

Triumph of the Heart

JOSEPH OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

Family of Mary

2005 (III) / No. 33

A Ring of Thankfulness

In thankfulness to the brave protector of Christ, I would like... for the 25th anniversary of my pontificate to give my ring to this picture... located in the Carmelite church in Wadowice. May this ring, a sign of bridal love, which will be placed on the hand of St. Joseph in the picture remind all those who honor him that the head of the Holy Family... remained faithful to the call of God until the end...

*From the Vatican on October 16, 2003, the 25th year of my pontificate,
John Paul II*

St. Joseph A Father for Our Time Too

by Fr. Paul Maria Sigl

*In this issue of our missionary magazine,
we would like to tell about a few holy men and women who took St. Joseph
as their personal father and achieved everything through him.*

*This should encourage us to ask the Patron of the Universal Church for help
with our intentions as well. Everything that St. Joseph did 2000 years ago for his son,
he would do today for you and me, and for the mystical body of Christ through
the millennia! St. Pio, giving the blessing one night to his spiritual children from his
cell window, said, "I carry... on my shoulders the weight of the world."
Yet what is true for millions of St. Pio's spiritual children is all the more true for
St. Joseph, the Father of the Church which will one day encompass all nations.*

The icon of the Divine Father

*T*here is not a single word recorded in the gospels from the mouth of St. Joseph. He is "the great man of silence" and perhaps therefore he is totally in the Church's background, close to being forgotten.

The true greatness and beauty of St. Joseph's vocation, in fact, is not so readily seen at first glance because he distinguished himself through virtues which did not draw attention and seemed less significant: modesty, obedi-

ence, ordinary work, hidden service, and all of this in silence and prayer. St. Joseph is more a man of deeds than a man of words. His deeds, more than mere words, speak a distinct language for all generations!

God made a masterpiece of fatherhood from this quiet man because St. Joseph had the unique vocation of being a father for Jesus, the Divine Son. In other words, he had to represent the position of the Divine Father here on

earth. In order to do so, God gave St. Joseph an immeasurably great heart, one which carried God's fatherly love like no other. What an

incomparably great vocation! Kings, apostles and popes in heaven look at him in amazement.

In pain – silence, prayer, trust

During the time of his engagement already, St. Joseph painfully experienced that in this world there is no love without suffering. The gospel reports, *“but before they lived together, she was found with child.”* Is there anything more painful for a man than to realize that his fiancé loves somebody else and is carrying his child? Nobody could help St. Joseph, nobody could clarify this for him. Mary carried the divine mystery in silence and awaited all help from God alone. St. Joseph did as well. In a situation where any other young man would have confronted his bride-to-be, St. Joseph awaited everything from God. A man of trust, he went beyond his limits, counting from then on only in the almightiness of God.

In this situation, which was hopeless from a human point of view, he suffered in silence and prayed full of trust, without accusing anybody! We can learn so much from him for the difficult moments in our relationships or for marital problems. Even in his immeasurable

pain, he always loved Mary and he wanted to let her go so that she would not be put to shame. Then the divine solution he had hoped for was given to him! *“The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’”* (Mt. 1: 20-21) *“When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.”* (Mt. 1: 24-25)

What “Good News”! What a joyful turn of events! He truly had the job of dreams—to be the husband of the Immaculate Conception and virginal father of the Divine Son who, in all eternity, would call Joseph His “father” and “dad”, even now in heaven!

The Lifesaver

St. Joseph also had to learn to be led by God. The moment he received clarity from God, this obedient man acted immediately. This was especially true when Jesus was in deadly danger: *“Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.”* (Mt. 2:14) For the courageous act of rescuing the Holy Family alone, St. Joseph deserves to be called the Patron of the Church! He is not only the protec-

tor of the dying but he also has the God-given task to save lives.

The mother of St. Therese of Lisieux experienced this firsthand. Shortly after the child's baptism, neither she nor the wet nurse could breast-feed the child. Little Therese was dying. The worried mother wrote to her brother, *“I am afraid that she has a digestive disorder. I see the same disquieting signs as in my other children*

who have died. Must I lose this child as well?" The doctors all agreed, only natural breastfeeding would save her life. The baby, however, would not take anything and it seemed her time had come. Her mother wrote about it, "I went up to my room quickly, knelt at the feet of St. Joseph and asked him for the grace that the little one be healed. I don't cry very often, but when I prayed this prayer, I shed many tears. I didn't know whether I should dare to go back downstairs." "Finally, I decided to go. And what did I see? The

baby was drinking vigorously and didn't stop until 1:00 in the afternoon. Then she vomited and sunk down in the arms of the wet nurse like she was dead. Five of us just stood around the baby. A servant cried and I could feel my blood freezing. She was not visibly breathing anymore... but she was lying there so peacefully that I thanked God for letting her fall asleep so gently. After 15 minutes, my little daughter suddenly opened her eyes and began to smile. From that moment on, my child was totally healed."

Adoration and Work

*T*he life of the Holy Family in Nazareth was hidden and ordinary, nearly insignificant. In their home, they did not place any value on recognition from others because the three of them knew that it is not our great deeds that make us valuable before God. The purity of our intentions and the love which we show to people we meet and work with each day are decisive. God's favor rests on these values. They are important for our lives as Christians. Jesus shared this modest life with his parents for 30 years.

