

PRESENZA AGOSTINIANA



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THE CAUSES OF THE SAINTS

On the path to holiness



STAGES OF THE PROCESS
of Beatification and
Canonization

FR. ANGELO CARÙ
Closing of the Diocesan
Phase

FR. GIOVANNI NICOLUCCI
Discovery of the Reliquary
of the Crucifix

Editorial

On the path to holiness



Dear Readers,

The cause of the saints represents a crucial element for the Church, as through it, the extraordinary holiness of individuals who have lived their faith in an exemplary manner is recognized and celebrated, becoming models of Christian virtue and inspiring the faithful to follow their example.

This issue of *Presenza Agostiniana* dedicates space to the rigorous journey that the General Postulation undertakes in accompanying each process of beatification and canonization. This long and careful path ensures that only those who have truly lived a life of extraordinary holiness are recognized as saints.

The veneration of the saints through prayers, pilgrimages, and liturgical celebrations strengthens the faith of the faithful and creates a profound spiritual bond between the community and the Kingdom of Heaven. This devotion not only keeps the memory of the saints alive but also nourishes the daily spirituality of believers, offering concrete examples of lived faith.

Indeed, through the recognition and celebration of the saints, the Church and our Order offer the faithful models of Christian life and Augustinian spirituality embodied in everyday life.

Happy reading.

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The Postulator General, Fr. Dennis Ruiz, and the Bishop of Palmas and Francisco Beltrão, Msgr. Edgar Ertl, during the Diocesan Closing of the Process of Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù

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On the path to holiness

Beatification and Canonization Process

Leandro Tesorero - @anjotesorero



1. The first steps

The path to beatification and canonization in the Catholic Church begins with the **identification of individuals** whose lives radiate extraordinary virtue and holiness or unwavering witness to the faith until death. It is often within local communities that the seeds of holiness are first planted. Individuals who lead lives of exemplary virtue, selflessness and devotion become revered figures, admired for their piety and moral integrity.

Similarly, in religious families, unwavering commitment to vows, selfless dedication to God and others, and profound spiritual experiences often capture the attention of peers and superiors - summed up in their supreme witness of love, both in word and deed.

2. Launch of a Cause for Beatification

According to the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* and its *Normae* (promulgated Jan. 25 and Feb. 7, 1983, respectively), a cause for beatification can be initiated by an applicant five (5) years after the death *in fama sanctitatis* (with a reputation for holiness) or *in odium fidei, uti fertur* (allegedly killed out of hatred for the faith) of one or a group of professed Catholics.

It is the **People of God** (or a substantial group of them) who ask the Bishop to recognize blessed that person, to whom they are devoted, and without this fama (sanctitatis) one cannot, nor should one begin. The Bishop accepts this desire of that group of Friends or devotees, who act on behalf of the whole Church and who have a Postulator representing them.



1. SERVANT OF GOD

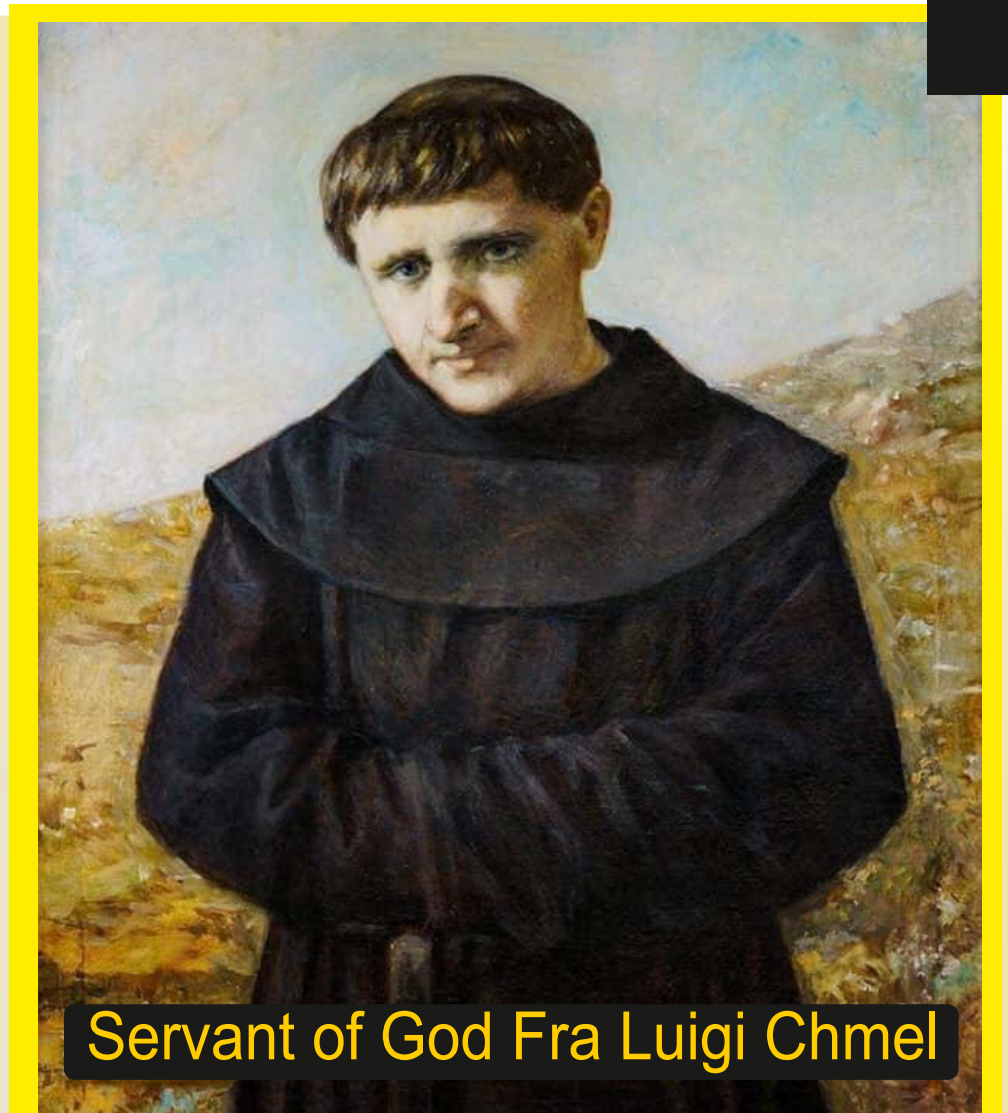
Diocesan and Roman level investigation: Unraveling in search of holiness

After receiving a petition, consulting with the bishops' conference and local faithful, and obtaining permission from the Holy See, the bishop will convene a tribunal to examine the candidate's life (or potential martyrdom). Witnesses will be called and documents written by and about the candidate should be collected and examined.

This documentary phase of the process can take

many years and ends with the judgment of a diocesan tribunal and the bishop's final decision, likewise the relevant bishop must also make sure that there is no public cult attributed to the Servant of God in his or her burial place or sleeping quarters.

