

13 November

Blessed ALOYSIUS VERSIGLIA, bishop,
and **CALLISTUS CARAVARIO**, priest
Salesian Protomartyrs

Aloysius Versiglia was born at Oliva Gessi, Italy, in 1873, and joined Don Bosco at the age of 12. He became a priest in 1895 and was then master of novices at Genzano, Rome, for ten years. In 1906 he led the first Salesian expedition to China, realizing in this way a repeated prophecy of Don Bosco. He established the mother house of the Salesians at Macau, opened the mission of Shiu Chow, and on 22 April 1920 became its first bishop. He was a prudent and tireless pastor truly dedicated to his flock, and set up his Apostolic Vicariate on a solid foundation. It included a seminary, houses of formation, various residences, an orphanage and homes for the aged. He showed himself more a father than a man of authority, and always took into consideration a confrere's strength before sending him to perform any work of charity.

Callistus Caravario was born at Cuorgne, Turin, in 1903. He met Bishop Versiglia at Turin in 1922, and said to him: "I will follow you to China". This he did, setting out two years later. He was ordained priest, and was always most faithful to his religious consecration and animated by an ardent charity. He was accompanying Bishop Versiglia on a pastoral visit to the district of Lin Chow, with two teachers, two women catechists and a girl pupil when, on 25 February 1930 in an isolated area along the river, the group was set upon by communist pirates. In their attempts to protect the young women, who managed to get away, the two missionaries were brutally beaten and then shot, in hatred for the Christian faith which exalts virginity.

John Paul II beatified them as Salesian Protomartyrs on 15 May 1983, recognizing in them the ideal of the Gospel shepherd, who gives his life for his flock and for the cause of truth and justice; the defender of the poor and the weak, who triumphs over the evil of sin and death.

Their memorial is celebrated on this day since on 13 November 1875 the first Salesian missionary expedition set out from Genoa for Buenos Aires in Argentina.

The liturgical formulary is a joyful exaltation of the triumph of the martyrs Aloysius and Callistus; they bore witness to Christ before the world, and now in the ever-present Church Christ in turn pays honour to them before his Father (*Entry ant.*). Their death reveals God's power shining

through our human weakness. He chooses the weak and makes them strong even to the point of martyrdom (*Pref.*): i.e. with the strength to fight to the death to proclaim the Gospel and defend human dignity (*Coll.*).

This example which links human suffering with the passion of Christ (*After comm.*), makes the assembly aware that its everyday sufferings are a means of witnessing to the blessed passion of the Son (*Offertory*). This is why in celebrating the memorial of Christ's passion and glory, the faithful pray to the Father to be given the strength to imitate the witness of the martyrs with persevering faith and assiduous charity (*Coll.*), so as to share one day in the glory of the resurrection (*After comm.*).

Just as Christ gave the martyrs courage not only by his words but also by the example of his own suffering (*Offertory*), so the faithful approach the table of the word and the bread of life (*After comm.*) to receive the necessary help to follow the Master

on the daily way of the cross, and so be one day admitted to eat and drink at his table (*Comm. ant.*).

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Let us celebrate with joy
the triumph of the martyrs Aloysius and Callistus;
they bore witness to Christ before the world,
and now Christ gives them honour
before his Father in heaven.**

OPENING PRAYER

**Almighty and merciful God,
you gave to your blessed martyrs,
Bishop Aloysius and Father Callistus,
the strength to fight to the death
to proclaim the Gospel
and defend human dignity;
grant that we, your loyal followers,
may imitate their testimony
with persevering faith and assiduous charity.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever and ever.**

Readings from the ferial lectionary, or:

1st Reading: Wis 3,1-7a.8b-9; or Rom 8,31b-39 Gospel: Mt 10,26-28.32-34.39; or Jn 12,24-26

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

**May the sacrifice we offer you, Father,
on this glorious memorial of your martyrs
Aloysius and Callistus,
enable us to proclaim the blessed passion of your Son,
who gave the martyrs courage not only by his words
but also by the example of his own suffering,
for he is Lord for ever and ever.**

PREFACE

The sign and example of martyrdom

Y. The Lord be with you. g. And also with you.

**Y. Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.**

Y. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. g. It is right to give him thanks and praise.

**Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.**

**Your holy martyrs Aloysius and Callistus
followed the example of Christ,
and gave their lives for the glory of your name.
Their death reveals your power
shining through our human weakness.
You choose the weak and make them strong
in bearing witness to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Blessed ALOYSIUS VERSIGLIA and CALLISTUS CARAVARIO (1)

My brothers and sisters, let us make our prayer to God our Father, that through the intercession of the martyrs he may enable us by his grace to bear witness to the power of the Spirit who is ever active in the Church.

R. Through your martyrs, save us O Lord.

1. For the holy Church of God: that being sustained by the sacrifice of the martyrs, she may be drawn ever more deeply into the redemptive mystery of the cross, we pray to the Lord.
2. For bishops, priests and deacons: that with generosity and competence they may fulfil their ministry of announcing and spreading the Kingdom of God, we pray to the Lord.
3. For missionaries and catechists: that they may be generous in sowing the seed of the Gospel in human hearts; may they ever seek for truth, justice and peace, we pray to the Lord.
4. For vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life: that those whom Christ is calling may listen to his voice, and give themselves wholeheartedly to his service in the Church, we pray to the Lord.
5. For all of us taking part in this Eucharist: that we may face our daily difficulties in the light of faith, and learn to make up what is lacking in the

passion of Christ for the life of the Church, his mystical Body, we pray to the Lord.

6. *Other intentions.*

God our Father, you gave the blessed martyrs Aloysius and Callistus the strength to put their own lives at risk for the sake of the Gospel; transform us by the power of your Spirit, that we may become ever more truly your disciples. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Blessed ALOYSIUS VERSIGLIA and CALLISTUS CARAVARIO (2)

As members of the pilgrim Church we are conscious of our communion with our fellow members of the Church in heaven. Let us therefore make our humble prayer to God our Father through the intercession of the martyrs Aloysius Versiglia and Callistus Caravario.

I. *Lord, may your kingdom come.*

1. For the holy Church of God: that following the example of the martyrs she may be ever more resplendent in faith and holiness of life, we pray to the Lord.

2. For Christians of different denominations: that adhering ever more closely to Christ the Lord in constructive dialogue, they may find the way to unity in the one true Church, we pray to the Lord.

3. For the governments of nations: that they may promote the common good by respecting human rights and especially religious freedom, we pray to the Lord.

4. For the Salesian Family: that in continuing the work of Saint John Bosco its members may collaborate with renewed commitment to the spreading of the Gospel to every corner of the world, we pray to the Lord.

5. For us gathered in this holy assembly: that we may proclaim by our lives the happiness promised to those who suffer for the faith, we pray to the Lord.

6. *Other intentions.*

Holy Father, you gave to Blessed Aloysius and Callistus the grace to follow your Son along the way of the cross; hear the prayers we make to you, so that animated by your Spirit of holiness we may work effectively for the building of your Kingdom. Grant this through Christ our Lord.