More and more Jesus became their teacher. One of the first unbelievable "lessons" took place when the 12-year-old Jesus remained behind in the temple in Jerusalem without having said anything to his parents.

Joseph's favored virtue, his humble readiness to suffer in silence, shined forth here. As a father, he certainly had the right in this painful moment at least to ask for an explanation. And yet he remained silent and let the mother speak. "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them"

(Lk. 2: 48b-50). "His mother kept all these things in her heart." (Lk. 2: 51b).

On the way home, Joseph, in silence and prayer, certainly also pondered in his heart the answer of Jesus. Then he surely understood always better that the life of Jesus was a life totally for the FATHER.

*H*ow happy it must have made Mary and Joseph to have also their God with them in Jesus. After Bethlehem, where not even the stall belonged to them, they had God personally in their midst, and with him they had everything! Therefore, Joseph is an example of a man of adoration. He adored for 30 years because the true temple was not in Jerusalem but in Nazareth. And Joseph lived in this temple. Yet he did not see the radiant son of a king before him, but a boy, a young man who helped him in the shop, serving silently and obediently. Therefore the French Carmelite St. Margaret of the Most Holy Sacrament said, "Joseph had to believe more that the Child Jesus was God than we have to believe when we hold the Holy Eucharist in our hands."

Joseph's workshop was, in fact, the only one in the world where God himself worked carefully and out of love. Watching his son,

Joseph also learned how to do everything out of love for God, to God and with God's strength. Therein lies the greatest value of work! And only in this way will work become prayer. This is actually the deepest reason why St. Joseph is the Patron of Workers.

Our stressful, competition plagued, merit based society should learn from his example. New technology, computerization, perfection,

advertising, efficiency, big contracts... are all good and even necessary, but in the end, they are not decisive. Everything should be done for love of God alone. How much that has been forgotten, even among us Christians! Therefore, the great Jesuit missionary Fr. John Baptist Reuss taught the children to interrupt their school classes often to renew their orientation toward God, "*Everything for love of you Jesus! Everything for You!*"

*W*herever we see fathers on this earth who embrace their children lovingly, we are shown a reflection of the unique love with which Joseph cared for the divine child.

Bridegroom of Our Lady

On quiet nights when the young Premonstratensian Herman (1150-1241) kept watch at the *Steinfeld on the Eifel* monastery and then sank into deep prayer in a corner of the abbey church, he sometimes heard the voice of his heavenly mistress calling to him. This naturally stately man happily followed the invitation of his "rose", as he lovingly called her, and spent the whole night in confident conversation at her feet.

This could not go on for long without having effects. Early on, his noticeably exemplary behavior caused some of Herman's brothers to give him the honorable name "Joseph". This did not seem right at all, however, to this holy priest from Germany. In his modesty, he felt little similarity to the wonderful groom of the Virgin Mary. In fact, the subject displeased him so much that one night he decided that he would accuse the brothers the following day at the monastery's chapter meeting. That same night, however, as he was praying like usual

in a corner of the choir, he saw suddenly before the steps leading up to the high altar the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by two beautiful angels. This pious monk was captivated by the gloriously majestic apparition.

"*To whom shall we wed the Blessed Virgin?*" one angel asked the other.

"*Whom other than the brother here?*" the other one replied.

Turning to Herman, the angel ordered, "*So come closer!*"

He approached shyly and then heard one of the angels say, "*This glorious virgin shall now be married to you.*" Shaken and embarrassed by such an honor, Herman immediately began to list the reasons of his unworthiness and sinfulness—but to no avail!

A short time later, his bride Mary confirmed the addition of the name Joseph in a dream where Herman Joseph saw her again,

this time with baby Jesus, at the stairs before the high altar. She said to him, *“Behold, you have my son. Carry him like my husband Joseph carried him to Egypt. Since you are allowed to carry my divine son in your arms, you shall also have his father’s name and henceforth be called Joseph.”*

Herman Joseph was much loved already in his lifetime by all his brothers and those to whom he ministered. This love and veneration of “Mary’s Groom,” went well beyond the walls of the monastery after his death.

Source: P. Dr. Bernward Meisterjahn SDS,
Szenen aus dem Leben des
hl. Hermann Josef von Steinfeld

*“You are hereby wed to this virgin, as St. Joseph once was,
and with the bride you should also have
the bridegroom’s name, being called Joseph from now on.”*

The Rescuer in Difficult Times

That is what they called Maria Anna Josefa Lindmayr (1657-1726) already during her lifetime. Opportune or not, she urged her compatriots to penance and conversion. “It seemed to me that the people lived without thinking about heaven, hell, God or eternal life. They had not given the first thought about the grave dangers and were quite content with their good lives.” There was peace though only after pledges were collected and the Trinity Church was built in Munich, Germany as she had advised. (See also Triumph of the Heart #8).

*M*aria Anna Josefa also needed a conversion during her youth. She testifies to this in her memoirs where she recalls with her cheerful character her girlhood years: *“I enjoyed everything that was fun... I was not Godless, but I was not pious either. I was not much inclined to virtue, and prayer was uncomfortable for me. The world excited me more than the spiritual, and I was a bit indignant and quite intense by nature.” “And yet from my youth, I always beheld the Blessed Virgin Mary with devotion and love.”* That was decisive for her interior conversion, which took place before she turned 16. *“I passed by the confessional many times before I could overcome myself...*

On the first Saturday of Advent 1672, however, my dearly beloved Mother Mary pulled me into the confessional by force. I want to do something right, I said to Christ.”

