

# *The Voice of Providence*

PUBLICATION OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY



# Servants of Charity



**now HOUR**  
AND AT THE

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2008

100 YEARS OF SERVICE AND GRACE ♦ 1908–2008

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### The Voice of Providence:

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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 They Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness for They Will Be Satisfied. (Mt 5:6)

Hunger is becoming an ever growing problem all over the world. The cost of food and the related cost of energy are unsettling the peace and the stability of the world.

In the wealthy countries, people can still provide food by giving up other comforts to make ends meet. But in two thirds of the world the majority of people do not have extra comforts to give up, and the price of food is already out of reach. Jobs are very few and assigned only to those who have an education or a connection.

Why are so many people suffering from starvation? Are we running out of food? Perhaps we should pay more attention to the Holy Father when he says that hunger in the world is not an accident but is mostly created by unfair distribution, greed, speculation and politics.

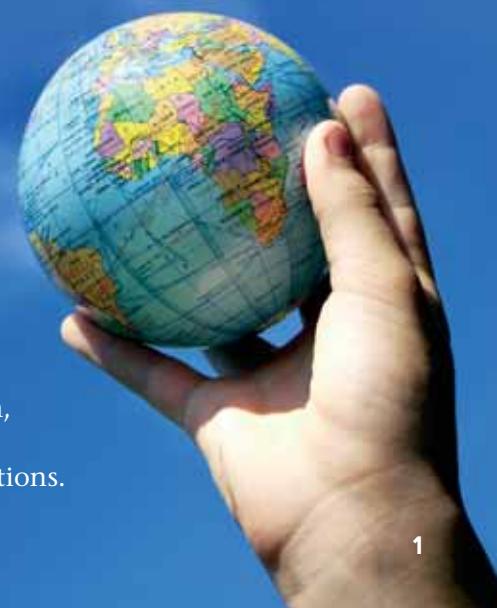
What can a mother or a father do when they see their children dying of starvation, malnutrition, or related diseases before their very eyes?

I have seen children and adults foraging through piles of garbage for food, in competition with animals. I have witnessed mothers mutilating their children to attract the compassion of passersby.

Fathers sell their children or their body parts to survive one more month with the whole family.

I have seen hundreds of prostitutes lined up along the expressways to sell their bodies, just for food.

In many cases a hungry person may turn to violence, robbery and assault. Entire peoples may surge into rebellion, often ending in many casualties and destruction, creating even worse conditions.



But blessed are we when we start to consider our affluence, our waste and our prejudices.

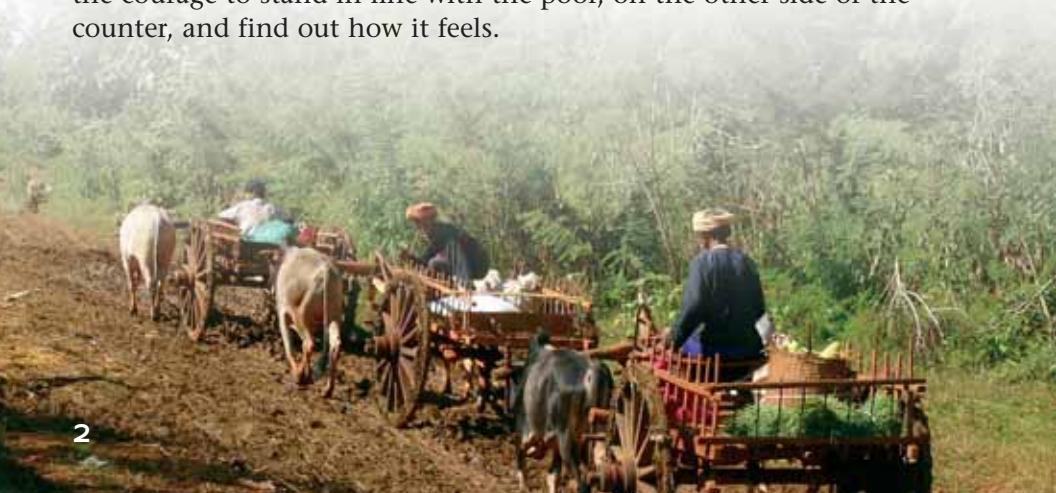
It is the first step toward hungering for justice and peace. One of the works of charity is feeding the hungry.

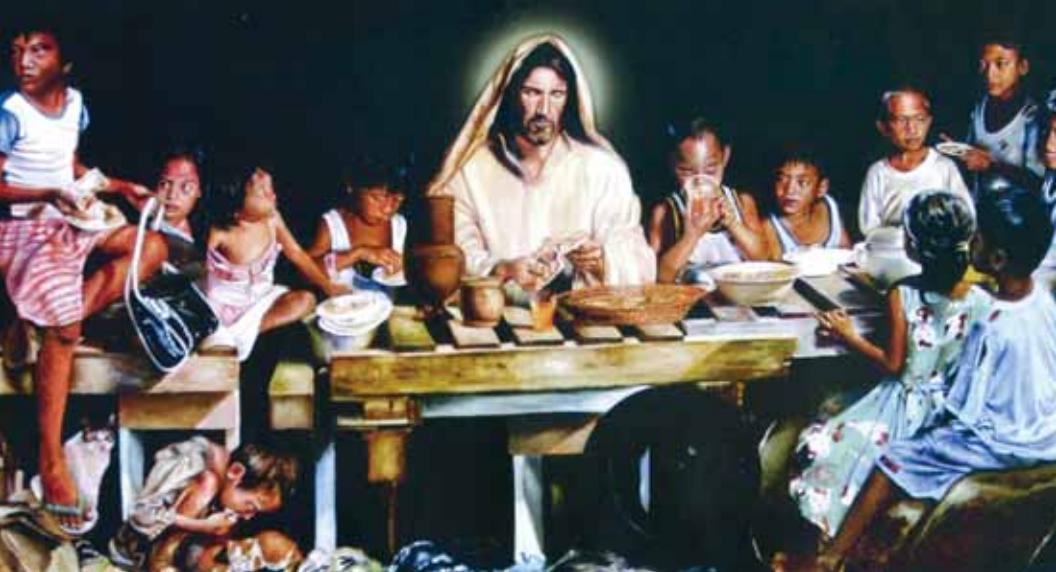
If we want peace we have to work for justice. Jesus' command is not hard to understand: "Love one another as I have loved you." The Lord will satisfy the hunger of the people who commit themselves to looking beyond their own front door.

