

CHOICES

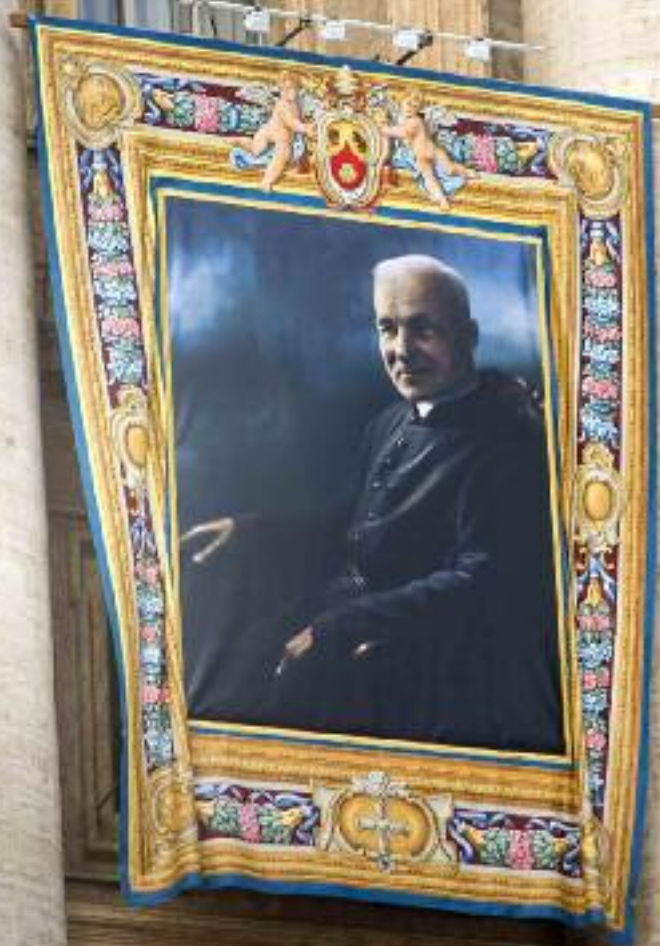
FROM THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

VOLUME 32, ISSUE 1



IN THIS ISSUE:

Reflections On
St. André



Celebrating a Saint



Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C. and Fr. Drew Gawrych, C.S.C. stand ready to offer guidance as you discern God's call.

There really is no greater honor in this world for a Catholic than to have one's image displayed on the front of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and to be named a saint by the Pope. We are not a people who are called to seek worldly honors, yet this honor acknowledges the fact that one of our fellow pilgrims in faith has reached the true goal to which we each aspire: communion with God in Heaven.

This past October, along with five others, one of our own brothers in Holy Cross was honored in this way. Saint André Bessette of Montreal, Canada, was lifted up by the Church as an example of a life of faith and acknowledged as one among the heavenly communion of saints. Part of the beauty of seeing him honored in such a way was to know about his humble beginnings and to know that such an honor is not what he sought after in his life. His desire was to give his life in humble service to the Lord and to the care of the afflicted. He ended up in the spotlight not because he desired it but because it served the Lord's purpose as a way to continue André's work of leading people to open the doors of their hearts to Saint Joseph and to the Lord. Another beautiful aspect of the celebration was to realize that it was not just members of the Congregation of Holy Cross there to celebrate his canonization. There were men and women from around the world who came to participate in the celebration as well. He is no longer just one of our own; Saint André is now a patron and witness for the Universal Church.

Saint André is a powerful witness to how institutions in the Church such as the Congregation of Holy Cross can serve to draw us from our particular situation into service and participation in the Universal Body of Christ. In this issue of CHOICES we hope to carry on the celebration of Saint André Bessette by sharing some of the images surrounding his canonization as well as reflections on how his life and work continue to reach many through the ministry of Holy Cross.

If you are seeking to find the way in which you are being called to move out of your particular situation and into service in the Church, know that you are welcome to be in touch with us.

In Holy Cross,
Fr. James T. Gallagher, C.S.C.
Director, Office of Vocations

A SAINT FOR OUR TIMES

André Bessette was canonized on October 17, 2010, in Rome, the first member of the Congregation of Holy Cross to be recognized as a saint. During his lifetime, Saint André was widely acclaimed, not just because of the Oratory he founded in Montreal and the miracles that happened there, but also for his personal holiness and spiritual wisdom.

