



LIFE AND MARTYRDOM OF BLESSED BUENAVENTURA GARCÍA DE PAREDES, O.P.

*Priest, Former Master of the Order
(... 12 August 1936)*

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Buenaventura García de Paredes was born in Castañeda de Valdes, province of Asturias and diocese of Oviedo on April 19, 1866. He was the son of Serapio García Paredes and María Pallasa. God blessed this marriage with four more children, one of whom became a secular priest.

He was baptized in the parish church of his own town by the parish priest, Fr. Pedro González Cienfuegos.

His family was typically rural and of humble condition. When he was a child, Buenaventura took care of the sheep of his father for a short time. He took his primary studies in his hometown. He is remembered as an obedient, respectful and pious child.

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The life of his saintly mother and the appeal of the first friar- preachers whom he knew were the initial signs of his vocation to the Dominican Order. In order to prepare himself better for his entry to the Dominican School, he had some classes in Latin taught by the parish priest, Fr. Antonio Francisco.

He entered the Dominican School of Corias (Asturias), but he was not able to pursue his studies for more than two years because his poor health forced him to return home. But as soon as he regained his health, he continued his studies at the Apostolic School of the Dominican Province of the Our Lady of the Rosary, located in the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, Toledo.

He received the Dominican habit at the Convent of Ocaña on August 30, 1883. On the thirtieth of August of the next year, he made his simple profession and began his philosophical studies at the same time. Once these studies were completed, he went to the College of Santo Tomás in Ávila where he made his solemn profession on September 8, 1887 before the rector, Fr. Santiago Payá.

When he finished his third year of theology, he was sent to the University of Salamanca to study Civil Law, which he later pursued, together with the course in Philosophy and Letters at the Universities of Valencia and Madrid. When he completed his theological studies, he was ordained priest on July 25, 1891 by his Excellency, Most Rev. Juan Herrero, D.D., bishop of Ávila.

He obtained his doctorate in Philosophy and Letters at the Central University of Madrid in 1897. In the following year, he likewise obtained his doctorate in Jurisprudence. With such a solid formation, he was sent to the Philippines, where he earned the degree of lector in theology, which was required by the Order to be able to teach in the University of Santo Tomas. At the University, he was entrusted with the Chair of Political and Administrative Law, the office he held with great regard from his

Blessed Buenaventura García de Paredes, O.P.; Blessed Jesús Villarde Andrés, O.P. from Fr. Villarroel, O.P., "Positio Bonaventurae García Paredes, Michaelis Leibar et XL Sociorum (para la causa de beatificación de los Mártires de Madrid, 1963), Roma: 1995.

Blessed Pedro Ibáñez Alonso, O.P.; Blessed Manuel Moreno Martínez, O.P.; Blessed Maximino Fernández Marinas, O.P.; Blessed José María López Castillo, O.P. from Fr. Eladio Neira, O.P., Fr. Hilario Ocio, O.P. and Fr. Gregorio Arnaiz, O.P. "Misioneros Dominicos en el Extremo Oriente, vol. 2: 1836-1940." Manila: Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores, 2000.

Appendix: Other Dominican Priests Assigned in the Philippines.

Blessed Inocencio García Díez, O.P.; Blessed Antonio Varona Ortega, O.P. from Fr. Eladio Neira, O.P., Fr. Hilario Ocio, O.P. and Fr. Gregorio Arnaiz, O.P. "Misioneros Dominicos en el Extremo Oriente, vol. 2: 1836-1940." Manila: Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores, 2000.

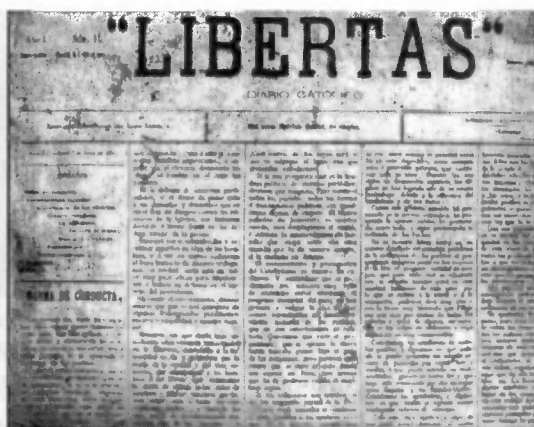
Translated by Rev. Fr. Pedro González Tejero, O.P. and Noel Vincent B. Abalajon, UST Central Seminary. Fr. Noel belongs to the Archdiocese of Capiz and is a S.T.L./M.A. Graduate of UST.

students and colleagues. At the same time, he assumed the directorship of the Catholic newspaper "Libertas," which was edited by the University. In this daily, he published excellent articles in defense of the Church.

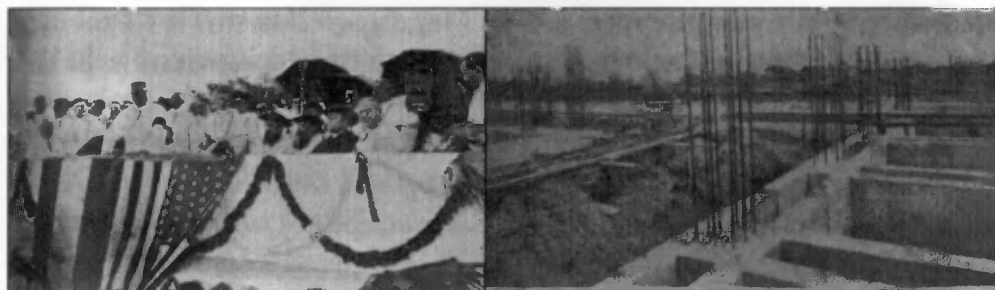
He returned to Spain in 1901 upon his election as Prior of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila. When he finished his term, he was entrusted with the rectorship of the School of Santa María de Nieva in Segovia, whose establishment he initiated. Under his leadership, this center of teaching prospered. In 1910, he was elected Prior of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. In the same year, he attended as an ex-officio member the Provincial Chapter held in Manila, where he was elected Prior Provincial of the Province of the Holy Rosary of the Philippines, which was the most numerous and widespread throughout the whole Dominican Order at that time.

The seven years he governed the Province marked a period of great activity and increase in apostolic works. On several occasions, he visited the great mission areas in the Far East, attending carefully to the needs of the missionaries and creating new centers of teaching and of charity. He founded a school in Foochow (China) and in Taipei (Taiwan). He also established a hospital in Tamduo (Vietnam) and the Apostolic School in La Mejorada (Spain). He opened the Dominican House of Theological Studies in Rosaryville (U.S.A.), and a school in Baguio, Philippines. He wrote circular letters addressed to the brethren, which were full of wise counsels on the apostolic and community life. Moved by his zeal for missions and for the good of the Order, he did not hesitate to give up properties and lands of the Province of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to other provinces of the Order — the prefectures in Vietnam to the Province of Lyon, the missions in Tingchow, China to the Province of Germany, and the house in Valencia, Spain for the restoration of the Province of Aragón.

