

MALAWI - TWIN

The Parish of Corpus Christi, Tonbridge, Twinned with Malawi

- Appeal Update -

Dear Parishioner

November 2005

The last three weeks have been most humbling for the members of your Malawi management team. Faced with the terrible news from our linked priests, it was decided that we had to appeal to you for help. This was a ponderous decision because of the enormous amount of tragedy recently experienced throughout the world and the call on your financial help from so many sources, including CAFOD. The situation in Malawi is not unique but you have demonstrated your determined support of our Twinning Project.

Your response has been unbelievable. In just three weeks, including Gift Aid, you have given £16410. This is unprecedented. So many parish families have given that neither Fr Michael nor the team members have had time to breathe. We praise Almighty God for your most generous response.

A special mention must be made regarding the substantial extra work which has fallen upon Father Michael and his staff. A large number of envelopes have arrived at the presbytery containing cash and cheques, all of which had to be opened, counted, recorded and banked. This has all been extra to the daily administration work involved in the running of a very active parish.

Our Lord taught us that when we give to our neighbours we are giving to God and there can be no doubt that He too is well aware of this very great profession of love and concern, shown by you for the terrible plight of our friends in Malawi. "*Zikomo kwambiri*" - Thank you very much and, to quote that old blessing "may you be in Heaven half an hour before the Devil knows you are dead."

So what happens next?

When you read this newsletter, we will have already sent £9,000 to the three parishes, *Nsanje*, *Chiringa* and *Kachebere*. We had expressed our concerns to the priests that, with such a large influx of cash, they could be in a position to purchase all the available food, leaving none for others in their parishes or those in neighbouring communities. We have therefore asked them to share with their neighbours. Fr Francis (*Nsanje*) has told us that he is giving £1000 to Fr Nazario at *Chikwawa* and we have asked Fr Peter (*Kachebere*) to share with Fr Emmanuel at his new parish of *Ncheu*.

The money we sent was paid directly into the bank accounts of the parishes and no one but the priests will have had access to it. The balance of the Appeal fund will follow once Gift Aid is received and the account is finalised.

We are keeping in regular touch with the priests and have asked for reports of their spending and feeding programmes, so that we can relay this news to you in future newsletters.

And now for something completely different...

One of our parishioners, Jan Harman, has just received a letter from her sponsored child. This letter is worth sharing with you, because it demonstrates the valuable benefit of our Sponsorship project to the Malawi youth. It is re-produced with only slight changes to the original:

My name is Aaron David Thove from Nsanje district in Malawi. I am seventeen years old. I am here at Nsanje secondary school doing my third year of secondary education. I shall be sitting for the Malawi School Certificate of Education next year, 2006.

I must take this opportunity to thank you most profoundly because I have come this far educationally with your financial assistance which is put to good use. For example I did my Malawi Junior Certificate of Education in 2004 and passed with flying colours in the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Biology, Physical Science, Geography, Agriculture, Social Studies, Commercial Studies and Chichewa (Their local language) Thank you very much for myself and for Malawi. I praise the Lord for everything.

I am the last born in a family of six. First born was Davious then Mavuto, Grace and lastly myself. Unfortunately my father died and then Davious died after a short illness in 2002. The deaths shocked my brother Mavuto so much that he left home immediately to an unknown destination. It is not known where he went and whether he is still alive or not. I was left with my shocked and wasted mother as my sister was forced into an early marriage by the situation. By the grace of God the two of us have kept to each other ever since.

It has been very tough and almost impossible for me and my mother. My mother kept on encouraging me in school despite the hardships. Lucky enough we have a free primary education system in Malawi so school fees were not a problem. During that period, soap and other social problems were the order of the day but I survived them. However it was worse when I was selected to start at Nsanje secondary school.

My mother and I did not know what to do but we kept on praying for God's guidance and deliverance. Indeed God's blessings and kindness were showered on us when Fr Nazario Mateyu said that someone would help me, who later I came to know to be you. I never bothered about groceries and pocket money, all I wanted and still want is to be educated whether in rags or without soap. I have now almost achieved that. I owe all that to you, my benefactor. Without you my mother and I would never have any hope.

Once again, my mother and I thank God for giving you a kind and merciful heart to find it suitable and right to help me try to secure a bright future through education. I would have been a nonentity without you. Only God knows how to rightly bless you in abundance.

I thank you for your time as you read this letter. I am anxiously looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Aaron's situation is typical of so many youngsters in Malawi. He is one of the fortunate ones in whom Fr Nazario has put his trust. He is obviously justifying this trust and we thank God for his strong faith and commitment.

Please continue to pray for the people of Malawi and for our sponsored children.

Peter Wells

On behalf of the Malawi Team