

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – December 2020

Tuesday December 8, 2020



Pakistan: Lahore

Maham Manzoor (aged 18, sister of Anum Manzoor, niece of Nasreen Bibi, domestic worker, forcibly converted to Islam, one day after saying she looked forward to Christmas)

Anum Manzoor (aged 20, sister of Maham Manzoor, niece of Nasreen Bibi, domestic worker, forcibly converted to Islam)

Nasreen Bibi (aunt of Maham Manzoor and Anum Manzoor, called police after Maham's employer claimed she had converted to Islam, said “Maham was visibly distressed when Asma [the employer] brought her to the room. When the officer asked her about the conversion claim, Maham nodded in approval, but I could clearly see fear in her eyes. I pleaded to speak to my niece in private, but the police officer cursed me and told me to get out of the house and never raise this matter again”, then received a phone call from Anum's employer: "Azmat told me to forget about my nieces, as both of them were Muslims now. He also warned me not to come to his house, threatening that I would rot in jail if I did. I could not believe my ears. Both of my nieces were being held hostage in the name of religion, and there was nothing I could do to rescue them")

<https://morningstarnews.org/2020/12/muslims-forcibly-convert-christian-maids-in-pakistan-relative-says/>

Thursday December 10, 2020



Egypt: Alexandria

Two Muslim brothers with a history of anti-Christian harassment went on a stabbing spree after their mother died

Fr Michael Gamil (witnessed the crime: “The matter began with insults and curses to the shopkeepers for being Christians and Copts...They say they started cursing the Copts because their mother died, and two years earlier, they cursed the Copts because their brother died: what do [family] death and the Copts have to do with each other??”)

Rames (brother of Abel, shopkeeper, **stabbed**, hospitalized, **died**)

Abel (brother of Rames, grocer, stabbed, hospitalized)

Tariq Fawzi Shenouda (clothing shopkeeper, stabbed near the heart, hospitalized)

Fr Paul (partially blind, cursed and insulted by the attackers in his church)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2020/12/23/muslims-kill-wound-coptic-christians-in-unacknowledged-hate-crime/>

Tuesday December 15, 2020



Pakistan: Lahore

Maham Manzoor (aged 18, sister of Anum Manzoor, niece of Nasreen Bibi, domestic worker, forcibly converted to Islam on **December 8, 2020**, one day after saying she looked forward to Christmas; **UPDATE**: appeared in court)

Anum Manzoor (aged 20, sister of Maham Manzoor, niece of Nasreen Bibi, domestic worker, forcibly converted to Islam on **December 8, 2020**; **UPDATE**: appeared in court)

Nasreen Bibi (aunt of Maham Manzoor and Anum Manzoor, **UPDATE**: said “We hoped that the court would consider the circumstances under which these conversion claims were being made, but to our horror the court rejected our pleas and handed the girls back in their Muslim employers’ custody”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2020/12/muslims-forcibly-convert-christian-maids-in-pakistan-relative-says/>



Nigeria: on the road to Igboukwu, Aguata county, Anambra state

Fr Valentine Oluchukwu Ezeagu SMMM (abducted while travelling to his father's funeral)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/69240>

Tuesday December 15, 2020



Pakistan: Lahore

Imran Ghafoor Masih (aged 32, arrested on [July 1, 2009](#) on a charge of Quran desecration despite police observation that none of the papers he had burned were from the Quran; sentenced to life imprisonment and fined more than US\$1,000 for Quran desecration on [January 11, 2010](#); **UPDATE**: conviction overturned)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2020/12/christian-in-pakistan-acquitted-of-blasphemy-after-11-years-in-prison/>

Wednesday December 16, 2020



Nigeria

Fr Valentine Oluchukwu Ezeagu SMMM (abducted on [December 15, 2020 on the road to Igboukwu, Aguata county, Anambra state](#) while travelling to his father's funeral; **UPDATE**: released)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/69247>

