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# 2024

ANNUAL REPORT







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# DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST,



Dr. Tom Catena, renowned director of Mother of Mercy Hospital, once shared an insightful perspective on joy. He described how happiness changes from hour to hour, buffeted by immediate circumstances, but that joy goes deeper. Joy is derived from living a purposeful life. It is found in overcoming grueling challenges to accomplish meaningful work that touches people's lives.

Our partners on the ground in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains of Sudan do this willingly every day, as an expression of living out their faith. But they don't do it alone. During 2024, you stood with us to confront challenges in some of the most desperate places in today's world. Sudan's civil war roiled into its second year in April, forcing the displacement of nearly 11 million people and worsening an existing famine. Refugees continued to flood South Sudan and other border nations. Many fled to camps within Sudan; others escaped to the Nuba Mountains where famine remains a deadly threat. Most of Sudan's hospitals continue to be closed, and the nation's infrastructure is at a standstill. Reports of war crimes are prevalent.

In South Sudan, the burden of refugees added to the complexities of a nation already struggling with its own food shortage. The number of displaced fleeing to South Sudan has now exceeded 1 million people, straining South Sudan's ability to meet such overwhelming demand.

In the midst of these developments, you stood by steadfastly to provide aid efforts for people in desperate need. You continued to carry families

to safety out of the warzone of Sudan. You sent emergency food supplies to crowded refugee camps in South Sudan, sustaining desperate families who left everything behind.

You sent, and continue to send, shipments of high potency nutrition packets to nourish starving children and families in the Nuba Mountains – people afflicted by war, drought, and famine. You're funding medicine shipments to Mother of Mercy Hospital, one of the few places to still find medical aid in war-torn Sudan.

Within South Sudan, you continue to lay foundations of change for a better future. During 2024 you funded the drilling of wells to bring lifegiving clean water to communities across the country. You brought healthcare to thousands at St. Theresa Hospital in Nzara, making childbirth safer for mothers and infants, and providing new capabilities in eye care and orthopedics.

You rescued victims of violence in Tombura and saved families driven from their homes who fled to Ave Maria Parish. You supported school children and educational initiatives that transform children's

lives and futures. You gave food and medicine to leper communities. And you took care of orphans at the Missionary Sisters of Charity and St. Bakhita Orphanage, where a new home is nearly complete for 150 children and babies.

Your partnership in 2024 achieved further progress in infrastructure, education, and healthcare, and provided crucial emergency aid that saved many lives. We thank God for you at every step, knowing our calling is to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and be constant in prayer. As you continue to partner with us, may you also find deep joy in participating in the challenges and rewards of this life-changing work. In so doing, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace. -Romans 15:13



*N. A. Corkery*  
**Neil Corkery**  
President  
Sudan Relief Fund



**EXPANSIONS AT MOTHER OF MERCY HOSPITAL  
BROUGHT LIFESAVING MEDICAL CARE TO THREE  
TIMES THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THIS YEAR.**



# HEALTHCARE AND MEDICINE

## The Best Medicine

Mother of Mercy Hospital, directed by the unwavering humanitarian and surgeon, Dr. Tom Catena, continues to stand as one of the few hospitals still operating in war-torn Sudan, and the only referral facility for hundreds of miles in the rugged and remote Nuba Mountains. With the continuing surge of refugees perpetuated by the second year of Sudan's civil war, the region continues to be inundated with displaced families. As a result, the hospital now serves a population that has swelled to well over 2 million people – placing an unprecedented demand on its resources.

Your support played a more crucial role than ever in supplying nearly all the medicine used by Mother of Mercy Hospital to treat the escalating humanitarian need – a need made more urgent by the rampant malnourishment from widespread famine, and by injured refugees escaping the violence of war. Your commitment allowed Sudan Relief Fund to ship multiple deliveries of medicine that enabled Dr. Tom and his staff to continue saving lives, and provided medicine for 13 expansion clinics affiliated with Mother of Mercy. These clinics give patients in remote areas access to basic medical treatment closer to home, without the burden of traveling hundreds of miles to the main hospital.

