

SPECIAL
FILE

The Oratory magazine

Novena and Feast of Saint Joseph
♦ March 10 to 19, 2017

A HERITAGE TO CELEBRATE

PREACHING AT 2 P.M. AND 7:30 P.M.

EMMANUEL DURAND, OP ♦ DANIEL CADRIN, OP ♦ ANDRÉ DESCÔTEAUX, OP

BILINGUAL MASSES March 14 and 16 at 7:30 p.m.

ENGLISH MASSES March 12 at 11:15 a.m.

March 19 at 12:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

SOLEMN MASSES IN THE BASILICA, MARCH 19

10:00 a.m. Msgr. Luc Cyr, Archbishop of Sherbrooke (bilingual)

2:30 p.m. Msgr. Claude Hamelin, Auxiliary Bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil

7:30 p.m. Msgr. Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal





Photo: Samuel Martin

Day 1 Friday MARCH 10

✠ Celebrating Newness

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times... But I say to you...” (*Matthew 5:21-22*) Jesus uplifts those who listen to him. He sets mutual responsibilities for us so that we may live in unity. Anger, insults, and contempt should no longer be found among us.

Jesus was bold in his audacity and originality. That kind of boldness emerges again among us with the saints. This is why they speak to us and impart their wisdom. Saint Joseph was bold in his daring to take to himself Mary, a virgin, who carried within her the New Child.

Brother André was bold in his innovation, by honoring Saint Joseph on the mountain, for mapping out a little path for prayer, and then, in all innocence, to dare to heal through faith and compassion. He had received, for our behalf, this faith which moves mountains.

When we climb this mountain in our day, are we ready to be renewed, turned upside down, unsettled, purified? Today, we begin the work of conversion.

Our concept of justice (which we have gotten quite used to before coming here) just won't do anymore. Anger, insults, harsh judgment will have to be laid to rest. We now have to encounter each other unarmed. If I approach the altar where our prayers to God are piled high, conveyed by Saint Joseph, am I prepared to reconcile with my brother, my sister, my son, my daughter, my father, my mother... and with those whose names I do not even want to pronounce?



Saint Joseph, you had to face up to bewildering circumstances and to threatening conditions by making decisions from a place of peaceful openness; sustain us, make us open to the everyday challenge of human relations.



EMMANUEL DURAND is a Dominican. He has been a religious for 25 years, and a priest for 17 years. He is a native of France with family roots in Oran, Algeria, where he remains in contact with friends and acquaintances. He has been active in health care ministries in psychiatric and palliative care settings. A professor of theology since 2001, he taught first at the Institut Catholique de Paris and is now at the Dominican University College in Ottawa. He is also guest master at the Dominican convent. In his free time, he enjoys exploring the hills of Outaouais in summer and winter, cycling, hiking or skiing.



Day 2 Saturday MARCH 11

✠ *Set Free*

Yesterday it was a question of my brother or sister. Today it's a question of my enemy. One only has to live a little bit to identify one's enemies and to become aware of the role that hate plays deep within the soul. Father Christian de Chergé, prior of the monastery of Tibhirine wrote this in his testament, "I have lived long enough to realize that I, too, am implicated in that evil which seems, sadly, to pervade the world, implicated even in that very evil which might blindly strike me down." With ever-growing insight about me, Jesus tries to teach me how to love my enemies, and then quite unreasonably, commands me to do it!

Brother André discovered that before we did. Remember, when he was doorkeeper at Collège Notre-Dame, he was mocked and belittled all year long by the staff doctor. And then, all of a sudden, the unbeliever's wife fell sick, so sick that the only recourse was to bring her secretly to Brother André. The faith and compassion of Brother André healed this woman, and at the same time, the hate and jealousy of the doctor.

When circumstances require, you'll find "Love your Enemy" waiting right in your heart, in your gaze. My enemy can become a brother or sister to me. One day perhaps, we shall turn out to be good thieves in paradise. But for that to happen, I must tear away hatred from my soul, down here below.



*Saint Joseph, how did you regard your enemies?
How did you regard Jesus' enemies?
Teach me this gaze of truth and of serenity,
this gaze of strength and sympathy,
this gaze which blesses and disarms.*

Day 3 Sunday MARCH 12

✠ *An Abiding Dream*

Brother André had a dream about devotion to Saint Joseph. He laid out a way up the mountain for us. We climb to the Oratory, we mumble our petitions, we have a heart to heart, then we go back down the mountain. Joseph also had a dream.... He took Mary to himself and led the Child to the threshold of a great mission.

On the mountain top, the face of Jesus flickers in our eyes, as it flickered on the furrowed brows of our forebears: Abraham, Moses, Elijah... Peter, James and John. It flickers beneath the slumbering eyelids of those who have already gone before us, having been healed, taken hope to themselves, and died peacefully. Jesus' Transfiguration is the passing on of a relay baton, moving along the great chain of believers who extend discipleship even to our day.

Should it happen that we find ourselves one fine day in The Cloud, it would be kind of nice to fantasise: "Well, we could put up three tents, right?" (We don't quite know what we're saying, but heck, we are talking to JESUS!) We mumble our petitions, our gripes, and our thank yous.

