

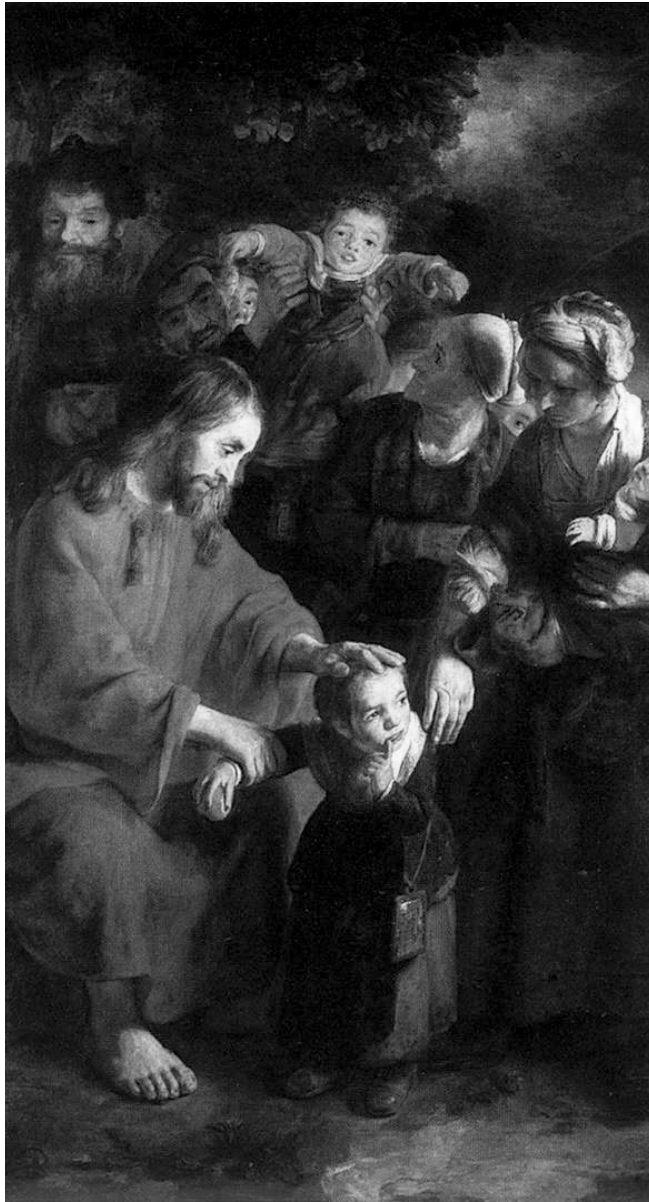


FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH

A RETREAT GUIDE ON HEROIC YOUTH

COMPANION GUIDE

FR. JOHN BARTUNEK, LC, STHD



FIRST MEDITATION

St. Agnes: Girl vs. Empire

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION/GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In art, St. Agnes is usually depicted with a palm branch, symbolizing the victory of her martyrdom, and a lamb. The Latin word for lamb, *agnus*, is similar to the spelling of Agnes. But what other biblical and liturgical references make the lamb an appropriate symbol for this martyr?
2. The example of martyrs like Agnes did wonders to spark interest in Christianity among pagan Romans. Why might that have been the case?
3. When I interact with young women, how does the consideration of their spiritual potential affect the attitude of my mind and heart? How would Christ interact with them?

QUOTATIONS TO HELP YOUR PRAYER

“Almighty ever-living God,
who choose what is weak in the world to
confound the strong,
mercifully grant,
that we, who celebrate the heavenly birthday of
your Martyr Saint Agnes,
may follow her constancy in the faith.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,



SECOND MEDITATION

*The King's Young Honor Guard:
St. José Luis Sánchez del Río*

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION/GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In the time of St. Agnes, the Roman Empire persecuted Christians because of their refusal to worship the imperial gods. In the time of St. José Luis, a secularist government persecuted the Church for its insistence on keeping God involved in society. How are the forces of evil trying to undermine the Church in my own society and culture?
2. What might José Luis's mother have been thinking and feeling as she watched her son's martyrdom? How would I react if I were to witness something similar happen to someone I love?
3. José Luis risked his life in order to protect the honor of God and the rights of the Church. How deeply do I feel motivated to spread Christ's Kingdom? How exactly do I engage in that mission in my day-to-day life?

