

CELEBRATING OUR BROTHER JAMES MILLER, FSC
Christian Brother, Christian Educator, Friend of the Poor, Martyr
1944 -1982

On Saturday, February 13, 1982, late in the afternoon, James Arnold Miller, a Christian Brother, was preparing to patch a wall outside the Casa Indigena De La Salle in Huehuetenango, Guatemala. Suddenly, four hooded men sped up in a car. Brother "Santiago," shot seven times in the neck and chest, died instantly.

Born in 1944, James Miller grew up in the farming community of Custer, Wisconsin. During his freshman year of high school he was so impressed by the Christian Brothers who taught him, that he entered the religious community. In 1969, Brother James was sent to Bluefields, Nicaragua, where he taught in both elementary and high schools. After receiving his master's degree in Spanish from St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, he returned to Nicaragua, this time to Puerto Cabezas, where Brother James helped build an industrial arts/vocational complex. In 1981, he came to the Indian Center in Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

Why was Brother James killed? He was no leftist. The answer may lie in the relations between the Brothers at the Indian Center and the Guatemalan army. The government, to meet its quota of army conscripts, often rounded up Indian boys from the streets. Even though students were exempt from military service, those from the Indian school were often impressed into the army. When that happened, a Brother would present proof to the authorities that the boy in question was a student. The military would then reluctantly release him.

Two days before the shooting of Brother James, a Mayan pupil was forced into the army. Another Christian Brother went to the authorities to obtain his release. This time the military refused to relinquish their catch. Adamant in his demands, the Brother infuriated them. The murder of Brother James was probably meant as a warning to the Brothers to cease interfering in government affairs.

Excerpts from "Brothers Called to Sainthood"

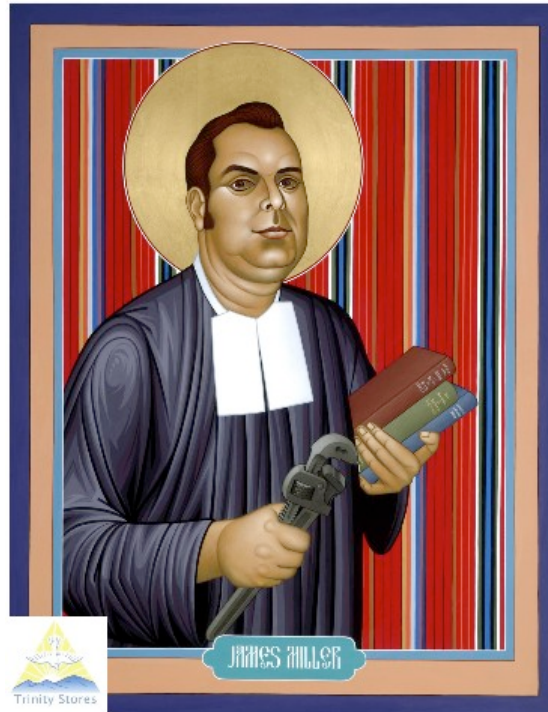
The days are often long, but I thoroughly enjoy my work with the Indian boys. Through daily association, I have come to respect and love them all and to have a deep respect for the centuries of Mayan history and tradition that are their heritage... I always find it a joy to visit the homes of the boys from the Indian Center. The Indians form about 50% of the country's population, but they are the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten ones of Guatemala. Many of them are desperately poor, the majority is illiterate, and malnutrition and mortality are endemic...

Aware of the many difficulties and risks that we face in the future, we continue to work with faith and hope and trust in God's Providence. Please join your prayers with ours every day. Many selfish, blind, and hardened hearts must be converted to the love of Christ before a lasting solution can be found. Armed force will not solve the problems; only dialogue and mutual understanding can be viable solutions.

I am personally weary of violence, but I continue to feel a strong commitment to the suffering poor of Central America. "God's ways are not man's ways," says the

Bible. God knows why He continued to call me to Guatemala, when some friends and relatives encouraged me to pull out for my own comfort and safety. I have been a Christian Brother for nearly 20 years now, and my commitment to my vocation grows steadily stronger in the context of my work in Central America. I pray to God for the grace and strength to serve Him faithfully by my presence among the poor and oppressed of Guatemala. I place my life in His Providence; I place my trust in Him.

Excerpts from Brother James Miller's personal writings



The Catholic people of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, who remember and celebrate their martyred native son, commissioned this icon, written by Brother Robert Lentz, OFM.

Brother James fondly called “Hermano Santiago”, whose boundless energy and good will led him to take on extra projects besides his teaching: things like organizing a volunteer fire department, speaking to politicians to get more funds for the school, fixing leaking pipes, and even sweeping floors. In this icon he holds a pipe wrench and a stack of textbooks, to indicate the scope of his work. Bright red Mayan fabric hangs behind him in the icon because of the blood he shed for Christ. The bright colors of the icon borders are taken from colors used on houses in Guatemala.



