



HEALING THE WOUNDS OF THE HEART

Displaced Children in an IDP camp in Dalmari, close to Yola, Nigeria

Our brothers and sisters in Nigeria will never forget the night of 13th June 2025, when armed militants massacred up to 200 Christians in one night - targeting displaced families, setting fire to their buildings as they lay asleep inside and macheting any who tried to flee.

The parish priest of Yelewata town, Fr Ukuma Jonathan, told ACN:

“What I saw was truly gruesome. People were slaughtered. Corpses were scattered everywhere.”

The displaced families were in buildings repurposed as temporary accommodation in the market square in Yelewata, near Makurdi, when the militants stormed in, killing people at will.

In a first-hand report given to ACN, local clergy said that earlier the same evening, police had repelled the attackers as they tried to storm

Yelewata's St Joseph's Church, where up to 700 displaced people lay sleeping.

But the militants then made for the town's market square, where they reportedly used fuel to set fire to the doors of the displaced people's accommodation, before opening fire in an area where more than 500 people were asleep.

Attacks like this have sadly become an almost daily occurrence in northern Nigeria, especially the Middle Belt area, where entire villages have been burned, families have fled with nothing, and many now live in makeshift camps where fear hangs in the air.

Fr Philip, who ministers in one of the displacement camps, told ACN: “People are alive, but inside they are broken. They carry wounds you cannot see.”



Christians in Nigeria are going through unimaginable suffering

Children wake screaming at night. Mothers sit in silence, unable to speak of what they witnessed. Young men who once worked their fields now tremble at the sound of motorbikes - the same sound that often precedes an attack.

Fr Philip wants to launch a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) programme to help victims process trauma, rebuild trust and rediscover hope. ACN has confirmed that trauma healing is now one of the Church's most urgent needs in Nigeria.

Your support can help him create safe spaces, counselling sessions, group therapy, and spiritual accompaniment, so that the wounds of the heart can finally begin to heal. ✝

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“WE TRAVEL WITH FAITH AND FEAR”

Catechists and priests travel long distances to bring pastoral care to isolated communities

This is Fr Félix Zakari, a priest of the diocese of Zaria in northern Nigeria. He was kidnapped by unknown assailants on 24th March 2022. During his agonising captivity, he was subjected to daily mistreatment and was even shot in his left foot. Denied medical attention, he miraculously survived until his release on 3rd May 2022, requiring three months of intensive hospital treatment to heal.

In Fr Felix's Diocese of Zaria, it is common for priests and catechists to travel long distances to reach isolated Christian communities. Many walk for hours. Others ride old bicycles along roads where kidnappers hide in the bush.

One catechist told ACN: “Every journey is a risk, but the people are waiting. We cannot abandon them.”

In the last decade, more than 200 priests have been kidnapped, and kidnappings have been reported in 70% of Nigeria's dioceses. ACN has documented

repeated attacks on clergy, including the kidnapping of Fr Felix in 2022. He told ACN after his rescue: “I survived by the grace of God.”

Thanks to generous benefactors, ACN has already funded 25 motorcycles for catechists serving 35 parishes - allowing them to reach remote villages more quickly and with less risk.

But more help is needed. To protect priests like Fr Félix, ACN is fundraising for enclosed vehicles to provide safe passage against ambushes on dangerous roads.

Additionally, the diocesan pastoral centre in Zaria is requesting support to install a security alarm system to protect clergy and the faithful during gatherings.

Your support helps ensure that priests, sisters, and catechists can continue to bring the sacraments, comfort and hope to communities living in fear. 



Fr Felix



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NIGERIA

"I WANT TO BE A BEACON OF HOPE"

Seminarians at the Good Shepherd Seminary, Kaduna, Nigeria

At the Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Kaduna, more than 250 young men are preparing for the priesthood in one of the most dangerous regions of the world. Kidnappings from seminaries and monasteries have surged in recent years, with seminarians often targeted because of their faith.

"In 2020, four seminarians were abducted from Good Shepherd. One of them, Michael Nnadi, was murdered. Yet vocations continue to grow.

"I want to be a beacon of hope for all our brothers and sisters affected by the persecution we suffer in this country." These are the words of Musa, a young seminarian training to be a priest in Kaduna.

Like him, many young men are training to become priests and help heal the wounds of a people who have suffered horrors because of their faith. They are willing, but they need training to heal the broken hearts in Nigeria.



Seminarians are the hope for the future of the church in Nigeria

More than 6,500 seminarians, the largest number on the continent of Africa, are currently training in Nigeria to become the future priests who will bring faith and hope to their people. They know full well that the future they face is uncertain, and yet they persevere in their vocation, placing all their trust in God.

Archbishop Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso of Kaduna, president of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops' Conference, has no doubts: "The history of Nigeria is clear.

Wherever the Church is persecuted, it has grown ever stronger."

"There is so much need in our country. Your help is the source of our strength, the source of our encouragement. That is why we want to thank all those who support this wonderful work of ACN."

Your kind support will ensure that no vocation is lost due to a lack of resources, keeping the future of the Nigerian Church vibrant and strong. 



THEIR HOPE STARTS WITH YOU

 **NIGERIA**

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WITH YOU, PERSECUTION DOES NOT HAVE THE LAST WORD

Clergy looking after displaced people in Pankshin Diocese after the Christmas 2023 massacre in Bokkos, Plateau State, Nigeria

Over 17,500 churches attacked, 2,000 Christian schools destroyed, at least 3 million internally displaced people across Nigeria's Middle Belt in the past 12 years, and more than 60,000 Christians murdered since 2000.

These staggering figures highlight the difficult truth that our Christian brothers and sisters in Nigeria are suffering alarming levels of systemic persecution perpetrated by Islamist extremist networks—including Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)—as well as radicalized Fulani militias and criminal bandits.

Despite the horror and violence, the Church continues to stand with suffering Christians in Nigeria. Priests, nuns, seminarians and catechists accompany communities that have lost family members, homes and livelihoods.



Victims and displaced in Ortese after Fulani attacks

Where everything seems destroyed, the Church remains - bringing faith, comfort and hope. But they cannot do it alone. They need you.

Through supporting displaced families, trauma counselling, children's education, and the repairing and building of churches, ACN is helping the local church

and the faithful in Nigeria live out their faith.

With your help through ACN, the Church will continue to support victims in their suffering, heal deep wounds, and keep alive the hope of an entire people. Let persecution not have the last word. 

Please offer hope by making a kind donation to support these and/or other similar projects around the world.



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