



Saturday of the 33rd week in Ordinary Time



Date: Saturday, November 23, 2024 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** B

First Reading: Revelation 11:4–12

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 144:1-2, 9-10 | **Response:** Psalm 144:1b

Gospel Acclamation: 2 Timothy 1:10

Gospel Reading: Luke 20:27–40

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

This morning's readings and the memorial of Blesseds Miguel Pro, Emilio Moscoso, and Rutilio Grande and companions invite us to reflect deeply on the call to bear courageous witness, to trust in God's strength, and to live in the hope of the resurrection. These themes converge in the lives of these martyrs, whose faithfulness to Christ serves as an enduring example for us, particularly as religious.

In the first reading from Revelation, we hear of two witnesses, often understood as representing Moses and Elijah—the law and the prophets—proclaiming God's truth in the face of great opposition. They endure suffering and death for their testimony, yet their resurrection reveals God's ultimate victory. This story resonates powerfully with the lives of the witnesses, of the martyrs, we honor today.

Blessed Miguel Pro, ministering secretly during the anti-Catholic persecution in Mexico, fearlessly brought the sacraments to the faithful until his arrest and execution. His final words, “Viva Cristo Rey!” “Long live Christ the King” declared his unwavering trust in Christ even as he faced death. Similarly, the Ecuadorian Blessed Emilio Moscoso died while protecting the Eucharist, offering a powerful testimony to the centrality of Christ in the Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith. Blessed Rutilio Grande and his companions courageously stood for justice and the dignity of the poor in El Salvador, their deaths bearing witness to the Gospel's call to solidarity with the oppressed.

These martyrs echo the psalmist's proclamation: "Blessed be the Lord, my rock." Their lives, grounded in prayer and trust in God, inspire us to turn to the Lord as our fortress and deliverer in times of trial. Religious life often calls us to stand against the values of the world—whether in upholding Gospel poverty, promoting justice, or fostering reconciliation. At times, it involves rejecting the hatred and discrimination of our world, even when it is deeply ingrained in our own cultures, by upholding the inviolable rights and dignity of every person. Like the martyrs, we must draw our strength from God, who equips us for the mission and sends the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us, especially when the road ahead is marked by rejection or suffering.

In the Gospel, Jesus assures us of the resurrection and a life with God that transcends earthly existence. This hope gave the martyrs the courage to face death, sustained by their belief in the promise of eternal life. Their witness challenges us, as religious, to live out the hope of the resurrection in our daily lives. The resurrection is not only a future reality but a present and transformative hope that shapes how we live today. It compels us to see every sacrifice, every act of service, and every moment of prayer as steps on our journey toward eternal life.

Our vows are signs of this hope. They proclaim freedom from material attachments, an undivided love for God, and complete trust in His will—not just for ourselves but for all people, especially the despised and downtrodden. Let us ask ourselves: Does the way we live our vocation proclaim to the world that we believe in the resurrection?

As we celebrate the Eucharist today, we are reminded of the source of the martyrs' strength: their profound union with Christ. Blessed Emilio Moscoso's prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Blessed Miguel Pro's secret celebration of the sacraments, and Blessed Rutilio Grande's solidarity with the poor all flowed from their intimate relationship with Christ. Their lives call us to examine our own faithfulness to prayer, community, and mission.

Indeed, in the writings of Blessed Miguel Pro selected for the Office of Readings, we find a beautiful reflection on the transformative power of the Eucharist. He wrote:

I have not found in all my religious life a faster and more effective means to live in intimate union with Jesus than the Holy Mass. Everything begins to look different, everything is seen from another angle, everything is shaped by wider, more generous, more spiritual horizons. You will not be the same as before: something more divine is going to flood your soul and change it altogether, and that something, which is the character to be conferred on you and is nothing else than the fullness of the Holy Spirit, will remove everything human that was left in you and stir your divine life, a closer and more real sharing in the companion of the Divine Nature Jesus Christ.

May the example of these blessed martyrs inspire us to live as courageous witnesses, rooted in trust and hope. As we proclaim Christ in our words and deeds, and as we prepare to celebrate the close of the liturgical year tomorrow, let us remember their cry: “Viva Cristo Rey! Long live Christ the King!” Let us trust that our faithfulness, like theirs, will bear fruit—not only in this life but also in the promise of the resurrection. As the Gospel reminds us, we are children of God, children of the resurrection, and siblings in Christ.

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2024-11nov-23-yb-ot-33/>

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