

MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS



irish jesuits international
ij

INSIDE

- Lina thanks you from Mindagulos
- Violet's Joy this Christmas
- Let it GLOW
- Agal looks forward to Christmas
- Christmas Gift Catalogue

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

From Fr John



The accounts of the **women** in this Christmas newsletter challenge us in many ways - to not only recognise and be **thankful for what we have**, but to have the drive to challenge and **fight the injustices** in our world.

We hear from Violet, who lives in Kangemi slums in Kenya, a place known well to me. I spent 6 years here at a Jesuit run parish. It was my very first mission as a Jesuit priest in Kenya. Violet explains to us, how she **dreams of being a journalist, being compelled to tell the truth**. This not only sobers us but inspires us to have the same conviction and courage Violet has, to speak out against the structures and systems that perpetuate the inequalities. While the injustice affects us all, **it is those on the margins who suffer the consequences of it the most**.

The women share with us, how they will be **celebrating Christmas Day** – in Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines and South Sudan. While we may live in different parts of the world, our aspirations are still the same –to share the day with loved ones. Violet's mother, Rehema tells us how her village elder will bring her flour and cooking oil, which she will share with her neighbours.

Lina tells us how **her son is thriving in the Philippines**, with the gift of the school lunch. It is humbling to see how your generosity is directly affecting a child like Lina's.

The accounts of these women underline how an action in Ireland can impact on a person's life overseas – the closeness of our lives, and the similarity in what we desire – togetherness with those we love.

I will celebrate Christmas Day this year with my elderly community in Milltown Park. We have Mass together on Christmas Day, have dinner together and sit around chatting.

On St. Stephen's Day I visit my family, neighbours and friends in Co. Limerick and Tipperary.

As I was sitting down to write this editorial, one of our supporters Sheila in Tipperary phoned to give a donation. Her words of warmth have summed it up for me **"it's good to be able to make a difference in somebody's life"** and she couldn't be more right. Christmas is a chance to share what we have with others – in places where a lot more can be done with even the smallest of donations. A little can make a huge difference.

I wish you a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year 2025.

Thank you for all your support throughout 2024.

Yours,
Fr John K Guiney SJ
Director

Lina thanks you from Mindagulos

As many families in Mindagulos are unable to afford nutritious meals, Christmas dinner is a luxury most can't afford. Lina Bocalas, a mother of seven, shares, "We don't prepare special food for Christmas because we don't have money. The best meals we get are in the school."

Your support is enabling a school **provide children with one nutritious meal a day**, five days a week.

"This program has changed my children's lives. Before, they were underweight, but now they are healthier, and going to school every day with excitement. The feeding program gives them food they don't get at home, like milk. It inspires them, and they've also become more responsible by learning about proper garbage disposal." *Lina*

Because of you, children in Mindagulos are not only growing stronger but also building better futures. In just two months, there has been an average weight gain of 1.97 kg among the children, a clear sign of improved health.

Lina hopes that with your continued support, **this program can grow and help even more children.** "I want this to continue because, even in times of crisis, our children have food to eat," she says.

Your support hasn't stopped there - **you've also helped fund a water program which gives a rural**



Lina's son having his meal at APC feeding program

community access to clean water. Lina shares that now she doesn't have to walk long distances to get water for her family. Lina gratefully shares,

"Now we can easily get the water we need for our daily needs. We're so thankful for the Jesuit community and those who help us."

Your generosity is making a profound difference. By continuing to give gifts like these, you are directly impacting the health and future of children in Mindagulos. Thank you for being a part of this transformation!

This Christmas, Give a Gift That Changes Lives



School Lunch

This gift will give a child like Lina's one meal a day for one week because no child should learn in hunger.

€20



Violet's Joy this Christmas

This Christmas season is a time to reflect on the blessings that have come from people like you.

Violet is 15 years old and living in Kangemi slums, Nairobi. Her life has transformed due to your kindness and support.

When Violet's father passed away, her mother, Rehema, was left raising eight children and one grandchild. Her family struggled to meet even the most basic of needs. Violet joined the Jesuit run *Upendo Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Program* when **her family's financial difficulties made attending school impossible.**

Through the gift of **Educate a Child**, Violet was able to receive tailored primary tuition to enable her to enter mainstream education at St Joseph's Primary School, medical support, counselling and school feeding.

