

The Voice of Providence

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DECEMBER 2011–JANUARY 2012



Featured Story: *The Christmas Creche*, page 11

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.....Merry Christmas,
Happy New Year
Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC
- 2.....Shrine News
*Sr. Margaret Mary Schissler,
DSMP*
- 3.....St. Joseph, Father, Custodian
and Support of Families
St. Louis Guanella
- 5.....The Shrine of St. Joseph
Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC
- 7.....Dedications & Memorials
- 8.....Masses, Medals and
The Holy Cloak
- 9Genevieve
Lisa Lickona
- 11The Christmas Crèche
Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC
- 18.....St. Louis Guanella: Charism
and Mission in Pennsylvania
Fr. Paul Oggioni, SdC
- 21.....How Good it is When Brothers
Live in Unity
Bob Neimeyer
- 24.....A Dream Come True
Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC
- 28.....Proud To Be Catholic
Sam Miller
- 30.....Trading
Carlo Lapucci
- 31The Pious Union Library:
The Heart of a Father

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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.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year

REFLECTION BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air. This is the season when believers exchange the greeting *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

However, I have thought of these words and asked myself, what do they really mean? Christmas for the Christian means the Birth of Christ. But, when we offer this greeting, we don't even think of it. This greeting has a profound meaning. It means *Christ's Mass*. St. Francis of Assisi built the first Crèche in a cave where midnight Mass was celebrated. The Mass, in fact, places the Body and Blood of Christ on the Altar, the same way Mary placed the Baby Jesus in the manger. It is up to us Christians to put Christ into Christmas, our life and our faith. Then the greeting has a meaning.

The second part of the greeting is even more puzzling. *Happy New Year!* The years are the same; we make them happy or unhappy. Most of the unhappiness we create ourselves. Other unpleasant circumstances are inevitable. One thing is for sure: there is absolutely nothing we can do about vital statistics, weather and taxes. No matter how much we struggle, God is always in control. I wanted to live happily this past year and all years before this. The results were proportioned to the effort I put into practicing two principles.

First: Enjoy what you have and be grateful for it. **Second:** Do not waste time chasing what you don't have.

This has given me peace of mind and heart as I acknowledge that we are all in God's hands. St. Augustine got it right. In your will is our peace and our heart will not find peace until it rests in you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



We Praise and Thank the Lord for each of you and for His Goodness to us!

BY SISTER MARGARET MARY SCHISSLER, DSMP

We live each day in the knowledge that we are loved and cared for by God our Father along with being guided and comforted by Joseph His Son. We just celebrated the wonderful time of Thanksgiving and are now in the season of “waiting,” anxiously preparing for the celebration of the Coming of the Lord in human form.

As members of the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph we enter into a different level of waiting this year because we are anxiously awaiting the completion of our addition to the Shrine itself. In this grace filled year of our Founder, St. Louis Guanella, who was Canonized on October 23rd, the Lord has blessed us with the reality that more and more people are visiting the very place where the Pious Union of St. Joseph is headquartered in the United States.

We are doubling our seating capacity in our Shrine and including a special place of honor for the original painting by Fr. Germano of the Holy Death of St. Joseph. Our pilgrims are pleased at the progress and as we continue to wait in this season of Advent preparing for the joyful coming of our Lord and Savior we also wait for a rebirth of the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph.

Each of you are a part of our growth and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your continued support. The Shrine of St. Joseph is where all of your intentions are prayed for daily with Mass and the rosary. This building represents all the sorrow and joy, pain and suffering, graces and healings of you our members. Each day as we remember all of you we ask, through the intercession of St. Joseph, that you be comforted in your life and guided through your hardship.

As we prepare to celebrate the great Feast of Christmas know that you are prayed for and remembered daily at the Pious Union/Shrine of St. Joseph. Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas.

St. Joseph, Father, Custodian and Support of Families

BY ST. LOUIS GUANELLA

The Supreme Pontiff Pius IX declared St. Joseph, Patriarch and Protector of the Universal Church. Pope Leo XIII honored St. Joseph by recognizing him Patron of all Christian Families. Through this official act, he glorified the Patriarch and natural Head of the Holy Family, recognizing in him the high authority that he exercised over Mary most holy and over the Son of Mary and Son of God.

