



## THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR EASTERN CHRISTIANS

### **What is the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians?**

The International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians enables Eastern and Western Christians to come together in communion through prayer, and is shared by the Eastern Churches in communion with the Bishop of Rome, including the Armenian Catholic, Chaldean, Coptic Catholic, Ethiopian and Eritrean Catholic (in Africa), Greek Melkite, Maronite, Syrian Catholic, Syro-Malabar (in India), Syro-Malankara (in India).

### **When is the International day of Prayer for Eastern Christians?**

The International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians – organised by Oeuvre d’Orient in Paris - takes place on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020, with the participation of Christians from all over Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and India.

### **Who are the Eastern Christians?**

The Eastern Christians are direct descendants of the Early Christians and trace their roots back to apostolic times. There are more than 26 million Eastern Christians living in the Middle East and surrounding regions. For Western Christians, they provide a direct link to the Early Church, leading us to the roots of Christianity and showing us, through their tradition and witness, a living faith in Christ.

### **Why is the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians on the Sixth Sunday of Easter?**

Sunday after Sunday, during the Easter celebrations, Eastern and Western Christians hear the Acts of the Apostles which witness to the first preaching of the Gospel. These readings remind us of the origin of the Eastern Churches and the history of the first Eastern Christians, who brought the Gospel to us. Nowadays, many of these Eastern Christians are oppressed and persecuted, and struggle to survive and to pass on our faith to their children, in their own lands where Christianity was born and first spread.

### **An international day of communion through prayer.**

We invite Western Christians to embrace the following prayer intention for Eastern Christians:

*“Heavenly Father, we pray today for peace in the world, especially in the Middle East. By your heavenly grace, strengthen the faith and hope of Eastern Christians. May they be blessed with peace and prosperity in their lands. And may we be inspired by their devotion and witness to the Gospel, by their love and compassion for all in their communities, and by their courage, their endurance and self-sacrifice against oppression. Through their charity, tolerance and friendship, bring peace and reconciliation to those troubled lands, where Christianity was born and first spread. Through Christ our Lord. Amen”*

### **Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE)**

*Patron:* His Eminence Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, M.Afr. | *Pastoral Advisor:* Father Timothy Radcliffe, OP | *Chairman:* John Adam Fox  
*Registered Charity Number:* 178592 | *Address:* 5 Leicester Place, London, WC2H 7BX | [facecharityuk@gmail.com](mailto:facecharityuk@gmail.com) | [www.oeuvre-orient.fr](http://www.oeuvre-orient.fr)



### How to celebrate this day?

- We ask you to say this prayer with us on the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians – the Sixth Sunday of Easter – on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- Give the prayer intention to your parish priest so that it may be read out at the Prayers of the Faithful during Mass on the Sixth Sunday of Easter.
- Share the prayer with your family and friends.

### How can you help Eastern Christians?

- **BEAR WITNESS TO CHRIST.** Often Eastern Christians ask: are there still Christians in the United Kingdom? Perhaps, before wondering what we can do for them, we should ask ourselves whether we truly bear witness to Christ as faithfully as they do.
- **GET TO KNOW THE EASTERN CHRISTIANS.** There are several Eastern Churches in the United Kingdom, not least Armenian Catholic, Chaldean, Coptic Catholic, Eritrean Catholic, Maronite, and Ukrainian Catholic. Participate in their liturgies, meet them (your brothers and sisters in Christ), and share your common origins.
- **BE AN ADVOCATE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND DEFEND THEIR CAUSE.** Be encouraged to write from time to time to your Member of Parliament, asking that the British Government remain vigilant to the predicament of Eastern Christians in the Middle East and resolute in defending their cause.
- **BE FULLY CATHOLIC.** To be fully Catholic means thinking of the whole Church. Eastern Catholics are also part of the Universal Catholic Church, in which the Eastern Catholic Churches are in communion with the Bishop of Rome. It is incumbent upon us to share our faith with Eastern Christians in whatever way we can, not least by charity.

### Oeuvre d'Orient and FACE

- For more than 160 years, the Catholic charity Oeuvre d'Orient has been supporting Eastern Christians in the Middle East and sustaining the survival of Christianity in the Biblical lands.
- Oeuvre d'Orient currently manages over 1500 long-term projects in humanitarian aid, education, healthcare and social aid, evangelisation and pastoral support, across 23 countries of the Middle East, India and North Africa.
- FACE – as the British sister branch of Oeuvre d'Orient - delivers grant aid directly to projects organised by the local dioceses and religious congregations of the Eastern Catholic Churches - to the benefit of all, of all faiths and none.
- If you would like further information on the mission of FACE and Oeuvre d'Orient, or would like to support its work by way of voluntary service or a donation, please contact: [facecharityuk@gmail.com](mailto:facecharityuk@gmail.com)

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