



**RESPONSE FORM**  
**Aid to the Church in Need**

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*BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE*  
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I/We enclose \_\_\_\_\_ to support the work of the Church in Sudan.

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to Aid to the Church in Need **OR** please debit my Bankcard, Visa or Mastercard:

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*A beautiful holy paraman (leather medallion) will be sent out to those who give a donation and tick this box*



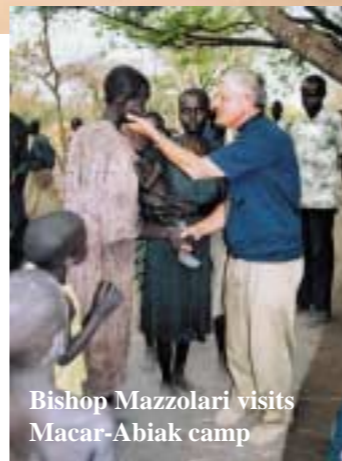
**An unshakeable faith: the refugees and displaced**

A Sudanese child in front of SS Peter & Paul Catholic church in Kakuma Refugee Camp, northern Kenya. The parish has a strong choir, and the church is filled for Sunday Mass, with many having to stand outside

Inside, each Station of the Cross is simply scratched in chalk on the mud walls

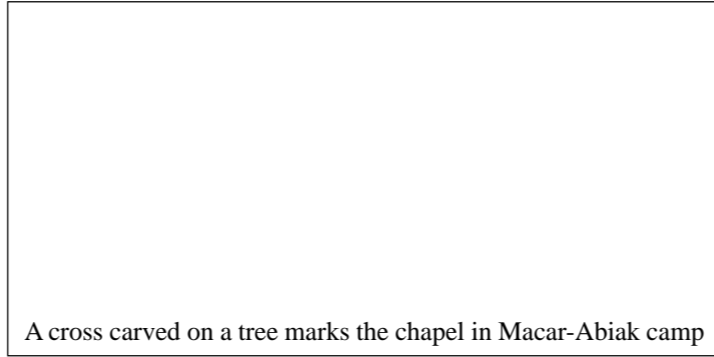


They have lost their homes, their possessions, their livestock and their cultivations. Many have lost family members. But the countless thousands of Christians who have been displaced by Sudan's tragic war refuse to lose their faith or trust in God



Bishop Mazzolari visits Macar-Abiak camp

When the first displaced people reached Macar-Abiak, having walked for 17 days to reach the camp, one of the first things they did was build themselves a chapel in which to pray.



