

One of the talks I will give on the [Catholic Answers Cruise](#) is about the Apostolic Fathers and Suffering for the Faith. It is dear to my heart since we just traveled all over Turkey, France and Italy filming the life of the Fathers, focusing in on the suffering and martyrdom of early Christians.



We visited the Church of Santo Stefano Rotundo (*picture to right*).

Many people think the church is morbid, disgusting and even gross. As you can see in the picture it is a round church with all the walls covered with paintings of the tortures and martyrdoms of the early Christians. They are graphic and detailed.

The two pictures below are from the walls of the church (*man with molten lead being poured down his throat and woman with her hands cut off and hung around her neck*). These are only two pictures of hundreds. You will see them in our next DVD. (Thanks for the correction below in Comments.)



**But back to my question:** Are you prepared to Witness for Christ?" Be careful before you say YES! In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to the Apostles, "You will be my witnesses." By virtue of our baptism, we are ALL called to be witnesses for Christ. But when Jesus used the word "witness" he may have implied more than we think. We tend to think he meant to give testimony for Christ with words alone. But the early Christians gave witness to Christ with much more than their words.

The New Testament was originally written in Greek and the Greek word used for "witness" is *martur*. Sound familiar. Say it to yourself out loud a few times and see if it sounds like an English word we use. I bet you guessed it. The English word "martyr" derives from the Greek word *martur* meaning witness.

The *Catechism* states, "Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death . . ." (CCC 2473). When we traveled to the sites of the Apostolic Fathers and the place where they and many others spilled their blood on arena floors, it was a sobering trip.



Are you and I really prepared to be witnesses for Christ in the full sense of the word? The early Christians suffered horrendously to pass the faith on to us. Would we have the faith and fortitude to follow in their steps? For myself, I like to think I would. But I also know I don't like pain--I avoid it like the plague.

But I commit myself to this, and ask you to join me -- if martyrdom is required of me, I will trust God to give me the grace and strength to go down heroically with these words on my lips:

**"I am a Christian! Lord Jesus, receive your servant!"**

**"And they have conquered [the Devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (*martur*), for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Revelation 12:11, RSVCE)**