“Everyone should go to St. Joseph”, advised Maria Anna countless times when years later many people came looking for help with the most varying needs. She was speaking from personal experience; he answered her prayer in a remarkable way when she was just a girl. You have to smile about how she found her way innerly to St. Joseph.

“From the earliest days of my youth, I had a special intention in which I experienced his help. This suffering had to do with my neck, and I was

very mad that I had to have this suffering.”
This “suffering” though was nothing more than a small blemish, a goiter. With her own love for the truth she wrote, *“I received help from the saintly father Joseph in this vain desire, and because of this help from St. Joseph, a great love for him grew.”*

This love and trust continued to grow when, at the age of 43, she was freed from a life-threatening disease through his intercession. Two years later, he healed her again. This took place when she sought to honor her beloved father Joseph with a 40-day fast of bread and water. To test her humility, her spiritual director ordered her in obedience to eat something. She did it, and became very sick afterwards.

*S*t. Joseph appeared during the night and healed her instantly to show how pleasing both her fasting and her obedience were.

Maria Anna Josefa wrote on March 19, 1713, *“St. Joseph is the greatest protector of God’s Church, a helper for everything and everyone, the Patron of the Poor and the Poor Souls in Purgatory.”* As a holy helper of poor souls, she knew what she was talking about. Poor souls came to her from every country looking for her help. *“Not a night passed in which I would not be visited by them.”*

A few years earlier, Maria Anna Lindmayr had a revelation, *“During prayer, the Heavenly Father explained to me and charged me to hold and treasure St. Joseph above all other saints, entrust everything to him, and recommend his Church to him.”*

The next day, she had another vision where she saw a glorious procession honoring St. Joseph in heaven. So she tried all the more that those on earth would remember his feast day with special solemnity.

Source: Bonifatius Günther OCD, Maria Anna Josefa Lindmayr, Prophetin Gottes, Helferin der Armen Seelen

“In Heaven, there is no Jealousy”

*St. Bernadette from Lourdes (1844-1879)
saw at the grotto in Massabielle 18 visions in 1858 of the “Lady”
who “was so beautiful that you would die to see her again.”
Our Lady led her to St. Joseph who became her favorite saint,
her confidant and greatest friend, and her teacher
in the spiritual life.*

*W*hen Bernadette entered the “Sisters of Charity” in Nevers, France in 1866, she brought with her this love and devotion to St. Joseph. Still, another event would bring this relationship to a totally new depth: the death of her father, Francois Soubirous, whom she loved so much. She cried in the convent for days over him, and, as a chosen

child of Mary, she realized that St. Joseph was her personal father now. She never called him anything other than *“my father Joseph”*. St. Bernadette was sick often in the convent. Her sisters knew that all they had to do to bring their sick sister a little joy was simply to put some fresh flowers in front of the statue of St. Joseph sitting on her nightstand.

When St. Bernadette was not lying in the infirmary herself, she helped there as an assistant nurse. They appreciated her for her goodness and her calming, levelheaded nature. Once, when she was doing her duties for the sick sisters, she said to them mischievously, *“You better behave because I am going to visit my father!”*

“As we looked at her in astonishment,” reported one of the sisters, *“Sr. Bernadette smiled and said, ‘Didn’t you know that now St. Joseph is my father?’”* She hurried away to the garden of the convent, to a small chapel dedicated to St. Joseph, which had become her favorite place to go and pray.

She visited her *“father Joseph”* every day in the chapel and spent practically all her free time there in prayer. One of her sisters questioned a little bit curiously, *“Isn’t it true, sister, that someone can pray well in that chapel?”*

Bernadette responded in child-like way, *“Oh yes! I go there as often as possible.”*

When another sister, Sr. Vincent Garros, asked her how she could remain recollected so long in prayer, St. Bernadette explained to her very simply, *“When you can’t pray, you have to turn to St. Joseph and say, ‘St. Joseph, teach me to pray!’”*

*T*he visionary from Lourdes, who loved hiddenness, unseen service and silence in the convent, found a great example for these virtues not only in Our Lady, but also in St. Joseph. In the day-to-day life for this simple soul, there was never any separation between Mary and Joseph. She did not have to divide her love.

In the year the saint entered the convent, one of her sisters witnessed that. She saw Bernadette praying her novena to the Immaculate Conception, but to her amazement, in front of a statue of St. Joseph. *“You must be distracted sister! You are praying to Our Lady, but kneeling before a statue of St. Joseph!”* Bernadette, with a smile and her fine humor, answered very naturally, *“Oh that doesn’t matter! The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph manage best with one another! And besides, in heaven there is no jealousy!”*

On March 19, 1879, the Feast of St. Joseph, she prayed to the Patron of the Dying incessantly for the grace of a good hour of death. Barely a month later, on April 16, the saint from Lourdes died on a Wednesday, the day which is dedicated to St. Joseph, and they buried her, unlike they had done for any other sister, in the little chapel of St. Joseph where she had prayed so often.

