

The Love of Christ Impels Us

now HOUR

AND AT THE

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2007



*“As the eyes of servants are on
the hands of their masters...
So are our eyes on the Lord,
our God, till he has pity on us.”*

— Psalm 123:2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1**From The Editor**
Fr. Paul Oggioni, SC
- 2**The First & Greatest Admirer of Mary**
O. Ribera
- 4**Death & Dying**
Fr. Mario Carrera, SC
- 7**Brothers & Sisters Gathered Together**
Fr. Paul Oggioni, SC
- 12**A Vocation, a Mission & the Happiest Source of Personal Fulfillment**
James Samek Ludovici
- 14**Thy Will Be Done: An Experience of God According to Blessed Louis Guanella**
- 16**Maria Bambina**
- 18**Send a Kiss to Her**
Dieudonne' le Presbytre
- 20**In The Heart of Jesus**
Fr. Luigi DeGiambattista
- 22**Discipleship: 2nd Annual Conference of the Guanellian Lay Movement**
Lauren Hill
- 24**Guanellian Leadership Institute**
Fr. Dennis Weber, SC
- 27**To Be a Fire for Charity**
- 29**Shrine Report**
- 32**From The Mailbag**
- 33**Vocations**

Cover: *Visiting agricultural workers from Mexico & Texas gather for Mass at the Shrine*

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The Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying is an Association of the faithful, founded by Blessed Aloysius Guanella in 1913 and made a Primary Association of the Catholic Church by Pope St. Pius X, on April 12, 1914.

The mission of this Association is to spread devotion to St. Joseph throughout the world and to bind together as many priests and faithful as possible in a universal Crusade of Prayer and work of mercy for the benefit of the suffering and dying.

To become a Member: Enroll your name at the Pious Union of St. Joseph and make a commitment to pray every day to St. Joseph for the suffering and dying.

The 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. Amen.

The Body of Christ, The Blood of Christ, The Heart of Christ

During the month of June we directed our gaze to the One who was pierced on the cross and from whose heart, blood and water flowed in His total immolation of self for our redemption. We see the blood and water that gushed from His heart as the vital power of the Church who makes us children of God through Baptism and sustains us through the Eucharist.

Devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus is an ancient devotion, to which the month of July is dedicated and which reminds us that we are purified and saved through Christ's Blood. To be Church means to make possible and visible this miracle of love and salvation that was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

We, Servants of Charity, are often asked to give reason for our ministry of caring for disabled persons in diverse regions and cultures of the world: mentally impaired, malnourished street children, abandoned aged and terminally ill persons, troubled youth and unprotected immigrants. When, in the actual world, in religious, social and economic contexts, each one of us recognizes we are not able to give the best of ourselves to others; who are really the disabled? The ones who cannot express themselves in their relationships with others or the ones who over-value themselves while denying fraternal help to those in need; refusing to make a loving commitment?

Mingling our blood with the blood of Christ, we ask you also to be part of our mission, part of this growing project of charity for the poor. We ask you to be bearers of a fraternal message which strives to bridge the gap between rich and poor, break down the barriers between ability and disability, and allows the foreigner to knock at our door without fear. Help us by sharing your humanity and by nurturing the hearts of innocent victims of injustice and abuse.

Together we can become a message of hope for our world, which will find salvation only in that pierced Heart of Jesus, whose blood purifies and feeds us, strengthening our own hearts for the difficult journey toward eternal life.

The First & Greatest Admirer of Mary

By O. RIBERA

September is a particular Marian month. The Catholic Church celebrates, on September 8th, the birthday of Mary, on the 12th her Holy Name, and on the 15th her Sorrows at the foot of the cross of her divine Son.

From the Gospels we know that she was married to Joseph, a man from the tribe of Judah from Bethlehem. Many are disappointed that the evangelists have done nothing to inform us about the life of the greatest married couple of all times: almost nothing about their family, their whereabouts, their looks, or their age... Why Joseph has left his ancestral home, down South, to go and live in Nazareth up North? Was he young or old? Was Mary a beautiful girl? Who knows! To have some answers, we'd better wait for the time when we can see them in heaven!

For sure, Joseph was in love with Mary and like all lovers he never tired of pronouncing her name over and over. The name of Mary, to us believers, has the taste of heaven and, like Joseph, we are pronouncing it over and over when we say the

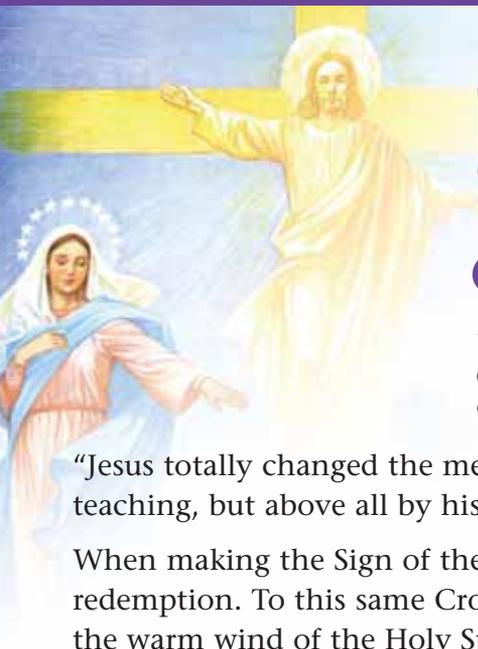
Rosary. Probably the name of Mary means “Lady” or “Princess.” Joseph was seeing in his wife the “Lady,” the mother of his God and, as such, he venerated her with his great love and respect. He knew that he was her husband, of course; however, his attitude toward her was one of a servant and custodian rather than a husband.

According to St. Jerome, the name of Mary has another meaning: *Stilla Maris*, that is, Drop of the Sea or *Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea. Our life here on earth is, more often than we expect, a dangerous journey on turbulent seas among trials, temptations and disappointments. By God’s grace we have a bright star in the sky, Mary. St. Bernard left us a famous saying that I would like to share with you: “*Respice stellam, voca Mariam*. Look at the star, invoke Mary. May her name never leave your lips and your heart.”

