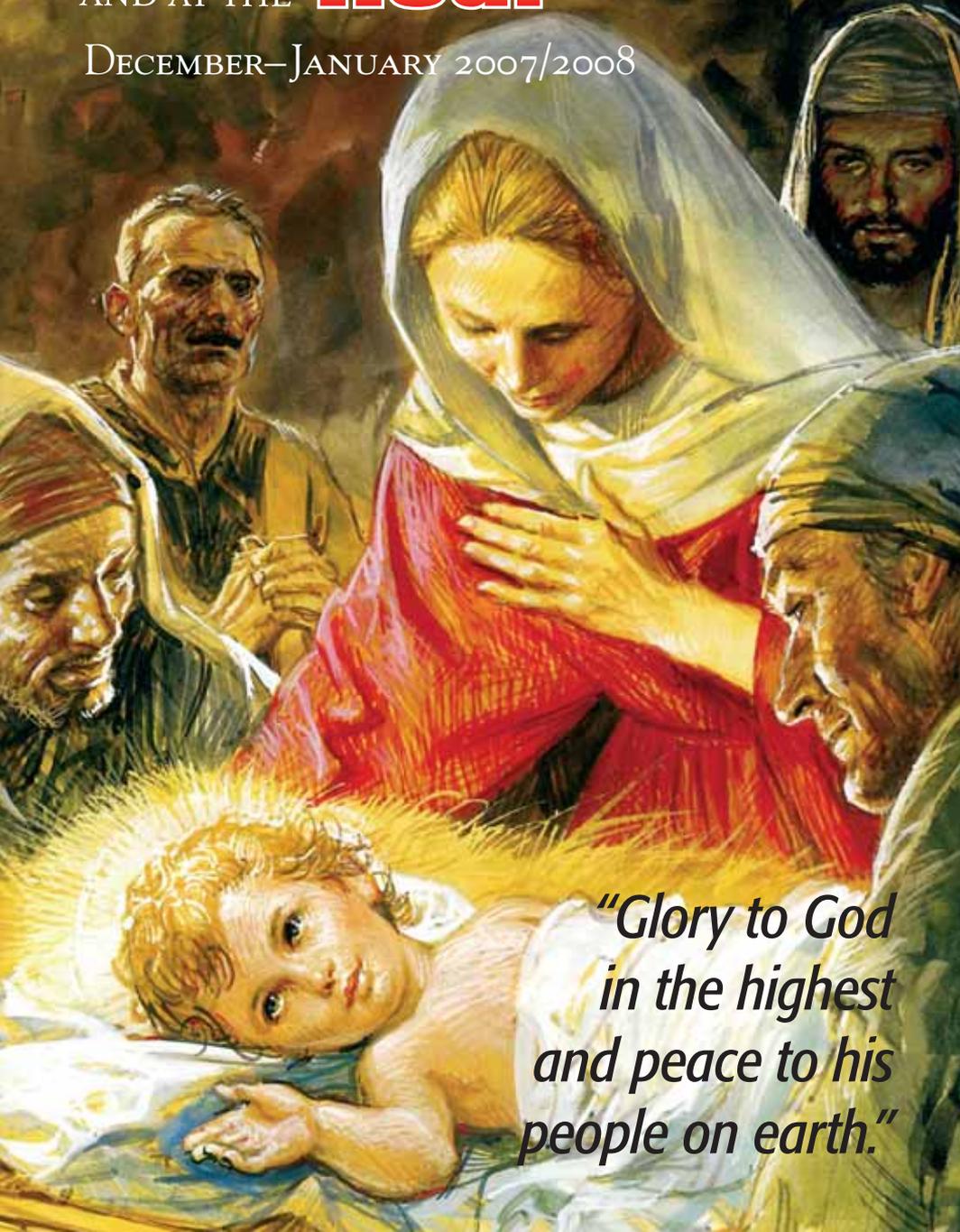


*The Love of Christ Impels Us*

# **now** HOUR

AND AT THE

DECEMBER—JANUARY 2007/2008



*“Glory to God  
in the highest  
and peace to his  
people on earth.”*

- 1 .....Rejoice! The Savior Is Born  
in Bethlehem  
*Blessed Louis Guanella*
- 2 .....Searching For a God That  
Becomes a Child  
*Averardo Dini*
- 4 .....A Forgotten Feast  
*Fr. William Spirito*
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Named Jesus  
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Mother of Divine  
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Have You Forsaken Me?  
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in Christmas  
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Cover: Nativity

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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.

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## **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.

# Rejoice! The Savior Is Born in Bethlehem

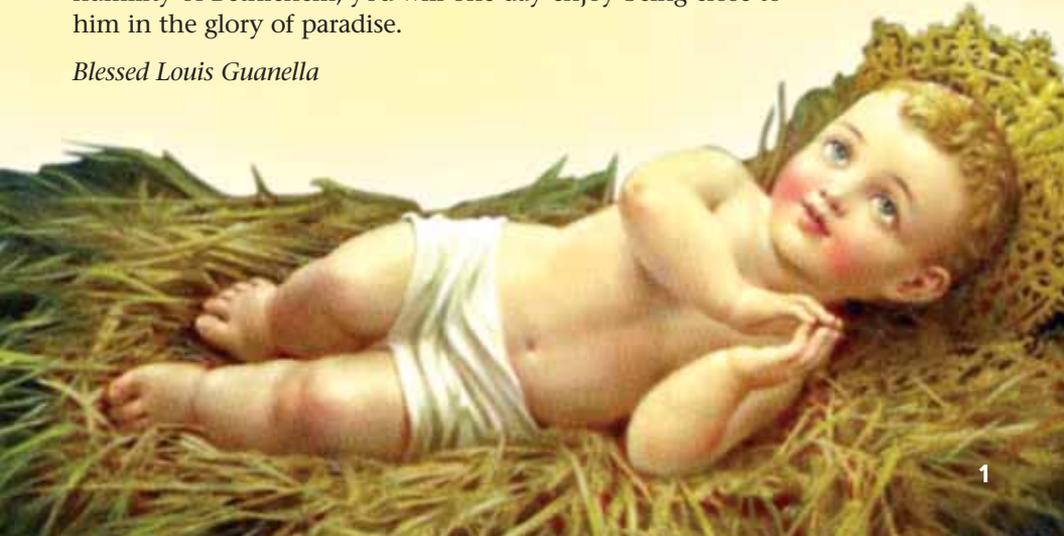
*“The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all men. It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Jesus Christ.” Ti 2:11-13*

Come in spirit to the manger of Jesus as the shepherds did, and adore your Savior. If you see that curious Bethlehemites come in, yet do not believe the mysteries of the poor and humble Jesus, do not pay attention to them. If you see that the leaders of the people themselves come in, and abhor the purity surrounding the crib of the divine infant, pity them in the bottom of your heart and pray for them. These wicked ones love honors, which after all are vain smoke; they crave for riches that are vile. They long for earthly pleasures. Yet what are all these pleasures of the world? They are vanities that press on one another like waves in the sea; they are satisfactions that vanish like wind; at best, they are nonsense that spends itself within a century. Then, see for yourself if, having to live in an evil world, it doesn't pay to remain faithful to Jesus!

