



Let not a single sheep be lost – in Africa or elsewhere.



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“Africa offers the world a beauty and natural richness which inspire praise of the Creator. This patrimony of Africa and of all mankind is constantly exposed to the risk of destruction caused by human selfishness of every type.”

– Pope Francis at the Nairobi UN offices in Kenya, November 26, 2015

Dear Friends,

True fasting demands not only that we subject our bodies to self-denial in order to celebrate Easter with a pure heart, but also that we share our bread with the hungry (Isaiah 58:7). Our fasting is only real when we share our food with those whose daily bread is taken from them by the greediness of the world.

In Africa 200 million people go hungry (17% of the entire population) and 600 million (50%) live below the poverty-line – that is the terrifying reality. But despite its vast

deserts, Africa is blessed with fertile soil and a climate that allows year-round harvesting in many regions. The continent also has immeasurable mineral riches, not to mention vast religious and cultural riches. Africa could be a veritable paradise on earth. The African people have a joyful attitude toward life. But the nations of Africa have fallen prey to epidemics, bad administration and corruption – while the so-called “advanced nations” are trying to impose a “culture of death” on them through “health programs” that contain the poison of abortion and radical gender

ideology. Africa is a youthful continent, with half its population under 30 years of age. Africa does not need these so-called “new ethics” but our brotherly support and help in promoting integral human development. Just as Africa offered the Holy Family refuge in Egypt when they fled Herod’s massacre of the children, and so helped pave the way for a truly Christian civilization, so now we must help Africa



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to escape the tyranny of modern colonialism and slavery.

Africa’s mineral resources are being unscrupulously exploited today – as they were in the past – yet there is barely a flicker of interest in the media. Who is interested in the killing of millions in brutal wars, which are dismissed as ethnic infighting? Who talks about the greed of the arms dealers? In the Democratic Republic of Congo alone more than 6 million people have already been killed. Who cares about the millions of refugees who for

decades have been forced to flee from the “diamond wars” or Islamist terror? Africa is like the man beaten by robbers and left half dead by the roadside – the continent needs not only our balm on her wounds but also the voice of Christ, telling her of the dignity of the children of God. Perhaps Africa’s vocation, as Pope Benedict put it, is to be the “spiritual lungs” of a world that has lost its hope and no longer believes in the fruitfulness of love and the joy of life?

Dear friends, we can do something about this. The projects highlighted in our Lenten campaign show that Africa is rich

in spiritual resources. May our fasting and sacrifices help her to conserve these treasures and also satisfy her hunger for justice.

I wish you a blessed Lent and a joyful Easter,

P. Martin M. Barta

Father Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



Bringing the Peace of Fatima to Nigeria

A few years ago, around 100 million Christians around the world faced persecution because of their faith. Today, that number has more than doubled. Nigeria and Sudan have suffered the worst – in both these countries the perpetrators of violence have been radical Islamists.

Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa with its 180 million inhabitants. However, it has also seen the highest number of deaths. Last year Nigeria had more martyrs than anywhere else, murdered simply because they were Christian.

Almost 3 million Nigerians found themselves uprooted and then displaced within their own country; their Churches attacked

and set on fire; bombed indiscriminately in crowded markets and their people murdered and abducted on a near daily basis. Yet, they are not giving up. On the contrary, these Christians are continuing to seek peace with their Muslim neighbours. Many Muslims also live and work peacefully alongside Christians, as they have always done.

Most of the 25 million Catholics in Nigeria live in the south. The new diocese of Pankshin in the north has approximately 170,000 Catholics – about 15% of the population. In his pastoral work, Bishop Michael Gokum relies heavily on the Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima, a Nigerian congregation of 65 Sisters whose mission includes running the large local school and praying, like the Shepherd Children of Fatima, for peace. One hundred years ago this year, while the First World War raged, Our Lady appeared to Jacinta, Lucia and Francisco promising them the soldiers



The power of the Rosary – Father Werenfried in Fatima, praying for peace.

would soon be returning home. She added however, that they must continue praying the Rosary daily.

As their vocation combines prayer and education, the Sisters need a convent close to the school with excellent security and equipped with a chapel. To this end, we have promised **\$63,000**. As Father Werenfried once said in Fatima, “We know that Mary can crush the serpent’s head underfoot. That is why we have consecrated our entire charity to Our Lady of Fatima, who has shown us the way to liberating the persecuted Church.” It is a way of conversion, penance, praying the Rosary – and sacrifice. Our Lady desired peace, so let there be peace for the Sisters, the schoolchildren and the people of Nigeria. Let us help them. ●



These Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima need the security of their convent’s walls.

The Hope of Easter for Sudan

Christians are not safe anywhere in Sudan – caught between civil war in the south and oppression in the north.

Cardinal Gabriel Zubeir Wako, the emeritus Archbishop of Khartoum greets us in his Easter message, “as we accompany Our Lord Jesus in his Passion for the redemption of mankind.” These words, in fact, reflect a harsh reality in Sudan, a country where Sharia law has also now been imposed. For not only at Easter do Christians accompany

Jesus in his sufferings, but every day of their lives. When priests arrive for retreat and formation in Khartoum, many of them are exhausted and sick, especially those from the Nuba Mountains, where Christians are hunted like wild beasts. These priests need rest, peace and renewal. An encounter with the Lord during their retreat provides them with a renewed strength. Solidarity with their brother priests also revives their courage. The retreat house itself is in need of repairs, with the work on hold because the slender resources the community have already been



A place of safety and mutual trust – Celebrating Holy Mass in the Khartoum retreat centre.

consumed by inflation. Our help is needed – not only for the **\$42,000** shortfall, but also to remind them that the hope of Easter is real through our solidarity with them. ●



“They are immensely grateful to us”

To find out about the work ACN is supporting in Africa, we spoke to Christine du Coudray Wiehe, who heads the Africa Section of our pontifical charity.

