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Haarlem, the 18th of october, Feast of Saint Luke

Dear Dominika Krupińska,

Thank you for organizing a Polish-Dutch prayer action for the persecuted Christians!

So many Christians are persecuted all over the world. Even today Christian faithful are the most persecuted group, but little attention is paid to them. In Nigeria and other parts of Africa, Christians are every day fearing for their lives; in Pakistan Christians are not free to profess their religion; they run the risk to be persecuted and brought to trial for blasphemy. Unfortunately, many more countries could be mentioned here. The list of countries where Christians cannot live without being persecuted, is a long one, unfortunately.

Those Christians need our prayers and attention. They are part of a long, ongoing procession of martyrs, who through the ages confessed their faith and were faithful to it and therefore had to suffer. They are followers of Jesus Christ who was martyred and condemned to death, though innocent, without guilt.

The Dutch Saint Titus Brandsma, who was canonized this year, followed his Lord by courageously giving his life till the end, because he wanted to be righteous and to be faithful in serving Jesus Christ and the Church. Saint Maximilian Kolbe too was a very courageous martyr who offered his life to save the life of a housefather. Blessed Michal Kozal tended at the victims and did not want to be a collaborator of the Gestapo.

These three man did not give up their faith and ideals nor did they violate their conscience. I am grateful for their lives and example because they resisted Nazi ideology and remained faithful to their conscience and their catholic belief. They help us, Christians in today's world, to be strong amidst the violence of terrorism and pagan ideologies that surround us and they are lights and intercessors for all those Christians who are persecuted today.

May God give strength and inner peace to all Christians persecuted; and may our prayer and work contribute to their freedom and help them to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the difficult circumstances that they have to live in.

+Johannes Hendriks  
Bishop of Haarlem-Amsterdam