Time will come, and perhaps it is not far off, when Jesus, no longer a poor baby, but a benevolent judge and a loving father, will come to welcome you. What a joy then! You will exclaim: “I waited for my God and now here He is! I waited for the glory of my Savior and now I, myself, am surrounded by the splendor of his blessedness! I am with God and am blessed forever.” What bliss this will be, what joy, what high jubilation!

Fortunate will you be if you do not delay in following Jesus, humble in the manger. If you do not feel ashamed to be close to him in the humility of Bethlehem, you will one day enjoy being close to him in the glory of paradise.

*Blessed Louis Guanella*



# *Searching For a God That Becomes a Child*

*By Averardo Dini*

The fabric that was torn in the Garden of Eden between God and man made a lasting, deep and irreparable tear. Losing contact with God, humanity became like children with no father and no mother. Once immersed in the world outside the garden, man felt cold and “naked.” Ashamed, he tried his best to hide behind a few fig leaves. Bitter tears and hard work, not smiles and joy now punctuate his days.

Regretting the loss of paradise now marks every second of his life to the point that he begins to fear God. Instead of friendship, man has a fearful relationship with God. The distance between man and God is infinite. Man, in pain, puts God in the highest heaven, in a place as far away as possible from himself. God, eternal Word and origin of all creation, is now silent and man feels this distance finding it impossible to approach Him. He feels almost crushed by the omnipotence of the Almighty God.

Burdened by working the earth and scratching for his existence, man has lost the memory of how to approach and call out to God.

So, with this heavy emptiness of heart he felt he could not live any longer and started to think about God in another way. He invented Jupiter, Saturn, Juno and many other gods and goddesses. Their dwelling place is in Heaven no more, but on mountains. The God of creation is gone from his mind and heart. He, who was created in the image and likeness of God, has now built a god in the image of himself. There is no fall that can possibly be worse. And man paid a great price for that.



However, the God of creation has not forgotten man at all. In His time He approached and talked to Abraham, establishing with him a new friendship and announcing to him a new covenant with man. The years came and went. Man makes his journey through history. At the fullness of time, God decides to become flesh and to hide Himself within the human form. He is born, true man, from a woman and appears to the world under the light of the stars to breathe in the earthly air of an isolated cave in Bethlehem of Judea.

That Child is God made man. He does not appear as a powerful giant: he is a Baby. He is not someone that raises terrible fears. No. His eyes are bright like the sun; his face is radiant with a divine smile; his flesh is soft and fragile; his body calls for tenderness and love. He does not talk yet, but he speaks through his eyes and smile. He is awaiting us to pick him up in our arms. His weight is insignificant. Having him in our arms, it is we who are elevated by Him and once again we enter the place left empty, the garden of all happiness.

He is the eternal Word and he came among us in silence and humility. His silence is more eloquent than all our words. We are able to hear his little heart-beat that now beats together with our own.

All we have to do now is kneel in front of that Baby Boy crying and once again be joyful because we are his “relatives.” The invisible God is here, in the face of a little Boy. All we have to do is adore the Lord and let ourselves be possessed by the mystery of his grace and salvation.

This Baby in the manger is salvation to every man that He loves.

He is one of us now because he wants to rekindle in us that spark of divinity that we have lost so we may return to our lives as children of light enlightening the world.





**JANUARY 23: THE WEDDING OF MARY AND JOSEPH**

# A Forgotten Feast

BY FR. WILLIAM SPIRITO

The Feast of the Wedding of Mary and Joseph was first celebrated in 1537 among the Franciscans and later adopted by many other Religious Orders and finally by the Papal States. It disappeared from the liturgical calendar in 1961, even though it is still celebrated in some dioceses and among a few Religious Families.

Some would say: “We celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, isn’t that enough? Isn’t their wedding celebrated in this feast? To be clear we should say that it is one thing to celebrate a wedding feast and quite another to celebrate an established family.

These are two different things; two different aspects, depending upon and complementing each other, present in the normal lives of people and in the mystery of salvation, planned by the Blessed Trinity. The former honors the love between a husband and wife, while the latter celebrates a family.

For the Divine Will to be present among us, God was in need of a man and a woman, united by a normal spousal bond. If, throughout the years of the Old Covenant, God called an entire people to be his spouse, here at the beginning of the New Covenant God summoned a man and a woman to bring forth his divine plan. In fact, we have two Annunciations, one to Mary, reported by Luke, and a second to Joseph that we read in the Gospel of Matthew. To Mary, the angel Gabriel showed the particular mission that God had for her, to become the Mother of the Messiah through the power of the Holy Spirit. Responding to Mary’s

hesitation, the angel properly enlightens her so that she gives her “fiat,” her unconditional “yes.” “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Lk 1:38)”.

To Joseph, the husband of Mary, the angel of the Lord confirms that the new life expressed in the womb of his spouse is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Surprised by this astonishing and confounding event, Joseph thinks at first he will cut off his relationship with Mary, both going their separate ways. Mary could not be his wife since God chose her for Himself. While he faces this painful trial God reveals to him, through an angel, what his mission should be: to welcome Mary into his house as his wife and to give the child his name. Being a righteous man, Joseph faithfully follows what the Lord requests from him. He takes Mary as his wife. She is daughter of her father no more, but becomes juridically,



according to the Law of Moses, his “property.” She will be known as Mary, wife of Joseph, like her relative, who we read about in the Gospel of John, called Mary, wife of Clopas.

Because both Mary and Joseph, said “Yes,” God was able to carry out his new covenant. The Son of the Almighty, the divine Word could take our flesh and become in a mysterious way the Emmanuel, God-with-us. From that time on, the Word that was with God was called, “Son of Mary,” “Son of Joseph,” and “the man called Jesus.”

