



*Dear Friends,*

ACN would have been impossible without the apparitions of our Blessed Lady in Fatima. ACN follows the “spiritual strategy” given by the Queen of the Rosary in Fatima to combat the great evil of militant atheism and thus bring peace to the world. “If you listen to what I say, there will be peace,” declared the Holy Virgin in 1917. Her prophetic words – along with the worldwide act of consecration – are still of critical importance 100 years later. Pope Pius XII even described the apparitions in Fatima as “the greatest intervention by God in the history of mankind since the death of the Apostles”. Through the shepherd children of Fatima’s visions of Mary, God wanted to save the world from the catastrophe of the Second World War and from atheistic communism. But the message of Fatima met with lukewarm faith – and we are still suffering from the consequences of our unwillingness to hear it: the persecution of Christians, huge numbers leaving the faith, moral decadence on a scale never seen before and conflicts in every part of the world – with the threat

of nuclear war again hanging over us. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said in his homily in Fatima (on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2010): “Anyone who believes that the prophetic mission of Fatima is completed, is mistaken”.

“Today, as never before, mankind stands at a crossroads... We possess instruments of



**“ACN is at the heart of the Fatima message.”**

unheard-of power. We can transform this world into a garden, or reduce it to a heap of ashes,” wrote Pope Saint John Paul II when he consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our Lady has given us simple, supernatural tools so that we help transform the world into a “garden”, tools that even children can use, as the three shepherd children of Fatima showed us. And what are these tools? Daily Rosary, Consecration to Mary’s Immaculate Heart, Communion of Reparation on the first Saturday of each month, and the

offering of our daily trials – which we embrace for the love of God, for reparation of sins, the conversion of sinners and to console the heart of God. In short, a path of penance and conversion. In this sense ACN is at the heart of the Fatima message.

Dear friends, by holding an international pilgrimage to Fatima on our own 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary we wanted to reinforce the union between our work and the message of Fatima and renew our own consecration to the Mother of God. May the month of October, the month of the Holy Rosary, provide new impetus for us to pray and strive still more faithfully to fulfil Our Lady’s wishes. As Pope Francis assured us in Fatima: “Under her mantle we are not lost; from her embrace will come the hope and the peace that we desire...”

With my grateful blessing on you all

*P. Martin M. Barta*

Father Martin Maria Barta  
Ecclesiastical Assistant



# Mass offerings for a suffering people

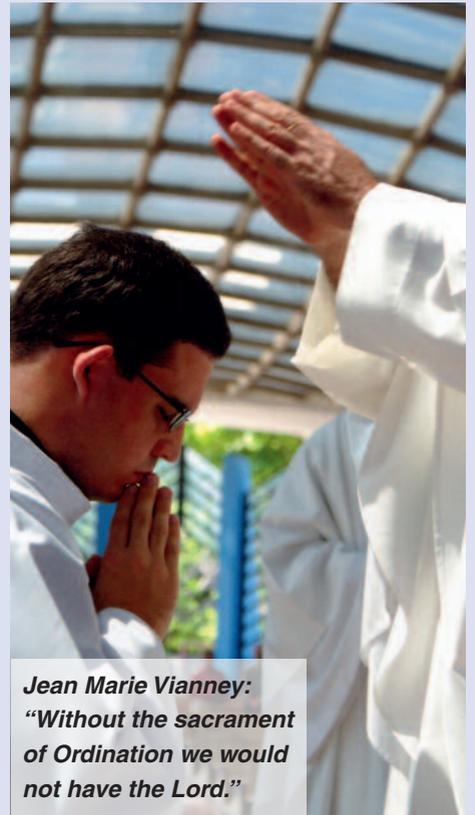
**“Oh, how great is the priest! If he understood himself, he would die... God obeys him. He utters two sentences, and at his word the Lord descends from heaven and encloses Himself in a tiny host.”**

Jean Marie Vianney, the holy Curé of Ars, lived out the priestly mystery to the point of physical exhaustion. He spent countless hours in the confessional, often up to 16 hours a day. Right up to the end he sought to bring heaven and earth together through for-

giveness and the Blessed Eucharist. He is the patron saint and pattern of all priests.

