

## Foreword

Four parishioners from Dromore Cathedral were due to be travelling to Maridi, Sudan with CMS Ireland in early March 2009. The team had been raising funds to help with their travel expenses. In the Christmas/New Year period, news reached us of terrible civil unrest in the area the team were supposed to go to. As a consequence, the trip was postponed, and the team, Dromore Cathedral and the wider Down and Dromore Diocese put their energies into gathering funds for emergency financial relief. Many people were displaced by the unrest, people lost they lives and are still displaced from their homes.

## Introduction

A member of the team, Lynn, was inspired to embark on a poverty challenge, and throw that challenge to others. This challenge aimed to raise some money to send to Maridi and to raise awareness of what it means to live in relative poverty.

### Sudan Poverty Challenge!

The challenge was "Could you live on £2.00 per day? (15.2.09 – 22.2.09)".

Lynn wrote "Certain things affect us more at specific times and since I started thinking about going to Maridi, I have become greatly affected by poverty, both that which I see around me and further afield. My dilemmas usually start over the price of my cup of coffee, just under £2.00. We'll get above the definitions of poverty as there seems no universal definition of but we can visualise *relative* poverty being described as living on \$2 (say £2.00) per day. Remember my cup of coffee that cost me £1.80, almost a whole day's budget.

I am very careful about the timing of this small challenge, it's *before* Lent (Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent is 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. '09) a time when, remembering Jesus fasting 40 days and forty nights, many 'give up' something they like. But this kind of poverty is no attempt to live as Christ did. It's about survival.

But your rising to the challenge could be Christ-like.

Could you pick 1 day or 1 week to live on £2.00 per day? In reality that £2.00 would be for food, heat, transport, clothes, medicine, everything.

Now if you do something like that could you give the Cathedral the money you are saving (however great or small) in excess of £2.00 per day to pass *directly* to our link Diocese in Sudan for a specific poverty related pressing need? Food, cooking utensils, whatever Bishop Justin in Maridi needs to support those who call on the church to help. The people of Maridi are crying in their physical weakness, but they are strong in their faith in God's power.

Imagine you wake in the darkness of poverty, how you would survive? Now my challenge may not always be practicable, you will get the sack if you don't get to work and you have to feed the children. But where it's safe, try it for 1 day or 1 week. I'm picking next week beginning Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. 09 to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 09 with my offering being made to Dromore Cathedral on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. With the Parish magazine this month many received a small brown envelope which you could use. If you've lost that put it in an envelope marked "Poverty Challenge". Those who aren't parishioners could direct their funds through Dromore Cathedral Office, Church Street, Dromore [contact details elsewhere on this site]. Even the children could get involved in this. For them it could mean forgoing pocket money."

### **The Poverty Challenge Daily Blog.**

During the challenge Lynn wrote a brief blog (a web log) each day, so that others could live the challenge with her. It's all laid out below.

#### **Day One: Poverty Challenge *February 15th, 2009***

My friend was honest when we were talking about this coming week, she said to me "But you can't live on £2 a day!" That's exactly it. At the outset I know it's going to be impossible to do and it'd be easier to just donate my weekly living budget to the Cathedral and live 'normally'. That way however won't raise awareness of the poverty which surrounds us and specifically this week that which has been and is occurring in Sudan at the moment. Those who have lived with poverty may think my attempts laughable, so accept my apologies now. This is just really a diary of how I get on.

So, tonight I'm going to bed on an empty tummy, hungry but not hunger that possesses me. You know, I hadn't expected things to go belly up quite so quickly, but I got up to go to Church this morning and then realised I'd no clothes ironed. I'm not really that organised you see. Decided that in an emergency situation I'd not have an iron and even if I had, today I'd rather use my electricity in another way. Thankfully I was able to dig something out to wear, not my usual colour co-ordinated self but I was warm. My 'problems' were happening because I deliberately have tried not to think ahead or plan this week very much. Think about it, in reality, if people were looting, burning and worse outside my door I wouldn't get much warning would I? So, after very basic ablutions (good old nautical term from someone from Dromore!), about which I'll spare you the details, I reached for the hair gel. Bad girl! Hair gel, perfume and the like would be the last thing I'd lift on my way out of a burning building. So off I went to church with 'fluffy' hair, feeling worse about not wearing perfume or having hair gel than I did about not having eaten.

