

An Advent Project

During this season of Advent when "visions of sugar plums dance in our heads" the Church reminds us of a significant scripture quote for this sacred season: "Give comfort to my people, says your God." This Advent season we invite you to give comfort to the people of South Sudan, the newest country in our world.

The people of South Sudan are suffering greatly because of an ongoing war. Since the conflict, 3.6 million citizens have been forced to flee their homes and more than 2.1 million are trapped inside the warring nation.

Over 5.1 million people are in need of aid, and 4.8 million are facing hunger. Due to economic collapse and years of poor agricultural conditions, areas of South Sudan are now experiencing famine.

Friends in Solidarity, Inc. is an organization that is trying to bring hope to the South Sudanese people through education, health care, peace studies and an agriculture program.

We are offering this Advent calendar as a way for you to learn about, pray for and offer a donation to help the South Sudanese people. Before the first day of Advent (Dec. 1) find a container you can use to collect your donations.

Use this calendar to complete the action for each day. On December 24th, count your donations and send a check to **Friends in Solidarity**. Your Christmas gift will be a blessing to the people of South Sudan.




Photo Credit: Paul Jeffrey

December 1	49% of Sudanese girls are married by age 18. A 15 year old girl has more chance of dying in child birth than of graduating from secondary school. (WHO) As we focus on Mary during this Advent season pray for the women and girls who are pregnant in South Sudan.
December 2	The South Sudanese government estimates that it needs 10 times the number of trained midwives across the country to reduce the number of deaths in childbirth. Consider what donation you can make so that pregnant women/girls in South Sudan can "Call the Midwife" during their pregnancy.
December 3	The Catholic Health Training Institute in Wau is one of few centers in South Sudan training registered nurses and midwives. Make a generous donation to Friends in Solidarity to support these future midwives.
December 4	For every 100,000 live births in South Sudan an estimated 789 mothers die, according to 2015 statistics from the U.N. and the World Bank. Pray for all pregnant women in South Sudan who don't have the opportunity for maternal healthcare.
December 5	In South Sudan 4.7 million people are in need of health services (WHO). Solidarity Catholic Health Training Institute works to meet the needs of these people. \$50.00 buys books for nursing students. Contribute \$1.00 towards these books or make a larger donation if you are able.
December 6	\$110 million dollars are needed to fully respond to the health needs of the Sudanese people. Thank God for your health and contribute \$1.10 to assist the people of South Sudan.
December 7	In 2016 there were 1.3 million cases of malaria reported in South Sudan (WHO). Malaria is a life-threatening disease. Pray for all those who are suffering from Malaria. Thank God again for your good health and access to health care.
December 8	In South Sudan 40% of people are literate (The World Bank) and only 18% of women. How would your life be different if you couldn't read or write? Thank God for the gift of your education. Enjoy a good book today and think of your brothers and sisters in South Sudan who don't have that pleasure.

December 9	In South Sudan only 30% of Primary school teachers are trained and only 66% of Secondary School teachers. Only 4% have at least a secondary education. (UNICEF) Contribute 10 cents for every year of your education.
December 10	Solidarity Teaching Training College helps to train teachers for the children in South Sudan. Who is your favorite teacher? Pray for him/her for working so hard to give you an education. In honor of this favorite teacher make a generous donation to Friends in Solidarity to support the teacher training program.
December 11	The pupil/teacher ratio in South Sudan is 50:1 (Girls Education in South Sudan) and the ratio of children to classroom is over 100. (UNICEF) Can you imagine having that many students in your class? Contribute 5 cents for each student in your favorite class in school.
December 12	Over 4000 teachers have participated in courses offered through the Solidarity Teacher Training Program. Pray for the continued success of this program and all the donors who have made this program possible.
December 13	National Immunization Days in March aimed to reach over 3 million children under 5 with two drops of polio vaccine (WHO). South Sudan has been polio free for the last 8 years. Contribute 50 cents for this good news and ask a friend to match it.
December 14	1 in 3 people in South Sudan have been displaced. Imagine what it would be like to leave your home and all your belongings. Which one item would you take with you? Why? Pray for all those fleeing from South Sudan who have little or nothing because they have left everything behind.
December 15	Today's scripture reading reminds us to "rejoice always" because "God is near". God is near to the people of South Sudan through organizations like Friends in Solidarity and supporters like you. Today consider all the ways God has brought joy to your life and make a contribution that will bring joy to the South Sudanese people.

"Give comfort to my people, says your God." (Isaiah)

December 16	The Solidarity Agricultural Project in Riimenze is assisting the people of South Sudan to regain their agrarian skills after many years of civil war. Today be grateful for the food you have and thank God for farmers who grow your food.
December 17	Nearly 5 million people across South Sudan are severely food insecure with thousands already facing starvation due to famine. For each meal/snack you eat today contribute 25 cents to help these hungry people.
December 18	The Agriculture Project in Riimenze, Sudan helps families to grow enough food to feed themselves. Contribute 25 cents for each fruit and vegetable you eat today to help these families have nutritious food.
December 19	Today is International Solidarity Day! During these past 18 days you have been growing in solidarity with the people of South Sudan. Look at the pictures on this brochure and give each person a name and say a prayer for them.
December 20	During this time of so much violence in South Sudan, the Solidarity team offers peace and reconciliation workshops at the Good Shepherd Peace Center. Today, be a peacemaker. Donate 25 cents each time you act nonviolently today.
December 21	In April, in Rome, Pope Francis knelt down and kissed the feet of the government leaders. He begged them to work for peace. How will you be a peacemaker today?
December 22	Think about all you have learned about the people of South Sudan and the work of Friends in Solidarity . Share what you learned with someone else and ask them to put a donation in your container to help support their work.
December 23	For unto us a child is born...and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah) Today, be peaceful as you wait for Christmas. Pray for Peace in South Sudan.
December 24	Count the money you have saved and send your gift to Friends in Solidarity.  Merry Christmas!

Prayer for South Sudan

Father of love and mercy,
 You created our people from every clan,
 tribe and nationality.
 It is your will that all our people should live
 in harmony, peace and unity,
 because we are all brothers and sisters.
 We ask forgiveness for the times we failed
 to live together in peace.
 Heal our offenses and help us to reconcile
 with one another.
 Grant to our leaders your divine wisdom
 and help us to promote respect,
 justice and true reconciliation,
 so that the people of South Sudan
 may live in unity and peace.
 We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

Thank you for making this Christmas
 a special one for us!



Photo Credit: Paul Jeffrey

Donations can be made online at:
<https://www.solidarityfriends.org/donate/>
 or checks can be mailed to:
FRIENDS IN SOLIDARITY, INC
8737 COLESVILLE ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20910

Friends in Solidarity is a collaborative ministry initiated by Institutes of Women and Men Religious in the United States supporting the people of Africa, especially South Sudan, through capacity building initiatives that include the training of teachers, health care professionals and pastoral teams.

An Advent Journey Hope and Solidarity with South Sudan



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Student Edition



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 SOLIDARITY**

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