



Media Release for 7.11.2022

From Canberra to Vienna, ACN highlights religious freedom and persecution of Christians in November

The international Red Wednesday campaign initiated by the Pontifical foundation *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN) to call attention to religious freedom and persecuted Christians will take place this year on Wednesday 23 November.

People all over the world will be reminded of the plight of persecuted Christians and the lack of religious freedom in many countries during the month of November, with buildings and landmarks in several different countries illuminated in red, and a series of special initiatives, prayer actions and witnesses.

The official international launch will be the release of the “Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2020–22” in the British Houses of Parliament on 16th November. The report specifically addresses the worldwide situation of persecuted Christians every two years. The report will be presented in other countries during the following weeks.

On Red Wednesday ten cathedrals will be illuminated in Australia, and St Christopher’s Cathedral in Canberra will hold a Night of Witnesses prayer event. The event will see banners of a series of recent martyrs processed into the Cathedral with testimonies from special guests including the Archbishop emeritus of Pakistan, Cardinal Joseph Coutts.

The United Kingdom has prepared a wide variety of events both in England and in Scotland, including asking people to gather with friends and families and share a traditional meal from countries where Christians are persecuted, during which they can exchange stories about the suffering church, pray and raise money to support refugees.

In France, bells will ring out from 100 churches all over the country and a round-table discussion will take place in Les Bernardins, Paris, followed by an evening prayer vigil at Montmartre on 23 November, featuring a testimony by Archbishop Ndagoso from Kaduna, Nigeria.

At least 94 churches in Austria have confirmed their participation, either lighting in red or holding prayer events. In South America, ACN Colombia has invited sister Gloria Narvaez, a nun who was held by Islamist terrorists for five years, to share her experiences.

ACN Germany has invited guests from Iraq, Nigeria and Pakistan to give witnesses in the Cathedrals of Regensburg, Mainz and Augsburg, among others, with sixty German parishes confirming their participation.

Red Wednesday traces its roots to Brazil in 2015, when the local ACN office had the Christ the Redeemer monument lit in red to mark the persecution of Christians in Iraq. In 2016, inspired by the same idea, ACN Italy illuminated the Fontana di Trevi. ACN UK took the idea further and created #RedWednesday to commemorate all persecuted Christians on a specific Wednesday in November, and this was later expanded to a whole 'Red Week' in some countries. In the UK, in particular, the initiative has been embraced not only by different Christian confessions, but also by other religions, in a show of solidarity.

The following is a full list of events already confirmed around the world. Others are still being prepared. More information can be found on ACN national office websites.

Australia:

Ten cathedrals will be lit in red, and will hold Masses or prayer services on Wednesday, 23 November. The Cathedral in Canberra will hold a Night of the Witness prayer event. More info: www.aidtochurch.org/redwednesday

Austria:

All parishes in Austria have been invited to light up their churches on Wednesday 16 November, and a Mass will be celebrated in St. Karlskirche, Vienna. So far, at least 94 churches have confirmed they will be participating. More info: <https://www.kircheinnot.at/rw/>

Belgium / Luxemburg:

An information and prayer session will be held at the headquarters of the local ACN on Wednesday, 23 November.

Brazil:

The Persecuted and Forgotten report will be launched during Red Week, accompanied by interviews to be published in the local press.

Canada:

On Wednesday, 16 November, there will be Mass and a vigil. Several buildings will be illuminated in red throughout the country. EN: <https://acn-canada.org/red-wednesday/>

Colombia:

Churches will be lit in red between 14 and 18 November, and sister Gloria Narvaez, who was kidnapped by jihadists in Mali and held for almost five years, will be giving conferences in Bogotá and in Medellín.

France:

A round table discussion will be held at "Les Bernardins" on Tuesday, 22 November, and on Wednesday 23 an evening prayer vigil will be held at Montmartre, while 100 churches will ring their bells all over France. <https://aed-france.org/evenement/mercrediroUGE/>

Germany:

Six events will be held with several German bishops, and parishes are being invited to associate themselves to the occasion, which will carry on during the second half of November, with 60 having

confirmed already. See more information: www.redwednesday.de

Ireland:

Wednesday, 23 November, will be marked by prayer services and interviews to be published in the local media.

Mexico:

There will be a mass with first-hand witness accounts by persecuted Christians in the Cuernavaca Cathedral on 27 October.

Netherlands:

In The Netherlands at east one hundred churches will be lit red on Wednesday 23 November. Many of them host evening prayers or celebrate Holy Mass for the intention of those persecuted and forgotten for their faith. Several churches will inform about the report Persecuted and Forgotten? 2022 to raise awareness. www.redwednesday.nl

Philippines:

Beginning two weeks beforehand, dioceses will be invited to celebrate and mark Red Wednesday through masses and the illumination of their buildings in red.

Portugal:

The Persecuted and Forgotten report will be presented in different parts of the country in the week between 19 and 27 November. On 24 November, or during the days before, some parishes will be illuminating their churches in red, a prayer day for victims of religious persecution will be held, and there will be stronger presence of articles and interviews in national media.

Slovakia:

A benefit concert focusing on persecuted Christians will be held on 19 November, and buildings will be illuminated in red on 23 November.

Switzerland:

Churches will be lit in red throughout the country between 12 and 20 November.

United Kingdom:

The “Persecuted and Forgotten?” report will be presented in Parliament on 16 November, and on 23 November there will be a rally, a liturgy and talks in London, as well as a parliamentary event in Scotland. As usual, churches, cathedrals and secular buildings will be asked to illuminate in red during the month of November, and prayer and fundraising events will be held in schools, religious groups and universities.

This year the British offices will be promoting the “Taste of Home” initiative, asking people to gather with friends and families and share a traditional meal from countries where Christians are persecuted, where they can share stories about the suffering church, pray and raise money to support refugees.

Finally, the office is holding a prayer and action novena during which all those interested will be asked to go to Mass, or pray the rosary, for persecuted Christians.

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Contact:

Teresa Hodal

Communications Coordinator – Aid to the Church in Need

E: media@aidtochurch.org

P: (02) 9167 9517 (direct)

www.aidtochurch.org