The French Revolution comes to mind. After years of killing, destruction and suffering, the conclusion was: "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity." Too much freedom creates unbridled capitalism; too much equality creates communism. Fraternity is the balance of the two. But the Gospel has been teaching the same thing for two thousand years. We could have avoided the killing, the suffering and the destruction had we listened to the words of Jesus.

Pope Benedict hit the target about world hunger. With humility, knowledge and firmness he stated: "Food production is often conditioned by structural deficiencies, by selfish politics and speculations which force entire populations to the edge of the human condition. Respect for human dignity within the international community, even in emergencies, would help to identify the superfluous for the global needs and distribute in fairness the fruits of creation."

Our Christian communities can not just stand there and watch so much suffering. We may not be able to do much individually, except offering our prayers and donations, but together we can move politicians and agencies. We can create awareness of what's going on and perhaps have the courage to stand in line with the poor, on the other side of the counter, and find out how it feels.





# THE CHURCH & WORLD HUNGER

By Fr. JOSEPH RINALDO, SC

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**The shortage of food and the high prices where food is available is a world-wide tragedy.**

The Church is painfully concerned for the millions of men and women whose survival is threatened by dangerous situations which jeopardize the security of their countries. In fact, the Church is aware that growing globalization of the markets does not always facilitate the availability of food.

Food production is often a condition of structural deficiencies, selfish politics and speculation which force entire populations to the edges of the development process. This awareness strongly compels us to reiterate that hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a world, which in reality avails itself of production levels, resources and technology capable of putting an end to this human tragedy and its consequences. The great challenge of the international community must not only be limited to the globalization of financial and business interests, but needs to cover the expectation of solidarity as well, with respect and appreciation for every human contribution.

The Church appreciates everyone's efforts to bring to the attention of the international community the obstacles against the struggle to eliminate hunger which, to become effective, must be united and organized. Unfortunately a multilateral intervention has been made impossible by the opposition of the few.

The Church encourages her faithful to participate as much as possible with their government in the commitment to eliminate the imbalance between wealth and poverty. She begs all believers to pursue reforms, at a national level, which deal successfully with the problems of underdevelopment that produces hunger, malnutrition and disease.

The Church will not ignore the calls of the people from many countries where they are unable to feed themselves sufficiently to live. Poverty and malnutrition are not a tragedy caused by the environment or natural disasters. Technological and financial concerns cannot prevail against the duty of justice toward the ones who suffer from hunger. The right to nutrition is based on the ethics of life to "feed the hungry" (Mt 25:35). Every human being has the right to life. Therefore it is necessary to foster the realization of this right by assisting the hungry in becoming able to meet their needs for sufficient and healthy nutrition.

At this particular time the security of food is threatened by the rising cost of agricultural products. It is imperative to develop new strategies to fight poverty and enhance rural improvement. Structural reforms are also necessary to face the challenges of food security and climate change. The availability of food must also be increased through a preferential choice for small farmers, which secures their access to markets. However, the increased agricultural production will make a difference only if met by an efficient distribution which satisfies primary essential needs. It's not an easy plan. It would, however, bring about the rediscovery of the rural family. The rural family is not meant only to be understood as a household limited to preserving and



transmitting, from parent to child, the farming methods, preservation and distribution of food, but represents a way of life, education, culture and spirituality. Financially speaking, the family not only insures effective and caring attention for the weakest, but can also assume a direct role in the chain of distribution and sale of agricultural products, bypassing the cost of the middle man and encouraging the small producer.



The food shortage today shows how modern technology alone cannot solve the world's nutrition problems. Even less can be done statistically or with emergency food deliveries. These are certainly important but must be sustained by political intervention that is inspired by the principles of natural law written in the hearts of men, which protects the dignity of people. Only the protection of the human being can defeat the main cause of hunger. The fence we build against other people which breaks solidarity, justifies over consuming, disrupts social interaction and ends by deepening social inequality and ignoring the common good is what holds us back.

If respect for human dignity is brought to the negotiating table and informs decision making, then many obstacles to protecting the weakest among us can be eliminated or at least considerably diminished. Then, it would be possible to adopt courageous policies that do not give up against hunger and malnutrition as if they were only a local nuisance without a solution. Supporting human dignity within the international agenda, including emergencies, can help in assessing what is superfluous and what is necessary in view of global needs.

The Catholic Church, although different from the United States, will cooperate and assist in all of their decent efforts and commitments which involve the entire international community. The goal is to encourage every nation to share the needs of other nations, by making the goods of the earth available, which the Creator has given to the entire human family.



# Dear Saint Joseph

BY BISHOP TONINO BELLO

First of all I would like to apologize if I am taking advantage of your hospitality, and for wishing to spend half an hour with you in your carpenter's shop. I would like to exchange a few words with you, if I may, so please, continue to plane your piece of wood while I sit on your bench, surrounded by the smell of resin and wood chips.

Dear St. Joseph, I came here to know you better: as the husband of Mary, the father of Jesus, and the head of a family to which you consecrated your life.

What made me curious about you is your special marriage to a virgin, your self-giving acceptance of fatherhood to the Son of God on earth, and your responsibilities in serving your exceptional family.

To be honest, I want you too tell me just how your experience is meaningful in our culture today?

I see from here, inside your house, your wife Mary, who is working on a beautiful piece of material, seamless, woven in one piece from the top to the bottom. Probably, it will be the tunic that Jesus will wear later on in his life. When your son wears this tunic, He, the Eternal, will feel the lovable protection of his Mother upon his shoulders.

Tell me, Joseph, when did you meet Mary? Did you meet her; as she was returning from the well, carrying a jug of water on her head, or perhaps on the Sabbath day when she was talking with other girls outside the synagogue?

I know that she talked to you about the Lord, the angel of the Lord, and about the mystery hidden in eternity and now hidden in her womb.

I know that she talked about a plan that is bigger than the universe and higher than the sky. After that conversation, you were moved by what you heard, and must have replied: For you, Mary, I would like to renounce all my plans. I would like to share with you your plans as long as the Lord will allow me to stay with you.

She answered: Yes, and you lightly touched her womb with a gentle caress. It was your first blessing upon the Church in its very beginning. She relied on the omnipotence of the Creator, while you offered your life on the fragility of one of His creatures. She showed a higher degree of faith, while you have shown a higher degree of hope. The rest was made up by charity, both in you and in her. You did not ask anything for yourself, not because of pride but because you loved Mary above everyone else.

Joseph, a lady is coming in. She is bringing you bread, fresh from the bakery. Your shop is now filled with its fragrance. You know that, before being eaten, bread was given to be shared with friends, the poor, the pilgrims, and with those who are passing by. When bread is broken at the table, it binds people into a communion. At the bottom of a knapsack, it reconciles the traveler with life. When bread is given to the poor, it is an encounter with fraternity. Given to someone who knocks at the door late at night, it soothes the hunger of the spirit, looking for solidarity while calming the hunger in his stomach.