A French writer, John Guitton, in his book “The Virgin Mary,” wrote that “Joseph is still unfortunately portrayed as an old white-haired man. Mary, at his side, appears more a woman under the protection of a man rather than his wife. The reason for this can be found in the simplistic explanation, given to the uneducated and harsh people of the Middle Ages, of Joseph’s virginity in his wedding with Mary. With Joseph’s age as the only explanation, people often tried to imply that Mary did not love Joseph at all. Their wedding was just a conventional cover up which hid from the world a supernatural event that was taking place in the womb of Mary. In this explanation Joseph was nothing more than a man who loved Mary as a mentor loves the girl put under his protection. Of course, in this relationship there is no true love. And, I agree with those who see in Mary and Joseph a true love and a couple fully living their lives in total trust in the Lord, without knowing how their extraordinary future would evolve.”

Mr. Guitton continues, making an intriguing and interesting suggestion: Mary “virginized” Joseph as she would “virginize” countless young men through her example. These virgin men are the numberless army of priests and religious brothers that give credit to her intercession, perpetuating the mystery of manly virginity in the world. Mary had no intention of taking away Joseph’s manliness or diminishing his capacity to give and receive love. Once Joseph looked into Mary’s eyes, he was changed; his senses were sublimated and incorporated into the glowing model of this unique woman.

We know that Joseph was a vigorous, alert, resolute and firm man; a man who doesn’t talk much but does much. He showed courage in making difficult decisions, even in the darkness of unknowing. Mary saw in him a strong and protective man. She saw in him a true man and she was delighted to welcome him into her life, a man made for her and only for her.

# The Child was Named Jesus

BY JANET SHURTLIFF

Only Mary and Joseph were there... on that holy night, when God worked out His plan for our salvation. The prophet said: "But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel." (Mi 5:1) Although Bethlehem was crowded and there was no room in the inn, yet in that holy stable, only Mary and Joseph were there.

This was a very human event. Joseph tried to find a place for them to stay. But there was no room, there was no place.

Where was the doctor? Where was the midwife? Did they come to the crude stable to help Mary? No, only Mary and Joseph were there.

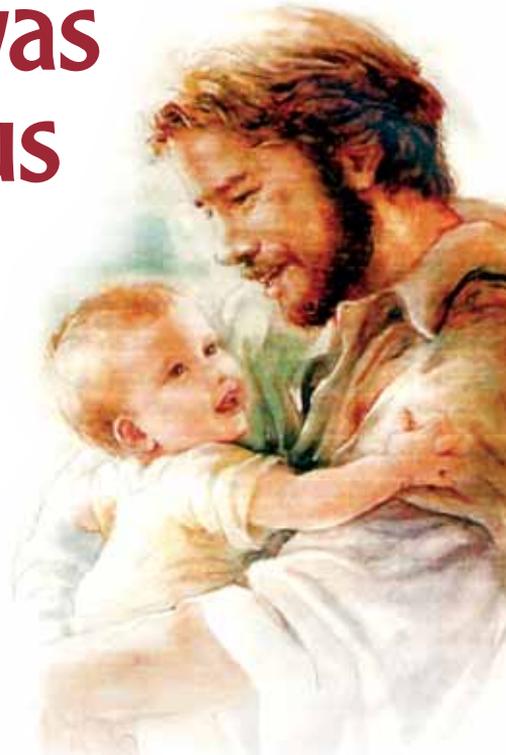
This very human event, the birth of this baby, was the fulfillment of prophecy, the Incarnation leading to our redemption. Only Mary and Joseph were there.

Joseph received Jesus, just born from the Blessed Mother. Joseph heard his first cry. It is natural. It need not be written down. It could not have happened differently!

Joseph was the first after Mary to be the eyewitness of Jesus, Emmanuel, "God is with us." Joseph was the first to receive into his arms the Savior, the Son of God. It could not have been otherwise. It was so natural. Only Mary and Joseph heard His first cry. You can imagine the spiritual emotion of Joseph.

It may sound poetic, but it is not; it is natural. Imagine the birth of a person in these circumstances. The details need not be written down.

Dear St. Joseph, you who loved and cared for the newborn baby Jesus and his Holy Mother Mary, pray for us.



*"But you, Bethlehem, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel." (Mi 5:1)*

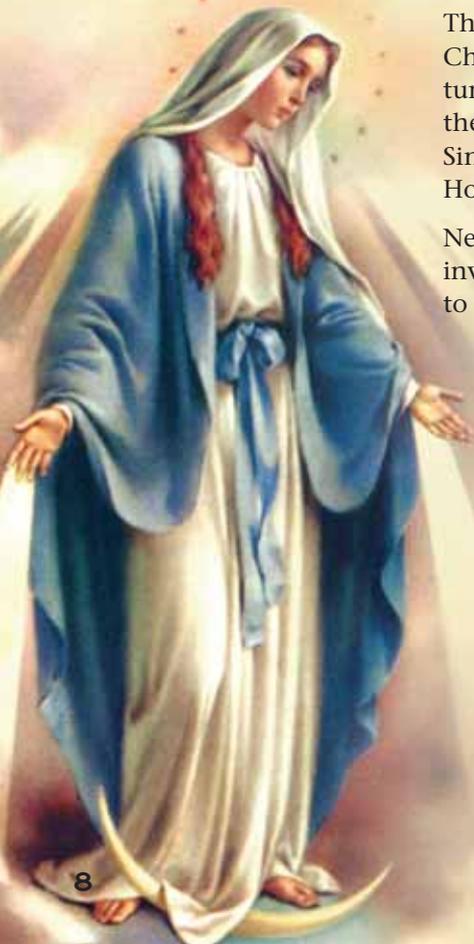
# Immaculate, Virgin and Mother of Divine Providence

BY DIEUDONNE' LE PRESBYTRE

In Advent, as we make our way toward Christmas, we encounter a feast that is full of the splendor of light and purity. It is the Solemnity that reminds us of the exceptional beauty of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.

The Church is captured by so great a beauty that she cries out, "You are so beautiful, O Mary, and no original stain is found in you."

Since the first centuries of Christianity our popular devotion gives honor to Mary as Immaculate. Songs, operas, art and literature has celebrated the birth, life and glory of the Virgin Mary.



The invocations are many by which the Church honors Mary throughout the centuries: Mother of Christ, Mystical Rose, Ark of the Covenant, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Help of Christians, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Queen of Peace.

Nevertheless the more recurrent and popular invocation is undoubtedly that which is related to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception: "O Mary, conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee."

