

Prayer for Peace in Syria

The reflections in this prayer have come to us from Syria. We cannot always cite the source, but we want to share their words.

Prayer and Intercession for Peace in Syria

God of Compassion,
Hear the cries of the people of Syria
Comfort those who suffer violence
Console those who mourn the dead
Give strength to Syria's neighbouring countries to welcome the refugees
Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms
And protect those who are committed to peace.
God of hope,
Inspire leaders to choose peace over violence and to seek reconciliation with their enemies
Inflame the Universal Church with compassion for the people of Syria
And give us hope for a future built on justice for all
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and Light of the world.
Amen

Litany for Syria

Immaculate Heart of Mary,	pray for Syria, pray for us.
Immaculate Heart of Mary,	pray for Syria, pray for us.
Immaculate Heart of Mary,	pray for Syria, pray for us.
St Joseph, patron and protector of the Universal Church,	
	pray for Syria, pray for us.
Martyrs of Syria and the Middle East,	pray for Syria, pray for us.
Saints of Syria and the Middle East,	pray for Syria, pray for us.
St Charbel, pray for Syria,	pray for us.

First day: Hear the outcry of the Syrian people

Reflections

“Suffering has gone beyond bounds. The whole of Syria has become a battlefield. Every aspect of democracy, human rights, freedom, secularism and citizenship is lost from view and no-one cares. The crisis has mown down thousands upon thousands of soldiers, opponents, civilians, men, women, children, Muslim sheikhs and Christian priests.” – Patriarch Gregorios III Laham of Antioch

We pray for peace in Syria.

We pray that weapons would will be silenced. We pray for an end to all violence and all armed conflict. We pray with the Holy Father, all of us united:

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for Syria, pray for us.

Now pray the Prayer and Intercession for Peace in Syria and the Litany for Syria

Second day: Comfort those who suffer because of violence

Reflections

Syria is a battleground: “The workplace, destroyed. Children’s innocence, destroyed. Families and homes, destroyed. Schools, places of worship, hospitals, destroyed... A cruel tragedy stretching out beneath the silent on-looking of so many. A small nation that carries the harsh and heavy image of Jesus with the Cross. ‘Simon of Cyrene’ has yet to appear.”

6.8 million people have been affected by the conflict in Syria. “The time of silence is approaching ... silent, tearful looks with broken hearts are a language that unites us to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the foot of the Cross...”

For all those who suffer because of this violence.

We pray that after such suffering and so many horrors, they will not lose their hope in a peaceful and just solution. We pray that many “Simons of Cyrene” might appear, ready to carry the cross and lighten the load of this people.

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Third day: Comfort those who mourn their loved ones

Reflections

The Syrian crisis, which began on March 15, 2011, has already taken many lives, too many, and the current political situation continues compounding and worsening the situation, unprecedented in this nation. The United Nations reports more than 100,000 dead. Before such a reality, words fall short...

Cities are destroyed and “development plans are in the cemeteries.” They tell us from Syria: “A six-year-old girl was playing hide-and-seek with her brother. A sniper shot the little boy... In the cemetery, the girl cried out before the tomb of her brother: ‘Come out from your hiding place! I don’t want to play anymore!’”

We pray for the victims of this war.

For all of them, and each one of them. They are not numbers, but names, members of a family. They are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. They are our brothers and sisters, children of God who created them in His image and likeness.

We pray that the right to life of every person be respected and defended.

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Fourth day: Help the nations that border Syria, as they welcome the refugees

Reflections

According to the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, there are 1,971,003 Syrian refugees, mainly in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. And there are many refugees who are not registered because they are afraid, or who are displaced within Syria itself.

“Every second of the day, I have only one desire: to return to my homeland. My heart is wounded. The only thing that keeps me here is my children. Even if it meant going back to die, if it were just me, I would go back,” laments a mother of two children who has taken refuge in Turkey.

It is impossible to imagine the future for this country, this peaceful land that once was the home of many refugees from the Middle East:

“We fled Iraq during the war and went to Syria. We had managed to rebuild our lives, but almost two years ago, we had to flee again to Iraq. There my son was hit with a bullet in the head as he was playing soccer. He survived, but with paralysis, and the bullet is embedded. Surgery is dangerous. We arrived in Turkey two months ago. A family took us in. Maybe here they can help us.”

In Lebanon, there are more than 700,000 refugees. Archbishop John Darwish writes: “We’ve been helping for 10 months. We began with 19 families. But their number has increased drastically. Now we are helping 580 families. If the conflict gets more complicated and the violence extends to the whole country, this number will grow even more.”

We pray for all those who have had to abandon their families, their homes, their land and their property.

For all those who are hungry and do not have a roof over their heads. We pray for those who live in refugee camps. We pray for all the countries receiving the displaced, for all of those all over the world who are offering aid, assistance and care to the emigrants and refugees.

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Fifth day: Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms, and protect those who work for peace

Reflections

“The most dramatic thing is the absence of dialogue in the last three years, the anguish and desperation that are taking root in this people.”

It has now been more than two years of fighting and conflict. Who now remembers that at the beginning, the aim was to fight against injustice, the lack of liberty, oppression? The opposing fronts of the conflict have hardened. What began as a civil war has become an international issue, but in an unhelpful way. Economic and geopolitical interests are winning a battle far removed from the aims of the Syrian people.

“May the war end and may we be able to go home,” the Syrian children pray day after day. That is all they want. That is all they long for, that the war would end.

We pray for the political leaders of the country and the whole world.

May they decide to seek peace and the good of the country. May they stop considering their own interests and power. We pray for the people who are working for peace, working to alleviate the sorrow of the Syrian people, working to dry their tears, so that they do not grow weary in their labour, despite threats from within and indifference from around the world.

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Sixth day: Inspire within the universal Church compassion for the Syrian people

Reflections

Today we pray especially for the Christian minority in Syria (5.2 percent). After the 2010 Synod on the Church in the Middle East, Christians wanted to be active witnesses of the Gospel in the heart of the Judeo-Islamic world... Violence has quickly suffocated the fruits of this synod in many countries.

The Christian minority is always in a fragile situation, in an ambiguous status quo: “In the conflicts in the Arab world, Christians generally maintain neutrality: They are not with the government, nor with the opposition... Because of this, they end up being rejected by both sides. Both want their loyalty. Thus, neutrality did not save the two bishops and three priests who were kidnapped. It did not save the hundreds of Christians who have been assassinated or kidnapped, nor has it stopped the massive exodus of young people and entire families.”

Paul of Tarsus, who had dedicated himself to persecuting the Church, radically changed his way of thinking and acting as a result of his experience on the road to Damascus. That is how he became Saint Paul, apostle and missionary. There, he preached for the first time.

We pray for our brothers and sisters in the Faith.

St. Paul, bless Christianity in Syria, help the Christians of this country. Do not forget this place, which was the cradle of Christianity. May the Faith not be diminished! May they feel the

support and consolation of their Christian brothers and sisters all over the world.

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Seventh day: Give us hope in a future of peace, founded on justice for all

Reflections

“It is time to finish with these weapons and, instead of calling for violence, international powers need to work for peace. Throughout this whole time of crisis, our churches have been almost full. The people feel that in spite of the problems, God is granting miracles for them.

“There is a mixture of hope and despair. People do not know what their future may be. People feel fear but in spite of that they are strong in their faith.” – Patriarch Gregorios III Laham

“Thus, we are not discouraged. On the contrary – even though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day after day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

We pray that hope does not grow faint.

We pray that Christ, Prince of Peace and Light of the World, fills the Syrian people with trust, so that they “abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

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Thank you for your prayers and solidarity with the people of Syria.