

The **Voice of Providence**
now HOUR
AND AT THE

PUBLICATION OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY

FEBRUARY–MARCH 2013



Featured Story: 25th Anniversary of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, page 5

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*© St. Joseph, foster father of
Jesus Christ and true spouse of the
Virgin Mary, pray for us and the
suffering and dying of today.*

The Voice of Providence:

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of the Divine Providence Province of the
Servants of Charity, a Catholic Religious
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Mission:

The divine call places the Servants of Charity
in the heart of the Church, making us share
more deeply in her mission in the world and
especially in her care for the poor. In the
Church, we are witnesses of God's fatherly
love and of the sacred value of each person,
even of the least gifted.

In collaboration with the people of goodwill,
we endeavor to safeguard the least ones so
that we work toward building a better world,
open to Christ and His Gospel.

Renewal

By SR. MARGARET MARY SCHISLER, DSMP

In this Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI he reminds us that “the renewal of the Church in America and throughout the world depends on the renewal of the sacrament of penance.” And what better time to think about a renewal than our season of Lent.

How many times have we said or heard, “What’s wrong with the world?” Come to think of it, it has crossed my mind and lips a few times. But if we stop and think for a moment our usual answers may bring up the economy, secularism, global warming, or even politics. But are these, as significant as they are, the real answer to the question?



I believe that just two little words will tell us what’s wrong with the world ... *I am*. If each of us takes the responsibility given to us then I believe the world will be a better place. We as a society have gotten to the point where all we expect from one another is the bare minimum. What do I have to do to meet the requirement? Do I have to go to Mass *every* Sunday? Can’t I talk to God directly, not through a priest, to get forgiveness? Doesn’t God forgive no matter what?

Our Holy Father was right in sharing with us about the renewal of the Church and of the world. It needs to begin with US! We need to make a *commitment* not just an *effort* to live in a better world. We need to begin with ourselves and the way we live our life and treat others. We need to experience conversion in our lives and be open to seeking forgiveness from God and from others. We will be forgiven in the measure that we have forgiven others!

Through our regular reception of the sacrament of penance we will experience this conversion of heart. Our own conversion will lead us to a life of peace which in the long run will also help to convert the world into a more peaceful place to live. Peace of mind will lead to a peace which will bring about a renewal for the Church and for the world.

What better way to bring about a renewal for the Church and the world than to bring about a renewal of ourselves through the sacrament of penance.



Shrine News

By SR. MARGARET MARY SCHISLER, DSMP

Hopefully all our readers have survived the Christmas rush and the materialism of the season.

Now ready or not we begin to celebrate our “springtime of the soul.” Lent begins on February 13th and this year Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, calls all the faithful to celebrate this Year of Faith by returning to the Sacrament of Penance. Here at the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph we have time dedicated each day before and after Mass for anyone who would like to celebrate this sacrament.

If there is anything in your life that you would like to change or alter this is the perfect time of the year in which the Church invites us to conversion. Sometimes we wrongly think of confession as a place of judgment and guilt instead of a place of healing and peace. But we need to think of approaching the Sacrament of Penance in the same way that we approach the Eucharist, as an intimate and meaningful encounter with Christ. During this very encounter we are brought sacramentally into contact with Jesus, who calls us to conversion of heart.

In this Sacrament we encounter the loving and merciful heart of God the Father. Within this Sacrament we hand over to the Lord everything that burdens us and weighs us down. This Sacrament restores and heals us, giving us the strength to begin again. We at the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph know the value of the Sacrament of Penance that is why we will always make time to help our community utilize this Sacrament at any time at our Shrine.

In this Year of Faith we are challenged to enter into a fruitful Lent producing a conversion of heart so that we can joyfully expect to share in the paschal mystery. May your Lent be a time of grace in which God leads you in union with the crucified and risen Lord through the experience of the desert to the joy and hope brought by Easter.



Remember Your Loved Ones

By Making a Dedication or Memorial in Their Name

Dedicate a step of the Holy Stair	\$5000
Dedicate a Pew in the Shrine	\$1000
“I am the Resurrection and the Life” Memorial Wall	\$500
Dedicate a tile near the Calvary.....	\$250
Become a Shrine Forester, Plant a tree.....	\$150
Dedicate a leaf on the Tree of Remembrance in the Shrine	\$500

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



For more information or to make a pledge, please call the Pious Union of St. Joseph Office Monday–Friday at 517-522-8017.

Send email to piousunion@pusj.org.



Sharing Your Devotion

to St. Joseph with your family and all
those who God brings into your life

	Donations
Give blessed St. Joseph Medals to family & friends	\$5.00 each
Offer a Mass in thanksgiving to St. Joseph	\$10 offering
Share a copy of the Holy Cloak with a friend	\$5.00 each
Share copies of the Voice of Providence	\$1.50 each

*Are there places where you visit that will display
brochures of the Pious Union of St. Joseph?*

*Let's generously celebrate the 100th Anniversary of
St. Guanella's visit to the United States by spreading
devotion to our dear St. Joseph.*

*Please use the envelope in the center of the magazine
to make requests and send donations.*



Pious Union in the United States Celebrates 25 Years of Ministry

By SR. MARGARET MARY SCHISLER, DSMP

Just 25 short years ago the Pious Union of St. Joseph had its founding by Fr. Germano Pegoraro. Fr. Germano had a dream to start a Pious Union of St. Joseph in the United States just as Fr. Guanella started the original Pious Union in Rome.

In 1987 Fr. Germano, as the first director, initiated the magazine *Now and at the Hour*, the official publication of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, in Springfield, Pennsylvania. He was inspired to paint a replica of the image of the Death of St. Joseph which adorns the sanctuary of the St. Joseph Minor Basilica in Rome. Fr. Germano's painting is now revered in the Chapel of the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph here in Grass Lake, Michigan.



In 1994 Bishop Kenneth Povish gave permission to establish the Pious Union of St. Joseph in his Diocese of Lansing. Fr. Germano moved his office and continued the publication in Grass Lake, Michigan. The property had a small house and an old barn situated on it. A benefactor came forward with enough money to get Fr. Germano started in rebuilding the existing barn into the Shrine of St. Joseph. Fr. Germano's dream was following the exact path that St. Louis Guanella took in transforming a humble barn in Italy into the beautiful St. Joseph Minor Basilica in Rome.

