

Who Was The St. Manuel González?

By Victoria Schneider (Translator of Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle)

“That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord’” (Jn 21:7). In the Gospel we have heard that seeing the miracle worked, a disciple recognizes Jesus. The others will recognize him later. In presenting to us Jesus who “came and took the bread and gave it to them” (Jn 21:13), the Gospel points out how and when we can meet the risen Christ: in the Eucharist, where Jesus is truly present under the appearances of bread and wine. It would be sad if, after so long, the Savior’s loving presence were still to be unknown by humanity.

This was the great passion of the new blessed, Bl. Manuel González García, Bishop of Malaga and later of Palencia. His experience before a deserted tabernacle in Palomares del Río was to mark his whole life, and from that moment he dedicated himself to spreading devotion to the Eucharist, proclaiming the words he subsequently chose as his epitaph: “Here is Jesus! He is here! Do not abandon him!” Bl. Manuel González, founder of the Misioneras Eucarísticas de Nazaret, is a model of Eucharistic faith whose example continues to speak to the Church today.”

St. John Paul II

Homily for the beatification of Bishop Manuel Gonzalez Garcia

April 29th, 2001



On October 16, 2016, the Church of God raised another saint to her altars. The canonization of Saint Manuel González in our day is a timely gift bestowed upon us by the solicitous hand of Divine Providence. We might well describe him as one of those saints of the Blessed Sacrament. All saints are Eucharistic saints, but some are more characterized by their devotion to the Eucharist than others. The life and mission of Saint Manuel was entirely and explicitly Eucharistic.

The Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle was proud to be an ambassador of the Eucharistic King in the world. It was his greatest joy to be able to speak on behalf of the love of his silent Sovereign and thereby draw souls to his Sacred Heart. Perhaps there is no other priestly saint since the great Curé of Ars who has spoken so eloquently of the living presence of Christ in the tabernacle. As a priest, I have always tried to draw souls to the Blessed Sacrament, but after having discovered his writings, I feel as though I have scarcely even begun to foster the true awe demanded by such a mystery. If Saint Manuel González was so outraged by the indifferent attitude towards the Eucharist that he observed in the Church a hundred years ago, what would

he say today? His words are a clarion call to priests—indeed, to all Christians—to arise from spiritual slumber and to draw near to the light of the Eucharistic Sun of Love. Perhaps his canonization is heaven's urgent invitation addressed to the whole Church to prostrate itself at the foot of the tabernacle. There alone is found the mystical source from which flow torrents of purifying grace and mercy. There alone do we encounter the heavenly well-spring from which the Church can be constantly renewed. The world has become a spiritual desert for want of having recourse to the tabernacle.

Bishop Manuel's Eucharistic piety was present from his youth, but it became the heartbeat of his spiritual life and the animating principle of his ministry after a particular experience at the outset of his priestly mission. Through a mystical moment of grace, he came to understand the truth of a phrase made famous by Saint Francis of Assisi: "Love is not loved!" In an instant, he realized the astonishing nature of Christ's love in the Blessed Sacrament, as well as the equally astonishing lack of love with which we surround this mystery. Though he had already believed in the Eucharistic Presence long before this experience, the full force of this truth in that moment seized his heart in a new way, thus becoming the unique driving-force for his life's mission. He had undergone a kind of spiritual shock at the way the gift of the Eucharist is so sorely spurned by human hearts. In the lives of the saints, there is often one key moment of grace which thereafter directs the entire course of their holy existence. For Saint Manuel, it was the unforgettable experience of the abandoned tabernacle.

Taken from: <https://scepterpublishers.org/blogs/scepter-blog-corner/who-was-the-st-manuel-gonzalez>

The Life of Blessed Manuel Gonzalez Garcia

He was born in Seville on the 25th of February 1877. He entered the Minor Seminary of Seville on September of 1889 where he wrote: "If I would be born a thousand times; a thousand times I would be a priest."

