



**“May more and more men and women strive daily, with quiet humility and courage, to be artisans of peace.”**

**Pope Francis,  
Message to World Peace Day 2022**



*Christ on the Cross, Benin.*

## Dear Friends,

In the joyful and festive atmosphere of Christmastide the Church calls on each one of us to be architects of peace. Peace is a gift of God, but it is down to us to embrace it in order to be able to build a world of peace.

Since peace is a gift, it is our duty to pray insistently for it to the Father of Light, from whom comes “every good gift and every perfect gift” (Jas 1:17). At every Mass, the fervent prayer rises from our altars: “Grant peace in our days.” Humanity can destroy peace by our own ignorance and wickedness, but we cannot restore it by our own efforts – we must have help from God.

However, peace is a challenge that demands that we all work together. Above all we must educate ourselves to respect the basic principles which promote a culture of peace. These principles can be grasped – and accepted – by anyone with common sense and good will. To affirm peace, people must rediscover a common way of thinking and loving; they must respect everyone’s rights

and not just focus on their own. More than anything else, we need to learn the difficult – but sublime – art of forgiveness, which alone can break through the spiral of hatred. Yet in order to achieve this we need to arrive at a common vision of humanity, a vision which respects different cultures, and yet can serve as a spiritual compass for everyone: a vision that can be universally recognised as fundamental truth.



**“If we want to be peacemakers, we must start with ourselves.”**

The Catholic Church exhorts us to be builders of peace. It is easy for me to say that this problem is too big for me, before which I feel like no more than a grain of sand. And yet the example of the Mother of God, whose solemnity we celebrated on New Year’s Day, reminds us that I – like each of us – must live as though the peace of the world depended on me alone: I must commit myself totally to it. If we want to be peacemakers, we must start with ourselves. We must begin in our

own hearts. We must resolve our own inner conflicts. And then promote peace in our families, by settling even the smallest quarrel. This shared love will then spread out, in concentric circles, into all the parts of our lives and work, ultimately changing the world. So let us begin this year with this firm determination, reminding ourselves that one of the Beatitudes is: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Mt 5:9). Children of God, and also children of the Mother of God, Our Lady, Queen of Peace. On December 31 we tore off the last page of the calendar, now the New Year lies before us, a clean white sheet of paper, at the top of it let us write the name of Mary. She is a symbol of our good intentions and a model for us to imitate. Mary is a sign of hope for a world shaken by violence.

*Cardinal Mauro Piacenza,  
President of ACN International*





# Leaving home and family for the sake of the Kingdom

**They miss their parents and their families. And yet the 44 young men preparing for the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Manaus in Brazil are still willing to leave everything “in search of something still greater – the Kingdom of God,” as 18-year-old Adelson so tellingly puts it.**

Most of these seminarians originally came from the riverside villages and settlements of the Amazon and its tributaries, which are often many days' journey by boat to the nearest town or city. They belong to various different indigenous tribal groups. Adelson is a member of the Maraguá people. “I'm happy to be in the seminary,” he explains, “so that I can later enrich the people of my own culture by bringing them the knowledge of the Faith that I am learning during my seminary training. With the help of God I am praying not only for the grace to persevere myself, but for all the young seminarians who are hoping to be able to serve God in the urban, rural and indigenous communities of the region. There is a great need for active priests, totally dedicated to the evangelisation of our peoples. We pray every day in the chapel for priestly vocations in our Church.”

However, the families of the seminarians are poor and can provide little material support for their sons. And the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis have led to a marked fall in the Sunday collections, so that the local Church also finds it ever more difficult to support their formation. That's why they urgently need our help to ensure that these young men will not to be sent home because of a lack of resources. For this year alone they need £26,300. Djavan, who belongs to the Macuxi ethnic group, wants to thank everyone who has already been helping him for his formation. “Without the help of the benefactors of our seminary, Saint Joseph's, I wouldn't be here,” he says.

