

ORDO
CISTERCIENSUM S.O.

ABBAS GENERALIS

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Rome, 20 April 2026

Dear Brothers and sisters,

With this short letter, I wish to draw your attention, insofar as needed, to the liturgical commemoration on 8 May of the Blessed Martyrs of Algeria, among whom are our seven brothers from Tibhirine. This year marks thirty years since they gave their lives and made us all coheirs.

All over the world, activities are organized around that date to remember this event. Let us, above all, join in these commemorations with our prayers, and perhaps pay extra attention and care to the celebration of 8 May within our own communities. One of the signs of hope we see today, in a world full of hatred and violence, is the growing global attention for the testimony of our brothers.

During his recent visit to Algeria, Pope Leo XIV reflected on the sacrifice of this group of Algerian martyrs. In a meeting with the church in Algeria, the Pope said: *“After all, it is precisely love for their brothers and sisters that inspired the witness of the martyrs we have commemorated. In the face of hatred and violence, they remained faithful to charity even to the point of sacrificing themselves alongside many other men and women, Christians and Muslims. They did so without ostentation or fanfare, with serenity and steadfastness, neither falling into presumption nor despair, for they knew the One in whom they had placed their trust.”* (13 April 2026)

In my circular letter this year, I have reflected extensively on this ‘love for their brothers and sisters’ in the care for the poor throughout the lived monastic life at Tibhirine. It may be good during these days to reread this year’s circular letter. Let us also not forget the four circular letters of Dom Bernardo Olivera on Our Brothers of Atlas (1996-1997), which, after thirty years, still help us to read the history of our brothers of Tibhirine in the light of faith so that ‘our lives may be formed as the Lord formed their lives’ (Dom Bernardo, Our brothers of Atlas IV. Keeping their memory alive, 21 May 1997)

The liturgical celebration alone is, of course, not enough to keep the memory of our brothers alive. We are coheirs of the legacy our brothers have left us. We keep their memory alive above all by giving ourselves fully in the daily life of our monastic experience, so that we are wholly transformed in Him, in openness to God and our neighbours, and in forgiveness.

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May the martyrs of Algeria, especially our brothers of Tibhirine, intercede for us so that we do not fall 'into presumption nor despair' for we know the One in whom we have placed our trust.

with my greetings and prayers,



Br. Bernardus Peeters ocso
Abbot General

