

PRAYER FOR THE GIRL CHILD



Whenever a baby is born, celebrations follow. There are endless feasts and parties to welcome the beautiful new life that is formed. There is happiness, enjoyment, exhilaration, and tears of joy. However, in some places, this kind of an environment persists only if it's a male child, that is, a son. If it's a girl child, then disappointment clouds over. It is surprising enough that this kind of discrimination still persists in many parts of the world. The girl child is not given enough worth, for it is believed that it is the son who is going to take full responsibility of the family and carry forward the legacy. The girls in the photo are not attending school, even

though it is school time. They are home busy to help with family chores. They lack the opportunity and the means to learn, develop and thrive like other children.

The Girl Child is important and valued. Above all she is precious, honoured and loved by God the creator.

A story from Kenya

Agnes and her sister Naomi (not their real names) are not in school, though other children in the neighbourhood attend school. They lack the school fees, food, clothing and other items to attend school like other children. Above all, they are girls, and education is not a priority for girls in Kangeta community and some other communities in Kenya. They remain at home and support their mother with the house work. Their mother is the breadwinner of the family and travels 17 kilometres every day to collect firewood and sell it to get some money to buy food for the family. She is not formally educated, and lacks opportunities to earn a living. Her husband is a drunkard and does not support the family nor bother about Agnes and Naomi being in school. As usual girls and women provide for the family and do the heavy work, they are discriminated against, overworked, valued less, exploited and forced into harmful cultural practices. All these factors affect the life of the girl child physically, socially, economically, spiritually, emotionally and psychologically.

Around the world there are similar or worse situations affecting millions of girls. They are trafficked, exploited, battered, and affected by harmful cultural practices, missing out on education, economic opportunities and life-giving relationships. It is for these reasons we invite you to pray for and with girls everywhere, that their dignity will be respected and that they might live the abundant life that God planned for every human being.

We pray for the safety of unborn and infant girls

Girls face dangers before they are even born. In some cultures, a preference for sons puts pressure on women to terminate their pregnancy if they are expecting a girl. Girls who survive until birth may be neglected, abandoned, or even killed. Seen as less valuable than boys, girls are less likely to be sent to school and may be the last to receive food or medical care. We ask God to protect young girls from people who fail to see their true value.

Creator God, touch the lives of girls even before they are born. Let them be born healthy and whole, and let their parents love and cherish them as much as you do.

“You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother’s womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.” Psalm 139:13-14.

We pray for educational opportunities for girls

Cultural factors such as female genital mutilation (FGM), family laws, teenage pregnancies, gender inequality and early marriage hinder the girl child from attending school and immediately the girl is betrothed and married off. In some cases, they are married as second wives in a polygamous marriage. In such contexts, the girls (young wives) are ill-treated by co-wives, remain illiterate in respect to marital and family laws. They lack knowledge on the right to education, hence parents do not take their children to school.

Lord Jesus, may you provide opportunities for young girls longing for education and a better future. Bless them with all their basic needs and supportive families to help them meet their future dreams.

“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.” Proverbs 3:13-14

We pray for girls and women affected by female genital mutilation

On 17th September, 2019, in Meru (Kenya) three girls had the ‘cut’ though it is clear in government policy that this act should not be done to the girls. The parents were aware and did it secretly. It was discovered by the police and the parents (women) were put into police custody for six months, with an alternative to pay a fine of Ksh. 200,000, according to the Meru local radio station Weru FM.

In February 2015, in Rome, Pope Francis strongly condemned female genital mutilation, calling it a degradation that had been to be combated. “The Pope mentioned that there are many forms of slavery, the commercialization, and mutilation of the bodies of women, which call out to us to be committed to defeat these types of degradation that reduce girls and women to mere objects that are bought and sold,” according to news on a meeting on women’s issues hosted by the Vatican’s Council for Culture.

Protector God, help families that practice FGM to see its damaging effects on girls and young women. Motivate families to turn away from damaging practices and protect their female children from all forms of harm, including FGM.

“God made humans in his own image ... male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

We pray for efforts to prevent child marriage

In Kenya, 23% of girls are married before their 18th birthday, and 4% are married before the age of 15. According to UNICEF, Kenya has the 20th highest absolute number of child brides in the world of 527,000.

Lord Jesus, show your compassion to the multitudes of girls and women who endure the damaging physical and relational effects of child marriage. Holy Spirit, help their husbands love and respect them. Reveal alternatives to parents or change the hearts of those who consider giving up their daughters for social status or financial gain.

“As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.” Psalm 103:13.

Concluding prayer

God of life and compassion, you created every girl in your image and likeness. Hear our prayers and strengthen us, your people, to celebrate the gift of every child. Help us to bring a healing touch to children who are afraid, neglected, or abused, and to take steps towards protecting them. Assure them with signs of your love, and lift them up in hope of a better future. Lead them out of their prisons of condemnation to live in the freedom of your beloved children. 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. We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



Prayer prepared by
Sr. Jane Kailu,
Province of East Central Africa