Welcome! The Pope invites people of good will to come together and pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

Getting started:
As I settle down to pray I become aware of my posture. I start from my head and focus on its position for a few seconds. Moving on I shift my attention to other parts of my body; my neck, my arms, hands, legs and feet. I try to relax those parts of me that feel tense. When I feel calm and at rest, I become aware of God’s presence in me and around me. I then read the story.

Short story:
Shiu opened the beautifully wrapped present her son Miki had just handed her. The box contained a large silver icon depicting the Last Supper. Smiling, Shiu told Miki “You noticed that I had liked this icon when we had gone shopping together last month!” Miki nodded happily. He had spent the entire summer working as a temporary pool attendant to earn enough money to be able to buy this lovely gift for his parents. It had cost quite a lot, but twenty years of marriage just had to be celebrated with a special gift.

“We are going to be late for Church” Miki’s father said. They had asked the priest to celebrate a special thanksgiving Mass to mark their anniversary. Shiu hugged Miki and hurried out. She wished that Miki could go with them but he was only fifteen years old. The government had forbidden children and young people from participating in religious activities. If Miki had gone to church with them, he would have risked not only getting his parents in trouble but also the priest and the rest of the community too.

Shiu had grown up going to an underground church but she switched to a government approved church, when she had Miki as she had feared that belonging to an underground church would have repercussions on him. Miki had never experienced the freedom of belonging to a Christian community and Shiu feared that he would not be interested in going to church when he grew older.

Time to reflect:
Did you know that members of the underground Church, especially priests and bishops, are often persecuted? The bishops in the approved government church are chosen by the government. Why do you think the Chinese government is trying to control religious activities?

Let us pray:
Lord we pray for our brothers and sisters in China, that they may worship you and walk faithfully in your ways without fear.

Inspiration:
Faithful people have always been in a marked minority. Arthur W. Pink

Hands on:
This month I will go online and read about Christians in China and read about the difficulties they face. I will keep them in my prayers.