

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – May 2019

Wednesday May 1, 2019



Venezuela: Sucre barrio, San Cristobal

Fr Jario Clavijo (attempted to stop a National Guard attack on his church as Mass ended)

Bishop Mario del Valle Moronta Rodriguez (**UPDATE**: reported “[Mass was ending] when two [members of] the GNB [the National Guard] entered the church on a motorcycle. The pastor came down from the rectory in order to stop them, in the attempt to dialogue, a horde of 40 GNB arrived trying to enter. The pastor, Fr Jairo Clavijo, stopped them, and after them a general arrived by the last name of Ochoa who started arguing with the pastor, in hardly respectful terms. Not content with the outrage, the GNB threw tear gas canisters inside the church. They were unable to evacuate the sacred precinct where there were a good number of faithful including quite a few elderly people. A nun fainted...This incident is extremely serious and is an attack on the Catholic Church. I blame the aforementioned General Ochoa as well as the military authorities in the region for this despicable incident which by itself speaks of the intentionality of the attackers who don't have the least respect for human dignity and don't even show any fear of God”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-national-guard-attacks-church-during-mass-89610>

Thursday May 2, 2019



Nigeria: Dong village, Plateau state

David Musa (aged 26, **killed** by Fulani Muslims)

Nuhu Ako (aged 42, church youth leader, **UPDATE**: described the killing of David Musa “We heard the sound of gunshots around the stream west of Dong village, where you’re now talking to us. We rushed there to find out what happened and found again the killing of a

member of our community...We are farmers and have not been able to continue with our vocation because of these attacks. We and our elders and church leaders have met several times with these herdsmen to understand what is prompting them to attack us without finding any real reason for such acts against us. [T]hey would impress it on their people to end such attacks on us, but it appears they only do this in order to perfect their plans to attack us the more...The destruction of our houses [in Nzerivoh] was carried out right in the presence of soldiers who were brought to the village to protect us. Instead, we have been forced to escape to Dong community, and here, too, the herdsmen are now attacking this community. We do not know where to run to since the whole of this area is under attack”)

Kadzai Prince Peter (catechist, said “We have tried to embrace all these Fulani people, to live with them. We’ve been kind to them: we gave them our land to stay on and to graze their cattle. Unfortunately, they’ve been killing our members. The way they attack us is terribly bad. We tried to make peace with them, but this has not worked as they keep attacking us. They still kill our members. So, we don’t know what else to do. We as Christians see the herdsmen as our brothers and cannot send them away, but, unfortunately, these Fulani herdsmen do not appreciate our hospitality and are killing us and forcing us out of our lands. We just buried one of our members killed by the herdsmen a moment ago”)

Silas Jacob (aged 42, catechist, described a Muslim attack in Nzehrivoh village, Plateau state on October 13, 2017; **UPDATE:** later said "...last Saturday [April 27], the herdsmen ambushed two of our people and killed them. And just while we were still mourning the two, one of us was again killed yesterday [May 2] in an ambush again by the herdsmen. This is very disheartening. These attacks on us are being carried out in the presence of soldiers, and yet the Nigerian government has not done anything to end these unprovoked attacks on us...We have parishioners who have no places to sleep, food to eat, and even medical supplies for health needs. Truly, those of us who have survived these attacks are suffering”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/05/three-christians-killed-in-ambush-attacks-near-jos-nigeria/>



United States - Pennsylvania

Archbishop Charles Chaput (**UPDATE:** released the following statement: "Over the past few days, videos have gone viral on social media featuring State Representative Brian Sims aggressively harassing young and elderly women who were peacefully praying outside of a Planned Parenthood Clinic in Philadelphia. These videos, which Representative Sims took himself, have rightly sparked broad outrage and garnered much attention in the press. His actions were unbecoming of an elected official...There is much bitter irony that he claims to be a champion for the rights of all women yet he trampled on the rights of others and disgracefully shamed them in public. It was particularly disdainful that he offered a bounty for the identity and home addresses of three young ladies in order to encourage protests at their homes...Representative Sims spoke often of shame and there

was plenty of that to be found in his actions, which demonstrated a complete disregard for civility and basic human decency..."")