"I am happy that Violet was enrolled in Upendo. If it wasn't for Upendo, Violet might be like other girls in Kangemi—caught up in drugs, prostitution, or early marriages. But instead, she is in school, and that is something to be truly thankful for." Rehema, Violet's mother.

Rehema's burden, like that of many families in Kangemi, is heavy. Extreme poverty meant that her first **four children never had the opportunity to go to school**, a reality that still haunts her. But because of people like you, her daughter Violet now has hope.

Violet receives more than just an education—your support ensures she has a meal at school each day, something her family cannot always provide at home.



Violet's family lives in a small, single-room house made of iron sheets, where they sleep, cook, and eat together.

"We only have one meal a day. But with Upendo, I know Violet won't go hungry at school," her Mother, Rehema, shares.

Violet's dreams are now bigger than ever, and that's all thanks to you. When she talks about her education, her face lights up with hope.

"Education will help me achieve my goals. My dream is to become a journalist and tell the world the truth," Violet shares confidently.

Beyond her career aspirations, she dreams of building a house for her family and ensuring they have enough to eat every day. These dreams are possible because of your kindness and generosity.

"Christmas gives me hope," Violet says with a smile. **"It brings joy to my family and makes me believe that things will change."**

Even in their struggles, Violet's family embodies the true spirit of Christmas. Rehema shares how they will celebrate this Christmas: **"A village elder will bring us gifts like flour or cooking oil, and we will share what we have with our neighbours."**

This Christmas, Give a Gift That Changes Lives



Educate a Child

Your gift will support a vulnerable child with primary education, medical support, counselling and school feeding for one school term in Kenya and Nigeria.

€200





Let it GLOW

Mary Henry facilitates the GLOW Program in South Sudan – **Girls Learn their Own Worth (GLOW)**. She graduated from the Jesuit Loyola Secondary School (LSS) in Wau following her state exams in Senior 4, and got a place on the school's 2-year internship program, which helps students get into employment.

Trained by a retired **Irish principal, Eilis McDonald**, in facilitating the GLOW module, Mary has been facilitating sessions on **adolescence and menstrual health management in South Sudan** across the 9 Jesuit schools and institutes. Accompanied by her colleague, Emmanuel Loboka, who facilitates the Boys & Adolescence module, they've facilitated sessions for 814 students (395 boys and 419 girls) since September.

The GLOW Program also assists students with **Dignity Kits** (bucket, soap, etc) and **GLOW Pads**. These reusable pads are made at the Tailoring Department at LSS Wau. Since many adolescent girls can't afford disposable pads, reusable pads are in high demand, and **crucial if you don't want to miss days at school**. Girls already have so many challenges in South Sudan, so **getting an equal chance to education is**

Above: Senior 4 students during their national exams in Wau, South Sudan

one of the problems we address. Caroline Sanga, who runs the Jesuit South Sudan Development Office, came up with the name GLOW and has been instrumental on turning it into a program that would affect positive change for girls.

“As an LSS alumni, Mary is deeply committed to school's mission, playing a key role in administration and the education of other LSS students in menstrual hygiene. She's a great asset to LSS and the broader Jesuit mission in South Sudan.” Caroline Sanga

So far, Mary has worked with the students on gathering **119 questionnaires** to establish a baseline on the impact menstrual health currently has on the female students. Following 2 years of the GLOW Program, the same survey will be conducted again to measure its impact.

Students in rural areas find it very difficult to access disposable pads, and some have to resort to using leaves. Given a girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth, than finish secondary school, the challenges facing girls is already immense. The



Mary on Voice of Hope Radio 98FM in Wau, South Sudan

GLOW Program is one way your support is making a meaningful change in the youngest country in the world as it celebrates its 13th birthday.

We ask Mary:

What do you love most about the GLOW Program?

“It’s ability and interest in standing with women, and girls in particular.”

What makes you a good facilitator of the GLOW Program?

Mary laughs, “I used to get into so much trouble when I was a student at LSS. I was always challenging the teachers, challenging what is needed at the school. Turns out, that energy for life is serving me well. I am able to connect with the youth across the Jesuit schools in South Sudan in a way others can’t, talk with them, and accompany them through their challenges. **Talking on the radio, has given me the chance to reach those even beyond the Jesuit schools.** It’s such an opportunity... when other girls and **women find it difficult to get that platform to talk about issues affecting them personally.**”

How will you be celebrating Christmas this year?

