

A Litany to Remember the Persecuted Church

based on Psalm 30

In need of your mercy, we offer today our prayer for the suffering of people of faith around the world. As we name the suffering of Christians in North Korea, we are mindful also of the suffering of so many others, named and unnamed.

The psalmist says, "What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?"

Hear, LORD, and be merciful to us; LORD, be our help.

Around the world, people of faith live where governments have outlawed worship, oppressed believers, and even killed people who belong to minority religious groups. Today we bear witness to the suffering of our Christian brothers and sisters in North Korea, who live in concentration camps and endure torture and abuse, or who lose their lives by execution or from being worked to death.

Hear, LORD, and be merciful to us; LORD, be our help.

We pray for the millions around the world who have fled their homes because their faith puts them under threat. Millions of refugees are the victims of religious persecution, and they now rely on the hospitality of strangers in order to survive. Today we bear witness to the thousands who have tried to escape North Korea. We pray for brave pastors who shelter them as they make their way along the "underground railroad" out of the country. We pray for Christians who provide refuge and support when they arrive to safety.

Hear, LORD, and be merciful to us; LORD, be our help.

We pray for all who remain oppressed, even after escaping the persecution they faced in their country of origin. We confess the intolerance that exists in our own communities toward people who are different from us, aware that it is Christians who face similar exclusion and suspicion in various parts of the world. Today we bear witness to the estimated 300,000 North Koreans who live as undocumented immigrants in China, without protection from the threat of being deported.

Hear, LORD, and be merciful to us; LORD, be our help.

And, God, we pray for the people who commit oppression against people of faith. We remember that they too are created in your image. We pray that they might repent, have courage to change, and come to know the saving and life-giving work of Jesus in their lives. Where we ourselves are the perpetrators of oppression, open our eyes and forgive us, Lord. Today we lift in prayer the totalitarian dictatorship of North Korea and the many people who are complicit in maintaining it. We lift in prayer the oppressive policies of China, which sends North Koreans back to experience torture and death. We bear witness to this sin, and to the image of God that is within people who perpetrate it. Change their hearts, O God.

Hear, LORD, and be merciful to us; LORD, be our help.

Be our help, O Lord. Grant that we might see your mercy in this broken, suffering world. Give us wisdom, compassion, and courage to go where you send us, to speak what you teach us, and to be who you call us to be. **Amen.**

