

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

For doctors and their humanitarian co-workers in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.



Country Focus: South Sudan

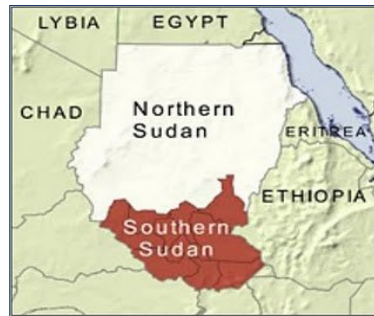
Even though South Sudan is the world's newest nation, it has a long history.

For hundreds of years, the people of South Sudan lived in kingdoms and tribes. Then, in the 1800's, a series of countries invaded parts of the Sudan. But the differences between the many tribes and kingdoms made it hard for foreign countries to rule. In fact, Britain, the last foreign occupier, set up two different administrations for the north and south parts of the country to make it easier to govern.

When Britain ended its occupation in 1946, citizens of South Sudan thought they would finally be independent. Instead, Britain made them a colony of North Sudan, causing decades of civil war. South Sudan finally won independence in 2011, but peace did not last

long. Due to the tribal loyalties that still existed, the citizens of South Sudan continued to fight one another.

The Catholic Church is one of the few institutions in South Sudan to have credibility, providing services that would otherwise be unavailable, like education, food and health care. The Church also works to build peace in South Sudan, and to bring Christ's hope to its people.



Promoting Knowledge of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"If someone who has [material wealth] sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

"In teaching us charity, the Gospel tells us that the more fortunate should give up some of their rights so they can use their goods more generously in the service of others" (Blessed Paul VI, A Call to Action, [Octogesima Adveniens] no. 23).

Education for Community Life

A Saint for Mission: Saints Cosmas and Damian



Like the doctors and other humanitarian workers we remember in this month's prayer petition, Saints Cosmas and Damian also cared for those in need.

Saints Cosmas and Damian were twin brothers born in what is now Syria in the third century. Both brothers became doctors, and chose to honor God through their work. They were known as the "moneyless ones" because they did not charge a fee for their services, believing that providing free medical care was the best way they could share their faith and God's love with all those they met. The brothers were arrested and martyred during the persecution of Christians by Diocletian in 303, but legend has it that even death couldn't stop them from providing medical care to those in need. Almost immediately after their deaths, people began asking for their intercession, especially in matters of physical illness.

Many healing miracles are attributed to them. Saint Gregory of Tours once said of Saints Cosmas and Damian, "These two physicians cured as many people by their prayers as they did by their medical knowledge, and now in heaven they still care for the sick miraculously."

Saints Cosmos and Damian are the patron saints of physicians. Their feast day is celebrated on September 26.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable



Doctors offer time to treat patients in South Sudan

Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:40 that whatever we do for the least of God's people, we also do for Jesus himself. The message of Matthew 25:40 is echoed in this month's Catholic Social Teaching focus: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

We first learned about the teaching of Option for the Poor and Vulnerable in October's newsletter. This theme reminds us that we are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Those who are most in need should be our priority.

This is why the work of doctors and other humanitarians we are praying for this month is so important in places like South Sudan. In countries where people do not have access to

food, water, education, health care, and other resources necessary to sustain life, it is the responsibility of all Christians to provide for them. Some people make great personal sacrifices so they can care for the poor, and we can help their work by supporting them in prayer.

In this month's video, you will meet Dr. Atar, a surgeon working in a remote part of South Sudan. As you will learn in the video, Dr. Atar is the only surgeon for a population of 200,000 people. He works long hours and only sees his family three times a year so that he can be present and tend to the medical needs of the community he serves. As you watch the video, think about how Dr. Atar's life is an example of the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

Surgeon Sacrificing Life for Refugees: [Click Here](#)>>

1. How is Dr. Atar putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable he serves above his own needs?
2. How is Dr. Atar's life and work an example of the Gospel message found in Matthew 25:40?
3. Who are some of the poor and vulnerable in your local community?
4. How can you put the needs of the poor and vulnerable in your local community above your own needs?



Dr. Atar in South Sudan

Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray for the Church, that we will continue to remember our brothers and sisters in South Sudan in word and deed.
- ✚ Let us pray for all relief and aid workers, that God will give them the courage and protection they need to assist those whom they serve.
- ✚ Let us pray for Dr. Atar and his family, that they may be strengthened by God's love during times of separation.
- ✚ Let us pray that we may learn from aid workers and follow their example of generosity and commitment in our own communities.

Dear God,
 Thank you for the doctors and aid workers who listen for the cries of the lost, and who reach out to the broken. Grant them strength for when they tire, and hope for when they despair. May your angels protect them as they protect others. Amen.