



ALL-AFRICA CONFERENCE
SISTER TO SISTER (AACSS)

NEWS FROM ALL-AFRICA CONFERENCE: SISTER TO SISTER THE CATHOLIC SISTERHOOD ADDRESSING THE CONDITIONS OF EXTREME POVERTY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Dear partner in AAC:SS,

Our story of COVID-19 relief in Africa's sub-Sahara starts with heroism.

Organized teams of women religious—the Sister-to-Sister networks that we cherish—began reaching out to the vulnerable and neglected in early March. They continue serving to this day with deliveries of food and supplies. Access to food has become critical because, for the most destitute, dying of starvation has become a bigger threat than dying from the virus.

Poverty in Africa's sub-Sahara is a major contributing factor to the suffering in the age of COVID-19. Many of our Sisters belong to religious congregations that are poor themselves. And many Sisters have suffered personal losses since March. So in May of this year, the AAC:SS Board voted to create an emergency relief fund to help Sisters better address the pandemic and its impact. With generous donor and foundation support, the AAC:SS Ministry Relief Fund was established. Funding was distributed to our leaders and standing committees where AAC:SS serves: Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. With this help, the Sisters and their committees began to focus in earnest on the immediate need to deliver food and supplies.

As a result of this funding, our Sisters are now delivering hundreds of bags of rice, beans, and salt along with cartons of eggs and boxes of soap, cleaning supplies, and toothpaste. Most of all, our Sisters are bringing a sense of hope to families suffering from material shortages. People understand that someone truly cares about them.

Our Sisters report that their initial COVID relief efforts have reached at least 600 households of adults, children, and elders...at least three

institutions for orphaned and disabled students... and countless individuals living far from cities and towns. They stress that these very conservative estimates are increasing as the months and weeks pass by.

Even though their outreach has been remarkable, delivering supplies in a coordinated way continues to challenge our Sisters. What is proving to be a godsend are their well-established

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Sisters deliver supplies to a family in Nigeria.

Notes of Gratitude

AAC:SS Zimbabwe express their gratitude to our valued donors. The donations helped to buy boxes of soap and masks which will go a long way to help the poor here. *Sister Ester, Zimbabwe*

The gifts of food and supplies were received with joy by the people. We cannot thank you enough, but we leave you in God's hands and ask that he bless you in the way he knows best. *Sister Lucy, Nigeria*



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AAC:SS networks—the ability to connect with one another online and via social media almost at will. As a result, our Sisters can streamline their bulk purchases, and efficiently repackage them for distribution. Their Sister-to-Sister networks have also been invaluable in purchasing materials to help set up washing stations, especially in villages and remote areas.

Our Sisters report several populations with special needs: the disabled, the mentally challenged, the elderly, children who have lost parents, displaced persons living in refugee camps, and workers who pre-COVID relied on basic farming and menial jobs to put food on the table. In addition to supplying them with food and supplies, teams of Sisters also began training sessions on COVID prevention and best practices for washing and cleaning.



Special-needs children in Zambia receive protective masks.

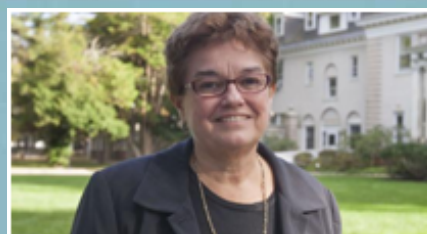
As I write to you, the rate of infection in countries where our Sisters serve remains relatively low by global standards. We attribute this to the immediate closing of borders and the slowdown of economic activity that followed. However, these are the very restrictions that created today's deadly shortage of food and supplies—and why our Sisters are determined to continue delivering emergency relief.

As women religious, our Sisters understand the power of prayer. As part of their ministry, they regularly pray with people who want to be comforted with expressions of faith. Praying together, says one Sister, offers encouragement to people who need hope as much as food.

This year comes to a close in ways we never could have anticipated. Yet we remain hopeful, too. Your support has been unwavering and generous. And your prayers are a constant reminder of the faith we share. Together with your support and God's help, AAC:SS will continue to bring healing to the poor and vulnerable of sub-Saharan Africa. We are grateful to have you as our partner in Sisterhood.

May you and your family enjoy every blessing this Christmas. I will remember you in prayer throughout the holiday season—and every day of the New Year.

In thanksgiving for your generous support,



Rosemary Jeffries, RSM
Executive Director

YOUR GIFT BUILDS SISTERHOOD

Your support for the work of All-Africa Conference: Sister to Sister will empower more women religious in the sub-Sahara to alleviate the conditions of extreme poverty while building an international Sisterhood based on the compassion of Our Lord.

For details on giving and underwriting opportunities, please contact Rosemary Jeffries, RSM, or go to www.allafrica-sistertosister.org.

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