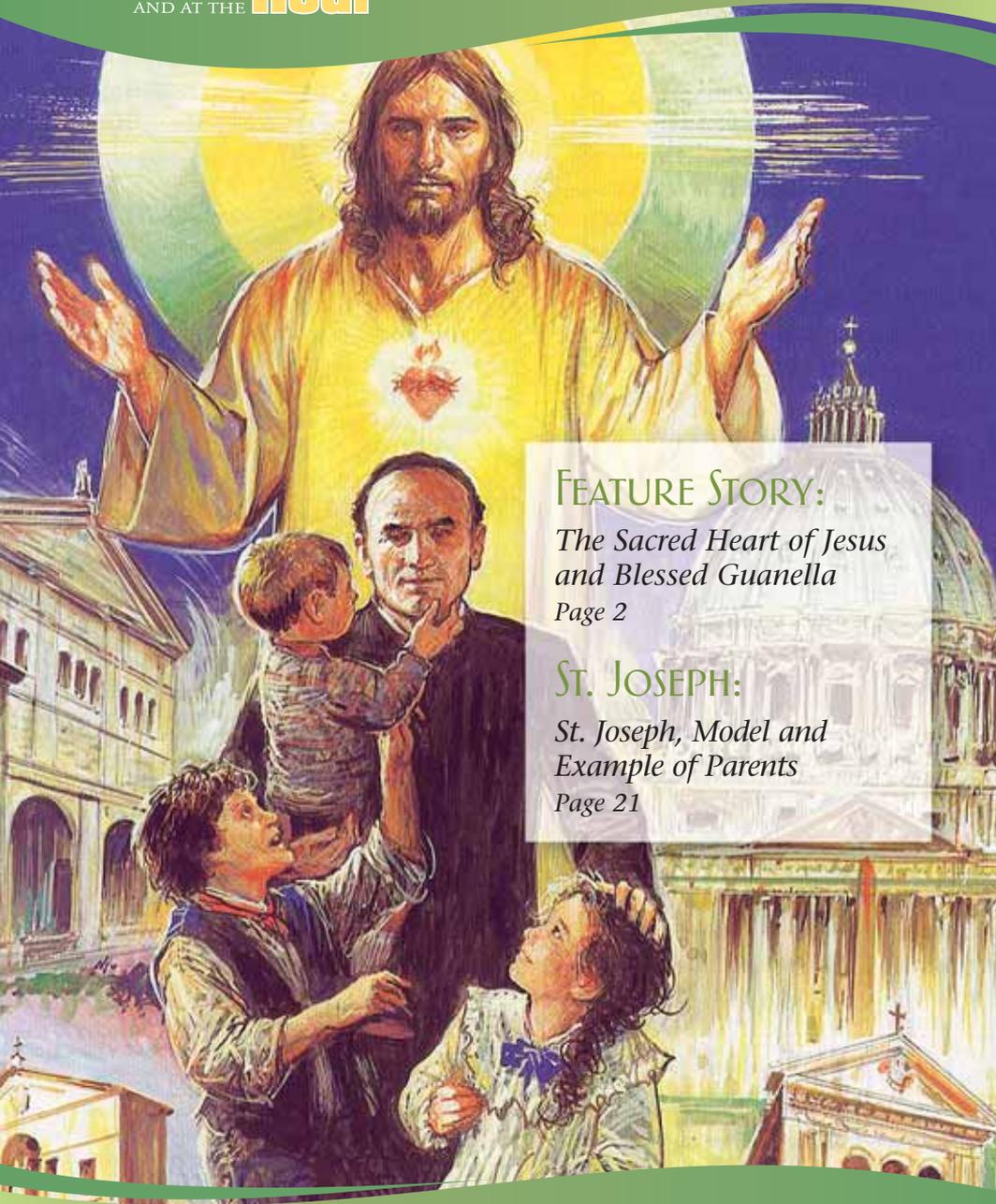


The Voice of Providence

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AND AT THE

PUBLICATION OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY



FEATURE STORY:

*The Sacred Heart of Jesus
and Blessed Guanella*

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ST. JOSEPH:

*St. Joseph, Model and
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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.



God our Father

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

On June 21st this year, we celebrate Father's Day to honor our fathers. Fatherhood is in crisis these days. Thirty eight percent of American children do not live with a meaningful father figure. The paternal figure is fading and so are all the values attached to it.

In the Bible, while the mother is seen as the custodian of the holiness of the family, the father is considered the spiritual leader of the family. Children develop their image and concept of God, to a great degree, from the image and concept they have of their father.

With Jesus our brother and model, we are children of God our Father, creator, redeemer and provider who will never abandon us.

Our Father in Heaven is a tender Father. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son" (Jn 3, 16). Jesus emptied Himself of His own will to do the will of the Father (cf. Phil 2, 7). He never did, said or thought of anything, unless the Father told Him. The intense love of the Son toward His Father is the Holy Spirit. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the best expression of the love of God for His children.

The Gospels present Jesus, loving his Father with the abandon and trust of a child. Jesus calls his Father so often and with such passion, using the Aramaic word Abba, which means, daddy, papa. The frequency and the tone of the word Abba on the lips of Jesus is so impressive that it was adopted in the Latin and Greek translations of the Bible and it remained in the translations of modern languages.

Jesus himself showed us the way to acknowledge the love of the Father when he taught us to pray along with Him, Our Father who art in heaven...



The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Blessed Guanella

BY FR. SILVIO DE NARD, SDC

Years ago I had the pleasure of welcoming two Italian Salesian priests visiting the United States. Once in the chapel of our House in Springfield (PA), one of them asked me why a big Crucifix hangs behind the altar in all the Servants of Charity Houses he had visited around the world.

“The Crucifix is the Guanellian image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” I replied. Father Guanella built a big church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus right in the middle of his

Motherhouse in Como. However, you would have a hard time finding a single image of the Sacred Heart, as He is usually portrayed. A gigantic scene of the Crucifixion of Jesus overshadows the church, instead. Why?

To Father Guanella, the Crucified Jesus is the sign, the visible image of the mercy and care of his divine Father’s Heart. It is on the cross that



Jesus saved us from sin and death. On the cross He signed the ultimate covenant that unites heaven to earth and earth to heaven. On the cross his Sacred Heart was pierced by a lance. On the cross He offered to the Father the last drops of water and blood, symbol of the sacraments. On the cross, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. On the cross, He gave us his Blessed Mother, Mary. On the cross, He gave us his forgiveness, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23, 34). On the cross we were and are saved.

In his book *In the Month of Fervor*, Father Guanella writes, “Imagine your tired father coming back from work. You ask him: ‘To what purpose is all this trouble?’ He answers you, ‘I have to do it because I have children to care for.’” Jesus went through the trouble of redemption because he cared for us, his ungrateful and unworthy children. Would that we understood such love and self-giving!

When we make a sacrifice, an act of mortification, or an act of charity it seems that we are doing a super-job in front of God and men. We even expect people to tell us so! Pride appears on the horizons of our heart. We should never forget that pride is the original sin that caused Jesus to come among us and die for us on the cross.