Through many centuries of history, the Church has authored through her Popes innumerable official and pastoral documents describing the privileges and titles of the Virgin Mary. Saints and artists compete to describe her greatness, bounty and beauty. The most celebrated document related to Mary is the Papal definition, "*Ineffabilis Deus*," by which Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Four years after this proclamation, Bernadette Soubirous, a poor and sick little girl of Lourdes who, ignorant about theological definitions and Papal declarations, gave sensational confirmation of this truth when disclosing one of her conversations with the “White Lady,” who appeared to her at the Grotto of Massabielle.



“My lady”, Bernadette asked, “may I know your name, please.” And the White Lady answered, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Since then, this refuse site in Lourdes, France, has been transformed into a little paradise where millions of pilgrims contemplate the mystery of the Immaculate Conception every year, receiving new strength in their lives for the continuation of their journey of suffering and love, following Jesus.

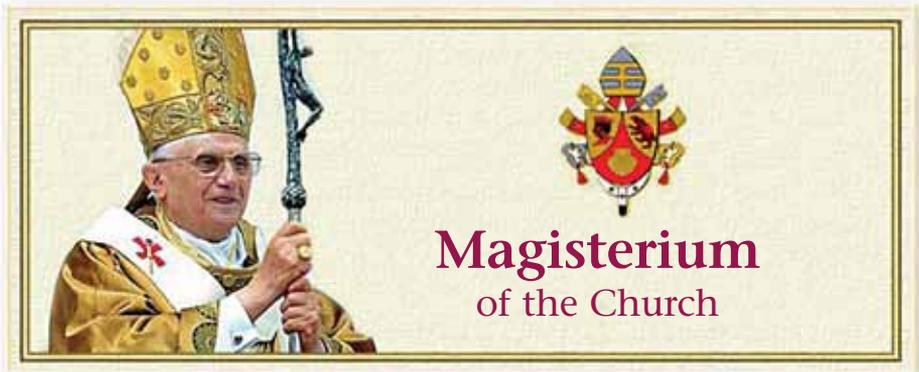
Blessed Louis Guanella, too, went to Lourdes to give thanks to Mary for her special protection during his illness with diphtheria, a mortal sickness of the time.

He expressed his devotion to Mary with trusting abandonment into her arms, confident that she would protect him against every kind of evil. Contemplating the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, he looked at Mary as *Mother of Divine Providence*. She, who gave us Jesus, becomes the bridge by which God’s Providence is manifested in the world. God is Love, God is Mercy, God is Providence.

## 150th Anniversary of the Lourdes’ Apparition

A gathering for the benefit of the sick will be celebrated at the Shrine of St. Joseph on **February 11, 2008**, on the occasion of World Day of the Sick and the 150th Anniversary of the apparition of the Blessed Mother to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes. In the Shrine and at the Grotto we will invoke the intercession of Mary with the same trust and faith as the pilgrims going to Lourdes, asking God for special graces.

**You are invited to be present**, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. During the Eucharist the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be administered and the Fathers will be present and available for Confession.



# Nutrition and Hydration

EXCERPT FROM L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has formulated responses to questions presented by His Excellency the Most Rev. William S. Skylstad, President of the United States Catholic Bishops' Conference, in a letter of July 11, 2005, regarding the nutrition and hydration of patients in the condition commonly called a "vegetative state."

The object of these questions was whether nutrition and hydration of such patients, especially if provided by artificial means, would constitute an excessively heavy burden for the patients, for their relatives or for the healthcare system, to the point where it could be considered, also in the light of the moral teaching of the Church, a means that is extraordinary or disproportionate and therefore not morally obligatory.

The Address of John Paul II to a group of Bishops from the United States of America during an *ad limina* visit on October 2, 1998, is quite explicit: nutrition and hydration are to be considered as normal care and as ordinary means for the preservation of life. It is not acceptable to interrupt them or to withhold them, if from that decision the death of the patient will follow. This would be euthanasia by omission (cf. n. 4)

Therefore, the Responses now given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith continue the same direction as the Documents

of the Holy See, and in particular the Address of John Paul II of March 20, 2004.

**Is the administration of food and water (whether by natural or artificial means) to a patient in a “vegetative state” morally obligatory except when they cannot be assimilated by the patient’s body or cannot be administered to the patient without causing significant physical discomfort?**

Yes. The administration of food and water even by artificial means is, in principle, an ordinary and proportionate means of preserving life. It is therefore obligatory to the extent to which, and for as long as, it is shown to accomplish its proper finality, which is the hydration and nourishment of the patient. In this way suffering and death by starvation and dehydration are prevented.

**When nutrition and hydration are being supplied by artificial means to a patient in a “permanent vegetative state,” may they be discontinued when competent physicians judge with moral certainty that the patient will never recover consciousness?**

No. A patient in a “permanent vegetative state” is a person with fundamental human dignity and must, therefore, receive ordinary and proportionate care which includes, in principle, the administration of water and food even by artificial means.



*The Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, approved these Responses, adopted in the Ordinary Session of the Congregation, and ordered their publication.*

*Rome from the Offices of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, August 1, 2007.*

*Cardinal William Levada, Prefect*

*Angelo Amato, SDB, Titular Archbishop of Sila, Secretary*



# Called To Live

BY SR. MARY LYNN RAKOWSKI, DSMP

“Dylan Must Die”, a story of the short life of a child who had a stroke in his mother’s womb, was published in 2006 in *The Human Life Review*. According to the author, Stephen Vincent, “He could not walk, talk or perform voluntary movements; he needed tube feeding and suffered seizures. Doctors said he would not live a year, yet his strength surprised them all.”

Dylan’s parents, who were not married, struggled to care for him for four years. At one point the parents wanted to marry, but decided against it. Then, “when the seizures became more frequent, they began thinking about what was best for him. Would he really want to live?” Finally, they came to the decision that it was best for Dylan to let him go. They agreed to remove his feeding tube and he starved to death. They were convinced they were doing the best for their son.

As I read the article, my heart went out to little Dylan and his parents, for I know a child, Adam, who also suffered a stroke in his mother’s womb, with an entirely different outcome. His parents were married with three other children. His mother Shelley’s pregnancy presented no indication of problems but the day before he was born, she felt the baby was less active. She conferred with her doctor and was advised to come to the hospital. After tests, it was determined that the baby was in distress and a C-section was performed. Afterwards, because Adam had a period of apnea at birth, they transferred him to a larger hospital. Before he left, a priest was called and Adam was baptized. Shelley and her husband Peter were told that a vessel, the size of a thread, in Adam’s brain had broken and the bleeding caused a stroke. He needed surgery to place a reservoir in the brain to drain the fluid. When this became infected, he needed another surgery. During this surgery he bled on the opposite side of the brain and they were told that Adam would probably die.

