

MIRROR

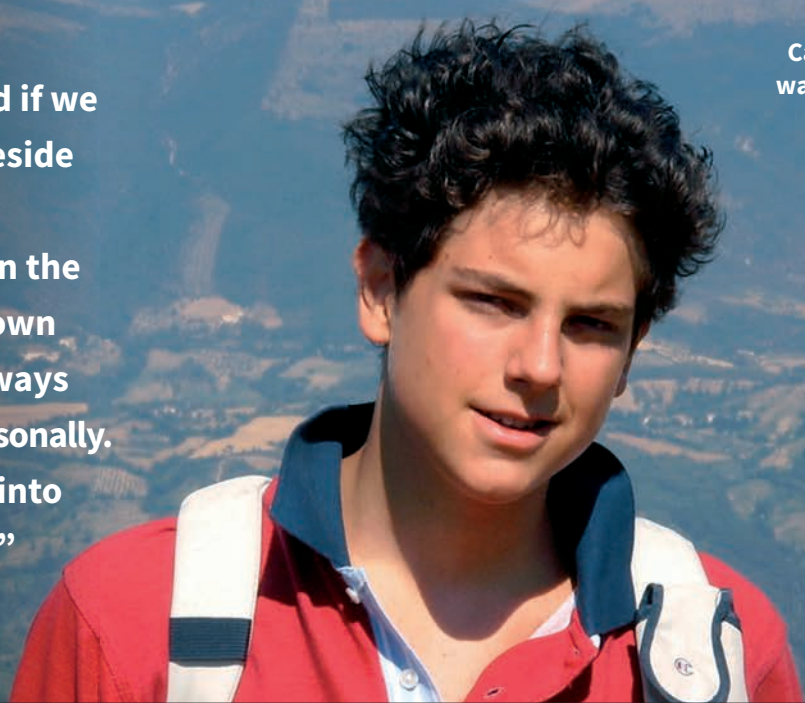


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“How can we be sad if we always have God beside us? Basically, we’re more fortunate than the disciples of Jesus’ own time, for we can always encounter Jesus personally. We only have to go into the nearest church.”

Blessed Carlo Acutis



Carlo Acutis: the Eucharist was his highway to heaven.

Dear Friends,

A New Year opens before us, and as we can all see, it is not likely to be an easy one. So let us turn all the more, full of hope, towards the unchanging One who will always surely guide us through the hardest of times, Almighty God. Jesus himself promised us, before ascending into heaven, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). And he remains faithful to this promise even to this day, for wherever a priest speaks the words of Consecration over the bread and wine, the Lord is made truly present among us, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

This reality shaped the life of a young Italian who was beatified only very recently, on 10th October 2020, in Assisi. His name is Carlo Acutis. Born in London in 1991, he grew up an only child in a wealthy family in Milan. His first Holy Communion, at the age of seven, awakened in him a profound longing for the Eucharist. Every day he attended Holy Mass, in order to be able to receive Jesus. “To be united always with Jesus – this is my life’s plan”, he would say. He described the

Eucharist as “my highway to heaven”. At the age of 15 he fell ill with a grave form of leukaemia and within less than two weeks he died, on October 12th, 2006. His last request was to be buried in Assisi. His embalmed body now lies – dressed in jeans, trainers and a tracksuit top – in the church of “Santa Maria Maggiore”, on the spot



“Wherever a priest speaks the words of Consecration, the Lord is made truly present among us.”

where Saint Francis left behind his own fine clothing in order to commit himself entirely to God.

Like other young people, Carlo was fascinated by the world of computers. He took a keen interest in algorithms and computer programming. Yet here too his love for the Eucharist was central to what he did. Aged just 11, he created a website – now translated into 17 different languages – on which he documented no fewer than 136 recorded Eucharistic miracles from every continent of the world (www.miracolieucaristici.org). “I believe that many people don’t fully

understand the value of Holy Mass”, Carlo used to say. He was convinced that “If we spend time in the sunshine, we get a tan. But if we spend time with Jesus in the Eucharist, then we become holy.” His own life was the proof of this. His cousin Flavia testified that she could not recall ever having seen Carlo unhappy. “Sadness is when we look into ourselves. Happiness is when we look towards God.”

Dear Friends, may this supernatural joy accompany you all throughout this coming year and give you strength to embrace and offer up even the painful situations to God, as Carlo himself did, “for the Pope and for the Church”. And especially for all the priests who through the Holy Mass make the Lord present for us on earth. And thank you all for supporting the seminarians who likewise wish to serve the Lord in the Eucharistic ministry.

