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“Please help ensure that we will be able to make the Christian family a place of shelter for love, a love which can then be carried out into the world.”

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

Dear Friends,

Our family experience leaves a deep impression on us. I am the eldest of ten brothers and sisters. Our parents died young. Those were dark times, but we had the memory of profoundly Christian parents. All ten of us were born at home. When a new baby was due, we children played very quietly, filled with anticipation. The first cries of our new brother or sister were like the pealing of a joyful bell. The best time was on Sunday evenings, when daddy took out a large book with entrancing pictures in it. It was a catechism, translated from the French. In a calm voice he told us about the mysteries of our Faith. One thing was clear to us - what was written in this book was borne out in the real life of our parents, and from it too came the gentle strength of our mother.

What the Church proclaims about the family is written on the human heart. The Creator God gave man and woman the capacity to love each other and so engender

new life. He wanted the tenderness of the child to find security within the enduring bond of love between father and mother, indissolubly united in marriage. But this reality of the family has been profoundly shaken today.

Father Werenfried prophetically recognised



“What the Church proclaims about the family is written on the human heart.”

the crisis of the family as a great challenge. We want to be faithful to his legacy. So, for example, we have responded to an appeal from South Africa, from the diocese of Tzaneen. The bishop here tells us of the great fear among the girls that they will catch Aids. We are helping Sister Bernadette, who has developed a successful programme of ‘Education for Life’, which sets out to change behaviour according to a Christian view of sexuality within love.

Another missionary, Father Moschner, has sent us encouraging news from Asunción in

Paraguay, where the sects are creating much confusion. Father Moschner wants every new family to have the foundation of a solid faith. His means for this is ‘I believe - ACN’s Little Catholic Catechism’. Now he is asking for more copies because the response has been so good.

In my childhood catechism there was a picture of the Most Holy Trinity, and shortly after it one of the Holy Family. In my recollection the two images merge together in a phrase that I have twice heard from Pope

John Paul II: “God is not solitude, but family.” Let us give thanks to this God, who is family, happiness in love, and who has created us in his own image. Please help us still more generously so that we may never have to turn down any of these urgent pastoral projects for the family on any of the five continents. I bless you all, and thank you in advance.

P. Joaquin Allienor

International Ecclesiastical Assistant



Rooted in the teaching of the Church



Dem. Rep. Congo. In the war-ravaged town of Goma, in private conversations or in organised courses, families are strengthened and the future of love is secured.

“The great challenge of the New Evangelisation, which John Paul II proposed with so much love, needs to be supported with a profound, authentic reflection on human love. This love is a privileged way that God has chosen to reveal himself to the world...”

With these words, spoken in mid-May, Pope Benedict XVI reinforced the connection between the family and the New Evangelisation. He was speaking on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the *John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family*. There are now countless small centres of the family apostolate throughout the world – all inspired by this ‘Mother Institute’.

In Goma, one of the war-torn dioceses in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, they have had to begin this work with families all over again. First the war came and killed or scattered the catechists and the helpers; then the volcano Nyragongo erupted and destroyed the buildings that remained. But the people refused to give in, and now they have



Nothing and no one is lost - a missionary sister with “her” children.

asked ACN to help them build their new premises. In painstaking detail they describe every single thing they need: 36 one-inch nails, floorboards, paint, paint brushes, sealant. Clearly, nothing will be wasted in this careful budgeting. We have promised **€15,000**. They urgently need interview rooms for meetings and counselling for people facing problems. All the training and counselling is based on the teachings of the Church, which are rooted in the nature of man, and laid out in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* or the apostolic letter *Familiaris Consortio*.

These teachings are also the basis of the work of the *Africa Family Life*



At last these two can be happy again and have confidence in life.



Congo. Here, in Kolwezi too, they stick together in solidarity.

Federation (AFLF), which is present in 14 countries of Africa. Its courses not only show how to live a happy family life but also how to combat Aids through marital fidelity and chastity. ACN has given **€33,000** to the AFLF, to help them teach people about motherhood, fatherhood and finding time for one another and time for God.

The New Evangelisation always starts with the individual – with each one of us. Your generosity is providing just such a beginning for many families in Africa. Their joy in God is a glorious thanksgiving for this. ●



Finding time for each other, and time for God. This is what the couples learn...



... here in Trivandrum, India, in the “Fathers’ and Mothers’ Forum”.



Combating suicide with love



Photo: KINI / Andzej Polęc
Romania. The “Civilisation of Love” smiling up at us.

If we help, then “there will once more be parents willing to bear with joy the burden of a large family.”

Father Werenfried



Photo: Family-Heime

Statistics can make harrowing reading at times. The statistics about changes in marriage and family life in the Western world are a case in point.

