

Diocese of Ha Tinh
Committee for Justice and Peace
No. 01/2019/CLHB

Van Hanh, 13th of August, 2019

INVITATION TO COMMUNION PRAYER

International Day Commemorating
the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief
22/08/2019

To: Parish Priests, Priests, Clergy Members, Seminarians
Catholic communities of the Diocese of Ha Tinh
and all people of conscience and good faith

In recent years, the right to religious freedom in many places in the world have been grossly violated, and an increasing number of people have become victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief.

Increasingly, places of worship have been bombed when people of faith were gathering for prayer, groups of faithful have been savagely massacred, many communities have been forced to leave their homes or hometowns because of their religions... Religious persecution does not stop at the use of violence but has manifested itself in other forms such as coercion, destruction of livelihood, prohibition of religious practices, defamation, and false accusations against religious leaders and their followers.

Particular to Catholics, Pope Francis has observed: "It might be hard for us to believe, but there are more martyrs today than in the first centuries. They are persecuted because they speak the truth and proclaim Jesus Christ to this society." (March 2019)

Faced with that reality, on the 28th of May, 2019 the UN General Assembly selected the 22nd day of August of each year to be the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief and called on state parties, religious organizations, civil society organizations and all people to commemorate that day.

In today's Vietnam, although brute force is not so frequently used, one may not claim that there is religious freedom, which is evidenced by the fact that there have been and continue to be victims of violence based on religion or belief.

For that very reason, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Diocese of Ha Tinh invites parishes, religious orders, all members of the Catholic Church and all people of conscience and good faith to be in communion with Pope Francis in his prayer of early March 2019 and to respond to the appeal of the UN General Assembly by organizing special prayers on 22/08/2019 as follows:

Intentions and Purposes:

1. Pray for all those who are persecuted because of their religion to remain firm in their faith and strong in overcoming persecution.
2. Pray for all Christians who are persecuted to always sense that Christ is close to them and His flock are in their company.
3. Pray for all leaders of nations to respect and protect their citizens' right to religious freedom.
4. Pray for all people in our home country Viet Nam to enjoy the right to religious freedom, and particularly those in the recently established Diocese of Ha Tinh to be guaranteed of their right to practice their faith and to be treated favorably in their building and development efforts.

Formats:

1. Mass with the Mass ceremony set to pray for the persecuted Christians (refer to the attached instructions).
2. Eucharistic Adorations (can use the attached Adoration form).
3. Community candle vigil (highly encouraged to do this, can use the attached Adoration form for praying).

Sincere prayers and the consensus of many people are always necessary to keep humanity on its path to freedom and civilization. That may change the world and, at the same time, may make victims of persecution on the basis of religion feel less lonely and stay resolute on their journey to manifest their own right to religious freedom.

The Committee for Justice and Peace of the Diocese hopes that our Priests and all our congregations will join us in this special day of prayer.

On behalf of the Committee for Justice and Peace
Diocese of Ha Tinh
Committee Chair

Signed,

Rev. Phero Tran Dinh Lai