Friday December 18, 2020



Nigeria: Abuja

Msgr Obiora F Ike (Director of the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice, Peace and Caritas [CIDJAP], **UPDATE**: issued a statement: "More than 100,000 people have been killed in ten years due to religiously motivated killings, the highest in any country in the world at

this time...ethnic intolerance, terrorism and State-sponsored religious fundamentalism are growing...The migration and security issues and its conflagration for the globe would be too much to handle aside the humanitarian crisis in the event of a full-blown confrontation...Unfortunately, Christians and many others in Nigeria feel the lack of interest from the West in the Nigerian conflict which, if left unchecked, could have catastrophic consequences")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/69256->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Kankara school students released Nigeria runs the risks of exploding warns a Nigerian prelate](http://www.fides.org/en/news/69256-)

Thursday December 24, 2020



Indonesia: Jayapura, Papua province

Zhage Sil (seminarian, **killed**)

Fr Johan (spoke on the death of Zhage Sil "I am shocked by his sudden and tragic death. He would have become a deacon next year and a diocesan priest immediately after. He was a courageous person who cared about people's needs and was not afraid to raise his voice, especially when it came to justice. We hope to receive clear news about his death soon")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/69295->

[ASIA INDONESIA Catholic seminarian killed in the Indonesian province of Papua](http://www.fides.org/en/news/69295-)



Nigeria: Pemi village, near Chibok, Borno state

Pastor Bulus Yikura (abducted in an ISWAP attack that killed 11)

[https://morningstarnews.org/2021/02/islamist-terrorists-in-nigeria-threaten-to-e from captivityxecutel-pastor/](https://morningstarnews.org/2021/02/islamist-terrorists-in-nigeria-threaten-to-e-from-captivityxecutel-pastor/)

Saturday December 26, 2020



Pakistan: Charar, Lahore

Raja Warris (aged 25, catechist, arrested after sharing an academic post on Facebook, moved by police along with his wife and two children to a safe house)

Rev Ayub Gujjar (said “The incident took place after Warris shared a post on Facebook on Dec. 22 [2020], which was deemed blasphemous by local Muslims...On Dec. 26, we were informed by our congregation members in Charar that a huge mob had gathered in the locality on the call of a cleric affiliated with the extremist religio-political outfit, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan [TLP], and were demanding the beheading of the catechist. Fearing violence, hundreds of Christian residents fled their homes while around 400 anti-riot policemen were deployed in the area to thwart violence...We sought time for negotiation with the protest leaders, but the police said they could not guarantee the safety of our people if the accused was not presented for arrest. We reluctantly agreed to bring Warris but demanded that he be kept at an undisclosed location due to the serious threat to his life”)

Bishop Azad Marshall (said “Warris is an educated youth who loves to serve God. I was deeply concerned about the situation in Charar, as any wrong action could have resulted in violent riots that could have put the lives of our people at risk. We immediately got in touch with senior government and police officials, which helped in restoring order in the neighborhood, and fortunately no loss of life and property was reported”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/01/christian-lay-leader-arrested-on-blasphemy-charges-in-pakistan/>

Sunday December 27, 2020



Nigeria: Owerri, Imo state

Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe (abducted along with his driver by several gunmen)

Ndubuisi Robert (driver for Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe, abducted)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/69306-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Auxiliary_Bishop_of_Owerri_in_south_east_Nigeria_kidnapped

Monday December 28, 2020



United States - Massachusetts: Springfield

Rev Dr Terrlyn L Curry Avery (church destroyed in an arson attack)

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/maine-man-dushko-vulchev-charged-hate-crimes-black-church-fire-springfield/>

<https://www.mlkchurchma.org/our-pastor.html>

Wednesday December 30, 2020



China: Hong Kong

The government has begun to pressure the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Hong Kong to be silent

