

Fighting Ebola in South Sudan

Stephen, from Kenya, is heading up a team that is working to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus to South Sudan.

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I have been working in South Sudan, Yambio state, since January 2019. My work is to stop the Ebola virus from reaching South Sudan from across the border with Congo. This work is made more difficult because this part of the country has a long border with

the same ethnic groups living on both sides, making the movement of peoples and goods very easy.

There was a recent case of the disease detected in July 2019 in the Congo, just 70 km from the border with South Sudan. I and my colleagues had to ensure that the front-line health care facilities, along the border, were well equipped and people were sufficiently prepared to avoid getting infected themselves and then pass on the disease to the local population.

Some years back I was working in Liberia and late last year also in the Congo in Ebola prevention. This gave me some experience in how to install the facilities and form people in order to prevent them from getting infected and transmitting the epidemic.

In the past months, my work here has been quite intense but very

fulfilling. I have prayed to Saint Josemaria every day for the safety of this country that is hosting me. I am from Kenya and my family there is praying for this intention too.

In my daily life, I am trying to make friends among my colleagues who come from many different parts of the world. I discovered that some of my friends are Catholic but have stopped going to church. Some of these friends have begun to come with me to Sunday Mass. This has given me the opportunity to share with them prayer cards of Saint Josemaria and introduced them to the Opus Dei website and help them to find a suitable article there to nourish their souls.

During my work in Yambio I attend Mass at St. Mary's, the local parish church, where I am becoming friend with some of the parishioners. I came with some prayer cards of

Saint Josemaria and books in Arabic (the local language here), and I gave them to the parish priest. He was very grateful and he told me that the books are helping both him and his parishioners.

I also pray for peace in this country, since the war these past years has created many problems. The gesture of Pope Francis some months back when he kissed the feet of the two main political leaders of South Sudan, seems to have moved people and now there is more stability.

I continue doing the prehistory of Opus Dei in South Sudan with the help of Saint Josemaria. I pray that the day we start here may come soon.

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