



Light shines in darkness – and darkness cannot overcome it.

(cf. John 1:4-5)

A prayer vigil for the Chibok schoolgirls still held by Boko Haram.

“The early apostles faced persecution, too. But Christ has never abandoned his Church. Without him, all of us would be gone. Darkness has thrived, but it has never won.”

Father Panachy Longinus Ogbede was speaking to ACN following extremist Islamist attacks, including the beheading of 10 Christians on Christmas Day 2019 and members of a wedding party the following day. The horrors for the Church continued into 2020. Around 400 Christians were killed during the first three months of 2020 as villages were attacked, churches burnt and Christians

abducted – one kidnapped seminarian, 18-year-old Michael Nnadi, was killed.

At the seminarian’s funeral in February 2020, Bishop Matthew Kukah said: **“This death is a metaphor for the fate of all Christians in Nigeria but especially northern Nigeria. For us Christians, it would seem safe to say that we are all marked men and women today. Yet, we must be ready to be washed in the blood of the lamb.”**

Attacks continued: in April, 32 Christians in Kaduna and Plateau States were slaughtered in their homes as they observed a COVID-19 lockdown. The attack was blamed on members of the

Fulani herder community.

In northern Nigeria, the Church has provided humanitarian, spiritual and psychological aid for more than 90,000 displaced Catholics – not to mention Muslims, traditional religionists and Christians of other denominations who turned to the Church for help.

This is why ACN has responded in love with projects including trauma care for victims of Islamists, ongoing support for communities under attack and rebuilding churches destroyed by extremists, so that the light of Christ can shine ever more brightly in the darkness of their lives. ✚

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The Sisters with their new generator.

Generating a lifeline for the Sisters

The 10 enclosed Carmelite Sisters in Taraba State have faced one trial after another.

Having had to replace the roofs on their chapel, guest house and part of the convent, they then found that their borehole – the source of much of their water – had dried up, meaning they needed to build another tank to store captured rainwater.

And then their generator started showing signs that it was on its last legs!

So they turned to Aid to the Church in Need for help, as the generator is absolutely necessary for the production of altar bread – which is one of the Sisters' main sources of income.

The Sisters had some money to buy a new generator – but, with a shortfall of more than £13,000, they needed our urgent assistance. We were only too happy to help, but still things did not go smoothly...

Sister Regina told us the volatile local situation affected their plans: "We were preparing to travel for the purchase of the generator... when the company called to say it was still not safe for us to travel and suggested that they

send the generator down to us accompanied by one of their engineers. We readily agreed to this arrangement."

The engineer arrived on schedule and taught the Sisters how to work the new generator.

Sister Regina wrote: "We are very grateful for your great generosity in helping us purchase this new generator." Thanks to your love we could help the Sisters overcome their crisis. ☩



Cooking the unleavened wafers.

Kidnapped seminarian killed



A Blessed Sacrament procession at the seminary.



Michael Nnadi

Tragedy struck Kaduna's Good Shepherd Seminary when one of its seminarians was murdered.

18-year-old Michael Nnadi was abducted by unidentified assailants, along with three other seminarians, on 8th January 2020. The others were released.

Jailed kidnapper Mustapha Mohammed, who confessed to the murder, said he killed the seminarian for "preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ" while in captivity.

The tragic death hit the seminary hard. One lecturer told

ACN: "Michael was a young and gifted seminarian. He was an orphan who had been brought up by his grandmother. Just a few weeks ago, after a year of spiritual preparation, he had been clothed in the soutane [cassock]. It seems that his only crime was his desire to serve God. The security forces and the government have failed him."

Speaking at the funeral, Bishop Matthew Kukah described the harrowing ordeal experienced by Michael's family, fellow seminarians and the whole of the Nigerian Church. He also thanked Aid to the Church in Need for its solidarity and

prayers throughout the ordeal. ACN has had close links with the seminary, providing ongoing support for its more than 260 seminarians, including helping to renovate the refectory and providing Mass stipends to give tutors an income.

Bishop Kukah said: "We are honoured that our son has been summoned to receive the crown of martyrdom..."

"May the Lord place him beside his bosom and may he intercede for us. If his blood can bring healing to our nation, then his murderers will never have the final say. May God give him eternal peace." ☩



The funeral of seminarian Michael Nnadi, 11th February 2020.

Raising up a ruined temple



Bishop Hilary Nanman Dachelem surveys the devastated church.

It was Christmas 2018. Christians were celebrating the wonder of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us when Islamist terrorists attacked Christian villages in Bauchi Diocese, destroying six churches.

The faithful fled the extremists' onslaught.

As the churches lay in ruins, Bishop Hilary Nanman Dachelem of Bauchi wrote to ACN, asking for our help to raise up one of these devastated places of Christian worship.

"I write to solicit help to build just one of the churches, which was destroyed by the activities of Boko Haram insurgents, and herdsmen in the diocese. There is now relative peace and people are gradually returning to their home after being displaced for a while.

"The reconstruction of the church will offer them a befitting place of worship. It will also boost their confidence and strengthen their faith and commitment in Christ."



St Peter's Church, Kagadama in Bauchi after the attack.

The people of Bauchi have faced a number of challenges, including drought, lack of food and water, not to mention attacks from Boko Haram and members of the Fulani herder community.

Aid to the Church in Need has promised £17,500 so that at least one community won't be worshipping God in the open, exposed to the sun and the rain. ☩

Coming to the help of widows

(Cf. James 1:27)

The number of widows being cared for by Maiduguri Diocese has doubled to around 8,000, as a result of Boko Haram's campaign of terror in northeastern Nigeria.

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri told ACN that 500 of these widows had had their husbands killed by Boko Haram. "They have had it worst living without the husbands, who in the majority of cases were bread winners in the family... life without their husbands is a great challenge.

"The diocese for a long time has given emergency support to widows, which has kept them strong. But there is the need of empowerment and to make them self-reliant."

To that end, they are equipping these



Refugees in Diffa region who fled Boko.

women to be able to feed their own families, teaching them skills including:

- Sewing and knitting
- Leatherworking – to make shoes and bags
- Carving and bead making
- Cooking and catering

Bishop Dashe Doeme added:

"Annually, we hope to train about 150 women in the aforementioned skills. These in turn will be able to impact on their families and pick up life again."

Please help these women support themselves and their children. 🙏

Help for Trauma Victims

"They've lost parents. They've received difficult wounds," Fr Joseph Fidelis told ACN.

Explaining how such problems will be tackled at a new trauma centre, built with help from the charity, he related the story of a mother and her three children, who hid in their home as her husband was tortured before being shot dead. While fleeing from the extremists, her son was shot in his hand. By the time they reached the IDP camp where Fr Joseph met them, the mother was already ill and died shortly after. Her son had to have his hand amputated due to infection.

Fr Joseph added: "One of the girls has problems sleeping – that tells you things about flashbacks and a lot of traumatic stress disorder. I am accompanying this family in therapy."

To tackle these issues, Maiduguri Diocese is setting up a trauma centre. Fr Joseph is one of the priests it



Father Joseph Fidelis talks with displaced women and children in a camp run by Maiduguri Diocese

has sent to study psychology and counselling – as well as training 50 lay counsellors across the diocese, who are already providing assistance.

The trauma centre will also provide access to specialist medical experts and psychiatrists, giving special

attention to children.

Fr Joseph said: "Christians are targeted; their places of worship are burned; Christians are kidnapped and killed." The trauma centre will help those who have suffered to find healing for the horrors they have seen. 🙏