With your partnership, a new pediatric ward was completed, reaching more children with vital healthcare unavailable anywhere else in the region. It was a timely and fortuitous addition, as the children's ward continued to be inundated with severely malnourished children due to the severe famine affecting Sudan. The hospital's maternity ward continues to be the gold standard for providing a safe birth environment for mothers and babies, fighting back against the doleful childbirth mortality rate that has long afflicted the area. The presence of the maternity ward makes that moment of new life a joyous and celebrated experience.

In 2024, Mother of Mercy served 70,000 outpatients, admitted 8,600 patients to the hospital, performed 2,500 surgeries and 1,120 eye related surgeries, delivered 700 babies, including 182 by C-section, and screened 10,000 children for malnutrition – continuing to raise the bar in offering a range of high quality healthcare services to people who have long suffered without this care available.



**Your partnership brings healthcare to remote areas, such as Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan**



**The Safe Motherhood project at St. Theresa Hospital is helping to defeat high childbirth mortality in Nzara**

### **Safeguarding New Life**

A mother should look forward to the birth of her baby – not fear it.

St. Theresa Hospital of Nzara brings medical care and hope to more than 500,000 people, serving a population that extends from South Sudan to the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. Over 10,000 patients found medical help here in 2024 – healthcare that is available nowhere else in the region. The facility offers a surgical theater, X-ray diagnostics, a children’s wing, and a maternity ward that can perform C-sections as well as provide premie care.

We are proud to partner with you to support the Safe Motherhood Project at St. Theresa Hospital, which is on the frontlines of fighting childbirth mortality in South Sudan and protecting mothers and infants. In a country where far too many women still give birth on dirt floors with no medical supervision, the Safe Motherhood Project is saving lives, providing a safe, sterile environment for mothers to bring their babies into the world. Changing lives and futures begins with quality healthcare from the time of birth. During 2024, over 600 mothers experienced safe deliveries, including C-sections, because of this care you provide.

With support from a generous foundation, a visiting orthopedic surgeon was funded this year. In a place where a broken bone left untreated can lead to infection or deformity, the significance of orthopedic care cannot be overestimated. Nor can the importance of essential healthcare for children, many who commonly die before age five in this country from treatable maladies. St. Theresa is fighting to defeat that statistic. We are pleased to have begun construction of a new pediatric ward this year, which is slated for completion in 2025. The steps St. Theresa Hospital of Nzara is taking to

expand healthcare is improving lives and outcomes for thousands of patients every year.

### **Bringing Healthcare to Ave Maria Parish**

In the remote jungle region of Western Equatoria lies Ave Maria Parish, where Father Avelino has long provided refuge for people displaced by violence or natural disaster. This year saw multiple outbreaks of violence in the region, leading to a significant number of internally displaced people fleeing to Ave Maria.

A missionary priest from Spain, Father Avelino welcomes refugees to take solace within the walls of the sturdy church building that offers comfort to the traumatized and destitute. He strives to provide a dignified life for those who arrive, often after losing everything. Children can attend the parish school. Families find an opportunity to start over by receiving tools to garden, and huts to rebuild a sense of family life. Fathers who lost their livelihoods can receive training in a new trade.

One of the most treasured features of Ave Maria Parish is the St. Peter’s Health Clinic, which offers medical care in this remote region. With the nearest full hospital being a nine hour drive away on dilapidated roads, the presence of a medical care clinic onsite has been a Godsend to this community.

This year we also began planning construction of an additional facility at the parish – a dental center which will bring a form of healthcare that until now has been completely out of reach to this area. The facility will serve families and children of Ave Maria Parish, and with the likelihood of people traveling from other areas to receive treatment, the dental clinic will benefit thousands of people in this remote outpost.



# CLEAN WATER AND HUMANITARIAN AID

## When Every Moment Counts

Responding to needs for humanitarian aid can often be urgent in nature, and we are grateful for the resources to answer those urgent cries when they happen. No one anticipated the sudden violence early in 2024 that upended hundreds of families in Western Equatoria, South Sudan, causing a wave of internally displaced people to flee to Ave Maria Parish, where Father Avelino sprang into action to help.

For three days, families running for their lives traversed jungle terrain carrying small children and any belongings they could grab in the moment. Most came with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. One young woman was pregnant when she was forced to flee, and gave birth to her baby right after arriving at the parish. She lamented having nothing to clothe or wrap her new infant in.

