

The Voice of Providence

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JUNE-JULY 2011



Feature: Fr. Louis Guanella: Saint of The Eucharist – page 12

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Oh Father! Oh Mother!

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*Ó 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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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 espe-
cially 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.



Happy Father's Day

REFLECTION BY FR JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

I am seventy years old. What have all these years made of me? A lot. One thing that I am most conscious of is this: seventy years of experiencing life's ups and downs have changed my naïve view that all in life is well. As a child, I felt and thought that life was well as long as mother or father were around. The presence of my father was for me an assurance that everything was taken care of. I could play, eat, go to school and sleep.

Papa and Mama looked after me and provided for all things. As an adult and a Priest on my annual home visits, I found my aging parents progressively weaker and sickly. I wondered how they were able to make everything go so well. I started worrying about them. When my father died I felt terribly alone. My mother was suffering from Alzheimer's and eventually went to God as well. My life changed; above all I have changed. I am no longer a child before whose eyes father is a big loving super person. I discovered another Father, God the Father of Jesus and my Father as well.

Our natural fathers are a reflection of our heavenly Father. As children we form our early concept of God modeled after our fathers' words and deeds.

Just 70 percent of American children grow up with both parents, worse than the developed world's average of 84 percent. Fatherhood is experiencing a major crisis in our families and many children grow up without role models, guidance or security.

In the Church's tradition the Father is the spiritual Leader of the family, while the mother is the Custodian of the family's holiness. A child can have a social father or other relatives who offer him security and guidance but a surrogate father can only go so far, especially in the many households where the children belong to different fathers. It seems that many fathers have given up their role as leaders and providers. When the father is absent, the families suffer and the children are disoriented and almost aimless.



Benedict XVI said, "The big problem of our times is not the strength of the enemy, it's the apathy of the good people." While St. Peter slept, Judas was working. When the fathers renounce their role of spiritual leadership the children are left exposed to the lure of the world. Our faith and its values are assaulted. The enemies of the Church are working on a trend that eliminates the presence of God within a living community.

If we believe in God, we have to practice the art of looking at everything with the eyes, the heart and the mind of children. We have to see ourselves as small, and we have to see God as the "Big One," who takes care of all things in a manner far more than we



can imagine. Like little children, we should let God do the worrying. We should trust that with Him, life may go on well. God is more than a Creator, God is also a Provider. More importantly for Jesus, God is the "heavenly Father." He is heavenly not only because He dwells in the heavens, but because God as Father is far more perfect than any earthly father in His power to provide and to be compassionate. We thank God for being our Father in Heaven. We

thank St. Joseph for being Jesus' father. We must also thank our own earthly fathers and mothers. Their unselfish and "magical" ways enable us to say, "All can be well because once upon a time, this was so. Life was worry free since we believed that Papa and Mama were bigger than any concerns that were there."

Happy Father's Day, God! Happy Father's Day St. Joseph! Happy Father's day, Dad!



Shrine News

BY SR. MARGARET MARY SCHISLER, DSMP

As we begin the month of June my immediate thoughts go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Naturally, because I am a “Margaret Mary,” I have had special devotion to the Sacred Heart since I was young. Reading the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque brought me to love the Sacred Heart in a special way. Blessed John Paul II shared in his Angelus message on June 24, 2002 in St. Peter’s ... “The month of June is singled out, in a particular way, for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To celebrate the Heart of Christ means to turn toward the profound center of the Person of the Savior, that center which the Bible identifies precisely as his Heart, seat of the love that has redeemed the world.

“If the human heart represents an unfathomable mystery that only God knows, how much more sublime is the heart of Jesus, in which the life of the Word itself beats. In it, as suggested by the beautiful Litanies of the Sacred Heart that echo the Scriptures, are found all the treasures of wisdom and science and the fullness of divinity. How necessary for contemporary humanity is the message that flows from contemplation of the heart of Christ. Where, indeed, if not from this source will it be able to attain the reserves of meekness and forgiveness necessary to heal the bitter conflicts that bloody it?”

As members of the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph, we unite ourselves in prayer and ask for the intercession of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for all the needs we have in our hearts. St. Joseph, who was the closest man to Jesus, entrusted all his cares to Him, trusting in His Providential care.

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Share copies of the Voice of Providence	\$1.50 each

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Canonization by spreading devotion to our dear St. Joseph.*

*Please use the envelope in the center of the magazine to
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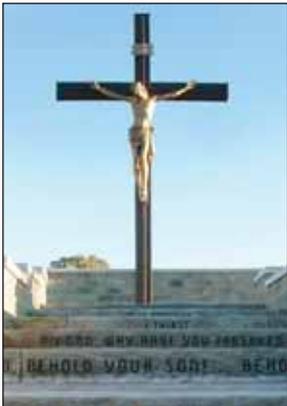


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- Dedicate a tile near the Calvary \$250
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- Dedicate a leaf on the Tree of Remembrance in the Shrine \$500

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Send email to piousunion@pusj.org.

St. Joseph Protecting and Inspiring

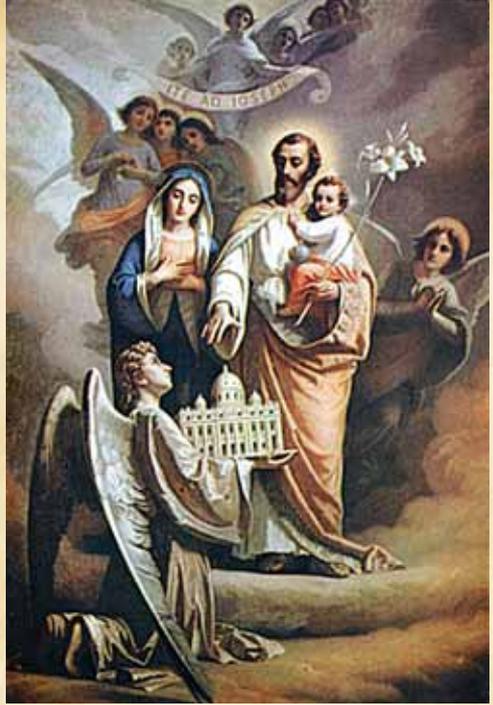
BY BLESSED LOUIS GUANELLA

This article was written by Bl. Louis Guanella, who will be canonized on October 23, 2011.