Take **Europe**, for example. People in the European Union now marry less (down 23.5 percent since 1980), and later (men at 30 and women at 28). Every third child – and in some countries every second child – is born out of wedlock. The number of divorces has increased by 50% since 1980, and still more in the Catholic countries (Portugal by 89%, Italy by 62%, Spain by 59%). Every 33 seconds a child is aborted – most of them in France, Britain, Italy, Germany and Spain. “Civilisations do not die,” says the historian Toynbee, “they commit suicide”.

This culture of death is being countered by the “Civilisation of Love” (Pope Paul VI). In Valencia, Spain, they are celebrating its enduring importance at the

World Meeting of the Families with the Pope.

By supporting so many different ACN projects, you are strengthening this “Civilisation of Love” – and with it the Church, so that she “can commit herself still more strongly to evangelisation and to the daily service of the family and of life” (Pope John Paul II). You are providing support all over the world, for example in **India**, the **Philippines**, **Ukraine** and **Romania**. You are helping to create centres where families can meet and share their experiences. They can come to know the Church’s teachings on marital love – without distortion by the media – and learn to embrace them with joy.

And if you continue to pray and to help us, we can work still harder together to defend innocent life and the family in Europe, America and Australia too. For the spiritual need is great, and time is short. ●



Ukraine. Praying happily, children meet with Father Allende.

So that Faith can go on healing

Faith heals - just as much today as two thousand years ago. In those days it was epilepsy, paralysis, and leprosy. Today it includes drugs as well. Faith and love for Christ work the miracle of healing in the *Farms of Hope*

(*the fazendas* - below see pictures from Brasil). The number of young people seeking entry is great, for they want to return to life. The dropout rate is very low, this too is a miracle, at least for those who are experts

on addiction. For Father Werenfried these miracles were always a self-evident aspect of faith - but one that costs money too. And so he turned to you, so that faith could continue to heal. Now we are doing the same. ●



From darkness into light. Through prayer and hard work, many former drug addicts find their way back to life on the fazendas.



Thanks to your help, we have been supporting Radio Sofiya in Moscow for many years. The programme editors have recently sent us some of the letters they receive from listeners. As they say, they are really addressed to you: "Your programme has become so much a part of our lives that it is almost like another family member." "In your voice each morning, I detect the loving hand of the Lord reaching out to all the listeners." "Your programmes teach us the spiritual life and give us direction in our lives." "Your broadcasts have extended the religious horizons of our thinking." "I have learnt a great deal from you spiritually." "You give us moral guidance and help us to live. Thank you, thank you with all our hearts."



Hans-Peter Rötlin,
President

The Last Word

The final exam

If a student could discover what the questions were for his final exams, he would surely study the answers with great diligence. Our life too is a test and at the end there is likewise an exam. But God in his loving kindness has already told us what the questions will be: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." The Works of Mercy will be the subject matter of the exam, those works in which God sees whether we have truly loved him, whether we have served him in our brethren. We fulfil the will of God if we transform our lives into a perpetual work of mercy.

Whatever our vocation may be, whether father or mother, farmer or office worker, member of parliament or head of state, student or worker - there is always an opportunity, throughout the day, to directly or indirectly feed the hungry, instruct the ignorant, bear burdensome people patiently, counsel the doubtful and pray for the living and the dead. A new approach to the well-being of our neighbour, in all our actions; then each day of our lives will help us to prepare for the final day and we will store up treasures that the worm cannot destroy.

Need, love and thanks - Your letters

Fascinated by the 'Bacon Priest'

My first contact with your work was in the late 1940s when I was a child. My father used to support and talk about the 'Bacon Priest'. This name fascinated me but I did not really understand what the work involved. I had not heard how your work had expanded until last year, when we had an appeal at our local church. My father would have been thrilled to know how your work has grown, helping the poorest of the poor. In his memory I am enclosing a cheque for £1,000 for your church building fund.

A benefactor from Wigan in England

Balm for the soul

The Mirror is like balm for the soul to me each time, the soul which often has to suffer these days - and not only for Christians. Many of the short letters from benefactors strike me as a great encouragement for those who hesitate to give, thinking that their comparatively small contributions would achieve nothing... But we all know the parable of the

poor widow who gave everything she had that day and was willing to go hungry herself. I like to give your Child's Bible to homeless beggars, and they accept it with surprise and pleasure. I am delighted that ACN is able to help and support Christian believers and at the same time to portray our Church throughout Europe and the world in a good light.

A benefactress from Bad Honnef in Germany

Moved to help

Each time we read the Mirror we are moved into helping - even though in a small way - with our donation. The need is immense but the work your organisation does always moves us into taking time to look into our hearts and responding in this way. So we wish to send our donation of \$2,000. May God continue to bless the wonderful work of your organisation.

A benefactor from Victoria in Australia

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).



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.

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