

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



The Face of a Priest

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SUMMER 2023

The MESSENGER

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The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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Back Cover: Grandchildren from the
Baldy Family.

Provincial Perspective

Dear Family,

We are halfway through the calendar year and into the summer with vacation plans. However, this is the time to take a breath and reflect.

We still find ourselves living in difficult and challenging economic times, as well as the unpredictability of the coronavirus. Our whole world has been affected, and we wonder what kind of normalcy we will experience.

We are called to model our lives on the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph by living in love and unity with God and one another.

Remember, God promised to be with us always and that His Spirit in us makes Him present to others by our words and actions. This is a time to grow in our faith and trust in God.

In this Year of Our Lord 2023, please spend some time every day, perhaps at the beginning of each day, reading Sacred Scripture. Allow God's word to dwell within you, and you will find your life filled with greater grace and true peace. Thank you for everything, and God bless you and your Family!

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

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A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

I Have Come to Serve (with a Smile)

**Reverend Simon P. Brzozowski, Jr., M.S.F.
December 10, 1923 - February 7, 2023**

Fortified with the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church, Father Simon entered eternal life on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at the age of 99. He was born December 10, 1923 in Gonzales, Texas, to the late S.P. (Sam) Brzozowski, Sr. and Marianna (Mary) Wostal Brzozowski.



Father Simon

Father Simon was preceded in death by his parents, Sam and Mary Brzozowski, and sister Mary Ann Araiza. He is survived by his brother, James V. Brzozowski and wife Leona of Garwood; and sisters Jean Hrnccirik of Bebe, June Cowey and husband Lee of Nixon, Jane Allen and husband Bobby of Nixon, and Barbara Breitschopf

of Georgetown (Texas communities). Father Simon is loved by his extended family, religious community, and many friends.

He was baptized, confirmed, and received his Christian education at Saint James Catholic Church in Gonzales.

After graduating from Gonzales High School at the age of 16, he attended Baldwin Business College in Yoakum. Three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Father Simon turned 18 and started his first job at Kelly Field in San Antonio as a messenger of internal mail distributing technical orders on base.

He was inducted into the Army Air Corps at Fort Sam Houston in April 1943, and served more than nine years during World War II and post-war at the Army Finance School. During those nine years

of active duty, Simon was stationed in New Guinea at the Headquarters for General Douglas MacArthur's South Pacific operations. He was also stationed in Nuremberg, Germany post-war during the Nuremberg Criminal War Trials, serving in Army Finance. He returned to the U.S. and was assigned to the Army Finance School, and in 1952

was honorably discharged at the rank of Master Sergeant.



Father Simon in 1943 in WWII.

He entered Holy Family Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the fall of 1955, and began nine years of study for the priesthood. He completed two years as a novice at the Holy Family Novitiate in Hillman, Minnesota, and then returned to Saint Louis for four years of theology. Father Simon was ordained on March 14, 1964, as a Priest of Jesus Christ with the Missionaries of the Holy Family by His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ritter, Archbishop of Saint Louis. Father Simon returned to his home parish of Saint James on June 7, 1964 to celebrate a homecoming Mass. He is the first priest to be ordained from Saint James Church in Gonzales.

Father Simon's assignments included teaching high school at the Minor Seminary in Saint Louis, and serving as associate pastor at Saint James and Sacred Heart in Gonzales and Saint Patrick's in Waelder, Texas. He also

served at parishes in Nixon, Smiley, New Braunfels, Beeville, Jourdan, Helena, Charlotte, and Corpus Christi, Texas. While in Corpus Christi, he served 12 years as hospital chaplain at Memorial Hospital, including two nursing homes!

He served as chaplain for eight years at the Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, a 250-bed facility in Saint Louis. Then he moved to the 70-unit resident facility of the Little Sisters in Louisville, Kentucky, where he served as chaplain for 14 more years.



Father Simon as a young boy.

After returning to Texas to "retire" in 2012, Father Simon assisted staff at the Formation House in San Antonio and at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Seguin, Texas. He celebrated his 50th jubilee at Saint Joseph Church in Donna, Texas, and at Saint James Church in Gonzales. He officially retired to Padua Place Assisted Living in San Antonio at the age of 93.

