

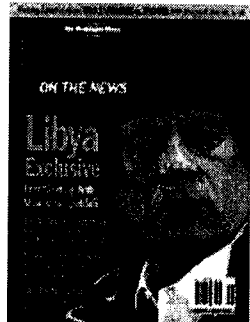
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Commentary: Spain Should Consider Martyr's Message

Posted March 15, 2004
By J. Michael Waller

In the midst of warring ideologies it may be well for the people of Spain to consider the faithfulness of their forebears who resisted the Islamic occupation of their land just over 1,100 years ago. In this commentary, J. Michael Waller notes that the Madrid bombing coincided with a martyr's feast day.

As investigators unravel clues about the March 11 terrorist bombing of the Madrid subway that killed 200 and led to election of a socialist government that favors appeasement of terrorists by pulling out of Iraq, terrorism experts are asking if the date had any significance to the attackers. Some note that the date is six months after 9/11. Others observe that the attack took place exactly 911 days after the al-Qaeda attacks on New York City and the Pentagon in 2001. **Insight** notes a third coincidence: On the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church, March 11 is the feast day marking the beheading of a Spanish bishop at the hands of Muslim invaders.

St. Eulogius was a ninth-century priest in Cordoba, Spain, a region that had been occupied by the Muslim Moors for more than 100 years. He was famous for encouraging Christians to stay true to their faith, even under torture and death, and for chronicling the martyrdom of those who suffered and died.

"In 850 the African Muslims then occupying Cordoba began to persecute Christians," according to the *Dictionary of Saints* by Donald Attwater and Catherine Rachel John. In prison, Eulogius "wrote an eloquent letter of encouragement" to two Christian women who were awaiting execution. They were beheaded; he was freed, but he continued to inspire Christians suffering from persecution. "During the next seven years he kept

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a record of the sufferings and death of those who were slain, the Memorandum of the Saints, and wrote a vindication of them as true martyrs."

According to John J. Delaney's *Pocket Dictionary of Saints*, "During the continued persecution that followed, he was tireless in his encouragement of his fellow Christians and was elected archbishop of Toledo but never occupied the see."

Eulogius got into more trouble with the occupiers when he helped a young woman named Leocritia who was from a prominent Moorish family, but had been secretly raised Christian, to escape. He was apprehended for this and sentenced to death on March 11, 859. "As they were leading him to execution, one of the guards gave him a blow on the face for having spoken against Mahomed [Mohammed]; he turned the other cheek and received a second," wrote Alban Butler in his 1878 book, *Lives of the Saints*.

Unlike today's socialist-led Spanish electorate, Eulogius refused to compromise with the Islamic terror and remained faithful even unto death. "He refused to apostatize," according to Attwater and John, "and accordingly the historian of martyrs was himself martyred, being beheaded four days before Leocritia whom he had tried to save."

*J. Michael Waller is a senior writer for **Insight**.*

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