The words of the future Saint, the Founder of the Servants of Charity, the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence and the Pious Union of St. Joseph, were published in the Bulletin of his religious family, *La Divina Provvidenza*, more than a century ago in March 1900.

Pope Pius IX, wished to expand the devotion to St. Joseph among the people of God and declared the Spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, Patriarch and Patron of the Universal Church. The Holy Father Leo XIII, continued the trend of his

Predecessor and proclaimed St. Joseph, Patron, *not only of Christian Families, but also of all religious Houses.* With this eminent act of wisdom and piety, the Vicar of Christ glorified the Patriarch and Head of the Holy Family, recognizing in him the dignified authority that he exercised over Mary and over the Son of Mary and Son of God. At the same time, from his privileged position, St. Joseph secured his most powerful protection for all the families and for all the charitable institutions that were not born from any blood relationship but out of charity. Without divine help they would pitifully fall into ruin.



Pope Pius IX, wished to expand the devotion to St. Joseph among the people of God and declared the Spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, Patriarch and Patron of the Universal Church.

May the protection of St. Joseph transform all charitable institutions and especially the various Houses of Divine Providence into welcoming hearths, beacons of light, and grant that all the virtues inspired by the shining example of the Holy Family may radiate from them.

However, God, who created man without man, does not want to save him without his cooperation, according to St. Augustine. So in order that our Houses feel the full benefit of having as their Head and Patron, the Head and Patron of the Family of Nazareth, they must show they are worthy by recognizing this very high privilege, by invoking him continuously, and making sure they do not fail to deserve it.

Let us turn with holy confidence to the glorious St. Joseph. Let us present to him our spiritual and temporal needs and not fear even for an instant that he might exercise his patronage weakly. Will he, the great Saint whom Jesus and Mary obeyed, who provided Jesus and Mary with their daily bread, be invoked in vain? No, not without a profound mystery of mercy. In this century, the figure of the glorious Patriarch stands out and shines with new light, as the Head of Christian families, as the Head of religious institutes.

Praise be to Heaven! St. Joseph, although he was of royal lineage, was very poor and by the sweat of his brow had to earn a living not for himself alone but for his Spouse and his Son, even though he was the Son of the Most High. May St. Joseph, therefore, encourage us and our poor in sorrowful trials of need and always help us to become those poor, the model so beloved by Jesus. Let us not tire of repeating it. Let us place our full trust in the Holy Family presented to us by the Holy Father as an example and comfort. When we are overcome by need or sorrow and feel wanting of a powerful voice to



intercede for us to the Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Let us turn confidently to St. Joseph and he, who so often experienced the anguish of the humiliations inherent in poverty, will make our powerful Advocate and Father hear us.

Among our residents there are many who are invalids and chronically sick. Death, the implacable executioner is a frequent visitor to our Houses. Do we not also wish in this regard to cherish the protection of St. Joseph, the powerful protector of the dying? Let us thank the Lord with open arms who has almost always given our Sisters, our Priests and our nurses the edifying example of sick people

who die resigned, even smiling, with the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph on their lips! Ah! May no one among us ever die without the comfort of St. Joseph!



“O Holy Joseph, help each and every one of our residents, especially at the hour of death; but do not forget, we implore you, our dear benefactors.

Watch over their souls and their bodies, protect their families and reward them a hundredfold for what they do for us. You know, O beloved Saint, that every day we and our residents pray to you and that we shall never cease to pray for them.

Grant us our warm prayers and grant that all who come to our aid may prosper and pour out blessings on their concerns and their families!”

The Heart of Jesus (Part 1)

BY FATHER OLIMPIO GIAMPEDRAGLIA, SDC

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is expressed and is nourished by the worship in His honor, first of all in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in Holy Communion.

The Eucharist is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the Tabernacle the Eucharistic Heart is truly and substantially present, and with the Heart His Blood, his Holy Face, the adorable Person of our Redeemer and Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason, our church is our Paradise on earth, and the Heart of Jesus adored in the tabernacle is the joy of our heart.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is not just a series of pious practices, though various and fervent, but life, because the love of God symbolized in the Heart of Jesus must inspire and inform our religious life in its entirety.

The soul of a Christian welcomes the invitation to enter into an intimate communion of dialogue and contemplation with the Heart of Christ. Father Guarella says, *“The Lord desires to speak with you more intimately. For that reason He made you hungry for the Bread that never tires us, but satisfies, strengthens, and makes us divine. For that reason He repeats: ‘Come to me!’”*

The study and the loving contemplation of the Heart of Jesus embraces all the mysteries of Christ’s life and may be understood under the light and love that comes from His Heart.



*Jesus gives us His Heart of a Father; like children,
we consecrate to Him our small heart.*

In contemplating the Mysteries of Christ, a soul opens to an atmosphere of wonderful familiarity with the Lord. Again Father Guanella says, “Consider that a good heart of a Father is the Heart of Jesus the Savior. Know that you are pleasing Him. You are making Him happy; you are experiencing happiness; you open the house of your heart to Him.”