Father Simon attained the age of 99 years, 1 month, and 28 days. He passed

peacefully into the arms of Jesus Christ on February 7, 2023, at Padua Place. We feel in our hearts there was great rejoicing and celebrating in a reunion with heavenly family and friends. He will always be remembered for his big smiles and joyful laughter.

The family of Father Simon is thankful to all the love bestowed upon him during his earthly ministry. Special thanks to those who visited Father Simon at Padua Place and brought him his favorite German chocolate cake!

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. Amen. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Contributions in memory of Father Simon should be mailed to the Missionaries of the Holy Family at 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118-1412. Gifts can also be received through the website at www.msf-america.org.



Like Saint Joseph, Father Simon was a Protector.





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God bless your family! +JMJ+



MADE IN MADAGASCAR

“My grace is sufficient for you.”

by Father Josselin, M.S.F.

Editor’s Note: Father Josselin is from our Madagascar Province, and he arrived in the United States in November 2022. He is currently assisting the provincial superior, Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F., at Saint Wenceslaus Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri.

Where were you born?

First of all, my full name is Josselin Mampianandra Randriamiharimanana, and I am from Madagascar. Originally, I was born on 13 August 1988 in Anjoma, a little village in the province of Fianarantsoa. I am from the Betsileo tribe, but my parents moved south, so the village where I grew up is Ankazoabo, in the Diocese of Morombe.

My Dad’s name is Gilbert

Randriamiharimanana, and my mother’s name is Therese de L’Enfant Jesus Rabia. I have two brothers and three sisters: Honorine, Yvonne, Eugene, Theresa, and Auguste. All of my family members are teachers, except me and my youngest brother who is in the military.

What do you miss the most about Madagascar?

I miss my family and the members of my religious community, the Missionaries of the Holy Family (M.S.F.). It is not enough to stay in the country of my birth as a missionary priest, so I am always ready



to leave everything and go anywhere to follow Jesus.

Why did you become a missionary priest?

When I was a little boy, five or six years old, I told my Mom, “I want to be a priest.” When she asked my why, I told her that I liked the hat the priest was wearing! The priest was Father Bosco,

M.S.F., and he often visited our church. He had a nice blue “casquette,” a cap worn by road cyclists. When I got older, I was impressed with the priests who would walk for miles just to meet with Christians and pray with them.



Celebrating Mass in Madagascar.

My parents were teachers in a large village, and we attended Mass every morning. We also prayed the Rosary every night before going to bed. My parents were in parish organizations, something like the Ladies of Mary and the Men’s Club found here in Saint Louis. All of this played a part in my decision to become a missionary priest.

After graduating with a college bachelor degree, I revealed my desire to be a missionary to my local priest. The very next day, I left my family to join the Missionaries of the Holy Family! I am proud of my choice. The Word of God that inspired me to be courageous is *“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

Why did you choose to come to the USA?

Most people choose what they want to do during the course of their lives. In the case of missionaries, however, we do not choose our assignments. Our superiors tell us what are assignments will be. I am still somewhat inexperienced as a priest because my ordination date was 13 September 2020.



Travel conditions in Madagascar.

Regardless, I love my new assignment because this is what Jesus Christ is calling me to do. I feel good, trusting in the work of the Holy Spirit to always clarify my mission.

How is the USA different from Madagascar?

There are many differences between the United States and Madagascar!

First, in the USA, even though there are very few practicing Christians, those who do go to church are focused and proud of their faith. The weather here changes a lot, up to three times in a day, from cool to warm to cool again.

In Saint Louis, I saw snow for the first time in my life, and I can see that it is fantastic, but the temperatures are very cold. Also, the cars here are loud and noisy.



Father Josselin's Family.

What is your favorite memory as a priest?

I have many good memories, but the most special one was two years after my ordination. I was working in the Village of Anjoma where I was born. How could I be so lucky? My hobby is riding motorcycles, and the parish had one. Before that, I used a bicycle to visit the mission churches, a total of 19 villages served by our parish. One of the reasons I became a priest was to serve in the mission areas. I was so happy because God was fulfilling my dream.

What is your favorite devotion?

