St. Raphael Maternity Support
A safe, healthy place for mothers and babies
— Matisi Village, Kitale, Kenya —

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.
Psalm 127:3
We are a Catholic ministry

that serves the poorest of the poor internationally by channeling aid through dioceses, parishes and Catholic missionaries, cost-effectively helping the poor break the cycle of poverty while advancing Catholic evangelization.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church’s spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify him in Heaven and on earth.
Project Synopsis

Description
Ensure quality health care for poor mothers and their newborns by supporting staff salaries at the St. Raphael Dispensary maternity wing.

Goal
Prevent infant and maternal deaths, and promote the health of mothers and newborns.

Affiliation
The clinic is run by the Catholic Diocese of Kitale.

Location
Matisi Village, a slum area six miles outside the town of Kitale, located in western Kenya’s Rift Valley, about 40 miles from the Ugandan border.

Cost
$6,600 is needed to supplement the pay of 5 staff members.

Highlights
• In 2009, Cross Catholic Outreach helped the Diocese of Kitale build the St. Raphael Dispensary maternity ward to address the health needs of poor mothers and newborns.
• The maternity wing has a delivery room, an area for monitoring premature babies, a prenatal and postnatal exam room, and a sanitary space for well-child care.
• Health education is provided during consultations as well as at church gatherings and other local events.
• Mothers prefer St. Raphael to the “free” government maternity ward, where quality is substandard and patients must buy basic supplies (gloves, cotton, etc.) the hospital lacks.
• The Diocese is taking steps to make the maternity ward fully self-sufficient. Until then, they need your help!
• Cross Catholic Outreach has committed to raising funds for staff salaries. This will ensure quality care while keeping patient fees minimal.
The Need

Childbirth should be a time of celebration, but when problems arise, the birthing experience can quickly shift from joyful to terrifying. Labor complications, such as excessive bleeding or a baby tangled in the umbilical cord, are even more frightening when help cannot be found. Imagine the fear of facing such a trial without a doctor, nurse or medical facility available.

In Matisi Village, a slum in western Kenya’s Rift Valley, many women give birth in crude, unhygienic shanties, attended only by a traditional midwife. Malaria, HIV and other serious illnesses run rampant in this community, where the only available water is full of deadly parasites. To make matters worse, the nearest medical facility used to be a six-mile walk away. Even if a villager had the money for transportation and care, there might be no doctor on staff that day, or there might be no medication in stock to treat the patient. As a result, she would have no choice but to buy questionable drugs from a roadside vendor.

Conditions like these help explain why Kenya has eight times the infant mortality rate of the United States, and 14 times the maternal death rate. A combination of poverty, inadequate health services and lack of education has left many Kenyan families stranded in a medical stone age, deprived of lifesaving medicine and care.

Concerned by this urgent need, the Diocese of Kitale sought the help of Cross Catholic Outreach to make a difference. As a result of that partnership, many pregnant mothers have received care that would not otherwise have been possible. But the need is still great. **Today, we are seeking your help** to continue protecting the lives of women and newborns.
Ministry Description

Through support from American Catholics, the Diocese of Kitale has created a lifesaving local resource for Matisi Village families in need of maternity care.

In 2006, the Diocese of Kitale established the St. Raphael Dispensary health clinic and appointed the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret to run it (that role has since been passed on to the Diocese of Kitale). The following year, Cross Catholic Outreach helped add staff toilets and two consultation rooms. Then in 2009, we funded the construction and furnishing of a new maternity wing.

Thanks to this new facility, pregnant mothers from Matisi no longer need to walk six miles to the government hospital. This change has been more than a matter of convenience — it's been a matter of life and death. Instead of giving birth in the unsanitary slum environment, women now have access to a clean, fully equipped birthing room, complete with an incubator, an area for prenatal and postnatal exams, and a sanitary place for well-child care. Today, hundreds of mothers come to St. Raphael Dispensary every year to safely deliver their babies and give their children a healthy start on life. In addition, the maternity staff offers free health education at local church gatherings and other events, raising awareness of the risks of giving birth without a medically trained attendant.

Recently, the Kenyan government has begun offering “free” maternity care at the Kitale hospital — but the care comes with a price. Patients must buy basic medical supplies the government hospital lacks, and the quality of services is very poor. Many also find it impossible to travel there. As a result, villagers still prefer the St. Raphael maternity ward. There, a woman can be attended by professional medical workers during labor, receive prenatal and postnatal care, and have access to emergency services — all for a small fee! What’s more, the Diocese of Kitale insist that this care is provided with gentleness, compassion and empathy. This is more than a maternity ward — it's a healing ministry led by women with a passion to change lives through their prayers and love.

The Diocese of Kitale is now taking steps to make the maternity ward 100 percent self-sufficient. But until they reach that goal, they need your help to continue their crucial work.
Help Now!

As Catholics, we know that childbirth is one of God’s greatest blessings. Who among us isn’t grieved when that miracle is turned into a nightmare for Kenyan families simply because they can’t access or afford basic maternal health services? Please — help us make sure that every needed resource is available to these vulnerable mothers and newborns.

Cross Catholic Outreach has committed to supporting the salaries of the maternity ward staff, but we cannot do it without your financial support! Please help us sustain this lifesaving Catholic ministry. Your generous gift will ensure that the women of this deeply impoverished community have compassionate, medically trained care providers at their side throughout their pregnancies, and that emergency situations need not be a death sentence. You will literally save the lives of Kenyan women and their babies, so their village might resound with the joyful words of Psalm 127:3, “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”

Christ’s teaching is clear: choose life! Please join us today and be God’s instrument of life and hope to his most vulnerable children. The Lord will not forget your sacrifice.

“…I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10

Our Promise to You!

Proceeds from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2019, the close of our ministry’s fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.