Our celebration with Bishop Boyea was beautiful. We are very grateful to our Bishop for continuing to bless the Pious Union with his presence and acceptance of the ministry set out for us by our founder, St. Louis Guanella. Because we are adding more and more people to our membership of praying for the suffering and dying, hopefully we are assisting more and more people in their suffering!

What was most gratifying was the fact that many families who were here when Fr. Germano celebrated mass in the Pastoral Center were with us to celebrate the 25th Anniversary. One of the families shared with me their joy to be able to share with us this great event and they are grateful that their children have grown and still like to come to the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph whenever they can. Our families have also shared with us that they feel they have a legacy to pass onto their families to pray for the suffering and dying through St. Joseph. St. Joseph who accompanies us throughout all of life wants to especially be with us in times of suffering to comfort us and guide us to heaven.

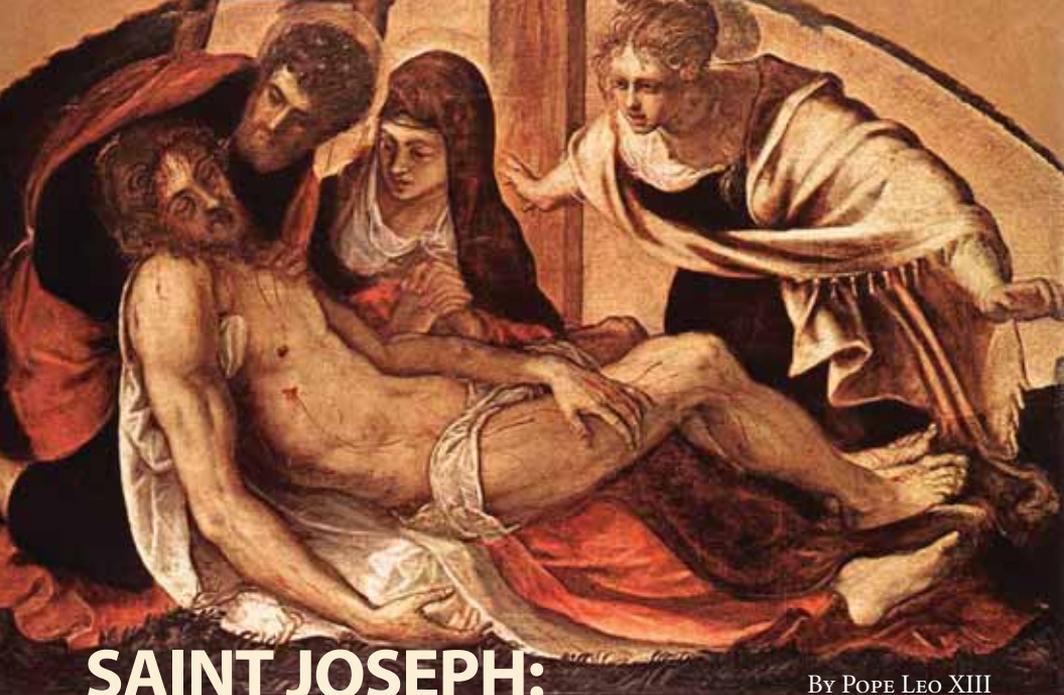




Bishop Boyea shared with us in his homily that St. Joseph is the perfect model for us. With all that Joseph went through in his life he remained faithful and always trusted in God. He knew that God's will was important in his life so he prayed that he could back off and allow God to be God throughout everything. He emptied himself so that his void could be filled with God. What better example to follow than St. Joseph!

Thank you members of the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph for your continued prayers and support. We are what we are because of you and pray every day for you and your loved ones. For the past 25 years we have prayed for many suffering and dying and thank you for joining in our ministry. God bless you and may St. Joseph be your guide and strength.





SAINT JOSEPH:

BY POPE LEO XIII

Example for Today's Christian Family Life

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ORDERED SPECIAL PRAYERS TO BE OFFERED UP THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, FOR THE INTERESTS OF CATHOLICISM TO BE CONSISTENTLY RECOMMENDED TO GOD, NONE WILL DEEM IT A SURPRISE THAT WE CONSIDER THE PRESENT MOMENT AN OPPORTUNE ONE TO AGAIN INCULCATE THIS DUTY.

During periods of trial and stress—especially when every lawless act seems permitted by the powers of darkness—it has been the custom of the Church to plead with special fervor and perseverance to God, her author and protector. By recourse, we invoke the intercession of the saints—and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God—whose patronage has ever been the most efficacious.

We know that there is certain help in the maternal goodness of the Virgin, and we are very certain that we shall never vainly place our trust in her. If on multiple occasions, she has displayed her power in aiding the Christian world, why should we doubt that she would not renew the assistance of her power and favor, if humble and constant prayers are offered up on all sides to her? That God may be more favorable to our prayers, and that He may come with bounty and quickness to the aid of His Church, we judge it of deep utility for the Christian people, continually to invoke with great piety and trust, together with the Virgin-Mother of God, her chaste Spouse, Blessed St. Joseph.

FATHERS OF FAMILIES
FIND IN JOSEPH THE BEST
PERSONIFICATION OF
PATERNAL SOLICITUDE
AND VIGILANCE; SPOUSES
A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF
LOVE, OF PEACE, AND OF
CONJUGAL FIDELITY...”



The special motives for which St. Joseph has been proclaimed Patron of the Church, and from which the Church looks for singular benefit from his patronage and protection, are that Joseph was the spouse of Mary and that he was reputed to be the Father of Jesus Christ. His dignity, his holiness and his glory have sprung from these sources. In truth, the dignity of the Mother of God is so lofty that none created can rank above it. But as Joseph has been united to the Blessed Virgin by the ties of marriage, it may not be doubted that he approached nearer than any to the eminent dignity by which the Mother of God surpasses so nobly all created nature. For marriage is the most intimate of all unions from which its essence imparts a community of gifts between those that by it are joined together. Thus in giving Joseph the Blessed Virgin as spouse, God appointed him to be not only her life's companion, the witness of her maidenhood, the protector of her honor, but also, by virtue of the conjugal tie, a participator in her sublime dignity.

