

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

WWW.USCCB.ORG/SFCA



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It's not often that committee work brings true joy, but I receive exactly that from my service as chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa. Established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as a way for Catholics in the United States to show fraternal unity with the growing Church in Africa, the annual collection for the Solidarity Fund helps the Catholic Church provide life-transforming pastoral ministry across the continent, often in regions experiencing devastating poverty, war, and natural—or manmade—disasters.

The Catholic Church in Africa is young and growing; its people are eager to share the Gospel with their neighbors through prayer, instruction, and works of mercy. The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa supports pastoral ministries such as catechesis, family life ministry, and the training of religious sisters.

In this report, you will read about ministries as diverse as pilgrimages and peacemaking. The four initiatives profiled here are only a small sample of the work done through the 75 grants that you made possible in 2023. Ministries have been empowered, for example, by solar panels that were installed at a seminary in Burkina-Faso and at a bishops' conference headquarters in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Malawi, with help from your gifts, the Church is improving ministry to the elderly. In several other countries, dioceses are creating safe environments for children through measures to prevent, address, and report abuse.

All these grants were requested by local African Catholic bishops' conferences seeking to ensure that they address their most urgent pastoral priorities.



Thank you for your gifts to this fund. Your generosity is strengthening the Church in Africa and bringing people closer to Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

Most Rev. Peter L. Smith

Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Africa

2023 USCCB SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

CHAIRMAN

Bishop Peter L. Smith, Auxiliary,
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

SUBCOMMITTEE

Bishop John P. Dolan, Diocese of Phoenix

Bishop Gregory W. Gordon, Auxiliary,
Archdiocese of Las Vegas

Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Emeritus,
Diocese of Tucson

Bishop Patrick M. Neary, CSC,
Diocese of St. Cloud

Bishop Edward Scharfenberger,
Diocese of Albany

Bishop David P. Talley, Diocese of Memphis

Bishop Gerald L. Vincke, Diocese of Salina
Archbishop Thomas R. Zinkula,
Archdiocese of Dubuque

CONSULTANTS

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap,
Archdiocese of Boston

Cardinal Joseph William Tobin, CSSR,
Archdiocese of Newark

Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez,
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSI, Emeritus,
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Msgr. Kieran E. Harrington

Mr. Patrick Markey

Mr. Donald Rogers

Mr. Fritz Zuger

STAFF

Ms. Mary Mencarini Campbell

Mr. Edward Kiely, Director

Ms. Mireille Gbetholancy-Kun,
Grant Specialist

Mr. Roy Molina, Grants Administrator†

Ms. Ana Paola Gironas, Grants
Administrator‡

†Roy Molina's tenure ended in January 2023.

‡Ana Paola Gironas's tenure began in March 2023.



IN 2023, THE USCCB SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA distributed 75 grants for pastoral ministry, totaling more than \$2.1 million. Grants supported initiatives including leadership formation, construction and renovation, justice and peace, communications, youth ministry, evangelization, Catholic education, child protection, and education of seminarians, clergy, and religious. This report highlights four of these initiatives, showing the diversity in how gifts from Catholics in the United States are used to support robust, life-changing ministries and help Catholics across Africa live the Gospel.

SOUTH SUDAN

Since gaining independence from an oppressive government in 2011, South Sudan has been convulsed by violent power struggles. Although peace agreements have made slow progress in much of the country, the killings, kidnappings, and violence against women have continued in Jonglei state, fueled by a complex mixture of ethnic rivalries, land disputes, and economic hardship. With a \$24,800 grant from the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa, the Justice and Peace Office of the Diocese of Malakal is working in communities experiencing the worst violence to end generations of hatred and revenge. Parishes host workshops and dialogue sessions to review biblical teachings on justice, peace, and reconciliation; explain Catholic social teaching; and introduce the Church's call

for the equal dignity of and mutual respect between men and women. Participants learn techniques for trauma recovery and conflict resolution, with a goal of becoming leaders who can teach others new and peaceful ways of resolving differences.

EASTERN AFRICA

Climate change has inflicted deadly weather extremes in eastern Africa, including multiyear droughts and monstrously heavy rains. From late 2023 through spring 2024, hundreds of people were killed by flooding, and more than 1 million were made homeless. This flooding followed the driest, hottest three years on record, in which tens of millions of eastern Africans faced hunger and starvation from loss of farming and fishing. In response, the Association of Member Episcopal



Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) launched a program called *Living Laudato Si'*—a multinational plan to engage Church and government leaders in implementing Pope Francis's vision of creation care, calling on parishes to take the lead in projects such as tree planting and soil conservation. The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa has provided \$32,000 to train pastoral workers—including those who serve as government liaisons—about *Laudato Si'* and the bishops' plan for implementing it, with a focus on efforts in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

TANZANIA

The Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus in the Diocese of Bukoba in Tanzania have been blessed with many vocations. Through a \$34,000 grant from the Solidarity Fund, Catholics in the United States are helping new sisters to deepen their spiritual lives and bringing renewal to professed sisters. About 200 sisters, including more than 40 who are new to religious life, will participate in two Ignatian retreats, with the goal of grounding every sister in Ignatian spirituality. This grant helps provide transportation, lodging, food,

and books on spirituality for the retreats. Other books provided through this grant assist those novices who arrive filled with faith but who lack a background in the Bible and theology. This community's mission of evangelization will be strengthened as all sisters become better equipped to communicate both the joy and the content of the Catholic faith.