There is another name that Joseph, in the secret of his heart, may have given to Mary. It was the name with which Gabriel addressed Mary at the Annunciation: Hail, full of grace. Certainly, Mary could not have hidden that strange greeting from her husband when she told him, later on, what happened that day. If Mary told Luke, when he was preparing material to write his Gospel, then why not Joseph? That name—Full of Grace—coming straight from heaven and unique in the Bible was perhaps one of the reasons that threw Joseph into distress when making his final decision about her: “She is pregnant. What am I going to do with her? Should I take her or divorce her?”

The angel Gabriel, when meeting Mary, called her “Full of Grace,” not Mary. He called her, not by the name given by her parents, but changed her name to a name that expresses what she is in the eyes of God, “Full of Grace,” favored by God and filled with blessings. Hers is a name personally chosen by the Lord. Joachim and Anna gave her the name of Mary, their Lady and Princess. God adds to that name and, through the astonishing greeting of Gabriel, calls her “Lady full of grace, Princess favored by the Lord, Lady and Princess filled with blessings.”

Joseph was the first and the most passionate admirer of Mary because, through the Holy Spirit, he was seeing and venerating in her the Fullness of Grace, the Lady carrying the One Who is grace himself, Jesus the Savior. He loved Mary as no other man could have loved her. For her and for her divine Son, he humbly spent all his energies and all the days of his life. No regrets at all.



Death & Dying

BY FR. MARIO CARRERA, SC
GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE PIOUS UNION
OF ST. JOSEPH, ROME, ITALY

“Jesus totally changed the meaning of death. He did it by his teaching, but above all by his own death.” (Benedict XVI)

When making the Sign of the Cross, we recall the symbol of our redemption. To this same Cross, Mary too is bound. At Nazareth, the warm wind of the Holy Spirit gave her the gift of new Life and on Calvary that life was stolen away. Upon this same mountain of sorrows, her womb became the source of a new, universal maternity.

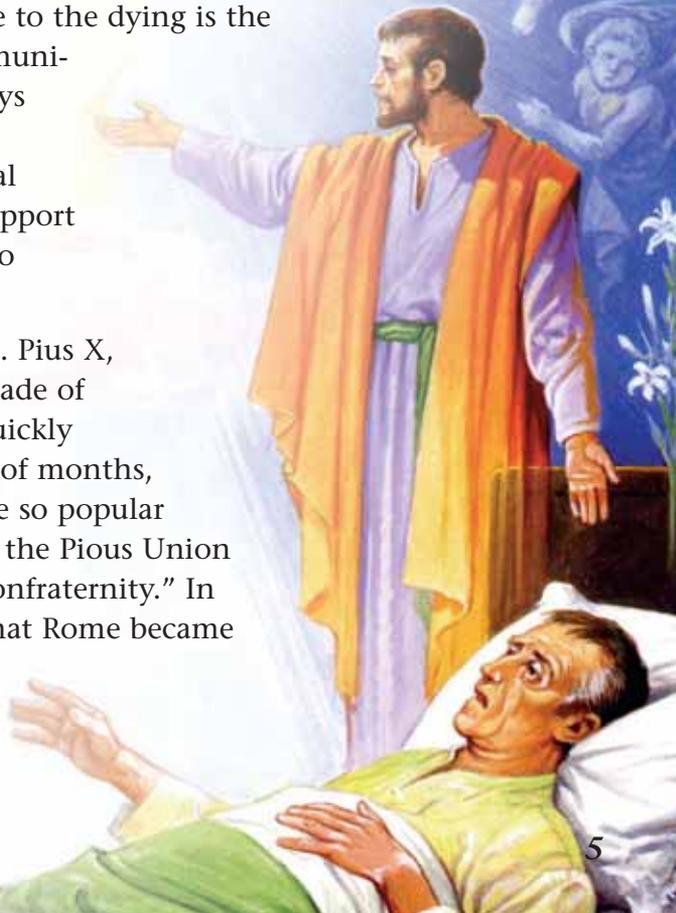
We know that when new life explodes in the mother’s womb, death also enters. Life and death are the two faces of our existence. Blessed Louis Guanella calls death “mother” because it opens the doors to eternal life and reveals the true purpose of our earthly life, that is, to use our time as best we can to reach our true destination, the safe harbor of salvation.

His home was in the Alps where signposts on mountain paths meant life and death to the traveler. Blessed Guanella offered spiritual signposts to people traveling the perilous path of death, helping them to save their soul. He called people from around the world, willing to be spiritually close to souls marching toward their eternal motherland. He established the Pious Union of St. Joseph and inspired an ocean of prayers for the benefit of the dying so that they might meet “mother” death in a serene way and put their trust in Jesus, the sure guide to the house of the Father.

Today Western society has relegated death to the basement of its concerns. The first step was to hide it from sight. However, this is useless. We are only fooling ourselves. We cannot stop death by refusing to talk about it. Death appears to some as despair and final defeat. Yet, this was not always so. Death was part of daily life: grandchildren saw their sick grandparents fading away and children attended their parents in sickness and death. In the trials of suffering and illness there was the love and comfort of family and friends. A sick person was given the same care once received in the cradle.

No one denies that dying is a courageous fight. We cannot commission anyone to die in our place, and although we must face it ourselves, we do not die alone. Close to the dying is the Church, a whole community of believers that prays for us so that we may receive the supernatural strength we need to support our faith and help us to persevere.

Encouraged by Pope St. Pius X, Blessed Guanella's crusade of prayer for the dying quickly expanded. In a matter of months, the Association became so popular that the Pope declared the Pious Union of Rome a "Primary Confraternity." In plain English we say that Rome became the heart of the Association, and its arms reached



around the world. In a matter of months the Pious Union spread to China, Australia, New Zealand and South America. Fr. Guanella spread the mission through a monthly magazine, "The Holy Crusade of prayer for the suffering and dying under the assistance of St. Joseph." Today "crusade" sounds a little bit awkward. Crusade is a word that recalls a climate of fundamentalism. To Blessed Guanella it was instead, and still is, a spiritual movement dedicated to carrying the splendor of the Cross of Christ for the benefit of those in need. Prayer of the Pious Union has a universal goal, the salvation of as many souls as possible.

