



CRUSADERS of MARY NEWSLETTER

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Brazilian Martyrs Were Victims of a Cruel Anti-Catholic Persecution

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Jesuit missionaries and diocesan priests from Portugal began to evangelize Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, in 1597. They catechized the Indios and formed the first Christian communities. In 1630 the Dutch invaded the region and conflicts arose, because the Dutch were Calvinists who restricted religious practice and persecuted Catholics.

The two episodes of the martyrdom of **Blessed André de Soveral, Blessed Ambrósio Francisco Ferro and 28 Companions** occurred in this context. In Rio Grande do Norte there were only two parishes: Our Lady of the Presentation in Natal, of which Father Ambrósio Francisco Ferro was parish priest, and Our Lady of the Purification in Cunhaú, directed by Father André de Soveral. These two parish communities were victims of harsh religious persecution by the Calvinists.

Blessed André de Soveral was born around 1572 in São Vicente, Brazil, the principal town on the island of Santos. He most likely studied at Children of Jesus College in his home town and it is there that his Jesuit vocation began. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1593 and made his novitiate in Bahia. After studying Latin and moral theology and learning the Indios' language, he was sent to the College of Olinda, a catechetical center for the Indios throughout the region. He had his first missionary experience in Rio Grande do Norte in 1606 among the Potiguar Indios. On that occasion he entered a native village headed by an

indigenous woman, Antonia Potiguara, whom he converted and baptized along with other Indios, and blessed her marriage. By 1614 he was parish priest of Cunhaú.

The martyrdom of Father André, Father Ambrósio and their faithful parishioners occurred on different days but in the same historical context. The first took place at Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel in Cunhaú. On Sunday, July 16, 1645, Father André de Soveral had gathered for Mass about 69 of the faithful, mostly farmers and workers employed in Cunhaú's sugar cane factory.

The Dutch sent one of their emissaries to Cunhaú, an unscrupulous and cruel German named Jakob Rabe, who presented himself as the envoy of the Supreme Dutch Council of Recife, saying that he would communicate its orders at the end of Mass. But this was merely a pretext, for after the consecration a band of Dutch soldiers, accompanied by Indios, burst into the chapel, blocked the exits and ferociously attacked the defenseless faithful. Father André realized the gravity of the situation and interrupted Mass to urge the faithful to prepare for death. He was killed by an axe hurled at him by an Indio.

The second episode of martyrdom occurred on the banks of the Uruaçú River, about 12 miles from Natal, on October 3, 1645. Here the victims were the city's parishioners, led by their parish priest, Father Ambrósio Francisco Ferro. Terrorized by the bloodshed that had occurred at Cunhaú,

Let the people show forth the wisdom of the saints, and the Church declare their praise; and their names shall live



unto generation and generation. Eccclus. 44, 32, 1. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just; praise becometh the upright. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

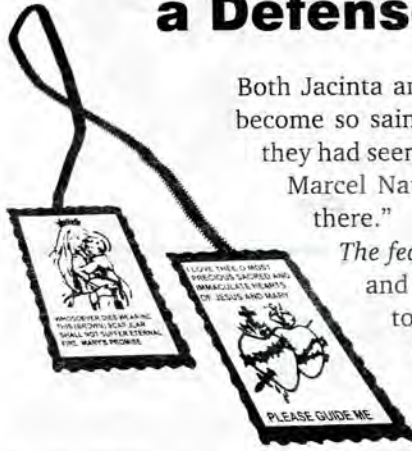
Amen.

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Mary's Brown Scapular: a Defense against Hell



Both Jacinta and Francisco died while still children. How did they become so saintly? They prayed, fasted, and did penance because they had seen Hell. "The thought of Hell makes saints," said Father Marcel Nault, "and the priority of priorities is to avoid going there."

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10) and it starts by humbly recognizing that no one deserves to go to Heaven. The saints tell us that actually most everybody goes to Hell. One has to be diligent about avoiding sin and the occasions of sin, confessing on a regular basis, and fruitful in good works — but that is not enough. We need devotion to the



Seers Jacinta and Francisco of Fatima had seen Hell.

Mother of God to save us from Hell.

St John Eudes tells us the Immaculate Heart of Mary is so full of mercy that, using the extraordinary privileges God has granted to Her alone, and out of Her incomparable goodness, She often saves from eternal perdition souls who in the ordinary course of Divine Justice would have been cast into Hell.

