

SERVANT OF GOD

Ángel Riesco Carbajo

BISHOP
(1902-1972)



Founder of the Secular Institute:
APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY

Heroic Reactions

The first letter written by Father Ángel Riesco, through which we know how distressed he was, was written during a pastoral visit in Cangas de Narcea on the 15th October 1958 and it has recently been published. One week later, Father Ángel transmitted his first reaction, which was based on the principle he had learnt from Father Encinas when he helped him to overcome the temptation of a provisional status in La Bañeza: "there is no provisional status for God." In the same way, the pastoral visits he was performing were not occasions to be out of strength or to be satisfied just for 'being there'.

'God willing, I go and will go on working until the end, as if I had to stay here forever. This is such a pleasure! Don't I work for God? Then, He is always next to me.'

A second reaction, about which we have evidence, might be the same as the apostles', when they joyfully got through the whipping test '*just for being worthy of undergoing hardship in the name of Jesus Christ.*'

Father Ángel used to go on a retreat every year. Each year, St. Ignatius set for him the goal of imitating Jesus Christ 'in overcoming any insult and vituperation.' According to Ignatian terminology, he seemed to be one of those who 'want to get involved and become distinguished in any service of his eternal Lord.' This is what those who knew him mention:

'Some of his classmates said that Father Ángel had always asked the Lord for humiliation. And they used to say, 'he is having some now.' Such humiliation was deduced from interpretation and criticism of his pastoral acts as Auxiliary Bishop in Oviedo. I did not make further inquiries owing to my fear of being indelicate.'

Another member of a religious order has the same suspicion:

'Not long ago, talking to Father Nieto about Father Angel concerning the strange situations

of lack of understanding and isolation that Father Ángel had to go through, he told me that Father Nieto mentioned once that Father Ángel had asked the Lord for humiliation. This explains what, to my way of thinking, turns out to be humanly unexplainable.'

Father Ángel's third reaction is to appreciate the redeeming value of humiliation: What apparently seems to be death, can turn into a source of fertility if it is leaked through a heart which, for love, wishes to identify with Jesus Christ. This is how Father Ángel, in his own hand, explains it in a letter:

'It is better not to think about it at all, and offer everything you have, with a devotional and cheerful dedication in our sorrow, to our Lord so that His Charity reigns in our world and Apostolic Missionaries of Charity become saints and large in number. I cheerfully sacrifice myself for these purposes and I bless you with all my heart.'

A fourth reaction will emerge from a vow of joy during his exile in Tudela: 'I have a vow of joy and, whatever it takes, I am determined to keep it.' He wrote these few lines which might be the reflection of the situation started in Oviedo:

'No, darling. Peace, joy and real happiness are in a despised and poor place, in austerity, in company with Jesus Christ, with the mother of Nazareth, with the poor and the social misfits...while pharisees, ladies, the ambitious and the worldly succeed, go up, eat and drink in Jerusalem...'

And finally, Father Ángel's fifth reaction: he did not feel bitter towards the Church. It is known that many people have broken bonds with the Church for less reasons. They did not have enough faith to overcome all the human miseries they found in the Church itself, and they came to consider it as a mere meeting of men and not as a meeting of men chosen by God.

Extract from the biography of Father Ángel, *A Simple story of a modest bishop* (Father Máximo Pérez, S.J.)

Eucharistic Workshop

Last Sunday, our parishioners went on a pilgrimage of penance to Castrotierra Sanctuary. That blessed magnet for the Holy Virgin, being



a palace for her, attracted our hearts so much that we can't help starting on our way in spite of the heavy rain.

What a beautiful day! How kind are souls in La Bañeza and how many gentle devotees of

the Holy Virgin are among us! She is fully conscious of it and she knows their names, which are written in golden letters in her Immaculate Heart.

And now... it is time for the eucharistic workshop: First Communion, Corpus Christi and its Octave, the Month of the Sacred Heart.

This workshop must be prepared so that it goes beyond a merely external ceremony. The Eucharist is, in fact, essentially an intimate ceremony because what can be noticed, touched and enjoyed from the outside does not represent the greatness of the Sacrament.

Studying the Eucharist must be our first duty. We hardly know about Jesus in the Sacrament. Most of the time, we merely have faith that Jesus is there. And even that faith turns out to be such an imperfect one, owing to its lack of strength, and so inaccurate that it seems annoying.

Our elders, the Spaniards of yesteryear, how conscious they were of the Holy Sacrament! Hence their unyielding faith. Nothing provides convictions with so much strength as being able to understand their foundation.

