

**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 practice their faith 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 restricted the Georgian faithful with ferocity. The faithful were not allowed to perform baptisms or even enter their churches and priests were



Our village was never left without prayer.

exiled or even killed. However, the faith of many Georgian Catholics was undaunted. In the village of Arali, the faithful rebuilt the roof of an ancient chapel and gathered there in secret to pray for over 60 years of religious oppression. 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 persecution 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 - with the sick, disabled, and children being the ones 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 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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