He was ordained by Blessed Cardinal Spínola, the founder of the newspaper "El Correo de Andalucía", where he worked when he was still a seminarian. On 29th of September 1901, he celebrated his first Mass at the Church of the Holy Trinity and entrusted himself to the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians.

Blessed Manuel was sent by the Archbishop of Seville to Palomares del Río, a beautiful and secluded village of Aljarafe, but upon his arrival no one came out to meet him. The church was greatly abandoned: filled with dust and dirt, cobwebs inside the tabernacle and torn altar cloths. Upon seeing this situation, he knelt before the altar and thought

about the many abandoned tabernacles in the world. This prompted him to start the "Unión Eucarística Reparadora".

At the age of 28, he was sent to Huelva where he saw many children in the streets. Later on he devoted his attention mainly in founding schools and teaching catechesis with the help of his parishioners.

On December 6, 1915, Pope Benedict XV appointed Blessed Manuel as auxiliary bishop of Málaga. He celebrated his appointment with a banquet to which he invited, not the authorities but the poorest children of the place. Three thousand children attended the banquet and accompanied him to the Episcopal Palace. He remained there until the night of the 11th of May 1931, the proclamation of the Republic, where a revolt expelled him and the Palace was burnt, destroying everything.

On August 5, 1935 he was appointed bishop of Palencia by Pope Pius XI. During a visit to Zaragoza in 1939 he fell seriously ill, and had to be transferred to Madrid where he passed away on the 4th of January 1940. Before he died he asked to be buried at the foot of the tabernacle. Fulfilling his wish, he was buried at the main altar of the Cathedral of Palencia.

His heroic virtues were recognized on the 6th of April 1998, and he was beatified by Blessed Pope John Paul II on April 29, 2001.

Biographical data are taken from the article " Seise, periodista, obispo y santo" by Francisco Ruiz de la Cuesta, published in the weekly Alfa y Omega on 6/29/2000.

Taken from: <http://beatomanuel.weebly.com/brief-biography.html>

Blessed Manuel González García
Atoner of the "Abandoned Tabernacles"
By Sr. Lucilia Veas, EP

Kneeling before that pile of debris, the faith of Blessed Manuel made him see, behind that battered little door, a Jesus so silent, so patient so overlooked, and so kind, who gazed at him suppliantly...

A few short days ago, the Church commemorated the most magnificent happening of all time—an episode that divided history into a *before* and *after*: the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Shepherds and Kings hastened to pay homage to God made Man, and every year we join them around the manger, adoring the Christ Child through prayer and song.

If the coming of Jesus at Christmas fills us with such joy, we have even greater reason to thrill with enthusiasm whenever we draw close to a tabernacle, where the same Jesus is really and truly present in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the Eucharistic Species.

Accordingly, over the centuries, God always raises up fervent souls to adore Him in the tabernacle, just as He once called the shepherds and the Magi to Bethlehem. Among these souls particularly devoted to the Eucharist is one whose life we reflect upon in these lines: Blessed Manuel González García, the “Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle.”



*Bishop Manuel during his tenure as
Archpriest of Huelva*
Called to the priesthood since childhood

He was born in Seville, on February 25, 1877, into a deeply Catholic family. His mother was especially pious, and had faithfully attended Mass and received Communion daily since her girlhood.

His childhood unfolded peacefully, close to his parents and siblings. While nothing was lacking to the family home, some of his boyhood desires would remain unfulfilled, such as that of having a little donkey of his own to ride and play with. Years later, he would thank God that some of these childish wishes

went unattended, since this taught him to govern his personal preferences, to have a truer vision of life, and to feel compassion for the needy.

He made his First Communion on May 11, 1886, and received the Sacrament of Confirmation in December of the same year. At this time, he saw one of his fondest childhood desires come true: he joined the *Seises*, the traditional boys' group that had the special privilege of performing a ceremonious dance before the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral of Seville.

