

LEBANON

www.acnuk.org/lebanon

The hope disaster cannot destroy

The Melkite Church is providing food for hundreds of Christian refugee families who fled Syria (see over).

Life was already hard for Georgette, but last August's explosion in Beirut left her struggling to make ends meet.

Christian grandmother Georgette told ACN: "I live in a poor quarter of the city and our situation is very bad, especially after the explosion. I live there with my three grandchildren... I am responsible for them and I don't have anybody to help me, except for God, and the benefactors of ACN".

Through the local Church, **ACN has been providing food packages for nearly 6,000 families badly affected by the catastrophe** – and is supporting the rebuilding of churches, convents and other structures badly hit by the blast (see over).

As Georgette filled her bare kitchen cupboards, she told us: **"I was so delighted to receive this help,**

because it means I can now feed my grandchildren for a month".

ACN has helped people like Georgette, struggling to get by as Lebanon copes with a crippling economic crisis and the after-effects of the devastating dock blast. With Christian emigration on the rise, ACN has promised more than £4 million in aid to help give the faithful a future in their homeland.

Knowing that she is not alone is absolutely vital for Georgette, even more important than food aid. She said: "Just knowing that there are people thinking about us [makes a difference]. I give thanks to God

every day. He has always guided me and my family and has sent us kind people to help us through these difficult times".

Through your love, ACN can help families like Georgette's. 🇩🇪



Sister Violette distributing food.



Georgette's grandson helps unpack.

Helping the suffering Church today
www.acnuk.org



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN UNITED KINGDOM

Syria's refugees – Keeping faith with our promises



ACN/Ivo Saglietti



ACN/Ivo Saglietti

Food is prepared and distributed to families in Lebanon – including refugees from Syria.

Labiba lives with her two sisters in a room just 16 feet square. They fled to Lebanon from Homs in neighbouring Syria just two years ago because they were dying of hunger.

Like so many Christian refugees, they arrived with just the clothes on their backs. They are now provided with a hot meal every day by the local Church's St John the Merciful Table initiative.

Set up in December 2015, every day the St John the Merciful Table

provides a hot meal for around 1,000 people – not only Syrian refugees, but also a growing number of poor Lebanese as well.

Hundreds of Christian families who fled the war in neighbouring Syria are being cared for by the Melkite Greek-Catholic Diocese of Zahlé, with backing from ACN. Support includes basic necessities such as rent, clothing and essential medication, as well as food from the St John the Merciful Table.

Retiring Melkite Archbishop Issam John Darwish, who set up the programmes, said: **“I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your cooperation, your love – and your constant willingness to help. During this time, I felt that your heart, mind, and prayer were with me and with every tormented Eastern Christian.**

“Once again I thank you. May the Lord bless all ACN's benefactors.” ✚



Father Nicolas, the parish priest of Saint Saviour's, Beirut, helping out with the repair work for his church.

Rebuilding hope

On 4th August 2020, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in Lebanon's capital Beirut, causing one of the biggest non-nuclear blasts ever recorded. At least 200 were killed, more than 6,000 were injured and in excess of 300,000 were left homeless.

ACN was among the organisations that responded quickly, providing help for afflicted families (see story on page 1), and also pledging assistance to rebuild damaged Church properties in the historic Christian quarter, which bore much of the brunt of the explosion. As the blast passed through buildings, it created a vacuum in enclosed spaces so strong that steel doors were ripped off their hinges and roofs imploded.

ACN is helping repair churches – including Saint Joseph's Church and St Louis' Cathedral – and other buildings

– such as the Maronite archdiocesan chancery, the Antonine Sisters' convent and the catechetical centre run by the Daughters of Charity of St Paul.

We are not just rebuilding Church structures, we are rebuilding hope for Lebanon's Christians. ✚



Volunteers clearing the Maronite Cathedral before repairs began.

Maronite Church Beirut