With my grateful blessing for a grace-filled New Year,

P. Martin M. Barta
Father Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



FACULTAD de TEOLOGÍA
del URUGUAY
"Mons. Mariano Soler"

"This is my vocation"



*"Wherever God may send me":
Henry Bukenya.*

"The love of God sometimes follows paths one could never have imagined, but it always reaches those who are willing to be found." So said Pope Benedict XVI at the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Henry Bukenya from Uganda is a good example of this. He was willing to be found, yet no one could possibly have foreseen it. For his mother died giving birth to him. "I never knew her". His father did not want to know him, for he already had three other wives, and seven children. It was his grandmother who took little Henry in, had him baptised and brought him to the school, to the parish. It was there he heard about the Mother of God. "Mary is my Mother. Whenever I had problems I went to her. And also to say thank you to her. I still do so today.

She accompanies me throughout my life." Henry was introduced to the Rosary Club, a group of children with a special love for Our Lady who were taking part in the Rosary campaign "A Million Children praying the Rosary". Over 10,000 children in Uganda were now meeting twice weekly to pray the Rosary. Henry was one of them, faithful year after year. Blythe Kaufmann, who founded the Rosary Club, soon spotted him. Not all the children prayed with quite so much devotion as Henry did. "Mary always leads us to Jesus", he says, with a smile that says still more. For it was Mary who led him to recognise within his heart the vocation to the priesthood.

So he began his philosophy studies, hoping to become a priest. But there are many vocations in Uganda, and the selection process is a strict one. His family situation, his father with his three wives, was what told against him. He was not admitted to the seminary.

But Henry did not give up. Once again he turned to his Mother, and again, and again. He managed to scrape by with casual work, helping out in the parish, and above all in the Rosary Club. Blythe sensed his genuine vocation and spoke to Bishop Jaime Fuentes from Uruguay, who was visiting Uganda at the time. The bishop began an intensive correspondence with Henry, a



He is often to be found here: Our Lady's shrine in the local cathedral.

young man by now, and could see that he was serious about it. They decided between them that Henry would travel to Uruguay and study theology in the diocese of Minas. But here too there were problems, for he was the only seminarian; that hardly constitutes a seminary. Once more Mary came to his aid. Henry has found a home with the Holy Family congregation and is studying theology at the university faculty. Within three years he wants to complete his studies and then "serve God for the rest of my life, wherever He may send me. This is my vocation".

Henry was willing to be found and be led to Uruguay. It is a country so heavily secularised that it can almost be described as atheistic or neo-pagan. Priests have a hard time here, and black priests still more so. Henry knows this; so he prays and studies. The diocese can scarcely afford his university fees and has asked us for a subsidy of **£1,100**. Henry merely pleads humbly, "Holy Mary, Seat of Wisdom, pray for me." ●



In three years Henry will be a priest: the seminarian in the parish.



A joyful yes to God’s love

For those with faith, life is a love story. For faith is the “wonderful way of realising love in life through the vocation to follow Christ”, according to Pope Saint John Paul II.

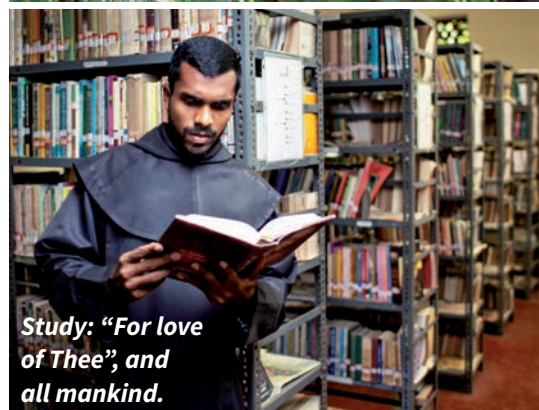
This is above all true of the loving dedication of the priest, day by day and throughout life, as that great Doctor of the Church Saint Thomas Aquinas put it in the last known words we have from him: “For love of Thee I have watched, studied and laboured. Thee have I preached; Thee have I taught. Never have I said anything against Thee ... but if I have written aught erroneous... I submit all to the judgement and correction of the Holy Roman Church, in whose obedience I now pass from this life.” It is for a life such as this, in love of God and obedience to the Church, that all the seminarians are now preparing. They already felt this in their hearts when they said yes to the call of God, and they know that as priests they will “continue the work of redemption on earth” as the holy Curé of Ars once put it. This is the core of their vocation, the seed that is nurtured and tended with such loving care in the seminary. For “ultimately, it is not administrators and managers we are training, but brothers and fathers, who will accompany the people on their journey through life” (Pope Francis). In the Carmelite seminary in Calcutta (Kolkata), in India’s West Bengal, 18 young men are currently training for this life. They

come from all over India to the central seminary of the order, which is dedicated to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the Patroness of the Missions. Here they grow as brothers, in unity of spirit, regardless of which corner of India they come from. In this unity they draw strength for their future life. For now though, their life is filled with study, garden work, and above all prayer.