“After Jesus, there is nobody in heaven or on earth so precious to my heart as St. Joseph”

Our Lady to St. Bernadette

Source: René Laurentin et André Doze, *Présence de Saint Joseph chez Bernadette Soubirous*

The Work of St. Joseph

Fr. Dominic Ringeisen (1835-1904), a simple country pastor from the diocese of Augsburg, Germany, had an eye for the needs of his time and a merciful heart for the most helpless, the disabled. In the 19th Century, people were generally ashamed of the so-called “cripples” and “idiots” and kept them hidden in their families, put them in homes for the poor, in the hospital, or in a monastery. Occasionally, the handicapped were locked up in “crazy cages” and tickets were sold for people to come and see them. The decision matured in Fr. Ringeisen therefore, “For the poorest, who are also an image of God, we want to build a home which is fitting for the dignity of man... Each poor and suffering soul should be honored and respected like the crucified Savior in person...

So many to care for, so many times Jesus!”

*F*r. Ringeisen named his first house for the disabled in Ursberg after St. Joseph. Only with trust in his help did he begin such colossal undertakings for his disabled. They were so great that even the Church superiors had little understanding for him. Calm and collected in these moments, Dominic told his friends, “*Everything will be okay, I’m certain.*” And that, even though there was no money in the house!

In situations where it seemed that there was no way out, he often called together the helpers, the sisters, and the young and old disabled residents also so that together they could storm their patron, St. Joseph. Several times it happened that a donation was received at the last second. However, Fr. Ringeisen also did his part! Going out many times to beg, he prayed to St. Joseph and knocked humbly anywhere he thought he might find help. One time, when he was on one of these trips, an older man pressed a package into his hand with the words, “*You need money!*”

In a totally different way, St. Joseph made use of the famous Fr. Kneipp to help Dominic again in his financial need. “*Just this last time,*” begged Dominic. And since the famous “*water doctor*” had the same vocation, he gave his priest friend

the key to the safe on his table and said, “*Yeah, go and take what you absolutely need!*” Kneipp, even though he knew Fr. Ringeisen well, was astounded when he returned and found only an empty safe.

*E*ven in later years, Fr. Ringeisen never tired of saying, “*Every stone in our buildings, every square inch of property we own, every penny in our possession, each heart which beats in our facilities, we have the childlike trust in God through the intercession of St. Joseph to thank.*”

With this lived trust, Fr. Ringeisen was able to settle many debts without directly paying them. It happened, for example, that the Mother Superior for one of the houses of the order Maria Bildhausen showed him the bill for a new stove. Fr. Ringeisen knelt down with the sisters and prayed to St. Joseph. When he stood up, he did not say anything more about paying the bill. “*So what about the stove?*” the superior asked restlessly.

“*You saw what we will do,*” he told her calmly, “*St. Joseph has to worry about it.*” And he cared for it in his own way. No further invoice every came from the company.

Prince Fugger from Kirchheim came once to visit the institution in Ursberg, and, seeing the many buildings, finally said to Fr. Ringeisen, who was showing him around, "Now you have to show me your gold mine though." The founder pointed to the statue of St. Joseph and said, "This is our gold mine." Some days, Fr. Ringeisen knelt before this simple statue of St. Joseph in his office up to 100 times. How often the founder from Ursberg brought claims to St. Joseph. He was so much Fr. Ringeisen's one and only that the word among his fellow priests was, "As long as Fr. Ringeisen is alive, nobody will receive an audience with St. Joseph!"

One priest from his institution smiled, "If Pope Pius IX had known that St. Joseph has so much to do in Ursberg, he certainly would not have chosen him as the Patron of the whole Catholic Church besides!"

"Thank you," were the last words which he wrote out with a shaky hand. Yes, thankfulness was the fine thread woven through his life. In order to give thanks to God, Fr. Ringeisen used St. Joseph as a messenger and he knelt for hours in front of his beloved statue of St. Joseph, not only making requests, but above all also to give thanks.

Source: Kalender der St. Josefskongregation
Ursberg, Ursberger Josefsbote

An Orphanage in New York

Missionary Frances Cabrini (1850-1917), an Italian emigrant to the USA, did invaluable work. Weak by nature and often sick, she nevertheless was always traveling, hurrying from one continent to another, always with big plans. At the same time, she radiated a deep interior life and was a very great mystic.

When Mother Cabrini died in Chicago in 1917, there were 15,000 of her spiritual daughters working in North, Central and South America as well as in Europe. Over 100,000 patients were under the care of her sisters in her hospitals and 5,000 orphans had been brought to her schools and orphanages.

(See Triumph of the Heart #28).

*I*n the summer of 1913, Frances Cabrini was in New York again, with firm plans to set up an orphanage closer to the city than her house in West Park. In her unremitting search for the right place, she passed by a big building one day in the wooded area of Dobbs Ferry. It seemed that it was not for sale since a boys' school was being run there which everyone thought was operating well. In spite of this, Frances wanted to speak with the owner, and it was his son that finally received her. "I would like to purchase this piece of property," she said very directly.

He smiled easily and said, "I'm sorry, sister, the house is not for sale." Frances did not give

in, "And if you would sell it?" "Then my father would certainly want \$100,000 for it." "Such a sum is out of the question for me. However, if you would sell it for less, I am very interested."

After a walk through the school, Mother Cabrini was convinced that it was exactly what she was looking for for her poor orphans. There was a chapel, a gym, a swimming pool, and a big garden to play in.

In parting, the young man still believed, "You will have to look somewhere else. My father is not interested in selling."

Frances responded friendly, but resolutely, "I can leave you my card though, can't I, in case you..." "I really believe that my father is not

selling,” was his final word.

