February 6th: Memorial of Saint Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

Gospel text (*Mt* 28:16-20): Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..."

Saint Paul Miki and companions (XVI)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Saint John Paul II)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today we celebrate Saint Paul Miki and companions, first martyrs of Japan. They triumphed over death in an insurmountable act of praise to the Lord. Like Christ, they were brought to a place where the common criminals were executed. Like Christ, they gave their lives so that they invite us all to believe in the love of the Father, in the saving mission of the Son, in the Grace of the Spirit. On February 5, 1597, twenty-six Martyrs witnessed the power of the Cross in Nishizaka; They were the first of a rich harvest of Martyrs, because many more would later sanctify this land with their suffering and death.

Many Christians died in Nagasaki, but the Nagasaki's Church did not die. She had to live underground, and the Christian message was passed from parents to children until the Church returned to public life. Rooted on the hill of these Martyrs, the Church in Nagasaki would grow and flourish, becoming an example of faith and faithfulness for Christians everywhere, an expression of hope founded on the Risen Christ.

—Each age — the past, the present and the future — produces bright examples of the power of Jesus Christ for the edification of all. The Martyrs Hill testifies the primacy of Love in the world.