You have a mark of predestination if you wear Her Brown Scapular 24 hours a day. Does that sound too good to be true? In fact, since 1251, She has given us a promise, and She is most faithful to it: "*Whoever dies wearing this Scapular shall not suffer eternal fire.*" ■

St. Benedict Biscop

St. Benedict was of noble descent, and one of the great officers of the court of King Oswi, the religious King of the Northumbrians. He was very dear to his prince, and was beholden to his bounty for many fair estates and great honors. Neither the favors of so good and gracious a king, nor the allurements of power, riches, and pleasures, were able to captivate his heart. He could see nothing in them but dangers and snares.

At the age of twenty-five he said goodbye to the world and made a journey of devotion to Rome. Upon his return he devoted himself wholly to the studies of the scriptures and other holy exercises. Some time after his return to England, Alfrid, son of King Oswi, asked Biscop to accompany him to Rome on a pilgrimage to the shrines of the apostles. The king prevented his son's journey but our saint traveled there burning with an earnest desire of improving himself in the knowledge of divine things, and in the love of God.

From Rome he went to the great monastery of Lerins, then renowned for its regular discipline, where he took the monastic habit and spent two years in the most exact observance of the rule penetrating every exercise with its true spirit.

After this he returned to Rome, where he received an order of Pope Vitalian to accompany St. Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Adrian, to England. When he arrived at Canterbury, St. Theodorus committed

to him the care of the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul. St. Benedict stayed about two years in Kent, giving himself up to religious exercises and sacred studies, under the discipline of those two excellent persons.

Then he returned to Rome, with a view of perfecting himself in ecclesiastical discipline and the rules and practice of a monastic life. He brought home with him a choice library, and relics and pictures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and other saints. When he returned to Northumberland, King Egfrid (in whose father's court St. Benedict had formerly lived) bestowed on him seventy ploughs or families of land for building a monastery at Weremouth, which this saint did, and he called it St. Peter.

When the monastery was built, St. Benedict went to France and brought back skillful masons who built the church of stone, after the Roman fashion (till that time stone buildings were very rare in Britain).

St. Benedict furnished himself with a larger stock of good books, especially the writings of the fathers, and of relics and holy pictures, with which he enriched his own country.

His first monastery was such an inspiration that the same king gave the saint a second donation of lands, consisting of forty ploughs, on which Biscop built another monastery, at a place called Girwy (now Jarrow), six miles

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Blessed Francisco, God's Sadness, and the Five First Saturdays.



Do Jesus and His Mother need *our* consolation? Are they not now in Heaven beyond all pain and suffering? Indeed they are. But, in some mysterious way, sin hurts Them. For sin is love rejected! And love rejected cannot but cause some mysterious pain to Our Lord Who is the Head of the Church which is revealed to us as the Mystical Body of Christ. When the body (i.e. men) suffer on account of sin, the Head too suffers in some way, more or less as the head in a human being suffers when some members experience suffering.

Blessed Francisco said, "I love God so much! But He is very sad because of so many sins! We must never commit any sins again." And, "I am so sorry to see Him sad like that! I offer Him all the sacrifices I can think of."

The second promise of the Five First Saturdays devotion is a promise of salvation for some of the worst sinners, who offend God by outrages committed against His Mother. People committing these sins are falling into Hell in great numbers, as was revealed on July 13, 1917, and Our Lady came to Fatima to ask the Faithful to make reparation for these horrible offenses. Blessed Francisco of Fatima, who loved 'the hidden Jesus', understood, and was moved with empathy because *God is sad*. From May till October 1917, and for the rest of his life, he dedicated all his efforts toward trying to *console* God. The Five First Saturdays devotion is intended to do this. Let us join with Blessed Francisco and compassionate Our Lord and Our Lady every First Saturday by the consoling practice of the Communions of Reparation, a solace given by us to God Himself. ■

ST. BENEDICT BISCOP continued from page 2

from the first. This latter was called St. Paul's. These two monasteries were almost looked upon as one and St. Benedict governed them both, though he placed in each a superior who continued to be subject to him.

In the church of St. Peter at Weremouth, he placed the pictures of the Blessed Virgin, the twelve apostles, the history of the Gospel, and the visions in the revelation of St. John. St. Paul's at Jarrow he adorned with other pictures, arranged in such a manner as to represent the harmony between the Old and New Testament, and the conformity of the figures in one to the reality in the other.

With these pictures, and many books and relics, St. Benedict brought from Rome in his last voyage, John, abbot of St. Martin's, whom he placed at Weremouth to instruct his monks in the Gregorian notes and the Roman ceremonies for singing the Divine Office.

