

Saint Louis Versiglia and Callistus Caravario

1873-1930 and 1903-1930

PARADISE

On February 25, 1930 two Salesian missionaries, Louis Versiglia and Don Callistus Caravario were martyred in China.

A wonderful event happened to the successor of Monsignor Versiglia in the spring of 1932 at the vicariate of Shiu Chow. Monsignor Ignazio Canazei, a positive and austere man, alien to all suggestions and hallucinations, told this story himself to one of his missionaries named Don Pietro Battezzati. He put these stories in writing and swore before the judges of the beatification process of two martyrs.

“Not very long ago – narrated Monsignor Canazei – after having tried countless times in vain to find important documents for the Mission in my office, I dragged myself to bed since it was so late. While in bed I thought of Monsignor Versiglia, almost in an effort to invoke his help in finding those documents of his episcopate. Shortly after midnight I woke up in a stupor, I saw light coming from the crack of my office door. Thinking that I had forgotten to turn off my oil lamp, I got up to turn it off. I opened the door and I saw the office completely illuminated and in the middle of the room was Monsignor Versiglia standing there jovially. I was

marveled but not afraid and I smiled at him. He also smiled and speaking to me happily and confidentially, as he used to do when he was alive, he showed me the double drawer of the big armoire archive that covered almost the entire wall of the office indicating the location of the documents that I had been searching for so long.

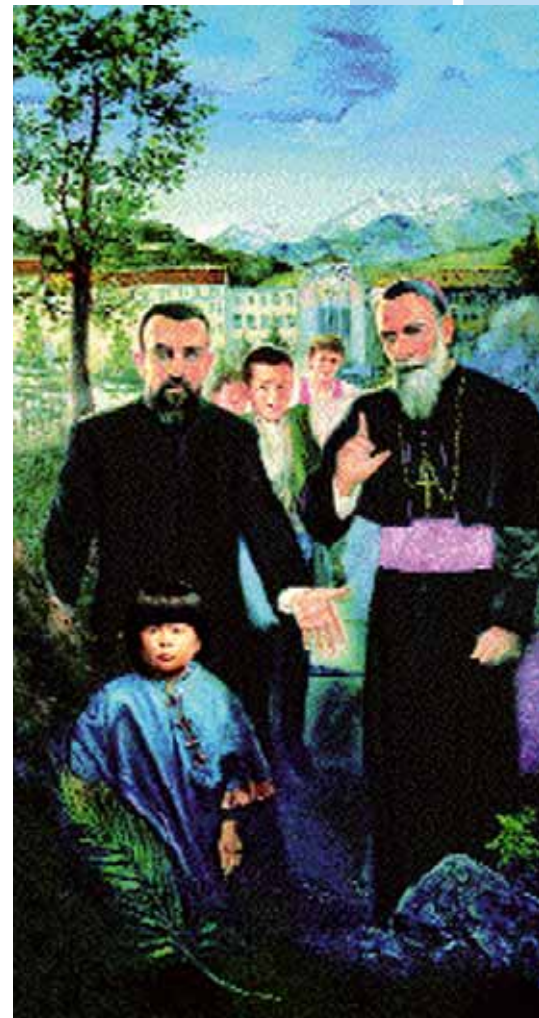
It was not a dream but a reality; and so I immediately found the documents in the place he indicated. I thanked him and then after having asked him a few things, he responded to my second question:

– Tell me, monsignor, when they killed you, did you go straight to Heaven?

He became more glowing and replied with a smile in Chinese:

– Chek Kat – which means: Instantaneously! Then he disappeared and everything became dark again.”

Salesian Bishop Louis Versiglia, was one of the 120 people martyred in China that was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 1, 2000. He was born in 1873 in Oliva Gessi, in the province of Pavia, and he knew Don Bosco personally. He was ordained a priest in 1895 and taught the novices at the Salesian House in Genzano for ten years. From the time he



was very young he had a desire in his heart to become a missionary. In 1906 he was chosen as the leader of the first Salesian missionary to leave for China. He saw his first apostolate in Macao and then in the region of Kwangtung in southern China where he founded the mission of Shiu Chow where he became the vicar apostolate and first bishop in 1920. While China got deeper into the civil war towards the end of 1930 he went on a trip with a young brother named Don Callistus Caravario (he was also in the group of 120 martyrs) to reach the Christians of a small mission in Lin-Chow. They were killed by a group of bandits on February 25, 1930

