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60 years of service to
the Church worldwide

Aid to the Church in Need

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*Father Werenfried believed in Easter for all.
His Daughters of the Resurrection (here
at his grave) now make this reality
– in Africa and elsewhere
in the world.*



*“Christ demands a faith
that will move mountains.
And since He never
demands the impossible we
can, in the strength of our
faith, move aside mountains
of misery and ignorance,
of misunderstanding, hatred
and lovelessness.
Usually this implies a task
of reconciliation that can
be achieved only through
prayer, humility and
selfless love.”*

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

Dear Friends,

Father Michael Shields is a priest who is surrounded by miracles. In Magadan, a harbour town and former prison camp in the far east of Siberia (“I love the cold”), he again and again witnesses the power of faith and love. It is a power that drives people to reconciliation. Everyone here carries a legacy of the Gulag in his heart, whether as a victim, child of a victim, a perpetrator or a relative of one. “Only someone who believes can deal with it,” says Father Michael. “And only those who believed were able to survive as prisoners, because they offered their lives, often for their tormentors.” When perpetrator and victim encounter each other today there are few words and many tears. There is a silent understanding, forgiveness, a celebration of love – in short, reconciliation.

Reconciliation is not just remembering. It is real and actual, happening here and now. 60 years ago in Flanders, when Father Werenfried began his campaign for

reconciliation with the Germans, the past was still very real and vivid and hatred kept the dead alive in the hearts of those they had left behind. He preached love, and he never ceased to call people to reconciliation – first in Flanders, then in Germany, then throughout Europe, the Middle East, Latin America,



*“For 60 years now ACN
has travelled the globe,
leaving behind a trail
of reconciliation.”*

Asia and Africa. He condemned regimes and systems, but not people. Faithful to St Augustine’s words “to love the sinner and hate the sin” he believed in Easter for us all. “With your money you can comfort others, but with your love you can redeem them,” Father Werenfried used to say. We continue to follow his maxim. In Cuba we are giving Christians a voice; in the Philippines we are opening up the broad horizon of faith to young people through the Bible apostolate; in Russia, thanks to you, people can hear the truth broadcast; in the Middle East they

can now read the messages of the Holy Father in Arabic. And in those places where they cannot be reached, because the devil has done his work ‘well’ in the media and in politics – as in many former communist countries, for example – the priest can nonetheless reach out to them when they come face to face with death, in the cemetery, as they lay their loved ones to rest. It is here, for the first time, that many hear the Good News of the Resurrection, of reconciliation with God.

We bring the redeeming love of Christ to others, through prayer, consolation, service. Here and now it is Easter. In the suffering and persecuted of today lies the chance of redemption for us too. For 60 years now ACN has travelled the globe, leaving behind a trail of reconciliation. It is the path trodden by your love. I pray that this trail may remain and grow ever broader. Yours in gratitude,

P. Joaquin Allienor

International Ecclesiastical Assistant



Bridges of mercy



Israel and Palestine – One country, two peoples, three religions. In 1958 Father Werenfried visited the Holy Land, meeting its Christians and its refugees.

“Lord, there is only one hope, only one reason for confidence, only one promise – Your Mercy.” This insight of Saint Augustine in his Confessions likewise lies at the root of the work of reconciliation founded by Father Werenfried.

Without mercy, which has the capacity to look beyond all differences, there can be no reconciliation among men. Often it is no more than a matter of knowledge, of understanding, of language. How, for example, are those Christians in the Middle East who speak only Arabic to get to hear the messages of the Pope? We now have an answer to this, in the form of the Arab-language edition of the Rome-based *Zenit* news agency. Its first edition, issued to mark the papal visit to Turkey in November 2006, carries an address by Pope Benedict XVI

on “Human dignity as the basis of dialogue”. This was a joint initiative by the Arab-language programme of *Radio Vatican* and the journal *Oasis*, published by the patriarchate of Venice. In this way, to quote the announcement by *Zenit*, “we are hoping to establish a bridge of dialogue between cultures and religions”. *Zenit* depends on private donations. We have promised them start-up help of €70,000 for the first two years. Will you help us to build this bridge of reconciliation?

Another unique bridge of understanding is *Blagovest-Info*. This Russian-language agency for religious information regularly reports on the often-difficult dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic believers. Both Russian and Western newspapers, agencies, radio and TV



A bridge to the Russian world – Dialogue thanks to Blagovest-Info.



A bridge to the Arab world – The logo on the new Arabic edition of Zenit.

stations make use of this crucial source. You are nurturing it with your generosity. We are hoping to be able to give at least €80,000 to cover the current year’s budget. It is a matter of providing truthful information and so building bridges and “renewing the face of the earth – this earth”, as Pope John Paul II used to say. For we don’t have another one. ●

Works of reconciliation

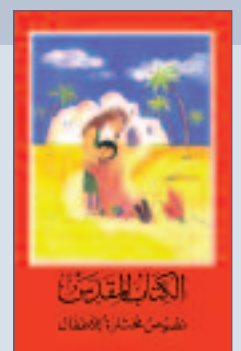
Who could give us a better ‘Introduction to Christianity’ than the Pope? While still a theology professor, Benedict XVI wrote just such a book, and his preface was as crisp as it was clear: “I believe. Amen.”

