

Prayer poems

for the persecuted Church



© Aid to the Church in Need/Magdalena Wolnik



Aid to the Church in Need



A girl with a candle in Iraq
© ACN/Zori

God's Love & Protection

PLEASE DON'T GIVE UP HOPE our brothers and sisters,
all of you who are suffering for your faith today.

Refresh and comfort your people O Lord, all those
who suffer solely for believing in you.

Our Father in heaven, we pray that you will shine your light
in the dark places of despair.

The Lord will strengthen all who put their trust in Him.

Every morning we see your goodness and your mercies which
will never come to an end.

Christ Jesus you are the Way, the Truth and the Light and all
who hope in you will never lose their way.

The love of God is what inspires us to reach out to those who
suffer for their Faith.

Into your loving arms Lord do we commit all the men,
women and children who are fleeing persecution today.

Our Father in heaven, touch the hearts of the evildoers and
cause them to turn away from their wicked ways.

Now let us not get tired of doing good, for with each act of
kindness, the light of Christ burns evenmore
brightly in our world.

– V. O. Evans



The Peace of Christ

LORD, SHOWER DOWN FORGIVENESS
and acquittal on those who have not faith in you,
nor love for those who ever more are yours;

show us what banishment you yet will lift from
those who will not speak your name, except in
blasphemy, what lift from those who say they do
your work as murder, and atrocity, that they may
have in death, the Peace of Christ unending.

– Alex Anderson



Pantocrator icon, Rezigat, West Bank, near Luxor in Egypt
© Aid to the Church in Need

Change of heart

HEAVENLY FATHER, WE KNOW that to be persecuted in your name is a blessing.

We pray therefore that you will bestow courage, fortitude and hope to those who because of their faith, have lost everything.

May they grow so strong that their persecutors will have a change of heart and may peace once more return to the land where your beloved Son came to call sinners.

Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

– Ian Crabtree



A girl with a candle in Homs, Syria
© Aid to the Church in Need

God of peace

GOD OF PEACE, bearer of hope, we seek your help
for the people of the Middle East.
Quiet the clamour of war and
guide us towards peace.

Where there is hatred and division sow seeds of
calm and openness.

Where there is destruction help us to rebuild.
Where children are crying bring an end to tears.
Shelter your people's and protect them.

Guide them and keep them from harm.
Show us how to break down the barriers of history
and fear and breathe whispers of hope. Amen.

— Robert



Christian refugee in Mar Elia Parish Centre with toys provided by ACN
© Aid to the Church in Need/Anton Fric

The Truck Toy - The Symbol of Hope

AS ONE CHILD SITS UNCOMFORTABLE
on a pavement, the other child laughs
with tears of joy.

“Here,” the child says – as he passes on
the brand new Truck Toy to the child.

Immediately the child feels comfort and love
“Thank You,” he says.

Moral of the story...

Please help the persecuted Christians.
As small as the gesture sounds –
you have the power to bring happiness.

– Biljana Biki



Catholics lighting candles and praying at the St. Elia shrine in Iraq
© Aid to the Church in Need

Dream of Mosul

AT NIGHT I DREAM fitfully of home – of all that was and
all that seemed might be.

How slowly, into our lives of love and laughter crept dark
tendrils of fear – snaking, ephemeral through night's velvet
stillness; in waking hours taking solid form – stifling our joy
and our hope.

Where once our days resounded with the warm greetings of
friends and neighbours, now hard eyes pursued us through the
streets and harsh voices called us strangers in our own land.

The choice – no choice – was made. To leave - with tears in
our eyes.

Now I wake, heavy-hearted. My dreams have no substance
and Mosul, the home of my heart is a fading memory.

For the Cross and faith in Him are we now wanderers across
the face of the earth.

For His love we will bear our loss and accept with bitter
gratitude the pity and compassion of
those who know us not.

– Patricia Hatton

Inspired by an ACN Project trip to northern Iraq in May 2015



Mother and her baby in a small refugee PVC Camp in Ankawa, Iraq
© Aid to the Church in Need

In memory of the children buried alive by Isis

THEIR WAILS OF TERROR hold a desperate trust:
Mother will hear! – but, women kept apart
we feel them fill the childrens’ face with dust and
agony and fear shiver the heart.

Thousands of miles away, unknown, I weep - can do
nothing but pray for God’s own breath.

They at last are safe in perfect sleep -
but horror lives – those long hours of death!

I hear that “Jesus!” was their final word;
Innocents’ prayer - and what was the good?

Son of Man, can we suppose you heard?
Such fright, such evil, have you understood?
Did our sins loaded on you choke like sand?

Oh Christ! in darkness, hold the childrens’ hand!

– Ruth Asch



Tabor's Light

O GOD OUR FATHER, Abuna!

Please help us see Light in all.

Within the darkness of Gethsemane
Of homes marked now with death's pall.

