PRAYER FOR THE GIRL CHILD

September 8th: Today, the birthday of our Beloved Mother Mary! The Church in India dedicates this day to the Girl Child.

Where would we be without Mother Mary! Where would we be if our mother was not allowed to be born? Every girl is a precious gift. She is born in the image and likeness of God, equal in dignity as much as a boy. However we live in a culture where sons are preferred over daughters. The elimination, discrimination and atrocities meted out to girl children must be condemned; as such crimes disfigure the image and likeness of God in human persons. Empowering girls and recognizing their potentials bring changes in the world. During this prayer, we remember all those millions of missing girls, who were murdered before and after their birth. We thank God for every girl child in our family, neighborhoods, parishes, institutions and society.

Prayer for forgiveness: LORD, heal us of our indifference and challenge us to be your messengers of justice.

Jesus, forgive us for our indifference in the face of imbalanced sex ratio, caused by brutal murders of girl children.

Jesus, forgive us for our insensitivity towards the increasing crimes against children and women that we witness daily.

Jesus, forgive us for our lack of courage to stand for the dignity and rights of children.

GOSPEL: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark (10:13:16)

"People were bringing little children to Jesus, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it". Then he put his arms around them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

DEAR PARENTS
By Christy Kenneally

I did not die young
I lived my span of life,
within your body
and within your love.

There are many who have lived long lives
and have not been loved as me.

If you would honor me
then speak my name
and number me among your family.
If you would honor me.
then strive to live in love

For in that love, I live.
Never ever doubt
that we will meet again.
Until that happy day,
I will grow with God and wait for you.
PSALM (Psalm 139: 13-18)

Lord, you created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I and all your works are wonderful. You knew me through and through, my being held no secrets from you, when I was being formed in secret, textured in the depths of the womb. Your eyes could see my embryo, in your book all my days were inscribed, every one that is fixed is there. How hard for me to grasp your thoughts, how many, God there are. If I could count them, they are more than the grains of sand; if I come to an end, I am still with you.

Intercessions:

Leader: Brothers and Sisters, we are called to fill our world with God’s love and justice. Let us pray for our Church and society through the intercession of Mary our Mother.

Response: God of Life, hear our prayer

1. For our Church and its leaders, that they may achieve the desired results envisaged in the Gender Policy of the Catholic Church in India through every parish cell. Let us pray.

2. For young girls, that they may recognize their innate power to empower themselves and others. Let us pray.

3. For all the faithful, that we help create a country where both girls and boys can live and grow with equal opportunities through education and empowerment. Let us pray.

4. For the governments, that it may take strong steps to put an end to the growing violence and atrocities against the girl child, through proper enactments and implementation of laws. Let us pray.

5. For all the families in this parish, that they may be homes of love, sharing, mutual respect and equality. Let us pray.

6. For the children of our world, the sick, disabled or ostracized due to sickness like HIV/AIDS, that they may feel your healing touch in the environment they live in. Let us pray.

7. For the children on the street and those forced into child labour in houses, institutions and factories, that their rights and wellbeing be protected through proper implementation of laws. Let us pray.

8. For children who are victims of abuse or human trafficking, that they may be helped to rebuild their lives again. Let us pray.

9. For our parish community, that we may have the courage to address the issue of missing girls in various forums and work towards the change of mindset. Let us pray.
OUR FATHER

FINAL PRAYER: God of Life and Compassion, hear our prayers and strengthen us, your people, to celebrate the gift of every child. Help us to bring a healing touch to children who are afraid, and take steps forward towards protecting them. We make this prayer through Mary, and her son Jesus, who showed us just how precious a girl child can be, Amen.

Policy

The Church’s love for children stems from Christ’s teachings and example. Children hold the hope for the future and must be nurtured. They form one of the largest vulnerable groups in society and hence the Constitution of India has laid special emphasis on their well-being and protection. Among children, the girl child is particularly vulnerable. In recognition of this, international and national communities have special provisions for the development of the girl child and adolescent girls, particularly with regard to their survival, health, nutrition, education, protection and participation in family and society. The Church supports and commits herself to these ideals.

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