A cross carved on a tree marks the chapel in Macar-Abiak camp

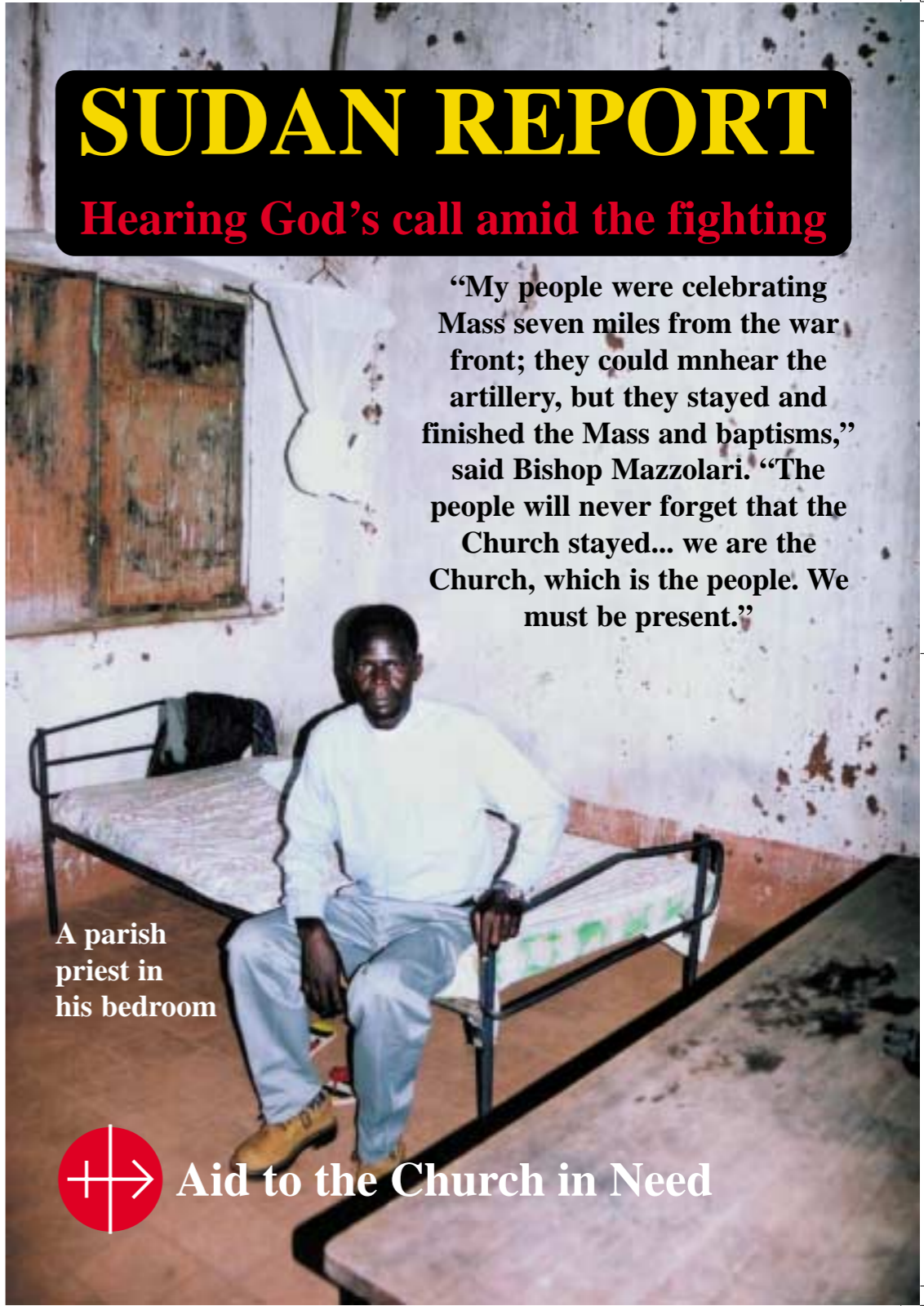


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**SUDAN REPORT**

**Hearing God's call amid the fighting**

**"My people were celebrating Mass seven miles from the war front; they could hear the artillery, but they stayed and finished the Mass and baptisms," said Bishop Mazzolari. "The people will never forget that the Church stayed... we are the Church, which is the people. We must be present."**



A parish priest in his bedroom



**Aid to the Church in Need**



# A country ravaged by war, hunger and disease...

**Sudan, the biggest country in Africa, remains immersed in a terrible and unequal civil war.**

“The most frightening experience of the war is the noise of the Antonov bombers, which people can recognise from a distance. It freezes and paralyses them psychologically. It inflicts panic, not just physical destruction.” Bishop Caesar Mazzolari of Rumbek has experienced much of this bombing at first-hand. His diocese

