

Pray This Week!

- **For the women & girls of Afghanistan.** Since the Taliban has taken over there, the abuse of women and girls has become a daily part of life. Women are denied education, freedom of movement, & the ability to work outside the home except in limited types of jobs. They cannot leave their homes without a male family member's permission. They face abuse & imprisonment at the whim of Taliban enforcers for a mounting list of things. Many face rape by strangers, Taliban 'authorities' & male family members with no legal recourse. There are no protections for women & girls – all justified by Taliban religious views.
- **All those dealing with natural disasters. Among them:** Much of the world is experiencing periods of excessive heat this summer. In the U.S., drought continues in some of the west & south. Fires continue to burn in New Mexico, Nevada, & California. Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, & Nevada have had major flooding. South Africa, Brazil, Australia, India & Bangladesh are among other countries experiencing serious flooding. There was an earthquake in the Philippines. Major wild fires are burning in Spain, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, & France. Europe, where air conditioning is rare, is dealing with record heat.
- **Countries Dealing with Major Political and/or Economic Upheaval** making life difficult for everyone. Among them are Sri Lanka, Venezuela, the Philippines, South Africa, Nigeria, South Sudan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Columbia, Syria, Afghanistan. . .
- **Ukraine:** Pray for Ukrainians living with the daily horrors of war. Pray for the millions of Ukrainians who continue to be displaced – including the millions still living as refugees in foreign lands. In Ukraine, food shortages & the growing risk of epidemic disease due to poor sanitary conditions & the lack of adequate health care services because of the war's destruction. Remember, those in Russia who do not support Putin's war & face persecution and imprisonment as a result.
- **The continuing COVID Pandemic.** Case numbers are growing again in the U.S., including in much of Ohio. The risk of Long COVID is substantial for everyone who gets COVID. 1 in 4 seniors & 1 in 5 of the rest of the population will have Long COVID. Most with Long COVID had only a light case of the virus initially. Be in prayer for the sick & their caregivers. Remember those who are continuing their study of the virus to understand its impact on people over the long term. Its impact on the brain is a particular concern.
- **Migrants & Refugees** – especially those who are exploited by smugglers. Remember those facing the excessive heat.
- **Mass Shooting Victims** – there have now been 371 mass shootings this year. 15 of them in the last week alone.
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – Pray for everyone affected by gun violence. 25,319 people have died in gun violence this year, including 968 children. 2,522 children have been injured. There are 393 million civilian owned guns in the U.S. – 120 guns for every 100 people. More children & teens die from gun violence than from any other single cause.



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When we pray for the people in need in our world, we are praying for peace. Peace is not just the absence of war, it is Shalom – living in harmony with each other & with God's creation. Shalom means health, safety, tranquility, wholeness, & rest – the welfare & prosperity of all. Praying for the needs of others is an important first step in loving people as God calls us to. Next steps include using our time, talents, & resources to help others when disaster strikes, offering comfort in times of need, & working for change when the suffering of others comes from discrimination, persecution, exploitation, or abuse. When shalom does not exist for everyone, no one is fully at peace!

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