

Chris Stein Reflection

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

“Lover of my soul Even unto death With my every breath I will love You In my darkest hour In humiliation I will wait for You I am not forsaken Oh, I lose my life Oh, my breath be taken I will wait for You I am not forsaken One thing I desire To see You in Your beauty You are my delight Yeah, You are my only.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aETZ6ETKAtI>

These are lyrics from the song Even Unto Death by Audrey Assad. I first heard this song and that it was written for the 21 Coptic Christian Martyrs that had been killed by ISIS some years ago. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-6Qsqdf5HY&feature=youtu.be>

As most of you are aware, the saints absolutely fascinate me. Among these holy men and women, the martyrs are specifically intriguing. These men and women, were able to give everything to God. It was Tertullian in the early Church who said “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

<https://media.ascensionpress.com/2018/09/17/blood-of-the-martyrs-is-still-seed-for-the-church/>

I find myself asking we are given the gift of faith like these men and women?

And now we get to our Gospel this morning:

“They will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name”

and further

“You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name.”

So what does this mean for us here today, in today's world? Are Jesus' words relevant to us? The reality is that as Christians martyrdom is never far off.

For us today we can speak of the daily white martyrdom: the call to offer all of the daily struggles and challenges to God. I think of the moms and dads whose children have left the faith and perhaps are even hostile to the faith, I think of the people who carry the cross of sickness and offer it up to God, of the people treated unfairly because of their faith. I think of the example of everyone here who continues to try to live the faith despite the sort of hostility that is shown to the Catholic faith by the world. I think of students who stand up for an unpopular classmate, despite the peer pressure.

And this white martyrdom is so beautiful because it really is a persistent cross, a cross that takes time. It is a cross that is lived for sometimes many years. So do not ever think less of your offerings to God. Jesus loves everything we offer Him.

So today we give thanks to God for the gift of our faith, for the strength that He gives us to believe, and we continue to practice standing firm in the challenges of the daily life. And we look to the holy men and women of our faith and thank them for providing an example of what it means to stand firmly united to Christ.