

NEWSBITS
OF THE
GUANELLIANS
IN THE
PHILIPPINES



The Servant of Charity

CELEBRATING LIFE AND LOVE

August 2011

Blessed John Paul II and Fr. Louis Guanella



“God’s
poor are the
favorite of
Providence”

LUIGI GUANELLA

Canonization of
Blessed Guanella
October 23, 2011
Vatican City, Rome,
Italy



Perhaps it is not just a mere coincidence that the beatification of John Paul II and the canonization of Father Guanella are taking place in the same year, just a few months apart, in the majestic solemnity of St. Peter’s square, in Rome.

The two men of God were born and grew up in different places, lived in a different time of history, received different charisms, walked different paths and played different roles in the life of the Church. Nevertheless, the Spirit of the Lord has ignited in both of them a similar fire, a common passionate love for Jesus and for His Church, a totally selfless dedication to their mission, to proclaim the truth and the sacredness of every human life, to reach out to the last and the lost, to embody here on earth the Good Shepherd the Good Samaritan, a God who never tires in searching and caring for his children, till the last breath, till the last drop of energy.

Actually, the great Pope, now Blessed John Paul II, looked for and met “Saint Louis Guanella” quite a few times during his twenty seven years of pastoral leadership. He met our Founder not in person, but in his communities, among his “treasures,” in the midst of his religious men and women who carry on his work and his vision. It is beautiful and inspiring to recall one of those most significant “encounters,” his visit to the Don Guanella



Village in Via Aurelia Antica, in Rome, on March 28, 1982.

John Paul II spent unforgettable moments among the more than three hundred of our residents, our elderly and “buoni figli”. He paused to caress and bless them; he welcomed their greetings with a large smile; he bent over their broken bodies lying in beds or seated on wheelchairs. He addressed them as “a caring father, “If to the eyes of many, you appear to be weak and infirm, before God you are great and dazzling in your being. Father Guanella called you “his pearls” and defined you as “the beloved of Divine Providence.” In our society the powerful and intelligent people occupy the first place and appear in focus.

But the contrary happens in the Kingdom of God. Jesus says to us that the children, the weak, the poor, and the suffering are great in the kingdom.”



Toward the end of his visit, addressing the Guanellian Religious, John Paul II re-echoed the same beautiful message that came spontaneously from his heart. Putting aside the prepared speech, the Pope said to us, “There is a need of a special

charity, a heroic charity in order to fall in love with these wounded, disabled, spastic brethren. It is easy to fall in love with visible beauty. It is a difficult task to fall in love with the absence of beauty, to discover beauty hidden (cont. next page)

Blessed John Paul II and Fr. Louis Guanella

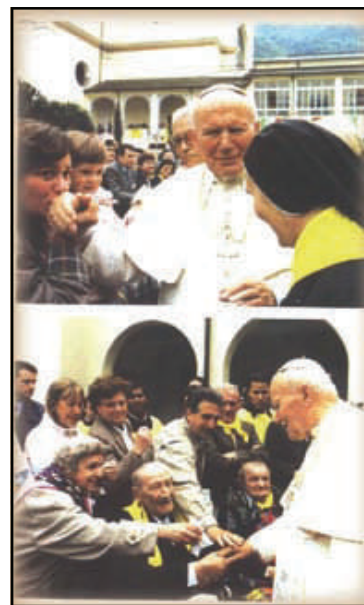
under its absence, present behind its opposite. There is therefore a need for a particularly farsighted, deep, piercing, heroic charity.

That is the road of Father Guanella, that is your road! You follow him as his sons and daughters, as Guanellians, and strive to imitate him, to make the same discovery as him. May the Lord, through the intercession of Father Guanella, give every Guanellian the ability to fall in love with that kind of beauty!

When we Guanellians met you in January 1995 in that huge Manila crowd of five million, we brought you again three hundred of our "special brethren". You blessed them and smiled at them, like in Rome.

Thank you Blessed John Paul II for catching the essence of our charism and mission. Holy Father, we are still in love with God's beauty, shining on the face of the poor. Keep helping us from heaven to grow in that Love.

Blessed John Paul II, pray for us! St. Louis Guanella, pray for us!



FR. GUANELLA: Father of the Poor (Part I)

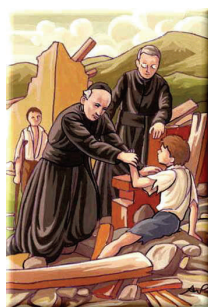
Aware that God is honoured when the dignity of man is restored, Fr Luigi Guanella, from being a "man of God" became a "father of the poor", that is, he translated his spirituality into action, transforming his filial relationship with God into brotherly solidarity with the poor. *"Times are stormy and we need to create in parishes various institutions for men, for women and for every need. They are leaven; God's spirit is in them: they produce small examples of holiness that sanctify and save"*.

His century witnessed new ways of supporting human wretchedness; in the second half of the nineteenth century new religious families came into being that were dedicated to the apostolate of charity. His response to God's call also became active, multifaceted and creative: he was able to bind together his **passion for God** and his **passion for the poor**. In 1892 the first issue of the bulletin of the Mother House in Como was published, *La Provvidenza*. In it he said that *"in the house there are already poor people of every kind"*. From then on his priority task was to *"show the world with the facts that God is with those who provide the solicitous care of a father for his children"*.

