



SCIAF

Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland



Mass in DR Congo



2023 Prayer Guide

“Devote yourselves to prayer”

Colossians 4:2

Taking time to reflect

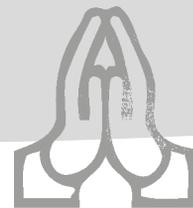
New Year's resolutions may not be your thing, but this time of year lends itself to reflect on the year that has been, and to look to the year ahead. Reflecting on the past and looking ahead can be a very worthwhile and spiritual activity. We can learn from the past and give God thanks for the good things that have happened. We can ask for God's peace and healing for things that we have struggled with, or for the times we have been hurt. We can also rest in the knowledge that God cares deeply for us and does not want any harm to come to us in the year ahead.

Each one of us will have experienced 2022 in a different way. Joy and blessing mixed with grief and loss. There will have been times of challenge and encouragement, times of regret maybe, but know this: God's grace is more than sufficient to remove any guilt and help us move forward into a year with hope.

“I can do all things through him (Jesus) who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13

Mass in DR Congo



The power of prayer

None of us knows what lies ahead in 2023 but we do know that prayer is given to us so that we can communicate with God. We are asked in 1 Peter 5:7 to “Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you”.

Prayer is powerful and important to the success of SCIAF's work with our partners across the world.

SCIAF is asking that you join us this year, and as Colossians 4:12 says, to “devote yourselves to prayer”.

We'd like to help support your prayers for the work of SCIAF by providing monthly reflections and prayer points for some of our projects that are empowering families to transform their lives.

We're also providing longer reflections for each month of 2023. All you need do is sign up to our monthly prayer emails, and you'll be sent a special prayer resource each month.

Sign up for our monthly prayer resource at sciaf.org.uk/pray

Special thanks to Father David Stewart SJ who will be providing many of the reflections across 2023.

Please turn over to see the focus for January and for a summary of the year ahead.

January

Colombia

Project: Rugby for Peace

Partner: Fundación Buen Punto

Life in Chocó is hard – not only is it the poorest region in Colombia, but it is also bearing the brunt of climate damage, coronavirus and illegal armed conflict. For young people, few opportunities exist, and many resort to joining gangs and militia groups to earn money and make their lives bearable.

But, for the first time ever, we are using Rugby as the main tool in one of our overseas development projects. Working with our local partners Fundación Buen Punto we are harnessing the power of sport to transform the lives of young people and their families.

Let us...

- Give thanks that Rugby for Peace is teaching young people and their families the skills they need to survive so, when the challenges of life tackle them to the ground, they have the resilience to get back up and play.
- Pray for peace in Chocó and for safety as our partners serve in difficult circumstances.
- Pray for the young people who often feel they have no future, for those who feel they have no way out and turn to the illegal drugs trade to make ends meet.



Learn more about the project at sciaf.org.uk/rugbyforpeace and be guided in prayer by visiting sciaf.org.uk/pray

Jhonathan, Colombia

February

Democratic Republic of Congo

Project: Supporting survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)

Partners: Centre Olame

DR Congo remains a very fragile state, devastated by one of Africa's worst civil wars which left over six million people dead. Following the Rwandan genocide and the influx of violent groups into Eastern DR Congo, multiple armed groups have terrorised the population and sexual violence is a major problem. Over 80% of the population live in poverty, and communities are at particular risk from disasters like changes in the weather, violence and conflict, and outbreaks of disease like Ebola.

Thanks to your generosity, we're supporting over 2,300 survivors and their families to access medical care, psychological and legal support, and financial services. We're also tackling the underlying causes of gender-based violence, by educating local community and faith leaders.

Let us...

- Give thanks that the Scottish Catholic community responded to this need and that in its first year, SCIAF partners have been able to support over 2,300 survivors of SGBV and their families.
- Pray that local communities in DR Congo are changing their attitudes and behaviours through education, therefore tackling the underlying causes of SGBV.
- Pray for our partners at Centre Olame: that God will grant them safety, wisdom and strength to keep going in difficult circumstances.



March/April



Zambia

Project: Acting against hunger

Partner: Caritas Kabwe

Zambia is a beautiful country, home to one of the seven natural wonders of the world – The Victoria Falls. It is, unfortunately, also a country where half the population are living below the poverty line. Every day, families across Zambia wake up hungry not knowing what they'll be forced to do to survive, or how long their children will live.

We're working with our partners Caritas Kabwe to help families with seeds, tools and training to start small vegetable gardens at home and grow more food in their fields. We're also supporting families with livestock and providing business training and literacy classes, particularly for women, so they can transform their own lives.

Catherine and
her grandchildren,
Zambia



Caritas Kabwe staff,
Zambia

“What people need are skills and training – the knowledge to save themselves. We use donations to train; to give people skills.”