Ramón Moya also wants to offer up his life for others. He has spinal cancer, and following surgery is now undergoing chemotherapy. But he continues to celebrate the Holy Mass. And thanks to your Mass stipends, he is able to pay for his medication. This is exceptionally difficult in Venezuela today. The country is in chaos. Until now ACN has not been asked for too much help. But now there are food shortages, and medicine is practically unobtainable. Sometimes they don't even have a chapel to celebrate in.

Father Milton Correa celebrates Holy Mass in the street, in a small town on Margarita Island, and the faithful kneel reverently in the dust when he elevates the Host. A sharp con-



**Jean Marie Vianney:**  
**“Without the sacrament of Ordination we would not have the Lord.”**

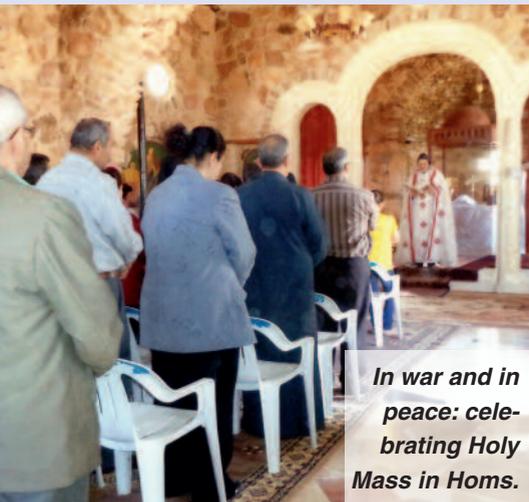
trast to the violence in the country. He also thanks you for your Mass stipends, which help him to survive and continue his ministry. Your offerings are a source of hope for the 14 priests in Margarita, once a tourist paradise but now utterly impoverished. You are helping these priests with your stipends (€8,160) and they in turn are using them to help the poorest in their parishes. ●



**Via crucis in Venezuela: the priest brings heaven and earth together.**

## “Come to Jesus”

**Thanks to the 1,436 million Mass stipends collected around the world, one Mass is celebrated every 22 seconds for the intentions of a benefactor of ACN.**



**In war and in peace: celebrating Holy Mass in Homs.**

Even in **Syria**, in the suffering city of Homs, they have continued to celebrate Holy Mass daily, often to the sound of falling shells. They keep in mind the words of the holy Curé of Ars, “it is not necessary to speak much in order to pray well... We know that Jesus is there... Come to Holy Communion; come to Jesus. Come, to live from Him, so that you may live with Him.” And Syriac Catholic Archbishop Philippe Barakat of Homs writes with gratitude, “How greatly these Mass stipends help us to survive as Christians. Above all now that our already poor diocese has been bled dry. The needs of

our priests and faithful cry out to heaven. We beg you, pray for peace!”

This year we sent 1,020 Mass stipends to Homs, as well as 935 to Multan, in **Pakistan**, 3,500 to the diocese of Ivano-Frankivsk in **Ukraine**, and hundreds of thousands to Africa. Recently, a priest in France left all his possessions in his will to provide Mass stipends for other priests around the world. He had understood what Jean Marie Vianney taught: without the sacrament of ordination, without priests, the Church would be no more than a humanitarian charity. It is our priests who transform it into the Body of Christ; hence they are “one of the most precious gifts of divine Mercy”. Your Mass stipends are a form of thanksgiving for this great gift. So let us be generous with our Mass offerings! ●



# Sharing the joy of the redemption

*Nicaragua: The boat is waiting. With medicine and also with the priest.*



**“The charity of works lends an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words”, wrote Pope Saint John Paul II. Both these things, words and works, are the essence of mission. And it is particularly in the area of works that we can help.**

Sometimes these works consist in enabling the presence of priests. The indigenous peoples of the diocese of Jinotega, in **Nicaragua**, have been waiting a whole year for a priest to come. But they can only be reached by water. The priests of the diocese would be only too happy to undertake the boat journey three or four times a year and bring the strength of the sacraments – and especially the Eucharist – to the waiting faithful of the Miskito and Mayangna peoples in their 31 villages. Indeed, as one of the missionaries, Father Cristobal Gadea observes, “Our mission is by no means a one-way street. We can learn a great deal from their deep, natural faith.”

