

heart and touch your soul, Venerable Mary of Ágredea related that St. Joseph said the following goodbye to Mary before he died.

Blessed art thou among all women. Let angels and men praise thee; let all the generations know, praise, and exalt thy dignity; and may the Most High be eternally praised for having created thee so pleasing in his eyes and in the sight of all the blessed spirits. I hope to enjoy thy sight in the heavenly fatherland.²⁰

Pious Union of St. Joseph

Will he, the great saint whom Jesus and Mary obeyed, who provided Jesus and Mary with their daily bread, be invoked in vain? No!¹¹

— St. Luigi Guanella

Saint Joseph is never invoked in vain. Jesus had total confidence in the comforting love of his virginal father. Jesus wants us to experience the wonders of living in union with St. Joseph as well.

Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

— Mt 7:9-11

In the Scripture passage above, Jesus is teaching us about the love of his Heavenly Father. Yet this teaching of Jesus also applies to our spiritual father, St. Joseph. He is an icon of the Heavenly Father. In St. Joseph's steadfast love, we can have total confidence.

The life and work of St. Luigi Guanella offer us an example of having total confidence in St. Joseph. Born and raised in Italy, St. Luigi spent his entire priesthood doing corporal and spiritual works of mercy for others. He looked after orphans, cared for those with mental and physical disabilities, helped abandoned elderly people, clothed the homeless, and fed the poor. Zealous to help everyone in need, he founded two religious congregations to continue performing the works of mercy, the Servants of Charity and the Daughters of Mary.

Devotion to St. Joseph was at the heart of St. Luigi's life and mission. He made certain that both of the religious communities he

founded strove to be in constant union with St. Joseph, seeing in him a model and a patron for all their charitable works. In the many homes St. Luigi established to meet the needs of others, he emphasized that devotion to St. Joseph needed to flourish, especially devotion to St. Joseph as the Patron of the Dying, because he believed that the works of mercy were fruitless if they did not help people acquire a relationship with the Lord and experience a holy and happy death like that of St. Joseph.

Saint Luigi's devotion to St. Joseph was so well known that St. Pope Pius X invited him to build a church near the Vatican in honor of St. Joseph. Saint Luigi was delighted by the invitation of the pope and began construction immediately. Not surprisingly, St. Luigi dedicated the new church to honoring St. Joseph's holy and happy death. The church took four years to complete and was consecrated on March 19, 1912.

The church St. Luigi built in honor of St. Joseph is located in the Trionfale region of Rome. It is known as San Giuseppe al Trionfale. Saint Pope Pius X had also encouraged St. Luigi to initiate an apostolate that would offer daily prayers for the suffering and the dying. In 1913, St. Luigi launched an international association of intercessors for the suffering and the dying. He named the association the Pious Union of St. Joseph, and St. Pope Pius X became the first official member. The headquarters of the Pious Union of St. Joseph is located right next to the church of San Giuseppe al Trionfale. International branches of the Pious Union of St. Joseph are located throughout the world. In the United States, the Pious Union of St. Joseph is headquartered in Grass Lake, Michigan (see page 287).

My dear St. Joseph, be with me living, be with me dying, and obtain for me a favorable judgment from Jesus, my merciful Savior.²

— Pope Leo XIII

Saint Joseph, my dear father, gaze upon me from heaven. Detach me from the things of earth, obtain for me purity of heart, love of God, and final perseverance.³

— Blessed Bartolo Longo