Father Guanella goes on saying, “It moves anyone to pity seeing a father who finds himself abandoned by his children! Have pity for Jesus, who, dying on the cross, has no one to give Him a little consolation. You, at least, shout to Him, ‘Sweet Heart of Jesus, make me love You more and more,’ and pour out your love for Him.”

There is no pride in Jesus, only compassion, a compassionate smile, a compassionate welcome into his arms. For that reason, Father Guanella built the Calvary, the Crucified Jesus, who, through his outstretched arms, welcomes the suffering, the needy, the disappointed, the sorrowful, the handicapped, the elderly, the marginalized, the terminally ill, the dying and all human miseries. To Jesus’ pierced Sacred Heart and to the cross, Father Guanella directs all suffering brothers and sisters, because in them they may find rest and consolation.

In the Month of Fervor is available for purchase from the Pious Union of St. Joseph. See the Guanellian Press on page 31 for more details.



God Is with Us: *A Cause for Joy*

Imparting the “precise significance of the Solemnity, of the Body and Blood of Christ,” Pope Benedict XVI reflects on the three actions which make up the Corpus Christi Celebration: gathering around the altar of the Eucharist, processing with the Eucharist and adoring God in the Eucharist.

Gathering

“Let us imagine for a moment that in the whole of Rome there is only this one altar and that all the city’s Christians are invited to gather here to celebrate the Savior who died and was raised... ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal 3, 28). ‘You are all one!’

In these words the truth and power of the Christian revolution is heard, the most profound revolution of human history, which was experienced precisely around the Eucharist...”

Processing

“The Corpus Christi procession teaches us that the Eucharist seeks to free us from every kind of despondency and discouragement, wants to raise us, so that we can set out on the journey with the strength God gives us through Jesus Christ... Without the God-with-us, the God who is close,

how can we stand up to the pilgrimage through life, either on our own or as society and the family of peoples?

The Eucharist is the Sacrament of the God who does not leave us alone on the journey but stays at our side and shows us the way. God created us free but he did not leave us alone: he made himself the ‘way’ and came to walk together with us so that in our freedom we should also have the criterion we need to discern the right way and to take it.”

Adoring

“Kneeling in adoration before the Lord. Adoring the God of Jesus Christ, who out of love made himself bread, broken, is the most effective and radical remedy against the idolatry of the past and of the present.

Kneeling before the Eucharist is a profession of freedom: those who bow to Jesus cannot and must not prostrate

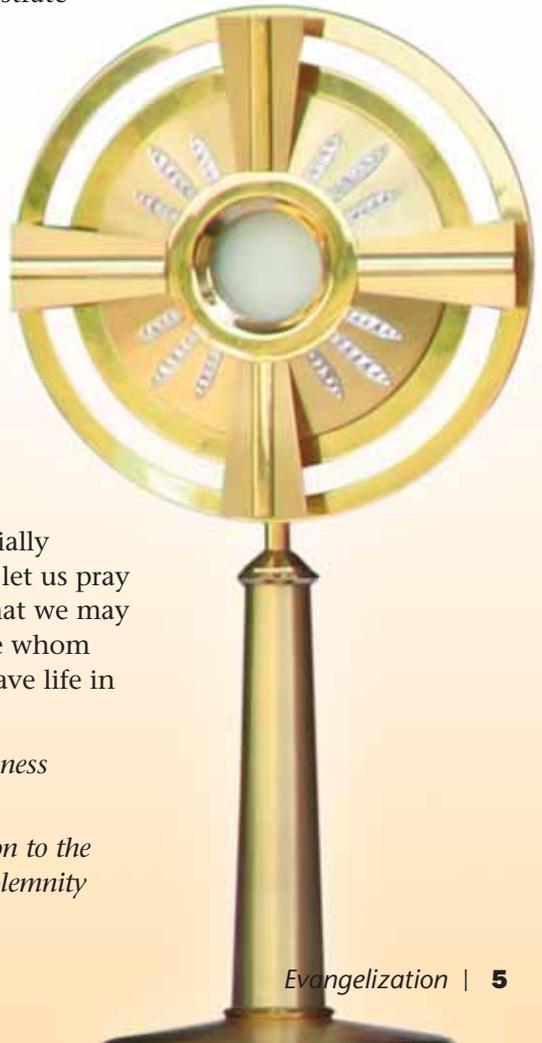
themselves before any earthly authority, however powerful. We Christians kneel only before God or before the Most Blessed Sacrament because we know and believe that the one true God is present in it, the God who created the world and so loved it that he gave his Only Begotten Son (cf. Jn 3, 16).

This is why gathering, walking and adoring together fills us with joy.

In making our own the adoring attitude of Mary, whom we especially remember in this month of May, let us pray for ourselves and for everyone; that we may know you, O Father, and the One whom you sent, Jesus Christ and thus have life in abundance. Amen.”

*Excerpt from the Homily of His Holiness
Benedict XVI*

*Holy Mass and Eucharistic Procession to the
Basilica of St. Mary Major on the Solemnity
of Corpus Christi 2008*





The Knights of Columbus and Masculine Christianity

BY JOSEPH YEKULIS

This issue of *The Voice of Providence* concerns itself with “God the Father,” as we celebrate Father’s Day on June 21st. Certainly Mother’s Day gets much more hype, as our mothers have traditionally been the more nurturing of our parents; but what about the fathers in our lives? Could the lower expectations for Father’s Day be a result of the “masculine” aspect of who we are and how we relate to our families in a spiritual and emotional sense?

As State Membership Director of the Michigan Knights of Columbus, I’ve been asked to connect being a member of “The World’s largest Catholic family men’s fraternal organization,” with being a “Masculine Christian.”



Men were created by God to be the original protectors of His families on earth. From the beginning of time, when God created Adam and Eve (cf. Gn 2-4), Adam became Eve's protector and provided for the first family of Creation. Later, God provided St. Joseph (cf. Lk 2, 4) to be the "Foster Father of Jesus," as from His wisdom He knew that the Son of Man would need a protector until He was able to grow into adulthood.

Being a protector is certainly in the nature of man and the primary role of one who becomes a husband and a father.

The most prominent term used to describe our two most famous of biblical fathers seems to be "protector," and being a protector is certainly in the nature of man and the primary role of one who becomes a husband and a father. There were many things that Adam and Joseph had to protect their families from during the dangerous times that they lived in, just as today, we have many dangers to protect our own families from in a world that continues to become more secular, more sexual, more drug infested, and more obsessed with instant gratification.

Which brings us to a crossroad: in a culture that demands political correctness, equality between men and women, and the emasculation of the male species, what does it mean to be a "Masculine Christian" in today's world? Let's start with the Word of God to try to get a handle on this, because Jesus was a "man's man," who stood up to persecution, ridicule, torture and death; dying for what he believed in and dying for our sins.

