

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



South Sudan

The "Other" Syria

March, 2017  
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**South Sudan**, which gained independence in July 2011, is the world's youngest country. Despite initial hopes of a peaceful future, conflict broke out in December 2013 between factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President, Dr Riek Machar. A fragile peace agreement, signed in August 2015, has now broken down, leading to pockets of fighting across the country. In the midst of this war-torn and impoverished country, Women and Men Religious are working to insure a peaceful and sustainable future for this country and its people through **Solidarity with South Sudan**, a project initiated by the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and the Union of Superiors General (USG) in Rome in 2006 after a request from the Bishops of Sudan. **Friends in Solidarity, Inc.**, a USA organization, works in support of **Solidarity with South Sudan** with Sister Pat Eck representing the Congregation of Bon Secours in this organization. Sister Mary Beth Hamm is on the Board of Directors. This issue of JPIC News focuses on the good work being done by both of these organizations of Women and Men Religious in the areas of health care, education, agriculture and pastoral care.

March  
JPIC Days of Remembrance

March 3  
World Wildlife Day

March 8  
International Women's Day

March 21  
International Day for the  
Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 22  
World Water Day

March 25  
International Day of Remembrance  
of the Victims of Slavery and the  
Transatlantic Slave Trade

*"Even though I walk through the valley of darkness,  
I fear no evil; for you are with me". (Psalm 23)*

### Prayer for South Sudan

Father of love and mercy,  
You created our people from every clan,  
tribe and nationality.  
It is your will that all our people should live  
in harmony, peace and unity,  
because we are all brothers and sisters.  
We ask forgiveness for the times we failed  
to live together in peace.  
Heal our offenses and help us to reconcile  
with one another.  
Grant to our leaders your divine wisdom  
and help us to promote respect, justice  
and true reconciliation,  
so that the people of South Sudan  
may live in unity and peace.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### The Situation in South Sudan

The people of Riimenze in South Sudan had a violent start to the New Year. On New Year's Day the army began an offensive against the "rebels" and began burning homes of people in the area. Two local staff of **Solidarity with South Sudan's Agricultural Training Project** were burned alive in their homes. Their bodies were taken immediately to the local cemetery for burial. The local people are traumatized by all that is happening and are bringing their possessions to the parish grounds. There is no one left in the village and stories of more burned houses and violent deaths are many. The numbers of refugees continues to grow and now numbers about 4,250. (As reported to Joan Mumaw, IHM, Executive Director of Friends in Solidarity, January 2017)



Fleeing from the village



Mourning the dead

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”*

The Church is the only institution in South Sudan that is really trusted by the people.



One way the Church is present in South Sudan is through **Solidarity with South Sudan**. Sisters, priests and brothers from a variety of congregations and countries work together with lay personnel in four primary sites – Yambio, Juba, Wau and Riimenze. Their ministries focus on building the capacity of the South Sudanese to become teachers, registered nurses, midwives, sustainable farmers and pastoral agents. **Friends in Solidarity** supports the capacity building work of **Solidarity with South Sudan** and is committed to raising awareness as well as funds to promote the vision of a just and peaceful society in Africa built upon the values of collaboration, inclusivity and solidarity between and among peoples, cultures, generations and nations.

For more information go to [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org) and <http://www.solidarityssudan.org/>

**Catholic Health Training Institute:** The CHTI trains health professionals who are inspired by a Christian vision of the dignity of the human person and the values of respect, compassion and justice. As well as receiving formal instruction from qualified staff, the students undergo long periods of clinical placement in hospitals and other health delivery clinical settings. Currently there are nearly 100 students in residence and there have been three groups of nursing graduates who have returned to their local communities as nursing professionals.

**The Solidarity Teacher Training College** in Yambio is an oasis of peace in the midst of this troubled region of South Sudan. **Solidarity with South Sudan** is committed to raising the level of literacy by training primary school teachers. Over 100 students coming from different ethnic groups and Nuba Mountains in Sudan are currently studying to become primary school teachers. Assisting these students to succeed in their studies is a capable Solidarity staff of nine religious from Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda New Zealand, Ireland, India and the USA. In November, 2016 twenty-six newly qualified teachers received their Certificates and are ready to step into the classrooms of South Sudan and play their part in shaping a new nation.

The **Agriculture Project** enables families to grow enough food to feed their families and to sell the surplus which provides funds for sending their children to school. Training in sustainable agricultural methods is provided to nearly 50 families. In the past year additional land was cleared and fruit trees and trees to be harvested for timber were planted providing for longer term sustainability for the project. All this work with local families is helping to build a community in Riimenze with a primary school and small clinic in the process of being rehabilitated.



**Solidarity Pastoral Services** are a response to the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference plea for support and help in meeting the needs of the church in South Sudan. These services include supporting the formation of clergy, religious and lay people; delivering peace and reconciliation workshops and programs; and working with Diocesan pastoral directors and their teams to ensure the delivery of quality pastoral care by the Catholic Church in South Sudan.

During this time of civil unrest, the pastoral team has facilitated the delivery of trauma healing as well as reconciliation and peace building workshops for clergy and lay leaders.

Donations to support any of these projects can be made to:

**Friends in Solidarity**

8808 Cameron Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

<https://www.solidarityfriends.org/donate/>

or

**Solidarity with South Sudan**

Piazza di Ponte S. Angelo, 28  
00186 Rome, Italy



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