



## MOTHER AND CHILD SUPPORTS

Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting in joyful hope for the arrival of a baby. A migrant baby soon to become a refugee.

In 2020, during Advent, more women than ever will wait to give birth alone and away from health clinics and supports. This is because Covid-19 has tested the limits of medical centres around the world that were already over-stretched and under-funded.

In 2020, during Advent, more pregnant and lactating women will have limited access to nutritious food to keep them and their babies strong and healthy, because restrictions prevented planting, harvesting, and casual work as day labourers, all of which they depend upon to grow and buy the food they need.

In 2020, during Advent, more mothers and children who are fleeing war

and civil unrest will wait in crowded shelters and camps without adequate sanitation or social distancing.

This Advent as we retell the stories of hope that mark the arrival of Jesus, Bishops' Appeal is highlighting unfunded or partially funded projects that support mothers and children to stay safe, stay healthy and stay together.

### NEPAL

In Nepal, CMS Ireland are supporting Sundar Dhoka Saathi Sewa (SDSS) to get vital, nutritious emergency food to pregnant and lactating mothers whose access to harvests, work and food have been decimated due to the Pandemic. Bishops' Appeal supported this programme in the first 3 months of lockdown, however, when restrictions were lifted in Nepal, public transport remained suspended meaning many people from the Kathmandu area have been unable to return to work. This programme continues to focus on ensuring pregnant and lactating women have nutritious food, and also supplies food for malnourished children.

**Binsa** (not her real name) is 25 years old and has two young sons. She used to live in Sindupalchowk district, but in the 2015 earthquake 64,000 homes in the district were destroyed and so Binsa and her family moved to Lalitpur district, Kathmandu. Her husband used to work in a brick factory but due to the lockdown the factory was shut down. The few savings they had were all spent on hospital fees during Binsa's maternity care.



"There were some days when we had empty stomachs so that we could feed our babies", Binsa said.

SDSS provided 30kg rice, 5kg flour, 3kg lentils, 3kg pulses, 2kg beaten rice, 2kg salt, 2 pieces Piyush (water purifier), 1 sanitary pad, 200-gram Carom seeds, 200-gram fenugreek seeds and 30 eggs. They wish to continue this for Binsa and other families in need for the foreseeable future.

### CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, Tearfund Ireland is working to provide children in crisis situations with emergency foster parents to give them a safe, secure home as an alternative to going into an orphanage. Mary and Joseph said 'Yes' to being the parents of Jesus. Support retired teachers and grandparents who are saying 'Yes' to caring for traumatised children and children with disabilities who need one to one family care, love and belonging.



*Emergency foster parents, Cambodia.*

*Photo credit: Markus Koker, Tearfund Ireland*

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Christian Aid are supporting families who have fled conflict and who are now living in overcrowded shelters, mostly without water or electricity.

25-year-old Fatuma is a mother of six children. They lived in Katare village in South Kivu, where both she and her husband worked as farmers to support themselves.

In April, fighting between the Congolese army and a local militia forced Fatuma and her family to flee for their lives. Since fleeing, the family have been living in a relative's house. The house has only two rooms and now occupied by a total of 16 people.

Added to this, travel restrictions

in Eastern Congo have led to an increase in the price of food and goods.

*"Coronavirus is a big worry for me. It now costs 3,000 CDF for one kg of small fish. Before the pandemic, this only cost 2,000 CDF," she says. "Before fleeing my village, my family ate three meals a day but now, we can only afford to eat one meal a day".*

With a population of nearly 90 million people, less than 1 in 20 have access to soap and water at home in DRC, Fatuma's family included.

Like others in the village, the family rely on a nearby well for water to drink and wash with. To help, Christian Aid's local partner provided Fatuma and her family with jerrycans to help them gather and



store water for use at home as well as soap for sanitation. But they want to do more to provide supports and even housing to protect families such as these.

## SIERRA LEONE



In Sierra Leone, Christian Aid is supporting the refurbishment of health clinics alongside community supports and education for women and their partners who are expecting a baby.

Sierra Leone is the most dangerous country in the world in which to give birth.

In an article by the Scottish Herald highlighting the work of Christian Aid in Sierra Leone, a health clinic in the Pujehun District is mentioned where Christian Aid is working: "Like

the other buildings in the village it is made of mud with wooden supports and, as with the rest of the village, there is no running water and no electricity.

In two small, dark and stiflingly hot rooms, nurses Kadiatu Sama One and Veronica Konneh work with next to nothing to bring new life into the world. There is barely enough space in the delivery room for a second person to hold up a torch or swat away mosquitos. There is one bed so if two women are labouring at once, one must lie on the floor."

Let this Christmas be another story of Hope, as Christians not only tell but live the Christmas story and provide welcome and worship to Christ the servant King, through our service to others.

Please support these worthwhile endeavours and help mothers and their children (both biological and foster) be safe and well this Christmas.

To donate go to: <http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give/>  
or send to: Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal (Mother & Child Appeal)

Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

*Thank you*