When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for the godless. You could hardly find anyone ready to die even for someone upright; though it is just possible that, for a really good person, someone might undertake to die. So it is proof of God's own love for us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners...What is more, we are filled with exultant trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation. (Romans 5:6-11)

A "Masculine Christian" therefore, is a man who is willing to die to self; to support his Christian faith, the needs of the wife, children, and extended family members, e.g., parents who can no longer care for

themselves, his local church, and his local community. A real man accepts the responsibilities that God has bestowed on him in life, and accepts his role in life to be the “protector.”

The Knights of Columbus were founded in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882 by Fr. Michael J. McGivney, who lived during a time of extreme prejudice against the Catholic immigrants who were arriving in the United States. Venerable Fr. McGivney recognized an unmet need during his time and developed a fraternal benefits society because of the number of men from his parish and community who were dying from disease and accidental deaths in local factories and sweat shops. When the head of the family died, the family was without “protection,” and the money that the men of the community pooled together helped keep families intact.

Today, the Knights of Columbus have grown into an organization of 1.7 million men, with 70,600 members in the State of Michigan. The principles of the Order are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism, and the Knights are considered the “Right Arm

of the Church.” Being a member of the Knights of Columbus does a number of things for a man trying to maintain his “Masculine Christianity.” It provides him with a way to bond with other Catholic men, who are not afraid to claim Jesus as their Savior and pray a rosary together. We are encouraged to remain engaged with our families in unity with the Church and to truly be “practicing Catholics.”

To be a Knight you must be a “Masculine Christian,” willing to give unto others before giving unto yourself. You must be a servant leader, standing up for the church, standing up for the Right-to-Life, and living within God’s rules, with that “Man’s Man” Jesus Christ standing at your side. To learn more about the Knights of Columbus, visit our website at www.kofc.org or contact me at joeyekulis@servantsofcharity.org to become a member of the Order.

To be a Knight you must be a “Masculine Christian,” willing to give unto others before giving unto yourself.



Bishop Bacciarini: A Suffering Servant of God

By FR. NINO MINETTI, SDC

On March 15, 2008, Benedict XVI declared Bishop Bacciarini “Venerable.” That means that the Church officially recognized that the saintly Bishop had lived the Christian virtues in an extraordinary way. This important stage of the journey toward sainthood for the great Swiss Bishop and the anniversary of his death on June 17, invite us to reflect on this exceptional figure.

Born in an extremely poor family near Lugano in Switzerland, he was Bishop of that city from 1917 to his death in 1935. His childhood was marked by the early death of his father and the heartbreak of his mother who was left suddenly alone to raise and nourish seven little ones.

He generously answered his call to the priesthood and was ordained with the resolution to strive for sanctity. With the years, he grew in holiness and responsibilities. As a young priest, he became Pastor of Arzo and just six years later the spiritual director of the minor seminary in Lugano.



He joined the Servants of Charity in 1906, fascinated by Father Guanella's charism and his ideals of charity and labor. He started working with the poor at the Mother House in Como and then, after a short period as Master of Novices, he became the First Pastor of St. Joseph at Trionfale in Rome, the Mother Church of the Pious Union of St. Joseph.

Upon the death of Father Louis Guanella, Founder of the Servants of Charity, he was elected Superior General of the Servants of Charity, becoming the first successor to Blessed Louis Guanella. One Saint succeeded another at the head of the young Congregation. On January 12, 1917, Pope Benedict XV appointed him Bishop of Lugano, Switzerland.

Bishop Aurelio Bacciarini was a man of prayer, contemplation and, at the same time, a man of intense activity. He founded the first Diocesan newspaper and many other publications in support and defense of the Catholic faith and the morality of the people. Under his leadership and assistance, more than thirty centers of education and assistance for children and poor adults were established.

He was a man of incredible energy, gifted with brilliant foresight. He founded Christian Unions to defend the rights of workers and proclaim the Social Doctrine of the Church. He started and supported the Federation of Catholic Teachers and initiated several Catholic associations for the youth. Notable among them was the Catholic Action Association, which he wanted to be present and active in every parish.

Bishop Bacciarini was most of all "a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity" (Is 53, 3) according to his biographer. For him the climb to Calvary started right after his Episcopal ordination. His suffering, however, did not turn him into a sad man. He actually lived through his infirmities with great dignity. As he moved from clinic to clinic, he mingled with the other patients and filled their conversation with plenty of joy. Even when his features appeared strained by the pain, he showed an interior serenity and composure that comforted and attracted people. He was even able to laugh at himself saying, "I am a Bishop with only one eye, one ear, one lung and one hand."

His letters are always bursting with hope and optimism and one would never guess how much suffering he was undergoing. "Through prayer and suffering we mature in charity. If we do not possess the spirit of God, we would never understand and accept the pain of suffering and the cross. Actually, we would reject it as a calamity and insanity.

Suffering removes the surface of the world's vanity and exposes all its lies and impotence. Suffering heals our heart, detaches our spirit from the earth and lifts it toward the eternal goods. The cross hurts and makes us cry, it appears a bitter mystery to our weakness, but it is also a holy mystery, worthy to be counted among the main mysteries of our faith."

The holy Bishop gave this encouragement to a newly ordained priest: "Do not turn down any cross, whether spiritual or physical. Accept happily, for the kingdom of God and for souls, every type of suffering."

Such was his life until the end. On his deathbed, his last words were, "I place my life on your altar, Lord, happy to offer it today, so that our Diocese of Lugano would find the faith of our Fathers."

PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF VENERABLE BISHOP AURELIO BACCIARINI

God, Father of endless love, through the Heart of Jesus your Son, you have revealed the mystery of your love for each of your children. By your power you alleviate our labor and suffering through the Holy Spirit. May you be praised forever. In your mercy you have sent to your Church your faithful Servant, Bishop Aurelio Bacciarini, to strengthen the faith of your people as an example of your compassion for the poor and inspiration of hope in his long suffering. Through his intercession give us, your children, the grace we are asking with confidence ... Give us the strength to accept and love your will where we firmly believe we can find our peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen!

If you would like to obtain copies of a prayer card for the intercession of Venerable Bishop Aurelio Bacciarini, please contact the Pious Union office at 517-522-8017.

A hand holding a red heart with wings. The hand is positioned at the top center, with the index finger pointing towards the right. A large, glowing red heart is held in the palm. From the top of the heart, a pair of white and yellow wings extends outwards. The background is a soft, light blue and green gradient.

Guanellian Lay Movement

Spreading the Good News

Throughout the World

Where does one begin? First, with a desire and with prayer; then seizing an opportunity! In Lent of 2007, Sr. Theresann and I invited Mary Lou Coons, a Guanellian Cooperator, and her mother, Marion Wierowski, to a prayer and study session each week. We gathered in our convent for a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament and then a lesson on either St. Paul or Blessed Louis Guanella. At the same time Mary Lou Coons, Sr. Rhonda and Lauren Hill, also a Cooperator, were communicating by email between Syracuse and Sleepy Eye, Minnesota about the possibility of starting a Guanellian Lay Group here in Syracuse.

