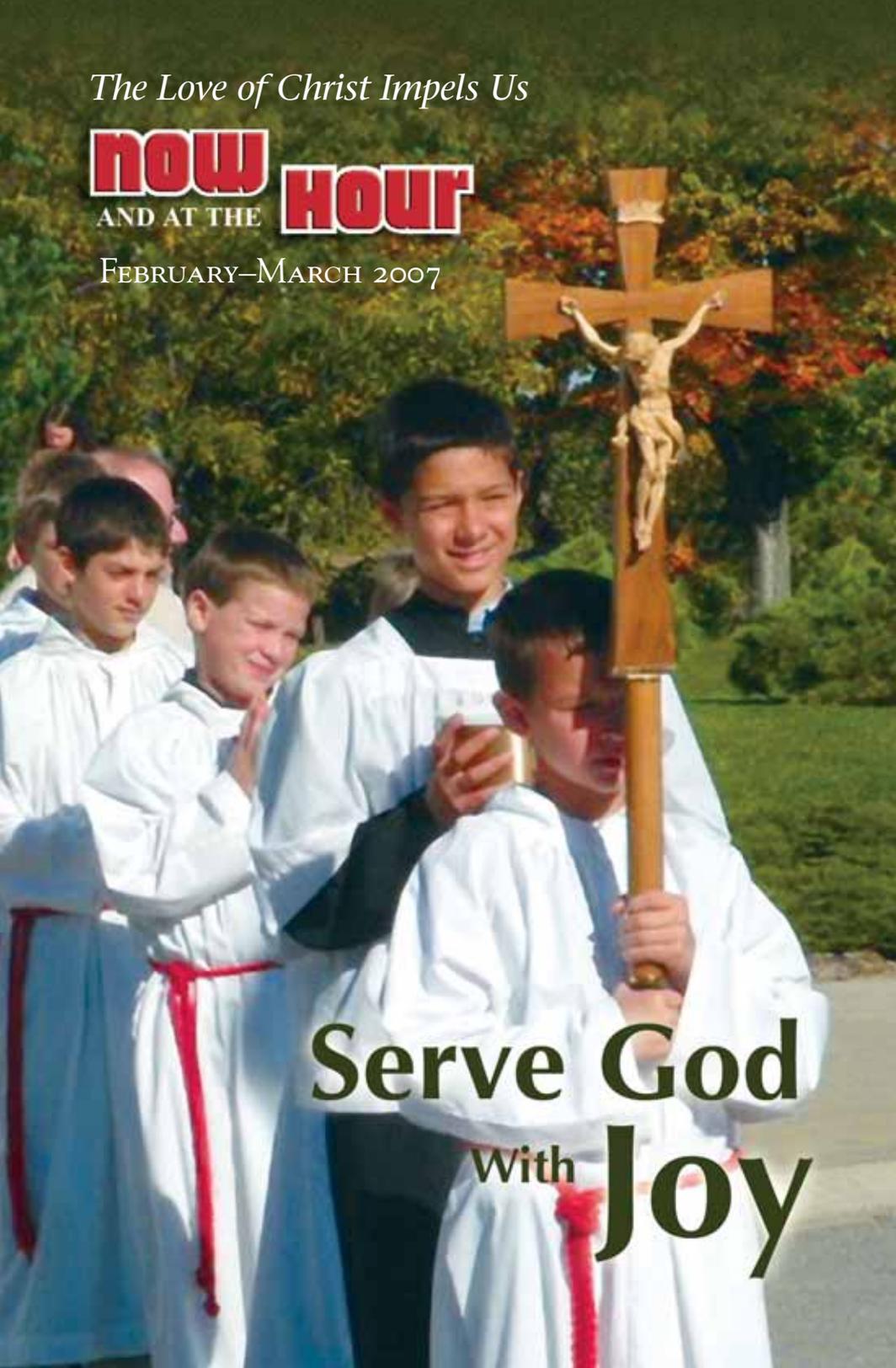


The Love of Christ Impels Us

now **HOUR**
AND AT THE

FEBRUARY—MARCH 2007



Serve God
With **Joy**

now AND AT THE **hour**

Cover: Altar boys process from the Grotto to the Shrine after Rosary.

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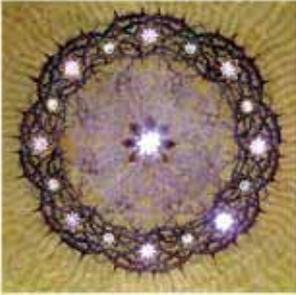
The Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying is an Association of the faithful, founded by Blessed Aloysius Guanella in 1913 and made a Primary Association of the Catholic Church by Pope St. Pius X, on April 12, 1914.

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

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

The Prayer of the Pious Union of St. Joseph

O St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus Christ and true Spouse of the Virgin Mary, pray for us and for the suffering and dying of this day. Amen.



Journey of Hope

We are at the threshold of a new liturgical season, Lent, which increases our awareness of the gift of salvation given to us by God through the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Son of

God, assuming flesh in the womb of Mary and being born in our own human nature, not only redeems us from our sins, but also teaches us how to give glory to God throughout our lives in our body and spirit.

Our body has been given to us so that, animated and sustained by God's spirit, we may become a visible expression of love. As we grow in wisdom and grace we discover that the main place of love is in our heart.

It is in our heart that God acts and continually calls us to be coherent and faithful.

It is in our heart that we feel the ardent desire to love.

It is in our heart that we suffer because of disappointment and denial.

It is in our heart that we find the unhealed furrows caused by every burning tear shed for a betrayed love.

It is in the heart, oppressed by remorse for sin, that our desire for repentance teaches us to repeat, "I stand up and I will return to the house of my Father."

Behold, the balm of the gaze of Jesus is pressing into your heart. It is a gaze which gives strength, refreshes the burning heat of your passion, heals each wound when you fall, sustains you in every temptation and leads you on your journey toward salvation.

He is always with you, nailed to the Cross, raised in the glory of the Father, acting through His Spirit, and present, still alive, in the Eucharist.

He is also hidden in your thirsty heart, while you seek for a love which can quench it forever.

When it seems that your life is surrounded by thorns, remember that these are the same that crowned the head of Jesus and let them incite you to become free in mind, body and spirit in your daily striving toward eternal life.

St. Joseph's Interior Life of Hope *(Part II)*

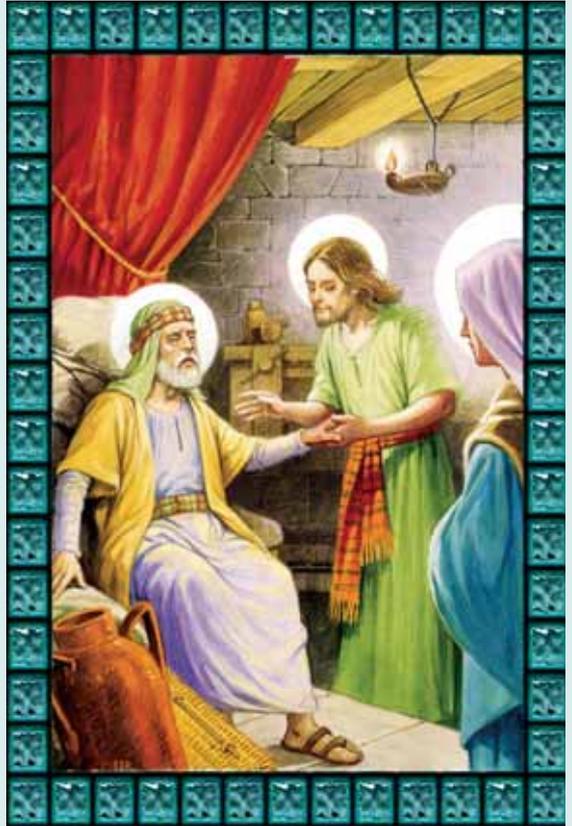
By Fr. John Ascedu

The main object of hope is the final possession of God in the life to come.