This book has been reprinted many times and translated into a number of languages. Now, thanks to your help, ACN has funded a Russian translation. It is a genuine work of reconciliation, especially since Metropolitan Kirill, the external affairs

representative of the Moscow patriarchate, has written a foreword to it. Another work of reconciliation is the translation of ACN’s *Child’s Bible* into Arabic. How many children will be able to read it and glimpse salvation! And how many millions of children around the world already know the *Child’s Bible* of ACN! The life of Christ, his words, his deeds – together they make us all into children of God, both those who read and those who give. And there are many more who are still waiting. ●



“Introduction to Christianity” in Russian.



Glimpsing salvation. The Child’s Bible in Arabic.



With loudspeakers and with silence



People of God on the move – Procession in Cuba, still without loudspeakers.



The Philippines – Imparting the Faith in all its profundity to the young.



Standing before God – Benedictine Brs. Lukasz, František, Vladimir and Damian.



Tanzania, Rulenge – Bibles and bicycles for the catechists.

The Faith in **Cuba** is deeply rooted, despite decades of communist dictatorship.

“The state tries to kill our traditions and the people revive them again,” one bishop tells us. It is better that we don’t reveal his name – even though he himself has no fear. Among such traditions are the Good Friday and Corpus Christi processions. The people come in thousands; they sing and pray. But by the time the processions extend to three or four hundred yards, then those at the back can no longer hear what is being said or sung at the front. And so the New Evangelisation is lost in a confusion of voices. Now the bishop has asked us for a voice that all can hear, and we have promised him **€8,000** so that he can buy a loudspeaker system. In this way the Word of God will not only be announced but also be heard, both at the back of the crowd and everywhere.

But the Word of God also needs silence. It needs the prayer of silence in the monasteries. Saint Edith Stein, Patroness of Europe, said of this silent monastic prayer: “It is our vocation to stand before God on behalf of all.” In Sampor, a small village in **Slovakia**, nine Benedictine Brothers have chosen to embrace this life. At present they are still living in a tumble-down house. They pray eight hours each day and work in the garden and in the fields. They have a site for their new monastery in Sampor, but no money for the walls that will shelter this silence. We have promised them **€40,000** so that they can move in as soon as possible. These nine Brothers will stand before God on our behalf. Their silent prayer is the pure essence of the Gospel. ●



Great expectations – Catechesis in the new diocese of Purnea, India.

Places of hope, faces of love

Guaratinguetá is the first of the Farms of Hope. Here in Brazil, on 12 May this year Pope Benedict XVI will speak to young people of whom it can be said: “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.” (Luke 15:6)

For these young people have come through the hell of drug addiction. They were healed here on the *Farms of Hope*. It was the Gospel, the love that healed them. In them the Word of God has again become



Guaratinguetá, near São Paulo, Brazil. This place of hope began in 1983.

flesh. “To love is to give everything, and to give oneself,” said Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus. That is what has happened here, through work and prayer. In Guaratinguetá the Pope will be looking into faces of love. ●



New life through work and prayer. Your generosity has made this possible.



"Our little hexagonal church is a jewel. It is admired by everyone. Needless to say, inside it is very bare, but we are so joyful. Thank you, thank you." Sister Maria works in a slum quarter in Teresina in the north-east of Brazil. Her thoughts often turn to you, her friends, as she writes, "knowing that we can do very little here on our own. Instead, we do it together with you." The old mud chapel has now been demolished, for the next, still younger, community is already waiting for the roofing tiles so that they can begin work on a simple chapel of their own. "It is a race with the sects," she writes. The new chapel has given new heart to her and her helpers.



A big "Thank you" (Danke) to ACN (Kirche in Not).



Hans-Peter Röthlin, President

The Last Word

An attractive hat

18 months after the death of our founder we opened the Father Werenfried Centre in Königstein, in the presence of many prominent figures from Church and society. Today the centre has become a popular place of encounter with the Bacon Priest – for our project partners from all over the world, for local people and for journalists – but above all for our benefactors from all those countries where we receive donations for the Church in need.

Needless to say, Father Werenfried's legendary 'Hat of Millions' is one of our prize exhibits. It is one of the great attractions for our visitors – and it is never left empty...

Recently a women's group visited the Father Werenfried Centre. They were all profoundly impressed. At the end of their tour one elderly lady took the director of the centre to one side and asked him: "Do you also accept legacies?" He answered in the affirmative, so she continued: "Then I will leave my house to you – you have convinced me!"

Father Werenfried and his hat are waiting here for your visit too...

Need, love and thanks – Your letters

Enriched by the suffering Church

Thank you, ACN, for being you. I have supported you for over 10 years and feel much enriched by being associated with you. Being on social security my financial relationship has been limited, but my prayers have been daily and I am strengthened and encouraged by our connection.

A benefactor from Bury St Edmunds, England

I have known your work from the beginning

Thank you for the information you sent me on Vietnam. ACN is the charity that is closest to my heart. I remember the beginnings of your work, when Father Werenfried was authorised by his superior to look after the exiled German priests – without any resources! And

then he hit upon the idea of asking the farmers' wives in Flanders for bacon. For me ACN is a proof of God's existence. I pray that the Lord may support you in your very difficult, but at the same time doubtless inspiring, task. Be assured of my daily prayers.

A woman from Villefranche-sur-Saône, France

Risking all for their faith

Thank you for the work you do. Thank you for the inspiration to cherish and defend our faith. How grateful we should be that daily Mass is so readily available to us. Thank you most of all for the men and women who are not only willing to practise their faith but willing to take the risk to share it under such threatening conditions.

A benefactor from Denver, USA

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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