Divine Mercy. When I was a little boy, my mother explained it to me. I still try to respect the hour of God's mercy at

3:00 p.m. everyday. My Mom said to me, *"Even if you can't finish the Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet, just say 'Jesus, I trust in you,' and if you trust Him, Jesus will forgive your sins no matter how big they are."* These are also the words of Jesus to Saint Faustina, but my mother passed it on to me, and she helped me to understand the devotion.



Father Josselin with brother priests in the USA.

What is your favorite sandwich?

The Cookie Sandwich! Toast two pieces of wheat bread and spread peanut butter on both slices. Squeeze a generous supply of honey on both slices, and add at least one soft, chewy, chocolate chip cookie in the middle. Press firmly together, heat for six seconds in the microwave, and enjoy. Delicious! Please try it; you can thank me later.

Pray for me, and I will pray for you.



Men of God: Religious Forever



Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.
55 years



Br. Rolland Kapsner, M.S.F.
50 years



Fr. Andrea Spatafora, M.S.F.
40 years



Fr. Andre Bemora, M.S.F.
20 years



Fr. Angelot Galson, M.S.F.
5 years

In this Year of Our Lord 2023, four priests and one brother of the Missionaries of the Holy Family are celebrating anniversaries of their ordination and perpetual vows. We thank God for our priests and brothers, and we beseech Him to send us many more.

If you would like to send a Tribute Gift in honor of one or more of these Men of God, please send it to 3014 Oregon Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63118.

Thank you and God bless your family!

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HOLY FAMILY SEMINARY

Holy Family Seminary: Part 1

2500 Ashby Road, Overland, Missouri

by Weldon Ticken

The property at 2500 Ashby Road throughout history was under French, Spanish (Spain), and later part of the Louisiana Purchase. In the 1770s, Louis Hessoun Honore, Sr. receive a Spanish later he increased that to 31.50 acres. Mr. Garnett built a frame house on the property that was finished in March 1906. A Plat Map from 1901-1905 showed a small barn on the



Holy Family Seminary: 1955-1994
2500 Ashby Road

Land Grant of 272 acres. Mr. Honore, who had five sons, gave each a portion of the land. The land was broken into five surveys. The Holy Family Seminary property was Survey 1902 totaling 31.5 acres.

The property was owned by various people. It was in 1903 that Charles D. Garnett bought 20.30 acres from the Overland Real Estate Company, and

property, plus another small structure which could have been a saw mill. In April 1907, a fire completely destroyed the house.

After the fire, Garnett immediately started the construction of his new mansion called Wildwood. It was three stories high, and, this time, it was constructed from brick and concrete. At the same time, a two-story carriage

house south of the mansion, a cottage house (referred to as the convent later on), a well house, and a small building referred to as an ice house were constructed. A small lake was also on the grounds connected by a wooden bridge, but later replaced with a concrete bridge.



Holy Family Seminary: 1944-1955
2500 Ashby Road

In 1908, Garnett and his wife Eline divorced. In 1910, the mansion was sold to Louis A. Cella who lived there until his passing on April 29, 1918. A relative, Mary Flynn, was awarded the house, and she sold it in 1921 to Frank Lind who was a grocer. Frank died February 5, 1939. His wife then sold the estate to Missionaries of the Holy Family in 1944 for \$40,000.

The beginning for the Missionaries of the Holy Family on 2500 Ashby Road in Overland, Missouri, was 1944. Rev. Joseph Mathey, M.S.F. was provincial at the time. Rev. George Schroer, M.S.F. was appointed rector of the seminary. Priests, religious brothers, and students moved to their new home from 7900 Clayton Road in Richmond Heights, Missouri.

In 1945, a fire destroyed the roof of the seminary. A main staircase that extended to the third floor was taken out and new dormitories and four private rooms were built. It took about six months to repair the roof and rooms.

In May 1946, Rev. Ernest Braun, M.S.F. was elected rector. The main house used several rooms for classes and was living quarters for everyone. It was at this time that the religious brothers of the congregation took care of the large garden and orchard that was on the property.

In 1947, the cottage house (convent) was remodeled, having six rooms and a laundry that would be used as the novitiate house. Rev. William Janning, M.S.F. was named novice master, and the novice students would live here separately from the main house. This would remain the novitiate house until 1955. In 1957, it was moved to Holy Family Mission House in Hillman, Minnesota.