On leaving the garden, Frances planted a medal of St. Joseph in a flower bed. She bent over quickly, like she was going to tie her shoe, and she stuck the medal in the soft dirt, just a moments work.

As she took her seat in the wagon with her sisters, she said with confidence, “*You’ll see, St. Joseph will hear our prayer!*”

A few days later, in fact, the school owner wrote that she should make him an offer, and she was able to buy the whole thing.

Source: Theodore Maynard,
Francesca Cabrini, *Leben und Sendung*

Blessed Brother André

On Mount Royal in Montreal is the largest shrine to St. Joseph in the world, and nearly 2 million people visit it each year from every religion.

From January 6-12, 1937, in a few short days, one million pilgrims climbed up the mountain in silence, and passed by the coffin of Br. André to pay their last respects to this humble lay brother and great miracle worker.

(See Triumph of the Heart #17)

Born in St. Grégoire d’Iberville near Montreal, Canada in 1845, Alfred Bessette grew up in a large family, but he became an orphan already at the age of 12. They divided his brothers and sisters and the sickly Alfred was sent to his aunt and uncle. The most precious thing which his mother left him was a living faith, so much so, that the local pastor, Andreas Provençal, noticed it immediately. He welcomed this youngster and deepened in him his love for the Eucharistic Lord.

The priest also encouraged him to invoke the father of Jesus and the Protector of Canada, “*He will hear and bless you! One day you will thank him for many gifts because St. Joseph is all-powerful before Our Lord!*” This seed fell on good ground in Alfred’s soul and those who visited him found him always more frequently in the parish church praying before the nice statue of St. Joseph.

Already at the age of 12, Alfred had to begin earning his own living. One after the other, he tried his hand as a cobbler, a baker, a farmhand and a blacksmith. His weak health suffered greatly from this and at the age of 15, he developed a stomach problem which would bother

him for the rest of his life.

It was in this time, however, that Alfred started a regulated spiritual life for himself. He prayed the Stations of the Cross, several Rosaries a day and, during his work, had trusting conversations with St. Joseph, to whom he entrusted all his concerns.

At the age of 20, as he unsuccessfully tried his luck as an immigranr worker in the USA, St. Joseph was his constant companion and best friend. Alfred, who suffered a lot from homesickness, prayed six months to St. Joseph for clarity before he took the advice of Fr. Provençal and returned to Canada.

“*Did you think about it?*” Fr. Provençal asked. “*Yes, Father, I have decided to become a brother.*” “*I knew that St. Joseph would enlighten you.*”

The two of them knelt down before the statue of St. Joseph in the church and thanked him for the great grace of his vocation. Before entering the Congregation of the Holy Cross, which earlier had been known as the Brothers of St. Joseph, Alfred worked as a servant. Because he told his friends so much about St. Joseph, they all joyfully called him “*St. Joseph’s fool*”.

"I am sending a saint to your community!" Fr. Provencal wrote to the superior in Montreal who was able to see for himself when Alfred Bessette was accepted into the novitiate in the fall of 1870. In thankfulness for his parish priest back home, Alfred asked to take the name Br. André.

When they did not want to let him make his profession after one year because of his weak constitution, he promised St. Joseph in his distress to build him a great shrine if he would not be sent away from the monastery. In this time, Bishop Bourget paid a visit, and the sick novice admitted modestly his inner need. He explained that he was ready to do the most

simple jobs in the monastery if only he would be allowed to stay there as a brother. He told the bishop about his great love to St. Joseph and his promise to build a huge basilica for him. *"Do you believe, Your Grace, that St. Joseph would allow this pledge to go unrealized and that I would have to give up my vocation?"*

The bishop, also a great devotee of St. Joseph, who had actually had the Holy Cross fathers come over from France and entrusted to them the responsibility to build a shrine to St. Joseph, was completely surprised at this lay brother, who had the same wish as he did. He promised the 26-year-old, *"Do not worry my son, you will be allowed to make your vows."*

Wonderful Healing

"At the end of my novitiate, the superior made me the porter... and there I have remained for 40 years without budging!" Br. André reported later with fine humor. In fact, he remained most of the next 15 years in a tight space at the door of the College of Notre Dame, always ready to help and compassionate toward teachers, parents and students. Everybody liked him, the patient, little brother who did not know how to read or write; they often took advantage of his goodness and his brothers showed him very little respect. Without complaining, Br. André took on all the additional jobs as well: ringing the morning bells, helping in the laundry room, cutting the students hair and caring for the sick. Late in the evening, they often saw him still scrubbing the lecture rooms and the hallways, followed by the Stations of the Cross around midnight in the chapel and then meditating the hidden and forgotten life of St. Joseph before his statue.

In March 1885, the monastery administrator complained to Br. André that his sick leg was becoming always worse. *"It seems like I will not even be able to come down to the chapel for*

the Feast of St. Joseph. I regret that very much!" "Father, there is a very simple solution. With great trust, pray a novena to St. Joseph! There are exactly nine days left and you will be healed on his feast and be able to come to the chapel," Br. André promised with great certainty.

"You expect nothing less than a miracle from St. Joseph, dear brother?"

"So it is! I will pray a novena with you, if it is okay."

On March 19, the healed priest, to the astonishment of everyone, was able to celebrate the Holy Mass. A short time later, Br. André rubbed a medal of St. Joseph on the neck of a student sick with diphtheria and finally encouraged the "lazy-head" out of bed, telling him that he was really healthy.

