

MISSIONARY ROSARY

October 1, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Today, October 1, 2019, the 75th anniversary of the martyrdom of Fr. Martino Capelli, a young Dehonian priest, is commemorated. He chose to remain with his people during the difficult moments of the end of World War II in Italy. But on this date there is also another important ecclesial event: the beginning of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, called for by Pope Francis to renew with new enthusiasm the responsibility of all Christians to proclaim Gospel.

These two commemorations, which seem so different, are nevertheless very closely linked. Not only because today too many missionaries continue risking their lives, even to the point of martyrdom in fidelity to one's commitment to Christ and to the poorest. But we also know that Fr. Capelli offered himself as a missionary to be sent to China, a desire that, unfortunately, he had no time to realize. For this reason, the Superior General has proposed this Servant of God as protector of our presences in Southeast Asia, and more widely, as an intercessor for the development of our younger missions. His availability and his total gift of life are an incentive for us to renew our own commitment, conscious of being, as the motto of the Extraordinary Missionary Month reminds us, "baptized and sent: Church of Christ on mission in the world".

We pray for all these intentions with the prayer of the Holy Rosary, bound also to this harvest of October. Let us entrust our intentions to Mary, particularly with the words of the prayers that Fr. Capelli wrote in a devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows. We allow ourselves to be accompanied in every mystery by the words of the Gospel but also by witnesses of missionaries and martyrs who, like Fr. Martino, have shared the Passion of Christ and now we invoke them as our models and intercessors.

1. JESUS PRAYS IN THE GETHSEMANE

THE GOSPEL:

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane,* and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,* and began to feel sorrow and distress.

Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death.* Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father,* if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will."

THE MISSION TESTIMONY

From the "spiritual testament" of Blessed Christian de Chergé, Trappist monk and martyr in Algeria

How to be found worthy of such an offer?

If it happened to me one day - and it could be today - to be a victim of terrorism that now seems to want to involve all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family to remember that my life was "given" to God and this country. May they accept that the one Lord of all life could not be a stranger to this brutal departure. Who prayed for me: how to be found worthy of such an offer? That they knew how to associate this death with many other equally violent ones, left in the indifference of anonymity.

I could not wish such a death. I do not see, in fact, how I could rejoice in the fact that these people whom I love were indiscriminately accused of my murder. It would be paying too high a price that would be called, perhaps, the "grace of martyrdom", owing it to an Algerian, whomever he is, especially if he says he acts in fidelity to what he believes to be Islam.

My death, apparently, will seem to agree with those who quickly treated me as naive, or as an idealist. But these people must know that my most piercing curiosity will finally be released. Ecco, I will be able, if it pleases God, to immerse my gaze in that of the Father, to contemplate with Him His children of Islam as He sees them, all enlightened by the glory of Christ, fruit of His Passion, invested with gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion, playing with differences.

Of this lost life, totally mine and totally theirs, I give thanks to God who seems to have wanted this wholeness for this joy, through and in spite of everything.

In this "thank you" in which everything is said, now of my life, I certainly include you, friends of yesterday and today. And even you, last-minute friend who didn't know what you were doing. Yes, for you too I want this "thank you", and this "to-God" in whose face I contemplate you. And let us meet again, blessed thieves, in Heaven, if it pleases God, our Father, of both.

OUR FATHER

10 HAIL MARYS

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER

PRAYER BY FR. MARTINO CAPELLI

In the presence of the whole heavenly court, invoking the help of all the saints and the prayers of all good souls, today I renew spontaneously and with a sincere heart the total, absolute, irrevocable consecration of all of myself; of my soul with all its faculties: intellect, will and memory; and my body with all its five senses. O Sorrowful Virgin, my Mother, I ask you only for a grace: that Christ live in my heart through faith, so that I may give your blessed Son to all the souls that I will meet in my apostolate. Amen. (9/1937)

2. JESUS' SCOURGED

THE GOSPEL:

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. (John 19, 1-3)

THE MISSION TESTIMONY

From the "History of the martyrdom of the saints Paul Miki and his companions" written by a contemporary author

You will be my witnesses

Our brother Paolo Miki, seeing himself raised on the most honorable pulpit he had ever had, first declared to those present that he was Japanese and belonged to the Society of Jesus, to die for having announced the gospel and to thank God for such a precious benefit. Then he added: "Having arrived at this moment, I think that no one among you believes that he wants to silence the truth. I therefore declare to you that there is no other way of salvation, if not that followed by Christians. Since this teaches me to forgive my enemies and all those who have offered me, I willingly forgive the emperor and all those responsible for my death, and I beg them to want to instruct him during Christian baptism".

