

BLESSED NICÉFORO DIEZ AND 25 COMPANIONS

Religious (Brothers, clerics and priests) and martyrs

Optional Memorial

Blessed Nicéforo 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 lives 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 to "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 23 July and the last on 23 October.

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 other priests, fifteen young students with their professors, and four religious Brothers.

Nicéforo and his companions, beatified by John Paul II on 01 October 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.

Entrance Antiphon

These are the saints
who were victorious in the blood of the Lamb;
and in the face of death they did not cling to life;
therefore they are reigning with Christ forever.

(Rev. 12:11)

COLLECT

**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.**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

**Lord, receive the gifts of your people,
in memory of Blessed Nicéforo and his companions.
May the Eucharist
that made them strong in their martyrdom
obtain for us dignity and patience in the trials of life.
Through Christ our Lord.**

PREFACE from the common of martyrs.

Communion Antiphon

**“No one has greater love than this, to lay down
one's life for one's friends,” says the Lord. (Jn. 15:13)**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Lord,
instill in us the wisdom of the Cross,
that inspired Blessed Nicéforo and his companions.
Through this sacrifice,
strengthen our resolution
to follow Christ faithfully
and to work in your Church for the salvation of all.
Through Christ our Lord.**