

# Saint José Sánchez del Río

1913 – 1928

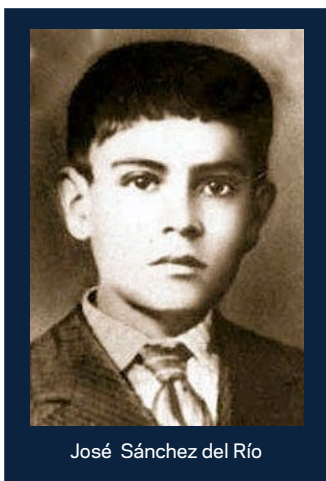
## INTRODUCTION

*For older students:*

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe (2 Timothy 4:12). Saint José Luis Sánchez del Río is the newest Mexican saint, recently canonized on October 16th. Although José was young and died as a martyr at age 14, he was a powerful example of youth, bravery, and faith.

José was born in 1913 in Sahuayo, Michoacán, México. He was the third of four children. José loved his faith and grew up with a strong devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

When José was twelve years old, the Cristero Wars began in Mexico. During this period in history the Mexican government attempted to extinguish the influence of the Catholic Church throughout the country. It persecuted the Catholic Church by seizing property, closing religious schools and convents, and executing Catholic priests. In defense of the Church, the peasants of many of the central and western states in Mexico rebelled against the government. Even though he was too young to join the rebellion, José desperately wanted to be a Cristero and stand up for his faith. He begged his mother saying, "Mama, do not let me lose the opportunity to gain Heaven so easily and so soon."



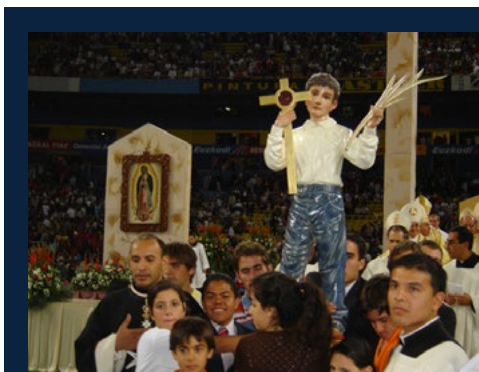
José Sánchez del Río



He was eventually allowed to join the effort as a flag bearer.

During a battle José was captured and was asked to deny his faith and the Cristero cause. José refused and was tortured terribly. Refusing to renounce his faith angered the government soldiers so much that they cut off the bottom of his feet. As José was forced to walk through town, he recited the rosary, prayed for his enemies, sang songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and proclaimed, "I will never give in. Vivo Cristo Rey y Santa Maria de Guadalupe!"

We celebrate the feast day of Saint José on February 10th and pray for his intercession on behalf of all persecuted Christians, children, and

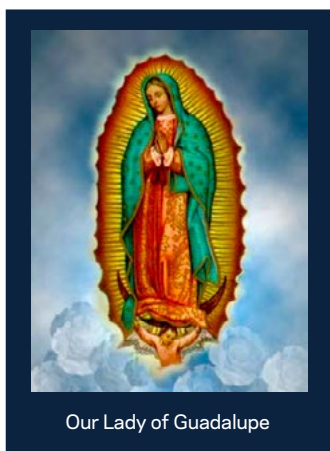


Statue of José Sánchez del Río with relic

the people of Sahuayo, Michoacán, México.

*For younger students:*

Saint José Luis Sánchez del Rio is a strong and brave saint. Saint José was a young boy who stood up for people to be able to love God and the Church freely in Mexico. He wanted to be a soldier, but was too young to fight; instead, he was allowed to carry the flag. Even when times were scary for Saint José, he always said the rosary, prayed for the enemy, sang songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and was known to proclaim, "Long Live Christ the King!" Saint José was full of courage even when he was in pain, and he allowed the love of Jesus to be the most important thing in his life.



## PRAYER

Dear Lord,  
Help me to be courageous and steadfast in my devotion to you. Help me to identify causes and injustices in my day that are worth defending and standing up for. Give me perseverance and a desire to help others at any cost. Help me to revere Christ as the king of my life.  
Saint José Sánchez del Rio, pray for us.  
Amen.

Or...

Dear Lord,

Help me to be brave and strong. Help me to pray for those who hurt me and those who hurt others. You are the king of my life. Help me to listen to you and to tell others about you.  
Saint José Sánchez del Rio, pray for us.  
Amen..

## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

### Religion

- Celebrate Saint José's feast day on February 10th by including an image of him in a prayer corner.
- Identify the tenants of a just war.
- Pray for those who hurt us and discuss conflict resolution and/or the power of reconciliation.

### Writing

- Journal about causes that students feel are important to defend.
- Research organizations in the community that stand up for the weak, vulnerable, or oppressed.
- Read some of the letters Saint José wrote.
- Write a letter to Saint José.

### Social Studies

- Create a unit about the Cristero War, Cristero Rebellion, or La Cristiada.
- Conduct a debate about the separation of church and state.
- Compare and contrast Mexico and U.S. government with respect to traditions of religious freedom.
- Read about the role of flag bearers.

### Art

- Watch the film: For Greater Glory
- Draw pictures of everyday heroes

that fight to protect people.

- Construct flags that symbolize important causes and issues.

### Language

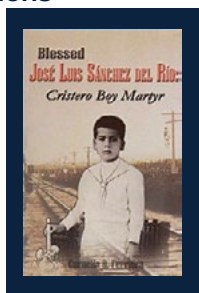
- Practice saying "Viva Cristo Rey!" or "Long live Christ the King!"
- Learn to recite the Hail Mary in Spanish.

### Home and Family Connections

- Write a family mission statement.
- Volunteer at a faith-based organization or event.
- Discover more about Saint José's hometown and plan a family pilgrimage.

### Book Recommendations

- Blessed José Luis Sánchez del Río: Cristero Boy Martyr (Ferreira, 2006).



### Service Projects

- Start a shoe drive to collect pairs of shoes.
- Write letters to soldiers.

### Relevant Songs

- "The King of Love my Shepherd Is"
- "Praise my Soul the King of Heaven"

### SOURCES

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