One day, your son, too, will break the bread, before dying, and hope will overflow upon the earth.

Please, break some of this bread for me!

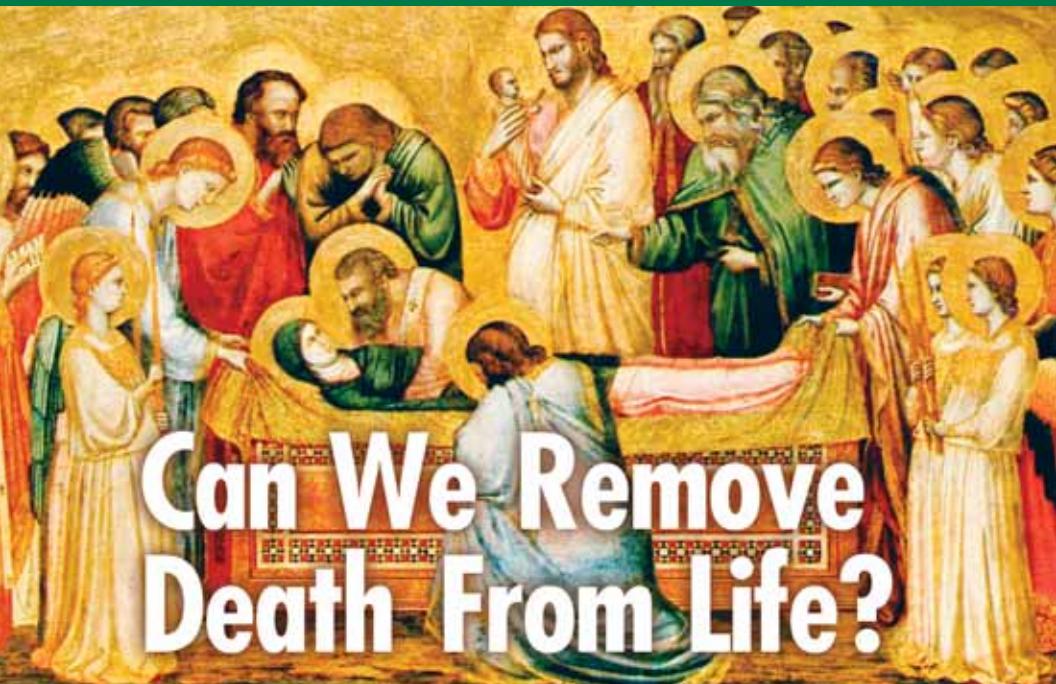
They are bringing you some wine, too. One day, wine will flow on the tables of the poor. Your son will do that, and he will choose the fruit of the vine as the sacrament of the eternal Sabbath.

Please, give me some of your wine, and give me also some fresh water from the spring.

When your son will use water to wash the feet of his friends, water will become the symbol of service, explanation of self-giving, and feast.

Dear Saint Joseph, I must go now. With you I found refuge. I needed to make sense of a few things. Our world is looking for meaning. May we reach out to you!





# Can We Remove Death From Life?

INTERVIEW WITH CARDINAL GEORGES MARIE MARTIN COTTIER, OP

By FRANCA GIAN SOLDATI

**In the Western world there is an ongoing attempt to remove the facts of death from human experience. It begins to look like death has become an unspeakable taboo. Is this a positive step for us or are we really damaging ourselves and our culture?**

*"The reality and certainty of death and the fragility of human life has always been a subject of interest and most recently to the existential pessimists of the post-modern world. Today people live totally immersed in the perceived omnipotence of science and technology. It is a type of censorship which permeates everything. Parents don't dare to talk to their children about death. They fear it might scare them and give them nightmares. School programs don't contemplate anything that hints of death."*

**We have to be honest with ourselves. Our culture is doing its best to remove the notion of death from daily life.**

*"People of the 21st century think they are immortal, forgetting that there is a God. It seems they purposely want to live a life of lies and falsehoods rather than accept the course of our human nature."*

**I think that people are not afraid of death per se.**

*"They are afraid of what happens before death, the experience of going through long days or months of suffering and pain. However, putting aside the notion of suffering and death from our natural experience brings serious consequences, because we put aside nature itself."*

**Every day the media enters our homes bringing us news of family violence, killings, famines, natural disasters, terrorism and war; a river of sorrows.**

*"Not so long ago people were more consciously aware that, sooner or later, they were going to die. They loved life, and life has to run its natural course. Certainly, they were not morbid people sleeping inside a casket or delighting in drawing and quartering their neighbors. They were not afraid to recognize that they were human, fragile and not so eternal. They did not run from themselves. They accepted mortality without falling into the pit of nihilism, that nefarious belief that there is no meaning or purpose in human life, and that everything ends here."*

**Would we be happier if we thought and talked more about the human experience of suffering and dying?**

*"I think so. Coupled with its aversion to death, society is unfortunately infected with the disease of pessimism which brings with it incapacity for enjoyment of the little things of life. It seems that people have become blind, en masse. Nothing attracts them for very long. We no longer enjoy the earth or the simple beauty of creation that lies outside our door. The chirping of birds annoys the ears of those who are used to loud man-made sound. When we throw death and suffering away, the result is that we are unable to enjoy life in its fullness. Life is not appreciated enough."*

**To a believer it's not so problematic to accept the death of our body, but to an unbeliever?**

*"We should convince ourselves first, and then others, that death is not falling into a pitch dark hole. It is entering into a new life, into a new and unknown dimension of life that is the love and intimacy of God. God does not rob us of life. He changes it for the better. The Christian anthropological intuition of unity among body and soul is basic. The breaking of that unity is not a breaking at all, but a passage, a rite of passage from the human dimension into the spiritual one. It is true that death is sometimes violent. We are paying the price of original sin! St. Paul writes to the Romans, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:23)"*

**You are 86 years old. Are you not afraid to die?**

*"To be honest with you, I am not afraid. Dying is a solemn act, and we must prepare ourselves for death, knowing that God's love is waiting for us."*

# The Pope Has Touched the Heart of America

By FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SC

In anticipation of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the USA, for the first time, we heard and read plenty of memories of John Paul II's visits and his charisma, especially with our youth. Many comparisons were made; accompanied by theories, guesses, predictions and catastrophes.

Nobody even came close to foreseeing the phenomenon which took place under our very eyes.

Pope Benedict came to this country like a distant relative who has been invited to spend Thanksgiving and doesn't know who else is going to be there, what to bring or what to say.