He then turned to his companions, who had now reached the extreme battle, and began to tell them words of encouragement.

A certain gladness appeared on everyone's faces, but in Ludovico it was particular. To him shouted another Christian who would soon be in heaven, and he, with gestures full of joy, fingers and whole body, attracted the eyes of all the spectators.

Others finally repeated: "Jesus! Mary!" with a serene face. Some also urged those around to a worthy Christian life; with these and other similar gestures they showed their readiness in the face of death.

Then four executioners began to extract the swords used by the Japanese from their sheaths. At their horrible sight all the faithful shouted: "Jesus! Mary! "And, what is more, a compassionate lament followed by several people, who went up to the sky. Their executioners, with a first and a second shot, in a very short time, killed them.

**OUR FATHER
10 HAIL MARYS
GLORY TO THE FATHER**

PRAYER BY FR. MARTINO CAPELLI

O Mother, you gave me Jesus, who deigned to descend into my poor heart, teach me to surround him with love, veneration and adoration. Let me understand Jesus and the Victim, the Priest, the Mediator, the Savior. Let me know his love, his zeal for souls, and I, O Mother, to show my gratitude, today I give myself, I vote and I consecrate myself to you; so that by forming yourselves on your example you may do to me what Jesus wants of me: Holy Priest, Holy Missionary, and Martyr of his Divine Heart. Amen. (8/12/1931)

3. THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

THE GOSPEL:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mt, 27, 27-29)

THE MISSION TESTIMONY

From the homily of St. Oscar Romero during the funeral of Fr. Rutilio Grande (killed on March 12, 1977, together with an elder and a child)

Love is the Solution

There can be no true peace and true love on the bases of injustice, violence, intrigue. True love is what brought Rutilio Grande to death together with two peasants. Thus, he loved the Church, dies with them and presents himself to the transcendence of heaven. He loved them, and it is significant that Fr. Grande fell by shot as he walked, carrying the message of the Mass and salvation. A priest with his peasants, who walks with the people to identify with them, to live with him not a revolutionary inspiration, but an inspiration of love and precisely because love is what inspires us.

Brothers, who knows if the criminal is listening on the radio, in their lair, in their conscience, these words ... We want to tell you, criminal brothers that we love you and that we ask God for repentance for your hearts, because the Church is not able to hate, it has no enemies. Only those who declare themselves as enemies are enemies; but she loves them and dies like Christ: forgive them, Father, because they do not know what they are doing.

Brothers, Salvadorans, when in these crucial moments it seems that there is no solution and they would like to use violent means, I tell you, brothers - praise God - that in the death of Fr. Grande the Church is saying: Yes, there is a solution, the solution is love, the solution is faith, the solution is to feel the Church not as an enemy, the Church as the meeting point of God with men. We understand this Church, let us be inspired by this love, live this faith and I assure you that there is a solution to our great social problems.

**OUR FATHER
10 HAIL MARYS
GLORY TO THE FATHER**

PRAYER BY FR. MARTINO CAPELLI

Moved by great love and the desire to serve the Blessed Virgin, today I consecrate myself to Mary of Sorrow. Now my heart beats with love and compassion for your pains. Thankful for so many great graces, especially for the religious vocation, which you have granted me, without any merit of mine, I thank you with all my soul, with all my heart and with all my strength. Let me match all your graces; do know that I know intimately, that you love, that you perfectly imitate Jesus. For love of you, he accepts everything that will please Jesus and you, even death, when, where, how Jesus wants it and you. He will try to make you known and loved by and for others. This is my firm and unyielding will: to be all of Jesus for Mary. Amen. (9/15/1931)

4. JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS TO THE CALVARY

GOSPEL READING:

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). (Mark 15, 21-22)

THE MISSION TESTIMONY

From the letters of Saint Paul Le-Bao-Tinh to the students of the Ke-Vinh Seminary in 1843

Martyrs participation in the victory of Christ the head

I am Paul, a prisoner for the name of Christ, who wants to introduce you to the tribulations in which I am immersed every day. Inflamed by divine love, lift up your praises with me to God: His mercy is eternal.

This prison is really an image of the eternal hell: to the cruel tortures of every kind, like the stumps, the iron chains, the ropes, hate, revenge, slander, obscene words, false accusations, wickedness, unjust oaths are added, curses and finally anguish and sadness.