After three days, his condition began to turn around. When asked what caused his turn for the better, Shelley replied that it was prayer. Shelley and Peter were given a relic of Blessed Guanella which was attached to his crib. Whenever Adam went to surgery the relic went there with him and Blessed Guanella watched over him during the most difficult times. The third day after surgery there was a Mass celebrating the closing of the year of the Eucharist. Adam's godmother attended and prayed for him. She also asked Bishop Paul Dudley to give Adam a blessing, which he did on his way to Mass. Adam improved.

All of this occurred in three month's time during which Peter and Shelley brought their family to the Ronald McDonald house near the hospital. They were blessed to have others fill in for them at their jobs, so they could spend their time with Adam. Peter stayed most nights and Shelley would take the days and the children visited daily with their little brother. They asked why this happened to Adam and their parents explained that it was God's plan for him. It was hard for them not to hold Adam, but when one of the nurses allowed his sister to climb into the bed, he became more real for them.



Soon after they arrived at the hospital they received a card with this scripture quote: "All good and perfect gifts come from above." This verse was hung on Adam's crib and his parents told him every day that he was God's good and perfect gift.

When talking about the support they received Shelly said, "Where do I start?" Parents, family, friends, neighbors, everyone we know was praying for Adam and for our family. Some people brought food, some contributed money, and some did anonymous deeds. To this day we don't know who did our yard work for us.

Shelley said, since Adam's birth "I've learned to be less selfish. I used to be a planner and organizer, but I have learned to live day by day. My expectations are more open, more flexible. Every parent has hopes and dreams for their children and our goal is helping our children get to heaven."

Adam is now two years old and has already passed significant milestones, despite the burdens he has carried. He is eating; he sits up on his own now and receives physical, occupational and speech therapies. A neurologist told Shelley and Peter that Adam would never walk, yet he is beginning to stand and take steps. Recently the feeding tube was reinserted for added nutrition.

I wanted to share this beautiful story with you

because it is a story of sanctity. It is a pro-life story worth telling. Throughout the interview with Shelley, I realized that Adam was loved. It was this love that called him to life; and it is this love that he responded to when his doctors were predicting that he might not survive.

This is why I believe that marriage is so important. I introduced my story with the example of Dylan because he and Adam both began life with the same impairment. I feel that following God's law with regard to marriage and family brings us strength and happiness even in the face of tremendous difficulty.

I desire that the story of Adam will give to many others the confidence that what is impossible for man is possible with God.



## Mother Teresa and her Dark Night of the Spirit

# MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

BY FR. SILVIO DENARD, SC

A new book, “Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light,” was published on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of her death. Written by Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, a Missionary of Charity and the postulator for the cause of her canonization, it offers us new insights into the life and faith of Mother Teresa. We learn that a deep dark spiritual night enveloped her from the beginning of her ministry until the end of her long life.

In our Catholic spirituality the dark night of the spirit is a mystical experience that very few people have the grace to go through. You may have heard about St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Padre Pio, St. Teresa of the Infant Jesus, St. Catherine of Genoa; all of these saints have the experience of this dark night in common.

Mother Teresa wrote to her spiritual director: “I desire God so much that my soul is hurt. However, I feel like I am forsaken and rejected by God. My heart is empty and faithless, with no love and zeal. Heaven does not make sense anymore to me and it appears to me an empty lot.” She felt abandoned by God, the same God she loved and served. Her soul was in total darkness while the light of numberless TV cameras was on her.

Johannes Tauler, a 14th century mystic, explained in frightening words, “We feel abandoned so much that any knowledge of God disappears...

We do not know anymore if God exists or not, if we are alive or dead.” This is the darkness that Mother Teresa experienced for half a century. Can you imagine years of darkness and interior anguish without spiritual joy or consolation?

Amazing that not even her closest collaborators knew; she suffered in silence while showing her big smile and infinite love.

*Continued on page 18*







*Mother of Divine Providence, Pray for us.*

She writes, "People around me are saying that I spend all my time smiling. They think that my heart is filled with faith, trust and love... If they knew! Being joyful is nothing but a cover for my emptiness and misery." She didn't talk about this to anyone because she didn't want to attract attention on herself. In fact, the most insidious danger for a soul going through this dark night is to believe that she is one of the elect, a special soul. Blessed Teresa, by the Grace of God, hid her interior torment behind her radiant smile.

Why did the Lord allow this darkness? Here, we truly see something new. Her dark night cannot be compared to the traditional idea of passive purification, the purgative way that prepares a soul to reach the illuminative way and later, final union with God. Mother Teresa thought that God was testing her because her "ego" was particularly hard to win. In her mind, God was forced to keep her in the dark for so long because she was the worst soul on earth.

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, the Papal Preacher, writes, "St. Paul said that, in order not to become too proud, God had given him a thorn in the flesh. Mother Teresa's thorn was God's silence and it preserved her from pride and vainglory in the midst of the world that was endlessly talking about her and praising her as a walking saint. She lived in the dark night that enveloped Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and on Calvary where He cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mother Teresa lived in communion with Jesus on the cross.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that mystics are living a gloomy existence. Quite the contrary! In their hearts, they enjoy a peace and a joy unknown



*John Paul II with Mother Teresa*

to us, because they believe they are doing God's will; a certainty that appears much stronger than their doubts. The smile and joy of Mother Teresa was not a mask but the visible effect of her soul's union with God. People saw that, but she was unable to see it."

Father Kolodiejchuk, in an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor*, reported that someone sent him an e-mail saying that now even atheists have a patron saint. "Maybe that was a little joke, he said, but actually there is a lot of truth in it. She is an example of someone who had a trial and remained faithful. She can be someone who leads others to the light. People who are feeling lonely, rejected or unloved, also have a patron saint in Mother."

"People say that eternal punishment in Hell is the loss of God... I am experiencing it in my own soul. I feel a God that does not want me, a God that is not God, a God that truly does not exist. O Jesus, forgive my blasphemy!" Mother Teresa wrote these incredible words, however we see she lived in solidarity and expiation because she also wrote, "I want to live in this world, so far away from God and obnoxious to the light of Jesus, to help people by carrying a little of their suffering on my shoulders."

Through the ages mystics have made it known to honest atheists that they are not far from the kingdom of God. They only need to jump from their land of unbelief and darkness into the land of the divine All and to the Light.



