*Famine in Malawi*

Newsletter No 66

April 2016

Dear Parishioner

Our appeal was made at an unfortunate time on Easter Sunday, but despite this your response was outstanding and will be a life saver many times over.

The collection came to £7,357 and we have rounded up this amount and sent £2,500 to each of our three parishes.

At the time the appeal was being printed, we received a donation which, when added to the amount present in the fund, enabled us to send an urgent gift of £2,000 to each of the priests. Their need was most urgent and this would help their people in the interim so in total, you have given £13,500 to this appeal.

Sadly, the hunger situation is likely to continue until next spring in some parts, but we have helped a lot already, as you will read in the following messages from the parish priests.

Fr Francis has sent two photographs which are displayed on the Malawi notice board in the Narthex. There are more to follow from the three priests.

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Here is what the three priests have to say….

*I managed to buy maize which we distributed to our people and the money you sent is now exhausted. We were able to distribute to a good number of starving and poor people but this was purchased at a very high price.*

*Some needy people continue to come but not as the situation was before because some are harvesting from their gardens. Though the harvests in most gardens are very poor indeed and the food will not last for long.*

*Some have literally harvested nothing and these are the people who continue to come to ask for food.*

*Maize is now on the market at a more reasonable price, so the best thing to do is to buy it, treat it and maybe keep it for future use. The current lower market price won’t last for long.*

*We thank you all for coming to our rescue that saw so many lives being saved. The love of God was seen to our people through you and your generous, kind and understanding hearts.*

*We all send our Peace and Love to you all and we always pray for you so that God continues to bless, protect and keep you all safe.*

*With many blessings,*

*Fr Charles.* (Chiringa parish)

*I write to present a report on the relief project which we carried out in our parish following our request for assistance and your kind donation of £2,000.*

*From September 2015 Malawi as a nation was hit by an acute shortage of food. The situation worsened in January/February/March 2016. During these months some families had literally nothing to eat. It was not a strange sight to see women waiting for maize husks at the maize mills which they would later process into flour and cook some porridge for themselves or their families. We also witnessed long queues at the maize selling points throughout the country. Due to the shortage of maize, some people spent three of four days - day and night - waiting for their turn to buy some maize. This was rationed to 25Kgs of maize at a time*

*We identified 126 vulnerable households of which 120 were female and 6 were male. We prioritised the ederly, those living with HIV/AIDS, female headed families and other vulnerable families. There were many people affected by the shortage of food. But we chose to reach out to those who were more vulnerable.*

*This was a big challenge because there was very little maize at the ADMARC markets. ADMARC are the official selling points for agricultural products in Malawi. We did not want to bribe the ADMARC officers or jump the long queues. This would have been an abuse of our prominence in the society and a complete disregard of the plight of many poor people around us. As an alternative, we went on the street market to purchase maize but at a slightly higher price.*

*We bought 126 bags of maize. Each bag contained 50Kgs of maize and cost us MK15,000.00. Thus we spent MK1,890,000.00*

*In the Diocese of Karonga every Parish has a Disaster Rapid Response Team (PDRRT). The members are trained to report on disasters that have happened or those that are likely to happen in an area. They are based in the villages and work hand-in-hand with our Catechists. The distribution exercise was completed in one week.*

*We are very grateful to the parishioners of Corpus Christi Parish for the timely support to the poor families in St. Mary’s Parish, Karonga.*

*Your assistance has helped to save many lives which would otherwise have been lost during the peak period of the famine.*

*We are sincerely grateful and we pray to God to bless you abundantly.*

*Fr Denis* (Karonga parish)

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*I'm very pleased to inform you that everyone here is very grateful for the assistance given to us. The £2000 sent to me was used to buy maize flour which benefited 140 most needy households with an average of 4 members each.*

*I wish to assure you that no assistance is too small for us. To save two lives is better than none.*

*The problem is so big and the situation is very bad and your help to us is a golden bullet.*

*Please extend our thanks to all who have helped us.*

*Fr Francis* (Njale parish)

Thank you also from your Malawi team!