

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-01-08 through 2017-01-14



Belarus

Mother Vasilisa Medved (aged 67, **stabbed to death** by a mentally ill woman)

Date: January 5, 2017

Location: Borisovo region, Minsk province

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/the-hegumeness-of-st-xenia-orthodox-convent-stabbed-to-death-in-belarus/>



Brazil

Pastor Valdemiro Santiago (aged 53, stabbed in the neck and back during a televised church service, hospitalized, required 25 stitches, said "I was imposing my hands, just hearing a miracle, a testimony, and someone came in behind, I do not know, I did not see who it was, and stabbed the neck, or a razor, I do not know. Pray for me. I forgive the person who did this")

Date: January 8, 2017

Location: Sao Paulo

Source:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelical.pastor.forgives.man.who.stabbed.him.during.church.service/103802.htm>



China

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for 'illegally holding state secrets'; formally charged on [January 22, 2016](#) with 'obstructing justice' and 'gathering a crowd to disturb social order'; **UPDATE**: sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment)

Date: January 5, 2017

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/01/prominent-pastor-sentenced-to-two-years.html>



India

Event: Christian leaders welcomed a court ruling prohibiting electoral campaigning on the basis of religion, but pointed out it left standing a 1995 Supreme Court ruling that Hinduism was not a religion with regard to such laws

Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas (**UPDATE:** said "The judgment could have been more complete and global had the court pronounced that seeking votes on the basis of the Hindu religion is against the secular ideals of India")

Fr Paul Thelakkat (**UPDATE:** said "The court's interpretation of Hinduism has today led to demands of homogenization and assimilation of minority communities into the Hindu way of life. What remains to be seen is how will this secularism be implemented when the court itself sees Hinduism as part of secular India")

Fr Savarimuthu Shankar (**UPDATE:** said "This is going to create more confusion and not going to serve the purpose of a secular and democratic country")

Date: January 2, 2017

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholics-skeptical-over-indian-court-ban-on-use-of-religion-in-elections/78019>

Fr Joseph Dhanaswami (aged 45, high school principal, arrested on [September 11, 2015](#) on sexual abuse charges at the instigation of Hindu radicals; **UPDATE:** acquitted for lack of evidence, said "I knew that one day I would be freed, but did not know when. I had full faith in my bishop, diocese and the judiciary..[jail was] a very hard experience and quite painful [but it brought me] closer to God and deepened [my] faith in Him. It also gave me a different kind of experience of how people live in jail")

Sr Christ Maria CSS (**UPDATE:** acquitted)

Philomina Kerketta (school maid, acquitted)

Bishop Patras Minj (**UPDATE:** said "We are relieved. It was a totally fabricated case aimed at tarnishing the image of the church. The attempts are to keep people away from the church")

Date: January 9, 2017

Location: Chhattisgarh state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-jailed-on-rape-charges-released/78064>



Italy

Event: Two priests were slashed in church by a mentally ill man with a broken bottle

Fr Adolfo Ralf FI

Fr Angelo Gaeta

Date: January 7, 2017

Location: Rome

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/kschiffer/priests-slashed-by-deranged-man-in-roman-basilica>



Mali

Beatrice Stockly (social worker, missionary, Swiss citizen, abducted in [Abaradjou, Timbuktu](#) on [January 8, 2016](#), had received death threats; **UPDATE**: video of her in captivity released, reported to be in good health)

Date: January 10, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/02/4302081/>



Mexico

Fr Joaquin Hernandez Sifuentes (disappeared in Coahuila on [January 3, 2017](#), personal items such as eyeglasses left behind in his rectory; **UPDATE**: **found dead**)

Bishop José Raul Vera Lopez OP (reported on the death of Fr Joaquin Hernandez Sifuentes, thanked the government for their assistance with the case, called on citizens to realize that they and clergy can all become victims of crime "We live in a wrecked environment, in a shattered society, and priests do not live under a bell jar")

Date: January 12, 2017

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/61509-AMERICA_MEXICO_The_priest_who_had_been_missing_since_3_January_found_dead#.WHjiGIMrKM8



Nigeria

Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri (**UPDATE:** said of a Muslim herdsmen attack on a Christian village that killed at least 10 "The Fulani are Muslim and the land they are attacking belongs mainly to ethnic groups that are Christian - now there is religious hatred driving the violence...the attacks on Christians meet with seeming indifference on the part of the country's leadership – either the police do not have the appropriate weaponry to intervene, or else they have not been given orders to do so")