We must keep this belief firmly in mind! As long as we walk on this earth we must keep hope alive so we may reach God in Heaven. This goal of Heaven is not just one of the many we strive to reach, living here on earth. Absolutely not! It is the most important one. Recall what Jesus said: "What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mt 16:26)

Joseph had the unique opportunity to live side by side with Jesus and to see how He was in constant union with his Father in Heaven. This experience influenced him deeply in his desire and kindled a strong hope

in reaching the final possession of God. For his part, Jesus bestowed grace upon grace on his foster father, Joseph, who lived every moment with salvation in mind. Joseph's existence became, allow me to say, like a perpetual day of recollection: the Lord was his all. When Joseph died



in the presence of his dearest, Jesus and Mary, his soul reached its destination in heaven. Faith and hope melted into a perpetual and eternal beatitude of charity and love in God.

Some theologians support the idea that the body of St. Joseph was raised from the dead and that Jesus brought him to Heaven when He ascended. It is a matter of our faith that the bodies of Jesus and Mary are in Heaven but that is not so for Joseph. Some persist in their theory, offering various reasons such as the fact that there are no relics of St. Joseph's body, as there are similarly no relics of Mary's. Another reason, they say, supports belief in the resurrection and ascension of Joseph with Jesus relies on the very particular mission of St. Joseph regarding Jesus. God called Joseph to live side by side with His Incarnate Son, to look after Him, to defend Him from danger, to feed, educate and help Him to advance in wisdom and age and favor before God and man, as we read in Luke 3: 52. Thus, they contend, a particular and unique mission corresponds to a particular and unique reward: the resurrection of his glorious body and his ascension with Jesus into Heaven, similar to Mary. As yet, it is a theory and not Catholic Theology but a theory which continues to be thought about and discussed.

What we know is that Joseph did not have it easy, practicing his faith and advancing in hope. Like many of us, he also hoped even when there was no apparent reason for hope. He also believed, even when all his dreams were tumbling and his familiar world falling apart. Through the gift of Intellect, the Holy Spirit sustained his faith. Through the gift of the Fear of the Lord, the Holy Spirit sustained his hope. Through filial "Fear," the Holy Spirit moved Joseph to look at the Lord as a son looks at his father. Joseph was not afraid of God. How many times he heard that Jesus' Father in Heaven was also his father. No, he did not fear the Lord, as we understand human fear. He loved the Lord in loving his Son; he served the Lord in serving his Son; he listened to his Father in heaven while listening to his Son. He tried his best to please the Lord and he learned directly from Jesus who opened the way for him to the Father as He did for us.

It happened when, after three long and agonizing days, Mary and Joseph found the twelve year old Jesus in the temple. Jesus told them to always nourish the hope of being helped by the Lord in all circumstances of life and to do everything as a pleasing sacrifice to Him, Creator and Father.

THE CLOAK OF ST. JOSEPH

By Gabriela Smith

Today, even kids don't like legends. They are things of the past! However, legends have some value, because they express the wisdom of peoples who believe in something beyond our human reach. The miraculous cloak of St. Joseph does not exist, but the Saint's goodness and concern toward suffering does exist for all time.

There was no more wood in the carpenter's shop. At home with his family, Joseph has a hard time smiling at little Jesus, hugging and kissing him. Mary knows something serious is bothering her husband.

"What is going on, Joseph?"

"I don't have any money and Issachar will lend me no more wood. How can I go on? I cannot work without wood."

"Trust the Lord, Joseph. We won't starve. I'll ask Susan to pay me for the oil I have given her. If she cannot, I'll go to our cousin Rachel."

Mary puts on her veil, on her head she puts the amphora and leaves the house to reach the fountain where she is sure to find the two women. An hour later she is back empty-handed. Susan could not pay for the oil because her son is still on the mountain with his flock and he has not sold any sheep.

Rachel could not afford any contribution because her business went so badly that she lost everything.

"Joseph, I think that you should go to Issachar and take him the linen cloak I made for you at the time of our wedding. Maybe it has some value and Issachar can give you more wood for your shop. Later on you can go back and redeem it."

Joseph doesn't answer, his mind is racing, "How can I pawn that cloak? It is better to be hungry than to give away that precious cloak! However, I have



Jesus and Mary to feed. What shall I do?" The carpenter sighs, looks at the Boy, goes to the closet, takes his cloak and leaves their house.

Issachar, a scrooge by nature, touches the cloak and feels the delicacy of the material. His small eyes sparkle with excitement and he says to Joseph:

"It is really a miserable token you bring me, but today I am in a generous mood. I'll take it."

When Joseph returns home with some wood for his shop, Issachar cannot contain his glee:

"I am so good at cheating people. That simpleton will pay me back five times over if he wants this precious cloak back. How delicate! What finesse! Such beautiful colors! What a beauty for some pieces of wood! I feel great!"

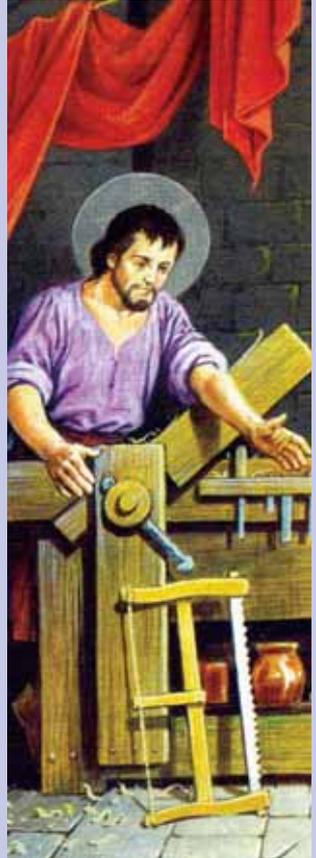
And congratulating himself for this stroke of luck, he casually puts it around his shoulders, and suddenly something happens.

For years, Issachar suffered from a wound to his shoulders that would not heal. Now, he feels something on his shoulders, a new feeling, a feeling of health. He tears off the bandage that covers his wound to check it, and:

"O my goodness! It's gone! Lydia, come here! It's gone!"

His wife Lydia runs to the shop to see the cause of this commotion. Seeing no bandage on the wound, she begins her daily cantankerous refrain on the stupidity of men who don't know any better and leave all the burdens on the poor women:

"O, you foolish man! What did you do with the bandage? Do you believe that I am foolish like you and spend my life bandaging you? Get lost! ... Wait! ... Where did this cloak come from? Why did you waste our money for a foolish thing we don't need when we don't have enough money for a good meal? Are you crazy? Have you lost your mind?"



