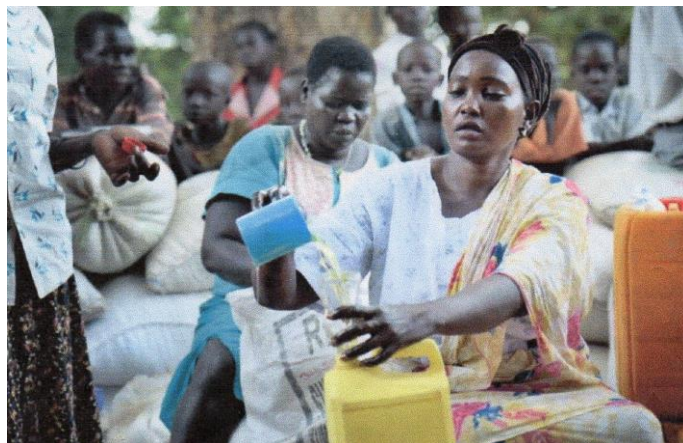


Important Update: Solidarity with South Sudan: July-August 2016

The edition of **Focus October 2015** contained a two page summary relating to Solidarity with South Sudan. Brigidines made a substantial financial commitment from the Common Project Fund late last year to assist with inter-congregational projects which aim to “accompany and empower the people of South Sudan, help to heal the wounds of past conflicts and guide the South Sudanese to a better future” (*Focus* p.7). Here there is an opportunity to update your knowledge and prayer commitment to the needs South Sudan, so read on please.



The recent newsletter focuses on **Valiant Women**. Brother Bill Firman writes:

“I am writing about women. So much can be achieved if opportunities are given. There are currently just over 400 missionaries in South Sudan. One of these generous women was Sister Veronica Rackova SSpS, a medical doctor and hospital administrator. She was shot on 16 May 2016 in the southern town of Yei as she drove a patient to a nearby hospital from St Bakhita’s Medical Centre in Yei, South Sudan. Sister Veronica wrote earlier: “Jesus would not abandon people. He was even ready to accept death, because he loved them. Recently somebody asked me why I am staying here under such circumstances, Why? Jesus continued on his way and did not give up when things got difficult.” Sister Veronica loved the people of South Sudan and although she was moved quickly to Nairobi, Kenya in the hope of saving her life, her body was returned to South Sudan for burial.

Brother Bill writes about another **Valiant Woman** and prefaces her own story:

“I would say, with Sister Veronica, that we are called to be a sign of hope especially in times of darkness. What hope would many girls have in this polygamous society, if the Loreto Sisters had not chosen to go to Rumbek and, with the generous support of Solidarity’s many donors, develop a quality boarding school for girls? It is not easy to be a girl or woman in South Sudan but we are all working with the genuine hope that life can be better for them.”



Girls at the Loreto Boarding School, Rumbek

Here is Mary Theresa's own story:

"I am Mary Theresa Legge, the first-born of a number of children, with six stepmothers and several aunts and uncles. The size of the family made it too hard for me to attend to my studies regularly. This was because I had to do domestic duties, and this was worse in my primary school as it was a day school.

My stepmothers with whom I stayed wanted me to look after my siblings. If I did not complete my duties and, at the same time, complete my school work I could not eat at midday or in the evening. Some of my friends advised me to look for a husband as a way of finding peace and love, but I refused.

I struggled to complete primary school but somehow I miraculously passed my exams. This gave me hope and interest to further my studies. I heard of Loreto and my father gave permission for me to go there. I prayed so hard to God to get admission – and I was accepted! It was a boarding school, and this made me happy. In the short time I have been there I have done well academically. I hope to finish my secondary education and wait for God to open a way for me to continue in my life. I believe that even in the darkest hour of life, God can show his might and power."

A family waits for better times outside Juba, where there was armed conflict in July.



Sister Lemma SSpS wrote on 14/8/2016: "Juba woke up calm and the cease fire seems to be holding. Transport has not been restored and the streets are empty. People are uncertain and it is unbelievable what we see in the camps and at the hospital."