<http://archphila.org/statement-of-archbishop-charles-j-chaput-o-f-m-cap-regarding-harassment-of-prayerful-protesters-outside-planned-parenthood-clinic/>

Sunday May 5, 2019



Switzerland

Dabrina Bet-Tamrez (Iranian citizen, daughter of Shamiram Isavi and Pastor Victor Beth Tarmez, sister of Ram-eil, has been working with the UN Human Rights Council to overturn the Iranian conviction of her parents and brother on national security and illegal religious activities charges, recently had to move after Iranian MOIS agents published her Swiss address and photo on social media and encouraged Iranian men in Switzerland to 'visit' her)

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/14164/iran-targeting-christians>

Monday May 6, 2019



Netherlands

Chen Yan (Chinese citizen, asylum applicant, detained in an immigration facility [on or before April 2, 2019](#) after documenting Chinese persecutions, at risk of deportation to China; **UPDATE:** released)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/05/dutch-officials-release-human-rights.html>

Tuesday May 7, 2019



India: Khunti

Fr Alphonse Aind SJ (aged 48, middle school principal in [Kochang village, Jharkhand state](#), arrested on [June 22, 2018](#) on fabricated charges of organizing the abduction and rape of five social activists by six Pathagadi tribal gunmen after the gunmen had seized his automobile, denied bail; **UPDATE**: convicted on conspiracy charges, church officials continue to insist the charges are fabricated)

<http://mattersindia.com/2019/05/jesuit-priest-5-others-convicted-in-gang-rape-case/>



United States – Colorado: Highlands Ranch

Kendrick Ray Castillo (aged 18, son of John Castillo, student, **shot dead** in his school while attempting to disarm another student, the armed student was motivated by anti-Christian sentiments)

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/meet-the-hero-from-the-robotics-team-who-died-rushing-the-colorado-stem-shooter/>

Wednesday May 8, 2019



Bangladesh

Church security has increased after the Sri Lankan Easter church attacks

Bangladesh: Tejgaon, Dhaka

Fr Kamal Corraya (said "In the past there were three agents in front of the main door of the church, now there are ten. After the massacres in Sri Lanka, we gathered with the members of the parish council and decided to increase surveillance, especially during Sunday masses", parishioners have been asked to not bring large bags to church)

Bangladesh: Chittagong

Fr Jermon D'Rozario (said of steps taken at the cathedral "In addition to policemen, there are sometimes agents of the [elite] Rapid Action Battalion to guarantee our security")

Bangladesh: Narikelbari

Fr Loton Gomes (attended a meeting of about 92 clergy with law enforcement, said "there are many small Protestant congregations in the area, in addition to the Catholic churches. Police gave us some useful tips, like installing video surveillance cameras, increasing the

number of guards and avoiding large bags. We must be suspicious of people we do not know and who might try to avoid the request for identification by the agents")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Increased-security-around-Bangladeshi-churches-following-Sri-Lanka-attacks-46962.html>



Pakistan

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 48, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, convicted in 2009 of blasphemy; the Supreme Court on [October 31, 2018](#) issued a ruling that overturned her conviction on the grounds that she had been denied presumption of innocence, ordered her immediate release; **UPDATE:** left the country for Canada)

Pakistan: Lahore

Fr James Channan OP (**UPDATE:** condemned the terror attack on a Sufi shrine "This is another sad example of religious terrorism. The terrorists are doing everything to create fear among the faithful and block them in living their religious practices. This explosion in the holy month of Ramadan is terrible. In this month of fasting, mosques and shrines are always crowded with faithful. We want to express our solidarity with the government, the security forces and the families of the victims")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore:-At-least-9-dead-and-24-wounded-in-attack-on-a-Sufi-shrine-46954.html>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/asia-bibi-is-free-at-last>

Sunday May 12, 2019



Pakistan: Okara

Fr James Bahadur (100 year old cemetery vandalized, more than 30 tombs destroyed, stated "It is very sad to see that some people attacked our Christian cemetery, they broke crosses and damaged graves. It is an offense to our faith, our religious feelings are hurt, the guilty must be arrested...This action of vandalism has spread terror in the city and our people are afraid. It is an act carried out by fundamentalists to sow hatred among people of various faiths...")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66051->

[ASIA PAKISTAN Christian cemetery devastated by vandals an attempt to sow terror](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66051-)



Burkina Faso: Dablo

Fr Simeon Yampa (aged 34, **killed** at Mass along with five others by jihadists, church burned)

