

ModernMARTYRS

HEROES OF THE FAITH

The gift you offer will support these and similar pastoral projects.



Fr Fran's STORY



Watch a video about Fr Frans and the legacy he has left behind in Syria

MARTYR

Father Frans van der Lugt

Pray for us

On the morning of 7 April 2014 two masked men burst into the home of Father Franciscus (Frans) van der Lugt in Homs, Syria. They beat up the Jesuit priest before shooting him with two gunshots to the head.

Hearing of his death Pope Francis said, "Last Monday in Homs, Syria, the Rev Fr Frans van der Lugt was assassinated, a Dutch Jesuit brother of mine, 75 years old, who arrived in Syria about 50 years ago; he always did good to all, with gratitude and love, and therefore he was loved and respected by Christians and Muslims. His brutal murder has filled me with deep pain and it made me think of a lot of people still suffering and dying in that tormented country, my beloved Syria, already too long in the throes of a bloody conflict, which continues to reap death and destruction. I also think of the many people abducted, both Christians and Muslims, in Syria and in other countries as well, among which are bishops and priests."

When millions of Syrians were fleeing the country during the Civil War, Fr Frans stayed. He knew he had to remain with the people whom he has called his brothers and sisters for so long. He desired to do all he could to support them in all the difficulties they faced, physical and spiritual. **He is remembered to this day for his solidarity and support for all who knocked on his door, Christian or Muslim.**

During his time as a priest in Syria, Fr Frans initiated many activities; one of them was the hike "Al Maseeer", which began in the 1980s. The hike gathered Syrian people from all religions, ages and regions, as well as Europeans and people from other parts of the world. It was a beautiful peace building initiative.

Fr Frans' ministry changed many people by introducing them to a new way of life, a life lived for others, a life lived for Christ. For many, their experiences with Fr Frans were vital in becoming the men and women they are today. Through Fr Frans' hikes they found a way to truly integrate with their own people. Fr Frans remained faithful to the Syrian people, whom he loved deeply, right up to his assassination in 2014.

Syria is far from having recovered from the war. The Christian population has halved from about 2 million since 2011. ACN is supporting thousands of Christian families to rebuild their lives and to live their faith, but who will minister to them and offer them the sacraments? The blood that was shed by Fr Frans was the final offering of his life for these people who form one of the oldest Christian communities on earth.

MAKE A DONATION

- in honour of Fr Frans van der Lugt to form seminarians and young men and women religious. Your offering will build and maintain seminaries and formation houses as well as provide formators and resources.