

The Importance Of Remembering

Thursday January 27th was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The date was chosen because January 27, 1945 was the day when the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau was finally liberated. The 27th was proclaimed an annual day of remembrance in 2005 by The United Nations General Assembly. The fervent wish of Holocaust survivors is that the world never forgets what happened to them and to the 6 million Jews (and as many others including Poles, Roma people (Gypsies), handicapped people, Slavs, political opponents, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others) who were murdered by Nazi Germany. They hope that remembering this horrific history will help people never let such appalling events happen again. Unfortunately, the fear of what could happen if the world does forget is justified. Some 'ethnic cleansing' events have happened and are happening in the world. People are still persecuted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or politics. There are some people who try to deny that the Holocaust happened and try to cover up similar atrocities even as they promote or participate in the hate that causes them. This year for Holocaust Remembrance Day, **Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO** said:

"Whenever this history is questioned, whenever violence is done to the memory of the victims, the rise of anti-Semitism and hate speech is encouraged, an everyday scourge of Jewish communities around the world. More than ever, we must therefore be vigilant. It is our shared responsibility to protect the truth, and to keep alive the memory of all those who suffered under the Nazi regime; to support research and documentation that can confront the fantasies of fanatics with the reality of history; and to study and teach the Holocaust, so that education may prevent anti-Semitism and all forms of racism."

Pray for people live with the threat or such atrocities or are living through them every day. Do not remain silent and allow hate to fester and grow. God calls us to love not hate. We are to love and care for all people as brothers and sisters because all people are made in the image of God just as we are ourselves.

- **Remember the Bridgewater College community.** 2 campus security officers were shot & killed Tuesday. The shooter (from off campus) has been arrested. (Bridgewater is a Church of the Brethren school in Virginia.) The college community joined in song & silence to remember the 2 officers Wednesday.
- **The COVID Pandemic.** Omicron cases are declining in some states & still surging in others. Nearly all hospitalized people are unvaccinated. The U.S has seen more than 74 million cases of COVID and more than 884,000 deaths.
- **Nigeria** – an attack January 20th in Pemi near Chibok (where the school girls were abducted in 2014) left 1 person dead & 17 children abducted. The Nigerian Brethren church was looted & burned along with shops & houses. The church was recently renovated after being burned a year ago. The continuing violence makes helping displaced & hurting people difficult.
- **The people of Tonga** continue to recover from the devastating volcanic eruption Jan. 15th. Recovery is hampered by daily earthquake activity since the eruption & destroyed communication cables. Needed aid is arriving. Tonga had only 1 case of COVID before the eruption, but has had 2 cases sense ships have delivered aid. The country is now in total lock down to prevent COVID spread. (1 ship bringing aid had a COVID outbreak on board in route)
- **Cameroon** – where a dispute over water have displaced more than 1000,000 people
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – there have been 34 mass shootings (up from 27 last week) in 2022 in which 42 people died & 114 people were injured. The 2022 gun death total is now 3,692. 129 deaths & 318 of the injured have been children (17 or younger).



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