And Joseph shines among all mankind by the most august dignity, since by divine will, he was the guardian of the Son of God and reputed as His father among men. Hence it came about that the Word of God was humbly subject to Joseph, that He obeyed him, and that He rendered to him all those offices that children are bound to render to their parents. From this two-fold dignity flowed the obligation which nature lies upon the head of families, so that Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the divine house whose head he was. And during the whole course of his life he fulfilled those charges and those duties.

Now the divine house which Joseph ruled with the authority of a father, contained within its limits, the first born Church. From the same fact that the most holy Virgin is the mother of Jesus Christ, she is the mother of all Christians whom she bore on Mount Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redemption. Jesus Christ is, in a manner,



the firstborn of Christians, who by the adoption and Redemption are his brothers. And for such reasons the Blessed Patriarch looks upon the multitude of Christians who make up the Church as confided especially to his trust—this limitless family spread over the earth, over which, because he is the spouse of Mary and the Father of Jesus Christ he holds, a paternal authority. It is, then, natural and worthy that as the Blessed Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family at Nazareth and surrounded them with his protection, he should now cover with the cloak of his heavenly patronage and defend the Church of Jesus Christ.

Fathers of families find in Joseph the best personification of paternal solicitude and vigilance; spouses a perfect example of love, of peace, and of conjugal fidelity; virgins at the same time find in him the model and protector of virginal integrity. The noble of birth will learn of Joseph how to guard their dignity even in misfortune; the rich will understand, by his lessons, what are the goods to be most desired and won at the price of their labor. As to workmen, artisans, and persons of lesser degree, their recourse to Joseph is a special right, and his example is for their particular imitation.

Taken from The Encyclical “Quam Quam Pluries” by Pope Leo XIII

Saint Louis Guanella:

Pilgrim to the World

By FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

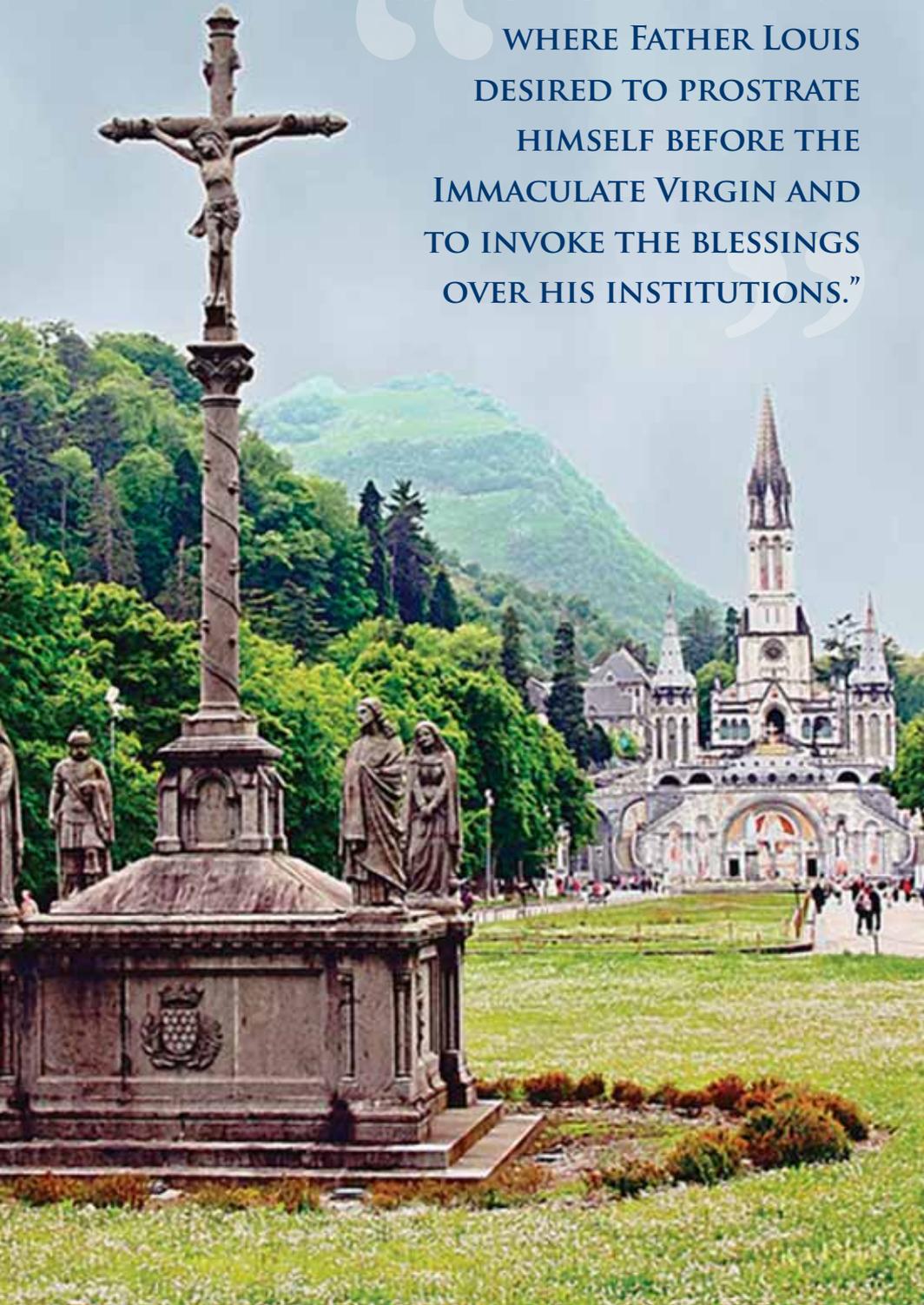
“The whole world is your homeland” was one of the most common sayings Father Guanella repeated to all Guanellian missionaries going to other countries, and even to his religious sisters and priests when they were moved from one House to another.

Actually, he called the missionaries “pilgrims” as he was. Father Louis was truly a pilgrim at heart. He went as a pilgrim to many shrines near and far to restore his faith, to get inspiration for his own soul and to gain strength to continue his work despite persecution from the civil authorities and the mistrust of his religious superior. In time, as he spirituality matured, he shared with others the importance of the pilgrimage in fortifying our faith. He saw Jesus in all creatures, good and bad. He saw people as children of God and all of them had goodness in themselves, because they were created in the image and likeness of God.

