

BEATIFICATION OF THE MARTYRS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IN SPAIN

Marists witnesses to the faith
66 Brothers and 2 Lay people

The celebration reminds us of the paschal triduum: three days, three different moments, but with a total unity.

Les Avellanes - 11 and 12 October

The celebration of Friday afternoon with a sense of family, like Holy Thursday. A group of brothers and laity from the different Provinces of Europe, the General House in Rome, and other parts of the Marist world, with the families of the neighbouring villages, gathered around 4 o'clock for the presentation of the book "The courage of faith", written by Br Lluís Serra, of the Province of L'Hermitage

The act took place in the church of the monastery of Les Avellanes. Brothers Emili Turú S.G., Ernesto Sánchez C.G., and Maurice Berquet, Provincial of l'Hermitage presided. Br Ernesto presented Br Lluís, emphasizing his qualifications and formation. Br Lluís then spoke, explaining the meaning of his work and the keys to its interpretation. The Superior General, in his turn, underlined that the work led the reader "not to remain indifferent", since it tells, in a brief manner and the present tense, of the death of 68 persons. "Their life, and not only their death, challenges us", he concluded.

Then the buses carried pilgrims, brothers and families to the place where Br Crisanto was assassinated, the "Mas del Pastor", in Tartareu. The account of the brother's martyrdom was read, and Mme Angelina Amorós, who had known him, gave a beautiful and moving testimony to the martyr. Gratitude was also expressed, by means of a beautiful floral wreath, to the families of the region who helped and took in the brothers and juniors, in dif-



ficult circumstances, with courage and generosity.

The participants then went back to the monastery of Les Avellanes to begin the eucharistic celebration in the fronton court, where the "4 martyrs of the fronton court" were shot. There the liturgy of the Word was celebrated – the first reading the account of the martyrdom of the 4 brothers: Aquilino, Fabián, Félix Lorenzo and Ligorio. The Gospel was the narrative of the passion of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke. All then went in procession up to the cemetery behind where, around the statue of Mary, they listened to the testimony of Br Inocencio Martínez and joined in the prayers of the faithful. The eucharist concluded in the church with a homage at the shrine of the martyrs. At the end of the celebration, Br Emili said: "If one wanted to sum up the life of these brother martyrs in one word, it would be "fidelity".

The Superior General did not fail to show his gratitude to the persons of the surrounding villages who, in every circumstance, felt so close to the brothers, that they formed a single family. The General

Councillors presented to all present a little cross, symbol of the life and martyrdom of the brothers and also of the mission of the Marists. In fact, the crosses were made by the youth of the social centre of Alcantarilla, Murcia, where some brothers of the Province of "Mediterránea"

carry out their mission. Finally, all shared a festive supper. Early the next morning, the brothers began the day with the Dawn Rosary, a pilgrimage from the fountain at the entrance to the monastery up to the statue of the Virgin of the "Puig" (hill).



BARCELONA, 12 OCTOBER

Homage to the brother martyrs and their families

On Sturday the pilgrims of Les Avellanes headed for Barcelona (the College of La Inmaculada), where they joined other groups from different parts of Spain and a large number of the martyrs' relatives. The day was like a Good Friday: homage and celebration of the martyrdom symbolised by a cross corresponding to each of the 68 martyrs, then presented to their families. The celebration began in the school courtyard with a dramatic representation of who the Marist Brothers were and are, living in community and carrying out their mission among children and young people. It must not be forgotten that the brothers and two lay



martyrs in their time lived this particular way of being Marist. A celebration of the faith followed in the main hall of the college, where the group "Kairoi" sang songs appropriate to the occasion. Br Emili addressed

the participants, stressing the significance of the martyrdom and how our martyrs challenge us: "It may be that we do not understand the process of beatification and canonisation very well", he said, "but our martyrs surprise us with a message very relevant today."

At the end of the celebration, the Superior General took the opportunity to thank all the persons who collaborated to arrive at this summit, the beatification of our 68 Marist martyrs: postulatores, organizers and others who had lent a hand. Each one received, as a sign of gratitude, a copy of the symbolic image created by the artist Goyo. The day finished with a festive and fraternal supper in the college courtyard.

CELEBRATION IN TARRAGONA

13 October: Beatification of the 68 Marist martyrs

Sunday 13 October 2013 was the date set for the beatification of 522 martyrs of the XX century, including 68 Marist Brothers. The ceremony took place in the grounds of the Catholic education complex in Tarragona. This was the largest beatification ceremony held in Spain, with a congregation of some 25,000 persons. It was presided over by the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato, accompanied by 104 bishops - thirty from abroad - 8 cardinals and 1,400 priests. In addition to the civil authorities, there were 4,000 relatives of the martyrs present at the ceremony, according to the local press.



It was a bright, beautiful morning, with a limpid blue sky, fitting for celebrating the victory of the God of life, the risen Jesus, and with him all those who had died in him, especially the witnesses of the faith who had shed their blood for God. The celebration began punctually at noon. The choir of the Monastery of Montserrat and an orchestra provided the music.

