



Our Marianist Martyrs of Ciudad Real: Blesseds Carlos Eraña, Jesús Hita and Fidel Fuidio (Feast Day: September 18)

By Bro. David Betz

October 1, 2020, is the 25th Anniversary of the Beatification of our Marianist Martyrs of Ciudad Real. All three were executed between Sept. 18, 1936, and Oct. 17, 1936. These were the early months of the Spanish Civil War, a conflict that began in July 1936 and ended in April 1939. This conflict was a battle between the Republicans, who were associated with communists and anarchists, and the Nationalists, who were considered monarchists, traditionalists and conservatives.

Along with this political split, animosity erupted between church and state and among economic classes. When the Republican government was elected it, started a plan to secularize society and looked to delegitimize the Catholic Church and its influence. Catholic leaders openly expressed their support for the Nationalists, and this led to much of the persecution of priests and religious during the civil war.

So, our Marianist Martyrs were caught in this struggle between church and state. Carlos, Jesús and Fidel were exemplary Marianist educators. They were very dedicated to their educational craft as well as their religious life. Their fellow brothers highly praised them for their commitment, their steadfastness, and their love for the Society of Mary. And so, at the time of the Spanish Civil War, their only “crime” was that they were faithful religious who worked to educate young people in the faith. They knew that they were in a precarious situation if they continued their work, but they felt that it was their duty and call as servants of God to pursue the will of God for the sake of the Good News. Their perseverance eventually led them to their arrests which ended in their executions (Carlos on 9/18/36, Jesús on 9/25/36 and Fidel on 10/17/36). An example of their faithfulness in this time of struggle can be seen in Jesús Hita’s response to his niece, Ana, concerning the situation at hand, “What can happen? If they kill us, then they kill us. If we are martyrs, so be it.” and then his niece asked about being afraid and he goes on, “Why? They will kill us for being religious. None of us has become actively involved with politics, least of all me. I have enough to do in my work with the students.” (The Blessed Carlos, Jesús, Fidel; Marianists by Emilio Ortega, SM, page 125)

What courage and faithfulness these three men had despite the dangers that surrounded them. They can be examples for us during our times especially when we are being confronted with the struggles that cause us to question what is important these days in respect to needs of the marginalized or of those who are being persecuted today for their efforts to seek justice in our society. Let us pray that God can give

us the perseverance of the Marianist Martyrs of Ciudad Real to pursue the love that God is calling us to be witnesses to in our world today.

Finally, here is a prayer that was written for the Beatification of Carlos, Jesús, and Fidel:

Give us, O God, large hearts, hearts which welcome the world without distinction of race, class, or religion.

Give us, O God, hearts that welcome to themselves, all good causes, all noble effort, all sincere commitments.

Give us, O God, hearts resembling the heart of Jesus of Nazareth who spent his life doing good, who taught us to call you Father, and who lay down his life, pardoning those who took that life.

Give us, O God, hearts similar to the hearts of Carlos, Fidel and Jesús who were able to commit themselves to their vocation, who trusted in the Mother of the Lord, and who inspired affection by their work as educators.

Amen.

See:

[The Blessed Carlos, Jesús, Fidel: Marianists by Emilio Ortega, SM](#) (Servant of God Series, North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton, OH, 1999)