After that, the infirmary was beyond capacity with 40 smallpox patients, all battling death. When they could no longer care for them, Br. André knelt down in the middle of the room and begged St. Joseph in a loud voice for their healing. They all recovered and the first rumors of his miracles began to spread. Soon thereaf-

ter, the sick began to besiege his door and the influx of those seeking help never again subsided.

The reluctant superior forbid the “*charlatan and quack*,” from receiving sick people at the house and assigned him to a drafty, deserted streetcar station. Although the mistrust, mockery and hostility hurt Br. André deeply, he never complained but rather reciprocated in divine ways. This was also the case with Joseph Charette, one of his greatest opponents. He not only healed his wife who was deathly ill, but also his medical colleague, a severely disabled internist from Montreal. Everything happened nearly unnoticed, like always.

“Do you believe that St. Joseph can work this miracle through his foster son?”

“Yes.”

“Then go! Leave your crutches at the stairs.”

The internist went and laid down his crutches in front of the statue of St. Joseph. He explained to his skeptical colleague, “*You make fun of this simple brother. Now you see someone miraculously healed by him!*”

Br. André healed without many words, without great gestures, sometimes from a distance or with just a glance, other times with a little oil or a medal of St. Joseph rubbed on a sick person.

He made some people go to confession first and change their lifestyle. He never tired of repeating, “*How dumb the people are to think that Br. André works the miracles! I have no power. I am not the one who heals but St. Joseph. If you did not trust in him, you would not be healed!*”

The Basilica of St. Joseph

How many sacrifices Br. André had to make before the largest shrine to St. Joseph in the world emerged little by little on the Mount Royal! To his joy, the first little oratory was consecrated in 1904, and at the age of 60, Br. André moved in permanently.

Some days, he received as many as 700 visitors, forgetting occasionally his modest meals of milk and moistened bread crusts. He did not sleep much at night, but rather prayed for a long time. Some people even saw a bright light around him. He simply thought, “*So many people have urgently entrusted themselves to my prayer. I must beg for so many conversions, healings and graces! I would also like to mention those who requested prayer by name and I cannot do that when I am sleeping!*”

Br. André founded the “*Fraternity of St. Joseph*” and the magazine “*The Annals of St. Joseph*” to finance construction of the basilica. Even at the age of 85, he undertook the last of his extensive

begging journeys to the cities in America. His arrival was always accompanied by enthusiastic crowds, many photographers and headlines, because each time sensational healings took place. “*Had it not been necessary, I would not have traveled a single mile!*” Br. André groaned. The shell of the church was finished in 1936 and the continuation of the construction was ensured. “*I am no longer needed, it is time for me to go,*” he said peacefully. A short time later, at the beginning of January 1937, the 91-year-old man lay on his deathbed in the hospital. “*The great merciful God comes!*” he whispered. He moaned with great pain in the end, “*How much I suffer, my God, how much I suffer.*” One priest asked why he did not ask St. Joseph to heal him. “*I cannot do anything for myself. Therefore the great saint did that much more for me,*” he answered calmly. His last words were, “*Mary, my good mother and the mother of my Redeemer! Be gracious to me and stand by me!*” He sighed, “*St. Joseph,*” and died. It was January 6, 1937, the first Wednesday of the New Year.

The Burglary

On the night of March 16, 1973, the urn with the embalmed heart of Br. André was stolen from the reliquary. They must have been professionals because they broke through two metal doors with several locks and blew up a steel armature unnoticed. The press reported everywhere about the sensational theft and many prayers were offered for the recovery of the venerated relics. Nearly two years passed until December 21, 1974, when police received an anonymous phone call with the tip that they might find something interesting in the cellar of a rented house near the center of Montreal.

In the cellar at the address given, they did, in fact, discover a wood box containing the carefully wrapped, sealed-glass urn with the heart of Br. André. The precious relic, with the unbroken seal of the Archbishop of Montreal on it, was intact. It was returned promptly to St. Joseph's basilica for veneration. The unexplained robbery and recovery made headlines anew throughout Canada and was even reported in the USA and Europe. Through this event, many heard for the first time about the shrine of St. Joseph and about Br. André.

Source: Josef Ludwig Sattel FMS, St. Josef, der Helfer und Tröster und sein Diener Bruder Andreas, Verlag Sigfried Hacker, Gröbenzell

"He is the Greatest Saint"

With Mary Teresa Tauscher (1855-1938), foundress of the worldwide congregation of the Carmelites of the Divine Heart of Jesus, a very impressive personality will be beatified this year. Anne Mary, as she was baptized, was the oldest of eight daughters of a strict Lutheran pastor, Traugott Tauscher. God guided this soul, shy from her childhood on, from Protestantism to the Catholic Church through reading the sacred scripture and contemplating religious art in museums.

Through her conversion at age 38, Mary Teresa lost not only her position at a Protestant nursing home in Cologne, Germany, but, to her dismay, could not even return to her parents' house. In this time of incredible uncertainty, she discovered her love to St. Joseph. She wrote, "Now I learn a little bit what it means to live in poverty and need because although I still had an apartment and food, this poverty was often very oppressive and humiliating. It would become a great blessing for me, however, because it led me to St. Joseph. The words of my father, 'How can anybody pray to such a stranger?' sank deep into my heart. Like a seed, my great, inner, trusting love for

him sprouted, yes, tied me with childlike devotion to this faithful, fatherly heart, and many thousand times holy father Joseph proved his love and protection to me."

