

Dear friends in Christ,

We have seen violence perpetrated against people of faith in recent weeks and years: the shooting of children at Mass just a few weeks ago, the shooting of Charlie Kirk on a university campus a week ago, and the martyrdom of many Christians killed in hatred of faith in Syria in the past few months, as well as many other senseless acts of violence. In light of all of this violence, I think it is important that we reflect on how Christ calls us to respond to such evil. It seems to me there are at least three ways the Lord calls us to respond:

1. To love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.
1. To forgive as Christ has forgiven us.
2. To continue to be courageous in speaking the truth, even when it is rejected, even when hated for it.

Last Sunday, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On this occasion, Pope Leo called together an ecumenical gathering of Christian church leaders to reflect and remember martyrs for the faith in this century. Here are some excerpts from the Homily Pope Leo gave on that occasion. They are well worth pondering:

"May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Gal 6:14*). These words of Saint Paul the Apostle, at whose tomb we are gathered, serve as an introduction to the commemoration of the martyrs and witnesses of the faith in the 21st century, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross... we stand at the foot of the cross of Christ, the means of our salvation, also described as the "hope of Christians" and the "glory of martyrs" (cf. *Vespers of the Byzantine Liturgy for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross*).

We are convinced that *martyria* unto death is "the truest communion possible with Christ who shed his Blood, and by that sacrifice brings near those who once were far off (cf. *Eph 2:13*)". Today too, we can affirm with John Paul II that, where hatred seemed to have permeated every aspect of life, these courageous servants of the Gospel and martyrs of the faith clearly demonstrated that "love is stronger than death"

We remember our brothers and sisters as we fix our gaze on the Crucified One. Through his cross, Jesus revealed to us the true face of God, his infinite compassion for humanity; he took upon himself the hatred and violence of the world, to share the lot of all those who are humiliated and oppressed: "He has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases" (*Is 53:4*). Many brothers and sisters, even today, carry the same cross as our Lord on account of their witness to the faith in difficult situations and hostile contexts: like him, they are persecuted, condemned and killed. It is of them that Jesus says: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (*Mt 5:10-11*). They are women and men, religious, lay people and priests, who pay

with their lives for their fidelity to the Gospel, their commitment to justice, their battle for religious freedom where it is still being violated, and their solidarity with the most disadvantaged. According to the world's standards, they have been "defeated." In truth, as the Book of Wisdom tells us: "though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality" (*Wis 3:4*).

Brothers and sisters, during this Jubilee Year, we celebrate the hope of these courageous witnesses of the faith. It is a hope filled with immortality because their martyrdom continues to spread the Gospel in a world marked by hatred, violence and war; it is a hope filled with immortality because, even though they have been killed in body, no one can silence their voice or erase the love they have shown; it is a hope filled with immortality because their witness lives on as a prophecy of the victory of good over evil. Yes, theirs is an unarmed hope. They bore witness to their faith without ever using the weapons of force and violence, but rather by embracing the hidden and meek power of the Gospel, in keeping with the words of the Apostle Paul: "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. [...] For whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (*2 Cor 12:9-10*).

My thoughts turn to the evangelical fortitude of Sister Dorothy Stang, committed to the landless in the Amazon: when those who were about to kill her asked her for a weapon, she showed them her Bible and replied, "This is my only weapon." I remember Father Ragheed Ganni, a Chaldean priest from Mosul in Iraq, who refused to fight in order to bear witness to how a true Christian behaves. I think also of Brother Francis Tofi, an Anglican and member of the Melanesian Brotherhood, who gave his life for peace in the Solomon Islands. There are many such examples because, unfortunately, despite the end of the great dictatorships of the twentieth century, to this day the persecution of Christians has not ended; on the contrary, in some parts of the world it has increased.

Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot and do not want to forget. We want to remember. We do so, certain that, just as in the first centuries, so too in the third millennium, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of new Christians (cf. Tertullian,) We want to keep this memory alive alongside our brothers and sisters of other Churches and Christian Communities... the ecumenism of blood unites "Christians of different backgrounds who together give their lives for faith in Jesus Christ. The witness of their martyrdom is more eloquent than any word: unity comes from the Cross of the Lord" (XVI Synodal Assembly, *Final Document*, n. 23). May the blood of so many witnesses hasten the arrival of the blessed day when we will drink from the same cup of salvation!..."
POPE LEO XIV

May the holy martyrs intercede for us and our Church!

Fr Johnson

WEEKLY CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: No Daily Mass on 09/22/25

Monday, September 22

No Daily Mass

10:00 AM Women of Faith

11:00 AM Koliha Funeral

Tuesday, September 23

No Daily Mass

5:30 PM Faith Formation K-6

Wednesday, September 24

8:30 AM Confessions

9:00 AM Daily Mass

7:00 PM House of Prayer

7:00 PM Gospel Choir Rehearsal
(For 11AM Masses)

Thursday, September 25

9:00 AM Daily Mass

12:15 PM Steps in Freedom

1:00 PM Rosary Cenacle

6:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
(For 9AM Masses)

6:30 PM Knights of Columbus—
Officers Meeting

7:00 PM Confirmation Information Session #1

7:00 PM OCIA

Friday, September 26

7:00 AM Brothers in Christ

9:00 AM Daily Mass

9:30 AM Benediction then Adoration until 9PM

10:00 AM Guardians & Angels

Saturday, September 27

3:30 PM Confessions

5:00 PM Saturday Vigil Mass

6:00 PM Oktoberfest by Knights of Columbus

Sunday, September 28

9:00 AM Sunday Mass

11:00 AM Sunday Mass

Coffee & Donuts after both Masses

SEPT 28 IS PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY



PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY

Next Sunday is Priesthood Sunday!

The last Sunday in September (September 28 this year) is a special day set aside to honor priesthood in the United States. It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of the priest as central to the life of the Church. The lay faithful are encouraged to honor and pray for their parish priests and for all in the vocation of priesthood.

"I invite you to pray for priests, so that through your prayer the Lord might strengthen their vocation, comfort them in their ministry, and help them always be joyful ministers of the Gospel for all people." - Pope Francis

Ministry of Catholic Cemeteries

Peace of Mind When You Need It Most!

Representatives from Associated Catholic Cemeteries will visit our parish soon to share information about the many choices and benefits of pre-planning at your Catholic Cemetery. Planning long before there is an urgent need ensures arrangements in harmony with your faith and avoids the pressure of having to make these decisions while grieving. The Church teaches us that the custom of burying the bodies of the dead should be observed, even for those who choose cremation. Please call or email with any questions you may have about pre-planning in a Catholic Cemetery (206)366-8834 parish@MyCatholicCemetery.org



**PARTNERS
IN THE GOSPEL**

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH FAMILY!

St Jude | Holy Innocents
Mission Church of St. Anthony