

# BRIDGING BORDERS



Mambi Maluta is one of the beneficiaries of the urban livelihood project of Jesuit Refugee Service-Kenya, a CJI partner.

Jenny Catiso/CJI

## SOLIDARITY IN A FRACTURED WORLD

By Fr. Daniel Mwamba Mutale, SJ

In an era marked by deepening inequality, unsustainable debt, and climate instability, solidarity has become more urgent than ever. For Christians, solidarity is not just a social sentiment; it is a profound spiritual and moral commitment rooted in the belief that every

human person possesses God-given dignity. It begins in the heart, in how we recognize one another as members of a single human family.

This vision is deeply embedded in Catholic tradition. The Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et spes*

states that “the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.” The suffering of the poor and of the Church are one.



## THE **POWER OF SOLIDARITY**

In the chaos of our world, it can be hard to know how to stand in solidarity with people who are marginalized and suffering. It is easy to become paralyzed when we see the world as we know it being upended by war, indiscriminate attacks on civilians, and massive destruction of entire countries. The mechanisms of coexistence and of solidarity that have guided us in the past have been vilified and made obsolete.

Our response can be guided by two sources. After being attacked publicly for his condemnation of war, Pope Leo XIV responded by reminding us of the message of the Gospel: “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9).

Speaking to reporters on a flight to Algiers, the Pope invited us to meet the challenges of our time by refusing the sword and acting with mercy. “I will continue to speak out loudly against war, looking to promote peace, promoting dialogue and multilateral relationships among the States to look for just solutions to problems,” he said.

We should also learn from the people who are suffering from war, violence, poverty, and exclusion in many parts of the world. In South Sudan, where people are victims of a brutal and often unknown war, I met South Sudanese youth who

are themselves suffering from the effects of war, but who nonetheless volunteer their time to provide education to displaced children.

When the conflict in the Middle East erupted and spread to include countries such as Lebanon, the team of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) responded immediately. They provided food, water and shelter for those who fled areas affected by the hostilities. They did this, even though many of them had also been displaced from their homes.

They teach us that our response must be guided by focusing on the people who are suffering: the poor and the victims of war or violence. They give us inspiration and courage.

In this issue, Fr. Daniel Mutale, SJ, the Executive Director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) explores what it means to be in solidarity with others (*see page 1*). Alejandra Castellanos Breton, Regional Director of JRS Latin America and the Caribbean, a CJI partner, shares the experiences of refugees and migrants who receive psychosocial support and other assistance from JRS (*see page 5*).

Your support for CJI and its partners offers a lifeline for many. And now more than ever, we cannot afford to be paralyzed. We must act in solidarity, denounce violence, and be peacemakers.

## The **vision & mission** of CJI

The **vision** of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The **mission** of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

To learn more about Canadian Jesuits International or to make a donation, please contact us at:

70 Saint Mary Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 1J3

Tel: 416.944.8727  
(while working remotely)

Toll Free (within Canada & USA)  
1.800.448.2148

Email: [cji@jesuits.ca](mailto:cji@jesuits.ca)

**JENNY CAFISO**  
Executive Director

**TESS SISON**  
Editor

**STEFANO MAERO**  
Design

 [canadianjesuitsinternational.ca](http://canadianjesuitsinternational.ca)  
 [facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational](https://facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational)  
 [instagram.com/canadianjesuitsinternational](https://instagram.com/canadianjesuitsinternational)  
 [@wearecji.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/wearecji.bsky.social)

# 'A PROFOUND JOURNEY OF FAITH, SERVICE, AND TRANSFORMATION' AT JESU ASHRAM

For more than 20 years, **Fr. Julius Kujur, SJ**, had been a steadfast and inspiring presence at Jesu Ashram, where he served as Director. Jesu Ashram is a health care centre of the Darjeeling-Nepal Jesuit Province that provides free medical treatment and care to the poorest, especially those living with leprosy, tuberculosis, and other ailments.

Fr. Julius served Jesu Ashram as Director from 2001 to 2015 and again from 2018 until February 2026. In between he held other key positions in the Jesuit Province of India. After his productive years at Jesu Ashram in Matigara, West Bengal, he has assumed a new role as the Superior of St. Xavier college of North Bengal.

## WHAT ARE YOUR REFLECTIONS ON YOUR TIME AT JESU ASHRAM?

It has been a profound journey of faith, service, and transformation. My time at Jesu Ashram has been full of compassion, challenge, and grace. Serving patients with tuberculosis and leprosy deepened my vocation through personal encounters with suffering and loneliness. Becoming the director in 2001 brought with it feelings of fear and inadequacy amid financial and administrative burdens. But the courage of the patients and constant prayer strengthened me. God's providence guided our mission. I look back with profound gratitude.