At the Provincial Chapter held in Manila in 1914, by virtue of a decree of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, the office of Fr. Paredes was extended indefinitely ("ad nutum Sanctae Sedis"), which, by this fact, deprived the voters of the right to vote. This unprecedented measure was received with much displeasure by a certain group in the assembly, which generated a situation of anxiety and disunity among



"Libertas" The Catholic Daily of which Fr. Paredes was a Director (AUST)



The UST Campus in Sulucan (now, Sampaloc Area) purchased during the time of Fr. Paredes as Prior Provincial. Left: Laying of the Cornerstone in 1911. Right: Construction of the Main Building (AUST).

the members of the Chapter. This caused Blessed Paredes considerable pains and sufferings. Furthermore, many of the brethren raised their criticisms and complaints to the Central Curia with accusations of nepotism against Fr. Paredes, who manifested favoritism towards his provincemates due to their appointments in different offices of responsibility. But he did not think in that way. And as a sign of his honesty, he presented his resignation as Provincial on several occasions.

On the other hand, other groups of the Province of the Holy Rosary praised his actions, considering him as “an excellent administrator gifted with prudence, charity, serenity, tact, keen attention, hardwork, indefatigability, and example to all.” Fr. Paredes kept a constant communication with the General Curia regarding all these problems, and he always showed an attitude of prudence and impartiality. As to the said Roman decree which confirmed him in the office “ad nutum Sanctae Sedis,” the procedural witnesses, in defense of Fr. Paredes, assured that he never asked or sought permanence in the office.

In 1917, having ended his second term as Prior Provincial, he was appointed superior of the new Dominican House of the Our Lady of the Rosary in Madrid, where he dedicated his life to the apostolate and the spiritual direction of the people for nine years.

In 1926, the General Chapter of the Order held in Ocaña, Toledo elected Fr. Paredes as Master General. He received the news in a very calm disposition. But overtaken by his sense of responsibility, upon his arrival in Ocaña, he threw himself to the ground before the Chapter Assembly, and humbly and strongly asked the electors to free him from this office. But seeing the insistence of the members of the Chapter, he accepted the office in the spirit of obedience.

For the two and a half years as Master General of the Order, Fr. Paredes accomplished praiseworthy achievements like visiting different provinces, and creating commissions for the study of the problems and needs of the Order. He

acquired for the Angelicum College in Rome the Convent of Saints Domenico and Sisto, which was more spacious and adequate than the ones used in the San Vital Street. In 1929, some serious problems surfaced in the Order, which affected his weak health. Because of this, he was forced to present his resignation from his office.

Some members of the General Curia of the Order affirmed that his poor health was the cause of certain sluggishness and faltering in the discharge of his office. Some news and information from France reached the Holy See. Certain religious of the Order were involved in the Worker Priests' Movement ("Action Francaise"), which was condemned by Pope Pius XI in 1926. It was the wish of the Holy See that the Master General would remove two of these religious from their respective convents. Fr. Paredes delayed his intervention for several months until a thorough investigation had been done. This delay did not please the Pope. Fr. Paredes wrote a letter to the Supreme Pontiff, manifesting his sorrow for the pain he had caused him and asking him forgiveness. The Holy See thought it opportune in those circumstances to invite Fr. Paredes to present his resignation, "offering him in case he would accept a titular Episcopal see as a testimony of benevolence and esteem." Fr. Paredes declined this offer. Weakened by his poor health to carry on the heavy burden of his office, he responded at once to the intimation of the Holy See, resigning from his office.

It is worthy to note the version and impression of Fr. Paredes concerning this matter. According to him, "the reason of his health was true, although some people used his illness as a pretext to complain to the Holy See." He understood that the Holy Father was favorable of his resignation as what transpired during his last audience with the Pope in relation to this problem. As a faithful son of the Church, he left the leadership of the Order with joy and without delay, freeing himself as he said "of a burden for which I have no necessary physical vigor ever since I was elected." This was a very painful trial for him, but Fr. Paredes knew how to transform it into a rich occasion for spiritual growth. He later told a Dominican religious of this remark: "I suffered much, but the Lord has given me great consolation I never had."

Being free to choose a house of the Order as his permanent residence, Fr. Paredes chose the secluded and quiet Convent of Ocaña because, as he wrote: "In this Convent I spent my novitiate, and furthermore, it is a true sanctuary of the Province, since the martyrs of Vietnam were formed in this Convent. I never ceased to thank God for this blessing He has bestowed on me and for this sweet spiritual peace which I enjoy." It was there where he dedicated the last years of his pastoral ministry, where he immersed himself with spiritual direction and with juridical and moral consultation. In the middle of July 1936, he went to Madrid where the raging revolution and civil war caught him at the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary.

He was a prolific writer since youth. His literary works, especially his articles and letters on different topics, were submitted to the judgment of the Holy See. And the two theological censors who examined them agreed that the author was “a son of the Catholic Church and a faithful follower not only of the truths, but also of the best morals of Christianity.”

B. VIRTUES

All the procedural witnesses who knew Fr. Paredes unanimously exalt his natural and supernatural virtues:

“He always manifested deep and profound faith which was shown in his personal sojourn and union with God in all the difficult offices he had.” “He put his trust in God.” “And he had good and humanitarian sentiments for all people.” “He also knew how to forgive those who oppose his plans and orders.” He was outstanding “in his great spirit of charity towards all, but especially towards the workers of the “Centro de Santo Domingo” which was established at the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Madrid. “He used to say of the simple and humble people that “they were the first in the Kingdom of God.” “He was very charitable to those who were sick.”

Msgr. Giuseppe Petrelli, the Apostolic Delegate in the Philippines from 1912 until 1921, said these words before three Dominican communities of Manila: Fr. Paredes “was always very prudent and very wise in the exercise of his office as a Provincial Superior.” He was well-known for his prudence and deliberation and for his extraordinary patience manifested during his governance. He was “just and impartial,” an exemplar Superior, although he was inclined to favor his provincemates. He was “very faithful in complying with his duties and very firm whenever he made his decisions as Superior, although he was compassionate and humane.” “In the difficult governance of his subjects, he always showed courage and strength.” He was “very moderate in his food and drink, in his moments of leisure and in all things.”

When the authorities and other people showered him honor and respect for his high position, he was very edifying for his profound humility as stated by all witnesses. “In public, he showed simplicity with a sense of profound humility.” “He carried himself with the same humility, without any ostentation.” He proved himself very humble in accepting the office of Master General as he prostrated himself on the ground before the assembly of the elective General Chapter, pleading with them to accept his renunciation of the office. In that occasion, an Austrian-Hungarian priest

remarked: "In my life I have never seen such a beautiful thing as this." His humility was a model because after his resignation from the office, his successor Fr. Aniceto Fernández testifies: "I met him once and far from being hurt or resentful, he exuded peace and docility, trying to justify the decision of the Holy See with respect and meekness."

He was noticeable for his friendliness and compassion towards everybody. He was "kind to all, nice and easy to deal with, because of which many used to go to him for confessions." "Although he had been in high positions, he treated everyone with great affability." He was "by character kind, amiable, compassionate, especially to those who suffer any kind of pain." "He had an exquisite zeal for the souls."

