

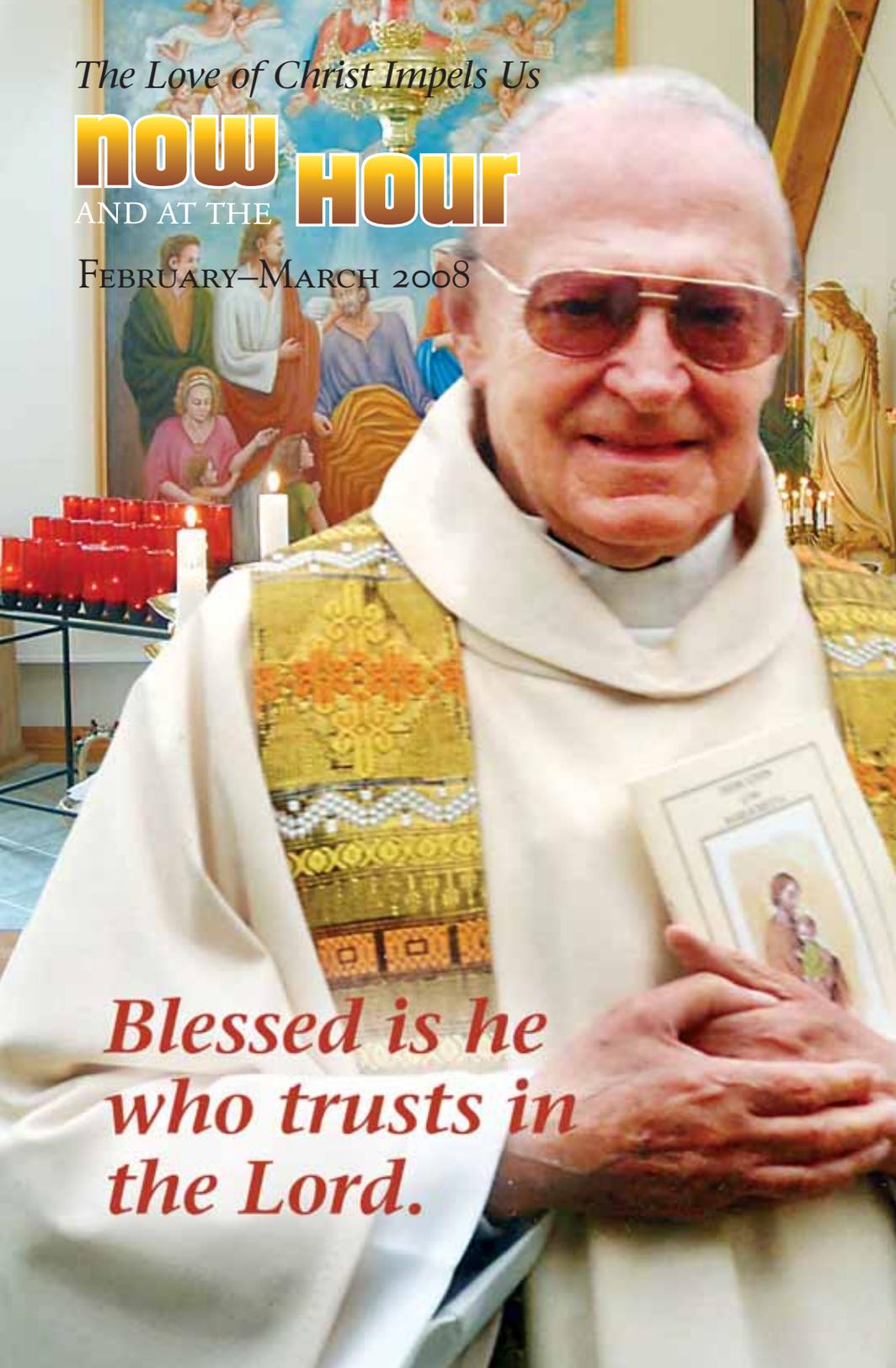
The Love of Christ Impels Us

now HOUR

AND AT THE

FEBRUARY–MARCH 2008

*Blessed is he
who trusts in
the Lord.*



now HOUR

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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.*

IN MEMORY OF

Fr. Germano Pegoraro

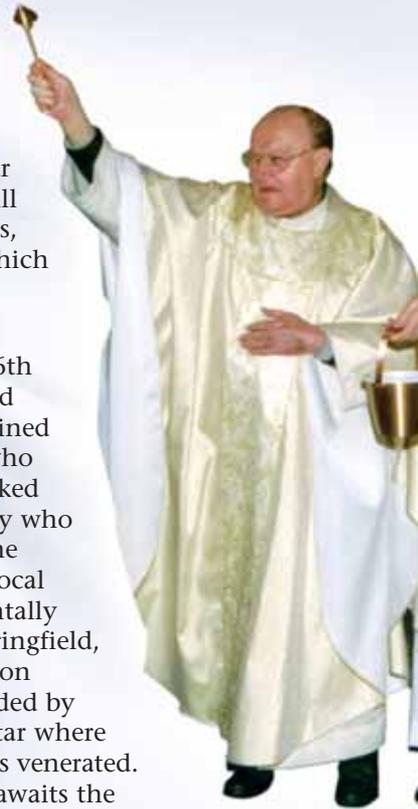
SERVANT OF CHARITY

Remembering a person to whom we owe respect, affection and gratitude, takes us beyond the borders marking the temporal boundaries of the human experience of this dear one. So, remembering Fr. Germano Pegoraro will take us back through his life, beyond boundaries, to discover and understand the moving force which marked his human and spiritual adventure.

He was born in 1923 in Thiene, Italy, the home town of a holy priest, St. Cajetan, who in the 16th Century dedicated his life to caring for orphaned and abandoned children. Fr. Germano was ordained by Blessed Cardinal Ildefonso Shuster in 1952, who he remembered fondly. In 1960 his Superiors asked him to join the first group of Servants of Charity who were working in the United States. They were the pioneers of the Congregation, bringing to the Local Church the Guanellian Charism, caring for mentally impaired children in Chelsea, Michigan and Springfield, Pennsylvania. Fr. Germano died in Como, Italy on December 12th, 2007 in the Motherhouse founded by Blessed Louis Guanella. He was near the very altar where Blessed Guanella's mortal body, a precious relic, is venerated. He was laid to rest in his home town where he awaits the resurrection while his soul was commended to the loving mercy of God.

