



Hungry for Hope

New emergency appeal

EVER-DEEPENING economic crisis – on top of 10 years of war – has triggered a new emergency in Syria where millions of people are desperately short of food and shelter.

The United Nations has declared that, “after a decade of crisis, life is harder than ever” for many Syrians.

In response, Church leaders are renewing pleas for aid from ACN.

Thanking you for helping the faithful through the dark days of war, our leading Syria project partner Sister Annie Demerjian told us: **“Many people are close to starving. Only the other day, I saw children scavenging for food in rubbish bins.”**

Economic meltdown, made worse by sanctions and COVID-19, means that, according to the UN, 12.4 million people – 60 percent of Syrians – lack “regular access to enough... nutritious food” –

up 4.5 million on the year before.

The reports also state that **more than 500,000 children under five suffer from stunted growth caused by malnutrition.**

With Daesh (ISIS) now defeated and many NGOs pulling back partly because of the pandemic, one ACN project partner said: “Who can we turn to but you at ACN?”

ACN is redoubling its efforts – prioritising food and milk, shelter and rent, medicine and clothes.

Also provided are Mass stipends, aid to restore desecrated churches and support for Sisters providing vital outreach.

Sister Annie said: **“In this time of so much suffering, with so many painful memories, we need to come together so that the living Lord can bring his healing touch.”** ✝





Madeleine and her ministering angels

SUFFERING huge health problems, Madeleine Jinkjian is dependent on outside help. Madeleine has the condition popularly known as ‘Elephant Man Disease’.

During Aleppo’s deadly wartime bombardments and afterwards, ACN helped Madeleine with support from ministering angels led by Sister Annie Demerjian and young volunteers including Vivian (pictured with Madeleine).

Madeleine receives food parcels, rent and regular visits to keep her spirits up. ACN also provided her with a wheelchair. Sr Annie told us: “Madeleine understands her reality and accepts it. She has a great sense of humour and is a very strong character.

“Thank you so much for supporting Madeleine. Where would she go for help were it not for you?” ✚

Faith in the future

YOUNG people are so excited by the joy of the Gospel that an ACN-backed catechesis programme has grown significantly over the past year.

There are now 1,150 young people on the course in Homs run by Jesuit priest Father Vincent de Beaucoudrey.

He told us: **“The catechism here in Homs is very lively. We have around 20 percent more people than last year, so now it’s almost 900 young people from six to 18 years old and 250 aged over 18 – among them facilitators and educators.”**

The programme includes weekly catechesis, summer camps and ‘Faith and Light Groups’ involving seminars and other activities for young people to explore their faith. ✚



Holding on to faith: Young faithful from St Barbara’s Armenian Catholic Church lead a procession through the streets with the ACN icon ‘Our Lady of Sorrows, Consoler of Syrians’



Sharing bread with the hungry

WITH food prices skyrocketing and two-thirds of people desperately short of food, religious brothers in Aleppo and their helpers have reached out to the poorest of the poor.

The Marist Brothers wrote to ACN and – thanks to your charity – they were able to start their project called ‘Bread for the Hungry’, providing **hot meals for elderly people living alone.**

Every morning, hot meals are cooked and are quickly taken round to the elderly people along with a piece of bread and fresh fruit and salad. The recipients are aged between 75 and 98.

To begin with, the meals were cooked

in a classroom but, with ACN’s help, a purpose-built kitchen was constructed and now the Marists are able to reach nearly 200 elderly people.

Project coordinator Dr Nabil Antaki said: “We have found that – in addition to the food that they so urgently need – the elderly people desire human warmth as they find loneliness so difficult. “They need to see a smile and this is what our volunteers never fail to do.”

The Marists found the elderly people also needed help washing and cleaning so, as Dr Antaki puts it, the ‘Bread for the Hungry’ programme “now has a child – ‘Care for the Elderly’, a project which takes care of these different needs.”

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Combating loneliness: Lucine Kayoumejian, a Christian from Aleppo, receives a visit

A roof over their heads

ACN is working hand-in-hand with a religious Sister to help poverty-stricken people pay their rent so they never have to fear being evicted from their homes.

The charity is supporting Sister Annie Demerjian’s scheme to **help fund the rent of 500 people in homes across Aleppo.**

Rents have soared to almost double the average salary, a problem made worse by a job shortage coupled with financial pressures caused by rising inflation as well as shortages of food and other basic items.

Sister Annie told us: “**The biggest problem for many people is rent. They think, well, if I have to, I can go without food for a while but if I can’t afford my rent I will be out on the street.**”

One family, Jacques Benna and his wife,

Cedrosia, and their two children, turned to Sister Annie when they could no longer keep up payments on their home.

The war meant Jacques lost his job as a taxi driver and then he and the two youngsters were badly wounded in a bomb blast – they still have shrapnel in their bodies.