God, who freed the three young men from the fiery furnace, is always close to me; and he also freed me from these tribulations, turning them into sweetness: his mercy is eternal.

In the midst of these torments, which usually bend and break others, by the grace of God I am full of joy and happiness, because I am not alone, but Christ is with me. He, our master, bears all the weight of the cross, giving to me the smallest and last part: he himself a fighter, not just a spectator of my struggle; winner and perfecter of every battle. On its head is placed the splendid crown of victory, in which the members also participate.

Show me your power, Lord, come to my help and save me, because in my weakness your strength has been manifested and glorified before the nations; and your enemies cannot proudly raise their heads, if I should falter along the way.

I am writing all this to you, so that your faith and my faith may be one. While the storm is raging, I cast the anchor to the throne of God: living hope, which is in my heart.

Come to my rescue with your prayers, so that I can fight according to the law, even support to the end the good fight, to conclude happily my race.

If we no longer see each other in the present life, this will be our happiness in the future world: we will stand before the throne of the Immaculate Lamb and sing his praises unanimously, exulting forever in the joy of victory. Amen.

**OUR FATHER
10 HAIL MARYS
GLORY TO THE FATHER**

PRAYER BY FR. MARTINO CAPELLI

Today I irrevocably consecrate all of myself to Our Lady of Sorrows: my soul and body, my intellect, my memory, my will, all five senses of the body. I want to be everything, only his; I want to serve you, giving up everything that may displease you. And you, Our Lady of Sorrows, grant me the grace to love the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Sacrament and on the Cross, to serve Him by saving him all animals and to die a martyr for Him. Hold me by his cross, inebriate me with his blood. O my Lady and Mother. Amen.

5. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

GOSPEL READING:

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. ...It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'; and when he had said this he breathed his last." (Lk. 23.33-46)

THE MISSION TESTIMONY

From "Scientia Crucis" of Saint Teresa Benedetta of the Cross, virgin and martyr

The door of life is opened to believers in the Crucified Christ

Christ himself had borne the yoke of the law, observing it and fulfilling it perfectly, to die for the law and victim of the law. At the same time, however, he exempted from the law all those who would accept life from him. Who, however, could have received it only by undoing their own. They immerse themselves in his life to become members of his body, and under this qualification suffer and die with him; but also to resurrect with him to eternal divine life. This life will arise for us in its fullness only on the day of glorification. However, from now on "in the flesh" we participate in it, as we believe: we believe that Christ died for us, to give life to us. And it is precisely this faith that makes us become one with him, members connected to the head, making us permeable to the effusions of his life. Thus faith in the Crucifix - the living faith, accompanied by loving dedication - is for us the gateway to life and the beginning of future glory. Moreover, the cross is our only boast. Whoever has put himself on the side of the Christ is dead for the world, as the world is dead to him. He is weak and despised in the environment of men, but precisely for this reason he is strong in reality, because in weaknesses the strength of God stands out fully. Deeply convinced of this truth, Jesus' disciples not only embrace the cross that is offered, but they crucify themselves. They have engaged in a ruthless struggle against their nature, to liquidate the life of sin in themselves and make room for the life of the spirit. The latter alone is what matters. The cross is not an end in itself. It stands out high and acts as an upward call. Therefore, it is not only a sign, it is also the winning weapon of Christ, the triumphal symbol with which he beats at the door of heaven. Then the streams of divine light erupt, engulfing all those who march in the wake of the Crucifix.

**OUR FATHER
10 HAIL MARYS
GLORY TO THE FATHER**

PRAYER BY FR. MARTINO CAPELLI

In your presence, my God, and in the presence of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the whole heavenly court, today I renew my dedication to the Virgin of Sorrows. I consecrate my whole person to her: my soul, my intelligence, my memory, my will; my heart, my senses, all my thoughts, affections, words, all my actions, prayers, sacrifices, consolations, every heartbeat of my heart. I dedicate my studies to it, my future life, accepting all that is my spiritual advantage, my future missionary apostolate. I also offer you my death and any kind of death. I beg you, my Mama, to be my Mother, guide me on the way of the Heart of Jesus, make me strong with soul and body, a zealous and holy missionary. One day then may you receive me in Holy Paradise. Amen. (3/27/1931)

PRAYER FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

Heavenly Father,
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ
rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers
to “go and make disciples of all nations”
and you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.
Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion,
may find new and efficacious expressions
that bring life and light to the world.
Help us make it possible for all peoples
to experience the saving love
and mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.
Amen