

What I saw in South Sudan

A Firsthand Account of
Sudan Relief Fund's Impact
in a War-Torn Country

Page 2 and 3

IN THIS ISSUE

**Hope for the most
vulnerable in Wau**

Page 4

**Lives saved spotlight:
urgent care for Apou**

Page 5

**Message from
the President**

Back Page



What I saw in South Sudan

David Dettoni's firsthand account of your impact in war-torn South Sudan



You know that your generosity has a huge impact in South Sudan. You can see it in the stories in this newsletter and other updates. But that impact is even more evident in person. So, I want to share with you exactly what I saw and felt during my most recent trip to South Sudan this past November.

I've been to South Sudan many times. Still, I'm always struck by the profound poverty that I see there, even from the moment I step out of the airport. The poor of Juba even set up camp on the graves of the cemetery near where we stayed. There was nowhere else for them to go.

On my third day, we drove for nine hours over the worst roads you've ever seen to get to Mother of Mercy Hospital. And just imagine: these are the same roads that the ill and injured of the Nuba Mountains must tread in agony to get to the

hospital. At the hospital, we shadowed Dr. Tom Catena and got a vivid view of the shortages the hospital faces: Dr. Tom didn't have enough blood for a surgery, so he asked one of us to donate!

At the St. Clare's Orphanage, Father Federico introduced me to some of the fifty children in his care. These children still bear the scars—sometimes literally—of their time on the street. But they are healing and happy in the safety of their new home.

Your support is continuously building a stronger, more stable future for South Sudan. I saw that future being built at the secondary schools and colleges Sudan Relief Fund helps fund. There is so much passion for higher education at these institutions! So many young people are overjoyed that you're giving them the opportunity to raise themselves up to create a better future for their country.

"I saw poverty and suffering in South Sudan, but even more than that I saw hope."

St. John's in Yambio has 105 students studying economics, business administration, and education. More than 1000 high schoolers gather to learn at Bishop Abangite College, the only secondary school in Yambio. While visiting the Christian Brothers of Instruction, I heard the brothers' eagerness to open a secondary school on the open ground next to their primary school.

One of the most exciting aspects of those schools to see how many girls are enrolled. At the Loretto School, Sister Orla shared with me her passion for saving girls from child marriage and giving them a future. The St. Bakhita School is full of girls who are setting foot in a classroom for the first time in their lives. It was incredible to see so many girls, not afraid or abused, but thriving.

Finally, I saw firsthand the passion that burns in Bishop Eduardo's eyes when he talks about the suffering of his people—but also about the difference your support of Sudan Relief Fund is making in their lives. I came away even more convinced of the importance of the work we're doing together.

I saw poverty and suffering in South Sudan, but even more than that I saw hope. The South Sudanese I met were full of hope, and full of the strength, resilience, and tenacity that your generosity is helping flourish into a strong future for South Sudan.



Hope for the most vulnerable in Wau



One moment you are living your ordinary life: caring for your children, farming your plot of land, living in peace. The next moment you're grabbing your children and fleeing for your life, bullets whizzing by as your home burns behind you.

That's the nightmare that the people of Wau are living now. Many have been killed, thousands displaced, and their homes and belongings have been destroyed. The displaced residents of Wau rely entirely on help from aid organizations and Catholic parishes for survival.

But many aid organizations have left South Sudan during the pandemic. Your support of Sudan Relief Fund is even more critical. You help the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa minister to the most vulnerable people of Wau—children, the elderly, lepers, and displaced families—in this moment of crisis.

Thanks to your support of Sudan Relief Fund, the Missionary Sisters have been providing food to people on the brink of famine, especially the disabled and elderly. They have been the only support system for the lepers of Agok, who are so stigmatized that no other organization will help them.

The Sisters know that Wau will only have a strong and stable future if its children receive a good education. Your generosity makes that happen, by paying school fees and providing meals for needy children.

But there is much still to do to alleviate suffering and strengthen education in this war-torn country. Many are hungry, many un-housed. Primary schools have been damaged during the fighting, some so badly that children are forced to study outside.

The Missionary Sisters have worked with Sudan Relief Fund to create an ambitious plan to help, which can only be achievable with your continued generosity.

It begins with renovating the damaged classrooms. The St. Raphael Primary School needs the fence surrounding it completed: only one section has been built. Children need basic school supplies like books and paper. Additional funds will also support the enrollment of girls, whose education often isn't prioritized.

The project will also secure food and essentials for many lepers and elderly people. It will also renovate ten

continued on page 5

LIVES SAVED SPOTLIGHT:

Urgent care for Apou

Nurse Noleen beams as she recalls a recent encounter with one former refugee. The young man pictured in this photograph with Nurse Noleen approached her one morning and asked if she remembered him. She knew his face but couldn't recall where they'd met. "You saved my life three years ago. My hand was rotting and you took me from the Bidi Bidi camp to the hospital in Arua. The operation saved my life!"

