



Current Issues in Prayer

March 2017

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:
That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.



Getting started:

I find a comfortable and quite place. For a few minutes, I concentrate on my breathing, and listen to the sounds around me. I thank God for this time of reflection.



Short story:

When Communist leaders took control of the Soviet Union, they tried to stop Christians from talking about Jesus. They didn't want people to read the Bible or trust in God. So when Jean's brave parents continued to tell others about the God they loved, they were sent to prison and the frightened boy was placed in a special training camp. There he would learn to think like a Communist and forget about God. But Jean didn't forget. He felt very lonely but preferred loneliness to having friends who hated God.



Jean refused to change his beliefs and follow the group. His teachers embarrassed him in front of the other students. Jean hurt inside, but he couldn't turn to his parents for help. Instead, he cried out to God for help. Jesus answered his prayers and became his best friend. Day after day, Jesus gave Jean the courage to say "NO" to the Communist leaders who wanted to destroy his faith. Jean remained faithful to God. In fact, the greater the pressure to surrender his faith, the more strength and courage he received from Jesus.

All the time, God was watching and protecting him. The day Jean was rewarded for all his perseverance came when he was released from the camp and could return to his family. But he did not forget the wonderful things he had learned through his suffering for Jesus. He knew, without a doubt, that Jesus was always with him. No wonder he believed that persecution is an experience that God permits to His best friends who can receive it as a gift.



Time to reflect:

Have you ever suffered persecution for being a Christian? If yes, did you stay faithful to God?



Let us pray:

I pray to trust Jesus my faithful Friend when I am being rejected for my Christian beliefs.



Inspiration:

"We love only to the degree that we are willing to suffer."

Fr John Hardon S.J.



Hands on:

Think of the many Christians that are being persecuted because of their faith, and support them by your prayers; that they keep their focus on Jesus, their faithful Friend.

You can also offer financial support to missionary organizations that support persecuted Christians.