It all came together on August 26, 2007, at the end of the Sacred Heart Conference, which brought many of our Sisters from around the country to New York. How providential that the Sacred Heart would be the means of our coming together! Our first meeting was held at the convent of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence. There were nine of us at the meeting, including the presenters, Sr. Rhonda Brown, DSMP and Lauren Hill. Sr. Rhonda told us about the Guanellian Group that was meeting in Sleepy Eye; a group with a strong desire to form a Guanellian community and who persuaded Sr. Rhonda to guide them.

With this group she began hour-long meetings that started with fellowship and then flowed into a teaching about Fr. Guanella. Sr. Rhonda drew on earlier work done by Sr. Sharon Williams, DSMP, who guided three women to become Guanellian Cooperators. In the early meetings she taught about Don Guanella's love for God, our Father, and his trust in our Heavenly Father's providential care of his children. Out of the initial meetings flowed a two-year program of prayer and study.

The theme for the first year was Don Guanella and His Spirituality which followed a natural range of topics: God is Our Provident Father, St. Joseph, Blessed Clare Bosatta, Mary, Mother of Jesus, The Eucharist in the Life of Fr. Guanella, Fr. Guanella in Depth and the Incarnation in the Writings of Fr. Guanella. In November of the first year they went on a pilgrimage to Illinois where they met and prayed with the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence in

Lake Zurich and Chicago and met some of the women who the Sisters care for in both residences.

In the second year Sr. Rhonda took up the theme, Guanellian Cooperators. The group studied and discussed the topics of Guanellian Cooperators – Identity, Style, Mission, Formation, Organization, and Funding. In October four of the members of the group prepared to take their promises as Guanellian Cooperators. Fr. Silvio De Nard, SdC, gave a day of recollection in November on the Feast of Our Lady of Providence and during the Mass the first four of this group made their Promises.

Each of the topics presented over the two years of formation was supported by written materials that Mary Lou Coons and Sr. Rhonda passed along to me for use with our group in Syracuse.

Mary Lou Coons, a Guanellian Cooperator, and six others who are interested in the spirit and charism of Blessed Guanella make up our group in Syracuse. We have studied our Founder, Blessed Clare and Our Lady of Providence as well as other topics. We are now studying a book, central to our Mission, entitled The Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission.

I see our group as a mixed group: some have the desire or call to be Guanellian Cooperators, for some the Guanellian Lay Movement is appealing, and others simply come to meetings for spiritual growth. We begin our meetings with fellowship and a visit with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament followed by the selected topic for the evening. We try to meet monthly, keeping in contact with one another between the meetings, which is also important. We don't always achieve this with everyone, but it is the ideal. Sharing what we have and what we have been given, especially in the area of a particular spirituality, produces growth for others as well as for ourselves. May the giving and receiving of the Guanellian Charism and Spirituality continue to grow and inspire others to know more about a man who loved others with the love and charity of Christ: a love without borders, a love without counting the cost!

“I see our group as a mixed group: some have the desire or call to be Guanellian Cooperators... others simply come to meetings for spiritual growth.”



The House of Love

Guanella Preethi Nivas in Bangalore, India

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC AND BRO. FRANCIS SUNIL KUMAR, SDC

I have visited Guanella Preethi Nivas (House of Love) in Bangalore, India, several times and my feelings toward it are always the same. It's like entering a different realm. The house is the Novitiate for the Servants of Charity



in India. But it also runs programs for children, the handicapped and lately for the elderly. The works sparkle like a multifaceted diamond.

The Beauty of Love

On weekdays you feel the silence and peace of young men praying, working, and studying. There is serenity, strength and structure and a promise of a future mission; a consolation for us old-timers.

On Sundays and holy days it looks like the earth shakes and all the choirs of angels start their performance at the same time. Hundreds and hundreds of children of all ages, all colorfully dressed, loaded with smiles, shiny eyes and hugs, invade the facility. There is no escape from their joy and life. Jesus experienced the same at His entrance in Jerusalem.

Weekends are dedicated to the handicapped. They are picked up and returned home at the end of the day. Their time is filled with love, entertainment, food, and teaching of some useful skills. It is a quieter

environment, but necessary to build trust and understanding that God loves all, especially the ones who most closely resemble Jesus carrying His Cross. The last program is dedicated to the shelter and service of the elderly.

How is all this possible? It is not easy. The priests and brothers are totally in the hands of God. This community has been suffering persecution for a long time. They have been harassed and threatened, and their property occupied. But they continue their mission with love and perseverance. They know the words of Jesus: “love one another as I have loved you.”

A New Mission

Most recently, the Lord has inspired the community to begin a new mission to give hope to the unwanted and less privileged people: the elderly and the handicapped. It was a dream that has slowly taken its form and become a reality.

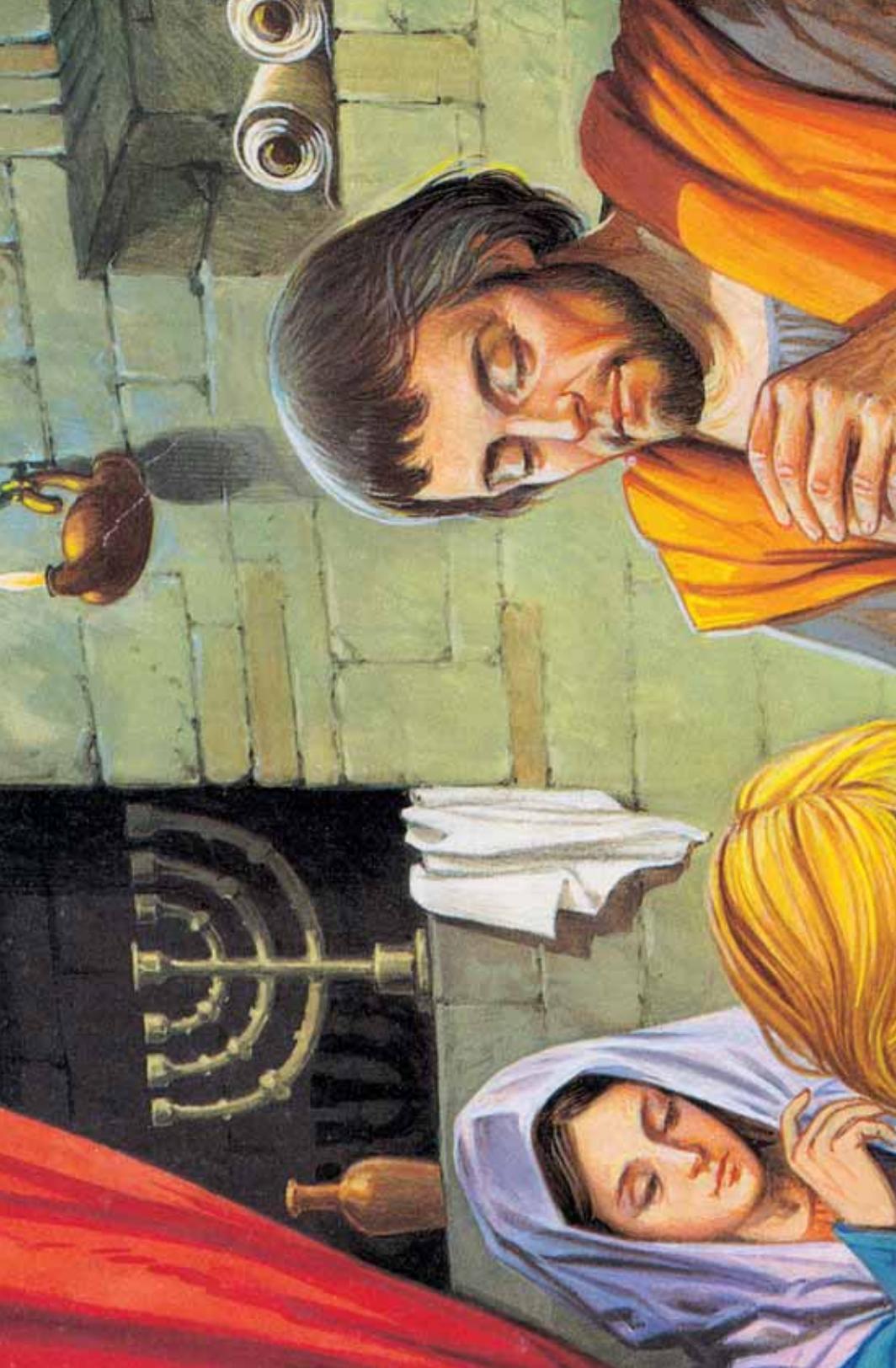
It began with the weekend ministry for the elderly and handicapped. After a few weeks of hard work, the priests and the seminarians were joined by many generous hearts who came forward to help materially and spiritually. As time went on, the number of elderly increased as well as the valuable support of the collaborators.

