

**BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD
MARTIN FULGENCIO ELORZA LEGARISTI OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST
THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE PRELATURE OF MOYOBAMBA (1899-1966)**

DECREE ON THE HEROIC VIRTUES

“His disciples recalled the words of scripture, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’” (Jn 2:17). This same zeal of Christ impelled the Servant of God Martín Fulgencio Elorza Legaristi to place everything that belonged to him at the service of the Christian people. As a bishop he devoted himself to forming consciences, as well as creating work projects and erecting buildings. A true disciple of St. Paul of the Cross, he kept the Passion of Christ at the center of his magisterium and his apostolate. From the same ideal of religious life he drew the strength to accomplish all that he did as an educator, Provincial Superior and then Bishop.

The Servant of God was born in Elgeta, in the Basque region of Spain, on 30 December 1899. He entered the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ as a teenager in Gabiria, where he added his baptismal name, Fulgencio, the religious name of Martin of the Side of Jesus.

He was ordained a priest on 13 July 1924. He held the role of director of the collegiate school of Gabiria. There he developed a new academic system, revising the educational syllabus that facilitated a more solid spiritual formation for the students. In 1935, by common consent, he was elected Provincial Superior. Although he was very young, his fellow religious recognized that he was an authoritative and prudent man, as well as being ardent about the Passionist charism. For two three-year terms he was re-elected to that same office, from 1941 to 1947. Later he became Delegate for the houses of the Congregation in America. At the beginning of 1949 he was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Prelature *nullius* of Moyobamba in Peru, which had been established by the Supreme Pontiff Pius XII on 7 March of the previous year. He was elected Prelate of the same on 3 October 1953 and was consecrated Titular Bishop of Baliana in Lima on 24 February 1954.

With great pastoral charity he visited the entire territory of the Prelature. He traveled by foot, on horseback or by canoe in a region that was without actual roads. For about seventeen years he governed pastorally by imitating the virtues of Jesus the Good Shepherd. He was also a tireless evangelizer by his teaching and the example of his virtuous life. With a keen sense of justice and animated by profound charity towards his neighbour, he worked to alleviate the misery of his people, promoting works for the good of society and encouraging the education of women and children. He encouraged catechesis and Catholic Action groups. His plans for the construction of churches and chapels, as well as for the erection of the seminary, were motivated by faith and hope. In everything he always demonstrated profound humility, which he considered to be the only way to receive the gift of divine grace. Between the end of November and the beginning of December 1966 he went to Lima, to deal with some affairs of the Prelature and to speak with the Apostolic Nuncio. His health was precarious, so much so that he could not return to Moyobamba to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord. On 30 December of that same year he gave his soul to God. A few days later, his body was transported to Moyobamba, where a large crowd of the faithful took part in his funeral.

By virtue of his reputation for holiness that he enjoyed in life and after death, the Cause of beatification and canonization of the Servant of God was begun. The Diocesan Inquiry was held at the Ecclesiastical Curia of Lima, from 1 February 2002 to 21 September 2004, with the addition of Rogatory Inquiries in San Sebastián in Spain and in Santo

Domingo in the Dominican Republic. This Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued the Decree on the juridical validity of the Inquiry on 13 July 2007. The *Positio* was then prepared, and it was discussed, according to the usual norms, as to whether the Servant of God practiced the Christian virtues to a heroic degree. On 1 December 2020, the Theological Consultors voted in favour of the Cause. The cardinals and bishops, gathered in the Ordinary Session of 1 March 2022, recognized that the Servant of God heroically exercised the theological, cardinal, and annexed virtues.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect then accurately reported all these things to the Supreme Pontiff Francis. His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the vote of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, today declared: The Servant of God Martin Fulgencio Elorza Legaristi, of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, first Bishop of the Prelature of Moyobamba, practiced the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity towards God and towards his neighbour, as well as the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance and the annexed virtues, to a heroic degree in the case and for the purpose in question. The Supreme Pontiff then ordered that this decree be published and included in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome on 9 April in the year of our Lord 2022.

MARCELLO Cardenal SEMERARO

Prefect

FABIO FABENE

Titular Archbishop of Montefiascone

Secretary