Strengthened in faith through the Sacraments, young Manuel was increasingly convinced that he had a vocation to the priesthood. His parents did not conceal their joy at the prospect of seeing their son celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the altar, but his zealous mother pointed out the seriousness that should accompany such a choice: “My son, it would please me greatly to see you a priest, but if Our Lord does not call you, do not become one; I would rather you be a good Christian than a bad priest.” [1](#)

Once, when he was twelve years old, he disappeared from home. At nightfall, with still no trace of him, the family continued searching for him in vain, scouring his favourite churches and the whole neighbourhood. Just as real alarm was starting to take hold of his family members, the boy arrived home with apologies for his tardiness. Showing them some documents, he explained that he had just come from the minor seminary, where he had been accepted—his entrance exam having been approved. While he knew that his parents would not oppose his decision, he decided to take this first step on his own, and not let age overtake him before answering the calling that burned brightly in his soul...

“That I not lose my vocation”

With a lively imagination, broad intelligence and a warm and generous heart—and by dint of constancy and a firm will—he successfully came through the difficulties of the first phase in the seminary. These included bouts of scruples and illness, as well as attacks against the priesthood from the most unexpected quarters...

One morning, in the middle of class, a professor jokingly declared that he was against ecclesiastical celibacy. Hearing this, Manuel sprang to his feet, and shot back: “It is shameful for a professor to dare speak with so little respect of this delicate matter. We, who are preparing for the priesthood, cannot let you speak to us in this way. I protest with my whole soul!” [2](#)

The teacher was disgruntled at being reprimanded by a student and the class ended in a climate of tension. As he left the room, his fellow students warmly applauded his bold act of courage. Afterwards, the professor took back his opinions before the class and asked pardon for his fault.

Another episode from his seminary days reveals his zeal for the priestly vocation. As the time for being called for military service arrived, he entrusted his case to

the hands of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Immaculate, asking them to deliver him from this vocational peril. Nevertheless, in due time he was summoned to join the ranks... Holding fast to confidence, he was not disheartened. There was still the possibility of paying an indult of 1,500 *pesetas* to obtain dispensation.

He asked the seminary rector leave to raise the considerable sum from among his acquaintances. He wrote a circular letter outlining the merits of those who help needy seminarians. He then described his difficulty and requested their aid in saving his vocation, by freeing him from the danger of life in the barracks, which also represented a significant setback to his studies. Funds poured in so abundantly that they covered his own needs and even enabled him to help another seminarian in a similar situation.

“That I not lose my vocation,” ³ was his motto. The future priest—and later Bishop—clearly understood that even against unfavourable winds, a person only fails to fulfil their God-given calling through of a lack of surrender into His hands or through negligence.

Sad and suppliant gaze of Jesus

After diaconal ordination, on June 11, 1901, the young seminarian was sent on a succession of village missions. His heart pulsed with missionary dreams but he soon awoke to a doleful reality. “To be honest, my first missions were a letdown. I often returned to the seminary with a disillusionment equal to the happiness with which I had set out by train, car or horseback to the place where I would exercise my ministry. I was eager to meet simple, wholesome and Christian folk, but instead found small-scale versions of the big cities with all of their moral corruption... [...] Actually, not everything was disappointing and disenchanting, for I did find some deeply Christian customs that had been preserved unharmed, and precious examples of simple faith, of healthy hearts, of patriarchal customs, the people I had dreamed of... But the communities were not made up of such people, nor were there people like this in every community.” ⁴

Although he did not encounter a thirst for heavenly things in the villages—and perhaps precisely for this reason!—he longed to be for souls like Christ in the Sacred Host: to lovingly give himself to the point of oblation for his entire life. His heart set on this resolution, he was ordained a priest on September 21, 1901, at 24 years of age.