Thinking of his human and spiritual experience, it becomes clear and understandable how the events which marked his youth were fertile ground onto which God showered his graces and helped him throughout the 55 years of his priestly journey.

Orphaned since his infancy and thirsty for love, he remembered how his holy mother nurtured and sustained him and encouraged him to be faithful and perseverant on his way to becoming a priest. The trust granted to him by his formators and superiors, his artistic inventiveness, and his thirst for adventures, together with the supernatural gifts from the Lord, made him





able to accept and persevere in the roles he was called to play in his ministry with those in need.

It is easy to realize now that the priesthood of Fr. Germano has been sustained and protected by St. Joseph.

He never forgot his earlier years of ministry in the Church of St. Joseph, Patron of the Suffering and Dying, which Blessed Louis Guanella built in Rome to honor his friend, Pope Pius X, whose name was Joseph.

Fr. Germano died on Wednesday, December 12th, the day of the week that Catholic religious tradition dedicates to St. Joseph. The news of his death reached the devotees of St. Joseph while adoring the Blessed Sacrament in the Shrine. He established this day of adoration so that, adoring Jesus in the Eucharist, we could pray for all members of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, asking God to bless the Church and St. Joseph to intercede for the suffering and dying.

Writers could indulge their fantasy by describing in a book of adventures the successful and unsuccessful events of Fr. Germano's life as a pastor, educator of youth and seminarians, administrator of the facilities for young mentally impaired children, driver, painter, entertainer, and so on to his last enterprise: beginning the U.S. branch of the international religious Archconfraternity of the Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Suffering and Dying.

In trial and tribulation, he loved to remember that St. Joseph obtained for him from God the grace to hope and to dream.

Affected by physical and spiritual trials, Fr. Germano found new energy and encouragement in dreaming of something that could become a sign of the merciful love of God and the protection of St. Joseph. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and helped by St. Joseph, led by the example of Blessed Louis Guanella and his experience of suffering, Fr. Germano was ready to begin the Pious Union of St. Joseph in the U.S. He even dreamt of building a National Shrine in Honor of St. Joseph, Patron of the Suffering and Dying.

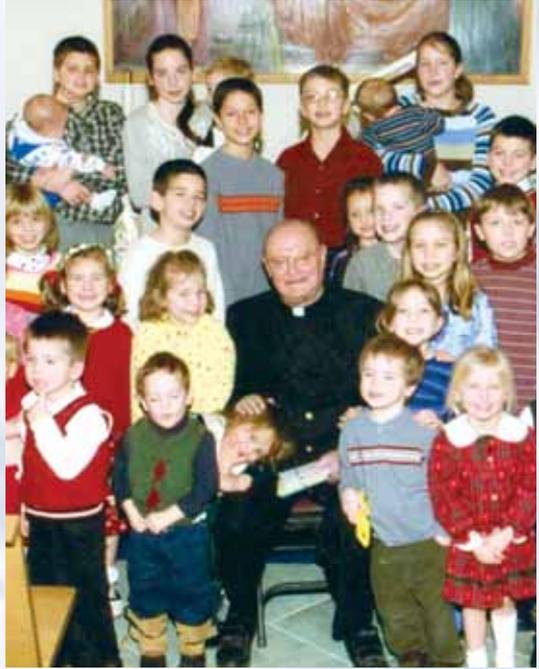
He started to run and to spread this idea. He found people who supported his dreams and benefactors to make them come true. He did not draw back in the face of objections and irony or those who doubted his capacity.

The Bishop of Lansing, Most Rev. Kenneth Povish, believed in him, sustained him, gave him his cooperation and by Episcopal Decree granted his approval for the institution of the Pious Union of St. Joseph in his Diocese on August 3, 1987, becoming, himself, the first member.

Since that beginning nobody could stop Fr. Germano. Two times he was invited by Mother Angelica to talk to the audience of EWTN about the mission of the Pious Union. Through these ethereal waves thousands of devotees of St. Joseph asked to be enrolled in the Pious Union, offering prayers, suffering and sacrifices for the eternal salvation of the dying.

Through the magazine, *Now and at the Hour*, he reached all the States of the Union offering his cooperation for the evangelization and spiritual support of suffering people.

Waiting for the construction of the “Basilica” of St. Joseph he wanted to remodel an old dairy barn, transforming it into a “Basilichetta,” small basilica, to express his gratitude to St. Joseph. Here he began his ministry of faith, mercy and love radiating his message of trust in and devotion to St. Joseph.



Major health problems

forced Fr. Germano to return to Italy in Jan 2005, but his heart remained here, near his little “Basilica” of St. Joseph.

Now his memory is with us and from Heaven, near to St. Joseph, he helps us with his prayer.

Fr. Germano didn't have little brothers and sisters. A sister that he never knew died when she was just an infant. He loved children and the children returned his love considering him like a grandfather. Jesus tells us that if we do not become like children we will not enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Rest in peace Fr. Germano, with Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the family who adopted you and with whom you will rejoice forever.

St. Joseph Spouse of Mary in Chastity

BY FR. JOSEPH BRIOSCHI, SDB

St. Joseph deserves more attention than he usually gets. The gospels do not mention him often. However, he was an exceptional man, leading a humble, hidden, transparent and chaste life that prepared him for his role as the “virginal spouse” of Mary and for being, as St. Augustine describes his unique fatherhood, a “father in his heart” to Jesus.

Mary committed herself to matrimonial life “without knowing any man.” In Luke 1:34 we read, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” The evangelist here notes that the two aspects of Mary’s choice, matrimony and virginity, were important and fundamental in God’s plan.