*The Shrine of the Holy Rosary
in Pompeii, Italy.*



LOURDES WAS A DESTINATION
WHERE FATHER LOUIS
DESIRED TO PROSTRATE
HIMSELF BEFORE THE
IMMACULATE VIRGIN AND
TO INVOKE THE BLESSINGS
OVER HIS INSTITUTIONS.”



The poor, the sick, the suffering and the rejected are among us to teach us that the compassionate Father never abandons his children. While the world rejects them, Jesus the compassionate Son of the compassionate Father called them blessed. In the Beatitudes, He stated the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor, thirsty, hungry, persecuted, meek and mourning. Father Guanella traveled extensively both home and abroad. Anywhere he went, he loved and respected the people, their culture, their food and their family customs. He even dressed as close as he could, according to the local traditions. Anywhere he went, he never failed to visit the local cathedral, shrines, ancient churches and the sites important and significant to the local population. He respected and loved all and in return, he received love and respect. Memorable are his pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Rome, Lourdes and Pompeii.

The Shrine of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii installed a statue of St. Louis Guanella at the main entrance in memory of his visit, and because he is one of the most important saints devoted to the Holy Rosary. During the interminable and tedious hours of his journeys, whether by train, carriage or on foot, Father Louis repeatedly prayed the Rosary and often invited the people present to join him.

Cardinal Ferrari of Milan, Italy, organized the memorable pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He invited Father Guanella to participate. Father Louis was delighted and prepared himself with hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. On September 17, 1902, the pilgrims sailed from Naples to Athens, Greece; from there to Damascus, Syria, and down



to the Holy Land. They were greeted and honored by religious and civil authorities and escorted as they moved from one holy site to the next. They visited the most significant sites from Nazareth to Cana; from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. The pilgrims relived the Annunciation and Jesus' birth, ministry, passion and death. Father Guanella spent the night in prayer before the Holy Sepulcher together with other priests and the Cardinal. Silence and recollection aroused deep and unforgettable emotions in his soul! He could not share them with anybody because his mounting feelings could not be expressed in words. It was one night that he would not live a second time. It was the night of the farewell, and in the morning, the pilgrim left Jerusalem for Jaffa, and they sailed toward Palermo. In the city of the Golden Valley they were received by Cardinal Celesia, while the people welcomed them, crowding both sides of the streets in a climate

of fraternal celebration. Father Guanella also had the time to visit the Capuchins' Cemetery.

The Pilgrimage to Rome, on February 20, 1903, was also organized by Cardinal Ferrari, in honor of Pope Leo XIII's 25th anniversary of pontificate. Father Guanella was again invited by the Cardinal. It was carried out with a routine not much different than that previously experienced by Father Guanella. "On the train we prayed together, we followed a routine of eating, yawning, sleeping and performing other simple acts of boredom." They visited the Roman Basilicas and were received by the Pope in Private audience. This was the first of many pilgrimages to Rome by Father Guanella. Soon these visits would become more intimate and meaningful, because of the special fraternal relationship with St. Pius X. Rome is the heart of the Church and Father Louis wanted to be next to this heart. The first shrine he built was dedicated to the Sacred Heart; the second in Rome to St. Joseph, the Head of the Holy Family.

The pilgrimage to Lourdes, led by Bishop Radini-Tedeschi, left from Genova on August 25, 1903. They reached the city on the 27th. It was a destination where Father Louis desired to prostrate himself before the Immaculate Virgin and to invoke the blessings over his institutions. At the shrine, he celebrated the divine sacrifice and prayed for those back home: the unfortunate in his Houses and their caretakers, the sisters, the religious brothers and the priests. It was impossible to imagine his emotions, because around him stirred a humanity of suffering and sick people so familiar to him; for them he begged the mercy of God that they might find hope. It was the environment of his Houses; the same needs that existed in the institutions of Divine Providence, even more urgent and more dramatic. The stop at the grotto, the Mass, the Eucharist received with



Six sisters left Italy for the United States to begin the work of Fr. Guanella there.



In October 2012, the relics of St. Guanella returned to Lourdes with a group of Guanellian pilgrims.

trepidation, the supplications, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament in the midst of interminable lines of sick people and the parade, in the evening, with the torches that illuminated with a surreal light at the Shrine of the Immaculate, were unforgettable times and circumstances of an experience he never wanted to end. In memory of this pilgrimage, Father Guanella purchased a large statue of Immaculate Mary. He took it to Lourdes for a blessing and brought it back to the House of Providence in Como, where it still stands in a grotto welcoming all the visitors to the House.

The Pilgrimage to the United States was the last for Father Guanella. He arrived in New York on December 2nd, and after visiting all the large cities between New York and Chicago, left on February 8, 1913. He brought his heart and spirit to America and in return America gave him her heart and spirit. Two months later, six sisters left Italy to transplant Father Guanella's spirit and mission to America. He never forgot that pilgrimage; it was a tremendous experience for him and he wanted to implement some of what he saw in the culture and the spirit of that people. But his health did not permit him to do more. On October 24, 1915, God called him to heaven where he concluded the pilgrimage of his life. A pilgrimage that, through the love of the least, forged him all the way to sainthood. This year we celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Guanellian Charism in America. He loved and admired this country. He felt right at home, "The whole world is your homeland." St. Louis Guanella said that we are all pilgrims longing for home, heaven, where we all hope to conclude our own pilgrimage and feel right at home.







The Guanellian Family

FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SdC.

Father Louis Guanella founded the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence for the Sisters, the Servants of Charity for Priests and Religious Brothers and the Guanellian Cooperators; a third order of men and women who wanted to live their daily lives according to the spirit and charism of Fr. Guanella.