Date: January 7, 2017

Location: Kwayine village, Adamawa state

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/nigeria-militants-burn-houses-in-a-christian-village-10-killed/>

Event: Village attacked by Muslim herdsmen, 2 killed, 2 missing

Ephraim Ezekiel (aged 19, **killed**)

Joshua Ladi (aged 41, **killed**)

Date: January 7, 2017

Location: Tsonje, Kaduna state

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Bloodbath-in-southern-Kaduna-peaceful-Christian-protests-in-Nigeria-call-for-end-to-the-killings>



Pakistan

EVENT: Christians condemned the refusal of a provincial governor to sign the recently enacted law against forced religious conversions

Saleem Khursheed Khokhar (former member of provincial parliament)

Jacqueline Sultan (attorney)

Date: January 10, 2017

Location: Sindh province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/former-christian-lawmaker-laments-revocation-of-minorities-protection-bill/>

Yasir Bhatti ('young' activist said "Here in local bazars some shopkeepers are selling shoes which are blaspheming Christian faith as symbols of cross have been inscribed on their soles...I urge the provincial as well as federal governments to take notice of the desecration of Christian symbol. I call upon the Peshawar High Court to take action in this case")

Date: January 10, 2017

Location: Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/peshawar-sale-of-cross-inscribed-shoes-vex-christians/>



Turkey

Bishop Ruben Tierrablanca Gonzalez (Mexican citizen, said after recent terror attacks “Although we can move around freely, people are understandably afraid of coming to Mass and there’s been a drop in participation. But all churches have been given police guards since a coup was attempted last July, and security officials have shown great kindness to us. Christians, Muslims and Jews are talking together and sharing the same anxieties, although the future doesn’t depend on us”)

Date: January 6, 2017

Location: Istanbul

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/01/06/turkish-bishop-says-catholics-are-afraid-of-coming-to-mass-after-terror-attacks/>



Uganda

Bishop George Edweu (object of an assassination attempt on [December 4, 2016](#) by a Muslim sheikh, the sheikh abandoned his mission and converted and went into hiding with his family; **UPDATE**: attacked and beaten by six masked men who demanded he divulge the whereabouts of the former sheikh, said “As I fell down, a vehicle with bright lights flashed, which scared them away, and they disappeared into the nearby bush. The vehicle arrived and took me into the church compound. Inside the church building we found a letter with a threatening message: ‘We are going to destroy your church unless you show us where [name withheld] is’”)

Date: January 2, 2017

Location: Amuria

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/pastor-uganda-attacked-sheikh-sent-kill-becomes-christian/>



United Kingdom

Event: Bishops responded to a government official who told a parliamentary committee “It is not OK for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage...I have a problem with the expression of religious conservatism because I think often it can be anti-equalities”

Bishop Philip Egan (**UPDATE**: said that restrictions on Catholic schools following church teaching would be Orwellian, added that teaching sexual morality has become “like

arguing with an alcoholic. After a while, they won't argue with you on grounds of reason, they just become furious and respond that way. There is something in our culture increasingly like that")

Bishop Mark Davies (**UPDATE:** said that 'British values' were shaped by Christianity and "These values would be undermined if an 'equalities agenda' in schools became the vehicle for an increasing intolerance of Christian teaching...Strangely, it is the historic teachings of Christianity and the Christian vision of marriage which might be in need of toleration")

Date: January 12, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/01/12/bishops-respond-to-government-advisors-comments-on-catholicism/>

Gordon Larmour (street preacher, found not guilty of threatening or abusive manner aggravated by prejudice relating to sexual orientation" and "assault", had himself been assaulted by two young men after they asked him what the Bible taught and his answer angered them)

Date: January 9, 2017

Location: Kilmarnock, Scotland

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/christian-evangelist-cleared-at-sheriffs-court>



United States - New Jersey

Fr Martin Rooney (Catholic hospital director of pastoral care, sued along with the hospital after denying surgery for gender reassignment)

Date reported: January 6, 2017

Location: Paterson

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/woman-launches-suit-to-force-catholic-hospital-into-doing-sex-change-surger>

Today's Martyrs

*For more information please visit our web site at <http://todaysmartyrs.org/>
or write to*

**2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455
Fairfield CT 06825-2400**

Permission is granted to copy, disseminate and forward this document without charge or fee, provided no changes are made and full attribution is made to Today's Martyrs