

Poverty pushed Aline to the brink of survival...

...but Aline pushed back harder.

Christian Aid Week: seven days, so many ways to push back against the inhumanity of poverty.



Pushing back against poverty

Christian Aid Week 12-18 May

A daily devotional

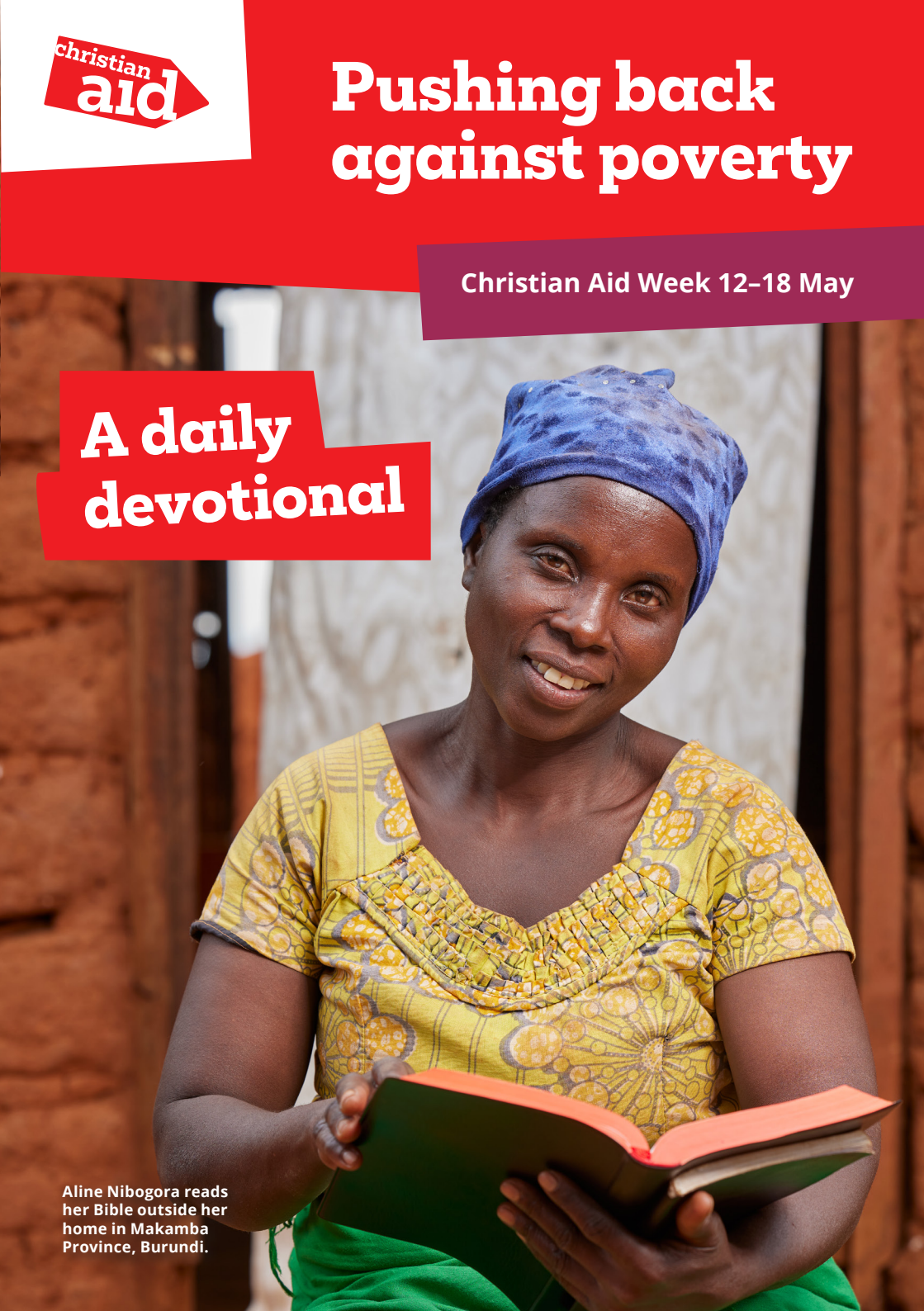


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Aline Nibogora reads her Bible outside her home in Makamba Province, Burundi.



Welcome to your week of **prayer** and **reflection**

Aline prays during a family worship session at home.