His devotion was edifying. "It is impressive to see him during prayers. His piety was manifested in his conversations, and likewise in his letters that were very edifying. To see him celebrate mass was very edifying." "During a canonical visit to the missions of Vietnam when he was a Prior Provincial, he immediately prostrated himself on the ground before a marker for the martyrs and remained there for a long time. When he stood up, we all noticed the overwhelming emotion of this Servant of God with his face covered with tears."

Some witnesses had summed up his virtues declaring that his life was the life of a saint. He was a "man of extraordinary gifts in all aspects, he always was for me a true and complete model, a true saint." One of his successors, Fr. Aniceto Fernández, describes him in this short remark: "He was a very respectful, spiritual, dignified and impartial father." "In all his behavior and in all things he always embodied something supernatural, and his spirit was always fair and fraternal. He was the reflection of all the virtues proper of a saint."

C. MARTYRDOM

Ever since the Popular Front ("Frente Popular" of the Communists) won the elections in Spain on February of 1936, Fr. Paredes, who lived in the secluded Convent of Ocaña, followed with great preoccupation the chaotic situation in Spain, oblivious of the enormous dimensions of the tragedy that was looming. There lived in Madrid a couple, Don Pedro Errazquin and Doña María Garmendía, with whom Fr. Paredes had established an intimate friendship in the Philippines since 1915. They considered him as their counselor and confidant in all the important affairs of the family. By his letters to the different members of the family, we can glimpse the state of the soul of Fr. Paredes just before the Great Religious Persecution started on the month of July:

"I cannot overcome the disturbing reality that we suffer. Our only hope is to trust in the mercy of God."

This friend of Fr. Paredes, Don Pedro, offered to arrange all the things for a passport and a ticket for him to leave Spain and to travel to the Philippines. But the old and sickly Fr. Paredes felt "a great and invincible difficulty to pursue this trip." And he would do it "only if the Superiors in Rome would allow him." It was in this sense that he wrote to Rome asking for permission, because "this is the least a friar should do though he has been a Master General" as he told his friend, Don Pedro. After obtaining the ticket for the trip, his friend solicited a passport from the authorities, but this document was denied to him on account of "being a religious."

A witness recalls that he saw him at the Convent few days before the beginning of the war "with an expression in his face of deep sadness and tribulation, and he heard from him words of condolence."

On the eighteenth of July, the day the revolution started, Don Pedro went to the Convent of the Our Lady of the Rosary in Madrid offering a refuge in his farm not only to Fr. Paredes but also to the other religious. The community however had already provided for this eventuality and had chosen some places for shelter in case of an emergency. Heeding the advice of the Provincial Vicar, Fr. Paredes left with his friend on that day, which explains his absence when a group of revolutionaries took over the Convent on the next day.

But at that time, all the exits of Madrid had been blocked, which made his departure for the farm impossible. For a short while, Don Pedro gave him a place to stay in his own home, but he was also being watched by the police. While staying in the house of Don Pedro, he "was able to celebrate mass in the Oratory of Sres. Granda, D. Felix."

The new hiding place prepared by Don Pedro was the Hotel del Carmen at the Plaza of Santa Bárbara. These were the last days of the month of July. Fr. Paredes was able to wander through the streets for several days in the company of Carlos Chacón, the secretary of the office of Don Pedro. For this purpose, Carlos Chacón bought him a civilian attire with tie. Moreover, Carlos brought him to the General Directorate of Security ("Dirección General de Seguridad"), where, through the help of some friends, he tried to acquire a safe pass for Fr. Paredes so that he could stay in Madrid



Poster of the Spanish Civil War

without being harassed or threatened if he would leave the city. Unfortunately, his friends were not able to obtain such document “because in the *cédula* Fr. Paredes was identified as a religious.” In the same hotel another Dominican was also hiding, Fr. Manuel Ma. Martínez, who met one night with Fr. Paredes and his friend, Don Pedro. It seemed to Fr. Manuel Martínez that “while Don Pedro was very nervous and restless, Fr. Paredes, on the contrary, showed a great serenity of the spirit.”

With the belief that the police were keeping watch on both of them, the two friends left the Hotel del Carmen and took refuge in a pension called del Infante Don Juan, at Recoletos Street, owned by Doña Celsa González. When both of them entered the house and he presented himself as a priest, she hesitated to accept him because she was afraid she might be apprehended. Finally, she accepted him due to the confidence the personality of Fr. Paredes accorded her.

A resident of the pension, Doña Pilar Restares, the Marquise of Diezma, whose house in Granada had been burned through the mandate of the “Casa del Pueblo” when several priests were found hiding there, saw Fr. Paredes and Don Pedro Errazquin arriving at the pension. So Doña Pilar narrates:

At the Pension there arrived two gentlemen, one was tall, strong and healthy, and the other was an old man, who looked like seventy-five years old. When we saw them, my sister Soledad said, “How well-protected is this old man by that gentleman!” And when we learned that the old man was a religious, we made our confessions to him. Fr. Paredes had been the Rector of the University of Manila and of the Order of Preachers. He asked for a blanket which we surmised was for sleeping on the floor. Since his *cédula* identified him as a religious, my nephew Rafael Valero changed it to a watchmaker.

In the room assigned to him, Fr. Paredes lived a life of meditation and prayer, even celebrating mass. A maidservant of the pension, Josefina de la Torre, had an opportunity to observe him and she offered this testimony about him:

Everyday I brought breakfast to his room without any knowledge that he was a friar. I soon learned that he was a very good person since I saw him always at his table holding a book with markers, which I believed was a devotional manual. On several occasions, curious as all women are, I peeped inside the keyhole of the door and I saw him kneeling down in a posture of prayer. In other instances, I observed that there were some people in the room of Fr. Paredes. He was standing up before a small table with a small bread and a glass, and I believed that he was celebrating the Holy Mass.

On the tenth of August, while visiting his office, his friend Don Pedro was arrested by the *milicianos* (Communist militiamen, partisans) of the *checa* (torture prison, control patrol) García de Paredes. They rummaged his whole house and found a chalice. They forced him to divulge “under the threat of death” the owner of the chalice, who was Fr. Paredes. He also revealed the place and room where he was hiding. Don Pedro was brought to the said *checa* and a few hours later was shot in the Pradera de San Isidro.

When Fr. Paredes received a call about the death of his friend, he wept bitterly. At midday of the eleventh of August, a group of *milicianos* broke into the Pension del Infante Don Juan, with some keeping tight watch outside and others climbing up the stairs to the floor where Fr. Paredes stayed. Three witnesses who were present have recounted the circumstances of his arrest.

The owner of the pension, Celsa González says:

I opened the door and inquired why they were taking him since he was a very good person, and they replied that they will return him after two hours. I told them that if they would do so, I would invite them to a very good merienda. I tried not to open the door, but they threatened me with guns and warned that they will also take me. That is why I allowed them and directed them to the dining room where Fr. Paredes was. When Fr. Paredes saw that they were going to seize him and knew already what happened to Don Pedro, he exclaimed: “Is there nobody who would save me?” And I noticed that he was trembling while murmuring: “What a pity, O God, to be among these *milicianos*!”