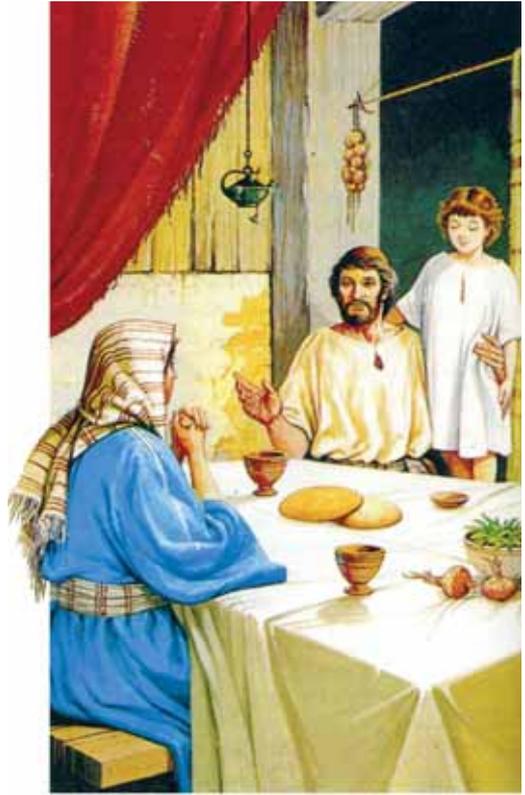
The Jewish culture was not familiar with the ideal of virginity and did not foster, among its members, institutionalized forms of virginal life in consecration to God. Mary assented to matrimony only with the assurance that she could continue to live her virginal choice. She would

accept only the man who could share with her the same choice. Of course, Mary’s choice was inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, present in her always. It is not by chance that the angel Gabriel greeted her, “Hail, Mary, **full of grace**; the Lord is with you!”

The same disposition of heart and mind that we see in Mary was required of the man called to spend his life with her. She could not



accept virginal matrimony without the consent of the man. Nothing could have interfered with God who inspired a woman and a man to embrace the ideal of a true conjugal life in perfect virginity. It is absurd to think that Mary and Joseph did not love each other after deciding to live their love in a virginal way. It is also absurd to think that they were just playing and making a show with their virginal love. Joseph loved the Blessed Mother with all his heart and mind, with a true, pure, chaste, joyful and serene love. His love was so intense that sexual relationship was superfluous.



St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, founder of Opus Dei, wrote, “Joseph possessed a young heart and a young body in order to live with Mary and to respect the virginity that God was giving to the world as one of his all-powerful signs of his coming among men.”

How could Joseph have made such a unique and unusual choice to be the husband of Mary and live a chaste life with her? In his divine plans, God requests a wholehearted availability from us to become joyful “servants” of his will. It is possible that Mary, at the beginning, may have sowed in Joseph’s heart her resolution to enter into matrimony and also remain a virgin. However, it is much easier to think that it was God himself, through the Holy Spirit, who instilled in Mary (a mere creature, even though graced to be the mother of his Son) her wish to participate in this unusual project. It is also much easier to think that God himself instilled in the heart of Joseph a certain disposition enabling him to accept a marriage so unusual and uncommon at the time.

It is totally undignified to guess that Joseph, called to the high office of being a father to the Son of God, was somehow forced to accept this role. It is utterly absurd to think that he was somehow thrown out of the saddle like St. Paul in order to accept at the last moment a kind of life that he did not contemplate or choose to live. It is much easier to think that Joseph and Mary were somehow guided by God to that virginal matrimony from their childhood, like the young Samuel who was brought to the Temple by his mother Anna to be consecrated to the Lord and to be a prophet. We would degrade our understanding of Mary and Joseph to think that their love story is merely psychological boloney. In believing that it would be impossible for a young couple to enter into engagement and matrimony intending to live a chaste life, says loud and clear that we want to ignore the Wisdom and Goodness of God who gives to each vocation its particular and peculiar grace.

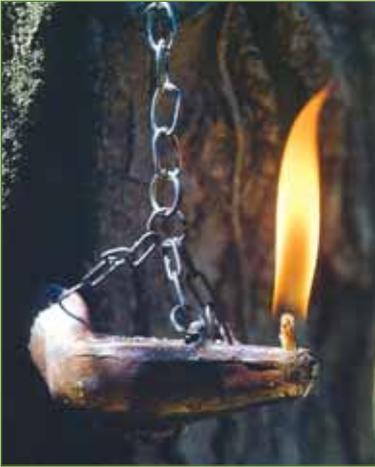
The virginity of the best known couple in the world, Mary and Joseph, is a message that should lead us to the Beatitude of those “poor in spirit” that God chooses and loves in a particular way. The Lord goes to them when He has it in mind to

do something great in the world. Virginity strips a human creature of the power, intrinsic in the sexual act (the true tree of life) that brings new lives into the world. When the gentle breeze of chastity does not blow on human love and does not inspire a couple to be pure in mind and body, the tree of life will wither. And, God forbid, it could be cut and thrown into the fire, as Matthew 3:10 says.





In Hope We Are Saved (Rom 8:24)



BY FR. REMIGIUS OPRANDI, SC

After his Encyclical, “God is Love,” Pope Benedict XVI gave us a precious new gift with his next Encyclical “In Hope we are Saved.” He wants us to be assured of the truth that life does not end in emptiness, because the fundamental certainty on which we believe is rooted in the truth that we were created to reach eternal life. As a matter of fact, the Pope reassures us that “we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present. The present, even if it is

arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads toward a goal great enough to justify the effort of the journey.” Then he adds that “only when the future is certain as positive reality does it become possible to live the present as well . . . The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.” Since this future exists, it changes our present life also.

Besides this, the Pope describes Christian hope with the example of the Sudanese slave, Saint Josephine Bakita, who was born in 1869 in Darfur, and who often said, “I am definitively loved and whatever happens to me, I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good.”

The Encyclical continues, saying that life is not the simple product of natural laws and causality of the existent universe. "It is not the elemental spirit of the universe, the laws of matter, which ultimately govern the world, ...it is not matter and evolution that have a final say, but reason, will, love – a Person." Therefore, it is Jesus Christ the one who truly frees us.

For this reason, the Pope tells us, it is very clear that true hope is not something but Someone: it does not have its foundation on changing things and material situations, but in God who himself to us is forever. Following this concept, he adds that the actual crisis of faith is above all a crisis of Christian hope.