Pope Benedict came with humility and love for a wounded American church, with an incredible strength of listening and profound respect for all, especially the poor and suffering. By the time he left he was no longer Pope Benedict XVI, he became OUR POPE.

Our Pope had simply touched the heart of America and of all the people who had a heart.

Wherever he went, spoke or visited, he reached the minds and hearts of his audience. He communicated with his voice, with his eyes, and most of all with his heart. He came down on a level with the people making his own, their pain and their joy, their suffering and endurance, their fears and hopes.



Three months later the effect of his visit continues, expands and increases. People are crowding into the churches, accessing countless religious websites, and applying to seminaries.

The St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, just outside Manhattan, where the Pope prayed with twenty five thousand youth, has received more applications in the last months of May and June than in the previous twenty years. Many of these applicants stated that they had been thinking about the priesthood, but never decided to take the final step. But after praying with the Pope and listening to his message of love to a jubilant crowd, they found the answer to their personal quest.

Pope Benedict challenged the opinion of many believers in America that religion is a personal matter without any implication in public life.

Perhaps it was the Pope's responsibility, as the head of the Catholic Church, to question radical individualism and stimulate people to reexamine our society.

Pope Benedict succeeded in getting the attention of many Catholics who had distanced themselves from their parishes. They felt they were called and invited personally to come out of their shell. In many churches Sunday attendance doubled, especially those with a large presence of people of German descent, deeply touched by the coming of "their" Pope.

These were the last words of our Holy Father in New York: "For all the people of America, and indeed, throughout the world, I pray that the future will bring increased fraternity and solidarity, a growth in mutual respect, and a renewed trust and confidence in God, our Heavenly Father.

With these words, I take my leave. I ask you to remember me in your prayers, and I assure you of my affection and friendship in the Lord. May God bless America!"



## ELECTION 2008:

# Our Christian Obligation

BY JOSEPH YEKULIS



As a former political office holder for ten years, I was asked by the Servants of Charity to once again speak about our upcoming elections in 2008 for this issue of The Voice of Providence.

So what's different about the decisions we face this year, compared to those we faced just two short years ago? The answer is: this is a Presidential year and if you thought things were wild during the mid-term elections in 2006 wait until this year's general election.

My last political campaign was in 2004 at the state level, and as I learned from the voter lists I used, while going door-to-door, there are many people who only vote once every four years, period. Many people are registered and don't vote at all. Why? They feel their vote "doesn't count" or they feel that voting is not really "worth the effort" of spending 45-60 minutes to get into a voting booth. Certainly the number one excuse I've heard is that, "I'm just too busy".

As Catholics, we must consider our core values as we prepare ourselves for the decisions we will be making this year when we vote. But where do we turn for the answers? Legally, the Church cannot endorse candidates. So let's start with the Catechism of the Catholic Church as it evolved from the Vatican II Council.

Paragraph 2246 states, "It is part of the Church's mission to pass moral judgments even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it. The means, the only means she may use are those which are in accord with the Gospel and the welfare of all men according to the diversity of times and circumstances."

Former U.S. Ambassador Alan Keyes spoke on EWTN television on April 26, 2005, and offered his insight as to why a "moral creed and a public conscience" are essential to the governance of people and a nation.

"I think...the purpose of law in human affairs is to try to conform the rules and regulations that govern society with the

will of God—which is ultimately the guide that has to shape what we do, both in terms of personal conscience, our obligation to our first society, which is the family, and to the larger society, which ultimately produces things like government. The United States...was founded on the principle that our rights as human beings come from the hand of God. Obviously if we are going to appeal to God's authority for our rights...the exercise of those rights has to respect the authority from which they come. Otherwise, we involve ourselves in a destructive contradiction."

So the Church may "pass moral judgments" based on the Gospel, our personal conscience is shaped by the "will of God," and without God's authority, "we involve ourselves in a destructive contradiction." Important words to consider, but is that enough to get you into the voting booth? This year will offer one of the most interesting Presidential Elections of our time, as there is no incumbent or Vice-Presidential candidate running this year. Certainly the major social and political issues will also shape your opinions.

- The War in Iraq – Finish the job or walk away?
- Support our troops or weaken the military?
- Four-dollar a gallon gasoline – Drill in Anwar or save the planet?
- Global warming; real or imagined?
- Protect human life or support abortions?
- Thousands of family homes in foreclosure.
- Taxes on personal property, income, roads, and businesses?
- The weakened value of the U.S. dollar in the world?
- Politics as usual or olive branches to the other side?
- Immigration: Open borders or closed gates?
- Uphold the sanctity of marriage or allow same sex marriages?

These are just a few of the many issues that you will be considering when choosing your next Commander-in-Chief. Not only that, but when you vote for a U.S. Senator, State Senator, State Representative, or local candidate, consider how his/her views on any of these issues conform to your own? When considering judicial candidates at any level, do you support strict constructionists who only interpret the law, or activist judges who legislate from the bench?

Since the Catholic Church does not allow candidates to campaign actively in our parishes or support individual candidates, it will be up to you to research the candidates to the best of your ability before you vote. The future of the free world is in your hands. Seek out the Lord's guidance and wisdom before casting your votes.

# The Joy of Being Called

By Fr. CHARLTON VIRAY, SC



I was ordained Priest on December 9, 2007 after ten years of formation by the Servants of Charity. These ten years were a challenging and joyful journey with the Lord, with the Guanellian community and with the poor. One could think that my journey has ended with ordination, but to tell you the truth, I am only just beginning.

I was studying Accountancy in a university in Manila when I met the Guanellians through a vocation awareness activity, organized by campus ministry where I was an active member. After this encounter, I became interested in their life and began visiting their house and attending vocation discernment activities. I felt that God was calling me to the Guanellian life and after two years in the university, I decided to enter. I was barely nineteen years old.

My father didn't like my idea (he had many reasons) and was very much against my decision. In opposition to my father's will, I left home and went to the seminary in May of 1994. My mother was my "partner in crime." In the seminary, I offered many prayers for my father and, surprisingly, God answered. After only five months, my father accepted my decision and even began looking for benefactors for my room and board and studies in the Seminary.

Seminary life was marked by many ups and downs. All of the seminarians, who entered before me, left except for one, Dong who was later ordained a Priest. Three years after entering, I also left for home. My sister became sick and my father gravely ill. He died just one year after I left the seminary. While outside, I was a religious education teacher in the High School and attended a Pastoral Course for Youth Leaders on weekends.

During this time away my heart was restless. I felt God was really calling me to serve him and his poor as a Guanellian priest and during the

Jubilee of 2000, I returned to the seminary permanently.

