

MIRROR



Aid to the Church in Need

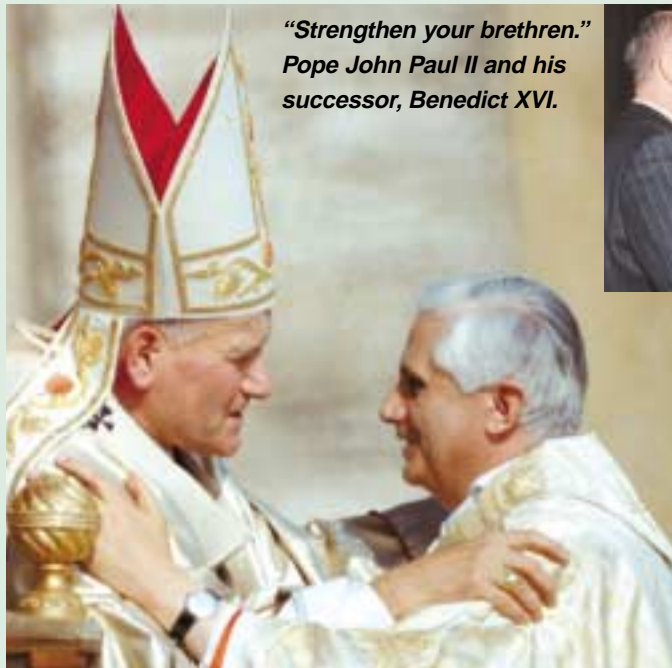
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*"Strengthen your brethren."
Pope John Paul II and his successor, Benedict XVI.*



Strengthen your helpers - Pope Benedict XVI encourages ACN secretary general Dr Norbert Neuhaus to tackle key issues like fundamentalist Islam and atheistic Marxism, and to promote the family.

Photos: © L'Osservatore Romano

"The more people we open fire upon - I mean the fire of love - the greater will be the number of burning hearts for the Church in distress."

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

Dear Friends,

Pope John Paul II died one year ago, on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday. Mercy, the summit of Love! He himself proclaimed this feast, in line with the revelations to Sister Faustina, the saint of God's mercy. "Let me go to the Father's house" were his last words after the Mass. The house of the Father is the house of Love. The first encyclical of Benedict XVI is devoted to this love. "Deus Caritas Est" - God is love. Nothing illustrates more beautifully the seamless continuity of the succession. Benedict XVI is following the path trodden by John Paul II to the Father's house, and he is taking us all with him. This encyclical is an invitation, it opens the door of the house. It enables us to catch a glimpse of the mystery of Love, of that "original gift" (St Thomas Aquinas) of the Father to mankind.

In a short commentary on his encyclical, Pope Benedict declares: "Love is not

merely a feeling; the will and the intelligence also belong to it." Father Werenfried might well have added: 'as does practical action, too.' It might be a car, or a bicycle, for love has to reach its destination. Father Laszlo, in the Serbian diocese of Zrenjanin, was just in time to



"Love is the seal of authenticity of Christians, it is the driving force of Christianity."

persuade a young woman not to have an abortion. She was on the point of going to the clinic when her mother rang the priest. Without a car he could not have brought the Good News of life and of love in time. For Father Laszlo it was a car; in the Amazon or in Congo it might be a boat, in the Andes a mule, in Vietnam a motorbike. Everywhere you are helping to bring this love to the children of God. God's love "transforms our lives and fills us with joy," wrote John Paul II. And Benedict underlines the reason: when we

love, we no longer wish only to take, "but to give, and precisely in this liberation from our ego we find ourselves and are filled with joy". Liberation from our ego - our brothers and sisters in need are helping us to this goal. "See how they love one another!" they said of the first

Christians. Love is the seal of authenticity of Christians, it is the driving force of Christianity. It urges us to confront the culture of death, hidden or open, in international bodies with the message

of the "Civilisation of Love" (Pope Paul VI). It urges us to hurl back at the newly awakening Marxism in Latin America, and the fundamentalist Islam in Africa and the Middle East, the Alleluia of the Resurrection. So it is that, wherever you help, it is always Easter.