With your assistance, we provided emergency food and shelter, plus basic cooking and eating utensils and simple gardening tools, so families could begin to take care of themselves. Father Avelino described how families felt solace camping near the security and comfort of the church that stands in the center of the community. He expressed gratitude for the gardening tools and seeds that would enable families to eat when the harvest time arrives. Sudan Relief Fund supplied additional aid to the parish in December.

## Water: A Matter of Life or Death

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation – Isaiah 12:3*

Though it's a resource we primarily take for granted in the developed world, the presence of clean water cannot be underestimated for the life and success of any community. Clean water puts an end to drinking the multitude of diseases that are rampant in contaminated water – diseases that kill children every year in South Sudan, like cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and many others. Clean water protects women and girls from the dangers of long, isolated trips in search of water, hauling up to 50 gallon containers for miles. Clean water enhances sanitation, further preventing disease. Healthy parents can work and healthy children can attend school. Even livestock benefit. The health and vibrance of a community hums when a clean water well is at the center of it.

In 2024 alone, you funded nearly two dozen clean water wells and sanitation projects, with more on the way, bringing healthy drinking water and enhanced sanitation to communities across South Sudan. The benefits of these health-giving wells extend to generations, making it one of the most effective long term ways to transform a community.



**Clean water supports healthy children and benefits entire communities**



**Your support brought more than 24 wells this year to communities without clean water**



## Remember the Orphan

*I rescued the poor who cried for help and the fatherless who had no one to help them – Job 29:12*

Remembering the orphan is at the forefront of Sudan Relief Fund's mission, and nothing reflects our calling from God more than the mandate to look after orphans in their need. We are thrilled to share how you made it possible to build a new home in 2024 for more than 150 children at St. Bakhita Orphanage – children who were moved from a dangerous conflict zone over a year ago. When the vicinity became unstable, Sister Bianca Bii – who has directed the orphanage for decades – and all the children were evacuated to Nzara, where their new home is now nearly complete.

The new facility contains dorm rooms with bunk beds for girls and boys, a kitchen, a multi-purpose gathering area, and room for staff. The children attend school nearby, and receive quality medical care from St. Theresa Hospital of Nzara, a Sudan



**Sister Bianca Bii is the heart and soul of St. Bakhita Orphanage**

Relief Fund sponsored facility. The faithful Sister Bianca Bii oversees the orphanage with the assistance of a local order of nuns. The home you have given them continues to care for very young children, including two babies who arrived in 2024.

These children receive not only physical provision. Sister Bianca reminds them they are loved and unique children of God, and they are not alone in this world. Thank you for partnering with us to provide a home and be an extended family to each of these children, giving them a future they wouldn't have without you.

Sudan Relief Fund is also proud to support the Missionary Sisters of Charity – the only facility in all of Rumbek that receives and cares for orphaned babies. For years, these dedicated Sisters have taken in some of the tiniest, most malnourished infants, even on death's door. Their dedication and meticulous care saves many fragile young lives. The Sisters also help young mothers in crisis pregnancies who have nowhere to go, some who've become pregnant through assault and violence.

This year our donor community expanded this facility to increase its capacity to help more young girls and orphaned children, constructing a multi-purpose area where all the residents can gather in one room for meals or worship – activities previously done outside because there was no other option. Your partnership is bringing care, hope, and a new future to these little ones who are precious in God's sight.



**A bed of their own - a safe new home was constructed for 150 children at St. Bakhita Orphanage**



**Missionary Sisters of Charity provided more orphans and abandoned infants a safe home**



# EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

*"Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime"*

Sudan Relief Fund understands that to effect long term change requires tackling a society's problems at their foundational level – treating causes and not merely symptoms, with a focus on sustainability. That's why building the pillars of a culture like infrastructure, education, citizenship, and faith, are essential elements for long term success.

## Developing Young Minds

Supporting educational initiatives is one of the most effective ways to lift families from poverty, improve health, and encourage peaceful conflict resolution. The gift of education transforms students' lives and carries forward a plethora of benefits that transfer to future generations of children.

This year we were pleased to help build schools for children in remote areas greatly in need of facilities. These projects included building the Redeemer Primary School and Nursery, constructing a security wall to protect students around the Catholic University in Juba, and building a water well at the Bishop

Abangite School in Yambio. We also supported "To Move Mountains," a faith based school in the Nuba Mountains that uses innovative methods to educate children in war zones, equipping them with both academic skills and practical life skills to navigate their unconventional environment.

