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Media Release 21 November 2019

Australian Cathedrals join in #RedWednesday in support of persecuted Christians.

Yesterday evening (Wednesday 20 November) several Australian Cathedrals were the first in the world (thanks to Australia's time zone difference) to launch **Red Wednesday 2019**, by lighting up their facades in red light. They will be joined this week by thousands of other Cathedrals, Church buildings and monuments around the world from London, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Prague, Washington D.C. and more, to mark the *Aid to the Church in Need* initiative.



St Mary's Cathedral Sydney turns red to highlight the persecution of millions of Christians around the world. Photographer: Patrick J Lee. Copyright: The Catholic Weekly.

The aim of **Red Wednesday** is to draw attention to the plight of millions of Christians who are living in environments where they are violently persecuted, discriminated against and prevented from practising their Faith. **Red Wednesday** also coincides with the release of *Aid to the Church in Need's* biennial report *Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their Faith.*

The report finds that persecution against Christians has worsened the most in South and East Asia. This area is now the regional hot spot for persecution. The report also gives warning that the international community is running out of time if it wants to save Christianity in many parts of the Middle East. The full report can be read at: www.aidtochurch.org/reports

In Australia, **Red Wednesday** events took place in Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, Maitland-Newcastle and Wollongong. A list of Red Wednesday events around Australia (and the world) can be viewed at: www.redwednesday.org

Red Wednesday participants were asked to pray for persecuted Christians, to wear red in honour of the Martyrs of the Faith and to share a picture on social media with the hashtag **#RedWednesday**.

The Archdiocese of Melbourne has extended **Red Wednesday** into an entire '**Red Week**' with prayer events from November 20-27. The Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne said; "Daily across the world, many of our brothers and sisters continue to suffer deeply through injustice and persecution in the name of Christ. As they choose to remain close to Him, so we choose to remain close to them - in solidarity for the courageous witness they model. We are proud to be #RedWednesday Champions."

The Archdiocese of Hobart held a Red Wednesday prayer service, led by Archbishop Julian Porteous. Attendees at the service heard powerful testimonies of persecution, lit candles, and prayed for both the victims of atrocities and their perpetrators.

National Director of *Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)*, Mr Bernard Toutounji said he was grateful to all those that supported **Red Wednesday**. "It was incredible to see the photos of so many Cathedrals around Australia lit up in red. It sends a strong message to our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ that we have not forgotten them." In reference to the latest ACN report Mr Toutounji said; "A report such as *Persecuted and Forgotten?* is of great value because it informs us on what is happening to our brothers and sisters in Faith. I would encourage everyone to read the report because we should not be ignorant to the hardships and dangers many Christians face in trying to live out their Faith," said Mr Toutounji.



St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne will be lit red from the 20th-27th of November.



The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese also lit up red in solidarity with those persecuted for their Faith.



Archbishop Julian Porteous lights a candle at the #RedWednesday prayer service in Hobart. Copyright Archdiocese of Hobart. Photographer: Ben Hine.



Fr Shammi (Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, Hobart) shared with the congregation about his "gut-wrenching" trip back to Sri Lanka after the Easter 2019 terrorist attacks. Copyright Archdiocese of Hobart. Photographer: Ben Hine.

Images and homilies from Red Wednesday events around Australia that can be used in your publications can be found [here](#).

Please note that more Red Wednesday images of Cathedrals, Churches and monuments lit up in red (from Australia and around the world) will be added to the above Google Drive link throughout today and the rest of the week as they are received by ACN Australia. In the same folder is a document called "*Image captions and important information*" which gives instructions on how to credit any images in your publications.

Persecuted and Forgotten?

A report on Christians
oppressed for their Faith
2017-19



A snapshot of a
deepening crisis



Aid to the
Church in Need
ACN AUSTRALIA

There is also a 5 minute video summary about the *Persecuted and Forgotten?* report that can be shared on your websites and social media platforms: <http://bit.ly/2XeeHTh>



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