On November 14, 1955, two German nuns, Sister Eugenie, C.S.A. and Sister Veronica, C.S.A., arrived at the seminary. One would do the cooking and the other laundry. They would remain there until August 10, 1959, and then they returned to their motherhouse in Germany.

In 1948, a barn was constructed on the property with the help of students and religious members, and it was blessed on October 14, 1948, but it was damaged by a fire in 1964 and had to be torn down.

In 1953, Rev. Peter Roebrocks, M.S.F. was appointed rector of the

seminary. That same year, work was begun on adding an annex to the main house and a chapel. This addition created several new private rooms, a kitchen, and a refectory. It was dedicated on November 10, 1955 by Archbishop Most Reverend Joseph E. Ritter of Saint Louis. At the same time, the lake on the property was expanded.



Provincial House: 1940-1956
7900 Clayton Road

In July 1956, Rev. Joseph Mathey, M.S.F., a former provincial and pastor of Saint James Church in Gonzales, Texas, was named the fourth rector of the seminary.

In early 1957, it was decided by the provincial council to start a high school and college department. The plan was to accept freshman in the coming year. Before, only belated vocations were accepted. Now not only older candidates, but younger men could receive a complete high school education. On September 6, 1957, the



Barn Fire: 1964
2500 Ashby Road

initial high school freshman class started out with 15 students, and the college department had seven students.

Within a few days, it was decided that there had to be a place where local students could visit with their parents on the weekends. So Rev. Thomas Copeland, M.S.F. asked the provincial superior to take a room in

the carriage building to make space to establish a bookstore. Father Copeland got a few benefactors to donate money and materials to set it up and establish a visiting area. This provided the students with the opportunity to purchase soda, chips, candy, and other items. However, in September 1958, the bookstore moved to a larger place in the lower level of the barn on the property.

From 1957 to November 1959, some religious scholastics, who were in their theology and philosophy years of study, were also living at the seminary. Their

dormitories were on the second floor of the carriage house. The philosophy department moved to a new home, Saint Thomas Aquinas in Farmington, Missouri, in November, 1959.

The first senior graduating class of the high school was on May 27, 1960, and the three students were John Flavin, Julian McLendon, and Felipe Sosa (who eventually become Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.). In September 1960, the first student council was formed, and students from the high school and college all had representatives.

In 1958, the Mother's Club was formed, and different events helped to raise money for the seminary. They held a card party at Northland Shopping Center on February 23, 1961, and

another on November 9, 1961, at Saints John and James Auditorium. Both were successful!

April 5, 1961 saw the beginning of the excavation for a swimming pool, east of the garage. The pool would be 20 x 60 feet, and it was completed by the early part of June.

On May 25, 1961, seven of the 15 students from the first high school freshman class of 1957 graduated as seniors. Five of these seniors who graduated from high school, and three young men who were already college students, entered the Holy Family Novitiate on August 14, 1961.

To be continued in the next issue.

+ jMj +

Do You Want More Holy Priests?

Please join the *Holy Family Circle* and help foster vocations to the priesthood! Find your level of joyful giving below, complete the form, and mail it or a copy to 3014 Oregon Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118.

Giving Level	Associate..... up to \$49 per month	Patriarch/Matriarch
Examples:	Samaritan \$50 per month	\$10,000 annual gift
	Companion \$100 per month	
	Disciple..... \$300 per month	
	Apostle..... \$600 per month	

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Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

My Level of Joyful Giving per month: _____

Having Fun in Saint Louis



Father Andre casts into the deep.

Father Andre celebrates his birthday.



Father Josselin catches a big one!

Fishing for dinner.



Having Fun in Saint Louis



*Katie and her
bodyguard
priests from
Madagascar.*

*Father Josselin
blessing a car.*



*Katie and Father
Andre have the same
reading glasses!*

*Getting
ready to
meet the
Archbishop.*





A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

An Apple for Sister Margaret Catherine

by Susan Wessel

A fine early September day in 1951, my life as a teacher's apprentice began...

I was six years of age in Florissant, Missouri, and had just walked into the first and second grade classroom at Old Saint Ferdinand's School. A Sister of Loretto was smiling at us in welcome. And so it began, what was to be my lifelong journey as a teacher.

