

International Christian Voice held candle Vigil for Victims of Lahore Attack

On March 27, 2016, Easter Sunday, a deadly suicide bombing took place in Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore, Pakistan. Many Christian families were celebrating Easter with their loved ones while Muslims were enjoying an evening out with their families when suddenly a suicide bomber blew himself up inside the park. Over 70 people were killed in his horrific incidence and hundreds others injured. Many who were killed were women and children.

International Christian Voice held a candle vigil on April 1, 2016 to remember all those who lost their lives in Lahore to this attack. The vigil was held at the Salvation Army Brampton Citadel and was attended peoples from all walks of life.



The vigil was beautifully managed by Rev. Dr. Rashid Gill who was the masters of ceremonies.

Rev Bishop Riaz read from 1 Peter 3:12-15 which states,

*For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their prayers;
But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.*

¹³ And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled- ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God^[c] in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;



worship team leading in worship

we ask God to take over those emotions and turn them around. His prayer was that even though we may not fully understand why such incidents take place, we rest in the assurance and Jesus is Lord. "You are in control of every sunrise and sunset. You give and you take away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Father Angelos Saad from the Canadian Coptic community shared his thoughts and prayed for those martyred in the Lahore attacks. He stated, "We felt a moment of fear, anger and disgust and now



All Pastors praying together

Hon. Ramesh Sangha MP Brampton Centre, Father Angelos Saad, Chair of Canadian Coptic centre then Mr. Peter Bhatti Chairman ICV lit a candle together in memory of all those who passed in Lahore.

Following the lighting of the candles, all the pastors joined hands in prayer which was led by Rev. James Luke. They stood in solidarity to pray for all the victimized people of Pakistan and especially for those who have lost their lives to terrorism.

Mr. Haroon Nasir than shared a person reflection. The friends of Mr. Nasir had lost loved ones in the Lahore attack. He shared that his co-worker had lost his 3-year-old daughter. He expressed that “all those are blessed have to be held accountable to those who don’t have much.” He emphasized that we must do more for the people of Pakistan.



1Mr. Peter Bhatti sharing his thoughts

Chairman of ICV, Peter Bhatti shared his views and thoughts on the incident. He recalled that 30 years ago there were no divisions amongst different faith communities of Pakistan. Everyone celebrated Easter, Eid, Diwali together and it was military dictator and undemocratic ruler who divided the nation on the basis of religion. He shared that there have been so many incidents like the Lahore attacks that have taken place in Pakistan and it was unacceptable to keep allowing such things to happen. “Such threats and incidents are not foreign to the western world. Look at what happened in France and recently in Brussels, look at what happened even in our own home, we lost two soldiers to this.” He called for everyone to stand united against the forces of terrorism.

Mr. Tahir Gora from the Canadian Progressive Muslims shared his solidarity with the Christian communities. He urged the government of Pakistan to take concrete measures to protect its minorities. He urged the government to free Asia Bibi and to repeal the Blasphemy Laws.



M.P Raj Grewal



M.P Ruby Sahota



M.P Ramesh Sangha

Mr. Ramesh Sangha, MP Brampton Centre, expressed his sorrow towards the children and women dying and was wondering why such things would happen to anyone especially as people were celebrating their sacred religious occasion, Easter. He spoke saying, “We are blessed to be in Canada, we can live here without fear, our government is well prepared for any sort of extremist attacks should it happen and we will act properly. We will tackle it in our country and in other countries so that we can get rid of terrorism. We will tackle these terrorists harshly while maintaining equal and democratic rights in our own country. My heart goes to all those

families who lost their loved ones and thank you for allowing me to share in your grief with you.”

Hon. Raj Grewal MP Brampton East stated, “What makes us so privileged to live in a country where these things don’t happen. We don’t have fear to practice our faith and the only difference between us here and those in Pakistan is that some were born there and some were born here.

The most difficult thing is to lose a loved one and have your faith tested.” He shared that such times are for the reflection of one’s faith. He assured the community that “the Canadian government is on your side, the UN is on your side and the freedom of religion is a principle freedom that needs to be protected. My thoughts and prayers are with the people of Pakistan.”

Ruby Sahota MP Brampton North then shared her thoughts. She said that the government of Canada has always supported religious freedoms and she would always stand with the Pakistani

Christians and their community to protect their rights and that she would stand with them to fight against those who try to take away from those rights. “I will stand with you to help in any way that I can. I give my deepest sympathies on behalf of myself and the government of Canada.”

Mr. Tim Iqbal then shared his thoughts saying, “a little child has lost his life in this incident and I don’t think he would’ve been able to tell you what religion he belongs to yet he lost his life.”

He emphasized that we must pray for these people and we must also work together to have these incidents stopped. He stated, “friends from different communities are here to condemn the incident but let’s work together to take some actions. Let’s work together to create a better world.”



Mr. Tim Iqbal Sharing his thoughts

Mr. Jag Badwal expressed that when candles are lit to remember those who have lost their lives, the lighting of the candles is symbolic to lighting candles in our hearts in order to find love and forgiveness. He said, “when we leave here today, let’s pass on the message of peace and

and forgiveness and let’s stand in solidarity with each other. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the attacks in Pakistan.”



Mr. Tanveer Joseph thanking to all guests

The Vice Chairman of International Christian Voice, Mr. Tanveer Gill then shared his thoughts and thanked all the honored guests for their attendance. He then stated “every other month we gather like this and we have told the world that this is the persecuted community and this is what is happening to the persecuted community. I want to request the representatives here today to bring our voice forward to a place it can be heard properly.” He expressed that it’s been so many years since the community has been waiting for change and that

change needs to be made. He then requested everyone to shake hands with the people sitting next to them as a symbolic gesture to show that we must work together to bring change. Pastor Yousif Nishan then said the closing prayer.

