



Antonio Molle Lazo. Carlist Martyr. (1915-1936)

On May 10th 1931, a major religious persecution began in Spain. Priests, especially Jesuits, started to receive death threats. Churches and convents were burned in Madrid. In a few days, a total of 107 religious buildings were burned down only in the Madrid area. Quickly these acts spread out to other cities like: Cadiz, Seville, Granada, and Valencia. From then on, the attacks against all things Catholic were in crescendo up until reaching its diabolical climax in the Summer of 1936. 13 bishops were killed, 4,184 priests, around 3,000 religious persons including seminarians, and over 300 nuns were also killed, resulting in almost 8,000 killings. Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII referred to these events as "True Martyrdom" and celebrated the generosity of those who fought for the rights of Christ and his Church, in accord with the proclamation by the Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Goma, and the rest of Spanish bishops that were able to escape from the zone controlled by the Communist and people of the "Popular Front". From all the martyrs, there is a story we cannot forget. The martyrdom of Antonio Molle Lazo.

Antonio Molle Lazo was born in Arcos de la Frontera (Cadiz, South west coast of Spain) on April 2nd 1915. It was Good Friday. Soon after his mother gave birth, the procession of "Our Father Jesus Nazarian" passed by his house. His parents Carlos and Maria Josefa were fervent Catholics and patriotic. They forecasted his martyrdom. Young Antonio learned from his parents to hold steadfast on principles, religious piety, and the value of family life. When Antonio was 5 months old the family moved to Jerez de la Frontera (Inland Andalucía) for job reasons. The family never enjoyed a prosperous lifestyle. In fact, sometimes Carlos, the father, found himself with no job. Antonio was enrolled in a Christian school managed by the Lasalle Brothers. He was not remembered as an intellectually bright student but a hard worker and as one who put a great deal of effort into finishing his studies, which he did. He received his first communion in 1925, the year Pope Pius XI installed the Feast of Christ the King into the liturgical calendar. This made a big impression on Antonio who devoted himself to learning more about the doctrine of Christ the King. He was also enrolled into the Mount Carmel scapular devotion by the Carmelite nuns who lived close by in a monastery. His personal and public devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary were constant highlights of his personality. He started to work at the train station at 11 years old. His classmates said of him that one day he will be a great defender of religion because he could not tolerate evil before his presence. He encouraged his friends to attend Holy Mass in those churches surrounded by a majority of Communists in their neighborhoods. He cut off right away any conversations that could lead to entertaining vice and was a big fan of sports as a practical way to avoid a life of concupiscence. At the age of 16 years old in 1931, he enrolled in the Carlist Youth ministry. His Carlist leaning came from his family's legacy but also from the vivid defense of the Faith, Catholic Spain, and the rights of the Church that the Carlist

have sustained for so long. He enjoyed attending the Carlist circle where they discussed present matters, played games, and had “merienda” (Spanish afternoon snack). He also led a group of young spies that infiltrated in the meetings and gatherings of Communist and anarchists’ associations with the objective to find out which Churches and convents they should go to protect in advance and what priests should be made aware of any potential assaults coming their way. Antonio Molle Lazo also participated actively in the public propaganda and distribution of Carlist merchandise in the streets when Carlist public gatherings were celebrated. This made him known.

In February 1936, all the left wings groups (Communists, Socialists, Anarchists) joined together in a political coalition called “the Popular Front”. This coalition came to power after running a vastly fraudulent election all over Spain. The religious persecution that was already in place took a more violent and hateful turn against all things Catholic then. Antonio Molle Lazo was arrested shortly after for spreading Carlist propaganda while shouting “Viva Cristo-Rey” and “Viva España y Viva El Rey” at the train station. Once in jail, he spent his time singing all the Catholic songs he learned from his childhood as the “Salve Regina”. Singing in the jail was forbidden so, when rebuked, he instead wrote Christian prayers with chalk on the walls. Days later, his brother Carlos ended up in the same jail with other Catholics that were arrested for defending the Convent of St. Domingo in the town of Jerez de la Frontera. He missed not to be able to receive Holy Communion so he devoted himself to reciting the Holy Rosary alone in the cell or along with other Catholics arrested in the nearby cells. The few friends that came to visit him, brought books about the martyrs and the Saints at his request. These books gave him great consolation while reinforcing the idea that his sufferings were nothing compared with what the Martyrs of the Church endured. This is how the martyrial soul of Antonio Molle Lazo was

shaping towards his final act of generosity: to give up his life for Christ. On May 16th Antonio Molle Lazo was set free. On July 18th 1936, the uprising of the National Army and the Carlist troops against the Republic and its Popular Front was official. The Carlist troops were able to protect several towns around Seville, like Jerez de la Frontera, and thanks to that, Catholics were able to attend Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion. Antonio Molle Lazo received the Lord in the Eucharist on August 6th, 8th, and 10th. On the 10th, eye witnesses related the deep recollection Antonio Molle Lazo displayed after receiving the Lord in the Chapel of the Sisters of the Cross in the City of Peñaflores. Many believed he was offering himself as an immolated victim to the Lord, however this could not be verified. What most likely happened is that he recited the act of accepting death which was very common among Carlists. That very day, the Communists launched a brutal attack against this city and were able to surround the convent where Antonio Molle Lazo was and planned to burn it down with the people inside. Somewhere able to escape the Communist corridor but Antonio stood there with other fellow Catholics trying to protect the nuns and other women that attended Mass, providing an escape for all.

He was the last one and he was finally apprehended by the Communists who beat him, mocked him and brought him outside to the street. They began to torture him attempting to have him deny the Faith and to blaspheme the Lord. They wanted him to shout "Death to Religion and Long life to Russia" and he replied with "Viva España and Viva Cristo-Rey". The torture increased. They threatened to kill him and drink his blood. He replied, "You can kill me but Christ will triumph." The Communists went onto cutting his ears and his nose. Antonio's only words during this excruciating pain were, "Oh, my God" and "Viva Cristo-Rey." He was receiving blows all over his body, especially in the head, but Antonio did not deny the Faith. At that moment, they pulled out his eyes.

They opened his shirt and saw the Carlist “Détente” medal he wore. The medal is an image of the Sacred Heart with the Spanish flag in the background. At that moment, Antonio understood that his final moment had arrived and extended his arms and placed his legs like Our Lord on the Cross and shouted one more time, the last time: “Viva Cristo-Rey.” Then a shot to the chest ended his life. He fell flat in the middle of the road. His body was still moving and some of the killers wanted to shoot him again, but others said, “Let him suffer.” They continued to launch blows and knife strikes to the body. He stopped breathing, his heart stopped, and he was left alone in the road in a cross position. His killers wore his ears, eyes and nose as trophies in their shirts. It was 4pm.

Miraculously, the Carlist troops and the National Army together were able to conquer back Peñaflor shortly after and Antonio’s body was picked up from the road. Eye witnesses related then what they saw and a Mass was offered for his soul the day after as the town was secured. News of Antonio Molle Lazo’s martyrial death spread like fire between the Carlist troops and the faithful. Soon, prayer cards and news of healings due to his intercession were running across Spain and overseas. In 1940, his canonization process was opened. **X**



ANTONIO MOLLE LAZO

(1915 - 1936)

MUERTO EN DEFENSA DE CRISTO-REY Y DE ESPAÑA CATOLICA

«Me mataréis, pero Cristo triunfará.»

ANTONIO MOLLE.

Jerez Gráfico 54815

todocoleccion