

APPEAL LETTER FOR ACN's #REDWEDNESDAY – 20th November 2024

Aid to the Church in Need's #RedWednesday campaign was established in 2016 to raise awareness of – and say NO – to Christian persecution worldwide. As one priest from Africa says 'People need food for their souls as well as their bodies'. Ahead of Black Friday, which celebrates materialism, #RedWednesday is a day to remember that faith matters!

Thanks to the UK Catholic community and with support from MPs, influencers and other public figures, #RedWednesday is now a recognised national and international campaign. ACN's colour is red because red is the colour of martyrdom – and over the years, parishes, schools, Churches Together and other groups as well as individuals across the country help raise awareness by lighting red, wearing red, or organising red-themed liturgies and fundraising events.

Christians are the most persecuted and oppressed faith group in the world today. Praying for and taking positive action for our brothers and sisters in Christ makes you part of ACN's #TeamRed – a coming together of Catholics and other Christians around the country to stand up for the Faith and give a voice to all who are suffering for Christ today.

This year, ACN is highlighting the plight of displaced and suffering young Christians around the world. For children growing up in war, conflict or with threat of violence, the world is a fearful and dangerous place. In countries where Christians are persecuted, children are collateral damage in the overall brutality – and the numbers run to millions. Seven-year-old Maryamu in Nigeria was kidnapped with others, and they were held in cages by Boko Haram extremists – she refused to convert. Two years later her young brother was brutally killed in front of her. After nine years in captivity, she managed to escape to a Church-run displacement camp, supported by ACN, where she is receiving trauma counselling and learning practical skills to help her earn a living.

For children like Maryamu, faith is their hope and strength. **Will you give them hope this #RedWednesday? Your kind donation today, or your fundraising, however small,** will help support a range of child-focused ACN projects in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Iraq, Mozambique, India, Lebanon, Syria, and Pakistan. £50 could provide a school place and hot meals for a displaced child. A parish gift of £500 could provide respite through pastoral programmes and educational activities. **And, as a bonus, your kind gift will be doubled thanks to generous ACN benefactors.**

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri, Nigeria is a great friend of Aid to the Church in Need. His diocese has suffered unimaginable suffering due to extremist violence. He is so grateful to Christians in the UK for their support. He says, "I applaud ACN's #RedWednesday, it is a wonderful initiative. When people hear about it, they will be stimulated to act whether morally, socially, economically or spiritually and will give hope to those who are affected!"

So, on **Wednesday 20th November**, please join ACN and Christians around the UK in prayer and by lighting your church red, if you can. Wear something red – perhaps a tie, socks or scarf – we'll leave it up to you. Please also help spread the word – the more people involved the more it helps the UK Christian voice be noticed and heard. And if you are able, please take action to help change the lives of children who are paying the price for their faithfulness to Christ.

Thank you and God Bless.

A prayer for #RedWednesday

Loving God, we pray for all people around the world who are taking part in #RedWednesday in any way. We pray for all the parishes, schools and individuals who are taking time to pray, fundraise and take action. We pray for all those around the world who suffer discrimination and persecution for their faith.

May we ask for the strength to build Your Kingdom here on earth. Let us make a place where all are welcome, and all are free to practise their faith in peace.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.