The Diocese will then send its report to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints through one of its Relators, who will guide the postulator in the preparation of the "Positio," a volume that summarizes the evidence gathered in the Diocese and confidently demonstrates the life, virtues or martyrdom and relative reputation of the Servant of God. Working with a theological commission established by the Dicastery, the Relator will ensure that the "Positio" summarizing the life and virtues of the Servant of God is adequately prepared.



Servant of God Fra Luigi Chmel

2. VENERABLE

Examination of life and virtues: Embracing the essence of holiness

The "Positio," prepared by the Relator with his collaborator (who may be the postulator or another), will be examined by three different bodies of experts-historians, theologians and prelates-whose votes will determine the final outcome of the case. The experts analyze the evidence to discern the depth of the candidate's commitment to Christian virtues. They also consider the candidate's impact on others and the legacy of holiness he or she has left behind.

When the "Positio" is finished, the theological commission and the subsequent historical commission vote affirmatively or negatively on the Cause. This recommendation is then forwarded to the prelates: Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops who are members of the Dicastery, who in turn vote and determine the life or end of the Cause. If the vote is affirmative, the recommendation for a Decree of Heroic Virtues or Martyrdom is sent to the Holy Father, whose judgment is final. Usually, this decree is read and formally promulgated before the Pope in a public audience. In the case of martyrs, what follows is the designation of the date of solemn beatification.



Venerable Fr. Carlo Giacinto

3. BLESSED

***Requirement for miracles:
A stamp of divine approval***

Beatification is the intermediate step towards canonization. The Vatican requires proof that an exceptional miracle occurred through the intercession of the venerable non-martyr. This miraculous event is usually a healing deemed scientifically inexplicable, judged as such by a Medical Consultation or Commission convened by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints and composed of specialists, both believers and nonbelievers. Important, for the purpose of recognition, is that the healing is complete and lasting, in many cases even rapid.

After this approval, the Bishops and Cardinal Members of the Dicastery also pronounce on the miracle, and the Holy Father, again if he deems it appropriate, authorizes the relevant Decree. Thus the Venerable can be beatified. Following this proclamation, the Blessed is inscribed in the liturgical calendar of his or her diocese or religious family on the anniversary day of his or her death or on a day that is deemed particularly significant.



Blessed Josefa of Santa Inés

4. SAINT

***Universal elevation to the altars: public
declaration of sainthood Universal***

In order to arrive at the canonization of a beatified person, the actor and postulator of the cause must find yet another exceptional miracle that occurred after beatification. The important thing, for the purpose of recognition, is that the healing is complete, final and permanent.

The second miracle undergoes similar scrutiny and evaluation as the first, with medical experts, theologians and other specialists collaborating to

discern its authenticity and supernatural character. Medical records, witness testimonies, and other relevant evidence are meticulously examined to rule out natural explanations and confirm the miraculous nature of the event (but, again, the Pope can make an exception). This leads to the proclamation of sainthood, technically called "canonization" because this is how the person becomes part of the canon that is, of the official list of saints recognized by the Church and of whom worship is possible; it is the supreme glorification by the Church of a Servant of God raised to the honors of the altars, with pronouncement of a decretory character, definitive and preceptive for the whole Church, committing the solemn Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff.



Saint Rita of Cascia

General Postulation

Tasks and Updates

Fr. Dennis Ruiz, oad - @dennisdueneruiz



The General Postulation is an office within the Order entrusted with the profound responsibility of advancing the **Causes of Beatification and Canonization**.

This intricate process involves extensive research, documentation, and dissemination aimed at recognizing individuals whose lives exemplified extraordinary holiness and virtue. The ultimate goal is to acknowledge these individuals as saints, serving as spiritual models for the faithful around the world.

Currently, the Office has six active causes and three particular external causes. Among the Order's active causes, four individuals are already Venerable Servants of God and are awaiting any reports of miracles to be subjected to the necessary scrutiny so they can be declared Blessed, while the others are still Servants of God:



Ven. Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci of Saint William

Discalced Augustinian Religious Priest

(Montecassiano, July 15, 1552 – Batignano, August 14, 1621),

his virtues were declared heroic on September 21, 1770



Ven. Fr. Carlo Giacinto of Saint Mary

Discalced Augustinian Religious Priest

(Genoa, September 5, 1658 – Genoa, April 23, 1721),

who was declared Venerable on December 19, 1937



Ven. Fra Santo of Saint Dominic

Discalced Augustinian Religious

(Trapani, August 5, 1655 – Trapani, January 16, 1728),

whose heroic virtues were recognized on May 13, 1989



Ven. Paola Renata Carboni

lay and virgin

(Monte Falcone, February 21, 1908 – Grottazzolina, September 11, 1927),

her virtues were declared heroic on April 2, 1993



Servant of God Fra Luigi Maria Chmel of the Crucifix

Discalced Augustinian Religious

(Spiska Stara Ves, October 17, 1913 – Rome, August 16, 1939)



Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù of Jesus Crucified

Discalced Augustinian Religious Priest

(Gallarate, February 17, 1925 – Toledo, May 23, 1995)

1. The beginnings

✉ 1. Research and documentation

The path towards beatification and canonization begins with meticulous research, the Office of Postulation collects comprehensive evidence on the life, works and virtues of the candidate, this includes the collection of testimonies, historical documents and any relevant personal writings or stories that highlight their faith and devotion.