He undertook a long process of the discernment of God's will and of the call of the Holy Spirit, committing himself to deciphering the multiple signs of the call received, to purify the good intentions he bore in his heart and to keep himself available to letting Grace guide him. This availability was broad: with humility, but not without suffering, he accepted his failures, his false steps when *"he thought he had Providence in his pocket"*, waiting, until he was well into his forties, for the hour of mercy to strike. Through this inner work, he managed to clarify for himself that serving the poor was God's heartfelt desire, even before it was his own personal plan of life, and that in fulfilling this desire of God the Father he would quench the thirst for happiness in his own heart.

One of the pillars on which his mission of charity rested was the awareness that helping the poor was helping God Himself, as Jesus taught: *"In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me!"* (Mt 25:40). His eyes were able to **see Jesus in the poor**: *"The most abandoned of all, bring him in, sit him at your table and make him yours, because he is Jesus"*. He was attracted by

the suffering, by the sick, by the abandoned, by the destitute, by all those marked by non-beauty because they bore the stigmata of the Crucified Jesus. He called them *"treasures"*, comparing them to the biblical figure in Psalm 22: *"Here am I, now more worm than man"*, and therefore to the *"suffering servant"* of Isaiah (cf. Is 42; 49; 50; 52-53); and hence to Jesus in his condition as victim offered for the redemption of the world. For this reason, the charitable service that Fr Guanella developed, *"especially for the poor children of the people, for the elderly poor of the people"*, was the main road to his sanctification, to his becoming a saint, to his being a saint. His service for the poor, expressed at levels ever closer to God's style, sanctified him, turning him into the image, frail and weak, yet nevertheless the image of the One who is Holy. For Fr Guanella, the service of charity was not only the place where holiness is expressed, but also the place in which holiness comes into being and matures; holiness develops in and with charity.



Welcome Fr. Vincent

The community in Quezon City is blessed with another new member, Fr. Vincent, SdC, a young, dynamic and zealous missionary from India. Fr. Vincent obtained his theological studies in Rome and was ordained to the priesthood on August 6, 2009 in Cuddalore, India. Right after his ordination, he took his first assignment as a member of the formation team at the Guanella Bhavan Seminary, house of the Aspirancy Program for young Indian Guanellians. Currently, he is serving as an Assistant Vocation Director as well as member of the Formation Team for our Quezon City community.

We wish to express our warm welcome to Fr. Vincent as we accompany him with our prayers for a fruitful missionary assignment here in the Philippines.



Life: A Matter of Choice



Harong Kan Sagrada Familia, Bogtong facilitated a youth vigil, on July 24, 2011, in order to raise awareness of Bl. Louis Guanella, who will be canonized on Oct 23, 2011, among the youth. The theme was, “Life is a Matter of Choices,” emphasizing the importance of making good choices. Fr. Robert Raj, reflected on the guidelines of how to make a right choice, he used the life of Fr. Guanella as an example.

Fr. Eduardo Cerbito, SdC, presided during the adoration and shared his vocation story to inspire the young participants. He challenged the participants to seek God’s will in their lives. Participants printed their choices with pictures of our Founder. The activity was held in HKSF pavilion, where more than one hundred youth participated including the seminarians, Sagrada Youth and students from all over Legazpi City.

“To be Catholic means to be Pro-Life.”

Bishop J. Peter Sartain

National Disability Prevention and Rehab Week

The main purpose of this celebration is to hail the dignity of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in society. This was celebrated at the Guanella Home with all the residents and good children from the surrounding community. The beauty of the celebration was because to the presence of their parents, staff, friends, volunteers and others in the campus. The good children enjoyed themselves by participating in activities such as dancing, singing and sports.

This was an opportunity for the children to display their hidden talents and ideas. This celebration brought hope to their life; to live and to provide a reason to love God. Since it was also nutrition month, children were taught how to stay healthy by eating good food.



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**SERVANTS
OF CHARITY
PHILIPPINES**

*Celebrating
God's love in
the footsteps of
Saint Louis
Guanella*



GUANELLA HOME RESIDENTS



This is Patrick, one of our special children living with us in Guanella home. He is happy with us and enjoys his stay with other children in the house. Though he is disabled, he participates in all the activities of the house like others and does some creative works. He says to the world my disabilities does not limit my happiness and it never takes away happiness and joyfulness everyday. This is

because of his abilities in doing gardening, playing songs, dancing and singing like other children. In case of Patrick, though he could not dance because he is in wheel chair he keeps his mind occupied by doing some handicraft; such as greeting cards and beautiful bracelets. He dedicates his energy to this creative work and gives witness to the people by living a happy life.



**SPONSOR A
SPECIAL CHILD**

**And be an
angel of hope
to God's poor**

Guanella Home for Special Children

**WHEN YOU
BECOME A
SPONSOR**

- The seminary community and our special children will pray for you everyday.
- Your special intention will be remembered in our prayers.
- A special Mass will be offered for you on your Birthday.
- A special tribute will be given to you on our Day for Benefactors
- You will have the opportunity to help not only the poor but also those who offer and dedicate their lives in helping the poor.

Thank you very much!