

# Santuario Joins Red Wednesday Campaign 2017

In response to the invitation of the Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) Philippines, Santuario Eucaristico makes a Stand for Faith and Freedom by joining the “Red Wednesday” by wearing red clothing and illuminating our parish with red lights in remembrance of the blood of the faithful who have been killed because of the Christian faith.





## WHAT IS RED WEDNESDAY?

Numerous studies have consistently shown that Christians are the most persecuted faith group in the world. A study by Open

Doors, a Christian advocacy group, reveals that the global persecution of Christians has risen for the past four consecutive years. Another study by the Center for New Religions published findings that over 90,000 Christians were murdered in 2016. That is equivalent to one Christian being murdered for the faith every six minutes. Furthermore, the study reveals that half a billion Christians are unable to freely express their faith. These findings affirm the declaration of Pope Francis that there are more Christians suffering today than there were in the early years of Christianity.

Given that our country is predominantly Christian, Filipinos find it difficult to grasp a reality where Christians can be persecuted. Many are not even aware of how difficult it is to practice the Christian faith in some areas of Muslim Mindanao. Since Christianity has been deeply ingrained in the fabric of Philippine society, we seem to have developed a blind spot regarding the nature and scale of Christian persecution in the world today.

For this reason, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), the Pontifical charity organization dedicated to serving the needs of persecuted Christian communities worldwide, is launching a Red Wednesday campaign to create awareness among Filipino Christians about the severity of Christian persecution. Red is the color of martyrdom in the Christian faith. The Red Wednesday campaign will shine a light on religious persecution and will honor all Christians who have suffered and died for Christ.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has endorsed the Red Wednesday campaign by inviting all cathedrals, minor basilicas and national & diocesan shrines to illuminate their façade in red. Furthermore, several Catholic universities in Manila have also expressed interest to join the campaign. On November 22, after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, a program will be held to discuss the

significance of the illumination of the said structures which will then be followed by a communal prayer for persecuted Christians.

In solidarity with Christians who suffer for their faith, ACN invites everyone to make a visible statement by wearing red and, if resources allow, light their own parishes or respective buildings or local monuments in red.

Let Red Wednesday be the start for Filipinos to lend their voice to the global call to uphold religious freedom and advocate for inter-faith harmony. As one global Christian family, may our expression of solidarity be a witness to the power of love over hate and be a source of strength and comfort for Christians all over the world by sending a message that they are not alone and that we are one with them in fighting for a better world where acceptance, love and respect for each other is the ultimate expression of faith in God.

#### **THE MISSION OF AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED**

Aid to the Church in Need supports Christians wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or suffering material need. Every year the charity responds to more than 5,000 requests for aid from bishops and religious superiors in around 140 countries, including: funding training for seminarians and priests; printing Bibles and religious literature; supporting priests and religious in difficult circumstances; building and restoring churches and chapels; broadcasting religious programmes; and helping refugees.

#### **RED WEDNESDAY AROUND THE WORLD**

In November 2016, to promote the latest Religious Freedom in the World report, ACN launched its first-ever Red Wednesday campaign in the United Kingdom. Key buildings, churches and schools were lit in red including Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, Houses of Parliament, and the University of Oxford.

The Red Wednesday gained regional and international media and internet coverage. The overall feedback was remarkable with parliamentarians, church leaders, other faith groups and teachers appealing to Aid to the Church in Need to make this an annual event, therefore making a commitment to grow this campaign and make this an annual event.

This initiative of the UK office of ACN has since been adopted by other countries. To complement their own respective awareness campaigns for persecuted Christians, famous landmarks around the world were lighted in red including the Fontana De Trevi in Italy, the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in France and the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Brazil.

### **#REDWEDNESDAYPH 2017 CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES and IMPACT**

The Red Wednesday Campaign in the Philippines intends to achieve the following objectives:

- Educate and inform Christian communities and the general public including the youth about the nature and scale of Christian persecution.
- Create awareness among Filipino Christians of their membership within a bigger global Christian family and to identify with all persecuted and suffering Christians.
- Encourage Christians of all ages and traditions to stand up for faith and freedom and the right of Christians to practice their faith without fear or obstruction
- Raise awareness about Aid to the Church in Need and its mission to help persecuted Christians.
- Encourage support for ACN projects in the Philippines and worldwide
- Work towards the annual commemoration of the Red Wednesday – with a particular focus on youth action and involvement (pending the approval of the CBCP).

#RedWednesdayPH brings together Christians and other faith communities in the Philippines in a positive and united vision

of religious belief which:

- UPHOLDS the right of individuals to follow their faith and conscience without coercion or reprisals.
- PROMOTES respect and tolerance for those of other religious traditions.
- CONDEMNS acts of violence carried out in the name of religion or by regimes against religion.
- COMMITS to helping victims of persecution.

Sources:

[Red Wednesday Campaign](#)

[World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians](#)