👤 3. Spiritual and community commitment

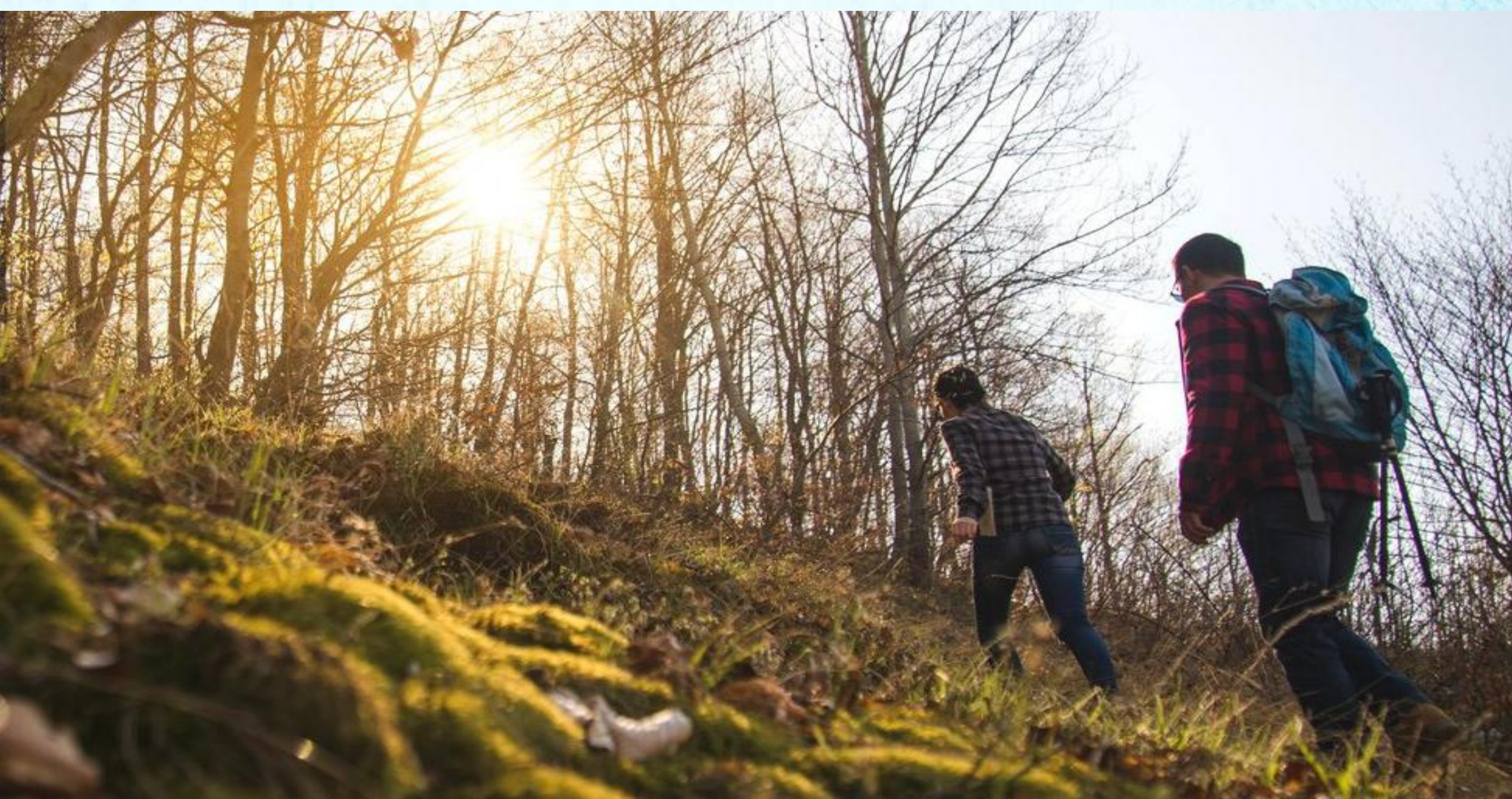
The Office of Postulation engages with various communities, encouraging devotion to candidates through prayer groups, pilgrimages and special liturgical celebrations; these efforts are designed to foster a deeper understanding and connection with candidates, promoting their spirituality and virtues as worthy of imitation.

🗣️ 2. Promotion of the Cause

Once sufficient evidence has been gathered, the Office undertakes the mission of making the life and virtues of the candidate widely known, this involves the publication of biographies, articles and other informative materials, the goal is to spread awareness and inspire the faithful by presenting these figures saints as models of Christian life.

✔️ 4. Searching for miracles

An essential aspect of the beatification and canonization process is the identification of miracles attributed to the candidate's intercession; the Postulation works closely with medical professionals, theologians, and other experts to examine and validate any reported miracles; this rigorous investigation is crucial to advancing the case to the next stage.



2. Beyond borders

The Postulation Office transcends geographic and cultural boundaries, leveraging modern technology and media to reach a global audience.

Using digital platforms, social media and international collaborations, the Office ensures that the lives and legacies of these saintly individuals are accessible to people around the world.

3. The impact of their work

The Postulation's efforts have a profound impact on the Church and its followers.

By highlighting the lives of potential saints, the Office provides tangible examples of lived faith, courage, and virtue.

These stories serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for individuals seeking to deepen their spiritual path.

Furthermore, the recognition of new saints contributes to the enrichment of the spiritual heritage of the Church, offering new insights and different perspectives on holiness. This ongoing process ensures that the Church continually celebrates and learns from the many ways God's grace manifests itself in the lives of the faithful.



4. Conclusion

The Office of Postulation plays a vital role in the beatification and canonization process, working meticulously to ensure that the exemplary lives of candidates are recognized and celebrated.

Through rigorous research, extensive promotion, and miracle-seeking, the Office helps bring these potential saints into the spotlight, encouraging the faithful to emulate their virtues and deepen their spiritual lives.

By embracing modern methods of communication, the Office extends its reach beyond traditional boundaries, making the stories of these saintly individuals known and revered throughout the world.



Official Prayers

of our Venerables and Servant of God



Ven. Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci of Saint William

Merciful Father, You who enkindle in the Church hearts with burning faith eager to consecrate themselves totally to You, grant that through Venerable Fr. Giovanni of Saint William, an example in his profound communion with Your love, model of Eucharistic life and singular in the spirit of penitence and apostolate, be raised to the honors of the altar. Grant us, through his intercession, a special grace which we now implore You with faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Ven. Fr. Carlo Giacinto of Saint Mary

Merciful Father, You have given us in Venerable Fr. Carlo Giacinto of Saint Mary a fervent and faithful dispenser of Your plans of salvation and a most devoted lover of the Most Blessed Virgin in whose powerful mediation he entrusted the conversion of sinners to Your grace, grant us the grace that we now implore You through the intercession of this Your devoted priest. Lastly, we pray that Your humble servant be elevated to the honors of the altar. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Ven. Fra Santo of Saint Dominic

Merciful Father, You have made resplendent in Venerable Fra Santo of Saint Dominic a special love for the Most Holy Eucharist, and have raised him to be a model of total dedication in the perfect observance of religious vows and fidelity to community life, grant O Lord, through his intercession, the grace that we now implore You with sincere faith. Lastly, we pray that Your servant may soon be elevated to the honors of the altar. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Servant of God Fra Luigi Maria Chmel of the Crucifix

Lord Holy Father, we thank you for giving to the Church your Servant Fra Luigi Maria Chmel of the Most Holy Cross, a professed Discalced Augustinian from Slovacchia. In his brief existence You made him radiate a profound union with the Passion of Jesus Crucified in the patient endurance of his painful and excruciating illness, his love for the consecrated life and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grant us, through his intercession and if it is according to Your holy will, the grace that we implore You in the hope that he will soon be numbered among your Saints. Amen.

Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù

Closing of the Diocesan Phase

Fr. Vilmar Potrick, oad - @freivilmar



On May 3, 2024, the Diocesan Phase of the Process of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù of Jesus Crucified was closed.

1. Brief biography of Fr. Angelo

Fr. Angelo was born on February 25, 1925, in Gallarate, Italy. He was ordained a priest in 1951. He dedicated his early years of priestly ministry to **servicing vocations**, being the Master of Aspirants in Genoa and the Master of Novices in Marsala. He came to Brazil in 1966, dedicating himself to evangelization for almost thirty years. He changed countries, but his goal remained unchanged: to always work for vocational animation.

For ten years, he worked in the State of Rio de Janeiro, both in the Parish of Santa Rita in the city of Rio de Janeiro and in Bom Jardim, where he built a private school. During his time in Bom Jardim, he was the parish priest of Euclidelândia on two occasions. In Paraná, he worked in Ampère from 1976 to 1980, where, along with his confreres, he built the Santo Agostinho Seminary, and from 1980 to 1988 in Salto do Lontra as the Parish Priest, where he also built the main church.