Why did I choose to go back? Because of Love.

I feel that God's love for me was the primary reason I went back to the seminary and tried my best to follow him, even knowing my weakness and limitation. I believe that the Lord loves me and is faithful to me. When God called me, he called me into love. His love for me will never change because in his very essence, in his very core, is love because God is love. And, he wanted me to be his instrument of love to others.

With God's unconditional love, how could I not love him in return? When I decided to enter the seminary, I was just responding to the love of God. Love of God, if genuine, will necessarily overflow into love of others; first the community and second the poor.

"Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34) This is the scripture that I chose for my ordination. Divine Word captures what I have experienced of God and the challenge that he is posing to me now and always.

The life of a priest is joyful and filled with sacrifices.

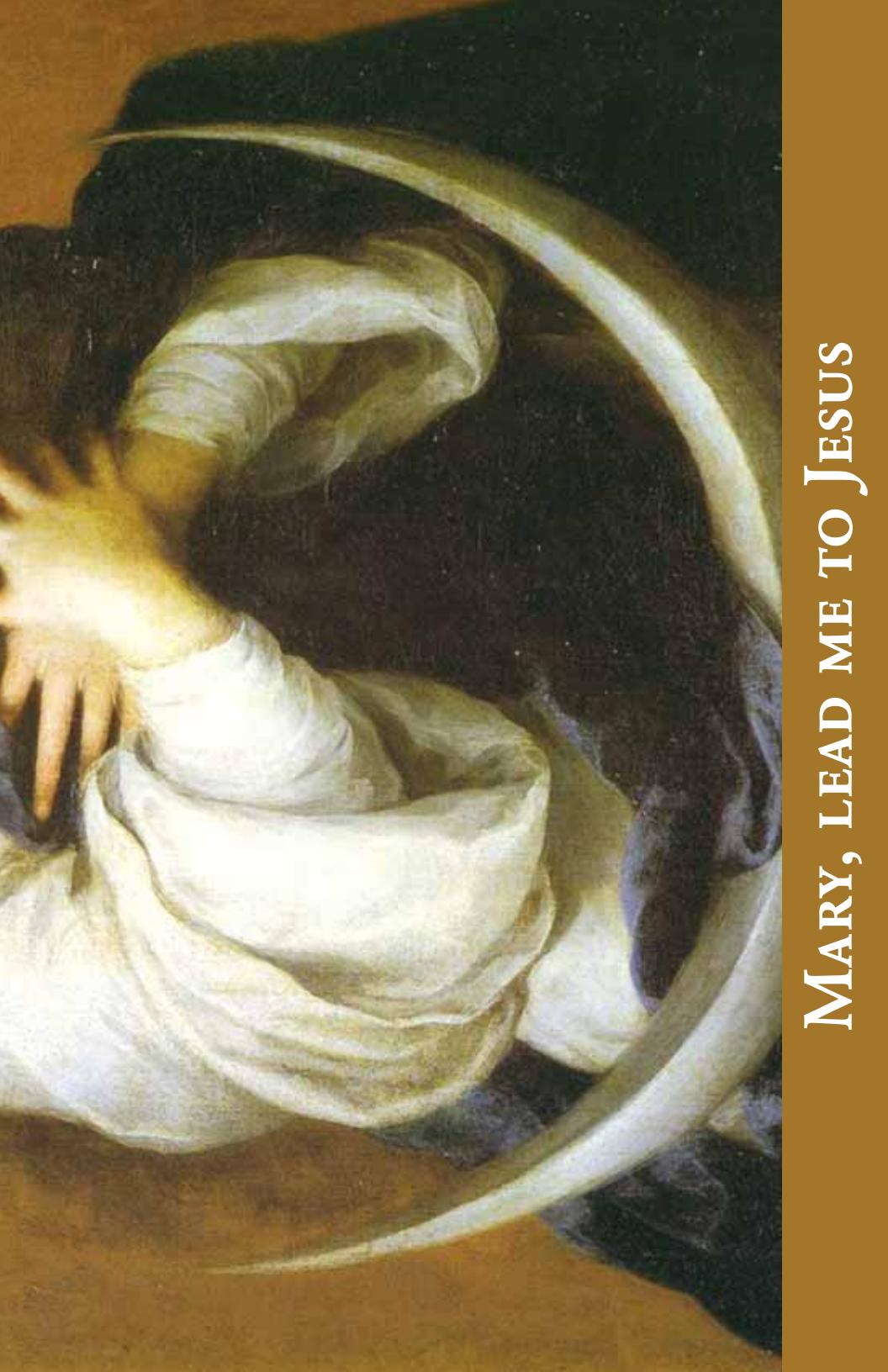
When I was ordained, many people asked me to

pray for them and for their intentions. I believe that prayer is part of our commitment and hope people will also pray for us. There are many temptations opposing the culture of life in our world today. Pray for your priests. Pray that we will be holy. Pray for our perseverance. Pray that we take all actions with love because when we act with love, we give of ourselves. It is this gift of self that is most precious to God. The most pleasing offering of our liberty to him is the gift of our hearts. Pray that we may "give Jesus to you, only Jesus, always Jesus!" (Mother Teresa)

I am happy to be a Guanellian priest and if I was given the chance to have another life, I would still choose to be a Servant of Charity priest.







MARY, LEAD ME TO JESUS

# THE BLESSED MOTHER HEARS THE CRY OF OUR HEART

## AT THE GROTTO WITH BLESSED GUANELLA

By ALEJANDRO DIEGUEZ

In 1887, Fr. Louis Guanella published a little book to pay his debt of gratitude to the Virgin of Lourdes, titled “A greeting to the Immaculate of Lourdes for each day of the month of May.” While struggling to give body and spirit to his Congregation, caring for poor and neglected people, he was stricken by diphtheria, a serious infection which was nearly incurable. He entrusted himself to the Virgin Mary of Lourdes as a son would entrust himself to his mother, filled with hope for healing and protection of his poor ones from disease. He wrote, ‘Being in the worst stage of my sickness, I was not even able to pronounce the Hail Mary. Others prayed for me while for three nights I could drink only a few drops of the water of Lourdes. At the end of this triduum I recovered my health and in a few days took on my accustomed activity.’

One year earlier, two orphan sisters, Ilda and Rachel, residents in his home suffered the same painful sickness. Sister Clare Bosatta wrote



to Mary on little strips of paper: "Oh blessed Virgin of Lourdes, heal us!" After the girls swallowed these paper invocations, as medicine, the grace was granted.