According to Fr. Manuel Ma. Martínez, Celsa González told him at the end of 1936 that Fr. Paredes during his arrest declared himself as a priest and religious, and gave himself to them with courage. These are the words of Fr. Martínez:

I heard from the owner of the pension that the *milicianos* arrived in search solely of Fr. Paredes, having all the information about his person and his religious state. The same person told me that when the *milicianos* arrested Fr. Paredes, with great courage, he confronted them: “I know why and for what you are taking me. I have not committed any crime except that of being a priest and a religious.

The maidservant of the pension, Josefina de la Torre, describes the arrest in this manner:

At midday, a group of *milicianos* entered the pension, looking for Fr. Paredes. At that moment, he was sitting down at the table. The attendant said that a group of *milicianos* asked her for Fr. Paredes. When he heard them, he said loudly: "Is there nobody to help me?" And he went where the *milicianos* stood saying: "What a pity, O God! The divine providence has willed this."

For her part, the Marquise of Diezma wrote the following:

While we were taking our lunch and the Father was alone in his table, he was told that the *milicianos* were looking for him, and they had an order to take him for questioning. Standing up from his table, he said: 'Is there nobody who can do something for me?' All of us held our breath so as not to denounce all the different people who were in the dining room. A lady, rather small in stature but great in her soul, and with a heart full of charity, responded: 'I...' It was the Marquise of Diezma who ran towards the telephone and talked to the General Directorate of Security. The answer was that if they had the warrant of arrest, there was no other way but to surrender himself and that nothing will happen to him. In the room of Fr. Paredes, they loaded their guns and when Fr. Paredes was going down the stairs, he told the *milicianos*: 'You will not do anything with me, eh!'

In an interview conducted by the Vice Postulator with the same Marquise of Diezma, she declared the following:

At all times he was an example of virtue and good spirit to all of us. On several occasions he heard our confessions. He did not make any resistance. He went out like a lamb. It is not true that he wanted to elude the arrest. He always showed himself patient and resigned. It is true that he said very sweetly: 'You would not do anything bad for me, eh?' These were not threats at all.

When Carlos Chacón went to inform Fr. Paredes about the murder of Don Pedro Errazquin, he arrived late in the pension. At that time, the *milicianos* were leaving the building and he could see the scene at a certain distance. The following is his description:

I stared at him, and I noticed that he showed complete serenity, but I was not able to talk to him. I followed the car which carried him and I saw that he was taken to the *checa* of García de Paredes Street where Don Pedro was detained. The next day I returned to find out what happened. Thanks to a man who was there, I was able to know

that they brought him to the town of Fuencarral. I immediately went there, and by the directions the man gave me, I knew that it was there where he had been killed. And that he had been buried. To be sure of this, I showed a picture of Fr. Paredes to the gravedigger, and upon seeing it, he assured me that he had really been killed and that he himself had buried him, and he showed me the grave. He further said that somebody whom he could not identify had bought a casket and with it he had been buried.

On the twelfth of August, around ten o'clock in the morning, in a small road of the town of Fuencarral, suburb of Madrid, with no witnesses but his own murderers, and with the serenity and resignation reflected in the face of his cadaver, the Servant of God, priest and religious, was killed by gunshots. Among the personal things found in his body were a rosary with a crucifix and a breviary. After the cadaver was examined by the forensic doctors, the jury of Fuencarral wrote the official document of his death that was registered as follows:

12th of August 1936

Book 32, Page 65, Number 122

Buenaventura García Paredes, *Doctor of Law and Former Rector of the University of Manila* was found dead on the 12th of August 1936, at 4:00 in the afternoon, in the small road of Valdesenderín of this district; of strong built measuring approximately 1.70 meters, whitish hair, at the back brown, he was dressed in a gray-colored attire with some dark dots, white shirt with blue lines, socks and a necktie. The brand carried the name "Las Cien Mil Corbatas." Mayor 7 and 9, Madrid. The vest belonged to "Casa Calero," Alcalá 9, Madrid, according to the brand name. He had a rosary with a crucifix, a white handkerchief with some designs, a breviary, a petition for a passport, some documents of accounts at the Bank of Vizcaya and a paid receipt for the boat "Sharnorst."

He died in the small road of Valdesenderín del Encinar on the 12th of the present month at approximately 10:00 in the morning due to gun shots as testified by the doctors. — That pictures were allowed to be taken. — Witnesses: Eustaquio Aparicio Palacios, Mariano Pérez Velasco, Clemente López Delgado. — Judge: Francisco Herreros Barriga. — Signed by de Jacinto, Secretary.

When the Red Cross found the cadaver, they took some photographs of it, two of which were kept in the files of the General Directorate of Security — one in front and the other at the side. The following day after the execution, Celsa González, the owner of the Pension del Infante Don Juan, seeing that all her hopes for the return of Fr. Paredes were gone, made the following investigations:

On the next day, I went to the office where they stored all the files of those who had been executed and truly among those that were shown to me, I saw first the corpse of Don Pedro and then that of Fr. Paredes, which I recognized immediately. He had in his temple a wound from which blood flows.

Seven months later, the Dominican Fr. Manuel Ma. Martínez, the companion of Fr. Paredes at the pension who escaped death, concurred with the testimony of Celsa González. Fr. Martínez says:

Around the middle of the month of March or April 1937, I could see in the General Directorate of Security among numerous photographs of those who were murdered the one of Fr. Paredes, which I recognized perfectly. I still remember that his head reclined towards the right side, and that he had a scar of a wound like a big slash.

Once the war ended, the said photographs of Fr. Paredes were kept in the same place and were carefully identified by the daughter of Don Pedro. This was testified by Don Pedro's wife and the two Dominicans of the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Madrid. These two priests were Fr. Nicolás Peña and Fr. Silvestre Sancho. Fr. Sancho tells what the gravedigger declared:

Accompanied by Fr. Nicolás Peña, Vicar Provincial, I went to the town hall of Fuencarral, where the register of deaths can be located, and we found the file with the photographs taken of Fr. Paredes, found dead in a small road of the said town. We went to the cemetery of this town and we talked with the gravedigger, asking him to show us the grave where Fr. Paredes was buried. He directed us to the grave and he admitted that he himself had buried Fr. Paredes. We asked him if he was buried in a casket or not. He answered that he was buried in a casket given by a lady whose name he did not know.

The photographs which the witnesses referred to are those which had been reproduced for the Canonical Process ("Proceso Matritense"). They show the head of the Servant of God reclined towards the right side with his peaceful countenance as though he were sleeping. They also show the scar of the wound of the gunshot in his temple and a trickle of blood flowing in his face.

On October 24, 1940, the mortal remains of Fr. Paredes were exhumed in the cemetery of Fuencarral with the permission of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and in the presence of the head of the mortuary and of the forensic doctors of the

town and district of Fuencarral. Thereafter his remains were taken and buried again with the due authorization of the Sacred Congregation of the Council inside the crypt of the Church of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary (Madrid) in the presence of many public officials and several faithful. The following is the testimony of Carlos Chacón about his burial:

I do not know the procedure they followed to ascertain that the cadaver truly belonged to Fr. Paredes. I only remember that the Fathers were very sure of it, and among the details they pointed out was the necktie whose brand name was still intact, and it was exactly that of the store where I myself had bought it. The same is true with the remnants of the coat which was preserved.

