

MIRROR



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**“Behold, the Lamb of God” – the Holy Sacrifice:
Archbishop Kaigama, Nigeria.**

“Evangelisation will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit... Jesus is ‘led by the Spirit’ to experience in the desert the decisive combat and the supreme test before beginning this mission.”

Blessed Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

Dear Friends,

The month of October is dedicated to the Universal Mission of the Church – but it is also the month of the Holy Rosary. At first glance the two might seem largely unrelated, but in reality they are inseparable. Every Catholic mission depends entirely on prayer, and prayer inspires those who pray to proclaim the Gospel to all creation.

uplifts the giver, perhaps even saving him or her from the sin of pride and moral decay. Our compassion for the world’s poor forces us out of our indifference, impelling us to perform gestures of love and uplifting our Christian spirit.

As we have all experienced, the resolve to be faithful to prayer and act in a missionary spirit is always accompanied by a spiritual

against others’ freedom to proclaim with joy a Good News which one has come to know through the Lord’s mercy? And why should only falsehood and error, debasement and pornography have the right to be put before people and often unfortunately imposed on them by the destructive propaganda of the mass media, by the tolerance of legislation, the timidity of the good and the impudence of the wicked?”

The world today is increasingly ruled by ideologies. We are engaged in a spiritual battle. At stake is the authority to interpret the nature of this world; the spirit that will govern our lives and that of our countries. That is why we so greatly need prayer and a worldwide mission, so that the true spirit may prevail through them. Before Jesus sent out his disciples to proclaim the Gospel, he gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits (Mark 6:7). They were to “exorcise” the world, so to speak, so that people’s hearts could be free to embrace the new spirit. The founder of ACN, Father Werenfried van Straaten, himself saw clearly, right from the beginning, that the task of materially helping the needy and persecuted also spiritually



“We greatly need prayer and a worldwide mission, so that the true spirit may prevail through them.”

struggle. The devil wants to deprive us of this inner resolve, this apostolic zeal and courage. As Blessed Pope Paul VI writes in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “The lack of fervour is all the more serious because it comes from within. It is manifested in fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope.” By contrast, our commitment to God’s will brushes aside all excuses and objections, including those that see evangelisation as a violation of our personal freedom. Pope Paul VI rightly asks: “Is it then a crime

Let us then be zealous in praying the Rosary, dear friends, so that through Mary, the first missionary, the true spirit that brings peace to the world may prevail within us. Let us help the missionaries on the front line, through our prayers and acts of love, that they may not be influenced by the false spirit or tempted to proclaim their own ideas, but instead preach only the “greatest and oldest idea”: namely Christ.

My grateful blessing on you all,

P. Martin Maria Barta

Fr Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant

The Mirror online

The Mirror newsletter has been at the heart of Aid to the Church in Need from the charity's beginning. It was Christmas 1947 when Father Werenfried van Straaten wrote the letter 'No Room at the Inn', in his abbey newsletter. In it he appealed for help for 14 million east German refugees fleeing the advance of Communist troops at the end of World War II. Soon his written appeals had outgrown the abbey newsletter, and as Aid to the Church in Need was born so was the Mirror newsletter.

Today, the Mirror is distributed to hundreds of thousands of friends and benefactors around the world, telling them of the hope and help they are bringing to persecuted and suffering Christians in need of our love and charity.

All of the editions of the Mirror produced by ACN (UK) can be found in the resources section of our web-site (www.acnuk.org/resources). Editions of the Mirror and all the country reports we send out in our mailings can be found by selecting "reports" in the right-hand menu.

*With the world becoming ever more digitised, we decided to make both **Mirror 5 (June/July)** and **Mirror 8 (December)** online specials. These editions will only be available on the web but this will give us the opportunity to add more pages and content than we would be able to do in the print edition. However, we will continue sending you the other six editions by post. We do hope that you'll be going regularly to ACN's website to download the Mirror. The December edition of the Mirror will be available online from Friday 30th November.*

Your offerings of love



Holy Mass celebrated in the DRC for the intentions of one of ACN's benefactors.

A Mass stipend, or Mass offering, is a gift of money to a priest, in return for which he agrees to celebrate Holy Mass for a particular intention of the donor. The grace of the Sacrament cannot be "bought" in this way, but the stipend does bind the giver more intimately with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This custom dates back to the second century. The acceptance, administration and application of Mass stipends is governed by canons 945 – 958 of the Code of Canon Law. The diocesan bishop is responsible for overseeing their observance.

ACN has been passing on your Mass offerings for more than 50 years, to almost every country of the world, but particularly to those where Christ, in the person of his priests, once more treads the path to Golgotha. In many of the poorest and most persecuted countries your Mass offerings are their sole means of survival. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, your Mass offerings are essential as the economy has all but collapsed. With people at the mercy of murderous gangs, and with strange sects and ancient super-

stitions leading many Christians astray, Catholic priests struggle to draw people back to God. But you are helping, with 2,400 Mass offerings this year. That is 2,400 encounters with Christ. In the **Ukrainian** Greek-Catholic Exarchate of Odessa we have passed on 1,000 Mass stipends to 43 priests. Again, it is not only the priests you are supporting here but also their vital pastoral work. We cannot be closer to God than in the Holy Eucharist, and your generous stipends help bring the world closer to God.



In Odessa, the Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated for a benefactor's intentions.



Christ, light of the nations and light of these Syrian Christians at the Easter Vigil.

Mass Solidarity with Syria



“This is my body, which will be given up for you.” There are few places on earth today where they are living the Passion of Our Lord more than in Syria.

