

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY
FOR THE INCARCERATED
FROM THE ORDER OF MALTA

# The, Serving Brother

**SUMMER 2018** 

## SAINT BROTHER ANDRE: A Simple Man, With Deep Faith in God

Brother André Bessette lived in a time that was very different than our own – born in Quebec in 1845, where

he died in 1937. He could not have imagined the changes that have happened in our society and in our Church since his days. His way of thinking, being and praying were very different from ours today.

The Church declares someone a saint for the way his or her example instructs the men and women of today. What then does Brother Andre have to say to us? What can we learn from Brother André? Most important, his life and example show us that life is beautiful and fruitful when we live in service to other people.

Orphaned by the time he was twelve, he had to work to support himself. Physically small, often ill, uneducated and clumsy with his hands, he worked hard as a farmhand, shoemaker, baker, and blacksmith in Quebec for six years before leaving for New England, where he worked in factories and farms. After four years trying to find steady work in the United States, he returned to Quebec. There, his

childhood pastor encouraged him to consider a vocation to religious life. He sent André to the Congregation of the



Holy Cross with a note that said "I am sending you a saint."

Given his poor health and lack of education, Brother André was assigned as doorkeeper of Notre Dame College in Montreal. In addition to welcoming visi-

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### **Letter from Father George**

## Embracing the holiness within each of us

Chances are you don't think of yourself as a holy person most of the time. None of us do, because we tend to think holiness is reserved for only special people who are somehow different from us ordinary sinners. But the articles in this edition of *The Serving Brother* are all about how we can become holy in our own lives with God's grace.

Despite what some people say, we Catholics do not believe in "works righteousness" – that we can buy God's love through charitable acts alone. God is not a parking meter that we enter coins in from time to time. It is *our relationship with God* that is the essential dimension of our faith and salvation as Christians and Catholics.

We believe that through our thoughts, words and actions, we *cooperate* with God's grace, and it is His sanctifying grace that makes us whole again, or in other words, holy.

It is by God's grace alone that we are saved.
But this requires us to say "Yes" to Him, just like
Mary did. When we say "Yes" to God, we accept
Jesus into our hearts and we experience the grace of
salvation – a free gift! – through Christ's one atoning

A very good example of saying Yes to God – and the grace that flows from that choice and commitment – is the life of Brother André of Montreal, that appears on the front page of this edition.

sacrifice on the cross.

Salvation comes from the Latin word *salvos*, which refers to soundness of health and healing. The Greek word for the same thing is *soteria*, which means to rescue or deliver us. We are healed and made whole and set free from the power of Satan – by God, not by our own efforts. But of course we DO have to do something to achieve salvation, and that is where the choice to say yes or no to God comes in.

Mary and John the Baptist said yes to God, but even then, their lives were marked by suffering and sadness. The joy of salvation is not a promise our lives will become easy or pain free – just that our

