

One Step - One Soul

Lead a Pilgrimage for the Persecuted Christians

-A Practical Guide-

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"Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way?"



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A GUIDE FOR THOSE LEADING THE PILGRIMAGE

Materials:

Template of individual quotes.

Country testimony sheet (contains 21 excerpts from testimonies of persecution from 8 different countries).

(Optional)

Holy Rosary (attached link).

- Divine Mercy Chaplet.
- Holy Hour for persecuted Christians (attached link).

Steps to follow:

• We advise you **to come up with a motto** for the pilgrimage, to create unity and to clearly know what each stage entails.

• The persons leading the pilgrimage will **individually deliver a private quote**, chosen at random, to each of the pilgrims.

These quotes are recommended to be taken especially from the New Testament and easy to understand. The Blessed Virgin Mary's words from a Marian apparition can also be used, as well as quotes from saints of special devotion among the pilgrim group, etc

Read the "Introduction to the Pilgrimage" for all the pilgrims, to set the tone for the pilgrimage's central aspect of offering.

Let's start walking!

• We recommend starting with the Prayer of the Holy Rosary (especially the Sorrowful mysteries), entrusting the fruits of the pilgrimage to the Blessed Virgin.

Read this text as an introduction to the Rosary. In order to follow along with the suggested text, offer the **first two kilometers for Pakistan**. *If it is more convenient, you may begin with another country:*

"For Christians in Pakistan, Christ suffering in His passion is very inviting. The image of Christ in His passion and on the cross is something very significant. We are still suffering, we have not yet experienced the Resurrection in our lives...







The Blessed Virgin also greatly captivates us. She is our model. That is why the Rosary is one of the most popular prayers of... the village people, the countryside and the simple people of the countryside. It does not require much memorization. Memorizing the Our Father and the Hail Mary is enough for them. If they were asked how many prayers they know, they would say, "the Rosary". This shows that the Blessed Virgin has a very important role. For the suffering Church of Pakistan, Our Lady of Sorrows was a mother who went through the suffering of seeing Her Son die on the cross, mistreated, nailed, and then lowered from the cross, and placed on her lap. All of this is a great suffering that our Mother Mary went through. And so we pray to Our Mother who stood at the foot of the cross. We tell him to pray for us, standing beside the cross of our sufferings. Therefore, during all these explosions, when Muslims are burning our homes, thousands of us gather together, and we pray. And what prayer do we pray? The Holy Rosary, so everyone can pray together. This shows that Our Lady, Mary, Our Mother, is considered a model for the suffering Church." *(P. Morris Jalal, OFM Cap., Pakistani priest).*

> (Everything you need to pray the Holy Rosary can be found at this link: https://www.hogardelamadre.org/en/resources/rosary.).

For the first kilometer and then for every two kilometers:

A country is named and a prepared text with a testimony is read about the persecution in that region. We have provided several countries on the sheet of testimonies by country, so that you can alternate according to your preference throughout the pilgrimage. (These excerpts have been taken from interviews that you can find on the HM Television series "In the Footsteps of the Nazarene".)

Each kilometer travelled:

Remembering the country for which we are praying, we pray a Hail Mary.

Every five kilometers:

A text of the Gospel is read that has to do with following Christ, his promises to His disciples, the Beatitudes, a quote from a Saint, a witness of the Gospel or an official Church document (Encyclical, Apostolic Letter, etc.), encouraging giving of one's life to follow Christ day by day, in the midst of difficulty or suffering.

We recommend that you pray the "Chaplet of Divine Mercy" to finalize the last two kilometers:

Offer the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for all the countries that have been named and those unnamed, but which are present before the Lord and the prayer of the whole Church.







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🕂 At the end of the pilgrimage:

We end by interiorly placing before the Lord every offering, thought, grace and petition that each has come about along the way. We offer you the attached **"Conclusion"**.

If possible, it is especially recommended to end with a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, offered for the persecuted Christians so as to place before the Lord all those things that we have been reflecting upon and going deeper into along the way.

(Everything you need to prepare the Holy Hour can be found at this link: https://www.eukmamie.org/images/stories/television/wakeup/pdf/PCHoly_Hour.pdf.)

Advice

We recommend

that you carefully examine the route you are going to take in order to properly and accurately distribute the proposals for the kilometers that we have suggested.

