



**CHRISTOPHER MAGALLANES JARA , 21 PRIESTS AND
3 LAY CATHOLICS WHO WERE EXECUTED ON MAY 21, 1927**

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St. Christopher Magallanes, and Companions

Feast Day: May 21



Martyrs for the Faith

Saint Christopher Magallanes

and Companions

*Christopher Magallanes Jara was born in 1869 in the Archdiocese of Guadalajara. His parents, Rafael Magallanes and Clara Jara, were poor farmers and devout Catholics. Growing up on a farm, young Christopher worked as a shepherd but felt truly called to look after human sheep. At the age of 19 he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest when he was 30.

He taught school in Guadalajara for a time until returning to his home village of Totatiche, to minister as a parish priest for nearly two decades. There he also opened a carpentry business to provide jobs for local men and helped to plan and construct a dam to aid the people of the area. But Father Magallanes was most interested in bringing the Catholic faith to those who had not heard the Good News of Jesus, in this case the Huichol people in the region.

During this time in Mexico's history, the government feared the power of the Catholic Church, and it tried to eliminate the practice of the faith. Under the very anti-Catholic government in Mexico at that time, one determined to weaken the Catholic faith of its people, churches, schools and seminaries were closed and foreign clergy were expelled. The constitution even banned the training of priests, and the seminary where young Christopher had studied was closed and turned into a museum. So in 1915 Father Magallanes established his own small seminary in Totatiche, Jalisco and soon had more than a dozen students. Christopher's clandestine seminary along with the other priests were forced to minister secretly to Catholics during the presidency of Plutarco Calles (1924-1928)..

The government did not look kindly on this kind of behavior and accused the priest of trying to incite a rebellion, even though he preached against violence of any kind. He was on his way to celebrate Mass when he was arrested. Without a trial, he was convicted. He gave away his few possessions to his jailers, and on May 21, 1927, he and 21 other priests and three lay Catholics were executed. His last words to his executioners were, "I die innocent, and ask God that my blood may serve to unite my Mexican brethren."

David, Manuel and Salvador the three laymen who died with their parish priest, Luis Batis, were all of part of the Cristero movement, pledging their allegiance to Christ and to the church that he established to spread the Good News in society—even if Mexico's leaders had made it a crime to receive baptism or celebrate the Mass.

These martyrs did not die as a single group but in eight Mexican states, with Jalisco and Zacatecas having the largest number.

They were beatified in 1992 and canonized eight years later by Pope John Paul II on May 21, 2000.. *(excerpted from: saintsresource.com; catholicblogspot.com)