MIRROR

Aid to the Church in Need

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In St Peter's:
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

"Christian life is not a collage of things. It is a harmonious totality, the work of the Holy Spirit. It renews all things. It renews our hearts, our lives and enables us to live in a different style, which encompasses all things."

Pope Francis,
Homily during Holy Mass
on 6.7.2013 in the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Dear Friends,

At this time of year we are preparing for Pentecost. Pentecost is God's response to the confusion of language and thought that comes from human pride – as illustrated by the building of the Tower of Babel. Only the spirit of love can overcome this confusion. The great crises that we are increasingly witnessing in the world today are essentially a war of the spirit – the spirit of truth versus the spirit of falsehood. But the meaning of life can only be found in the spirit of truth.

A university professor once told me that a student had asked him about the student riots of 1968. After the professor had described the period of the unrest and its cultural and religious consequences, the young man said to him, "Your generation may well have lost its religion, but my generation has lost its contact with reality. We don't know how to assess the value of the simplest things. We cannot affirm what is good in this world with any certainty and we no longer see the potential for goodness, even in ourselves."



May the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all nations.

How tragic and pointless it is when people cannot or will not recognise what is the beautiful, the good and the true. Does this not deprive us of hope too? How can we tell our children and young people that life is worthwhile? That there is any point in enduring the hardships of life, the sacrifice, the suffering and death? All of us need the ultimate certainty, the inner strength which, despite the power of evil, inspires the goodness in our souls. This is brought about by the Holy Spirit. In the light of the Cross, the Spirit of Christ reveals things as they really are, in all their meaning. The Cross is the fixed point, around which the world is turned upside down. Because the Cross reveals God's mercy, and the boundless Spirit of Love. Through the experience of God's forgiveness, in his loving embrace, we can become spiritually rooted while living in this earthly world. As the Holy Spirit desires not only to enlighten and console us but also to lead us into a new age with a renewed humanity. Every year as Pentecost comes around, we are reminded that the Spirit leads the Church from age to age, taking her deeper and deeper into the fullness of Christ's truth.

After 2,000 years of Christian history the Holy Spirit is closer to us than ever. Yet, just like the apostles in Jerusalem, we must pray fervently with Mary for his outpouring. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, send now your Spirit over the earth! Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all peoples, that they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster and war. May the Lady of All Nations, the Blessed Virgin Mary, be our Advocate. Amen.

My grateful blessing on you all,

P. Martin M. Barta

Father Martin M. Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



Bringing God to the riverside communities in Alto Solimoes: Without a new outboard motor for their boat, it will not be possible.



Helping them to discover the infinite love of God. Sister Teresa and her charges in a school in Addis Abeba.

Serving the Church on the margins

Wherever you find the Church lives, you find her on the move. Whether on two wheels or four; with or without a motor; by canoe, by boat, by bus. And it is your loving generosity that keeps her mission of love afloat.

Last year you helped with 576 projects to spread the Good News. Once again this year, this Gospel message must be taken across mountain, water and wasteland. Often little is needed – some diesel for an outboard motor, a bicycle in Africa, a moped in Asia, a car in Eastern Europe. In **Sierra Leone** – devastated last year by the terrible scourge of Ebola – Father Joe Sandy needs an outboard motor, so that he can bring the Sacraments to the parishes of St Patrick and St Ambrose on the Shebro Islands, just off the coast (**€9,500**). In **Madagascar** they need five motorbikes for five priests, who are looking after outlying parishes far away from their main parish centres (**€22,000**) – if we did not help, people would not see a priest. In the diocese of Alto Solimoes, in the Amazon region of **Brazil**, they need two outboard motors for the Capuchin Fathers who minister to more than 60 riverside communities (**€30,000**). In **Ukraine** they need a minibus for the seminary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Vorzel, near Kiev. The seminary currently has 37 students living and studying there, who have a burning desire to bring something of the love of Christ to this suffering land (**€20,000**). And in **Palestine** a small car is needed for Father Mansour Mattosha, a Syrian Catholic priest who is struggling to care for his widely scattered flock (**€15,000**).