After Church I had my only meal of the day which was very small, vegetables only and then off on a 2 hour walk. I was lucky to have a meal; food would probably not be available on day one of a crisis. Back to the walking. We've worked out that I need to walk 18 hours

this week to have walked an equivalent distance to that which I would need to do to get to and from work. Yesterday myself and a couple of friends walked a total of 7 hours, plus the 2 today leaves 9 hours. I have allowed myself some water when I was thirsty and absentmindedly drank some juice I was offered after Church. I had one cup of coffee which I didn't buy and at Youth Fellowship this evening I was confronted with toast and goodies which although offered I declined.

At the minute the prospect of the long walks isn't something which bothers me. Often, I find that walking is a time when I usually clear my head and think over the troubles of the day and even start thinking about things I'm going to write about or talk about in Church. Today not a lot came as I concentrated on how the displaced people in Sudan felt as they made their way to Maridi Cathedral. I wonder though did they know where they were going when they set out, or did they simply arrive in Maridi and receive a Christian welcome from the parishioners? This week I really want to walk alongside my brothers and sisters in Christ who have found shelter in Maridi. As I walked today, I carried no water bottle, but neither did I have a baby on my back nor a bundle under my arm. I want to walk the miles this week in their shoes.

I wonder what the boss will think when I arrive in work tomorrow with unironed clothes? Will anyone even notice? And will my resolve be as strong tomorrow when I'm really hungry. Stay tuned.

***"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"***

[1 John 3: 17 \(NIV\)](#)

## **Day 2 : Poverty Challenge February 16th, 2009**

I'm going to bed tired and very hungry. My evening was going to be made complete by a cup of tea, but I had to ask someone for a couple of headache tablets today, so that's that then. Might as well go to bed. You'll probably guess, today was quite a challenge. No one at my work seemed to notice I hadn't ironed my clothes, but I did chicken out a little and wear the same blouse as yesterday. Had my meal, if you can call a bowl of rice a meal, at lunchtime before my hour long walk. The gilding, if there was any wore off half way round my walk as I realised I've another few days of walking left. You know I really missed my wee cup of coffee at lunchtime. It's my chance to get away from it all with a book or newspaper. Maybe it's just habit and I could read for free in the library. I haven't even a good wash to look forward to tomorrow morning thanks to one of my nearest and dearest. As I smugly commented about my shower this morning being a 'sprinkle', the retort came back that it should have been a cold 'sprinkle'. Well, the gauntlet has well and truly slapped me about the face. A cold sprinkle it is I hope it improves my concentration. I'm hungry but at least I'm not a statistic. Due to food poverty 1 in 7 do not get enough to eat to be healthy and 25,000 people die each day from hunger and related causes.

**6 children die each second due to hunger.”**

***“Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.”***

Proverbs 30:8 (NIV)

**Day 3 : Poverty Challenge February 17th, 2009**

What a difference a day makes. The hunger has been replaced by pain and I had to go to bed after I came home from work. I was forced to take a cup of soup and I can't describe how good that was. I'm very much recovered now, but very tired and still hungry. The cold shower this morning literally took my breath away but it was a wash of sorts and at the moment that's still an important use of money for me. Today at work it was very difficult concentrating and dealing logically & politely in all situations. My walk was really good especially since the sun was out, thankfully it's not the summer so I don't get too hot and bothered. Bit worried about the clothing situation as I really ~~need~~ want a clean top to wear tomorrow. My wardrobe is off limits so I'll either raid another wardrobe or go digging in our clothes recycling bag. I suspect tomorrow could see me wearing an old torn school shirt, minus a few buttons and covered in ink. It's pot luck but either way the stuff won't fit the best. Another meeting to go to but hey, I'll just wear what I do with a confident air.