Sister Margaret Catherine was one of a handful of nuns assigned to the parish which had housed a living saint, though Sister Rose Philippine Duchesne had lived and worked in Florissant during the late 1800's. The church was founded in 1820 and staffed by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart from France. The Jesuits were the Fathers in charge of the Saint Louis area and were anxious to have a school for the French Catholic children.

By the time my sisters and I went to school, the Sisters of Loretto had taken the place of the Sacred Heart nuns. The very first day, I fell in love with school and in my six-year-old mind knew this was what I wanted to do with my life.

Sister Margaret Catherine made school so interesting for the children. Learning to read was a grand adventure. The little

town of Florissant had the upper floor of the town bank as a one room library with glass fronted bookshelves. A strict librarian kept a watchful eye on the children who entered, and she insisted on no talking at all! It was so fun to be able to carry two books home each library visit.

In school, Sister had us divided into reading groups. We were taught to read out loud, which was a big boost to our skill in reading. Sister read to us every afternoon, as did our Mom at home.

Arithmetic was another adventure. Learning to add and subtract was helped along by Sister's little games with blocks and little toy people.

Another game was fishing. Sister cut out paper fish and put questions on the back, either for arithmetic or religion class. The fishing pole was a stick with a string and magnet to hook the paperclip on the fish. The fishermen would read the question and try to answer or get hints from Sister or the other classmates.

I have used this fish game for the 47 years I have taught CCD classes, and the children have never tired of it.



Sister Margaret Catherine (right) with the principal and two students.

In the 1950s, every day the children attended Mass before school began. Sister taught us how to behave at Mass,

genuflecting, the Sign of the Cross, the basic prayers, how to go to Confession, and all about the Holy Eucharist. First Holy Communion at Saint Ferdinand's was always held on Mother's Day.

At recess, the children played in the back of school, but also, we could play in the field which bordered the playground and wooded area. One of the best things was picking bunches of purple violets in May or making necklaces from clovers.

Sister Margaret Catherine deserves all the lauds I can ever express, and so I give her this shiny red apple. God bless her. +JM+

Pieta Votive Candles



This beautiful Pieta statue is in Saint Wenceslaus Church in Saint Louis, Missouri, and in the rectory are the offices of the North American Province of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. If you would like a 6-day votive candle lit for your family and your intentions, contact us at 1-888-484-9945 or mprater@msf-america.org. Candles burn in a rack to the right of the statue. (The suggested donation is \$7.00.) Thank you and may God bless you.

Thank You & God Bless You to everyone who made a financial gift in 2023. We, the priests and brothers of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, extend our deep gratitude to all our benefactors. You are remembered in our prayers.



JOYS OF FAMILY LIFE

Do You Know Where Your Children Are?

by Brother Knight Baldy Bluett

Do you remember the public service announcements for parents on American TV, especially from the late 1960s to the late 1980s? They were typically aired right before local news about 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. That was when many cities had nightly curfews for minors.

Thus, a public service announcement to parents: is your child home yet? Of course, kids didn't have to be home if you knew they were staying with someone you trusted to keep them safe.



Baby and the Bear Rug.

I have six children, they are all adults, and they are all married to wonderful spouses. They are spread out from Dallas to Minneapolis to Seattle, and



Wise Monkeys.

I recently made some phone calls. I called my oldest son in Dallas, and I found out that he and his two boys are visiting my older sister in Wisconsin. I called my oldest daughter, and I found out that she and her family are in Hawaii.

I called my 2nd oldest daughter who lives in Wisconsin, and I learned that she is visiting her oldest son in Terre Haute, Indiana. I called my youngest son in Minneapolis, and I learned that he and his family are in Appleton, Wisconsin.

I called my 3rd oldest daughter in Minneapolis, and she told me that her family is visiting other family somewhere "up North" in Wisconsin. Finally, I called my youngest daughter, and she was actually at home. I don't seem to know where they are when I call any of them!



Visiting Girlfriend in Germany.

Not all of these calls happened on the same day. No, I don't know where my children and grandchildren are on any given day, but given their ages, that's fine. I hope they all know where their children are all the time. It's not about controlling children. It's about working with them to make sure they are protected and safe.