But the old motor on their boat is getting increasingly unreliable, and maintaining it is

becoming too expensive. They don’t have the money for a new motor, they barely have enough to afford to hire a boat. Bishop Carlos Enrique Gutierrez told us: “We have sold the still usable parts of the old motor for €1,300. We have two boats without motors, a small one and a large one, to suit the size of the team. Two new motors – a small one and a powerful one – will cost a total of €5,500. Then there are the fuel costs and spare parts...” He is asking ACN for **€4,500**. The bishop has a fervent devotion to the Mother of God. His letters have a printed motto at the foot of each page: ¡Quien Causa tanta alegría! ... ¡La Inmaculada Concepción de María! (“What causes such deep affection – Mary’s Immaculate Conception!”). We are only too happy to help, so that his priests can more often share the joy of the redemption with the Miskito and Mayangna peoples.

Sometimes the work of charity involves going out to the people and living alongside them. In Kajokeji, in South Sudan, three Comboni Sisters have spent several years carrying out missionary work, even in time of war, when it was particularly needed. Their closeness to the people gave them comfort and showed the truth of their words. But the continuing warfare has forced the people to flee and destroyed the small mission outpost. So the Sisters have followed the refugees to **Uganda**. Here they have found



**“There I am among you”: a procession with the Blessed Sacrament.**

temporary refuge with their fellow Comboni Sisters – but they are over 100 miles (170 km) from the refugee camps – too far away to be able to continue their work. A modest house nearby would cost €25,000, but they would also need a water tank, solar panels and a gas cooker. This little house would help nurture the refugees’ faith. The Comboni Sisters have asked our help, so that they can be close to the people and – despite the circumstances – share the joy of the redemption with them. We have promised them **€30,000**, so that they can live closer to the refugees and bring the loving charity of God to them.



**Close to the victims: Comboni Sisters among the refugees.**



# “Forever grateful and loyal”

*“Lord, have mercy...”: Archbishop Chucrallah Nabil Hage celebrating Mass according to the Maronite rite in the city of Tyre, Lebanon.*

It was late summer 1977, and war was raging in **Lebanon**. Journalists sat in the safety of West Beirut; while bombs fell on the Christians in the East. The western media portrayed the Christians as fascists. They felt abandoned. So Father Werenfried sent someone to survey the situation in the Christian area.

He came by sea from Cyprus, since the airport was unsafe, visiting the refugee camps, where no UN representative had set foot, and the overcrowded Maronite monasteries in the mountains. He saw the needs and wrote down what the people needed. He brought them hope. Later his visit was followed by deliveries of medicines, milk powder and blankets. To this day the older Lebanese Christians still speak with gratitude of Father Weren-

fried’s messenger of hope. “During the war and in the decades that followed, you understood our needs and stood by our side”, writes Maronite Archbishop Chucrallah Nabil Hage of Tyre. In his diocese, which extends to the frontier with Israel, the persecution and oppression of the Christians has never really ceased. During the war they were caught between the Israelis and the Hezbollah militias. The

churches were their refuge, their help came from the priests. And the same is true today. Many of the refugees from Syria have found temporary refuge and a little bit of security here, either staying with relatives or in accommodation provided by the Church. “My 25 priests are wearing themselves out on their behalf”, says Archbishop Chucrallah. “I go begging everywhere in order to strengthen and encourage them. So that they can experience the solidarity of other Christians.”

In this same spirit the Archbishop is also asking us for Mass stipends. He has learned from Father Werenfried to place his requests in God’s hands. He writes, “If you can help me, then I will be very grateful to you. If you cannot, I will nonetheless never forget what you have already done for us. I remain forever grateful and loyal to ACN and you can be sure that I will continue to pray for you every day. May the Lord bless you and shower you with his abundant graces, his peace and his joy.”