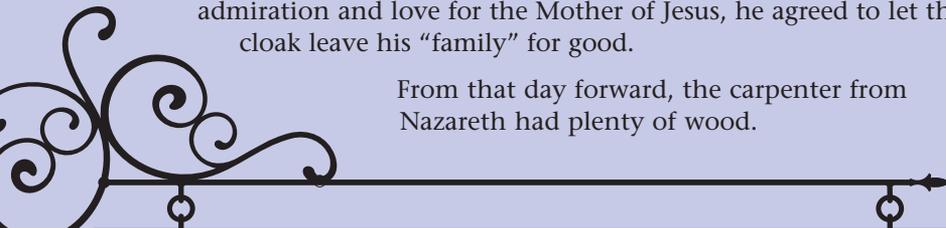
In her fury, Lydia jumps on Issachar to tear off the cloak, but upon touching the material she begins sobbing bitterly and from that day on, she was no longer the woman everyone knew, but a new genial and smiling person. A new life began to reign in the house of Issachar.

When the time came for Joseph to redeem his cloak, Issachar and Lydia refused to give it back. One day they went to see him bringing extravagant gifts: "Listen, Joseph, your cloak brought many blessings upon my house. My business is flourishing and everything I do has good results. It seems that miracles are happening. The last one regards my son who lost his mind after a long illness. He was healed when his mother put this blessed cloak on him. I am offering you all the wood I gave to you for free. Give me your cloak and I will give you another one made by Lydia in purple. I will give you all the wood you need forever. Please, let me keep this cloak!"

Lydia, too, approached Mary: "Here, Mary. I have brought for you some honey, some olives and two doves for your Son."

Humble Joseph, knowing that it was Mary who made this miraculous cloak, gave all the credit for holiness to her and, filled with a renewed admiration and love for the Mother of Jesus, he agreed to let the cloak leave his "family" for good.

From that day forward, the carpenter from Nazareth had plenty of wood.

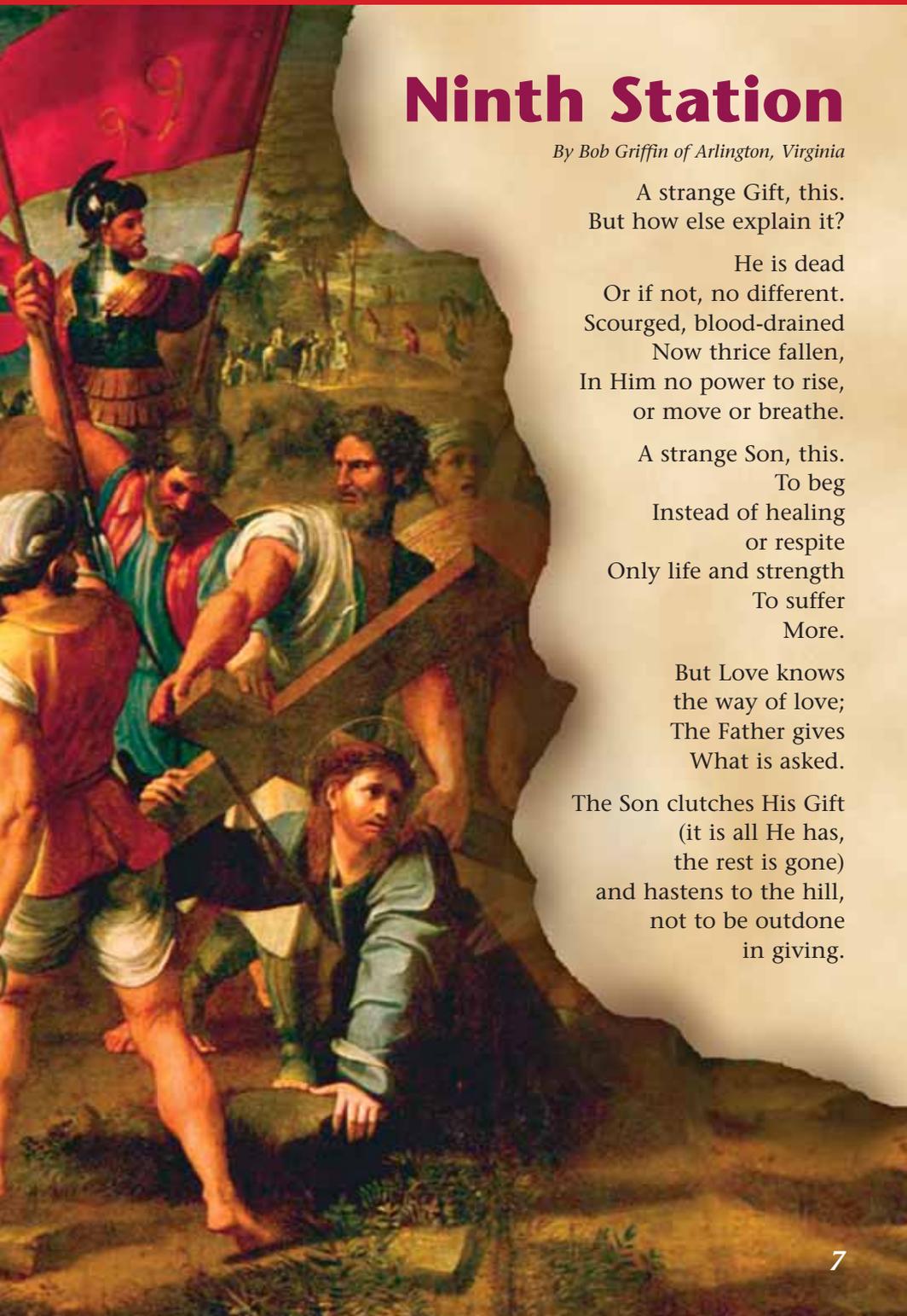


Novena, Devotional Prayers and Invocations to St. Joseph, as intercessor, were published in the booklet, *St. Joseph's Cloak*, by the Servants of Charity and the Pious Union of St. Joseph for many years.

In the future the Cloak will again be available in English. The reprinting and approval process is necessarily long and many of you have asked to be notified when it is available.

We will keep you posted.

To receive the Novena of St. Joseph pamphlet or the St. Joseph Chaplet before his Feast Day, write or call the office. We have some of each on hand and will be glad to provide them until we run out.



Ninth Station

By Bob Griffin of Arlington, Virginia

A strange Gift, this.
But how else explain it?

He is dead
Or if not, no different.
Scourged, blood-drained
Now thrice fallen,
In Him no power to rise,
or move or breathe.

A strange Son, this.
To beg
Instead of healing
or respite
Only life and strength
To suffer
More.

But Love knows
the way of love;
The Father gives
What is asked.

The Son clutches His Gift
(it is all He has,
the rest is gone)
and hastens to the hill,
not to be outdone
in giving.



WE ADORE YOU, O CHRIST,
AND WE BLESS YOU.
BECAUSE BY YOUR HOLY CROSS
YOU HAVE REDEEMED THE WORLD.

Rediscover Lent to Fully Celebrate Easter

By R. Borhgesi

Lent is a time of Grace for our conversion and upholds us as we grow in our own dignity as children of God. Each one of us has a personal way to fulfillment of his Christian vocation, but this Lenten experience would lose its deep meaning if we do not enter into it in the perspective of one who is committing himself, as a member of a community, journeying together toward freedom and salvation.

In fact, sin doesn't have a negative consequence only for the individual person but the consequences are spread throughout the community, in the social institutions and throughout the environment.

Equally, the grace of forgiveness that we receive from God concerns not only the redemption and transfiguration of the individual soul but also the full person, the human condition, the Church and the whole world.

This doesn't mean that each person or Christian community must commit itself in everything, but there must be present in the community a visible and prompt cooperation with the grace of God to produce the fruit of salvation.

