

## **Bishop Joseph Chhmar Salas (1937-1977)**

After the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975 all religious activities were forbidden. Catholics suffered persecution and most churches were destroyed. It was not until 1990 that Catholics and those of other faiths were free to worship. One of those who lost his life was Bishop Joseph Chhmar Salas, bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh and the first native bishop of Cambodia.

After the Khmer Rouge took power Bishop Joseph was sent to a forced labour camp where he died in September 1977.



Photo: CAFOD

An official enquiry in the martyrdom of Bishop Joseph and others who lost their lives between April 1975 -1978 was opened on 1 May 2015 by the Cambodian Catholic Church.

### *Sources:*

[www.phnompenhpost.com/national/vanquished-70s-catholic-church-still-mend](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/vanquished-70s-catholic-church-still-mend),  
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Chhmar\\_Salas](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Chhmar_Salas)

## **A prayer for peace**

### **Comfort, O comfort your people**

We pray for those lives,  
Made in your image,  
Damaged by conflict.

**Response: Comfort, O comfort your people.**

We pray for those in authority  
That they may use their power  
To bind wounds, heal relationships and find common  
ground.

**Response: Comfort, O comfort your people**

We pray for a transforming peace,  
Turning fear into trust,  
Pain into hope  
And doubt into confidence  
for a better future.

**Response: Comfort, O comfort your people.**

We pray for world leaders  
That they may establish structures for justice,  
Protecting human dignity,  
Enabling reconciliation  
And building God's kingdom.

**Response: Comfort, O comfort your people.**

*Sue Cooper/CAFOD*