Moreover this papal document talks about the illusions which have enslaved humanity, like Marxism, that forgot the real needs of the human being and forgot his freedom. Marxists "thought that once the economy was put right, everything then would automatically be put right. Their real error is materialism: man in fact is not merely the product of economic conditions." The Pope analyses the tremendous impact of the capitalistic theories causing disappointments and bitterness in a multitude of persons at the same time he contrasts the theory of those maintaining that man can be redeemed by scientific progress and discovery. Benedict XVI reminds us that "it is not science that redeems man: man is redeemed by love. Science can contribute greatly to making the world and mankind more human. Yet, it can also destroy mankind unless it is stirred by forces that lie outside it."

He suggests four ways to learn and develop the virtue of faith.

The first is prayer: "If nobody hears me, God hears my supplication." The Pope relates the witnessing of the Vietnamese Cardinal Francois Xavier Ngunien van Thuan who was imprisoned for 13 years, 9 of which were in isolation: "The fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness of hope."

The second way is to act. "Our actions engender hope for us and for others; but at the same time, it is the great hope based upon God's promises that gives us courage and directs our action in good times and bad."

The third way is suffering. “We must do all we can to overcome suffering, but to banish it from the world altogether is not in our power. It is not in sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, finding meaning through union with Christ.”

The fourth way is the Judgment of the Lord. “The image of the Last Judgment is an image of hope. The judgment of God is hope, both because of his justice and his peace. The incarnation of God in Christ has so closely linked the two together. In justice we all work out our salvation with ‘fear and trembling’. (Phil 2:12) Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustingly to meet the Judge whom we know as our ‘advocate’.” (Jn 2:1)

Finally, Benedict XVI clarifies an important element of Christian hope in saying, “Our hope is always, essentially hope for others also; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise?”

The Encyclical ends presenting Mary as “Star of Hope, shining on us while crossing the treacherous sea of life,

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, teach us to believe, to love, to hope with you. Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way.”



150th Anniversary of Lourdes Apparition

A History of Mercy & Love



BY DIEUDONNE' LE PRESBYTRE

It was February 11, 1858 when Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubiroux in the place where the people of Lourdes dumped their trash. She was looking there for some wood to heat her poor kitchen during the cold winter.

After that day, the Blessed Mother appeared to her eighteen times. The last was on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, on July 16th.

Once again, God did not choose the wisest and most learned, according to the world's standards, to transmit his message to; only a simple and illiterate girl to whom he manifested his desire to save his people through prayer and penance.

Bernadette was so simple-minded that she couldn't even remember the answers to the questions of her Catechism, and for this reason her first Communion was delayed. In spite of this failing, her heart was full of love for God and with a heart so pure she was allowed to see the reflection of God in the face of the Blessed Mother.

Her encounters with Mary at the Grotto of Massabielle sang to Bernadette with the harmony of paradise. No foul smell of garbage or squeaking rats, no whispering of curious people or the mocking of the incredulous surrounding her; no fear of her family members or the disbelief of her pastor disturbed the supernatural vision which filled her spirit with sublime moments of peace.



Bernadette felt transported to a place outside the world. In her dialogue with Mary she learned how to love God, to entrust herself to his Divine Will, to long for Jesus with a pure heart, to offer her suffering and personal limitations for the salvation of sinners. She learned how to pray the Rosary with Mary, contemplating Jesus in the mystery of our salvation and bowing her head with Mary when invoking the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Without the vision, Bernadette felt confused and alone. To everyone who asked, she could only say, "She is so beautiful!"

During this conversation with Mary she was also able to memorize the answers to the fundamental questions of the catechism that she had never been able to learn. How beautiful to see Mary becoming the way for her to meet and stay with Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Bernadette's friends thought the apparition was a soul asking for prayer. Believing this, they went to the dump to sprinkle this vision with Holy Water. To Bernadette's request for her name, the White Lady, as Bernadette called her, showed a place where, after some scratching, a spring of water appeared.



She made a request for prayer and penance while asking that people make procession to the place and build a chapel.

This was too much for the pastor of Lourdes, Fr. Dominique Peyramale. "Listen to me," he said "who is this lady? What is her name?" "I don't know," answered Bernadette. The pastor continued, "Try to know who she is. If she presumes to have a chapel, ask on my behalf to reveal herself by producing a rose bush in this place."

With accustomed simplicity, Bernadette referred the questions of her pastor to the White Lady. It was March 25th the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord. She relates: "I asked three times at a stretch who she was. She answered me three times smiling. I dared to ask her for the fourth time. So, lowering her arms, she lifted up her eyes to Heaven; then joining her hands at her breast she said, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' These are the last words she said to me. She had beautiful blue eyes."

Running to the rectory she told the pastor the name of the White Lady without understanding the meaning of her words herself.

Hearing her message, the scales fell from his eyes and heart and a supernatural breeze swept away all doubt in his mind. He saw the finger of God in this event. How could this ignorant and sickly girl, who was not even able to make her First Communion, express the formula of this dogma, declared as truth of faith by Pius IX four years earlier, not fully accepted by some Catholic theologians and rejected by Protestants?

This was the real sign that it was the Immaculate Mother of God who appeared to Bernadette in this humble place in Massabielle.

Since that time, Lourdes has become a place where Heaven touches the Earth. A theologian wrote that God the Father sent his Son first to save humankind. It is the Son who, realizing that his work of redemption is threatened now sends his mother to offer supernatural help against the powers of the evil one working for the damnation of souls.

Every year now millions make their pilgrimage to Lourdes asking for spiritual and physical healing. Many are the physical healings granted to these pilgrims who are immersed in the miraculous water. However, how many more are those who are healed in their spirit during the procession of the Eucharist and the silent prayer looking at the image of Mary, where the White Lady appeared to Bernadette.

When the picture of the statue, which was placed in the Grotto was shown to her, Sr. Bernadette said, "It does not look like her. She was so beautiful, beautiful!"

It is true, no one can depict the beauty of God reflected in the face of Mary. Thinking of her beauty, we are invited to discover the beauty of the face of Jesus, to whom she gave her own flesh and blood, contemplating the transfigured suffering body of our brothers and sisters. In them it is possible to see the new incarnation of Jesus offering himself to the Father in his continuous and perpetual sacrifice for the salvation of all mankind.

Mary's message in Lourdes, Fatima and everywhere she has appeared is always the same: pray and suffer for the moral misery and sin which darkens the world and oppresses poor mankind.

The Blessed Mother is telling us that sometimes it looks impossible to stop the hand of her Son from punishing his unfaithful people. For all of us poor sinners she asks for prayer and suffering so that, at the end, the Love and Mercy of God will triumph.