Twenty-seven years after in 1967, the mortal remains of Fr. Paredes were moved solemnly to the cemetery chapel of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila where they rest until today. In the niche where these remains were placed the following inscription can be read: "Most Rev. Buenaventura G. Paredes, Former Master General † 12 of August 1936. Fuencarral, Madrid."

All the witnesses of the Canonical Process who testified on behalf of this Servant of God are totally convinced that he was killed by the enemies of religion, who were motivated by their hatred of the Christian faith, and that Fr. Paredes accepted his death with resignation and for the love of God. His conduct in the places where he took refuge and at the moment of his detention manifests that he had this state of soul.

Many witnesses have declared to have special devotion to the Servant of God and have invoked his intercession for their needs. And some testify to have received special favors through his intercession, among them the quick healing of a serious wound, the cure of osteoporosis that a little girl suffered and many other cases appearing as miracles, which were reported to the Vice-Postulator of the Cause.



LIFE AND MARTYRDOM OF BLESSED JESÚS VILLAVERDE ANDRÉS, O.P.

Priest
(... 16 October 1936)

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Jesús Villaverde Andrés was born in San Miguel de Dueñas, province of León, diocese of Astorga on December 4, 1877. He was the son of José Antonio Andrés and María Teresa Francisca Andrés. He was baptized on the twelfth of the same month in the parish church of the said town. He received the name Vicente de Jesús Andrés, but he always used the name Jesús.

The family belonged to the middle class. His father was a military captain. God blessed this marriage with six children, two of whom entered the religious state. The parents were zealous and exemplary Catholics, and they raised their children as good Christians.

When their family moved to Salamanca, Jesús studied in a school of the Jesuit priests. From Salamanca, they had to transfer to Madrid. There the young Jesús began his priestly formation in the diocesan seminary, while staying in his home. The house of his parents was very near the Residencia-Procuración of the Dominican priests in La Pasión Street. Jesús used to visit the church often, and was a familiar figure to its

resident priests. The vocation to the Dominican Order was nurtured in his young soul due to this early contact with these religious.

In 1894, he entered the novitiate at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, where he made his simple profession on July 4, 1895. When he finished his philosophical studies, he moved to the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila where he took his theological formation. He was ordained priest on June 26, 1903.

His Dominican priestly life is characterized by constant transition and activity as professor of ecclesiastical sciences and as superior of different communities. He was sent to the Philippines, where he first taught at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran (c. 1905-1910). He returned to Spain and was assigned to the Convent of Valencia, which the Province of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary ceded to the Province of Aragón for its needed restoration.

He went back to the Philippines in 1916. He spent the rest of his life teaching at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila with a professorial chair in theology, after obtaining the doctorate of theology at the Faculty of Sacred Theology in 1919. Aside from teaching dogmatic theology from 1919 to 1934, he also taught classes in Canon Law. He held several offices at the University of Santo Tomas: as Secretary General (1919- 1921), Treasurer (1929-1932), and Dean of the Faculty of Theology (1932-1934). While teaching at the University, he was appointed Rector of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran (1924-1927). He only left the Philippines for three years when he was elected Prior of the Dominican community in Rosaryville, New Orleans, U.S.A. (1921-1924).

In 1934 he was elected Prior of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila, which term he did not finish by the order of the Master General. When he was assigned to the Convent of Santo Domingo in Madrid, he was caught by the Revolution and the assault on the Convent by the Communists.

B. VIRTUES

His religious brothers remembered Fr. Villaverde as a “model religious, rigid in monastic observances,” “faithful in the fulfillment of his duties and in assisting the choir.” There were two moments in his life when his conduct earned some criticisms. The first was in 1912 when he was assigned to the Convent of Valencia by the Master General. After a while, Fr. Villaverde left for the Convent of Ávila with an appointment coming only from the Vicar Provincial of Spain. And while in Ávila, he took part in the election of the prior for this Convent even before obtaining the approval of his transfer by the Master General. The other incident happened in 1936, when as Prior

of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila, he was embroiled in an internal conflict due to opposing opinions between the Master of the Order and the Prior Provincial of the Province of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. In this quarrel, Fr. Villaverde took the side of the Provincial Superior, and for this reason, he was transferred to the convent of Madrid.

There is an aspect of his personality which all procedural witnesses confirmed. They say that he had an “active,” “strong” and “distinct character;” “somewhat temperamental;” but these witnesses offered a reason: “It was due to a sickness that afflicted him” — “a liver disease” which “caused him severe headache.” They also explain “that he suffered this patiently and with great resignation,” to the point “that he was able to control it being a man of suffering and patience.” “I witnessed how he had to work much in order to overcome his temper on certain occasions.” But amidst all these sufferings and struggles, he remained “faithful, amiable and affable.”

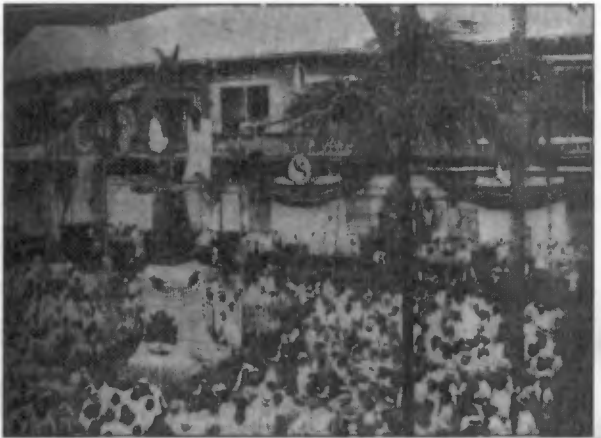
As a Superior, he was compassionate and charitable, trying to lighten the punishments as much as possible. “He had no grudge against anybody.”



The UST Campus in Intramuros where Fr. Villaverde held several positions from 1916 until 1934 (AUST).



The New UST Campus in Sulcan opened in 1927 (Benavides).



The Tricentennial Celebration of UST in 1911. Crowd gathered around Plaza de Santo Tomas (AUST).

All the witnesses affirm that he was a great preacher. He left some of his homilies written doctrine “which conforms perfectly with the dogmatic teachings and the Christian morals of the Church,” and “in the same way with the doctrine of the Magisterium of the Church.”

C. MARTYRDOM

On July 19, 1936, when the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Madrid was stormed by the Communists, he took refuge in the house of his own mother located in Cuesta de los Descargos, no. 2. There he found, together with his mother, his two sisters, Amalia and Sor Pilar, an Augustinian religious whose whole community had been expelled in Alcalá de Henares. When he arrived home, Fr. Villaverde, who was dressed in civilian attire, managed to talk with his family “for only five minutes” as told by Sor Pilar:

The little which I could have him talked at the house of our parents gave me the impression that he was resigned, and he said. ‘I do not know what is going to happen. We will follow what God wills’: I bade him goodbye and I never saw him again.

These words agree substantially with those mentioned by the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Augustinians, Sor Josefa Ezquer, which she probably heard from Sor Pilar on some occasions. Mother Josefa says:

Sor Pilar met his brother for a few minutes. They embraced each other and she said to him: ‘Oh, my brother, this is not the life for us.’ And he answered: ‘Certainly not, but we must be ready for what God wills for us.’

