

Devotional Thoughts :: "When will the happy moment come..." ~ Extreme Devotion

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“On hearing the death sentence, you will receive it as the invitation of the King of glory, who invited you to his wedding feast.”

The instructions were difficult but clear. The French authors Franz Ravennas and Martin Guillaubert wrote an instruction manual for Christians facing the threat of death. Their “publishing office” was their jail cell during the French Revolution. They saw their cell as the “ante-chamber to paradise.”

“When they have finished reading your sentence,” the manual continues, “you will say with many martyrs who have gone before you, ‘Thank God.’ Sing joyful songs. When they bind your hands, say the words of St. Paul: ‘I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of Jesus Christ.’”

“On the way to being shot, speak to the guards from Scripture about the delight of suffering and dying for Christ. ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’ (Romans 8:35)

“When you encounter the executioner, remember the words of the great martyr Ignatius: ‘When will the happy moment come when I will be slaughtered for my Savior? How long must I wait?’ Remember to also say a prayer for the persecutors.”

Ravennas and Guillaubert were beheaded. Their words are too much to imagine for most Christians in free nations, but they are followed, even today, in restricted nations.

Every day we live should come with a warning: Watch out! At any given moment, tragedy is a distinct possibility. Whether we are riding in a vehicle, crossing a street, or just going about our daily work, we are not safe from an accident, a disease, or a purposeful act of violence. While we can't live protected from the evils of this world, we can live with the promise that God gives us: Nothing, absolutely nothing, can cut us off from the love we have in Jesus. Although you may never die for your faith, you may face rejection and other painful persecutions. God's love will instruct you and help you face all that comes your way today.