

# GLOBAL PRAYER FOR CHINA



## EXCERPT FROM THE PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF SHESHAN

*Virgin Most Holy, Mother of the Incarnate Word and our Mother, venerated in the Shrine of Sheshan under the title "Help of Christians", the entire Church in China looks to you with devout affection.*

*We come before you today to implore your protection.*

*Our Lady of Sheshan, sustain all those in China, who, amid their daily trials, continue to believe, to hope, to love. May they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus.*



*The head of a Marian statue stands among the ruins of Qianwang Catholic Church after it was demolished on Aug. 13, 2018.*

## WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE CHURCH IN CHINA?

The people of China are enduring the worst crackdown on human rights since the Tiananmen massacre, and the most severe assault on religious freedom since the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime under Xi Jinping has launched an all-out assault on human rights, human dignity, freedom of religion and conscience, justice and peace: all fundamental values at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching.

In 2018, the CCP ramped up draconian regulations to tighten its control over Catholic and Protestant churches. The CCP has total oversight over religious leadership, doctrine, expression, and all other aspects of religious life. Catholic and Protestant churches are required to “support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party” and “the socialist system.” Christians who resist are penalized. Sermons are to be based on President Xi’s sayings. Young people under 18 years of age are banned from all Catholic and Protestant churches and are prevented from receiving the sacraments and participating in Bible studies. The extent of the CCP’s disregard for Christians’ religious rights and freedoms is deeply concerning.

The Christian faithful in China are suffering. As members of the universal Church, we are all called to unite ourselves with our brothers and sisters through prayer, especially for those facing persecution.

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*“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”*

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

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Pope Francis greets pilgrims from China during a General Audience

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

This attack on religious freedom by Chinese authorities has a complex and political history. In response to the political confusion, **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI** published a letter in 2007 addressed to the bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful of the Catholic Church in China. In it, Pope Benedict designated May 24th, the feast of Our Lady of Help of Christians, as an annual worldwide day of prayer for the Chinese Church:

*I encourage you to celebrate [the day of prayer] by renewing your communion of faith in Jesus our Lord and of faithfulness to the Pope, and by praying that the unity among you may become ever deeper and more visible. I remind you, moreover, of the commandment that Jesus gave us, to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us, as well as the invitation of the Apostle Saint Paul: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:1-4).*

## Contact Us

### Global Prayer for China

For all inquiries, including media requests, please email

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The need for prayer has only grown greater since 2007. Christians – both Catholic and Protestant – face repression and grave religious persecution throughout the country, carried out with particular intensity since 2018.

**Pope Francis** delivered a message to the Catholics of China and to the Universal Church in 2018 in which he said:

*"Dear brothers and sisters of the universal Church, all of us are called to recognize as one of the signs of our times everything that is happening today in the life of the Church in China. We have an important duty: to accompany our brothers and sisters in China with fervent prayer and fraternal friendship. Indeed, they need to feel that in the journey that now lies ahead, they are not alone."*

## GLOBAL PRAYER FOR CHINA

Global Prayer for China is a response to Cardinal Bo's statement to the faithful on March 14, 2021:

*"On behalf of the Church throughout Asia, as President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, I would like to call on the faithful to extend [the day of prayer] to a Week of Prayer for the Church in China and the peoples of China, from Sunday 23 May until Sunday 30 May ... It is right that we should pray not only for the Church but for all persons in the People's Republic of China."*

**From May 23rd to May 30th, let us unite ourselves in prayer for the Church  
and all those facing persecution in China.**

You can learn more at  
[globalprayerforchina.com](http://globalprayerforchina.com)