

International Day of the Girl Child

11 October 2012

Pray for the girls

victims of abuse and discrimination

Pray for our nation

to change the mindset of our people so that
we will not kill abuse or discriminate against girls.

Confess our sin of Indifference.

Commit to stand against
the abuse, violence and
discrimination against girls.

Because boys and girls,
men and women
are created in the image of God

Set apart the dates

October 7, 14 or 11
for prayer and commitment



*International Day of the **Girl** Child*

**11th
October
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*“Let the little children
come to me, and do not
hinder them ...”
(Mark 10:14)*

Nearly 7000 girls are killed in India every day. Prejudice against girl child among Indians is a worldwide phenomenon. This, in a sense, is genocide. Millions of Indian girls are missing. They are victims of foeticide, infanticide, malnutrition, illiteracy, abuse, violence, trafficking and forced labour.

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate, demonstrated how much he loves children. Though all children are at risk, girl child is particularly vulnerable. The Church must show love and practical care, thereby demonstrating the love and concern of the Creator God.

INTERCESSION

Leader: Gracious Lord, we thank you for creating us, both male and female, in your image, out of your love, and in your divine plan and purpose. We are grateful that Christ died on the cross to redeem all humankind. Yet, we confess that we have not always seen ourselves and each other as created in your image. We have treated one another as less than what you have created us to be. Transform us with the power and hope of your resurrection.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during your ministry on earth, you showed how precious little children are to you. We have failed to show the same love to them, particularly towards the girl child. We have discriminated against the girl child from the womb till the tomb. We have destroyed life, often even before she could come into this world. Forgive us.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus, we learn from the Gospels that you loved, healed and restored women in a society where she was discriminated against both in social and religious life. Yet, even today, we face the same challenge of exclusion of women, and discrimination and violence against the girl child at all stages of her life. We confess our guilt.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Instead of rejoicing at the birth of every girl child who adds beauty and meaning to our world, we plot ways to get rid of her. We blame and threaten the mother when we receive the news of the birth of the girl child. We force the mother to kill or abandon the girl child whom she lovingly and patiently bore for nine long months. We are sorry.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the Church that she would bring the message of love and hope to every girl child who feels unloved, unwanted and rejected. May we be facilitators in helping her to grow to her God-given potentials in her service to humanity.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We confess that we have not acknowledged the gifts and abilities of the girl child and women, and have not provided them opportunities to exercise those gifts for the good of the Church. Help us to nurture the girl child and equip her to contribute through any role in the Church that the Spirit might call her to, including that of leadership.

Lord, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We bring before you every daughter, sister, wife and mother that you may shower your blessings upon them and on all that they do in different roles. Help them and us to uphold the dignity that you have given them.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all those who oppress and exploit the girl child or woman that they would realize the harm that is caused to another person created in the image of God. Help them to see that what they do to the girl child is an offence against you. Change their hearts and minds by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all victims of gender discrimination and violence. We know that you are moved by their silent tears and sighs. Comfort them with your love and stretch forth your hand to heal them.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all those in authority – in organisations, Church and society – that they would be sensitive to the issues affecting the girl child and women, and would take measures to protect and to provide equal opportunities for their growth and development.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: God of love and life, fill us with your love and compassion. Help us to see every person as you would see her. Teach us to see you in every girl child. Let every girl child know that she is precious, loved and wanted.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We offer these prayers in the name of Christ who is the hope and authority of the future. Amen.

(Prepared by: Rev. Thomas Jacob, Presbyterian-in-charge, Wesley Church CNI, Colaba, Mumbai)

Girl Children and You

Dangerous Decline

India was recently ranked as the fourth worst country in the world for the safety and wellbeing of women, citing the high rates of child marriage, trafficking, slavery, female feticide, and female infanticide as contributing factors. Even when a female child manages to survive past the first year of her life, she often suffers “systematic neglect, inferior medical care, poor nutrition, and substandard education” compared to her male counterparts. Girl babies are “breast-fed less frequently” and for a “shorter duration” than baby boys, and receive little to no medical care. 71 percent of young females experience severe malnutrition, as opposed to 28 percent of males in the same age group. Nearly 30

percent of Indian women report facing “dowry-related beatings” by their groom and/or his family. Approximately 17 women are killed everyday due to dowry related violence. The crime statistics released by the Delhi police revealed that a woman is raped in Delhi every 18 hours and cases of molestation against women take place every 14 hours.

At the foundation of these patterns are mindsets which view girls as burdens and liabilities- mindsets which pose threat to the life of the

unborn girls and stem from the lie that women are inferior to men.

Can we reclaim the value and dignity of each human life? Can our combined and singular voices together reinstate the equal and inherent value of an unborn girl child?

Can we engage on this issue of justice to ensure freedom, equality and dignity to our women? Can we mobilize minds, hearts and hands, and join in the movement to cause a change in mindsets by choosing life over death.

- You can be the catalyst in changing the mindset which causes and perpetuates the practice of female foeticide by championing the value and precious worth of our girl children.
- You can pray regularly to seek forgiveness for this evil practice of our time and for the healing of our land and for the building of a society where there is no discrimination against the girl children.
- Pray for the girls -victims of abuse and discrimination
- Pray for our nation – for a change in the mindset of our people so that we will not kill, abuse or discriminate against girls.
- Confess our sins of indifference.
- Commit to stand against the abuse, violence and discrimination against girls-because boys and girls, men and women are created in the image of God.

By a conservative estimate, female foeticide accounts for at least half a million missing female births in India every year, according to research findings published in British Medical journal Lancet. The Lancet Report 2011 estimates that more than 12 million female foetuses may have been aborted in India in the last three decades.



A movement to restore the dignity and equality of women and girl children in India

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