

Mission Intention

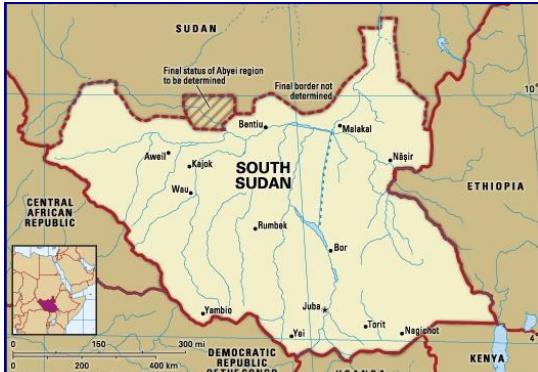
January 2016 - 2017

This month we are asked to open ourselves to greater unity with Christians around the world. May our common faith in Jesus guide us to work together for peace and justice.

Christian Unity

That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and charity to restore communion and by collaborating to meet challenges facing humanity.

Country Focus: South Sudan



South Sudan is the newest country in the world as it became a country in 2011 after gaining independence from Sudan after a long, violent civil war. It is located in East Central Africa and shares borders with seven other African nations.

South Sudan is a land of expansive grasslands, swamps and tropical forests. Many different tribal groups with multiple languages make up the population. Unlike the predominantly Muslim population of Sudan, the South Sudanese follow their traditional religions and only a minority are Christians.

Most South Sudanese made their livelihood as subsistence farmers, but currently are heavily dependent on pumping and selling oil to the region. Yet, the country remains very poor and underdeveloped.

There have been numerous ethnic conflicts, disputes over oil and border disputes resulting in the displacement of many people from their homes. Since 2013, there has been continued conflict.

The Church in South Sudan has actively been a force for peace and is uniting with Christian leaders around the country and Sudan to advocate love, mutual respect and forgiveness. Mission for them is focused on re-building peace and unity.

God's Word for Mission

Promoting Knowledge of Faith

"So we, though many, are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5).

"I pray that the image and likeness of God in each person will enable us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity. Especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our deepest dignity, and make nonviolence our way of life" (Pope Francis, 2017 World Day of Peace Message).

A Saint for Mission: St. Josephine Bakita

Education for Community Life



Josephine, whose birth name is unknown, was born in Sudan in 1869. At the age of 7 she was kidnapped and sold into brutal slavery. She was given the name "Bakita" by her captors which means "fortunate." Eventually, she was brought to Italy and became the babysitter of Mimmina Michieli, the daughter of the family she was placed with.

Bakita and Mimmina became friends and the two were entrusted to the Canossian Sisters in Venice for schooling. It was there that Bakita came to know God and received baptism in 1890 taking the name of Josephine.

When it was time to return home, she refused to go because she wanted to remain with the sisters. She was set free and entered the community and consecrated her life to God in 1896. Josephine spent many years loving and serving the sisters and the children at school. Her goodness inspired all who knew her. She said, "Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who don't know him. What a grace it is to know God."

She was ill for many years until she died in 1947 and news of her holy life spread around the world. She was canonized a saint on Oct. 1, 2000.

Her life gives witness to faith in God's love during suffering. St. Josephine Bakita is the patron saint of Sudan. Her feast day is February 8.



CENTER OF MISSION

Society for the Propagation of the Faith / St. Paul and Minneapolis

Solidarity as Path to Peace

Catholic Social Teaching



The victims of war, who are often defenseless children, need a refuge and the ability to live in safe environments. Catholic Social teachings ask us to be in solidarity, in unity, with these children and help them find a place of peace and security.

Peter Kuch was eight years old when civil war broke out in his country of Sudan. He was separated from his family becoming one of the many “lost boys” of Sudan. He was forced to walk many miles through the desert with thousands of other children in order to reach a refugee camp.

Peter was very lucky and was eventually brought to the United States. He found a job, attended college, and joined the U.S. Army. All that time, he had lost connection to his family in Sudan. He prayed to see them again some day.

An Army friend of Peter’s compassionately offered him money so he could look for his mother and father. He located them and in an emotional reunion, reconnected with his family. Peter is thankful to the U.S., which he considers his home, and all those who, in solidarity with children in need, took care of him to find a place of peace and safety.

Watch the story on YouTube:
“Torn from Sudan home, man reunites with family”

Daily Offering

Missionary Initiative

Dear God, I offer you all that I am this day. I offer to your loving care my joys and sorrows; my work and my play; my good times and sad times. Help me to know you more clearly and to follow you more nearly so that I may be more like your son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit; one God forever and ever. Amen.

Working for Peace and Unity

Moral Formation

After watching the video, think about the questions below and discuss.

1. Many injustices are caused by war. What injustices did Peter face?
2. What evidence was there during Peter’s emotional reunion that the family had faith in God?
3. Peter has a deep love of the U.S. Why do you think he joined the Army? How did his experiences in Sudan influence that decision?
4. Jesus and his followers suffered from conflict with those at “war” with his teachings of love and peace. How did they respond? How should you respond to injustices you might experience?



Petitions for Mission

Liturgical Education

- # Let us pray that all Christians may seek and find greater unity in prayer and service.
- # Let us pray for peace in South Sudan and an end to violence in our world.
- # Let us pray that all persons may be held sacred and respected as God’s beloved children.
- # Let us pray that families separated by war and tragedy may be reunited in God’s grace.
- # Let us pray that many more may come to know God and his way of goodness, truth and love.



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