Around this time, Carlos, a brother of Fr. Villaverde, arrived at the house of their parents. As a military man, he thought that Fr. Villaverde would be safer under his custody, and so he took him to his house in the Plaza de Duque de Alba, no. 2. He stayed there for three months in the company of Carlos and his daughters, Gloria and Dolores. Another daughter of Carlos had her house in Madrid and she visited Fr. Villaverde frequently. The Servant of God prayed much, consoled his family and taught them to trust in God. These are the words of Gloria Villaverde:

Throughout the duration of his stay in our house, it can be said that he did not do anything else except to pray and console all of us with words of trust in God amidst all these constant fears, which we all felt. He did these in a personal way when my fiancé, a *Traditionalista*

young man, was detained, and I was crying constantly. He told me that it was God's will because He wanted him for heaven.

On the fifteenth of October, the arrest of Fr. Villaverde took place. We have two versions of the circumstances of this event: one, from an actual witness, Gloria Villaverde, niece of the Servant of God, and the other, from a secondary witness, Amalia, sister of the Servant of God. The fact transpired quickly in this manner: The *milicianos* were searching for a friar; the Servant of God surrendered himself to them as a religious; he was taken to the *checa*, and killed on the following day without any witnesses except his murderers. Gloria narrates:

At midnight of October 15, 1936, a group of *milicianos* came to take my uncle. We tried to prevent his arrest, pretending that he was not there. But then, they decided to take my father instead. When my uncle knew this, he came out from his hiding place. He told the *milicianos* that he was ready to die for Christ, and he asked them to leave his brother, my father behind. He was brought to the *checa* of Fomento and they asked us to bring him food.

After a few days, while falling in line to deliver the package of food, suddenly a policeman prodded my father which he took as a lack of courtesy. But the policeman only wanted to speak with us in private. In the office of the *checa*, they demanded that we should bring good food, especially good beef, because they said our uncle had a great appetite. They even asked us to bring him cigars, and promised that during that night we will be able to meet him.

For me, all these were very suspicious because my uncle did not smoke cigars. Nevertheless, we tried to comply with the request of the *milicianos* of the *checa*. While we were leaving, we saw reclining in one of the walls of the building the policeman who gave my father a nudge. He persuaded us not to go back to the *checa* because he had heard from the *milicianos* that if we return, they will do to us what they had done with our relative, that is, they will kill us. He showed himself as a man of good heart who was horrified by the crimes committed by those murderers. He confided to us that he belonged to the Socorro Blanco, and that he worked as much as possible to free from death as many as he could. He promised to visit us when the war ended, if he and we will survive. He also told us to visit the Office of the Identification of Cadavers, where the photographs of the corpses of the victims were kept. We went there but we could not find any photograph of our uncle.

The two sisters of Gloria, namely Dolores and Ángeles, gave the same account, but they related what they heard from their father and their sister without adding anything new to the testimony of the two who followed the path of Fr. Villaverde until it was possible for them. However, the testimonies of Amalia Villaverde, sister of the Servant of God and of Carlos, reveal some elements worthy of consideration, facts which she could have learned from the information intimated by her brother Carlos. This is the testimony of Amalia:

My brother Carlos came to our house and informed us about the arrest of the Servant of God. He said that at twelve midnight, I don't remember well but I believe he said it was the feast of Saint Teresa of Jesús, a group of *milicianos* knocked at the door of his house. My brother then asked: 'Who is it?' And they exclaimed: 'The law!' My brother opened the door and then the *milicianos* told him: 'We come to take a friar who lives here.' My brother Carlos answered: 'There is no friar here.' The *milicianos* retorted: 'Then, if there is no friar here, we will take you.' Thereafter his three daughters embraced their father crying. Fr. Villaverde, who was on his bed and was intently listening at the conversation, quickly put on his clothes and presented himself to the *milicianos* declaring: 'If it is for that, you have here the friar. I am the friar.' Then the *milicianos* grabbed the Servant of God and took him with them telling him that they will only question him and promising us that he will return in the afternoon.

My brother Carlos tried to follow them to know what will happen, but some of the *milicianos* prevented him, pointing their guns toward him and threatening to kill him if he would follow them. However, he was able to leave the house afterwards and he asked many of the *zetas* to locate the Servant of God.

One of them whose name I can't remember reported that Fr. Villaverde was there. My brother Carlos asked a favor to meet him. But they replied: 'If you want to talk to the friar Fr. Villaverde, come back at 9:00 in the afternoon.' Moved by pity, one of the *milicianos*, however, did not mind that others would hear him and talked with my brother Carlos, telling him: 'Do not come at 9:00, because if you come, they will also kill you like what happened to your brother.' My brother Carlos returned home and recounted all these things to his family. When 9:00 came, he tried to leave the house but his daughters stopped him.

The last moments of the life of Fr. Villaverde had remained the secret of his executioners. Nobody knew how he was killed. No photographs of his cadaver were found or even the place where he was buried, although his brother Carlos tried to obtain all these facts. These are the words of his daughter Gloria:

Even though threatened with death, my father insisted in securing information at least of the death and burial of my uncle, but without any luck.

In the General Cause, the section about the Religious confirms the death of Fr. Andrés:

Arrested at night (October 15, 1946) by the members of the *checa* Fomento and brought there, he was considered murdered.

The Acts of the Provincial Chapter of the Dominican Province of the Our Lady of the Rosary in 1939 dedicated the following elegy to the Servant of God: "Having left the Convent to avoid the cruelty of communism, he was invited by God to the heavenly banquet."

To sum up, the essential facts of the testimonies during the canonical procedure verify that on October 15, 1936, the *milicianos* arrested the Servant of God. They were searching for a friar, and he presented himself as a religious, ready to die for Christ. He was brought to the *checa* of Fomento, and in the next day, his brother Carlos, after doing some investigations and being threatened with the same fate, learned that his brother had suffered death.

It needs more than intelligence to understand holiness, more than sensibility to recognize it, more than a nicely balanced judgement to criticize it: a whole lifetime can be spent in the study of the Church's wonders, of spiritual books, and of manifestations of sanctity without coming anywhere near its hidden reality. Indeed, to look at it in that way, from the point of view of a research-worker or of a dilettante, is a sign of complete blindness in its regard.

– Henri Gheon



BLESSED PEDRO IBÁÑEZ ALONSO, O.P.

Priest
(1893-1936)

Pedro Ibáñez Alonso was born in Fuentes de Nava, province of Palencia on April 27, 1893. Like all his companions who traveled in the same boat to the Philippines (*barcada*) he completed his studies in humanities at the Apostolic School of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. He received the Dominican habit at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila on September 4, 1908. A year after, he made his simple profession on September 5, 1909. He took his philosophy and preparatory theology in Avila. However, he could not continue his theological studies due to his poor health. In October of 1914, he was sent to the House of Studies of the Province in Rosaryville, Louisiana, U.S.A., where he made his solemn vows on December 8, 1915. Here he completed two years of theology.

Soon after, he was sent to the Philippines, where he finished his theology at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. He was ordained priest on April 1, 1917. After the required examination for hearing confessions, he was sent to the mission of Emuy in China. In the Prefecture of Hin-hoa, he started to learn the Chinese language.

