

Solidarity

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the source of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

Country Focus: Kenya

You don't need to visit Kenya to know what it looks like. If you've ever seen a picture of Africa on TV or in a magazine, chances are it was taken in Kenya.

Home to a variety of wildlife and located on the equator near two major water sources, Kenya has long been a center of trade. This has given Kenya a diverse culture, with more than 60 different languages spoken in the country.

Kenya has one of the largest economies in Africa and is home to many of its best universities. It also has the fourth-highest literacy rate in Africa. But more than half of Kenyans live in poverty, many of the original tribes still fight amongst one another, and climate change often causes severe drought and food shortages.

Catholics in Kenya are helping address these challenges. The Church is bringing together different tribes. Many dioceses in Kenya partner with dioceses around the world and together they work on projects to help Kenyans living in poverty. Our own archdiocese has a solidarity partnership with the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya. Through these efforts, the Catholic Church is an example of Christ to many Kenyans.



Promoting Knowledge of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were baptized into one body...If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1 Cor. 12:12-13, 26).

"[Solidarity] is a firm determination to commit oneself to the common good because we are all really responsible for all" (St. John Paul II, On Social Concern, [Sollicitudo rei Socialis] no. 38).

Education for Community Life

A Saint for Mission: Blessed Sister Irene Stefani



The Catholic Church is growing faster in Africa than anywhere else in the world, partly because of the ministry of missionaries like Blessed Sister Irene Stefani.

Sister Irene had an immense love for the Lord and wanted nothing more than to serve him by being a missionary. She made her vows in 1914, and left her native Italy a year later to travel to Kenya. She spent the rest of her life in Kenya ministering to the sick. She would travel long distances to visit and treat the ill, measuring the length of her journeys by how many rosaries she could recite. She frequently got up in the middle of her meals to help those in need and was known to wear a wide-brimmed hat so that she could help the sick rain or shine. Sister Irene's work was very much appreciated by the people she served and she became known as the "angel of charity" and "Nyaatha," which meant "Merciful Mother" in the local language.

Blessed Sister Irene caught the plague from a patient and died in 1930. She was the first person to be beatified in Kenya, and more than 100,000 people attended the ceremony. Sister Irene dedicated her life in service alongside Kenyans and her example of Christ's love helped give witness to the Gospel message in her adopted country. Blessed Sister Irene Stefani's Feast Day is October 31.

Solidarity



As Blessed Sister Irene knew, we are all one human family, regardless of our national, ethnic, and economic differences. We are all also our brothers' and sisters' keepers even if our brothers and sisters live in a different part of the world. The Church calls this solidarity and it is one of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching.

Solidarity means that we love one another, as Jesus commanded. But love is more than just feeling compassion for people who don't have the same resources we do. To truly live the theme of solidarity, we realize we are all connected and we must work to build communities with economic and social policies that are fair for all, so that everyone may live a life of dignity.

Jesus is the ultimate example of solidarity. By becoming human, Jesus shows us that God is in solidarity with humanity in a very real way. God loves all people, creating each individual in God's image and likeness. Solidarity is being able to see God in every person and loving them as Jesus does because they are a son or daughter of God.

One way our archdiocese chooses to experience solidarity is through a global solidarity partnership with the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya. This relationship lets both partners learn from one another and celebrate our common faith through the equal sharing of our cultures, resources, and experiences. In this month's video, you will learn more about the Catholic Social Teaching theme of solidarity and how it can help us grow closer to Christ.

Catholic Social Teachings 101: Click Here>>

1. What does the statement: "Solidarity is more than a feeling, it is a commitment," mean? What is the difference between a feeling and a commitment?
2. What does it mean to do something *with* someone rather than *for* someone? How does this help us understand the theme of solidarity?
3. What are some examples of solidarity? What are some ways to show solidarity without using material resources like money or clothing?
4. Has there ever been a time when you have shown or been shown solidarity? What happened? What does your experience teach you about your faith?



Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray that we may respond respectfully when listening to the stories and experiences of those different from ourselves.
- ✚ Let us pray that our faith communities will be places of welcome for the many diverse faces of Christ.
- ✚ Let us pray for our partnership with Kitui, Kenya, that we may learn from one another and help each other grow in faith.
- ✚ Let us pray that all countries will come to recognize every human being as members of the one human family.

Dear God,
 Thank you for your gift of creation. Help us understand our place in this world, and grant us the wisdom and generosity to seek your will. Please lead us to live in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, so that all your children might live in dignity and peace. Amen.