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"Every Christian is a 'martyr', a witness"

During yesterday's general audience, Pope Francis explained the meaning of martyrdom. He said that Christians who decide to live their faith coherently should take into account Jesus' words: there will be persecutions.

06/29/2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In our continuing catechesis on Christian hope, we now look to the

example of the martyrs. Their hope gave them the strength even to die for their faith in Christ. The Lord himself warned his followers that, in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, they would encounter opposition and hostility in this world of sin and injustice. Jesus asks his disciples to proclaim the Gospel by their lives of detachment from wealth and power, by their rejection of the spiral of hatred, violence and retaliation, and by their trust in his triumph over the power of sin and death.

As his followers, we know that the Lord will never abandon us. By imitating the example of his own self-sacrifice and love, we demonstrate our faith and hope in him and we become his witnesses before the world. In this sense, every Christian is a “martyr”, a witness to the sure hope that faith inspires. The martyrs who even today lay down their lives for the faith do so out of

love. By their example and intercession, may we become ever more convincing witnesses, above all in the events of our daily lives, to our undying hope in the promises of Christ.

Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Scotland, Wales, Sweden, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines and the United States of America. I especially greet the participants in the Conference for the promotion of the new *Programme of Priestly Formation*, with the assurance of my prayers for their important ministry. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Tomorrow we celebrate the solemnity of the Apostles Saints Peter

and Paul, who gave their lives for the love of Christ. We ask God that, through their intercession, we be granted the gift of strength to follow Him and to be his witnesses, living with Christian hope, above all in this continuous and hidden martyrdom of doing our daily duties well and with love.

Thank you very much.

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