

## BLESSED CARLOS ERAÑA, A SIMPLE HEROISM

Blessed Carlos Eraña was martyred on September 18, 1936, near the city of Ciudad Real (Spain). At the time of his death, he was 51 years old. He had spent 33 years in religious life. Today we would say it was a short life. We know, however, that the important thing about a life is not whether it is long or short, but whether it is full or empty, whether it has borne fruit or has become infertile. Valuable are those lives in which the person has found his or her own path of meaning, his or her way of responding to the call of Love. We would like to remember here those calls that marked Carlos Eraña's life path and how he answered those calls. They can be inspiring for us:

- The call to life and faith. In his case, they were united, since she was born into a family and in a social context in which faith and life were totally intertwined and inseparable. However, for him faith was not just something inherited and taken for granted, but an experience that he would cultivate with care.
- The call to Marianist religious life. It came to him in a very prosaic way: the postulate of the Province of Spain was only two kilometers from his home, in the town of Eskoziatza (province of Guipúzcoa) and he was attracted by what was happening there. It was his first contact with the Marianist world, in which he felt more and more at home and with which he came to identify completely.
- The call to the mission of education and evangelization. At that time, the Marianist mission was totally focused on education through schools. However, Carlos did not simply join the general trend in a passive way, but found his personal missionary vocation in education and in the apostolate carried out in the schools. He revealed himself as a great educator. He assumed positions of responsibility in several educational works in the Province. His role as director of the Instituto Popular de la Concepción de Ciudad Real, a diocesan foundation for the free education of the children of working class families, was very relevant. He worked in this school for 16 years. There he worked hard, was happy, and very much appreciated by his students and the whole city.
- The call of martyrdom. Carlos, like many Catholics, found himself in a situation of indiscriminate religious persecution. Without attracting attention or manifesting any acts of heroism, he accepted the situation as a way of being loyal to his faith and to his vowed commitments. He faced his death with serenity. It was precisely in the place where he had worked tirelessly in the service of the poorest, that he was captured and shot. There was no arrest warrant nor trial.

"This is my servant...he will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street, a bruised reed he shall not break...he will faithfully bring forth justice, he will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice on the earth...". "Without defense or justice, he was taken away... And through him the plans of the Lord will succeed." Recalling the words of the prophet Isaiah, we give thanks to God for the simple and faithful heroism of our brother martyrs, and we entrust ourselves to their intercession:

*Blessed Carlos, help us to respond to God's calls, whatever they may be, in the simplicity of our lives and circumstances. May we do so with a faithful love that gives meaning and fruitfulness to our vocation in the service of the Kingdom.*