

**Pakistan Delegation (FIS province)  
Salesian Family Spirituality Days 2021  
January 15-05 (VIDEO TEXT)**

## **The Hope of Persecuted Christians in Pakistan**

The Situation of Persecuted Christians in Pakistan is not getting better. Among the 233 Million of Pakistani population, the Christians are 3M only – about 1.1 M of Catholics.

Salesian Charism reached Pakistan in 1999, with two works in Lahore and Quetta. Don Bosco Technical School in Lahore is situated in the largest Christian settlement in the country called Youhanabad (St John). Last March 15 one Bosconian Akash Bashir (1994-2015) gave his life in suicide bomber attack to save the lives of more than 1000 Catholics in his parish Church.

Five Christians of Lahore-Youhanabad answered to this interview with two questions:

### **Question 1**

**What are your difficulties as discriminated, persecuted Christian?**

### **Question 2.**

**What keeps you going ahead to live & witness your Christian faith?**

**Interview 1: Ms. Shabana**

**Interview 2 Ms. Mehwish**

**Interview 3 Ms. Amjad and his wife**

**Interview 4: Ms. Sitara**

### **Production**

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**Question 1: Persecution?**

My name is Shabana. The name of my late husband is Inderyas. We are from Bahawalpur city. We came to Youhanabad for a marriage ceremony. He came back home at 4am. The police arrested him when we were going back to Bahawalpur city. We cried aloud that we are not culprits but nobody listened. We were very disturbed after the incident. We had no house and my husband was sick. He died with that sickness in jail. He was in jail for three years. After his death we faced a hard time. We did not have anything to eat. We sold all that we had just to eat food. Our troubles increased day by day. We were unable to pay the utility bills and the education system of my children was stopped. In our culture when the husband dies, the widow has no worth in family and even in laws. She remains only a mother of her children. All the relationships end. My children were my strength and we used to pray together.

**Question 2: Hope?**

It is the love of Christ that is with me when all my brothers and sisters abandoned me. But still Christ is with me. I asked for a strong faith and I got it. He provided me everything. I prayed a lot with my children. I believe that except God no one can give me anything. It is my desire that my own children should remain faithful like me. They must have strong faith as I have. It is God who listens. I asked God for His will to be done in my life and in my house. Today I am living in the same house. It is written in the book of Revelation 2:10 "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." and I only want to live under God's protection and love with my children.

**Question 1: Persecution?**

My name is Mehwish and I live in Youhanabad II. I was working in a combined factory. One day it happened that I was going to a factory. On the way some strange people kidnapped me on gunpoint. They brought me to an unknown place. They told me to recite the Holy Quran. They converted me to Islam and insisted me for forceful Marriage. One day I tried to contact my family with some personal number and I ran from there.

Now I am at home with my family. At the present moment, me and my family are facing a hard time. I don't have a job. Our relatives are not with us and I am very disturbed in my life. People speak different things about me which hurts me alot.

**Question 2: Hope?**

When I was there I prayed unceasingly. I was asking help from God. I only wanted to go home and meet my family. I was hopeful that my God would never leave me alone. Because He knows the heart of His children. He will grant me justice. It is my hope, love and faith in God that I am with my family and Christian community.

## **Mr. Amjad and his wife**

### **Question 1: Persecution?**

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ to all the brothers and sisters. My name is Amjad Arif. I live in Youhanabad Block C, street Penjay wali. When there was a bomb blast I was driving a rickshaw. When I was back home. I was with my family. Some Policemen caught me and asked me who you are. I replied: I am a Christian. Being a Christian they brought me to the Police Station, tortured me, and offered me to accept Islam then you can be released from prison. I answered that I believe in Jesus Christ and I am not going to accept Islam. I am born in a Christian family and I will die as a Christian. They put me in jail illegally. When I was in prison my wife worked hard as a maiden in others' houses and also took care of the whole family. Whatever she earned, from that little money she was also sending some money to me into the jail. Whenever my wife wanted to visit me, the Policemen used to ask for money as bribery. I used to reply that have mercy on me because I am a poor man. Under compulsion, I had to give them two or three hundred just to see my wife. Also, we were strong in our faith and we did not apostatize. Our Risen Lord gave me freedom and granted me a chance to live again with my family.

Our problems are increasing day by day due to Covid-19. I do not have a job but my wife is working very hard. The utility bills are going high rapidly. Still, I am grateful to God. Who is giving us our daily bread to live?

### **Mr Amjad's Wife: Persecution?**

I faced a hard time when my husband was in prison. I cooked food or sometimes I did not. I used to feed my children by begging from our neighbors. Meantime, I was visiting my husband in jail. The education of my children was stopped. I was begging for money from different people to look after the house. No one was with me, not even my siblings. I was depending totally on others.

### **Question 2: Hope?**

This is the love of God and we are the sons and daughters of one Father. We believe in the Risen Lord. we cannot leave Jesus. if we leave Jesus we will be finished. On the contrary, we were connected with the Lord. Jesus has given me the freedom that I am back in my family peacefully. He has also given me good health. This is the love of the Lord Jesus that we are strong in faith in Him. We belong to God who has been with me on every trail. As we were invited to convert to Islam we could have done it for the sake of liberty. But I refused everything because I believe in the Risen Lord.

**Question: Persecution or discrimination?**

My name is Sitara. The name of my father is Aftab Gill who was a pastor and now he is a watchman. We were living in Muridke. In the place we were living in Muslims were in the majority. The church of my father was in our street. Muslims used to stop us to pray. We are committed and strong in our faith. We experienced the salvation of God deeply. For this reason we wanted to live for Christ only. We fled from our house. We are committed to God. Once it happened I was studying in a coaching center. All my fellows were Muslims and I was only a Christian student. One day I forgot my notebook there. On one of the pages it was written '*in the Blood of Christ we are redeemed*'. My teacher took the notebook and read it. She approached me and said what is written in your notebook. You know It is a blasphemy. The second thing that happened to me was that they discriminated against me by switching off the fan during summer season in the month of June and July. Right after two days they kicked me out and said you cannot study here. As Christians we are discriminated against and seen strangely. Before we fled from our house they kidnapped my father. They said if you want to see your father alive convert to Islam. Wherever we used to go to stay, even our relatives asked us to leave. Because they are in danger due to our presence. We faced a difficult time. But we are thankful to God because we are committed to Him.

**Question 2: Hope?**

If we see Love, hope and faith they are eternal. But love of Christ connects me to God. In (*JOHN 3:16 It is written God loved the World that He gave his only Son so that anyone who believed in Him will not perish rather will have life in abundance*). I think other religions cannot give eternal life. Only Christ can give us everlasting life. When they kidnapped my father I wanted to commit suicide but God communicated to me and said that He did not give me life to waste rather I wanted to take service from you. It is also written in the (*Psalms 34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing*). This verse makes me strong and helps me to trust in God's love. God loves me and he gave his life for me. Then why should I waste my life? After this experience I can say that God really loves us and gives us comforts to move ahead. I put all my problems before God that is why He takes care of me. Even our house is taken away from us but still this is the grace of God that we are alive. It is the sign of Christ's Love.