LIBERIA

In a nation still recovering from a brutal civil war, an annual pilgrimage is building unity and encouraging lay discipleship. The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa provided the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Liberia (CABICOL) with \$18,000 for food, lodging, transportation, and speaker fees for the inaugural pilgrimage, in which more than 1,000 Catholics retraced the path of the first Catholic missionaries to evangelize in what is now the Diocese of Gbarnga. Far more than a procession or hike, the event included a three-day stay with open-air liturgies, confessions, and other activities intended to deepen the pilgrims' faith and prepare them to share the Good News with others.

SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

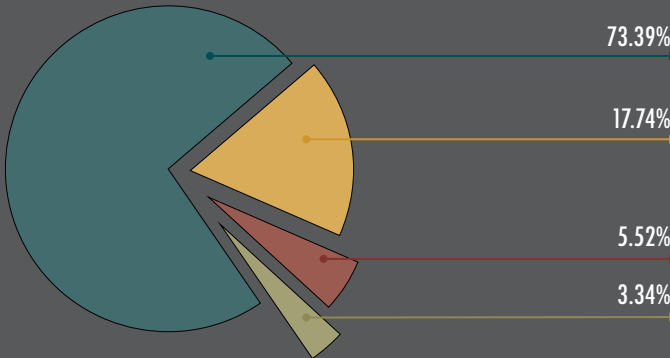
Statement of Revenue, Expenses, and Other Changes in Net Assets for the Year Ending December 31, 2023.

REVENUES

National Collections Contributions	\$3,241,529
Income on Investments	\$35,809
Total Revenue	\$3,277,338

EXPENSES

Grants and Donations*	\$2,110,175	73.39%
Program Costs	\$510,169	17.74%
Promotions and Fundraising Expenses	\$158,843	5.52%
Administrative Expenses	\$95,998	3.34%
Total Expenses	\$2,875,185	100%
Total Grants & Donations	\$2,110,175	



TOTAL EXPENSES

Changes in Net Assets from Operations	\$402,153
Non-Operating Activities:	
Unrealized Gain on Investments	\$471,184
Changes in Net Assets	\$873,337
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year	\$2,866,324
Net Assets at the End of the Year	\$3,739,661

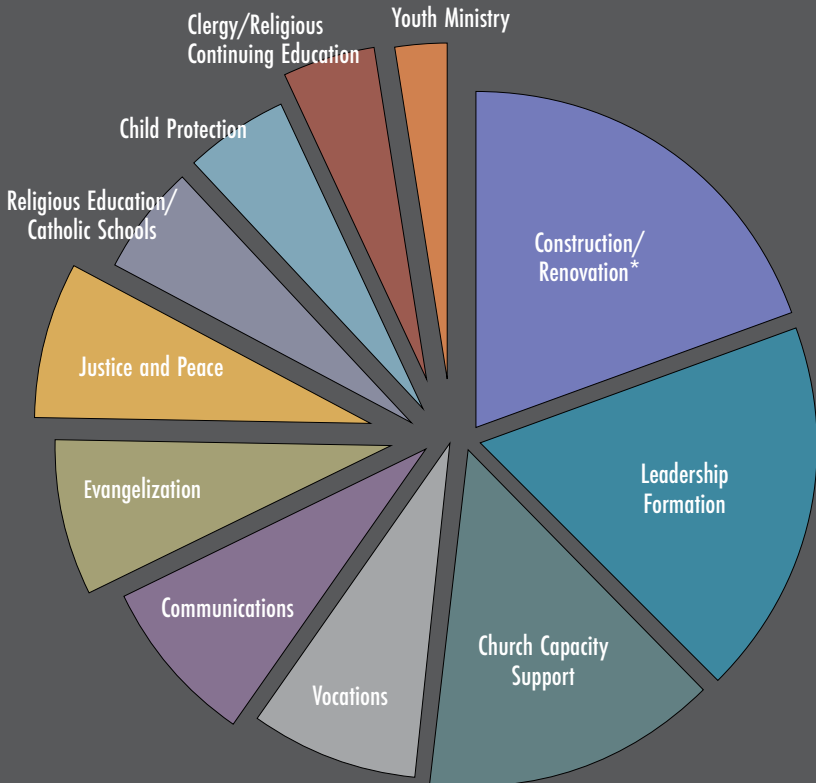
*Grants approved in 2023 totaled \$2,108,250. Grants and donations in 2023 totaled \$2,110,175, including payments and write-offs to grants approved in 2023 and prior years.

2023 DISTRIBUTION OF APPROVED GRANTS

Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest one hundredth and so may not total exactly 100%.

PROGRAM AREA	NUMBER OF GRANTS	GRANT AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Construction/Renovation*	10	\$412,600	19.57%
Leadership Formation	16	\$380,850	18.06%
Church Capacity Support	14	\$301,300	14.29%
Vocations	4	\$170,000	8.06%
Communications	5	\$169,100	8.02%
Evangelization	7	\$157,000	7.45%
Justice and Peace	6	\$155,300	7.37%
Religious Education/Catholic Schools	4	\$116,000	5.50%
Child Protection	4	\$103,100	4.89%
Clergy/Religious Continuing Education	3	\$94,000	4.46%
Youth Ministry	2	\$49,000	2.32%
TOTAL	75	\$2,108,250	99.99%

*Construction grants primarily fund rehabilitation and renovation of existing, deteriorated structures.





If you miss the collection or wish to give outside of the collection, #iGiveCatholicTogether (usccb.igivecatholictogether.org/organizations/usccb-church-in-africa) accepts funds online to support the good work of the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa.

Thank you for your support!

For more information about the USCCB's work with the **Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa** and around the world, please visit www.usccb.org/africa.

or write to:

Office of National Collections

3211 Fourth Street NE | Washington, DC 20017