This Pious Union of St. Joseph is a pilgrimage of a prayerful people having as its flag the Cross of Jesus, sign of God's unfailing love.

We need people around us. Even Jesus, on the wood of the Cross, cried out to his heavenly Father. He suffered fear and solitude in the Garden of Gethsemane, devastation and abandonment at the end. In the face of tragic events, violence and death, Christians will offer solidarity with those who are suffering and dying, Good Samaritans offering hope.

Before his death, St. Joseph received a unique grace. He, the carpenter from Nazareth, crossed the threshold of eternity near to Jesus and Mary. In life he supported his family, lived his faith, and prayed with Jesus and Mary and for years he patiently awaited the particular mission of Jesus, but did not have the grace to see it. He departed from this world blessed by Jesus and Mary, his little family so much loved.

We cannot have his unique experience. However, we can keep alive in our hearts the awareness that we are loved from eternity and that God gave us life so that we may bear fruit, abundant fruit, for his glory and for the salvation of many.

Brothers and Sisters Gathered Together

By FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SC

“O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES, FOR AMBER WAVES OF GRAIN,
FOR PURPLE MOUNTAIN MAJESTIES ABOVE THE FRUITED PLAIN!
AMERICA! AMERICA! GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE, AND CROWN
THY GOOD WITH BROTHERHOOD FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA.”

Seeking the Promised Land

Every time I hear this hymn sung, in full voice with a sense of gratitude, during liturgical services and communal meetings, I get emotional thinking of the many gifts of grace and nature that the Lord has spread upon this country. This land has become the home of people descending from many “tribes” who established themselves here for centuries to live in peace and progress in tranquility.

I think of the tribes of the people of Israel who ran away from Egypt and the poverty and slavery imposed upon them. They found a lasting dwelling place in the Promised Land of their fathers and, in this way, they became the meeting point of the faith in a God that is Father of all and wanting all to be saved in Christ Jesus.

I also recall the words of Emma Lazarus that I read at the bottom of the Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York City’s harbor:

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.”

In front of my eyes a vision appears; a vision

of numberless vessels from which a multitude of men, women and children disembark, seemingly pushed to our shores by a destiny of despair. In reality though, they were led by Divine Providence to build the most industrious and advanced country in the modern world.

As it was years ago, today too, masses of poor people press against the boundaries of our country.

Once they were pressing against

our ports, today they are arriving at every border using all means.

They are frequently preyed upon by unscrupulous people who profit from their difficult situation, while trampling on their fundamental rights as persons and as families.

As it was in the past with slaves who were brought out of Africa and for those fleeing religious persecution and tyrannical monarchies, it is the same today for immigrants who are denied the fundamental good of the culture they aspire to share in with their families.

We are told that 500,000 immigrants enter illegally into the United States every year. 90% of them find jobs within a few months, while only five thousand are able to become legal residents.

The words of Moses to his people before entering the land of Canaan should resound in our hearts when thinking of these immigrants:

“You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”!

These strangers are people who, in their poverty and need, are looking through the doors and windows of our country and seeing the abundance which we possess. They are asking to enter and to enjoy the same opportunities: to have a home, honest work, food, education and health care.



Immigrants in the early 1900s

They are the poor who were already abused repeatedly by the corruption within their own country and by the interests of power and big money in league with the richest nations of the world.

Cardinal Roger Mahoney was right when, at the 5th Annual Templeton Awards in Philadelphia, he reminded the country of the Gospel of Matthew 25:35; “Listen! The wage of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.”

“As a Christian,” he said, “there are no prior commitments that can overrule or trump this biblical tradition of compassion for the stranger, the alien and the worker. In whatever economic, political or social policies we discuss, we cannot turn our backs on this biblical legacy of hope.”

Today, politicians are discussing the issue of immigration at length. At the same time, too many citizens are saying that illegal immigrants are wounding the economy of the country. For this reason, they say, illegal immigrants and their families must be chased away. Frankly, we must ask ourselves the basic questions, “Is it true that illegal immigrants are destroying our economy and abusing its resources? Is it not true, instead, that immigrants accept work that Americans do not even consider because it is too hard and pays only pennies?”

The Church as God’s Family

Being members of the Church of God, we have to consider a special point when we face the crowd that, like sheep without shepherds, is



looking for a place to pitch the tent of their faith. Many have the same faith that we have. However, they are professing it in their own color, form and way. Theirs is a faith that expresses itself through what they touch and see and feel and we should not disregard it as childish. It is a faith that is anchored to life, to death, to the afterlife and we should not think it superstitious. It is a faith that seeks a physical manifestation so that they can communicate through signs, singing, joy and weeping their solidarity in sharing with us their fears and hopes. Above all, it is a faith that is nailed to the cross of Jesus' suffering and dying and from whom they implore mercy and salvation.

Through their humble and spontaneous faith, Latinos feel God is close to them; they have confidence in his providential presence; they feel they are the same family as the saints in heaven, from whom they ask intercession in the trials they meet in life.

Spanish speakers express their faith in a song that many know and that has become almost the "national anthem" of their faith: "Juntos como hermanos, miembros de la Iglesia vamos caminando al encuentro del Señor." (Brothers and sisters we are, members of the same Church; we are walking all together to the meeting with our Lord)

A Challenge and a Hope

Our Bishops ask for consideration, respect and justice toward those who, for human reasons and for objective emergencies, have crossed our national boundaries. Rightly they maintain that if we accept



their work and the taxes they pay, we have also the duty to guarantee them the protection of our laws. For this reason they urge legislators to study the possibility of legalizing the status of those who are living and working in the United States. They also envision the creation



of an efficient system for the future for temporary workers who enter for a short time as well as those seeking permanent legal residence. Above all, it is urgent that the law make provisions for reuniting their families, by removing the obstacles that do not allow family members outside the country to be reunited with those already in the U.S.

Local Churches are invited to adopt an attitude of welcome, acceptance and collaboration toward those persons who, pushed by their hunger and thirst for justice, for truth, food and honest work ask to enter our country and share in the life that the Lord has prepared for all.

