



## Prayer Letter 42

*This prayer letter was written by Action Chrétienne en Orient (France), from Strasbourg in Alsace, one of the areas of France most affected by COVID-19. ACO has a privileged relationship with the Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace – Lorraine and with French protestantism.*

<https://action-chretienne-orient.fr>

### ***Introduction to the prayer***

The COVID-19 pandemic is an event that affects the whole of mankind in many different ways.

Of course, there is the disease first; it affects individuals and communities and is transmitted from person to person and spreads from country to country.

Then there are prevention and lockdown measures that severely affect relationships, both on a personal and social level, and which cause or exacerbate economic crises whose long-lasting consequences can already be felt and will be very difficult for many in the future.

Lastly, the pandemic is also an unprecedented media event: for all news media, COVID-19 has become the unique topic and all aspects of our human realities are examined. Opinion statements, controversies, genuine information and fake news get all mixed up and cause confusion and insecurity. At the same time there has been such an increase in the use of digital communication tools that it enables us to maintain, as far as possible, the links and relationships that are the essence of our humanity.

The pandemic is therefore a global event that affects all levels of our individual and collective existence, that tests our humanity and reveals its flaws and inequalities, thus challenging us to stand in solidarity, to reach out to our neighbour despite all obstacles and uncertainties.

So, in spite of all our lockdowns, we are called as Christians to persevere in the communion given by Christ because it knows no boundaries : it goes to the very limits of our humanity to bear witness to the love of God and to put ourselves at the service of « the least of these people of His. »

***« But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the end of the earth. »***  
***Acts 1, 8.***

### ***Prayer***

We Christians of Europe and in the Middle East, in communion with one another, we pray to you Lord, our God, and ask you for the presence of your Spirit in order to renew our commitment to serve you.

We thank you for the dedication of the many healthcare workers who day after day provide the sick with the best possible care. Whatever their nationality, whatever their religion, they work for Life.  
May your Spirit guide them and strengthen them.

We pray for the sick and their families, and for those who mourn the loss of loved one.  
May your Spirit of consolation and encouragement be with them.

We pray for the leaders of all nations as well as for the decision makers and scientific researchers. Grant them your Spirit of wisdom in their decision making. When so many people are suffering, do not allow this pandemic to be exploited for partisan purposes, political manipulations or cruel power struggles.  
Let nations find their way to solidarity, beyond the usual divisions.

We pray that the world will be open to learn from this ordeal, that we do not close our arms and borders in a defensive attitude, but that we open our hearts to more justice, charity and solidarity to make the world a better place.  
May your Spirit of selflessness and love conquer our hearts to renew our humanity.

We pray in particular for the countries in the Middle East whose major political and economic crises have been greatly aggravated by the pandemic and the consequent lockdown measures - which were certainly necessary - but have had severe consequences on the poorest of the people. We entrust to you Iran, one of the countries most affected by the disease in the Middle East. We pray for Iraq, a country weakened in spite of its wealth. We entrust to you Syria, still divided by war. We entrust to you Lebanon where daily life has become unbearable for most of the population. We pray for Egypt, one of the countries in Africa most hit by the disease.

May your Spirit of solidarity open us up to the situations experienced by others,  
beyond our usual horizon.

We pray for our Churches in Europe and in the Middle East who continue to bear witness and intensify their commitments. We thank you for all the initiatives making it possible to share your Word and community life through digital tools and allowing each Church to stay in touch with its member, and to keep links between people and communities on both sides of the Mediterranean.  
May your Spirit strengthen our communion without borders!

We pray for all the projects implemented by Christian churches and institutions to help the most vulnerable, those who are isolated, those who have lost their jobs and can no longer afford the basic needs of a dignified life, those who are displaced and the refugees,  
those who cannot get treatment or go to school.

May your Spirit encourage us to persevere in your service and to live by the gift of your grace.

Amen

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