How important is Africa to ACN?

For 13 years now the Church in Africa has been a top priority for our pontifical foundation, at least in terms of the volume of funding for the projects. When I first started here 25 years ago, the priority was still the persecuted Church behind the Iron Curtain, but after the fall of the Berlin Wall Africa increasingly began to claim our attention, particularly after the first continental synod, the Synod for Africa, which was called by Saint John Paul II in 1994. With the words “Christ is calling Africa,” the Pope drew our attention to a young Church, dynamic and rich in priestly and religious vocations, but poor in infrastructure and opportunities for formation, and additionally threatened by an aggressive Islam and a West-inspired “culture of death,” that is destructive especially towards the traditional family. So this is precisely the area to which our aid is directed.

Which kind of projects are your priority?

The Church on this continent has long survived, thanks in good measure to the



Keeping informed – Christine du Coudray talking to one of our project partners.



material help of the missionaries, but for a variety of reasons this aid is no longer possible. In keeping with our mission and our pastoral outlook, more than anything else we focus on the formation of candidates for the priesthood, on supporting seminarians and providing scholarships, and also on the ongoing formation of priests, retreats and spiritual exercises, the support of religious Sisters. We also help with bicycles, motorcycles and cars for pastoral work, Bibles in the local languages, radio stations and religious programming, and for the construction of churches and chapels, convents and parish centres etc. Needless to say, we receive a huge number of requests for aid and have to be selective, according to the actual situation and need. For a time the priority was the former Marxist regimes such as Angola, Madagascar and Mozambique, at other times it has been the countries suffering civil war, such as Liberia, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or again the countries threatened by radical Islam, such as Nigeria, Mali and today even Kenya and Tanzania.

How is this aid received by the Christians in Africa?

They are immensely grateful to us, and to all our benefactors. It is so important to

them to experience our solidarity, the sense of unity in Christ, the assurance that they are not alone in their need. During the second Africa Synod we organized a North-South meeting between the bishops of Europe and Africa. A hundred bishops took part and shared their problems and priorities. It was a worldwide first.

How important is the family in your aid for Africa?

Over the years we have often been approached by local family organizations of all shapes and sizes and in every corner of the continent. We not only help individually, but also via the overarching African Family Life Federation, thereby encouraging them all to work together. This is enormously important in an age of globalization and massive anti-family campaigns such as the promotion of gender ideology. The Holy Father has repeatedly warned us about this ideology; many governments and organizations in the West have fallen for it and are now pressurizing the African nations. Hence it is all the more necessary to defend and promote the true values of human nature and the expertise in this understanding that the Church has accumulated over the course of 2,000 years as a rock and refuge for the family.

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Planned Giving: representing both our vision and your commitment to today's society and for tomorrow's!



**Johannes
Freiherr
Heereman,**
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Still today, despite the publicity given to it by many organizations, the different modalities of planned giving are very little known. We would like to inform you about them, considering all the advantages they may represent for you:



- A way to share your heritage
- An opportunity to gain in fiscal savings
- An opportunity to reach a goal dear to you
- The possibility of sharing values that are important to you
- The simplicity of supporting a cause that is dear to you
- The chance to restructure a plan for giving which is advantageous to you and to the organization who will benefit.

In simple terms, planned giving is subject to a financial plan, fiscal or successional, so as to choose the best option to share one's life savings. It reflects the hopes and philanthropic objectives of the donor while taking into account his or her personal background.

Aid to the Church in Need may receive planned donations in the following ways:

- A donation through a legacy;
- A donation through life insurance;
- A donation through a charitable trust;
- A donation through real estate;
- A donation through a qualifying security.

To learn which of these choices might correspond best with your situation, we invite you to speak to your legal or financial consultant (notary, lawyer, financial planner, accountant) who would have the expertise necessary to best advise you.

In conclusion, please know, whatever the amount foreseen, your planned donation is important for your chosen organization, as it provides concrete and lasting benefits.

Dear friends,

Africa is one of the main focuses of our aid for the Church in need. One quarter of all your donations go to Africa – over 32 million dollars. This aid is much more than merely help for the poor and needy; it is a real investment in the future. On the one hand, the Church is growing on this continent like nowhere else; on the other, this young and dynamic Church needs the help of her brothers and sisters outside Africa in order to withstand an expansive and oppressive Islam. And in the long term this helps us as well, as the missionary outreach is not simply a one-way street.

There is no comparison between our aid and that given by many governments and NGOs, which often comes with pressure to comply with their anti-life policies on the family and human life. We help people to live in fidelity to the teaching of Christ. The common bond we share with the Church in Africa is the “Civilization of Love” – which is stronger than the “culture of death” and degradation, as it is a source of true hope. For this reason also, thank you for your generosity!

Send your donation to: **Aid to the Church in Need (Canada) Inc.**
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