

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS: Following one of Zimbabwe's longest ever droughts, months of torrential rains have pounded Zimbabwe this season further worsening the deplorable state of many roads. Potholes are rife and akin to the aftermath of a sporadic missile attack.



Virtually all Zimbabwe's infrastructure is in a dilapidated state. Resilient youths eke out a living by patching roads with bricks and gravel. Motorists give their small change as a token of their appreciation. Over the past few months or so, an outbreak of 2,200 suspected cases of



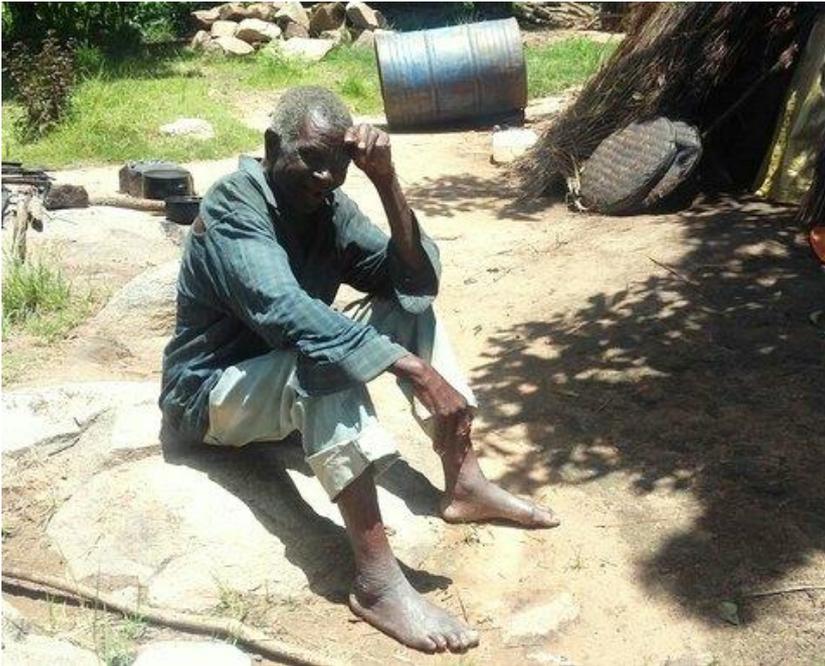
typhoid fever affected Harare and other regions of the country attributing to nine deaths.

MAIZE CROPS: Artpeace crops have suffered from the incessant rains – see below centre. The artists pleaded for Urea, a fertiliser ideal for use in wet growing conditions. God must have heard



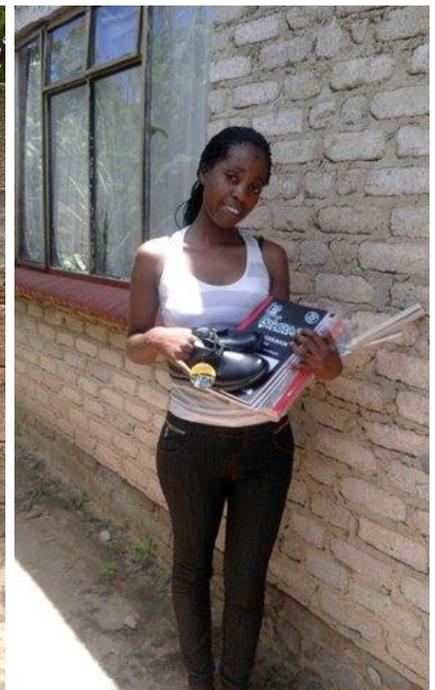
their cries for soon after, Christine Bainbridge, a well-known local lady artist member of Oxfordshire village church Wheatley URC (left), and an admirer of the group's work, recommended to her elders that Artpeace be added to their 2017 list of charities. The congregation agreed and soon afterwards, I received a generous donation from church treasurer Chris Shelley, covering 50 Kg sacks of Urea (above left) for the whole group. The photo above right shows Talent, artist Ignatius's wife applying the fertiliser. So, barring more disasters, the group are back on track for a good harvest! Maize is their staple diet.

THE RAINS also had a devastating effect on some homes. Leo Mazengula (Fr Konrad's assistant) sent these photos of an old man sitting in despair beside his demolished home.



SALES at the Southwark Cathedral shop for February appear to be on the low side but 'The Thinker' piece on the left by Godwin was one success. A reminder to the congregation that all these sales and donations help send the artists and their friends' families to school. Children like Alice and Isabel below left, are very fortunate as their fees over the years have been covered by members of the congregation. Isabel is due to sit her 'A' levels later this year and is only too aware that without our support, this would not be possible and her future would look bleak. There was enough money left over to buy some books and a new pair of shoes which she is proudly holding - they still have the label on!

CROSSING THE DIVIDE: A girl (below left) walks into a maize field alone on her way to school whilst two young boys go the opposite direction to get to theirs. Photo by artist Christine Ndoro.



Fr Konrad, my contact at Silveira House is recovering from a major stomach operation in Germany. We hope and pray that he will be able to continue his pastoral duties. **Johnston Simpson**