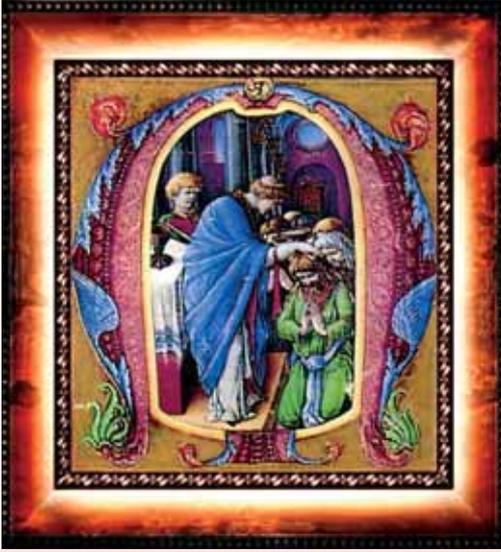
Making our way toward Easter is, once again, an experience within the millennial mission of the Church, spreading the Good News of salvation. We are called by the Church to reconciliation with God and with one another and further to renew the covenant between God and mankind through Jesus, who invites us to be perfect as His Heavenly Father is perfect.

In this way we may be sustained in a fruitful hope while we wait for the glorious return of the Lord to fulfill His promises and for all to be together with God.

At the beginning of Lent the Church marks our forehead with ashes. At the end of Lent she shows to us a man crowned by thorns, soaked in blood and covered in sweat, dust and spit: He is Jesus Christ, the crucified God-Man. "Behold the man!" was the exclamation of Pilate.

Yes, in this God-Man we can see the sublime expression of love and the consequences of the perfidious ingratitude of mankind. It is a mystery and at the same time reality.

Our Heart's Conversion



Conversion is the meaning of Lent. Every year the Church offers this time to her faithful, helping us to grow spiritually toward purification, liberation and resurrection. To allow it we must be dressed again with the courage to refuse a double standard of life and to adopt a deeper commitment.

We must enter into Lent with a desire to change our lives completely, overturning our materialistic desires and lifting our spirits toward the supernatural vision of our destiny as children of God.

May the ashes, pressed upon our foreheads, awaken in us a strong desire for new life and stir up the fire which seems extinguished by our tepidity and selfishness. The grace of the presence of the Lord in our renewed life promises to transform everything around us, causing all to assume the physiognomy of the salvation Jesus brought to us by His incarnation, death and resurrection.

We are ashes and we may not treat our brothers and sisters with deceit and lies any longer. We may not be violent any longer. We may not shut others out, while remaining alone in our presumptuous egotism any longer.

We are ashes and Jesus himself encourages us to persevere in holiness. Our true greatness is our return to the breath of God, who knows how to pull a new being out of the ashes.

“WE MUST ENTER INTO
LENT WITH A DESIRE
TO CHANGE OUR LIVES
COMPLETELY”

Bought with a Price

From Bishop Paul Loverde's Pastoral Letter

Do you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

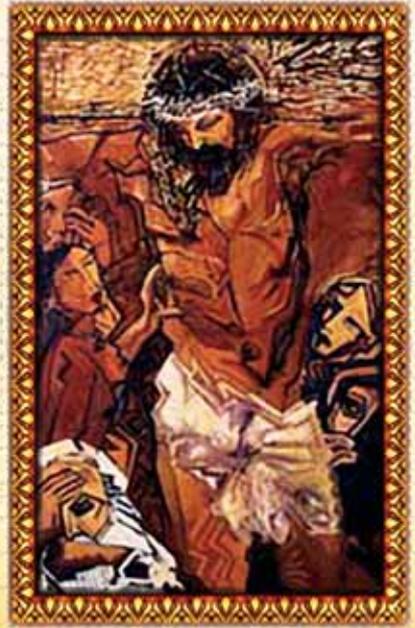
(1 Cor. 6:19-20)

"Bought with a Price: Pornography and the attack on the living temple of God" is the title of the pastoral letter, delivered to his flock, by the Bishop of Arlington, Virginia, Paul Loverde, in which he identifies pornography as an evil plague, devastating the mind, body and spirit and destroying matrimonial and family life.

He clearly presents the disastrous condition of the body, treated as merchandise for a vile trade which destroys the supernatural, divine likeness of the human being and then he charges all Catholics of his Diocese to bring this issue out of the darkness into the light. Current culture, which supports the legitimacy of individual self-determination, considers pornography a simple human weakness and even a legitimate part of physical sexual life. However, we know through the teachings of the Church, rooted in God's revelation, that pornography presents and promotes a distorted use of human sexuality, and is a mortal sin for those who produce, sell and use it.

"Pornography does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors and the public) since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials."

(CCC 2354)



❖ Pornography is dangerous to the virtue of chastity

“Pornography injures the common good by producing a commercial and licentious view of sexuality.

Young Christians struggle to live the demands of discipleship amid pressures of the surrounding culture which, over the last generation, has abandoned the virtue of chastity.

Spouses, especially husbands, striving to grow in the fidelity inherent in their marital vocation, encounter temptation to escape and seek false comfort in images and fantasies.

Priests and Religious, having committed themselves to a chaste and celibate life, find themselves in the midst of a culture that views celibacy as an impossible and even unhealthy goal.

Single men and women are distracted by these fantasies from their most important task of discerning God’s call in their life. In moving from impure thoughts to images to actual sexual misconduct, they undermine the foundation of trust and fidelity required for future happiness. The user of pornography, while longing for intimacy, turns ever more surely back into himself, becoming ever more isolated and alone.”

❖ Pornography destroys the family

“When family members turn to pornography in a distorted thirst for intimacy, they reject their commitment to their family. By doing this, they commit violence against the relationships which define their own vocation. The first to feel the violence of pornographic use is the spouse. The use of pornography is a violation of the commitment of marriage. Even if tolerated by the spouse, how can one possibly not feel rejection and betrayal when one’s committed partner turns to illusion and fleeting happiness in pornographic images? This rejection, if left unhealed, will often lead to permanent destruction of the marital commitment”

❖ Pornography damages the spiritual and mental growth of our children

“As is the nature of all sin, the ones who suffer the most are the innocent. Just as it is vain to hope for a spouse using pornography to keep it a secret, it is also a vain hope to think that the material itself can be kept a secret. Children encounter the very



material that has damaged their family and are introduced to an understanding of sexuality not intended by their parents. Instead of learning and experiencing the nobility of the human person created in the image and likeness of God, they experience the degradation of the human person reduced to a commodity, an object.”

❖ Pornography degrades the viewer

“Widespread pornography naturally leads to a degradation of human society because it degrades the persons who submit to it. Distorting that very human characteristic that promises an end to isolation, pornography leads, not to intimacy, but to deeper isolation. The divine purpose of human sexuality is to assuage the longing for communion with another and to bring the person into a bond of life-nurturing and life-giving love. In this human experience of intimacy with another, man’s eternal destiny of perfect communion with his Creator is prefigured. The false promise of intimacy offered by pornography leads, instead, to an ever-deeper alienation, that cripples the user’s ability to experience truly intimate human contact. *‘Be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like light in the world.’*” (Phil 2:15)

❖ What can we do?

Bishop Loverde, while reminding us that the most effective way to combat the plague of pornography is the witness of our faith, invites us also to ask the intercession and protection of St. Joseph.

“O most provident guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ. Most beloved father, dispel the evil of impurity and sin. Our most mighty protector, graciously assist us from heaven in our struggle with the power of darkness. And just as you once saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, so now defend this family from the snare of her enemies and from all adversity. Shield each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your help, we may be able to live a virtuous life, to die a holy death, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.”