But due to his poor health, he needed to return to Manila the next year. In 1919, he went back to his former mission where he tried hard to study the language.



The Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, Toledo where the Dominican martyrs had their early formation (Tejón).

Later on, he was entrusted with the new missionary district of Kamna. After one and a half years of missionary work, he had to return to the Philippines again because of his illness and his troubled conscience. He stayed for two years at Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila. In May of 1924, he was assigned to the Colegio de San Jacinto in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, where he taught until the school was closed in May of 1934.

Then he was transferred to the College of Santo María de Nieva in Segovia, Spain. Incidentally he was in Madrid at the time when the *milicianos* assaulted the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary on July 19, 1936. He barely escaped for the moment, jumping over the wall at the back of the Convent. He looked for refuge and found it in the pension of a town mate, known as Pension Torío, where several religious of different Orders were also hiding. On the twenty-sixth of August, all of them were arrested by the *milicianos*. According to an eyewitness, Fr. Ibáñez identified himself as "Catholic, Apostolic, Roman and Dominican until death." All these religious were brought to the *checa* where they were again investigated. They were finally executed on the twenty-seventh of August in the barrio of China, district of Vallecas in Madrid without any witnesses. Their "crime" for their execution was simply because they were priests and religious.



BLESSED MANUEL MORENO MARTÍNEZ, O.P.

Priest
(1862-1936)

Manuel Moreno Martínez was born in the town of Rincón de Soto, district of Rioja, province of Logroño on June 17, 1862. He received the Dominican habit at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña on September 23, 1877. Thereafter he made his simple and solemn professions at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila. As a subdeacon, he was sent to the Philippines with three years of studies in philosophy and also three years in theology. He took a course on moral theology at the University of Santo Tomas while residing at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila, where he was ordained deacon, and finally was ordained priest in July of 1895.

After learning the Chinese language through the help of the Vicar Provincial, Fr. Coltell, he was then assigned to the Southern Vicariate of Fukien, China. Eight months later, he was entrusted with the district of Longun, China. After two years, the non-Christians of Fogan burned four Catholic churches. Because of such atrocity, he was summoned to Foochow, China by the Apostolic Vicar, Most Rev. Salvador Masot, O.P., D.D., who appointed him as Vicar Forane. He was given the mission to return to Fogan to demand from the civil authorities the restitution of the destroyed churches and the payment for the material damages incurred against the Christians. With his ability and hardwork, as shown in Foochow as well in Fogan, the Mandarins

and the French Consul approved the restoration of the three churches like what they did with the Church of Mouc-yong. He played a very crucial role in all these events, even to the point of risking his life when he was confronted by a group of non-Christians who yelled: "Kill the foreigners!" Eventually due to his experience, perseverance and knowledge of Chinese psychology, he came out of these troubles unscathed. In 1890, he was appointed Pro-Vicar of the Vicariate of Northern Fogan. He exercised this office fruitfully for several years (1890-1898). He resided in the town of Fuan (Fogan), where he converted many non-Christians and built a modest house. He became a Provincial Vicar for two terms (1902-1905 and 1906-1909). He remained in this mission until the middle of 1911. At that time, he had to leave China for he was involved in a dispute between the Province of the Our Lady of the Rosary and the Apostolic Vicar whom Fr. Moreno supported. He was sent to the Philippines and stayed for two years at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila (1911- 1913). Later on, he was assigned chaplain of the Dominican Sisters in Santa Rita, Pampanga (1913-1917). However in 1917, he returned to Spain for his assignment at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila. After two years, he was transferred to the Apostolic School of La Mejorada in Olmedo, Valladolid (1921-1931). He served this school for ten years as confessor of the aspirants and of the Dominican Sisters of Olmedo. He also ministered at the school for lay people in Santa María de Nieva, Segovia (1931-1934). In November of 1934, he was appointed Superior of the Dominican House in Barcelona. A year later, he was elected Prior of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. He was present there in 1936 when the *milicianos* took over the town of Ocaña. They stormed the Convent on the twenty-ninth of July, pillaging the Convent and desecrating the Church. He took refuge in the house of some friends. But thinking he was safer in Madrid, he took the train for the capital city accompanied by two more religious. They were given safe passes with the password "Romero," which was designed by the Communists to deceive them. As they arrived in Madrid on August 5, 1936, they were all killed in the railroad station of Atocha while crying out: "Viva, Cristo Rey!" ("Hail, Christ the King!").



BLESSED MAXIMINO FERNÁNDEZ MARINAS, O.P.

Priest
(1867-1936)

Maximino Fernández Marinas was born in the town of Castañeda de Valdés, province of Asturias on November 2, 1867. He received the Dominican habit on August 31, 1884 at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, where he also made his simple profession on September 9, 1885. He later took his solemn vows on September 9, 1888 at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila. He went to the Philippines, after three years of studies in philosophy and four years in theology. He completed his theological studies at the University of Santo Tomas, and was ordained priest at the Santo Domingo Church in Intramuros, Manila. On June 4, 1893, he was assigned to the missions in the province of Cagayan. His first assignment was in the parish of Alcalá, Cagayan as its pastor. In May of 1896, he was moved to the town of Sanchez-Mira, Cagayan where he was captured by the Katipuneros on August 28, 1898. He was later transferred to Ilocos together with Fr. Carazo and Fr. Chillarón, vicars of Pamplona and Claveria respectively. Unlike the other missionaries of Cagayan, they did not suffer a lot of deprivations nor were cruelly harassed. They were sent to the prison of San Isidro de Nueva Ecija, where he endured constant diarrhea which almost caused his death.

In May of 1899, Don Fernando Canon was named governor of Nueva Vizcaya.

This charitable man took Fr. Maximino and Fr. Carazo under his custody due to their poor health. He brought them to Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. During the first days of December of that year, they were sent to Manila. In May of 1902, he took the boat for Spain and was assigned to the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. As Vicar Provincial of the Order, he made canonical visitations to the houses of the vicariate of Spain.



The Church of Santo Domingo as seen in the Plaza de Santo Tomas (Benavides).

At the end of 1919, Fr. Maximino was assigned to Rome as the Syndic of the House of the Holy Trinity in Via Condotti. After some time, he moved to the Convent of Quercia (House of Formation), and later on he was transferred to the Shrine of Madonna del Arco near Naples, Italy, where he took the job of

sacristan. At the end of 1922, he returned to Ocaña, Spain. In 1926, he was appointed chaplain of the Dominican Sisters of St. Agnes in Zaragoza, Spain. He stayed there for five years, before returning to Ocaña, where he remained until July of 1936.

When the *milicianos* took possession of the Convent of Ocaña, he left with a safe pass to go to Madrid together with Fr. Moreno. When they arrived at the railroad station of Atocha, they were shot. Fr. Maximino was still conscious at that time. He was rushed to the hospital dying with eleven bullets in his body.

There he died amidst terrible sufferings, "totally abandoned and mocked by the medical personnel." He died on August 15, 1936. A religious of the Christian Schools (La Salle Brothers) once remarked of him: "He died with the crown of physical and moral martyrdom."

