

Blessed Buenaventura de Puzól (1897-1936)



Julio Esteve Flors was born on 9 October 1897 in Puzól (Valencia). His baptism was on 10 October in the parish of Santos Juanes in Puzól. He was one of five children born to Vicente Esteve and Josefa Flors. Julio began his schooling in the Seraphic Seminary, and took the Capuchin habit on 15 September 1913, and received the name Buenaventura. He made simple vows on 17 September 1914 and perpetual vows on 18 September 1918. Sent to Rome for further studies, he became a doctor of philosophy at the Gregorian University. In Rome he was ordained to the priesthood by José Palica, the archbishop of Philippi.

On his return to Spain he was appointed professor of philosophy and canon law in the theology student house in Orihuela. He also distinguished himself as a preacher, speaker, and spiritual director, but especially as a man of God. Juan F. Escrirá confirms these things: "He dedicated himself to study and to preaching. He had a peaceful temperament. Further more he was a very astute and intelligent person, as well as polite and proper. Among the faithful he was very edifying. He was an authentic man of God." Vicente Aguilar will also lend weight to these observations: "He worked especially in the apostolate of preaching the Word of God. His qualities were noteworthy: a great goodness and intelligence. He was very humble and mortified."



With the arrival of the religious persecution he felt obliged to leave the friary and led a life of prayer. "During the time that he remained in hiding," again, Vicente Aguilar. "He never complained that God should allow such things, despite the fact that he had a foreboding that there was to be period of martyrdom and persecution for the Church, as he said to those who spoke with him or visited him."

He had taken refuge in the family home in Carcagente. He was arrested there by the Committee of Puzól on 24 September 1936 to make some statements. On the night of 26 September 1936 he was taken with other detainees to the cemetery of Gilet (Valencia). There he was shot at two o'clock in the morning. Before being executed, Br. Buenaventura had stated, "I am preparing myself for the palm of martyrdom." Before being executed he said to his murderers. "What you measure out now will be measured out later for you." When the war ended, these very words were recalled by his slayers when they fell into the hands of justice. They recalled, "Now what the friar told us is happening."

His sister, Vicenta Esteve Flors remembers how her brother acted in those last moments with the same serenity as ever. Before being shot he gave absolution to about thirteen detainees who were transported by truck. Among them was also the father and brother of the Servant of God.

He was buried in the cemetery in Gilet in a common grave. When the civil war was over, his remains were exhumed, identified by his sister Vicenta and taken to the martyrs shrine in the cemetery at Puzól. Now they rest in the chapel of the Capuchin martyrs in the friary of Saint Mary Magdalene in Masangrell.