Their simple lives and faith are a lesson for us and can even make our faith more credible. Their strong sense of family helps us to understand that in the house of God we are all equal in dignity. Their poverty awakes in us the desire to share. Their joy, a little bit too noisy for the tastes of some folks, shows us how joyful God is. Their rituals in liturgical celebrations remind us that it is from the heart that visible expressions of our faith come.

Realizing these things then, all together in one voice, we can sing: “La Iglesia in marcha esta’, a un mundo nuevo vamos ya, donde reinara’ el amor, donde reinara’ la paz.” (The Church is walking and we too are going toward a new world where love and peace will reign)

A Vocation, a Mission & the Happiest Source of Personal Fulfillment

By JAMES SAMEK LUDOVICI OF "AVVENIRE"

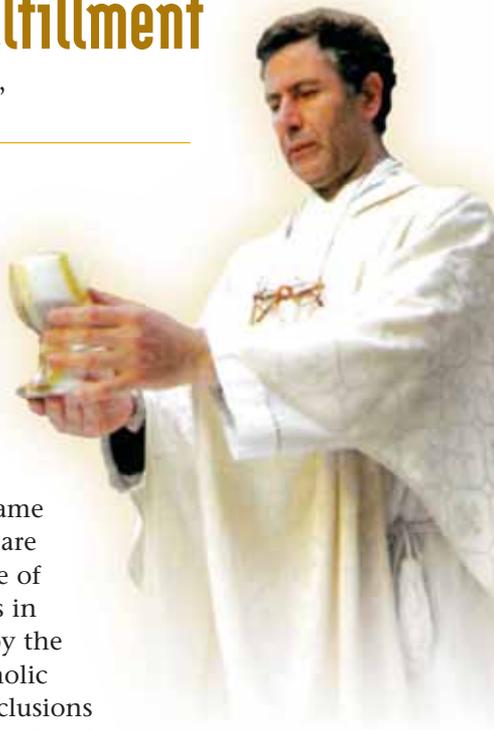
The German philosopher Nietzsche stated, with his typical arrogance, "I pity these priests! They are only prisoners. The one whom they call their redeemer loaded them up with heavy logs: heavily burdening them with false values and insane words! Ah! May somebody redeem them from this redeemer!"

Unfortunately this man's philosophy became common and spread the idea that priests are unhappy and frustrated. However, in spite of some scandal and frequent contradictions in the statements of those working to destroy the credibility, essence and values of the Catholic priesthood, we are happy to read the conclusions of a Social Survey conducted by the University of Chicago, which finds that priests are happier than others and more satisfied with their work than anyone else in the United States.

The research data was gathered for the years between 1972 and 2004 from a sample of 50,000 Americans.

The researcher expected the findings to indicate people in prestigious and lucrative jobs were the most satisfied with their work. However, in spite of comparatively low compensation for ministry, the survey indicated that it was priests who were most satisfied of all.

During the years covered by the survey it is also true that between 1964 and 2004 more than 69,000 priests abandoned their ministries. We are not surprised or scandalized by this number because we remember the consequences of the pernicious moral and religious tornados that tore through the Church during those forty years. In the face of this great loss to the



priesthood, however, we retain a sense of hope and give gratitude to God that in spite of all these devastating storms, more than 11,200 priests returned to their ministries. They repented and decided to undertake a journey of penance, reparation and fruitful commitment. They renewed their priestly commitment with full dedication to the kingdom of God.

What is the importance of this survey for us then? First of all we learn that the happiest among men are those committed to others and second that after making this commitment they are able to find the real meaning of their life.

The survey appears to give a clear indication that there is a connection between love and happiness: in fact, everything we do impelled by love becomes less onerous. Doing something only out of a sense of duty and obligation or working only to be economically rewarded or to increase our social status, can be frustrating and exhausting. Contrary to popular thought; when we strive to act with love in a supernatural vision of our life, all of our activities, big or little, fill our heart and life with joy. In fact, love can transfigure us and make everything we do meaningful: our sacrifices, struggles and suffering as well.

It was again Nietzsche who wrote that only those who possess the real sense of life can bear any weight. Despite his misleading interpretation and representations of the Church's mission, describing it as a prison of exhausting precepts and prohibitions, it is more and more clear to us that the synthesis of the commandments and the essence of Christian morality, incarnated and joyfully announced by thousands of faithful priests, comes from the divine commandment of love: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself..." (Mk 12:29-31). All other commandments are fulfilled in these two.

Moreover, it is Jesus' commandment of love which informs us with a profound sense and meaning of life.

Let us give thanks to God for His gift of priests. Let us pray for their perseverance and holiness in the sacred ministry. Let us cooperate with them to restore the image of Jesus Christ, who is leading his flock toward salvation through the ministry of his Holy Church.



THY WILL

AN EXPERIENCE OF GOD ACCORD

Suppose that the Supreme Pontiff or any other person famous for knowledge or sanctity came to you personally to beg you to perform a particular task. You would certainly consider yourself fortunate in fulfilling their request, because you feel absolutely certain that it is right and advantageous for you and for others. You are sure that it will bring honor to him who has requested your service.

When you do the will of God, you don't fulfill the desires of a simple man, as holy as he may be, but you fulfill the desires of the Most High. You know that whatever God wants is for the good of your soul, for the good of your brothers and sisters and for His glory. With what great love you should pray: "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven!"

Consider then, this golden rule for you to follow. For a long time you have asked for advice in regard to your sanctification, so I tell you, "Pray that you may fulfill the will of God in everything" because this is enough for you to become a great saint. If you become a saint, what glory for God; what triumph for Jesus Christ and what satisfaction for yourself!

If you love and obey Him you make the Most Holy Heart of our Redeemer happy. By his own nature Jesus Christ, your

L BE DONE

ING TO BLESSED LOUIS GUANELLA

elder brother, loves the Father. Jesus came down from Heaven to Earth to fulfill the will of the Father and He fulfills it perfectly. He didn't even refuse Him the agony in the Garden or the more painful agony on the cross. Jesus, your older brother, underwent so much in order to find you and lead you back to the Father.

