

A DOMINICAN VINDICATED

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HE Dominican Order has its glorious martyrs, the best known of whom are Saint Peter Martyr, Saint John of Cologne, Blessed Francis Capillas, and Blessed Peter Sanz. In a recent issue of the *Analecta*, the official organ of the Dominican Order, there appeared a story of another Dominican confessor who suffered and died for justice' sake.

In the library Desclee de Brower is a small book bearing the title *Le Proces de l'attentat commis contra Guillaume le Taciturne, prince d'Orange*, which is a critical study of unedited documents. It caused much comment among the European University professors and historians for its learned study of a court trial. It relates all the historical facts of the trial in which Father Temmerman, O.P., was condemned to be hanged and quartered by the Calvinists, when he refused to break the Seal of the Confessional. Father Temmerman was one of the priests who in 1580 remained in the Netherlands after the heretics, under the leadership of William the Silent, had overthrown the Spanish rule and established Calvinism as the official religion.

The Netherlands, after the conquest by Charlemagne at the end of the eighth century, remained Catholic until the beginning of the Reformation. During this period Catholicism was the State religion and the Emperor took such a pride in defending the true Faith that every enemy of Catholicism was treated as a traitor to the State.

In 1555, Philip II succeeded his father, Charles V, on the Spanish throne. He had under his sway Spain, the two Sicilies, the Milanese, the Netherlands, Franché Comté, Mexico and Peru. Philip adopted his father's policy, the two principal points of which were the maintenance and extension of absolute rule throughout his dominions, and the support and propagation of the Catholic religion. Philip II was constantly pressing his subjects for the money necessary to maintain and to extend his rule. The Spanish troops preyed upon the peaceful Flemish, keeping the Low Countries in a restless mood. Then too, Calvin won over many people of the Netherlands

to his heretical teachings. Philip, however, resolutely refused to annul or modify the rigorous edicts of his father against heretics.

These exactions of the Spanish troops and the condemnation of heretics incited the people of the Netherlands to rebel against the Spanish rule. They found a staunch leader in William of Nassau, prince of Orange, commonly called William the Silent. Under William's influence, Holland, Zealand, Overysel and the Bishopric of Utrecht rose in rebellion against Spain in 1572. When in 1579, William obtained the signature of the Union of Utrecht, the first foundation of the Dutch Republic, he became the open enemy of Philip II, king of Spain, whose authority in the Netherlands he had thus overthrown. Then, when William openly professed himself a Calvinist, he gave Philip an added cause of grievance. Philip put a price of 25,000 gold crowns on William's head, and this bribe induced various attempts to assassinate him.

Anastrus, a merchant of Antwerp, who had suffered the loss of his goods, thought to enrich himself quickly by obtaining the reward offered by the king of Spain. Knowing, however, that the assailant would be killed immediately by William's companions, he dared not attempt the deed himself. He asked his servants to do it in his name, promising them a liberal reward. John of Jauregui, from Biscardia, nineteen years old, who was devoted to his master and shared his sorrows over the loss of the merchandise, promised to kill William in his master's name. Preparations for the murder were immediately set on foot. Anastrus, knowing that his name would inevitably be linked with that of the murderer, fled to the coast.

On Friday, March 16, 1582, John of Jauregui visited Father Temmerman, a Dominican chaplain of the Spaniards in the city of Antwerp. Although the Calvinists had expelled all religious from the city, this Dominican, wearing secular clothing, remained there to dispense the spiritual necessities to the many Catholics who were engaged in business in the city. Father Temmerman welcomed John into his cell. John told him that his master, Anastrus, had suffered great financial loss and that his master and he were going by sea to Spain. As the journey by sea was very dangerous he desired to receive the Sacrament of Penance. Now, whether John received the Sacrament worthily and afterwards relapsed, or whether he made a bad confession, we cannot say one way or the other on the historical evidence at our command. What we do know is that he did receive Communion during the Mass celebrated by Father Temmerman, and afterwards asked him to say several Masses to petition God for a

happy and safe journey. On Saturday of that week John forwarded all his personal belongings, together with a letter of explanation, to his uncle, who lived in the city of Burgense.

Anastrus, being a safe distance from the inevitable vengeance of William's followers, wrote to his servant asking him to do the killing at the first opportunity. He suggested that he use a gun for the deed. On the Morning of March 19, John again assisted at Mass in Father Temmerman's hiding place. After breakfast, being fully armed, he went to the castle of the Prince of Orange, finding him seated at a table with a number of French allies.

When William saw John of Jauregui enter the room he called him aside, so that his business might not be overheard by his companions. Without any hesitation John levelled his gun and fired. The bullet pierced William's head under the left ear, went through his mouth and lodged in his upper jaw under the right eye. John, who had failed to wound the Prince fatally, and thereby failed to win the fortune for his master, met a speedy death at the hands of William's followers.

On the same afternoon, Calvin Marnix of Aldegonde, a rabidly Calvinistic judge, began the trial of Anastrus' servants, who were still living in Antwerp. Calvin Marnix was a bitter enemy of the Spanish Catholics who made their abode in the Netherlands. Upon interrogation the first witness said that Father Temmerman was John's confessor and that he had celebrated several Masses in Anastrus' house. The priest was summoned to court to be questioned. Upon his refusal to disclose what his penitent had told him in Confession, his naked body was scourged. The judge, accusing the priest of having heard John's confession and then not having denounced the premeditated crime to the proper authorities so that they might have prevented it, condemned him to be hanged and quartered.

The unjust sentence of the judge was carried out on March 29, 1582, just ten days after John had unsuccessfully attempted to kill William the Silent. After Father Temmerman was hanged and quartered, parts of his body were hung on the gates of the city of Antwerp, and his head, stuck on a spear, was raised on William's tower.

The Calvinists, knowing that their crime would soon be known throughout the Christian world, edited a book in which they tried to justify their murder of Father Temmerman. To conceal their injustice they omitted some statements and injected others into their story of the trial. The name of the Dominican confessor was blackened by base calumnies, as they accused him of being an accomplice

in the attempted murder of William; they also said that he had broken the Seal of the Confessional during the course of the trial. Most historians accepted the falsified accounts of the trial as true until recently, when Father de Meyer, O.P., discovered the original accounts of the trial.

The original documents of the trial show that the Dominican confessor did not violate the secrecy of the Sacrament of Penance, but that the judge, because he was anxious to win favor with William, Prince of Orange, and the Calvinists of Antwerp, speedily condemned him to death. The calumnies are clearly shown to be interpolations. The heroic son of Saint Dominic preserved secrecy concerning all that had transpired between his penitent and himself, the ambassador of God. He desired to suffer death rather than violate the sacred Seal of Confession. Father De Meyer's work clears the name of the Dominican confessor, showing that Father Temmerman may be considered a martyr.

The head of Father Temmerman is religiously preserved in the Dominican convent in Antwerp. The Catholics of Antwerp have always considered him a martyr and have privately venerated his remains. The prayers of all are asked that the cause of this glorious defender of the Sacramental Seal may soon be introduced for Beatification.

AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM

Mother of my Lord and me, guard me well through life
Lest on the highway to eternity
My weakness prove too great to bear the strife.

Lady full of grace and love, take my hand in thine
And through thy guidance from above
Let not my soul from virtue's path decline.

Mary ever virgin, purest maid, above all creatures blest
Oh keep thou ever watchful care of me
Until my Lord shall call me home to rest.

—Anselm Vitie, O.P.