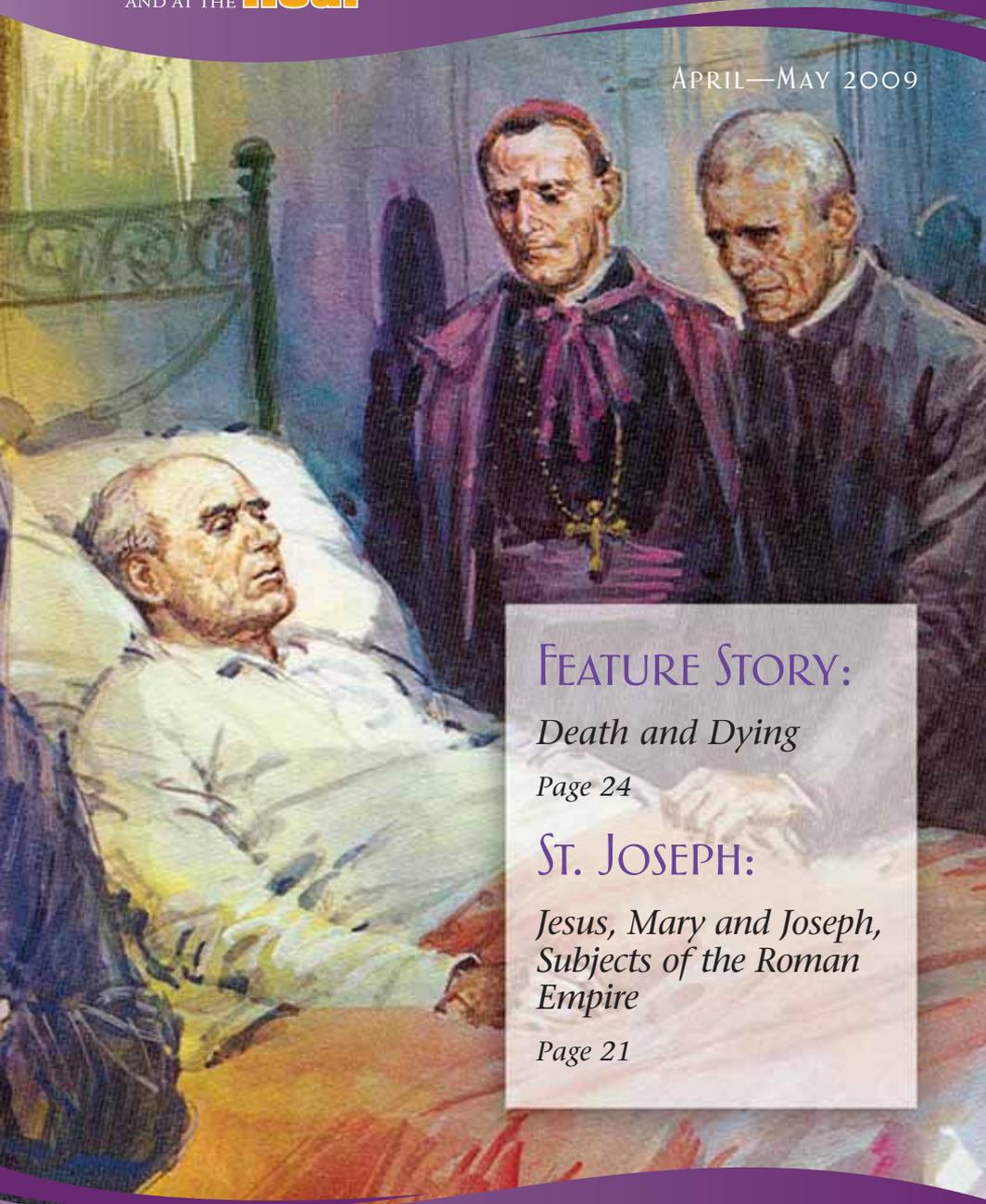


The Voice of Providence

now **Hour**
AND AT THE

PUBLICATION OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY

APRIL—MAY 2009



FEATURE STORY:

Death and Dying

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ST. JOSEPH:

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Subjects of the Roman
Empire*

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Mission

The divine call places the Servants of Charity in the heart of the Church, making us share more deeply in her mission in the world and especially in her care for the poor. In the Church, we are witnesses of God's fatherly love and of the sacred value of each person, even of the least gifted.

In collaboration with the people of goodwill, we endeavor to safeguard the least ones so that we work toward building a better world, open to Christ and His Gospel.

Blessed Are the Merciful

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

Mercy is the compassionate sorrow for other people's misfortunes and the will to alleviate it through our efforts. Mercy is not just sensitivity to people suffering. Without our involvement it remains simply an emotion. The encounter of love and suffering generates mercy which is one of the essential forms of charity, the very heart of Christianity. Jesus wills that we practice mercy as the most excellent way of accomplishing the commandment, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Mercy unites us to God, "Be merciful as your father is merciful" (Lk 6, 36). Christ is for us the source of merciful love. He enlightens and inspires all forms of mercy. Almsgiving takes inspiration from the Lord Jesus who, "being rich... became poor for our sake" (2 Cor 8, 9). Our mercy springs from the heart of Jesus who cares for his children caught in many sufferings. "Jesus saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mk 6, 34).

I grew up in Italy during World War II, which devastated not only homes, but also the bodies and souls of the people. There was not much food to go around. Every Sunday, my mother wrapped up four dishes in those large checkered Italian napkins, and dispatched us four kids to four different families. We watched in dismay as our food disappeared from the kitchen, but in the end, there was enough for all. My father ate the leftovers after us kids. I do not remember when, or if my mother ate.

Mercy obtains the forgiveness of sins in this life and eternal happiness with God in the life to come. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5, 7).

A Mother's Love and Devotion

BY JOSEPH YEKULIS

Mother's Day is on May 10th this year and many of us need to slow down to say, "Thank you Mom."

Early Christians celebrated Mother's Day on the fourth Sunday of Lent to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, and eventually, the holiday was expanded in England to include all mothers, and was called "Mothering Sunday."

This year, the Servants of Charity searched for a mother to honor as an example of piety and perseverance on Mother's Day; someone who lives her life for Jesus Christ, and serves God by living a vocation of motherhood every day.