For the full text please visit:

www.arlingtondiocese.org/offices/communications/boughtprice.html



HALLOWED BE THY NAME

An experience of God According to Blessed Louis Guanella

When you say to God, “*Hallowed be thy Name,*” remember that you are part of the family of your heavenly Father, here on earth. In this earthly family there is a vineyard which needs to be cultivated and in which everyone is expected to work. Children can labor in different ways. It is the Lord’s right to assign to you the particular task you must perform. It will be your duty, then, to fulfill exactly what God recommends to you in the ministry entrusted to you.

The son who wants to please his father begins to work early in the morning and continues in spite of the warmest hours of the day. And, if little devout brothers and sisters, like horse-flies and mosquitoes, come to distract him, the good son ignores them and continues the work until evening, for his father’s sake. May it please heaven that you start in the morning of your life to do well what God entrusts to you! May it please God that you continue in your efforts until noon and until the evening of your life. A Christian, in fact, must labor as long as he lives if he wants to be beloved.

Pay attention, however, there may be two types of fields here on earth. We may have a field which has been cleared. This can yield one hundred percent. This is a blessed field in the Garden of Eden. The land of Canaan is the second, which is fertile, yet it needs to be cleared and worked on consistently in order to produce fruit. Your heart is like this type of field. If your heart is pure in its intentions, if it is bright like purified gold, then you will be laboring in an excellent field, occupying yourself with profit for the glory of God and for your soul.

Imagine a young man who thinks he is old enough to leave his house and work on his own. Soon that ill-advised youth will be sorry and will return to his father! Think now of yourself! To avoid the danger of displeasing God, reflect continuously upon the fact that you are a sinner in the face of God. Even though you have been forgiven by Him, you have inflicted despicable offenses. How can you look at yourself and still dare to rise in imitation of the pride of Lucifer? Remember that if you allow those most vile strangers, that is the passions, to enter your heart that you will not be able to say to God with a peaceful mind: *"Hallowed be thy name!"*

The children, who care for the health and honor of their father, shield him with their own bodies with an impenetrable rampart. You, who boast of being a loving son, what have you done so far? A vile aggressor has entered the house of God the Father and has committed many sacrileges before his eyes. Blasphemers still persist today in dragging Jesus as a rag on the streets: and you remain so tranquil?

As far as you are concerned, consider the following. If you or one of your parents, who gave you life, received half of the wicked offenses directed to God your Father every day, would it not enrage you? If you do not burn with holy zeal when you witness these injuries, inflicted upon the Most High, it is a sign that you have not yet learned to say in your heart: *"Hallowed be thy name!"*

(Blessed Louis Guanella, *"Let us go to the Father"*, Works, Pg 31-34)

The Human Person

the Heart of Peace



Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the World Day of Peace

1. I wish to extend good wishes for peace to...all men and women of good will. In a special way, I invoke peace upon all those experiencing pain and suffering...I wish on this World Day of Peace to encourage everyone to reflect on the theme: *The Human Person, the Heart of Peace*. Respect for the person promotes peace and in building peace, the foundations are laid for an authentic integral humanism.

The human person and peace: gift and task

2. *As one, created in the image of God, each human being has the dignity of a person.* One can understand the task entrusted to human beings to mature in the ability to love and to contribute to the progress of the world, renewing it in justice and in peace. All human beings have the duty to cultivate *an awareness of this twofold aspect of gift and task*.

3. *Peace is both gift and task.* If it is true that peace between individuals and peoples calls for unflinching commitment, it is also true, that *peace is a gift from God*, an aspect of God's activity. Peace is a task demanding of everyone a personal response consistent with God's plan.

The right to life and to religious freedom

4. To respect the dignity of each human being means that *the person can not be disposed of at will*. The Church...promotes and defends respect for the *life* and the *religious freedom* of everyone. The right to life and to the free expression of personal faith in God is not subject to the power of man. Peace requires the establishment of *a clear boundary between what is at man's disposal and what is not*.

5. As far as the *free expression of personal faith* is concerned, I must point out that in some States, (Christians) are persecuted, and tragic cases of ferocious violence have been recorded. There are regimes that impose a single religion upon

everyone, while secular regimes often lead not so much to violent persecution as to systematic cultural denigration of religious beliefs. In both instances, a fundamental human right is not being respected, with serious repercussions for peaceful coexistence.

Human rights and international organizations

12. A true and stable peace presupposes respect for human rights...Only if they are grounded in the objective requirements of the nature bestowed on man by the Creator, can the rights attributed to him be affirmed without fear of contradiction. Clarity...is needed if human rights, are to be adequately defended. Without such clarity, the expression "human rights" will end up being predicated of quite different subjects.

13. The protection of human rights is constantly referred to by the United Nations...as a *moral commitment assumed by all mankind*. There is a profound truth to this, especially if the rights...are based...on man's very nature and his inalienable dignity as a person created by God. It is important for international agencies not to lose sight of the natural foundation of human rights. This would enable them to avoid the risk, unfortunately ever-present, of sliding towards a merely positivistic interpretation of those rights.

International humanitarian law and the internal law of States

14. The scourge of terrorism demands a profound reflection on the ethical limits restricting the use of modern methods of guaranteeing internal security. Increasingly, wars are not declared, especially when they are initiated by terrorist groups determined to attain their ends by any means available. States cannot fail to recognize the need to establish clearer rules to counter effectively the dramatic decline that we are witnessing. War represents a failure for the international community and a grave loss for humanity.

The Church as safeguard of the transcendence of the human person

16. Finally, let every Christian be committed to tireless peace-making and strenuous defense of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable rights.

17. Let every believer unflinchingly contribute to the advancement of a *true integral humanism*. To the Queen of Peace, the Mother of Jesus Christ "our peace" (Eph 2:14), I entrust my urgent prayer for all humanity at the beginning of the year 2007, to which we look with hearts full of hope, notwithstanding the dangers and difficulties that surround us. May Mary show us, in her Son, the Way of peace, and enlighten our vision, so that we can recognize Christ's face in the face of every human person, the heart of peace!

From the Vatican, December 8, 2006

Editor's Note: For the full text, please visit the Vatican website at www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm.



Defend and Promote Life, Always

By Patricia Stella

Many among us ask questions such as these: Which authority can claim the right to decide when and how a life is worth living? Who is going to decide under what conditions and within which limits or beyond which boundaries a life may be lived? Who has the wisdom or the right to separate the healthy and happy members of society from the suffering people?

I don't think we care much about these questions, really. What we want to know is that we will not suffer too much. Answers to our questions about life and death are just words, except when we listen, not to the famous doctors, scientists or the secular media, but to the Gospel and the tenets of our Christian faith, which tell us about the meaning of suffering and life eternal, of salvation and damnation. Faith alone teaches us that God spares us!

People who cannot rely upon faith, to deal with pain and suffering, invoke legal interventions while remaining ignorant of natural law. The law, people think, can resolve all problems and answer all questions. I have my doubts about that!

Some say that we should imitate enlightened and modern countries such as Holland, however they are not telling us the whole truth. In these same countries the civil law actually allows people to choose life or death for their sick or disabled children.

To support their thesis in favor of death for those living lives which they believe have no value, some organizations and individuals are using the same trite arguments, used to debate abortion. They report in exasperated tones and cite exaggerated numbers of heart-wrenching cases (no one checks them anyway!). Their philosophy provides an apocalyptic vision of the same dilemmas which humanity has always faced in our shared experience of birth and death, joy and suffering.

