



Beatification of the Algerian Martyrs
On the feast of the
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Br Henri Vergès FMS and Sr Paul-Hélène Saint Raymond LSA
And 17 others martyred in Algeria
May 1994 - August 1996

L: Glory be to God who has shown us the light!

R: *Lead us from darkness to light,*

L: Glory be to God who lead us from sadness to joy,

R: *Lead us from death to immortality.*

All: Glory be to God who has shown us the light!

Hymn | Christ be our Light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,

Light for the world to see.

Chorus:

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your Church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us

Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,

Shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter people are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,

Walls made of living stone.

Many the gifts, many the people,

Many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

Making your kingdom come.

Introduction:

Sr Paul-Hélène Saint Raymond LSA and Br Henri Vergès FMS worked in Algeria as missionaries from France, and were martyred by Islamic extremists on 8 May 8, 1994.

All the reflections, antiphons and prayers in this service are taken from either Sr Paul-Hélène or Br Henri's own writings or the testimonies of people who knew them, reproduced in the book, *A Christian in the House of Islam*, edited by Robert Masson, (2004).

One witness said of Henri “I perceived in the account he gave me of his work a real passion, passion for meeting, passion for service of the young, passion which led him to this land. He went right to the end of this passion.”

May the witness of Sr Paul-Hélène and Br Henri’s lives draw us closer in our understanding and appreciation of God speaking to us through our Muslim sisters and brothers, may it be a sign against all those who would take up violence to further their cause, and may it lead us further along our own vocational path and inspire others to join our Assumption or Marist way of life in all its forms.

Opening Prayer

We pray, Lord Jesus,
that we “make of you, our friend, our brother, our holiness, the whole of our life.
May you be our Life, our Breathing, our Strength.
May you be the one whom the souls we are responsible for meet.”
Amen.

Reflection 1: Why in Algeria? Because there is God’s mysterious plan for the people of Islam, a temple of his presence where he invites me to enter, a mutual opening to promote, a dialogue between believers to pursue and develop, our paths to God can only converge. Because God sends his Church to all the people of the universe, a simple presence which purifies itself, which allows itself to be challenged by the Word and which challenges, liberates itself and liberates, which leaves to God the choice of times for a more explicit revelation of the gospel of his Son journeying with all peoples in this world. [PAUSE]

Reflection 2: To be transparent to the Gospel, transparent of the Gospel. To be a grain buried in the world of humanity from which will burst the leaven of the Gospel. To let myself be transformed each day a little more by the living Word of the Gospel: not to let it lose its edge through routine, distraction, comfortableness. May it ceaselessly cause new growth in me. To be continually more a Gospel word. To be awakened! [PAUSE]

Reflection 3: (by Andree Ghillet p72) After work, with the students gone, we would go to the chapel to say Vespers and the rosary. One evening he confided to me that this moment, when he abandoned himself into the arms of Mary, was the dearest to his heart, and he spoke of our Mother with great tenderness, slowly, softly. His eyes shone with joy. The spiritual richness of his soul moved me and was contagious. It was against the wall of this chapel, of the tabernacle, that his body collapsed from the deadly shot. [PAUSE]

Psalm 116 | Dilexi quoniam exaudiet Dominus

Antiphon: I try to let shine through a little, what should be the life of one of the baptized, radiation of a Presence which transforms everything into love. (Br Henri)

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“Lord, save me!”

The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
The Lord protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return to your rest, my soul,
for the Lord has been good to you.

For you, Lord, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I trusted in the Lord when I said,
“I am greatly afflicted”;
in my alarm I said,
“Everyone is a liar.”

What shall I return to the Lord
for all his goodness to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord.
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful servants.
Truly I am your servant, Lord;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.

I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the Lord.
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord
in your midst, Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord.
Glory be to the Father...

Antiphon: I try to let shine through a little, what should be the life of one of the baptized, radiation of a Presence which transforms everything into love. (Br Henri)

Canticle | 1 Peter 2:21-24

Antiphon: Father, our lives are already given anyway. (Sr Paul-Hélène)

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you,
leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate;
when he suffered, he made no threats.
Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,
so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.

Glory be to the Father...

Antiphon: Father, our lives are already given anyway. (Sr Paul-Hélène)

Intercessions

God of life, we pray for the Church in Algeria that through the witness of these martyrs it may follow faithfully the way of Jesus Christ, tell courageously the truth of Jesus Christ and live joyfully the life of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us... **Lord hear our prayer.**

Loving Father, we pray for the Institute of the Marist Brothers as we embark on a new beginning, may we be faithful to our mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved.
Lord hear us... **Lord hear our prayer.**

Loving Father, we pray for the congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, may they continue to be motivated by the pressing need to proclaim the Good News and testify to the joy of believing, as they work with the poor and those considered to be unimportant.
Lord hear us... **Lord hear our prayer.**

Our Father in heaven

Holy be you name
Your kingdom come, your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we “give ourselves to You, to be given by You and with You, entirely to the Father, in the Love of the Holy Spirit.

May my will be the Father’s will on me

And may it be done day after day, to the end.”

We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Blessing

May the risen Christ shine out by means of our lives,

through which the cross continues to rise up on our paths like a beacon. Amen.