“I Exist and My Vocation Is...”

By FR. SILVIO DENARD, SC

Last November, Pope Benedict XVI created twenty three new Cardinals. One of them is the Archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, Angelo Comastri. Recently he spoke about the problem of a lack of purpose in life among the people of the world today. He underlined the fact that people, young and old, are without a clear vision and “vocation” for their lives.

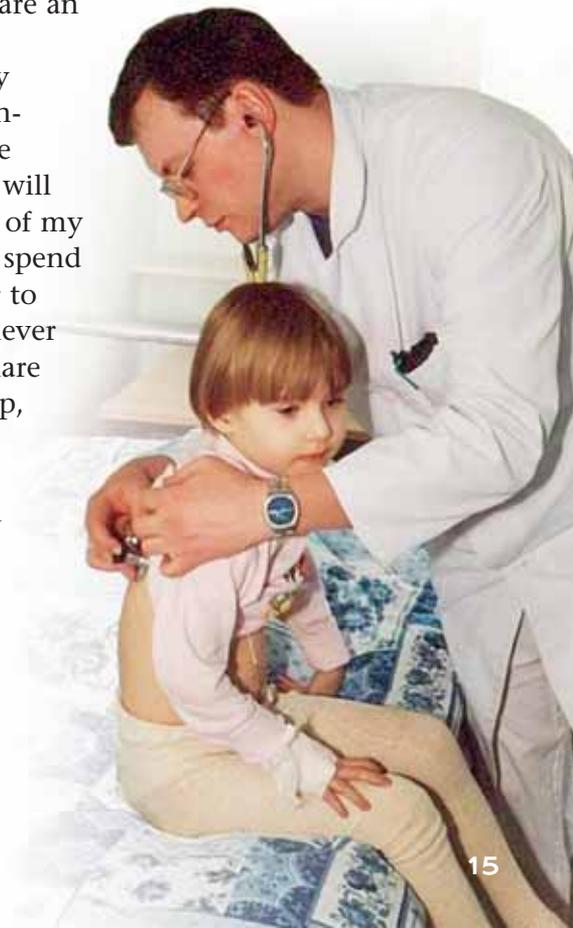
We know that God creates us for a purpose, he said, for a specific mission and we must discern, discover, and carry on with it. God calls us first to holiness, and second to spend our life in his service, giving him the glory. Modern culture, drawn to the ephemeral, short-lived and fleeting things of life, is more attracted to an American Idol contest than to a conversation with a seminarian or a novice who is striving to follow the Lord and love him. Society, in general, prefers the healthy handsome football player to an obscure and ugly disabled man. Physical beauty is the membership card in the popular and exclusive Hollywood club. Thank God that the Lord is not so interested in our physique!

Cardinal Comastri tells us that the lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is not the only shortage. A vocations crisis is affecting the whole of society. Many other vocations are affected as well, especially those that demand commitment and long-term self-giving. You may have already experienced this in your local hospital in the scarcity of doctors and nurses and in your schools, by a similar lack of teachers. These are only a few of the special vocations dedicated to serving people in mental and physical need.

Cardinal Comastri proposes that without recognizing the meaning in life there is no life at all. We cannot live without a vocation; our life is devalued and makes no sense without it.

He cannot forget the day, after a Eucharistic procession, when he greeted many of the sick people who were gathered in the Italian Shrine of Loreto and there among them he saw a small crib. Approaching it, he realized that inside the crib there was no baby. Instead, there was a woman affected by osteosis. The story of this lady, Maria Respigo, was a story of painful desertions. Her father abandoned her once he realized how deformed she was; her mother died when she was just three years old and her brothers and sisters refused to welcome her into their families. In spite of it all, she told the Cardinal that she was given the grace to understand that God was not abandoning her and that she had a vocation. "I am happy to live my life," she said to him. "I exist, and my vocation is to shout to those who are healthy that health is a gift they can share with others; otherwise it will rot in their hands. The purpose of my life is to shout to those who are bored that the hours spent doing nothing are an insult to everyone who cannot afford to waste a minute. If they do not share their time with others, these same hours will be the cause of their unhappiness and will rot in their hands. The purpose of my life is to shout to all those who spend their nights going from one bar to another that these nights will never make them happy until they share them with those in need. Bishop, how beautiful is my vocation." When, at 39, she died she was buried inside the crib used for a Nativity scene.

The Cardinal ended his talk by saying, "She was happy to live, because she discovered and embraced her vocation and purpose of life."



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Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I entrust my heart and soul to you

1908 – March 24 – 2008

A Journey under the Gaze of God

By FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SC

At the end of their work-day, caring for 300 sick and disabled children and adults, a small group of Priests gathered with Blessed Louis Guanella in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and signed a covenant of love with God, who called them to be living signs of his mercy toward the poor. Fr. Guanella chose the night of March 24, 1908, the Liturgical celebration of the Annunciation of the Lord, to commit himself and his ten companions to God, giving birth to the embryo of God's grace



implanted years earlier in the fertile soil of his spirit. Over 30 years time Fr. Guanella, with faithful and patient commitment, cultivated the gift of the Holy Spirit so that God's miracle of love could be manifested according to his plan.

Pope Pius X supported and blessed them. The Daughters of St. Mary of Providence prayed to God to strengthen their shared religious family to be able to share the Founder's precious legacy of love and service. Spiritually present, were also hundreds of people who were sheltered in the big heart and homes of Fr. Guanella, giving thanks to God for having chosen this small group of courageous men to announce the Gospel of charity to the world. In the history of the Congregation are recorded the names and deeds of Priests and Brothers who joined our founder in this miraculous adventure that we commemorate, celebrate, announce and want to experience again within the Church.

2008 raises in us a commitment to return to the origin of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Fr. Guanella. We seek to rediscover and engender renewed conviction and enthusiasm in the will of God: being Good Samaritans caring for the spiritually and physically wounded and abandoned among us.

Hundreds of Servants of Charity adventured away from their homes to share life with people who the founder considered with preferential love: mentally and physically impaired, orphans, sick and aged, migrants and persons whose faith was threatened by the lack of shepherds.