Rose Waswa, Project Co-ordinator, Caritas Kabwe

In this Lenten season, let us...

- Give thanks for project workers like Rose who are encouraging people every day to see their gifts and talents, and to use them to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Pray for parents who see their children go hungry, who feel that all hope is gone.
- Pray that the world takes climate justice seriously and that we see fewer families devastated by extreme weather.

May

Colombia

Project: The River Guardians

Partner: Siembra

The river Atrato and the Chocó region in Colombia face many challenges, including environmental and social devastation. The Atrato is being destroyed by illegal gold mining, and communities are losing their traditional livelihoods as the region's resources are depleted and degraded.

Through our local partners, we work with local Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and Mestizo rural communities, strengthening their capacity to defend, protect, and make sustainable use of their natural resources.

Let us...

- Give thanks for the life-giving nature of water. For all we use it for: to clean, cook and drink. And for the water in our seas, lakes and rivers that gives life.
- Pray for the River Guardians who continue to defend, protect and make sustainable use of natural resources.
- Pray that Governments and multi-national companies that are fixated on profits may look to the interests of people and planet.

Playing in
the River Atrato,
Colombia

June

South Sudan

Project: Children Together

Partner: Sudan Evangelical Mission (SEM)

South Sudan is the world's newest nation, but it is also one of the poorest. It is in the midst of a devastating humanitarian crisis, where extreme weather, political instability and global food issues have made access to food extremely difficult. Around 70 percent of the population are facing extreme hunger. Children with disabilities are the most vulnerable in society.

We've been working in South Sudan for over three decades. Working with a number of local partners, we're getting life-saving food, medicine and shelter to thousands of families, promoting peace and reconciliation, and helping women affected by domestic violence. Throughout the decades we've had a specific focus on education, improving access to school for those least likely to attend, such as girls and those with disabilities. Today, with the help of SEM, we're specifically supporting those living with disabilities, through schooling or the setting up of a business, so they can live an active life in their community.

Let us...

- Give thanks for our partner SEM, who enables us to respond and alleviate the impact of poverty in South Sudan. May God continue to bless their work.
- Pray for peace in South Sudan, and for the country's leaders that they do the right thing to bring true and lasting harmony.
- Pray for the people of South Sudan who have suffered and still suffer from the impacts of conflict, displacement, the changing climate, economic shocks and serious illness.
- Pray in particular for people with disabilities. Break down the stigma that still exists in many communities. We pray for an attitude of inclusion and equality.



July



Ethiopia

Project: Food security

Partners: Ethiopian Catholic Church and sister agencies CAFOD and Trocaire

Ethiopia is experiencing a devastating humanitarian crisis as a result of heavy fighting in the country's Tigray region, and extreme weather which means millions of families do not have enough to eat. Many people have lost their lives, over five million people have fled their homes, and more than 13.6 million people require emergency food. These major crises have set back several years of strong development progress as Ethiopians have sought to establish a stable political system and thriving economy after years of civil war.

SCIAF has been working in Ethiopia for almost four decades, working in partnership with our sister agencies CAFOD and Trocaire, and alongside our local partners and the Ethiopian Catholic Church. As an important part of the local community, the Church is well placed to provide both long-term support to farming families, and emergency humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter and other essentials, to those people suffering from extreme poverty, conflict and food shortages.

Let us...

- Give thanks that the Church has a long history in Ethiopia providing long-term support to millions of families and are well placed to respond to emergency humanitarian assistance.
- Pray for project workers in Ethiopia and the millions of people displaced because of conflict. Pray for their safety; pray for peace.
- Pray for the millions of people who are without access to food. Pray that the Church can continue to provide emergency response where required and help families over the longer-term.

August



Scotland

Throughout the year, SCIAF visits schools and parishes, providing opportunities to learn about global issues and to share how Christ's love compels SCIAF to respond in the way we do through our amazing partners.

SCIAF's development education programme reflects a lifelong learning approach to ensure that the Catholic community of all ages here in Scotland can learn, pray for, and act on global injustices. Resources can be downloaded and shared from our website and schools and parishes can request workshops led by SCIAF speakers.

Let us...

- Give thanks that education and prayer has always been a part of SCIAF's mission from its inception.
- Pray for the development education work of SCIAF. Pray that schools and parishes will use resources and invite SCIAF speakers to deliver workshops.
- Pray for our children and young people as they start a new academic year. Pray that they will continue to grow in their faith. Pray that they continue to grow as global citizens, looking to serve others.



SCIAF workshop with St Ninian's & St Cuthbert's church, Hamilton

September



A focus on our emergency work

Project: Emergency humanitarian response

Partner: Caritas International

Eleven years on, the Syrian civil war continues and, while fighting has reduced, the impact of the conflict remains devastating. Almost the entire population of Syria (80%) now lives below the poverty line and an estimated three million have some form of disability or lifelong impairment due to a combination of violence and a broken health system.

