Aid to the Church in Need
ACN IRELAND

Week of Witness 2023

Sunday 19th – Sunday 26th November

Dear Reader, 19th November 2023

Welcome to this pilot information pack for parishes from ACN Ireland. In it you will find an information leaflet describing ACN's work and mission, a complimentary copy of the November issue of the *Mirror* (ACN's monthly magazine) as well as a card and a pre-addressed envelope for your reply to ACN.

Aid to the Church in Need was founded in Germany in 1947 as a Catholic aid charity for war refugees. The charity has evolved over the years and today has national offices in over 20 countries. ACN Ireland was established in 2009. ACN was re-founded as a Pontificial Charity by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011. It is dedicated to the service of Christians around the world, through information, prayer and action, wherever they are persecuted or oppressed or suffering because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

ACN supports every year an average of 6,000 projects in close to 150 countries, through the prayers, generosity and volunteering work of those who support us in our mission. Projects range from big to small and include the construction and repair of churches and other parish buildings; supporting the formation of priests, religious and lay missionaries; providing cars, motorcycles and other means of transportation to help clergy and other parish pastoral workers reach remote areas of the world and minister to the needs of their faith communities; providing bibles, rosary beads and catechetical resources to nurture the faith of people of all ages; and assisting refugees and persecuted people by providing material help and pastoral care to victims of war and religious persecution. Whether assisting orphans in Sudan or helping Christians in the very land of the Child of Bethlehem's birth (so incredibly devastated by recent atrocities), ACN helps fan the flame of faith in today's disturbed and troubled world.

Every year, Aid to the Church in Need runs a week of campaigning and prayer for persecuted Christians around the world, called the Week of Witness. This year's Week of Witness falls between Sunday 19th November and Sunday 26th November.

Since 2016, the Wednesday of the Week of Witness has become known as Red Wednesday. Red is the liturgical colour for the feasts of martyrs, representing the blood of those who suffered death for their faith. On Red Wednesday, where possible, cathedrals, churches and public buildings around the world are lit up in red to show solidarity with our suffering Christian brothers and sisters.

This year, Red Wednesday falls on 22nd November, the feast of Saint Cecilia, the patroness of musicians and Church music, and one of the most famous martyrs of the early Church.

This coming Wednesday wear something red - a tie, scarf or scapular - to show solidarity with the suffering Church and to remember the blood lost by Christians in defence of their faith.

► *continued overleaf...*

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You can support the work of ACN Ireland in the following ways

- **By praying, fasting and attending Mass regularly** for an end to war and persecution wherever in the world there is division and strife.
- **By blessing yourself in public, when having a meal, passing a Church, or a graveyard**, for all those around the world who cannot bless themselves in public for fear of their safety.
- **By asking our elected public representatives to defend the rights of those who suffer discrimination and persecution because of their faith**.
- **By subscribing to our Mirror magazine**, published monthly, and by donating or volunteering from time to time to support and promote the work of ACN.
- **By completing the enclosed reply card and receiving our free weekly newsletter by email**.
- **By contacting us to have a Mass offered** for a loved one - living or deceased - and having your offering go to support priests working in impoverished areas of the world.

In conclusion, all of us at ACN Ireland are grateful to the priests of the 40 parishes, and their bishops, who for the duration of this year's Week of Witness are supporting us in piloting materials in this parish information pack. Please feel free to write to us at the address overleaf or via email to info@acnireland.org with your feedback.

In this the month of the Holy Souls, may God, through the intercession of Our Lady, continue to bless you and your loved ones during this Week of Witness and always.

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Dr. Michael Kinsella
DIRECTOR, ACN IRELAND

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