When you're pushed to the brink of survival, putting a healthy meal in front of your family, sending your children to school, and having a small, regular income become unthinkable dreams. Yet this is the reality faced by many families in Burundi, where extreme poverty and the climate crisis are making survival a daily challenge.

Through this series of daily reflections, Bible verses and prayers, we'll explore how Aline Nibogora escaped the inhumane trap of poverty. With determination, hope, faith, love, and a little help from Christian Aid, Aline secured a

brighter future so her children would never have to experience the pain that she endured. Aline told us: 'I want my children to live in complete peace and have a good future. Even though I have lived through difficult times, they have always been my priority.'

This Christian Aid Week, we have seven days and so many ways to make a difference.

With your fundraising, gifts, prayers and actions, you could help someone like Aline to transform their own life.



Aline carries water home from a Christian Aid funded community well in Makamba Province, Burundi.

Call for change this year

When we speak with one amplified voice, lasting change becomes possible. In this general election year, we want to call on newly elected MPs to use their position to push back against poverty.

At the back of this booklet, you'll find a postcard that you can use to ask your elected representative to take action.

However you take part this Christian Aid Week, remember that together, we will beat extreme poverty.

Christian Aid has worked in Burundi for nearly 30 years.

Together with our partners, we're focused on supporting people to push back against the inhumanity of poverty to build a better future.

One of the ways we're doing this in Burundi is by providing community-based training so that families can come together to set up small businesses and support one another financially.

With our support, more families are building reliable and diverse incomes that are bringing them food security, better health, safer homes, increased resilience and hope.



Aline is now farming crops so she can cook nutritious meals for her children.

Sunday

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'

(Philippians 4:13)

In the areas where we work in Burundi, people without their own small business or income will typically head out on an empty stomach each morning. They must look for casual work to buy food for that evening. Most only eat once a day. How much they and their children will eat depends on the work they were able to find that same day. Making plans for the future is impossible when you can't make plans beyond the day.

This was the position Aline found herself in when an early marriage ended in abuse and violence. Separated from her children, she was forced to sleep on the streets of Burundi. Hungry, scorned and alone, Aline was pushed to the brink

of survival, but her life was about to change.

Think about the plans you have for this coming week, month and year. Give thanks that you are able to look ahead. Pray for those whose lives are too uncertain to make plans.

God,
whose Spirit dwells in us
guide us to make plans which
further your kingdom.
Give us your vision and the
courage to follow your path.
Amen.

Monday

'And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.'

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

This familiar verse is a popular reading at weddings and funerals. But for all its familiarity, these words are still powerful, as we recognise that love is such an important force in all our lives – especially through times of great change.

Aline's love for her children drove her to transform her life. Her first step back from the brink came when she participated in a three-day community workshop with Christian Aid funded trainers. Aline learnt how to establish a steady income and make long term plans. Aline: 'I came out with amazing knowledge and skills. The trainer restored a sense of hope and energy in me.'

With a small start-up loan, Aline started trading avocados and peanuts

locally. With her profits, she bought a bicycle so she could transport greater quantities of goods to markets further afield. Eventually, her hard work had earned the money she needed to rent a house and be reunited with her three eldest sons.

Christian Aid Week is a time to demonstrate love through our gifts, prayers and actions. It's a time to let our global neighbours know that our love is with them as they face great challenges and changes.

Visit caweek.org and watch the video of Aline's story in the resources section.

This Christian Aid Week, your gift could provide a stepping stone out of poverty for someone like Aline.

Jesus,
You showed us what love is
by laying down your life for us.
Help us this Christian Aid Week
to reflect that same sacrificial love
through generous giving
and courageous action
for those in need.
Amen.



Aline with the bicycle that's helped her to build a small business.

Tuesday

'O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.'

(Psalm 136:1)

Aline's faith has guided and comforted her through the darkest of times. She told us: 'We pray together as we are still alive thanks to God's grace. God comforts you through troubled times and gives you hope for a better future. With God's help you can overcome obstacles and be victorious.'

The small grocery business that Aline built not only pays for a home for her and her children, but food, clothes and essential healthcare too. Aline's also purchased solar panels so her children can do their evening homework by electric light, and further their education. Aline's home is a sanctuary for her and her children. A place where they can nurture their ambitions and make

plans for the future. A home filled with prayer and praise.

