

Malawi



Malawi is a landlocked country located in southern Africa. It covers an area that is just a bit smaller than the state of Pennsylvania and its population is about one and a half times of that state's. The capital city is Lilongwe and the official language of Malawi is English.



Lake Malawi is sometimes called the Calendar Lake—it is 365 miles long and 52 miles wide!

Most Malawians are Christian (about 85%); about 13% of the population are Muslim. The rest either identify as having no religion or belonging to one of many smaller, independent faiths. Roman Catholics make up about one fifth

of all Christians totalling about two million.

The Catholic faith was introduced to Malawi by French missionaries in the late 19th century. After just forty years, the first local clergy—native Malawians—were ordained priests for their own Church.

Although primary education is free in Malawi, it is not compulsory, even though their Constitution guarantees at least five years of education for all people. Only 65% of the population can read and write. Dropout rates are higher for girls than boys due to the risk of gender-based violence along the long walks to school.

Infant mortality is very high (about 42/1,000 births compared to the US' rate of about 6/1,000) and life expectancy at birth is low. Currently, a person born in Malawi can expect to live about 62 years. Much of this can be traced to the high level of HIV/AIDS infection in the country which has left over one million orphaned children. Lack of access to good medical care also contributes to the crisis—there is only one doctor for approximately every 50,000 people.

MCA in Malawi

While most people (about 90%) have access to indoor running water, more than half of all Malawians do not have indoor toilets. This exposes the population to conditions that are quickly spread from person to person, such as dysentery. Easily dealt with in western cultures with good sanitation and health care, simple dysentery can be a killer in places where there is little medical care.

Almost 15% of Malawian children are underweight. Nutrition is a problem, as is sometimes obtaining the basic comforts of life.

Malawi's own Missionary Childhood members are stepping in to help the poorest, of their local brothers and sisters. Because so many Malawian children lack the body fat to keep themselves warm especially at night, going without a blanket is a real hardship. Recently, the young missionaries of Malawi's MCA raised enough money to donate 130 blankets to children who go without the warmth and comfort of a simple covering at night.



These young missionaries have a lot of which they can be proud! In a country where their very lives may depend on the funding that comes to them from MCA through missionaries, they still find it in their hearts to pray and sacrifice for others. What an example they set for us all!

Another social problem being addressed by missionaries funded by MCA children who

are orphaned due to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Because of support from the Missionary Childhood Association, 42 local projects that provide homes for street children and orphans have been built throughout the country. These homes are also connected to schools and health centers. In many of the dioceses, the facilities are placed at the Cathedral, giving them a central location. They are modest institutions, often one or two small buildings surrounded by land. No child in need is turned away. Besides education and faith formation, they also receive nutritious food and access to health care.



Recently, a Missionary (Holy) Childhood Mass was held at one of Malawi's diocesan



Cathedrals. During the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop Peter Musikuwa from Chikwawa Diocese urged the young missionaries to deepen their faith and charity through MCA. He asked the children to be

generous with the little gifts they have—faith and material resources—saying, “Christian life is all about sharing out of love what one values.”

Our last report shows that Missionary Childhood members of Malawi had sacrificed \$10,441.00 for their brothers and sisters around the world.