To this ancient poverty, still visible today among us, should be added the subtle and deceptive lack of humanity in our existing economic and social structures, which seem to uphold justice and spark progress while causing a new and more dangerous poverty, difficult to overcome. Fr. Guanella said to his disciples, don't lock yourselves in the churches. Go out on the streets to care for the poor, following the example of Jesus who looked for and welcomed those in need.

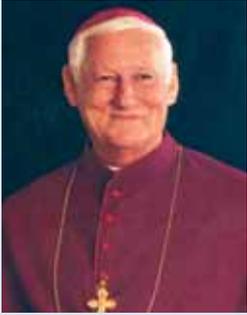
Facing this dangerous poverty throughout the world, we are aware that the Lord is asking us to review our positions, structures, philosophy, nearness to the poor, and our testimony of life according to Jesus' life and words. We want all who are involved in our ministry and spirituality to partake in the celebration and discernment.

A century ago Blessed Louis Guanella and a few generous men cared for hundreds of the poor. Today 500 Servants of Charity and hundreds of members of the Guanellian Lay Movement serve over a million brothers and sisters while offering comfort, consolation, and support.

There is room for so many others: those needing help and those who want to help. Some give their life to Blessed Guanella's ministry, others their time and prayer, and many offer material support for the glory of God and for the sake of the suffering.

We need you to join our mission, making the love of God more and more visible in our world.





The Way of St. Joseph is the Way of Blessed Guanella

HOMILY ON THE FEAST OF BLESSED LOUIS GUANELLA
BY MOST REV. CARL F. MENGELING, BISHOP OF LANSING

In the name of Jesus, I greet with spiritual joy the beloved brethren of the Congregation of Servants of Charity and their visiting Superiors from the Philippines, India and Rome; the Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence and the Guanellian Cooperators, all on fire with the charism of Blessed Louis Guanella; Members of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, prayerful and loving servants of the sick and dying; everyone from St. Louis Center; all from this Shrine; and everyone present.

In this Mass and the sacred events of this day we bring together our Crucified Lord, St. Joseph and Blessed Louis Guanella. They are the very heart, identity and mission of the Servants of Charity.

We celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Savior in this Eucharist – Christ present for us – in this total act of love and gift. Drawing us into that love so we too can become the ‘Body Given Up – the Blood Poured Out.’

We celebrate Blessed Louis Guanella, the Holy Founder and his charism of charity for the little ones. We celebrate St. Joseph into whose hand God entrusted his most precious possessions – Jesus and his Mother. Blessed Louis will call those entrusted to him ‘my treasures my good children.’

We witness in our time and celebrate today the never ceasing miracles of grace which transform the lines of those who are served and those who serve in the love of Jesus – our diocese and many people and I thank Our Lord for the followers of Blessed Louis Guanella. The gentle and generous love, sacrifice and courage of the Servants of Charity and all Guanellians is a sacred gift. The diocese and I are proud of them and their saving mission at St. Louis Center and here at the Shrine of the Pious Union of St. Joseph.

Two vital truths governed the life and mission of Blessed Louis Guanella; it is God who works and his serene reliance on Divine Providence. As he approached death in 1915 he was asked, "Who will take over after you?" Fr. Guanella said, "It is God who works." The words concluding the homily of Pope Paul VI at the Beatification in 1964 were, "It is God who works." The second truth: "Give them bread and the Lord." He once said, "The poor are our masters. They constitute a perennial 'sacrament of Christ.' They are vicars of Christ remaining here on earth."

In an address of John Paul II in 1982, he said: "He was extremely sensitive to the situations of the marginal, the handicapped, of orphans, the aged, the invalids, of people without homes and love. He desired to be always the Good Samaritan of the Gospel to all and dedicate his life completely to works of mercy. He said: "Victims are needed in everything, and there is special need for victims conforming to the great Victim of Calvary, to raise towers of salvation for souls."

In his early years at home and as a youth and in priestly life, St. Joseph was a strong and gentle presence and guide. The 'Way of Joseph' became the way of Blessed Louis and the Servants of Charity.

What is this 'way of Joseph?' God called Joseph and entrusted to him, his most precious possessions – Jesus and his Mother Mary. The Bible gives us not one word spoken by Joseph – but his actions speak volumes. Matthew tells of three calls. Each time, knowing nothing but trusting, Joseph immediately did what God asked. Like Joseph, Blessed Louis said often: "It is God who works." Joseph's way – faith, obedience and loyalty of heart. Love – in discipline of heart and body, manly devotion and fidelity. Humble – in everyday routine of selfless service. Fidelity – to the ordinary which is extraordinary.

Blessed Louis was deeply inspired and motivated at the death of Joseph – a happy death in the loving and divine presence of Jesus and the love of his spouse the Blessed Virgin Mary. This led to the Pious Union of St. Joseph, patron of the sick and dying in 1914 that continues here.

The General Chapter of the Servants of Charity was in Rome during Jubilee 2000. The theme was 'Our Witness in the Third Millennium.' Pope John Paul II addressed the chapter: "As you face these demanding challenges, the shining example of Blessed Louis Guanella will prompt you to choose the commandment of love as the essential criterion of your being and acting, expressed in decisions to serve and to promote the advancement of the poorest people. This will spur you to be present on the frontiers of charity, with full trust in Providence."

AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

AN EXPERIENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO BLESSED LOUIS GUANELLA

Behold in these words a miracle of mercy of your Lord and Father. He, who is the Most High, comes down to terms with you, a miserable creature. He comes to terms with you, a vile sinner, and says: "If you forgive those who are brothers to you and children to me for the injuries which they have inflicted on you, then I will forgive you the greater offenses that you have inflicted on me." Forgive, then and you will be forgiven... Do not judge anyone, if you yourself do not want to be judged. And if you care not to be condemned, you, too, do not condemn any of your neighbors.

Satan is very mad that Christians can so easily obtain the forgiveness of the Lord. Thus, he has unchained a demonic rage from hell, letting it spread around the world.

This rage is the satanic beast human respect, which today still damages the Christian world so badly. A shiver of shame attacks the faithful, and a poisonous gall masters their hearts, while the voice of Satan resounds: "To forgive is vile. It is fitting that you show the world who you are!" This is the devil's talk.