The soul feels seated at the table of the Lord and enriched with his many gifts because, like the Blessed Mother, a soul may become His dwelling place. The soul drinks the drops of the Precious Blood that come down from the Cross; it invokes the grace for higher perfection; it greets the Lord with great affection; converses and lives with Him, enjoying His sweet charity.

Yet, it is not enough to *contemplate* and *taste*. At the school of the mysteries of the Heart of Jesus, the soul of a Christian has to learn to practice all virtues. The Lord has to become the *mold* of his soul. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of divine mercy that is bestowed abundantly upon us. It is the august divine Heart that is offered to us, as a model of virtue, and as an example of love toward God and neighbor. He is our strength and comfort in our weakness. The qualities of the Divine Heart of Jesus, when well practiced, form the best way to reach perfection.



Holiness is to go and nourish ourselves in the life of the Heart of Jesus Christ. There are many “nourishments,” but the best and most necessary is the Eucharist. Let us strive as much as possible to make ours the life of the Eucharistic Sacred Heart.

Father Guanella invoked the Heart of Jesus with many titles. However, the true title that he most attributed to the Heart of Jesus was “fatherly.” *“The Heart of Jesus is a Heart of a Father;”* *“The Heart of Jesus is the Heart of an extremely good Father;”* *“O Lord and Father, I adore you and I give you glory.”*

The devotion to the Heart of Jesus consists therefore in a vital exchange.

Jesus gives us His Heart of a Father; like children, we consecrate to Him our small heart.

This admirable exchange is the secret of sanctity for every Christian and for every family. The Lord Jesus is a Father so generous that He gives his Heart to those poor creatures who, in their turn, offer Him their poor hearts.

The Heart of Jesus, revelation of the Father, is one with the Father. By nourishing us with His love, He leads us back to the Father, who is the primary source of every good. Any time that we pray to the Lord, we should fix our eyes on Jesus and beg Him to lead us to the Father. When we lean on Jesus’ arm, we will progress faster; and when we arrive at the right hand of the Most High, we will be received joyfully by the Eternal Father. With the same confidence of the beloved Son, we will then have the opportunity to talk to God, and obtain from Him whatever is good for our soul, including all those divine graces that are necessary to bring us runaway children back to the Father.



Father Louis Guanella

Saint of the Eucharist (Part 1)

By FR. DOMINIC SAGINARIO, SdC



As you may know, Blessed Louis Guanella will be declared Saint by Pope Benedict XVI on October 23, 2011, during a solemn ceremony, called *Canonization*.

Blessed Louis Guanella is known in the Church as *Father of the Poor*. With an extraordinary sensitivity he searched for them, loved them with a human and evangelical spirit. He dedicated his life and his priesthood to them becoming their father and brother. In a special way he brought them hope and dignity. He was proclaimed Blessed by Paul VI and was presented as a model Christian, priest and apostle for our times.

Now he will be proclaimed a Saint, next the great figures of Mother Theresa, John Paul II, Padre Pio and Chiara Lubich. Why? Without doubt because of the balanced beauty of his life, entwined in the Gospel, the filial love of God and a creative dedication to the poor. Most of all he will be proclaimed for his courage and imagination exercised in spreading around him the strong message of Jesus, “Love one another as I have loved you.”

However I would like to open a little window into his personal holiness, that is, his vital connection to the Eucharist. Now I present the development history; in Part II, I will highlight a very interesting aspect of his Eucharistic spirituality.

Father Louis’ vocation to the priesthood blossomed at his First Communion. He prepared himself extremely well with the help of his mother and his pastor. The day was April 8, 1852, Holy Thursday. He was nine years old. The First Holy Communion for him was like sitting at the Last Supper with Jesus, among the Apostles. Back home, he withdrew alone by his grandparents’ barn on the hill of Gualdera. Deep in prayer,



View of the altar in the church at Prosto, the location where he celebrated his first mass.

Left: A statue in Gualdera depicts Father Guanella’s encounter with the Virgin Mary.



The church at Prosto, a compass of faith in the mountains.

he encountered the Virgin Mary with his eyes and heard her voice with his ears, unforgettable moments of ecstasy. For a long time he cherished this feeling of presence and prayer. From that time on, he started to dwell on an idea as beautiful as it was hard to realize. One day, he went to meet his father who was coming down from the mountains and, armed with confidence and humility, told him, “Dad, I want to become a priest!” His father was very touched, loved him more and helped him the best he could.

He was ordained a priest on May 26, 1866, a day full of grace and drama. The city of Como was under rebels’ agitation. During the Ordination ceremony in a small chapel, instead of the traditional organ and choir, they kept hearing guns and the bedlam of violent insurgents.

The Bishop of Como was not permitted by the government to take his post and the Bishop who ordained him was a persecuted Bishop from South Italy, who was imprisoned and sent to Como under house arrest. All that got impressed in his soul like a prophecy. The newly ordained Father Guanella celebrated his First Mass in the small town of Prosto where he would be assigned as Assistant Pastor. It was Corpus Christi Day, the Eucharistic day par excellence. The whole town, his relatives and all the priests of the valley were there. He celebrated, shed tears of joy and from then on, the Eucharist became the center of his life. He understood and firmly believed that everything sprang from and returned to the mystery of the Eucharist.

And so, before teaching catechism to the children, he stopped in church first. He did the same thing before conferences for young adults or evening classes for adults. The focus was always Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament. Every morning after Mass, he brought communion to the sick. Every day he visited families. He had a special preference for those families who had a handicapped or an elderly relative in the house.

On leaving and coming back, he always paid a visit to the tabernacle. He always closed his day with a short visit to the Bread of Life.

Anytime he walked up to his mountains he kept an eye on the church bell tower. It was a habit he acquired since he was a child leading the flock. The bell tower was a compass of faith and direction. Later on during his many travels from one foundation to another, the sight of a bell tower called him to prayer. It was protection and connection at the same time.