This year the religious community took on a new challenge. They opened a residential program with four homeless people: three elderly and an injured young man. The inauguration of the new home, called Guanella House of Love, was simple but meaningful. The tender hearts of the children were also there to appreciate the life of the elderly.

We believe that our new residents add beauty to this Home of Love. They are rich in experience and talent. They spend most of the time in broom making.

Mother Theresa while addressing the people of Norway said, “There is so much suffering, so much hate, so much misery. We must start to work in our homes with prayer and sacrifices. Love is born in homes.”

We are grateful to all those who help continue the mission of Father Guanella for the less privileged. Their assistance is recognized and appreciated. The Home for the Aged was opened to give hope to the brokenhearted and love to those who have no one.





O. Scarpelli



Pursuing the Path to Holiness

BY FR. DENNIS WEBER, SDC

Without equivocation, I can say that the greatest influence on my vocation as a priest of the Servants of Charity was the seed that was planted by my parents and their deep devotion to the Catholic faith. I was the second of ten children in our family and descended from a family of nine children on my mother's side of the family and eight children on my father's side of the family. One consistent, strong, and common element within my family was the passing on of the Catholic faith tradition by my parents. This was manifested by attending weekly Mass, praying the rosary as a family, attending 12 years of Catholic school, and publicly witnessing to the faith in various ways.

As early as third or fourth grade, I felt that God was calling me to the priesthood. One way that this was evident was that my brothers and I would "play Mass" using my mother's hamper as the altar, a table covering as a vestment, and bread and grape juice for the bread and wine.

This feeling continued for me throughout my elementary school years and early high school years when I had become an altar server in our parish as well as working in the office of the parish rectory, throughout high school, for 25 hours a week.

However my discernment of the call to the priesthood became dormant as a sophomore in high school when I discovered "girls." At this point in my life, thoughts of the priesthood were replaced by dating and dances, by playing sports and spending time with my friends, and during and after college focusing on a career and what I thought was a vocation to marriage. I dated throughout the rest of high school, college, and after college, even at one point coming close to getting engaged but in the end not finding the "right girl."

I had been enjoying a successful career as a branch manager for an international financial services company when a distinct shift in my vocational journey began to take shape at the age of 35. In April of 1989, I visited my younger brother, who was studying in Rome as a religious with the Servants of Charity. The purpose of my visit was to attend his

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perpetual profession as a Servant of Charity. I stayed at the International Theological Seminary of the Servants of Charity, visited the city of Rome, and thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the Servants of Charity. It was upon my return trip to the States, while on the airplane, that a very clear feeling came to me – God was calling me to the priesthood.

When I arrived back in the States, I began to speak with a number of priest friends about what I discerned as a call to priesthood. This discernment led to me to applying and being accepted to attend St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in September of 1990 as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of



Philadelphia. But apparently God was not finished in directing my journey. During my second year in the seminary, I attended a Spirituality Year: a year free of academic commitments that gave me time to grow in my relationship with God. It was during this year that I discerned that I was being called to join the Servants of Charity and I did so in August of 1992. I then finished my theological studies at St. Charles Seminary, professed perpetual vows on May 4, 1997 and I was ordained as a priest of the Servants of Charity on November 22, 1997.

My vocational journey was less than a straight line but we also know that God makes straight the crooked lines. Looking back on my life, I am convinced that the path that led me to the blessing of being a religious priest of the Servants of Charity was one that God fully intended for me – in having me be a part of a family with a great devotion to the Catholic faith; the friends and relationships that were a part of my life; the educational and career experiences that were on this vocational path; my continuing to live out my vocation in being shaped by my religious community, prayer life and the ministries of the Servants of Charity; in bringing me to where I am in my life today. As we are all called to holiness, I see also that God has directed me in this way so as to pursue the path to holiness as a priest of the Servants of Charity. For this I am deeply thankful to God.