**Our faithful supporters play a vital role in the training of the Church's future priests. Can these young seminarians continue to count on your help?**



*In communion with the Lord: a seminarian praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.*

## Good shepherds for Nicaragua

**The crisis in Nicaragua is growing worse. In the past four years there have been some 200 separate attacks on churches and priests in the country. Several priests, and even Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa himself, have been arrested by the state.**

Yet despite all these difficulties, there are still many vocations in this Central American nation. For example, there are 49 young men in Matagalpa currently training for the

priesthood. One of them, Roger José explains: “I want to commit my life to God and serve with great love the Church He has chosen to entrust to me. I would give everything for Him and wish only to do His will and be a man of prayer, caring for the needy and bringing souls to Him.”

**Once again this year we are proposing to help the formation of these future “good shepherds” of Nicaragua – with a contribution of £22,400.**





# Prayerfully knocking at the door of your hearts

**“Deliver all of us from the dangers, most immaculate Mother of God, for you bore the timeless Deliverer, you bore the Peace, the Peace which has surpassed all understanding”, so pray the faithful of the Eastern Churches.**

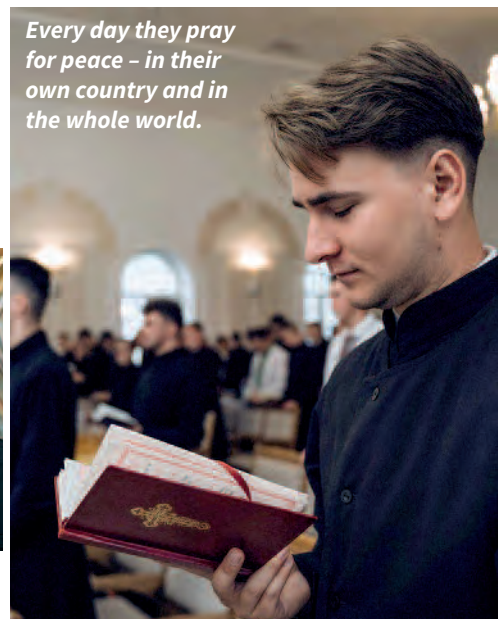
**Ukraine’s** love for the Blessed Virgin is immense. Especially now, in the midst of war, they trust in her protection. In March 2022 Pope Francis consecrated Ukraine and Russia to her Immaculate Heart. Through her intercession the faithful continue to hope that Christ will grant the gift of peace, which they no longer believe that those who hold positions of power on Earth can provide.

In the seminary of Ivano-Frankivsk they also pray for peace every day. Currently there are 202 young men from six different dioceses studying for the priesthood. With 450 ordained priests, averaging around 35 years in age, the Archeparchy of Ivano-Frankivsk has the highest number of Greek-Catholic priests in the country. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church is in full communion with the Pope, but celebrates the liturgy in the Byzantine rite.

The history of the seminary has been an eventful one. During Soviet times it was expropriated by the Communist Party and turned into a training centre for its leadership cadres. After the collapse of communism, the by-then derelict building was returned to the Church and eventually restored with the support of ACN. The seminarians themselves rolled up their sleeves to help rebuild it. Today’s future priests are also pursuing their vocation in difficult times. Although the



**Just three of the 202 young men hoping for your help.**



*Every day they pray for peace – in their own country and in the whole world.*



**Ukraine: rich in vocations.**

seminary is situated in the more peaceful Western Ukraine, no one knows what the future will bring. From the beginning of the war in February 2022 and, for several months afterwards, the seminary served as a shelter for internal refugees, particularly women and children, and the seminarians continued their studies online. Now they are back again, studying in person at the seminary, while working hard ministering to the refugees.

Today the seminary is more dependent on outside support than ever, since living costs have risen alarmingly. So when the seminarians pray for their “daily bread” and their various other needs, they are also gently knocking at the door of your hearts.