He then moved to Toledo, where he was the parish priest of Ouro Verde do Oeste, also holding **various offices within the Order**, particularly that of Delegate of the Discalced Augustinians from April 1991 until the day of his death, May 23, 1995.

2. The virtues of the Servant of God

His testimony as a religious and a priest was truly exemplary. As a Discalced Augustinian, he chose to belong completely to **Jesus Crucified**, desiring to conform to Him in humility, obedience, poverty, and the perfect offering of himself; as a priest,

he devoted his energies to "becoming all things to all people" for the salvation of souls. This was his constant ideal and his life program.

Everyone admired his simplicity, piety, and fervor, leading them to love Jesus and Mary. He particularly venerated the Madonna as a mother under the title of Our Lady of Aparecida. In community life, he was exemplary: he always





Current Seminario Santo Agostinho, Ampère (Brazil)

chose the last place and the heaviest tasks, giving his all for the good of the house and the Order. He was very close to his confreres, especially the sick and the elderly, and loved the seminarians, novices, and clerics like a father.

He had a unique way of appreciating people, ignoring criticism, discouragement, and a comfortable life. He was diligent in working for vocations and the formation of aspirants to religious life.

He contributed to the construction of five formation houses in Brazil, extending his hand with humility to his confreres, friends, and benefactors: his "vacations" in Italy ended up serving only this purpose. Tireless in providing help where needed, he continuously visited the houses of the Delegation, always seeking new humble and silent apostolates.

He was a **man of God**, always living in prayer and devoted to the good of souls. Mons. Agostinho José Sartori, who knew him very well, said during Fr. Angelo's funeral Mass: "Fr. Angelo was a poor religious in every sense, poor by a deliberate choice; an



example of humility, chastity, and all Christian virtues. Active in missionary zeal, he worked to provide priests to churches that did not have them. It was necessary for him to die in Brazil, a good soldier of Christ, like a seed that falls to yield more fruit."

Concluding the funeral, he invited everyone to sing Fr. Angelo's favorite invocation to Our Lady of Aparecida: "Give us your blessing, beloved

Mother, Our Lady of Aparecida," and ended: "Observing the intensity of his devotion to the Virgin Mary, I am convinced that he had a special communication with Her."

3. Start of the Beatification and Canonization Process

After 23 years since the death of the Servant of God, his religious family, the Order of Discalced Augustinians, decided to begin the process of canonization.

In **July 2018**, Ms. Edgar Xavier Ertl requested permission from the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to start the process in the Diocese of Palmas Francisco Beltrão, which was granted.

In **April 2019**, the General Postulator of the Discalced Augustinians asked Mons. Edgar to begin the process. After following the preliminary steps indicated by the norms of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, Mons. Edgar began the process on **May 23, 2022**, with the establishment of the Tribunal tasked with hearing the witnesses indicated by the Postulator and all other necessary acts for this first phase of the process. Forty witnesses were heard, five by the Tribunal of Rome, four by the Tribunal of Rio de Janeiro, and thirty-one by the Tribunal of Palmas - Francisco Beltrão. Meanwhile, the historical commission, appointed in June 2020, was also working, gathering all the documentation and other materials concerning the Cause. The Closing Session took place on May 3, 2024.

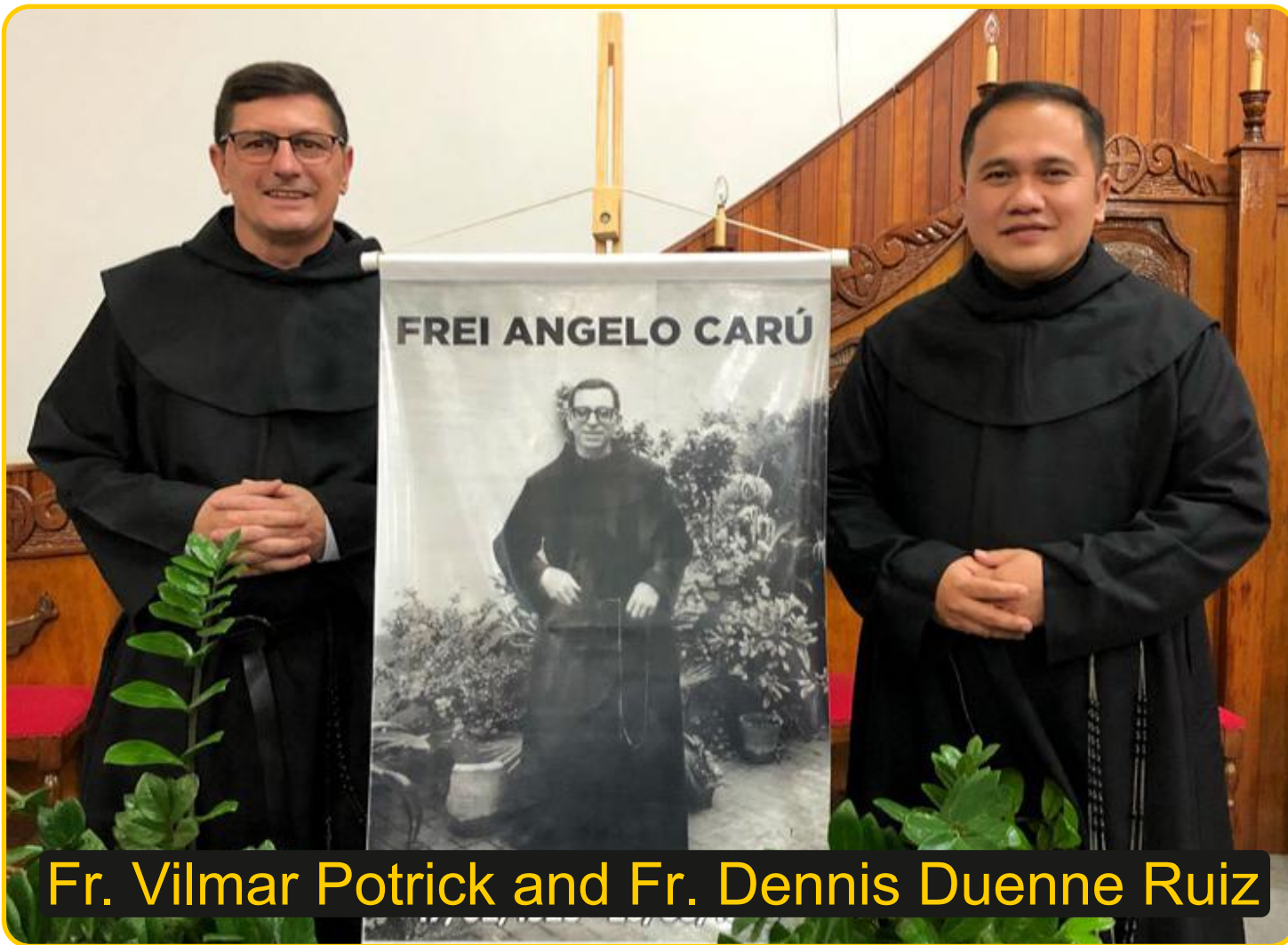


2022: start of the Process

4. Closing Session of the Diocesan Phase

On **May 3, 2024**, a historic event took place in the Diocese of Palmas - Francisco Beltrão at the mother church of the Parish of Santa Teresinha and Santo Agostinho in Ampére: the Closing Session of the Diocesan Phase of the Beatification and Canonization Process of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù.