## WHICH ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE YOU AND THE STAFF MOST PROUD OF?

We are most proud of the strong faith and dedication that sustain our mission. Staff members

serve with love, creating a clean, peaceful, and dignified home for patients. This environment of mutual trust, understanding, and compassion promotes healing. Our commitment has earned goodwill from the community and government officials.

## HOW HAS THE SUPPORT OF CJI AND ITS DONORS MADE A DIFFERENCE, AND WHY MUST IT CONTINUE?

Poverty and inequality in India create a very difficult context in which Jesu Ashram continues its mission of service for the poor. Many people still struggle to obtain adequate food, clean drinking water, and safe housing. Poverty is exacerbated by unemployment, a lack of job security, and an absence of social security. The contrast between wealth and poverty is stark. In big cities we see luxurious houses, good schools, and modern hospitals. Yet in tea plantation areas, many families live in old, overcrowded and damp houses with leaking roofs. They only receive water at certain times of the day. When they fall ill, they rely on overcrowded government hospitals, whose doctors and nurses are overworked.

Although Jesu Ashram cannot meet every need, it strives to serve the poor, and its work continues with the generous support of CJI and other benefactors. CJI's consistent support alleviates financial anxiety, enabling us to focus on patient care, outreach programs, surgeries, repairs, and dignified end-of-life care.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR JESU ASHRAM?

The leadership of my successor, Fr. Matthew Siju, SJ, has given me great confidence and hope for the future. He speaks to the poor with genuine love and visits patients to understand their needs and well-being. He meets with the nurses and doctors, showing respect and concern for everyone involved in the mission. He demonstrates creativity, initiative, and dedication. He is highly qualified, having completed a master's in social work, and he is currently pursuing a master's in hospital management.

📷 Fr. Julius Kujur, SJ, is known to many Jesu Ashram supporters for his dedication, compassion, and servant leadership.



Jesu Ashram

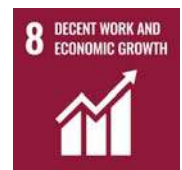
# FEATURED PROJECT: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFRICA


Ever since she set up a small bread business with funds provided by the African Jesuits AIDS Network (AJAN), Grace Futi said there has been a vast improvement in her well-being and that of her family. “Family conflicts have decreased... I am busy. I manage my money with joy. I no longer ask for money to buy my medication,” said Futi, who is living with HIV/AIDS.

Futi was one of 295 women who received scholarships for entrepreneurial skills training and funding as part of AJAN’s project, Building Resilience in Women and Girls in Africa, which is supported by Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). The project was initially implemented in Burkina Faso, Togo, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe. This year, it is being scaled up to include four more countries: Cameroon, Burundi, South Sudan, and Zambia.

The AJAN project aims to foster economic self-reliance among vulnerable women and girls, especially those living with HIV, those who are internally displaced, orphaned, or widowed. They receive training in financial literacy and business management, after which they are given seed grants to purchase business supplies. They will also establish a Group Solidarity Fund, contributing to their revolving fund, form self-help groups and receive psycho-social support sessions.



 Grace Futi set up her bread business after receiving an entrepreneurial skills training and funding as part of a project by the African Jesuits AIDS Network, a CJI partner.



AJAN believes that equipping women and girls with the right economic skills, can empower them to support themselves and their families. Running sustainable enterprises can also help to reduce stigma surrounding people living with HIV. The project aims to restore their dignity and sense of purpose, enabling them to become catalysts for social change.

Expected results of the project for fiscal year 2026-2027:



**341** women and girls from eight countries in Africa will receive technical skills and financial support to run income-generating activities.



**2,315** family members will benefit from the economic and social stability that women and girls will achieve in the project.

# ACCOMPANYING PEOPLE IS ‘A FORM OF RESISTANCE AGAINST DEHUMANIZATION’

By Alejandra Castellanos Breton

I recently visited La Argelia, a Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) shelter located in a cold, foggy neighbourhood in Quito, Ecuador. The shelter welcomes about ten families at a time. Here, internally displaced Ecuadorians, Venezuelan families who have crossed two or three countries, and Colombians fleeing armed conflict come together.

Most arrive with a mission to find work. They soon realize that managing their emotions is an important part of settling into a community. La Argelia provides a therapeutic model that combines individual and group sessions, community support, and a sustainability plan. This is what sets the shelter apart from other places they have been to, say the residents. “In other shelters, they told us: ‘go out and fend for yourselves.’ Here, they teach us to understand what we feel,” said Camilo, an Indigenous Mizak man from Cauca.

