

Prayer Network – October 2017

International Day of the Girl Child



#1

The Girl Child is valued. She is precious, honoured and loved.

“So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself. He created them male and female. God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
(Genesis 1:27-28)

What is the value of a girl?



#2

A child, whether a girl or a boy, is a creation of God. God blessed her to be fruitful and gave her authority over all other creatures on earth. There is no distinction in God’s blessing to a male or a female child. They are both God’s loved ones.

A girl child is a human being. The value of a girl child is value of a human life. She is gifted, intelligent, imaginative and creative. She makes up half the world, contributes to its growth, its beauty and its progress. She is as fully human, fully alive as her male counterpart. She can change cultural attitudes and mind-sets. Her voice matters and carries weight.

Let us lift her up where she is deprived, violated, or discriminated against.



#3



#4

Who is she who is short-changed?

Unfortunately, in many countries and cultures the girl child carries negative images of discrimination and abusive treatment, for they are devalued by countless years of superstitious beliefs and misinformation. Those born into the world risk death in infancy, either through murder, abuse, neglect or sickness. If they survive to the age of five, they may face servitude, irrational submission, childbearing, brokenness, exploitation, violence, sexual abuse and discrimination. The illogical and ignorant reason is that she is a girl.

Cultures that believe that the girl child is inferior to the boy child subject her to strangling, drowning, abortion, and deny her the basic rights of childhood. Girls face and experience discrimination, sexual stereotypes, rejection, devaluation, and violence, often at the hands of the people closest to them, whom they look up to, love and trust the most.

We want to pray for the girl child who is

Abused – those who suffer female genital mutilation, are forced into marriage and child bearing while they are still children; sold or bonded into labour.

O God of Love, embrace these children that they may feel that they belong and are accepted within their family, community and culture.

Neglected. Those uncared for, deprived of proper meals and health care. Left to fend for themselves in the slums or the streets

Lord Jesus, lay your hands on these children, bring them to yourself that they may hear and understand how you value and love them; for to them belong the kingdom of heaven.

Sexually Exploited. Since their families are unable to care for them they are often forced into becoming soldiers' "wives," or "trophies", temple "wives" or forced into prostitution and/or early marriages.

God of justice and truth, stop all the people and mechanisms that sexually exploit and traffic girls and liberate these girls to live in the freedom of the children of God.

Lacking Education - Discrimination and poverty deprive many girls of an education which keeps them in poor health, restricts their prospects to a brighter future and traps them in the poverty cycle.

O God of unity and truth, we pray that all peoples and all cultures may view the girl child as your precious creation and through the knowledge of your word understand that all belong to you through Jesus, your Son and are one in him; that all prejudices against another human be completely eradicated.

Rejected: Those whose birth bring disappointment and sadness and are viewed as a burden to society.

O God, send forth your light and your truth to all families gifted with the girl child that they may rejoice at every gift of life. That every girl who feels rejected may experience restoration of her dignity and self-worth and be emotionally strengthened to live life to the full.

God of all life, you created every girl in your image and likeness. Pour out your love on them who even today feel less than human because of their background or culture. Give them your protection and loving care. May all the people in their lives show them acceptance and treasure them as your gift to their family, community, society and the world. Assure them with signs of your love and lift them up in hope of a better future and lead them out of their prisons of condemnation into the freedom of your beloved children. We also remember the privileged girl child, that they may live their lives in gratitude and integrity, caring and sharing their blessings with the disadvantaged, the marginalised and the troubled through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Recommended Practice

Changing the deplorable situation of millions of girls will necessitate changing the worldview of their cultures. Not everyone can do that on a macro scale. However each one can contribute to change by the following:

- Become aware through exposure, reading and research and sharing whatever knowledge one has with people in her/his circle of work or life.
- Pray daily for these disadvantaged children especially for the little girls
 - o In this month of October, gather your family/community to pray the rosary to honour our Blessed Mother on the centenary of her apparition at Fatima bringing to her all the suffering girl child
- Organise your small community to help at least one girl child a year
 - o Raise funds through projects and/or ask family and friends to contribute to sponsor a girl child's education in a developing country (Ministries in countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, India, Africa, etc can identify a child for sponsorship by countries that are doing well)
 - o Organise a water filtration project or to sink a well to help a village in any of the above country
- Embrace a girl child to help her feel loved.
- Share a nutritious meal with a hungry girl child
- Make her smile



Images

- #1 Change One Life
- #2 Author William Lambers (23/06/12)
- #3 Deccan Chronicle (25/08/15)
- #4 Centre for Research and Social Development
- #5 Financial Tribune (28/08/17)