Perhaps you heard about the April "Teen Takeover" in Chicago. Hundreds of teenagers terrorizing downtown Chicago. There was a lot of damage done to cars, businesses, and attacks on citizens. There are many joys of family life, however, did the parents of the teen takeover in Chicago know where their kids were? From my experience, kids want to work with

their parents, and parents should work with their kids.

I am excited about this summer! My 3rd oldest daughter and her three girls are going to visit my place for a while. Those three granddaughters will have a great time exploring my place. Their Mom and Grandma Patty will have all kinds of stuff for them to do: finger painting, gardening, whatever. Sticks and water. Kids love it, no matter whether it's jumping in puddles or drawing pictures in the dirt with a stick. Just a simple joy of family life.

Essentially, kids want to work with you, and you should want to work with them, even if you don't know where they are at any given moment. God bless your family. **+MJ+**



Ice Fishing.

P.S. If you want to know where your children are, shut down the internet modem. They will find YOU.



Be Reconciled to God

Reconciliation: Message of Hope

by Father F. A. Eka Yuantoro, M.S.F.

In April 2023, some members of the Missionaries of the Holy Family (M.S.F.) celebrated our 25th anniversary of religious vows with a pilgrimage to La Salette, France, in the French Alps. The founder of our community, Venerable Father John Berthier, was inspired by the approved Marian apparition of Our Blessed Mother at La Salette in 1846.

Father Berthier.

We arrived at the Basilica of Our Lady of La Salette at night, and it was snowing. We received a friendly welcome from the Missionaries of La Salette, and the Sisters of La Salette served us wine and bread before dinner. We arrived from Rome by bus, and it was a long journey, over 385 miles. After dinner, we settled



Basilica of Our Lady of La Salette.

The message from our Lady of La Salette can help us to proclaim the Good News and share the joy of the Gospel to people in our world today, and this was the desire of

into our rooms, and then gathered together again for prayer in a chapel dedicated to our founder.

The next day, we could clearly see the beautiful, snow-covered



Statue of Our Lady of La Salette in the Basilica.

mountains. After breakfast, we toured the Basilica of La Salette and learned the meaning of the many symbols and ornamentation, including the image of the four Gospels on the altar. Everything was united in one message: Jesus Christ brings hope to those who will repent, believe in God who made heaven and earth, and trust in the mercy and love of Our Savior who redeemed us by His blood.

History of La Salette

On September 19, 1846, Our Blessed Mother appeared to two poor, shepherd children, Melanie and Maximin. The world was in a cholera pandemic, and many people died. Similar, in a way, to the recent coronavirus pandemic.

Our Blessed Mother, wearing a beautiful dress of French style, was heard crying by Melanie and Maximin. She told the shepherd children that people need to repent and believe in her Son, Jesus Christ. She became known as the Mother of Reconciliation because she desires all people to reconcile with Jesus for the salvation of their souls. Ultimately, a message of hope in the mercy of God. The sociopolitical climate in France at the time was terrible because many people no longer believed in God, and some were very anti-Church and anti-clergy.

Families struggled to survive and live normal lives because of war and internal conflict in Europe. Because of this persistent instability, Father Berthier moved to Grave, Holland, to establish the Missionaries of the Holy Family on September 28, 1895.

In 1996, Pope Saint John Paul II delivered a special message on the 150th anniversary of the Marian apparition at La Salette:

“The message of La Salette was given to two young shepherds at a time of great suffering. People were scourged by famine, subjected to many injustices. Indifference or hostility toward the Gospel message worsened. As she appeared, bearing on her breast the likeness of her crucified Son, Our Lady showed herself associated to the work of salvation, experiencing compassion for the trials of her children, suffering when they strayed from the Church of Christ as they forgot or rejected the presence of God in their lives, the blessedness of His Name.”



Inside the Basilica.

Mother of Reconciliation

While in La Salette, we had the opportunity to be in a procession with a statue of Our Lady of La Salette with pilgrims from many different countries. We processed to

the area where Our Lady appeared to the poor shepherd children. The Sisters of La Salette helped the pilgrims light their candles, and they distributed prayer cards in French, Polish, Italian, Spanish, and German for use during the recitation of the Rosary.



Our Lady of La Salette and Shepherd Children.

