



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME FOR THE BEATIFICATION  
OF EIGHT MARTYRS OF MOTRIL***

*Monday, 8 March 1999*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. The echo still resounds from yesterday's celebration, at which I had the joy of beatifying Vicente Soler and six companions, Manuel Martín Sierra, Nicolas Barré and Anna Schäffer. This morning I am again delighted to extend an affectionate welcome to all of you, dear pilgrims, who have come for this solemn occasion. Your impressive numbers show how the teaching and example of these authentic disciples of Christ, witnesses and spiritual masters, have made a deep impact on the souls of many people, leaving in them an indelible and fruitful memory. Let us give thanks to God!

2. Today I have the pleasure of welcoming the members of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, as well as the other pilgrims who, in the company of their Bishops, have come to Rome from Andalusia, where the eight new blessed were martyred, and from other parts of Spain.

In speaking of "martyrdom", we are reminded of a tragedy both horrible and wondrous: horrible because of the cruel, organized injustice which caused it; horrible too for the blood shed and the pain suffered; wondrous, however, because of the innocence which docilely surrendered to torture with no attempt at self-defence, happy to bear witness to the invincible truth of faith. Life dies, but faith triumphs and lives. So does martyrdom. It is a supreme act of love and fidelity to Christ, which becomes a witness and an example, a perennial message for humanity today and in the future.

This is also true of the martyrdom of the seven Augustinian Recollects and the parish priest of Motril. They died as they had lived: offering their lives each day for Christ and for their brothers and sisters. The accounts of their martyrdom are moving, especially that of the elderly Fr Vicente Soler, who had been Prior General of the order. In prison he comforted the other inmates, telling them that during his ministry he had been in worse circumstances and the Lord had always helped him. A hero of charity, he wanted to offer himself in place of the father of a family condemned to death; when the final moment came, he commended the fate of all the condemned to Our Lady "de la Cabeza", patroness of Motril.

May these newly beatified martyrs accompany the Church on her way as she works and suffers for the Gospel, and encourage a new springtime of Christian life to flourish in Spain!

3. I am pleased to welcome you who have come to participate in the beatification of Fr Nicolas Barré. Your presence shows your attachment to one who is a gift of God for the Church.

I extend a special greeting to you, the family of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. In your work of instructing children and underprivileged young people, your founder's charism is a call to you to participate in the human and spiritual growth of those entrusted to you. Fr Barré knew that no human wealth is possible without education, no love of God without an apprenticeship in generosity. His undertaking, which you continue with unselfishness, humility and abandonment to God, is a response to extreme human misery. By getting people on their feet, you join the efforts of all who are concerned to make God known. Dear sisters, I encourage you to remain faithful to your educational mission, whose source is found in the love and contemplation of Christ.

Following in the footsteps of Nicolas Barré, may you love the Lord, abandon yourselves to him without reserve and lead young people to God!

4. Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, dear brothers and sisters!

I greet all of you who have come to Rome from the Diocese of Regensburg for the beatification of Anna Schäffer. I welcome Cardinal Friedrich Wetter, who as Archbishop of Munich and Freising is your Metropolitan and is representing his Brother Bishops. I also greet your diocesan Bishop Manfred Müller and the many priests and religious who are among the pilgrims.

The celebration of a beatification is always something uplifting. It is an anticipation of what awaits us at the end of time. You should nourish yourselves on this every day. I therefore urge you: take something home with you from this special day! The result of this celebration must be something more than a lovely memory of Rome and the blessed's feast-day in the liturgical calendar. Anna Schäffer remains among us with her message of life, which is a firm support to rely on when we experience sadness and cross dark valleys.

How many people today have to live with a diagnosis that, humanly speaking, leaves them without hope! How many people are confined to a sickbed, where they will always remain day after day! How many people suffer from the complicated stories life has written and from situations that have befallen them through misfortune or their own fault! Of course, there are people whom you are close to and whom you have brought with you in spirit on this pilgrimage. May Anna Schäffer, a woman from your land, encourage you, your families, friends and acquaintances to offer their prayers to God!

What this new blessed did from her sickbed on earth, she now accomplishes even more effectively in heaven: she ceaselessly speaks to God on our behalf. Thanks be to God for giving us such a powerful intercessor.

5. Dear brothers and sisters, the beatification of our heavenly patrons takes place during the Lenten journey which leads

us to Easter. May their witness be an encouragement and incentive for everyone to take this path of conversion and reconciliation with a determined will, faithfully following in the footsteps of the blessed whom we particularly honour today. May Mary, Queen of Saints and Martyrs, intercede for us.

I cordially bless each of you, your families and the ecclesial communities to which you belong.

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