The only hospital for one million people...

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception show their love for God through their service of the poor. For them this is an essential part of their charism. This young congregation from India is working in Brazil, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, South Sudan, and **Ethiopia** too. Three years ago the archbishop of Addis Abeba entrusted St Luke's hospital to them. For a million people in the area this is the only hospital they have access to. Every day the sisters take in 200 new patients.

But the sisters also go out to the people in the villages and the countryside. For 20 miles (50km) round about they go, particularly to women and children, seeing how they live, pray and work. They don't just talk with them, they also roll up their sleeves and help. And they also help them to understand their own virtues and talents – as well as the love of God for his people. This demands a great deal of time, but also inspires creativity, initiative and leads them to the "fullness of humanity" that is one of the goals of the congregation's social and pastoral work.

For their arduous journey, reaching out to those on the margins and the edge of society, as Pope Francis puts it, the sisters need a car. We have promised them **€30,000** for one. ●

Any donation you kindly give will go to support these, or similar



"The Lord will send his angel with you …" (Gen 24.40): Blessing motorcycles for the priests in Madagascar.



With your help, and with the blessing of the priest, the Good News is spreading in Samalkha, India.

When Father Marneni arrives, their faces light up

Young Father Marneni Kumar is looking after his very first parish – and it is a big challenge, as it is one of the poorest parishes in India.

But Father Marneni is very happy to be ministering to the faithful of St Joseph's parish in Wangamarthy, **India**. "They are God-fearing and devout. They love to come to the prayer meetings. They love to pray and sing together, to hear the Word of God, to reflect on it and to bear powerful witness to it in the vineyard of the Lord."

Together with his catechists and pastoral helpers, he looks after 24 villages and 18 schools. Almost all the Catholics here are labourers who work on the land. "They are extremely poor. No work means no food, and hunger for the family." They are the poorest of the poor, the lowest class of Indian society. Hardly a family has running water, many do not even have a roof over their heads. But in their shared prayer and shared faith they discover their dignity as children of God. When Father Marneni arrives, their faces light up.

But most of them cannot meet with Father until nine in the evening, as they cannot get away from their work until then. But at such a late hour in the evening there is no public transport for Father Marneni to get home again afterwards. So he needs a motorcycle to get about, and it would be a real blessing if his 15 pastoral helpers had bicycles. We have promised him **€1,800** to cover the cost. ●

Field work, fish farming, and the Rosary ... the way back to life

Drug addicts are the outcasts, the wounded victims on the margins. Helping them was always one of Father Werenfried's major concerns.



Singing, prayer and work – on the Fazenda of Merciful Love.

In **Brazil** Father Hans Stapel founded a great movement to help them, the Fazendas, or Farms of Hope. Today they are present in more than ten countries. In the diocese of Pinheiro, Father Joao Luis Mancini has set up a similar initiative and established a "Fazenda of Merciful Love". Here 60 young men are trying to overcome their addiction through work – farming fish – and through prayer – particularly the Rosary. God's grace is at work in them. Even the locals, who initially did not want to see the farm set up in their area, are supporting the project, now that they have seen its good results. Father Joao is like the Good Shepherd, caring day and night for his "lost sheep". He gets the addicts' families involved, to facilitate their return back home, and also runs another Fazenda of Merciful Love in the neighbouring diocese of Viana. A similar place for women is also planned, because more and more women – including mothers – are falling into addiction. But they want to come back to life. Now Father Joao's old car has become unreliable, and he needs a new one for all his many tasks and journeys. We have promised him **€6,300**. ●

In **silence** – and amid the **din of life**

"The trees, the flowers, the herbs, they all grow in silence. The stars, the sun, the moon, they all move in silence. Silence gives us a new perspective on things."



A chapel where they can listen to God. The walls are built; but the roof is needed.