While visiting the United States, he was a guest of the Scalabrinian fathers in Boston, Massachusetts. On Christmas day of 1912, the Masses began at 4:00 a.m. and continued to midday. Father Guanella had no other commitments and attended all the Masses, happy to honor the birth of the Baby Jesus.

His bedroom in Como had a little window that permitted him to see the altar of the Sacred Heart Shrine and he spent several hours kneeling by that window. The expressions he used for the Eucharist are full of faith and love, “*Sun of the world;*” “*life of the world;*” “*our paradise on earth;*” “*mystery of love;*” “*spring of divine love.*” All foundations were not finished unless they had the Eucharist in the House.

This is the message Father Guanella spontaneously gave on the 25th anniversary of his ordination, “I have assisted souls for the last 25 years and my experience taught me to recognize the incredible effectiveness of the most holy Eucharist in protecting, fortifying, animating and, in one word, sanctifying all who approach the holy Eucharist with faith, purity and devotion.”



Fr. Guanella with the Scalabrinian priests in Boston 1912.







OCTOBER 23, 2011

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

Blessed Louis Guanella will be proclaimed a Saint in a solemn ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI.

This day will be remembered forever by the great Guanellian family spread all over the world. In a special way it will be remembered by the thousands of Pilgrims from all corners of the world, who will gather in Rome to be part of a lifetime event.

The significance of this event is great for all believers who follow the word of Jesus, "Love one another as I have loved you," and, "Anytime you did it to any of my little ones, you did it to me."

The recognition of Blessed Louis Guanella's holiness is the recognition that the Church assigns to the works of charity each one of us performs to help our brothers and sisters in need.

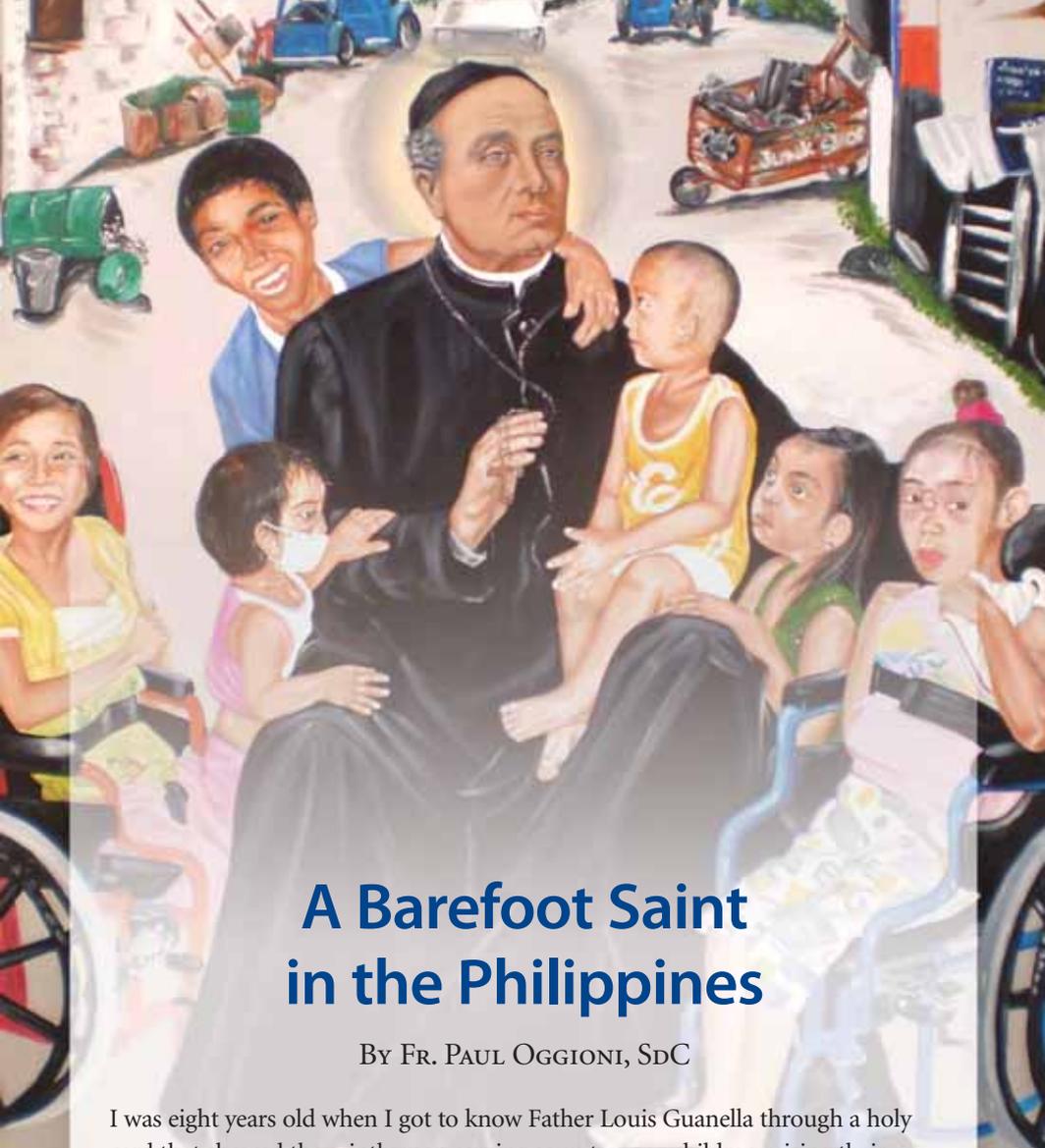
Benedict XVI says that, "Today's men pay more attention to witnesses than to preachers, unless the preachers are also witnesses." Blessed Louis Guanella was a preacher, but most of all he was a witness of the Love of God for all, especially the poor. For this reason he will be proclaimed a Saint; a Saint who was flying on two wings, "Prayer and suffering."