My dear hearts at home have been offering lots of support like, what if I nibbled this biscuit a bit. Can you have my gooey leftovers? Yes I reply, but no thanks - not yet. Outside home, what is emerging is that the response elicited around me is true human kindness to someone in need. I haven't been banging the drum, but where relevant have told people. Heightening the response of care for someone else is my aim this week. I won't change the world, just a perhaps for one person, but that's enough. If we all take care of the poverty of even one person, it's one life saved. I always knew why children were crying in those disturbing news items from disaster areas, but now I literally feel their pain.

***“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”*** Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

**Day 4 : Poverty Challenge February 18th, 2009**

It's an early post tonight as I anticipate going to bed soon. I'm much recovered now after being ill last night I suspect from lack of food. Today I wanted some more food so I sacrificed my daily wash. I've just had the most beautiful bowl of vegetable soup and the leftovers from another plate. Heaven, but I suspect hunger will set in again soon. Well, the recycle bag for clothes yielded an oversize shirt bought in the 80s, and a t shirt with a logo on it which I had to cover. They were however clean and tomorrow I'd like (well it's a need) some clean socks, necessitating another dig in the recycle bag. I could end up in Spiderman socks and underpants (I'm female!). My walk today was again pleasant but along the way I passed a standpipe into a building site which was leaking water which

could have washed me and given me a much needed drink. People at the meeting I was at didn't bat an eyelid at my attire, nor did a gentleman I didn't know object to me using his tea bag to get a cup of tea. Tomorrow I NEED a wash so I have persuaded a loved one to have a bath (we usually shower to save water) and I'll use it afterward. I'm so excited!!!!

Word about what I'm doing is gathering pace and I was given a scone today from someone I wouldn't have expected. Well, that's not true really, it just took me by surprise. (That scone with its juicy looking cherries will be for tomorrow morning). I'm getting words of encouragement, some have said they don't know what to do and others offered help when I was ill and I've been offered money. Some are concerned and I've even had a hug. In fact there is the whole range of emotions here, all of which would happen in an ideal world when someone is in need. We all play our part, but making sure each need is covered. A friend put it very well for me, for me this week is also 'active prayer' against what is happening in Maridi, Sudan.

***"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*** Matt 14:29-31

#### **Day 5: Poverty Challenge February 19th, 2009**

I could hardly drag myself across the room to write this because I'm just so tired, and sore, but a phone call has roused me. Anyway. I had a bath today, I am clean! Ok, so it was someone else's bathwater, but it was bliss. Thankfully I had let the water out of the bath before my beloved told me I should have kept the water for tomorrow, otherwise I really would have felt obliged to comply. The recycling bag yielded a pair of Harry Potter socks, the smalls were too small but clean, and the tops I slept in were serviceable so all in all I felt good. My donated cherry scone was haute cuisine this morning, but the highlight of the day, was after I got home from work. Instead of having one slice of bread with my vegetable soup (again) I had four. Well, the extra bread was sitting to go out to the birds, and it didn't taste all that bad really. The remainder, minus the blue bits will make lovely toast tomorrow. It's been difficult concentrating at work and I'm so glad I'm not in tomorrow. I've walked another 5 hours Mon-Thurs so I have another 2 hours to do before Sunday to make up the 18 hours total this week. My feet are blistered and sore but I think there's another few hours in them yet. Before I left work I was given some money by a good friend who said they'd known me for too long to let me suffer. I was also offered a snack bar which I turned down. Fool, that would have went with the blue moulded toast just lovely. The smells coming from food shops I passed were marvellous and food I'd normally detest looked so appetising. So near and yet so far, and it must be unbearable for people in poverty living so close to those with plenty. I carried no money and felt their helplessness.