### Mass readings

WEEK	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
May 28-June 3	1 Pt 1:3-9 Mk 10:17-27	1 Pt 1:10-16 Mk 10:28-31	1 Pt 1:18-25 Mk 10:32-45	Zep 3:14-18a Lk 1:39-56 The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	1 Pt 4:7-13 Mk 11:11-26 <b>St Justin</b>	Jude 17, 20b-25 Mk 11:27-33 Sts Marcellinus & Peter	Ex 24:3-8 [1] Heb 9:11-15 Mk 14:12-16, 22
June 4-10	2 Pt 1:2-7 Mk 12:1-12	2 Pt 3:12-15a, 17-18 Mk 12:13-17 <b>St Boniface</b>	2 Tm 1:1-3. 6-12 Mk 12:18-27 St Norbert	2 Tm 2:8-15 Mk 12:28-34	Hos 11:1, 3-4, 8c-9 Eph 3:8-12, 14-19 Jn 19:31-37 [2]		Gn 3:9-15 2 Cor 4:13–5:1 Mk 3:20-35
June 11-17	Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3, Mt 5:1-12 <b>St Barnabas</b>	1 Kgs 17:7-16 Mt 5:13-16	1 Kgs 18:20-39 Mt 5:17-19 St Anthony of Padua	1 Kgs 18:41-46 Mt 5:20-26	1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-16 Mt 5:27-32	1 Kgs 19:19-21 Mt 5:33-37	Ez 17:22-24 2 Cor 5:6-10 Mk 4:26-34
June 18-24	1 Kgs 21:1-16 Mt 5:38-42	1 Kgs 21:17-29 Mt 5:43-48 <b>St Romuald</b>	2 Kgs 2:1, 6-14 Mt 6:1-6, 16-18	Sir 48:1-14 Mt 6:7-15 St Aloysius Gonzaga	2 Kgs 11:1-4, 9-18, Mt 6:19-23 Sts Paulinus, John Fisher & Thomas More	2 Chr 24:17-25 Mt 6:24-34	ls 49:1-6 [4] Acts 13:22-26 Lk 1:57-66, 80
June 25-July 1	2 Kgs 17:5-8, 13-15a, 18 Mt 7:1-5	2 Kgs 19:9b-11, 14-21, 31-35a, 36 Mt 7:6, 12-14	2 Kgs 22:8-13; 23:1-3 Mt 7:15-20 [5]	2 Kgs 24:8-17 Mt 7:21-29 St Irenaeus	Acts 12:1-11 2 Tm 4:6-8, 17-18 Mt 16:13-19 [6]	Lam 2:2, 10-14, 18-19 Mt 8:5-17 The First Martyrs of the Holy Roman Church	Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24 2Cor 8:7,9,13-15 Mk 5:21-43
July 2-8	Am 2:6-10, 13-16 Mt 8:18-22	Eph 2:19-22 Jn 20:24-29 St Thomas	Am 5:14-15, 21-24 Mt 8:28-34	Am 7:10-17 Mt 9:1-8 Sts Anthony Zaccaria & Elizabeth of Portugal	Am 8:4-6, 9-12 Mt 9:9-13 <b>St Maria Goretti</b>	Am 9:11-15 Mt 9:14-17	Ez 2:2-5/2 Cor 12:7-10 Mk 6:1-6a
July 9-15	Hos 2:16, 17b-18, 21-22 Mt 9:18-26 St Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions	Hos 8:4-7, 11-13 Mt 9:32-38	Hos 10:1-3, 7-8, 12 Mt 10:1-7 <b>St Benedict</b>	Hos 11:1-4, 8e-9 Mt 10:7-15	Hos 14:2-10 Mt 10:16-23 St Henry	ls 6:1-8 Mt 10:24-33 St Kateri Tekakwitha	Am 7:12-15 Eph 1:3-14 Mk 6:7-13
July 16-22	ls 1:10-17 Mt 10:34–11:1 Our Lady of Mount Carmel	ls 7:1-9 Mt 11:20-24	Is 10:5-7, 13b-16 Mt 11:25-27 St Camillus de Lellis	ls 26:7-9, 12, 16-19 Mt 11:28-30	ls 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8 Mt 12:1-8 <b>St Apollinaris</b>	Mi 2:1-5 Mt 12:14-21 St Lawrence of Brindisi	Jer 23:1-6 Eph 2:13-18 Mk 6:30-34
July 22-29	Mi 6:1-4, 6-8 Mt 12:38-42 <b>St Bridget</b>	Mi 7:14-15, 18-20 Mt 12:46-50 St Sharbel Makhluf	2 Cor 4:7-15 Mt 20:20-28 St James	Jer 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13 Mt 13:10-17 Sts Joachim & Anne	Jer 3:14-17 Mt 13:18-23	Jer 7:1-11 Mt 13:24-30	2 Kgs 4:42-44 Eph 4:1-6 Jn 6:1-15
July 30-Aug 5	Jer 13:1-11 Mt 13:31-35 St Peter Chrysologus	Jer 14:17-22 Mt 13:36-43 <b>St Ignatius of Loyola</b>	Jer 15:10, 16-21 Mt 13:44-46 St Alphonsus Liguori	Jer 18:1-6 Mt 13:47-53 Sts Eusebius of Vercelli & Peter Julian Eymard	Jer 26:1-9 Mt 13:54-58	Jer 26:11-16, 24 Mt 14:1-12 <b>St John Vianney</b>	Ex 16:2-4, 12-15 Eph 4:17, 20-24 Jn 6:24-35
Aug 6-12	Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 2 Pt 1:16-19 Mk 9:2-10 [7]	Jer 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22 Mt14:22-36 Sts Cajetan and Six- tus II & Companions	Jer 31:1-7 Mt 15:21-28 St Dominic	Jer 31:31-34 Mt 16:13-23 St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross	2 Cor 9:6-10 Jn 12:24-26 St Lawrence	Hb 1:12–2:4 Mt 17:14-20 <b>St Clare</b>	1 Kgs 19:4-8 Eph 4:30–5:2 Jn 6:41-51
Aug 13-19	Ez 1:2-5, 24-28c Mt 17:22-27 Sts Pontian & Hippolytus	Ez 2:8–3:4 Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14 St Maximilian Kolbe	Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab 1Cor 15:20-27 Lk 1:39-56 [8]		Ez 16:1-15, 60, 63 Mt 19:3-12	Ez 18:1-10, 13b, Mt 19:13-15	Prv 9:1-6 Eph 5:15-20 Jn 6:51-58
Aug 20-26	Ez 24:15-24 Mt 19:16-22 <b>St Bernard</b>	Ez 28:1-10 Mt 19:23-30 <b>St Pius X</b>	Ez 34:1-11 Mt 20:1-16 The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Ez 36:23-28 Mt 22:1-14 <b>St Rose of Lima</b>	Rv 21:9b-14 Jn 1:45-51 St Bartholomew	Ez 43:1-7ab Mt 23:1-12 Sts Louis & Joseph Calasanz	Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 1 Eph 5:21-32 Jn 6:60-69

