Saint Jaime Hilario Barbal and Saint Martyrs of Turón: “To die for Christ is to live!”

On 9 October the Catholic Church commemorates the witness to holiness of nine Martyr Brothers of the Christian Schools who gave their lives for the love of Christ. They are the **Saint Brother Jaime Hilario Barbal**, executed in Tarragona (Spain) in 1937, and the **Saint Brothers of Turón: Cirilo Bertrán, Marciano José, Victoriano Pío, Julián Alfredo, Benjamín Julián, Héctor Valdivielso, Aniceto Adolfo and Augusto Andrés**, who were also shot dead three years earlier, in 1934. Also with them was the Passionist priest Inocencio de la Inmaculada.

They were young Brothers. **Four of them were under 26 years old and the oldest was 46**. Their martyrdom was neither accidental nor unexpected, for at that time in Spain a severe campaign of hatred and violence against priests and religious was being disseminated, which triggered cruel and systematically planned murders.

In the case of the eight Brothers who were serving in a school at Turón, a mining town in Asturias, they were illegally arrested at dawn on 5 October 1934, while they were celebrating the Eucharist. **They were executed in the cemetery on 9 October and buried in a mass grave. The serenity and courage with which they faced their martyrdom impressed their murderers.** They had prepared themselves with prayer, confession and forgiveness which they anticipated to their executioners. They were, moreover, Brothers passionate about the mission of educating children and young people in the values of the Gospel, always moved by the spirit of faith, zeal and community.

Brother Jaime Hilario distinguished himself for his literary skills, collaborating in the dissemination of Christian values in various journals. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, he was taken to prison in Lérida. **During his brief trial he did not deny his identity as a religious and accepted his martyrdom, as he expressed in a letter sent to his family**. He was shot dead

next to the Tarragona cemetery on 18 January 1937.

These nine Lasallian Martyrs were **beatified by Pope John Paul II on 29 April 1990 and canonised by the same pontiff on 21 November 1999**. Among them, **Brother Héctor Valdivielso was born in Argentina and was the first saint from this country**.

May their example encourage us to be faithful to our evangelising and teaching vocation every day, even to the extreme, dedicating our lives for those most in need and the most vulnerable in the society.

Saint Brothers Jaime Hilario and Martyrs of Turón, pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts… forever!