***"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him***

***up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*** Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

### **Day 6 : Poverty Challenge *February 20th, 2009***

I'm almost there, one more day and I can wash, eat, dress in my own clothes. Haven't missed TV though, still I'll save more of that 'till my last blog. I'm tired, dirty, hungry, thirsty, need I day more? Haven't changed my clothes or washed today, and was so uplifted by one of the other Sudan mission team members contacting me to let me know that I could have a wash in warm water, just like I would if I were in Sudan. Oh joy! I will save that to tomorrow. It's been an 'easier' day as I haven't been in work. The day started with toast made from the bread I rescued from the birds last night and a cup of tea. That one teabag has been so well used, must be a record. By 9am I was feeling restless and wishing I was in work, which is *very* unlike me. I decided to walk to Lisburn from Dromore to complete the hours I should be walking over the past week. The walk was pleasant enough, lovely weather, but the heavy traffic left little bits of grit in my mouth. I had to take a slightly longer route but it was safer. This route kept me on a bus route and I planned to get a bus in an emergency. Good job I didn't need one, as I later discovered I'd only 85p in my purse. You see I haven't used my purse since last Sunday. My meal tonight was half a portion of chips, the other half being for tomorrow, and the stale bread again. Yes, there truly was half a loaf destined for the feathered critturs. I used the 85p left in my purse and someone gave me the rest and bought the chips. I'm breaking the challenge slightly by travelling to Belfast this evening. Not an issue for me though as I'm volunteering in a scheme in Belfast which is there to support those in need and hungry on a Friday and Saturday night. Tonight I am needy and will be accepting one of the the cups of soup and the croissant I usually hand out. I'm hungry now but I've a while to wait.

My walk today was uplifting as along the way horns were tooted twice, one of the drivers I recognised. Someone else saw me but didn't stop because I looked so fresh! I was offered a lift into town by someone I know, but I turned it down only for the purposes of this challenge, but I did get a lift back from Lisburn with someone who was going that way anyway. And so I pray it would be with our response to those in need. A friend offered me money yesterday and asked how much I needed. I told him about the £2 and he gave me £5.

**I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.** Mark 9:41 (NIV)

### **Final Day : Poverty Challenge *February 21st, 2009***

Last night I had my donated soup and a roll on the streets in Belfast. I was hungry and smelly and tired, but my plight was nowhere near that of the homeless, sick and needy who also ate the soup. One person arrived with no shoes and was given a pair which one of the volunteers bought earlier that evening. They were even the same foot size. For me, today

was the worst physically and I have noticed my eating seems more furtive and rushed than usual and I was so appreciative of every morsel in my mouth. I've had a stale croissant and the chips from last night. I was however given a lunch of a cup of soup and a roll (more about lunch later). My feet are a bit tender from the walk to Lisburn yesterday and my body aches. After a couple of hours sleep I was up bright and breezy (I wish) to go to help at a car wash organised by N.I Fire & Rescue Cadet Scheme (Lisburn). It was 5 hours of very hard work, for which I accepted the soup and a roll and a warm cup of coffee. The cadets made a donation to the Emergency Relief Appeal for Sudan. These young people were aware of where the money raised was going to but also freely admitted that they usually spent most of Saturday in bed or lounging about the house! They worked so hard and their humour was excellent inspite of their tiredness. I had to come home and just give up.

A friend sent this to my husband for my encouragement.

**“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>1</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”** (John 3:16-21 NIV)

I've reached the end. But for others this is their reality and their only hope is us. I must go. I've asked someone for a bed for the night. I'll contact you tomorrow.

### **Poverty Challenge + 1 February 22nd, 2009**

Dear Friend,

Last night I turned to a Christian family for a bed for the night and without hesitation I was given shelter. I walked quickly down the road carrying only my sleeping bag and blanket. Since my departure was a bit rushed in the end, I had nothing else other than that which I carried in my handbag, namely a purse with no money, a New Testament and Psalms, a notebook and pen. Although I arrived after supper, something was left for me and I settled down to read, but being too tired I soon climbed into my sleeping bag. I was soon ready for sleep, but it didn't come for a while, as I went over the week's events on what was my last day of poverty. After a short time, I felt a warm sensation creeping from my toes to my head and I am convinced God's hand was in that. A sense of it's all right now, there there, and I almost cried. Although alone and in a strange situation I felt safe, no hand would touch me.