One of Father Guanella's dreams was that of starting his institutions for the handicapped and the elderly in the United States. He visited the U.S. in 1912-13, and sent the first Sisters in 1913. The first Servants of Charity priests arrived in 1958. This year we observe the 55th Anniversary of the Guanellians work and institutions in the U.S.A. It is only fair that we remember with gratitude the first Guanellian pioneers who left their family and country to transplant the Spirit and Charism of the Founder in American soil. Fr. Romano Di Ruscio, the now deceased Fr. Louis Frangi, Fr. Joseph Legnani, Fr. Paul Saltarini, Fr. Germano Pegoraro, Fr. Umberto Mellare and Brother Santino Satalino composed the first wave. Ten years later Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, Fr. Fortunato Turati, Fr. Pietro Di Tullio and the late Fr. Sante Piacente composed the second wave.

We cannot forget either, with gratitude, the assistance of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence. When the Servants of Charity arrived, they did not know the language, the culture and the people. The Sisters literally took them by the hand and taught them everything they needed to know.

Today the two religious Congregations continue the work according to the Spirit and charism of Father Guanella in cooperation with the third family founded by Father Louis Guanella, called the Guanellian Cooperators. The Guanellian Lay Movement is the new blessing in our work for the poor. The Guanellian Lay Movement unites all the laity associated in one way or another with the work done by the Guanellian Congregations.

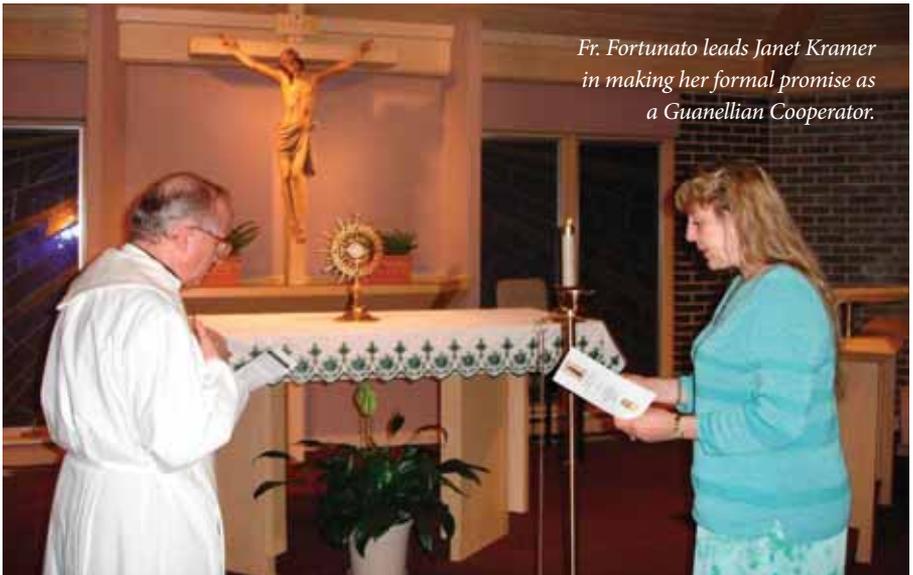
It is also the breeding ground for the Guanellian Cooperators, a group of Catholic people, men and women, committed to living their daily life according the spirit and charism of Father Guanella and joining in his mission for the poor.

The potential in the hands and hearts of our Guanellian cooperators is incredible.

The possibilities are countless. Our faith and the inspiration from the Founder can open doors for us that we never dreamed of, or even knew existed.

Perhaps, as we celebrate the canonization of St. Louis Guanella, this is the best present we can offer him and the Church.

We can present him with a group of men and women well prepared and well gifted by the Holy Spirit, Guanellian Cooperators who appreciate their vocation and who firmly believe in the Guanellian spirituality and mission.



*Fr. Fortunato leads Janet Kramer
in making her formal promise as
a Guanellian Cooperator.*

Winds of Change Blow Through Rhode Island Parish

By Fr. Dennis Weber and Joseph Yekulis

During the same week in October that the winds of Hurricane Sandy swept north along the Atlantic shorelines of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, the gentler winds of change were settling in the city of East Providence, RI, as a peaceful transition was completed by the Servants of Charity at Sacred Heart Parish.

This transition involved a change in leadership from Fr. Peter DiTullio, SdC. who had served as the pastor of this beautiful church for the past twenty-five years, and Fr. Silvio DeNard, SdC. who has been tending to his flock in Springfield, PA., at the Don Guanella House of Formation/Novitiate as formator and novice-master.

Many people familiar with the mission of the Servants of Charity are not familiar with the fact that the congregation accepted responsibility for the management of a parish operation in Rhode Island some 30 years ago. However, it occurred as they sought out a parish operation for their priests serving in Pennsylvania and Michigan. Why? The intention was that the priests who were caring for their respective homes for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities could use a parish operation as a respite from their challenging duties in Chelsea, MI and Springfield, PA. So what happened?

The Servants of Charity approached the Bishop of the Providence, RI Diocese, and offered themselves in service for a parish operation. As a result, they were given the Sacred Heart Parish in E. Providence to manage. It wasn't exactly the Italian neighborhood they were looking for, but instead, it was located in a hard-working blue-collar Portuguese American neighborhood. After a handful of Servants of Charity priests took their turn in trying to "fit-in" with the parish, the hard working and industrious Fr. Peter DiTullio took his turn, and the Lord found His "match" for the people of Sacred Heart.



This match lasted for twenty-five years, and on September 29, 2012, Fr. Peter was finally able to step back and look upon his accomplishments as their pastor. The parish celebrated Fr. Peter's years of service in a public tribute to thank him for his years of "fidelity, hard work, and love," and on September 29th, the church was packed with parishioners and friends from the area for a special Thanksgiving Mass followed by a Tribute Dinner in his honor. Rather than retire to Florida or return to Italy for an assignment in Rome or Como, his superiors and the Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Tobin asked him to stay to help manage the transition with Fr. Silvio DeNard.

On the evening of October 27, 2012 those winds of change finally blew into E. Providence, and a new chapter for the Servants of Charity began at Sacred Heart Parish. Fr. Silvio DeNard was installed as the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish during an evening Eucharistic Liturgy presided by Bishop Robert Evans, Auxiliary Bishop of Providence. Also present to concelebrate the Mass were Fr. Luigi DeGiambattista, Fr. Peter DiTullio, Fr. David Stawasz, and Fr. Dennis Weber, all of the Servants of Charity.

