

13 FEBRUARY

BLESSED JAMES MILLER, MARTYR

Optional Memorial

James Miller was born on 21 September 1944 in Ellis, in the northern United States. Growing up in Catholic family, he attended the local primary school and then Pacelli High School in Stevens Point, which was run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It was there that his vocation blossomed. His formation began at the Brothers' house of formation in Glencoe and then at Saint Mary's University in Winona. After religious profession in 1969 he decided to become a missionary. His pastoral ministry began in Nicaragua, where he remained from 1969 until 1980. Recalled to the United States, he remained there for only one year, but his heart and mind were always with the missions. He asked to be allowed to return to the missions and his superiors sent him to Guatemala, to the city of Huehuetenango, at the La Salle Indigenous Center, a school dedicated to rural natives. The situation in Guatemala was very volatile: on February 13, 1982, he was assassinated because of his religious and educational work with the poor.

From the Common of One Martyr.

THE OFFICE OF READINGS

SECOND READING

From a homily of Pope Saint John Paul II

(Insegnamenti, XXIV, 1, 2001, 505-506.508)

They lived loving and died forgiving: this is their witness.

“The Lord Jesus Christ will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (*Phil 3:21*). These words of St Paul remind us that our true homeland is in heaven and that Jesus will transfigure our mortal body into a glorious body like his own. The Apostle comments in this way on the mystery of the Transfiguration of the Lord which the Church proclaims on the Second Sunday of Lent. Jesus, in fact, wanted to offer a sign and a prophecy of his glorious Resurrection, in which we are also called to share. What was accomplished in Jesus, our Head, must also be fulfilled in us who form his Body.

This is a great mystery for the life of the Church, since we should not think that the transfiguration will happen only in the next world after death. The saints' lives and the martyrs' witness teach us that if the transfiguration of the body will occur at the end of time with the resurrection of the flesh, that of the heart takes place now on this earth with the help of grace.

We can ask ourselves: What are “transfigured” men and women like? The answer is very beautiful: they are people who follow Christ in his life and his death; who are inspired by him and let themselves be imbued with the grace that he gives us; whose food is to do the Father's will; who let themselves be led by the Spirit; who prefer nothing to Christ's kingdom; who love others to the point of shedding their blood for them; who are ready to give him their all without expecting anything in return; who, in a word, live loving and die forgiving.

On various occasions I have recalled the need to preserve the memory of the martyrs. Their witness must not be forgotten. They are the most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith, which can give a human face even to the most violent death and show its beauty even in the midst of atrocious

sufferings. The particular Churches must do everything possible not to forget those who suffered martyrdom.

The pilgrim Church is called to live a new springtime of Christianity, since she has been watered and fertilized by the blood of so many martyrs. *Sanguis martyrurum, semen christianorum!* The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians! (Tertullian, *Apol*, 50, 13). Today these words, coined during the persecutions of the first centuries, must instill hope in your apostolic initiatives and pastoral efforts in the often difficult task of the new evangelization. For this you can rely on the incomparable help of your martyrs. Remember their valor: "*Consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever*" (Heb 13:7-8).

RESPONSORY

Rev. 21:4, 7:16

R/ He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. * The world of the past is no more.

V/ They will never hunger or thirst again; sun and scorching wind will never plague them. * The world of the past is no more.

Prayer

O God, who, on account of the wonderful confession of your holy name, bestowed the glory of martyrdom on that wise teacher of the youth, Blessed James Alfred Miller, grant, we pray, that by his intercession we may remain firm in professing the faith unto death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.