This silence of which Blessed Mother Teresa speaks is the silence one finds before the Tabernacle. Here things happen within the heart – far from the din of the streets, the crowds, the media. This kind of silence is needed by the children from the poverty striken township of La Cabana in Buenos Aires, **Argentina**. Drugs, violence, sects – every day children are assailed from all sides, while their families, for the most part, struggle to survive. They have come here from the countryside or from abroad. Many depend on social security.

50 years ago, in the midst of this slum area, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded a school. Today it has 850 pupils and their religious formation plays a very important role in these children's lives. But knowledge is one thing, prayer is another. The school wants to build its own chapel – which can at the same time be used by everyone in this troubled part of town – so that this knowledge can take root in the hearts of the children. Only through prayer, by seeking God in the silence of His presence can Faith take root. The multipurpose centre, where Holy Mass is currently celebrated, is not suitable for this, since it lacks an atmosphere of prayer and silence. They have asked us for **€20,000** to fund the roof for the chapel. Will you help us to create this sacred space in La Cabana, so that all who come here can gain a new perspective on their lives?



I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some (1 Cor 9:22): The group "Do Caos à Glória", ready to go to work in the football stadium.

In Rio on the other hand...

In the midst of the din of life, in the chaos of the streets, in the roughhouse of the football stadiums and the Carnival, at music concerts and other big gatherings you will find the young missionaries of the community Do Caos à Glória (From Chaos to Glory) making known the Good News, both visibly and audibly. The community is only 16 years old – and sprang from the work in the favelas and in response to the spiritual poverty of the masses, "because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36). The Spirit blows where he wills, even in the midst of the noise. These young missionaries are convinced that "God wishes to show forth his love and grace there, through us". They do not want to see the Carnival become an excuse for carnal excesses, the passionate enthusiasm for sport turned to heedless violence, the joy of music leading to idolatry of performers. "We counter the modern idolatry with God, the chaos with the ordered beauty of love." The community has attracted considerable interest; but their new members need theoretical and practical formation in theology – and also in dance, theatre, preaching and the new media. This modern form of the New Evangelisation has its own skills that need to be learned. We have promised them **€10,000** to provide this formation. ●

Any donation you kindly give will go to support these, or similar



Gathering joyfully around their bishop: "Today the New Evangelisation also means involving the laity more in spreading the Faith."

The power of prayer

"The arm of the Lord has not grown shorter", says Archbishop Thomas Luke Msusa of Blantyre, in Malawi, "for there are still miracles, even today". He can speak with authority, as he experienced one himself .

That was 11 years ago, on the day of his consecration as bishop. Suddenly, his Muslim father knelt before him and asked him for baptism. For many years his father, who was the Imam in his village, had tried to bring his son back to Islam. And for as many years his son had prayed for him in turn. Anyone who knows just how much power and authority the father wields in a Muslim family can imagine just how difficult the relationship of a son with his family had been, ever since he had converted to the Catholic faith as a youth and joined the Montfort Missionaries. They had taken him in when his mother died. He was five years old at the time. By the age of 12 he wanted to become a priest. He attended school, studied, took his permanent religious vows, sought his father's blessing – and received the response, "Go to hell! You are destroying our culture." Even his sister and his two brothers wanted nothing more to do with him. At the age of 34 he was ordained to the priesthood, and nearly 8 years later he became Bishop of the diocese of Zomba.

The young bishop, as he was then, lifted his father to his feet and embraced him silently. Tears flowed. His father said: "God has touched me, I want to be baptised." So then his son explained that he, the trained Imam, would have to learn the Catholic faith as a catechumen, just as the learned scholar Saul had done 2,000 years before. Today his father is baptised – and the rest of the family is as well, because the bishop prayed for them for many long years. And the Imam's son, who is now Archbishop of the financial metropolis of Blantyre and chairman of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, is also a key figure in the dialogue with Muslims and the other religions of the country. Their problems are not with the traditional Muslims of Africa, but with the fundamentalists from abroad, who threaten the Church with destruction. We are supporting Archbishop Thomas with many projects for the New Evangelisation, including support for marriage counselling, the family apostolate and above all the training of catechists. Archbishop Thomas prays a great deal for ACN, as he believes in the power of prayer! ●

