

## Blessed Aurelio de Vinalesa (1896-1936)



osé Ample Alcaide was born to Vicente Ample and Manuela Alcaide on 3 February 1896 in Vinalesa (Valencia), the third of seven children. He was baptised four days later (4 February) in the parish of Saint Honoratus the Bishop. He received Confirmation on 21 April 1899. He did his first schooling in the Seraphic Seminary of Massamagrell (Valencia). He took the Capuchin habit in 1912. He made temporary profession on 10 August 1913 and perpetual profession on 18 December 1917. He was then sent to Rome for further studies and was ordained priest there on 26 March 1921 by the Archbishop of Philippi, Giuseppe Palica.

On his return to Spain he was appointed director of the philosophy and theology student house in Orihuela (Alicante). He prudently carried out this office to general satisfaction for the rest of his life. "He enjoyed the reputation of a saint among the faithful," said the diocesan priest Fr. Pascual Ortells. "To that reputation he joined wisdom. He was a faithful observer of the rule of Saint Francis. He committed himself completely to help the young friars so that they might become perfect religious."

During the revolution of 1936 all the religious in the friary of Orihuela dispersed on 13 July. Aurelio sought refuge in the family home in Vinalesa where the militiamen captured him on 28 August 1936. His body was buried in the cemetery of Foyos (Valencia), near to where he had been killed. His remains were exhumed and transported to the cemetery of Vinalesa on 17 September 1937. Now they rest in the Chapel of the Capuchin Martyrs in the Magdalen Friary of Massamagrell.

Aurelio kept himself inwardly ready and open from the moment of his capture until his death. He remained always faithful to Christ. "He remained calm right up to the last moment, encouraging all of us who were about to die. When everything was ready for the execution, he exhorted us to recite the formula of the act of contrition. And that is what we did. When the Servant of God was saying the formula of absolution, one of the militia slapped him twice. One of the group of militia told his companion not to slap the friar any more because it was not worth the effort, given the short period of life that remained. The Servant of God remained calm before the injury and continued the absolution until the end. As soon as the Servant of God had finished his sacred duty, a volley rang out and we all fell while repeating with him, "Long live Christ the King!"