The bishop, after the greeting of the Mass, thanked Fr. Peter for his commitment, dedication and care for the parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish during the past twenty-five years. He then thanked the Servants of Charity for continuing to assume the pastoral care of the parish and for assigning Fr. Silvio to carry on their duties in E. Providence. The bishop's homily centered on the image of the Good Shepherd and he called on Fr. Silvio, as the new shepherd of Sacred Heart Parish, to provide a "leadership of service" and a "service of leadership." At the end of Mass, Fr. Silvio spoke of how happy he was to be the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish and felt that his main role as pastor would be to "guide his parishioners to heaven."

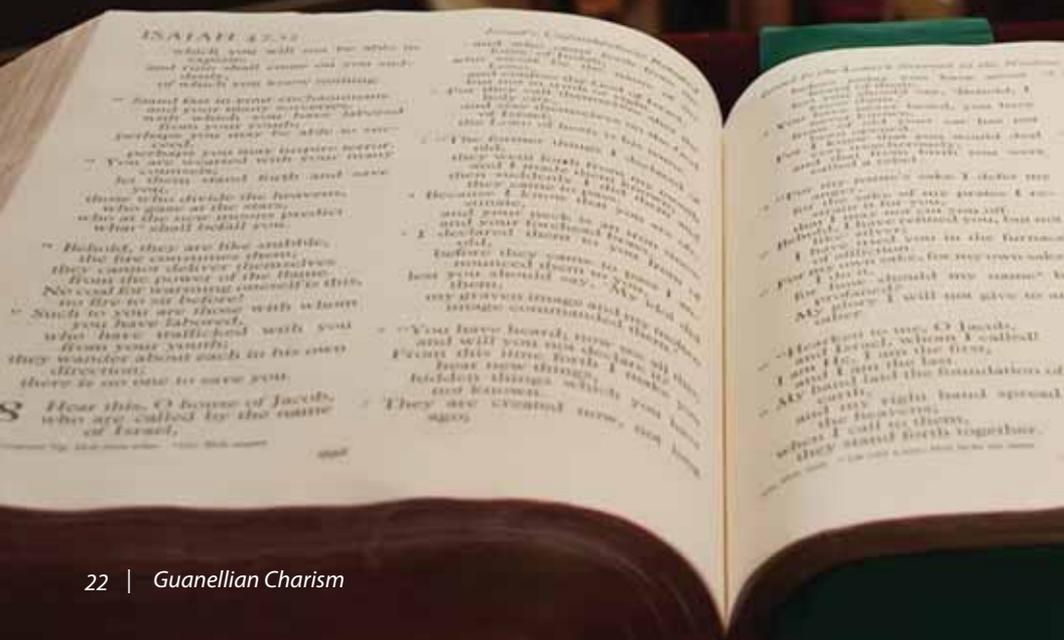
This new chapter in the parish will see two committed and dedicated Servants of Charity who model "walking in the footsteps" of Fr. Guanella "by ways of the heart," and who will lead the People of God at Sacred Heart Parish to the realization of being a "Samaritan Parish."

Celebrating the Mass

By Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC

Mass attendance is declining these days especially among our youth. We can blame the parish structure, the pastors themselves, the schedule, the choir and many other factors that may or may not contribute to this situation.

But the real reason is within us.



We do not understand the true meaning of the Mass. For many it has become a foreign language with sketchy subtitles. For others, it is something Catholics do, or it is a tradition in the family. Some go so the children will be eligible for First Communion or enrollment in the Catholic schools.

We need to approach the celebration of the Mass with a lively faith in Our Lord. The Roman centurion who pierced Jesus's Heart with a spear proclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Like the centurion, faith makes us aware of the God into whose presence we enter. It blossoms into deep trust in God and expresses itself in a spoken or silent petition for a favor we cannot obtain by our own resources. Each Mass should be an experience of God, of faith, and of prayer.

But this will not happen unless we prepare for it. In many households, preparing to go to Mass is a frantic activity of getting up, getting dressed, getting ready, including yelling and pushing, to make it to church on time. Lack of preparation for Mass results in a failed experience. Preparation is the key to a rewarding religious experience.



The salutation of the Mass, “The Lord be with you” invites us to acknowledge the presence of the Lord, and we confirm that we are in the presence of God with our answer, “And with your Spirit.” The prophet Isaiah started his mission with the words, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Jesus started his redemptive missions with the same words at the synagogue of Capernaum, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” What is the spirit of the Celebrant of the Mass, called and consecrated by God to be a priest and a prophet like Jesus? The Spirit of the Celebrant is that of making present the Body and Blood of Christ on the Altar, to renew the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, to pray for the universal Church, to pray for the living and the dead and to pray for the special intentions announced in the intercessions. This is the Spirit of the Celebrant. But this is not enough. To the Spirit of the Celebrant, each person in attendance should add their own spirit. The spirit of the people is what they bring to the celebration of the Mass. Individuals and families bring to Mass their faith, hope and love; their joys and pains; failures and successes, forgiveness and hatred; grace and sinfulness; tears and laughter. The Spirit of the Celebrant and the Spirit of the people together are offered to God with the hope of receiving what our heart longs for. The spirit of the Celebrant united with the Spirit of the people make a communion of faith and a community of believers.

Therefore, Mass is not a deposit where we go to withdraw spiritual benefits. It is rather a matching fund. The more we bring, the more we receive; if we bring nothing, we receive nothing. This is the reason many people stop attending Mass. They do not get anything because they don't bring anything. Preparation for Mass is as important as attending Mass.



“IF WE ARE TO BREAK THE MONOTONY OF REPETITION WE MUST MAKE THE MASS A LIVING PRAYER THAT IS SUSTAINED BY AN ARDENT FAITH. THEN WE HAVE THAT FULL AND AUTHENTIC PARTICIPATION BY ALL WHO ARE PRESENT AT THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE WHICH IS A TIME OF THE DEEPEST PRAYER.”