At 6:00 p.m., **Mass** began, presided over by Msgr. Edgar Xavier Ertl, concelebrated by the Prior Provincial of the Discalced Augustinians, Fr. Getúlio Freire Pereira, the General Postulator of the Order, Fr. Dennis Duene Ruiz, and many other Priests. Several female Religious Congregations from Salto do Lontra, Nova Londrina, and Francisco Beltrão were also present. Despite the torrential rain all day, the people of God participated in large numbers in this important event. It is worth noting that from



Fr. Vilmar Potrick and Fr. Dennis Duenne Ruiz

6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., from the beginning to the end of all the functions and the refreshments, the rain ceased.

At 7:00 p.m., the **41st and Final Session of the Tribunal** constituted for this purpose began. The session was presided over by Msgr. Edgar Xavier Ertl, assisted by the Episcopal Delegate, Fr. Leandro Oldra Sustição, the

Promoter of Justice, Fr. Geraldo Macagnan, and the Notaries, Mrs. Bernardete Maria Dettoni Modzinski and Mrs. Ivete Ana Gregol Angonese.

After the Bishop's opening prayer, all the members of the Tribunal took an **oath** that they had faithfully fulfilled their duties. The Postulator, Fr. Dennis Duene Ruiz, and the Vice-Postulator, Fr. Vilmar Potrick, also took an oath.

Subsequently, the Postulator, who was appointed the **Official Bearer** of the material to Rome, took an oath to faithfully fulfill his duty. After the signing of the session documents, the Bishop requested that they be placed in the cases to be sent to Rome and finally ordered that the cases be sealed and stamped with his seal.



2024: Closure of the Process



Once everything was ready, the Bishop officially handed over the material to the Bearer along with an envelope containing: his letter to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, the letters from the Episcopal Delegate and the Promoter of Justice, and the Instrument of Closure. Finally, after the Bishop's words, Fr. Angelo's beloved hymn, "Give us your blessing, beloved Mother...", was sung, followed by the final blessing.

5. Next steps

An additional step to be taken was the delivery of the material to the **Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome**. They will analyze all the material and, if everything is in order, issue a decree of legal approval of the Diocesan Phase.

Subsequently, those who will work in the Roman phase of the process will be appointed, namely a relator and an external collaborator, who will be responsible for drafting the *Positio*, a synthesis of all the material sent.

After the *Positio*'s delivery, it will be examined by a Commission of Theologians for approval. Once approved by this commission, it will be presented to the Cardinals and Bishops who are members of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

In an Ordinary Session, they will approve it once again and, if the analysis is positive, the Supreme Pontiff can give his consent and grant Fr. Angelo the title of Venerable Servant of God. After this, there will be the phase of the first miracle for Beatification and the second miracle for Canonization. As Mons. Edgar said, it is now time to pray that everything will be accomplished for the greater glory of God.

2024: delivery of the material to the Vatican



Ven. Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci

The Reliquary of the Crucifix

Emiliano Eusepi



At the beginning of 2024, a Priest and a Deacon, both attentive to the traces of faith in the place where they live and where they carry out pastoral service, made known an important object that is located outside the Diocese of Grosseto: the Reliquary of the Crucifix of the Venerable Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci of Saint William.

1. Spiritual and historical significance of the Reliquary

The ongoing research has provided some useful elements to historically frame the object as a gift made by the Bishop of Grosseto to the Medici family. Reading the life of the Venerable Fr. Giovanni, both in already published texts and in those preserved in archives and documents that speak of him, it is possible to see **traces of his profound devotion to the cross**.

To provide a complete exposition would require considerable space due to the abundance of material, and for this reason, only a few highlights will be given.



- Montecassiano is the birthplace of Fr. Giovanni. From the Santa Croce Gate, one arrives, almost getting lost in the alleys, at the Church of Santa Croce. In the village, during Father Giovanni's time, there was a strong devotion to a relic of the cross which was carried in procession on May 3rd, and even the town's coat of arms features a depiction of a cross.
- The Feast of the Holy Cross in Montecassiano holds significant spiritual importance for Fr. Giovanni, who celebrates his first Mass precisely on May 3rd. On that day, a sign occurs: his grandson, ill for two years, is healed thanks to his prayers.
- According to testimonies, his usual way of praying is connected to the sign of the cross; he prayed with his hands clasped to his chest, one over the other. The phrase "or with his arms in the form of a cross" is repeated in testimonies from his beatification process. His method of praying for the healing of the sick involved first placing his hand on the area of the illness, then making the sign of the cross and reciting a prayer, resulting in the healing of the afflicted person. Not to mention his exorcisms performed with the relic of the Holy Cross.

The Discalced Augustinians obtained the opportunity to grant a **Plenary Indulgence** on May 3rd for the convent of Batignano, and on that occasion, a great number of people, even from distant countries, visited the convent. This might seem like a typical event in the 1600s-1700s when indulgences attracted many faithful. However, according to sources, this occurred without the Fathers having published news of the Indulgence, so it was considered a miraculous event.

The pilgrims were internally compelled to visit the convent and especially to confess. Many Priests joined the Fathers of the convent for confessions because the religious community was not large.

Centuries later, the invitation remains to rediscover the **sign of the cross** and to make it, even before eating. It is known that during a Holy Thursday meal with priests and the Bishop, who were overindulging, they were reproached by Fr. Giovanni for their lack of respect towards the Lord for not making the sign of the cross.

2. The cross and the life of Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci

Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci always demonstrated compassion, mercy, and respect towards others. For him, **respecting people's consciences**, their inviolability, privacy, and the uniqueness of their experiences and spiritual paths, especially those marked by difficulties, was fundamental. He also respected the internal forum in guiding his penitents.

The Ven. Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci avoided empty talk and gossip, especially distancing himself from people who did not direct their conversations towards the Lord. Particularly when people spoke in ways that "**put others on the cross**," even if these discussions were presented to him as being for the good of those individuals. He understood this and physically withdrew to his hermitage and spiritually distanced himself from these incorrect attitudes towards others, which caused him inner suffering. The oldest images depict Fr. Giovanni in prayer before the crucifix or **holding the crucifix** in his hand. Now, that crucifix has been found, and his example serves as an invitation to live a better Christian life.

