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THE PARISH OF CORPUS CHRISTI TONBRIDGE  
AND ST PETER'S HADLOW  
TWINNED WITH LINK PARISHES IN MALAWI

Give and it will be given to you... The measure you give shall be the measure you receive  
Luke 6.38

Newsletter no: 26

Date: May 2006

"We have not lost one person as a result of the  
famine"

Dear Parishioner

These were the words spoken to Anne Mahoney by Fr Boniface during her visit to *Malawi*. He was referring to his home Parish of *Chiringa* where Fr Alfred is Parish Priest and ministers to about 17,000 parishioners.

We have received a similar message from Fr Francis at *Nsanje*, who has about the same number of parishioners.

We believe the situation is the same at *Kachebere*, and we expect that Fr Denis will confirm this, when he arrives in Tonbridge on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July, to spend five weeks with us.

Anne has seen with her own eyes, the results of our Famine Appeal. She has spoken to the people and taken film of the feeding programme, which you will be able to view later this year. She will give you a written report, in the next few weeks, of all that she has witnessed.

**There is no doubt in her mind that our Famine Appeal has been a resounding success and has saved very many lives.**

Let us thank Almighty God for the opportunity we have been given to help these, our friends, in a country where many millions are dying from starvation.

Anne also discovered, on her visit to *Nsanje*, that their feeding programme was being closely watched by a Church Aid group from Norway. Fr Francis had targeted the most vulnerable: the elderly, fifty orphans and those suffering from T.B. (The condition of T.B. may be improved with better nutrition)

This group has been so impressed by the reporting and selection processes to target the most vulnerable, that they have decided to give additional help. When Fr Francis's money runs out with his next and final distribution, they will continue to help him for the next five months.

The dedication and organisational skills of all our priests and their teams, have been severely tested. They have not been found wanting. They have put an enormous amount of effort into spending wisely, the £21,000 which we have sent to buy food for their people.

## Our Sponsorship Project

The children of Malawi are provided with free primary school education; anything beyond this stage has to be paid for. The vast majority of families have no hope of finding sufficient money to pay for further education for their children.

We currently have 45 children in our project, sponsored by 39 families, to help them improve their chances of a life beyond casual labour and subsistence farming. Several of these children have now progressed beyond the secondary school stage and are studying for university, the priesthood and better paid jobs in the workplace.

Anne met and photographed 35 of these children and is currently contacting their sponsors. This is what she says about this project.....

*"Thank you very much for all that you have done for me"*

*Time and time again I was asked to pass these exact words on to the sponsors of the many students I was privileged to meet when visiting Nsanje, Chiringa and Kachebere. Meeting these students was a highlight of my visit. They became real people - school children just like our own and no longer a name or a number on paper. I was able to spend some time with each of them individually, getting to know them a little and learning something of their backgrounds. It wasn't always easy - some were very quiet, some were shy, while others chatted quite happily.*

*I was struck and, at the same time, deeply moved by many things during the course of these encounters.*

*All the students spoke to me in perfect English. As I said, some were shy and a little hesitant. Nevertheless, their standard of English was excellent. They were all eager to learn and committed to their studies. Some had very definite ideas as to their career paths after school - several hoped to become Priests, others Accountants, Nurses, one wished to go into Insurance and another to become an Airline Pilot flying Jumbo Jets! One young man said that once he was qualified, he would in his turn be able to sponsor students - to help as he had been helped. And then we received the exciting news that two of our sponsored girls had passed their University Entrance Exams and been awarded places at Mzuzu University! Despite all adversity, they had succeeded with the help of their sponsors.*

*All the students expressed their deep gratitude for the help they receive from their sponsors and greatly appreciate the opportunity they have been given.*

*But the most inspiring thing of all was their tremendous strength of character, their determination. Each and every student had their own story to tell, full of difficulty, adversity and heartache. Many had lost one parent, some had lost both, and were living with a grandparent, an aunt, a married sister. In one case, the child was living on his own and undertaking piecemeal work to earn money to keep himself, while continuing with his education at school.*

*These children are living with poverty on a scale that we can hardly begin to imagine. Perhaps it would be too disturbing if we could.*

*I understood the importance of our sponsorship programme before I went to Malawi. I have now seen the reality of it. Sponsorship gives these children the possibility of a future through education. YOU are giving them hope for tomorrow. YOU are making the difference for them.*

*There are many, many more children in similar situations, whose family lives have been decimated by HIV/AIDS and hunger and where desperate poverty leaves nothing for education of the children. Many, many more sponsors are needed. In financial terms, it does not cost us a lot - perhaps the cost of one family meal at a Restaurant, perhaps a visit to the Hairdressers, or a bottle of perfume. The price of one small luxury would pay for one child's education for one year. Could you make that small sacrifice once a year for about five years? Please think about it - children are desperate for your help. I met teenage students for whom it was so important to go to school but they go to school hungry, every day, only eating a simple meal in the evening because there is no money for food. They simply want to go to school and to learn. And you can help to make that happen for them.*

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In March this year, the Executive Director of the **World Food Programme** was quoted in the press as saying:

- *“Getting children fed and into schools is the most powerful investment Africa could make”*
- *“If you help a little girl go to school for five years in Malawi, everything about her life changes for the better. She's a better citizen, a better teacher, a better farmer.”*

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It is through education that long term change can be brought about. If you feel you would like to be a sponsor and help to change a child's life, please talk to Peter Wells, or any member of the Twin Team. It is a most rewarding undertaking, both for the sponsor and for the student.

This year we will be asking for £100 – just £1.92 pence per week, to educate a child for one year; not a lot to give that child hope for a better future.

On behalf of all our sponsored students:

*Zikomo Kwambiri kia Mulungu akudalitseni*

Thank you very much and God bless you.

Peter Wells  
On behalf of the Malawi Team