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# **Decree of Heroic Virtues of Isidoro Zorzano**

On December 21, 2016, Pope Francis instructed that this decree on the heroic virtues of Isidoro Zorzano be published and transcribed in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

11/10/2017

Decree on Virtues

THE CONGREGATION FOR THE  
CAUSES OF SAINTS

MADRID

Beatification and Canonization of the  
Servant of God

ISIDORO ZORZANO LEDESMA (1902 –  
1943)

A Lay Faithful of the Personal  
Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus  
Dei

DECREE ON HIS VIRTUES

*“Well done, good and faithful servant;  
you have been faithful over a little, I  
will set you over much; enter into the  
joy of your master” (Mt 25:21).*

These words of Jesus Christ can be applied to Isidoro Zorzano, who was a good and faithful servant precisely in little things. He loved God and neighbor in the circumstances of ordinary life.

He was the third of five children of Spanish immigrants. He was born in

Buenos Aires, Argentina, on September 13, 1902, and was baptized on April 5, 1905. After years of hard work, his parents had attained a comfortable financial position and wanted their children to be educated in Spain. They moved there in May 1905 and settled in Logroño, with the intention of returning to Argentina. Isidoro studied in the high school run by the Marist Brothers, who prepared him for First Holy Communion, which he received just before reaching the age of nine. A few months later, in 1912, his father died, and his mother decided not to return to Argentina.

In October 1915 the Servant of God met a new classmate, St. Josemaría Escrivá. Endowed with good intelligence and great tenacity, Isidoro completed his middle and high school studies without difficulty, and in 1919 he began studying industrial engineering in a special

school in Madrid. After the death of Fernando, his oldest brother, the Servant of God returned to Logroño, to be close to his mother. He was ready to abandon his studies if need be, but he was able to continue with them thanks to the whole family moving to Madrid.

In 1924, the Zorzano family found themselves in a difficult financial situation. Once again Isidoro thought about leaving the university in order to take a job to support his family. But encouraged by his mother, he continued his studies until he received his engineering degree in 1927. He then began his working career in the shipyards at Matagorda, Cádiz, and shortly thereafter moved to Malaga, to work in the Andalusian Railroad Company, while teaching in a technical school.

August 24, 1930 marked a milestone in the life of Isidoro. On a trip to

Madrid he met his old classmate and friend, St. Josemaría Escrivá, who had become a priest five years earlier. He told St. Josemaría he wanted to strengthen his Christian life. St. Josemaría spoke to him about Opus Dei, founded less than two years earlier, and explained that it was a path of holiness and apostolate in one's own state and condition of life, in professional work and the fulfillment of ordinary occupations. The Servant of God, moved by divine grace, immediately asked to be admitted to Opus Dei. He returned to Malaga where he continued with his normal activities, his work on the railroad, his teaching in the technical school and his intense participation in various diocesan activities. He helped out in the school of the Adoration Sisters and in the House of the Child Jesus, and also took part in Catholic Action.

Because of his principled Christian life, in 1932 the Servant of God was the target of a defamation campaign by an openly anti-Christian newspaper. Later, in 1936, a union meeting decided to put him to death simply because he was Catholic. Therefore Isidoro had to flee to Madrid. Shortly afterwards the civil war broke out, and the religious persecution, which had begun in 1931, reached its most violent stage.

He remained in Madrid during the entire time of the war. With precarious documentation and placing his life in danger, he dedicated himself to helping the members of Opus Dei and many other people who were in jail or in hiding. He visited them frequently and brought them food and other supplies, and he helped them spiritually.

When the war ended, in July 1939, Isidoro was able to take up his work in the railroad again and lived in a student residence opened by St. Josemaría, in which he carried out the role of financial administrator.

Isidoro Zorzano was a well-balanced person, with a reflective and reserved character, and a tireless worker. Those who knew him remember his quiet friendliness and warmth, and his openness to the needs of others.

Regarding the virtues of the Servant of God, a key moment was his meeting with St. Josemaría Escrivá, on 24 August 1930, and his request to be admitted to Opus Dei that same day. This led to a continuous growth in his spiritual life, shown in an ever closer union with our Lord and a strengthening love for the Church. Isidoro strove untiringly for holiness in the world, as a lay faithful, in the

loving fulfillment of his daily duties, in his professional work, and in all the circumstances of ordinary life.

He showed exemplary diligence in his work, loyalty and spirit of service towards his colleagues, love for justice in promoting initiatives in favor of the most needy, and faith and charity through catechesis and education for the most neglected sectors of society.

Isidoro Zozano sought in all of his actions the glory of God and the spiritual good of those around him. He carried out an assiduous apostolic work with his friends and with young people. Moved by a deep awareness of his divine filiation, he strove diligently to faithfully fulfill practices of piety recommended by the Church. His interior life was centered and rooted in the Holy Mass; he had a deep devotion to the Eucharist and received the



sacrament of penance frequently. He also had a strong devotion to our Lady. He gave special importance to mental and vocal prayer, and practiced the spirit of penance and mortification above all in the fulfillment of daily duties and in accepting joyfully difficulties and setbacks.

In 1941 the Servant of God began to show signs of weakness. After several months the doctors diagnosed malignant lymphoma, which led to his death on July 15, 1943, at the age of 40.

The informative process on the reputation for holiness, virtues and miracles took place in Madrid from 1948 to 1961. When new legislation on the Causes of Saints was promulgated in 1993-1994, an additional diocesan process was carried out in the archdiocese of Madrid. The Congregation for the

Causes of Saints decreed the validity of this process on October 15, 1994. The special meeting of theological consultants on November 17, 2015 gave a positive response to the question of the heroic exercise of the virtues by the Servant of God. The ordinary session of the cardinals and bishops confirmed this judgment on December 13, 2016, presided over by myself, Cardinal Angelo Amato.

The undersigned, Cardinal Prefect, presented to the Supreme Pontiff Francis a detailed report of all the phases described above. The Holy Father, receiving and ratifying the view of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on today's date has solemnly declared: *It has been shown that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, both with God and neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, with their related virtues, were practiced in a*

*heroic degree by the Servant of God Isidoro Zorzano Ledesma, a lay faithful of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, in the present case and for the purposes now being considered.*

The Holy Father has instructed that this decree be published and transcribed in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given in Rome, on the 21st day of the month of December, in the year of our Lord 2016.

Angelo Card. Amato, S.D.B.

Prefect

L. and S.

Marcello Bartolucci

Titular Archbishop of Bevagua

Secretary

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