

Pope St. Paul VI spoke also of his desire, in the act of Canonisation, to “assist in advancing ecumenism worthy of the name.” This witness in the society of our day is carried out alongside our Christian brothers and sisters.

In these present times of the Covid-19 pandemic, this fidelity, this loyalty, expressed in love and charity, is as vital as ever. It is, perhaps, the most powerful witness in times of crisis - and our martyrs show the way of fidelity without limit.

It may have been difficult for us to celebrate Mass together for some time - the “truth of the Holy Eucharist”, Pope St. Paul VI reminds us, was a particular point of testing for the martyrs. These present times are testing for us too. Our response must, surely, be that of the martyrs - placing the Eucharist at the centre of our lives and returning to the celebration with renewed hope and trust in the One who gave Himself for us on the Cross and continues to give Himself to us completely in the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist.

Faithful to his own promise, the Lord Himself is with us on our journey, just as He was with the martyrs whom we celebrate today. Through His closeness to us and our openness to His love, we are made a people of hope. This hope, rooted in the Eucharist, makes our witness strong; more effective than we might ever imagine.

As we give thanks for the witness of our martyrs, may their prayers strengthen us on the path of fidelity to the vocation, the mission, to which each of us is called.

With every Blessing,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Bishop of Arundel & Brighton