



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF THE MARTYRS MSGR. PIERRE CLAVERIE, O.P., BISHOP OF
ORAN,
AND 18 COMPANIONS (MEN AND WOMAN RELIGIOUS) IN ALGERIA**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Saturday, 8 December, the Church in Algeria is joyfully celebrating the Beatification of 18 men and women religious martyrs. I join in your action of thanksgiving for these lives wholly given for love of God, of the country and of all of its citizens whose humble everyday life you share in a spirit of fraternity, of friendship, of service.

May you receive here my fraternal encouragement so that this celebration may help to heal the wounds of the past and create a new dynamic of encounter and of living together after the example of our Blessed.

I am very grateful to the President of the Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and to his collaborators, for having facilitated the celebration, on Algerian soil, of the Beatification of Bishop Pierre Claverie and his 18 men and women Companions, martyrs of the greatest love. Thus, I wish to express all my affection to the people of Algeria who have known great suffering during the social crisis to which it fell victim in the final years of the last century.

Commemorating the death in Algeria of these 19 Christian victims, the Catholics of Algeria and of the world wish to celebrate the faithfulness of these martyrs to the plan of Peace that God inspires in all mankind. At the same time, they wish to include in their prayers all the sons and daughters of Algeria who, likewise, were victims of the same violence by having observed, with fidelity and respect for the other, their duties as believers and citizens in this blessed land. For them too we raise our prayers and express our grateful homage.

The Catholic Church in Algeria knows she is the heir, with the entire nation of Algeria, of the great

message of love offered by one of the numerous spiritual masters of your land, Saint Augustine of Hippo. She wishes to serve that same message, in these times in which peoples seek to advance their aspiration to “live together in peace”.

Through the Beatification of our 19 brothers and sisters, the Church wishes to bear witness to her desire to continue working for dialogue, harmony and friendship. We believe that this unprecedented event in your country may trace in the Algerian sky a great sign of fraternity addressed to the entire world.

We are pleased that this celebration can be experienced in a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who is particularly present in our two religious Traditions. May the maternal gaze of the Blessed Virgin Mary, full of grace, protect you and keep you.

From the Vatican, 2 December 2018

Francis