For example, you might need to leave more kilometers between naming countries and testimonies, or maybe you need to shorten them...

The important thing is that the pilgrimage brings us closer to God and to our persecuted brothers and sisters. That is the fundamental reason for providing this material and for designing it as we did.

Manage your possibilities well and trust in the Holy Spirit.

Let's go!



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INTRODUCING THE PILGRIMAGE

Each life is full of steps that mark the course of your journey.

The path to follow Christ is full of trials and key decisions, which sometimes can even involve the sacrifice of one's life: martyrdom.

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16: 24). A true follower of Christ follows his Master "until death" (St. Lawrence Giustiniani). You are going to choose a road. You will follow a path that will lead you to an end, dedicating time and effort. But have you ever wondered why you actually do it? Have you ever thought that every step can bear great fruit for yourselve and for others?

About 215 million Christians experience persecution in over 50 countries: North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, India, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Kenya, Turkmenistan, Qatar, Egypt, Ethiopia, Palestinian Territories, Laos, Brunei, Bangladesh, Jordan, Myanmar, Tunisia, Bhutan, Malaysia, Mali, Tanzania, Central African Republic, Tajikistan, Algeria, Turkey, Kuwait, China, Djibouti, Mexico, Comoros, Kazakhstan, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Mauritania, Bahrain, Oman, Colombia...

Many of your brothers - in the Faith of Christ - walk every day to reach Him in the Eucharist. They walk every day to go to see their Heavenly and greet her with honest simplicity. They walk every day to see their Heavenly Mother and to greet her with simplicity; they walk to not deny Christ, to not apostatize and to remain faithful to their faith; they walk to flee, if necessary, from their own homes, cities or towns; they also perhaps walk thinking and praying for their unknown brothers in Christ whom they would like to thank for helping them to remain awake in the battle for their Faith.

You could be one of them. Do you want to offer yourself for them?

At the beginning of this path, we will give you a quote which can be a constant prayer for you during your journey.

Think often: What does the Lord want to tell me with this quote? Do I often turn to the Holy Spirit so that God can speak to me? Do I really do everything I can to become holy? If others risk their lives for the faith, would I have the strength of spirit to do the same if necessary?

We invite you to think that every step that you take is a soul that needs to be sustained in his Faith in Christ. At the same time, think of each step as a grace of encouragement in your faith and in the faith of those who walk with you, whether on the pilgrimage or in your daily life.

For this purpose, every two kilometers we will remember a country that is suffering persecution and we will read some words of the witnesses who remain faithful to Christ in those lands and who enrich our life and the life of the Church with their example.

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Every kilometer we will pray a Hail Mary for them, followed a brief time of silence, asking the Lord and the Blessed Virgin to protect our persecuted brothers and sisters from the corresponding country.

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Put on the armor and protection of the Lord and Our Mother and... walk with and for your brothers and sisters! Let's go!

CONCLUDING TEXT AND PRAYER

Dear brother and sisters, we have reached the destination of our pilgrimage, but remember: the surest way to reach our "Final Pilgrimage" successfully is Jesus Christ.

During this journey you have prayed, reflected and hopefully opened your heart to God who is full of compassion and tenderness for every created soul. He has wanted to speak to you from the beginning of the journey through a motto and a quote exclusively for you. You have offered your efforts for so many Christians that you do not know and that one day will be waiting to thank you.

It is possible that you have reflected on the sufferings, experienced by Christ and by those He has united with us in faith, which take on the meaning that we would never have thought to understand. Surely you have discovered - perhaps once again - that the more you give, the more you receive.

We never walk alone.

Others need our steps and sarifices in order to keep walking. And others need us so as to wake up to the suffering of others.



Heavenly Father, may the example of our persecuted brethren increase our Christian commitment and make us more fervent and grateful for the gift of faith. Open our hearts, Lord, so that we generously know how to support them and show them our solidarity. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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COUNTRIES AND TESTIMONIES

A list of countries and number of testimonies for each country: Egypt (1), Nigeria (1), Iraq (5), Syria (3), China (3), Pakistan (3), Palestinian Territories (2), India (3).