We are organizing a pilgrimage to Rome for Blessed Louis Guanella's Canonization. A longer itinerary from October 17th to October 27th, 2011, will focus on the Canonization, the Rome area, a visit to Fr. Guanella's birthplace and Como, the cradle of the Guanellian Foundations.

A shorter itinerary from October 20th to October 27th, 2011 will focus on the Canonization and the Rome area.

If you are interested and would like more information, call the Pious Union of St Joseph at 517-522-8017 or send email to piousunion@pusj.org

If you reach our answering machine, please leave your name and phone number. It is important to speak slowly and clearly when leaving a message. We will call you as soon as we return.



A Barefoot Saint in the Philippines

BY FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SDC

I was eight years old when I got to know Father Louis Guanella through a holy card that showed the saintly man serving soup to poor children raising their bowl toward a steaming pot. I still remember the large hand of Father Guanella holding the ladle before the hungry eyes of those children. Since then that large hand has been associated, in my mind, with his big warped shoes of rough leather. Father Guanella did not follow trends. God had called him to hurry through the roads of a selfish world in search of as many destitute and rejected people as he could. He wanted to offer them “Bread and the Lord,” relief to their afflicted bodies and hope to their mortified spirits.



By reading Father Guanella's writing, I understood the reason of his being always on the run. Looking at him, I saw his wide forehead, his strong hands, his warped shoes, his searching eyes almost on the lookout for more miseries to relieve and ready to spring to assist.

God called me to be a Guanellian. I have worked for many years in the Guanellian missions of Paraguay and the Philippines. I have helped in Africa and India and now I offer my energies in the United States for the migrants from Central and South America.

One saying of Father Guanella that impresses me is, "We have to walk in the shoes of the poor," similar to the Native American expression, "We have to walk in people's moccasins for seven moons before we can understand them."

However, for Father Guanella, this was not just an expression; it was a way of life. We have to give up something, which is often difficult, to feel that we are walking in the shoes of the poor or wearing their clothes.

Last month I went back to the Philippines and a magnificent sight was before me that made me understand what the Guanellian Mission means in cultural contexts different from its Italian origins. It is reaching the extreme borders of human poverty and rejection. As I entered the new facility for children and adults with disabilities located on the outskirts of Manila, I was surrounded by a cheering group of youngsters expressing their happiness for the new house, full of light and color. They were grateful because they feel loved and supported in their limitation with which nature has marked on their body and mind.

I understood their joy better when I saw a large painting of Father Guanella surrounded by handicapped children, modeled after the residents. The children are barefoot but happy and smiling because they feel loved and protected.



However, what touched me most was the figure of Father Guanella himself. He had the same wide forehead, the same large, strong and protecting hands, the same searching eyes for the poor to assist and the souls to cure, but he had bare feet. The artist had captured the heart of Father Guanella and understood what it meant to “Walk in the shoes of the poor.” In the Philippines, as well as in India, Africa and Latin America the poor have no shoes. They walk on boiling sand, on mud, on garbage without any protection. Even the simplest footwear is too expensive for them. You see them scavenging the piles of refuse looking for food. They approach the tourist with the international sign of hunger by pointing to the mouth with their joined fingers. They wear oversized pants and brightly colored t-shirts.

Father Guanella has never been in these places, but if he had, he would have walked there barefooted like the poor. The poor, who understood the heart of Father Guanella, removed his shoes and now he is one of them. The Servants of Charity continue the work of their Founder, soon St. Louis Guanella. We will be grateful to you if you can help us to carry on his work and his dreams.



The Feast Day of St. John the Baptist in Malta

BY JOSEPH YEKULIS

What are Feast Days, and why do we celebrate them? The traditions of Feast Days go back to ancient times, and were recorded in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 16:15-17 states, “Seven days shall you keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in a place which the Lord shall choose, because the Lord thy God shall bless you in all your produce, and in all the increase of the works of your hands, therefore you shall surely rejoice. Three times in a year, all your men shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the feast of Weeks, and in the feast of Shelters: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he has given you.”

Through scripture, God’s expectations for man are twofold. The first is to acknowledge and thank God the Father as our Lord, Creator, Redeemer and Provider. The second is to enjoy life and share what we have with each other in a festive way. As Christianity spread throughout Europe and the rest of the world, the Old Testament tradition of celebrating Feast Days merged into the New Testament traditions of Christianity, and the Catholic Church created Feast Days to honor the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary and its saints.

The Islands of Malta are located in the Mediterranean Sea between Sicily and North Africa, with a population of 370,000 people. The two main islands are Malta and Gozo, and their history can be traced back thousands of years. Due to their strategic location between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, they have been occupied though the ages



Statue of Elizabeth and son John the Baptist



Center statue of Jesus and John the Baptist in the town square

by the Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, French, and English.

The religious traditions of Malta come from its closeness to the Catholic Church, as St. Paul was shipwrecked there during his journey by sea to Rome after leaving his two year confinement from Caesarea, (Acts 28:1-16). This three month layover occurred during the most dangerous time to travel by sea, and while there, he healed the father of the Roman Governor Publius from a severe fever. Many other people on the island who were suffering from sickness and disease were also cured, and the people were converted to Christianity.

A second major influence on the people of Malta was the Knights of St. John, a military and spiritual force that arrived in 1530 after being

driven from their original home in Rhodes. Their origins can be traced to the Christian Crusades, and they had a strong influence on Malta's development for 200 years. Made up of European noblemen who lived the lives of monks and soldiers, their objectives were, "The service of the poor and the defense of the Catholic faith."