"Isn't it natural if I love and honor Mary as my mother, that I love and honor St. Joseph as my father and... that I ask him to care for me as a father like he once cared for the Child Jesus?"
"Truly, what better and what more holy father could we ask for? It is unimaginable that God could refuse a request of St. Joseph!" one can read in the notes of Mother Mary Teresa to her spiritual daughters. "He has never let me ask in vain."

"As far as I can remember, I was five years old

when I received a great grace. I was asleep, but it was unforgettable. In our living room, I saw the Divine Savior surrounded by many children. His look, his love and his indescribable goodness inflamed in my heart a fire of divine love... and awoke in me the desire that all children love Our Savior like I did."

*A*s an adult, Mary Teresa learned in Berlin about the great misery of the children who grow up on the streets or who are offered up for adoption in the newspapers. In August 1891, she rented a shabby two-bedroom apartment for three children, a caretaker and a girl. She had no idea that this would be the cradle of the congregation. It was very simple, this first "St. Joseph's Home".

Mother Mary Teresa began her work with trust in St. Joseph alone. "I came to Berlin without any money, and there my enemies triumphed in that I failed in this complex undertaking, I mean financially. My holy father Joseph, however, did

not allow me to be mistreated... and I was able to settle all accounts." "Under his protection, I was able, practically without means, to set up not only a home for the poor children, but, led by divine providence, to continue on from town to town, country to country and even to found some convents and homes of St. Joseph. Beginning with the first St. Joseph's Home in Berlin, I overturned the concerns of buying and building to the Divine Child and laid the concerns for the support of the continually growing Carmel family in the hands of holy father Joseph."

"Thanks to his powerful help and intercession... this work, in spite of ragging storms, grew continually and became always more firmly planted, and not only the work but the sisters as well." "I would also like to mention one of the miracles through his intercession, that with the sparse food everyone remained not only healthy and not only content, but rather cheerful and happy."

Source: Maria Teresa Tauscher vom hl. Josef, Selbstbiographie, herausgegeben von den Karmelitinnen des Göttlichen Herzens Jesu

"To be a Poor Laborer..."

This year the Catholic Church will also beatify Count Charles from Foucauld (1859-1916), an extravagant aristocrat from France, who, before his conversion was an officer and a socialite, led a very active, yet unfulfilling, life of luxury. In his struggles and searching he complained, "I search for the light, but I don't find it." Eventually he found what he was really looking for—he became a priest and "a hermit with an open door" in the Algerian desert with the poorest, most forgotten people.

As a wandering missionary, he worked among the Muslims, faithful to his daily resolution, "Live like you would have to die today a martyr." Through his "apostolate of goodness", he became "the brother of all people" and sealed his extraordinary vocation in a testimony of blood.

*T*his ascetic of the desert was prepared by God a long time for his mission. Three years after his conversion, the Count of Foucauld entered the Trappists in 1890, where he shared the poor and hard life of a monk for six years. Yet he felt always more strongly the inner call to follow Jesus in the hidden, contemplative life of the Holy Family in Nazareth. With the

permission of his superior, he left the Trappists and began a new life on March 10, 1897, in the hometown of Jesus. It was in the month of St. Joseph and Charles wrote about it, "On the first Wednesday that I spend here, permit me, my God, through the intercession of St. Joseph, to become a servant in the convent of St. Clare." From that moment on, he led a lonely,

uneventful life of work, detachment and prayer as an unknown servant in the Clarissan convent. "Throughout the day during work and at

night in prayer, I found completely what I... was seeking and striving for. God has very obviously prepared this place in his Nazareth for me."

...*So should your life be*"

*B*eautiful meditations and interior conversations with Jesus, which Charles of Foucauld wrote down during the three years he was in the Holy Land, give an insight into the depths of this soul.

"Tell me, my God, in what seclusion I shall live!" Jesus answered, "In the same which I lived during my life... My mother and St. Joseph both had a life of perfection, both chose virginity, and they lived in the world as if they weren't of the world.... They were two laborers.... When I came into their lives, I came into this totally supernatural domestic life where days were passed in perpetual meditation, in fasting, in prayer and in work guided by God.

These souls who lived this life, who were more like brother and sister than spouses, understood how to establish their life off to the side, totally alone, totally secluded in this little Nazareth....

"I, who breathed this love of seclusion in them... did not want it any other way. I entered this hidden, secluded, lonely life and immersed myself with them in it... So should your life be... recollection, silence, peace and contact with God in every moment of the day."

Source: Charles de Foucauld, *Die geistlichen Schriften*, 1963 Herod Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft m. b. H. Wien

Called for Heaven!

*From Scherbakty, Kazakhstan, we tell you, dear benefactors,
the touching story of a young man
who despite his indescribable pain could still say,
"the body is only a thing, it is the soul that matters.
The soul must be pure. All this had to come, otherwise
I never would have found the Church and never learned to pray."*

*I*t all began in November 2003. A nurse called and asked us to please come to the hospital. A man was lying there with a severe illness, and in his despair had cried out, "If somebody could just come from the church and pray with me and sing a few songs for me!"

