

The Bishop's Annual
Clothing Drive starts
tonight in each hall ...

University of Notre Dame
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under the supervision of
the local K. of C. Help
them to help others.

A Blessed Anniversary

At 10:30, twenty-five years ago this morning, the head of the Mexican secret police entered the Mexico City prison and called out at the entrance of a particular cell: "Michael Pro."

A man of medium height, about 36 years of age, stepped into the corridor, nodded respectfully to the police, and followed the officer into the courtyard. On the way a soldier ran up to the young Jesuit priest and begged his pardon.

"I not only pardon you, but I will pray for you. I thank you for the great favor you are going to do for me today." Then with a calm expression, he walked past the throng of officers. For a moment he stopped to have his picture taken, then moved to the spot indicated by an officer. He faced the firing squad.

"Have you any request to make?"

"Yes, I want to pray a little while." And he knelt down on the soft, red sand where many before him had already spilled their blood in the persecution which President Calles was waging against the Catholic Church. After a few moments, Father Pro made the sign of the cross; he devoutly kissed the crucifix he held in his hands, and stood up. Refusing to be blindfolded, he faced the throng and spoke: "God is my witness that I am innocent."

With all the dignity of the priesthood, he raised his arm and with the crucifix made the sign of the cross over the assembly. "May God have pity on all of you," he said.

Then he spread his arms wide in the form of a cross. In his left hand he held his head; in his right, the crucifix. Gazing resolutely forward, he cried out: "With all my heart I forgive my enemies." Then he looked to heaven. In a low, clear voice, he gave the triumphant battle call of the Mexican martyrs: "Viva Cristo Rey!"

A sharp command to the firing squad. The click of rifles. Then a volley shattered the silence. The priest fell forward, his arms still forming a cross, a red stain widening on his chest.

Such was the earthly end of a courageous, apostolic career that rivaled the exploits of the priest-martyrs of 16th Century England. Hunted and pursued, constantly harassed by his enemies, Father Pro had carried on his priestly apostolate in the midst of diabolical hatred against the Faith of Mexico. For 17 months he had wandered about in disguise -- now as a mechanic, now as a young student, now as a chauffeur -- saying Mass in secret hide-outs, giving Communion behind closed doors, carrying on retreats, and missions -- under the very noses of the men who had placed a price on his head.

Obregon is gone. Calles is gone. So are the soldiers who put Father Pro to death. They have all disappeared from the Mexican scene. The world moves on without them-- remembering only their moment of power, of lust, of greed, of cruelty.

But the Church, recognizing Father Pro's heroic life and valiant death, has announced her interest in his sanctity; and will soon begin the study of his Cause. And so, what appeared to be shame, and dishonor, and cowardice before men, and a tragic ending to a heroic career, now evolves into the beginning of a triumphant eternity for this servant of God. Forevermore, his name will be a benediction on his people.

Say a prayer to Father Pro tonight. Ask him for a share of his fortitude, and his courage -- that you may ultimately rejoice with him in the high court of heaven.