

# REFLECTIONS ON POPE BENEDICT XVI'S MONTHLY INTENTIONS

June 2010

*Editor's Note: Apostleship of Prayer receives monthly prayer intentions from Pope Benedict XVI and urges Christians throughout the world to unite in prayer for those intentions. The reflections below seek to illuminate the Holy Father's concerns.*

## General Intention

**Respect for Human Life.** *That every national and international institution may strive to guarantee respect for human life from conception to natural death.*



June's general intention is one that is dear to the Heart of Jesus, to which we give special honor in this month of the Sacred Heart.

We respect human life because God gave it to us. We respect each and every human life also because God came to us with a human body. Jesus, God made man, loved us with a heart that was both human and divine. Humanity rejected God's plan, but God didn't give up on us. He sent his Son to life and die and be raised so that we - each one of us - could live forever in union with God.

Jesus died even for babies developing in the womb today, even for elderly people who have lost their faculties. These are lives to be respected and cared for until God calls them home in a natural death.

Our world has many official proclamations and documents affirming that all are "created equal" with certain "inalienable rights." That's a good start. Yet those basic human rights are often denied to whole populations, such as the unborn.

Pope Benedict asks us to pray that national and international institutions may go further than they ever have and proclaim the human right to life from conception to natural death. The Pope has said that safeguarding God's creation begins with safeguarding human life in the womb.

"If we wish to build true peace," said Pope Benedict, "how can we separate... the protection of the environment and the protection of human life, including the life of the unborn? It is in man's respect for himself that his sense of responsibility for creation is shown. As St.



Thomas Aquinas has taught, man represents all that is noble in the universe. Furthermore, as I noted during the recent World Summit on Food Security, 'the world has enough food for all its inhabitants' provided that selfishness does not lead some to hoard the goods which are intended for all" (January 10, 2009, Pope Benedict speaking at the annual meeting for Vatican ambassadors).

**Reflection:**

How will you speak up for the God-given right to life of every person from conception to natural death?

**Reading:**

*Jeremiah 1:4-5* The word of the Lord came to me thus: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

---

**Mission Intention**

**Churches in Asia.** *That the Churches in Asia, a "little flock" among non-Christian populations, may communicate the gospel well and give joyful witness to their faith.*



Pope Benedict has called Asia the most important mission field of Christianity's third millennium. Even if we look at only population projections, it seems clear that Asia's response to the gospel will play a major role in determining the future of Christianity for the foreseeable future. But currently there are great challenges to the spread of the faith in Asia.

Today only about 6 percent of Asians are Christian - in South Asia the estimate is only 2 percent. These percentages sharply contrast the 87 percent of Christians in the Americas, Europe's 77 percent, Oceania's 63 percent, and Africa's 46 percent.

No wonder the Pope sometimes refers to the Churches of Asia as a "little flock." He recognizes that the Christian population is not only small, but also vulnerable. Today it is in Asia where much of the persecution of Christians occurs. Many Christians in India, Iraq, China, Vietnam, and Malaysia are victims of violence, harassment, and discrimination.

It is difficult to be a member of a minority. People don't like to stand out, especially in ways that might make them victims. People want to blend in with those around them and avoid trouble. This human tendency works against evangelization. It makes people resistant to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's why to be effective in communicating the faith Asian Christians must know and live in the joy of the Lord. The joy Asian Christians show in their lives may be the only gospel others will ever "hear."

Let's pray for the little flock of Asia, as the Pope has asked. Let us pray that they may live the faith with joy in spite of the hostility they may experience as a result of it.

Remember too that the Middle East is in Asia - including the place where Jesus was born and raised. Surely Asians occupy a special place in his Heart.

**Reflection:**

Are there ways you can show your love for the people of Asia? How can you support the little flock of Christians there?

**Reading:**

*Luke 12:31-34* Seek his kingdom, and these things will be given you besides. Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.



---

**Prayer of the Month**



Lord God, I thank you for my life and the lives of my brothers and sisters. Help us all understand that abortion ends life, that it violates the right to life you have given to each of your children - from conception to natural death. I commit myself to defend life until all my brothers and sisters are protected and safe. Give me the grace to speak out in defense of the unborn. Help me do what I can to make others aware of the sanctity of life and our moral responsibility to end abortion. Amen.

- Adapted from prayer at [priestsforlife.org](http://priestsforlife.org)

---

*To register as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer, to subscribe to leaflets, or to order additional leaflets for distribution to others, please contact us. Thank you for your generous support of our ministry.*

**APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER**

3211 South Lake Dr., Ste. 216

Milwaukee, WI 53235

414-486-1152 - [www.apostleshipofprayer.org](http://www.apostleshipofprayer.org)

Copyright, 2010: Apostleship of Prayer