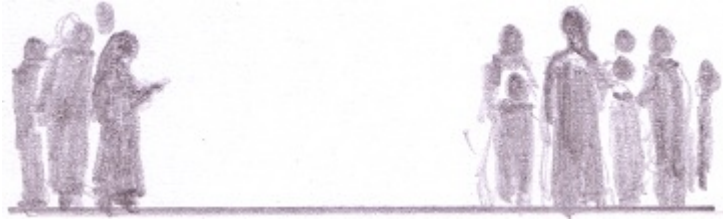


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by Pat Marrin

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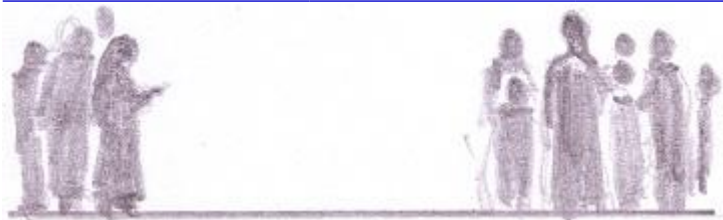
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"Your mother and your brothers are standing outside" (Luke 8:20).

Memorial of 19th century Korean martyrs

[Prv 21:1-6, 10-13](#); [Luke 8:19-21](#)

When Pope Francis visited Korea in 2014, he was writing a page in a long and complicated history of Christian expansion into Asia. Today's commemoration of 19th century Koreans martyrs (canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1984) is a reminder of how European missionary efforts were perceived as foreign intervention. Over

10,000 Korean Christians were killed at the time during state-sponsored persecution.

Today's gospel reading reminds us just how radical the early church must have seemed within Jewish and Mediterranean cultures. Luke records that Jesus' family came to where he was preaching to the crowds with the intention of claiming clan authority over him. Jesus rebuffs them when he says. "Who is my mother, who are my brothers? They are the ones who hear God's word and follow it."

Because Christianity emerged as the dominant cultural force in many parts of the world, we can forget how disruptive it must have been to existing networks of tribal and family loyalties, causing divisions within households and between generations. Rome saw the Jesus movement as a threat to their control and launched several waves of persecution to suppress the church.

In today's world, we see continued tension among religious groups as refugee and migrating populations enter established national and cultural enclaves in an increasingly diverse world. While most religions seek compatibility and collaboration on basic goals, extremist and exclusive claims about truth and God can stir up fear and violence.

On this commemoration of the 101 martyrs of Korea, the universal church prays for justice and peace as it preaches the gospel of love and reconciliation. We look for guidance from the example of our martyred brothers and sisters, who knew the true cost of discipleship.

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