

How to pray for persecuted Christians

1. Praise God that He is all-knowing, that in Christ He himself experienced shame, pain and agonising death. Thank Him for His promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Josh 1.5).

2. Pray that all governments will work for justice and righteousness. While Jesus says that in this world we will have trouble, He does not say that it will always be present in every place.

3. Pray that leaders of liberal democracies will use their influence to find ways to reduce, if not end, persecution in countries where it occurs. Just as Paul appealed to Caesar to seek justice, so we can appeal to secular governments.

4. Pray for the growth of the Church where persecution flourishes, remembering that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church".

5. Pray for strength and courage for those experiencing persecution, and for peace that only God can bring. Thank Him that His grace is sufficient for their needs (2 Cor 12.9). Pray that their faith will not fail, but that their suffering will draw them closer to Him and increase their faith.

6. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable persecuted Christians to forgive and love their persecutors (Matt 5:44) and that their Christ-like reactions will have an impact on their persecutors.

7. Pray that the Lord will be at work in the hearts of those who currently persecute our sisters and brothers to bring them to a saving knowledge of Himself, as He did with Saul of Tarsus.

8. Thank the Lord for the privilege of entering into the sufferings of our sisters and brothers, remembering that "if one part [of the body] suffers, every part suffers with it" (1 Cor 12.26).

9. Pray that Christians who are experiencing persecution will not lose the ability to accept or trust genuine approaches from those who have formerly persecuted them, as when the believers in Jerusalem had to accept the reality of Saul's conversion. Pray that the Lord will give discernment, and relief from unnecessary fears.

10. Pray for yourself and for persecuted Christians to be spiritually ready for whatever tomorrow brings, be that persecution, respite from suffering, or Christ's return.