André was beatified (named 'Blessed' - the last step before being named a saint) by Pope John Paul II in 1982. In his beatification homily, the Pope said, "A daily crowd of the sick, the afflicted, the poor of all kinds—those who were handicapped or wounded by life—came to him. They found in his presence a welcome ear, comfort and faith in God. Do not the poor of today have as much need of such love, of such hope, of such education in prayer?"

The legacy of André's saintliness can be seen today in the life and ministry of the Congregation of Holy Cross. André House in Phoenix, Arizona, continues his ministry of bringing hope to the poor as a soup kitchen and drop-in center, offering services like showers and a clothing closet for the homeless. The Brother André Clinic in Peru provides a range of medical services and personal attention to people who would otherwise be unable to afford such care. And thousands of pilgrims continue to come to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, seeking the prayers of St. Joseph and St. André. Those are but a few examples of the many works and ministries throughout the world that draw their example from the ministry of Saint André.

God has clearly used this humble Holy Cross brother to lead many others to a greater holiness. And he can do the same for us.



GOD'S BLESSINGS

By Br. Richard Armstrong, C.S.C.

This is a story about God's blessing for all His children, and their perceived response. Throughout my twenty-three years of ministry at André House in Phoenix, Arizona, I have been awestruck by the answer I receive when I ask our guests, "How are you?" The overwhelming answer is - "blessed." My experience at André House tells me that many of these people have been victims of discrimination, violence and under employment or unemployment. Many have in the past, or presently, suffer the effects of alcoholism and drug addiction, and other negative "powers" that affect their lives.



Through their daily efforts of responding to God's blessings, they often struggle. We, too, are blessed by our Father. Like the poor and homeless people who come to André House, we are called to respond in actions of love every day.

Saint André's life is the embodiment of a person responding to God's blessing. He suffered disappointment and the pain of rejection when his application to become a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross was rejected. Later, through the influence of the bishop, he was accepted into the Congregation. In the eyes of the world, being a doorkeeper was not a job of status. Just think, when was the last time you noticed or remembered a

The Office of Vocations offers a range of retreats for high school, college, and post-graduate students who are considering a vocation to religious life. Learn more at:

holycrossvocations.org

doorkeeper? But as a result of his faithfulness to God's call, sharing God's blessings with others, Br. André was canonized by the Church.

There have been many times in my life that I have struggled to recognize God's blessing and gifts. I often feel powerless and wonder what my place is in God's plan. As I sat in St. Peter's Square on October 17, I thanked God for the example of Saint André's life. His life demonstrates that we can make a difference in the world if we act faithfully to God's call. I pray that each of us will respond to God's blessings, by living a life that is marked with actions of love and respect for humankind.

Brother Armstrong, C.S.C., has been working at André House for 23 years. The canonization of Saint André comes as André House enters its 27th year of ministering to those in need with transitional houses, and a hospitality center where they serve over 600 meals a night, offer showers, laundry, clothing, blankets and many other services.

GETTING TO KNOW SAINT ANDRÉ

By Mary Rose Bacani

In late April 2010, when I was asked to work on a documentary on the life and legacy of Brother André Bessette, all I knew of André and Holy Cross was that he built Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montreal.

Barely six months later, our team at Salt + Light Television had finished two documentaries on Br. André, hosted and aired live coverage of his Canonization Mass on October 17, and devoted entire episodes of several programs to him and his life.

After six months of living and breathing Br. André, I can say this much: what I know of the mind and heart of Br. André comes from the members and affiliates of Holy Cross whom I met.

Br. Fernand Bessette is a distant relative of Br. André and a brother of the Canadian Province for the Congregation of Holy Cross. He taught me that Br. André adds compassion to the mission of Holy Cross - a heart that is open to others. A heart that is open to others listens to the suffering of others and carries that suffering with them. In a sense, Br. André's message is particularly important for us who live in a technological age of efficiency. Sometimes, the best way to be there for people is the old-fashioned way of physically being with them and listening. Br. Fernand opened to me the significance of the Holy Cross motto, "Hail the Cross, our only Hope". The motto of Holy Cross is

to love with Christ's love, which is a sacrificial love. Br. Fernand talked about how Br. André would do his Way of the Cross in two ways - the devotion itself and the mission. Br. André did his Way of the Cross whenever he listened to people's sufferings and embraced their crosses with them.



