

26 APRIL
(27 APRIL FOR OCSO MONASTERIES)

Saint Raphael Arnáiz Barón – Cistercian Oblate

Rafael Arnáiz Barón was born in Burgos on 9 April 1911. An architecture student in Madrid, in 1934 he left his university studies to enter the Trappist monastery of San Isidro de Dueñas, where he died just four years later, on 26 April 1938, from a diabetic coma. In very short time, he embarked on an exceptional journey of faith, love, humility and prayer along the way of the Cross, which led him to an exemplary contemplative and mystical experience. His letters and diaries have been widely circulated. On 19 August 1989 in Santiago de Compostela, the holy Pope John Paul II held him up as a model for young people throughout the world and beatified him on 27 September 1992. He was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI on 11 October 2009.

Common of the Saints - for a Religious - Monk

COLLECT

God our Father,
you made Blessed Raphael an outstanding disciple
in the knowledge of the cross of Christ.

By his example and intercession
may we love you above all things,
and, with hearts filled with love,
hasten along the way of the cross
and so attain the paschal joy.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Office of Reading / Vigils

SECOND READING

From the writings of Saint Rafael Arnaiz

Simplicity of Heart

I see, brother, that your way is a simple life.

God requires no more than that we be simple from without and love from within. In reality the true ways of God are easy and simple, when you walk by them with the spirit of confidence, and with a free heart and trust in Him.

How happy is the Trappist who is a true Trappist, not only in the exterior, but also in the simplicity of the interior.

For those who are in the world we have been something complicated...However, I don't know how to explain, but I have come to understand the words of Jesus: *"If you don't become like little children..."*.

The ways of the Lord are simple; his yoke is sweet and his burden light.

Dying to the world is to be born to God, and in the austerities of a life of silence and solitude, there is sweet joy of a heart that reckons its happiness in simplicity, and he that follows Christ, follows Him only through the way of the Cross; loving the Cross, I believe that this is all secured.

God, always illumines the heart of he who loves and seeks Him with simplicity.

How tortuous are the ways to run through in order to arrive at simplicity. How much more inconvenient is the complication...and how do we esteem people who complicate it all. Many times, if we do not practice virtue, it's due to our way of living, which rejects what is simple.

Many times, we do not understand the grandeur that enshrines itself in an act of simplicity, because we seek the great in things, in the difficulty of the same things.

Perhaps I do not know how to explain myself, but I see now clearly, that what I saw before obscure and complicated is relatively simple and uncomplicated.

Virtue, God, the interior life...how difficult it would seem to me to live that! Now it's not that I have virtue, nor my knowledge of God and the life of the Spirit, these are completely clear, but I have seen what this come to, without complications, without twisting, without acute philosophy, without technical difficulties.

I have seen that to God that comes precisely, by the contrary. It comes to know Him by simplicity of heart. An act of love has no difficulty... The truly difficult thing is wanting to know God by scrutinizing His mysteries. Through the first we come to God, through the second no.

Virtue... ah! That is for saints, something most difficult to practice. Yes, in fact, but to have virtue one need not run hastily, nor dedicate oneself to profound studies, a simple act to "want", is enough, at times, just a simple act of the will is enough.

Why then do we not at times, have virtue? Because we are not simple; because we complicate our desires, because all what we want our little will makes it difficult, which is left to do what it pleases, the comfortable, the unnecessary, and many times of the passions.

If someone would tell me the detail of what I must do to be holy and pleasing to God, I believe that with the help of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I shall do it.

With Jesus at my side, nothing seems difficulty to me, and the way of sanctity each time I see it simpler. It seems much better to me that it consists in getting rid of things than acquiring them. Much better to cutting down to simplicity than complicating it with new things.

And to measure we detach ourselves from disordinate love of creatures and to ourselves, it seems to me, that we are getting nearer more and more to the only true love, to the only desire, to the only yearning of this life, to the only true holiness that is God.

(Obras Completas, Ed. Monte Carmelo, 8th ed. Burgos 2022, nn. 432, 657, 698, 867, 869, 881-883, 1156)

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RESPONSORY

cfr Sap 1, 1-2

R. Let honesty prompt your thinking about the Lord, * seek Him in simplicity of heart. Alleluia

V. Since He is to be found by those who do not put Him to the test, He shows Himself to those who do not distrust Him * seek Him in simplicity of heart. Alleluia