In the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar Jesus Christ undergoes the agony of the Garden and of the cross again in a mystical way and He waits for the time when, moved by compassion for Him, you hasten to return to God's arms giving Him your heart. The heart of a Christian pleases the Heart of Jesus, as the heart of a good child pleases the will of his father fully. Offering himself as a victim to the Most High, Jesus wants to offer, along with his own heart, the hearts of all his younger brothers and sisters. In doing so he would experience the joy which a firstborn child feels when, after much suffering, he is able to lead his younger brothers and sisters back to his father.

Loving Christians exult when hearing that something needs to be done because God wants it!

May it please Heaven that you learn to rejoice for nothing other than lovingly fulfilling the Will of the Most High!



*The image of Maria Bambina
venerated in Milan, Italy*



Send a Kiss to Her

BY DIEUDONNE' LE PRESBYTRE

Honoring Mary with an intense spiritual affection helped Blessed Louis Guanella to discover and deepen his spiritual sensitivity, looking always to God as a provident and merciful Father while serving and caring for the poorest members of the Lord's family.



He learned how to honor Mary, to feel her protection in his daily ministry, being part of the people of God who are always in need during their journey toward the celestial homeland.

Beginning with the Shrine of the Blessed Mother near his native town, he learned to invoke her as "Mother of Mercy," and throughout his life he always looked for opportunities to express his devotion by visiting her in many sacred places in Italy and abroad. He also went to Lourdes to pay his debt of gratitude for the protection given by the Blessed Mother to his Congregations.

Nearing the sunset of his life, he traveled as a pilgrim to Nazareth and Bethlehem. While there, he contemplated the mystery of the love of God made flesh and manifested in the humble availability of Mary to the merciful plan of God.

These Pilgrimages to Marian Shrines and Biblical sites were for him like luminous sign posts on the way of priestly commitment, leading the procession of believers into Heaven.

It happened one day that a poor mentally disabled person, sheltered in Bl. Guanella's Motherhouse broke the statue of Mary in the garden. At the same time a group of visitors came to visit the institution and he, commenting on the accident, made a comparison between the broken image of Mary, the Daughter of Zion and Mother Church, offended and

persecuted by reckless enemies. The listeners were deeply touched and filled with strong emotion and Fr. Guanella appealed to them to always love the Church, which he reminded them is like a lovable Mother.

It happened also that, while visiting one of the Communities of his Religious Sisters, he was caught in a moment of ecstasy near the image of the Baby Mary, contemplating the greatness and beauty of the most chosen daughter of God. The sisters heard him repeating, "Send kisses to her! Send kisses to her!"

In his books he often spoke of Mary. He wrote, "Who is that baby girl? She is the lucky one blessed by God to be the Mother of our Savior. O Heaven, help me! How can a creature become the Mother of God? It's that! It's like that. For this reason I ask, 'who is the one who can fix his gaze on the face of the Virgin?' As Mary has been the Mother of Jesus, so also has she received in her heart the virtues of Jesus. Here my mind gets lost in thinking how the power of God could be accommodated in the heart of Mary. . .The heart of Mary is like the iron that, when placed into the fire, cannot be distinguished from it."

Surely when contemplating the image of the Baby Mary, the grace was given to Fr. Guanella to see her face. His human and spiritual journey had already reached its highest goal and it was granted to him to see with anticipation the vision of paradise which would soon welcome him.

During ancient times believers were supported by a strong faith in God and in their anticipation of a future life with Him. Today many doubt the revealed truths of our faith.

Blessed Louis Guanella found in Mary the example of consolation and support in his spiritual journey, always guiding him in the right way.

She is the one who has
gone ahead of us. She
accompanies us
through our life
on our way to
be with Jesus
forever.

*Cathedral of
Milan, Italy,
dedicated
to the birth
of Mary*



In The Heart of Jesus

We are all loved and called to be saints

This is a time of grace that the Servants of Charity, belonging to the newly erected "Divine Providence Province," are experiencing through activities and initiatives. At the same time we are preparing to celebrate the 1st Centennial Anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation, we are praying fervently for the Pope's authentication of the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Louis Guanella, and asking that we will be allowed to honor, pray and invoke him as a saint. To all the members of the Province working and ministering in India, the Philippines and the U.S., the Provincial Superior, Fr. Luigi DeGiambattista, sends his warm invitation to deepen our mission and the gift of our vocation as Servants of Charity in the local context of the Church and in the social environment. We want to share his message with readers and especially the members of the Guanellian Lay Movement who are asking to be involved in Blessed Guanella's ministry of charity, so that, through prayer, mutual support and example, we can join forces in the growth of the kingdom of God's love.

We read in our Constitution: "in the heart of Christ pierced on the cross and present in the Eucharist, we contemplate the supreme revelation of the love of God and are able to comprehend how true it is that we really are children loved and saved." (Constitution of the Servants of Charity 11)

Yes, dear brothers, today we are once again invited to go deeper into the experience of His tremendous, extravagant, compassionate love that on the cross has truly recreated, redeemed, embraced us and made us children of the same Father. In the crucified Son "the Father gives us His heart and better than any father or mother on earth, knows our hearts and follows our steps". (Bl. Guanella)

Let us go back to God's open heart every day, personally and as a community, as His family! From that heart we were born in the Church one hundred years ago! It is written in our birth certificate: we are Servants of Charity, "Servi a Charitate".

We exist, we are chosen, we are gathered, and we are sent only because of LOVE!

"Our very title reminds us that Charity is the reason why the Lord gathers us together, consecrates us for Himself and sends us to the poor". (Const. 12)

In this year of immediate preparation for our Centennial jubilee celebration, let us become more conscious of our origins, of our identity that is encapsulated in our beautiful name "SERVANTS OF CHARITY", Servants because we were first LOVED: personally, unconditionally, faithfully, totally loved, till the last drop of His blood, till His last breath! Let us enter with joy and gratitude into the Lord's heart and remain there with wonder and find peace and new energy. Let us experience once again His unconditional welcome! Let us seek and receive His healing forgiveness! Let us be touched, formed and transformed by His MERCY!