The first three years of his priestly life were spent preaching in the diocesan churches of Seville. He was as tireless in curing souls as he was zealous for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. During one of his missions in Palomares del Río—a ghost city in terms of religious and church observance—he received the calling to be the atoner of the “Abandoned Tabernacles.”

When the local sacristan told him of the dearth of piety among the habitants, he describes what he did in his own words: “I went directly to the tabernacle of the restored church, in search of wings for my languishing enthusiasm, and... what a sorry tabernacle! What efforts my faith and my zeal had to make to refrain from mounting my donkey still tied to the church door, and turning back! But I did not flee. [...] There, I knelt before that pile of debris and grime, and my faith saw, behind that battered little door, a Jesus so silent, so patient, so overlooked, so kind, looking at me... It seemed to me that His eyes, having searched that desert of souls, alighted on me sadly and suppliantly, speaking volumes and asking even more...” 5

From then on, his life was one of an adorer and atoner of Our Lord abandoned in tabernacles, and he sought to transmit his spirit of reparation to all who put themselves under his direction, especially priests, for he knew very well that the faith and devotion of the Catholic population hinges on their example.

Founder of the works of reparation

The grace of Palomares del Río struck Fr. Manuel deeply. Whenever he recounted the episode he seemed to relive it. It was this grace that marked out the path of his priestly ministry and of many of his pastoral initiatives.

As the chaplain of a home for the aged in Seville, he promoted adoration of the Blessed Sacrament among the elderly, so that they, in their solitude, would keep the Great Forsaken One company in the tabernacle. And never did he miss his own vigil! Thus was born a true “Fraternity of the Abandoned Ones,” the first atoners of the “Abandoned Tabernacle.”

At 28 years of age, he was sent by the Archbishop of Seville to be the Archpriest of Huelva, a city which languished in deplorable moral and spiritual decadence. “What a dense wilderness and what a black cloud awaited me in Huelva!” 6 He found himself subject to grievous trials, when the Bishop of León invited him to be his secretary. He left the decision to his Archbishop, who duly issued him the

order to stay where he was. “I know very well that you were not ordained a priest to build yourself a career, nor to win cities nor fortresses, but to save souls,” 7 the prelate had declared.

For Fr. Manual, the state in which he found the tabernacle served as a gauge of the moral and spiritual life of the local populace. He called empty parish churches or churches with abandoned tabernacles “Calvaries,” and to revert the situation, He inaugurated the work of the Three Marys, composed of a group of pious women who were disposed to collaborate in the apostolic initiative, and to whom he extended this moving appeal: “Adoring Marys, in face of the modern-day Pharisees and the ingratitude of a once-Christian people, in face of the cowardice and sloth of the disciples, stand at your post, *‘iuxta crucem cum Maria Mater eius* — beside the Cross, with Mary, Mother of Jesus.” 8

Later, he founded the work of the Disciples of St. John. Both initiatives were primarily aimed at encouraging the faithful—men and women—to practise adoration and reparation before the “tabernacle-Calvaries,” following the example of Mary Most Holy, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas and St. John the Evangelist at the foot of the Cross.

He was heartened to see these undertakings gain rapid ground. A number of other works were formed around them: Diocesan Eucharistic Missionaries, Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth, for nuns, and Auxiliary Nazarene Missionaries, for the consecrated laity, as well as a Children’s Eucharistic Reparation and a Eucharistic Youth Atonement.

Of his tireless work in reparation of the “Abandoned Tabernacles,” he said: “It is not that there are no other evils that offend God and beset our neighbour, nor is it that we are not concerned about these, too. But we leave it to other works and institutions that have come about or are specialized for the purpose, to rectify these other wrongs, for they are nothing but effects or symptoms of the grave and transcendental evil of abandonment.” 9

To be a host of love for Jesus

In December of 1915 he was named titular Bishop of Olimpo and auxiliary of Málaga, and in the following January he received Episcopal ordination. Upon becoming the titular bishop of this diocese, in 1920, he founded his pastoral action on three pillars: the formation of priests, the religious education of

children and the cultivation of authentic piety among the faithful. He dedicated special attention to each of these areas, but his calling to be the atoner of the “Abandoned Tabernacles” prompted him to give priority to the preparation of future priests and to found a seminary in Málaga. Unflagging in this undertaking, Bishop Manuel fought hard to give them a deep understanding of the importance of their mission.