St. Benedict appointed St. Ceolfrid as the abbot of both his monasteries, being himself struck with a palsy, by which all the lower parts of his body were without life. He lay sick with this palsy for three years, and for a considerable time was entirely confined to his bed. During this long illness, unable to raise his voice for singing the Divine Office, at every canonical hour he sent for some of his monks who sang the psalms proper for the hour of the day or night. He endeavored to join not only his heart but also his voice with theirs.

His attention to God never seemed to relax, and he frequently and earnestly exhorted his monks to a constant

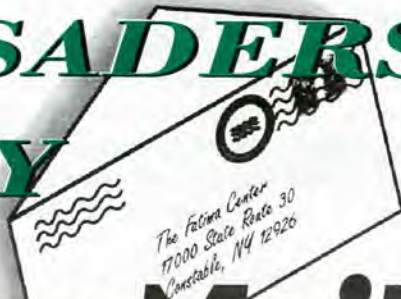
observance of the rule he had given them. "You must not think," he said, "that the constitutions which you have received from me were my own invention; for having in my frequent journeys visited seventeen well-ordered monasteries, I informed myself of all their laws and rules, and picking out the best among them, these I have recommended to you." The saint expired soon after, having received the viaticum on the 12th of January, in 690. His relics, according to Malmesbury, were moved to Thorney Abbey in 970, but the monks of Glastonbury thought themselves possessed at least of part of that treasure. The English Benedictines honor him as one of the patrons of their congregation, and he is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. ■

BRAZILIAN MARTYRS WERE VICTIMS continued from page 1

the Catholics of Natal took refuge in several places, but in vain. The Dutch authorities forced them to go to a pre-arranged site where they were awaited by soldiers and a group of 200 Indios. Many of the faithful were tortured with their priest in various ways until they died. The chroniclers of the time describe the means of torture: their limbs were severed; their heads cut off; they were burned; their eyes, tongues and noses were torn off. A child was pinned to a tree trunk and another sliced in half with a sword. Mateus Moreira had his heart ripped out through his back, as he cried: "Praised be the Blessed Sacrament". Those martyred include 27 Brazilians, one Portuguese, one Spaniard and one Frenchman. ■

CRUSADERS of MARY

Reader Mail



My Dear Reverend Father Gruner,

Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. I have not much to say but just to thank and show appreciation for all the love, kindness and concern towards me.

If I could recollect, it has been over ten years since you started ministering the word of God and that of Our Lady's Message (Heaven's Peace Plan) to me through many of your Fatima publications. It has been quite tremendous the gifts I have received from this wonderful, powerful, unassuming, beautiful, gentle and yet very humble Mother of God - Virgin Mary.

Father, you took me into knowing the correct weapon to fight satan and his cohorts - the Rosary. Since I have been praying the Rosary, many great things have been happening in my life. I thank God for you and your co-workers there in revealing to the world courageously the words of Our Lady...

Father, never think that you are suffering alone. I am constantly praying for your success and defeat of "our" enemies. Your joy is my joy and your sorrows are mine too.

We Are Interested!

in knowing how the Message of Fatima has changed your life. If you would like to share your story with other members, write us by December 31, 2000, and we will enter your name in a draw for a FREE 5-inch Olive Wood Crucifix personally blessed by Father Gruner.

Once more Father, accept my immense gratitude for your continuous spreading of Our Lady's Message despite all odds. Thank you for the gifts and blessings on me and our families.

May the almighty God continue to give you the strength and courage needed to work in His vineyard.

Mr. C. Ibe, Nigeria.

Dear Workers for Our Lady,

Please find enclosed \$50.00 to help Father Gruner defend himself. Wish I could send more money. Will keep him in my prayers.

As my husband is now working at home 2/3's of his time, it is becoming more tricky for me to respond to your requests for money. He is agnostic and hostile to religion. Other than going to Mass on Sunday, my children and I must pray in

secret and keep our religion behind the scenes. For years I have gone to weekday Mass as often as possible when he was working. But now he is "under foot" and my hidden life is more difficult.

It seems that all my friends who are orthodox in their Catholic faith are having increased challenges today like never before.

One has to remind oneself that the good Lord is ultimately in charge and allowing these things for our own good...

God bless and keep you always!

(Name withheld), Canada

Dear Father Gruner,

I am praying for you and will remember you at my Masses and also your workers who struggle against fierce opposition to bring the Fatima Message to me and other Catholics around the world. Thank you for *The Fatima Crusader Magazine*.

Mrs. L. Kaipo, USA

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