

MALAWI - TWIN

The Parish of Corpus Christi, Tonbridge, Twinned with Malawi

-Famine Appeal Latest -

23

Dear Parishioner

December 2005

£18,000 !



18,000 Thank Yous From Malawi

This is the result of a most dramatic show of caring by our parishioners for the starving members of Our Lord's family in Malawi.

It was St Theresa of Avila who said "We cannot be sure if we are loving God, although we may have good reason for believing that we are, but we can know quite well if we are loving our neighbour." Your response to the recent appeal is a categorical demonstration of this love.

We have so far sent £12,000 to five parishes. Of this figure, £3,000 was sent out before the appeal started and £9,000 has since been sent. A further £9,000 will be sent in January when, it is anticipated, the priests will have used up their resources.

We are in regular touch with the priests in Malawi, receiving news of how the people are being helped. What follows contains extracts from their reports, plus more photographs, showing how you are helping to feed very many of the starving people in their communities, regardless of their faiths.

It should be remembered that these priests each have an average of 16 area churches, with thousands of parishioners, whom they serve and are actively seeking supplies of maize from their government agency -ADMARC - or whatever private source from which it can be obtained.

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CHIRINGA - Where we have the parish and pre-school playgroup.

We had sent Fr Alfred a gift of £1,000 before the appeal. We have since sent £3,000. He has written several messages describing the situation in his parish before and after receiving our two gifts. Here are extracts:

"I am very overwhelmed by the response and commitment of the Tonbridge community. It is so encouraging for me, working in one of the remotest and poorest parts of Malawi. I have now a great feeling that I am not alone. There are people out there who care and are concerned for our plight. Please convey my gratitude to all. Abundant God's blessings to you all."

"This assistance is going a long way in alleviating the plight of hunger in our parish. We are able to formulate a structured programme of targeting the most vulnerable without in any way excluding those who come to the doorsteps of the parish for assistance. We do this without discrimination and irrespective of creed.

Our feeding programme has positively impacted the community. It has changed their lives from people living in despair to people living positively in faith and hope."

"Blessed are you, the community of Corpus Christi, Tonbridge, for having recognised and accepted the new born Jesus through the weak and vulnerable poor of Chiringa. Be assured that your Christmas celebrations will be spiritually shared with the community of Chiringa.

As my token of thanks and appreciation I, together with the Chiringa community will offer a Triduum of Holy Masses for the intentions of all Christians of Corpus Christi parish, Tonbridge.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a prosperous new year."

NSANJE - Where we have the parish and primary school.

We had sent £1,000 to Nsanje to help the parish and primary school, when Fr Francis and Patrick, the headmaster, first told us of the drought situation. Following the appeal we sent a further £3,000 and Fr Francis gave £1,000 to Fr Nazario to help the community of Chikwawa. Nsanje is in the diocese of Chikwawa.

Fr Francis writes:

"This district has 75,060 farming families and 46,893 (62%) of these are affected with hunger. At the moment none has died from hunger but they are seriously starving. If this situation continues we shall have hunger related illnesses and deaths." Our primary school pupils are also affected. Out of 802 pupils, 672 are at immediate risk. They come to school without taking food. That is why we are experiencing drop out rate and absenteeism.

Zikomo kwambiri – thank you very much....



On Sunday 4th December, after receiving the second gift, Fr Francis sent a more encouraging message. He sent a list of names of 161 people, in twelve communities, he had so far helped with food. These included 107 sick and elderly and 54 orphans.

CHIKWAWA – Where Fr Nazario is based

Fr Nazario is secretary to the Bishop of Chikwawa and, technically, does not have a parish as such. However, he serves in local parishes whose people are just as hungry. He is in constant touch with ADMARC – the government agency which controls the distribution of maize at a fair price – and he has found a local farmer who still has stocks. He and Fr Francis are working together to buy and distribute as much food as they can obtain. He writes:

“Please pass my heartfelt thanks to all the parishioners for the noble work they are doing to help us and the most vulnerable at this difficult time.”

KACHEBERE – Where we have the parish and seminary.

Fr Peter and Fr Denis are both writing to keep us informed and have sent a number of photographs which show the people with bags of maize flour. A few of those are included in this newsletter but there will be many more to show you on Sunday January 22nd at the Malawi film show.

Fr Denis writes:

“Let me sincerely thank the parishioners of Corpus Christi for your generosity. It is amazing how much God can do through His people. We have identified one of our Christians who is a commercial farmer and we hope he will be able to sell some maize to us.

In the seminary we are managing to feed the students because we stocked just enough maize for them, but our workers face the same plight as the other parishioners. The rains did come and people have planted crops but there has been no further rain for one month and the crops are now drying out. It is really worrying and we hope God will be kind to us.”

Fr Peter wrote on 30th November:

“We started distributing maize flour to fifty families yesterday. We continued today to another fifty families and hope to continue tomorrow to another fifty. This was done in one outstation and we have ordered a further supply to feed another outstation next week. We are now searching for further supplies which have been promised to us.”

NCHEU - This is Fr Emmanuel’s new parish. We know nothing about this parish as yet but he was the ‘pioneer’ Malawian priest in our parish and remains a dear friend. It seemed right to include him and his people who are in similar circumstances. We asked Fr Denis to help him from the money we had already sent to Kachebere. He gave Fr Emmanuel £1,000, from the money we had sent before the appeal.

On behalf of the people of Malawi:

“KHIRISIMASI YABWINO KWA INU NONSE” - a happy Christmas to you all!

Peter Wells

On behalf of the Malawi-Twin Team