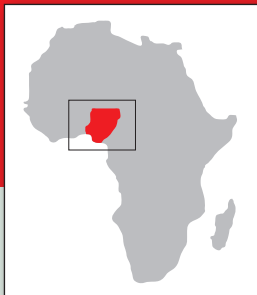


Aid to the Church in Need help for Nigeria



With your help, Aid to the Church in Need is able to support suffering faithful across Nigeria. Thanks to your prayers and generosity, your charity can continue to provide promises of love to those most in need.

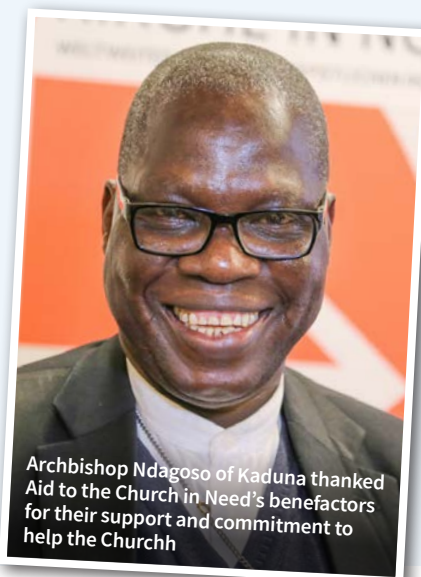
A friend in need is Aid to the Church in Need's friend indeed

Archbishop Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso of Kaduna, one of the areas suffering persecution, spoke of how the faithful are given "hope and courage" by the charity's "concrete solidarity with us".

During a recent Aid to the Church in Need fact-finding trip, he told staff: "In spite of the serious security challenges we face in this part of the country, [your help] is a very clear sign of your commitment to the progress of the Gospel message... especially those of

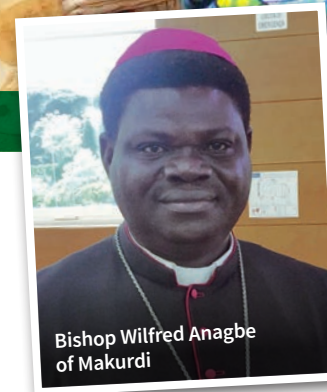
us in a very difficult situation and in dire need." The archbishop added: "They say 'A friend in need is a friend indeed'. Aid to the Church in Need has shown us that it is a friend indeed and we appreciate this. We are immensely indebted to all of you who took the risk to come and show concrete solidarity with us.

"Please be assured of our continued spiritual support and cooperation in your commitment to help the Church in need wherever she exists."



Nigeria: A new emergency

Aid to the Church in Need helps people suffering in the "killing fields"



"Two of my priests were murdered... together with at least 17 of the faithful."

Bishop Wilfred Anagbe described how Islamist extremists struck during an early morning Mass at St Ignatius's parish in Nigeria's Makurdi Diocese.

So far this year, militant Fulani herdsmen have killed more than 100 people across central Nigeria's Middle Belt where anti-Christian violence has risen.

There are now 100,000 displaced people in the area because of these attacks. Bishop Anagbe says the extremists are determined to force the long-established Christian community out of the area.

He said: "There is a clear agenda, a plan to Islamise all the areas that are currently predominantly Christian in the so-called Middle Belt."

Nigeria's bishops have described the country's Middle Belt region as "killing fields".

Christians are determined to stay in their homeland and urgently need your help. Aid to the Church in Need's projects across

Nigeria include:

- Emergency aid for widows and orphans in Maiduguri
 - Supporting victims of religiously-motivated violence in Southern Kaduna
 - Interfaith dialogue workshops for priests in Osogbo Diocese
 - Annual retreat for 87 priests in Jalingo Diocese
 - Help for 25 displaced Catholic families from Pulka Parish, Gwoza, Borno State
 - Pastoral help for Nigerian Christians in a refugee camp in Minawawo, Cameroon
- Please help ACN continue to provide a lifeline to those who are suffering.**



'Mass murder of Christians'

Two young Catholic men – Yohanna Stephen and Dakare Martins – were shot dead by suspected Fulani extremists as they returned home after taking a neighbour to hospital.

Speaking to Aid to the Church in Need, parish priest Fr Alexander Yeyock of Christian

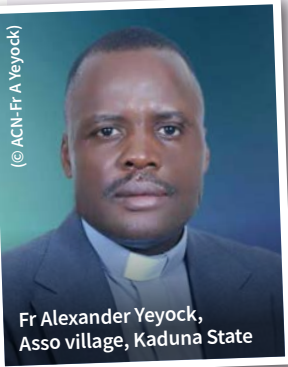
majority Asso village, Kaduna State, described the on-going attacks as **"mass murder of Christians in the northern part of Nigeria"**.

