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## Solidarity for Malawi

**Malawi, Sitima Parish, January 2015** - In the space of Twenty Four hours Southern Malawi received a month's worth of rain and then the rains continued, unabated, for another Forty Eight hours. The results are catastrophic in a poor country using little cement in the construction of their houses. Mud built and grass roofed, the houses simply melted and were washed away in the rains as was the livestock and whatever few possessions that the people had.

One old lady who had lived in Mbaru Village for all of her 80 plus years told me that she had never in her life experienced anything like it. She told how the waters came up to her chin as she and all of the people of her village, holding hands made a desperate rush to the sanctuary of our Church where they remain to this day. While the rains have now abated, they have not stopped. There is nothing left for them to go back to anyway. When they do finally go back they are faced with having to re-build and re-plant and to do all of this with whatever it was that they were able to escape with in the mad dash to safety.

The Government and most of the NGO's say that they are going to help but are yet at the stage of registering and writing names. The Red Cross has erected two tents to cater for the over-flow of people. The local Member of Parliament complains that Government is concentrating all of its' efforts in the Lower Shire, an area that was hit even harder than the area around the parish here. He left \$40 when he visited.

As a parish community we are doing what we can. We have been able to send a little maize flour to help in the feeding. We have been able to help just over 165 families with basic starter packs but given that, in this area, there are now over 4,000 displaced families, then that is no more than a drop in the ocean that, previously land-locked Malawi, has now become.

People need urgent help to be able to overcome the challenge posed by this disaster. They need our solidarity and our assistance. Please, help us to help the people of Malawi!

Fr. Owen O'Donnell smm  
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Malawi