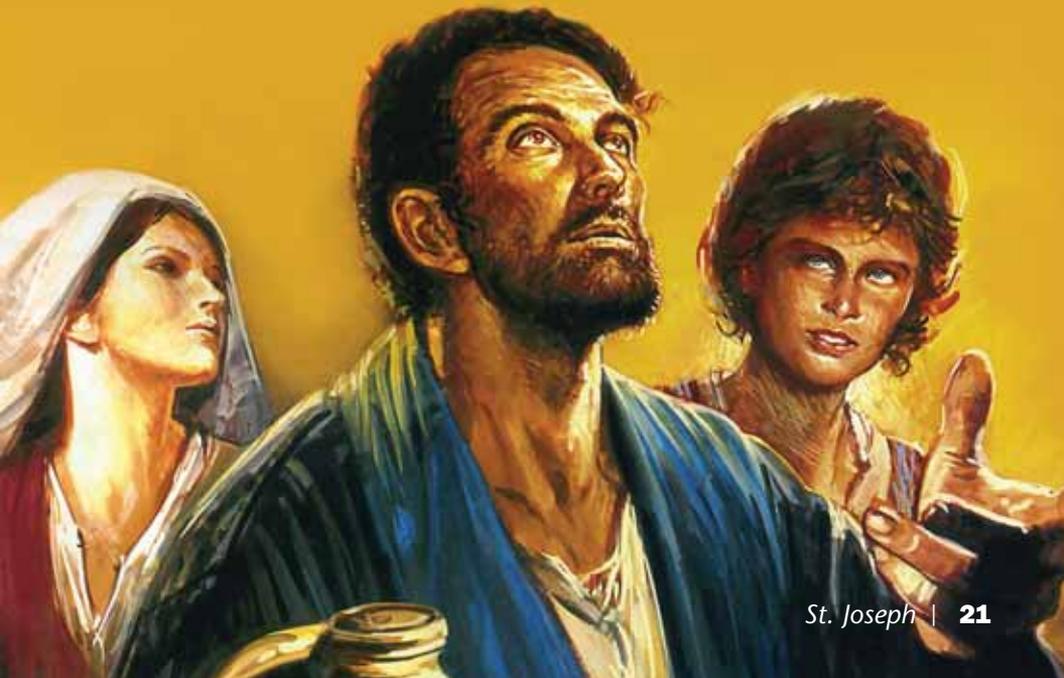


ST. JOSEPH, MODEL AND EXAMPLE OF PARENTS

BY FR. TARCISIO STRAMARE

Among the mysteries of the hidden life of Jesus, where St. Joseph “ministered” as a humble servant, Pope John Paul II reflects upon Jesus advancing “in wisdom and in stature, and favor before God and man” (Lk 2, 52). Number 16 of the Apostolic Exhortation “Guardian of the Redeemer” is introduced by the title “The Support and Education of Jesus of Nazareth.” The advancing of Jesus “in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man” took place within the Holy Family under the careful and loving eyes of Joseph, who had the important task of “raising” Jesus, that is, feeding, clothing, and educating Him in the Law and in a trade, in keeping with the duties of a father.

For his part, Jesus “was obedient to them,” (Lk 2, 51) respectfully returning the affection of his “parents.” In this way He wished to sanctify the obligation of family and work, which he performed at Joseph’s side.



From the scarcity of information that the Gospel offers, it is hard to know how Mary and Joseph formed the child Jesus while he grew up. Together with Joseph, Mary introduced Jesus to the rites and statutes of the Law of Moses, praying the Psalms and teaching the history of Israel, the people of the Covenant with God. Jesus learned from Mary and Joseph to attend the Sabbath services at the local synagogue and to travel once a year to the Temple of Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

Mary and Joseph have become the model and example of good parents, teachers, catechists, and all those who attend to the formation and education of children. We should never undervalue St. Joseph as a true parent, teacher and catechist to Jesus.

Origen, a Father of the Church, affirms that the Holy Spirit honored St. Joseph by giving him the title of “father” because of his dedication to helping Jesus grow up as a good, respectful and God-fearing young man.

St. Thomas Aquinas collects in his “*Catena Aurea*” this and other quotes of Origen, and develops the idea in other works he would write later on. He recognizes that St. Joseph, though not the physical parent of Jesus, merits the name of “father” because he faithfully performed all the functions proper to fathers. To Aquinas, a father is not only the man that generates a new life, but also the one who educates and forms his children, helping them to grow up well. Children are not cherished goods solely because they are generated through marriage, but because within a marriage they are welcome, educated and formed to love God and neighbor. He further specifies that the marriage between Mary and Joseph was planned by God as the place, the family where His divine Child was to be welcomed, educated and formed.

Forming children is as important today as it was yesterday and in this way, the mission of St. Joseph goes beyond being the guardian or custodian of Jesus. As a member of the Holy Family, he is not just a mere external presence that God used to provide food for the table. He was not even chosen to be the “bodyguard” of Jesus, to take care that no danger may have threatened Him. On the contrary, St. Joseph had an immensely positive influence on Jesus, as a father should have in a normal family, in a relationship between son and dad.

Keep in mind that, over the centuries, St. Joseph was selected as a model by those who were seriously seeking perfection. He became their teacher in the spiritual life, a guide to growing in holiness as he is today, and the model of parents and educators who choose him as their special Patron Saint.



The Mercy Connection

By KATE ERNSTING



How do God's works of mercy manage to call together those who have a stark need with the very people who can fill that need, even across countries, languages and cultures?

Sometimes the simplest of connections can be the bridge.

For Dr. Dan Heffernan, founder of Hope Clinic International (HCI) serving the poorest of the poor in Nicaragua, the connection was his grandchildren's pediatrician.

Dan was working for an American company, and Dr. Jaime Rodriguez was their family pediatrician. The younger Heffernans learned from Rodriguez about the desperate needs for medical care among the children he serves in a rural area about 90 miles from Managua.

"You know, Dad, we've got to do something to help these people," Heffernan Jr. told his father, who responded by flying to Nicaragua. After meeting the Nicaraguan doctor and seeing his work, Dr. Heffernan said he was determined to get him more help.

During that first trip, they visited a government hospital. "These types of hospitals are intended for the poor, and down there that means poor. The big thrill for them was getting a fan to give relief from the heat in the overcrowded, understaffed and under-tooled hospital."

Dr. Heffernan was eager to make another trip and begin planning ways to expand the mission to Nicaragua. He was familiar with what it took as founder of a clinic serving the indigent in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The Michigan clinic started sending medical supplies to Nicaragua, but the biggest need in that country was still unmet.

“In some of the poorest areas, there is much intermarriage, causing many birth defects,” explained Heffernan. “Dr. Rodriguez said what he needed most were surgeons....”

Expanding into another country required many more connections. More volunteer medical personnel were needed, particularly pediatricians and pediatric surgeons. Also needed were facilities, translators, and Nicaraguans who could help people coming from the U.S. to connect with the children and mothers needing special care.

Dr. Heffernan found Sherry Snyder, a nurse, to take on the task of planning the first medical mission trip in January of 2001. Pediatric surgeon Joseph Lelli, now of Detroit Children’s hospital, and Ann Arbor pediatrician Dave Thorrez led the effort. Hope Clinic International now sends three medical missions and one surgical mission a year.

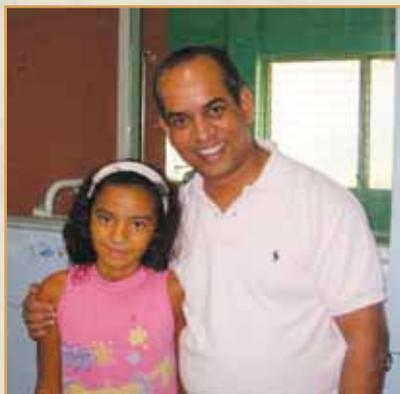
Dr. Lelli was the key, helping children with a rare birth defect that has a very high incidence in Nicaragua. A rare inborn abnormality is characterized by the absence of a rectal opening and can be corrected with surgery. These “poor children do not have access to a trained surgeon or a hospital,” Sherry Snyder explained.