Burial of the Ven. Fr. Giovanni Nicolucci



Sunday Liturgy

with Saint Augustine - July/August 2024

Fr. Gabriele Ferlisi, oad



July 7, 2024

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezek 2:2-5

2Cor 12:7-10

Mark 6:1-6



The difficult mission of the prophet

a. Between astonishment and prejudice. Today's gospel presents us with a strange human behavior, fluctuating between astonishment and prejudice, which makes the mission of the prophet difficult. Jesus found himself involved in it.

b. Jesus' experience. The evangelist precisely narrates what happened to him in Nazareth on a Sabbath day in the synagogue after preaching: he left the people literally enchanted. "Everyone was amazed," writes the evangelist. However, the Nazarenes, who should have simply rejoiced in their fellow countryman, for some reason began to make malicious comments: "Where did he get all this? And what wisdom is this that has been given to him?..." Jesus listened to their gossip and, without beating around the bush, pronounced a weighty judgment, which remains famous because it is always relevant: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home."

c. Resolute in the mission. the mission of prophets and pastors truly proves to be difficult. Nevertheless, beyond everything, Jesus teaches us to remain steadfast in our purposes and to carry forward the program of our mission. Whether our mission is difficult or easy, we too must persevere in carrying out our mission, just as Jesus traveled through villages teaching. Therefore, it is necessary that we lift our gaze to Jesus and aim straight for the essence of our mission, as St. Augustine hoped: "I will tell you at once: I preach Christ to you with the intention of entering into you, that is, into your heart. If I were preaching something else, I would be attempting to enter into you by another way. Christ is the door through which I enter into you; I enter through Christ not into your domestic walls, but into your hearts: I enter through Christ, and you willingly listen to Christ in me. Why do you listen willingly to Christ in me? Because you are his sheep, because you have been redeemed by his blood. You recognize the price of your redemption, which I did not give, but which is announced to you through me. He has redeemed you, he who shed his precious blood" (*Sermon 47,2*).

Message: always convinced that the good we do is its own reward, let us remember that the value of our mission and our pastoral activities depends on the testimony of our own conscience and not on the reward of the approval of others.

July 14, 2024

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Am 7:12-15

Eph 1:3-14

Mark 6:7-13



Poor missionaries, rich only in the presence of Jesus

a. Sent out almost recklessly. Despite the difficulties and rejection encountered by prophets, Jesus seems not to take them into account and, against all apparent human logic, sends out his disciples without anything, almost recklessly. He sends them, in fact, ordering them not to take anything for the journey except a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. Similarly, St. Augustine's precept goes: "And do not say about anything: it is mine, but let everything be common among you" (*Rule 4*) "Since we are in community, it is not lawful for anyone to possess anything as his own. 'Perhaps,' someone suggests, 'there is someone who does possess.' It is not lawful. Whoever possesses is doing wrong" (*Sermon 355,2*). He simply wanted the religious to be "the poor of God" (*Sermon 356,8-9*). And he wanted the Church not to become a society of traders (*Sermon 355,5*).

b. The only certainties. The only certainties that prophets must have are first and foremost the certainty of the Lord's presence who accompanies them and gives them strength. Here's what St. Augustine said about himself: "What do I want? What do I desire? What do I crave? Why do I speak? Why do I sit here? Why do I live, if not with this aspiration that together we live in Christ? This is my craving, this is my honor, this is my conquest, this is my joy, this is my glory" (*Sermon 17,2*). The priest has the vocation to be a man of God, "alter Christus": "Such must be the good bishop (priest); if he is not such, he is not a bishop. What good does it do for an unhappy person to be called Happy? If you see a poor unfortunate person named Happy, and you say to him: Come here, Happy; go there, Happy; rise up, Happy; sit down, Happy, that person, even amidst the insistent repetition of the name, remains unhappy."

c. Content of the preaching. "We are the servants of the Word, not ours, but precisely of our God" (*Sermon 339,7*). "Correct yourself: listen to the Scripture. I take from the Scripture the words that I address to you so that you do not accuse me like the man who brings Christmas gifts: 'Do not delay in converting to the Lord.' These are not my words; yet, they are also mine: if I love, they are mine; love, and they are yours. The discourse that I am delivering is Sacred Scripture: if you despise it, it is your adversary" (*Sermon 339,7*).

Message: the most beautiful praise that Saint Augustine wanted for his religious was that they were "God's poor" (*pauperes Dei*). Only God's poor become humble beggars of God and true apostles.

July 21, 2024

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 23:1-6

Eph 2:13-18

Mark 6:30-34



Deeply human shepherds

a. Shepherds content with their apostolate. The evangelist highlights the understandable joy and satisfaction of the apostles for the great effort they put into their mission, to the point of exhaustion, where they didn't even have time to eat. This happens to many pastors.

b. Jesus' invitation to rest. Faced with their weariness, Jesus' human attitude moves us as he invites them to rest. Yes, rest is an essential part of the rhythms that mark human life; it is a need, a right, and a duty. One cannot always be in the trenches. St. John Paul II wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*: "Rest is 'sacred,' being for man the condition to break away from the sometimes excessively absorbing cycle of earthly commitments and to regain awareness that everything is the work of God" (*Dies Domini* 65). As God rested, so must man rest. As Jesus rested, so must the apostle rest: not to idle away time, but to contemplate and celebrate the wonders wrought by God (*Dies Domini* 17); not to flee, but to return to one's own heart and find oneself and God there: "With me alone before You" (*Confessions* 9.4.7).

St. Augustine said: "I will withdraw into my private room where I can sing songs of love to You amid groans—the inexpressible groans evoked during my pilgrimage by the remembrance of Jerusalem in my heart yearning upward toward her, Jerusalem my homeland, Jerusalem my mother, and toward You, her sovereign, her illuminator, her father and guardian and spouse, her chaste and intense delights, her solid joy and all her ineffable goods, all simultaneously, for You are the one, supreme, true Good" (*Confessions* 12.16.23).

c. Missionary contemplatives. Historically it turns out that true missionaries are the best contemplatives and true contemplatives are the best missionaries. People know how to discover them and run to them to meet God, get spiritual oxygen and discover the meaning of life. The evangelist says: "And they began to flock there on foot from all the cities."

Message: the liturgy invites us to be contemplative but human missionaries. In fact, Christianity is the religion of the Word made flesh.

July 28, 2024

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2Kings 4:42-44

Eph 4:1-6

John 6:1-15



Beginning of the discourse on the bread of life

a. The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. The liturgy proposes for our reflection, starting today and for the next four consecutive Sundays, the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. In it, Jesus, prompted by the physical hunger of a large crowd following him, whom he satisfies with the great miracle of multiplying five loaves and two fish, goes on to highlight the deeper hunger of the heart within man, which he promises to satisfy with the living bread of his flesh.

b. An unusual miracle that shakes and points to an even greater miracle. St. Augustine says: "Since his miracles, by which God sustains the whole world and provides for every creature, due to their frequency end up passing unnoticed [...] God has reserved, in his merciful goodness, to perform at the right time certain works outside the normal course of natural events, so that those who are accustomed to everyday things may be impressed, seeing not greater works, but unusual ones. To govern the whole world, indeed, is a greater miracle than to feed five thousand people with five loaves. However, no one marvels at that fact, but men marvel at this, not because it is greater, but because it is rare. For who even now feeds the whole world, if not the one who creates the harvest with a few grains?" (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* 24.1).