We were also pleased to provide a vehicle for the Brothers of Christian Instruction in Riimenze through a generous foundation grant, to assist with the many needs of the primary and secondary school in this distant location where transportation is expensive and scarce.



**Your support is bringing education and opportunity to children in remote parts of South Sudan**



# FAMINE RELIEF FOR REFUGEES

*"Sudan is the greatest humanitarian tragedy in the world." – Dr. Tom*

## **Saving a Generation from Starvation**

2024 saw one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes unfold in Sudan, as widespread famine raged across most of the country with the ferocity and deadliness of the civil war. Those who were not killed in the fighting escaped only to find themselves facing a new risk to their life from starvation.

A lethal combination of drought, pestilence, and civil war brought the cultivation of crops to a standstill and led to a severe food shortage, one that Dr. Tom – who has endured wartime in Sudan before – described as “the worst I’ve seen in more than sixteen and a half years here.” Heartbreaking accounts of people boiling leaves and eating bugs to survive dominated headlines and illustrated the severity of the crisis.

Our supporters immediately answered the call. You sprang to action to meet the skyrocketing need of refugee families arriving destitute into the Nuba Mountains, or to refugee camps in northern South Sudan. Your support is sending shipments of emergency food, making nothing short of a lifesaving difference to people facing the imminent threat of starvation.

Many organizations pulled out of Sudan this year due to the severity of the conditions, leaving gaping holes in the need for humanitarian aid. **You made it possible for Sudan Relief Fund to stay the course and increase levels of assistance.** With our

networks on the ground in Sudan and South Sudan, and 26 years of experience delivering relief supplies into difficult areas, together we are saving lives in what’s being acknowledged as the worst humanitarian crisis in today’s world. We are grateful for your partnership in this vital effort.

When Dr. Tom alerted us to the urgent need in Nuba for *Plumpy’Nut* – a nutritional paste made from peanuts, milk, and crucial vitamins and minerals used by NGOs worldwide to nourish starving children – our network of supporters came through with overwhelming support.

*Plumpy’Nut* is inexpensive, requires no refrigeration, has a long shelf life, and can be eaten right out of the packet to rehabilitate starving children and families. Its high potency is extremely effective in treating victims of malnourishment.


In 2024, SRF coordinated the delivery of over 17,000 cartons of nutrient-rich *Plumpy’Nut* to help feed over 33,000 children in the Nuba Mountains — and more will be delivered in 2025. In a fortuitous turn of events, fighting shifted enough to allow delivery of aid into previously inaccessible parts of Nuba, enabling us to address the critical threat of starvation.

“It’s an absolute life saver,” says Dr. Tom. “All our malnourished children are taking it.” We thank you for joining us in this effort and for saving many children’s lives this year from the preventable tragedy of starvation in a modern world.



***Plumpy’Nut* shipments fed over 33,000 malnourished children at risk of starving in Sudan’s severe famine**



A close-up photograph of a woman with a red headscarf and a plaid shirt holding a young child. The child is looking directly at the camera while eating from a white and orange packet. The scene is warmly lit, and the woman's face is partially visible in the upper right.

**FIGHTING STARVATION ON THE FRONTLINES.  
YOUR SUPPORT REACHED ACROSS THE WORLD  
TO FEED WIDOWS AND CHILDREN.**



# FINANCIALS

## Such a Time as This

2024 was a year filled with dire humanitarian challenges for Sudan and South Sudan, but also a year where the answer to that cry was swift and abundant. Having achieved a banner year in raising humanitarian aid to save lives in very desperate circumstances was at once rewarding and humbling. Remembering the people who make it possible to carry that help to the front lines was a privilege, and our great responsibility, throughout 2024. The lives saved and hope brought to dismal places are priceless accomplishments that offer a constant reminder of our purpose.

Throughout 2024, your steadfast support enabled Sudan Relief Fund to deliver critical aid to thousands of people enduring civil war, famine, and displacement in Sudan and South Sudan. Amid a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis, the impact of your generosity proved more vital than ever. Urgent needs required immediate action, and thanks to your help, we provided lifesaving *Plumpy'Nut* nutrition shipments to tens of thousands of children — an effort already reaching more children into the new year. We look forward to detailing the full breadth of these efforts in our 2025 report.