Euthanasia, a moral dilemma, may also redefine cultural boundaries. If life, birth and death are no longer understood as natural events; as an earthly pilgrimage where joy, sorrow, free will and events outside of our control

are at work effecting unique and wonderful traits within human beings who seek God, the consequence is a life reduced to purely biological events which can be manipulated at every turn by the philosophies of pop culture's current potentates. Then only immediate gratification, what I like or want, may become the only factors weighed when considering mankind's tough questions.

This redefinition of cultural boundaries gave rise to the misguided mission of Derek and Anne Humphrey, founders of the Hemlock Society, the most influential pro-euthanasia organization in the United States and lead to these and other tragic events. With the help of her husband, Anne euthanized her parents who we are told were not even affected by terminal illness. When Anne, herself, discovered that an incurable tumor was making her sick, she went for help to her husband, but soon realized that he was now her worst enemy. He and their organization expected her to choose to die and Anne, filled with remorse and in despair, sought help from Rita, one of her oldest friends and the founder of the International Anti-euthanasia Task Force. To Rita, she confided her disappointment in her husband. She was expecting him to be her support. Rita embraced Anne and told her, "I don't want you to die. I love you. I will help you to recover." And Rita did all that was possible to help her, but Anne, overwhelmed by the pressure from her husband and members of their organization, took her own life.

The promoters of euthanasia, confused by a false sense of compassion, inevitably set up a diabolical climate of despair, betrayal and indifference that leads to the death of human beings, while they remain convinced that they are serving a good and even a superior moral purpose. Because of their misguided influence, many handicapped, sick and elderly people are afraid they will meet death before their time as they are made to feel themselves as a burden, as ugly and unproductive, with nothing to offer to society their family or to God.

In this critical human dilemma, only love can make a difference. Without love, the life of the most vulnerable person is at the mercy of the most powerful.

God loves us and does not count our days as a burden. He has given us everything and we will always have something beautiful to offer Him at every stage of our life. Love!

Servants of Charity

Celebrate 100th Birthday

Together with the Lay Guanellian Movement on the Paths of the Fourth World

By Dieudonne' le Presbytre

Still young and vital, the congregation of the Servants of Charity readies itself to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its birth.

Day had already ended on March 24, 1908 when Fr. Louis Guanella, the founder, wanted to sign with indelible ink the first beginnings of their life experience toward sainthood for this first small group of priests. He was looking into a future that would be won with innumerable works of mercy throughout the world.

This same night, which celebrated the incarnation of the Word of God in the womb of Mary, also marked the beginning of the congregation of the Servants of Charity.

A Holy Night, when the echo of God's voice pronounced the word "enough" to the spiritual and physical suffering that tormented, but never defeated the unstoppable spirit of Fr. Guanella. In spite of the many trials and difficulties, his trust in the mercy of God sustained him and never failed.

Since that night Fr. Guanella's march upon the road of the "fourth world" never stopped. God's people who were excluded, derelict, poor because of their physical or mental disability, infirmity or incurable illness became the precious inheritance he bequeathed to his religious priests and brothers.

He was not satisfied just to wait at home for the poor to come knocking at the door. He went looking for them everywhere, bringing them home to be



served at his table. In his eyes these poor are the Benjamins in the house of our merciful Father.

His mission, growing within the Church and in the world, is present in twenty countries, where the Servants of Charity are compelled by the same challenge which was answered by their Founder with his holy life and experience. In being coherent in love we are challenged by the world, the culture, utilitarian practices of social and economic institutions, by political bureaucracies, and by our own soft religiosity that allows us to remain afraid of a total Gospel commitment, hiding our self-love and stopping us from reaching out for the Love of God.

Regardless of our weakness in the face of these monumental challenges, we can still hear the vibrant declaration of St. John, "We believed in Love."

2007 will be for us, the Servants of Charity, a year full of grace in preparation for our 100th birthday and we want to commit ourselves to growing in the love of God so that the Gospel of Life and Salvation will be announced with love and effectiveness, bringing abundant fruit to the poor for whom we have been sent.

We want to share this, our commitment of evangelization, with the Lay Guanellian Movement, which partakes with us and with the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence of the beneficent gifts of the spirituality of Blessed Louis Guanella.



We announce with joy our invitation to you to join the *Second National Conference of the Lay Guanellian Movement*, which will be held at St. Mary of Providence, 4200 N. Austin Avenue, Chicago, on May 4 thru 6, 2007.



For details please call Sr. Linda Willette 507-794-2052 or Joe Yekulis at 734-475-8430 or the Pious Union of St. Joseph 517-522-8017.



Blessed Guanella's Citizenship in the Local Catholic Church

By Fr. Silvio de Nard, SC

It was 1806 when the Declaration of Religious Freedom affirmed the right of free association to the Catholic community in the United States. Catholics, alongside all other US citizens, could then commit themselves to the development of a common homeland from the viewpoint of their Catholic Faith.

In Baltimore, Maryland, that same year, Bishop John Carroll consecrated his Cathedral Church with the title of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Baltimore was erected as the first Catholic Diocese in the American Federation and is universally honored as the primary Episcopal Seat and Mother of all local churches in the nation. For this reason its Cathedral is named the Proto-Cathedral of the United States.

Two hundred years later, November 5, 2006, the special envoy of the Pope, Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, a native of Baltimore, presided over the solemn celebration for the rededication of the Cathedral and the consecration of her new altar. This event has become a very important moment in the living history of our Congregation, because Blessed Louis Guanella was solemnly recognized as a member of the local Church in America.

It is an ancient tradition in the Church, proceeding from the first centuries AD, to celebrate the Eucharist remembering the example of the saints and martyrs, whose relics were placed under the altars. Following tradition the Archbishop of Baltimore, Cardinal William Henry Keeler, in committing his Christian Community in its process of spiritual and human growth as the flock of the Divine Shepherd, placed within the altar the relics of those saints whose lives touched his Archdiocese.

Among these Saints and Blessed, three were chosen and their relics were placed within the Cathedral's new altar. The first of these is St. John Neumann (†1860). He came to the United States from Bohemia as a missionary. After joining the



Holy Mass is celebrated on the newly dedicated Altar

Redemptorists in Baltimore he was appointed as Bishop of Philadelphia and consumed all his life as a missionary of the Good News for the spiritual and intellectual formation of his flock.

The second chosen was St. Elizabeth Seaton (†1821). She was a widow and former member of the Episcopalian Church. She founded the congregation of the Daughters of Charity in Baltimore and, with her religious sisters, she initiated the glorious Catholic school experience in the United States.

Finally, the relics of our Founder, Blessed Guanella (†1915), were requested. He traveled to the United States from Italy to prepare a place to send his religious sisters, the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, to work with the poor, especially children, aged and mentally disabled. On a Sunday evening in mid-January, 1913, he reached Baltimore and immediately went to the Cathedral to join

in the solemn evening prayer, which was the custom of the time. Early Monday morning he celebrated his Mass and then assisted the Mass of Cardinal James Gibbons, with whom he shared his dreams and discussed his projects. Blessed Guanella wrote in his memoirs his admiration for the Cardinal and also his surprise at the invitation for lunch that was so simple and so similar to that of the poor pastors of his country.

Nearly one century after his visit to Baltimore, several of Fr. Guanella's Priests and Sisters were invited to the celebration, representing the whole Guanellian family throughout the world. Today all of us believe that the seed planted by our Founder many years ago will surely sprout anew, out of the deep night and intense cold that imprisoned it in the ground. To all of you we announce the promise of the light of a new dawn in our mission and our ministry. The future will bring joy.

