



**“The Eucharist is a precious
nourishment for faith:
an encounter with Christ
truly present in the supreme
act of his love, the life-giving
gift of himself.”**

**Pope Francis,
Encyclical “Lumen Fidei”**

Dear Friends,

On the commemorative cards for his first Holy Mass a young priest once wrote the single Greek word: “Eucharistomen” – “We give thanks”. Thanksgiving is uppermost in our minds as we present this year’s annual report to you in the current issue of the Mirror. “Thank you” is a very human expression; it is one of the shortest phrases for expressing our appreciation for what we have been given. We all depend upon one another – though this fact often becomes blurred by the fact that we can purchase so many forms of help and assistance. Acts of human kindness become paid-for services, what used to be a free suddenly commands a fee. And yet as humans we depend to a considerable extent on things that can never be paid for – our very existence, freedom, grace – all things beyond price. The things we can purchase, such as pleasure, comfort, education, excitement, insurance – even good health, to some extent – can at best satisfy us, but never make us truly happy.

That is why gratitude leads us to the unconditional love of God, which is bestowed

on us freely and for nothing. It is given for our good, simply because God wants us to be good. He wants us to experience this love not only through the incarnation of his Son, but also through the Holy Eucharist. Eucharist means thanksgiving. Our Lord gave us his enduring presence in the Eucharist, he transformed the Cross, all suffering and all evil in the world into thanksgiving, and



**“Our gratitude to God
impels us to hasten to
the help of others.”**

hence also into a blessing. Jesus surrendered his own body to the world to heal our wounds. Our gratitude to God impels us to hasten to the help of others, even though in doing so we may run the risk of being hurt ourselves. We need the Eucharist to enable us to overcome our fears and our selfishness.

Dear friends, everything that we are able to achieve, with your help, draws its real strength from the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar and is grounded in it. Since our Lord himself wishes to be present among us in the Eucharist, we build churches, help

seminarians, priests and religious and help train lay catechists. The Eucharist is the most precious and most necessary gift that can be given. The holy Curé of Ars put it this way: “All the treasures of this world are not enough to nourish the soul. God alone must be its nourishment. How noble man must be if only God alone can feed him.” Let us often spend time before the Blessed Sacrament.

He is there! Without price! On our love for our Eucharistic Lord depends whether the world descends into chaos in its poverty and ingratitude, or whether it is saved. That is why Saint Peter Julian Eymard once said, “The

Blessed Eucharist is not only the life of the individual Christian, it is also the life of the nations. A century advances or goes backwards to the extent that the most Blessed Sacrament is adored.”

My grateful thanks and blessings on you all

P. Martin M. Barta

Father Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



Making space for mission

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). The Word came to us in our own time and space – and was subject to our human necessities.

These necessities are real. The Gospel message only needs the embrace of willing hearts. But those who go out bearing this message need spaces and places in which to make it known. Spaces where people can gather, spaces where the Word itself can be proclaimed, small libraries and, of course, spaces of quiet and of prayer. In **Indonesia**, in the fishing village of Lamalera on the island of Lembata, the Daughters of Our Lady Queen of the Holy Rosary would dearly love to be able to explain the Gospel message to the children and young people and pray with them.

And there are also many adults who want to hear it. In fact, there have been Christians in Lamalera for 130 years now. But the sisters want to give a concrete expression to the phrase “dwelt among us”. They need a convent, where Christ can dwell. They have asked our help (€13,000) so that they can build this convent, together with a classroom and a reading room, and at the same time they plan to document the history of the island and the story of how the Jesuits first called the islanders to follow Christ. Certainly, there is no shortage of work. Sister Maria Simprosa lists some



The children are waiting, and so are they: for a convent and a home for the gospel message.

examples: “Two kindergartens, three primary schools, two secondary schools – our mission in Lamalera includes educational, pastoral and social work.” So the Word is putting down roots here, and is recognised by its fruit and works. For as Saint John Paul II wrote, with reference to the new millennium: “The charity of works ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words.” ●

The chapel is their jewel

Sometimes it takes Father Camillo a day or two longer to get there.

Sometimes he has to take a roundabout route, when the heavy rains leave the dirt tracks in this part of **Burma** simply impassable and his motorcycle becomes increasingly unreliable. But he will get there in the end. He always does; you can depend on him. The 500 or so Catholics in his parish in the archdiocese of Taunggyi know this. Once a month he travels to its remote villages to celebrate with them and make Christ present among them, to pray with

them and hear confessions. And he travels every week to the three principal villages of Sain Lian, Wankan and Naung Kwe. Usually the faithful are waiting for him in their basic wooden chapels, the centres of spiritual life in this mission territory. But the chapel in Wankan has deteriorated and needs to be renovated. In the past it would have been no problem to fund a chapel here, for the gemstone mining in this region was a steady source of income. But now the mines have closed and the people are forced to live on what they can grow in their fields. Today the real gemstone, the real jewel in their lives, is



The jewel of Wankan: its real glory lies within, of course.

their chapel. Father Camillo asks our help to repair it. It will cost €4,450, little enough for such a centre of saving grace. So let's not keep Father Camillo and his parishioners waiting any longer. ●



Understanding and reaching out to others: dialogue in Israel and Nigeria.



The way of peace

“There can be no religious justification for violence, in whatever way it may manifest itself. ... Dialogue is the way of peace.”