It didn't take long to find Helen Campbell of Grass Lake, MI at the Shrine of St. Joseph. Married to husband Joseph since the mid-70's, Helen has raised ten adult children, and now finds herself pitching in to help with the grandchildren of several of her sons and their wives. While you might say that raising ten children over the past 34 years doesn't make Helen unique, her devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Blessed Sacrament, and raising three daughters who have become religious sisters certainly does.

Helen and her husband Joseph came together as members of the charismatic Christian community known as the "Word of God," which sprouted in Southeast Michigan in the late 60's and early 70's. Members of that community continued to grow through the years, and eventually supported building Christ the King Catholic Church in Ann Arbor, MI on the campus of Dominos Farms with the help of devout Catholic owner Thomas Monaghan.

Helen's Mother's Day story might best be told through the words of three of her children, Mark, David and Sr. Mary Jacinta. David remembers life growing up with ten brothers and sisters on the "Old West Side" of

Ann Arbor as “crazy, but fun,” and Mark says that, “the family stayed busy by running a neighborhood grocery store at the corner of Huron and Ashley streets known as the Fireside Market.” Helen & Joe’s children are Mark, David, Sr. Mary Joseph, Jesse, Sister Mary Jacinta, Sr. Maria Abyssus Humilitatis, Michael, Peter, Joseph, and Chris. Sr. Mary Joseph and Sr. Mary Jacinta are members of the Dominican congregation known as the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, located in Ann Arbor, MI, while Sr. Humilitatis is a member of the community known as the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará; an Argentinean community.

According to David, “There were always chores to do and others around to play with. Growing up with so many others, you learned that the world didn’t revolve around you, and to get along with others. Mama instilled in us a simple piety. She taught us the importance of receiving the sacraments, of living a Christian life, and of spreading God’s love to others. As a mother, she taught me the importance of being patient with my own children.”

Mark is grateful for how she helped him develop his musical skills growing up, and taking him to his music lessons. Mark, his wife Amy, and their own family of seven children perform during Masses at the Shrine of St. Joseph. “Mom taught me to surrender my life daily to Jesus, and to lay my burdens at his feet. She inspired me to remain faithful to God under difficult circumstances and to maintain an active prayer life.”



Sr. Mary Jacinta has been inspired by her mother's unconditional fidelity to the Church. "It wasn't always about the words she spoke, but about how she lived her life. She ingrained the importance of attending daily Mass in us in a non-preachy way, and our whole family still follows that practice to this day. She has always been very devoted to the Blessed Mother, and in 1997 she dedicated herself to Mary through the teachings of a Dominican priest named St. Louis de Montfort. She shared that devotion with the rest of us, and placed a simple chain bracelet on our wrists to remind us that we were all consecrated to Mary; and to serve as a visible symbol of our commitment.

I still draw inspiration from my mother through her complete and total gift of self in everything she does, even while performing the most menial of tasks. Whenever we pass by a Catholic Church, she makes the sign of the cross, and blows a kiss to the Church. And while present with the Blessed Sacrament she has told me that she's, 'Just telling Jesus about my day.' It's a very simple thing, but there's nothing superfluous about her and her relationship with Christ.

My mother has taught me that no matter what you do; good or bad, your philosophy of life is what makes an impact on others. The character of your heart on the inside shows more than anything else you do on the outside. Children can identify that; whether or not they can verbalize it or point it out. They see it and notice it more than adults often realize. In order to purify that, as my Mom shows, you need the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Helen Campbell has inspired her family and the rest of us by devoting her life to Jesus and Mary, and by living a life of Christian dignity and grace for her children and grandchildren. Today, we express our gratitude to all mothers on Mother's Day.

The Campbell Children in 2003



CHRIST OUR PASCHAL SACRIFICE

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

The Resurrection of Jesus is the key and the foundation of our faith. He is the one who revealed to us the Love of the Father. He is the one who sent us the Holy Spirit. He is the one who opened for us the way to salvation. Our faith, hope and love depend on the Resurrection of Jesus. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3, 16). With His Resurrection Jesus confirmed for us that the Gospel He preached is true and therefore we believe in Him, we hope in Him, we love Him and we love one another.

"If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching, empty too is your faith" (1 Cor 15, 14). Christ's Resurrection is a warranty for the resurrection of the dead and our resurrection.

Jesus' Resurrection fills us with tears of joy, gratitude, praise and wonderment. The liturgy is uncontainable in its luminous expressions of jubilation, appreciation and amazement of God's prodigious works and love for us.

"Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of Angels! Exult all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes forever!

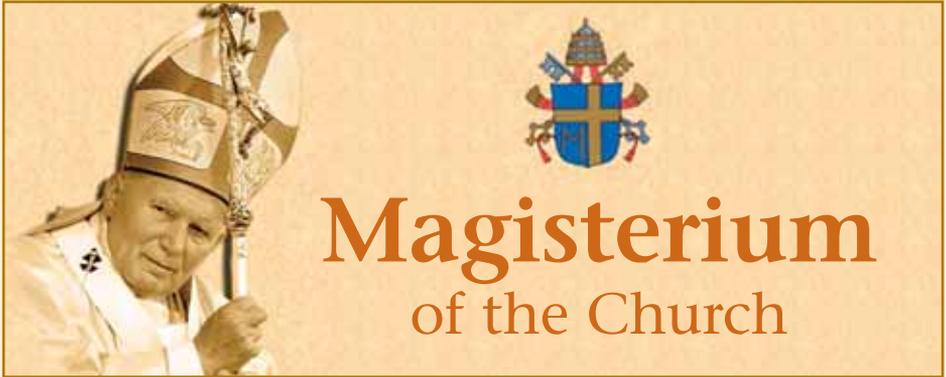
Rejoice O Mother Church! Exult in glory! The risen Savior shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people.

This is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true lamb, is slain; whose blood consecrates the homes of all the believers.

This is the day when Christians everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a redeemer!" (Easter Liturgy)

Happy Easter to all the members of the Pious Union of St. Joseph.



Magisterium of the Church

Jesus, I Trust in You

Homily of the Holy Father, John Paul II, in St. Peter's Square for the Canonization of Sr. Mary Faustina Kowalska, Sunday, April 30, 2000

"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 118, 1). So the Church sings on the Octave of Easter, as if receiving from Christ's lips these words of the Psalm; from the lips of the risen Christ, who bears the great message of divine mercy and entrusts its ministry to the Apostles in the Upper Room: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20, 21-23)....