In God's heart we do not need to pretend to be different, we do not have to wear masks, to show off. We are loved as we are; poor sinners, fragile and broken people! Loved not because we are saints! We are all sinners, all loved and all called to be saints!

Only by entering contemplatively and remaining prayerfully in His heart will we be able to hear His voice again and again: "love one another as I have loved you.... By your mutual love they will know that you are my disciples...I have given you the example... This is my body given up for you; this is my blood for you and for all... Be merciful as I am merciful... Go and tell the good news... Go and do the same... Be good Samaritans among my poor and afflicted brethren!"

Only when we ourselves feel "touched without merit by His mercy, only then we will strive to make that mercy visible in us, by becoming merciful ourselves and by witnessing to a living faith in Providence". (Const. 10)

Only if we grow in the mercy of the Lord can we build genuine COMMUNION among ourselves. Only if we plunge daily into His compassionate love will we emerge as true Servants and fiery MISSIONARIES among the poor and the suffering.



The Most Rev. Carl F. Mengeling, Bishop of Lansing, Michigan, and the Servants of Charity

DISCIPLESHIP

2nd Annual Conference of the Guanellian Lay Movement

By LAUREN HILL

An enthusiastic group of laypeople, religious sisters and priests met in Chicago for the 2nd Annual Conference of the Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM). Each year we gather to pray, exchange ideas and insights, to teach and learn. For most of us, we who are not members of the Guanellian religious congregations of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence (DSMP) or the Servants of Charity (SC), the Conference is a time of retreat and formation while continuing to deepen our understanding of Blessed Louis Guanella's mission of Charity.

The Sacraments of the Church are the solid foundation upon which the conference is built: Holy Mass, Confession, Adoration, Benediction, and Our Lady's Rosary are the cornerstone of our activities.

Teaching to this year's theme, Discipleship, were Fr. Steven Glab, CR, Fr. Silvio DeNard, SC, Sr. Beth Ann Dillon, DSMP and Fr. Paul Oggioni, SC. Discipleship in Scripture and in the spirit of Blessed Louis Guanella, were the treasures these excellent speakers opened up for us.

"Who is a Disciple?" Fr. Steven asked, before directing us to many references in Scripture. After Christ's death, he said, no one referred to themselves or others as Christians, they were Jews, known only by the way they lived their lives. They were referred to as followers of "the way." They took on the discipline (disciples) by choosing order over chaos, by following Christ, the way the truth and the life and His "way" became the ordering principle upon which "life" was based.

Blessed Louis Guanella, Fr. Silvio told us, was a true disciple of Christ and follower

"CHARITY IS THE VISIBLE EXPRES



of the Word of God. He was a man of action: spiritual, intellectual, and physical, who didn't wait for perfect circumstances to act. He lived according to Christ on behalf of the poor. More of a teacher than a healer, he opened schools, cared for the sick and offered homes to the abandoned. "He bothered people," pestering them to care for the poor and his discipleship took the form of a servant. Fr. Silvio told us that we, who cooperate in his mission of charity, are called by God; we are a family, and Charity is the fruit of our cooperation with Divine Providence.

"Be present to the poor," was Sr. Beth Ann's clear and poignant message. Discipleship in works of charity, in the spirit of Blessed Guanella, was discussed and with Sister's help and the materials she provided we are now better able to understand the formative books we are reading this year: With Faith Love and Competence and the Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission.

A fiery closing message from, Fr. Paul, asked the provocative question: "What can we offer to a relativistic world?" "Charity" he thundered! "Charity is the visible expression of the Mercy of God." Blessed Guanella was given the grace of the Holy Spirit, his charisma, for the common good, which he passed on to his religious foundations. We who share his Charism continue his mission of charity.

Before departure, several participants lead one last discussion developing the question, what is our role in the Guanellian Mission? Dialogue was earnest and lively. It was decided that regional meetings would be organized, according to the missions carried on in local areas, and that lines of communication would be opened for sharing news and activities.

All in attendance expressed a desire to continue their formation.

SION OF THE MERCY OF GOD."



The 3rd Annual Conference of the GLM will be held in October 2008 in Elverson Pennsylvania. You are, of course, invited.

Guanellian Leadership Institute

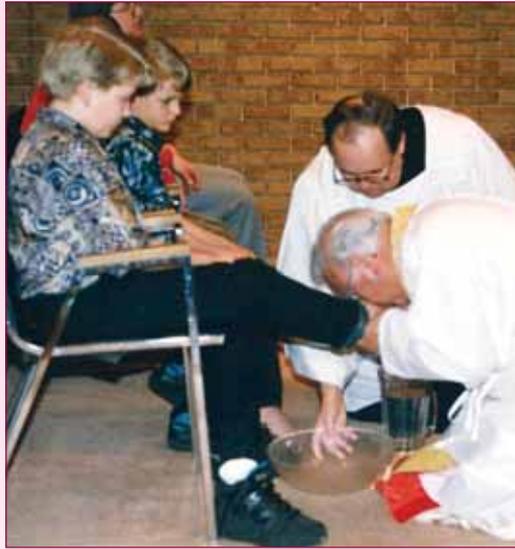
By Fr. Dennis Weber, S.C.

In March of 2004, a “changing of the guard” took place at Don Guanella Village, a residential program for persons with developmental disabilities, administered by the Servants of Charity since its inception in October of 1960. Administration of the programs shifted from the Servants of Charity to lay administrators under the auspices of Catholic Social Services (CSS) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. On the surface, this was not such a bad idea for the Servants of Charity. Three priests continued to live on campus providing a pastoral and spiritual presence to the residents, staff and family community. In an environment that was growing increasingly complex through a heightened regulatory atmosphere and the management of a \$10 million budget and nearly 250 staff members, this transfer of administration from a priest to a lay administrator represented an opportunity to bring in a seasoned professional in the field of mental retardation administration while also allowing for the ongoing presence of religious. Yet, it was not without its challenges.