Even though the weather was cold and the wind was strong, the pilgrims were enthusiastic and prayed to God for His mercy and love. The song, *Mother Mary of La Salette*, was sung in French, Polish, and Italian. There was a statue of Our Lady where she blessed the children before she ascended into Heaven. She faced the City of Rome

when she did so as a reminder that we must obey the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. The priests then blessed all the pilgrims, and we returned to our lodgings.

The Missionaries of La Salette take care of the Basilica of Our Lady of La Salette, and they serve the many visiting pilgrims. These missionaries form a truly international team because they are from Poland, Brazil, Philippines, Myanmar, Madagascar, France, and Italy.

Tomb of John (Jean) Berthier

Our founder, Venerable Father John Berthier, is buried in La Salette. At times during his life, he would live at La Salette and serve the pilgrims coming from many parts of France.

We prayed together at his tomb before heading back to Rome. We placed our Rosaries and Crucifixes on top of his tomb, and Father General Agustinus Purnama, M.S.F. led us in prayer. We want to grow in the spirit of our founder to be missionaries of mercy in the world.

Father Berthier died in Grave, Holland on October 16, 1908, and his body was later moved to La Salette. Even though he is our founder, he was a Missionary of La Salette, and he died as a Missionary of La Salette.

Father General Agustinus reminded us that, as missionaries, we must be ready to go to any place where

we are needed. We serve the mission of the Church, and we are an international congregation, so we must be open to serve in any country.



After we left La Salette, we celebrated Sunday Mass in Chatonnay, France, where Father Berthier was born. We visited the home of his childhood, and this house was recently purchased by the Missionaries of the Holy Family. The house needs some repairs, and the work is now in the planning stages.

It was inspiring to see and touch the place where our founder lived. I was moved to continue my mission to share the joy and mercy of the Gospel. As a Missionary of the Holy Family, I must go wherever I am needed. I am from Indonesia, but I serve the Church in Texas near the border of Mexico.

We are missionaries of God, just as Jesus is the missionary of the Father.

+jmi+



HOW DOES OUR GARDEN GROW?

Encouraging Growth of Religious Communities

by J. P. Richardson

*“Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockleshells,
And pretty maids all in a row.”*

Remember that *Mother Goose* nursery rhyme? Some scholars say the verse had Catholic meanings. Silver bells were church bells; pretty maids were nuns.

The Catholic Church once flourished bountifully with sisters, brothers, nuns, monks, friars, and religious order priests. Many people today don't know who they are. Sisters ran most Catholic schools and hospitals. Their work was the fabric of Catholic life. People professing religious vows have kept the Faith alive across centuries, while educating children to be good citizens. Their contributions to civilization are beyond belief – belief in God and Heaven, and living as Christians in this world.

Their accomplishments – for love of God and neighbor rather than



money – are sublime. What would the world be without them? In recent times, though, their numbers have decreased drastically, with exceptions. Some communities are increasing. Why? **How can religious orders grow?**

My mother had two green thumbs – more: ten green fingers and ten green toes. From her, I got one green, little fingertip. When I try to grow a garden, I need help – fertilizer, for starters. One brand says boldly on the box: *“Encourages New Growth!”* We want to encourage new growth

in our beautiful gardens of religious communities.

We'll need a gardener's ingredients: soil, seeds, warmth, water, light, nutrients, and air. God, the Original Gardener, grew His Garden of Eden – Paradise – from love. God is love



(1 John 4:16) and is everywhere, like air (unpolluted). Religious communities need God's love to grow.

Hope is fertile soil. We sow seeds of faith – each like a tiny mustard seed that grows to be the largest of plants, where, Jesus said, *"birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches"* (Matthew 13:31-32). Saint Paul teaches that *"faith, hope, and love remain"* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Scripture likens the Holy Spirit to the wind: *"The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"* (John 3:8). *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,*

generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). A garden refreshed by "holy wind," bearing "holy fruit," would be "divine" – and growing.

Jesus is *"the Light of the World"* (John 8:12). God is *"the source of living waters"* (Jeremiah 2:13). *"The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven,"* William Shakespeare wrote. Whenever it rains, we'll thank



God for His mercy. Life in community could provide warmth. Our nutrients are the teachings and Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Our fertilizer is prayer. We must pray for vocations – and thank God for them.

