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Photo: L'Osservatore Romano

*"It is a privilege for a priest to serve a Church charity such as ACN..."
Pope Benedict XVI to Father Allende during a private audience.*

*"God has adorned
the earth, however
black and dark
it may be, with a
garment of holiness.
Our charity is
a part of this robe,
woven of threads
of love and
gratitude."*

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

Dear Friends,

Since that first Advent in 1947 nearly 60 years have passed, during which ACN has worked on the front line of evangelisation all over the world. Again and again Father Werenfried called upon us to "dry the tears of God wherever he weeps". Pope Benedict XVI, for his part, teaches us in his encyclical on love that "the programme of Jesus is a heart which sees". Right from the start, ACN has seen the reality of the world through the eyes of the Popes, and each of the Popes pointed Father Werenfried to where the bitterest tears of God were being shed in his suffering children.

Pope Pius XII pointed him towards the suffering of the post-war era and the necessity of reconciliation between victor and vanquished. Father Werenfried became a faithful companion to the martyr Churches in Eastern Europe. At another decisive moment, Blessed John XXIII appealed to him to help in Latin America.

Later it was the suffering in Asia and Africa that demanded attention. During the era of the post-conciliar crisis, Pope Paul VI found a strong ally in the founder of ACN. Pope John Paul II entrusted Father Werenfried with a special mission, that of reconciliation between the Catholic



*"Are you willing, during the next
60 years, to cast out your nets
anew – in those very places
where God weeps the most?"*

Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. On each occasion it was a Pope who opened up a new horizon. And on each occasion the prophetic creativity of this Dutch priest opened up the hearts of Catholic believers to respond with the generosity needed. This is the tradition in which we stand, and so we ask ourselves: What are the new challenges of today for Benedict XVI?

On a bright spring afternoon he welcomed us to his residence in Castel Gandolfo. The window of the room looked out across

Lake Albano. The slender figure of the Pope raised his arms to welcome us. He looked at me and said: "It is a privilege for a priest to serve a Church charity such as ACN." At that moment a small boat was crossing the lake. There came to my mind the question put by Jesus three times on the shores of a different lake: "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" (Jn 21:15) The priority of the present Pope is to concentrate to the fullest degree on the mystery of love and on the search for unity.

The future of ACN demands answers from us today: Do you love me in your brothers and sisters? Will you help them, so that the Gospel can reach them all? Are you willing, during the next 60 years, to cast out your nets anew – in those very places where God weeps the most? These questions are addressed to us all. I already know your answer, and in gratitude, I bless you.

P. Joaquin Allende

International Ecclesiastical Assistant



Learn, pray, hope – the *Child's Bible*



Photo: Andrzej Polec
School of life. In Sudan too the Child's Bible is pattern and example.

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word became Scripture and worked among us... It still does so today. So too, the little version of the Holy Scriptures, our *Child's Bible*, works wonders of grace in millions of hearts and souls.

In Latin America it has been at work for 28 years and in 19 languages (153 worldwide), with a total printing of close on 24 million copies. The overall printing now stands at around 45 million copies. It all began in Spanish and Portuguese. On his visit to **Brazil** in May, the Pope was formally handed the 10 millionth copy for that country (pictured above right). For many children, like the street children of Maringá, it is the only book they get in their lives. It is also the Word that connects. When they

visit the sisters, they pray for you in the convent chapel. They pray with the Bible, learn with the Bible and from the Bible draw hope for a more dignified life. The Bible is their treasure. The Word is at work. Your sacrifice continues to spread it – and not only in Latin America.

In **Syria** the children are “proud to come to their catechism lessons, carrying this book”, as one bishop writes. Others would love to profess their faith like this, but do not have the Scriptures.

In the north of the **Dem. Rep. Congo**, the teacher has to write in the sand or in the air – for they have no paper, no blackboard, no books. The Bible is often the only school textbook. For the children it is a friend that accompanies them through life. But many children are still waiting... ●



Photo: L'Osservatore Romano



Father Werenfried: founder of ACN and founder of the *Child's Bible* too!