In Saint Matthew’s Gospel we read how Jesus went “to the region of Tyre and Sidon” (15:21) and praised the woman whose faith led her to plead with him for



*In communion with Rome since the beginning: a Maronite priest celebrating Holy Mass.*

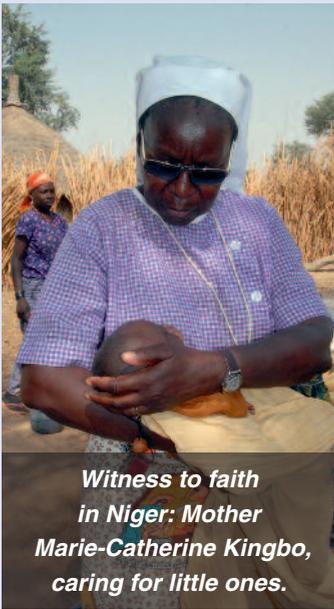
her daughter. This faith and this Christian presence have survived, to a remarkable degree, despite all the persecution. The Maronites have always been in communion with Rome. We have sent the archbishop and his 25 priests 1,250 Mass stipends. They will remember you all in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. ●



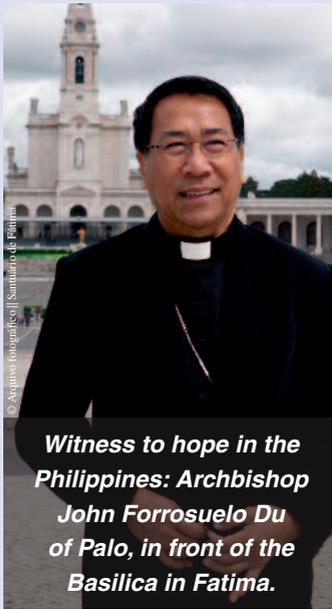
# Like a Rosary in the hands of the Church



*Witness to love in Syria: Sister Annie Demerjian.*



*Witness to faith in Niger: Mother Marie-Catherine Kingbo, caring for little ones.*



*Witness to hope in the Philippines: Archbishop John Forrosuelo Du of Palo, in front of the Basilica in Fatima.*

This year ACN is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At the promptings of various Popes our founder, Father Werenfried van Straaten expanded our apostolate of prayer and actions for the suffering Church. And over the years these prayers and actions have, so to speak, formed themselves into the beads which make up an enormous Rosary of Love for Christians throughout the world. Today ACN is a pontifical foundation, working in 150 different countries. But its goal is still the same as it has always been – to relieve suffering and lead people to God.

To this end, Father Werenfried appealed to you, our benefactors, on innumerable occasions. At the turn of the new millennium he wrote: “Werenfried – a warrior for peace. I will readily admit to you that I have not always brought honour on this beautiful name, which I received as a novice, and that I have often failed in my programme of life. But as Pope John Paul II has said, God also gives us ‘the strength to fulfil what he asks of us’. As is clear from the many annual reports we have sent you we have, with God’s help, all of us achieved much together. Yet the heathens still mock us, and Satan is still the prince of this world. Peace is further away than we had hoped, following the collapse of communism. This is a reproach, and it concerns you and me. It means that we have not fought enough, not prayed enough, not sacrificed enough. It means that we must commit ourselves still more generously for peace, which is irreconcilable with injustice,

oppression and our own sinfulness. It means that we – poor weak sinners that we are, who have so often betrayed our Lord – must step forward once more to do battle in this time. And we must do so as though it were the decisive battle.”

For over half a century Father Werenfried appealed to his benefactors in words like these. Only thanks to their help was he able to build up our charity. We now have national offices in 23 countries – but it is never enough to meet all the growing needs. We are receiving more and more requests and pleas for help. Often we are able to help, but more often than we like to we have to say no, with a heavy heart, because we have “not fought enough, not prayed enough, not sacrificed enough”. Today, in our 70<sup>th</sup> year, peace is still far away and the persecution of Christians is fiercer than ever. But our benefactors are spiritual warriors, offering their



*Saved by the Rosary: Our Lady of Palo, Philippines. She holds the Child Jesus, who reaches down with the Rosary beads, saving a little child from Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in 2013.*

prayers and sacrifices, participating in God’s plan of salvation, just as we all do when we take the Rosary in our hands.