There are 359 Catholic churches in Malta, and with a church in every village, each community celebrates the feast day of their patron saint with a great deal of pride for the glory of their saint. A typical "festa" may be witnessed in the village of Xewkija, pronounced sho-key-ah, Gozo, this year on June 26th, when the people celebrate the feast day of their patron saint, St. John the Baptist. (Actual feast day is June 24th).

The Church of St. John the Baptist has one of the largest church domes in the world. Construction on this building began in 1952 and was completed in 1973. It was built around the original 17th century church, from which



The Marching Band of Xewkija performs in the streets

many baroque artifacts can still be found in their museum. The dome of Xewkija is 75 meters high, and the church seats 4,000 people. The rotunda was built this large to compete with Xewkija's principle rival of Mosta in Malta, and was completely funded by the people of the village. Paintings from the scenes of the life of St. John the Baptist adorn the six side chapels, and the wooden statue of St. John the Baptist was carved in 1845. It is only removed from its glass case once a year during this feast day.



The fraternity of St. John the Baptist carries the statue from the Church

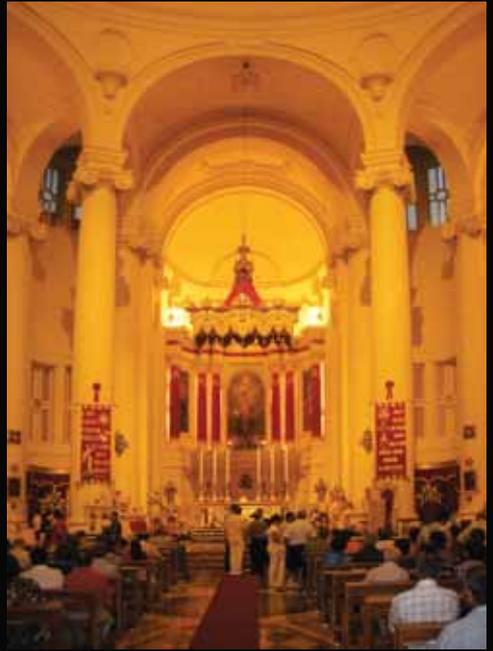
The feast day celebration begins with two masses, one in the morning and one in the evening, and the entire town will gather to await the completion of the evening Mass. The village square will be adorned with statues of important saints and banners of modern church leaders such as St. John Bosco and Pope John Paul II. As darkness falls, a marching brass band will play their music in the streets to celebrate the arrival of their patron saint. The band will march with the townspeople to the bandstand outside of the church in the village square, where opera singers will recount the life of St. John the Baptist in Italian.



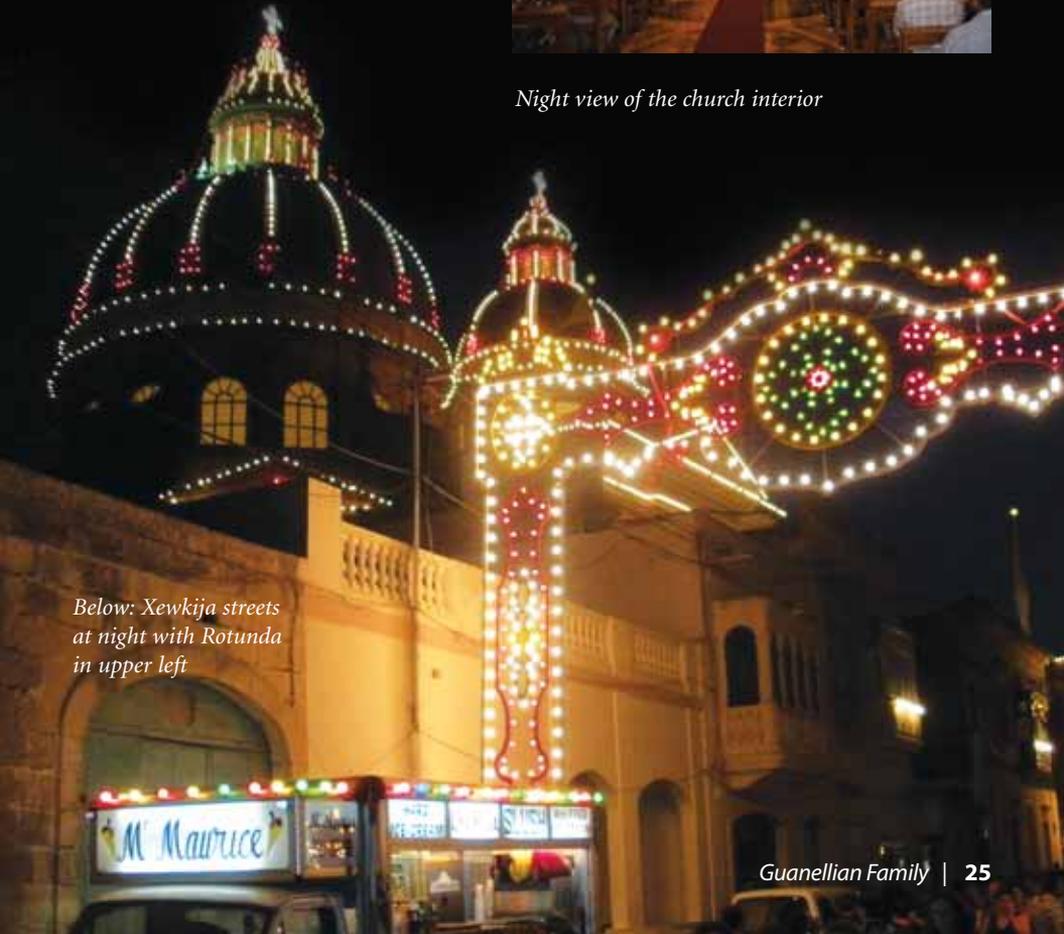
The holy procession moves into the street from the church

Streamers and confetti will fly from the roof of the church and fireworks will fill the sky, announcing the arrival of St. John the Baptist from inside the church. The Fraternity of St. John the Baptist will carry the statue from the church, and then follow a procession of priests and religious into the town.