“I believe” – a book of worldwide unity

Already 4.5 million copies have been published in 22 languages, and yet God speaks to each individual, personally, in his heart. In **Argentina** one prisoner read the *Little Catechism* “I believe” and experienced the desire for baptism. In **Paraguay**, where the sects are trying to proliferate, “parents now have a sure guide for their children”, as a missionary writes to us. In **Pakistan** Christian families feel “strengthened in their faith, especially since this is no dry theological work but filled with quotations, poems and illustrations”, as Sister Regina puts it. From every corner

letters are pouring in from your grateful brothers and sisters. They testify how your generosity is strengthening the unity of the Church worldwide. ●



A catechism to be learned and lived. A religion class in the Philippines.



Truth comes in small parcels... Packing up ACN's Little Catechism for Cuba.



Mustard seeds in the soil of the earth



The Word on the airwaves. Sister Nadiya speaks on Radio Voskresinnya.

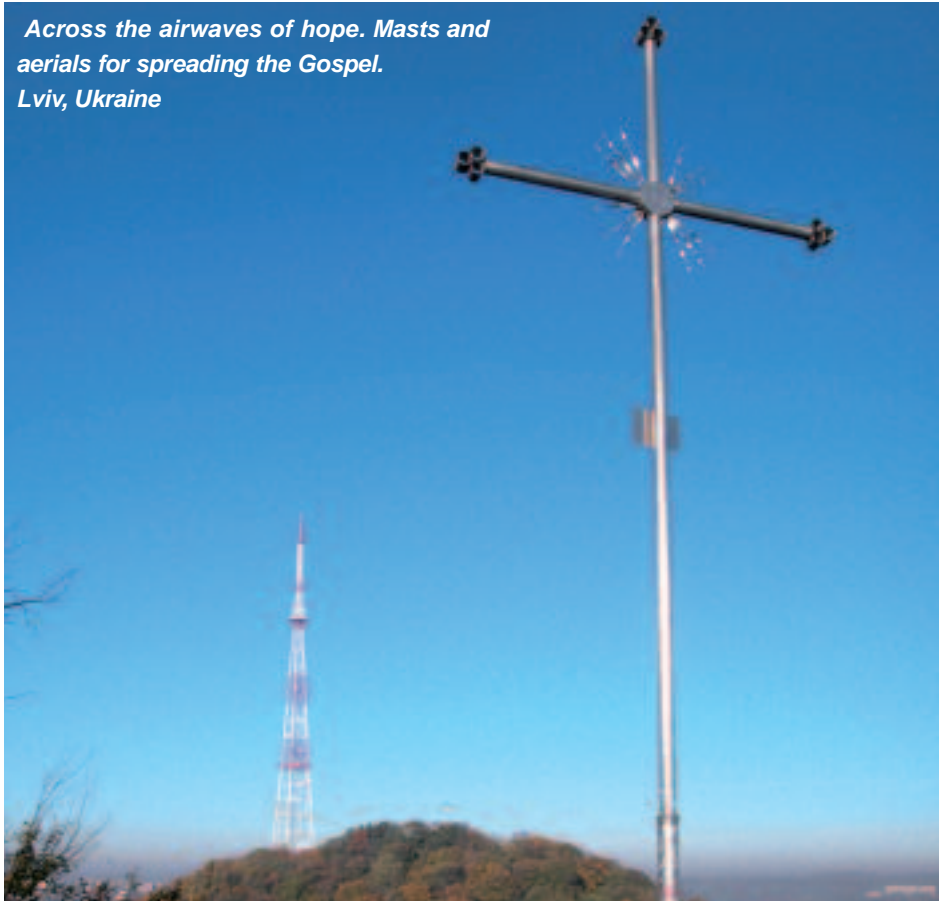
Pope John Paul II said that we must “renew the face of the earth – this earth”. It is true, for we have no other, and yet the face of this earth is dominated by the media. Hence the New Evangelisation is unthinkable without the grain of mustard in the soil of the media.

It is a stony soil, so the task is an arduous one. In the soil of **Lithuania**, the only former Soviet Union state with a Catholic majority, this mustard seed is the “Little Studio” (*Mazoji studija*). With a combination of music, literature and Bible readings, the station also manages to reach many listeners who are otherwise strangers to the Good News. In fact its “Culture and Religion” programme even won a prize in 2005. But such media work is time-intensive, requires trained staff and carries high running costs. The bishops have asked for our support, and we have promised them **€50,000**. Only then will this mustard seed become a tree in which the birds of the air can nest (cf Mt 13:31f).

