



ACN

MIRROR

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No 7 • October 2023



Peru: A priest in the Andes – the image of the Good Shepherd.

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Dear Friends,

“The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates the heart of the mystery of the Church. In a variety of ways she joyfully experiences the constant fulfilment of the promise: ‘Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age’ (Mt 28:20), but in the Holy Eucharist, through the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord, she rejoices in this presence with unique intensity. Ever since Pentecost, when the Church, the People of the New Covenant, began her pilgrim journey towards her heavenly homeland, the Divine Sacrament has continued to mark the passing of her days, filling them with confident hope”.

With these words Pope Saint John Paul II begins his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (“The Church lives by the Eucharist”), an encyclical which can be seen as one of the defining legacies of his pontificate and one which I particularly recommend that you read. Accept his words as a gift: contemplate this central mystery of our Faith over

and over again, understanding it with greater love, celebrating it with greater devotion, and making it fruitful in our lives.

At Mass, Jesus Christ, the Risen One, is totally present. He sits at the right hand of



“For many priests your Mass stipends are providing emergency support.”

God and acts for our salvation – in other words for us. As the Letter to the Romans puts it, “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” (Rom 8:32ff.)

This clear understanding of the Church’s Faith moves us to ask you for Mass stipends as a specially privileged way of helping priests in need. Last year we were able to help some 40,000 priests with Mass

offerings, whether for individual Masses, Tridua, Novenas or Gregorian Masses. For many priests your Mass stipends are providing emergency support.

The Mass offerings you make, on behalf of your departed loved ones or for other particular intentions, have a threefold effect. First of all, through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the redemptive work of Jesus is fulfilled in a supreme manner and at the same time praise and thanksgiving is given to God. Secondly, you are helping departed souls in their place of purification and making the most powerful possible intercession for the intentions concerned. Finally, many priests would not be able to survive without the material support you provide.

I therefore invite you to entrust your Mass intentions to us, and I send you my warmest greetings and blessings,

Father Anton Lässer CP
Ecclesiastical Assistant



*Bolivia:
Mass high up in
the Andes.*

Mission on the margins



BOLIVIA. In the Scriptures mountains are often places of encounter with God – Moses on Mount Sinai, the Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel and Jesus himself on Mount Tabor – to give the best-known examples. For our priests, however, their ministry in the high mountainous regions brings with it numerous extra challenges. And, indeed, in many other places as well...

In the prelatore of Corocoro in Bolivia some of the parishes sit at an altitude of up to 16,000 feet (5,000 m). This is an area almost the size of Belgium, yet it has just 19 priests to minister to the people. Every parish includes numerous villages, the largest has up to 120 of them. In most cases the priest can only visit once or twice a year. The distances are great, the roads difficult and dangerous, the climate harsh. This life brings a lot of loneliness to priests, because

their confreres live so far away. Bishop Pascual Limachi Ortiz visits them as often as he can in order to be close to them. He belongs to the indigenous Aymara people, who make up the majority of the population in the prelatore. So he fully understands life in the Andes. He has many plans to strengthen the life of the Church in the region and promote vocations, because where the Church is not present, the sects start to spread.



In Patacamaya: the Catholic faithful receiving Communion.

In order to support his priests in their difficult ministry, the bishop has asked us for Mass stipends. The faithful are very poor and can barely support their priests. We were more than happy to say yes – and now we are counting on your help!

PAPUA NEW GUINEA. The feeling of being cut off from the rest of the world is one that is familiar to the priests of Alotau-Sideia Diocese in Papua New Guinea, as many of their parishes are located on small islands which are accessible only by boat.



Even in the remotest corners, Christ is still present in the Eucharist.

One of these priests, who ministered to one of these parishes until a short time ago, had to have one foot amputated. The event changed his life, but he has not let it discourage him.

He now works as parish priest on the main island, where conditions are a little better. Although things are still far from easy for him, he continues to insist: “I am happy that I can continue to serve the Church, despite my disability.” The Mass offerings you have already given to help him and his fellow priests over the past few years, have been an immense help. He tells us, “I thank God for your love and concern for us priests in difficult situations. Without



The faithful listening intently to the Gospel message.

your financial support there is much that I could never manage to do.”

Would you be willing, to give help and fresh courage to the 19 priests in Alotau-Sideia this year – not to mention their brother priests in the other dioceses of Papua New Guinea – and show them that they are not alone?



Little victories

In **Albania**, the Faith was brutally persecuted during Communist times. Even today, almost 35 years after the fall of Communism, most of the priests and religious in the south of the country still come from abroad – including the 52 religious Sisters currently working there.

Most of these religious congregations have been in Albania for over 30 years. Many of the Sisters have devoted a large part of their lives to building up the Church in this impoverished region. Lovingly, they continue to serve all who need their help, and



A joyful welcome: Sister Silvia and Father Riccardo visit one of the villages.



This woman wants to know the Bible better. Sister is helping her.

through the loving witness of their lives they are also gently changing the lives of the people. As a result, more and more families are finding their way to faith.