Asso's parishioners are supporting the two men's families. Yohanna's wife, Blessing Stephen, is now raising their three children on her own and Dakare's wife, Evelyn, is the sole carer for their son, Humble.

Fr Alexander said extremists are trying to create **"an Islamic state and Shari'a rule... to Islamise the Christian community. It is a jihadist crusade in a subtle manner."**

The atrocity took place on Easter Thursday 2018, almost exactly a year after suspected Fulani militants murdered 12 Christians during last year's Holy Saturday vigil service, held at the village's St John's Catholic Church.

Fr Alexander said: **"The community's inhabitants find it difficult to go to their farms and farming is the main occupation of the people. Once it is 6pm, everyone begins to get jittery for fear of the unknown."**



Fr Alexander Yeyock, Asso village, Kaduna State



Two families in mourning – Mrs Blessing Stephen (left) with her three children, Mrs Evelyn Martins and son; Fr Alexander Yeyock in Asso village



Despite their suffering, women keep faith and hope at a displacement camp in Maiduguri

Help for widows and orphans

Aid to the Church in Need has just rushed through an emergency grant in response to fresh reports that violence by Islamist militants Boko Haram has left 15,000 orphans and 5,000 widows.

The €68,000 aid package provides for families in urgent need of food, counselling and schooling.

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri has begged Aid to the Church in Need for help, describing how Boko Haram has abducted and killed thousands of men, depriving families of fathers and husbands on whom they depend as breadwinners.

On a project assessment trip to Maiduguri, Aid to the Church in Need staff met Agnes, 40, a widow and now the sole carer of nine children.

She told Aid to the Church in Need: "My husband was a builder. He was working outside a house when Boko Haram came and gunned him down.

"The terrorists didn't allow anybody to come and recover the bodies of my husband and his fellow workers."

Agnes said her husband's death had left the family very poor – he was the breadwinner.

Aid to the Church in Need is also providing food and schooling for orphans in the east of the diocese, the area which Bishop Dashe Doeme says is "the poorest and the most affected by the violence".

According to Aid to the Church in Need data collected in Nigeria, Boko Haram has killed more than 20,000 people, 26 million people have suffered directly from the conflict and 2.3 million young people have been deprived of education. Aid to the Church in Need has also pledged to provide ongoing help for pastoral needs.

Since the violence began in 2009, the Diocese of Maiduguri has lost 200 churches and chapels, 25 schools, three hospitals, three convents as well as "countless" homes, shops and other businesses.

Please remember the faithful in your prayers. ✚



Smiling through the pain – youngsters from Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria

Female catechists' joyful faith

The joy and enthusiasm of female catechists – trained thanks to you, the friends and benefactors of Aid to the Church in Need – made a deep impression on staff from the charity during a recent project assessment trip to northern Nigeria.

The Aid to the Church in Need team were treated to a dance display on a visit to the Female

Catechists' Centre, outside Jos city, where the charity has been supporting the two-year Evangelisation for Life programme. It includes:

- Programmes for single and married women, including mothers and grandmothers
- Training on Christian education for young people
- Two classes for graduate and



Welcome ceremony by members of the Female Catechists' Formation Centre, Kwali, outside Jos



commissioned women Course graduates are among the first female catechists in this region and have a special charism to communicate the riches of our Faith to young and old, especially women.

They have embraced God's directive in Jeremiah (31:13) to **"rejoice in the dance"**. God promised the faithful: **"I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow."** ✚

Training tomorrow's priests in Nigeria

With more than 400 seminarians at St Augustine's Major Seminary, Jos – 50 more young men applying this year alone – the Church in Nigeria is experiencing a springtime of Faith.

St Augustine's is not the only place where young men are flocking to serve Jesus. The Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Kaduna has nearly 150 seminarians.

Aid to the Church in Need is helping to train tomorrow's priests by part-funding a chapel and a new kitchen at the seminary in Kaduna and by providing Mass stipends for clergy who teach at St Augustine's.

Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos said many young men were open to becoming priests.

He said: **"Jesus died with open arms embracing everybody. Our religion is mission: to show good to others,**

to reach others. Look at the Old Testament – it took 2,000 years to bring the Gospel to the people." ✚



Seminarians in Nigeria take part in a Blessed Sacrament procession