For years, Nurse Noleen has been a gift from God to the people of South Sudan. Her ministry in the Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda provides medical care and comfort to thousands of South Sudanese refugees.

As the young man spoke, the memory flooded back to Nurse Noleen. Apou had come to the chapel she used as a clinic within the camp in agony. A deep cut on his hand had grown infected, and without urgent intervention it was at risk of needing to be amputated.

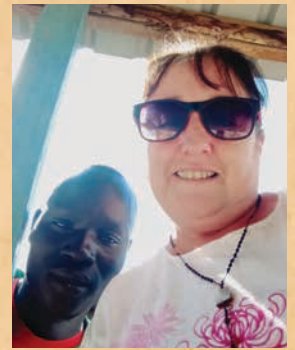
Experienced in dealing swiftly with dire need, she

rushed him to the nearest hospital. Her decisive action saved his hand and his life. And now, she got to see firsthand the fruits of her labor. Apou is back in South Sudan and is fully healthy.

Nurse Noleen has returned to South Sudan as well. Now she is saving lives caring for the ostracized residents of a leper colony in the village of Malo, near Rumbek. She is treating these most vulnerable brothers and sisters in Christ with the same "suitcase of medicine" she used to treat refugees like Apou.

Your generous support provides Nurse Noleen with that suitcase—and the ability to provide food and care to people who have been thrown out of their communities and left to die. Nurse Noleen is heartened by the fact that you will not let them be forgotten.

"The people of South Sudan are a mirror of love, acceptance, kindness, faith, and hope. They expect so little, yet offer all they have." You are helping Nurse Noleen offer all she has to those who would otherwise go without—people like Apou, whose life was saved by the ministry your generosity supports.



Apou and Nurse Noleen

"There is much still to do to alleviate the suffering of the poor and marginalized in this war-torn country."

houses to house displaced families. Finally, those families will be strengthened through retreats and seminars, helping youths to grow in faith and moral strength.

You bring immeasurable blessings to the suffering people of Wau through your continued support of Sudan Relief Fund and the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa. Sister Anne Wandia sees the impact your generosity makes every day:

"Each time I distribute food in the campgrounds, hundreds of households thank me, but deep down in



my heart I know it's because of the efforts and support of SRF donors. We are always grateful to God for your kind support, which helps us carry on our missionary activities with a courageous heart and maintain our identity, mission, and vision in South Sudan."

A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

PRESIDENT OF SUDAN RELIEF FUND

DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST,

I hope this message finds you well amidst the upheaval of these strange times. In this newsletter, we want to give you an in-depth look at something more uplifting: encouraging and inspiring stories from our partners in South Sudan.

Remember: these are stories of encouragement only because of you.

David Dettoni witnessed firsthand the life-changing effects of our partners in South Sudan. New schools, Dr. Tom's busy hospital, safe havens for imperiled girls and women. He met the selfless people saving the lives of refugees like Apou.

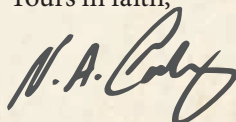
And in Wau, violence and upheaval have driven thousands from their homes and left them entirely reliant on the generosity of others for food, shelter, health care, and education. That could sound hopeless, but with your support of Sudan Relief Fund, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa are ministering to the most vulnerable on the ground.

You're growing and shining a light on the sources of hope in this society: new access to schools, lifesaving aid for lepers, new homes for displaced families. This incredible progress is the result of your continued, sacrificial generosity. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

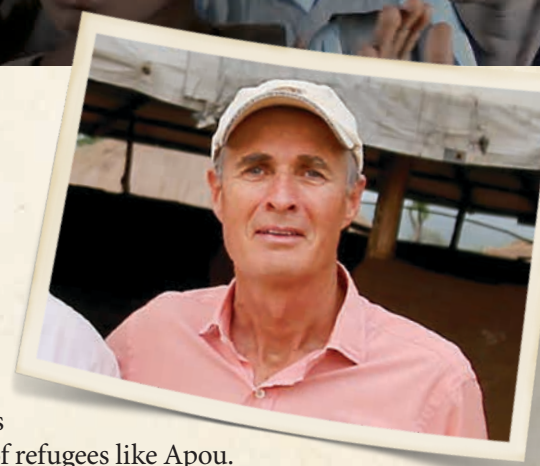
I am encouraged by your incredible willingness to provide our brothers and sisters in South Sudan with food, shelter, and health care. By living the example of Christ, you are sharing hope and restoring dignity to these people who have been beaten down by violence and poverty. And our amazing partners are taking your generous gifts and multiplying them with great, life-saving effects.

I'm humbled to share in this mission with them and with 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.**

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