Note: Solemnities in red, Feast days in gold and Memorials in green, in celebration of the saint/event shown. [1] The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ [2] The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus [3] The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary [4] The Nativity of Saint John The Baptist [5] St Cyril of Alexandria [6] Sts Peter and Paul [7] The Transfiguration of the Lord [8] The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

suffering and pain will have purpose and meaning when we join it to Jesus' suffering on the cross. We have to make our own sacrifices, and that requires us to DO something: To give up our selfishness and pride, to humbly ask for forgiveness from those we have wronged and – even harder – to humbly forgive those who have harmed us. And most of all, we need to forgive ourselves.

Father George T. Williams SJ, PhD is Editor of The Serving Brother, and Chaplain of San Quentin State Prison. Opened in July 1852, San Quentin is the oldest prison in California, and houses over 4,200 men, including more than 750 on death row.

#### St. BROTHER ANDRÉ, From front page

tors, he served as janitor, launderer, and sacristan, ran errands and provided the students with cheap haircuts.

Over the years his reputation for humility and kindness grew, as did the number of visitors he received. Most of these were poor and sick people, to whom he offered not only his compassion and what material assistance he could provide, but also moral and spiritual advice.

Many people began to experience physical healings after praying with Brother André, and his reputation as a healer began to spread. So many people flocked to see him that the Congregation asked him to see sick people at a trolley station near the College. Through it all, Brother André remained humble. He knew that the real source of these miraculous cures was St. Joseph's power to intercede before God.

His desire to increase devotion to St. Joseph's intercessory power before God inspired him to create a shrine to his favorite saint on top of Mount Royal, in Montreal. He saved the money he earned from giving haircuts at five cents apiece, eventually earning the \$200 he needed to construct a simple building. This shrine opened on October 19, 1904 and Brother André was assigned full-time as the caretaker of the Oratory of St. Joseph in 1909. (An oratory is a room set aside for prayer, from the Latin word "orare," to pray.)