Heralding the dawn is the announcement of the conclusion of the canonical investigation into the circumstances surrounding the miracle and the grace which we believe God granted to a young man in Pennsylvania. After mortal injury he regained his health from the brink of death. All documents will be delivered from Philadelphia to the Vatican, where we expect a group of physicians to certify the medical impossibility of explaining the boy's recovery.

We pray, asking God, that through the canonization of His servant, Blessed Louis Guanella, that His Glory will be amplified in our local Church.



Fr. Silvio de Nard carries relics to be placed in the Altar

PHILIPPINES EMERGENCY:

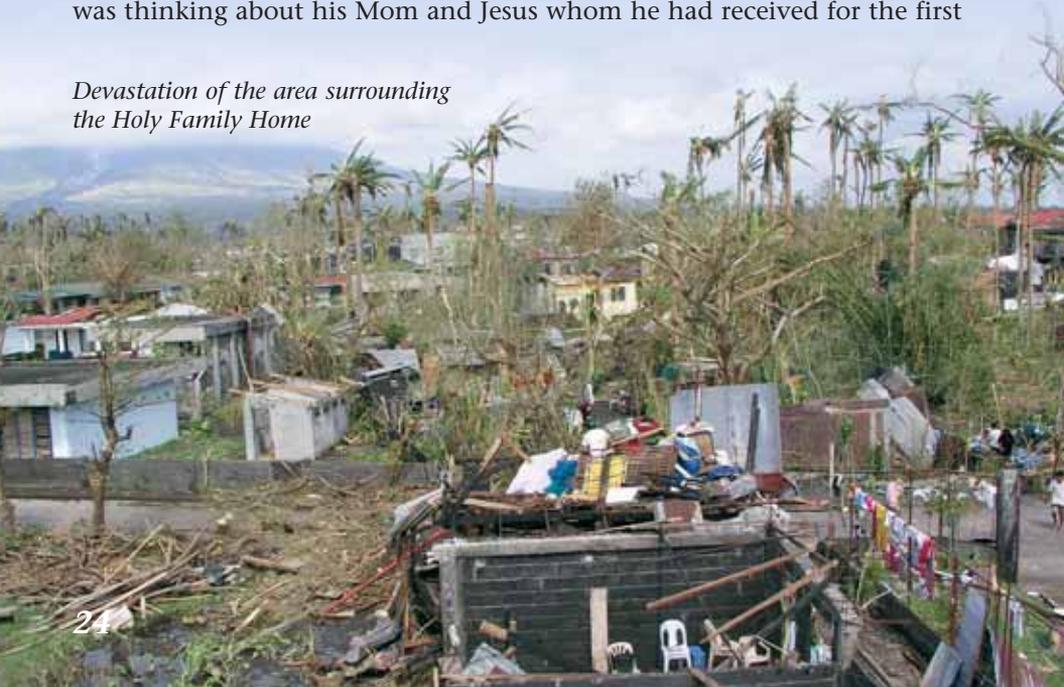
On the Frontlines with Love

By Fr. Louis De Giambattista, SC

I am just coming back from the Bicol region and from our facility in Legazpi where the devastating typhoon came down with great force in November. I reached the place after an adventurous journey among miles upon miles of devastation. For eight hours the rain fell and the wind was blowing at 160 miles per hour. What I have found at Legazpi and the surrounding villages is difficult to describe and it will be difficult to forget as well. I never saw a war and I never saw Hell, but I saw there the effects of a war and the suffering that the damned souls are going through in Hell. People say that there are more than 1300 dead.

I spoke to a father, in critical condition in the only hospital left standing. He told me that from his family of seven, only two survived, he and his seven year old daughter. In the wards of that same hospital I saw terrible and indescribable suffering, like that of a mother who was expecting to give birth to her child. She found herself in a hospital bed with an amputated leg and desperately asking where they put her child. I wept to hear the nine year old Charles, the only survivor of his family. A rescue team found him buried in a well of mud and stranded by a tree that fell on him. Only his head was coming out of the mud. He told me that while awaiting help he was thinking about his Mom and Jesus whom he had received for the first

*Devastation of the area surrounding
the Holy Family Home*



time just days before. Among so much suffering and darkness (the electrical system is totally destroyed), the Lord opens glimmers of light and new life. Walking among the people of the village where our facility is located, I heard over and over again a prayer of thanksgiving for being alive even though having lost everything else. Going among them to bring some assistance, I found myself kneeling in the mud and hearing their confessions. Truly I broke with them the bread of God's forgiveness and strength.

While people are still digging for the recovery of victims and giving them a Christian burial, you can see the strong determination of the villagers to go back to life. They are assembling new huts from the wreckage, recovering what could be useful, re-opening paths and roads connecting with surrounding villages, and building little bamboo bridges over creeks. When the sun comes out, you can see women washing what remains of their clothes. People dig among the ruins using their naked hands. Drinking water is a rarity and everyone hopes that another typhoon will spare them.

Inside the compound of our facility "Harong Kan Sacrada Familia" (*Holy Family Home*), the wounds of the typhoon are very visible: collapsed ceilings, roofs contorted, ruins inside the school, windows broken to pieces, doors gone, trees entering through windows, iron fences flying from who knows where and found twisted in our kitchen. In spite of all the destruction, the house is still standing, and confreres and patients are thanking God for His provident protection. The house where the patients live is miraculously intact. Confreres and patients are unhurt. The fury of the wind blew away the main door of the church.

Reuters: With the high winds came flooding



Destruction of classrooms at Holy Family Home



Fr. Luigi comforts young typhoon victim



AP: Distressed people in the wake of the typhoon



Some sections of the facility are now the only refuge for hundreds of people displaced from their homes that do not exist anymore.

More than one hundred thousand people are piled up in evacuation centers, one of which is the nearby elementary school. Even though very badly damaged, the school offers a roof to hundreds of local people. Kids are all over the place. Our priests are frequently among them bringing food and whatever else they need.



ANSA: Mourning over the graves

In such horrible situations, it is comforting to see so much solidarity coming from other regions of the Philippines. It is necessary to receive a lot of help because reconstruction will take a long time. While we in the house are replacing walls, cleaning floors and hammering down new roofs, our duty is also to repair and console the spirits of the

many who are living with the trauma of nature's devastation.

As Servants of Charity, in union with the Guanellian family around the world, we live this new call to charity in opening wide the door of our facility and, more important, the door of our heart to the numberless brothers and sisters in need and who are coming to us. In following Jesus, the Good Samaritan, we are happy to give and share with them the little we have.

I take the occasion to thank all who, either here in the Philippines or in other countries, are providing help and prayer.

The Holy Birth of Jesus may find us vigilant and attentive in seeing the face of Emmanuel (God-is-with-us) especially in the faces of the little ones, the poor and the afflicted.

We too are praying for all of you. May the Lord give us his peace and new enthusiasm to serve Him among these wonderful Filipino people.

Love from Legazpi and Manila. Your help will be a witness of love for our brothers and sisters with whom we are sharing these moments of suffering and struggle.



Reuters: Caring for the dead in the aftermath of the typhoon

St. Bernadette Soubirous:

A Good-for-Nothing, Given the Task of Praying



Bernadette Soubirous (1868)

In Anticipation of the 150th Anniversary of the Apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes

By Fr. Paul Oggioni, SC

The lady, dressed in white, made a promise to Bernadette in one of her apparitions in the cave of Massabielle, Lourdes, France; “I will not make you happy in this world but in the future one.” The difficulties and challenges were too much: suspicion, misunderstanding, rejection, and repeated humiliations.