God created our original parents to live blissfully in His Garden, but He gave them a choice: Obey God, or yield to the serpent's temptations. To yield to Satan is to let weeds grow. Weeds – like sins for which we are not sorry – will spread, suffocating flowers, choking vegetables. Some weeds have demonic names and – surprise! – are poisonous – for example, devil's weed and hell's bells.

God tolerates no weeds in Paradise, so we poor children of Eve are not born in Eden.

We are born in a weed patch, a disordering of God's design. Redesigning ourselves in our own images, rejecting God's designs for us in His image, is an example of entangling ourselves among weeds. We can try to control weeds with well-formed consciences and Confession.

Sister Julia Kubista, M.M., a longtime Maryknoll missionary in Africa, founded the Sisters in Jesus the Lord in 2005 in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to be missionaries in Russia. Their motherhouse now is in Saint Joseph, Missouri. She grew up on a farm and knows about planting and growing:

"A religious habit speaks quietly but firmly," she said. "God is in charge of religious orders. If they're not paying attention to Him, why should He pay attention to them? Your habit signifies Whom you married. If you take it off, it's like throwing away your wedding ring. Why expect your Husband to stick around? After Vatican II, many priests took off their Roman collars, and many sisters took off their habits – but it didn't work. The numbers, way up before, went way down after the council."

One morning, waiting for my dental spring cleaning, I conversed with two waiting Sisters. One, wearing Franciscan blue, said, "My habit says, 'I witness.'" The other, wearing



Dominican white, smiled and nodded. I thanked them for being witnesses. Habits are gardeners' garments silently witnessing: "We are laborers in God's vineyard."

The Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia – the Nashville Dominicans – started in Tennessee in the year Abraham Lincoln was elected president: 1860. They are growing today. Why? Vocation Director Sister Mara Grace, O.P., said, "Every vocation is a precious gift, a mystery of the Lord's calling. The Lord continues to call women to religious life. Women entering our community have heard this call in their silent dialogue with the Lord in prayer."

"Many are drawn to the radical following of Christ, expressed through the vowed life: They want to give their entire selves in poverty, chastity, and obedience. They are attracted to the life of prayer, the communal life, the common apostolate, the devotion to the Eucharist and to Our Lady,

and fidelity to the Church. Many comment that they are drawn to the joy of the sisters; this joy comes from faithful living of the charism that has been given to the community by the Holy Spirit.”

Cultivating weatherproof ideas – such as fidelity to the Church’s teachings,

Catholic education, communal life, and wearing habits – could sprout a new Catholic springtime. “Then the Lord will guide you always, and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give strength to your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11). **+JM+**

Artist Spotlight

Lillian Ryan



Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Formerly from New York City, Lillian Ryan is an aspiring artist in Saint Louis, Missouri. At a young age, she learned to paint and draw, using inspiration from her family. As her work grew, it incorporated illustrative recollections of her life. She is currently a third-year student at Fontbonne University in Saint Louis, studying for a BFA in Studio Art with a minor in Psychology. She then plans to receive an MFA in Art Therapy. **+JM+**



An Invitation

The Family Forever Society

by Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

What is the Family Forever Society? It's very simple! Members of this special society are people who have remembered the Missionaries of the Holy Family in their wills or estate plans. Their bequests are called Legacy Gifts.

While most Legacy Gifts are made with the intention of the Missionaries of the Holy Family receiving benefits in the future, some Legacy Gifts are realized in the present. Gifts of securities or stock, real estate, and other tangible property are usually transferred before December 31 of any year so the benefactor can realize tax breaks for charitable donations.

Most Legacy Gifts are used as principal for our Retirement Trust Fund. While we do have a modest trust fund to help cover the rising cost of healthcare needed by the elderly and disabled members of our religious community, it is always a struggle.

Please consider joining our Family Forever Society. To receive a free booklet on preparing your will, please send your request to me at 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118, or call me at 1-888-484-9945. If you are remembering us in your will, please remember us as: *Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family - North American Province.*

Our Holy Family priests and brothers will always hold you and your loved ones in prayer. Isn't that what a Family is supposed to do? Thank you and God bless you... *forever.*



Forever Yours in the Holy Family,

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior, North American Province



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*Family Time!
See page 18.*



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