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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](http://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.](#)