

# MIRROR



**Aid to the Church in Need**

**Seminarians  
renewing hope in Ukraine  
- see special report**

No. 1 - January /February 2006  
Published  
eight times per year

ED/23/09

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Photo: UNHCR



**Expulsion and exile - refugees in search of a home.**

**“Christ continues and completes His Passion in all refugees, the persecuted, the oppressed or spiritually isolated who must still tread their bitter Way of the Cross. As once Veronica and Simon of Cyrene comforted or helped Him on the way to Calvary, so now we too are called upon to help Him in the poorest of His brothers, with whom He so expressly identifies Himself.”**

**Father Werenfried (1913-2003),  
founder of Aid to the Church in Need**

*Dear Friends,*

Once, Father Werenfried gave a picture of Our Lady to a little girl from a refugee family, saying: “You can hang it on the wall at home.” The girl replied: “But Father, we don’t have a wall.” She lived with her family in the middle of a large hut, and was surrounded by other refugees in a draughty few square metres. No walls; no home; homeless. Father Werenfried was moved by the plight of these refugees, uprooted from their homes and now seeking somewhere to rest body and soul in a foreign land.

He built them houses and, importantly, he built them churches. To these people, who had lost everything, he gave four walls and so restored some privacy, some security, some hope in a better future, a prospect of a lasting home - in short, a foretaste of Heaven, a little piece of the New Jerusalem.

To this day, floods of homeless, uprooted people pour through our world. It is not always war that has displaced them. Sometimes hatred of the Christian faith has forced them to flee. Others have lost

rooves and walls to the raging ocean, or landslides have swept away their homes, or raging hurricanes have torn up their dreams of a better life... How often we witness their sorrow on our television screens! 2005 was a year of natural disasters that would have made even Father Werenfried’s heart quake! Like him, we have seen the face of Christ in these brothers



**“In each of these refugees Jesus lives. Christ himself looks at us through the eyes of the homeless.”**

and sisters of ours, uprooted by human hands or force of nature. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matt. 25:40).

Dear friends, in each of these refugees Jesus lives. Christ himself looks at us through the eyes of the homeless. He looks at us through the eyes of the uprooted, through the eyes of the children without schools and thus without any future, through the hopeless eyes of the mothers and fathers who stare at their empty hands... In them all, we see and hear the

words of the paralytic beside the pool in Bethsaida: “*hominem non habeo*” - “Lord, I have no one to carry me to the water...” (John 5:7). May that never be said of us! It is not the wall that matters; that is only the means to hold the image of Our Lady in the hearts of our brothers and sisters. It is not the school that matters; that is merely a way to a deeper understanding of

this world, and hence of Christ. Nor is it the church buildings that count, for they merely define the place of encounter with Emmanuel, God with us. It is the encounter itself that matters, the Communion of

Saints, the Civilisation of Love that the Popes of the past half century have spoken of again and again. Love is what counts in every culture, Christ came for us all. He waits for us everywhere. And so we must join together and help wherever we can. I bless you all with a grateful heart.

Yours,

*P. Joaquin Allieret*

International Ecclesiastical Assistant



# A home for the exiled



**These eyes have seen hell - a former child soldier learning to pray.**

**“For centuries Abel has lain there in blood and tears because we have forgotten your love.” These words of Pope John XXIII referred to the refugees from Israel, but they are as valid as ever today. To this day, millions of refugees lie there in blood and tears because the world has forgotten the love of God.**

We raise them up wherever we can, whether in Africa, Asia, Latin America or Scandinavia. Thanks to your generosity, we have found Abel in **Sudan**. 50,000 Christians of the Dinka tribe are now hoping to return from war-ravaged Darfur, where they fled 20 years ago, back to their homeland in the south. They face a thousand miles on foot - and then a new beginning in a wasted land, in devastated fields and villages. But

this is their home, and with our help of **£13,000**, with seeds, water and agricultural implements, they will make this homeland flourish once more. Among them are 72 young boys, former child soldiers; they too are Abel - victims of hatred and violence. They need to be led back to love - a love that seems as strange and far away from them as their earliest, fatherless childhood. For this they need something extra. For two years, they will be looked after in a special displacement camp; they will go to school here and learn to appreciate the precious worth of the human body and all the fruits of the earth. Your help will sustain them and the prayers of us all will accompany them.



## A new home in the Church

“Violence has its roots in hatred and there alone,” said St Benedict of Nursia, the apostle of Europe. To forget hatred, to experience love, to find a new home in the Church in a foreign land - this is now a reality for thousands of Catholic Tamils from war-torn Sri Lanka and refugees from Vietnam who have found sanctuary in **Norway**. The Church in the far north of Europe is a diaspora Church and in need of help. We helped in 2005 with **£11,200**, and we hope to help again this year. For the Church here is poor and small, but faithful and missionary. The immigrants from Asia have brought new life, organising dance evenings and theatre performances from their own homelands, with biblical scenes. Often there are hundreds of young people and children there. They have found a real home at last, and you helped open the door for them. ●



**Seeking a new home and a new future - Sudanese Christians who have fled persecution and famine. This is the Lobonok camp in Juba archdiocese, south Sudan.**



Photo: KIN / Andrzej Polec



**Proud of their own culture, though far from home - Vietnamese Catholics in Norway.**



**Saying “I do” in Oslo - a Tamil wedding.**



# Making hope a reality

Rarely has there been such a promising harvest from the rich soil of **Guatemala**. Perhaps the farmers would at last be able to pay off their debts, and maybe even buy some better seed. But then Stan arrived, a hurricane worse even than Mitch, six years before.