John O. Mudd, chair of the board of Ascension Health, the nation’s largest Catholic health care system, described in an article entitled “From C.E.O. to Mission Leader” (America, July 18-25, 2005), the existence of what he labeled as an “organizational schizophrenia” in Catholic ministries in which the lay leaders were seen as having the responsibility “to see that the organization is financially sound and



delivers excellent service” while the mission directors and pastoral leaders were “responsible for mission, ministry and Catholic identity.” With the decreasing number of religious priests and sisters being involved in various Catholic ministries, Mr. Mudd saw the challenge for the lay leaders of these ministries as one in which they “too, must become effective mission leaders.” He further stated that this requires “thinking of ourselves differently and preparing for a role that may not have been part of the job description when we



signed up. This change is required, not just because there are fewer priests and sisters, but fundamentally because, as the Second Vatican Council made clear, lay persons have both the right and the responsibility to continue the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus.”

We at Don Guanella Village decided to meet this challenge of lay leadership becoming “effective mission leaders” with the establishment, in September 2005, of the Guanellian Leadership Institute. In this program we seek to educate, shape and form the leadership team of the Mental Retardation Services Division of CSS while leading them to understand, appropriate and foster the Guanellian spirit and values as “Servant Leaders of Charity” in serving the mission. This three year program has focused on topics such as respect for the dignity of the human person; the preferential option for the poor; companionship with persons with developmental disabilities; the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas est*” (God is Love); Servant Leadership and living family spirit. Further topics to be presented will focus on trust in Divine Providence and Eucharistic spirituality. All of these topics manifest the spirituality and charism of Blessed Louis Guanella but are also amply represented in the long teaching tradition of the Catholic Church.

This type of program is present in the tradition of the Guanellian family and is part of the formational and educational patrimony of Blessed Louis Guanella. Fr. Guanella saw that education and formation of the human person centers, essentially, upon interpersonal relationships that arise from the heart and develop by way of the heart (Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission, p. 62). Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* had this to say: “Those who work for the Church’s charitable organizations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heart-felt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity. Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a “formation of heart:” they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others.”

It is through the Guanellian Leadership Institute that we strive, then, to bring about a “formation of heart” so that our lay leaders may be “effective mission leaders” in the spirit of Fr. Guanella.



FROM INDIA:

To Be a Fire for Charity

Not to Fade Away, but to be a Flame in Fraternity

When the new day dawned, all of nature beautified the house of Guanella Preethi Nivas community bringing it, the blessings of God. To begin their religious life with Jesus, May 31, 2007, the Provincial Superior Rev. Fr. Luigi exposed the Blessed Sacrament and gave a reflection on the meaning of religious life. This was not an ordinary day; rather it was a day of joy, not only for this community but for the whole Guanellian Congregation because the novices responded to the call of the Lord unconditionally and with generous hearts.

Their profession began from the entrance. The soldiers of charity so called; "Fire of Charity" were accompanied by a gathering of their parents, Priests, Religious Sisters and children on their way towards the church. Really, it inspired us to see the goodness of the Lord by giving these servants to work in the vineyard and "To Be Fire for Charity in Fraternity."

The reflection given by Fr. Provincial enriched the new soldiers forming them to be united with Christ in love and to be fire for the Guanellian mission. Rev. Fr Visuwasam, Novice Master, presented the Novices to the provincial superior, with joy, thanking God and praying for their commitment. The Provincial Superior verified the intention of the Novices. Though it is not easy to live out these promises in the modern world, these young men came forward and professed their vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. This inspires us to live as Jesus lived on the

*Newly professed members of the
Servants of Charity*



earth. Afterwards they were offered the Guanellian symbols of the 'The Cross' and 'The Constitution book', as guides and companions on the journey toward holiness according to Guanellian spirituality.

When the Mass ended, one of the newly professed confreres, Bro. Amal Raj, expressed his gratitude to all with his smiling

face and thunderous voice. Another reason for joy that day was in the efforts of the newly professed brothers who, with the help of Rev. Fr. Gnanaraj, produced the booklet, "THE PROVIDENTIAL EVENTS OF BLESSED LOUIS GUANELLA". Rev. Fr. Maria Arokiadoss released the booklet and the Provincial Superior received the first copy.



Seminarians celebrating

After experiencing first profession I have learned to be a man of Jesus, a man of communion and a man of mission as our Blessed Guanella did. Please pray for us, the new novices, to fulfill these visions with our lives.

May this day, May 31, 2007 become a treasured day of holiness for all the newly professed religious.

The same day the Novices made their religious profession, we also want to make it known that after a deep experience of retreat, in preparation for the Novitiate, five postulants shared their great desire to understand and live the Guanellian life.

When all were gathered, one postulant came forward and expressed to Rev. Fr. Luigi De Giambattista, the desire of the five postulants to enter the Novitiate. He accepted their request and welcomed them, saying that they are "called to be a community of disciples, a community of brothers and a community of servants."

After entering into the Novitiate, five new Novices shared their joy by embracing one another committing themselves to sustain each other in their concrete cooperation with the will of God in the Guanellian Way.

This report was taken from letters written by Bro. Maria Julian Bernard and Novice Ravi Kumar Songa.

SHRINE REPORT

Prayer Requests

Every day many requests for prayer reach the desk of the Director of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, sent by members of the Confraternity and devotees who are suffering and in pain from their spiritual, physical and emotional difficulties and worries. In daily celebrations and prayers we entrust to God, through the intercession of St. Joseph, these requests of our brothers and sisters who cry out for divine intervention. Sick people ask for healing. Unemployed workers ask for help in finding a job. Discouraged persons ask for serenity and peace of heart.



Sorrowful parents seek the conversion of their children and baptism for their grandchildren. Persons with financial problems ask for the intercession of St. Joseph to find a simple and effective way to manage their family business. Each has his own list of intentions: peace in the world, harmony in the family, respect for life and an end to abortion, increased vocations and holy priests, the intentions of the Pope, unity among Christians, help for persecuted Christians, and conversion of sinners.

Many of you are sending your donations for a vigil candle to be lit near the image of St. Joseph. This burning candle is an expression of our faith and sign of our desire to be united with God in a continuous offering of prayer.

