

True Riches

by [Walt Garlington](#) (April 2023)



La visión del Coloseo. El último mártir, José Benlliure y Gili, 1885

How many men have crossed the globe, with threats
To health and life, in search of earthly treasure—
The gold of El Dorado or a cave
Of Africk's diamonds or the spices
Of the East? How many met a savage end
In fever swamps and lonely mountains,
Or had their flesh and organs ripped apart

By the sharpened tips of spears and arrows?
And, worst of all, the prizes for which
They suffered so will not follow them
Beyond the grave, and will perish at time's end.

But the Christian martyrs! How many names
Are known to us—Praise God! —but how many more
Remain unknown, hidden in forgotten
Histories, buried in graves hastily made?
With them are treasures to satisfy the deepest
Longings, to meet the greatest human needs—
Bits of bone, blood-stained wood and stone;
Dirt from round their graves, marble from their tombs —
Healing of bodily infirmities,
Casting out oppressive demons,
Granting to the childless the boon of a fruitful womb,
And good guidance to those adrift in life.

How many blessings more have they multiplied
To men? Where, then, is our burning zeal
To find all the relics of these benefactors
Of the human race? To hazard our lives?
To be sundered for years from kin and kith?
To endure miseries and deprivation?
For our friendship with these heavenly patrons
Will help us far beyond our earthly days.

Best, then—yes? —if our heroes be those
Who give all to find the graves of the holy
Martyrs, those inexhaustible fountains
Of true riches for the soul and body,
Who make them known to the children of men—
Alone, downtrodden, sickened with despair.

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Walt Garlington was born and raised in that part of Dixieland called Louisiana. A chemical engineer by training, he has spent the last several years writing full-time. He has written essays and poems for *The Hayride*, *New English Review*, *The Tenth Amendment Center*, *The Abbeville Institute*, *Reckonin'*, *Katehon*, *Geopolitica*, and *USA Really*. He writes regularly at his own web site, [Confiteri: A Southern Perspective](#).

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