Today my joy is truly great in presenting the life and witness of Sr. Faustina Kowalska to the whole Church as a gift of God for our time. By divine Providence, the life of this humble daughter of Poland was completely linked with the history of the 20th century, the century we have just left behind. In fact, it was between the First and Second World Wars that Christ entrusted his message of mercy to her. Those who remember, who were witnesses and participants in the events of those years and the horrible sufferings they caused for millions of people, know well how necessary was the message of mercy.

Jesus told Sr. Faustina: "Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy" (*Diary*, p. 132)....

It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church will be called "Divine Mercy Sunday." In the various readings, the liturgy seems to indicate the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings. Christ has taught us that "man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called 'to practice mercy' towards others: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Mt 5, 7)" (*Dives in misericordia*, n. 14)....

It is not easy to love with a deep love, which lies in the authentic gift of self. This love can only be learned by penetrating the mystery of God's love. Looking at him, being one with his fatherly heart, we are able to look with new eyes at our brothers and sisters, with an attitude of unselfishness and solidarity, of generosity and forgiveness. All this is mercy! ...

It is this love which must inspire humanity today, if it is to face the crisis of the meaning of life, the challenges of the most diverse needs and, especially, the duty to defend the dignity of every human person. Thus the message of divine mercy is also implicitly a message about the value of every human being. Each person is precious in God's eyes; Christ gave his life for each one; to everyone the Father gives his Spirit and offers intimacy.

This consoling message is addressed above all to those who, afflicted by a particularly harsh trial or crushed by the weight of the sins they committed, have lost all confidence in life and are tempted to give in to despair. To them the gentle face of Christ is offered; those rays from his heart touch them and shine upon them, warm them, show them the way and fill them with hope. How many souls have been consoled by the prayer "Jesus, I trust in you," which Providence intimated through Sr. Faustina! This simple act of abandonment to Jesus dispels the thickest clouds and lets a ray of light penetrate every life....

Let us make our own [Sr. Faustina's] prayer of trusting abandonment and say with firm hope: Christ Jesus, I trust in you!

Now Is Our Time

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

As the inaugural celebrations die down, the promises from the campaign rallies across the country still echo in my memory, “Now is our time!” and “Yes we can!” However, our times are plagued by global recession caused by the bursting of the housing bubble and the freezing of credit.

The food crisis continues to grow as small producers are driven out of their land and forced to join the band of migrants desperate to find a way to feed their families. The energy crisis and the threat of global warming are showing their devastating effects, especially among the weakest and poorest.

The cause of this disturbing scenario can be traced to market liberalization, deregulation and the decrease of protections for the common good in the last quarter century for the benefit of a few greedy and reckless profiteers whose primary concern is feeding their pockets.

Our very survival depends on how we respond. Our government is responding by bailing out the same people who brought us into this mess. No one is bailing out the jobless, the homeless or the farmers.

Our President promised us, “Yes we can.” He is putting together all the healthy forces of the country to begin a healing process. A recovery effort of these proportions cannot be based only on technology and theories.



He needs all of us to take on responsibilities and be ready for sacrifices. I like what I hear about creating new jobs and I like what I see about putting an end to the slaughter of innocents from all sides in the Middle East. I am worried about what I don't hear, because I am concerned that in this plan, God and the family may be dropped from the equation. When a mother can kill her own child, what can stop us from killing one another?

A true recovery must start from within, because we are spiritual beings, not construction blocks. Without the family and the support of the family we will turn into a pack of wolves, rampaging for food and fending off other packs.

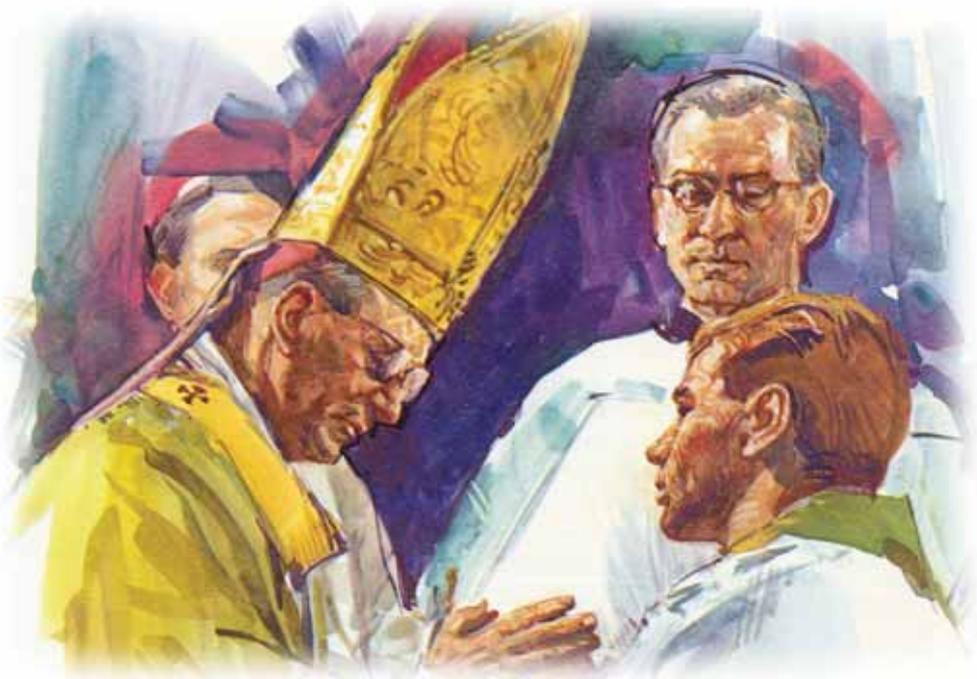
As Christians we have already been bailed out by Jesus who died for us. He bailed out all who wanted to change and accepted his Gospel. Most of the ones who believed in Him were poor, crippled, lepers, blind, deaf or possessed. He gave hope to them all, even to the last minute repentant. However, he rejected the proud, the hypocrites and the blind leaders who were only concerned with their importance and wealth. Those He did not bail out.

