

## Renewing our Love of the Eucharist this Advent



### **“He Looked to Love”**

**Advent Reflection for Sunday, December 5**

**By Dianne Traflet, J.D., S.T.D.**

This week, I was delighted to read Pope Francis’s announcement that Blessed Titus Brandsma (1881-1942) will be canonized. I’ve had a great devotion to this Carmelite priest since 1985 when I attended the commemoration of Fr. Titus’ Beatification at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, New York, where Cardinal John O’Connor gave a particularly moving homily on his courageous priestly ministry. While the Cardinal spoke forcefully about the reality of evil, he related that on a pilgrimage to Dachau, he trembled as he put his hands onto a red brick oven and thought: “My God, how could human beings do this to one another?” I’ll never forget that homily. It stirred me to learn more about the Holocaust and those heroic people who tried to fight Nazism. Fr. Titus adamantly opposed the persecution of the Jewish people and demanded that Catholic journalists not print Nazi propaganda. Deemed dangerous by the Nazis, he was arrested and sent to Dachau, where he was savagely beaten repeatedly. He once was knocked to the ground and kicked mercilessly. When a fellow prisoner carried him back to his bunk, Father responded: “Thank you, Brother, but don’t have pity on me. I hardly felt anything, for I was adoring Him whom I am carrying.” He was carrying a consecrated host, hidden in his eyeglass case. That night, in the darkness of his bunker, he prayed a *Te Deum*. Imagine the extreme pain and exhaustion that Blessed Titus was suffering, and yet he was able to praise God. Imagine his loving focus in the face of hatred; he looked to Love. May Father Titus intercede for us, especially this Advent, that we may praise our God whatever the circumstances or locations we find ourselves, and that we might turn with love to our Lord who wants to be carried by us, even into darkness.