My grateful blessing on you all.

P. Jacques Allende

International Ecclesiastical Assistant





Lending Wings to the Good News



Their dugout canoe is too slow - Instead of using poles, Father Noël (right) and his catechist need a powerful outboard motor.

“The Church is God’s family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life.” It is as though Benedict XVI had written these words in his encyclical precisely for our charity. At any rate they are an appeal to us, for we know those who are without these necessities.



On the way to visit his parishes, Bishop Akio (right) and his predecessor.

Take the catechist Benedict in **Uganda**; he is severely handicapped and needs a wheelchair. They call him “a blessing” for the parish of Christ the King in Teboke. His inner joy shows them what truly makes one happy - the awareness of being a child of God. His smile reminds them that love overcomes all suffering. Nonetheless, he still needs a wheelchair. We have promised Father Innocent Opiro, who looks after him, **€3,600** - for his wheelchair and for 58 bicycles for his fellow catechists.

Or take Father Noël Assayi of the diocese of Owando in **Congo/Brazzaville**. He needs an outboard motor for his dugout canoe. The sects are everywhere, he writes, “they spread hatred and division and dupe the people. Why should we not go there and broadcast the seed of love, so as to bring peace, dispel doubt, in short carry the

light of the Good News of Christ into the darkness?” The people rejoice when he moors on the river bank. But with his pole it takes far too long. An outboard motor would lend wings to the Gospel message. Once again we have contributed **€3,600**.

And then there is Bishop Akio Johnson Mutek of the diocese of Torit in the south of **Sudan**, who suffers from a kidney disease; we want to help him too. He is now well enough again to devote himself to travelling around his desert diocese, to the scattered communities in desperate need of rebuilding after the long years of war. We have promised to help him with **€23,100**, for there should be no one in our family without the basic necessities. ●



Uganda. Fausta beams with joy at her new bike. But others are still waiting...

A sure way to God

“He who follows God always walks surely,” writes Saint Ambrose. Here in the Catholic parish of Saint Teresa, near Lutsk in Ukraine, the people would love to do just that.

But Father Volodymyr Ositsa often has to travel up to 120 miles between churches. He cannot regularly visit all seven churches making up the parish in this wide area. The roads are too long and the buses too few.

The older people especially suffer because of this. They are waiting for him. After the sufferings of the past, he represents a ray of hope to them, despite all the unemployment and poverty. He occasionally celebrates Holy Mass en route with the young people in the open air, like the ‘rucksack priests’ who were once sent out by Father Werenfried to those with no churches and no priests. We have promised him **€5,500**




for a car. With your help, Father Volodymyr will be able to bring the Sacraments to many more people, both young and old, and lead them along the sure way to God. ●



Our unity gives us hope



As far as their wheels will carry them... Vietnamese sisters, setting off to give religious instruction - thanks to you! 



'Help me to reach the children' - Father Luciano with his little flock. 

In the Jubilee Year 2000, according to Pope John Paul II's wishes, the Vietnamese Cardinal Nguyen van Thuan became the first Asian to conduct the papal retreat. Nguyen van Thuan had been imprisoned by the communists for 13 years, nine of them in solitary confinement. In his 21 meditations he spoke about hope in unity.

The wealth of the Church, he said in one of these Lenten sermons, is her unity. "The Christian vocation is to live unity. The Christian community united in mutual love is the actual place where Jesus is made visible."

This unity is lived out in countless places around the world - not least in **Vietnam** itself, "the eldest daughter of the Church in Eastern Asia" (Pius XI). It is lived out in the concern for the elderly, the sick and the lonely, in the schooling of the children of poor families, in the religious instruction for young and old. The Sisters of Divine Providence care for everybody in the parish of Hoa Hung in the diocese of Long Xuyen. They care for 500 boys and girls aged up to 14. This is hard and exhausting work and they need motorcycles to help

them in it. The equation is quite simple - more motorcycles, more unity.