“Well, there’s nothing big in my program for Christmas Day. I will be home with my parent and my siblings. I’ll go to church in the morning. If the Salesian Sisters have a Christmas chorus, I’ll go join them. Then **I’ll just stay at home, eat cookies and go visit my relatives.**”

Agal looks forward to Christmas

“My name is Agal Yunuwa, I am 13 years old and I am in Junior Secondary School in Askira Uba, Borno State.

My parents are both farmers with seven children. Because of the economic hardship in the country, sending me and my siblings to school has not been easy for my parents.

The **Girls for Girls (G4G) project** has helped me and many girls in the community a lot. The project has given girls like me support. In my school, we were given **school uniforms, school shoes, books, pen, pencils and other learning materials.** The project also gave us some items for our personal use like

sanitary pads, body cream, soaps, toilet tissues, antiseptic, hair combs and other things. These items they gave us, is to help us to keep our bodies clean. **We were happy to get the sanitary pads, since most of our parents cannot afford to buy us pads.**

In the school, they trained our teachers and some parents on safe schools and gave our teachers some teaching materials like textbooks and a class register.



The project has also made our classrooms better. **Two classrooms that were in bad shape were painted** and now we can have classes in a beautiful looking classroom that is better and stronger.

Other girls and I are being trained in other skills too, some learnt beadmaking, hat making, tailoring. I learnt tailoring and now I can make simple clothes for myself and if I continue to learn I hope to become self employed by the time I finish secondary school. I can hope for things like that now and I'm so grateful!

I love Christmas very much because it is a time that we all stay home to celebrate with my parents and siblings. There's no school and no farming and though my parents don't have much we get to spend time together and visit our relatives and share

what we have together. I am looking forward to the Christmas celebration.

I am happy to be part of the G4G and I hope that more girls in community can benefit too," shares Agal.

Violence caused by Boko Haram, in North-Eastern Nigeria killed tens of thousands, displaced millions of people, damaged the country's economy and led to the deterioration of the education system. The gift of a **School Kit**, has made a lasting change for many students like Agal in the Girls4Girls program.

By purchasing a school kit you can do something amazing and transform the life of a child now and for the future!

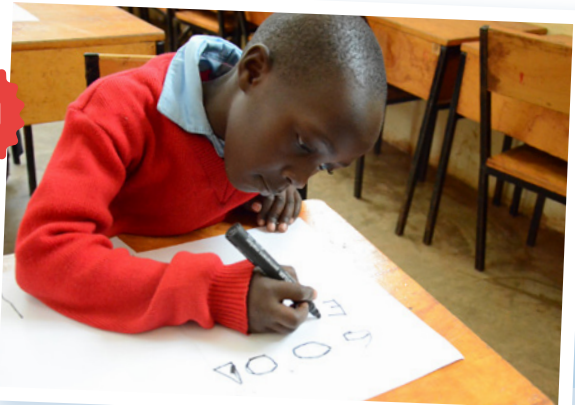
This Christmas, Give a Gift That Changes Lives



School Kit

This gift of a school kit will provide a child with pens, copybooks, backpacks and empower them to strive for a better future. With this gift you can make a difference.

€20





Make a Difference this Christmas

Gifts That Change Lives

This Christmas give a gift that tells your friends and family what you are passionate about. **Our Christmas Gift Catalogue offers 18 meaningful gifts** that not only bring joy to your loved ones but also will help us to continue to protect the most marginalised of this world.

When you choose a gift from our catalogue, you're directly changing lives in one of the 12 developing countries where we work. When you purchase the gift of a pig, for example, you're empowering a woman in Maban, South Sudan, with an investment that can sustain her through difficult times. **This pig isn't just livestock—it's a lifeline, offering security and resilience** in a place where traditional safety nets don't exist.

Your thoughtful gift provides much more than an item; it offers hope, stability, and a future for those facing unimaginable challenges.

Explore our catalogue to find incredible gifts that make a lasting impact. From nourishing meals for children in Syria and Lebanon to training opportunities for dedicated teachers, your generosity will touch countless lives in the most meaningful ways.



Visit us online at www.iji.ie/gifts



Call us on **01 836 6509**



Scan QR Code →



20 Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin 1
D01 E9F3
Tel. +353 1 836 6509

Email: reception@iji.ie
www.iji.ie

Registered Charity No: CHY 19577
RCN: 20076979