

MIRROR

Aid to the Church in Need

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Praying for peace in the Middle East: A Lebanese Christian makes her petition at the mountainside birthplace of the country's beloved St Charbel.



*“Love should be
measureless, boundless.
It should be ready not
only to provide the bare
necessities for brothers
in need, but also, after the
example of our Heavenly
Father, be prepared to
give ‘the rest that shall
be added unto you’.”*

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

Dear Friends,

God weeps again. He weeps in the countless refugees and uprooted people of today. “Ceaselessly his tears flow over the divine countenance of Jesus. The tears of the poor are his tears, because he has become one with them. And Jesus’ tears are the tears of God.” Those were the words of Father Werenfried, almost 40 years ago. Turning to us all, he continues: “We cannot love him if we do not dry their tears. That is why

I began my wandering through the rubble areas and the makeshift camps of defeated Germany, through the refugee areas of Europe and Asia and through all the countries and continents where God weeps.”

This journey is not over yet. God still weeps today, in the Balkans, in the Hindu Kush, in China, in Africa. And most recently he has been weeping in the Middle East – in Tyre and Sidon, where Jesus taught and healed, and in Cana, where, at the request of his thoughtful mother, he turned water into wine for the

bridal couple. He weeps in the refugees whose fate he too shared 2,000 years ago. Oh Holy Land, how your soil is soaked with blood and tears! We immediately offered help, after the war broke out again in July, turning the children of men into refugees once more. But wasn’t this just a



*“Let us, like Father
Werenfried, scatter the
seed of love on this blood
and tear-soaked earth.”*

drop in the ocean? They are still hungry and thirsty – and not least for love and peace. Their tears are a silent appeal for our pity. Many of us understand this silent pleading, for many of us have ourselves wandered homeless and in exile. Father Werenfried responded to this silent cry in his day and preached reconciliation by his deeds. Around the world he dried the tears of Jesus. But today there are once more over 13 million people who wander, homeless and uprooted, often in their own countries, still searching for a place where

they can rest their heads and say “this is my home”.

The last to leave, more often than not, are the priests and religious sisters. Often they stay on amidst the ruins in order to support those who are unable to flee. They too have only their bare hands. Yet with these

empty hands the priests can celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, bringing healing and redemption through the sufferings of Christ. Mass stipends are frequently the only support they have to live on. By helping

them and sharing in the suffering of these millions, we carry the work of reconciliation, in the love of Christ, throughout this pitiless world. Let us, like Father Werenfried, travel the world and scatter the seed of love on this blood and tear-soaked earth. May we hear, in their silent pleading, the words of Christ: Follow me!

My blessing on you all,

P. Jacques Allienor

International Ecclesiastical Assistant



Islands of peace and oases of love



Bosnia-Herzegovina. Opposing hatred with the Cross of love.

Photo: ACN/Andrzej Polec



Syria. Surrounded by minarets – but the Cross will remain if the young remain.

“Very soon the Islamic fundamentalists will have achieved their declared aim of driving out all the Christians and those of other faiths from the Middle East.”

Since Father Werenfried wrote these words, 15 years have passed and already vast numbers of Christians have emigrated from **Lebanon**, from **Syria**, from **Iraq** and from **Israel** too. Those remaining are holding out, praying and begging for help. At stake is their very survival – and more than this. Patriarch Gregory III of the Catholic Melkites in Damascus, the **Syrian** capital, explains: “With your help, the presence of the Christians will not simply be an historical footnote but will remain as a living witness of the Good News among our Muslim brethren.” For this reason he has asked us to help with a multipurpose building in Maaruneh, near Damascus. This village of around 2,000 souls is inhabited almost entirely by Christians. He needs **€15,000** to complete the work. Already his investment is paying off, for the young people are now

meeting regularly for catechesis, recreation and parish work. They are building a Christian future for this country; they are part of the “Eucharistic Communion”, one of those “islands of peace” which, as Pope Benedict XVI said in July, in his appeal for peace in the Middle East, can transcend all the barriers of culture and civilisation. “This is the new way in which God triumphed,” the Pope reminded us. “He did not oppose violence with a stronger violence,” but put his trust in the very opposite – in love.

New courage to continue

In the same spirit, through his pastoral work, Father Yakan is establishing “an oasis of love” in **Turkey** for the refugees from Iraq. Theirs is a desperate plight – many are alone, widowed and homeless. Some have even attempted suicide. Can you help them to find new courage to live? We have promised **€20,000**. In Africa the UN often helps, but only materially. Yet people need more than this. As Mother Teresa said: “There is



Turkey. Eucharistic Communion – island of love and peace.

more hunger in the world for love than for bread.” Such is the love that the Jesuits in **Tanzania** and the Holy Spirit Fathers in Durban, **South Africa**, are trying to provide through their apostolate to the refugees. They give their time and a listening ear, organise workshops and sessions of catechesis. So they show those who have lost everything how to forget and forgive, and provide them with true bread to live on. This work also costs money – money the Fathers do not have. We have promised each group **€15,000**. But other refugees nearer home, in Europe itself, are also waiting for your help. In **Bosnia-Herzegovina** many are still returning to find their parish churches in ruins. They want to rebuild them, to raise up the Cross again. We wish to help them and their courageous Bishop Komarica, who has never left, with **€20,000**. May God have a home again – in men’s hearts and in the tabernacle. ●



South Africa. Catechesis with the refugees in Durban.



