



**FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH** (Nov. 1, 8, 2015)

Merciful Father, hear the cries of your people who are being persecuted and killed for your name's sake; who are threatened with the sword to "deny or die"; who are made to watch as their own children are slain; who are tortured for the sake of a religion; and who must flee their homeland for their lives, if they can.

We join our prayers with their cries for deliverance, O Lord, asking that you embrace them with your nearer presence and provide your promised deliverance in the midst of their suffering. Breathe in them your peace, which passes all understanding, and reassure them that there is nothing in all creation that can ever separate them from your love, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Strengthen them as you did for all the saints and martyrs who went before, with the confidence that death is of no lasting consequence in your eternal Kingdom.

We pray for the conversion of the evildoers, as they hear the compelling witness of the Gospel on the lips and in the lives of the persecuted church. And finally we implore your forgiveness for our sins of indifference and apathy toward the persecuted church, which because it is part of your body in the world today, is beaten, despised, and killed as you were for our redemption. With shame we confess that so much suffering has met with so little awareness and response.

Imbue us, O Lord, with your living Word, the Holy Spirit, that as the communion of saints, we may stand in solidarity with all who willingly suffer for the sake of Christ. We open our hearts, praying not only for the suffering church, but that their suffering may teach us faithfulness today, and what it costs to stand for the Gospel in the evil day, confident that while sorrow may linger for the night, joy comes in the morning. Lord, in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**