Their medical fees – and their worries – shot up higher still when Cedrosia contracted cancer.

Sister Annie told us: “Cedrosia keeps saying to us: ‘Thank you. Thank you, ACN. **If you did not help us, we would have lost our home.** You helped us just in time and gave us hope.’”

Sister Annie has asked ACN to increase help so she can expand the rent scheme to help more struggling families.

In hope of healing

THANKS to you, ACN is able to provide urgent medical help to more than 600 people in and around Damascus, whose health has been ruined by a decade of war.

The medical assistance programme – mainly aimed at displaced families living in camps – comes after the Economist Intelligence Unit, which assesses medical and other welfare provision, named Damascus as the world’s “least liveable” city – worse than 149 other cities worldwide.

Presenting their plans to ACN, the team behind the Damascus medicine project, led by Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop Jean-Abdo Arbach, stated that 10 years of war had “robbed” many people of their health.

Economic crisis meant people were unable to pay for the care they desperately need.



A medical supply programme in action

Specifically, the project provides:

- 200 people: Outpatient consultations – radiology tests, X-rays, MRI and CT scans
- 200 people: Inpatient life-saving surgery
- 100 people: Medical equipment – blood glucose and blood pressure monitors, wheelchairs
- 70 people: Surgery and treatment for long-term conditions – cancer, dialysis patients

■ 50 people: Medical supplies for neurological and orthopaedic patients
Central to the project is a core group of doctors, nurses and other health professionals able to access hospitals and other health facilities that are still operating.

Archbishop Arbach stated: “We have always rushed to cater for the needs of patients and tried hard to cover the gaps. In this project we aim to provide assistance to those who need it most.”



‘I was hungry and you fed me.’ (Matthew 25:35): A team preparing meals for elderly people in Aleppo. A tub of tomatoes has increased in price from 17 Syrian Pounds in 2011 to 1,000 Syrian Pounds today.



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Syria's deepening crisis

Sister Samia Jreij, director of the ACN-funded 'Mustard Seed' centre in Homs Old City which, after moving multiple times to escape the conflict, cares for 80 children and young adults with learning and physical disabilities

In many parts of Syria, the struggle for food, shelter and medicine is worse today than during the height of the conflict:



HUNGER:

12.4 million

(60 percent) of people in Syria do not get enough to eat, up by **4.5 million** over the past year
(Source: United Nations (UN))



COST OF LIVING:

for an average family has **grown by**

74%

since 1st January 2020
(UN)



FOOD PRICES:

have increased by **more than**

200%

since 2020
(UN)



CHILD MALNUTRITION:

More than

500,000

children under five suffer **stunting** caused by malnutrition
(UN)



HOMELESS:

6.7 million

Syrians are displaced within the country and another **6.6 million** are refugees abroad
(UN)



HEALTH, EDUCATION & OTHER WELFARE:

Damascus is the "**least liveable**"

of **150** cities

worldwide assessed for infrastructure and stability
(Economist Intelligence Unit)



ELECTRICITY:

Over a 24-hour period, electricity supply to homes in Aleppo can be **off for more than**

90%

of the time – 22 hours
(Sr Annie Demerjian)

Current **ACN** emergency aid priorities for Syria

Food – milk – clothes

Recipients: 6,190 families
Location: Aleppo
Project details: Vouchers for food and sanitary items (e.g toothpaste and soap)
Project partner: Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop Jean-Clément Jeanbart of Aleppo

ALEPPO

Recipients: 190 elderly (aged 75-98)
Location: Aleppo
Project details: Hot meals and help with cleaning and washing
Project partner: Blue Marists

Recipients: 300 families
Location: Aleppo
Project details: Food baskets and vouchers for daily needs
Project partner: Sister Annie Demerjian

Recipients: 3,000 babies and children
Location: Aleppo
Project details: Milk ('Drop of Milk' project)
Project partner: Blue Marists

Recipients: 23,050 families
Location: Nationwide
Project details: COVID-19 emergency aid (food and other daily costs)
Project partners: Various

Recipients: 2,000 children
Location: Damascus
Project details: Coats and pyjamas
Project partner: Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Joseph Absi

DAMASCUS

Recipients: 25,000 children
Location: Nationwide
Project details: Winter coats
Project partner: Sister Annie Demerjian



Thumbs up: Sr Annie, volunteer Fadi and a young recipient of a winter coat funded by ACN



Dedication:

To Father Andrzej Halemba PhD, who has retired after 10 years as ACN Head of Middle East projects. He risked his life bringing aid to Syria during the war. Wishing Father Halemba prayers and good wishes for the future.



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Church in Need
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 Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church
 and a registered charity in England and Wales (1097984) and Scotland (SC040748)

Reports by JOHN PONTIFEX © 2021
 With special thanks to Kira von Bock Iwaniuk

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Printed by Cliffe Enterprises, Eastbourne BN22 8UY