

STTC Newsletter - December 2023

Solidarity Teacher Training College, Yambio, South Sudan



2023 has been a year of many blessings, and at this moment of Christmas and before the year closes, it is good to give thanks.

We have much to celebrate. 2023 was the year we graduated our first Diploma group and probably the largest class of Teacher Trainees. Female students now make up nearly a half of the student body, a proportion that rises with each new intake. Two fine new classrooms and an administrative office now dominate the entrance to the campus, testament to the support of our donors and our unwavering commitment to training teachers for South Sudan. Shrubs have blossomed, trees have borne fruit, the library floor is solid underfoot, the water supply is safe.



The turbulence at the end of September 2023 was a shock. An all-out strike by workers and teachers led to the suspension of all activities in the college and the evacuation of students to their home places. The disruption and expense of the temporary closure, with the contracts of all the teachers and support staff now terminated, has been painful. The threats and insults have never prevented us from doing good and being brothers and sisters to one another. Despite the fragility of the ministry, we still haven't given up our hope. We look now to what the upheaval has taught us and how we might better plan for the future.



The interval of closure has been used by the Solidarity members to undertake serious clearing-out and repairs, apart from the new construction, that would be impossible during the ordinary term. The physical work on the campus has lifted our spirits, as you see small improvements transform the place. Changes are now forced upon us but probably ones we ought to be making anyway for the long-term sustainability of the college. So, we turn this time of suffering into blessing also. We look forward to a new beginning soon in the new year and to bringing the students back on campus

The arrival of a new community member, Sr Sherly George into the middle of all this confusion, has been the best news of all. Sherly was previously missioned to Iraq and before that to far-flung parts of her home country of India. She is a science teacher, PhD in Zoology, and within days of arrival took on the challenge of the Science store room with remarkable results. We are delighted to welcome Sherly among us. The educational ministry in Yambio continues to be relevant. It is blessed with a great company of committed Solidarity members coming from diverse cultures not only to train teachers but to give witness to peace and communal living.



We, the community members at Solidarity Teacher Training College, Jacinta Prunty (Holy Faith Sisters), Elizabeth Blok (School Sisters of Notre Dame), Guillermina Vasquez Rubinos (Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Sherly George (Congregation of Mother of Carmel) and Chris Soosai (De La Salle Brothers), thank all the donors and well-wishers for their support throughout 2023.

We appreciate that you stand with us in good times and in difficulties; that helps us to stay strong ourselves.

*We wish you the blessings of Christmas,
the time of Christ's coming in vulnerability and poverty,
and we pray that the new year, 2024, will bring you and your family
peace, joy and well-being.*