May St. Joseph always protect the family of the Houses of Providence. The families of the Houses of Providence are not families related by blood but united by charity. Without St. Joseph's help they would miserably perish. The patronage of St. Joseph shall change our families into hearths of love, beacons of light, and sources of virtue in the example of the most holy Family.

We can never think that St. Joseph will abandon us in our spiritual and temporal needs. We will never invoke St. Joseph, who was obeyed by Jesus and Mary and provided the daily bread for them, in vain; he will always hear our prayer.

Even though St. Joseph was from a royal family, he lived in extreme poverty and with hard work, earned a living for himself, his Spouse and his Son, the Son of God. We don't have to worry about praying to him at all times and confiding all our anxieties in him, our fears, our joys and our pains.

Trusting St. Joseph is trusting the holy Family. When we are oppressed by doubts and sadness and need comfort and a powerful voice to intercede for us to the Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary, let us call on St. Joseph. He suffered many humiliations and poverty and will assist us as an advocate and father.



St. Joseph will turn our families' houses into beacons of a Christian atmosphere that, founded on faith and charity, will anticipate on earth the peace and joy promised to the elect.

Each family should enthrone a picture or a statue of St. Joseph in their house as a sign of devotion to this great saint, but most of all as a commitment to living virtuously in conformity with the will of God.



We all have friends or relatives in our midst who are very sick or near death. We must place them under the protection of St. Joseph, Patron of the suffering and dying. Under his protection, the dying will experience the comfort of St. Joseph with the names of Jesus and Mary on their lips at the last moments of their life.

Among us no one should die without St. Joseph next to them.

O St. Joseph, assist all of us especially the lonely and the abandoned. No one should die alone and without prayer.

At the hour of our death, protect our souls and our bodies, bless our families and reward their love.

O St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus Christ and true spouse of the Virgin Mary, Pray for us and for the suffering and dying of this day.



The Shrine of St. Joseph

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

St. Joseph, the patron saint of the suffering and dying, is doing it again. He was the one who first inspired our friends and benefactors to do the impossible.

St. Joseph's Shrine at the Pious Union was built twenty years ago. It is a beautiful place, and inviting for both prayer and meditation. It is an oasis of peace, however it is very small. We have difficulty accommodating our pilgrim groups and properly serving them at Sunday Masses.

Several benefactors, moved by St. Joseph, have encouraged us in words and in deeds. They have provided us with seed money and little by little our faith in St. Joseph has grown. Things have moved fast, even too fast, as more friends have come forward with donations. We called an architect, selected a builder and on Monday, October 10th, 2011, the work began.



St. Joseph and St. Louis Guanella have come together to help us. Would you like to join them? Help us to expand the Shrine of St. Joseph. He calls people, attracts them to pray for the suffering and dying, and moves them to become beneficiaries from other's prayers when our time comes. We are \$60,000 short. We appreciate your prayers and donations, both large and small. It is our faith in St. Joseph that counts. He will not let us down.



O St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus Christ and true Spouse of the Virgin Mary; pray for us and for the suffering and dying of today.



Remember Your Loved Ones

by Making a Dedication or Memorial in their name.

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

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



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

Send email to piousunion@pusj.org.

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

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

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

*Let's generously celebrate the Year of our Founder's
Canonization by spreading devotion to our dear St. Joseph.*

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

Genevieve

Our daughter Genevieve was born on November 23, 2010, at 24 weeks gestation, weighing 1 lb. 3 oz. My seven other children were unable to visit her in the special unit in the hospital. They asked me to describe her. “She is smaller than a Bitty Baby,” I said.

When Gen was five days old, the doctors discovered a hole in her heart and an intestinal blockage, both defects that could be repaired by surgery. But, because of the blockage, Gen would have to get all her nutrition via IV, and it would be at least two months before she would be big enough for the first surgery. The doctors speculated that she had Down Syndrome.

When this diagnosis was confirmed, the head of the unit met with me. Gen would probably only live a few weeks, he said. He was concerned about the “use of resources” in treating her. He wondered at her “quality of life.” “Society has certain standards,” he added. Nothing direct was said, but I got the message: we should pull the tubes and let her die.

