



Archdiocese of Vancouver
ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

May 24, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today, Pentecost Sunday, is also the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China, first observed in 2007 when Pope Benedict XVI asked that a day be set aside to remember the needs of Chinese Christians.

May 24 is also the traditional memorial of Our Lady, Help of Christians, who is venerated at the Shrine of Sheshan in Shanghai by pilgrims who travel from throughout China to honour her.

This Day of Prayer was established because of concern about growing restrictions and pressures being placed on the Church by China's communist government. "Christ is living His passion" here, Pope Benedict said.

Since then, developments have only added urgency to his appeal. The current persecution against churches has been called the worst since the Cultural Revolution, with forced demolition of church buildings, removal of crosses, and pastors sentenced to jail. Christians are subject to confiscation of property, fines, job loss, and police intimidation. These are shocking violations of individuals' freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

I am asking the faithful of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, and in particular those many Catholics with ties to China, to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters. In the words of Pope Benedict, May they "keep their faith alive, their hope strong, and their love for all people ardent."

Our Lady, Help of Christians, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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