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Historic first: Every Catholic Archdiocese across Australia and New Zealand unites for Red November

For the first time, every Catholic Archdiocese across Australia and New Zealand is uniting in support of Aid to the Church in Need's (ACN) Red November campaign, marking a historic show of solidarity with millions of Christians worldwide who face persecution because of their faith.

The milestone comes as 32 dioceses across Australia and New Zealand, including every

Archdiocese and four of the Eastern Catholic eparchies, have confirmed their participation this year. Diocesan participation has more than tripled since 2023, reflecting the growing resonance of this important cause and a desire to respond through prayer, solidarity and practical action.

Red November is a global initiative of ACN, a pontifical foundation supporting suffering and persecuted Christians worldwide. Each November, the campaign unites Catholics around the world in prayer and solidarity, shining a light on Christian persecution and inspiring practical action to support those suffering for their faith.

For Mykola Cardinal Bychok, ACN's Red November Ambassador, the plight of persecuted Christians is personal.

His homeland's Ukrainian Catholic Church suffered more than 40 years of persecution under Soviet rule.

“When one member of the Body of Christ suffers, we all suffer. May our prayer, our public witness and our practical support remind our persecuted brothers and sisters that they are not alone,” Cardinal Bychok said.

The growing response comes as ACN's recently released *Persecuted and Forgotten? 2024-2026* report reveals that around 220 million Christians were directly exposed to persecution in 2023, with oppression worsening in 55% of the countries surveyed.

Lukas Rajnoch, Acting National Director of ACN Australia and New Zealand, said the unprecedented participation was a powerful expression of unity with Christians suffering for their faith.

“To see every Catholic Archdiocese across Australia and New Zealand standing together is a powerful expression of solidarity with our persecuted brothers and sisters. Whether it is a diocese, a small parish, a family or an individual, every act of prayer and solidarity matters.

Together, we remind Christians suffering for their faith that they are not forgotten and do not stand alone,” Mr Rajnoch said.

“In our encounters with persecuted Christians around the world, they repeatedly ask us to pray for them so they are strengthened in faith, speak up for them so they are not forgotten, and support them so they can survive.”

Internationally, the campaign centres on Red Wednesday, 18 November, when churches and iconic buildings are illuminated in red. In Australia and New Zealand, dioceses and parishes can participate on any suitable day throughout November.

ACN invites parishes to celebrate a Red November Mass and encourages individuals and families to participate in three simple ways:

- **Pray:** Remember persecuted Christians at Mass or by praying the Red Rosary, perhaps lighting a candle

as a sign of solidarity.

- **Support:** Donate to ACN's Red November Appeal to help vulnerable Christian communities suffering persecution.
- **Act:** Shine a light on Christian persecution by wearing red, sharing stories of persecuted Christians or encouraging others to participate.

To learn more and register your participation, visit **www.rednovember.org**.

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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, clerical formation, and emergency relief in areas affected by conflict and poverty. www.aidtochurch.org

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BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR EVANGELISATION, LAITY AND MINISTRY

MEDIA RELEASE
NOVEMBER 6, 2026

Bishops reflect on 25 years of implementing *Woman and Man*

The Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry is setting up a group to advise on supporting women.

The initiative came out of research, being released today, reviewing the implementation of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's social justice statement, *Woman and Man: The Bishops Respond.*

Released in 2000, the social justice statement advanced women's inclusion, leadership and gifts in the Church. The bishops' statement was issued in response to a 1999 research report, *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*.

In 2022, the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia issued a decree calling for the Church to
"implement more fully" the undertakings made in the social justice statement.

The evaluation, by the National Centre for Pastoral Research, highlights women's increased education and professional roles, the impact of women-led initiatives, improved collaboration and new approaches to inclusion and contemporary challenges.

It also identifies enduring barriers such as restructuring, lost institutional memory, limited funding and networks, poor sharing of experience, clericalism, stereotypes and gendered expectations.

Commission chair Archbishop Christopher Prowse said the report was a timely reminder for the Church in Australia.

"As we become a more synodal Church, this research shows our gains and the work still ahead," Archbishop Prowse said.

"The commission will establish a group to advise on supporting

women and guiding future initiatives."

Archbishop Prowse also highlighted bishop-delegate for women Bishop Michael Morrissey's 2026 Pastoral Letter on International Women's Day and Pope Leo XIV's recent words to women at the Vatican:

"The presence of women is a wealth that must be recognised and valued more and more. In addition to a particular sensitivity towards people and relationships, they also bring all the human, professional and intellectual talents proper to female experience and thought. Their competence, capacity for discernment, creativity and concreteness increase the life of the institutions and contribute to acquiring a broader view of the reality and problems encountered." *(Pope Leo XVI to the Association of Women in the Vatican, 5 October 2026)*

The evaluation report is available from here.

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FULL STORY

Bishops reflect on 25 years of implementing *Woman and Man*

(ACBC)

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, MISSION AND SERVICE

MEDIA RELEASE
NOVEMBER 6, 2026

Prison Sunday 2026

Catholics across Australia are being encouraged to mark Prison Sunday on November 8 by directing their thoughts and prayers to prisoners, their families and those who care for them including chaplains.

Visiting a prison in Equatorial Guinea in April, Pope Leo XIV said: “No one is excluded from God’s love.”

“True justice seeks not so much to punish as to help rebuild the lives of victims, offenders and communities wounded by evil,” he said.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference delegate for prisons, Bishop Tim Norton SVD, said prisoners, their families and those released from custody often found themselves on the margins of society due to social stigma.

“But all people are deserving of dignity and respect which can be shown through personal connection,” he said.

“Despite the challenges they face in ministering to people who have often led troubled lives, prison chaplains and others working in post-release programs enable the light of the Gospel to shine into the darkness of the prison experience.

“Whatever offence they have committed and whatever the harm it has caused, prisoners are offered love, compassion and respect by our chaplains who offer a listening ear, spiritual care and a reminder that no person is beyond God’s love.”

Bishop Norton said visiting was often a lifeline for people in prison.

“It’s an opportunity to provide practical and emotional support,” he said.

“It can also serve as a reminder that the Church stands by the

side of prisoners and God does not abandon anyone.”

Bishop Norton expressed thanks for the many chaplains working in correctional facilities across Australia.

FULL STORY

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