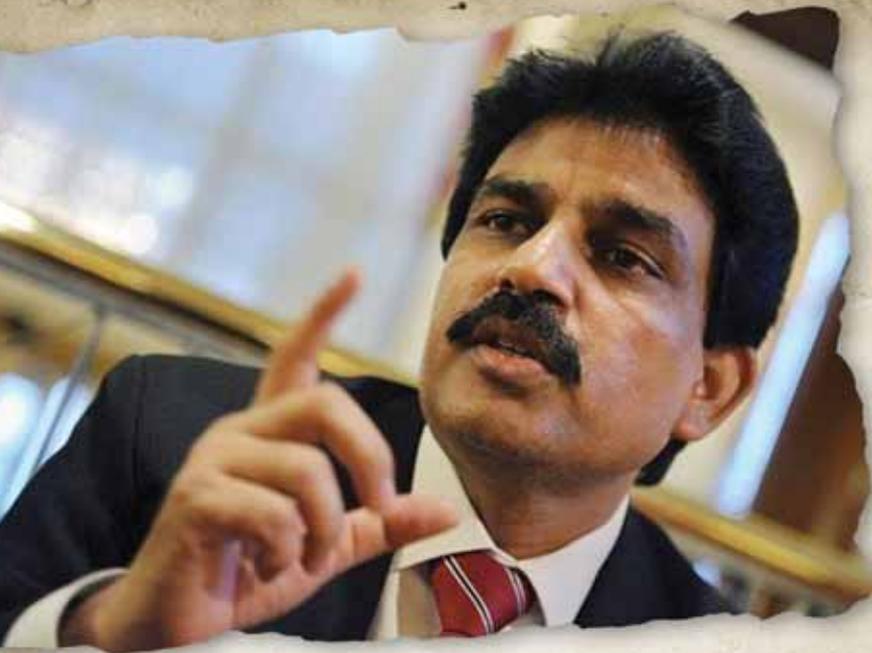
The town and the church will be colorfully illuminated by light displays stretched above the streets, and the celebration will go on into the night; carrying out the Lord's command to, "Surely rejoice."



Night view of the church interior



Below: Xewkija streets at night with Rotunda in upper left



I Want to Serve Jesus

THE TESTAMENT OF SHAHBAZ BHATTI, PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN

On March 3, 2011, Shahbaz Bhatti, Secretary for Minorities in Pakistan, was assassinated in Islamabad by twenty-two bullets fired by Taliban terrorists because he was Catholic. Thousands of people and dignitaries of all faiths attended the funeral held at the Catholic Church.

He was forty-two years old and he knew that by following his plan of reconciliation and dialogue, he put his life in danger. Therefore, he videotaped his testament where he stated, “I am ready to die for my beliefs and the cause of my Community.”

The text of his testament follows:

“I want to serve Jesus. My name is Shahbaz Bhatti. I was born in a Catholic family. My father a retired teacher, and my mother a homemaker, have raised me according to the Christian values and the teaching of the Bible both of which have influenced my childhood. Since my early years, I used to go to church where I found deep inspiration in the teaching, sacrifice and the crucifixion of Jesus. It was the Love of Jesus that induced me to offer my services to the Church. The terrifying conditions in which the Christians in Pakistan lived disturbed me immensely. I still remember when I was thirteen and on

Good Friday I listened to the homily on Jesus' sacrifice for our redemption and for the salvation of the world. I thought that I could respond to His love by loving our brothers and sisters, offering my services to all Christians, especially the poor, the needy and the persecuted who live in this Islamic state.

I have been offered high government posts, and I was asked to abandon my commitment, but I always refused, even at the risk of losing my life. My answer has always been the same: "No! I want to serve Jesus as a common man."

My commitment makes me happy. I don't want popularity; I don't want positions of power. I just want a place at Jesus' feet. I desire that my life, my character and my deeds witness for me and show that I am following Jesus Christ. This desire is so strong in my heart that I would consider it a privilege if, in my efforts and in my fight to help the needy, the poor and the persecuted Christians of Pakistan, Jesus would accept the sacrifice of my life. I want to live for Christ and for Him I want to die. I am not afraid of anything in this country.

Many times the extremists have tried to kill me and jail me. They have threatened and persecuted me; they have terrorized my family. The extremists have even told my parents to force and stop me from continuing my mission on behalf of the Christians and the needy, otherwise they would lose me. My father instead has always encouraged me.

I am determined that, as long as I live, I will continue to serve Jesus and these poor, suffering people, the Christians, the needy and the poor. I want to tell you that I find much strength in the Holy Bible and in the life of Jesus. The more I read the New and the Old Testament, each verse of the Bible and the words of Jesus, the more strength and determination I acquire.

When I ponder that Jesus sacrificed everything, that the Father has sent His only Son for our redemption and salvation, I ask myself how I can follow Him in the climb to Calvary. Our Lord had said, "Come with me, pick up your cross and follow me." The passages of the Bible I cherished most say, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me under your roof, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you did not abandon me."

When I see poor and needy people, I think that under their appearance, Jesus himself comes toward me. I always try to be helpful, together with my colleagues, to offer assistance to the needy, the hungry and the thirsty.

