

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.”

--Luke 4:18

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

--Psalm 29: 10-11

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

--Amos 5:24

Chile—Though human rights have been protected in recent years in this South American nation, 2016 saw an increase in instances of Christian persecution, particularly through arson attacks on churches. Churches have been attacked and destroyed, especially in the La Araucanía region. What is more disturbing is that initially the Chilean government was reluctant to investigate these incidents, and the attacks have recently gone beyond church buildings, and perpetrators are now attacking congregations as well. We give thanks that the Chilean government has begun to take seriously these attacks, and pray that those responsible will swiftly be brought to justice. Pray that this potential trend of persecution will be stopped before it further evolves, that the government will continue to pursue justice and protect the rights of all its citizens, and that those responsible will come to know the grace, peace, and salvation of Jesus. Pray that the congregations that have been attacked will be comforted and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, that they will be protected from further attack, and that their witness for Christ will be strong and full of forgiveness. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Yemen—A Salesian priest from India was abducted on March 4, 2016 and has been missing ever since. Father Tom Uzhunnalil was taken during an attack by gunmen on a care home in Aden, Yemen, run by Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, during which 16 people were killed, including four missionary nuns who worked at the care center. Father Tom had worked in Yemen for four years and was just staying at the care center at the time of the attack, and there has been great concern about his whereabouts and his wellbeing in intermittent months. However, a video was released on December 24, 2016, that appears to be of Father Tom, pleading for his release. While the authenticity of the video has yet to be fully confirmed, there is some evidence that indicates it might be genuine and so believers in the region are asking for continued prayer for the safety and release of Father Tom. Pray also for those who experienced the attack and those who lost loved ones during it, that they might find comfort and healing in Jesus. Pray also that those involved in the kidnapping and attack might be convicted of the wrongness of their actions and know forgiveness that only Jesus can offer. Pray for the whole country of Yemen,

which has been ravaged by a civil war since 2015, on scale with what is happening in Syria, but totally underreported by international media. Pray for the over 10 million people who have been deprived of food, water, electricity, and shelter due to the conflict, as well as for the estimated 850,000 children who are literally starving amid shortages and difficulty with humanitarian aid getting through the violence. Pray for peace in this region, for humanitarian aid to reach those in dire need, for the protection of innocent civilians, and for many to find true freedom in Christ. (Source: *Middle East Concern; UNICEF*)

China—On December 30, 2016, the three-year prison sentence of Ma Huichao began. Arrested for holding an “unauthorized” Bible study, she stood trial in a local court in China’s western Xinjiang in mid-November 2016, where she was also accused of “gathering a crowd to disturb public order” and where her lawyer was disallowed to plead innocent. This Christian woman does not plan to appeal her sentence. Pray for the strengthening of her faith during her imprisonment; pray for her physical, spiritual, and emotional perseverance during this time; and pray that her witness will be strong and many prisoners and guards will encounter Christ through Ma Huichao. (Source: *China Aid*)

Angola—This African nation is one of the richest in natural resources, including oil and diamonds—where one can find a \$10,000-a-month one-bedroom apartment in the capital Luanda—and yet it is also known as one of the deadliest places to be a child. In fact, Angola is ranked number one in the world for child mortality due to malnutrition and lack of medicine—all while billions of dollars are diverted to a small elite, who enjoy a “warm relationship” with the United States and other Western nations because of oil resources. Ranked also among the most corrupt nations in the world, Angola’s children die at a rate of 150,000 per year, all overseen by the autocratic President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who does not even take the simple measure of fortifying flour with nutrients, a practice common in even poorer nations, such as Burkino Faso and Mauritania. Pray for the children of Angola and for their impoverished parents who are powerless to help them. Pray for the direct intervention of God to protect and provide for the “least of these.” Pray for the church around the world to be moved to dramatic, effective, compassionate action. Pray for the conviction of those who enjoy vulgar extravagant wealth at the expense of hundreds of thousands of innocent children. Pray for the powerful around the world who continue to negotiate “business as usual” despite awareness of deep, endemic corruption in places where they do business. May God move powerfully in the hearts and minds of many in this nation to bring about justice and transformative change in the lives of individuals and the whole country. (Source: *The New York Times*)

