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Red November unites thousands to remember, pray for, and support persecuted Christians

A record 30 dioceses in Australia and New Zealand are commemorating Red November this month, to show solidarity with persecuted Christians suffering increased violence, persecution and human rights abuses worldwide.

Red November is a global movement led by Catholic charity *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN), uniting tens of thousands of people to shine a spotlight on Christian persecution. Cathedrals and churches across Australia and New Zealand will be lit in red, to symbolise the blood of the martyrs. Parishes will hold Masses and prayer vigils to pray for the persecuted Church. Schools, families and individuals will pray the Red Rosary, light candles, and share stories of persecuted Christians.

Participation in Australia and New Zealand has more than doubled in the past two years, with seven new cathedrals participating for the first time in 2025, from St Joseph's Cathedral in Dunedin, New Zealand, to St Patrick's Cathedral in Toowoomba, Queensland.

Mykola Cardinal Bychok, Australia's first official Ambassador for Red November, encouraged all Catholics to pray and offer Masses this Red November to spiritually strengthen the persecuted and honour today's martyrs. In his [Red November address](#), His Eminence said supporting the persecuted Church is a cause close to his heart and his own country's history.

"Through Red Wednesday and Red November, we shine a light into places of darkness. We remind the world that behind statistics are real people: fathers and mothers, children and grandparents, whose only "crime" is the courage to believe, to pray, to live their faith," said the cardinal.

"As a Ukrainian, I cannot speak about this reality without remembering our own history. Under Soviet rule, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was outlawed for more than four decades. Our bishops and priests were arrested, our churches were confiscated, our faithful forced underground. My own grandparents' generation had to pray in secret, often in the quiet of their homes, not knowing if someone would denounce them. They lived in constant fear, yet their faith endured."

"This is why Red November matters. It is not just about remembering distant lands. It is about remembering that the freedom we enjoy today was purchased by the courage and sacrifice of those who came before us. ...Their witness strengthens our faith, their sacrifice calls forth our love."

Research from ACN's 2025 [Religious Freedom Report](#) shows a concerning decline worldwide, with two-thirds of humanity – more than 5.4 billion people – living in countries without full religious freedom. Of these, 413 million Christians live in countries where religious freedom is severely



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violated, with approximately 220 million living in countries where they are directly exposed to persecution.

The greatest threats to religious freedom are the global rise in authoritarianism and oppressive government regimes; the advance of jihadism and religious nationalism; displacement crises aggravated by war and armed conflict; forced migration, and organised crime.

Bernard Toutounji, National Director of *Aid to the Church in Need Australia and New Zealand*, said the right to live out one's faith is among the most targeted and alarming human rights issues of our time.

"One in seven Christians live in countries where they suffer persecution for their faith. Every day, priests, sisters, catechists, and Catholic families like yours and mine face intimidation, violence, exclusion from jobs, attacks on their churches and homes, kidnappings, and even death, to simply live out their faith."

"In our nation, we are blessed to live in security and live our faith freely. We enjoy the right to worship, or not to worship, as we choose. Red November offers us an important reality check: a time to remember that when one part suffers in the Body of Christ, all parts suffer with it. We cannot, and should not, live in comfort without turning our minds, hearts, and resources to help the brothers and sisters crying out to us for prayer and support."

"This Red November, I invite all Australians and New Zealanders to pray for suffering Christians, to share their stories, and to support *Aid to the Church in Need* as we work to keep the flame of faith alive in places where it is most at risk of being extinguished. Our prayer, support and advocacy matter more than ever. Each one of us is needed to help break the silence on Christian persecution."

Red November is founded upon the international annual event, Red Wednesday (19 November), begun by ACN in 2015. Red Wednesday traces its roots to Brazil in 2015, when the Christ the Redeemer monument was lit in red to mark the persecution of Christians in Iraq.

How to get involved in Red November:

- **Help break the silence on Christian persecution**, by watching and sharing the Red November video. [Watch the video](#)
- **Pray the Red Rosary**, focusing each decade on a continent where Christians suffer persecution. [Download the prayer card](#)

To Learn more and register to participate, visit the Red November website: www.rednovember.org

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About Aid to the Church in Need

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