🕂 Testimonios:



"With friendship, fraternity and example, we have to give another model of coexistence, of fraternity, and explain where we have learned it: from the Gospel and from Jesus. If you want to be perfect, go and follow Jesus. Live according to the model of the Gospel. This is our mission. This is why the last words of the Gospel are, "Go and bring the Good News to whole the world, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit."
That is to say, our mission of fraternity is to transmit to each person this treasure that we have: the Gospel, the life of Jesus, the figure of Jesus. It is up to us to try to give the most beautiful gift we have: the spirit of the Gospel. Together we must form a society where each one chooses his own itinerary, but where we love each other. This, I believe, is our mission. If anyone discovers that the Gospel is truly the most beautiful thing,

I invite him to be a Christian."

Fr. Samir Khalil, S.J.

(Egyptian priest and Professor of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Doctor of Islamic Studies)



"In some attacks, for example, on three different occasions, no less than a hundred people have been left dead each time; and when one hundred people have been murdered, the only funeral you can do is a mass funeral. There has not been one attack in which someone is not killed, in which a house is not demolished, in which people are not left homeless, etc. It is not that we have provoked anyone. It is not that Christians have done something to provoke someone.

Christians are simply being attacked because they are Christians.

Those who attack us have never hidden their intention: they have said that their attacks are not motivated by anything other than religion. Their intention is to rid Northern Nigeria of Christianity. Yet it is certain that the persecutions which the Church has undergone have not discouraged the people or made them lose their faith. In no way have they demoralized the people. In general they have made us more courageous and they have brought us together as the Body of Christ in a family. We are seeing that we do not abandon the faith because of these trials, but even though we are attacked, everything indicates and points to the fact that we are living our faith and doing our best to live the faith. It is because of this that the Church is being attacked."

Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri (Bishop of the Diocese of Kafanchan, Nigeria).









"No one has denied Jesus. I have not heard of anyone that has changed their religion, not even the elderly and the children. A 7-year-old girl said, "I will never deny Jesus." So they left everything, lost everything, but kept their faith. Yes, every day I have seen this miracle. This is a great miracle. I think that our Iraqi Christians are better than the apostles, because when Jesus was crucified, all of the apostles fled, and their leader, Peter, denied Jesus.

But I think our Christians were stronger than them. We are proud. This is the work of many generations of apostles, nuns, teachers, of many, many people. I believe that everyone can give us a small contribution, like the widow of the Gospel. Anything can help. God sees the will and not the quantity. And this is very important to remember. We cannot change the world with just beautiful thoughts. No, to change our world we have to start now. Right now, in this moment, what can I do? I think if everyone starts to think like that, the pressure of love will be greater. " *Bishop Yousif Thomas Mirkis (Bishop of Kirkuk and Suleimaniyah, Iraq)*

"When we face a challenge like this we have to think of what is really important in life, what are the most important things in life. It is not just your possessions, but who you are... "a worthy Christian". That is the most important. And what I also admire is being Catholic. Being Catholic gives us the strength to know that there are so many Catholics and who are praying for us, supporting us, giving proof of solidarity. I feel really proud to be Catholic and to have so many people who strengthen us, always trying to tell our stories. Not to mention the support and great help we have received... because the churches have been the only ones who have supported the Christians. And so the sign of faith is growing. In spite of all this, our churches are full of people. Now we need more churches, we have increased the number of Masses, because we see that the need is increasing. We have many people in Catechism classes, many young people who attend the youth groups..." *Archbishop Bashar Warda (Chaldean Catholic Archbishop of Erbil, Iraq)*

"I bear in my heart the many sufferings of the world, not just in Iraq, Syria and Nigeria, but also elsewhere. There are those suffering from being abandoned by all, betrayed by their own friends of other religions. I pray for the Christians of Europe so that they may defend their faith, their culture, their Christian identity. Pray for all Christian families, those whom no one remembers. Pray for the priests and nuns who work day and night helping the refugees. Pray for our seminarians in Iraq who, despite seeing their families in difficulty, have not left their vocation, but have maintained their decision and want to move forward. I pray for you too."

Father Behnam Benoka (Iraqi priest in Erbil, Iraq)







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"Christianity in Iraq dates back to the end of the first century and in these twenty centuries, there has always been persecution. They murdered bishops, priests, hundreds of thousands of people; many villages were destroyed. And in spite of all this, Christianity became stronger and stronger. Whenever there were persecuted Christians, there was a strong Church, because the persecution shows how precious the treasure that we have is. They would like to take it away, but thanks to God it has been preserved." *Archbishop Bashar Warda (Chaldean Catholic Archbishop of Erbil, Iraq)*.

