

When Evening Draws Near

Father Guanella had an apparition in his early childhood of an old man in the act of begging that foretold his calling from God. As a young seminarian, during his summer vacation, his objective was to assist and care for the aged and the bedridden in their home. As a Founder, after overcoming many difficulties, he was finally able to open his Houses. The aged were always welcomed, and often taken from conditions of extreme suffering.

One day, the high ecclesiastical authorities, responding to complaints by slanderers, prohibited the acceptance of the aged into the Houses of Divine Providence. Father Guanella took this decision with extreme sadness. At this time an old man, who was accepted in the house, entered the room, and crying said: "Father Louis, with all my heart I thank you and your Priests for the good you have done for me. Some months ago, I was a lost soul and now I am happy. I beg you, do not abandon the poor aged." Father Louis cried and so did the others in the room. The decision was deferred. When the matter was presented to Pope Saint Pius X, he concluded: "Yes, keep your poor old men and do not abandon them." Father Guanella did not.

Enlightened by faith and inner loving affection he had very happy intuitions, filled with wise introspection and practical validity. Father Guanella wanted the aged to remain with their family, entrusted to the care of their children and grandchildren. Therefore, he admitted only those who were truly abandoned. They came to him physically and mentally worn out, burdened by sickness and age, sometime derelict and degraded. He always acknowledged their humane dignity and saw in their lives the image of Christ suffering. As a friend he studied their weaknesses, characteristic of old age, but only so that he and his coworkers could learn how to be more understanding and caring.

"Blessed are you when in the wards of hospitals, in the care of wounded beings, you offer your youth as a fragrance of incense to God, happy to comfort the suffering with complete dedication of your whole being". (Blessed Louis Guanella)