In addition to filming in Montreal, I visited three places in the United States during the course of the production: Portland, Oregon; Notre Dame, Indiana; and Manchester, New Hampshire. In all three locations, I learned an important lesson about education. First of all, Br. André, a man with very little education, is being held up by Holy Cross as a role model for educators in the faith. How can that be? Fr. Edwin Obermiller of the Indiana Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross said something very profound: "Br. André never had a formal education...he had many blessings that were given to him in his personality, his humility, his prayer. It allowed him to be able to teach, no better or worse than any of our Holy Cross religious who have a PhD." Other priests, sisters, and lay collaborators of Holy Cross I talked to in the United States said similar things. Sr. Carol Descoteaux, former regional leader of the Sisters of Holy Cross in the US Region, said, with tears in her eyes, "I'm university-schooled, I have a Doctorate in Theology, and yet I look to Br. André to inspire me at the level of the heart."

Stories and photographs from the United States and abroad are shared on the Holy Cross Blog. Check it out:

cscpriestsandbrothers.blogspot.com

It is truly wonderful to see how Br. André reminds a society that values credentials above the human person, that all you really need to make an impact is who you are. You just need to surrender all you are and all you have to God, and He will make of your life a miracle.

Saint André, pray for us!

Mary Rose Bacani is a producer with Salt + Light Catholic Media Foundation, a charitable organization devoted to spreading the light of Christ to the world through media. Under the direction of Fr. Thomas Rosica, CSB, CEO of Salt + Light, Mary Rose spearheaded the production of God's Doorkeeper, a documentary on the life and legacy of Br. André. For more information on the documentary or to purchase a copy, visit www.saltandlighttv.org/brotherandre.

ENTERTAINING ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING IT

By Rev. Daniel J. Issing, C.S.C.

The canonization of Brother André Bessette has led me to consider doorkeeping in my own life.

I teach theology at King's College. I suppose, like every college professor, I keep the gate of socioeconomic mobility. I am reminded of this whenever students lament hard work or a low grade by pointing out that theology is just a core course they are required to take. The assumption of these students, who are frankly not many in number, is that theology is something to put up with and should not interfere with accounting exams and grade point averages. I am never happy to see theology so minimalized, learning so instrumentalized, and my vocation reduced to grade-keeping.

Recently, Notre Dame theologian Larry Cunningham began a lecture at King's in which he juxtaposed the well-educated and learned founder of Holy Cross, Blessed Basil Moreau, and the barely literate Saint André. I found myself wondering if my education had left me unable to resonate with André's porter duties at Notre Dame College in Montreal. Once Cunningham described the biblical metaphor of the door and the one who watches it, that doubt left me. No doubt, this was Cunningham's intent. We are all doorkeepers of some sort. The issue is whether we understand this simple and daily task as the matter of Christian faith. As the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (13:2).





Canadian Pilgrim
St. Peter's Square
Vatican City, Italy



Prayer Vigil
Sant' Andrea della Valle
Rome, Italy



Mass of Thanksgiving
Sant' Andrea della Valle
Rome, Italy



Canonization
St. Peter's Square
Vatican City, Italy

A professor's classroom can become a revolving door of the same old lectures, bad jokes, and frustration at repeated student errors of grammar year after year. But it is also true that the classroom can be a door into one's future, and not simply or primarily a future of socioeconomic success. One good lecture on Augustine and one studied and plotted examination of Aquinas can stir a multitude of threshold climbs up wisdom's mountaintop seeing into the mystery of life. It is not a stretch to say that the theology professor, who teaches God, is a doorkeeper of a particular sort at the threshold of God's house.



Saint André's example, then, is far from irrelevant to the teacher of theology. Many arrive at the door of today's university seeking something rather practical just as they did at Notre Dame College in Montreal in the early 1900s. They seek a better future. André reminds me that the classroom is all about hospitality to strangers, whether these strangers are ideas, cultures, beliefs, persons, or God. I am called to surprise my students. I am called to invite them to see and cross over thresholds of human experience that will indeed change them.

Teaching in the Saint André tradition of hospitable doorkeeping is "the simple task," to use Larry Cunningham's words, "of being in a humble place and extending a hand to those who come to the door," whether of the classroom or inside the hearts and minds of my students - those gracious thresh-

"It is with the smallest brushes that the artist paints the most beautiful pictures."



"How good the Good God is! He really watches over us."

- Saint André

olds of life at which, by the grace of God, I stand and serve.

Rev. Daniel J. Issing, C.S.C., is Assistant Professor of Theology at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Previously he served as Director of Campus Ministry at Stonehill College, where he was also an assistant professor in Interdepartmental Studies.