Against him, however, there is the loving figure of Jesus Christ our

“WERE YOU TO TAKE
OUT MY RIGHT EYE,
I WOULD LOOK AT
YOU WITH MY LEFT
EYE WITH EQUAL
AFFECTION.”

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Savior, who exhorts:
 “Forgive and you will be forgiven.” In contrast to Satan is Jesus, who died on the cross praying: “Father, forgive those who crucify me, because they do not know what they are doing.”

Against the avengers, ministers of Satan, we find the meek who are the peaceful children of the Father. These exclaim: “We do not want to lose but save those brothers of ours who offend us, therefore we forgive them.” Stephen was led to death as a result of a plot by despicable companions and especially because of Saul. When the young man, being horribly stoned, prayed for his most ruthless persecutor, Saul converted, became Paul, and Stephen saw the sky opened. He kept his eyes fixed on it, until he entered. Blessed is the man to whom the skies were wide open!... And you, hearing that forgiving is vile, would you know how to answer?...

You could say: “To attain heaven, then, is it enough to forgive and do nothing more?” I answer by suggesting that you forgive with all your heart and then surrender the care of yourself into the hands of God. To be saved, one must also observe the law. However, the Lord will enlighten your mind in order to know and give strength to your soul in order to carry out his will. It will always be true that, if you forgive your brothers, the Lord will forgive you so that you may be saved forever.



Guanellian News



ITALY

Great expectation fills the hearts of the Servants of Charity, Lay Guanellians, and Cooperators of our institution as we await the final decision from the theological and medical commission examining the miracle obtained by the intercession of Blessed Louis Guanella for a young man who was mortally injured in Philadelphia. We invite you to join us with prayers and supplications, asking God to hasten the day of the canonization of our

Founder. We hope that it will occur in 2008, the First Centennial Anniversary of the founding of our Congregation.

ASIA

India

2007 was filled with blessings for our Congregation, where five Postulants began their Novitiate, Five Novices made their first Religious Profession, Seven Religious made their Final Vows and Five Deacons were Ordained Priests.

The newly ordained, becoming martyrs of the charity of Christ, committed themselves to be an asset of the Church, a joy of Christ and the hope of the Congregation.





Philippines

Once again God blessed the works of mercy that the Servants of Charity are developing. On December 9, 2007 our Deacon Rev. Charlton Viray was ordained Priest. Many people joined in the celebration. Present in the large crowd and sitting in the main seats were groups of poor, sick, and disabled persons connected to our ministry in Quezon City, in the suburbs of Manila.

It's our constant prayer to God for the increase of Guanellian vocations in India and

Philippines to care physically and spiritually for the many people suffering in misery and abandonment.

LATIN AMERICA

Another important milestone in the history of our Congregation is the 80th Anniversary of the ministry of the Servants of Charity in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

It was a challenging beginning for the Congregation, which sent a small group of confreres to a country very distant from its origin in Italy. This small shoot, sprouting so far from the sturdy trunk of its foundation survived the storms, difficulties, misunderstandings and initial rejection by the new environment. In due time it grew up like a teak tree extending its branches toward Paraguay (1940), Brazil (1947), Chile (1948), and Columbia (1987)



This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the presence of the Congregation in Chile. Invited by a holy Jesuit Priest, St. Alberto Hurtado, to take care of his institution for street children, the first Guanellian pioneers were able to weave a tapestry of activities for children and the aged, orphans, mentally impaired and poor and abandoned people from north to south in this mountainous country.



U.S.A.

General Assembly

October 29-30 2007 a General Assembly of the Servants of Charity working in the U.S. was held at the St. Louis Center in Chelsea MI and lead by Provincial Superior, Fr. Luigi

deGiambatista, with the participation of representatives from India and Philippines. It was a momentous event. For the first time Guanellians belonging to the same Religious Province met to deepen the meaning of their unique vocation together, to be lived in their different cultural contexts and activities of charity. The Provincial Superior invited all the confreres to open their hearts and minds and to be prepared for new adventures in the fields of charity. He called for courage and a renewed commitment as missionaries of love toward those most in need.

40th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination

With gratitude to God for showering his graces upon their Guanellian priestly vocations, Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SC and Fr. Fortunato Turati, SC celebrated their 40th Anniversary of Ordination in the parish of St. Mary in Chelsea, Michigan. Both were ordained in Italy on Christmas



Eve, 1967 and sent to the U.S. the following year. For almost forty years they spent their life and energy, in joy and suffering, in the institutions of the Congregation, caring for mentally impaired boys and adults and cooperating in the pastoral ministry of the Dioceses of Philadelphia, PA, Providence, RI and Lansing, MI.

The Bishop of Lansing, Most Rev. Carl F. Mengeling, presided at the Eucharistic Celebration. He cast the light of his homily on the preciousness of the Religious and Priestly Vocations and expressed his gratitude for the untiring pastoral ministry of the Servants of Charity, working in the Diocese of Lansing at the St. Louis Center in Chelsea and the Pious Union of St. Joseph in Grass Lake.

Fr. Germano Pegoraro: Sign of God's Love

By BECKY COOK

In 1994 Father Germano began to celebrate Mass on Wednesdays at a new shrine – the Pious Union of Saint Joseph. That same year, I moved to Grass Lake and, as a cradle Catholic, I looked for and found the Sacraments of the Church and Fr. Germano at the same time.



Weekday Mass was held in a beautiful old house with an incredible image behind the altar, a painting of the crucifixion. I learned later that it was painted by this gentle speaking Italian priest. I said “later” in the previous sentence, but it really wasn’t much later, for as anyone who has been around Fr. Germano knows, he was proud of his paintings and would announce his special creations to every new face. This was his down to earth manner. He made everyone feel welcome: invited, loved, accepted, and cherished.

His ways were simple and he wanted to teach us to pray in a simple manner. I learned to pray the Anima Christi after Communion because Father would have us all recite it after him. Father loved the Blessed Mother. On Saturdays, he invited us to pray the Rosary and it was then that he also taught me to pray to my Guardian Angel. Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God’s love entrusts me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. I still cherish the memory of those evenings when we would pray and Father would ask humbly if someone could stay a little longer afterwards to keep him company. He loved people and became anxious when he was alone.