Bringing in these surgeons can be life-changing. Snyder told the story of one of the first patients, a 7-year-old girl with an intestinal defect who wasn’t expected to live. “She was emaciated, lying down, very weak. Dr. Lelli did the surgery, which took 12 hours, at the nearest hospital in Managua. I saw her on a recent trip and she’s fine and living a normal life.”



Another patient is 2-year-old Sylvia, the granddaughter of one of the local volunteers. “Her grandfather told us she would have to go to Costa Rica to have the operation, and there was no way he could possibly afford either the trip or the operation.” Snyder said that after the surgical mission team operated, she is happy, healthy, and “you couldn’t tell she ever had the condition.”

A month after his first mission trip, Michigan pediatrician Dr. Roger Anderberg's son Timothy, a recent college graduate, was killed in a car accident. In memory of their son, Roger and his wife Lorrie established a medical clinic in his name in the Nicaraguan town of Estelí. Tim's clinic is staffed by a full-time physician.



Hope made a local connection with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which now helps organize the HCI missions. The Society helped them locate areas where they could do the most good, in the towns of Jinotega and Estelí and now all of the native Nicaraguans in the Society volunteer at the clinic and help with the missions, Snyder said.

For the medical missions, many other American pediatricians assist from the Ann Arbor-Detroit area, including Dr. Steve Park, who often finds volunteers among the residents he supervises at the University of Michigan.

Today a Nicaraguan surgeon is part of the mission. He has been trained in a laparoscopic surgery technique used by Dr. Lelli. The team brought a laparoscopic tower last year and left it for the doctor to use.

Through her sister, Snyder learned of a team of California firefighters who became volunteers too. "I knew they would be invaluable because they were all Emergency Medical Technicians. Each team of 14-18 people needs 5-6 translators. In California many EMTs speak fluent Spanish. So we filled two big needs with one connection!"

In the economy of God's mercy, charity begins at home but when hearts are willing, it certainly doesn't end there.

For more information contact Sherry Snyder at SSnyder@hopeclinicinternational.org



When Suffering, Trust God

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SdC

Christian tradition has seen suffering and voluntary works of self-denial as a way of imitating Christ's love. In the Old Testament, suffering was seen as an evil traced to Adam's sin and God's punishment for collective or personal sin. In the Gospels, however, the suffering of Jesus is presented as necessary for the Redemption of man. The Christian is, in a sense, the prolongation of the presence of Jesus in space and time, and as such, he must continue Jesus' action in his own life. Christ died for all men because He loves all men. Christians must continue this loving suffering and mortification for their brothers and sisters in Christ.

The example of Jesus is clear. He offered his life and suffering for others that they might become pleasing to God. The Christian has an essential mission, as a member of Christ's body, to continue Jesus' work. This is a deep mystery, subject to inexhaustible meditation, that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances, which the members of the Mystical Body offer for this intention.

Like Christ, his disciples will be persecuted. Following Christ, they must deny themselves. They must learn to suffer unjustly for Christ's sake.

Yet man's present suffering cannot be compared with his future glory in heaven.

On March 19, 2009, the feast of St. Joseph, Patron of the suffering and dying, Pope Benedict XVI, in a visit to Cameroon, Africa, wanted to share the suffering of a group of handicapped at the Cardinal Emile Leger Center. The Center is an initiative of Cardinal Leger who, after the Second Vatican Council, resigned his assignment as Archbishop of Montreal, Canada, in order to spend the rest of his life in a simple bungalow in the city of Yaounde. There he built a center of hope for handicapped children.

The Holy Father had seen so much poverty and so much suffering in Africa that he was compelled to speak about suffering and the meaning of sacrifice in our life. Benedict XVI said that although many doubt God's presence in their lives when facing suffering, it's actually the best time to entrust oneself to him. During the Pope's meeting with sick people he assured those present, "You are not alone in your pain, for Christ himself is close to all who suffer."

Faced with suffering, sickness and death, it is tempting to cry out in pain, as Job did, whose name means "suffering." As our condition deteriorates, our anguish increases; some are tempted to doubt whether God is present in their lives. Job, however, was conscious of God's presence; his was not a cry of rebellion, but, from the depths of his sorrow, he allowed his trust to grow (cf. Job 19; 42:2-6). His friends, like each of us when faced with the suffering of a loved one, tried to console him, but they used hollow and empty words.

In the presence of such torment, we feel powerless and we cannot find the right words. Before a brother or sister plunged into the mystery of the Cross, a respectful and compassionate silence, a prayerful presence, a gesture of tenderness and comfort, a kind look, a smile, often achieve more than many words. (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 March 2009)

The life of Jesus was a complete work of mercy. The Baltimore Catechism listed for us the works of mercy. Give food, water, clothes and shelter to the needy. Visit the sick and the imprisoned. Accompanying those who suffer, through the care and attention we offer them, we accomplish an act of charity and love that God recognizes: "I was sick, and you visited me."

As followers of Jesus, we are all committed to an active and friendly presence in hospitals, nursing homes, or in the home of senior citizens, for the comfort and spiritual support of the sick. In accordance with his promise, God will give us a just reward, and he will recompense us in heaven.



DAYS TO REMEMBER:

Servants Conclude Centennial with Special Events at the Shrine

BY JOSEPH YEKULIS

The Servants of Charity were founded on March 24, 1908, by Blessed Fr. Louis Guanella in Como, Italy, who made it his life's work to care for his "poor children" and the suffering and dying. At the end of March, the Servants of Charity held two major celebrations at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Grass Lake, MI. The first was the Feast of St. Joseph, honoring the Foster Father of Jesus, and the second was called, "A Day to Remember: Closing of the Centennial Celebration." This second celebration was held on Tuesday March 24, 2009, and witnessed by a standing room only crowd of over 100 people.

The Feast of St. Joseph is a Catholic tradition that dates back to the Middle Ages and was created to express gratitude to St. Joseph, the intercessor who answered the prayers of the people for their deliverance from famine. In Old World Sicily, the families of farmers and fishermen would build altars in their homes to honor St. Joseph and to share their bounty with those who were less fortunate. Eventually this tradition became a public event that grew into the Solemnity of St. Joseph.

This year, Holy Mass was offered by Fr. Fortunato Turati, SdC at 11:30 a.m., and was followed by an evening Rosary in which Fr. Turati offered the prayers from the devotional booklet "The Holy Cloak in Honor of St. Joseph." Following the Rosary, Fr. Turati blessed the Altar of St. Joseph that had been constructed by the St. Joseph Women's Guild and all of the food and religious articles laid on the altar by the pilgrims. The worshipers in attendance ended the evening by sharing a meal and social time together in the Holy Family Pastoral Center of the Shrine of St. Joseph.