Pope Benedict XVI said it all in a telegram to the new President of the United States, Barack Obama. "On the occasion of your inauguration as the forty-fourth president of the United States of America, I offer cordial good wishes, together with the assurance of my prayers that the Almighty God will grant you unfailing wisdom and strength in the exercise of your high responsibility.

Under your leadership may the American people continue to find in their impressive religious and political heritage the spiritual values and ethical principles needed to cooperate in the building of a truly just and free society, marked by respect for the dignity, equality and rights of each of its members, especially the outcast and those who have no voice.

At a time when so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world yearn for liberation from the scourge of poverty, hunger and violence, I pray that you will be confirmed in your resolve to promote understanding, cooperation and peace among the nations, so that all may share in the banquet of life which God wills to set for the whole human family (Is 25, 6-7). Upon you and your family, and upon all the American people, I willingly invoke the Lord's blessings of peace and joy."

At the Pious Union of St. Joseph we continue to work in fidelity to our mission of assisting and praying for the poor, the hungry, the persecuted, the suffering and dying. The same people Jesus bailed out. The same people our new President promised to bail out.



Heirs of a "yes" of Love

BY FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SDC

On March 24th, the Servants of Charity closed the first Centennial of the religious profession of our Founder, Blessed Louis Guanella. His vows were an expression of a total and final "yes" to God and a commitment to live, work and die for Him and for his neighbor. This "yes" of love was rooted in a previous "yes" he pronounced the night of his priestly ordination in Como: "I want to be a sword of fire in my holy ministry! A faithful priest without compromise." And that is truly what happened.

It was May 26, 1866. The ordaining Bishop Frascolla was exiled in Como by the persecutors of the Church, the Masonic Italian government. The Bishop had time to know the fiery Guanella and to put the final touches on his priestly formation: teacher of truth and defender of the weak. These two understood, encouraged, and supported each other in carrying out an ideal for which to live and die.

Since her foundation, countless martyrs of the Christian faith have committed themselves to making the Church more beautiful, visible, strong and fruitful. That bishop returned to his diocese years later, fondly remembering the young priest so filled with zeal and enthusiasm. Father Guanella also kept within his heart the example of the persecuted bishop who spurred him to persevere in the Lord without fear of misunderstanding, persecution and disapproval.

Driven by a supernatural force, Blessed Guanella entered into the mystery of Christ, who was calling him to unite himself to His redemptive sacrifice celebrated at Mass. His textbook was the Sacred Heart of Jesus and from Him, he learned how to mold his priestly heart into the Heart of Jesus, High and Eternal Priest, victim and sacrifice. From the divine Heart, Guanella filled his human heart with zeal for souls, and acquired mercy, love and a desire to relieve human misery.

That priestly heart, constantly on fire for the Lord, sustained Guanella all his life. His last Mass, on September 27, 1915, was celebrated with the same faith as his first Mass. Eyewitnesses testified that, seeing him on the altar, they were moved by his fire, the same fire requested from the Lord at his ordination.

Besides the “fire,” there is also another key word that describes his incessant commitment to be a priest for others: “bread.” Guanella was particularly attracted by Ignatius of Antioch, the holy Bishop of the early Church, who wrote that, like the mystical Body of Christ, Christians should be the sacrificial bread, broken and distributed to others. From the day of his ordination, Guanella walked in that direction. His spiritual strength came from the Eucharist. From the Mass he learned how to be broken bread for those who were entrusted to his care. He urged his spiritual children to give “Bread and the Lord” to the needy knocking at their doors. In broken, sick and wounded bodies, Fr. Guanella saw the real presence of the same Jesus present in the Eucharist. To the skeptical and those in doubt, he offered his faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, a Sacrament of love that sustains the weak and makes purer the love of believers.

This was and still is today Blessed Louis Guanella, priest of the Almighty, bright gift of the Lord to his Church, and broken bread for the many who hunger.

Divine Providence Province Provincial Chapter

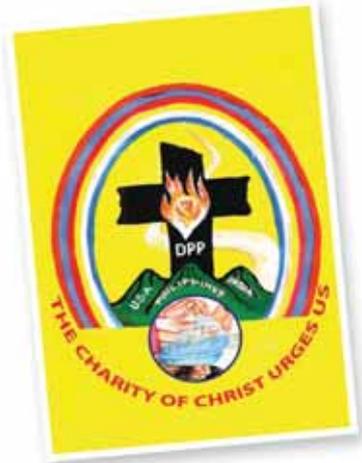
By FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

The Servants of Charity Congregation is divided into several Provinces, mostly organized by countries and languages. The Divine Providence Province includes India, the Philippines and the United States with English as the uniting language. Geographically it is a huge Province, but the love of God and the love of the poor bring us close together and unite us in service. We hope and pray that God will reward us with many generous vocations, ready to embrace the spirit and charism of Blessed Louis Guanella.

Our newly-formed Province will celebrate its first Provincial Chapter from May 18th to May 23rd. The Provincial Chapter is an assembly of designated or elected delegates representing all the geographical areas and services of the Province. This assembly will assess the work done within the last three years and make plans for the next three years. The members will address the progress of our activities and offer guidelines to better serve the poor and to better prepare the future members of the Servants of Charity.

For this event, we have adapted the traditional Prayer to Blessed Louis Guanella and added a logo designed by our seminarians in India. We welcome the prayers of all men and women of good will.

To receive copies of this Holy Card, please contact the Pious Union of St. Joseph office.



Prayer to Blessed Louis Guanella

O Blessed Louis Guanella, apostle of Charity, who, in a world filled with hatred and selfishness, have spread the treasures of your heart to the poor and suffering, whom you dearly loved, obtain for us from Divine Providence, an ever increasing love of God and our neighbor. Obtain for us also, the favor we are now asking for: **the successful celebration of the First Provincial Chapter**, and the grace of final perseverance.

Amen.

Servants of Charity
Divine Providence Province

Developing Chapters

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC

Guanellian Lay Movement

Spreading the Good News  Throughout the World

Father Louis Guanella received from God the gift of service to the poor and suffering through spiritual and material charity. To accomplish his mission he founded three groups: one of Priests and Brothers, called the Servants of Charity; another of Sisters, called the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence; the third, of lay people, called the Guanellian Cooperators, for men and women called to live their lives according to the Guanellian charism.