A few years later, while building the Motherhouse of his Congregation, a very special grace was granted through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. The house which was in a permanent state of construction had sand, stones, iron, tools and scaffoldings all over the place. The work proceeded according to God's Providence, which never failed. No one was ever injured among the workers or the residents. While building the Church of the Sacred Heart, it happened that Fr. Guanella, was working with some of the people living in the House of Divine Providence. They worked hard all day filling the scaffolding with brick for building the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. Night had fallen when he said to them all, "Let us pray a Hail Mary and go to sleep." Soon afterwards a child, known by everyone for his skill in hunting and roasting mice, rocketed a stone at a mouse strolling across the scaffold, which caused scaffolding and heavy bricks to come crashing to the ground.

Fr. Guanella credited the Blessed Mother with protecting everyone from harm that night and honored her by placing a statue of the Immaculate Conception in the garden, surrounded by flowers.

Grateful for her innumerable favors, Fr. Guanella then joined a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1903, organized by the Italian Bishops.



He wrote of himself: "Fr. Louis Guanella felt the need to place his gratitude and all the tenderness, anxiety and desire contained within his spirit at the feet of the Immaculate. He felt a need and an obligation to invoke Mary, asking her to continue to protect and bless the humble institution he founded."

August 25, 1903 he began his pilgrimage in Rome with four hundred others, all joining together with thousands of French pilgrims when they reached the city of Marseille. Deeply impressed by the courage of Bishop Charles Francois Turinaz, who delivered a vibrant homily denouncing the government's persecution of the Church, he wrote: "We felt confused and astonished before this kind of frankness so similar to that of the apostles and martyrs in the beginning of the Church."

Protected by the Immaculate and immersed in the supernatural atmosphere, Fr. Guanella wrote: "In Lourdes we pray at any time, day and night, in the shrine and outside, without end." He was also very impressed by the sick pilgrims, during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, who waited with Christian resignation, imploring Mary for healing. He remembers "How many times I stopped near the Grotto, seeing the suffering people near the pools whose thoughts were hidden within the convulsions of their bodies!"

He was impressed by the generous and spontaneous activities of the volunteers. "Some of the sick were helped by priests and nuns. But often there were many young men supporting relatives or friends in an attitude of service which approached heroism. Strong young men surrendered themselves totally to the service of their weak brothers



and sisters, almost willing to carry the suffering upon their own shoulders, as St. Camillus De Lellis said: "to save the suffering, I became sick for them myself."

During his stay in Lourdes, Fr. Guanella witnessed miraculous healings. When arriving the pilgrims saw a man in the last stages of tuberculosis bounce up from his mat shouting, "Seignuer, je suis gueri' – Lord, I am healed." He was seen, in the days that followed, serving the sick. "A young man from Belgium, he was brought to Lourdes by the charity of his fellow countrymen. What a deep faith was in him and in them!"

Leaving Lourdes was hard for Fr. Guanella. He wrote. "How painful it is to leave Lourdes, where the heart experiences sweet effusions from the Immaculate Virgin, and where we lingered in forgetfulness of our ordinary human needs! Nevertheless, we must go back! Farewell blessed Grotto, where divine inspirations come down from heaven to give courage to the meek, and where a new strength reanimates us all!"

On his return he gave small bottles of water to his priests, sisters and benefactors as a sign of God's grace and mercy. His last message was: "The water of Lourdes is a memory, a sweetness and a hope... Go, as a pilgrim, to that place where marvellous events are natural. You will see with your eyes and touch with your hand the White Lady of the Pyrenees who hears and benevolently grants the invocations of her children."





# Let Us Go To The Father

## An Embrace of Love Awaits Us

By FR. GABRIEL CANTALUPPI, SC

Many years ago, a boy who was born in the Italian Alps didn't have many chances to play sports. He began contributing his manual labor to the family very early in life: gathering eggs, carting hay, stacking wood, and going to the store for groceries, among other things.

This was not demanding work, however, it was an opportunity to acquire a sense of responsibility for running the house, together with his siblings and parents.

There was one job, however, which was given to small children, that was hard and at times dangerous: watching the family's flock while pasturing them at the foot of the mountains. It wasn't the job, itself, that scared them, but the prospect of spending hours by themselves, with no one around except for their sheep. Their lives, wrapped in silence, begged for the presence of a friend.

Blessed Luigi Guanella experienced solitude and silence as a boy and later wrote: "Do you remember when you tended your flock as a little shepherd? Then, you often thought of your father and your home." He longed for a friend, eager to spend these solitary hours with him, and he found that friend. He found the Father in heaven. "A little child in seeing his father happily smiles at him and extends his little arms out to him. With unsteady steps he runs to him to be comforted by his strong arms. To the little boy, his Father's warm embrace is the place where he finds perfect joy."

Many years later, when Father Guanella recalled his childhood family experience, he saw it as a catechesis which left a deep impression on his spiritual life.

When he visited the different houses that he had opened for suffering people, his first and foremost pleasure was to go through the wards, and to stop at every bed to give each person a smile, a word of consolation, a hug, and a small present.

"Let us go to the Father! O soul seeking God, call out to the Lord! Say, "Abba, Father!" and He will come to you. It is Jesus, who, moved by your prayer, stops at your side and leads you to Him. Better still, he puts in a good word for you by showing His Father the wounds of his hands, feet, and open side so that He might show you his compassion."

Often we don't know what to say to the Lord in prayer. There are times when we would rather complain because we didn't receive the grace we asked for. Maybe, we didn't receive it because the Lord had prepared for us a greater grace that could help us to love him better. Living in a society that preaches immediate gratification, we are losing the simple marvel and hope that grows with the hours when we are expecting a gift, a visit, or a ceremony that will change our life. Do you still remember the Christmas Eve's of your childhood? They were filled with expectation, joy, and hope. Do you remember the day of your graduation, your wedding, or the birth of your firstborn? They were marvelous hopeful days.

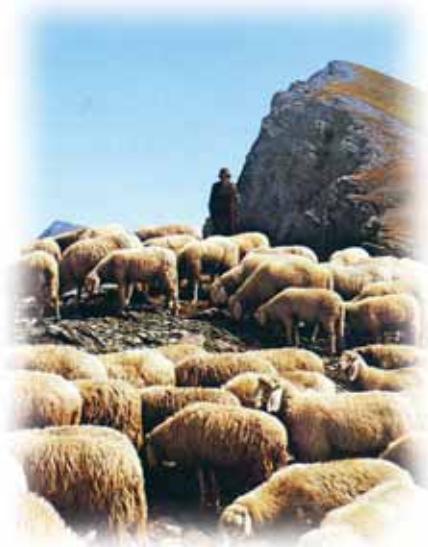
Humble people regret not corresponding to the love of the Father in heaven. Because they need His presence in their daily life, they persevere in prayer. As Father Guanella says: "We should lift to Him our first thought in the morning and the last at night. All day may be immersed in God as the fish is constantly surrounded by water and the bird by the air."