I knew that every person deserves food and water and ordinary medical treatment. We don’t remove these essentials, no matter what the “projected outcome.” But I was overwhelmed. At this time, God brought a beautiful person into my life—a neonatologist who is also a devout Catholic. After reviewing Genevieve’s case, she agreed that the odds were not good. “But God is affirming her now,” she said, “We must follow her.”

So this is what we did.

My husband and I talked and sang to Genevieve every day. She continued to be fragile, but she gained weight. We prayed and hoped. Then, at two and a half months, shortly before she was to have her first surgery, she showed signs of kidney malfunction. We insisted that the doctors give her “normal” treatment. But even after the round of antibiotics, Genevieve’s kidneys continued to fail. We asked the doctors to let us spend a night at the hospital together as a family.



“SUDDENLY, THE NURSE, A VETERAN OF 35 YEARS, COULD NOT CONTAIN HER EXCITEMENT. “HER EYES ARE OPEN!” SHE PRACTICALLY SHOUTED! GENEVIEVE RALLIED TO SEE HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS. THEY HAD WANTED TO SEE HER AND SHE WANTED TO SEE THEM!”

On February 28, the nurse placed Gen in my arms while my husband went to get the other children. Genevieve looked so pale and sickly. I had not seen her open her eyes for many days. I wondered if she would even make it through our visit. In the next moment, the children were in the room, whispering excitedly and reaching to touch her tiny hands and feet. Suddenly, the nurse, a veteran of 35 years, could not contain her excitement. “Her eyes are open!” she practically shouted! Genevieve rallied to see her brothers and sisters. They had wanted to see her and she wanted to see them! For the next two hours, we were a family, all together. And the next morning Gen entered into that Love that never ends.

Recently, I spoke again with the head of the unit. He said that he did not know why little babies came into the world only to die. I felt so sad for him. I realized that he had no sense of death as a beginning, of suffering as redemptive. I tried to put it into words that he would understand. “When a parent loses a child,” I said, “there is not only darkness. There is also light.”

Lisa Lickona is a home schooling mother of seven and a regular contributor to Magnificat Magazine she also writes for the John Paul II Institute.

THE CHRISTMAS CRÈCHE

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

The Christmas crèche, or Nativity scene, has been for many centuries the most popular symbol of Christmas. Unfortunately it has slowly been replaced by the Christmas tree even among Christian families. It's a tradition rooted in a specific historical event in the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Francis was the first one to give life to the Nativity scene as described in the second chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke. It took place in a town near Assisi, Greccio, Italy, on December 25, 1223.

In 1222, Francis was able to fulfill his great desire to visit the locations where Jesus lived. He went to Bethlehem and paused for a long time at the place where the Savior was born. Back in Italy, he kept thinking about his trip. His mind and heart were fascinated by the event of Jesus' birth. God becomes man. God becomes a child, humble, fragile, indigent. Francis was moved to tears considering these realities.



On Christmas 1223, he decided to organize an actual representation of Jesus' birth, convinced that, if he could see with his own eyes, he could have a way to understand the mystery of the birth of Christ even deeper. Why did he choose Greccio rather than Assisi, his birth place where he normally lived?



Probably because Greccio's landscape resembled that of Bethlehem where he visited three years earlier.

Francis and some of his companions went to live on a mountain above Greccio. However, when the people of that small village asked him to come and live among them, Francis came down to the valley and took residence in some caves near the village. The area was swampy and desolate with the look of absolute poverty, silence and suffering. Francis liked that natural dereliction because it helped him to meditate and feel poor and humble. When he thought of reliving the birth of Jesus, he wanted it to happen in Greccio.

Tommaso da Celano and St. Bonaventure are biographers and contemporaries of St. Francis of Assisi. They are direct witnesses and wrote a detailed description of the Nativity scene of Greccio.

This holy man was always meditating the life of Jesus and above all, the humility of the Incarnation and the love of the Passion. These are the two most human and most disconcerting experiences of Christ's life on earth.