GOD IS LOVE

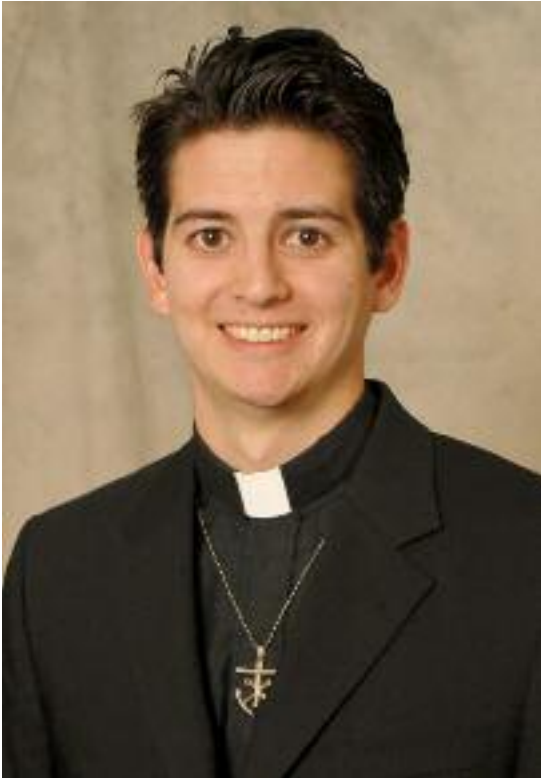
By Rev. Vince Kuna, C.S.C.

Deus Caritas Est. God is Love. The title of Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical addressed different types of love. Benedict affirmed both plutonic, brotherly love and sensual, romantic love but cautioned that neither type wholly captures the true Christian understanding of love. I had the unique opportunity to serve as a representative of the Congregation of Holy Cross on a pilgrimage to the canonization of Brother André.

Traveling in Italy prior to the canonization, I found both of these types of love alive and well. I was reminded of the amazing art, literature, and architecture that flourished during the Renaissance. And I witnessed many couples holding hands and savoring time together at picturesque cafes. A traveling companion, Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C., and I agreed that these types of love fall short of the Christian ideal.

Arriving in Rome, I gained a deeper understanding of the true and enduring love Pope Benedict spoke of in God is Love. Jesus Christ's saving act on the cross introduced to the world a love that would lay one's life down for another. I found this eternal love manifested at the canonization Mass for Brother André in the Eternal City of Rome. The pilgrims gathered at St. Peter's celebrated six saints who exhibited this very sacrificial love. Saint André spent a religious life in Holy Cross sacrificing himself for others: healing the sick, counseling the suffering, and lending wisdom to the spiritually craving. As his holy reputation grew, he offered these ministries at great personal sacrifice until his very death.

Saint André represents for the Church a reminder of sacrificial love, especially those whom God calls to religious life. If the passion exhibited by those from Holy Cross who were able to gather at the Mass was any indicator, Saint André will serve as an authentic example of religious life from which all religious congregations and orders can draw inspiration.



Upon returning home, I am reminded of the sacrificial ministry God calls me to as a priest. Middle-of-the night anointings and unanticipated counseling sessions come at great sacrifice to regular day-to-day ministry. My priestly ministry demands that I serve the people of God in these unplanned moments and serve them with vigor and passion. To do so imitates in a small way the love lived by Br. André...André's life in imitation of God... who is love.

Fr. Vince Kuna, C.S.C., has served as associate pastor at the Tri-Community Parish in Colorado Springs since 2009. His ministerial focus deals with teenage youth: teaching and celebrating sacraments at the local Catholic high school and doing the same for the parish's youth ministry program. His current fundraiser is a reading marathon for youth ministry.

SAINT ANDRÉ AT OUR DOORS

By André J. Noethe

For over six years I have had the privilege to work at the Downtown Chapel, a Holy Cross parish in Portland, Oregon. Located in the traditional skid row area of the city, our parish offers hope and healing each day through the simple act of opening our doors to the many needs of the community. This ministry is a direct response to the Gospels,

"When you say to God, Our Father, He has his ear right next to your lips."



"Put yourself in God's hands; he abandons no one."

- Saint André

and it is at our doors that we encounter the ministry of André each day.

