
THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them," (Mk 10:14)

A Season of Saints!

János (John) Brenner was born in a city called Szombathely in the country of Hungary on Dec. 27, 1931. As a child, he was described as: "full of life, joy and mischief!" János attended Catholic schools run by the Cistercian order (a reformed order of Benedictines) for several years until the nationalization of all Hungarian schools by the communist government which sadly came into power in Hungary after World War II. When János was a teenager, he thought Jesus might be calling him to be a priest so he applied to the Cistercian order. He was accepted as a novice in 1950 and took the name Brother Anasztáz (Anastasius). However, just a few months later, the communist government began suppressing religious houses. To protect the men in formation, the novice master moved the young brothers from the abbey to private apartments where they hoped to continue their studies in secret. Despite the dangers and religious oppression going on around him, János persevered and was ordained a priest in 1955. He was especially talented at working with youth, which made him all the more a target of the communist government. Even when he was made aware of personal threats against his life and his bishop offered to move him to a different parish, Father János responded, "I am not afraid. I'm happy to stay." On the night of Dec. 14, 1957, Father was called to give last rites to a sick person in a neighboring town. He left his home, carrying anointing oils and Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist with him. However, it was a trap. The next day, Father was found martyred, still clutching the Most Blessed Sacrament in his hands. While the communists had hoped that Father's death would intimidate Hungarian Catholics, his heroic witness actually helped make them even *more* courageous and faithful to Jesus and His Church!

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Blessed János Brenner

Blessed János kept a journal and his writings show us that he had a deep trust in Jesus. He wrote: "Even if the road is rough, I look at Your pain-ridden face (Jesus) and follow You. I ask You only one thing: may I always fulfill most precisely what You give to me as my vocation." Throughout his ministry, Blessed János was known for his willingness to serve and to sacrifice. He took as his priestly motto from the Book of Romans 8:28: "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose." He also adopted a Cistercian motto: "Burn and give light!" His beatification Mass was in 2018 and had to be moved from Szombathely's Cathedral Square to a larger park area because of the vast numbers of people wanting to attend.