Burma—We continue to pray for the strengthening of freedom and democracy in the nation of Burma, where the military party still controls 25 percent of the parliament, as well as key ministries. We pray especially for the government to end its persecution of the Rohingya people, an ethnic and Muslim minority that has lived for generations in Burma, but is not officially recognized by the government. Though officially stateless, the Rohingya have been

“recognized” enough to have their homes destroyed, to be raped, and to be denied international humanitarian aid. Since October 2016, more than 30,000 Rohingya have fled the violence and hundreds have died, some being mowed down by helicopter guns. Throughout this time, the government has blocked any aid from reaching this displaced group which is on the brink of starvation. We give thanks that the government of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi finally allowed aid to reach these persecuted people on December 20, 2016. Pray that as president she will ensure the justice and human rights she fought so hard for during decades of house arrest as an activist. Pray that the ethnically fueled violence towards the Rohingya will be ended, an impartial investigation into those responsible will be carried out, that justice will be served, and that this community will be healed. Pray that they will find physical peace, as well as the eternal peace of Christ. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide; The New York Times*)

Malawi-- Before coming to Christ, Rashid M'Balaka was an abusive man who dug up human bones for ancestor worship. Then a Christian named Joseph shared the Gospel with him, and he had a dream that showed him that Jesus was truly God, and he was saved. His wife rejected his faith, and his in-laws that he lived with beat and persecuted him. However, one uncle that lived with them became a believer after talking to the evangelist Joseph, and Rashid's wife turned to Christ also after three years of seeing her husband's change of behavior. Praise God that both husband and wife now worship Christ freely in their own new home. Pray for their witness to family members and neighbors in their Yao village. Pray also for God to sustain them in this country that is one of the poorest in the world. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Democratic Republic of Congo-- Please pray for the many families of victims of recent attacks on the Eastern part of the Congo, where nearly 700 people have been killed by Islamist militant Allied Democratic Force (ADF) in the past two years. Pray for comfort for the bereaved and for wisdom for church leaders to know how to minister at this dangerous time. Please pray also that God would preserve His people in this country where the extremists are trying to annihilate them all. (Source: Open Doors)

India-- Praise God for His answers to prayer in the life of a poor, spiritually-lost family. Kripal and his wife, Bani, struggled with poverty and severe illness. Bani was so sick that she could not eat or walk, and the doctors and traditional healers could not help. Praise God that a Christian family sent their pastor to pray with the couple, and that Bani's illness gradually went away. She is now strong and well, and both husband and wife have found new life in Christ. In addition, they received a gift of two goats that have reproduced so that they ended up with twelve, providing an income to feed, clothe, and educate their four children. Praise God for His gifts of salvation and sustenance. (Source: Gospel for Asia)

Israel/Palestinian Territories-- Please pray for protection and encouragement for the Christians living in Gaza who are often persecuted by Hamas. In addition, pray for justice in the Bethlehem area where a type of mafia has been stealing Palestinian Christians' land. Thankfully, many Muslims there are tolerant of Christians, but the extremists are a very real

threat to their safety. Pray that God would open their eyes to the truth. Pray also for protection for Jewish believers in Israel and that the Holy Spirit would open the minds of unbelievers. Pray for this turbulent nation to find true peace in Jesus Christ. (Source: International Christian Concern)

Kyrgyzstan-- A 52-year-old pastor, husband, and father of five, Marat Niyazaliev, stood up to a Muslim man who was stealing water from the community. This Muslim man is now falsely accusing Marat, a former Muslim, of molesting a child even though he was proven to be in a town sixty miles away at the supposed time of the allegation. Please pray for Marat while he is in prison awaiting charges. Understandably, he says that the stigma of the accusation has been incredibly difficult to bear. Please pray for justice and for his name to be cleared, and that the Lord would minister to him in this trial. Pray also for his accuser to repent and come to saving faith. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)