Sister Loise, from Kenya, cares for the families of the Roma people, who are frequently treated with discrimination and contempt. When she and her fellow Sisters began to take Roma children into their school, many of the other parents took their children away. So the Sisters were left with only the Roma children. When

these achieved good results after two years, the other parents began to bring their children back again. These are the little victories the Sisters are managing to achieve.

Since the 52 religious in southern Albania provide their selfless service “without money and without cost”, we have promised a contribution of £22,400 to support them over the year ahead, so that they can continue to transform people’s lives.

Chapels in the jungle

To proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the most distant isles – this was the burning wish of the Carmelite saint and Doctor of the Church Saint Therese of Lisieux. The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** belong territorially to India but are geographically closer to Burma (Myanmar). No doubt Saint Therese would have loved working there.



The Bishop arrives, after a long journey through the jungle.

Various indigenous tribes live in the jungles here. Some refuse any contact with the outside world. More recently, a number of other people from various parts of India have settled on the islands. Life is expensive and difficult, since nearly everything has to be shipped in from the distant Indian mainland. This also makes building work difficult.

We have been asked to help complete three village chapels. One of these is in the village of Hanspuri in the northern Nicobar Islands. To just reach the place involves a four hour journey through a hilly jungle region. The only alternative is



The faithful are looking forward to their new chapel.

a 3½ hour boat trip, followed by a one-hour journey on foot.

The community has begun work on a permanent chapel, as until now they only had a makeshift structure.

We would like to help them to complete this chapel, along with two others. Altogether we have been asked for £21,100. Will you help them build?



Abducted by jihadists, saved by God

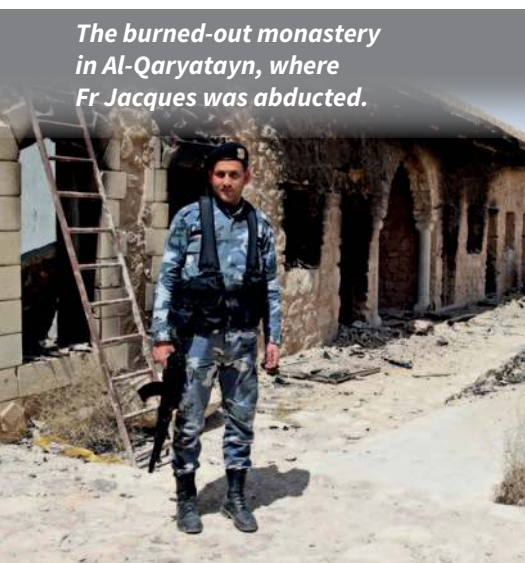


The priests raise their new archbishop aloft at his consecration ceremony.

“Axios!” “He is worthy!” – Three times Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III repeats this acclamation, while the priests raise up the new Syriac Catholic Archbishop of Homs on his episcopal throne. And who could be a more worthy shepherd than this man, who has already followed Christ on his *Via Crucis*? Having spent five months in the hands of jihadists, Father Jacques Mourad was formally consecrated as archbishop in March of this year.

In the night of 21st May 2015 a group of armed masked men forced their way into Mar Elian Monastery in Al-Qaryatayn, Syria, and abducted Father Jacques. Again and again his abductors threatened to behead him if he refused to renounce Christ and convert to Islam. But he remained unshaken.

The burned-out monastery in Al-Qaryatayn, where Fr Jacques was abducted.



The jihadists not only sought to abuse and humiliate him, but even staged a mock execution in an effort to force him to renounce his Faith. “I lived each day as though it was my last”, Father Jacques recalls. “In difficult moments I heard within me the words of God: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor 12:9). I felt happy to be able to put into practice the Gospel words: ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you’ (Lk 6:27ff.)”. His “spiritual weapon” as he calls it, was the prayer of the Rosary. Silent and smiling, he was thus able to endure everything that was heaped upon him.

At the same time the town of Al-Qaryatayn was seized by the IS terrorists, and the monastery and its adjoining cemetery razed to the ground, along with the tomb of the third century martyr Saint Julian of Emesa – while 250 of the faithful were also abducted and taken hostage.



“Blessed are those who are persecuted...” (Mt 5:10). Archbishop Jacques stood steadfast.

This was something Father Jacques only discovered later in August, when his captors took him to join the other prisoners. But at least now they were able to secretly celebrate the sacred liturgy in their underground prison. Finally, on 10th October, Father Jacques regained his freedom. “Once again the merciful hand of God and the Virgin Mary had protected and guided me”, he declares gratefully.

ACN has always understood it as our special “duty” to help those who, in a special way, are close to our crucified Lord.

This is why we hope to help Archbishop Jacques and the other 14 Syriac Catholic priests of his archdiocese with Mass stipends. For not only have they experienced suffering and oppression, but they also carry the crosses of all those in Homs who have endured poverty and suffering. Will you help us to help them?



“The Eucharist is my only strength”

For 10 years now, Nigerian Spiritan Father Kenneth Iwunna has been living and working among the traditionally nomadic Borana people of southern Ethiopia. According to their ancient pagan belief, the greatest sacrifice they could make to the god they worshipped was their firstborn children. Today more and more families are turning to Christ, who is himself the one true Victim for the salvation of the world.