*The current article which includes eight martyrs more,
counts a distinguished personality in the person of
Buenaventura García Paredes, O.P.*

*who was a distinguished professor, writer, former Rector of UST, Prior
Provincial of the Holy Rosary Province,
and later elected Master of the Order.*

*The article refracts and humanizes the divine so to say,
in very absorbing pages.*



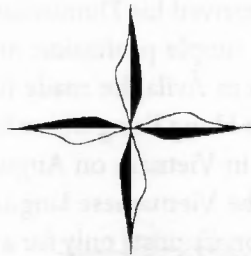
BLESSED JOSÉ MARIA LÓPEZ CARRILLO, O.P.

Priest
(1892-1936)

José Maria López Carrillo was born in Alcalá la Real, province of Jaén on February 14, 1892. While still a child, he migrated to a foreign country with his parents. But the moment his mother died, his father returned to Spain, together with his two sons. José María was placed under the care of an uncle priest and an aunt who was a Dominican tertiary. "He grew very much inclined to the things of God, very adorable, docile and humble." After finishing his studies in humanities at the College of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, he received the Dominican habit at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila on October 23, 1910. At the same Convent, he made both professions, the simple vows on November 5, 1911 and the solemn vows on December 27, 1914. While he was in Ávila, he finished his philosophical studies and his preparatory theology. He was sent to the House of Studies of the Province in Rosaryville, Louisiana, U.S.A., where he finished his four years of theology and where he eventually was ordained deacon. In Manila, he completed his fifth year in theology at the University of Santo Tomas. He was ordained priest on January 19, 1919. After passing the required examination for hearing confessions on July 9, 1919, he was sent to the mission of Northern Fukien in China. After learning the native language, he was assigned to the district of Ping-tan in the island of Haisan (1919-1935), where

he built a church and worked tirelessly for the protection of abandoned children at the *Santa Infancia*.

In 1935 he returned to Spain and was assigned to the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, in order to recover from his sickness and to undergo a surgical operation. On the eve of the Civil War in 1936, he was at the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Madrid when it was attacked by the Communists on the nineteenth of July. Together with Fr. Pedro Ibáñez, he was able to escape for a while, jumping over the wall at the back of the Convent. Both of them took refuge in the Pension Torío, near Puerta del Sol at the very center of Madrid. On the twenty-sixth of August, the two religious were arrested and interrogated by the *milicianos*. They were brought to the *checa* of Fomento, where they were subjected to further questioning. Fr. José María identified himself as “a missionary in China.” On the twenty-seventh of the same month, the following day after their incarceration, they were killed together with other religious from different Orders. No one knew of the circumstances of their death. Their summary execution took place at “the barrio of China in Vallecas.” The Red Cross took photographs of both Dominican priests. The pictures of Fr. José María were taken one in front and the other at the side, which were later on recorded and kept. He was buried in the cemetery of Almudena or del Este on August 28, 1936. His remains were transferred to a different section of the cemetery, but finally were brought to the cemetery of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila on March 18, 1960.





BLESSED INOCENCIO GARCÍA DíEZ, O.P.

Priest
(1874-1936)

Inocencio García Díez was born in Alar de Rey, province of Palencia on December 28, 1874. He finished his studies in humanities at the College of Santo Domingo in Ocaña, where he received his Dominican habit on January 1, 1891. At the same Convent, he made his simple profession on January 1, 1894. A year later at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila, he made his solemn vows on January 9, 1895. As a deacon, he was sent to Hong Kong where he received the mission to work in Central Vietnam. He arrived in Vietnam on August 8, 1899, and soon after was ordained priest. After learning the Vietnamese language, he was entrusted with the pastoral care of one of the missionary posts only for a few months. He was then sent to the Philippines, arriving in Manila on March 23, 1901. He stayed at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila until June 12, 1903, when he was assigned to the Colegio de San Jacinto in Tuguegarao, Cagayan.

In 1910, he returned to Spain and served the school of Santa María de Nieva in Segovia, where he became rector from 1918 to 1924. In 1925, he was transferred to the Convent of the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Madrid, where he dedicated himself to the apostolate and was especially esteemed by the religious sisters. When

this House was promoted to a Convent, he was appointed as its first Prior and Rector of Militia Angélica. He exercised these offices until 1936 when the capital of Spain fell to the hands of the Communists, who captured the Convent on July 19, 1936. Fr. Inocencio was at the confessional and could hardly leave during the assault because of the gunshots. He fled to the house of his sister in Madrid. When he learned that Fr. Santonja was wounded and was admitted in a hospital, he went there to console him. On the thirteenth of August, the porter of the house betrayed him. He was brought to the *checa* of Fomento. On the same day or the day after, he was killed in the dungeon simply because he was a priest and religious. "He had a strong character but he was amiable. He was a good religious and a hardworking man, fervent in the confessional and good in spiritual direction. He had a sister in the Carmelite Order, Sor Concepción, who died as a real saint."

*Here lies UST's moral strength,
its resilience,
and its unending grace
through the centuries.
On these martyrs too,
lie UST's heritage and destiny*



BLESSED ANTONIO VARONA ORTEGA, O.P.

Priest
(1901-1936)

Antonio Varona Ortega, O.P. was born in Zume, the province of Burgos on January 16, 1901. He finished his studies in humanities at the College of La Mejorada in Olmedo, Valladolid (1913-1917). He received the Dominican habit at the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila on September 8, 1917. At the same Convent, he made both his simple and solemn professions. After three years of studies in philosophy and a year of preparatory theology, he was sent to the House of the Province in Rosaryville, Louisiana, U.S.A., where he completed his two years of theology. He was later sent to the Dominican Convent in Washington, D.C. where he finished his last year in theology. At the same time, he took some courses in education at the Catholic University of America from 1924 until 1926, where he soon obtained the degree of Master in Education. He was ordained priest in New Orleans, U.S.A. on June 13, 1926. He arrived in Manila in the same year and was assigned to the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, where he was renowned as a "formator and educator." He taught biology and took care of the intern students of the school.

In 1933, he returned to Spain due to his lingering sickness of tuberculosis. He was at first assigned to the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila. Not long afterwards in 1934, he was admitted to the hospital in Guadarama, Madrid. He was discharged



Letran Circa 1930s

from the hospital with his condition considered hopeless. He was sent to a farm at Nambroca in Toledo, while remaining under the care of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. He was in Nambroca totally paralyzed when the revolution broke out and the persecution of the religious started. On the twenty-fourth of July, “instigated by the leaders of the *casa del pueblo* around eighty or ninety men surrounded the town hall and threatened the friars.” At midday, a group of *milicianos* stormed the farm, taking with them the four religious who were there and bringing them to the town hall for interrogation. At night, they were allowed to leave in a car, but as soon as they reached the town of Algodor, midway the two provinces of Madrid and Toledo, a group of men were already waiting for them. They took the friars into the waiting room of the railroad station and detained them there for several hours. They were finally brought near the Tajo river to a place known as *Malecón de Cañete* and “there they were shot as the Servants of God looked towards heaven with outstretched hands, and drawing courage and strength from their misfortune, they cried aloud: “Viva, Cristo Rey!” (“Hail, Christ the King!”).