I still chuckle when I think of Fr. Germano at Mass greeting a young mother, holding her baby. Father would snuggle up and kiss her child tenderly. He loved children so much. Father began the festive tradition of greeting the children and giving them little candies as they were leaving after Mass.

He had a dream that an old dairy barn behind his house would become a church. He wanted to restore the barn for many reasons; because Jesus was born in a stable, St. Joseph was a worker and because the first Pious Union began in a barn in Rome. He wanted all of the workers in the area (many are



farmers) to feel welcome to come to Mass in the middle of the day. A barn he thought, would not discourage anyone who might need to come to Mass in work clothes.

When building money was scarce, he believed, "Saint Joseph will provide." He lived Divine Providence completely and I learned first hand from him how delighted he was when his prayers were answered in special ways. I sold a saddle one day and was

going to use the \$500 to purchase another, but passing the Shrine I felt an urge to turn in the driveway and offer it as a donation. Fr. Germano began to cry. They had purchased a computer that day to work on the magazine but ran short of money. He made a plea to St. Joseph for their needs only moments before I arrived – and the amount he needed and had prayed for... \$500.

I have so many other memories of Father: celebration of the Latin Mass nearby; his love of rabbit cooked by Fr. Fortunato; deep and expressive appreciation for people who helped out at the Shrine, stuffing envelopes, planting flowers or cutting grass and clearing tree limbs felled by Michigan storms; his sadness when his vision worsened and he could no longer paint, read or drive; and his parting advice after confession, "be faithful and be good to your spouse."

On Wednesday the Pious Union of St. Joseph prays in a special way for those who are suffering and dying and Jesus in the Eucharist is adored. Fr. Germano's love for his founder, Blessed Louis Guanella and his devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament formed this tradition at the Shrine. How fitting that Fr. Germano passed into eternal life on Wednesday during Adoration on the day devoted to his dear patron, St. Joseph.

Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.

May the Souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Thinking of Him

By WAYNE MEIER

In the wake of Fr. Germano Pegoraro's passing, I find myself pondering the question: what makes a person immortal; what impressions does a person make in the minds and hearts of those they leave behind? Specifically, what impresses us about the life of Fr. Germano? Why do we know him as such a good man and a good friend? Fr. Germano dedicated his life to the church and more specifically to the developmentally disabled. He possessed a reverence for his mother, an unwavering dedication to the founder of the Servants of Charity, Blessed Louis Guanella, and overwhelming devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mother and St. Joseph. How often we heard him say, "I'm not worried about it, St. Joseph will help." Father believed it, lived it, and all too often, proved it.



Father Germano was a visionary, however, some of us used to tease him about being a dreamer. He envisioned that a 35 acre cornfield with an old barn and farmhouse would some day be a National Shrine to St. Joseph, Patron of the Suffering and Dying. On one occasion, a friend asked him, "Father, you must be dreaming! How do you plan on getting rid of all that junk in the barn?" He simply responded, "I'm not getting rid of it, St. Joseph will." Two weeks later the barn, filled to the loft with junk, was cleared out by a local farmer. Father envisioned the transformation of the barn into a Chapel. When I heard about it I said, "Father, you're kidding me, right? The best thing for that building is a bulldozer!" He simply said, "Fr. Guanella was given an old

barn to start the Pious Union in Italy. In this barn, we will start the Pious Union in the United States.” He did not waver from his vision or his dream and on June 18, 2000, the Shrine of St. Joseph was dedicated by Most Rev. Carl Mengeling, Bishop of Lansing.



Thousands of hours have been dedicated and donated to the Pious Union of St. Joseph. This is the true miracle taking place in Grass Lake, Michigan. The grounds are maintained by a group of wonderful followers dedicated to the vision of Fr.



Germano. The chapel is cleaned and cared for by a loving group of people carrying out the dreams of this good man. Countless thousands of hours are donated to the dream and this dream was the seed that Fr. Germano planted. He planted the seed with no money and no idea where the money would come from. When I asked him, “Father, do you have any idea how much money this will cost?” He simply responded, “St. Joseph will help us find a way.” The old barn has been transformed into a beautiful chapel, the farmhouse into a Holy Family Pastoral Center. The cornfield is outlined with roadways and parking lots. Our Lady’s Grotto has been built, an echo of Lourdes. Mt. Calvary has been established with thousands of regular donations by the members of the Pious Union and friends of St. Joseph.

We all know that Father suffered from human pain as well. When he was hospitalized with cancer, his friends rushed to his aid. During his hip surgery, a group of men labored tirelessly to

build a ramp and deck for easier access to his house, and when stricken by macular degeneration, which brought his painting to an end, his followers encouraged him to forge forward. This gentle man radiated beams of kindness, reverence, and love to anyone he met or knew. I have never been able to find a person who could refuse him anything that he requested. He loved the young children and was often surrounded by them. He loved teenagers, young and old alike and we all loved him.

After an emotional final Mass in the Shrine of St. Joseph, Father grabbed my lapel with his left hand and with his right index finger, issued me his final charge. While looking into my tearful eyes, he said, "Wayne, you must promise me that you will help Fr. Paul! He is a good man. Continue what has been started here." He then gave me a hug, a peck on the cheek, turned and was gone.

Father Germano, we will help Fr. Paul, for the seed that you have planted is now a twig that you watered with kindness, cultivated with love, and nurtured with reverence. It is now up to us to water that twig and help it grow with dedication and devotion. We look forward to the day when the seed that you planted will grow into a mighty oak.

Rest in peace, my friend. We'll take it from here. We ask you for your prayers as we endeavor to fulfill your dream. From your first seed to this twig to a mighty oak: the National Shrine of St. Joseph, Patron of the Suffering and Dying.



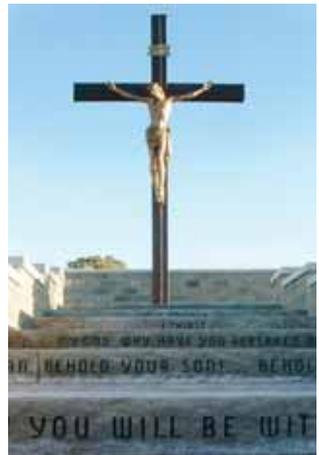


Dedications & Memorials

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

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

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



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

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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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



Philippines, A fatherly embrace

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