The American Guanellian Lay Movement celebrated its third National Meeting in Elverson, PA, last October 10-12, 2008. During the meeting a Mission Statement was released:

The Guanellian Lay Movement is an association of persons who listen, learn and announce the Word of God in the Spirit of Blessed Louis Guanella. Like him, we are sent to evangelize the poor, arousing in them reasons for hope, by witnessing the love of the Father.

As members of the Guanellian Family and in reciprocal collaboration, we partake in the Spirit and mission of the Founder. We become instruments of Providence through the exercise of the works of mercy.

Local Chapters of the Guanellian Lay Movement have adopted the Mission Statement and begun organizing themselves in accord with its guidelines. Members have committed themselves to raise awareness, develop a formation program, and create an organization which is able to approach and achieve specific goals.

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Two Stars in the Guanellian Firmament

BY FR. DOMINIC SAGINARIO, SdC

April 20th is a date rich in the memory of our Guanellian family. We celebrate the feast day and anniversary of the beatification of Sister Clare Bosatta, whom Blessed Louis Guanella considered the “cornerstone” of all his foundations.

The Saints don’t come alone in history; on the contrary they spring together, as clusters. They are like the billions of stars shining in the sky, each one with proper age, greatness, and beauty. As St. Paul observes: “Star differs from star in brightness” (1 Cor 15, 41). But all are connected.

I remember a scientist’s observation: “the small rustle produced by the fall of a leaf resounds in the universe!” We can try it. If you whisper a word into a sensitive microphone, one of your friends could hear it across the ocean, or from a satellite in space. This is the way I see the two Blessed of our family—the Founder, Father Louis Guanella, and his disciple, Sister Clare Bosatta—different in holiness, but complementary.

Fr. Louis was exuberant in faith and works, taken by an apostolic rush toward service to his brothers, especially the poorest. He had a fiery, vivacious character. He was a volcano of initiatives from the beginnings of his priesthood. The people called him “Father Run-Run.” Oh, he loved to pray, because he loved our Lord Jesus sincerely. But when he was in prayer, he also thought about the poor of his parish and the surrounding villages and he raced and raced to find ways to help them.



On his journey he met Clare. She was a kind soul, delicate, absorbed by interior amazement of God, fully living in contemplative unity with Jesus. At the same time, she was able to teach and she attended to her financial and educational activities. Two different worlds of holiness,

but sent together by Divine Providence to offer the Gospel message and their lives to the people Jesus called his “little ones.”

St. Benedict guided his twin sister, St. Scholastica, on her ascent to holiness. At the same time, however, he received her help, and together they became giants in the spiritual life. St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi both sang to God and spread within the Church a cheerful sense of spring. St. Teresa of Avila shared with St. John of the Cross the task of renewing the Carmelite Order and enriched the Church with new vitality. Thus, our Blessed Louis Guanella fulfilled his vocation as Founder with the help of and in communion with Blessed Clare Bosatta. Together, each with personal originality but in solidarity, they offered mutual support by example, prayer and work, and realized rays of goodness in their souls.



I dare to affirm that Blessed Clare would not have become that precious pearl in the Church, without the assiduous work, wise and strong, of her good shepherd, Father Louis Guanella. In turn, Father Guanella would not have experienced and then instilled in his disciples such a profound contemplative dynamism for their charitable mission, if he had not met the admirable work of the Holy Spirit in the humble personality of Clare Bosatta.

Our Guanellian history is indeed fascinating. Thanks to divine Goodness, we count among our spiritual sources a rich confluence of tides, coming from St. John Bosco, St. Joseph B. Cottolengo, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and St. Phillip Neri. Father Guanella drew from these tides, especially during the period of his preparation as Founder. But in an immediate and powerful way, he was given the grace to draw from the clear and deep source of spirituality of Blessed Clare Bosatta, with her charism of unifying contemplative spirit of prayer and creative donation to the poor, concerned with both human and mystical aspects.

A subject inspiring beautiful psalms of joy.





Jesus, I Trust in You!

Lessons from the Single Life, Part Two



BY KIMBERLY BEAUBIEN

In my previous essay I talked about two lessons we can learn from the single life: trust in God and stay close to Christ. In this article I would like to talk about a third lesson having to do with how single people, and similarly other vocations, should live out their lives.

I love the way a particular deacon I know refers to my vocation. He calls it “the generous single life.” He refers to it thus when he prays for people in all vocations, whether called to “religious life, married life, or the generous single life.” What does he mean? Well, for one thing, he clearly considers it a definite vocation. But only a specific sort of single life is a vocation: the generous one.

Some are single because they simply haven’t found their particular vocation in life yet; others choose to remain so. Regardless of reason however, those who are single may use their freedom for either generous or selfish pursuits. We all are familiar with single people who party away and avoid responsibility or who selfishly pursue money and worldly success for their own personal gain. We also may be aware of single persons who give of themselves by serving the community and family members or pursue a demanding career for the good of others. Single people may use their singleness for either reason, but only the second is fulfilling their vocation as a single person.

John Paul the Great taught us in the Theology of the Body that we are called to be nuptial; that is, we are called to give of ourselves. Only in giving ourselves away to others do we truly find ourselves. Married people are called to give themselves completely to their spouses, generously and responsibly participating with God in the procreation of children. Priests are spiritual fathers to their congregation and religious serve a wide variety of people.

The single person responds to this call by being generous with their time, talent and treasure. In the gospel of John, Jesus told us that if we remain in Him, we will bear much fruit. Alternatively, if we do not

remain in Him and bear fruit, we will be cut off and thrown out like a branch to wither (Jn 15, 2.5-6). So let the single person beware! It may be tempting to sink into selfishness, or settle somewhere in the middle, but we must seek to do God's will first and at all times.

Though the single person faces specific trials and frustra-

tions, it can be a great gift. The single person's relatively lower level of responsibility means that we are freer to be generous in whatever way others may require. That is why my deacon-acquaintance refers to the single life as generous. The generous single person can be a great boon to a sick relative or a struggling church committee or fulfill any number of needs. The key is to let God work through us in whatever we do. Then we will be fulfilling our call to be nuptial, even in the midst of our singleness, for as long as God chooses to have us remain so. And while we're at it, we just might find what God wants for the rest of our lives as well.