If we continue in this mission, we will assure a place for us at the feet of Jesus and we will look at Him without shame."

"That persecuted Christians may persevere, sustained by the Holy Spirit, in witnessing to the love of God for all, even for those who persecute them."

— *Pope Benedict XVI Monthly Prayer Intention April 2010*



New General Counsel of DSMP

BY SR. MARGARET MARY SCHISLER, DSMP

Have you ever wondered how leaders of a Religious Congregation get elected into “office?” How long is their official leadership? What traits do the sisters look for in persons they choose to guide them into their future ministries?

Every six years the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence convene a meeting which we call the “General Chapter” and in which we review our community life and ministry for the past six years, along with electing the persons who will lead the Congregation for the next six. This General Chapter is an assembly representative of the whole Congregation. It is an expression of the participation of all the Sisters in the life and mission of the Institute, as well as their co-responsibility within its government.

The sisters that participate in the General Chapter are chosen and voted upon from the various ministries around the world. Our ministries are present in 14 countries from Europe to the Philippines, India, South America as well as North America. We reach out to persons with developmental disabilities, the elderly, school children, and parishioners. Various cultures and languages are learned by many sisters because we are an international congregation that asks sisters to help in many lands other than where they were

born. Our Founder, soon to be Saint Louis Guanella, has told us, “The whole world is your country.”

In preparation, tasks are offered to all of the sisters for the purpose of analyzing how the ministry of each community has been carried out in light of the charism initiated by Blessed Louis Guanella. In performing these tasks each sister becomes a part of the Chapter. She is able to present her analysis and concerns while helping to identify the charismatic traits that are alive and lived well and those that need to be rejuvenated. We try to preserve the charism that Fr. Guanella left us which is, trust in Divine Providence and the necessity to have dignity and love for all persons. In today’s society love for every person is needed so that we can portray a culture of hope, so people may turn their cares over to the Lord and not be so down-hearted, putting their complete trust in God.

The final task of the sisters participating in the General Chapter is to elect the new government. These sisters are chosen to take the Congregation into the future with all the challenges of ministering to a changing society. Their gifts of leadership, wisdom, and understanding are called upon to guide our Congregation, serving in various ministries within many diverse cultures scattered and sown throughout the world.

The sisters chosen for the next six years to lead us into the future of our ministries are: Sr. Serena Ciserani, Superior General and Sr. Giustina Valicenti, Sr. Carla Folini, Sr. Neli Salete Bordignon, Sr. Maria Antonietta Ripamonti as her General Council. We promise our prayers, love and fidelity as these sisters guide us in our Guanellian Family.



A Dangerous Play

(The Good Father)

BY CARLO LAPUCCI

Two young students from Morbegno went to Milan in June 1912 to take the final exam of their secondary school before enrolling in a university. Having spent their elementary school at the Divine Providence House in Como, they knew Father Guanella well. When free from school, they never missed an opportunity to pay him a visit if he was visiting St. Cajetan House in Milan. Knowing that the two boys did not have any financial means, Father Guanella sometimes invited them to dinner or gave them some money for their necessities.

One Saturday evening, the two young men had the opportunity to meet Father Guanella. Excited, they told him that they could not join him for dinner because they had two tickets for a play that was being performed at a nearby theater. Its writer was Guido da Verona. At the sound of his name, Father Guanella's face darkened. That man was a no good, and Guanella cared too much for his young friends than to let them go and attend such a morally corrupt play. He decided, on the spot, to keep them away from the theater, so he took them to a restaurant located near the theater. From there, they could have easily reached their final destination once dinner was over. The two, of course, were jubilant for this attention and had a great time. Good food, good wine, and good conversation. But time was running out, and the play was supposed to begin soon.

The time was ripe, and Father Guanella found a way to advise them not to attend the play. He produced so many good reasons that the boys decided to stay and to finish their beautiful and unexpected evening with him. They continued for some time reminiscing about the golden years of their childhood, their adventures and their school under the fatherly eyes of Father Guanella. The friendship with their benefactor and father was renewed and strengthened more and more by all the memories they had in common. Late that night, they went to bed happy, and still in God's grace, ready to return to their books and exams the next day.

Author's Note: History likes to turn the tables. In 1935, the villa where Guido da Verona wrote his immoral novels and plays was purchased by the spiritual children of Father Guanella, the Servants of Charity, as their Novitiate House.

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Oh Father! Oh Mother!

Father Louis Guanella will be canonized on October 23, 2011. He will officially become a Saint. The book *Oh Father! Oh Mother!* contains the meditations Father Louis Guanella wrote in preparation or in thanksgiving for every feast day of Jesus and the Blessed Mother. The reflections of this great new saint are inspiring and touching as he penetrates the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He invites the reader to meditate on the meaning of each mystery celebrated and challenges the Christian to a higher level of spirituality.

In reading this book, I loved the mystical and sacrificial approach Blessed Louis Guanella had toward Jesus Crucified and the Sorrowful Mother.

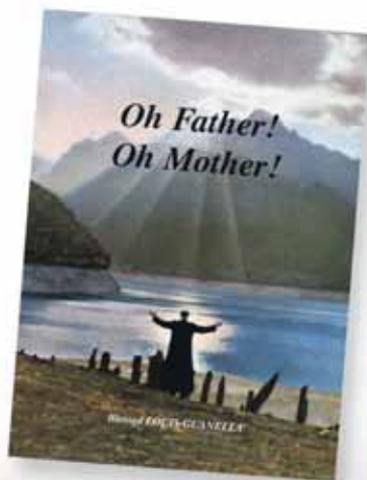
This book can help you to be a better Christian as it helped me to be a better priest.

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC



Oh Father! Oh Mother! is available through the Pious Union of St. Joseph. 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.



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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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