

make his presence felt on earth. Both are quiet flames burning vigorously before the Lord asking Him to be with them and others in the midst of their suffering. They are warm, strong flames of hope that light up the chapel and bring the warmth of faith into the lives of others.

At the beginning of January, the Church remembers the small doorkeeper whose faith helped furnish the Church with the largest shrine to St. Joseph in the world sitting atop Mount Royal in Montreal. His faith and his prayer taught so many who came to visit him how to pray. He healed so many physically as is seen by all of the canes and crutches they left him as a thank you since they no longer were in need of them, but I can only imagine how many he also healed spiritually. While I was not around to meet him in person during his lifetime, his example continues to teach me both how to pray and how to be a Holy Cross religious.

Having been blessed with that summer to pray with some of the people who come to St. Joseph's Oratory and feel the intensity of their prayers in the votive chapel, I now know how to pray better and how to hope more firmly. Their constant desire for God in their lives and in the world has taught me how to pray.

Deacon Bryan Williams, C.S.C., took his Final Vows with the Congregation of Holy Cross on August 25, 2018, and was ordained a transitional deacon the next day. Deacon Williams has been assigned to serve in Campus Ministry at Stonehill College. His priestly Ordination is scheduled for the spring of 2019. He is originally from Houston, Texas.



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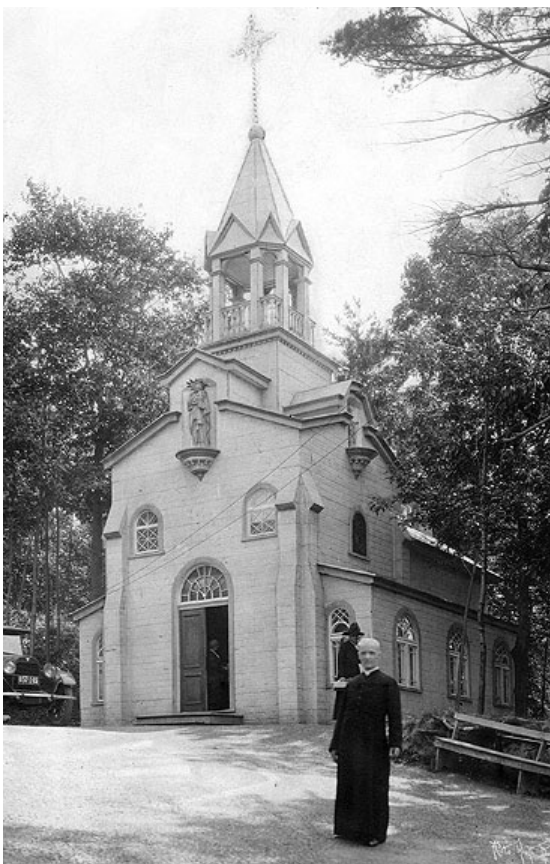


MONTHLY REFLECTION SERIES

Teach Me How to Pray

by Deacon Bryan Williams, C.S.C.

Throughout formation at Moreau Seminary, we heard of the large crowds that would wait hours to simply have five minutes to visit with Br. André. Whether they were on crutches, had cancer, their child could not speak, or they were looking for work, they all traveled to the Oratory in pilgrimage to find hope. Hope that this sickness or difficulty was not all that there was in life. Hope that God would hear and answer their prayers. Amazingly, Br. André would pray with them, rub oil on their wound while praying, or tell them how to ask for St. Joseph's intercession.



Then, he himself would go off and pray to St. Joseph for long periods of time for them and their intentions. At the end of his life, over one million people waited in the early January cold to file past his casket at the Oratory to pay their respects to the man who had healed them, prayed with them, and given them so much hope.

Today, the brothers and priests of Holy Cross continue to pray with and for the pilgrims who come to St. Joseph's Oratory. Assisting the priest in the Blessing Office with receiving Mass intentions and praying with some of the pilgrims during the summer last year, I glimpsed what I imagine Br. André and St. Joseph continue to hear. The lady with cancer, the man who recently lost his job, the person with a deformed leg, the struggling marriage, the couple who finally have the opportunity to come across the world or from across town to make pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory, the lady who comes every day from Montreal to pray. All of them yearn for God to touch their lives, to heal them and their loved ones. It is humbling to see the strength of the hope that so many people have in the midst of their suffering, and it gives me hope in the work that I do and in the encounters that I have with others.

Walking further down the hall into the votive chapel where up to 10,000 candles are lit at the feet of St. Joseph, the heat from the candles is overbearing. You can feel the weight of the devotion

and desire for God of the pilgrims who come from all over the world. They cry out to God because they know that He will hear their prayer, for it is their prayer that is kept burning before St. Joseph in

“Prayer is a fervent and continuous desire.”

that chapel. Each time I walk through that room, illumined with the light of those candles lit by the thousands of pilgrims who pass through, the same pilgrims who keep the light of faith strongly burning in their hearts and in the hearts of those around them, I am reminded that I am on sacred ground. Hope burns brightly in that space with the confidence that she will be heard.

Blessed Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, of which Br. André was a member, writes in his Exercises of 1858, “Prayer is a fervent and continuous desire.” It is the soul reaching out to touch and to be with God. It is the monk sitting in quiet meditation, and it is the pilgrim petitioning St. Joseph's intercession at St. Joseph's Oratory. Both come longing for God in their lives and in the lives of others, yearning and hoping that God