As for young Father Luciano Sotero Teles of the parish of Our Lady of Graces in the diocese of Tianguá, **Brazil**, a motorcycle simply would not do. Among other things he has to care for no fewer than 27 small communities with chapels as well. But with a simple, small car he could, he writes, serve the Lord still better in this arid corner of God's Kingdom. So let us help him, so that this unity in love can be made visible! ●



Over hill and dale... On the way to visit the young people in Dong Tien, Vietnam.

"In love man transcends himself; he frees himself because he is concerned for the other person, because he wishes the other person's life to succeed."

Pope John Paul II



Pope John Paul II. Just a few weeks before his death, and already too weak to speak, he wished to send the people on St Peter's Square a dove as a sign of peace and love. But it was too cold for the dove, and it turned rapidly back - to the Vicar of Christ, who in his sufferings better embodied the love of Christ for mankind than any symbol.



ACN welcomed its newest members into our international family on 31 January. More than 20 bishops were joined by a host of religious and seminarians, all of whom we have helped over the decades, at the opening of ACN's Polish Office in Warsaw. Also at the celebration



Photo: P. Dariusz Michalski SJ

was the Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos. Cardinal Castrillón said: "I come out of love for John Paul II, out of love for Poland and because I admire the work of this charity." In his address, in a packed St Michael's church, Bishop Wiktor Skworc thanked ACN for its help during difficult times. By its future contribution to the work of the charity, Poland would endeavour to repay the "mountainous debt of gratitude".



Photo: P. Dariusz Michalski SJ

Photos: Above, the Cardinal with the chairman, Mgr Piwowarski (left), and national director, Fr Waldemar Cislo (right); and left with staff from the Polish office.



Hans-Peter Röhlin,
President

The Last Word

Cross and Grace

I quite frequently visit the tomb of Father Werenfried in the cemetery in Königstein, in order to pray, to reflect or to ask his advice. Every time I am attracted by the beautiful cross that crowns his headstone. This cross, carved in red granite, has something about it that particularly moves me.



It speaks of the sorrow and suffering that Jesus endured, and which is present in our own lives too - sickness, injustice, violence, death.

But the cross also speaks of grace and blessing, because it points to Jesus who rose from the dead. There is no Good Friday without Easter - this is the central message of our Christian faith!

Yes, this is the Good News of Jesus: in our lives there is both Cross and Grace, but Grace always has the last word, for it is the expression of the love of God. And his love is stronger than death - hence the most important thing one can say about God is: "God is love." It is most certainly not by chance that our Pope has chosen this statement, of all things, as the subject of his first encyclical. May this certainty accompany us in all our sorrows, trials and difficulties and give us comfort - this is my wish for you all and for myself too.

Need, love and thanks - Your letters

May God bless you

Without the willing sacrifice and selfless help of ACN it is difficult to imagine that the contemplative convents would still exist today. Therefore we implore the merciful God that he might bless this charity and all its staff and benefactors who have supported our enclosed communities.

The Carmelite sisters of Czestochowa, Poland

God is much better...

I would like to give you £70 for Sudanese children needing schooling and bread. I think especially of my two sons. I placed them in God's hands as we were moving around and, by his will, they made it. I think God took care of

mine so I would like the money to go for this purpose. I love Fr Werenfried's saying that we underestimate the love and mercy of God and the generosity of people. Next year I will purchase his autobiography.

A Mother from Bath, England

Helpers in the vineyard

God alone knows what an immeasurable help a car has been to our pastoral work. And you have helped us to obtain it. Thank you. God has all eternity to reward you for this, but you may rejoice even now that God has already enlisted your help in the great mission of expanding his kingdom. We pray the Angelus at the end of Holy Mass for you.

Father Laszlo of Vrsac, Serbia

Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need:

Please use the **Freepost** envelope – it saves you money and helps us.

In Ireland: Aid to the Church in Need, 151 St Mobhi Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, tel. (01) 8377516. (Registered Charity No. 9492).

In Great Britain: Aid to the Church in Need, 1 Times Square, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 1LF, tel. 020-8642 8668. (Registered Charity No. 1097984).



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