The Oratory attracted large numbers of pilgrims, and plans were made to build a large basilica. Brother André's full-time ministry for the rest of his life was to receive the long lines of sick visitors who flocked to the Oratory to see him. He became known as the "Miracle Man of Montreal," and thousands of miraculous healings were believed to be the result of his own intercession before God over the following decades.

Brother André was a man of compassion. Very often, he went to those

who could not come to him. Almost every day, in his office, for hours and hours, he would listen to people, rich and poor, who were unhappy. He opened his heart to their sufferings, their illnesses, their disappointments, their failures, their unhappiness. After listening, he comforted them. He called them to courage and hope. He encouraged them to trust in God. He prayed a lot for those who spoke to him. He prayed to God. He prayed for Mary's intercession before God and he prayed for St. Joseph's intercession before Christ on the Cross.

Brother André considered God to be a close friend, who is also close to the ill and the needy. God is full of compassion and love, and He wants everyone's happiness. One of his friends said of him, "Before leaving to visit the sick, he took us to pray with him in the chapel, and he would pray for a long time. During his visits with the sick, he would ask us from time to time to drive him to the church, where he sometimes prayed for an hour or more."

In the words from the first letter of Peter: "Maintain constant love for one another... serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1Pt 4:7-11) Brother André lived these words. His life is an example and an invitation to us to be people of active listening, people of compassion, people of service, and people of prayer. How many people, from children to teenagers to adults to the elderly, would be so much happier, if only someone would take the time to listen to them with love!

What Brother André also tells us and shows us is that life is worth living in the company of God. In God, Brother André had a living faith. Not an intellectual faith. Not a complicated faith. Not a faith learned from books. A faith received on the knees of his mother. A faith deepened by long times of prayer and meditation. A faith that was bathed in love. If there was one thing that the brother was certain of, it was the love of

God. He often said "How the good God is good! How He takes care of us!" He also loved to say: "The good God loves us so much, infinitely, he wants us to love Him."

Brother André never doubted the love God had for him. The sufferings that he had to endure—and they were many—never led him to think that God had grown distant or had lost interest in him. Brother André spoke on this subject in words that were simple, yet surprising. He said "Those who suffer have something to offer to the good God." He said "Don't ask that your trials would be lifted. Ask God more for the grace to bear them well." He said "Place yourselves in the hands of the good God. He abandons no one." We live in a time when it's tempting to think that one can live without God. Brother André reminds us that what gives flavor to life and makes it fruitful is living it with God, in His intimacy and in His love.

Brother Andre is a great saint. He is praying for us in heaven now. He said "When I die, I'll be much closer to the good God than I am now. I will have much more power to help you."

To be a saint is simply to live the commitment of our baptism as sons and daughters of God. It is to live with faith

and hope, despite the doubts and problems life throws our way. Being a saint means to love deeply through prayer, service and the practice of forgiveness. To love, says the Gospel, is to love with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind. (Mk 12:28-34)

Brother André was a humble man of service. He accomplished everything with love and joy - qualities and virtues that make a saint. His sorrow was to meet people who did not pray with faith.

"If you do not have faith," Brother André would tell them "you will obtain nothing." For him, faith originated in the heart for it is permeated with love, trust and hope. Faith is the driving force of prayer. Brother André gave himself completely to the service of the sick, with his whole heart and all of his faith. He faced his own difficulties with faith and love.

Brother André...Saint Brother André, we pray for your intercession before God. Keep your promise. Pray for us. 😵

The above is adapted from the homily by the Archbishop of Montreal, Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, at a Mass celebrated in Olympic Stadium in Montreal, Quebec on October 17, 2010 when Brother André was canonized as St. Andre of Montreal at the Vatican.