Uganda. Refugee camp in Gulu – waiting for a better future.



The gift of Christ's presence

For 41 years now ACN has been receiving and distributing Mass stipends. Last year we forwarded more than 1.3 million of them. They help priests all over the world, especially in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

The Mass stipend is a gift to help support the priest, who offers Mass for the donor's intention. However there is no question of 'purchasing' the fruits of grace in this way. The Mass stipend creates an intimate bond between the donor and the Sacrifice of the Mass, and through such Masses the Communion of Saints is especially made manifest. Thus you, too, are present in the Andes when a priest celebrates Mass in some remote village, even though these impoverished mountain farmers cannot even afford to pay the travelling costs of their priests, let alone their general support. But a few euro that you give for a

Mass make both things possible. The same is true in Madagascar and India, and in the Philippines too. This is especially so in countries such as Central Africa, from where we received an SOS from Fr Felicien Bernard of the diocese of Bambari; or in the Dem. Rep. of Congo, where everything is lacking after years of war, but the priest is there as the embodiment of hope, strength and faith. "Without your help in the form of Mass stipends, the priest could not be such an example," writes Metropolitan Bishop Boulos Borkhoche, of the Melkite Catholic diocese of Bosra, Hauran and Khabab in Syria. There is a spiritual joy in their poverty, says the bishop, "for Our Lord Jesus also lived in this way and called us to imitate him". He and his

priests also depend almost entirely on your gifts. They, like every priest whom you help with Mass stipends, bring us the best thing imaginable, namely the presence of Christ. ●



Photo: Andrzej Polec

For Father Werenfried the Holy Mass was the centre of his life.



Thanks to your Mass stipends this priest in Peru can get around, and so also bring the sacraments to the dying.

Bond of unity

The Eucharist is "a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us" (St Augustine). Through our Mass stipends we can stretch this bond of unity



Brazil.
Mass stipends help support priests in Macapá, one of the poorest dioceses.



Angola.
United by the Mass with the diocese of Novo Redondo.



Belarus.
Mass near Minsk. Resurrection from the ruins.



India.
Children's Mass in Mahanpur. "This is my body..."



Mexico.
Redemption in Tijuana. "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world".

around the globe. We can strengthen our priests. One of them writes from Cuba: "For the first time ever I have received money from people I do not know personally, but their gift enables me to ease a great need which I did not know how to tackle." God knew, however, so let us give thanks to him. ●



“I believe.” With what fervour and gratitude many people utter these two words! One such person is the catechist, Rémi Boni Angaman of Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He sends his heartfelt thanks for I believe, ACN’s Little Catholic Catechism. “It brings us so much joy and helps us to give new life and content to our catechesis. This book gives us strength and courage to grow in the Faith.” Rémi uses the catechism to teach schoolchildren (photo). As he says, “the book makes me and the children happy”. They want to pray for you, for they think this is the best way of expressing their gratitude. And indeed, there could surely be no more beautiful form of thanks.



Hans-Peter Röhlin,
President

The Last Word

Those closest to us have first claim

It happened in a post office in a small town during the summer holidays. A long queue of impatient people stood waiting and waiting. One of the two assistants had left the window and was working with great care in the back room, but fully visible to everyone, clearly on something important. For over half an hour nothing happened, except that the queue grew longer. Finally came the inevitable outburst of anger by the waiting customers...

I was one of those standing in the queue with growing impatience. It gave me time to reflect on getting my priorities right in life. The lesson I drew from it was this: for me the first priority should always be those who need me here and now, not those who ring up or leave behind some task or other for me to do. Generally these are all things one can postpone – by ringing back later, or working on such tasks “after hours”. But the person who comes to me directly and who urgently needs me should have first claim, ahead of all the others. Was not this the way that Jesus behaved too?

Need, love and thanks – Your letters

Thanksgiving to God for ACN

Please accept the enclosed cheque as a thanksgiving offering to God for your work on the occasion of our 25th wedding anniversary and for the guidance and blessings he has showered on us during those 25 years.

A couple in the North West of England

Trying to live love

Ever since I received your book, “I believe”, I have found myself closer and closer to God and I endeavour to live love. I will continue to send little donations to ACN; though it’s not much, for I only have a small widow’s pension. Thanks for your prayers. Please keep on fighting for the poor and needy.

A pensioner from Ettlingen, Germany

A day-to-day catechism!

Thank you for the last Mirror that moved me to tears. I want to help you more than with this cheque, but as Father Werenfried said, I’ll also pray for all your brothers and sisters who work to spread the Good

News in the world and help the poor. Thank you also for the theology I find in the Mirror: a day-to-day catechism!

A woman from Monkstown, Ireland

Thank you, Bacon Priest!

In the late 1980s I came upon the book “Where God Weeps”, by the Bacon Priest (Fr Werenfried). I still remember the anguish I felt when I read it and the tears I shed, as a young and ‘spoilt’ Christian! Today I was delighted to discover your webpage. It reminded me of the powerful emotions I felt then and the reawakened love within me for this Church – still persecuted today.

A benefactor from Italy

A lesson for our faith

You published a beautiful photo on the first page of Mirror 4. I felt deeply moved to see these children so happy because they now have a Bible of their own. What a lesson for our own faith, which, as Father Alliende says, is “often tired”.

A man from Grenoble, France

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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