Message: a first message is the invitation to make Jesus' compassion our own and to let ourselves be involved in the miracle with the offering of the poverty of our five loaves and two fish. A second message is the attention that is asked of us on the Word of God, to be able to grasp the richness of every detail that leads us to the marrow of the barley, that is, to its deepest meaning, and satisfies us.



August 4, 2024

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exod 16:2-4.12-15

Eph 4:17.20-24

John 6:24-35



It is difficult to search for Jesus for Jesus' sake

a. Morbid search of the crowd. The crowd, thrilled by the miracle performed by Jesus and determined to proclaim him king, does not accept that he has hidden himself, and heads towards Capernaum to search for him. They find him, but instead of receiving the commendation they may have expected, Jesus gives them a gentle yet firm rebuke.

b. The crowd did not recognize the miracle's function as a sign. Jesus reproaches the crowd because in the multiplication of the loaves they perceived his miracle-working power that satisfied physical hunger, but they did not grasp the function of "sign" that the miracle inherently had: "You seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled," as St. Augustine comments in his Commentary on the Gospel of John 6. Many seek Jesus solely for temporal benefits! Some approach priests to succeed in business; some take refuge in the Church because oppressed by a powerful person; some want intervention with someone over whom they have little influence. For one thing or another, the Church is always full of people like this. It is difficult for people to seek Jesus for Jesus. And it is always the case: the crowd more easily seeks God's consolations than the God of consolations, seeks gifts but not the Giver. Truly, how difficult it is to seek Jesus for Jesus!

c. Hint of the Bread of Life. It is here that Jesus, to suggest a proper search for Himself, begins to outline the revelation of the other Bread, the one of life that is Himself: "Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal". And they ask, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answers them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent".

Therefore, seeking Jesus for Jesus means believing in him as the one sent by God. This is what it means to eat not the perishable food but the food that endures for eternal life. Compared to this bread of life that Jesus promises, the manna of the Old Testament was only a figure.

Message: it is necessary to always rectify the intention in the search for God, so as not to fall into the trap of self-interested calculation. God must be sought and loved for himself. And it is important to listen attentively and docilely to welcome the great things the Lord wants to reveal to us.

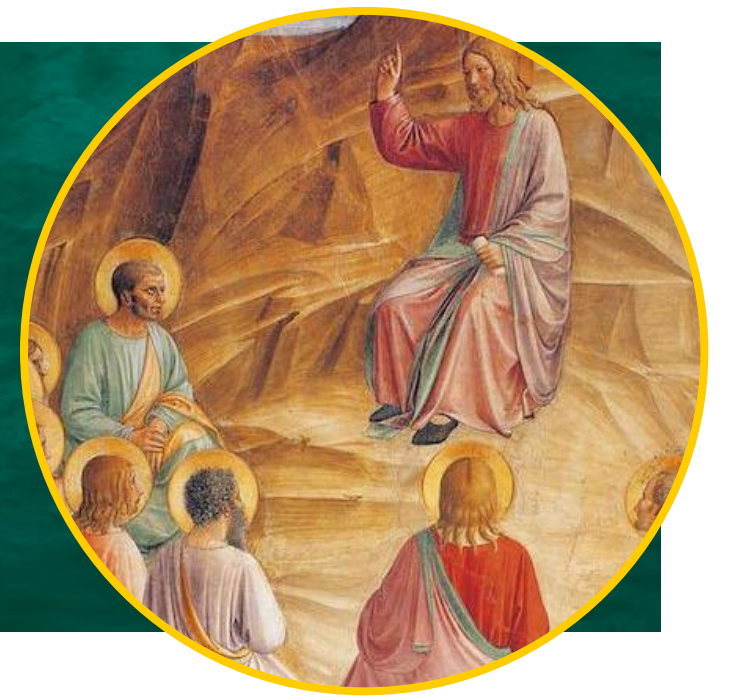
August 11, 2024

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1Kings 19:4-8

Eph 4:30-5:2

John 6:41-51



Faith and the attraction of grace

a. Inability of the people to understand and the beginning of murmuring. It is normal for people not to understand Jesus' discourse and to murmur. As St. Augustine says in his Commentary on the Gospel of John 6: "They [the Jews] were far from that heavenly bread and were incapable of feeling hunger for it. They had sickened mouths of the heart; they had open ears but were deaf, they saw but were blind. Indeed, this bread requires the hunger of the inner man."

b. The attraction of grace does not nullify freedom. Indeed, no one is compelled to believe against their will. "It can happen that someone enters the church against their will, and against their will approaches the altar and receives the Sacrament, but they cannot believe unless they want to. If believing were an outward action, it could occur against our will, but it is not with the body that one believes. Listen to the Apostle: 'One believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.' The profession of faith arises from the roots of the heart. You may hear someone professing faith without knowing if they truly believe. But if you believe that they do not believe, you cannot call their profession a faith: because to profess means to express what one has in the heart. And if in the heart you have one thing and say another, you speak words but do not make a profession of faith. We do not go to Christ by walking, but by believing. We do not reach Christ by moving our bodies, but by the free decision of the heart."

c. Eucharistic bread, rest, and satisfaction of the heart. Here is the other bread capable of satisfying the hunger pangs of the human heart: "What men desire through food and drink, to satisfy hunger and thirst, they find fully only in this food and drink, which make those who partake of them immortal and incorruptible, forming the society of saints, where there will be peace and full and perfect unity. For this reason, as men of God understood before us, our Lord Jesus Christ offers us his body and blood, through elements where multiplicity converges into unity. For bread is made from many grains of wheat ground together, and wine from many grapes pressed together."

Message: Jesus' speech suggests to us the true existential approach with the Bread of eternal life: not an intellectual nor simply devotional approach, but the approach of amazement. Just as the Church lives from the Eucharist, so every Christian must be enchanted and live from the Eucharist.

August 18, 2024

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Prov 9:1-6

Eph 5:15-20

John 6:51-58



Jesus is the bread-flesh of eternal life

a. From the term "bread" to the term "flesh". In his discourse, Jesus slowly shifts the use of terms until he substitutes "bread" with "flesh". Indeed, while he initially says, "If anyone eats of this bread," specifying it to be his flesh, later he simply states, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

He continues, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life... For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." In his way of speaking, Jesus emphasizes both the profoundly real and substantial change that occurs in the Eucharist, where the bread, after the words of consecration, is no longer bread but "is," and not merely "signifies," the flesh of Jesus; and the necessity of feeding on this bread-flesh of Jesus.

b. The dismay of the Jews. It is precisely this realism that causes dismay among the crowd: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The people had understood well that for Jesus, the bread he proposed to eat was his flesh and not simply bread that "signified" his flesh. The people had grasped this truth well, which later in history theology will call with the technical term "transubstantiation," and not "transignification" or "transfinalization."

c. But why eat the flesh of Jesus and how to eat it? This was what the people did not understand. The answer is contained in these words of Jesus: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." As seen, Jesus shifts the emphasis from temporal earthly life to eternal life and suggests why one must eat his flesh: not to have fullness of earthly life, but to have eternal life. Indeed, there is in man the hunger of the body, which is satisfied with material bread, and there is another spiritual hunger of the heart, which is satisfied with the flesh of Christ. But how to eat this flesh? Not with material teeth, like cannibals, but with the spiritual teeth of the heart: "You should eat with the heart, not chew with the teeth."