"Suffering has to do with the mission of Christianity. Even if it is not easy, it is possible with the grace of God. I believe that the Holy Spirit lives in us since we were baptized and we must witness to this and show this around us, even to those who were not baptized. That is our characteristic. It is not easy, but it is possible. In the end we see that suffering has value. We do not say that we are better. We are like them, but if they see something more, it really must be the Holy Spirit that is in us.

We must show this with our actions and with our life. I think that hope is not just in what we say. It's a lifestyle: hope in the midst of the atrocious situation that we live, in the midst of daily threats, seeing the dead before us every day.

I have seen in the Eastern Orthodox Church of Iraq living witnesses of all the martyrs of this Church who have fallen, situations of exile, of genocide against Chaldean Catholics, non-Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Evangelicals... They did not differentiate between anyone in this region; all Christians were affected. That is why I always ask for others to think of and pray for all Christians, without distinction. It is our duty to be apostles of this and to prepare Christians to live it.

The existence of people who only worship God is to help lay people live this mission." Pascale Warda (Iraqi Catholic Chaldean, Ex-Minister of Immigration and Displacement in Iraq)



"I am convinced that the Virgin Mary is protecting the poor people, the poor families... Many of the poor families pray to the Virgin Mary.

It is a great tradition to pray the Rosary every day before celebrating the Mass, in the evening, from five-thirty to six.

We pray the Rosary in community before the Eucharist. I have the deep conviction that the Virgin Mary is powerful and that we will have peace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. This is my conviction. (...) Faith gives me strength, as does prayer.

And when I look at people suffering, I cannot leave them. I cannot leave. I have to be with the people as their pastor and as the person in charge of the Church. The disposition of being with the families, listening to them, helping them, and supporting them gives me strength to remain there among them."

Bishop Antoine Audo (Chaldean Catholic Bishop of Aleppo, Syria)







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"He who does not suffer cannot understand. The human being is selfish; he says, "The moment I am well, I do not care about my neighbor." We have to live the Christian life authentically. We have to fix our gaze on authentic life; we have to know how to live. The lie and revenge of the world never ends. It never ends. The world is on a volcano that can explode at any moment. The devil is calm now. He is calm because he is already leading the world. That is why we have to listen to the words of our Lord: "When I return, will I find faith?"

For we must truly be Christians, not only in our words, but in our deeds. We have to show it to the world.

Many times a refugee or an immigrant does not want food. He does not want us to look at him like a poor man. Many times what he wants is love, true love, Christian love. We have to look for where our Lord is. Not only in the books, not only in church, in monasteries, but we have to search for him in our hearts. Are our hearts ready to receive him? When we are ready to receive Him, we must open our hearts, and when we open them,

> He enters and dines with us, and there we find peace. We must be true messengers of the Word of our Lord." Archbishop Nicolaos Matti Abd Alahad (Syrian Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of Antioch)

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"Yes, we are directly persecuted. But the persecuted live with great faith: they are not afraid. They are not afraid of death.

For example: Mothers, when they send their children to school in the morning, do not know if a bomb will fall on them or if the children will find their house still standing when they come home. They live the day of "today" with great faith. As everyone says, "They can kill my body, but nothing else. We already know that our soul is in the hands of our Lord." They want to keep going and continue their lives without fear of what is happening, even though they are dying every day.

Hopefully we have the faith that they have!" Archbishop Nicolaos Matti Abd Alahad (Syrian Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of Antioch)



"The situation is difficult. We have to manifest our faith by the way we live our daily lives. I believe that this is the main way others can learn about the faith. Look at it this way: when the Church has property, with a building, you can easily attend Mass, go to confession, receive catechism classes, etc. These things are great. But when there is no such property, you can truly manifest your faith in other ways. For example, you can pray in your own home, you can give witness to strong morals by the way you live. That is how we profess our faith.

And we see this persecution as a purification for the Church. During purifications, perhaps some Catholics will deny their faith. But perhaps they did not have true faith to begin with. Most of us maintain the faith.

We always feel closer to the Lord through purifications."