St. Francis of Assisi is known to be a passionate saint, a poet, the author of the "Canticle of the creatures," lover of animals and nature. He was idealistic and immersed in mysticism. However he was extremely practical and very concrete. His imitation of Christ was literal, without shadows. Jesus taught us that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father, hidden in the poorest, the sick, and the imprisoned. He visited the prisoners, hugged and served the lepers. Jesus was poor, possessed nothing and Francis who belonged to a rich family, renounced everything including the clothes he was wearing. He wanted to experience the true

“ST. FRANCIS WANTED TO EXPERIENCE THE TRUE MEANING OF THE INCARNATION, BIRTH AND DEATH OF JESUS. FOR THIS REASON, HE WANTED TO CELEBRATE THE EVENT OF CHRISTMAS OF 1223, WITH A REALISTIC REPRESENTATION.”

meaning of the Incarnation, birth and death of Jesus. For this reason, he wanted to celebrate the event of Christmas of 1223, with a realistic representation.



Francis prepared it meticulously. He asked for help from one of his friends, the nobleman Giovanni da Greccio, who, according to Celano, “even though he was a noble and respected person in the area, he valued the nobility of the spirit more than that of the flesh.” Francis told his friend that on Christmas night he wanted a representation of Jesus’ birth. Not a dramatic performance for people’s curiosity, but a visible and true reconstruction. Celano reports the exact words Francis told Giovanni: “I would like to reenact the birth of the baby in Bethlehem, and in some way see with the eyes of my body the destitution he had to suffer for the lack of the necessary things for a newborn baby, how he was laid in a manger and how he rested on hay between the cow and the donkey.”

Francis despised the theatrical performance; he believed it was disrespectful for a profound religious mystery. He was worried that his attempt would be wrongly interpreted. For this reason, St. Bonaventure reports that “Brother Francis, before acting on his project, asked the Pope’s permission.”



On the night of December 25, 1223, Celano reports that “Giovanni da Greccio organized everything as Francis had asked him. The news spread fast and the local people gathered around the cave where Francis and his friars used to pray. Pilgrims came from other villages; men, cheerful women, children all carrying, according to their means, candles and torches to light the night. Francis arrived at last and was very delighted when he saw that everything was set according to his wish. At this point the manger is set up properly and filled with hay, then the ox and the donkey are brought in.”

From this description it is obvious that Francis wants to recreate the scene of the birth of Jesus, but he does not want to offer a performance. Therefore, none of the faithful takes the place of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph or the baby. The opposite would have been a dramatic performance.

Francis just wanted the experience of the real scene for a meditation during the Mass that would follow, because the Mass would bring the real presence of Jesus in that place. This detail is extremely important. The Eucharistic liturgy brings to the altar the true, real and substantial presence of Jesus. Francis wanted to relive the birth of Jesus in real form within the Mass.

When Francis spoke about priests, he compared them to the Virgin Mary, because when they celebrate Mass they give birth to Jesus on the altar. Even the faithful receiving Communion, are like Mary who carried Jesus in her womb. Therefore the

Eucharistic Liturgy of that Christmas night would have brought Jesus to that place prepared like the shed of Bethlehem.

Francis was an ordained Deacon. Both Celano and St. Bonaventure relate that at midnight, “Brother Francis participated in the Mass, wore the Deacon’s vestments, read the Gospel and offered a homily. When he pronounced the words ‘Baby of Bethlehem’ his voice trembled with tenderness and emotion. During the celebration of Mass the abundant gifts of the Almighty were manifested with prodigious happenings.”

“Giovanni da Greccio,” continues St Bonaventure, “states that he saw in the manger the most beautiful baby sleeping and hugged by Francis with both arms trying to wake him up.”

We really do not know what happened that night, however, within the centuries, the tradition has been consistent and firm from generation to generation that on that special Christmas night, Jesus truly appeared alive in the form of a baby lying on the hay of the manger.

Christmas means exactly that, Christ Mass; Francis, the mystic of Assisi, penetrated the heart of God in the mystery of the Incarnation, birth and passion of Jesus the Christ.





Pope Benedict XVI during the Canonization of St. Louis Guanella – October 23, 2011



Saint Louis Guanella

Charism and Mission in Pennsylvania

BY FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SDC

For the last couple of years, the three Guanellian families founded by St. Louis Guanella, serving in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, have been incredibly blessed.

The Servants of Charity, the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence and the Guanellian Cooperators are grateful for the approval of the miracle granted by God through the intercession of their Founder Father Louis Guanella, by the Vatican Congregation of the Saints. The recognition of his Sanctity drew thousands of people to St. Peter's square in Rome where, together with the recipient of the miracle, William Glisson and his family, they witnessed and cheered Benedict XVI declaring their beloved Founder a Saint.