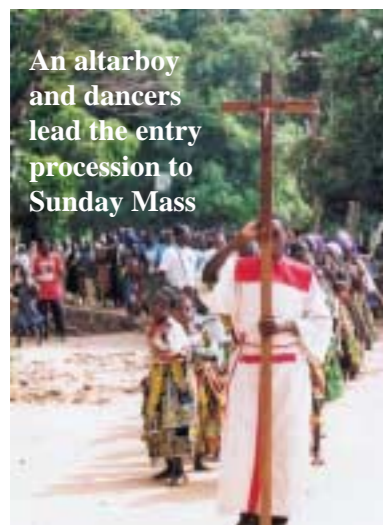


Bombed and looted:  
a typical sight in Rumbek

has been “warzone number one” in this civil war which has been ravaging southern Sudan since 1983. The introduction of Sharia, or Islamic law, triggered rebellion in the animist and Christian south and led to the appalling fighting which has already cost over two million lives - mainly of innocent civilians caught in the crossfire. There are numerous reasons for the war. It is cultural: the Arabs against the blacks - or “slaves” as they call them. It is

about resources: the wealthy but arid North wanting the oil and water of the fertile South. And it is religious: the Muslims against the Christians. As a result, there are over a million displaced people and refugees. Many are dying from hunger and thirst, whilst cholera and other diseases rage. There is scarcely any medical aid and education is minimal, often at the hands of dedicated but untrained teachers.

## ...but where the Faith is flourishing



An altarboy and dancers lead the entry procession to Sunday Mass

Yet the Church is not only thriving in southern Sudan, it is growing. “The faith has grown so fast and become much deeper in the last ten years,” one young priest explained. “Every day, people are coming to restart their sacramental life and so many came back to the faith with our Jubilee year programmes - some even brought their old witchcraft instruments with them to burn!”

“The people are enthusiastic,” agreed Bishop Joseph Gasi of Tombura-Yambio diocese. “They pray and dance like David in the Old Testament. Marriages are very numerous, and devotion to the Sacred Heart is flourishing. The Lord is still with us and encouraging us.”

But many are risking their lives to attend Mass. “There is high attendance at church celebrations, but in Yei we are bombed almost every Sunday, so as to scatter the people at Mass,” said Bishop Erkolano Lodu. “The government has chosen Sunday as the best day to bomb the churches because they are full.”

Yet despite the danger and poverty, everyone dresses smartly for Mass and gives ample reinforcement to Africa’s reputation as ‘the singing and dancing Church’. As one missionary said: “In church we give them the only social event where they are at peace - they don’t want to go home. They want to keep singing until the sun goes down.”

## A Sister’s story

Family life in southern Sudan suffers terribly from the absence of its men. Innumerable fathers, brothers, husbands and sons have been killed or are away fighting for years, while those who do not want to fight are forced into hiding.

Sister Jacinta’s brother Peter went to fight in 1991. “He passed back through here in 1999, but then went again. We don’t hear much, sometimes only once or twice a year. It is difficult for us to know when someone has died; you don’t get news easily from the frontline.”

The responsibility of the families is now laid upon the women, who must find money and cultivate to feed their families. “The women feel really terrible; they hate the situation but what can they do? All this affects the growth of the children. Many learn to steal too because they don’t have a good family background,” added Sister Jacinta. “This war has brought with it a kind of savagery. We want to form Christians who are real Christians in conscience.”



Mass in Tombura-Yambio’s “Green Cathedral”: the faithful worship under the trees as the war has prevented them from building a proper cathedral



## Catechists: “the future of the Church in Sudan”

The war has left a great shortage of priests in southern Sudan. With life expectancy at less than 50, most of the older clergy have died, and the few young priests who have managed to finish their seminary training now face a task too huge to handle alone.

Luckily, the country has hundreds of dedicated catechists, people who heroically and courageously keep the faith alive and strong among Catholics who may not see a priest more than once or twice a year.

“Many catechists are as good as priests,” one bishop said. “They are recognised as the spiritual leaders of their communities.”

Training these selfless men and women, and helping them travel between their remote chapels in the vast parishes, is a priority for Aid to the Church in Need. We will keep helping Sudan’s catechists. For as one of them told us: “I am not a soldier, but I am fighting in this war indirectly by spreading the Gospel and encouraging the people.”



A Sudanese catechist with his bicycle, provided by Aid to the Church in Need. Most have no transport and are forced to walk many hours (or days) in the fierce African heat to reach each of their chapels