



Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa

OFFICE OF NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

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SUPPORT THE
Solidarity Fund for the
**CHURCH IN
AFRICA**

Dear Diocesan Director,

The social, spiritual, and psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to reverberate in societies throughout the world. Lockdowns, social isolation, loss of jobs, and other factors have all disrupted the faith and family lives of people around the world—including in Africa, where social isolation and church closures negatively impacted the way that Catholics in Uganda lived their faith daily. In Kenya, the challenges posed by COVID-19 deeply affected marriage and family life; and conflict, poverty, and rates of death, including death from suicide, increased. The breakdown of families and many people's isolation and loss of hope formed a crisis that needed a compassionate pastoral response.

The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa stood ready to assist African church leaders who reached out for help to renew faith, strengthen families, and heal the wounds that lingered in the pandemic's aftermath. The Uganda Episcopal Conference used a grant from the Solidarity Fund to gather 250 priests, religious brothers and sisters, and laity from ten Ugandan dioceses for a series of workshops. Participants focused on understanding the pandemic and its effects on the faith of the people. They also discussed lessons learned about ways to respond to a similar future crisis so they can bring back those who might leave the Church during the crisis.

The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa awarded a grant of collection funds to the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops to implement its program to reinvigorate marriage and family life in the Diocese of Nakuru. Trained married couples, clergy, religious brothers and sisters, and catechists facilitated workshops for 450 participants on topics that included marriage preparation, Christian family life, and Natural Family Planning. Participants also learned how to provide pastoral care to people in isolated and vulnerable groups including prisoners, homeless families, families of truck drivers and fishing industry workers, and prostitutes and their families.

When you participate in the collection for the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa, your contribution helps the Church reach out to the people most in need and bring them pastoral care.

We need your help to promote your local parish collections for the Solidarity Fund and to share the stories of those who benefit. **You can help the collection by using the sample letter from your bishop and by encouraging pastors to highlight the collection at Mass and to use the bulletin announcements and the social media tool kit** available at www.usccb.org/africa.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at 202-541-3365 or mhren@usccb.org. Thank you for your continued support.

With gratitude,

Margaret Hren
Assistant Director, Promotions