In total, thanks to the remarkable generosity shown all year and an additional outpouring of support at year's end, donations reached an inspiring **\$9.2 million**, ensuring we can continue responding

swiftly to urgent needs and expanding our programs as we enter 2025. Thank you for standing with us — and with the people of Sudan and South Sudan — every step of the way.

We are especially thankful to members of the Sudan Relief Fund Mercy Society, who continually demonstrated their commitment to improving the lives of people in Sudan and South Sudan through personal contributions of \$1,000 or more during 2024. In addition, Sudan Relief Fund cannot extend enough gratitude to our numerous foundation partners, whose dedication and compassionate support continue to make this lifesaving work possible, reaching desperate lives with transformation and hope.

*Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.*  
-Isaiah 1:17



- **EDUCATION & CIVIL SOCIETY: \$1,264,724**
- **HEALTHCARE & MEDICINE: \$2,010,964**
- **CLEAN WATER & HUMANITARIAN AID: \$2,168,266**

**TOTAL IMPACT: \$5,443,954**





**FREEDOM TO DREAM. YOUR SUPPORT  
FREES HER TO IMAGINE A FUTURE  
WITHOUT HUNGER OR POVERTY.**



# MEET THE TEAM

## NEIL CORKERY

President



Since joining Sudan Relief Fund in 2005, Neil has traveled frequently and extensively to South Sudan, developing close working relationships with bishops and numerous groups working in the country, especially: Solidarity with South Sudan; Aid to the Church in Need; Catholic Medical Missionary Board; and various religious congregations such as the Comboni Missionaries, the Jesuits, the Congregation of Christian Brothers, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), and various Franciscan communities. In his travels

throughout South Sudan, Neil has met with and learned from caregivers, doctors, relief aid workers, and local civilians to better understand the country's most urgent needs and challenges. With support from donors, Neil is dedicated to providing help, peace, and hope for the future by striving to fulfill immediate needs and aiding in authentic, integral human development necessary for long-term growth and stability.

## MATT SMITH

Senior Vice President



A graduate of Baylor University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Matt's entire professional career has been spent in the nonprofit sector out of a desire to "help the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). After spending years as a fundraising consultant for a variety of nonprofits, he joined Sudan Relief Fund in 2022 with a goal to bring lasting change to the world's newest country. In his role as Senior Vice President, Matt serves as an advocate for the vision and mission of Sudan Relief Fund and oversees fundraising strategy.

He considers it a privilege to bring individuals into a close relationship with the organization by connecting their giving to Sudan Relief Fund's work on the ground in South Sudan. In addition, Matt works closely with the President to cultivate partner relationships both domestically and internationally. Above all, he finds joy in listening and learning from others.



## DAVID DETTONI

Executive Vice President



Before joining Sudan Relief Fund as Executive Vice President, David served with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a United States Federal

Government commission created by Congress to advise the president and Congress on policies to promote international religious freedom. Mr. Dettoni has led many official delegations to the African continent, including to countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan, and Eritrea; he has developed a unique expertise on understanding persecution, the religious dimension to ongoing conflicts in the region, and to religiously-motivated violence/terrorism. He also served as the co-staff director of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

## FRED OTIENO

Program Coordinator, South Sudan



Fred Otieno hails from Kenyan nationality and is a former religious brother. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Human Development, and a Master's Degree in Project Planning and

Management. Since 2021, Fred has overseen Sudan Relief Fund projects in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio. During this time, he has been responsible for identifying the different interventions of various projects and linking them with Sudan Relief Fund. Fred currently oversees projects in other dioceses of South Sudan as well. He says, "Sudan Relief Fund creates a positive transformation in the lives of marginalized people, thereby promoting their human dignity. This is a true manifestation of Christ discipleship."

## KATE MELLON

Director of Development



Kate Mellon is the Director of Development for Sudan Relief Fund, where she has served for more than ten years, liaising with donors and managing critical functions of the organization to further

its work and illuminate the plight of the South Sudanese. Kate has a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, which she earned from George Mason University. She has spent considerable time traveling across South Sudan to gain a broad perspective of the projects funded and the scope of Sudan Relief Fund's work in this nation. Committed to the mission, Kate finds it rewarding to be an integral part of an organization that does so much to save lives and help suffering people in Sudan and South Sudan.