ACN’s Lifeline to Syria

Since 2010...

738
ACN projects have been completed

80%
of ACN aid has provided emergency help

127
reconstruction projects (homes, churches, etc.)

15%
of ACN emergency help is milk aid

50,000
young people supported

87,000
Masses said through Mass stipends (30 every day)

New ACN
Syria Projects:

DAMASCUS: Help for 200 sick people
HOME: Milk for babies, toddlers and children
LATTARIA: Support of St Antony’s Church, Damascus
VALLEY OF THE CHRISTIANS (HOMS): Shelter for displaced families
ALEPPO: ‘Drop of Milk’ programme

“"Only thanks to you can we continue our mission here. We are passionate about helping the children but, without your compassion, we would be lost. You are always to our prayers.”

The words of Sister Samar, who cares for nearly 80 children with learning difficulties in Homs city (see story inside) – one of countless messages of thanks we received on our behalf during our trip to Syria. In this report, we mark the completion of 1,000 projects undertaken by ACN since the beginning of the war in 2011 – food, materials, medicine, education, shelter and pastoral support. But sadly the needs go on: nearly two-thirds of Syria’s 18.2 million population lack the basics to survive on their own. Please continue to give the faith’s in Syria their daily bread by supporting a fresh crop of urgent ACN projects, providing a roof over their heads, rebuilding desecrated churches, providing milk for babies and toddlers, and support for children’s education.

As one parishioner said: "Nearly 60 percent of our people suffer extreme poverty. Who can we turn to but you?"

Syria

HELP IN ACTION: Youngsters in Marmarita, in the Valley of the Christians, near Homs, wearing new shirts given by ACN

Back from Syria, ACN’s John Pontifex shows how you are offering help and hope

Give them this day their daily bread

Aid to the Church in Need

12-14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA
www.acnuk.org

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Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church

Helping the suffering Church today
www.acnuk.org
Looking after the most vulnerable

Homes raised up from the ashes

Razan, aged 21, greets us with a big smile. “Welcome to our home,” she says. We are visiting Homs’ Wadi al Sayeh district – formerly on the frontline of the conflict. Not a single building is free of bullet holes, smashed windows and derelict roofs… except for Razan’s home and a few like it. So determined were she and her family to return that they begged ACN to help rebuild their home. Everything including the kitchen sink has been replaced. We meet Razan’s father, Fawzi, and grandmother, Fawzia, aged 94.

Fawzia takes me by the hand and says: “After the bombs fell, we had to leave every day for more than six years I prayed for our years. I honestly believed that at my age I would never be able to go back home. And yet here I am. Thank you, thank you.” Courage clearly runs in the family.

Razan explains how – astonishingly – she kept up her studies throughout the war. She said: “Then, I can’t go far away for long without feeling homesick. I don’t mind where we were during our displacement but, despite all the challenges, it’s far better being back.” Many more Christian families want to go back home and ACN has agreed to work with Church leaders in Syria to rebuild 200 homes – with a further 500 earmarked as a second phase.

ACN’s Syria projects leader Father Andrzej Halemba said: “This home rebuilding programme is one of the most critical steps forward in the recovery of the Christian community in Syria.”

In Syria’s Anan town, Father George narrowly escaped with his life

Standing alongside them in their ancient church, I was about to witness a moment the villagers had dreamed about for years on end. They had fled in panic wall from Anan village in the chick valley of the Christians, near Homs, after the church was seized by gun-toting Islamist militants.

But, with the militants forced out, ACN had rebuilt more than 50 homes torched by the retreating extremists. And here we were in Anan’s St George’s Church – itself rebuilt with ACN help – with all the families thanking God for their settlement back in their village. Each family was given a table of stone inscribed with “Jesus is my rock” to mark the occasion. Presenting the tablets, ACN Middle East projects co-ordinator Father Andrzej Halemba told the families: “Always remember that you are never alone, that God is always with you and that the friends and benefactors of ACN are always praying and supporting you.”

The Stones of the Extremists Rejected

For years, Father George believed he would never go back. And yet here we were back in the village. Not only had Father George escaped with his life negotiating with militants for the parishioners and eventually Father George escaped too.

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