A Chinese priest (He exercises his priesthood in China clandestinely, remaining faithful to the Holy See)









"When I was a child, the persecutions were not very strong in my area. Most of us learned our catechism with some religious Sisters. Also, from time to time, we could have a meeting or a talk with the priest. Normally, every Sunday we could attend Mass. But when I was a little older, the persecutions became stronger. Our bishop was arrested and put into prison, and many priests of the diocese were also arrested by the State. When I was a little older, I wanted to go to Confession. I wanted to grow deeper in the faith. But in that situation, there was no opportunity to do so, and that's how I felt the call of the Lord. In that situation, priests were needed in the Church, so I entered the seminary to serve the Catholics. Since then, the inspiring examples of our bishop and priests have helped me a lot. In my life there are many difficulties. When new difficulties arise, two things help me: the examples of others, which always encourage me, and the hope of the true faith. This means that if today we suffer for Jesus Christ, tomorrow eternal life will be ours. Eternal life is not a theory; it is not something distant. It is simply our tomorrow. This is our faith. When we finish the life of this world, eternal life will begin." A Chinese priest

(He exercises his priesthood in China clandestinely, remaining faithful to the Holy See)

"In my experience, almost no one [renounces their faith because of persecution.] And why? As a priest in my diocese told me, "During persecution, the most important thing is not to ask the Lord to get us out of this situation. The most important thing is to ask for the strength to maintain our faith!"

So even though there are persecutions, the persecutions themselves greatly help us to maintain our faith. We always live our faith; we do not abandon it." A Chinese priest (He exercises his priesthood in China clandestinely, remaining faithful to the Holy See)



"Suffering is a part of us. It is part of our daily life in Pakistan. It is also part of our faith. That is why I always give the life of the saints as an example. The lives of the saints, especially those who have given their lives for Christ, are very beautiful and encouraging. So people think, "Why not me? If this saint has given his life for Christ, why should I not do the same? If they can, why can't I?"

We speak to them about Christian values, about hope and fidelity, for example. You should remain faithful to Jesus Christ until death. That is why there is a saying in our language: "May they take your life, not your faith." This is very ingrained in our culture. Let your life be taken, but not your faith. For many of our people, their faith has more value than their life. Solidarity is also a source of encouragement.

When something happens, we are all there to support each other." Father Morris Jalal, OFM Cap. (Pakistani priest who exercises his ministry in Pakistan)









"As a Pakistani Christian, I believe that witnessing to Jesus Christ is our mission, even in such difficult situations as these. Our Christian presence is very important in an Islamic country like ours. We are witnessing Jesus Christ by transmitting Christian values in this very Islamic country. This is very valuable and important to us, and this is why we do not care about our difficulties, or having to face many sufferings, problems and challenges. Our people have a very strong faith. The more suffering there is, the stronger the faith of our people. The fact that our people in Pakistan never lose hope and grow ever stronger in their faith is very edifying.

They do not back down; they do not retreat.

On the contrary, they face the situation with the values that Christ taught us, the values of the Gospel and the Faith. They are even repeatedly forced to accept Islam. Many young people, and especially women, are kidnapped, raped, and forced to convert to Islam. But we must acknowledge that, although we are a very small minority, our young people have a very strong faith even in the midst of suffering, and are willing to give their lives for the Faith and for Christ.

> This is martyrdom. They are willing to give their lives, but they will never give up their faith."

Father Morris Jalal, OFM Cap. (Pakistani priest who exercises his ministry in Pakistan)

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"I am impressed by the testimony of Manzur Masih. He was one of the first victims of the "Law of Blasphemy". He was a very simple man, from the countryside, who lived a very simple life. On one occasion he had a disagreement with a neighbor about some matter and they tried to force him to convert to Islam. They asked him to convert and offered him a lot of money, houses and other advantages, if he accepted Islam. As the simple man that he was, he answered: "Everything in this life is worth less than Christ. My Christ is everything to me." These were his words. He was killed in the Supreme Court when he was leaving the courtroom of the judge who was judging the case. I still hear his words. He said, "My desire is to die for the faith. I would never deny Christ; I would lose my life to keep my faith." I think his words are encouraging. The faith of the simple is full of courage! He did not know the Bible very well. He might not have known much theology, but he simply believed that Christ is the ultimate end of his life, that he would leave everything that is not this end, and that he would cling to Christ and die for Christ. For me, he is a martyr. For us in Pakistan, he is a martyr, even though he is not officially proclaimed to be so. And his life and his example will always be a motivation for our young people today and for the generations to come." Father Morris Jalal, OFM Cap. (Pakistani priest who exercises his ministry in Pakistan)