The Montfort Missionaries

The Societas Mariae Montfortana, (SMM) was founded by Saint Louis Maria Grignion de Montfort (1673 – 1716), but only began to spread after the death of its founder. Today, with around 1,000 members in 37 different countries, it is one of the smallest missionary congregations. Its spirituality is strongly Marian in character. De Montfort's great work *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* has been translated into more than 40 different languages. The community's charism is missionary work in its broadest sense. According to its founder, it must draw its prophetic strength from the working of the Holy Spirit and depend entirely on divine Providence.



Archbishop Thomas Msusa, SMM.

You are part of it all



"The sisters have a wonderful rapport with the poor children and for the people who are otherwise forgotten", writes Bishop Donald Francis Lippert, who is delighted by the work of the Sisters of Mother Teresa in his diocese of Mendi in Papua New Guinea. They visit the inmates in the prisons and go into the hospitals to see the sick; they take care of religious instruction, and of the elderly. "I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and solidarity towards our missionary Church in Mendi. Your support makes it possible for the sisters to do their varied work", continues Bishop Donald (in the photo, standing in his Capuchin habit, in front of the car that was funded thanks to your help). And he adds, your help "makes you present here, in our midst. You go with us everywhere."

Need, love and thanks – your letters

Sharing his first ever pay packet

Enclosed is 50 Euros for ACN. They are for the Christians in Iraq. I am a young adult and I want to share my first wage packet, which I have just received, for this purpose.

A young man from Portugal

A new life, thanks to you

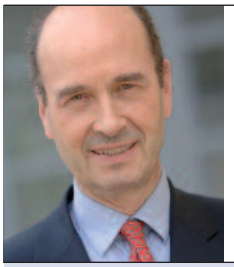
After the devastating earthquake in January 2010 I no longer wanted to live in Haiti. All my dreams were buried beneath the rubble. I had no strength left to hope for a better life. Then ACN helped me to travel to the World Youth Day in Madrid, and this changed my whole life. I saw the enthusiasm for God and was able to hope once more. Today, three years later, I want to thank God and thank you. I know now that God never abandons us, so long as we trust in him and do not lose courage. I have now obtained a diploma and am still studying – and when I have finished, I want to work for the Church.

A student from Haiti

An act of love

I am happy to be able to send you a modest sum. As religious sisters we receive 50 Euros once a year for our own personal use. So, since we already have everything we need, then we can surely help others with it a little also. Oh, if only I could do more to help! But prayer is more important still, by far. I would also like to ask for your prayers, since in the face of so much worldwide need I am sometimes in danger of losing heart. The letters from your readers help me!

A religious sister in Germany



Johannes Freiherr Heereman,
Executive President, ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

The Gospel relates the words of Christ: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). We do not need to look far to see who these brothers of Christ are. The plight of the Christians in Syria and Iraq cries out to heaven. Will they experience a new Pentecost? Does the Church in the Islamic countries still have a future? She will do – provided that we take the words of Saint James to heart: "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" (Jas 2:14). I can only say to Saint James, with gratitude, that these works are there. Once again in 2014, thanks to a continuing increase in donations, we were able to help many millions of Christians around the world who would otherwise have received no help at all. In helping these brothers and sisters of ours to remain in their own country, or to find refuge in a new one; in helping them to retain their identity as Christians and in building bridges of mercy between the Christians of our democratic and wealthy nations on the one hand and the persecuted and oppressed Christians on the other, we continue to carry out the mission of mercy entrusted to us.



Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Please use the envelope. Aid to the Church in Need, 39B Mdina Road, Attard ATD 9038; Tel: 21487818; Fax: 21586257

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Pass this leaflet on to your neighbours, friends or leave it at the Parish Church for others to review.

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