Our different postures during Mass, such as sitting, standing, genuflecting, should reflect what is present in our mind, heart and soul. What the soul experiences, the body expresses in visible actions and postures. Our prayer gets us in contact with Christ, and our faith assures us that at Mass we are in his presence, even though we do not physically see him. We should pray at Mass that we have a personal and living experience of Christ and to do all we can to enter into the presence of God. However, if Christ has little place in our daily life, we can't expect to have some kind of revelation when we go to Mass. We are the same people kneeling in the pew as we were before we entered the church. A good faith-inspired life prepares us to get a lot out of the Holy Eucharist. We should be careful against falling into routine. We need to maintain an attitude of wonder and awe. It takes a spirit of prayer and lively faith to counteract the listlessness of weekly or daily habits. If we are to break the monotony of repetition we must make the Mass a living prayer that is sustained by an ardent faith. Then we have that full and authentic participation by all who are present at the Eucharistic Sacrifice which is a time of the deepest prayer. There we find ourselves in the presence of the Crucified and Risen Savior. He speaks to us through the proclamation of his inspired word; he invites us to offer ourselves with him, the Immaculate Victim, to the Father; he feeds us and changes us into himself in Holy Communion; he sends us forth to announce the Gospel by our lives.

Our prayer at Mass is a profession of faith and no other prayer equals this great prayer of the Mass. As we look forward to Christ's second coming, we offer the Father in thanksgiving the holy and living sacrifice of the Eucharist. The Mass is the Church's greatest prayer and greatest treasure. We are not so much obliged as privileged to go to Mass on the Lord's Day.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION

A Call from God to Live and Share Joyfully



BY FR. SATHEESH ALPHONSE, SdC

In 1997, Pope John Paul II instituted a “Day of Prayer” for women and men in consecrated life. This celebration was attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. Parishes in the U.S. celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life on the weekend after February 2nd.

This Feast is also known as “Candlemas Day,” the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all people. The celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life has been transferred to the following Sunday in order to highlight the gift of consecrated persons for the whole Church. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “The Church believes this Feast of the Presentation is significant for consecrated persons because by their evangelical witness they become, like Christ, lights of God’s love in the darkness of the world.”

It is a day to thank God for the service of many consecrated men and women who work in parishes, schools, universities, chanceries, hospitals, centers of social service, counseling and spiritual direction. Archbishop Carlson said, “Their zeal and joy for doing God’s will manifests the life and holiness of the Church.”

What does it mean to be a consecrated religious in today's world? It coincides with the fact that we celebrate the day for the consecrated religious on the day when Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple.

Jesus being presented in the temple signifies the total dedication of a person to God. Hence being a consecrated religious means that one has totally dedicated his or her life to God. The supreme model for us to follow in total dedication is Jesus Christ, who by His coming as a human person humbled himself. He was consecrated after 40 days of his birth, fulfilling the Jewish ritual. But Jesus' entire life manifested the total dedication of his life to God and His people.



My personal conviction of being a religious is something that I treasure as dear to my heart. A person who gives his or her life to God must be a joyful giver. Since everything we are and have comes from God, there is no reason to not be a joyful giver. We give back what was given to us to begin with, as a free gift. Living our lives to uplift the downtrodden in so many ways, doesn't mean that we do it on our own. We give what God has given to us. It is a call to live our lives meaningfully each and every day, since every day is a gift from God and God gives us long life in order to share it with others. Following Jesus means that we give back our lives in abundance that we have received (John 10:10). The talents that we possess come from God and utilizing our talents for the betterment of God's people is the reason that God bestowed those talents upon us.

So we say what Jesus invited us to say "we are unprofitable servants, and we have done what we were obliged to do" (Luke 17:10). The conclusion is that without joy in our hearts, we cannot be a consecrated person. We can be great workers doing great things, but to be a consecrated religious, no matter what sort of work we do, we are called to be joyful givers. Being joyful means being full of joy, as someone who has experienced the fullness of God's gift of life should be able to manifest His fullness through joyful living. It is about the experience of living God's forgiveness each and every day.

When we share our lives with others, our lives become multi-dimensional. A young woman who shares her life with a young man becomes his wife and he her husband. A man fully sharing his life with his child becomes a father to that child. And when consecrated people totally dedicate themselves to the cause of others in need, they will inherit a hundred times more brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and children (Mt. 19:29). We become a global family of brothers and sisters. The “World Becomes Our Homeland,” (St. Louis Guanella). Pope John Paul II said, “It is a question of dedicating one’s life to the service of God and of the Church, of doing so with unshakeable faith, with mature judgment and a free decision, generously, regardless of the price.” The invitation is to be generous. A joyful and generous giver is a true giver.

As we celebrate the “Day for Consecrated Persons” on the “Feast of the Presentation of the Lord,” let the light of Jesus Christ shine through the meaningful lives of consecrated people, and may many more join our religious orders to consecrate themselves to bringing light into the lives of those who are in need.



DO YOU WANT TO BE A SAINT?

BY KELLY FLAHERTY

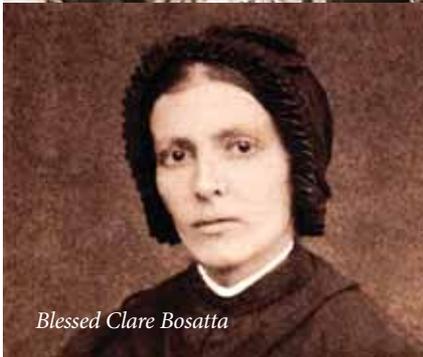
Is it still possible for someone from today's society to become a saint? Is it difficult, and what does it take? The answer to these questions is easy. It is possible for someone from today's society to become a saint, and becoming a saint is not difficult. But what it takes to become a saint is difficult to say. We can learn a great deal by examining the lives of the saints.

Most saints did not achieve sanctity on their own; some had spiritual advisors, holy families, holy friends or visits from holy people. If you look into the lives of saints you will find that they are grouped together, leading one another on the path to holiness. So not only do the saints live lives of heroic holiness, but they surround themselves with holy people. Take for instance our own St. Louis Guanella. He worked with several saints: St. John Bosco, St. Joseph Cottolengo, and St. Pius X. Two people who worked with him have joined him on the road to Canonization: Venerable Bishop Aurelio Bacciarini and Blessed Clare Bosatta.