All of us considered this event as a sign of God's affirmation of fifty years of tireless work the Guanellian family has done in the United States for the thousands of people with developmental disabilities. They have been helped with love, faith and competence to overcome the difficulties that hampered their bodies and minds. The Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence were sent to the United States by the Founder himself in 1913, followed by the Servants of Charity in 1959.



The miracle that finally brought Father Guanella to the Altar of Sainthood took place here in the United States where Saint Louis Guanella is not well known. Is the Lord telling us something? Is the newly canonized saint giving us a message? Perhaps God is calling us to courageously explore new ways of charity and to assist the new poverties within our society, following the example of the new saint given to us by the Church as a model of Christian life.

At the age of seventy, Father Guanella reached the United States with the enthusiasm of a spiritual youth. Urged by his faith and his creative charity he saw a great potential for his charisma. He came to the aid of his brothers and sisters who needed assistance in preserving their faith. Thousands of immigrants came from Europe to this country but the local Church was not able to care for their spiritual



needs. A century later, new waves of people keep crossing the borders of this great nation with the hope of a better life for themselves and their families back home.

The Servants of Charity have worked for over two years now with the Hispanic community. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has granted them a vacant convent in the city of Chester, once a thriving community but now suffering the effects of unemployment, drugs, prostitution and crime with the consequent spiritual decline.

The vacant houses became home to thousands of poor African Americans and immigrants from South and Central America.

The Church of St. Hedwig, a monument of the Polish community's faith, is the spiritual center of the Servants of Charity activity. There aren't too many Catholics in the area. Even the immigrant Latino population, traditionally Catholic, has not involved themselves with the Church. Therefore we made the first step by contacting them with the hope of restoring their Christian values weakened by their suffering and separation from their cultural and religious roots. Sharing their faith, culture, religious traditions and family values will help them to face the challenges they meet every day to maintain their Catholic identity.

Following in the footsteps of the Founder our missionary work will be dedicated to the preservation of the Catholic faith, works of charity, the promotion of life and the witness of truth, confident in the words of the Founder, “God does it all” and “God saves.”

On June 24, 2011, a new “Welcome House,” called The Holy Family House, was dedicated by the Servants of Charity in Chester, PA, during a ceremony presided by Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, John McIntyre. This center will attend to the pastoral care of the immigrants. No one really knows how many live in the area. Many, often illegally, arrive attracted by the mirage of a better life. What they find instead, is rejection and insecurity, together with the fear of being exploited. Unfortunately there are also frequent cases of those who undergo legal proceedings, and are obligated to return to their lands, leaving their spouse here with children born during their stay.

The new pastoral center will become a reference point for the large community of Latinos living in the area. It will be open to reception, to catechesis, to serve the immediate needs regarding the spiritual and material assistance to people in emergency situations and as a meeting place for young people, to experience moments of relaxation and joy. It will also be an open house, under the protection of the Holy Family, and the center of connection with the families who are left behind in the lands of origin, to preserve the bonds of communion and affection. May the Lord bless our effort. St. Louis Guanella will watch over us so we can stay faithful to his charism and to his teaching.

We invite any person of good will to join us in our effort to show our neighbors in need that God loves all especially the poor. St. Louis Guanella reminds us of the works of mercy we learn in religious education: Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit and ransom the captives, bury the dead.



How Good it is When Brothers Live in Unity

BY BOB NEIMEYER

This past summer, my superiors gave me the opportunity to experience the Spirit, Mission, and Charism of the Servants of Charity in a manner that I had not previously been able to. I was sent to live, pray, and work with one of our communities in Colombia, South America. During that time, I was able to participate in several aspects of our mission, including serving the mentally disabled and the elderly, in our parish activities and in the school. I was even asked to participate, in a small way, in the formation of the young men at our seminary by teaching them English.