*Only in giving
ourselves away to
others do we truly
find ourselves.*

May 3rd: World Day of Prayer for Vocations

As we celebrate this occasion, the Church invites us to honor the vocation of all Christians given at baptism. May we who have dedicated our lives to God through the vocation of marriage, priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life, and the single life continue to follow Jesus who has called us by name. May those who are discerning their life vocation listen to the grace of God to guide them.

"The Church prays everyday to the Holy Spirit for the gift of vocations. Gathered around the Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, as in the beginning, the ecclesial community learns from her how to implore the Lord for a flowering of new apostles, alive with the faith and love that are necessary for the mission."

– POPE BENEDICT XVI

O Father, raise up among Christians numerous and holy vocations to the priesthood, to keep the faith alive and guard the gracious memory of your Son Jesus through the preaching of his word and the administration of the Sacraments, with which you continually renew your faithful.

Give us holy ministers of your altar, who are careful and fervent guardians of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the supreme gift of Christ for the redemption of the world.

Call ministers of your mercy, who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, spread the joy of your forgiveness.

Grant, O Father, that the Church may welcome with joy numerous inspirations of the Spirit of your Son and, docile to His teachings, may she care for vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life.

Sustain the Bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated men and women, and all the baptized in Christ, so that they may faithfully fulfill their mission at the service of the Gospel.

This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Queen of Apostles, pray for us.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Subjects of the Roman Empire

BY FR. TARCISIO STRAMARE

Joseph is the man who was chosen by God to put the birth of Jesus into a legal context, providing legal grounds to include the Son of God into society with the respect due to the Divine Will and human law. The entire “hidden” life of Jesus is entrusted to him. Registering the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is an event not particularly taken into consideration by theologians. History, instead, is very much interested in the date of Jesus’ birth, because it’s strictly connected to a Roman census.

St. Luke recalls in his Gospel a decree going out from the Emperor Augustus, asking for a census of the Roman Empire. From this historical census we uncover some meanings that otherwise might go unnoticed. First, from the point of view of the

Incarnation, the repetition of the word “census” or enrollment sends a clear message that the existence of Jesus, “son of Joseph from Nazareth,” must be recognized in this world. Though miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus not only seems to be a true man, but he is a true man, a real man officially recognized as “belonging to the house and family of David” and registered by Joseph as his son. Luke had already recorded, in his account of the Annunciation to Mary,



that Joseph was “of the house of David.” His Gospel tells us that Joseph was “enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.” This is proof-positive that Mary is physically present in Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

By registering the birth of Jesus, Joseph performs his first official act as father-guardian. He assumes the same important legal duty required of the people of his time and of our time. Luke includes this insignificant



event, as well as this insignificant small family from Nazareth, in the context of a major and solemn event: the Imperial Enrollment. His intention is to make it clear that the Word of God has come and has “made his dwelling among us,” true man among men.

By unknown Roman officials, the holy Name of Jesus is written, intermingled with countless other names, without privilege or special regard. Jesus’ lowliness is complete. He truly “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself.” Almost whispering, Luke takes us by the hand and introduces us into this mysterious dimension of God’s plan of salvation, which follows His divine imagination rather than the exasperating precision of the human calendar.

Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation on St. Joseph, “Guardian of the Redeemer,” meticulously considers the hidden life of Jesus. He considers the “mysteries” of Joseph’s life, and the first mystery is the “enrollment,” the census which we’ve been talking about. “Journeying to Bethlehem for the census, in obedience to the orders of the legitimate authority, Joseph fulfilled for the child the significant

task of officially including the name ‘Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth’ in the registry of the Roman Empire. This registration clearly shows us that Jesus belongs to the human race, as a man among men, a citizen of the world, subject to law and civil institutions, but equally the ‘savior of the world.’”

“INSCRIBED WITH THE WHOLE
WORLD IN THE CENSUS, HE
OFFERED THE WHOLE WORLD
COMMUNION WITH HIMSELF.”

Origen, a father of the Church, describes the theological significance of this historical event in a homily on the Gospel of Luke. “Since the first census of the World took place under Caesar Augustus, and among all the others Joseph too went to register together with Mary his wife, who was with child, and since Jesus was born before the census was completed: to the person who makes a careful examination it will appear that a kind of mystery is expressed in the fact that at the time when all people in the world presented themselves to be counted, Christ too should be counted. By being registered with everyone else, He could sanctify everyone. Incribed with the whole world in the census, He offered to the whole world Communion with Himself. After presenting Himself, He wrote all the people of the world in the book of the living, so that as many as believed in Him could then be written in heaven with the saints of God, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.”



Death and Dying

By FR. MARIO CARRERA, SDC
DIRECTOR OF THE PIOUS UNION OF ST. JOSEPH, ROME



John Paul II said that “today many want to silence the cross; nevertheless, nothing is more eloquent than the cross forced to disappear.” This happens also with death. Death has always been a mystery and an enigma, troubling our mind and conscience and causing feelings of hope or fear in our daily experience.

The great French theologian, Cardinal John Danielou said that “death is a frightening experience but, even more so; it is the painful agony and the uncertain perspective of the future that is the cause of deep anguish to those who are not rooted in the faith.” Spiritual and emotional anxiety has been dispelled by Jesus Christ through his victory over death; by His death and resurrection the meaning of dying and death is forever changed.

From the Gospel we know that Jesus wept twice; first when he was looking on the ungrateful Jerusalem and second upon the death of his friend Lazarus. In front of Lazarus' tomb, Jesus expressed his deep feeling and revealed to us the weight of death in the human experience. Nevertheless, Jesus wants to make us aware that the resurrection will be awarded only after paying the promissory note of His death and our own.

Everyday we experience time passing, marked by many different events, works and circumstances which are meaningful to us when we are led by hope and faith. In this way, the moment of our human sunset brings its own beauty, enlightening and edifying those around us.

Jesus, entering into history tells us, "I have come, so that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10, 10). In him we find an abundance of light, joy and the means to plan and build our lives, which helps us comprehend the eternal dimension of our soul.