In looking back at previous issues of *The Voice of Providence*, I found an article that Fr. Silvio De Nard wrote in the April/May 2006 issue, "Yes to Life: In the Footsteps of St. Gianna



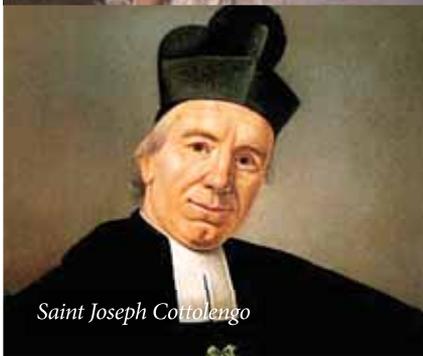
*Venerable Bishop
Aurelio Bacciarini*



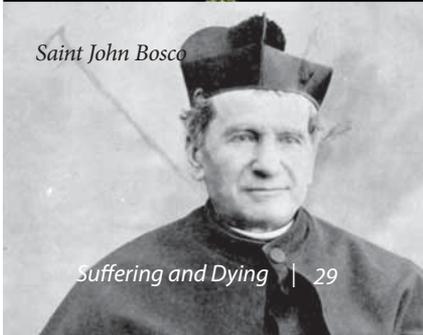
Blessed Clare Bosatta



Saint Gianna Beretta Molla



Saint Joseph Cottolengo



Saint John Bosco

Beretta Molla.” It tells the story of a young mother, Rita Fedrizzi Fontana, and her choice to decline treatment for abdominal cancer so that her unborn child’s life would be spared. She lived a rather ordinary life. She was married, and had two sons, Francesco and Andrew. She was a teacher at the local high school and she loved water-skiing. I began to wonder about the lives of her family since her death. How are they doing and how has her heroic choice impacted those whom her life touched? Is she considered a saint, having lived a heroic life?

Was Rita a hero? She would say that she was not. She made her decision based on the teachings of her Catholic faith. She and her husband, Enrico, made the decision together; that they would keep their child who was a gift from God. Great courage and a strong faith in God were necessary to follow through with this decision. Even the local bishop said, “Usually, a heroic act is not improvised.”



When I investigated Rita’s life more closely, I learned that she lived in Pianello Lario. All three of her children were baptized in the very same church where St. Louis Guanella was the pastor when he began his first institute. She had drawn herself ever closer to the Blessed Mother through her involvement with a religious group called ‘Casa di Maria.’

I found books about bioethics in Italian that referenced Rita and her choice to prove their point about the sanctity of human life. I read letters from her students, extolling the praises of their saintly professor. The Italian government even gave awards to her husband, Enrico, on her behalf posthumously.

Most importantly, I received a beautiful letter from her oldest son, Francesco. He was surprised that her story would have been discovered so far away. He said that the loss of his mother was quite difficult, but during the summer of 2005 he went on a retreat in Loreto, Italy with Casa di Maria. Becoming involved with a religious group that had been so close to his mother helped him through his difficulties, and eventually brought him to Rome where he is currently discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

I believe that Rita lived close to the Lord in the footsteps of the saints, and left an example for others to follow. Is Rita a saint? Francesco says that, “Putting the prefix ‘saint’ in front of a name doesn’t change what a person did: the example was given and it’s an invitation to emulate it. For me, my mother is already a saint. The recognition from the Church is an important enrichment, but it doesn’t change the person and what she did, (not to diminish what the Church intends to do when a person is canonized). What really matters is the Sign that a person has left. We are all called to be saints.”

The Holy Cloak of St. Joseph

The Pious Union of St. Joseph has published, ready for distribution, a booklet of forty pages containing one of the dearest and oldest devotions to St. Joseph: *The Holy Cloak of St. Joseph*.

St. Joseph is the Patron of the Universal Church, the Guardian of Jesus and Mary, the Protector and model of every Christian.

Through this prayer and our perseverance through it, we ask St. Joseph to open his Cloak and provide a shield to us for protection, guidance and spiritual growth.

In history, the cloak has been a powerful symbol of belonging like a flag, a uniform or a banner. When we take refuge under the Holy Cloak of St. Joseph we become members of his Family with Jesus and Mary. We belong to the Holy Family. We are protected, guided and sheltered from all evil.

This devotion leads us to meditate and understand St. Joseph's virtues and role in the history of salvation for the Church and each one of us.

This devotion is perfect for the month of March dedicated to St. Joseph and anytime we feel the need of special assistance from St. Joseph and want to be members of the Holy Family.



THE HOLY CLOAK
In Honor of
ST. JOSEPH

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC



Is God Calling You to Serve Others?

Among those who are deprived of human and spiritual support, we care for developmentally disabled, abandoned youth, indigent elderly, and the incurably and terminally ill. We are also committed to pastoral and missionary work in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa.

The Servants of Charity Priests and Brothers, Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, Cooperators and hundreds of members of the greater Guanellian family serve over a million brothers and sisters while offering comfort, consolation and support. There is room for many others; those needing help and those who want to help.

Consider joining our mission, making the love of God more and more visible in our world. For more information, contact:

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Prayer for Vocations

Pray, we beg You, O holy Mother of God, that religious vocations to this work of mercy may be multiplied, and that those who are called to help may be eager to respond for the greater glory of God, your honor, and the relief of many who suffer in misery and abandonment. Amen.



Please consider helping one of our seminarians to become a priest or a brother for one dollar a day.



To become a member of the Pious Union of St. Joseph or to extend membership to prayerful friends and relatives, please send names and addresses to 953 E. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake, MI 49240 or email piousunion@pusj.org

Shrine of St. Joseph Sacraments and Hours of Devotion

Mass times: Sun 10:00 a.m. • M, Tu, Th, Fr and Sat 11:30 a.m.

Wed 8:30 a.m. followed by Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

Benediction: Wed 4:45 p.m. • Divine Mercy Chaplet: Wed 4:30 p.m.

Holy Rosary: Before Mass • **Stations of the Cross:** Friday at 11:00 a.m.

Anointing of the Sick: First Saturday during 11:30 a.m. Mass and when requested

Confession: Before and after Mass, upon request

To receive the Monthly Shrine Bulletin and all special event mailings, please contact the office at 517-522-8017 or send email to piousunion@pusj.org

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