

# GNB

GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

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## RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN ASIA

**HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR THE MONTH:**

**Evangelization**

That Christians, and other religious minorities in Asian countries, may be able to practice their faith in full freedom.



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# REACHING CHRISTIAN MATURITY

## THE FATHER SPEAKS

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It is a common practice that in order to know the number of the practicing Catholics we use only one indicator: **practicing individual devotional piety**. Someone is called a good practicing Catholic if he/she regularly attends Sunday Mass, prays Rosary, reads Bible, makes Marian pilgrimages, and does charitable works. Of course they are very noble practices, but they are only portraying one side of our Catholic faith.

**The other side of our Catholic faith is the profession of our faith**, which is done by living it out and proclaiming it through our witnesses in our daily lives. Concerning this matter, the Second Vatican Council through its Decree of the Ministry and Life of the Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, clearly says: “*Very little good will be achieved by [liturgical] ceremonies however beautiful, or societies however flourishing, if they are not directed towards educating people to reach Christian maturity*” (no. 6). Someone reaches Christian maturity if, according to the same document, he/she is able “*to determine the solution to their problems and the will of God in the crises of life, great or small,*” able and willing “*not to live only for themselves,*” and capable of carrying out “*their duties in a Christian way in the community of men.*”

**A Catholic will reach a Christian maturity if he/she is willing to share one's life and faith with others**, because—according to Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*—“*Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 8). Pope Francis further mentions that “*Life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 10). This can happen if our faith is based on our personal encounter with Jesus, because “*Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice of a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life*

*a new horizon and a decisive direction*” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 7).

Pope Francis also reminds us that having an experience of personal encounter with Jesus has a very serious consequence for our lives, because “*Jesus, the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person, identifies especially with the little ones* (cf. Mt 25:40). **This reminds us Christians that we are called to care for the vulnerable of the earth**” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 209). The vulnerable of the earth, in the mind of Pope Francis, are “*those living in barrios and the country-side—landless, homeless, lacking food and health care—to the detriment of their rights*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 191), “*the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, migrants*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 210), and “*women who endure situation of exclusion, mistreatment and violence*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 212).

Caring for them, according to Pope Francis, is “*not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a ‘dignified sustenance’ for all people, but also their ‘general welfare and prosperity.’ This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives. A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use*” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 192).

Seen in this way, becoming a real Catholic is not only very challenging, exciting, and fulfilling, but more that it will give us real joy because “**The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus**” (*Evangelii Gaudium* no. 1).