SCIAF has been in Syria and surrounding countries since 2016 – and we're still there, ensuring essential access to food, water and safe places to stay for the most vulnerable people. Together with our partners, we're helping families to rebuild homes and livelihoods damaged and destroyed in the violent conflict, and helping refugees to rebuild their lives across Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

SCIAF is proud to be part of the global Caritas network, enabling us to respond quickly and effectively to humanitarian crises around the world, wherever there's a need. While we don't want to see climate emergencies and conflict break out, we are heartened by the caring response of the Scottish Catholic community as you continually give to help people in desperate situations.

Let us...

- Give thanks that, with other Caritas agencies across the world, the Catholic Church are able to keep responding to the needs of our sisters and brothers in humanitarian crises.
- Pray for peace in Syria and surrounding countries. Pray for safety for those that seek to help others.
- Pray for children who have lived in temporary shelter for their entire childhood. Pray for them as they struggle with trauma and reduced education.

October



Rwanda

Project: Improved climate change resilience

Partner: Commission Diocesaine Justice aux Paix de Kigali (CDJP Kigali)

Rwanda continues to recover from the genocide that ripped the country apart in the mid-1990s, leaving high levels of trauma and sexual violence. A small, landlocked, hilly country, it is a third of the size of Scotland but with a population three times larger. Most of the population are rural and young. Although it's made remarkable progress in recent decades, over half of the population live on less than \$2 a day, and struggle to grow enough food to survive.

We've been working in Rwanda since 1994, supporting families to grow more food, start small businesses, access clean water and adapt to climate change. We're also tackling sexual and gender-based violence against women and marginalised people, providing services like medical care, trauma counselling and legal aid, and working with women to build their self-esteem and confidence. This particular project is helping build sustainable agriculture and climate change resilience for farming families.

Let us...

- Give thanks for the strong relationship between SCIAF and our Rwandan partners over the years.
- Pray for all Rwandan people suffering from deep wounds, that they may recover. Bring your healing on them.
- Pray for peace in the region of the Great Lakes so that Rwandans can live in peace with all their neighbours.
- Pray for leaders. Help them direct the Rwandan population to the path of real and effective development, built on a just, green and peaceful society.



Cambodia

Project: Increasing income and food security

Partner: Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) and Caritas Cambodia

Almost a fifth of Cambodia's population live below the poverty line. Extreme weather has made flooding and drought regular events, affecting livelihoods like agriculture, forestry and fishing. Democracy and human rights are also an issue, as are illegal fishing and logging that have depleted natural resources. Farmers struggle in the face of industrial land-grabbing and deforestation. Cambodia was hit particularly hard by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the country's economic growth, and reversing some of the progress made in recent years.

We've been working in Cambodia since 1986, helping vulnerable communities to stand up for their rights, protect their rivers, forests and land, and adapt the way they farm and fish to better cope with climate change. We're helping to promote the role and voice of women and indigenous groups in society, and support our partners to advocate for the rights of the poorest in society.

Let us...

- Give thanks for DPA and Caritas Cambodia who are working directly with communities affected by climate change, and those impacted by illegal fishing, logging, and land-grabbing.
- Pray that progress will be made and that the poorest will not be forgotten in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pray in particular for indigenous groups and women that their voices are heard and their rights respected.



Malawi

Project: Improving the Lives of People with Albinism in Malawi

Partner: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)

People with albinism are one of the most marginalised groups in Malawi. Since 2014, Malawi has recorded over 200 cases of reported attacks, abductions, and killings of people with albinism. Many people with albinism live in fear, and don't know who to turn to for protection or support. They face discrimination in all areas of life – at school, in their communities, and in the world of work.

However, thanks to you, we've been working to help people with albinism live lives free from fear and violence. Through CCJP, we're working to end stigma and discrimination. By educating local communities, we're tackling the myths surrounding albinism and making sure people feel safe in their homes. We're also providing legal support and education for people with albinism, to make sure they know what their rights are and how they can report any violation of these rights.

As we head into this season of Advent, let us...

- Give thanks that huge steps have been made through this work and that many people with albinism are now living without fear. Give thanks that people with albinism are represented in community decision-making.
- Pray for the many people with albinism that still live in fear of violence and are discriminated against because of stigma and myths.
- Pray for the CCJP staff who work tirelessly to bring about justice. Pray for strength and wisdom as they carry out their tasks.

Mass in Zambia



sciaf.org.uk/pray

“One of the most effective ways we have to help is that of prayer. Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters.”

Pope Francis

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PR. Tel: 0141 354 5555.

Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.

Photos by Colin Hattersley, Paul McSherry, Simon Murphy, Santiago Ramírez.

 **Caritas**
Internationalis