It is a training that equips them to accompany others through life, for later it will be their task to “comfort the fearful, embrace the weak, refute enemies, guard against the importunate, instruct the ignorant, rouse the slothful, admonish the proud, encourage the failing, pacify the quarrelsome, help the poor, free the oppressed, acknowledge the good, suffer the bad and, oh – love them all!”, to quote Saint Augustine’s description of his daily life.

But even this training in love still costs money. The seminary can cover almost 80 percent of its annual costs. They have asked us for the remaining **£4,800**, so they can make ends meet. Surely, their joyful yes to God’s love must be worth that much to us? ●

*In the garden:
tending God’s
creation.*



*Study: “For love
of Thee”, and
all mankind.*



On the road to charity

“Thank you with all my heart”, writes Father Kennedy Seketa, rector of Saint Dominic’s seminary in Lusaka, the **Zambian** capital. And you can read his relief between the lines. For now, thanks to the minibus, which will be going to all eleven dioceses of the country, his seminarians can at last fulfil the requirements of their pastoral year and supplement their academic learning with works of charity. Last year there were 29 seminarians; this year there will be 35 on their pastoral year. Altogether there are 67 studying at Saint Dominic’s Seminary in Lusaka. Many of them spend their weekends working in the ten parishes of the diocese of Lusaka, and here too the minibus will play a vital part. With such intensive usage, Father Kennedy’s promise to “treat the vehicle with great care” is not one that has been made lightly.



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

Dear Friends,

On 31st October 2020 Cardinal Schönborn ordained two Jesuit priests in Innsbruck, Austria. Perhaps especially because of the strict coronavirus measures that had to be observed, this proved to be both liturgically and spiritually a very moving ceremony, which brought great joy and confidence to all who were present.

Afterwards, the two newly ordained priests were asked by the press to say what was “the attraction in becoming a priest in 2020”. One responded that it was the call of Jesus to a genuine relationship with him and his fellow men that had given birth to his vocation. The other remarked that the decisive factor for him had been the privilege of witnessing to the Gospel with his own life and thereby being always open to all around him.

Thanks to your prayers and your generous help, we are able to help many seminarians all over the world to discover and live a similar vocation – and this despite the “spiritual anaesthesia” of our secularised world (as Cardinal Cantalamessa, OFM Cap, has put it).

Permit me also to add that one of these priests, as an expression of this closeness and gratitude, expressly included the benefactors of ACN in the blessing at his first Holy Mass and also asked me to share this joy with you.

Need, love and thanks – your letters

Brought closer to persecuted Christians
I know ACN from a number of different events, and I regularly follow your TV broadcasts [Where God Weeps on EWTN]. It took me a little while to realise just how widely your charity spans the whole earth. I wasn’t always so clear about the extent to which Christians are being persecuted and discriminated against in their faith. Thanks to your reporting, I feel much more closely united with them and I now enfold them still more fervently in my prayers.

An ACN supporter in Germany

For the marginalised in society
Thank you for your prayers and your concern. It warms my heart to know that there is always someone praying for us. It gives me courage in my faith and strengthens my trust in God. You are the witnesses of God whom the world so greatly needs, the heart beating in sympathy for those on the margins of society. Yet for us, these poor are the elect of God. They may seem worthless

when viewed by capitalist standards, but for God they are the sustaining pillars of our common home. I thank God for having reached me through ACN. May God bless you!

An ACN supporter in Belgium

Still happy to help, despite his problems

Yesterday I transferred 50 Euros to ACN to help two Syrian families, and in response to your appeal for donations. Although I haven’t yet received my salary for this month and I’m not sure if I will be continuing to work for the company where I’ve been working for around twenty-five years, I couldn’t simply sit back and do nothing. In Syria, and sadly in Portugal as well, there are people living in greater poverty than I am. And so I am still happy to help! I’m only sorry I can’t give more than 50 Euros. In return I simply ask your prayers for my family and for Portugal.

An ACN benefactor in Portugal

Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Our address: 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 direct debit or have sent a donation recently, please accept our sincere thanks. This Mirror is for your interest and information.

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12–14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA
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