These words of Pope Francis, given at an international peace meeting in Rome on 30 September 2013, have not fallen on deaf ears. They are being translated into practical action in a range of different initiatives, almost all of them initiated by Christians. In the Catholic run Al-Liqa Centre in Jerusalem, **Israel**, Christians and Jews, and Christians and Muslims meet together. Al-Liqa means “encounter” and the centre organises talks, discussion forums, youth meetings and workshops for believers of all religions. The discussions are altogether down to earth and practical. The young people deal with the concrete issues such as “Life in a pluralistic society”. And the dialogue is continued in the quarterly Al-Liqa Journal, in which leading figures from all three monotheistic religions write on such topics as the family in Islam, the Christian presence in Israel, teaching values, and so forth. Particular attention is paid to the theme of the dignity and role of women – a sensitive topic for some Islamic representatives. But the dialogue continues, leading to mutual understanding and not infrequently even to real friendships. Only thanks to your generosity can the centre continue its precious work. Right now they are asking us for **€20,000**. But they are sowing seeds of reconciliation in a region beset by violence and war.

Similarly in **Nigeria**, the Church is working tirelessly to promote reconciliation through

interreligious dialogue. A precondition here is not only to know one’s own Christian faith but also Islamic beliefs. This is the purpose of the workshops for priests, seminarians, religious and catechists in the diocese of Osogbo in the southwest of the country. The population here is approximately two thirds Muslim and the Islam-dominated state is putting pressure on other faiths. Compulsory measures like full body cloth-

ing for female pupils, even in the Catholic schools, make dialogue more difficult. Once again it is the Christians who are responding. Workshops can help address these issues, and Father Akinkunmi sent us a detailed programme, which we plan to support with a contribution of **€10,000**. “We religious leaders are called to work for peace”, said Pope Francis at the meeting in Rome. This can only happen, he said, “through dialogue and prayer. Both belong together, for dialogue has its roots in something beyond our own strength.”

The suffering Lord brings healing

“Love transforms the soul and makes it free.” So wrote Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

In Grodno, **Belarus**, many people are now experiencing this liberating effect. Father Czeslaw tells of miraculous conversions in his retreat centre with its image of the suffering Jesus. And the centre is not even finished yet! Nonetheless, more and more people are coming here with their problems – and broken marriages are given new life, childless couples suddenly find they are expecting, people facing crises and despair in their lives are finding new courage and confidence before the image of the suffering Jesus. Father Czeslaw has built up the centre around this image into something of a place of pilgrimage. So many people are hungering and thirsting for love, and many of them can be helped, in the confessional and through prayer. But they also need their “daily bread”, and the centre is still lacking its large kitchen. We have promised **€20,000** for love to be put into practice.



Blessing the spot where the kitchen will stand.



Extending his pastoral outreach

Malawi is one of Africa's smaller nations, some 850 km long by 350 km wide. Catholics make up a quarter of the population and live scattered across Malawi, many live in the hill country. The priest can only get to some settlements once a year. So not surprisingly, Father Frederick Chinkhoma is "overjoyed" with his new car. "Now I can at last reach even the remoter villages, even up in the hills. The people there are longing for the sacraments. The new car has unbelievably extended and simplified my pastoral work." For this he sends you his heartfelt thanks, and those of his brothers and sisters out in the villages. And needless to say, we will all be remembered, every time he celebrates Holy Mass.



**Johannes
Freiherr
Heereman,**
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

Support for building projects is the largest single category in the aid we supply to the Church in need. This is inevitably the case, since walls and roofs cost more than bread and books. All over the world, thanks to your generosity, we help to build, repair or renovate churches, chapels, convents and community centres. They are places of prayer, places of the spirit. Often their presence radiates out through an entire region, bringing life. This really is a sustainable form of help. These buildings root and strengthen the Christian presence.

And this enduring character is also the reason behind a major project we are funding in Iraq. In consultation with the local bishops we are planning to repair and rebuild the ruined homes of Christians in the Niniveh plains, this biblical land of faith, so that these Christians can return to their home towns and villages. It is a project that sends out a powerful signal. We are already helping with medicines, food, mobile school classrooms and rent subsidies for these refugees. For these Christian communities have been bled dry, as has their country also. A home, however small and simple, is a sign of security and of a better future for them. Thank you for your fidelity!

Need, love and thanks – your letters

A Lenten gift for victims of war

Recently, my old father keeps telling me what he'd experienced during the Korean War. Since his hometown was close to the border – which is now the DMZ; demilitarized zone –, he wasn't able to flee so he suffered a lot. His story was heartbreaking, and then I thought how it'd be painful for those who are now at war. As we're going through Lent, I am sending you a little donation but to help our brothers and sisters in Syria, suffering in the fire of war.

A benefactress in South Korea

Little streams flow into the great rivers

Dear friends, enclosed I'm sending you 20 Euros to help. I can't contribute much since I'm unemployed and have no income. But I keep putting a little bit by so

that I can give it to you. It's not much, but I give it gladly, as little streams flow into the great rivers! May God help me to help you.

A benefactress in Portugal

Emma's birthday money

Enclosed is our 15-year old daughter Emma's annual gift from her birthday money. May God continue to shower abundant blessings on your good work. Please keep us in prayers.

A benefactress in the United States

A wonderful enterprise

Above all, ACN is a charity that helps practically, on the ground, where the need is greatest. A quite wonderful enterprise with an extraordinary founder.

A benefactor in Germany

How to make your contribution to the Church in Need:

1. Go to our Head Office website: www.acn-intl.org
2. Click the **donate now** button
3. Either: Go to the National Office of *Aid to the Church in Need* in your country.
4. Or: Make an online donation (if you live in a country without an ACN National Office).



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