Those who could escape, did so. Over half the Syrian people were made exiles, or refugees in their own land. Those who remained now live in hunger among the ruins. The priests stayed on – in Homs, Hama, Aleppo and the other ruined cities. Their presence gives strength to the Christians, for now, more than ever the Church embodies hope. The priests convey this hope by both

word and deed. Living on just £110 a month, priests still manage to give to the poor and sick. Their witness strengthens others. But where does *their* strength come from? From their encounter with Christ. “It is from the midst of suffering that the message of salvation springs”, says Maronite Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus. Yet the temptation to leave is always there, he adds. Baptisms and weddings are down by 75 percent, whereas funerals are an everyday occurrence. “But the future of the Church in Syria rests, as it does everywhere, on the priesthood. What would happen to the Church without priests?” And in this difficult situation the Archbishop welcomes ACN’s Mass stipends as a vital lifeline.



“For on the night when he was betrayed...” Holy Mass celebrated in Hama, Syria, for ACN’s benefactors.

We have promised him **£3,800** in Mass offerings for his 9 priests, and to Melkite Archbishop Jean Abdo Arbach of Homs, Hama and Yabroud we are giving **£12,800** for his 18 priests. Archbishop Arbach says, “Your help nourishes our hope”. And Maronite Bishop Antoine Chbeir of Latakia quotes St Paul in asking for Masses for his



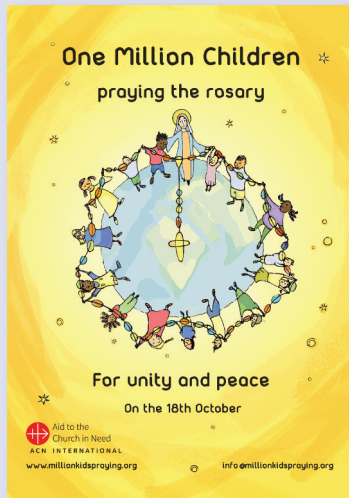
Children in Syria receiving Holy Communion from Melkite Patriarch Emeritus Gregorios III.

30 priests (we have promised him **£21,300**). “We preach Christ crucified”, Bishop Chbeir says, adding “the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:23ff). He is referring to the sufferings of the Syrian Christians today – and to the bond of love that unites us to them.

The Melkite and Maronite Churches are Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with the Pope.



The Rosary – a worldwide bond of love



It began 12 years ago. A small group of children gathered beneath a tree in Venezuela and prayed. The children, not quite 10 years old, were praying the Rosary – for peace, for their families, for the world. But they didn't want to pray alone. Other children joined them. They wanted one million children to pray the Rosary together at the same time – all around the world. Now it happens every year. On 18 October hundreds of thousands of children pray the Rosary, in a campaign that unites the world with God. For the Rosary, as Saint John Paul II wrote, "brings us through the heart of his Mother into a living bond with Jesus". Once again this year ACN is calling on children all over

the world to pray, through the intercession of the Mother of God, for peace – above all in Iraq and Syria. The prayer of children is powerful – and you can find resources for the event online at www.millionkidspaying.org



Thomas Heine-Geldern,
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

Whenever I have the opportunity to talk about Mass stipends, I feel a sense of joy and wonder at being able to report that every 21 seconds Holy Mass is celebrated somewhere in the world for the intentions of one of our benefactors. Not only does this confidence in the power of the Holy Eucharist strengthen the faith of the giver, but it is also an important pillar supporting the bridge of love that unites us to our suffering brothers and sisters. At the same time it enables many priests not only to carry out their own pastoral ministry, but also to materially support their communities – which are often extremely poor.

I would like to thank you all for persevering with your prayers and generosity, because these Mass offerings enable us to light many torches of faith and hope which can be passed on to future generations. It is this coming generation that particularly concerns us as we grow older, filling us with both joy and concern for the future. Let us therefore join together in praying for the Youth Synod which is happening now, so that, with courage and with the help of the Holy Spirit, ways may be found to inspire young people with love for Jesus Christ.

Thomas Heine-Geldern

Need, love and thanks – your letters

A little task for the Lord

This is the first time that I have written to you – as until recently I knew practically nothing about your organisation. But yesterday I was in Fatima, and after Holy Mass I found a copy of the Mirror left lying on a bench. It seemed to be waiting just for me. Being somewhat curious about such things, I felt the Lord was calling me and giving me a little task to do: take a little flour from your store and give it for this good cause. So this is what I have done!

A benefactress in Portugal

How can anyone say "no"?

Your letters and Mirror are so compassionate and compelling, so poignant and bracing, that one wonders how anyone can say "no" to your urgent pleas. The love of Christ urges us, does it not? Thank you for allowing us to be a small part in your extraordinary

work on behalf of our Brothers and Sisters of the Household of Faith! ...

Finally, as for the issues of the Mirror, I save each of them. They are a wonderful compendium of Faith and Truth and Love! Thank you, again!

A benefactor in the United States

An offering given in gratitude

Please find enclosed a donation of \$70 – towards religious Sisters and wherever you feel it is needed. I give thanks to God that I am finally permanent in my job as an Aged Care Worker and have the security to support my family. In gratitude I offer you this donation and pray that you continue this good work. I am sure that Fr Werenfried would be so proud of all you have achieved. Please keep up the good work. And I enjoy receiving the Mirror regularly.

A benefactress in Australia

December's Mirror will be a special online edition. Please see the announcement on page 2.

Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Our address is Aid to the Church in Need, 12–14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA. Please use the Freepost envelope – it saves you money and helps us. If you give by standing order, or have sent a donation recently, please accept our sincere thanks. This Mirror is for your interest and information.

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