Others are sending stipends for the offering of Holy Masses to be celebrated in the Shrine or in the mission chapels of the Servants of Charity working in India and the Philippines. Some are also cooperating with our ministry of charity in these countries where we are caring for orphans, disabled persons, incurably sick and indigent elderly. Masses and works of mercy will obtain for you from God the graces you need for your daily life and commitments. We assure you also that you and your dear ones are constantly in our daily prayer and in the prayer of those who are helped by your cooperation.

The Mass stipend is \$10 as directed by the Diocese. Gregorian Mass, a Mass for the repose of the soul offered for thirty consecutive days, may be arranged by contacting the offices of the Pious Union of St. Joseph.

Groundbreaking of Mount Calvary

For years it has been the dream of many people that this project would get underway, fulfilling a desire to offer another place of prayer and devotion to pilgrims coming to the Shrine of St. Joseph.

Generous members and friends of the Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying offered their prayerful cooperation and their donations. Now we are glad to announce that on July 1st the foundation stone was blessed and buried at the foot of the future Calvary, where the altar for the Eucharist will be located.

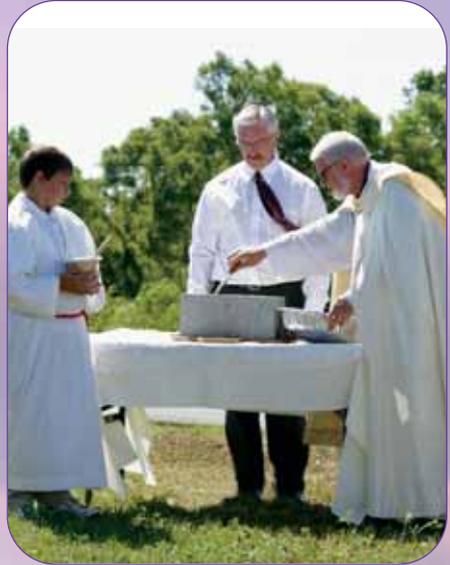
During the celebration medals of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Divine Providence, St. Joseph and Blessed Louis Guanella were cemented in with the stone as a sign of our complete trust in God's help and faithful commitment in our ministry to the suffering and dying while announcing the redeeming power of Jesus' death on the cross and presence in the Eucharist.

Pilgrims who draw near to the altar at the foot of Calvary will easily understand that the contemplation of Jesus crucified joined with Jesus in the Eucharist are the sure path to spiritual growth. Connecting to the eternal sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross while participating in the Eucharistic celebration, we become worthy of salvation and eternal life. We, who want to share with Him our life and suffering, find confidence that through His cross we may become worthy to enter into His light.

When God wants something there is no doubt that His Providence will bring it about through generosity and cooperation.

Mount Calvary will be blessed and dedicated on Sunday, October 28, 2007. All are invited to the celebration.





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**
- “I am the Resurrection and the Life” Memorial Wall\$500**
- Dedicate a tile near the Calvary.....\$250**
- Dedicate a tile at Our Lady’s Grotto\$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

From the Mailbag

Dear Father Paul,

I received my membership card today, and your wonderful thoughtful words and prayers for my son.

To answer your question about what is drawing me to the dying; it is the power of St. Joseph at the hour of death. He "is" the patron of the dying. I guess the power of this comes from him being beside me when my son Scott died. He snatched Scott from the evil one, and delivered him to his Son and spouse. I know he would be in hell right now had it not been for the power of St. Joseph. I find solace every day in that. There has not been one day of my life that I have not thought of Scott and St. Joseph. I was surrounded by spiritual angels after Scott died. People came into my life, reinforced the spirit within me and left. It's like the experience happened yesterday.

Any one who know me knows that I have four solid devotions: St. Joseph, Mary, the Immaculate Heart and the Sacred Heart. One day a lady came to me and said, "John you must join the Pious Union of St. Joseph because of your devotion to St. Joseph."

That's it Father, I'm glad I stopped to answer you.

In Jesus, through Mary and Joseph,

Email from John

Dear Fathers,

On January 19, 1999 you accepted me and my spouse into the Pious Union of St. Joseph. At the time my husband was not practicing his faith, however on March 18, 2003, after having received a great sign from St. Joseph I wrote and told you about his conversion.

Now I am sad but coping with his death, after having prayed with him all night. He died a very peaceful death.

Please send information about having the Gregorian Masses said for him. I do pray to St. Joseph with gratitude for his help.

Waiting for your reply, Sincerely in the Lord,

A Member in Louisiana

Dear Father,

In April you offered Mass for my intentions for my brother Michael who was critically ill. We were told that he was dying from cancer. I received a beautiful letter from you that was so comforting. Michael died April 24th. He suffered a lot but when he died his nurse said that when she got to his bed he looked up and smiled and took his last breath. So, God and St. Joseph and all those we prayed to, heard our prayers. I pray every day for the dying and the forgotten souls in purgatory. Again, thank you for your comforting words.

God Bless, MS

Servants of Charity and Daughters of St. Mary of Providence

Called by God to evangelize the world through Charity

Among those who are deprived of humane and spiritual support, we care for developmentally disabled, abandoned children, indigent elderly, incurable and terminally ill and troubled youth. We are also committed to pastoral and mission work in America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Our founder, Blessed Guanella, wrote that “the whole world is your homeland.” His words, echoing through time, remind us that Charity has no boundaries.

For more information, contact:

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Ph. (773) 545-8300
E-Mail: srbarbaram@sbcglobal.net

Fr. Paolo Oggioni, SC
Pious Union of St. Joseph
953 East Michigan Avenue
Grass Lake, MI 49240-9210
Ph. (517) 522-8017
E-Mail: frapauloni@yahoo.com



Shrine Pastoral Ministry

Mass Schedule

Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri., Sat. – 11:30 a.m.

Wed. – 8:30 a.m. followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction at 4:30

Sun. – Eucharistic Celebration for Pilgrims at 10:00 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Daily before & after Mass

Saturday 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday Devotion for the Sick

11:00 a.m. Rosary and the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick.

For pilgrimages and/or day retreats, please contact the Pious Union Office
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mon. – Sat. (517) 522-8017



Chaldean women praying at the Shrine of St. Joseph for peace in Iraq

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Grass Lake, MI 49240

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