The two months that I spent there were, and continue to be, a source of blessing for me. There were so many significant experiences and profound encounters with Our Lord in the prayer life, activities and apostolate, the formation process, the poor we serve, through living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and at the priestly ordination





I attended one of the Servants of Charity. Although I would like to write about them all, it is not possible to do so at this time. So, I am faced with a dilemma; since I can't write about everything, what do I choose? It has been said that first impressions are the most lasting, so I have decided to write about my initial impressions that the Colombian Servants of Charity made on me, and it is one of the many outstanding characteristics of that community.

Upon my arrival at the airport (even though it was nearly 11:00 P.M.) I was greeted by three confreres and two young men who are currently in the initial stages of formation with the Servants of Charity. Immediately, despite the fact that we were not able to speak the same language, they were able to communicate to me a true spirit of warmth, love, and affection. I was not greeted as a stranger, or a visitor, not even as a friend: I was greeted as a long lost brother and they were able to convey to me the sense that I was finally home. I was filled with joy and a deep love. What came to my mind were the verses from Psalm 133: "See, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together as one! There the Lord has decreed a blessing, life forevermore." With this outpouring of

“I WAS NOT GREETED AS A STRANGER, OR A VISITOR, NOT EVEN AS A FRIEND: I WAS GREETED AS A LONG LOST BROTHER AND THEY WERE ABLE TO CONVEY TO ME THE SENSE THAT I WAS FINALLY HOME. I WAS FILLED WITH JOY AND A DEEP LOVE.”

fraternal charity, a bond was established at that moment (as it did with the other members of the community who I met soon afterward) and it continued to strengthen and mature during the entire time I lived with them.



The religious house where I stayed was a true international community, consisting of three priests: one from Italy, one from Spain, and one from India; there was also a religious brother from Mexico, and eleven young men in formation from Colombia.

Besides that, the house was always receiving guests; it was a bustling center of hospitality. Confreres visited and stayed with us from all over Latin America and from Italy as well. There was a time when two confreres from Argentina accompanied by their superior, from Paraguay, came to renew their vows. We were Servants of Charity from eight different countries sharing our lives by praying, working, eating, and recreating together for almost one week.



A Dream Come True

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

The St. Louis Center, in Chelsea, Michigan, was opened in 1960 with the specific purpose of educating and training children with developmental disabilities. The Servants of Charity and Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, who welcomed the first residents wanted to call the new facility Saint Louis Center in honor of their Founder, Father Louis Guanella. At that time, Father Guanella was not declared Blessed. But those religious priests and sisters knew that one day their Founder would be a saint.

Fifty years later their dream became a reality. Father Louis Guanella became a Saint on October 23, 2011, canonized by Pope Benedict XVI at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The St. Louis Center began with a program for disabled boys only. Today it serves also adult ladies and gentlemen.

The Pious Union of St. Joseph, Patron of the suffering and dying, is also served by the same religious communities.

Since the beginning, the religious Community of St. Louis Center and the Pious Union,

assisted by an always increasing number of lay friends and benefactors chose to emphasize one of the singular focuses of Father Guanella's Sanctity: the Defense of Life.

Our nation has a materialistic and pragmatic vision of life. Society endorses sport and its successes; exalts physical beauty, its products and manifestations. Success is measured by production and wealth...

Dishonest profits are called entrepreneurship and competition has no regard for the loser.

Abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide are acceptable remedies to nuisance and pain.

The weak, the sick, and the handicapped are a burden to society that diminishes the collective prosperity.

To offset this mentality that diminishes the human person and the value of life,

the Servants of Charity and the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence of St. Louis Center and the Pious Union of St. Joseph, witness to society the charism and the anthropological vision of St. Louis Guanella. This charism and vision are approved by the Church that elevated him to the altars of holiness.

St. Louis Guanella is called the Father of the poor. He is a saint because he saw the image and likeness of God in every person. He recognized that each person has been loved by God even before God Himself formed them in their mother's womb. (Jr 1, 4).

Abortion, inconceivable for Father Guanella, continues the massacre of the innocents and cries vengeance in the sight of God. Father Guanella sees in the poor, abused, ill treated and rejected, Christ scoffed, flogged and crowned with thorns again. Despising the poor is nailing Christ on the Cross again. Physical beauty is only packaging which is discarded after its use. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but to remain a temple



it needs to be kept consecrated, constantly purified from vices and decorated with virtues.

Our soul was given to us by God and it belongs to God and must be returned to God. Every person is immortal, unique and unrepeatable.