Bishop Theophile Nare (wrote "Fr Simeon Yampa was a humble person, obedient and full of love, he loved his parishioners")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66018->

[AFRICA BURKINA FASO Today the funeral of Fr Simeon Yampa and five faithful killed in the attack during Sunday Mass](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66018-)

Monday May 13, 2019



India: New Delhi

Gornath Chalanseth (father of four, imprisoned for the **August 2008** murder of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati; **UPDATE**: granted bail by the Supreme Court)

Anto Akkara (journalist; **UPDATE**: stated "This bail order is a landmark and huge victory in the fight for justice for Kandhamal's seven innocents. This bail order of the Supreme Court, led by the ADF legal team, will be the first step towards acquittal of the innocent Christians languishing in jail for a decade for a crime they never committed")

Bhaskar Sunamajhi (husband of Debaki, father of one; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

Bijay Kumar Sunseth (husband of Pabitra Sanseth, father of six; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

Budhadeb Nayak (husband of Nilandri, father of five; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

Durjo Sunamajhi (husband of Gumili, father of five; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

Munda Badmajhi (husband of Bandigudali, father of four; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

Sanatan Badmajhi (husband of Badusi, father of four; **UPDATE**: still in prison)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66017->

[ASIA INDIA One of seven innocent Christians accused in Orissa released](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66017-)



Egypt: Al-Wahda district, Shubra al-Khaymah city, Qaliubiya province

Fr Makad Saad (**shot dead** in front of his church reportedly by another priest over a declined loan)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66025->
[AFRICA EGYPT Coptic priest killed by a Christian guard](#)



Niger: Dolbel

Fr Nicaise Avlouke (injured in the hand and leg during an attack on his church)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66023->
[AFRICA NIGER Catholic parish attacked parish priest wounded Sahel Christian communities increasingly at risk](#)

Tuesday May 14, 2019



Nicaragua: Esteli

Bishop Juan Abelardo Mata Guevara (shot at by pro-government paramilitaries at a police checkpoint in **Nindiri** while in his vehicle on **July 15, 2018**, escaped injury; **UPDATE:** said "We have said several times: this regime does not have the political will to reach an agreement for the good of the country. For the regime, the people are only the small group that supports it. It has its own program: to remain in power at all costs and create a scenario that will allow it to continue acting in political life...[President Daniel Ortega] has no intention of seeking a peaceful solution to the socio-political crisis that the country has been experiencing for a year")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66024->
[AMERICA NICARAGUA Bishop Mata Guevara dialogue is blocked no political prisoners have been released there is no will to resolve the crisis](#)

Friday May 17, 2019



Australia

Israel Folau (aged 30, husband of Maria Tuta'ia, top-ranked professional rugby player, told by Rugby Australia on [April 11, 2019](#) that it would move to void his AU\$4m contract after he posted on Instagram Bible quotes that listed particular sins as risking damnation, including homosexuality; spoke at an Easter service on [April 21, 2019](#), broke down when he said "For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"; **UPDATE**: contract voided, said "I am deeply saddened by today's decision to terminate my employment and I am considering my options. As Australians, we are born with certain rights, including the right to freedom of religion and the right to freedom of expression. The Christian faith has always been a part of my life and I believe it is my duty as a Christian to share God's word. Upholding my religious beliefs should not prevent my ability to work or play for my club and country")

<https://www.news.com.au/sport/rugby/australia-reacts-to-official-israel-folau-sacking/news-story/28e7e7c01434ef63a388486de223ffee>



Burkina Faso: Bobo-Dioulasso

Fr Fernando Fernandez SDB (Spanish citizen, **stabbed to death** by a former cook)

Fr Germain Plakoo-Mlapa SDB (Togolese citizen, stabbed, hospitalized, out of danger)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/66053-AFRICA_BURKINA_FASO_A_Spanish_Salesian_killed_in_Bobo_Dioulasso

Saturday May 18, 2019



Nicaragua: Managua

Cardinal Leopoldo Jose Brenes Solorzano (aged 70, roughed up by pro-government paramilitaries in [Diriamba](#) on [July 9, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: condemned police violence committed in front of the cathedral against people protesting the death of a North American in prison)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66052->

[AMERICA NICARAGUA Cardinal Brenes condemns the police violence committed in front of the Cathedral of Managua](#)

May 2019, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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<http://todaysmartyrs.org/events/>

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