

Blessed John Maria of the Cross Priest and martyr

He was born at San Esteban de los Patos (Avila, Spain) on September 25, 1891 of a family of farmers who lived simply and were rich in Christian virtue. They gave him the name Mariano. Already as a child he felt the call to follow Christ as a priest and he would in time become a diocesan priest. He later entered the Priests of the Sacred Heart taking as his religious name that of John Maria of the Cross, by which name he would be known in the future. Filled with apostolic zeal he devoted a great part of his life in service to the Minor Seminary at Puente la Reina and in the promotion of vocations. The Spanish Revolution of 1936 led him to witness his faith and to declare himself a priest while confronting those trying to burn the Church of Sts. John in Valencia. Put into prison, after a month of ministering to his fellow inmates, he underwent martyrdom at Silla (Valencia) on August 23, 1936.

Liturgy of the Hours

The Second Reading

From the writings of Blessed John Maria of the Cross. Retreat Notes, Rome, 1927.

If the Heart of Jesus is the object of delight to the Father, why should it not become the object of delight also to this poor priest of yours? Yes, my soul, rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in the most Holy Heart of Jesus.

Sin does two grave injuries: one, that we might perhaps call divine, and the other human; the first offends the holiness of God and the second offends souls. It is the task of the priest repairer of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to dedicate himself to these two kinds of reparations: one that we can call divine and the other human.

Now the person that habitually takes loving delight in the holy presence of God, contemplates the Lord in His divinity, presence and power, looks upon Him and adores Him in his inner soul as though made his temple by means of grace and visits the Blessed Sacrament such a one makes divine reparation. In addition, in imitation of St. Teresa, the soul that takes great delight in the most holy humanity of the Lord united to His divinity, and contemplates Him in His childhood, or in His hidden life, in His public life, in His Passion and His resurrection, or Ascension, etc....., is it not certain that this habitual delight in the Lord constitutes a great consolation and excellent reparation to the one who has said: "My delight is to be with the children of men" even though most turn away because of their lack of faith, indifference or forgetfulness?

When therefore a soul loves God, finds joy in Him, it can do no less than to love and find joy in His living image, that is, his neighbor, namely souls. From this love zeal for the salvation of souls which is something most dear to the Heart of Jesus will follow as a logical consequence.

Work done in keeping with holy obedience, in apostolic ministry, in the missions, in schools, in communications, in the pulpit, in the confessional, in periodicals and in books, in Catholic social action, at the bed side of the sick, in the apostolate of prayer, will not overlook any work on behalf of poor souls, drawing them away from sin and defects and showing them how to walk the demanding ways of perfection

This is the second part of reparation, namely human reparation.

Response Cf. Ps. 68, 10:15,15

V/ Zeal for your house is always in my heart; it is my portion and my inheritance for ever

V/ I praise and bless your Name among all the people.

R/ It is my portion and my inheritance for ever.

COLLECT

Almighty and eternal God, through the Blessed John Maria de la Cruz, priest and martyr, you have sent to your Church a seed of new life. Grant to all your children that they imitate his virtue so that they may offer themselves lovingly as heralds of your love and instruments of peace. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.