

Blessed Niceforo Diez and 25 Companions

Description

Blessed Niceforo Diez Tejerina



Blessed Niceforo Diez Tejerina, Provincial Superior and his twenty five companions, sealed their fidelity to the Lord and to their Passionist vocation with the sacrifice of their life during the Spanish Civil War.

None of them had ever been involved in politics; however, they lived in a climate of social

instability and fierce hatred against the Church and they became innocent victims.

During the night of 21-22 July 1936 they were violently driven from the monastery of Daimiel, which is annexed to the shrine dedicated of “Christ the light”, (Ciudad Real, Spain).

Before leaving the house they gathered in the Church for their last and most poignant community gathering.

The Provincial Superior took the ciborium with the consecrated hosts and addressed the community with moving words of encouragement and hope. His voice was like a balm in the hearts of the religious. “Citizens of Calvary”, he said, “this is our Gethsemane.

At the prospect of painful death our human nature is terrified and distressed; but Jesus is with us. I am going to give you the One who is the strength of the weak.

Jesus at the beginning of his Passion was comforted by an angel; we are comforted and supported by Jesus himself. Soon we will be with Him.

Citizens of Calvary, let us die for Him. I have the task of encouraging you, yet I feel encouraged by your example.”

All the religious received sacramental absolution and the Eucharist with devotion. Then they proceeded strong and serene towards martyrdom.

In the following days they were killed in “hated for the faith”, in various groups and in different places. The first group suffered martyrdom on July 23 and the last on October 23.

The Passionists of Daimiel are celebrated as martyrs of a religious community as a whole, in its various components: the provincial superior, the local superior, student Director, four priests, two young students with their professors, four religious brothers.

Niceforo and his companions, beatified by John Paul II on October 1, 1989, are the first martyrs of the Passionist Congregation to be elevated to the honors of the altar.

The date of 23 (24) July was chosen for the liturgical commemoration because it was the day on which the first group suffered martyrdom, led by the Provincial Superior, Nicéforo Diez.

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Prayer

Father, strength and reward of martyrs, you gave Blessed Nicéforo and his companions the grace of sharing in the Passion of Christ. Grant that by imitating their example, we, too, may courageously persevere in constantly professing our faith. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

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