*Perpetual Profession of the Missionaries of Charity in the Basilica of St. Joseph, Rome, the primary center of the Pious Union of St. Joseph*

# Forgive Us Our Trespasses

## *An Experience of God According to Blessed Louis Guanella*

Debts cause continuous preoccupations within a family. To owe something to someone who is your equal causes great displeasure. To find oneself a debtor to a highly respected person causes even more grief. It is painful to carry little debts, but it is more painful to carry big onerous debts. The serious or venial sins you are committing are your debts. It is hard for you to owe so much to the Lord, since you are unable to satisfy him with a cent!

While you still live on earth, work at balancing your accounts, behaving as one who intends to clear all his liabilities at any cost. He, who wants to pay his debts, reduces the needs of his house, contents himself with the bare necessities of food and clothing, and absolutely banishes expensive forms of recreation like dances, night entertainments, going to theaters and luxurious banquets. He cannot even hear conversations about these extravagances, which caused his fall to the bottom of this abyss. He finds a job and works. He wastes no time during his working hours, and to comfort himself, do you know what he does? He cries. Oh! When tears spring out from the heart and run warmly down from the eyes, then the heart lightens and the eyes brighten up, and it seems that fruitful dew comes down upon the field of his heart, yielding a thousand fold the seeds of virtue.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you want to pay the great debts you have with God, do likewise. Pull yourself together. Rid your heart of those abominable monsters of pride, avarice and lust, which are the infernal thieves who have despoiled you so badly. Set about an untiring work. Then soften that hard bread of which you want to feed yourself, with tears from your eyes. These tears will touch the Angels in Paradise.



If your tears are the same as the tears shed by the servant because of his own debaucheries, then you are close to having your grave debts written off. Much more, if to these tears you add a drop of the tears and blood which Jesus shed on the cross, then you are completely forgiven. If your tears are like the tears of the desolate child who grieves for the lofty displeasure he has caused to his father, then the Heavenly Father is already willing to forgive all your abuses, and to readmit you into his home because the Lord immediately loves those who love Him.

Admire this miracle of love. In reparation for so many debts of yours and for so much suffering caused to Him, Jesus is satisfied to receive from you only one tear of repentance. If this tear flows out of our eyes, Jesus takes it and mixes it with his own blood and offers it to the Most High, saying: "Father , forgive him! Father, forgive him!"

From *Let us go to the Father*, Works page 51–54



A Great Devotion of Blessed Guanella

# St. Joseph: Friend and Traveling Companion

BY FR. PIERO PELLEGRINI, SC

Father Guanella does not relate to St. Joseph in prayer as one of the faithful, prostrated in front of the Saints who are located way up there, stepping into the infinite Heavens of God, the most high.

Instead, Fr. Guanella felt very close to his Saints who guided him in his prayer and prayed in harmony with him. He was close to his saints, however God and the Lord Jesus were at the center of his prayer.

In his educational booklet, “The Foundation” for instance, in writing about Holy Communion, he suggests to us: *“Pour out your heart like Mary and Joseph in the manger of Bethlehem.”* (The Foundation, Works I, 140)

Obviously Jesus and the Eucharist is not mentioned but, in truth, all is centered on Him.

Similarly, remembering the words of Pius IX, he encourages us: *“After God, my greatest trust is in Mary, most holy. Pray to those Saints who were closest to Jesus in the great Mystery of the Incarnation: St. Joseph and St. John.”* (Come With Me, Works I, 136)

A good method for praying, teaches Fr. Guanella, is to recite the Rosary. He encourages reflection before each Hail Mary on a particular aspect of the mystery considered in the decade. He offers us a sample of his prayer in the booklet “Half an Hour of Good Prayer.”

Before each Hail Mary, he introduces a particular aspect of the mystery without petitions, suggestions or feelings. It is as though he is

saying: *let yourself be brightened by the light; contemplate, absorb, and worship.* In the mystery of the Nativity, for example, he proposes to contemplate St. Joseph:

- The Virgin Mary is the spouse of St. Joseph. Hail Mary full of grace...
- Jesus, who in the minds and hearts of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds, is a radiant source of wisdom and consolation, teaches us that true happiness rests only in the love of God. Hail Mary...
- The poor and simple shepherds are the first, after Mary and Joseph, to adore Jesus. Hail Mary...

During the long hours of his daily work Fr. Guanella often turned to St. Joseph, as he would to a friend or traveling companion, with a “smile,” or a “nod.” He listened to his counsel, his reason and asked for light, trust, love, and courage.

Liturgies, ceremonies, celebrations and festivities in honor of St. Joseph, as well as any other Saint, particularly dear to him, had the effect of creating closeness with the Saint and, with the Saint, closeness to God.

This is the reason for, and the meaning of the recommended presence of a statue of St. Joseph in various parts of the House of Divine Providence, which he founded, and in the garden.

Prayer to St. Joseph, therefore, becomes praise and glory, petition and thanksgiving; a time for learning, for meditation, for ceremony and even for celebration.

*Image of St. Joseph venerated at the Pious Union of St. Joseph in Grass Lake*



# Like Compassionate Cyrenians

Serving Needy



Brothers & Sisters

*“The ‘Little House’ proposes to do something good: this is also possible through Lay Cooperators.”*

By these words Blessed Louis Guanella expressed the fundamental importance of the many laypersons, cooperating with the fulfillment of the plan of God who called him to start and develop works of charity. In the evolution of his spiritual experience, Fr. Guanella experimented with an intense and positive relationship with the faithful who were entrusted to his pastoral care.

He was gifted by God with an extroverted character which helped him to reveal his gifts, as he became fully immersed in the real context of the lives of the flock to which he was sent as shepherd and promoter of spiritual and social life.

Fr. Guanella knew, and was aware within himself, of the qualities and defects, illusions and delusions, sufferings and hopes, dreams and hard work of the people he came in contact with. He understood their spiritual and human consistency, and this informed his decisions in discerning the plan of God when founding the Servants of Charity and the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence while serving them with hope and heart and unlimited love.

We can affirm that his spiritual growth, vocation and pastoral experience were notably influenced by his personal experience with the laity: to a certain degree, he was formed by them.

Since his childhood, Fr. Guanella was influenced by the simple-hearted holiness and spiritual behavior of his parish community, which he observed in the fulfillment of their daily duties. He was formed in his family to enter into this part of Christian experience by the example of his father, mother, sister Catherine and his neighbors.

In all the parishes where he was sent to shepherd the flock of the Lord, he was always inspired and helped by the faith of his parishioners and by their decisions to do good with a deep spirit of prayer and faith.

