

Why Red Wednesday?

Created in God's image, each member of the human family is born free and equal, with a natural inclination to seek the truth and to worship God. While this desire to live out one's faith is fundamental to the human person, it has often been limited or restricted through history by various regimes and governments.

In 1948, the United Nations defined freedom of religion as an inalienable right for all members of the human family (Article 18, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*).

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council affirmed this in its declaration on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, stating that every person, "has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious, in order that they may with prudence form for themselves right and true judgements of conscience" (no. 3).

Tragically today there are millions of people who are robbed of their religious freedom and persecuted for their beliefs. Each of us who has the freedom to practice our faith has an added duty to stand up for those who do not.

Places of Persecution (today)

Religious freedom is violated in almost one third of the world's countries (31.6 percent), where two thirds of the world's population lives. 62 countries out of a total of 196 face very severe violations of religious freedom. The number of people living in these countries is close to 5.2 billion, as the worst offenders include some of the most populous nations in the world (**China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria**).



PRAYER FOR Persecuted Christians

*Lord Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd,
You call all people to Yourself,
but You also warned us that
following You would not be easy.
Today, many Christians suffer and
are persecuted for love of You.
In them, You continue Your passion for
the redemption of the world.
It is a grace to carry the cross with them.
Grant us love, courage
and a readiness to sacrifice
so that we can aid and console
our brothers and sisters in faith.
Fill us with Your merciful love for one another,
that we may also bless
our enemies and forgive them.
Thus, we want to joyfully testify to Your presence
in the world and find fullness of life in You.
Amen.*



Founded in 1947 as a Catholic aid organisation for war refugees, and declared a Pontifical Foundation by Pope Benedict XVI, *Aid to the Church in Need* is the only international Catholic charity dedicated to the pastoral and spiritual support of suffering and persecuted Christians. The work is not funded by Church or State but relies solely on the offerings of benefactors around the world.

1800 101 201 • www.redwednesday.org



Light Red. Wear Red. Pray Red.



Stand Up for Faith and Freedom



23 November 2022

#RedWednesday



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN AUSTRALIA

PONTIFICAL
FOUNDATION





What is Red Wednesday?

Red Wednesday is an initiative of *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN), the only international Catholic charity dedicated to the support of suffering and persecuted Christians.

Red Wednesday is a day to gather and pray for those who are persecuted for their love of Jesus Christ. Cathedrals, churches and public buildings around the world will light up in red to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is clear that the persecution of Christians is worse today than at any time in history. In terms of the numbers of people involved, the gravity of the acts committed, and their impact, not only are Christians more persecuted than any other faith group, but ever-increasing numbers are experiencing the worst forms of persecution.

The purpose of **Red Wednesday** is to join together and raise a strong voice in support of the Christians who are unable to speak freely, and who look to us – brothers and sisters in Christ – to speak on their behalf.

Let's break the silence of Christian persecution worldwide. Pray for those who suffer. Share their stories. Give whatever you can. Make **#RedWednesday** a campaign that cannot be ignored.



Photos © ACN International

Some ways to get involved:

PRAYING Pray for the suffering and persecuted Church. Organise a prayer vigil or Holy Hour at your parish or school; include the Prayer for Persecuted Christians (overleaf) in your daily prayers; create a “Red Corner” in your home or school with devotional items that remind you to pray for those who suffer for their faith; attend an extra mass and offer it for someone in the world who cannot go to mass for fear of persecution.



ILLUMINATING Join famous Cathedrals and landmarks around the world as they light up and decorate in red for Red Wednesday. Check your local

diocesan news to see what may be happening near you. You may also be inspired to help organise an event in your parish or school – contact the ACN Australia team for resources.

GIVING Give to help support suffering and persecuted Christians globally – your offering a tangible sign of your love and solidarity. You may like to organise a fundraising event: from “Red Wednesday Morning Teas” to walkathons to a movie night or a simple bake sale. Visit our Red Wednesday webpage for more fundraising ideas.

Children from Sacred Heart School, in Erbil Iraq, who have experienced great suffering through war and economic hardship, give thanks for your prayers and support this Red Wednesday.



BLESSING On Red Wednesday, and throughout November, make a conscious decision to bless oneself in public or when having a meal, conscious of those who are not able to

safely do so due to religious oppression. Consider also wearing a visible crucifix or other Christian symbol, as recognition of the religious freedoms we enjoy that many others around the world do not.



WEARING Wear something red, a red ribbon or some other item. The colour red being symbolic of the blood shed by Christians for their love of Christ. Be prepared to explain to others the significance of wearing red and its connection to the suffering Church.

LEARNING Red Wednesday is a day to become informed and raise awareness of the plight of many Christians around the world – with 80% of all acts of religious persecution being committed against Christians. What form is persecution taking? Where are Christians currently experiencing persecution? Answers to these and other important questions, can be found in our Religious Freedom in the World Report 2022 on our website.

SHARING Share your photos and Red Wednesday stories on your social media including **#RedWednesday**.