Even the poorest human beings have the right to be loved, appreciated and accepted.

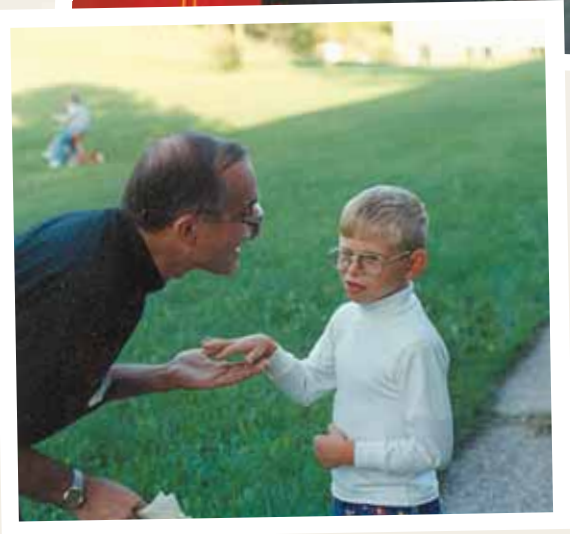
The poor, the beggar, the limited in mind and body are a gift of God to all of us. They recall us to a simple life of charity, love and suffering. They are a reminder for us against wasting the gifts we received from God.

The poor and the less able are not a burden to society, but a responsibility of society that produced them. They are the victims of a society that excludes them through a system that renders people incapable of being self sufficient.

However, Father Louis Guanella was not just a theorist. He treated the poor with the same respect he approached the Body of Christ. He never stopped trying harder and better to rehabilitate their minds and bodies to their highest potential. Through work, tailored to their ability, he made them feel useful and proud, restoring their personal dignity.

Father Guanella did not limit himself just to his foundations. He approached and befriended the powerful, the rich, the experts as well as the simple and the good people, all to the glory of God and the benefit of the poor.

Based on these principles, the religious, courageously and effectively assisted by the laity,



have involved other Catholics and Christians. They are educating the politicians, informing judges and shaking consciences.

This is the Charism of the mission of St. Louis Guanella. The Religious Community and the Guanellian Lay Movement are dedicated to following in the footsteps of their Founder.

Many of the lay members are deeply involved in the operation of the St. Louis Center and the Pious Union of St. Joseph. They monitor the programs, the budgets, the maintenance and the planning of every single aspect of both ministries.

They are also committed to assisting the Missions, especially in India, the Philippines and Vietnam, because Father Guanella told us “the whole world is your homeland.”

We will remain faithful to the spirit of the Founder. His canonization gave us more strength and determination to follow what he started under the protection of St. Joseph and our Father, St. Louis Guanella.

O Saint Louis Guanella, apostle of charity, you spread the treasure of your heart to the poor and suffering, whom you loved in a world filled with hatred and selfishness. Obtain for us from Divine Providence an ever increasing love for God and our neighbor. Obtain for us also the favor we are asking for..., and the grace of final perseverance.

Amen

Saint Louis Guanella, pray for us.





Proud To Be Catholic

BY SAM MILLER, A PROMINENT CLEVELAND JEWISH BUSINESSMAN

“Why would the media carry on a vendetta against one of the most important institutions that we have today in the United States, namely the Catholic Church?”

Do you know—the Catholic Church educates 2.6 million students everyday at a cost to the Church of 10 billion dollars, and a savings on the other hand to the American taxpayer of 18 billion dollars? The graduates go on to graduate studies at a rate of 92%. The Church has 230 colleges and universities in the U.S. with an enrollment of 700,000 students.

The Catholic Church has a non-profit hospital system of 637 hospitals, which account for hospital treatment of 1 out of every 5 people—not just Catholics—in the United States today.

But the press is vindictive and tries to totally denigrate, in every way, the Catholic Church in this country. They have blamed the disease of pedophilia on the Catholic Church, which is as irresponsible as blaming adultery on the institution of marriage.

Let me give you some figures that Catholics should know and remember. For example, 12% of the 300 Protestant clergy surveyed admitted to sexual intercourse with a parishioner; 38% acknowledged other inappropriate sexual contact in a study by the United Methodist Church, 41.8% of clergy women reported unwanted sexual behavior; 17% of laywomen have been sexually harassed.