Message: we need to be clear and believe that in the Eucharist there is the flesh and blood of Jesus; there is Christ, true Man and true God. And we must also remember to feed ourselves often on the Eucharist, but to approach it worthily with a heart purified from sins.

August 25, 2024

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Josh 24:1-2a.15-17.18b

Eph 5:21-32

John 6:60-69



Harsh speech, abandonment of many, Peter's profession of faith

a. The scene is reversed. As Jesus approaches the conclusion of his discourse on the bread that gives life, the evangelist highlights the reversal of the scene: from the euphoria of the crowd wanting to declare Jesus king, to the abandonment of many of them because they found the continuation of his discourse unacceptable. Jesus, for his part, without retracting any of his words, sought to further clarify their real and spiritual meaning.

b. How do we know if we understand Jesus' words in a spiritual sense? If we abide in him and he in us. "Now, we abide in him if we are his members; he abides in us if we are his temple. It is unity that binds us together, making us members of Christ" (*Commentary on the Gospel of John 27:6*). Therefore, "a Christian should fear nothing more than being separated from the body of Christ. For whoever separates himself from the body of Christ is no longer his member; if he is not his member, he cannot be animated by his Spirit. 'And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him'" (*Commentary on the Gospel of John 27:6*).

c. Through the mouth of Peter, the apostles say they do not want to abandon Jesus. "Then Jesus said to the twelve - that is, to those twelve who remained: 'Do you also want to go away?'" No one left, not even Judas. The reason why Judas stayed was already clear to the Lord, and later it was also clear to us. Peter answered for all, one for many, unity for universality: "Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go?'" If you drive us away, give us another like you. 'To whom shall we go?' If we move away from you, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. See how Peter, by the grace of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, understood? Why did he understand? Because he believed. 'You have the words of eternal life.' You give us eternal life by offering us your body and your blood. 'And we have believed and have come to know.' He does not say, 'we have come to know and believed,' but 'we have believed and have come to know.' We have believed in order to come to know; if, in fact, we had wanted to know before believing, we would not have succeeded in either knowing or believing. What have we believed and what have we come to know? 'That you are the Christ, the Son of God,' that is, that you are the very eternal life, and in flesh and blood you give us what you yourself are" (*Commentary on the Gospel of John 27:9*).

Message: in order not to risk ending up like the Jews who turned their backs on Jesus and abandoned him after the euphoria of wanting to proclaim him king, we must take the words seriously and understand them well in a spiritual sense.

Some pictures

Sharing a Bit of our Life



May 3, 2024

Ampère - Brazil

Closing of the Diocesan Investigation for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù of Jesus Crucified, Religious Priest of the Order of Discalced Augustinians



May 19, 2024

Cebu City - Philippines

The Prior Provincial, Fr. Crisologo Suan, received the Solemn Profession of: Fra Hoang Minh Tuat, Fra Richard Tun Thaung, Fra Pham Van An, Fra Tran Kim Hung and Fra Tran Van Nam



May 21-24, 2024

Assis - Italy

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, participated in the 101st Assembly of the Union of Superiors General, with the theme: *Faithful to the legacy of the Second Vatican Council*



May 28, 2024

Valverde - Italy

The XXXII Marian priestly day was held in the Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Valverde, organized by the Sicilian Episcopal Conference, with approximately 300 Priests, 15 Bishops and the Prior General



June 1, 2024

Rome - Italy

The Prior General presided over the Mass at the International College when 5 confreres were established in the Ministry of Lector and another 4 in that of the Acolyte, taking an important step in their religious formation towards the priesthood



June 3, 2024

Cebu City - Philippines

Fr. Renan Ilustrisimo, Director General for Studies and Formation, conducted a series of meetings with the formandi and formators of the Province Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, with special attention to the *Ratio*



June 7, 2024

Maringà - Brazil

Rodrigo Marcello Rosa presented his graduation thesis at the Universidade Estadual de Maringà: *The Order of Discalced Augustinians - Education beyond religion*, underlining the importance of Augustinian pedagogy in the formation of lay people



June 15, 2024

Lauregno - Italy

Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer visited various communities in the Philippines, Italy and Brazil, celebrating his 50th anniversary of Priestly Ordination with family, confreres and friends, thanking for his extensive missionary activity



June 14, 2024
Cebu City - Philippines

The Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Ven. Fr. Carlo Giacinto of Saint Mary was disclosed at the Parish of St. Joseph in Tayud, in the presence of the Parish Priest, Fr. Romeo Desuyo, the Postulator General and the Provincial Secretary, Fr. Randy Lozano



June 16, 2024
Rome - Italy

In the church Madonna della Consolazione, at the General Curia of the Discalced Augustinians, the new book by Fr. Gabriele Ferlisi was presented: *Portrait of Augustine in thirty brushstrokes*



June 22, 2024
Villa Elisa - Paraguay

Cardinal Adalberto Martínez ordained Fra Milciades Gauto Armoa as deacon in the Santos Arcángeles Parish; the celebration was attended by confreres, family and friends of Fra Milciades who is the second confrere of Paraguayan origin to be ordained



June 24-28, 2024
Toledo - Brazil

The first group of religious from the Province Santa Rita de Cássia participated in the annual retreat, led by Msgr. Anuar Battisti who from the question Jesus asked his disciples: "What are you looking for? (Jonh 1:38-39) reflected on various aspects of religious and priestly life



Prior General's Message

God calls us to be saints today

Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad - @freineisimon



Dear confreres, laypeople, and friends,

In a context of great desacralization, especially in the West, speaking of holiness might seem out of place.

Therefore, I would like to go against the tide. God calls us to be holy. “All the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and the perfection of charity” (*Lumen Gentium* 40).

I would like to share a recent experience. At the last Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG) held in Assisi at the end of last May, a Mass was scheduled in the Sanctuary of the Spogliazione, the church where the body of Blessed Carlo Acutis is kept. And on the very day set for this celebration, the Holy See announced to the entire Church that the Blessed would be recognized as a saint! Some might say it was just a coincidence, but for those who believe, it was a “God-incidence.”

Being in that sanctuary on that day, together with the local bishop and more than a hundred general superiors representing countless consecrated persons, was a clear call for me to be holy and to encourage the consecrated to do the same. Holiness requires a renunciation of the old self, marked by sin, to be what we are in essence: children of God, made for love and to love.

St. Francis of Assisi and the “soon-to-be saint” Carlo Acutis give us a beautiful example and shake the whole Church. That day, I was reminded what Chiara Lubich said: “I will be holy if I am holy now!”

This is what I desire and what I propose to all members of the Order, affiliates, and readers of *Presenza Agostiniana*: to be holy today!