St. Francis of Assisi was accustomed to calling death "sister," looking at her as the other cheek of the face of life. Blessed Louis Guanella, as a pastor and educator of souls, called death "mother," not only because she ushers us into eternal life, but also because she gives meaning to our existence. She gives us the compass and coordinates for our voyage so we can reach the port of salvation.

Fr. Guanella founded the Pious Union of St. Joseph, enlisting an army of generous and faithful persons to pray everyday for the dying while fostering a serene and trustful final encounter with God.

Today our society has assigned the reality of death to oblivion. Many people cannot imagine death without the desperation of irreparable defeat. But in Fr. Guanella's time, life was shared among all the members of the family. Grandchildren felt the pain and suffering of their grandparents and parents spent themselves for the health of their children. Anguish, suffering and sickness were experienced, accepted and tempered in the warmth of the family and nearness of friends. The sick were cared for like a baby in the cradle.

In comparison the sick today live life separated from those who love them and may be treated as a burden, dying without dignity.

With the support of Pope Pius X, Fr. Guanella founded the Pious Union of St. Joseph as a crusade of prayer, asking God, through the intercession

of St. Joseph, to gaze with mercy and love upon his children struggling in the supreme moment of their life. The Confraternity grew up steadfastly and its ministry of prayer spread throughout Europe even reaching China, Oceania and South America with the missionaries working in different fields of evangelization.

Fr. Guanella wanted the Pious Union of St. Joseph to be known as a “Crusade of Prayer for the Dying.” Today, however, we avoid using the word “crusade” because it can be misinterpreted. Nevertheless, the intention that moved our Founder remains the same. He wanted to bring to life a movement of people aware of the preciousness of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus, while praying for all of our suffering and dying brothers and sisters.

You give life to this mission. We pray that many more will join us, offering their sacrifice of prayer for souls and for God’s mercy and His salvation, now and at the hour of our death.

Prayer of the Pious Union of St. Joseph

O St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus Christ and
True spouse of the Virgin Mary,
Pray for us and for the Suffering and dying of this day/night.
Amen.

Attention Readers:

To enroll friends and family in the Pious Union of St. Joseph, please send their names and addresses to **953 E. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake, MI 49240** or email **piousunion@pusj.org**.

If you wish to spread devotion to St. Joseph through prayer for the suffering and dying in your Parish, please consult your Pastor for his permission. The office will send you five or ten free magazines each time they are published. We can also provide the St. Joseph in my Pocket prayer cards, and brochure. For details, call the office at 517-522-8017.

In the Midst of Suffering, Love

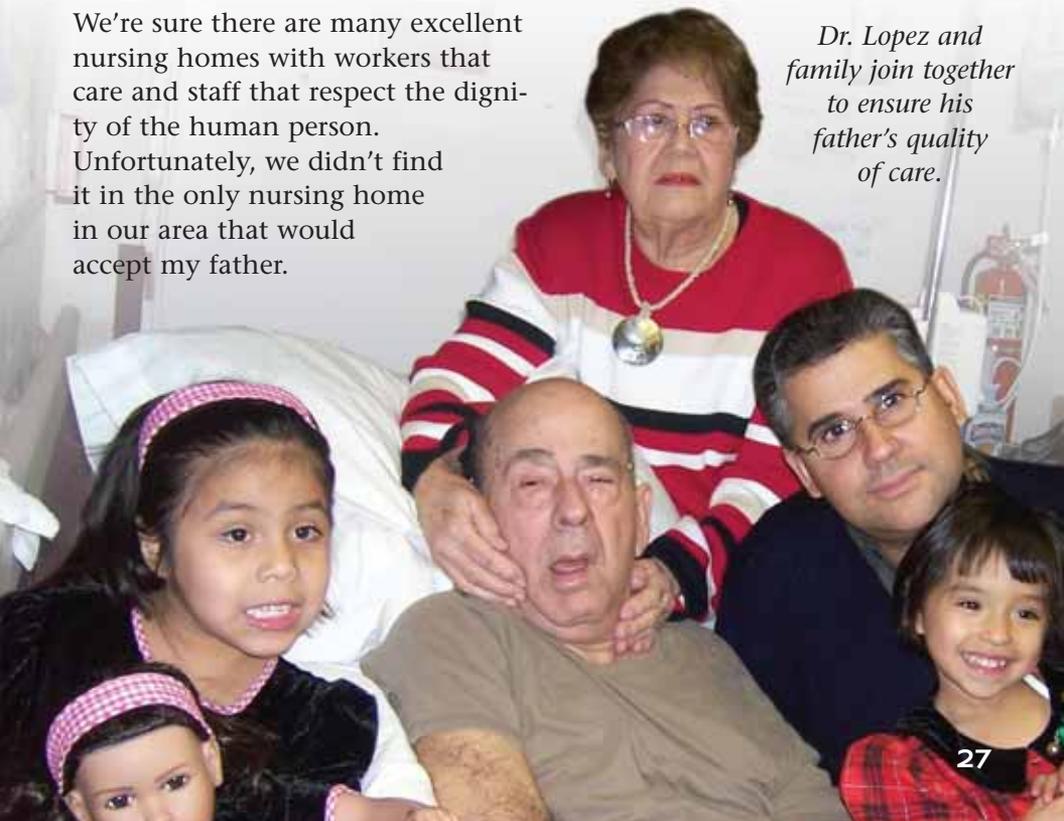
BY JUAN (PACO) LOPEZ, MD

More than two years ago at Christmas, while my parents were visiting our family in Michigan, my father suffered a massive stroke which left him paralyzed, incontinent, and unable to talk or swallow. He needs constant medical monitoring and nursing care and gets food and water through a tube connected to his stomach. He is bedridden, and has to be moved side to side and have his diapers changed every 3-4 hours in order to avoid the formation of skin ulcers. Some days he is semiconscious, other days he sleeps. He is sometimes alert and aware of his surroundings and has been on the verge of dying many times.

As we have struggled with my father's illness, we have come face-to-face with the Culture of Death. We have also experienced, first hand, the power of love, the redemptive power of human suffering and the meaning of true mercy.

We're sure there are many excellent nursing homes with workers that care and staff that respect the dignity of the human person. Unfortunately, we didn't find it in the only nursing home in our area that would accept my father.

Dr. Lopez and family join together to ensure his father's quality of care.