Father Guanella reminds us that Jesus gave us the "Our Father," his letter of recommendation to pray to the Father in a way that pleases Him. It is true. When praying the "Our Father" we please the Father because to Him it is like the last will of his Son, the summary of the reasons why he came to earth, sacrificed himself, and let his Sacred Heart be pierced.

Our Founder describes the Lord's Prayer as a mutual embrace between God and a faithful soul. The distance between the two is infinite; however, the distance is filled with love.

By Baptism we have become adopted children of God, children that should love in return the Love we have received. When his Love is not returned and God is running after us, who are running away from Him: are we truly good adopted children?

Father Guanella invites us to raise our eyes to heaven, to cry out "Father! Father!" and to wait for Him who will bring us close to his throne, "When, O Father, will you bring us to you forever? When?"



# Guanellian Lay Movement

Spreading the Good News      Throughout the World



Along the path of my Christian journey I encountered ever-new possibilities and avenues for expressing faith and commitment in the Church. I was so impressed when, at the age of seven, during preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, I thought I could become a soldier of Jesus Christ. I imagined myself on the battlefield, against the evil one, led by the Pope, my holy Bishop and my pastor. I dreamt heroic dreams of spreading the good news to the farthest ends of the world, following the example of the holy missionaries. Some, whom I met, became living inspirations for future decisions in my life. I wanted to become a Servant of Charity, priest and missionary.

During my theological studies the decisions which came out of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council were implemented. In spite of the many misinterpretations of this supernatural event and pastoral failures, I believe that the Holy Spirit leads the Church in her mission to evangelize the world as we move toward the final revelation of the merciful love of God.

I learned to love the Church. We are People of God, God's family, holy Church, made one in Jesus through the Sacraments. We are citizens of the world, to which we are sent as the yeast of salvation for the suffering who wait for true and final liberation.

I was helped to deepen my relationship with God through His Sacraments and His Word.

I became convinced that there is no Church without Peter and the Apostles, without the Pope and his Bishops at the head of the one and only mystical body of Jesus Christ.

I learned also how to develop my religious and priestly vocation, sharing co-responsibility with the laity for the growth of the Church.

A new springtime of the Spirit followed the Council. From the womb of the Church spiritual experiences burst forth, some failing miserably for lack of understanding and discernment. Others, however, ripened through perseverant unity and through discernment of the Church and are bearing

a variety of fruit which helps the Church to identify herself more completely with her mission, established by Jesus, in the world.

Filled with the breath of the Spirit, the sails on the ship carrying the Servants of Charity to the four corners of the world became part of the great movement of the Church, who recognizes in the laity the essential commitment to making the presence of divine grace effective in the world.

The conviction that the gift of grace, given by the Holy Spirit to our Founder, should be shared with the people of God is an integral part of the Guanellian tradition. Fr. Guanella took many lay people into partnership in his mission of caring for poor and neglected brothers and sisters. He was aware that charity is sterile if kept enclosed within the borders of his personal feelings. By its nature, charity spreads itself around. Fr. Guanella, anticipating the direction of the Vatican II Council, considered himself an instrument in the hands of God, aware that with the cooperation of the laity, they could, together, be more effective in spreading the Good News through specific vocations entrusted to him by God.

Among the Catholic Associations, born in the Church in the last half century, is the Guanellian Lay Movement which follows in the footsteps of Blessed Louis Guanella. Members commit themselves to deepen their understanding of Guanellian spirituality so that they may be able to adopt, as their own daily Christian experience, the principle of evangelical charity toward those in need. The number of those who are drawn to Guanellian spirituality grows everyday in the United States.

You are invited to join the Third National Meeting of the Guanellian Lay Movement.

## 3rd National Conference of the Guanellian Lay Movement

**October 10th, 11th, and 12th 2008 St. Mary of Providence Center, Elverson, Pennsylvania**

**Guest Speaker:** Fr Luigi De Giambattista, SC Provincial Superior of the Divine Providence Province

Tours of historic Philadelphia and Amish Country are being considered.

More information to come. For brochure, please call the Pious Union of St. Joseph 517-522-8017

# Ten Years: A Dream and a Very Full Life

## Guanellian Ministry in Legazpi-Philippines

By FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SC

It is a beautiful trip back in time to re-read in our minds the story of past events. Here we find once again the watchful presence of God, who sustains us and guides our steps whenever we commit ourselves to follow him with faithfulness and love.

Early in 1998 I reached Legazpi, the capital city of the Bicol Region of the Philippines. Introducing myself to Bishop Jose' Sorra, I assured him of the full cooperation of the Servants of Charity in his ministry with the poor.

Those first months in Legazpi, show us how the Providence of God opens the way for our work of mercy. Often I asked God, "What do you want? What is the right path? Where do I follow?" We did not go there looking for the poor. They came to us, showing us the paths to their humble shelters, near the sea. The simple lives of these fishermen and street vendors were full of color and the sound of voices, accompanied by the unfailing presence of suffering. Difficulty and worry marks the lives of those with no potential to match their dreams to reality. We met children whose bodies were marked by the stigmata of poverty, hunger, sickness and abuse. There were many frail people, considered lazy by the surrounding community, whose bodies were weakened from lack of food. They were deprived of needed medicine and could not find fair

*Harong Kan Sagrata Familia Before*

employment. We saw children dying from dysentery, meningitis and pneumonia, and adults afflicted with tuberculosis.

On the feast of St. Pius X, August 21, 1998, we welcomed our first patient, Jemsom, a young boy who had fallen asleep in a tree. Falling from the tree, he injured two vertebrae and was so poor that the hospital sent him away without treating his injury. His parents could not pay for treatment so we adopted him and helped him to recover the autonomy of movement that would give him independence in spite of his permanent disability.

It became clear that God wanted us to stay in Legazpi when Joseph, a benefactor, gave us one acre of land to build a clinic. There we buried the medal of St. Joseph through whose intercession numerous graces were granted to us by God and day after day we witnessed the growth of this providential home for the sick and incurable, which we named after the Holy Family.