So, how did they reach that knowledge? Studying tenaciously the doctrine of the Holy Church.

Worshipping and loving. This logical consequence of knowing the Eucharist will be discussed soon.

Angel Riesco (19th May 1945)

With the Servant of God in March

It has always been a tradition to celebrate Father Angel's saint's day on the first of March. We have carried it out this year as well, with the Holly Mass to commemorate his eternal rest and in an act of gratitude. A special meeting-coexistence with his daughters has also been organized, in the Mother House of Ciudad Misioneras.

We must support the Holly Church, overall on these tough circumstances we are living nowadays, as we support the Servant of God, Father Angel. We all know how strong his love and faith for the Church is and that

makes us understand he wants us to pray and dedicate ourselves for it unceasingly. That is what he used to remind us during times of suffering.

Furthermore, we are all concerned about the slowness of his Cause. The Lord will provide. We must repeat with Father Angel: "It is not the people, it is not the events, it is not the material goods, it is the Lord!" Repeat this to maintain faith and hope, and not to cease commending yourselves to Him and asking the Lord for his intercession and his desired glorification.

I was marvelled at his smile

Adoración Cavero

I wish I could always preserve in my very weak mind all those experiences and advices I have learnt from our Founding Father since the first day I met him!

I will always remember the day I saw him and met him for first time, in Astorga. I got really impressed by him. He was walking back home after celebrating the Mass, with a group of children who were waiting just to share a bit of time with him. There he was, with his praiseworthy calmness, while he was showing them some holy cards for them to pick. I was marvelled at his smile, his sweetness, his calmness and his charm with the kids.

That same day, I saw him again saying goodbye to some relatives by the station with that same friendly impression and that sweetness on his moves. I felt such a holy joy I would never forget.

As I joined the Apostolic Teams I had the chance to see him many other times again after that first day. I could often listen to him at the Retreats, Coexistences Meetings, Spiritual Practices - which he used to lead during the first years of Las Misioneras-, etc. He was strict during those practices, but just because he got always intensely involved. He never gave up instilling into what he thought to get perfection and holiness.

He was saintly sensitive, modest and warm-hearted, but he could easily bring you to God with that fervent, serious and respectful bearing.

Minor issues, as it could be a grammar mistake, were always important to him. Many times I got my letters back with all those red marks to correct my spelling.

He was always looking for the bright side of life, and that was his advice anytime we needed it. I still remember a quote he shared with me more than once: "We, the consecrated souls,

have to be so full by God and by the issues related to God that we could not talk about anything else. In the same way people related to the bullfighting are always talking about it or sportsmen are always talking about their progress and just glancingly about God and other issues, we have to talk glancingly about other issues apart from God. We need to be aware about it".

I remember him with great tenderness during his frequent visits to our Homes, especially to the one in Astorga. That was his hometown, the place where his family was still living and the place he had to leave after being named Bishop. How well he instilled on us the attentiveness and respect we needed to show while working with the priests every day! He was always interested about our life, he even used to demand a weekly report about the incidents every once in a while.

I could say without a doubt that what people thought as he was walking by was: "Here is God". Such was the strength of his appearance that people could feel it emerging from his deep inside as well as his strong union with the Lord.

More than once he talked to me personally about availability, and many other times in general for all of us. He was always willing to go where he had been sent as he knew that was the will of God. This makes me remember how disappointed he was when we tried to move to some other Homes due to the inauguration of a new one. Our lack of maturity broke his heart.

The Lord challenged him because he had chosen him to become a saint.



Favors

I would like to thank Father Ángel for his intercession in bringing from the Lord the benefits we need. Thanks, Father, for meeting our requests.

Cary, Belen's grandmother, underwent heart surgery twice in three months. She had to remain hospitalized for a month each time, and she was seriously ill owing to further complications.

The second time she underwent surgery was such a miracle. Doctors thought she would not make it. After going through a long process, she slowly managed to get better. Now, she has returned to her normal life at home.

We have been praying to Father Ángel since Belen mentioned it, and we gave her a card bearing a prayer for his beatification.

Thanks, Father, for this extraordinary favour and for your efficient intercession! Bring us the faith from the Lord. We will keep on praying for your prompt beatification and canonization.

A.P.P. (León)

There was an adult couple at my parish church who lived together without being married and with no Christian life. Since our Father Ángel was concerned about these cases and did everything he could to bring "those away from Christianity" closer to God and to all the benefits the Church can provide them, I commended it to his intercession. And so it was. I consider it to be a special grace. The wedding day was a happy day for them. They were just as excited as two youngsters, and they take an active part at Mass now.