We left immediately for the hospital. What we found in the poor little room moved us

deeply—a totally emaciated man with a terrible skin disease. His fingers and joints were bent and his knee was swollen. The whole bed was full of flakes of skin which had fallen off his body. He poured out his heart to us and told us all his problems. His eyes told the story and you could see it from his crumpled body covered with festering wounds.

The patient's name was Jura. He had a bad accident two years ago. The result was nerve trauma, a terrible skin disease, and a distortion of the joints. Through this suffering, and because his wife had left him besides, his heart was like that of a child—open for God and grace.

Still not baptized at the age of 32, we taught Jura how to pray the Rosary. How beautiful it always was then to see him praying—his eyes closed, the Rosary pressed to his heart. We could only marvel at how grace and prayer transformed him in such a short time! Even though Jura knew almost nothing about Jesus and Mary, he believed like a child and knew God initially only with the “knowledge of the heart”. When we came again to visit him, he told us full of conviction, *“I understood something. I always thought, ‘Why did God punish me?’ But I do not think that way anymore! The body is only a thing, it is the soul that matters. The soul must be pure! All this had to come, otherwise I never would have found the Church and never learned to pray.”*

The medicine and care were insufficient. So Jura suffered unspeakable pain, especially during the long nights, with his immobile, stiff body, full of bedsores. He soon found the best medicine though, “At night, when I cannot sleep because of the pain, I begin right away to pray. Then for me it is as if I am no longer in the world. I don't feel the pain any more. No, God never leaves me alone! I feel him so close to me when I pray. I know he is right next to me.” With that he opened his heart to us.

In his little room, there were two other old iron beds; there was not any more space than that. These beds were surely for those whom they expected to die. And so Jura, during the three months he was in this room, saw three other patients die before his eyes. This helped him to find his mission, “I prayed for them all the time,” he told us, when the next person died in the room. One of the three was even baptized before he died.

When his condition improved a little, Jura was released, and he spent the last months on his way of the Cross at home. Because of the family problems there, his condition turned again quickly for the worse. We visited him regularly, to pray with him and to tell him about God. Already in the hospital, he had told us how much he wished to be baptized. Naturally, life wants to live and so he always said, *“When I get better, I will go to church and I would like to be baptized.”*

However, his church had to be his sickbed. His pains intensified; his knee swelled more and more and became stiff. Then the big day came when Jura could be baptized by Fr. Bonaventura, in his room instead of in the church as he had always desired. Heaven had selected a wonderful feast though, March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph. Jura chose Joseph as his baptismal name. Could he have picked a better protector than the Patron of the Dying? He would go home soon.

Since he did not receive the care and food he needed at home, Jura asked us to bring him to the sanatorium. It was, so to say, his last stretch to Golgotha when we brought him there the next day. We are not talking about a good sanatorium in the West, transportation in an ambulance and smooth roads. We could not give our Jura Joseph this comfort even though we really wanted to. We constructed a soft bed from two mattresses in our van so that the drive over the pothole-filled streets would not be too painful for him. One of our sisters, a nurse, did everything she could medically to prepare him for the trip. Still, it hurt him so much just to be carried out of the house by our brothers and, with great effort, laid on the mattresses. Because of his swollen knee, which bled constantly, it was almost impossible to lift him normally. After a two-hour drive, we arrived at the destination. Despite the paperwork Jura had for the sanatorium, they were not expecting him.

It was lunchtime, so there was not a doctor to be found in the whole hospital. We had to lay the poor man on the ground with the mattresses and wait two hours until the midday pause was over. A good old woman brought Jura a little bit of soup to strengthen him. When the doctors returned, they stood around him staring as if he was the object of some sort of show. It would have reminded you of the tenth station of the Cross.

The worst was yet to come—they did not want to accept him! They even wanted x-rays still,

which meant Jura would have to be driven again somewhere else in the van. This, besides the fact that poor Jura could not even stand up. Still, it was Jura's desire to receive finally better care. God helped and they accepted him. However, it was in no way as if a "place" was ready for him. Our brothers had to assemble his bed and the sisters put on the sheets for him that we had brought with us. How heavy it was for Jura to be in this position! His family did not want him and it was even a fight at the sanatorium before they accepted him.

To Heaven in the Hands of St. Joseph

*I*n this abandonment and full of desire for a permanent home, he sighed, "If only God would bring me quickly home!"

His prayer was heard that very night. It was the first Wednesday after his baptism, the day of St. Joseph. When we heard of Jura's trip home, our hearts were filled with consolation and quiet joy. When we thought about him on the day of his baptism, we remembered a man who was through and through cleansed and healed through suffering and baptism. And now he was in heaven!

Jura Joseph's funeral was on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation. One of our missionary sisters asked spontaneously during morning prayer this day that he help them find a passage in sacred scripture. They turned to him with the following words, "Jura, you don't have to suffer anymore and are you not already in heaven? Give us a nice passage from scripture." Then they opened the Bible. They are convinced that he gave them this passage from the Letter to the Romans which could not have described his life more beautifully.

*How can we who died to sin still live in it?
Do you not know that all of us
who have been baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?*

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
we too might walk in newness of life.*

*For if we have been united with him in a death like his,
we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."*

Romans 6: 2-5

*I cannot imagine anything more beautiful
than the Child Jesus in the arms of St. Joseph,
how, with a soft child's voice,
he called him father
and gave him a child's hug.*

*He is the saint of our hearts,
the father of my life and my love!*

St. Francis de Sales