And it was not the last of what she received the day she pronounced her commitment to

God and His Church through the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience in religious life.

She was 20 years old. To the Bishop, asking what kind of activity could be convenient for her, the Mother Superior answered: “What do you want to entrust to her, who is good-for-nothing?” The Bishop told Bernadette with kind affection, “my daughter, since you are good-for-nothing I entrust to you the duty of prayer.” Bernadette accepted and was faithful to her duty for fifteen years until she died on April 16, 1879 when she was thirty five years old.



Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette

During her painful sickness, a tumor in her leg manifested and frequently she cried out, "Immaculate Mary is so beautiful that after seeing her one time you wait for nothing else except to see her once again in heaven, forever."

February 11, 1858 the Immaculate Mary appeared to Bernadette in a dump where the garbage of the town of Lourdes was thrown. In that dirty place this sickly girl experienced eighteen times an indescribable vision of paradise.

February 24, 1858 the "White Lady" manifested, through Bernadette, her message to the world, "Penance! Penance! Pray for the sinners."

February 25, 1858 the Blessed Mother said to Bernadette, "Go and drink from that fountain and wash your face." From that time a miraculous spring of water flowed from the ground.

March 25, 1858 Bernadette communicated to her Pastor the words of Mary, "the lady told me, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.'"

July 16, 1858 the entrance to the Grotto was closed by local authorities and barricaded to keep people out. From outside Bernadette saw the radiant maternal face of the Blessed Mother for the last time. She said: "Never did I see her so beautiful."



Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes

Since then Lourdes has become known as the "City of Mary," "City of the Suffering," and the "City of Miracles." A Basilica and the miraculous spring have become like the evangelical pool where Jesus healed the paralytic man who had no one to carry him to the pool.

In almost 150 years millions of people have visited the Blessed Mother at her Grotto of Massabielle. Incredulous and skeptics alike have recovered their faith. Sinners rediscovered God through Mary. Sick people found comfort in their suffering and on many occasions their health was restored. The curious were touched by the inexpressible joy and



Lourdes: Grotto of the apparition

inner peace bursting forth from the suffering body of the crowd lying on stretchers in front of Our Lady's Grotto. These are the people of God, suffering in their body and spirit and joining their pain with Jesus on the cross for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of mankind. Most will return home renewed, accepting their heavy cross and offering their suffering in union with Jesus Christ.

Those going to Lourdes asking God, through Mary, for spiritual and

physical relief, learn from Bernadette's example that in spite of everything, life is beautiful and worthy to be lived.

When her suffering was unbearable Bernadette sighed: "No, my Lord! I don't ask for relief but only for strength and patience." In her last will she wrote, "Thank you my God for the soul you gave to me, for the desert of my inner aridity, for your darkness and hidden revelations, for your silence and your flashes of lightening. In everything, for You, far away or near to me, thank you, O Jesus."

This is the message coming from Lourdes, where everyone may make a spiritual journey of love and hope. There is no loneliness, sickness, physical disability, or emotional disturbance that can impede faith.

Let us go together to the Grotto of Lourdes where Mary will show us her maternal love, interceding for the graces we need and sustaining us with her protection during our spiritual journey toward Heaven.

February 11: Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

World Day of the Sick for the Conversion of Sinners and the Spiritual Growth of the Church

To honor Mary, a Grotto with her image was blessed at the Shrine of St. Joseph on November 5, 2005. Our Lady's Grotto is becoming a point of reference and place for prayer and meditation for sick and pilgrims, who come to the Shrine, entrusting to the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph the secrets of their spirit.

In 2007 St. Joseph's Shrine and the Grotto continue to be a center of prayer where the suffering family of God converges to strengthen its faith and to surrender with love and perseverance to the Will of God.

On February 11th all present at the Shrine joined the World Day of the Sick with the same spirit and faith of the pilgrims going to Lourdes. Like them, we approached an intimacy with Jesus through prayer, Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick. All together at the Grotto we entrusted the Virgin Mary with our supplications and a certainty of her protection and intercession.

To honor God and invoke the protection of Mary in preparation for the 150th Anniversary of her apparition in Lourdes many activities are planned.

"First Saturday Devotion" will be offered regularly and those suffering spiritually, physically, and emotionally are invited to join a Lourdes celebration every First Saturday of the month at 2:30 p.m...

Devotion to Mary, Mother of Mercy and Consolation of the Afflicted, will help us to fulfill the Will of God in our suffering body, mind and spirit as we attend to what she asked the servants at the Wedding of Cana to do, that is, to do what Jesus tells you.

We will entrust ourselves to the Will of God in the spirit of the request of Mary to Bernadette, "Conversion, suffering and prayer for the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation."



Procession to Our Lady's Grotto, Shrine of St. Joseph

SHRINE REPORT

Looking Towards Calvary – A New Design

By Lauren Hill

In looking over the new drawings, you will notice that some primary elements of the design have changed, while some remain the same. At the heart of it all, is Jesus.

In the new design the benches face Calvary and our eyes ascend first to the Altar of the Sacrifice of the Mass and then to Jesus Crucified at the top of the hill. The Holy Stair, more detailed in this illustration, continues to be the route pilgrims will travel on their prayerful journey to the foot of the Cross. Each step announces one of the last seven words of Jesus; light has been added for night-time devotees and alcoves cut into the wall at the foot of the Stair, holding votive candles which may be lit when offering our intentions. “I am the Resurrection and the Life” Memorial Wall remains at the crest of the hill and behind the crucifix.



Holy Stair as seen from the Foot of Calvary

As the new Calvary design, prepared by architect Scott McGrath, nears completion, Fr. Paul and the Council prepare to go out for bids in the hope of establishing a start date for construction in the spring.



We, members of the Pious Union, can all turn to one another and say, “thank you” for your prayers, volunteer work and donations while we continue to spread devotion to St. Joseph as the patron of the Suffering and Dying. St. Joseph, help us in all our efforts to give Glory to God and guide us in patience, gratitude and love.



Memorials and Dedications

- Dedicate a step of the Holy Stair\$5000**
- Dedicate a Bench in front of the Altar\$1000**
- “I am the Resurrection and the Life” Memorial Wall\$500**
- Dedicate a tile near the Calvary\$250**
- Dedicate a tile at Our Lady’s Grotto\$250**
- Become a Shrine Forester, Plant a tree\$150**
- Dedicate a leaf on the Tree of Remembrance in the Shrine\$500**

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

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

Early in the transformation of the buildings and surroundings of the Shrine of St. Joseph, the Knights of Columbus of the St. Francis of Assisi Council and the Cardinal O’Hara Assembly became primary benefactors in support of the Shrine. Wayne Meier, who served as the Grand Knight of the St Francis Council, continues to serve as the Chairman of the Pious Union Pastoral Council. We are grateful to God for the generosity of these good Knights and most recently offered thanksgiving for a substantial donation from the St. Francis Council for the building of the Calvary.



Tom Ciesicki (L) and Ray Woodruff, (R) present Fr. Paul and the Pious Union of St. Joseph with a donation for the Calvary

The Servants of Charity and The Daughters of St. Mary of Providence God's Gift to the Church and the poor

... called to enlarge the tent of Charity and to announce
that the poor and the neglected are the preferred members
of the family of God ...

rely on
you.



Jesus needs you
to love others!

Vocation Directors

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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.

Sacrament of the Sick

Upon request

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

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