



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

Media release 5.11.2024

Australian and New Zealand cathedrals light in red for persecuted Christians

More than half of the dioceses in Australia and New Zealand are participating in Red November this month to show solidarity with persecuted Christians suffering increased violence, persecution and human rights abuses worldwide.

This November, thousands of people will be taking a moment to remember, pray for and support Christians suffering persecution around the world. Twenty-four Cathedrals in Australia and New Zealand will be participating, with most lighting up in red, holding Masses, prayer gatherings, and sharing testimonies of the persecuted.

Red November is founded upon the international annual event, Red Wednesday (20 November), begun by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) in 2015 in a global movement to shed light on the suffering of Christians and advocate for faith and freedom.

Participation in Australia and New Zealand has more than doubled since last year, with 15 cathedrals joining for the first time this November. All five Eastern Catholic Eparchies are participating, many of whose communities have been affected by persecution in their traditional homeland. Given the ongoing conflicts, this year's national focus will be on supporting Christians in the Holy Land.

Bernard Toutounji, National Director of Aid to the Church in Need Australia and New Zealand, said the increasing support shows growing awareness and concern for Christian persecution and is an important wake-up call to the West to not take their faith for granted.

“Red November is a time to acknowledge the terrible extent to which martyrdoms, massacres, and the mass exodus of Christians from their homelands is happening today due to worsening Christian persecution worldwide,” said Mr Toutounji.

“Commemorating Red November is a sign of solidarity – the universality of our Church demands that we do not let our brothers and sisters suffer in silence. The crimson red reminds us of blood-stained martyrs and burned-down churches. Their testimony and witness of faith challenges and inspires us to treasure and live out our own more deeply.”

New Zealand's Diocese of Palmerston North held this year's first Red November event internationally at its Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on Sunday 3 November. Bishop John Adams embraced the initiative to light the Cathedral in red and celebrated all weekend Masses for the persecuted faithful, preaching on the need to recall and pray for the suffering Church. Mr Toutounji also presented on behalf of ACN,

a pontifical and pastoral aid charity helping to keep the faith alive in places suffering extreme persecution.

ACN Australia and New Zealand also issued an invitation to 1,300 local parishes to participate during November by holding a dedicated Mass, prayer event, collection, or by showing a video on the challenges facing Christians in the Holy Land.

Almost 340 million Christians today – or one out of every seven – live in a country where they suffer some form of persecution. Pew Research Centre data showed that Christians suffered religiously motivated harassment ranging from verbal abuse through to killings in 160 countries, up from 110 countries since 2012. 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.

View a live map of participating Cathedrals and Red November events: [View here](#)

Learn more on the Red November website: <https://rednovember.org/>

<ENDS>

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Jemimah McMurray

Communications Manager – Aid to the Church in Need Australia & New Zealand

E: jemimah@aidtochurch.org

P: 0468 318 440

ABOUT

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is the only international Catholic charity dedicated to the service of suffering Christians wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. Founded in 1947, ACN is a pontifical foundation and provides vital aid for pastoral projects, religious education, and emergency relief in areas affected by conflict and poverty. It seeks to keep the flame of faith alive in places it is most in danger of being extinguished. ACN operates solely on benefactor donations, with no funding from Church or State.

www.aidtochurch.org