Nelson, an Afro-Colombian from Buenaventura, fought back tears as he recounted his experiences on public transport. Some people refused to sit next to him and others spat at him. “You understand that it’s not personal, that it’s structural. But it still hurts.” Sharing his experience with a trusted group means that he need not bear the burden of that violence alone, he said.

Ingrid, a Venezuelan woman from Zulia, told me that her children were born along the migration route in Colombia and Peru. “Here, I learned that if I don’t understand what I’m feeling, I can’t move forward.”

The people I met are facing challenges that stem from unprecedented regional pressures. In Colombia, more than 1.5 million were affected by armed violence in 2025, said a report by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Here, JRS projects prioritize protection, livelihoods, education, psychosocial support, and reconciliation.

With nearly a million immigration detentions in Mexico in 2024, the country has become a destination, a place of prolonged waiting, and a transit point.

JRS Mexico has found that 73.6% of migrants feel unsafe, 60% are depressed or stressed, and 34% have experienced violence. JRS provides them with legal and psychosocial support, emergency aid and other services. In Ecuador, increased internal displacement and tougher migration policies has led JRS Ecuador to strengthen its work in the areas of comprehensive care and community protection.

In Venezuela, the number of returns exceeded the number of departures in 2025. I met Vanessa, a 28-year-old woman who returned to Venezuela after years of experiencing xenophobia abroad. JRS has helped her to grow her jewelry business.



JRS Latin America and the Caribbean

📷 Jesuit Refugee Service offers various forms of assistance, including psychosocial support to refugees and migrants from Latin America.

JRS Latin America and the Caribbean continues to exist, even in a restrictive environment with fewer resources because behind every migrant is a story that involves painful decisions. Displaced families have the right to heal, to work, to learn, and to dream of a better future. Accompanying them is also a form of resistance against dehumanization.

*Alejandra Castellanos Breton is the Regional Director at Jesuit Refugee Service Latin America and the Caribbean.*

## ➔ Solidarity in a fractured world

| continued from cover page |

Pope Leo XIV, in *Delix Tē*, argues that true solidarity begins with recognizing the humanity and dignity of others, an idea echoed in the African concept of *ubuntu*. It challenges narrow notions of “neighbour,” calling us to extend our concern to debt-burdened nations, and families facing rising costs. African thought similarly grounds human dignity and rights in social bonds. ★Julius Nyerere’s communitarian vision of dignity-rights in *ujamaa*, expanded moral responsibility beyond

kinship to a wider community where each person’s well-being is interconnected. Likewise, ★★Kenneth Kaunda’s African humanism upheld respect for human dignity and care for the vulnerable.

South African Anglican Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, further developed *ubuntu* in response to apartheid’s violence, using it as a moral foundation for social reconciliation. He showed how *ubuntu* strengthens

human rights by affirming that even wrongdoers remain part of a shared moral community capable of repentance and restoration.

In today’s world of growing poverty and inequality, solidarity requires renewed responsibility to address urgent challenges. In my research and pastoral work in Zambia, I have seen how the combined pressures of debt, rising costs, and low wages force families to choose between food, education, and healthcare. Basic needs become luxuries.

Many Sub-Saharan African nations face heavy debt burdens, and restructuring agreements often restrict public spending. When resources are diverted from development to servicing debt, it is the most vulnerable who bear the heaviest burden, revealing how global financial systems directly shape the lives of the poor. Addressing this requires more than charity; it calls for systemic change, including fair debt resolution and curbing illicit financial flows.

However, solidarity is not only a matter of policy but also of practice. As Pope Francis reminded us, it is “a way of making history.” It grows through concrete actions: advocating for just policies, supporting ethical economic practices, and welcoming refugees and migrants. For Christians, particularly those shaped by Ignatian spirituality, solidarity involves discernment, asking where God calls us to respond in ways that make a real difference.

Ultimately, solidarity recognizes our shared destiny. The climate crisis, global debt, food insecurity, and migration affect the entire human family. It calls us to see the face of Christ in every person and to act in solidarity for the common good, participating in God’s work of healing a fractured world.

*Fr. Daniel Mwamba Mutale, SJ is Executive Director at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, a Canadian Jesuits International partner based in Zambia.*

*★Julius Nyerere was a prominent African anti-colonialist leader who became the first president of Tanzania.*

*★★Kenneth Kaunda led Zambia to independence in 1964 and was the country’s president until 1991.*

📷 Refugee children express their hopes at a learning space provided by the Jesuit Refugee Service in Latin America.