Meanwhile, 1.7% of the Catholic clergy have been found guilty of pedophilia, while 10% of Protestant ministers have been found guilty of pedophilia. This is not a Catholic problem.

“BE PROUD TO SPEAK UP FOR YOUR
FAITH WITH PRIDE AND REVERENCE
AND LEARN WHAT YOUR CHURCH
DOES FOR ALL OTHER RELIGIONS.”

A study of American priests showed that most are happy in the priesthood and find it even better than they had expected, and that most, if given the choice, would choose to be priests again in face of all this obnoxious PR the Church has been receiving.

The Catholic Church is bleeding from self-inflicted wounds. The agony that Catholics have felt and suffered is not necessarily the fault of the Church. You have been hurt by a small number of wayward priests that have probably been totally weeded out by now.

Walk with your shoulders high and your head higher. Be a proud member of the most important non-governmental agency in the United States. Then remember what Jeremiah said: ‘Stand by the roads, and look and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is and walk in it, and find rest for your souls’. Be proud to speak up for your faith with pride and reverence and learn what your Church does for all other religions.

Be Proud that you are a Catholic!

“Walk with your shoulders high and your head higher... Be Proud that you are a Catholic!”

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Trading

BY CARLO LAPUCCI

In winter 1903, Father Guanella was visiting the House run by the Sisters located at St. Paul d'Argon in Northern Italy. After the usual greetings and brief review of how things were going in the House, he suddenly presented a strange request, "By any chance, do you have a pair of socks for me?"

The Sisters looked down at his feet and, behold, what a mess! Father was wearing a wreckage of shoes that had seen better times, a very long time ago. Now, broken and open in many parts, they had ended somehow on his feet not covering them, but breathing the freezing winter air. And no socks, either!

Horrified, Sister Superior mumbled, "Oh my goodness, Father! What did you put on this morning?"

"In the dark I put on the wrong shoes. I am so sorry!"

The Sisters went into action, and in minutes Father had new socks and new shoes on his feet. They were providential, because without them he couldn't have gone too far.

Later on, the Sisters came to know the whole story.

Father Guanella was walking from the rail station to the House when he met a poor man, who was shaking and freezing from the intense cold weather. On his feet he eyed a pair of old, broken and open things formerly called shoes, and no socks. Without thinking twice, he traded his own shoes with those of the man; giving him his socks as well. Once the exchange was completed, Father continued his walk as if nothing had happened, and reached the House of the Sisters. We already know the rest of the story.



THE PIOUS UNION OF ST. JOSEPH'S LIBRARY

The Heart of a Father

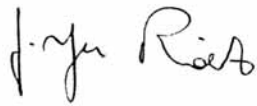
This poignant booklet of one hundred pages is the last written by Fr. Tito Credaro, a Guanellian priest, who studied, lived and extensively wrote about the Guanellian spirituality. Fr. Tito loves Father Guanella and his congregation, the Servants of Charity.

In *The Heart of a Father*, he gives us the reason why he loves Father Guanella and his Religious Family so much. This book gets an added credit now that Father Guanella is a Saint.

Fr. Tito reveals in his book the depths of Father Guanella's heart. Father Guanella's Spirituality is based on the Paternity of God who gave His Divine Son to redeem His human children. Father Guanella tried all his life to imitate God the father by giving everything of himself and his possessions to the poor, the handicapped and the elderly, the weakest and the most vulnerable among our brothers and sisters.

I found this book to be addictive: once you start, you don't want to put it down. It will challenge your faith while you learn more about God, the Father.

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC



The Heart of a Father 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.

The Holy Cloak in Honor of St Joseph continues to be available with a donation of \$5 or more. Please note on your donation envelope the books that you would like to receive.



IS GOD CALLING YOU TO SERVE OTHERS?

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

The **Servants of Charity** Priests and Brothers, **Daughters of St. Mary of Providence**, Cooperators and hundreds of members of the greater Guanellian family serve over a million brothers and sisters while offering comfort, consolation and support.

There is room for many others; those needing help and those who want to help.

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

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

Shrine of St. Joseph Sacraments and Hours of Devotion

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

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

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

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

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

Confession: Before and after Mass, upon request

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

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