#### **Power in YOUR Corner?**

When others ask you to pray for them, your prayers in response are known as "intercessory prayers." Catholics believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, including those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven – all together forming one Church. In this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always attentive to our prayers.

All church members have the power to offer intercessory prayers before God. Very early on Christians asked for the prayers of those martyred in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the world.

Which saints do *you* turn to most often for intercessory prayers? Please share the names of those saints that you and your family members rely upon most and what attracts you to them. Please write to the address shown in this edition with the notation "Honor Roll of Saints Project."

## The Holiness of the Blessed Virgin and John the Baptist

Two people in the New Testament are the best models for us of the true Christian. The Bible even outlines both their lives, from conception to the moment they entered heaven.

In the Virgin Mary we see the fullness of holiness when, by her humble obedience as "handmaid of the Lord" she allowed God to act in and through her, and she became the Mother of God.

She is our model because we too must say "yes" to God's call, in the same way – so that God can work in and through us. Only if we let God's Word work in us can we come to live as sons and daughters of God. Just as Mary, we are dependent on the Spirit to fulfill our life's calling as Christians; we can't do it ourselves.

However, unlike the young Virgin Mary, we need to change, and to change radically throughout our lives. As Blessed John Henry Newman said, "Change is the only sign of life, and to be perfect is to have changed much."

John the Baptist was a prophet who called on the people of his time to completely change their ways to prepare for the coming of Christ. His mission and message can be summed up in his own statement, "I must decrease, but He (Christ) must increase." This is the clearest and the best summary of the Christian life in the Bible. It is the radical rule of life for all Christians.

John challenges us to radically change in those areas of our lives where Christ has not yet been invited in, or where he has been quietly squeezed out. He warns us that there is no time or room for delay or for beating about the bush. The time for conversion is now.

He also reminds us that we have a duty to help prepare people in our families, among our friends and in whatever situation we may find ourselves, so that Christ may be allowed to enter in. This calling is just as prophetic today as it was in John's day, and we can seek his prayers and help in this mission.

St Francis said that we should preach the Gospel all the time, and, when necessary, with words. St Anthony of Padua said that our main way of preaching must be the quality of our lives. For many people, a single photo of Mother Teresa of Calcutta praying, or with a baby in her arms, or among lepers is worth a thousand sermons. People who knew her, even non-Christians, said that they could feel God's presence when they were near her, and her words were listened to because of who she was and her closeness to God.

All of us have a purpose for our lives. Like Mary and John the Baptist, each of us was called by God while still in our mother's womb, to do things in harmony with the Holy Spirit that we could never have done by ourselves. Once we put ourselves in His hands, God uses us whether we know it or not.

If we want to be instruments capable of bringing about a change in a world so very much bigger than we are, we must accept John the Baptist's challenge. We must decrease, and Christ must increase. The conversion of the world does not begin by converting "them": it begins by the conversion of you and me.

Let us ask both Mary and St John the Baptist to support us with their prayers. May Christ be the Lord of our lives and may we become his instruments.

Adapted from a homily offered by the Right Reverend Dom Paul Stonham, Abbot of the Abbey of St Michael and All Angels at Hereford, England. The Abbey and its monks belong to the English Benedictine Congregation of the Catholic Church.

## The only great tragedy in life is to not become a saint.

By Fr. Frank Lioi

On April 9, Pope Francis sent a letter to the whole Church titled Rejoice and Be Glad (in Latin, Gaudete et Exultate) - which is what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:12). But why should we rejoice and be glad? Because God calls us all to be holy, to be saints! This message is a radical call to holiness for all of humanity, in today's world.

The call to holiness is universal. Its practice should be as natural and familiar as any good habit. Holiness does not mean that you never make mistakes or fall short. It is about living in the humble awareness that we are always in need of the mercy of God.