**We are hoping to help the seminary for this year with £700 per student. Will you help us, so that none of these vocations will be lost?**



**These 69 youngsters can thank their guardian angels, as they survived when the seminary was hit by the tornado.**

## No roof over their heads

**In the night of 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 a tornado swept over Saint Pius X’s Minor Seminary in Makoua, in the Republic of the Congo.**

Thank God, no lives were lost, but the roof of the seminary was almost completely blown off. The 69 youngsters studying there for potential entry to the major seminary were not only terrified for their lives but also found themselves suddenly, and quite literally, without a roof over their heads. And though they have managed to temporarily fix the worst of the damage, the seminary ultimately still needs a new permanent roof.

**We are proposing to help with £21,900. Would you consider making a contribution?**



## Vital formation for the formators



In July 2022 in Rome, for the 30<sup>th</sup> time, a one-month course was held for seminary formators. Thanks to your support we were able to help 65 priests from 11 different countries – particularly from Africa – to attend. Not only did they gain valuable knowledge and insights about their demanding responsibilities, but at the same time they were able to enjoy a fruitful exchange with their fellow priests from other parts of the world, as well as gaining a profound experience of the Universal Church. Moreover, they had the opportunity to see the Holy Father during the Angelus. On behalf of all the participants whom you enabled to attend, Nigerian Father Emmanuel Maigari writes the following: “I want to thank all your benefactors for the opportunity and the privilege of being able to attend this course. Thank you for your efforts to ensure that, for the good of the Church, the formators themselves are properly formed. May God bless you abundantly!”

## Need, love and thanks – your letters

### Thanks for getting back to us

We are delighted to hear that our donation has reached its destination. Thank you for taking the trouble to reply. It is a joy to know that with our donation we have been able to help some of the religious in Ukraine and bring a little joy in this terrible situation.

**A group of supporters in Germany**

### Facebook fundraiser

To mark my recent birthday I organised a Facebook fundraising campaign for ACN and managed to raise 200 Euros. I hope to send you the money very soon.

**An ACN friend and benefactor in the Netherlands**

### Her link with the Universal Church

I want to thank you first of all for the Mirror. I always love to read it. It keeps my link with the Universal Church alive and I am delighted to see how you support its projects. I pray that

the Holy Spirit may inspire a missionary zeal in the hearts of more young people and the enthusiasm to serve the Church worldwide. And may the Holy Spirit inspire you too to find new ways of reaching out to young people and benefactors. I pray daily for this.

**ACN benefactress in Belgium**

### ACN Brazil celebrates its Silver Jubilee

Celebrating 25 years means making the past present and looking back on our history. A history that has called for great commitment, effort, trust in God’s providence and above all hard work on the part of those who pioneered it. Throughout these years my diocese has benefited from your charity, which has done so much good for Christ’s Church. Doubtless, ACN will still remember many of the old campaigns in a number of our dioceses, which you so generously gave your valuable support to.

**A bishop in Brazil**



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

*Dear Friends,*

*In Amoris Laetitia, the Holy Father writes of the Church that “we have been called to form consciences, not replace them.” This is a duty the Church has towards all the baptised, but above all towards those preparing for the priesthood. And Pope Francis also compares each seminarian to a rough diamond, willing, in accordance with his conscience, to be patiently and carefully polished, so as to sparkle with light among the people of God.*

*Every seminarian strives for the complete formation of his conscience, so that he can faithfully follow his vocation. To achieve it he needs the example of theologically well-trained, experienced and, above all, profoundly believing individuals who can accompany him and help him to successfully negotiate the highs and lows of his spiritual journey. This is possible, so long as the seminary is properly equipped and staffed. However, they lack often the resources they need.*

*At present ACN is able to financially support one in every eight seminarians worldwide and in this way comes close to its cherished goal, namely that “no vocation may be lost just for lack of money.”*

*My heartfelt thanks to you all, united in prayer that enough labourers may be found for the vineyard of the Lord.*

## 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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