Concerned with the wave of secularization that was influencing even priests, he exhorted them. “If the love of my Jesus is the love of a Host, I should be for Jesus, a host of love. If Jesus is my Host, every day and every hour, should I not aspire, and prepare myself to be His daily and hourly host?” **10**


Additionally, he sought to convince them that, upon ordination, a priest ceases to be a “common man.” The figure of a priest is entirely marked by his ministry, which is not merely a task to be carried out for a few hours a day. He cautioned, “Priests, my brothers, be aware that each time that you dress as *man*, speak as *man*, aspire and strive as man, look upon your brothers and your superiors as *man*, act in society as man and not as *priest*, the secularizing revolution wins a victory and the Christian spirit suffers a defeat. Do not forget that *being and living as a priest* is your whole honour, your strength, and the fruitfulness of the mission that God and the Church have confided to you.” **11**

A life consecrated to the Eucharistic Jesus

In May of 1931, anti-clericism took over the streets of Spain. Churches and convents were burned and profaned with barbaric and inhuman ferocity. The city of Málaga was one of the most affected by religious hatred. Historic statues of Our Lord and Our Lady were burned in the public square, along with paintings, documents and valuable liturgical pieces.

After just over a decade at the head of the Diocese of Málaga, Bishop Manuel saw his Episcopal palace consumed by flames, helpless to salvage it. To save his own life he had to take refuge in neighbouring Gibraltar, under British sovereignty, and there he was remained in exile for some months. He later established himself in Ronda, but soon went on to Madrid, where he kept informed on the revolutionary happenings in his diocese. In 1935, he was named Bishop of Palencia, the city in which he spent the final phase of his life.

In November of 1939, his already weakened health suffered a blow with a kidney disorder, and on December 31, he was transferred to the Rosary Sanatorium, in Madrid, where in the early morning hours of January 4, 1940, at 64 years of age, he surrendered his soul to God.

His mortal remains were deposited at the feet of the Blessed Sacrament, in the Cathedral of Palencia. Upon the white marble slab was engraved the following epitaph, which he himself had written: “I ask to be buried before a tabernacle, so that my bones, after my death, like my tongue and my pen during my life, may constantly say to those who pass by: “Jesus is here! He is here! Do not leave Him abandoned!” [12](#) 

Notes

[1](#) CAMPOS GILES, José. El Obispo del Sagrario Abandonado. 6.ed. Madrid: El Granito de Arena, 2000, p.7.

[2](#) Idem, p.21.

[3](#) Idem, p.29.

[4](#) Idem, p.32-33.

[5](#) Idem, p.40-41.

[6](#) Idem, p.55.

[7](#) Idem, p.62

[8](#) Idem, p.151.

[9](#) GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, Manuel. El abandono de los sagrarios acompañados, apud AMIGO, Carlos; OSORO, Carlos; PALMERO, Rafael. Beato Manuel González. El Obispo de la Eucaristía, visto por tres Obispos. Madrid: Edibesa, 2001, p.29.

[10](#) GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, Manuel, apud AMIGO; OSORO; PALMERO, op. cit., p.65

[11](#) GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, Manuel. Un sueño pastoral, n.1944. In: Obras Completas. Escritos de espiritualidad sacerdotal. Burgos: Monte Carmelo; El Granito de Arena, 2005, v.II, p.289.

[12](#) CAMPOS GILES, op. cit., p. 534.

Taken From: <https://catholicmagazine.news/blessed-manuel-gonzalez-garcia-atoner-of-the-abandoned-tabernacles/>