

VICENTE LOPEZ DE URALDE LAZCANO, S.M. (1894-1990)

On Sunday, December 14, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. in the Oratory of San Felipe Neri in Cadiz, Spain, the process for the canonization of Father Vicente López, S.M., was initiated by His Excellency Antonio Ceballos, the Bishop of Cadiz. With the bishop presiding, the ceremony included swearing in the members of the diocesan tribunal that will gather oral and written testimony about the life of Father Vicente López, S.M., and how he practiced Christian virtues to a heroic degree. The Postulator and Vice Postulator of the cause also swore an oath to fulfill their duties faithfully. They are, respectively, Father Antonio Gascón, S.M., and Mr. Julio Ramos, Esq. Mr. Ramos is a retired attorney, a former student of Father Vicente, and a close associate of the Marianists. Also in attendance were Father Enrique Torres, S.M., former Marianist Postulator General and member of the history commission for the cause, as well as many Marianists of the Cadiz area.

The cause for the canonization of Father Vicente Lopez was introduced to Bishop Antonio Ceballos of Cadiz by Father Antonio Gascón, Marianist Postulator General, on September 25, 2008. After consulting the bishops of Western Andalucía and receiving the nihil obstat from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Bishop Ceballos approved the introduction of Father Vicente's cause in the Diocese of Cadiz, and charged his Vicar General, Father Guillermo Dominguez Leonseguí (former student of the Marianists and an acquaintance of Father Vicente), to set in motion the process for opening the cause. Thus began the fourteenth process for the canonization of a Marianist.

After a long and fruitful teaching and pastoral ministry as a Marianist, Father Vicente López de Uralde Lazcano passed to his everlasting reward on September 15, 1990, at the age of 96 in Cadiz, Spain. Born in Vitoria, Spain, in 1894, he received his elementary education from the Marianists in his native city at the School of Our Lady of the Pillar. That school was founded by Mrs. Felicia Olave, the aunt of Father José María Salaverri, S.M., primarily to educate the children of poor workers. When Vicente entered the Marianist postulate for the Province of Spain in Escoriaza, one of his fellow postulants was Emilio Salaverri, the father of our former superior general, Father José María. Emilio and Vicente shared a lifelong friendship of mutual respect and affection.

Vicente professed first vows in Vitoria in 1911 and perpetual vows in Escoriaza in 1917. At the Marianist Seminary, Fribourg, Switzerland, he studied theology and was ordained in 1925. He returned to Spain to work as a priest in

Marianist schools, and in 1928 Father Vicente was assigned to Colegio San Felipe Neri in Cadiz, where he served as a teacher and as chaplain of the oratory (public chapel) next to the school. From 1928 until his death in 1990 he lived and worked with admirable dedication in Cadiz. For many years he taught English to the primary school students and among other duties was organist for the community. To the people of Cadiz he became a legend, much loved by students, alumni, parents, and the diocesan clergy, always respected as a holy priest and comforting confessor.

From the outset Bishop Ceballos exhibited warm enthusiasm for the initiation of Father Vicente's cause because this distinguished Marianist was greatly beloved by the diocesan clergy and the faithful of Cadiz and by all connected with Colegio San Felipe Neri. With Bishop Ceballos the Marianists are grateful for the sanctifying presence of Father Vicente in the Marianist Family and in the Diocese of Cadiz.

May God soon bring Father Vicente to the honors of the altar.

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Prayer for the Glorification of Vicente López

God, our Father,
you have called Vicente López de Uralde
to serve your Church as a Marianist priest,
under the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary,
and you made him a merciful pastor
for the reconciliation of sinners.
Grant that we, following his example,
may bear witness to our faith
with a compassionate and merciful heart,
and through his intercession grant the graces
we humbly beg of you
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

-- Brother John Samaha, S.M.