Many important dates mark the growth of the Harong Kan Sagrata Familia, (House of the Holy Family). April 6, 2000, the same day that Fr. Guanella founded the Motherhouse of the Servants of Charity, the foundation of the clinic was dug. December 31, 2000 Feast of the Holy Family, Bishop Lucilo Quiambao, solemnly blessed the small Church dedicated to Jesus the Redeemer. November 11, 2001, on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Providence, Bishop Jose' Sorra blessed the new construction and all the facilities. December 8, 2002, a generous contractor began construction of a new building, which he donated in memory of his father. March 24, 2003, the anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation, we began our activity in the new building, able to extend our ministry with disabled children.

*Harong Kan Sagrata Familia After*



We didn't wait for completion to begin our activities. When a room was ready, a patient was welcomed immediately. Under the shade of a big Mango tree, malnourished children were fed. In a simple "Nipa Hut," a Filipino bamboo shelter, a group of mentally impaired children were cared for by the generous and faithful physiotherapist and several dedicated teachers.

Little by little all the empty space was filled. Severely injured patients were sheltered for medical treatment; malnourished children received food and medical care; children affected by tuberculosis received proper medication; poor persons suffering from stroke and physical disability were rehabilitated; mentally impaired children followed special programs according the individual needs of each one.

When we realized that there was no more space to develop our activities, our hearts and eyes took flight to an open parcel of land just beyond our property. We needed more land for our children to raise domestic animals, so important to subsistence, and to grow fruit and vegetables. I told the owner of the land that I would bury another medal of St. Joseph, positive that if it was the will of God, he would intercede for the grace needed. The owner answered that I should bury the medal on my own land so that St. Joseph would obtain the money for us to purchase it. God received our prayers and, with the help of many benefactors, the land was acquired. Today, on this 10th Anniversary, new activity can be seen on the land at Harong Kan Sagrada Familia.

We have seen true miracles of Providence, the same that shaped our Congregation; miracles that help us to see that God is always at work when we trust in Him and cooperate in his plan of love.



Along the way, a chain of solidarity developed. Friends and volunteers, whose names are written in the "Book of Life" cared for our poor and shared our ministry. They gave us their appreciation and sympathy, rolled up their sleeves and shared in the work and in our simple humble food. We loved each other as brothers and sisters: Servants of Charity, staff, volunteers and patients. We became surrounded by a sympathetic community.

What Fr. Guanella often said is really true, "If we care for ten poor, God sends what is needed for them. If we care for 100 poor, the same, God sends what is needed. However, if we loose our trust in Divine Providence, God stops helping us."

Thanks to God and our benefactors, we hope to continue in the name of Jesus, our charitable presence in this "House of the Holy Family" following in the footsteps of Blessed Louis Guanella.

Committing ourselves in a daily service of prayer and works of mercy, the Servants of Charity promote the fundamental truth that, in the end, the world will only be saved by charity.



# Committed to Serve

By FR DAVID STAWASZ, SC



You may have certain associations with the word 'commitment.' To some, it refers to that disposition which leads to marriage; to others, it means a dedication to a cause; in the hearts of the faithful the word evokes a spiritual dedication which is knowingly offered for the Lord. This last one may sound too pious, you know, like something a fanatic might

say. However, I like to think of it as an idea that isn't radical at all, but practical. A person simply uses his talents as he thinks God would want him to. Not for some 'far out' project, but with the simple recognition that in using these talents for good, they can accomplish what God wants of them for the good of all. This includes the immediate recipient, the 'giver' and all who are affected by his actions.

For example, think of someone who is sick and is visited by a co-worker. Perhaps these two people are not close friends, but only occasionally speak with each other. This simple visit can mean more to the sick person than a party thrown in his honor or a winning lottery ticket.

Many people whose employment involves working with others have, as its reward, the human interaction and good feelings that derive from providing a necessary service. A few examples from my current surroundings of Harong Kan Sagrada Familia, in Legazpi, Philippines are found in the daily work. There are people involved with our day program for Autistic children, who provide the children with the extra patience that's needed to help them learn. Also there are the people working in our physical therapy center. There are many instances where people of all ages were helped and the gratitude which they express



or the progress made has touched all who have witnessed it. For example, the little three-year-old boy who came to us for physical therapy; the progress he made in only a few months time was celebrated by his mother, who graciously thanked everyone before traveling the long distance back to her home and family. Also there is a little girl who is only just beginning to be able to tolerate sitting up for short periods of time, never longer than five minutes. Initially she would cry out and be distressed when sitting for only one minute. These small accomplishments mean a great deal to both the therapist and the patient.



J.R. is a resident, who receives needed treatments beyond the scope of our center. He is a young man in his late teens, who has a fractured neck. He developed several wounds that required surgery, to be followed by dressing changes twice a day. It has been three months since he came to live at the center and he requires yet another surgical intervention. It takes a lot of planning to coordinate his treatments. There are the lab tests and the need for blood transfusions and care of his wounds while he is in the hospital. One physician has offered her services without charge for J.R. and for numerous others, too many to count.

I like to think that the generosity of the people I have described is the result of their willingness to do God's will by sharing their talents with others unconditionally. There may be rewards such as the satisfaction of positive progress or the praise and gratitude expressed by others, but it all comes down to doing what is right. What we are doing is not sensational enough to have a book written about it. You won't read about these little successes in the newspapers; but, in the final analysis, these lives are beautiful examples of living one's faith through offering their commitment to the Lord.



# A Vision for the Future



Dear friends of St. Joseph,

Often I find myself looking through the glass door out to Mount Calvary and Our Lady's Grotto, while praying in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in the Shrine of St. Joseph. I thank God as I think of how he made so much beauty possible through the cooperation of the members of the Pious Union of St. Joseph and readers of this magazine.

Although the financial resources for continued building at the Shrine are shrinking during these very weak economic times, I will always trust in Divine Providence to lift us out of difficulty and help us once again,

with your cooperation, to finish the second phase of the Calvary and the Grotto.

Today, however, we face an urgent need. The ceiling of the Shrine requires complete repair. New insulation is needed to protect the interior from the bursts of cold air, which whistle in during our Michigan winters and cause higher and higher energy bills.

In support of this urgent work and for the completion of the Calvary and Our Lady's Grotto, I ask for your understanding and cooperation.

May God bless you and your family.

Fr. Paolo Oggioni



# Servants of Charity 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.

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# The Servants of Charity

## *100 Years of Service and Grace*

In union with Jesus the Good Shepherd and good and passionate Samaritan, Blessed Louis Guanella loved, in a special way, the most abandoned and suffering and lavishly gave himself without measure to provide them with "Bread and the Lord."

Among those who are tried most in body and spirit and deprived of human support, we become instruments of Providence through the exercise of the works of mercy and the ministry of pastoral charity, caring for boys, the elderly and mentally impaired.

*"Give Bread and the Lord"*



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