“This mission has taught me the value and the essential nature of my priesthood. For me as a priest this is the best possible experience. If you ask me whether I am happy, then my answer is an emphatic ‘YES’”, says Father Kenneth, beaming. Nonetheless, his life as a missionary is far from easy. “Here in this remote spot my strength is nothing else but God himself, present in the Eucharist. Otherwise I would never have come here”, he confesses. “Sometimes, when everything seems hard and difficult and I have no brother or sister, no mother or father to whom I can express myself, it is then that I run to Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament, and when I celebrate Mass I feel well again. The Holy Eucharist is for me what blood is for the body. Without the Holy Eucharist there can be no Catholic priest. The same is true of the body: without blood it is lifeless.”

When people ask him why a man like himself, so full of energy, should have voluntarily chosen this life without gaining any profit from it, he explains to them that the Eucharist is the sole reason. “In the Eucharist the Borana people see God himself, present here in their midst. For them what is especially attractive about Christianity is that every individual is loved. And it also impresses them to know that Holy Mass is also celebrated, in just the same way as it is here, in Rome and throughout the world.”

The young Church in these territories is full of life, but also bitterly poor. The

Mass offerings Father Kenneth receives are the only possible way he can survive in his mission. Without them he could not help the needy either – the widows, orphans and old people who have no children to support them or whose children have already died.

We are therefore proposing to help him and his 11 fellow Spiritan priests, who

are likewise devoting their lives to serving in some of the most difficult regions of Ethiopia, by providing them with your Mass offerings once again. These priests will celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for your intentions with great reverence and love, because Christ is the same – whether among the nomads of the African savannah or in the loftiest cathedral.



A million children praying the Rosary.

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” (Mk 10:14).

This reflects what we often see that in Marian apparitions recognised by the Church, it is often children who are blessed with “heavenly visits” and messages from the Mother of God. St Padre Pio, who was endowed with many gifts of grace, famously said: “When a million children pray the Rosary, the world will change.”

This is why ACN continues to organise this worldwide campaign and invites you to help children come to Jesus on 18th October to pray the Rosary for peace in the world, through the hands of Mary. Please help us by actively promoting this campaign and encouraging more children to take part. Perhaps you could help organise something in your own area? Thank you for whatever you can do for Jesus and Mary!
Father Anton Lässer CP



Regina Lynch
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

Through my work with ACN I am privileged to meet Catholics in some of the remotest parts of the world where, thanks to devoted priests and Sisters, the seeds of our Faith have been planted and carefully nurtured.

But I have also been in places where it is thanks to courageous and determined laity that the Faith is still alive. One example that springs to mind is Kyrgyzstan, a republic of the Soviet Union until its independence in 1991. In the 1930s and 1940s thousands of Catholics – many of them with German, Ukrainian or Polish roots – were deported to Kyrgyzstan by Stalin and hindered in the practice of their Faith. But in particular the mothers kept the Faith alive among these suffering believers, and I met some of them when I visited some of the small villages a few years ago with the Apostolic Administrator of Kyrgyzstan, Father Anthony Corcoran, SJ. Together with their children and their grandchildren they filled the small houses that now serve as chapels.

For me they are an example of how we all have a duty to live and transmit our Faith even in the most difficult situations.

Regina Lynch

Need, love and thanks – your letters

Fruitful collaboration

Thank you very much for your congratulatory message and prayerful wishes. I continue to count on your prayers, support and partnership as I begin my episcopal ministry, fully aware that new beginnings always have their challenges. But I rely on the Lord who has called me to embrace this sacred mantle of leadership, and on the collaboration, support and partnership of persons like you and your organisation which is geared towards helping the work of evangelisation in Africa, especially in this part of the world. I assure you of my prayers for God's abundant blessings upon you, your collaborators, partners and sponsors in your vision and Mission.

Fraternally yours in the Lord

Bishop John Koroma, Sierra Leone

50 years of married life – with ACN

We started supporting ACN when we were first married, 50 years ago – so we have grown up with it and grown old with it. What attracted us then, and still attracts us now is the fact that it's a work of

evangelisation as well as aid. Also the fact that it is thoroughly of the Church. Because I'm a Catholic, I know how important it is to proclaim the true Church of Christ through works of mercy and material help. Christians who are subject to persecution have a special call on our generosity.

A married couple in England

In gratitude

I want to express my profound gratitude for the opportunity to take part in the Holy Mass marking ACN's Benefactors' Day. I am most grateful for this, as I also support all the work your charity does. I wish you many successful future projects and many willing hearts ready to support them.

A friend and supporter in Slovakia

My favourite charity

ACN is my favorite charity. It's always a joy to write a check each month to assist the Hands of Christ among his poor.

A friend and supporter in the United States

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.

UK Mirror Editor: John Newton | Publisher: Aid to the Church in Need
Printed in the UK by Cliffe Enterprise, Eastbourne BN22 8UY
ISSN 0252-2535 *De licentia competentis auctoritatis ecclesasticae*



Aid to the
Church in Need

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