

## Despite danger and death – the Lord remains forever

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri visits a church in his diocese attacked by Islamist terror group Boko Haram.

**“The plan of the enemy is to kill Christianity. But he will never succeed because God is in his Church. He says the world will make us suffer but that we shouldn’t worry, for he has conquered the world. Boko Haram can never survive forever, but the Lord remains forever,”**

Bishop Oliver Doeme of Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria, told ACN earlier this year.

Boko Haram violence continues to afflict Nigeria’s Christians. At the end of April 2019, gunmen on motorbikes opened fire indiscriminately in Kuda,

Adamawa State killing more than 20 villagers. The following day they attacked again, as funeral preparations were being made.

But the scale of destruction caused by Fulani militants is surpassing that of Boko Haram. **In February and March 2019, Islamist Fulani herdsmen killed more than 150 Christians.** On 11<sup>th</sup> March alone, 52 people were killed and around 100 homes were destroyed in attacks on Inkirimi and Dogonnoma villages in Maro, Kaduna State. Militants hid in the bush to intercept fleeing villagers, including women and young children. For Kaduna’s Christians

this was just the latest in a long litany of attacks.

ACN is responding by helping to strengthen the Faith – supporting priests, seminarians, Sisters and catechists. As you will read inside, it is also backing programmes run by the local Catholic Church helping those whose lives have been devastated by the violence.

But it is only through your generous love that we have been able to show Christ’s love to a suffering Church.

**Please support our brothers and sisters who are targeted by extremists.** ☕



# Widowed by Boko Haram



Widowed Catherine Ibrahim with her children Daniel (left) and Salome (right).

## Helping victims of Fulani violence

**Fr Alexander Yeyock of Asso, Kaduna State – where two priests were murdered by Fulani extremists – told ACN:**  
“[Our Church] is suffering here. Her anguish is caused by unrelenting violence from terror groups now armed with sophisticated weapons intent on removing the Christian presence in our homeland.”

What began decades ago as a conflict caused by nomadic Fulani cattle herders impinging on Christian farmers' grazing land has mushroomed into a crisis over the last few years. Islamist militants among the Fulani have acquired high-powered guns and started targeting Churches.

Fr Aaron Tanko from Kaduna State said: **“Churches are constantly under attack, Christians killed, businesses crippled.**

**Some Christians have relocated and didn't come back again.”**

But those who have stayed in Kaduna State need help. In Godogodo, Pasakori and Ikulu Pari villages where homes were torched by the extremists we have helped to rebuild. We are also providing seedlings for farmers whose livelihoods were destroyed.

**In Bakin Kogi village – where 16 were killed and 110 houses burnt down during a Fulani militant attack in February 2017 – ACN worked with the local Church to provide food and other vital assistance for 110 households in the months following the disaster.**

Only through your ongoing gifts of love were we able to help our suffering brothers and sisters in their time of need. God bless you for your love. 🙏



A Fulani cattle herder armed with a rifle.



**Catherine Ibrahim told ACN how Boko Haram gunmen forced her to watch as they murdered her husband.**

The terrorists attacked her village during Sunday Mass, killing people and torching houses and the church. She ran home to rescue her children – Salome, then aged seven, and five-year-old Daniel.

Catherine said: **“One of the insurgents savagely dragged me, so I could witness my husband’s death. They butchered my husband mercilessly. I can’t forget the fear in his eyes. I don’t want to say more than this. I hate to remember.”**

Helpless as her children were taken into captivity by Boko Haram, Catherine describe how she went looking for them – only to be seized herself.

**During her captivity she was bound with her arms tied behind her back for 20 days, tortured and starved.** The other woman being similarly treated to her died of her injuries. Catherine prayed to God in her tribal language – and discovered that her guard was from the same tribe. She believes he played a part in gaining freedom.



Women and children in one of the camps for internal refugees.

At a camp for displaced Catholics in Maiduguri Diocese she was overjoyed to be reunited with her children.

Despite six months of physiotherapy she has still not fully regained the use of her hands but her Faith remains steadfast. Every weekday, Catherine and her two children gather with other Catholics at the camp to pray the Rosary.

**ACN has helped the diocese set up a fund for widows and orphans, to rehabilitate them and provide emergency aid for those affected by the crisis. Please help those like Catherine who have held fast to their Faith throughout such horrific experiences.** 🙏



A village in Kaduna destroyed by Fulani attacks.



# Supporting a Faith under fire



St Joseph's school buildings after the Boko Haram attacks.

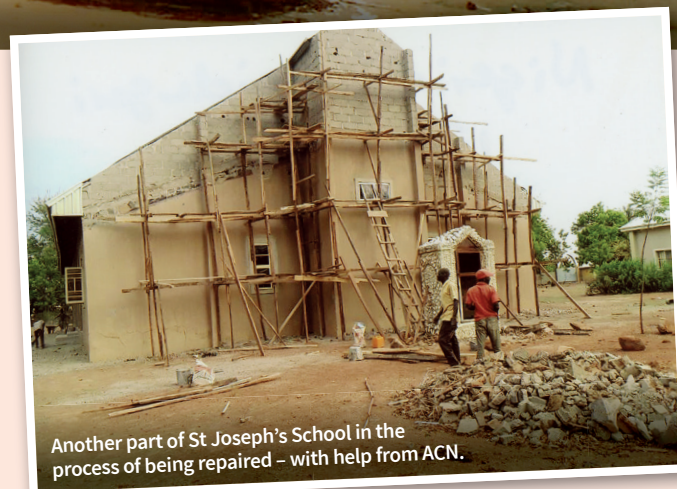
**St Joseph's School in Shuwa was attacked and destroyed by Boko Haram – but ACN is helping to rebuild.**

The rector, Father Alex Misquita, is back at the school with three other priests. While the buildings are not fully functional yet, students and teachers are already living there. Across Nigeria ACN is helping to renovate churches, chapels and presbyteries as well as providing extensions for seminaries and convents.

**The seminaries need the help, as in the midst of extremist violence vocations are thriving. There are currently more than 5,000 seminarians in Nigeria,** the largest number in any African country, where the entire

continent is seeing more vocations than any other in the world. We are supporting a number of seminary lecturers by providing Mass stipends to support them – including 52 Gregorian Masses being said by instructors at Christ the King Seminary, Kafanchan.

And to ensure that the Faith endures in areas with no priests, ACN has provided houses for 30 full-time catechists and training for other catechists and lay pastoral workers. The Church is also supporting a number of catechetical programmes including



Another part of St Joseph's School in the process of being repaired – with help from ACN.

those in the Archdiocese of Benin City. **Despite all the difficulties Nigeria's Christians are experiencing, your generous love is helping a Faith under fire to flourish.** ✝



These seminarians were supported by ACN.



Children gathering for catechesis in front of an unfinished church.



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