We often arrived in the morning to find his diaper hadn't been changed all night. Some times we would find him dehydrated. Other times the wrong medication was given. My mother is at the nursing home all day, to make sure that he gets adequate care and is treated with dignity. By the grace of God, and thanks to multiple complaints, the nursing home was closed this year by the State and my father moved to a better place.

Not only have we struggled with the poor care provided at the nursing home, but to our surprise, and in spite of the fact that my wife and I are both physicians, we have trouble obtaining appropriate hospital care also. In medical crises we encounter resistance from some doctors to promptly administer the minimum in care that our religious beliefs, and basic common sense, require: water, nourishment, and antibiotics. The attitude of some of our colleagues seems to be passive towards patients

with advanced dementia, or who they think lack a "good quality of life." We certainly don't want to impose burdensome or extraordinary procedures on our father. The Church teaches that we may refuse treatment that's of dubious benefit, or results in a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life when death



is imminent. However, we want him treated with dignity and respect. We are prepared for his death if it comes through natural causes, but we don't want medical "care" guided, consciously or unconsciously, by a utilitarian view of human life.

In spite of all these difficulties and struggles, our family has received many graces and blessings. God, in his infinite mercy, brings us closer to him when we need him the most, in the midst of suffering and disease. Our father's situation has allowed us to spend more time together as a

family, doing what is most important: taking care of each other. Our two daughters (5 and 6 years old) love to visit their grandpa, and when they walk into the nursing home, they bring joy to all. Through our friendship with the Servants of Charity, we have been able to bring priests and the Sacraments to the residents who might have died without this comfort.

A very moving experience occurred on the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, and World Day of the Sick. Father Paul Oggioni, a Servant of Charity, came to hear confession, pray the Rosary, celebrate Mass, and administer the Sacrament of the Sick at our nursing home. I witnessed the



close connection that exists between the Mystery of the Eucharist, the role of Mary in the project of salvation, and the reality of human pain and suffering. I watched the emotions of the residents, most of them elderly and almost all of them very ill, as they received the Eucharist and were touched by the priest, truly acting in persona Christi. Some had tears in their eyes. As one resident told me, most had not been to Mass in a long time. You could see their longing for the body of Christ and their joy in receiving. It was one of the most beautiful Masses I have ever attended.

Shortly after my dad had the stroke, I bumped into Father Enzo Addari at St. Louis Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Quoting Jesus, he reminded me that illnesses can happen “for the greater glory of God.” “What is the glory of God?” he asked. “The glory of God is love. These things happen so that we can manifest the love of God.” I understood him intellectually, but I didn’t quite “get it.” However, after seeing my mother limp every day to the nursing home to spend hours with my dad; watching my wife help her change his diapers and suction his phlegm; and watching my daughters lovingly stroke their grandfather’s hand while he lies in bed unconscious, I finally “got it.” Love, charity, mercy, this is what the glory of God is about. In the midst of suffering, above all things, love.



Dedications & Memorials

You may reserve the following Shrine or Calvary memorials or dedications with your donation:

- Dedicate a step of the Holy Stair.....\$5000**
- Dedicate a Bench in front of the Altar\$1000**
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- Dedicate a tile near the Calvary.....\$250**
- Become a Shrine Forester, Plant a tree\$150**
- Dedicate a leaf on the Tree of Remembrance in the Shrine\$500**

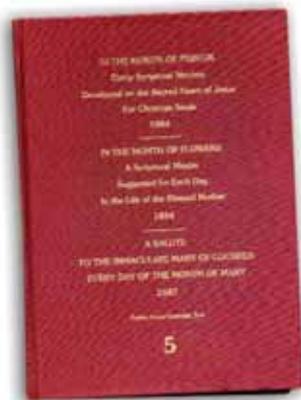
All donations are used for ministry at the Shrine of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying and for the continued building up of the Shrine in his honor.



For more information or to make a pledge, please call the Pious Union of St. Joseph Office Monday – Friday 517-522-8017 or send email to piousunion@pusj.org.

In the Month of Flowers

Blessed Louis Guanella wrote this book during one of the most difficult periods of his life. He had just returned from a three-year experience with St. John Bosco. His Bishop called him back to the Diocese and confined him to a dismal mountain parish six thousand feet above sea level. He was torn by contrasting desires to go back to St. John Bosco and to obey his Bishop. He also wanted to start a Congregation of priests and sisters to take care of the elderly and handicapped.



In all of this he did not get discouraged but resolved to place his life in the hands of the Blessed Mother. She would show him the way.

In gratitude, he wrote a book to honor her: *In the Month of Flowers*.

For each day of the month of May, he presents a lesson, practical inspirations, an anecdote, a prayer and a few reflections. Each day we are offered a tender and delightful meditation that highlights the profound love and devotion that Blessed Guanella had for the Virgin Mary, her role in the life of each Christian and the Church. Mary appears human, close, real, giving hope and leading us to her son Jesus.

The reader will experience Mary's tenderness and feel changed by the end of the month.

I wish you a rewarding and pleasant month of May in the company of Mary.

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo

Fr Joseph Rinaldo, SdC

In the Month of Flowers is available through the Pious Union of St Joseph office. Send your request and a donation to The Pious Union of St. Joseph, 953 E. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake, MI 49240.

Call the office at 517-522-8017 for more information or for purchasing quantities of more than ten copies.

Is God Calling You to Serve Others?

Among those who are deprived of human and spiritual support, we care for developmentally disabled, abandoned youth, indigent elderly, and the incurably and terminally ill. We are also committed to pastoral and missionary work in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa.

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There is room for many others; those needing help and those who want to help.

Consider joining our mission, making the love of God more and more visible in our world. **For more information, contact:**

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101 Years of Service and Grace 1908-2009

The Servants of Charity Congregation of Catholic Priests and Brothers care for persons with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities, the Senior Elderly, and those who are dying in twenty countries around the world. In Michigan, they operate St. Louis Center in Chelsea and the Shrine of St. Joseph in Grass Lake.

The Servants of Charity thank the Michigan Knights of Columbus for all their great works, and offer congratulations to them on the occasion of their 109th Annual Meeting on Mackinac Island May 21-23, 2009.



New Knights pose with their sponsors and State Council Officers and Directors during PSD Tom Clark's Tribute Day at St. Louis Center; Feb. 1, 2009.

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