**He chose to dedicate his life to God as teacher of God's Word,
and God accepted his life to teach us faith and fidelity.**

**Let us remember that we are always and everywhere in the holy presence of our
God. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and living forever!**



**O good and gracious God
Who welcomes into light
All Your faithful servants.**

**Hear Your people
who sing Your praise
in the memory of our Brother James.**

**He with all the martyrs and saints
Across the centuries come,
in constancy they are unmoved.
in silence they are proved.**

**No one has ever measured love,
Or weighed it in his hand,
But God Who knows the inmost heart,
Gives them the promised land
Praise to the Father, Son and Spirit blest
Who guide us through this life
to our eternal home.**

HEBREWS 12: 1 - 4

**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also
lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with
perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and
perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that
you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have
not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.**

PSALM 138

I thank You, Yahweh, with all my heart;
I sing praise to You before the angels.
I worship You and praise Your holy name
because of Your constant love and faithfulness.
Even though You are exalted,
You care for the lowly.
The proud cannot hide from You.
Even when I am surrounded by troubles,
You keep me safe;
You oppose my angry enemies
and save me by Your power.
You will do everything You have promised me;
Yahweh, Your faithful love endures forever.
Complete the work You have begun.

REFLECTION

"There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."
John 15:13

According to the Dictionary, self-sacrifice means the sacrifice of oneself or one's own interests for the benefit of others; the opposite being self-centeredness, a "What's in it for me?" mentality.

Archbishop Romero of El Salvador was gunned down by a sharpshooter while celebrating Mass. As Archbishop he had become increasingly vocal against the oppression of his people even publicly confronting the military. In one speech he promised the faithful that if he were to die at the hands of their enemies that life, not death, would have the last word: "I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadoran people." Reflecting on Scripture during his last Mass he said, "One must not love oneself so much, as to avoid getting involved in the risks of life that history demands of us." FR. MAX OLIVA, S.J.

Does this sound like the man we are celebrating today???

INTERCESSIONS

For all who witness God's love and concern for the poor among us...

That we will be strengthened to act justly, walk humbly and love them tenderly.

For all church and government leaders

That they will ceaselessly work for the dignity of the human person as the divine image of God.

For the De La Salle Christian Brothers

That we, along with our colleagues and partners in ministry, may be faithful to the dream of St. John Baptist de La Salle in providing a Christian education to the working class and the poor.

For all the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the forgotten, the voiceless,
That we may help them through education to reclaim their God-given
rights.

For all those who witness Christ and His Gospel message in foreign lands
That they will be faithful and true messengers of the Lord Jesus.

For all of our benefactors, friends, families, students, alumni and those we have
promised to remember in prayer
That You, O Lord, will hold them in the palm of Your hand and allow no
harm to come to them.

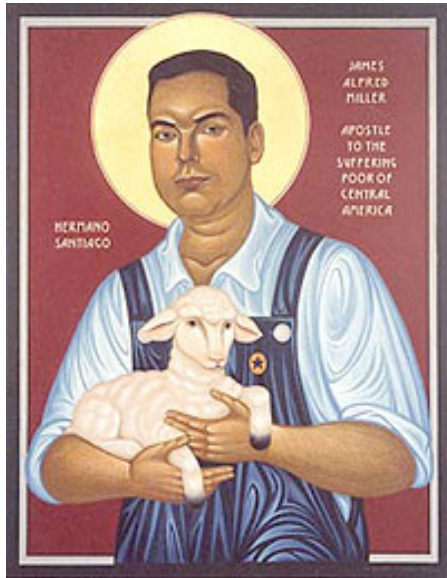
For an increase of vocations to priesthood, diaconate, brotherhood, sisterhood
and dedicated lay ministry,
That the Church may be alive with a people willing to serve “the people of
God” with a variety of gifts.

O merciful and good God, hear our prayers this day as we honor our Brother
James. Answer our prayers as only You know best and let us as always
graciously accept Your holy will in our regard. Amen.

TE DEUM

O God, we praise You, and acknowledge You to be the Lord.
Everlasting Father, all the earth worships You.
All the Angels, the heavens and all angelic powers,
All the Cherubim and Seraphim, continuously cry to You:
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Your glory.
The glorious choir of the Apostles,
The wonderful company of Prophets,
The white-robed army of Martyrs, praise You.
The Holy Church throughout the world acknowledges You:
The Father of infinite Majesty;
Thy adorable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
O Christ, You are the King of glory!
You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
When You took it upon Yourself to deliver man,
You did not disdain the Virgin's womb.
Having overcome the sting of death,
You opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
We believe that You will come to be our Judge.
We, therefore, beg You to help Your servants whom You have redeemed with
Your Precious Blood. Let them be numbered with Your Saints in everlasting glory.
Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance!
Govern them, and raise them up forever.
Every day we thank You.
And we praise Your Name forever, yes, forever and ever.
O Lord, deign to keep us from sin this day.
Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.
O Lord, in You I have put my trust; let me never be put to sh



Brother James Miller
and all you holy men and women
who have gone before us,
help us to grow in our love of the Lord
and our love for one another.



Saint John Baptist de La Salle, our Father and Founder,
instill in us a spirit of faith and zeal.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

With St. Paul, "I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying for always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."