The Nazarene King of Peace beckons
Through eyes emptied of tears full of Love;
His Fatherly hands count the countless;

And stars mark their journeys above.
Transfigure our minds full of doubt Like Thomas!

My Lord and My God.

– Marta Salamonowicz

Almighty God

PLEASE PROTECT ALL our Christian brothers and sisters who are being cruelly persecuted throughout the world. Strengthen them in their faith.

In the name of Your Son Jesus Christ who died for our sins, rose again on the third day and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit in glory.

Κυριέ Ελεησον!
Χρίστε Ελεησον!

[Lord have mercy!
Christ have mercy!]

– Janice Mermikli





Stained glass window in Trinity Church Sutton, UK
© Biljana Blki

Guardian Angel

OH GUARDIAN ANGEL, Spirit of light
Come down and help us in our daily plight.

Thank you for all the help you give.

Keeping us strong with the will to live.

Help us to shine the light to those in need
No matter what race colour or creed.

– Kerry Currall



Assumption of Our Lady at Metropolitan Cathedral of The Immaculate Conception, Zamboanga, Philippines © Aid to the Church in Need

Father in Heaven

DEAR FATHER IN HEAVEN – have mercy on all those who have been driven from their homes by violent, misguided men.

Comfort and console, cherish and heal all who are suffering from persecution.

Grant them all the Light of Your Peaceful Love.
Enfold them in Your Father arms.

Give Your Light to those who carry out such awful deeds of persecution and the desire for forgiveness.

I ask these things all in the Holy Name of Jesus, Son of the Almighty Father.

Through the Holy Spirit.
And I ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints to pray for these intentions.

Amen.

– Michael



Crucifixion icon from Assiut Coptic Cathedral, Egypt
© Aid to the Church in Need

Crucifixion

MY JESUS, UPON YOU was laid every form of violence during your Passion and Crucifixion.

You wept for our sins, You died in order that we might live through Your promise of Salvation.

Touch the hearts I pray, of the perpetrators of the heinous violence and persecutions in all places where Christians are forced to flee from their homes, especially in Iraq, Syria and Africa.

Give them hope Lord that their hearts may be lifted through the compassion, consolation and kindness of those who are helping to sustain and support them.

Amen.

— Paula

Dundee

WE REMEMBER YOU

Horror, shock and revulsion filling our hearts.

We remember you
Seeing happy children play in the sun.

We remember you
Kneeling in our padded pews,
soft candle-light in our eyes.

We remember you Carrying full shopping
bags to safe homes.

We remember you in the dark of night when Christ
stands before us and looks into our eyes.

We remember you – And pray for Mercy.

– Mary Wilkinson



Boys in Solor island, Flores, Indonesia
© Aid to the Church in Need /Magdalena Wolnik



Children eating in Cameroon, Africa © Aid to the Church in Need

God of all the earth

GOD OF ALL THE EARTH, have mercy on those who are poor and have no control over their circumstances.

Confound those who oppress others in order to exercise power. Protect those who seek to be good news and those who call out for justice.

Guide into righteousness all who make decisions on which depend life and death, and in these dangerous days, grant us that peace which the world cannot give.
Amen.

– An ACN benefactor



Entrance of the Mar Elia refugee camp in Ankawa, Iraq
© Ilona Budzbon/Aid to the Church in Need

Bethlehem

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM,

How sad to see you lie
In such a persecuted place,
Where peace has gone awry.

We western Christians seem to live
like mice who chase their tails.

Why can't we be compassionate,
less focussed on ourselves?

Yet other Christians, though afraid,
Still make the time to pray.

Why can't we help them, show we care
Not simply turn away?

For God created everyone
Who lives in this small world.

Why is the banner of aggression
Flying high, unfurled?

Is the pursuit of money, fame,
Mere pleasure, our main goal?

Does anyone find peace of mind
When they neglect their soul?

For each of us, although unique,
Is human, not divine.

Do we, as Christians, show we care?
We rarely find the time.

O precious town of Bethlehem,
Where Christ was born one day,
So many Christians love your name
Though we live far away.

We sing of you at Christmas time -
You're such a sacred place.

May you again be lit by love
And incandescent grace.

– An ACN benefactor



St. Lorenzo Ruiz Proto, martyr of the Philippines
© Aid to the Church in Need

Martyr

LIFE CONDENSING INTO THE MOMENT clear,
To taste Gethsemane upon your tongue,
To make your self-sacrifice without fear,
So that angel's praises you shall hear sung.

Follow the lamb through death to life
Undying, bearing execution raw,
Gaze unblinking on that threatening knife,
You shall now triumph over blood and gore.

Martyrs in white robes dance around God's throne,
Undenied by him they did not deny,
You are the chosen; Christ calls you his own,
Pray that I, like you, to death shall now die.