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium (aged 88; **UPDATE**: reported to have said "We are at the bottom of the pit – there is no freedom of expression anymore. All these things are normal in mainland China. We are becoming like any other city in China. For any word you say [the authorities] can say you're offending the National Security Law...Apparently the authorities in the diocese have now decided to please the government by discouraging certain initiatives of the commission...rather than respecting the commission in doing its job according to the social teaching of the Church. I'm afraid that a real persecution has already begun...They are afraid of irritating or displeasing the Beijing government, so everybody knows that the future bishop of Hong Kong needs to have the blessing from Beijing. We hope they have the courage to assign a good shepherd to our diocese instead of appointing somebody who would be only an official chosen by the Beijing government...I don't know for how long you can still hear my voice. So please pray for us")

Lina Chen (executive secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission; **UPDATE**: reported to have said "Although the commission faces more challenges under the National Security Law, we will continue to implement Catholic Social Teachings for the promotion of social justice in every aspect of human life")

China: Jilin

Bishop Andrew Han Jingtao (aged 99, scholar, imprisoned in 1953 in a labor camp for refusing to join the official church; released in 1980; consecrated bishop in 1986; **UPDATE**: died of natural causes, had been under constant surveillance since 1997)

China: Taiyuan, Shanxi province

Pastor An Yankui (husband of Yao Congya, home Bible study raided by police, arrested along with five others)

Yao Congya (wife of Pastor An Yankui, wrote "While eight Christians were studying the Bible at our home tonight, approximately three dozen security agents barged in. After they forcibly restrained those studying, they searched our home. Officials confiscated our church's choir robe vests and Christian books. After they handcuffed my husband and five Christian sisters, PBS officers transported them to the police station. I was not taken away because of our small child")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Bishop-Andrew-Han-Jingtao,-a-giant-of-culture-and-faith-of-the-underground-Church,-dies-51968.html>

<https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/news/world/special-report-nuns-arrested-as-beijing-turns-up-heat-on-church-in-hong-kong-535842/>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2020/12/psb-officers-raid-home-bible-study.html>

Thursday December 31, 2020



China: Xinxiang, Henan province

Pastor Li Juncai (arrested along with three other parishioners while protesting the government's [February 20, 2019](#) removal of a cross from the roof of their church; **UPDATE:** convicted on various charges of disrupting public service and financial crimes, sentenced to 5 and a half years' imprisonment and fined 50,000 yuan [US\$7,659])

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2021/03/in-closed-trial-xinxiang-court-rejects.html>



Nigeria: Edo state

Fr Aloysius Ezoenyeka OSB (U.S. resident, brother of Titus, shot by bandits during an attempted abduction, escaped, hospitalized, recovered after surgery)

God-is-Great (aged 11, son of SonyMopo, drove Fr Aloysius Ezoenyeka to the hospital)

SonyMopo (father of God-is-Great, shot at the bandits to get Fr Aloysius Ezoenyeka to the hospital)

Chidiebere (helped transport Fr Aloysius Ezoenyeka to the hospital)

<https://catholicnewsagency.com/news/247376/the-harrowing-story-of-an-la-priest-who-survived-a-shooting-in-nigeria>



United Kingdom: Trent College

Rev Dr Bernard Randall (aged 47, school chaplain, discovered on [July 1, 2019](#) that his school had reported him to the police as a possible terrorism risk after he gave a homily telling students that they were free to respectfully disagree on Christian principles with the school's new LGBT curricula, later stated: "I was terrified. I did not sleep. What was I supposed to tell my family? Being reported as a potential terrorist, extremist and a danger to children are arguably the worst crimes you could be accused of...When I found out that they had reported me without telling me, my mind was blown trying to comprehend it. I had gone to such lengths in the sermon to stress that we must respect one another no matter what, even people we disagree with"; told on [August 30, 2019](#) that he would be dismissed, but the dismissal was later overruled by the school governors, later stated "During the disciplinary hearing, I was never asked what I thought, they just assumed that I had extreme religious views. I don't think the Church of England is an extremist organization"; **UPDATE**: dismissed under the pretext of Covid-19 restrictions)

<https://christianconcern.com/news/school-chaplain-reported-to-terrorist-watchdog-for-sermon-on-identity-politics/>

December 2020, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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

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