Therefore, in the process of forming his Religious Congregations, he positively

emphasized the importance of the “active cooperation” of the lay faithful to reach better results in the ministry while awakening public opinion to the special needs of neglected people and bringing about public and government action.

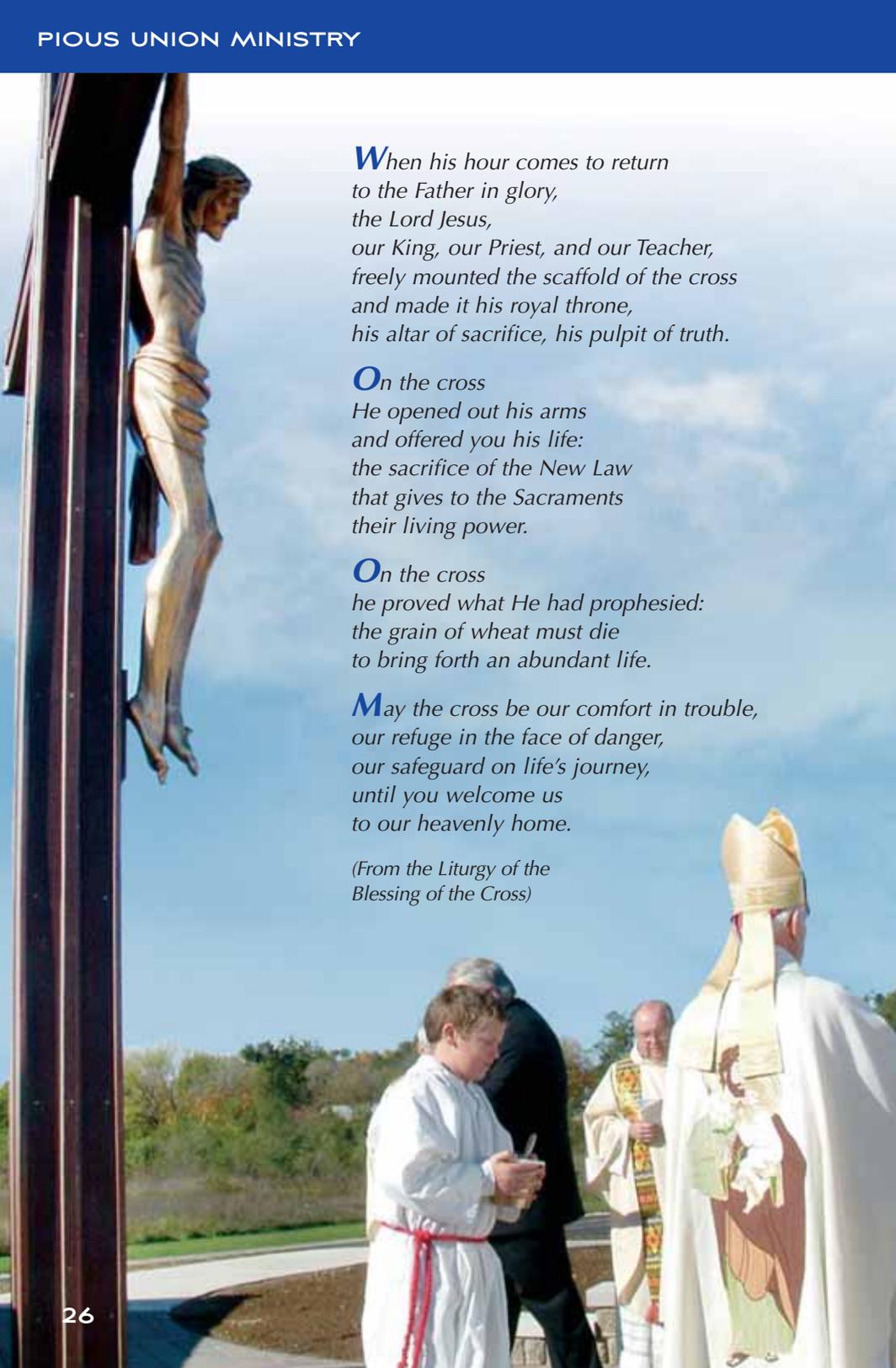
He also wrote little biographies of some of his cooperators as models to be imitated by those who were willing to cooperate with God, serving needy brothers and sisters while remaining in their communities and performing their daily family duties.

In all of his foundations offering shelter and spiritual help to neglected people, Fr. Guanella looked for and appreciated, as a gift from God, the cooperation of lay men and women.

In his magazine “Divine Providence,” begun in 1892 and edited by a lay cooperator, Mrs. Theresa Albini Crosta, he wrote: *“when somebody knows that he has to carry a very heavy weight, it is natural for him to look for some compassionate Cyrinian. Our ‘Little House of Divine Providence’ was favored from the beginning by having the help of many cooperators. If this is not a work of the Providence of God, I would not know how to define it. And if, therefore, this institution is the work of Providence, then please, become ‘Cooperators with Providence’ and join in the noble mission of helping those who have been hit by misfortune. Let us help them to find solutions for their urgent need of food, clothes, medicine and shelter.”*



1914: Blessed Louis Guanella with Lay Cooperators.



*When his hour comes to return  
to the Father in glory,  
the Lord Jesus,  
our King, our Priest, and our Teacher,  
freely mounted the scaffold of the cross  
and made it his royal throne,  
his altar of sacrifice, his pulpit of truth.*

*On the cross  
He opened out his arms  
and offered you his life:  
the sacrifice of the New Law  
that gives to the Sacraments  
their living power.*

*On the cross  
he proved what He had prophesied:  
the grain of wheat must die  
to bring forth an abundant life.*

*May the cross be our comfort in trouble,  
our refuge in the face of danger,  
our safeguard on life's journey,  
until you welcome us  
to our heavenly home.*

*(From the Liturgy of the  
Blessing of the Cross)*

## October 28: Dedication of Mount Calvary

# In the Cross is Our Hope

BY FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SC

While the Bishop of Lansing, Most Rev. Carl F. Mengeling, proclaimed the invocation for the blessing of the cross, the hearts of all participants of the sacred liturgy were filled with joy and holy emotions.

The Shrine of St. Joseph was almost too small to shelter the crowd we were expecting to participate in the celebration, and for these a very large tent was prepared in welcome for this assembly of the faithful.

The Lord was so good to give us a beautiful sunny day after some rainy days and a freezing night. In spite of the condensation, dripping down from the inside of the tent on our heads, we were able to participate with joyful gratitude in all parts of the Liturgy.

