

THE FAITH OF CATHOLIC GEORGIA *During the Soviet Regime, the Catholic Church in Georgia was persecuted under communist rule for nearly 70 years. Priests were arrested, churches were closed, and the faithful were left to worship in secret.*

Today there are approximately 80,000 Catholics in Georgia practicing the Latin, Georgian-Byzantine, and Armenian Rites.



Enduring Catholic Faith in Georgia: During the Soviet regime, the communists persecuted the Georgian faithful with ferocity. The faithful were not allowed to perform baptisms or even enter their churches and priests were exiled or even killed. However, the faith of



Our village was never left without prayer.

many Georgian Catholics was undaunted. In the village of Arali, after communists removed their priest and closed their village Church, the faithful rebuilt the roof of an ancient chapel on the outskirts of the village and, for over 60 years of religious oppression, gathered there to pray. Despite the fierce persecution, the village “was never left without prayer.” Today, the Catholic Church in Arali has reopened and the faithful are

allowed to practice their religion freely, but they still gather weekly in that same ancient chapel to pray. Today, these heroic Catholics who kept the faith alive during decades of oppression need your support and prayers.

Changing Lives in Georgia: After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were no means for people to survive. Over 30% of Georgians live below the poverty line - children, the sick and the disabled are the most affected. Currently, over 1,000 children are being educated and establishing healthy relationships in Church-run daycare centers, a service that greatly improves their lives. We bear witness to our identity as Christians when we meet the needs of these people. Every bit of support is helpful to the people in Georgia.



As a church, we owe these services to our people.

Conversation and Reflection:

- *The people of Arali remained steadfast in their faith over 60 years of persecution. How can I demonstrate loyalty in my own faith?*
- *The people of Arali were “never left without prayer.” How do I incorporate constant prayer in my spirituality?*
- *What does it mean for me to be heroic in my faith in my life today?*
- *How do I particularly feel called to witness to my Christian identity through service?*
- *What is my takeaway from hearing these stories of my brothers and sisters in Christ in Georgia?*



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