Opinion
Guest Voices



Gerry Straub is pictured with Baby Ruth in April 2019 at the Santa Chiara Children's Center in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Straub founded the home for abandoned and abused kids in May 2015. (Courtesy of Gerry Straub)



by John Dear

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This week on "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," John Dear speaks with filmmaker and author Gerry Straub about his life making documentaries about extreme poverty around the world, and then his move to Haiti, where he founded the Santa Chiara Children's Center, an orphanage for children in war-torn Port au Prince.

Last year, he had to flee Haiti because of the escalating gang violence and anarchy that has swept through the country. Since then, he's been living in Florida and helping the orphanage online and via Zoom.

He has now written a new book about his mythic journey from Hollywood, where he was once a producer of the soap opera "General Hospital," to Assisi, Italy, which inspired his award-winning book about Sts. Francis and Clare called *The Sun and Moon Over Assisi*. He then founded Pax et Bonum Communications, where for 20 years he made some 20 movies about extreme poverty. All those films can be watched online at www.paxetbonumcomm.org.

"I was just trying to understand St. Francis' love of the poor and poverty itself," Straub said. "I knew I could put the power of film to the service of the poor."

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Later in life, he moved to Haiti and started Santa Chiara. His new spiritual memoir, *The Cross of Love, the Pain of Poverty: The Unscripted Journey of a Hollywood Producer to the Worst Slums on Earth and an Orphanage in Haiti* (with a foreword by Dear), is available online and all proceeds go to the orphanage.

"We wanted the children to live a nonviolent life. In this horrible place of screaming kids and gunshots, something beautiful was created," Straub said.

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.