Today at church, washed and in clean, ironed clothes I felt strangely remote from the first service of the day and although I wanted to dearly, I hadn't the energy to sing. Other friends asked how I was and how the week had been, their concern touched me and we exchanged a few words. Although my written capabilities have remained relatively unchanged this week, I have found myself fighting for words and being continually thirsty hasn't helped. This morning I can only describe how I was feeling by likening it all to having one of those out of body experiences and watching myself sitting in church. By the time I was at the second service of the day at 11.30am I was back to full voice in the choir. As I write this I have suddenly realised not a single note has passed my lips all week. That's so strange as I usually sing constantly.

We were invited out to lunch today to celebrate the 18th birthday of a young lad we've known most of his life. I almost cancelled, and would not have been telling a lie if I'd sent apologies of being under the weather. In the end I ate sparingly, chewing every morsel slowly. It was difficult being surrounded by all the food, but what made it better was that plates were almost licked clean and there was no waste. I did however almost bring home some bottles of wine which were left on the table, what exactly for I don't know since I don't drink wine. That has been my only meal, but tomorrow I'll return or try to return to 'normal' whatever that is. I'm hungry now, but I've learnt to ignore it.

I must tell you that I feel blessed this week that apart from that little blip earlier in the week my health has been fine, no flare up of niggling little medical conditions. That had worried me, but apart from being tired and sore from all the walking and the car wash yesterday, physically I feel fine. The rest of me, well, I don't know yet. My primary aim this week was to raise awareness of the plight of those living in poverty, and to pray constantly for my brothers and sisters in Christ in Maridi, I pray that has all been achieved. I wanted to stand shoulder to shoulder with everyone in Maridi and walk with them in their troubles.

So, I'm coming to the end of our time together, but I will be in touch again later in the week to let you know how I've been settling down to that 'normal' life I mentioned earlier on. I must thank all of you for taking time to read what I've written this week, and for your support which carried me along.

Your sister in Christ,

Lynn

### **Poverty challenge update. *March 2nd, 2009***

Dear Friend, It's been just over a week now since I left my 'poverty challenge' behind, and I must say it's been a strange week. Remember, as you read, it was only one single week. In reality I'll not be leaving bits of this behind.

I've gathered up the thoughts of a week, because let's face it, now that I'm just the same as anyone else, there's not a lot to tell. I've enjoyed, no 'luxuriated' in washing and putting gel on my hair and changing my clothes and not felt guilty. I can't bear the smell of the highly scented body lotions I have and my perfume is becoming overbearing. My first walk around the supermarket was surreal and when I first sat in a cafe again I felt guilty, I felt guilty sitting in a cafe drinking a single cup of coffee. Guilty, guilty. Can't read the glossy mags, guilty. Slimming mags? Guilty. Highlights? Having a significant purpose to life, oh and the extra 3 slices of bread for tea one night. Lowlights? Being hungry and thirsty as I walked past a food shop. As my granny used to say I had 'plenty to fall back on' so no physical harm done. But as to my psyche? In reality I know, there's really no guilt in a cup of coffee. What if everyone stopped their wee indulgences? As we've seen recently it doesn't take long for belt tightening to become a recession and small businesses soon miss the trade. I can't really settle to read anything which frustrates me as I bought myself a book for Christmas and was saving it for Lent. It's a book of portraits of Jesus. I wanted to spend 40 days and 40 nights getting to know Him.

I feel guilty and incredibly drained over having entered Lent without being able to contemplate 'giving something up'. That's unsettling and peculiar but I feel another little phase coming on. You see, the team was due to fly to Sudan this weekend and oh how lost I feel. I want to be there. My voice hasn't spoken yet. God speaks, I listen. Shhhh! I can't hear it and it's almost the weekend. What am I going to do? I haven't broken that particular piece of news to my beloveds yet, and I wonder if I should, but the whisper is God wants more of something, not less.

At the weekend I was sent some pictures of the distribution of clothes and blankets in Sudan. Sad faces stared out at me, faces of mothers who have watched as their families were murdered. And a sad tearful face stared back.

Please pray for the uplift of spirits of the whole team who were due to fly to Sudan and please continue to pray for the safety of the people in Sudan,

Lynn