I have commended many more cases to Father Ángel. There are many people who do not love the Church just because they do not know anything about it.

M. C. F.

A high-risk tumor was detected in a priest of León who was our acquaintance. After getting a real fright, he accepted it: 'It is God's will'. The operation was successful, and he underwent medical treatment and had periodic checkups. According to the doctor, all the process has been such a success and he has gone on with the parish activities.

When he asked us for prayers, we turned to Father Ángel for interceding with the Lord in order to help him. Thank heavens, our request has been heard. Thanks, Father Ángel!

Maruja C. and Azucena P. (León)

I have had a cataract operation. I was warned that it would be a difficult operation owing to pseudoexfoliation syndrome, which could bring further complications. In addition, my intraocular pressure was too high. My pupils did not dilate by using drops, so I commended myself to Father Ángel at all times. During surgery, I suffered a hemorrhage, but thank God and His servant's intercession, the operation was successful. I feel a deep sense of gratitude toward Father Ángel, and I make a donation for his canonization cause.

M^a Carmen Hernández (Béjar)

I would like to thank Father Ángel for his intercession in my brother's recovery from his serious illness during last August. He had to be rushed to the hospital and his life was at high risk. As soon as I was aware, I offered a novena to Father Ángel and when my brother required surgery, I repeated it, particularly, during the postoperative period. I would like to thank God for taking His servant's intercession into account. I am pleased to make a donation.

Juana Solís (Madroñera-Cáceres)

I had to undergo surgery to treat appendicitis. It seemed to be an easy operation which would not take long. Once in the operating room, I started saying the rosary while doctors carried out the surgery. However, I noticed it was taking longer than expected.

I finished praying but the surgery had not finished yet. The surgeons were muttering, but I could not understand a word. I noticed something was not going as expected. I decided to commend it to Father Ángel, and I asked him to take charge of the situation and help the surgical team. I was able to feel his presence, smiling beside me. I kept on praying and after five minutes, the operation was finished successfully. The appendix is normally located in the right lower quadrant of the abdomen, but they did not manage to find it. After an hour and a half, they finally decided to try in the left side, and there it was. Today, fifteen days later, I am feeling good. Thanks, Father Ángel! It was your intercession which enlightened the surgical team. Thanks for listening to our plea!

Viky Martínez (El Colorado - Formosa)

Testimonies

Dear Apostolic Missionaries,

Your beloved founder's news bulletin has just arrived. I would like to congratulate you, one by one, wishing the Holy Spirit to mold you as real apostolic missionaries.

I have read the article written by Monsignor Alberto José González Chaves twice and I love it. It is such a good support to define Father Ángel's saintliness.

I am delighted at the success in bringing Father Ángel to faraway places like the Philippines, Germany, Poland and California. It is like Mary Magdalene's jar: when it breaks, the Church is pervaded by its scent and there is a smell of Saintliness. The jar must break for this purpose. If we were able to break our jar, just as Father Ángel did, the Church would smell so good!

I am so glad I was able to help open the jar, by writing his biography. People must be

conscious of your good deeds to glorify our celestial Father.

Maximo SJ

A missionary gave me a news bulletin of Father Ángel's Cause for Canonization and I liked it so much that I asked her for his biography. It was really gratifying and I chose three particular ideas: Being in the presence of God, being always happy and being at peace (he wished for people to not lose their sense of peace).

If only I could reach these purposes...

I am making a donation in appreciation of all his biography has done for me. I will go on commending myself to him. Thank you!

Carmen Calvo (Santiago de Compostela)

I consider 2013 to be a good year for the beatification of Father Ángel. I pray for this purpose in my Eucharist. Moreover, in 2013, we celebrate the Year of Faith, and Father Ángel had plenty of it. God bless you and make you larger in number! I remember you in my prayers.

José Luis de Santiago R. (Las Arenas)

Thanks for sending me the news bulletin of Father Ángel's Cause for Canonization. I hope his cause reaches a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible. Saints' example are always for the glory of God and His Church.

P. Mauricio Martín, OCD.

We wish that this new year brings your beloved Institution good news about the cause for canonization of our unforgettable Father Ángel. We are making a small donation to help you in the process.

José Santos (La Bañeza)

I would like to thank you for sending me the news bulletin of Father Ángel's Cause for Canonization. I hope the Lord shows us His glory in him.