Your bones making holy the ground as shrine,
I beg you Lord, let their witness teach mine.

- Christopher Villiers



The pupils in the school uniforms in the compound of the Salesians Secondary school in Lungi, Africa © Ilona Budzbon/Aid to the Church in Need

Shadows

WHEN THE SHADOWS CLOSE around you

In a cloak of dark despair,
When your pain is overflowing
And life seems too hard to bear,
Truly Jesus walks beside you;
He will guide you when you stray,
Fold his tender arms around you,
Gently wipe your tears away.
When you're wand'ring in the darkness
Vainly searching for the light,
Fears and torments all around you
In the black and lonely night,
He is walking there beside you,
He will answer when you call;
He will catch you when you stumble,
Lift you up each time you fall.
When a woman, sick and feeble,
Was despairing of a cure,
She reached out to touch His garment
And her sickness was no more.
Why He loves the lowly sinner
We can never understand,
But His precious love is boundless.
Just reach out and take His hand.

— Winefred Barnes



Birch tree grown as a Cross, at Golgotha - Solovki Sovietic prison camp
© Irina Stovbyra/Blagovest Info

Straight Silver Birch

STRAIGHT SILVER BIRCH

lamp post of light shining
through lush summer foliage.
Tiny frog runs onto path
startled we tip-toe
anything to avoid treading it.

Nearby, nameless martyrs
severed feet stand millimetres
from their bodies.

Beautiful sculptures shattered,
hands with five fingers waiting to
caress, cling, comfort
now strewn too far, too far
to ever meet their limbs, to ever play,
to walk on sea-saw footsteps
maybe grow up one day.

Arranged around brutalized head
all parts present and correct
– no one disagrees this being was complete –
remains counted like the scalpels
which drew lots for them.
The breath, their breaths though
cannot be bottled
already in the hollow of God's
hand under the light of the
Silent Silver Birch, weeping.

The perpetrators may plead
twinkle twinkle little star
but nursery rhymes taste sour
not even a glimmer will break
the dark hour they will penetrate
in the Hollow way.

– Rachel McKenzie



Door of the Chaldean Patriarchate in Erbil, Iraq © Aid to the Church in Need

The Wood Carver (of Bethlehem).

CARVED FROM THE WOOD
of the olive tree, the persecuted Christ.

Carved is the land where Christ has walked.

Carved is the shade where Christ has talked.

Carved – is the stable of his birth.

Carved – is the cradle of the earth.

Carved – are the beads of Mary's fears.

Carved – that we may count her tears.

Carved – is the image of the Cross.

Carved – is the gain that came from loss.

Carved is the world of God's reflection.

Carved is the hope of Resurrection.

– An ACN benefactor



Bishop Andrew Karnley with an orphan boy from Cenacolo mission house in Liberia © Ilona Budzbon/Aid to the Church in Need

Hear our Prayers

O GOD, HEAR OUR PRAYERS and the Prayers of our Brothers and Sisters who, daily, suffer persecution and even death, for being Faithful Witnesses to the Truth.

May their love for You and Your Blessed Mother sustain them. May we, who are so free to practise our Faith, be inspired by those who suffer persecution, to ever greater Love; may we never refuse God's Invitations to follow Him and witness to others!

– Mike Cowie



Icon of Annunciation at the Coptic Catholic Church in Guizeh in Egypt
© Ilona Budzbon/Aid to the Church in Need

Guardian Angels

MAY GOD, HIS MOTHER, MARY and the Guardian Angels watch over those who are being persecuted for their faith. Touch the hearts and consciences of those who persecute them, helping them to see that, in attacking Christians, they attack Christ. Help those of us, who have such great freedom to practise our faith, to love the Mass which so many of our Brothers and Sisters would give their very lives to take part in.

– Mike Cowie



Moses in Mount Nebo Nuntiatur in Amman, Jordan
© Aid to the Church in Need

The Church

LOVING FATHER OF ALL CREATION,

We bless and praise You, who are our very existence and happiness, teaching us through The Church and Our Mother, represented by Mary mother of your Beloved Son by the power of the Holy Spirit – all for our good.

We glorify You in union with your holy angels and saints, in Jesus Name.

– Boniface Jonas



Small Yazidi camp: food packages distributed by ACN
© Ilona Budzbon/Aid the the Church in Need

Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic charity helping to bring Christ to the world, supports the faithful wherever they are persecuted, oppressed, or in pastoral need.

Founded on Christmas Day 1947, ACN supports over 5,000 projects every year throughout the world.

For regular updates from the suffering church around the world, and to view our Christmas gifts and cards, go to www.acnuk.org.

Thank you for your prayers and support!



Aid to the Church in Need

12-14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton SM1 4DA
Tel: 020 8642 8668 www.acnuk.org
A registered charity in England & Wales
(1097984) and in Scotland (SC040748)