Listening to the needs of hundreds of people each day and responding in whatever ways we can - through hospitality, by offering basic needs and transition assistance, and by praying for people and their circumstances - we begin to appreciate the life of our saint. However, it is a ministry that often leads to feelings of sadness, annoyance, fear, frustration, helplessness or anger when faced with the circumstances of some in our community - the mentally ill woman who is vulnerable and sleeping at our doors, the parishioner who is drinking after 5 years of sobriety, the pregnant couple who fear that they will lose another child because of being deemed unable to provide for it, the delusional man who refuses to enter an apartment that can provide him safety...without our faith, and without the example of André, how would we respond to these people without despair? André responded confidently with what he had to offer: an invitation to prayer. Let us, as a parish, cultivate confidence in our own prayer.



Likewise, I am continually amazed at the stamina that André had in his ministry, spending entire days listening and praying with people who were desperate for that same hope and healing. Saint André was placed at the doorway of inconsolable

suffering, and offered the only thing that he could: his uncompromisable faith. Personally, and as a community, it is too easy to feel inadequate or incapable of such faith. Let us all trust in the same healing love of God that André knew so well. But when we are unable to find such strength, let us begin to ask for Saint André's intercessions. André continues to be active at the doors of the Downtown Chapel; may he also continue to be active in our prayers. Saint André. Pray for us.

André J. Noethe currently serves as Pastoral Associate at the Downtown Chapel. After graduating from Notre Dame in 1998, Andrew served at St. John Vianney Parish, Moreau Seminary and the University of Portland. He also completed a Masters of Nonprofit Administration at Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business. Andrew is a 2009 recipient of The Spirit of Holy Cross Award.

HUMILITY AND HOSPITALITY

By Tami Schmitz

As a Campus Minister at Notre Dame it has been a great blessing to have worked side-by-side with many members of the Congregation of Holy Cross for over twelve years. This past summer, I had the chance to deepen my understanding of Holy Cross spirituality through a visit to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. Eager to learn more about Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., I joined a pilgrimage led by Rev. John DeRiso, C.S.C., and Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C. I had heard and shared plenty of stories about Saint André over the years, and I had always marveled at how this diminutive, uneducated man had touched the lives of so many. I hoped that in visiting the place where André lived and worked, I would be able to appreciate his faith and holiness even more.

The visit exceeded my expectations. I was particularly struck by the abundance of André's humility and hospitality. It was amazing to stand before the door of Notre Dame College, where he served for almost 40 years as a humble porter. I marveled at how he had transformed a simple, mundane assignment into a means for opening the hearts of thousands of people to God's love and compassion. André always refused to take credit for the thousands of healings that took place at his doorstep, always attributing his good works to the intercession of St. Joseph. Everything he did pointed toward God. He was the embodiment of humility.

"Ah! If the people could only realize that it is not I, but Saint Joseph who works cures."



"I have asked God to keep me always in his presence, like the saints in heaven."

- Saint André

Saint André also personified the gift of hospitality. Standing at the door day after day, hour after hour, he never turned anyone away. He welcomed families of the student boarders, the sick and hungry, the lonely and troubled, accepting whomever it was that God sent his way and seeing Christ in every single person.



Following our the tour of the beautiful Oratory and Saint André's stomping grounds, I went to the chapel for a private prayer. In reflecting on André's life and faith, I gave thanks for the ways that humility and hospitality remain at the heart of Holy Cross' mission. Again and again I see members of Holy Cross living out these virtues at the University of Notre Dame: Holy Cross priests in residence halls with their doors always open for students who wish to talk; Holy Cross priests who are ready to drop everything and respond to a student or colleague in need; Holy Cross priests in silent prayer at the Grotto and Basilica. I think Saint André must be smiling, knowing that the same beautiful spirit of humility and hospitality that he used to bring Christ to others is alive and well today within his Holy Cross family.

Tami Schmitz currently serves as a member of the University of Notre Dame Office of Campus Ministry, where she leads the R.C.I.A program and Notre Dame Encounter Retreats.



ITE
AD
JOSEPH

MARIA

JOSEPH

THE
STATUE
OF
THE
HOLY
FAMILY
BY
FRANZ
WIDMANN
1882

“Come follow me.”
It was the Lord Jesus calling us.

We asked how we might follow,
and we found many footprints on
the road. A great band of men had
passed this way, men who had
made and lived by their vows, men
who had walked side by side in
their following of the Lord. They
beckoned us to fall in step with
them. We wanted to be part of the
family they formed in order to
share in their life and work.

Constitution 1,
Congregation of Holy Cross



If you have ever had the feeling that
God may be calling you to religious life
or the priesthood, please visit us at

holycrossvocations.org