José Luis Pérez A. (Madrid)

Asturias: NIEMBRO: Loli Rivaz.
 OVIEDO: Charo Calvete.
Barcelona: Adoración Cavero.
Bilbao: Tomasa Morán.
 Justina Romero. Conchita Inyesto.
Cáceres:
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 CASTROCALBÓN: Manuela Alonso.
 LA BAÑEZA: Devotees of the Servant of God. Parish Church of Sta. María. M^a Jesús Fidalgo. M^a Luisa Pérez. Petra Villar. Nieves Rúa. Nino and Juli. José Santos. Emilia Estévez.
 Pura Paraíso. Aurora Pastor. Lola Rodríguez. Tinina Cela. Remedios Herrejón. Teresa Alonso. Mercedes Moratinos. Adela Frade. Loli

Want to thank favors and send donations

Conde. Mary Martín. M^a Rosimira Martínez. Ramona Loureiro. Ángel Ramos. Antonia Martínez. Isabel Casquero. José Luis Ramos and Aurora. Family M.T. (They are grateful for all the favors). Elvira García and her family. M^a Rosa Cordero.
 LA MILLA DEL RÍO: Josefa Sánchez.
 PRIORO: Amparo Díez.
 SAN MARTÍN: Emilia Fernández.
Madrid: Gloria Reig. Hermanos de Lola Rodríguez.
Navarra:
 TUDELA: Olga and family Alonso Riesco

PRAYER

Our Father, Lord of life and God of infinite mercy, in your loving providence, you chose your servant Angel Riesco to faithfully serve your Church as Bishop and Founder of the Apostolic Missionaries of Charity. We beseech you to grant us the fidelity of your Son's disciples, the unity He asked for them, and the fortitude we need to be committed witnesses of your loving presence among men and women in the world. We ask you for the humility and simplicity Jesus taught us and the charity that brought Him to the Cross.

With humble confidence, we beseech you to glorify your servant Bishop Angel and to grant us through his intercession the special favour we ask of you. We ask you this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory)

WITH ECCLESIASTIC APPROVAL OF THE BISHOP OF ASTORGA

Orense:
 Orense:
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 ROSARIO: M^a Cecilia Comuzzi. Mónica Marucco. Betty Rodríguez. Julia López.
 VILLA CONSTITUCIÓN: Nilda Roldán.

PERÚ
 LIMA: Family Chancayauri Canales.

We beg those who achieve some grace by the intercession of the Servant of God, to contact with: Cause of Canonisation of the Servant of God Rev. Angel Riesco. "Ciudad Misioneras". P.O. Box 57 – 24750 LA BAÑEZA, León, SPAIN. Donations for the Cause may be sent by bank transfer

El Ángel que en él se va formando

T.M.

Nació en un pueblecito de labriegos en el hermoso valle de Vidriales, Bercianos es su nombre, Ángel el niño y Maximina y Pablo son sus padres. Y ese verano caluroso y fértil recibe ya las aguas bautismales.

Como las mieses de los campos crece y un gran día, tal vez del mes de mayo, recibe con fervor el Pan del Cielo como un ángel que en él se va formando.

Hay amor y pobreza en abundancia en el hogar humilde del buen Pablo y hasta a cruzar los mares se deciden y llegan a Argentina navegando.

Ocho años ha cumplido Angelito y un Colegio su padre le ha encontrado, en él aprenderá ciencias y letras y una sentencia que se le ha grabado.

Sobre la puerta lee cada día lo que en su corazón Dios ha sembrado: Ser bueno es lo que más vale en el mundo, y muy pronto se propone lograrlo.

Ya en Comillas destaca su presencia y su amor por Jesús Eucaristía. A la Virgen la quiere con ternura y a San José su santidad confía.

Tratará de que a Cristo le amen todos, hablando de El será gran Catequista. El amor será el método que emplee porque el amor el corazón conquista.

Y un gran día, Sacerdote de Cristo pronunciará su Sí con alegría. Le espera gran misión en La Bañeza, pobres, niños y enfermos son su vida.

Padre bueno será de Misioneras que fundará con fe y con valentía, que el amor de Jesús reine en el mundo, será su lema y por él dará la vida.

Señor, enseñadme a despreciar los juicios de los hombres. ¡Hid Jesús mío; cuando alguno me juzgare mal o dijere mal de mí o me despreciare, haced que me alegre, que me regocije pues así podré asemejarme más a Vos y os amaré más!

Causa de canonización del Siervo de Dios Ángel Riesco
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