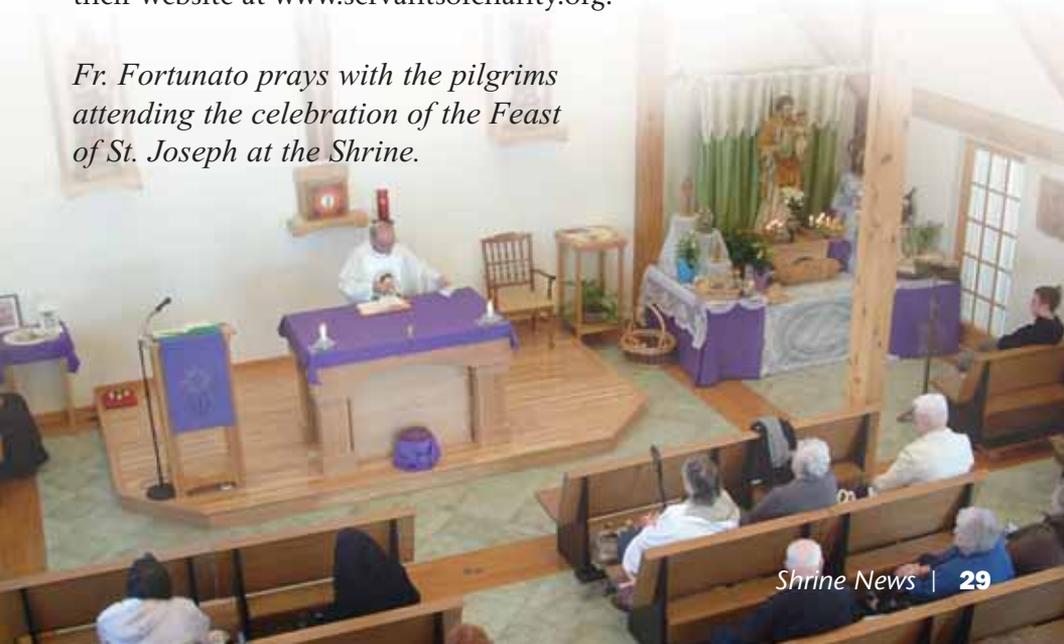
Five days later, the Servants of Charity concluded their Centennial Year with a Mass celebrated by Monsignor Steven Raica, Chancellor of the

Diocese of Lansing, and concelebrated by seven Priests of the Servants of Charity. They were Fr. Enzo Addari, Fr. Satheesh Alphonse, Fr. Paul Oggioni, Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, Fr. David Stawasz, Fr. Fortunato Turati, and Fr. Dennis Weber. Fr. Tim Krzyzaniak and Fr. Gordon Reigle were also present from the local area.

In a beautiful evening service which began with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Msgr. Raica remarked during his homily that, "When Fr. Guanella was present to his people, they felt as if Jesus was in their midst." Fr. Dennis Weber, U.S. Provincial Council Representative, concluded by thanking everyone present for their great support of the Servants of Charity in the community and said, "We're looking forward to beginning our next century of work as we enter the start of our 101st year. Hopefully our congregation will be here to celebrate our 200th Anniversary..."

The evening concluded with a potluck dinner shared with a packed house of lay people and religious who enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate the closing services for the 100th Anniversary of the Servants of Charity. Participants in the afterglow included members of the Pious Union Pastoral Council, the St. Louis Center Community Advisory Council, and members of the Guanellian Lay Movement in Michigan. The event also served as a homecoming of sorts for Fr. Paul Oggioni, who is now serving the Servants of Charity in Springfield, PA. Several families from the local Hispanic community turned out for the services and potluck dinner for the opportunity to visit with Fr. Paul. For more information on the Servants of Charity and their ministry, please visit their website at www.servantsofcharity.org.

Fr. Fortunato prays with the pilgrims attending the celebration of the Feast of St. Joseph at the Shrine.





Dear Father,

I received the literature that you sent including the medal and prayer cards to our beloved St. Joseph.

I want to think that I am special to St. Joseph but I realize my love and devotion to Our Great Saint is mediocre at best knowing of saints and people who have gone before me. But I want to be accepted by St. Joseph as my predecessors have been.

It seems appropriate that just today I will offer my whole day to Jesus through St. Joseph, the slow mundane living routine of a retirement home. I have plenty of time for prayer and sacrifice. It is as if St. Joseph were saying directly to me, "Yes, I accept you." This is so thrilling to actually hear Joseph whispering into my ear, "I love you and accept you."

Thank you Father for all the literature and cards you sent to me. I was wondering if Joseph had rejected me and later, when the mail arrived – there he was.

Thank you so much Father. I will enjoy the privilege of being a Friend of St. Joseph and Blessed Louis Guanella.

Ite ad Joseph,
A Religious Brother from Massachusetts

Dear Father,

The Peace of our Risen Jesus be with you. The articles in your magazine are inspiring and the pictures of St. Joseph are beautiful. He is our patron saint, after Our Blessed Mother. During World War II the freezer at one of our boarding schools broke down and the Superior was unable to hire a repairman. The cook, Sister Martha, had an enormous devotion to St. Joseph and she implored him most fervently. After the noon meal, the kitchen doorbell rang. It was a repairman with his tool bag. He fixed the freezer and said goodbye. When Sister Martha went to thank the Superior she subsequently telephoned every company that she had contacted. Each response was the same: "we had no repairman to send you." Good, St. Joseph always helps us.

With gratitude in the
awesome love of God,
Sister Norma

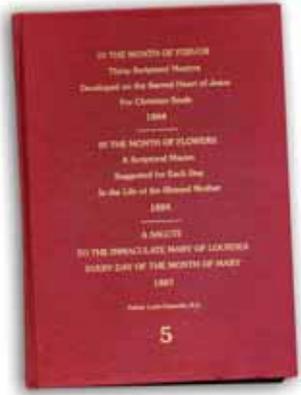




In the Month of Fervor

I hope you enjoyed *In the Month of Flowers*, a book written by Blessed Louis Guanella in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the same collection of his writings is another astonishing masterpiece entitled *In the Month of Fervor*, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

For each day of the month of June, there is a meditation, an anecdote, a prayer and a reflection with a personal resolution. However, these meditations are a lot more than good inspirations. To understand the loving Heart of Jesus it takes another loving heart: the heart of a saint.



Blessed Louis Guanella penetrates the heart of Jesus beginning from the moment Jesus' heart started beating in unison with the Heart of Mary His Mother, to every single episode of His life: the Heart of Jesus during His Baptism; the Heart of Jesus at His Transfiguration; the Heart of Jesus at the Last Supper and at the Garden of Olives; the Heart of Jesus on the Cross, in the tomb and at His Resurrection; and the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist.

This book is a dialog between the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Blessed Louis Guanella. It could become a dialog between our heart and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It gives you hope, it increases your love, and it may even bring you to tears.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Joseph Rinaldo

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC

In the Month of Fervor is available through the Pious Union of St. Joseph office. Send your request and a donation to The Pious Union of St. Joseph, 953 E. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake, MI 49240.

Call the office at 517-522-8017 for more information or for purchasing quantities of more than ten copies.

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 **Guanellian Lay Movement** 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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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

Benediction: Wed 4:45 p.m. • **Divine Mercy:** 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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