Christian education is likewise a goal of *Radio Voskresinnya* in Lviv, **Ukraine**.



Nigeria. Without radio, much of Africa would not hear the Good News.



Across the airwaves of hope. Masts and aerials for spreading the Gospel. Lviv, Ukraine

Father Andriy explains how Christian values can shape the people of today; Father Orest tells people how, despite poverty and hardship, one can still live in the joy and hope of the Resurrection. And Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, Head of the Eastern-rite Ukrainian Catholic Church, speaks about the meaning of life and the Christian understanding of marriage, love and work. The programmes are wide-ranging, topical and instructive. We have promised to help with over **€150,000**.

Without such large sums, many radio stations would have to shut down - especial-

ly the network of small stations in Haiti and Amazonia, in Central Africa, China, Laos, Vietnam and other vast and inaccessible regions, which would not hear the Gospel without radio. In all these countries it is your open hands that scatter the seed of the Word. It is a good seed, which germinates even when the ground is stony. Don't let those giving hands grow weary!



Honduras. Father Roel Mejia, live on air in San Pedro Sula.



Ready to go with the Gospel. Making final checks at Radio Sofia, Moscow.



“Thank you. We are counting on you.”

IRAQI priest Father Saad Sirop Hanna, 35, had just celebrated Mass one morning last August when he was captured by masked men close to his parish church in Baghdad and bundled into a car. Militants were trying to rid the city of Christians. After 28 days in captivity, Fr Saad’s agony was over and he was released. Now the Chaldean Catholic priest is based in Rome studying – all thanks to an ACN scholarship. He told us:



“When I was in captivity, I felt the presence of God all the time. Thanks to him I stayed alive. Now I am studying and a new stage in my life has begun. I am just so very thankful to Aid to the Church in Need. I remember you all when I celebrate Mass. The Christians of my country are passing through a very difficult time – they need the help of everyone, especially you, our brothers and sisters in faith. Never should the world forget that Christianity came from the Orient. We need prayers and support to sustain us. We count on your solidarity.”



Hans-Peter Röhlin,
President

The Last Word

Recognition from the highest source

Aid to the Church in Need is a charity of ‘pontifical right’. That means that our ultimate superior is the Pope, who normally speaks to us through the prefect of the congregation for the clergy. The new prefect is the Brazilian, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, who has already been acquainted with us for many years as a project partner.

As president of ACN, I paid him an official visit on 13 April, together with our ecclesiastical assistant Father Joaquín Alliende, and vice-president Pieter van der Velden. The cardinal, accompanied by two assistants, gave us a generous amount of his time. First of all, we gave him a detailed update on our charity as it approaches its 60th anniversary, reporting on the four years since the founder’s death. The cardinal expressed clearly his confidence in the leadership of the charity and charged us to thank you all for the unshakeable loyalty that you have again and again demonstrated by your generosity to the Church in need. At the end he gave us – and, through us, to all of you – his blessing.

This blessing – and your fidelity – is a union in the Heart of Christ, that is all that is needed for the future of ACN.

Need, love and thanks – Your letters

Congratulations from the Amazon

From the Amazon region in Ecuador, the missionary Church of Puyo rejoices to celebrate your 60th anniversary with you. Warmest congratulations for your great help in evangelisation. Without you we too would be missionaries in need.

Bishop Rafael Cob García of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puyo in Ecuador

The real missionary spirit

We, the Fifth & Sixth Class Pupils of Templeorum in Ireland, have pleasure in enclosing the sum of €365.57 which we raised in our recent Jumble Sale. We are delighted to find that ACN is one of the charities that gives the real Missionary spirit to those that are in great need. It is

nice to see this charitable work being done alongside the real missionary work of the spreading of the Good News.

A group of school students, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland

The benefits of prayer

You say that you “receive thanks from those who benefit from your kindness around the world”. But I have benefited far more by their prayers than they have by my donations. I know this because I seldom went to church and didn’t say many prayers. Now I go every week, say prayers and feel the benefit of all the prayers of those “bishops, priests and sisters” around the world.

A benefactor in the UK

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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