Right from the start Father Werenfried put his trust in the intercession of Our Lady. In Fatima he first consecrated our charity to the Mother of God. This year, the hundredth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady there, ACN made a pilgrimage to Fatima, to Mary, to pray for our needy brothers and sisters all over the world. There were three “witnesses”, from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, who, so to speak, “represented” our project partners. Joining with them we stood with the “woman clothed with the sun” and prayed for peace – “as though it were the decisive battle”.





## Fatima's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, ACN's 70<sup>th</sup>

What could be more appropriate than to commemorate these anniversaries with a pilgrimage to the site of the apparition of Our Lady in Fatima? Especially since Father Werenfried consecrated ACN to her on numerous occasions, the first time was more than 50 years ago. The photo shows some of the participants on the ACN pilgrimage in September.



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

*Dear friends,*

*Looking back over the seven decades of our existence, these words of Saint Paul came into my mind: "For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints" (2 Cor 8:3-4). It was the Christian communities in Macedonia who, despite their "extreme poverty", as Saint Paul puts it, gave with such a "wealth of generosity". I have the same feeling when I look back over your generosity during the last seven decades. For 70 years now ACN has been the work of your selfless charity.*

*Can this continue in the coming decades? It must and, so please God, it will. For the need is growing, the number of requests are increasing. ACN will use new methods to further its work – there will no doubt be more on-line giving, communication with our benefactors will become more direct and the information more detailed – but the underlying foundation will remain your selfless love and generosity. "Love is the root of all good", wrote the great Church Father St John Chrysostom. For this love I offer you my heartfelt thanks.*

## Thanks, and congratulations on our 70<sup>th</sup>

### ACN is serving the Kingdom of God

*We could not have developed our pastoral work in Cuba without your help. Our children would have no Child's Bible, our young people no YOUCAT. Our priests would struggle without your Mass stipends and we could not repair our churches. We know well that your aid includes many a 'widow's mite' – and so it is all the more precious to us. You are helping to spread the Kingdom of God in this world, and God will reward you a hundredfold. May Our Lord bless you and may the Virgin of El Cobre, Our Lady of Charity protect you!*

Bishop Álvaro Beyra Luarca of Bayamo-Manzanillo, Cuba

### Often the only help for our priests

*My warmest congratulations, and my thanks for your continued support for our diocese over the past 25 years. Thanks to your benefactors we have been able to rebuild churches and other vital facilities. Indeed, your Mass stipends are frequently the only means of survival for our priests, and so in this way you are helping to bring the Kingdom of God to those who seek it.*

Bishop Maksymilian Leonid Dubrawski of Kamyanets-Podilskyi, Ukraine

### Abundant fruits

*My heartfelt congratulations and good wishes to ACN. I know well the history of your charity, which supports us in our mission in Nigeria and in Africa generally. An aspect I would particularly like to emphasise is your help for the training of priests and religious. This has borne abundant fruits. I cherish the hope that, after having long benefited from your aid, we may one day become benefactors ourselves.*

Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria

### Your indispensable support

*Your support for the Christians of Syria has been indispensable since the war began. You have never ceased to come to our aid, supporting pastoral care, education and health care. I still recall with great emotion that wonderful evening in Rome when the Trevi Fountain was illuminated in red, in memory of the blood of the Christian martyrs.*

Chaldean Catholic Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo, Syria

## How to make your contribution to the Church in Need:

1. Go to our Head Office website: [www.acn-intl.org](http://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).



**Editor-in-chief:** Jürgen Liminski  
**Responsible Publisher:**  
ACN International, Postfach 1209,  
D-61452 Königstein  
De licentia competentis  
auctoritatis ecclesiasticae

[www.acn-intl.org](http://www.acn-intl.org)