

# THE CATHOLIC HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE

**The Hon. Sam  
Brownback  
The Hon. Joseph  
Cella  
Dr. Thomas Farr  
The Hon. Mary Ann  
Glendon  
The Hon. Jim  
Nicholson  
Patrick Reilly  
Nina Shea  
Rev. Robert Sirico  
George Weigel**

22 February, 2023 A.D.  
Ash Wednesday

Dear Friends:

We write to you as Catholics who — despite our varied careers in education, government, and ministry — have a shared commitment to upholding the dignity of the human being, especially the most vulnerable who have no voices.

And we invite you to consider a Lenten project that teaches valuable lessons about being a Christian witness, and giving hope and encouragement to one who is alone, afraid, and persecuted simply for advocating human justice and compassion.

This Lent, we ask you to please offer up individual spiritual bouquets for good man and friend of ours, Mr. Jimmy Lai, who is overseas in a jail cell, and who should not be forgotten. For your convenience below are basic guidance for the spiritual bouquets that can be crafted for Mr. Lai.

Mr. Lai is a 75-year-old Catholic businessman in Hong Kong who, inspired by his Christian faith, has peacefully advocated democracy and respect for human rights. Because he spoke the truth in the fight for freedom. Mr. Lai has been jailed by Communist Chinese authorities since December 2020. It is a difficult time for Mr. Lai, but he is facing his time of isolation with courage through his faith. He will not get his day in court to fight the most serious charges until September 2023, when he could be imprisoned in mainland China for the rest of his life.

Citing Mr. Lai's "bravery and determination in the face of repression," a bi-partisan U.S. commission nominated him this year for the Nobel Peace Prize.

During the season of Lent, we are called upon to contemplate Christ's perfect example of holiness, as He preached in the Beatitudes: ***"Blessed are the meek... Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for***

*righteousness... Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5: 5-6, 11)*

We are respectfully requesting you prepare a spiritual bouquet for Mr. Lai, a corporal work of mercy to life the soul of a prisoner and let him know that fellow Christians are praying for him.

We are reminded of the witness of Saint John Paul the Great who described the freedom of conscience as “the basis and foundation of all other human rights.” His words captured well the plight of Mr. Lai: “There is a suffering of the soul, such as we see in those who are isolated, persecuted, imprisoned for various offenses or for reasons of conscience, for ideas though dissident are nonetheless peaceful.”

Upon completion of the letters, we would ask you gather the spiritual bouquets and mail them to the following address:

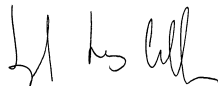
Mr. Jimmy Lai  
#190  
11 Convent Road  
Convent Station, New Jersey 07961

Thank you for your time and consideration.

We wish you a fruitful Lenten journey.

God Bless.

Sincerely Yours,



Joseph Cella  
Director  
The Catholic Humanitarian Committee