How could your home become one of prayer and praise? Take a small action to invite God to be with you today: make time to pray, listen to worship music, or read a passage from the Bible. How can you feel God's presence during your day?

God,
whose love endures forever,
comfort us when the way
is uncertain, guide us and
accompany us, through
Christian Aid Week and beyond.
Amen.

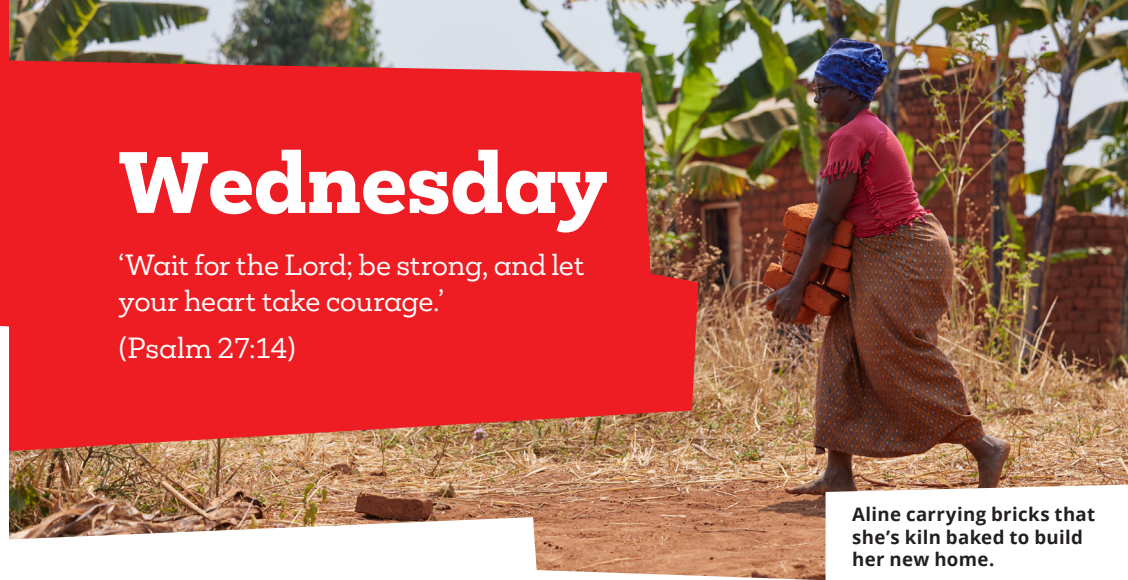
Aline provides lunch in her home to her sons and neighbours.



Wednesday

'Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage.'

(Psalm 27:14)



Aline carrying bricks that she's kiln baked to build her new home.

Burundi continues to be one of the toughest places on earth to live. The future is uncertain, and challenges wait for families like Aline's around every corner.

As the climate crisis deepens, people in Burundi find themselves in an increasingly precarious position in the face of the droughts, floods and landslides that are becoming more frequent. Burundi's fragile economy is built on agriculture, and many homes are built of unbaked mud bricks. Extreme weather undermines the stability of both, often with devastating consequences.

When a ferocious storm destroyed Aline's home, almost killing her and her children, she was able to recover by selling the cows she'd been keeping. Now when a crisis threatens her family's survival, Aline has options. Even a small business can provide just enough resources to weather a brutal storm in Burundi.

Today, Aline's using her experience to help 25 other families in her community to build their resilience. And she's baking her own bricks to build a strong home for her and her children in every sense.

Reflect on how your community responds to a crisis. What happened during the pandemic? What happens when there are extreme temperatures or storms? What role do faith communities and churches play in helping people who are in crisis or building resilience? Give thanks for all those who respond.

Jesus,
you were able to calm
the storm, and save your
followers from disaster.
Help us to weather the storms
we face, to take action against
the climate crisis, and to
respond to those in need.
Amen.

Thursday

'Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'

(Hebrews 11:1)

Aline pushed back against poverty to survive against all odds. No longer living day-to-day, Aline and her children can plan for a future that they'll build together.

Aline told us: 'I could never have dreamed that I would one day have a brick house and be a successful businesswoman, able to feed and clothe my children. Even if I die today, my children will have a house to live in, and won't be wandering around like I was.' She added: 'Education leads to a bright future, and a child should study as much as possible. One of my children dreams of becoming a doctor.'

