



A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

PRESIDENT OF SUDAN RELIEF FUND

Dear Friend in Christ,

Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala's steadfastness amidst the most trying circumstances is a constant gift not only to his flock, but to all of us at Sudan Relief Fund. We congratulate His Excellency on his twelfth anniversary at the helm of the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio and ask that you join us in thanking God for Bishop's faithful leadership and praying for his continued strength.

Bishop's bold example is being met by his flock and all who continue to strive despite impossible odds in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains.

After long delays due to insecurity and other struggles in Tombura-Yambio, no fewer than five school renovation and new construction projects are now underway, thanks to you and all of Sudan Relief Fund's incredibly generous donors. Also underway is the construction of a dispensary and residential facility to complement the emergency room launched last year by the Missionary Community of St. Paul the Apostle.

And I am thrilled to report that Dr. Tom Catena and his beautiful wife Nasima have welcomed a son into their home! Adding to Dr. Tom's excitement is the fact that work is about to begin on a long-overdue expansion of Mother of Mercy Hospital's surgical facilities.

I do not mean to give the impression that all is well in this war-torn and often forgotten corner of the world. On the contrary, the situation in South Sudan remains dire. Yet the astonishingly resilient people you've supported so generously are laying the foundation for a brighter future for their children even as more lives are being saved.

I'm more grateful than I can say here for all you do to lift up our South Sudanese brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you.

Yours in faith,

Neil Corkery, President

PLANNED GIVING, LEGACY GIFTS, BEQUESTS, WILLS & ESTATE DONATIONS

What will your legacy be?

Planned giving or legacy gifts are one of the most generous ways you can help the desperately poor people of South Sudan. At Sudan Relief Fund, we are blessed to have the most generous donors in the world. Please consult your investment advisor, accountant, or lawyer for details on remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate plans. Please consider remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate planning. For questions contact Brendan Gotta, Director of Stewardship, at 330.461.3356.

LEGACY SOCIETY
SUDAN RELIEF FUND



SUDAN RELIEF FUND

P.O. Box 7084 • Merrifield, VA 22116 • 1-888-488-0348
www.sdrlf.com

Your financial support helps us save lives and bring Christ's love to the suffering people of South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. Sudan Relief Review is published by Sudan Relief Fund (SRF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible. ©2020 Sudan Relief Fund. All Rights Reserved.

OCTOBER 2020



SUDAN RELIEF REVIEW

Bringing the Gospel of Christ, and providing food, clean water, shelter and medical care, to the people of South Sudan

Dr. Tom: Growing the Hospital, and Growing a Family



When it began to look like they would not be able to conceive a child, Dr. Tom Catena and his wife, Nasima, decided to adopt. Although adoption is unheard of in Nuba, Nasima was open to the idea. After many months of extended visits with a very special young boy at an orphanage in Juba, Nasima was able to make all the necessary arrangements—and in March, she brought Francis to his new home.

Three of Nasima's nieces are staying with the family to help, which has been a huge blessing, especially given Dr. Tom's rigorous schedule. By the time he would get home from his rounds at the hospital, Francis would often be asleep. But now that Francis is getting settled in his new home, the family usually has a few hours in the evening together.

Nasima and Dr. Tom ask for your prayers as, like all young families, they joyfully seek balance between home life and work. Prayers are especially needed as Dr. Tom's already rigorous schedule is about to become even more demanding.

Mother of Mercy Hospital, which Sudan Relief Fund donors like you have funded since its inception and

initial construction, draws patients not only from throughout the expansive Nuba Mountain region, but from as far away as Khartoum in the north and the refugee camps in South Sudan. In 2019, Dr. Tom Catena, the only surgeon in the Nuba mountains, with the help of his colleagues performed 659 major and 1,224 minor surgeries—everything from Cesarean sections and gastrointestinal surgery to amputations and neurological procedures.

The surgical facilities, however, are in desperate need of expansion and improvement. Currently, patients must be wheeled through four sets of standard size doors, passing through the break room and the sterilization room to reach the operating room. Sterilization is being carried out in what was intended to be a locker room and bathroom. The surgical team has done an admirable job working in less than ideal conditions, but they have pushed the current facility to its limits. And given the decrease in violence following last year's ouster of the dictator of Sudan, now is the time to upgrade the hospital's surgical facilities.

Dr. Tom expresses his thanks to SRF donors for their faithful stewardship and generosity since the

hospital's beginning, and he can now announce that he and the team are ready to break ground on the expansion. The new building will house two new operating rooms and a recovery room, and the existing space will then be renovated and built to purpose.

The new facility has been intentionally designed so that surgeries can continue in the existing structure until construction is complete. With the expanded surgical theater, Dr. Tom and his team will be able to focus more on patient care and less on fighting against the inadequacies of a facility that was not built to handle the growing volume of patients in need of emergency surgical care. It also means that visiting doctors will be able to visit for a couple weeks at a time assist Dr. Tom with various surgical procedures. In short, the upgraded facilities mean that more lives will be saved, and more families will be kept intact.

Such an advanced facility was practically inconceivable when Dr. Tom began his work at Mother of Mercy Hospital in the remote Nuban Mountains in 2008. But as he likes to say, especially in light of Francis' arrival, God will never be outdone in generosity.