JRS Latin America and the Caribbean

## OUTREACH FOSTERS YOUTH JUSTICE LEADERSHIP

By Juan Camilo Poveda

The Outreach Program at Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) has grown steadily over the past years through strong relationships with Catholic and Jesuit schools across Canada. Our classroom presentations and retreats have evolved into long-term partnerships, with schools participating in larger events such as Social Justice Days and CJI's Youth for Others (Y4O) Advocacy Symposium. Schools work with CJI because students learn about Catholic Social Teaching not just in theory, but through the real-life experiences of our partners in the Global South. By amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, young people can engage in global justice issues through relationships and solidarity.

For many students, participation in the CJI symposium has been a next step in their formation journey. At the symposium in Ottawa last November, 84 secondary and post-secondary students gathered for three days of formation, civic engagement, and advocacy. They learned from Sr. Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso, a Franciscan Catechist Sister and Indigenous land defender from the Brazilian Amazon, who helped them engage with issues around ecology, justice, gender, corporate accountability, and civic responsibility. The students also met with the Speaker of the House and some Members of Parliament and observed Question Period on Parliament Hill.

A consistent piece of feedback from symposium participants has been the importance of community. There is a desire for ongoing connection and leadership development. "I learned how much power people have when they advocate for what they believe in... it truly makes a difference," said Lydia, a high school student from Notre Dame High School in Ottawa. "I hope to continue to advocate for myself and for those who don't have a voice."

In response, CJI is consolidating the Y4O Network as a space for community and formation. A planning committee made up of student volunteers has been set up to help shape the network's structure and priorities. This year, we plan to offer online events focused on capacity-building and fostering connections between peers. Over time, we hope to strengthen relationships



Tess Sison/CJI

Students line up to ask questions during an event with Members of Parliament at CJI's Youth for Others Advocacy Symposium in Ottawa in 2025.

with other youth justice networks around the world and expand participation in Canada.

*Juan Camilo Poveda is the Outreach Coordinator at Canadian Jesuits International.*

### NEW CJI PROJECTS FOR YOUTH, WOMEN

The Board of Directors of Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) has approved a project that will train traditionally excluded youth from seven countries on influential and critical citizenship so that they can play a leading role in social and political transformation. The project by CJI Jesuit partner Fe y Alegría Internacional was one of 20 projects approved by the Board when it met on February 21. Fe y Alegría is an international Jesuit education and social development movement that offers education, vocational training, and social programs to poor and marginalized communities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The other projects which were approved address the right to education; ecology and sustainability; human rights, civic participation, and peacebuilding; and the rights of forcibly displaced people. Learn more: [bit.ly/CJI20Projects](https://bit.ly/CJI20Projects)

# 'ALL BLESSINGS COME FROM GOD'

By Joanna Terpstra

I was born on a dairy farm, one of 11 children. My parents did not have it easy, dealing with war and the Depression in their time, but my mother had a strong faith. She taught us to appreciate what we had and not take anything for granted. We shared the little we had. My husband grew up in similar circumstances. We raised our children to appreciate their blessings. I believe that what we learn as youngsters stays with us.

My late husband and I were always aware of the great need in the world and many charities that needed help, but we did not know how to find the right organization to support. Some years ago, we received a visit from a Jesuit priest, \*Fr. Johnson, who told us about the international work of the Jesuits. He was extremely down-to-earth and we became supporters. I read the newsletters from Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), and it breaks my heart how people struggle.

God has been very good to us. My husband and I agreed that when we retired, we would spend our money helping those in need. Some people think "It's my money. I worked hard for it." But all blessings come from God.

I support CJI's Greatest Need fund. I trust CJI to decide where the funds should go because the Jesuits work with local communities and see

the needs while living with the community.

I have named the Jesuits and another charity that my husband and I have supported for a long time, in my will. I also support work with communities in Northern Canada. One of my

grandsons is being ordained in May and will be taking up a position there as a parish priest.

*Joanna Terpstra is a long-time supporter of Canadian Jesuits International.*


*\*The late Fr Francis Xavier Johnson was a Jesuit for 68 years. He was a teacher, hospital chaplain and a dedicated priest in parishes in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.*

## LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE AND SERVICE

There are three things that endure: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.  
*(1 Corinthians 13:13)*

**Love** is more than a feeling: it means **selfless concern** for the welfare of others. Your **love for others** will endure.

You can **change lives** by leaving a **bequest** in your will, naming Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) as a beneficiary in your insurance policy or giving stocks or bonds to CJI.

Please arrange your life changing support today at:  
 [canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/planned-giving](https://canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/planned-giving)


Donate online at:  
[www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca](https://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca)

Or mail your cheque to:  
**Canadian Jesuits International**  
**70 Saint Mary Street,**  
**Toronto, ON M5S 1J3**

Call: **1-800-448-2148**  
Email: [cji@jesuits.ca](mailto:cji@jesuits.ca)

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Registered Charitable Number # 11883 3623 RR0002

 Joanna Terpstra



Submitted