



# Current Issues in Prayer

March 2024

Welcome! The Pope invites people of good will to come together and pray **that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive.**



## Getting started:

I settle down in a quiet place and pray for the grace to be in the presence of Jesus.



## Short story:

A bishop and a close friend to Pope Benedict XVI was asked why the pontiff wore red shoes. "It is very fashionable, of course!" joked the bishop. The red shoes contrast sharply with the Pope's white vestment and became a trademark of Pope Benedict's image. The bishop went on to explain that the red shoes symbolise the passion, faith, and martyrdom of Jesus Christ and other persecuted Catholic figures.



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The bishop remarked that many associate 'martyrdom' with the early Christians who suffered persecution and death for their faith or else with medieval Catholic saints who paid with their lives for proclaiming Christianity under tyrant monarchs. However, martyrdom is still a reality in some parts of the world of today. Think of those Christian communities suffering torture and death under Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in East Africa. The bishop invited those around him to pray for present-day martyrs and reflect on their experiences to strengthen their faith and treasure their freedom of conscience and religion. "Only in this way, martyrdom takes on a powerful spirit in our lives and becomes significant and meaningful".



## Time to reflect:

How aware am I of the persecution of Christians and that of others who belong to other religions? Do I appreciate enough the blessing I have of being free to receive Holy Communion, to spread the Good News and do whatever it takes to live a full Christian life without fear and danger?



## Let us pray:

Lord, hear the prayers of those who put their trust in you in times of danger and of those who die calling on your Name. Help us work hard for a peaceful world where all may follow the ways of God according to their traditions, without the fear of persecution and death.



## Inspiration:

We don't know how God chooses martyrs. We do know that they give us the most precious gift they possess - their very lives.

*Cesar Chavez*



## Hands on:

When compared to that of the martyrs, our contribution to the faith might seem small and insignificant. Nevertheless, we may embrace another martyrdom every day with practical gestures such as making the sign of the Cross; sharing our faith; serving others with a kind and generous heart and always placing God as the priority in life over all things.