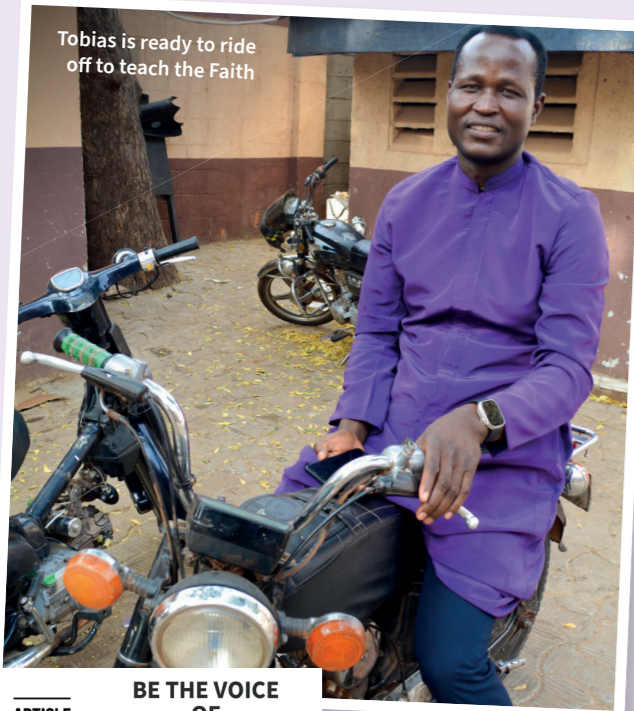


Tobias is ready to ride off to teach the Faith



A special plea to you

Nigerian catechist Tobias Yahaya came within inches of being killed by a man who wanted him dead because of his Christian faith.

The blade narrowly missed vital organs and Tobias recovered. In an astonishing move he publicly forgave his attacker, embracing him in the courtroom.

Tobias has now made an impassioned plea in support of ACN's campaign calling on governments to stamp out persecution and uphold religious freedom in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Tobias, winner of last year's ACN Courage to be Christian award, said: **"We live in an environment where it is extremely difficult for the seed of Christianity to grow. We labourers are making costly sacrifices to keep the faith. Religious freedom must become a reality."**

Sign the petition at acnuk.org/sign18 or request Article 18 cards by emailing acn@acnuk.org or calling 020 8642 8668.

BE THE VOICE OF
ARTICLE 18
PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
SIGN OUR PETITION



Scan the QR code to learn more

Your Mass intentions in Nigeria

Fr Anthony – who is receiving your Mass offerings – wrote to thank ACN's benefactors for their support. He is one of three priests who teach spirituality at Holy Name Seminary, Kano. Kano has suffered devastating attacks by terrorist group Boko Haram.

"I am writing to sincerely thank you for the Mass stipends I recently received... **This gesture reminds me that I am not walking this path alone, but that I am supported by a community that cares deeply about the work being done.**"

Fr Anthony is one of numerous priests in Nigeria who offers the sacrifice of the Mass for your intentions. He concluded: "May the Lord bless you abundantly for your kindness and continue to inspire your generosity towards mission work."



Persecuted, but not forsaken

Msepera with her child in a displacement camp after extremists slew her husband.

Msepera (pictured) will never forget the day the extremists came. Militant Fulani herdsmen killed her husband and smeared his blood all over her body "as a warning". She now lives in a displacement camp.

Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of Makurdi told ACN extremists are continuing to destroy villages and drive out Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt: **"They conquer, kill and occupy – they attack even those who have managed to escape into our displacement camps."**

The faithful in Nigeria are attacked on every side but – thanks to your prayers and support – the Body of Christ is surviving and even thriving. In the words of St Paul:

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken... always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Cor. 4:8-10 RSV-CE).

Inside you will read how your generous love is supporting our brothers and sisters in Christ, not only where they are bearing the brunt of the violence, but also where



Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of Makurdi

there are other pressing needs. For example, there are plans to print the New Testament in the language of the Kambari people, for the very first time, so that they will know the Word of God better.

Bishop Wilfred said: "I cannot thank you enough for all the help we have received over the years."