"Holiness does not make you less human," the Pope wrote, "since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace." Holiness begins as small steps that individuals can take in daily life to become better people. Examples include loving parents raising a child, as well as "small gestures" and sacrifices one can make, like deciding not to pass on gossip.

We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is ONLY for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs and spend much time in prayer. But we are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.

The important thing is that each believer prayerfully discovers their own path. Each must bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts, rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. Holiness involves finding balance in prayer time, time spent enjoying others' company and time dedicated to serving others in ways large and small. Each person has a special mission, and no one should claim that their own path is the only worthy one.

The Holy Father wants people to understand that becoming holy is the very reason for which we are made. It is where we will find true joy. He echoes French poet Leon Bloy, who wrote, "The only great tragedy in life is to not become a saint." 🔯

## Give your brain a workout!

#### Sudoku Puzzle

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9			9		3	6		
2		7	8	1		6		
	3	4	8			2		

Sudoku Directions - Fill each square with the numbers 1-9. No number can appear twice within the same row, the same column, or within the same frame Of nine squares. Answers on BACK PAGE

### Cryptograms

Can you uncode the sayings below, by figuring out how the letters have been swapped? Hints: In the first puzzle, F represents the letter I. In the second, Z represents G.

FL ODQ NGEE SDR TD XGBZQCG JG ADT'N GUMEZFT NJG KGZCDT JG AZTNC ODQ ND RD CDYGNJFTS, ODQ ZKG ZBNQZEEO JFTRGKFTS JFC XEGCCFTS. - BJZKEGC CNZTEGO ZME GSTIVTA MQV MY NMVLJNZ. DMNETSYQF HMQ AIH. HTA, VM UT AQST, UQV LT EMTA DLIV JA AVJFF KMST DMNETSYQF: LT KIPTA AIJNVA MQV MY AJNNTSA. – AMSTN PJTSPTZIISE 7

## A Cornerstone of Hospitaller Spirituality: Our Lady of Philermos

The birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8th is celebrated by the Order of Malta under the title of "Our Lady of Philermos, Patroness of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta."

In the year 1306, the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem bought and occupied the Island of Rhodes. This is in the

Aegean Sea, a pocket of the eastern Mediterranean Sea between Greece and what is now Turkey.

On Mount Philermos in Rhodes there were the remains of a Byzantine church. It had housed a "miraculous" portrait or icon of the Blessed Mother, which tradition said was painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist

and had been brought to Rhodes from Jerusalem. The Knights of Saint John built a church on the spot and reinstalled the icon, which was honored as "Our Lady of All Mercies" and became known near and far as "Our Lady of Philermos." Since then, the Order has been devoted to Our Lady under that title as its protector and patroness. In 1530 the Order moved to Malta and the icon was placed in the church of Saint Lawrence. Before long the church was

badly damaged by fire, but the icon was not harmed.

On 19 May 1565, the Turkish leader Suleiman began The Great Siege of Malta. Although its troops were greatly outnumbered, the Order withstood the attacks. After months of vicious fighting, a relief army landed on Malta. The next day, September 8th – the Feast of Our Lady of Philermos – the Turks fled.

When Napoleon Bonaparte captured Malta in 1798, the Order took away the icon of Our Lady of Philermos, which then came under the protection of the Russian Tsars. It was saved from the 1917 Russian Revolution and in 1919 was taken to Copenhagen.

In 1931 the priceless

icon was moved to Yugoslavia and placed under the protection of its king. When that country was invaded by the Nazis in 1941, the icon was hidden in a monastery in the country of Montenegro. It later was found and placed in a museum in the City of Cetinje, but was held in storage and never displayed. Considered lost for decades, a few years ago the icon was 'discovered' and now can be seen at the National Museum in Cetinje, Montenegro.



Modern image, circa 2008

#### Puzzle solutions

God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners. Soren Kierkegaard

If you tell God no because He won't explain the reason He wants you to do something, you are actually hindering His blessing. Charles Stanley

Answers to cryptoquotes:

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