

April 2020 Prayer Items

The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

—1 John 2:17

[The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders] were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

—Revelation 5:8b

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

—Revelation 3:11

Burma—U Tun Nu, the pastor of Believers' Church Myanmar, was abducted fourteen months ago in January 2019 and has been presumed dead. However, to the relief of his family and church, he was just released and is well. He says that his time in captivity was the worst experience of his life mentally, spiritually, and physically, but that God protected and encouraged him. Other prisoners mocked him for his trust in God, but he experienced God's miraculous protection. He received one plate of plain rice and one liter of water per day for all fourteen months. Praise God for His miraculous protection and release and that he has been reunited with his family. Pray for their future protection and for salvation for the prisoners who mocked his faith. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

United States—Approximately one in five homeless youths become victims of human trafficking in the United States. Because they are vulnerable, often in hiding, or “invisible” in many ways, they are low-risk, easy prey for traffickers, who lure, abduct, or otherwise force them into slave labor, sex work, or both—often because of the teens' needs for basics like food and shelter. Considering that an astounding 700,000 youths experience homelessness in a given year in the United States, that one in five statistic translates into thousands of kids being exploited in the worst possible ways. On January 14, 2020, the US House Committee on Education and Labor passed the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (H.R. 5191), which is a good first step to ensuring better protections for homeless youth and fewer numbers suffering additional abuse, while already struggling just to get by. Give thanks for the growing awareness of this epidemic, and especially for this first concrete step by the US government. Pray for increased vigilance in our communities against the evils of human trafficking, for eyes to see and hearts of compassion to intervene. Pray for the perfect Father to surround these children with His love and protection. Pray for those who exploit and abuse children, and who traffic humans, that they would repent of this great evil, choose a different course, and find the light and salvation of Jesus. (*Source: Freedom United*)

Nepal—Suffering from a chronic illness, Ishika sought help from Christians who shared the Gospel with her and prayed for her. After recovering, she attended their church and became a believer. As a result of her conversion and change of behavior, neighbors pressured her husband to force her to return to Hinduism. He started drinking and left her and their children, saying that he won't return until she turns back to Hinduism. Now, her three children can no longer afford to go to school. As we praise God for Ishika's salvation, let us also pray that God would provide for her and her children. Pray also that her husband would be convicted of his sin and recognize his need for salvation. Pray that he would be saved and return to his family. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

International—Even as millions around the globe experience the anxiety of the spreading corona virus, and the inconvenience and economic strain of the shelter-in-place orders, and even the painful loss of loved ones, the situation of those languishing in refugee camps around the world is even more precarious—with unavoidably close, cramped living quarters and poor or completely absent health care. Whether it's along the Turkish border, on the small Greek island of Lesbos, in Burmese camps in Thailand, or any in number of camps scattered all over the continent of Africa, the risks and needs are the same. As always, these vulnerable, forgotten, unwanted, desperate, hurting families—also created in the image of God—are the least protected. Let us pray fervently for their protection from this virus; for the provision of food, fuel, and medicine to their camps; for perseverance

and a longing for faith in their hearts. Pray that Christian organizations embrace them warmly and draw them irresistibly with the love of Christ and the hope of His promises. (Source: *International Rescue Committee*)

India—On March 21, a Hindu nationalist group of about 15-20 men barged into a prayer meeting at the private home of Pastor Abraham and threatened to kill any Christians that were present. They verbally harassed the women there, calling them prostitutes, and attempted to attack the pastor. When police arrived, they were all forced to go to the police station, and the Christians were reprimanded and told that in the future they would have to get permission to hold prayer meetings. In India, there is no law against private prayer gatherings in the home, and Pastor Abraham says that in his twenty years of holding such meetings in his home this has never happened. Please pray for God’s protection over believers in India and that this would not discourage them from meeting together. Pray instead that they would be emboldened in their faith and grow in their trust in Jesus. Praise God that no one was hurt in this alarming disturbance. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