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PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

"Christians are suffering, together with their Palestinian Muslim brothers, because of the political situation, that is, because of the occupation of their lands.
But we also know very well that Jewish Israel does not want Christians in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem. I, as a priest, have been denied entry into Jerusalem. We do not have religious freedom in our country because of the occupation.
We cannot carry out our pastoral activity. We cannot enter our Holy Places, the Holy Sepulcher and the other holy places in Galilee, in Nazareth. We need a special permit and it is very complicated to obtain. It is only granted for certain feast days, and not even for all of them. That is why we cannot carry out our pastoral activities and work as priests. Christians cannot really access holy places to pray there, and feel safe and at peace in their own homeland. Jesus did not promise a rich and prosperous life to Christians, but that we must accept His cross; especially in His land, the land of the cross. We cannot deny that."

Father Aziz Halaweh (Palestinian Priest who belongs to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem)

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"Christians must carry their cross, but not all are prepared to do so, or they do not have the strength of spirit to carry the cross. That is why they feel frustrated and, at any moment, they will abandon their country. Each year, entire families leave the country forever. It is very sad to see the land of Jesus without Christians, without His followers. It is very sad to think of the holy places converted into a pile of ancient stones, like museums. The Church in the Holy Land becomes increasingly empty, increasingly weaker. It's really very sad.

The brothers and sisters who come as pilgrims to visit us give us much hope and peace. Our spirit is strengthened when we see all those brave pilgrims who love the land of Jesus, who love Jesus, who come to visit the roots of their Faith here on earth. This gives us a lot of strength."

Father Aziz Halaweh (Palestinian Priest who belongs to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem)



"The Christians of India get their strength from the Lord because they suffer for the faith that they have in the Lord. This is the strong faith originally brought to us by the European missionaries. And this faith strengthens us to live the daily difficulties that we encounter.

It also gives us courage to live the faith, as does the solidarity that we receive, not only during the present persecution... One of the experiences I have about Christian doctrine is that we are like a body and all parts of the body feel the suffering of those members that are affected. And there are many people suffering for their faith and people in other parts of the world who also share this suffering. They show their solidarity with us in many ways: through their prayers, with their financial support, visiting us...

All this gives me strength; it gives me encouragement as a Christian and as a priest to live the faith in the midst of many difficulties." Father Mrutyunjaya Digal (Indian priest who exercises his ministry in India)





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"Because of the context in which we live, we face many challenges, but I believe that faith grows with suffering. The history of the Church tells us that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity. This is also our hope. Given the Christian persecution, there is a possibility that the number of baptized will grow.

We now find that many more people come to church and practice their faith. There is also an increase in vocations. Many young people desire to become priests, religious, and missionaries for our region and outside of India. They lost their property, houses, and their loved ones, but with one voice they said,

"If I live, I live only for Christ; If I die, I die for Christ."

The radical groups have done us so much damage, but they cannot separate us from the love of God! And this has been the expression of their strong faith in the Lord. They have understood their faith in a deeper way and thus have been able to face these challenges against the faith so that, by the power of God, they can forgive these radicals. They have been able to forgive them and this also helps them reconcile with the other groups. In this way, they have the joy of living their faith every day in the midst of these challenges."

Father Mrutyunjaya Digal (Indian priest who exercises his ministry in India)

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"I can tell you that there was a case in which a person was asked if he wanted to renounce his faith and he was told, "If you renounce your faith, you save your life; if you do not, we will annihilate you."

Because of this, they cut him into three pieces before his wife, his children and his relatives. It was a horrible experience. It has been a trauma for his family. To another, they asked the same question of whether or not he was going to deny Christ. Seeing that he did not give up, they burned him alive and crushed his head with a stone. Like these, there are a number of cases that have impacted Christians. Yet these situations have made them stronger in their faith, and very brave. They say, "I, as a Christian, should live my faith with more freedom and with courage." In Orissa, in India, we have to stand firm. We do not have to be afraid to defend our faith. We have to live our faith with more joy and this faith has to be renewed every day, at every moment... by all of us! By priests, bishops, religious, the laity, Christians!" *Father Santos Kumar Digal (Indian priest who exercises his ministry in India)*



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(Lk 24:35)









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