Stan swept away everything in its path - homes, schools, a whole way of life. In the parish of St Bartholomew, crushed by the raging waters, the earliest help came in the form of food. The people knelt down and thanked God for not forgetting them. Trusting in your generosity, we immediately sent **£27,300** in emergency aid. St Bartholomew, the Immaculate Conception, St Andrew, St Mark, St Rose - all these parishes, and many more besides, are hoping for help so that



*Nothing could withstand it - Hurricane Stan overwhelmed the diocese of Escuintla.*



**Father Carlos and his people - he represents a piece of home for them.**

they can rebuild. Hundreds of their children are dead, tens of thousands have lost everything in the floods and landslides. Your help will give living substance to their hope.

In the **Dominican Republic**, Father Carlos Amédée Sherwans is the embodiment of hope for the refugees from neighbouring Haiti. He has devoted himself to their survival and to teaching them to read and write. He lives among them. "I cannot speak of redemption without sharing their poverty," he tells us. "Love is always a concrete thing, for body and soul." His protégés have no status and no rights, and often perform tasks that border on slavery.

For them too your generosity gives substance to their hope. Thank you. ●



**Migrants from Haiti meeting with Bishop Bretón Martínez.**

## Daring to speak about God

In Africa, a mere eight percent of the population has access to electric power. This means that television scarcely plays a part in evangelisation or social life, while radio, by contrast, is vital. Radio NDoye, the station run by Bishop Yombandje of Bossangoa in the **Central African Republic**, provided information, taught the alphabet, proclaimed the Good News. Then rebels from neighbouring Chad attacked the station, killed three of its staff and looted the equipment. But the bishop refuses to give up. He already has new equipment; now he is looking for support for the technical and theological training of the journalists. We have promised him



our help, just as we have for other Catholic radio stations which, like Radio Pa'i Puku in **Paraguay**, are the only media that speak of God. In Lithuania too, as in Ukraine and



throughout Eastern Europe, millions of people listen to the broadcasts of a handful of Catholic radio stations. This is spreading the Word pure and simple. ●



**Wellsprings of the Good News - studios in Ukraine (left) and Russia.**





## The Tsunami: “You were the first to help”



**Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam (pictured) of Sri Lanka wrote to us after the tsunami, which struck his diocese of Jaffna:**

**“Thank you. You were the first to help my diocese to organise the immediate relief efforts for the 22,000 families affected by the tsunami on 26th December 2004. We really much appreciate your emergency aid. We moved the people to safe places away from the sea, we organised women and children’s clothing, milk, food, drinking water, mats and pillows. Injured people were taken to the nearest hospitals and medical camps were organised.”**

**Late last year, Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam visited ACN and underlined the need for continued support, adding that the charity was one of the only organisations prepared to help rebuild dozens of churches, convents, presbyteries and other church buildings lost to the tsunami.**



Hans-Peter Röhlin,  
President

## The Last Word

### Homeland

*Whilst in Bethlehem, some Christians told me that relatives of theirs had arrived “in heaven”. I offered my condolences. But they laughed. No, they meant Europe, America - “heaven” compared to the “hell” they left behind. Yet, Heaven is the final homeland of mankind and we are all searching for that peace, joy and security we can only fully know there.*

*These Christians had found a new home abroad thanks to the help of the Church, which is the gateway to Heaven. Today, the questions of ‘homeland’ and assimilation are political dynamite – as we recently saw in the city suburbs in France.*

*War, hunger, poverty, unemployment, expulsion – the sheer scale of need drives people to risk everything as they flee across oceans and even deserts. Parents in south-east Asia hand over their children to racketeers; young women in Eastern Europe entrust themselves unsuspectingly to sexual exploiters; immigrant ghettos appear in our midst, like enclaves of a former homeland. But such people have a right to a homeland – to a fatherland and a mother tongue – and we have the duty to help them to assume this right, above all in the places where they were born. This is what our priests, sisters and lay workers are doing. They are making them feel at home in the Church – the gateway to Heaven.*

## Need, love and thanks - Your letters

### **A life-saving drop in the ocean**

*My donation is no more than a drop in the vast ocean of need. But I know that for those dying of thirst such a drop can be a life-saver. Whenever I can, I try to help your wonderful charity, which helped me too when I was a student in Rome.*

### **A priest from Portugal**

### **No gold, but she shares with the poorest**

*Thank you so much for the recent Mirror. I think we have a good Pope in Benedict XVI. Every morning I say the prayer for him that you sent me, so that God may give him strength for his heavy task... I have no gold and no jewellery, but what I have managed to save I wish to share with the poor, as far as*

*it goes. I am sending you €80 for the training of priests. From time to time I will be able to send you other small amounts.*

### **A woman from Jena in Germany**

### **She prays for the sisters in Bukavu**

*Your appeal for help for the forgotten ones of this world in Bukavu moved me deeply. I pray every day for the Church in need and especially for the sisters in Bukavu: “God, hear my prayer; read my heart and the hearts of others who have been moved as I have been. Give us courage to go on serving the Church in need, for she suffers wherever people suffer.”*

### **An elderly lady in France**

## Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Please use the Freepost envelope – it saves you money and helps us. Aid to the Church in Need, 1 Times Square, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 1LF - Tel. 020 8642 8668. (Registered Charity No. 1097984). 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.



**You can now watch ACN programmes on TV  
- see EWTN on Sky channel 680.**

**Editors:** Jürgen Liminski, Claude Piel - **Responsible Publisher:** Kirche in Not/ Ostpriesterhilfe, Postfach 1209, 61452 Königstein, Germany - Printed in Great Britain - ISSN 0252-2535 - De licentia competentis auctoritatis ecclesiasticae  
[www.kirche-in-not.org](http://www.kirche-in-not.org)