International—Globally men are by far more likely to be murdered than women, and yet, strikingly approximately 80 percent of murder victims who are killed by their families, spouses, or intimate partners are women. In fact, around the world, an estimated 137 women are killed each day by those closest to them: women like Judith Chesang, 22, of Kenya, who was murdered by her abusive husband while she was harvesting sorghum with her sister; or Neha Sharad Chaudury, 18, India who was murdered by her parents and a male relative on her 18th birthday, because they disapproved of her boyfriend; or Sandra Lucia Hammer Moura, 39, of Brazil and Marie-Amélie Vaillat, 36, of France, both of whom were murdered by abusive husbands. In many of these situations, there seems to be an inadequate response by law enforcement. Along with these statistics are the larger phenomena of female infanticide and gender-based abortion, also prevalent globally. These facts reveal a disturbing reality of pervasive, endemic violence against women that is not limited by borders or cultures. Pray that women of any age, culture, or socio-economic background would be valued and protected as they should be as image-bearers of God. Pray that human institutions, such as police and prosecutors, would be tenacious in their pursuit of justice for these victims. Pray that the church around the globe would be at the forefront of honoring women, as Christ did, and confronting injustice in any and every form. (Source: *BBC*)

Kenya—A pastor in Kenya has requested prayer for his safety after receiving multiple anonymous phone calls with threats on his life. Callers accuse him of “bringing shame to his tribe and following the teachings of infidels.” He suspects that the callers may be part of the al-Shabaab terrorist group. The pastor’s response to them is his desire for them to become followers of Christ as well. Pray for his prayer to be answered and that many in this dangerous group would turn to Christ. Pray also for supernatural protection over the pastor and his family. (Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

Azerbaijan—Human rights situation and freedom of speech in this small nation and former Soviet satellite situated between Europe and Asia are markedly repressed. Journalists such as Khadija Ismayilova, Gulnur Kazimova, Efgan Murtanli, Gunel Mevlud and Shirin Abbasov have been harassed, imprisoned on trumped up charges, threatened, and even exiled because of their reporting on governmental corruption, human rights abuses, and opposition parties. Others, like human rights defender Elchin Mammad, have been similarly targeted, abused, and arrested on trumped up charges for documenting the human rights situation in their country. Also with broad oppression of human rights, freedom of religion is also not a right protected in Azerbaijan, and Christians there also suffer discrimination and persecution. Pray for the country of Azerbaijan to govern with integrity and justice, to seek the well being of all its citizens, and provide a free and civil society for its people. Pray for all journalists and human rights defenders, such as those listed above, who courageously speak the truth at great risk and personal cost to themselves and their families. Pray for their protection and for truth to prevail. Pray for believers there to be a compelling and brave witness to their fellow countrymen and that the light of Christ will penetrate this nation. (Source: *Amnesty International*)

Turkey—On January 11, a couple in their sixties named Simoni and Hurmuz Diril were abducted after receiving death threats. Many believe that Kurdish and Turkish citizens were attempting to frighten the Christian minority from their land. Sadly, on March 20, Simoni’s body was found dead in a mountainous area of southeastern Turkey. Her husband, Hurmuz, is still missing. Please pray for comfort for their family that is grieving, and pray

that Hurmuz would be kept safe and returned soon. Pray also that the small number of believers in Turkey would be united and able to help and encourage each other. Praise God for reports that indicate the church is growing in Turkey, as many disillusioned Muslims are seeking truth. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Iraq—On January 20, 2020, French nationals Antoine Brochon, Julien Dittmar, Alexandre Goodarzy, and Iraqi Tariq Mattoka all went missing. The four were aid workers working in administrative capacities for *SOS Chretiens d'Orient* (SOS Christians of the Middle East) in Baghdad when they were disappeared. This followed immediately on the heels of a US airstrike that killed a high-ranking Iranian military officer and the subsequent promises of retaliation by Iranian militias. We rejoice with Iraqi and French Christians at the recent release of these four aid workers on March 26—though no details about their captivity are currently available. We join Middle East Concern in praying specifically "thanking the Lord for the release of the aid workers; that they and their families will be able to overcome the impact of their abduction; that their organization, and others who support Christians in Iraq and the wider Middle East, will be able to continue their assistance, in spite of the challenges; [and]for Christians in Iraq to enjoy tolerance and peace in a civil state in which all Iraqis enjoy equal rights." (Source: *Middle East Concern*)