

Homily for entrance into the novitiate of the Tyburn Monks 3 October 2019

Today we mark a very historic occasion in the history of our Congregation and indeed for the history of the Church. It is very appropriate that Reverend Father Manuel and Reverend Father Hector have chosen this day for their admission to the novitiate which marks the beginning of their monastic life.

Today we also celebrate The Feast Day of Blessed Columba Marmion¹, the spiritual director of our saintly Mother Foundress, the Servant of God, Mother Marie Adele Garnier. Mother Foundress received in a dream a prophecy of his coming to Tyburn. Dom Columba first came to Tyburn 111 years ago and Tyburn was his place of refuge when he fled Belgium as a refugee during World War I. We stand before the altar and replica of the Tyburn Tree which was donated by him along with this painting on my left of all the Benedictine saints of this country.

This is a very fitting place to celebrate the admission to the novitiate of these two priests because we are also celebrating the beginnings of a new work of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Eucharistic heart of Jesus. We are before the relics of the Tyburn Martyrs. Our congregation had its birth on the Mount of Martyrs, Montmartre in Paris. Tyburn is the Montmartre of England. We have two priests from a country that has had in recent years many martyrs, Colombia. We are before the tomb of someone who was given the honorary title of the last Tyburn martyr, our Mother Foundress.

Like the prophecy of the arrival of Blessed Columba Marmion, Mother Foundress must have also had some kind of prophecy about this new work because she always wanted a foundation of monks who, like her daughters, would also adore and sacrifice themselves for the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

In the rule for monks which Mother Foundress wrote in 1903 she says:

**“The first work of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart will be to cry with Saint Benedict: ‘opus Dei,’ Work of God. And we name the work of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus as that of *divine praise and adoration.*”
(The Monk of the Sacred Heart 1903, n.6.)**

Mother Foundress sees the charism and purpose of the Congregation of monks as being consecrated to the Sacred Heart, seeking a life of perfection

¹ It was Blessed Columba Marmion who helped the Tyburn Nuns to become Benedictine.

in contemplation. She envisaged that the monks would lead the nations to consecrate themselves with the same spirit to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

To be at the very beginning of a Congregation which is entrusted with such an immense task must be extremely daunting. But, my dear brothers in the Eucharistic Heart, you should also be reminded of the words of our Mother Foundress at the birth of our Congregation. These are her words in 1897 to one of her first daughters, Alexida Bourgeois, just before they began to live on Montmartre:

“We say, then, ‘O my God, here we are, we are Thine, to do Thy Will. Deign to make us love it and fulfil it always in everything. In these dispositions we can, and ought, to expect trouble, difficulties, cares and trials of every kind, poverty, humiliation, perhaps even persecution. We must be prepared for sacrifice, always, always! For this, indeed, we must not only be prepared, but even eager, in obedience and with a deep humility and consciousness that we are nothing. We must realise that all that we may do and suffer and desire is absolutely nothing in itself, but, united to the merits of Our Lord, becomes of immense value in His eyes.” (14 March 1897)

So I end with the words of our dear Mother Foundress which she often repeated to her daughters, *“Bon Courage!!!”* And also with a blessing which Mother Foundress gave to Alexida,

**“May Our Lady of the Apostles protect you, may the Holy Angels watch over you, and may Our Lord pour out upon you ever His most precious blessings.”
Amen.**