QUOTATIONS TO HELP YOUR PRAYER

“Dear Mom,

Today in battle I was taken prisoner. I am pretty sure right now that I am going to die, but that's okay, mom. Just accept the will of God. Don't worry about my dying—that's what would pain me; and now tell

my brothers to follow the example of their littlest brother. And you just do God's will, be strong, and send me your blessing together with dad's. Say hello from me to everybody one last time, and please receive your son's heart, who loves you so much and wants so much to see you again before he dies.

—Letter to his Mother on the Day of his Capture
ST. JOSÉ LUIS SÁNCHEZ DEL RÍO

“...[T]he “battle” of perseverance cannot be won without prayer. Not sporadic or hesitant prayer, but prayer offered as Jesus tells us in the Gospel: “Pray always, without ever losing heart” (Luke 18:1). This is the Christian way of life: remaining *steadfast* in prayer, in order to remain *steadfast* in faith and testimony... True, each of us grows weary. Yet we are not alone; we are part of a Body! We are members of the Body of Christ, the Church... Only in the Church, and thanks to the Church's prayer, are we able to remain steadfast in faith and witness... This is the mystery of prayer: *to keep crying out, not to lose heart, and if we should grow tired, asking help to keep our hands raised...* The saints are men and women who enter fully into the mystery of prayer. Men and women who *struggle with prayer*, letting the Holy Spirit pray and struggle in them. They struggle *to the very end*, with all their strength, and they triumph, but not by their own efforts: the Lord triumphs in them and with them.

—Homily for the Canonization of St. José Luis Sánchez del Río and Six Other Saints
POPE FRANCIS

“The young blessed José Sánchez del Río should encourage all of us, especially you young people, to give witness to Christ in our daily lives. My dear young people, Christ will probably not ask you to shed your blood, but he is certainly asking you, from this very moment, to bear witness to the truth in your lives in the midst of an environment of indifference toward transcendent values and of a materialism and hedonism that look to suffocate consciences. Christ is also hoping for your openness to receive and welcome a vocational project that he has prepared for you. He alone has, for each one of you, the answers to your life's questions, and he is inviting you to follow him through marriage, the priesthood, or religious life.

— Homily for the Beatification of José Luis Sánchez del Río and 12 other Mexican Martyrs
CARDINAL JOSÉ SARAIVA MARTINS

NOTES



CONFERENCE

Helping Youth Be Heroic

1. What were (have been) the most impactful experiences of my youth? Why were they so impactful and what was their impact?
2. How firmly do I believe that Jesus is truly calling me to Christian greatness?
3. When has someone I care about been clear to me regarding the demands of following Christ and living a truly meaningful life? How did I react? What were the results?
4. Which people in my life would I consider truly “authentic”? Why? How does it make me feel to be with them?
5. When have I felt deeply respected and believed in? When have I felt most disrespected and regarded with condescension? What in the people’s behavior made the difference?
6. When have I felt most loved by God? By another person? What fruits did that experience have in my own heart, mind, and actions?
7. How clearly do I communicate the real demands of the Gospel to those around me?
8. How authentic am I in my relationships with other people? What tends to make me “put on a show” in some of those relationships and why?

FURTHER READING

If you feel moved to continue reflecting and praying about this theme, you may find the following books helpful:

My Dear Young Friends: Pope John Paul II Speaks to Teens on Life, Love, and Courage
by St. John Paul II and John Vitek

Blessed José: Boy, Cristero, Martyr
by Kevin McKenzie, LC

José Luis Sánchez del Río: Cristero Boy Martyr
by Cornelia R. Ferreira

Discipleship Focused Youth Ministry: A Getting Started Guide for Parishes
by Eric Gallagher and Jim Beckman

Spiritually Mentoring Teenage Boys: Personal Dialogue to Make Young Saints
by Matthew P. Schneider, LC

St. John Paul II's World Youth Day Messages
[available on the Vatican website: <https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/youth.index.html>]

EXPLORING MORE

Please visit our website, *RCSpirituality.org*, for more spiritual resources, and follow us on Facebook for regular updates: *facebook.com/RCSpirituality*.

If you would like to support and sponsor a Retreat Guide, please consider making a donation at *RCSpirituality.org*.



Retreat Guides are a service of Regnum Christi.
RegnumChristi.org

Produced by Coronation Media.
CoronationMedia.com

Developed & Self-published by RCSpirituality.
RCSpirituality.org