The Bishop, surrounded by numerous Servants of Charity gathered in general assembly here in Michigan, from Italy, India and the Philippines, celebrated the liturgy of the feast of Blessed Louis Guanella, the founder of the Pious Union of St. Joseph. Also present were several of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence representing all of the Guanellian Sisters working in the United States and throughout the world. With the Sisters and many committed lay persons, the Servants of Charity are united in spirit and action for the growth of the kingdom of God, evangelizing the poor through charity.

Precious and meaningful was the presence of a group of migrant workers from Mexico who filled our hearts and minds with the sweet harmonies of the music and melodies of their culture. Members of the Knights of Columbus, 4th Degree Color Guard, added solemnity to the celebration.

However, beyond this simple chronicle, what is truly important is the reason for Mount Calvary, which is offered for reflection and meditation to the community and all pilgrims and visitors to the Shrine.



The Servants of Charity and the members and friends of the Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying, have planted a very visible cross at the center of the grounds of the Shrine. Pilgrim and visitors are inspired to join in, believe in and celebrate the merciful love of God who grants us the grace to be called his children in the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whose memory we celebrate every day in the Eucharist, together with his resurrection and real presence among us.

The truth of this, our Catholic faith, is expressed by the altar placed in an elevated area at the foot of the Calvary for outdoor celebrations of the Eucharist. During the celebration, looking at Jesus on the cross, and present on the altar of sacrifice, the faithful will understand deeply that the love of Jesus is full of mercy and compassion, becoming spiritual nourishment and sustaining us in our weakness.

A Holy Stair, leading to the top of Calvary, ascends to the cross from behind the altar. There are seven steps and on each step is engraved one of the "last seven words" that Jesus pronounced on the cross. Meditating on these last words of Jesus, the pilgrim is invited to center his attention and prayer completely in the suffering of Jesus who looks down at him from the cross, 20 feet above.

At the foot of the cross and on the Memorial Wall, you can see the dedications and memorials, engraved names of those who ask to be perpetually remembered in the daily prayers at the Shrine. These and all members of the Pious Union of St. Joseph and many anonymous donors are remembered in our prayers and share in the merits of this faithful ministry for the suffering and dying.

We are now envisioning other projects: the Way of the Cross, the empty tomb of Jesus and a small votive chapel dedicated to the death of St. Joseph. Trusting in the providence of God and the generosity of devotees and friends, we hope to give body to our dreams in the years leading to 2010.

Pilgrims, coming to the Shrine to entrust their suffering and pain to God, are now able to make a simple and meaningful spiritual journey: beginning at the Grotto of our Lady of Lourdes, then contemplating the suffering of Jesus, being sustained by the intercession of St. Joseph and adoring Jesus in the Eucharist. All may find inspiration and spiritual support in their self-surrender to the will of God, cooperating with Jesus for the redemption of all mankind, while longing for salvation without limits.



This is the vision that is seen by travelers, passing the Shrine of St. Joseph on Old US 12. Out of the darkness the floodlit image of Jesus on the cross appears to their sight and enters their imagination.

A vision of Jesus, while going to work early in the morning or returning home at night, tired and most often alone, is a sign of protection and blessing.

Christ on the cross is a reminder to all to live their lives in daily commitment to family, workplace and society. The cross is our daily invitation to trust in the loving mercy of God who forgives us through Jesus Christ and invites us to become instruments of his grace through our own daily self-giving, to Him and to others.

The cross without Jesus is meaningless, as empty and meaningless as our lives would be without Him.



# *The Joy and Peace of Christ in Christmas*

BY WAYNE MEIER

Soon we will celebrate the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Even during this season, when we celebrate the greatest gift of all, we can get all wrapped up in ourselves about what to buy, how much to spend or how much is enough. Rushing around we can forget why we celebrate, worry too much and even go into debt.

When I think about celebrating Christmas generously this year and why we celebrate, I am reminded of two very special Christmases that stand out far above any of the gifts that I've received over the years.

The first of these special Christmas days was in 1962 when I was six years old. I was born and raised on a family farm in North Dakota. My parents worked extremely hard and were very poor. Lacking money, my mother saved Green Stamps so that she could put at least one gift under the tree for her children. That year, Santa brought me a Tonka tow-truck. That was all, there were no other gifts. What's memorable is that I was given permission to take my new truck with me to Grandpa and Grandma's house. Grandma prepared a Christmas feast and all of my uncles, aunts, and cousins were there. I had the opportunity to show my relatives that Santa thought I'd been a good boy that year and I had the tow-truck with me to prove it. We spent the day eating all we could, drinking all the soda pop we could hold, and playing ourselves to exhaustion. Those were the days!

The second most memorable Christmas was in 1980. Deb and I had been married for two years and we were enjoying our newborn daughter, Melissa, our first child. You'll remember that the economy was in recession in the 80's and like everyone else we knew, my young wife and I were most worried about



keeping our jobs. As Christmas approached, we made a pact that we wouldn't buy presents for each other. However, on Christmas morning, there was one small package under the tree addressed to "Daddy." Inside was a pair of socks and a coffee mug that said "World's Greatest Daddy." Deb had saved a few nickels and quarters from her lunch money to show me how much I was cherished by my little family and I was overcome with emotion. I will never forget that day.

These special Christmases help me to remember that what touches hearts is not what we give, but the spirit in which we give to one another. Two different women, my Mother and my Wife, separated by time and place, shared a common spirit in their absolute desire to see a smile on the face of the people they loved. I was so fortunate to receive their gifts and although the cup and socks and even the Tonka truck are long gone the spirit continues to delight.

Kind gestures are welcome gifts and a smile in return always gladdens the heart of the giver. During these difficult economic times, while we find our country still at war, and many of us are missing someone from our family or community who is far away from home, we can stop our rushing and breathe deeply the goodness of the season of Christ's birth; passing on His gift of love to everyone we meet.

Love is what we celebrate, God's love for us and our love for Him, and he gave us His peace in which to celebrate.

**Thank you to all who have shared their gifts with the Pious Union of St. Joseph this year and again at Christmas time. Your gifts to the Pious Union are passed on in the love of Christ to all who visit the Shrine or benefit from the works of the Servants of Charity.**

**May God bless you and all who share Christmas with you in the Love of Christ.**

**As many have done this year, you are invited to give the gift of perpetual remembrance by requesting a memorial on Mount Calvary, where many pilgrims will pass and prayers will be offered.**



# 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**
- 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](mailto:piousunion@pusj.org)

# 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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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



*Servants of Charity ministry with children, Philippines*

## Pious Union of St. Joseph

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