



September 14, 2022

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we honor the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we are provided the opportunity to reflect upon the cross as a symbol of death, upon which our Lord suffered for our sins. We can also look to the cross for the victory that it represents, for Jesus did not stay on a cross or in a tomb...He rose from it! He conquers death and brings new life. The suffering of the cross always precedes the triumph of resurrection.

On this day in 1597, Franciscan Friar Pedro de Corpa gave his life for our faith. In the days that followed, his fellow Franciscan missionaries, Friars Blas Rodríguez, Miguel de Añon, Antonio de Badajóz, and Francisco de Veráscola, were martyred as they proclaimed the Gospel and upheld the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the Sacrament of Marriage. In the Diocese of Savannah, the story of the Georgia Martyrs is part of our history, and we have endeavored to advance the cause of their beatification for decades.

Today, I am pleased to share with you that we have received an update from the Vatican: the Historical Committee of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints has approved and advanced the cause of beatification for Friar Pedro de Corpa and Companions. (Beatification is one of the steps on the road to these holy men being formally recognized as Saints in the Catholic Church.)

This news from the Dicastery indicates that the process is moving along well. The cause will now be evaluated by a theological commission and a commission of Cardinals before the Pope can proclaim the Friars blessed among the saints. I ask for your continued prayers and support as we patiently continue this journey. I also invite you to reflect upon an intention in your heart and pray **The Martyrs' Prayer**:

O Lord Jesus Christ, reward the apostolic zeal of Friar Pedro de Corpa and his four companion Friars—Blas, Miguel, Antonio, and Francisco—who labored for the spiritual well-being of the native Guale people of Georgia and gave their lives in witness to the Christian faith.

Through their merits and intercession, graciously grant the favor I humbly ask of You (*pause and state your intention*), so that, for the glory of Your Name, their heroic sacrifice may be officially recognized by the Church.

Amen.

DIOCESE OF SAVANNAH † OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

2170 E. VICTORY DRIVE, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31404 (912) 201-4080 DIOSAV.ORG

Perhaps your intention could be for an increased understanding of the beauty of the Covenant of Marriage for couples in our Diocese or for a greater desire for the strengthening of family life and values in our homes throughout South Georgia.

Thank you for your interest in the history of our local Church and the advancement of the cause of beatification for Friar Pedro de Corpa and Companions. Thank you for honoring the Triumph of the Cross today with a devotional spirit of hope. Please be assured of my prayers for you, your loved ones and your intentions. May we meet each day in our prayers and *Rejoice in the Lord always!*

In Christ,

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Most Reverend Stephen D. Parkes
Bishop of Savannah

~ Additional resources regarding the Friars are available online at TheGeorgiaMartyrs.org.