Aline can not only look ahead to her children's future now, but her own

too. Naturally, Aline wants security as she ages. In the next five years, she hopes to expand her current wholesale business by selling a range of goods, so that one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances. Aline affirmed: 'This is not a dream. It is a plan, and I will do it. I am a woman who is an achiever.'

None of us know what the future will hold. But thanks to the faith and kindness of Christian Aid supporters, Aline can now look ahead and make plans. Leaving a gift in your Will is one way to help more families build a life beyond poverty. To find out more, visit caid.org.uk/legacy or caid.ie/legacy

Lord,
your kingdom is one without end.
Inspire us with the vision
of justice and peace
of life before death
of a brighter future.
Amen.

Aline helping her son Vyukesenge with homework.

Friday

'Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow.'

(Isaiah 1:17)

Aline's long and difficult journey out of extreme poverty was made possible by her courage, determination, tenacity, and love for her children. And it all began with a little support and faith from Christian Aid supporters like you. Aline: 'When we see Christian Aid, we feel comforted; we feel we are not alone. You helped us to change our poor living conditions.'

Aline's story demonstrates that training and knowledge can fuel lasting change. For churches and individuals who want to learn more about poverty and how to challenge it, we have a six-session course called Act on Poverty – ideal to use in small groups. Participants gain a deeper understanding of local and global poverty, hear stories of faith and activism that challenge the status quo, and learn how we can all take steps to tackle poverty together.

Visit caid.org.uk/actonpoverty to download our Act on Poverty course, and inspire yourself or your church to make poverty an injustice of the past.

Pray today that the gifts, prayers and actions made this Christian Aid Week have a transformative impact in the world.



Aline reunited with her three sons, Vyukesenge, Fisto and Irumva. Behind them, the new home they're building together brick by brick in Makamba Province, Burundi.

God,
whose voice is heard through
so many humble people of faith,
open our ears to those who
are speaking your truth
open our eyes to the realities
of poverty around us
open our hearts to those you love
and help us to reach out and
take action.
Amen.



Giles Goddard addressing protestors at St John's Church, Waterloo on Loss and Damage Action Day.

Saturday

'Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.'

(1 John 3:18)

No longer hidden, persecuted and alone, Aline's risen to become a leader of her community. A spokesperson and champion of those who are pushing back against the inhumanity of poverty. She told us: 'The members [of the community group I chair] thank me for the training and the positive impact it has had on their daily lives. People come to me as they trust me. Here in Burundi, a neighbour is considered a member of the family.'

This year, there will be a general election, and it's important that we make sure that the people who want to represent us are also champions of justice who take active steps to push back against the inhumanity of

Lord,
as Christian Aid Week draws to a close, draw together our gifts, prayers and actions and help them to flourish in the world. Bless the efforts of individuals and churches, of politicians and ordinary people, and help these seven days make a difference.
Amen.

poverty. We need to tell our MPs and parliamentary candidates that we want both local and global poverty to be at the top of their agendas.

Why not invite your MP or parliamentary candidate to an event at your church? Or book a meeting slot at one of their surgeries.

Make your voice heard by filling in the postcard on the next page.

Go to caweek.org/campaign or caid.ie/campaigns to discover other ways to use your voice to make a difference.

Call on your politician to push back against poverty

Christian Aid Week is seven days with so many ways to make a difference. In 2024, one of these ways is to call on your newly elected MP to use their position to make lasting change possible.

Please fill in the tear-off postcard below with your name and postcode. Once the results of the general election are confirmed, we'll send this card to your new MP, calling on them to act on poverty.

Dear _____

Congratulations on winning your seat at the general election.

At my church, we believe everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. We believe that poverty is not inevitable, and we can all make a difference.

I believe that you too can help make a difference. Please use your position in parliament, and as my local representative, to act on poverty.

Yours,

Don't forget to add your postcode below to ensure we can identify your constituency and send this postcard to your elected representative. Please note: we'll only use your postcode to do this, and won't use it for any other purpose.

Postcode:

Email:

We'll use your email address to keep a record of the action you've taken with your new MP. If you're also happy to hear from Christian Aid by email, please tick here . We'll keep you updated about our work and the difference your support is making. We promise never to share your details with any other organisation for marketing purposes. For more information, please visit caid.org.uk/privacy or caid.ie/privacy