

## ***Make Time to Pray***

This is the second week of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas during which we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. Make time, in the midst of your preparations for gift giving and family gatherings to remember the message the baby in the manger came to bring. Pray for those who need to hear his message, and those who need to see Jesus' call to care for and love our neighbors – friends & enemies alike – put into practice. Open your heart to seek God's calling to you and look for the ways you can be the instruments of God's caring and peace in the world.



- **Iran** – where peaceful protests against the extreme Islamic government continue. Protestors face abuse & violence as the government attempts to eliminate any opposition to their extreme views.
- **China** – people are protesting the government's zero-COVID policy. Though China's COVID numbers have been kept low, the policy has been strict, and harshly enforced. Now, the government is using violence in their crack down on protests. The government does not tolerate any opposition.
- **People still recovering from storms & flooding in the U.S. & elsewhere.** Remember people who live in places where the impact of climate change on the severity of storms & flooding is making their home areas unlivable. More tornados hit the south this week & more tornados are expected.
- **Those recovering from earthquakes in Indonesia** as of November 25, at least 310 have been killed, & 24 are still missing. At least 2,000 are injured. There have also been quakes in the **Solomon Islands & off the Mexican/U.S. Pacific coast.**
- **Ukraine where the war continues** – Rocket/missile attacks against Ukrainian cities are ongoing. Vital civilian power facilities & other infrastructure are being targeted. This is affecting millions of civilians. How people will survive winter without power for heat, water, & other utilities is a serious concern. Anti-war protests in Russia & resistance to military conscription is ongoing as is some degree of martial law in all areas under Russian control in Ukraine & Russia.
- **The People of Haiti** –still dealing with a cholera outbreak, gang violence, & major political unrest.
- **Uganda** – give thanks that the Ebola outbreak seems to be under control this week. The number of new cases has finally started to decline.
- **The People of Somalia** – facing a major famine & violence. The worst drought in 40 years, which is related to climate change, & violent conflict combine to put millions in danger of starvation.
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – 40,424 people have died in gun violence in 2022 (up 808 from last week), including 1,537 children (up 32 from last week). 35,783 people have been injured (up 640 from last week) including 4,132 children (up 94 from last week). 21,978 of the deaths are suicides (up 462 from last week). There have been 617 mass shootings in 2022 (12 were last week).
- **The continuing COVID Pandemic, & the outbreak of the RSV virus. Also, the CDC has declared that flu is now an epidemic in the U.S.** Many pediatric hospitals are out of beds because so many children are sick with RSV, flu, COVID, or a combination of these.

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