SRF's Commitment to Education and The Next Generation



Imagine how different your life would be without electricity, running water, and a safe and secure place to lay your head. For many orphans and school children in the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, such deprivations are a fact of life. Thanks to you and other Sudan Relief Fund donors, however, huge progress is being made in the living conditions and educational opportunities in this beleaguered region.

Last year, Sudan Relief Fund and the Diocese set out on an ambitious plan to dramatically improve the facilities at St. Josephine Bakhita orphanage. And because you and other SRF supporters have come through in a big way, we have some good news to report in the completion of the first stage of the orphanage upgrade project.

The successful installation of a complete solar power system, upgraded lighting, and a powered water pump has lifted the spirits of Sr. Bianca, her staff, and the sixty orphans they serve. The next phase will include the construction of a dormitory and lavatory facilities that will significantly improve the living conditions of the orphans.

SRF partner Bishop Eduardo

Kussala reports that, after years of delays due to widespread violence and financial problems, things are finally beginning to come together for Sr. Bianca and the children of St. Bakhita. "Sr. Bianca is very happy that she has seen real change," said Bishop Kussala. "She sees in the donations of Sudan Relief Fund supporters a sign of God's mercy, with which we collaborate in promoting the dignity of these dear children."

Elsewhere in the diocese, other necessary projects are finally underway after significant delays due to complications having to do with the coronavirus and associated lockdowns.

Bishop Kussala reports that, after a competitive bidding process and coordination with local authorities, contractors have been chosen and work is underway on each of the projects. The campuses include four primary schools and one secondary school, which together will welcome several hundred students in the coming year.

At **Regina Martyrum Primary school** in Mupo, construction materials have arrived, and work has begun on the new school building.

The renovation of **St. Mary, Help of Christians** in Tombura has begun with removal of the remainder of the old and dilapidated iron sheet roofing

(the rest was blown off by the wind). New sheeting and other materials such as timber and bricks have been delivered to the site.

At what will be a brand-new campus for **St. Genevieve Secondary school**, the site for the project has been acquired and cleared for construction after resolving a potential conflict between local tribes.

In Source Yubu, near the border of Central African Republic, **St. Thomas Primary School** is adding four classrooms to accommodate increased enrollment. Crews have made great progress in construction, which thankfully was not hampered by the coronavirus shutdowns.

And in Ngbokoko, construction of another brand-new campus, **Ave Maria Primary School**, is underway. The site has been cleared and materials have been delivered in anticipation of the construction work beginning soon.

On behalf of all the children and families who will benefit from these dynamic projects, Bishop Kussala expressed his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Sudan Relief Fund's supporters.

"Without your commitment to my people, hundreds of children would not have access to life-changing opportunities in a region where illiteracy is the norm," said Bishop Kussala. "The spiritual and intellectual formation these children will receive in school is the beginning of realizing their potential, which will in turn bless entire communities and the nation."



Expanding the Health Center at Ave Maria



Breaking ground. Laying foundations for the new health clinic.

As we reported last quarter, Father Avelino Bassols and his fellow priest of the Missionary Community of St. Paul the Apostle have made truly incredible progress at Ave Maria Parish in the last couple of years. The Missionary Community continues to expand their outreach and are building a new secondary school and have launched the St. Joseph the Worker Vocational Training Centre, where young people from the area can learn a profession in carpentry, plumbing, or engineering.

Continuing to carry out the Missionary Community's wholistic approach to caring for the spiritual and physical well-being of the community, they hired a nurse to help with the medical needs they saw in the community. Now word is getting out. Ave Maria was already seeing increasing numbers of pilgrims visiting the shrine to worship. Now they are also seeing increasing numbers of patients seeking care and healing. This has inspired the idea of building a small health clinic to serve the local community. Thanks to our generous donors, SRF has sent the funds needed to start construction. Although most parishioners and patients come from nearby villages, pilgrims and patients often walk for days through the rain

forest and South Sudanese outback to reach the shrine or visit the local nurse. The number of patients coming every day has grown to around 70, and with only one room and one trained nurse to serve them all, the need to expand is imperative.

"We have been shocked by the number of people coming to us since we opened. We are blessed with one qualified nurse, but it is urgent that we find a lasting solution for the growing need," Fr. Avelino said.

Because of your support, and the donations of the entire Sudan Relief Fund community, the Community has been able to begin the process of building the first proper health facility in the area. It will have a pharmacy and a laboratory that will aid in testing and diagnosis, as well as some rooms for patients. When the expanded facility is open, the Community will not only be able to hire additional nurses and support staff, they will be able to host wellness programs and invite surgeons when available to perform minor operations. But the pharmacy will be the biggest change, allowing trained staff to dispense medicine, which is most desperately needed.

The new center and additional staff cannot arrive too soon. Due to shutdowns associated with the



Despite Covid, still ministering to the pilgrims and holding mass outside

coronavirus, Fr. Avelino has also been celebrating Mass and hearing confessions outside, even as he and his brothers arrange for the care of many sick people. And because there are no hospital beds, the ill and any family who travel with them stay in the Ave Maria parish house, often for days at a time.

"In a time when the entire world has been taken by surprise with the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of having an adequate medical facility becomes even more obvious," said Fr. Avelino. "We are grateful to Sudan Relief Fund for helping us bring healing to even more of God's children in need."