The Eucharist began with a solemn entrance procession, followed by the blessing of the water and the aspersions. Those taking part were then able to listen to the personal message of Pope Francis, transmitted by video. He said, among other things: «The Holy Fathers say: 'Let us imitate the martyrs!' It is always necessary to die a little in order to come out of ourselves, our egoism, our wellbeing, our laziness, our sadnesses and open ourselves to God, to others, especially to those most in need of us. Let us ask for the intercession of the martyrs to be concrete Christians, Christians in deeds and not in words; to not be mediocre Christians, Christians with a coat of Christianity but without sub-

stance...»

The Archbishop of Tarragona, Mgr Jaime Pujol Balcells, then requested the beatification of the 522 martyrs. Cardinal Angelo Amato read the Apostolic Letter in which His Holiness, Pope Francis, inscribed in the book of the blessed those who gave their lives in defence of the faith. As the text was read, the images of the blessed appeared on the giant screens. Thus, the participants were able to see, among others, Brothers Crisanto and Cipriano José, and the two laymen, Ramón Emiliano Hortelano Gómez and Julián Aguilar Martín. At the end of the reading, the beatification logo was unfurled to the sound of «Christus vincit» with the images of the martyrs as background.

A solemn procession accompanied a beautiful urn containing the relics of the martyrs to a place near the altar, surrounded by 7 lamps and flowers, where they were venerated and incensed. Then Cardinal Amato presented a copy of the Apostolic Letter to each of the diocesan bishops involved

and to each Postulator, including our Br Luis Jorge Flores.

The Eucharist continued with the Gloria and the Liturgy of the Word. In his homily, the Pope's representative, Cardinal Amato, said: «Our brothers and sisters were not combatants, they had no weapons, were not at the front, did not support any party, were not provocators. They were peaceful men and women. They were killed out of hatred for the faith, simply because they were Catholics, because they were priests, seminarians, religious men and women, because they believed in God and their only treasure was Jesus, whom they loved more than their lives. They hated no one, they loved everyone, they did good to all. Their apostolate was catechesis in the parishes, teaching in the schools, care of the sick, charity to the poor, assistance to elderly persons and the marginalised...» And he continued:

"What message does our martyrs, ancient and modern offer us? They leave us a double message. Before everything, they invite us to pardon. Pope

Francis reminded us recently that the joy of God is to pardon!... There is the whole Gospel, the whole of Christianity! It is not a watered down sentiment, on the contrary, mercy is the true power which can save man from the 'cancer' which is sin, moral evil, spiritual evil. Only love can fill the chasms, the devastating whirlwind which evil opens in the heart and in history. Only love can do that, and such is the joy of God !... May today's celebration then be the feast of reconciliation, of pardon given and received, the triumph of the Lord of peace..."

"From this comes a second message: that of the conversion of the heart to goodness and mercy. We are all called to convert ourselves to the good, those who call themselves Christians as well as those who do not. The Church also invites the persecutors not to be afraid of conversion, not to fear the good, to refuse the evil. The lord is a good father who pardons and welcomes, with open arms, all his children straying on the paths of evil and sin."

There followed the Credo, the inten-

tions and the eucharistic liturgy, in union with all the martyrs of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. At the end, Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid and president of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, addressed some words of thanks before the solemn blessing. The «Virelai», a hymn in honour of N.D. of Montserrat, brought the liturgical celebration to a close. The image of the Black Virgin ("Moreneta") had stood beside the altar throughout the celebration, in a way presiding.



INTERCESSORS AND MODELS

Marist Martyrs

Dear brothers and Marist friends. Our 68 Marist martyrs in Spain have already been beatified. They have already been officially declared, according to the Church, DOCTORS in holiness and, as such, our INTERCESSORS and our MODELS. All "graduates" undertake a new step, installed in their "office", in order to receive and concern themselves with the "clients". Nothing worse for these "professionals" than to find themselves WITHOUT CLIENTS. What would people think of us, Marist brothers, if we had no pupils in our educational centres?

Well ! The beatification of our martyrs in Spain confirms us in the certitude that they are already in their heavenly "office". Let us ask ourselves now if they lack CLIENTS... They are there to be our intercessors before God; and God, without a doubt, wishes to work through their mediation when we pray to obtain some grace. Let us remember that the BLESSED, when they are invoked, can obtain from God a miracle, in the face of extreme human situations. If a miracle is obtained

through their intercession, the Church can declare them SAINTS.

I hope that in the future we become "clients" of our BLESSED brothers and of those in the troop of the VENERABLES, such as Brothers François and Alfano. In my opinion, we have confined them to the attic for long years, although extreme situations have not been wanting in our congregation and elsewhere during that time. We have only to think of our parents, friends, students, ex-students who could have benefitted from their intercession. A novena is a good thing but not necessary. What matters is to invoke the Venerable or the Blessed in a PRAYERFUL and CONTINUOUS way, asking his intervention before God, so that we obtain what we are asking for.



May Jesus, Mary and Marcellin revive in us a solid and sound devotion towards those who have preceded us in the following of Jesus, and whom the Church now presents to us as models of a faith that led them to lose their life in order to gain it in Christ.

Br Luis Jorge Flores Aceves
Postulator General



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