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Reports by John Newton
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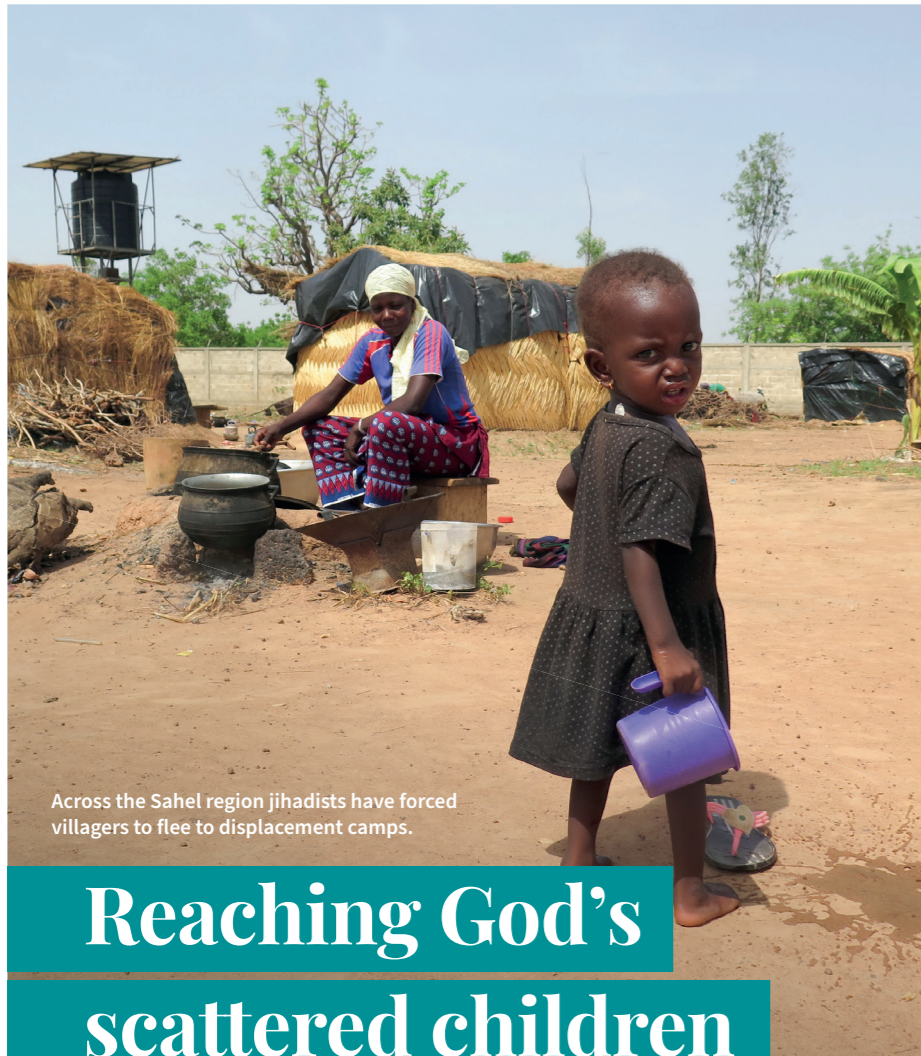
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Across the Sahel region jihadists have forced villagers to flee to displacement camps.

Reaching God's scattered children

Nigeria faces a humanitarian crisis. The UN estimates 3.5 million people are internally displaced – driven by the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east, and Fulani militant attacks in the Middle Belt.

Women and children are badly affected, facing malnutrition as well as being vulnerable to further attacks.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria has put in place an ambitious plan to come to the assistance of these suffering millions – but they need your help.

Fr Zacharia Samjumi told us they need a new vehicle to travel throughout Abuja – where there are 18 displacement camps housing those who fled Boko Haram – and “across the country’s 60 dioceses... for pastoral visits to IDP [internally displaced persons] camps, shelters for returning migrants, and other mission locations”.

The vehicle will enable priests to provide “spiritual support and religious services for those in need, ensuring the Church’s mission of love, care and inclusion is fully realised” – but they can only do so with the help of your generous love.

Fr Zacharia said: “Together, we can continue to fulfil Christ’s mandate to serve ‘the least of these’ his brethren. May the Lord bless you abundantly for your generosity and commitment to the mission of the Church.” ✚



Across Africa they thirst for the Word of God.

“The Encouragement of the Scriptures” (Romans 15:4)

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ,” said St Jerome.

That is why Catholic scholars have been intent on producing the Bible in the Kambari language, so that members of the Kambari tribe – and particularly the young people – will learn more about Our Lord. Bishop Bulus Dauwa Yohanna of Kontagora told ACN: “While most Kambari men have a certain fluency in Hausa most women and children have a very rudimentary knowledge of it and communicate most of the time in Kambari. **One of the most effective ways to read and comprehend the Word of God is the use of mother tongue.**”

Kontagora Diocese is ready to produce the New Testament with Psalms – the Old

Testament is still being translated – so that the diocese’s biggest tribal group can know Jesus more deeply through the scriptures.

There are very few books available in Kambari – but Bishop Bulus has sought your help so that the New Testament can be one of them. He is looking to print 10,000 copies and money from the books’ sale will be ploughed back into printing, making the project self-supporting.

“There is no doubt having the New Testament and Psalms will go a long way to improve the Kambari people’s understanding of the scripture and thereby improve their faith journey... We would be very grateful if Aid to the Church in Need will come to our assistance with this important and worthy project.” ✚



The Claretians celebrating the Easter vigil in a village church.

The Lord is a protecting wall

A chain-link fence is all that stands between the young Claretians training for the priesthood and the violence that surrounds them.

Fr Nathaniel Eke, Superior of the Claretian Order, said: “For a few years now, the state of insecurity, banditry, armed robbery and kidnapping in Benue State as a whole, has worsened significantly – and poses a threat to all.

“Abduction cases in recent years in the north central region of Nigeria have often seen Catholic priests and religious houses targeted more.”

Fr Nathaniel explained that building a fence around the novitiate where young men are studying for priesthood will give them a degree of safety and enable them to prepare to minister to the disadvantaged community around them.

With abductions rising, a sandcrete block wall topped with razor wire will replace the existing fence, providing seminarians with more security.

Only too aware of the dangers, Bishop Michael Apochi of Otukpo said: “It is really needed. The request is truly timely.” ✚

ACN helped build this wall at the Good Shepherd Seminary.