And then it's time to keep quiet, in a heart to heart, to listen to the voice of the Father in a long-distance call from God: Quit your homeland.... Pay attention to my beloved Son. Jesus is climbing down with us. The plain has changed!



*Saint Joseph, you notice light playing off the face
of the child of Bethlehem, and the faces of Mary,
the shepherds and the magi, yet you never suspect that
you yourself are become radiant. Teach us to become
radiant witnesses of the beloved Son, here in this world.*



Photo: Bernard Brault

Day 4 Monday MARCH 13

✠ A Mercy to Offer

“Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

This year past, Pope Francis has provided us the opportunity to experience a Year of Mercy. He led us to discover that the name of God is Mercy. He reminded us that “...from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly.” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, no. 25) And so, this call to expressions and acts of pardon is no small thing. Mercy has as its source the face of our God, whose witnesses we want to be.

Mercy is felt in the gut, the way a mother or father copes with their suffering child. Brother André was a remarkable exemplar of this sort of active mercy. He encountered thousands of people during his lifetime and he was able to get in touch with their misfortune and give it his full attention. He was able to be moved by them and to move himself to offer comfort by a word of approval, a gesture, a gaze.

To approve is to be moved and to move.

We are called to do the same thing ourselves. Saint Joseph’s Oratory of Mount Royal has been and remains the special place for transmitting this mercy which reconciles and heals.



*Saint Joseph, you were a forgiving father to Jesus, your son.
Following you around, he picked up the words
and the acts of mercy. Teach us, by your example,
to become witnesses to the mercy of the living God.*



DANIEL CADRIN has been a religious of the Dominican Order since 1967 and was ordained a deacon in 1975. After working in faith education and bible formation in the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Brother Cadrin served as general councillor and assistant to the Master of the Order of Preachers in Rome, from 1992 to 1999. Today, he is a professor and Director of the l’Institut de pastorale des dominicains in Montreal. He has written a number of works and articles on the consecrated life and adult formation for Christian living. He has a particular interest in the meanings of images and symbols, as well as the art of photography.



Day 5 Tuesday MARCH 14

✠ *Discovering a Brother or Sister*

“You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers.” (*Matthew 23:8*)

All around us, in our families, in our neighborhood, where we work and play, we see all kinds of different people. These different ages, cultures, ways of living are not at all the same. Even in our faith communities, the old and new ways brush up against each other.

We are tricked by false impressions or by those categories which classify things as inferior or superior. Jesus calls us to step forth from our narrow frames of reference and recognize those who are our brothers and sisters. Like the prophets, he cares about equality and justice.

Brother André wore his name well: he was a Brother to so many of the people with whom he came in contact. He didn't care about their social status, their place of origin; he didn't rank them according to their successes in life or their station. He considered each one as a child of God, gifted and fragile. He offered them healing, and challenges and hope. He didn't bring people down, rather he raised them up. In his footsteps, Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal has been and continues to be a crossroads for encounter and mutual support, for very different people.



*Saint Joseph, attentive father,
you helped Jesus your son to recognize in every person,
a brother, a sister. Teach us the path
to an open and positive humanity.*

Day 6 Wednesday MARCH 15

✠ *A Life to Give*

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life.” (*Matthew 20:28*)

Two of Jesus' apostles wanted to be seated one at his right hand and one at his left. They wanted to be in first place, the place of honor. We get it. But remember, there were 12 apostles, and the other 10 were up in arms! Squabbles and rivalry did their dirty work of division within the community. That happens even today! Jesus didn't get all worked up but invited his disciples to use another approach.

The important thing is not to try to dominate but rather to put oneself at the service of others. This was the originality of the community of disciples formed by Jesus. And he himself gave generous example.

Brother André did the same sort of thing. Though popular, he didn't use his abilities to control or to impose. He didn't take center stage, but focused on people's needs. Service as a gift of self was his thing, and he did it with humble generosity. Just so, Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal has been and remains an out of the ordinary place where one can learn to serve and to give of oneself.



*Saint Joseph, you put your life at the service
of Mary and Jesus with courage and constancy,
in order to bring to fruition the promises of God.
Teach us to be active, faithful and impartial servants,
who give of themselves to others.*



Photo: Samuel Martin

Day 7 Thursday MARCH 16

✠ A Poverty to Share

Lazarus... the rich man... and a reversal of fortunes. The one who used to be a beggar enters into the joy of the Kingdom. The one who enjoyed life's comforts can't even get a drop of water to cool his tongue.

Alfred Bessette, poor fellow, left his homeland to join thousands of his countrymen who sought out work in the factories of New England. By the time he returned, he was still a poor man amid other poor. As a religious, he would stand next to the door his whole life.

He so invested himself with poverty that he became one of those "poor in spirit" to whom the Kingdom belongs. Poverty did not turn him in on himself. Rather, he became alert to misery, intuited it, embraced it. A poor man himself, he brought hope and, to many, healing. He is in fact the cause of this magnificent basilica. Through him, "the Almighty has worked wonders" (*Luke 1:49*).

The rich man, entrapped by possessing and consuming, is unaware of anything else. He engenders nothing for others. He never lifts his eyes to heaven, because he is blinded by his goods, and constantly sets himself to getting more and more things without noticing the poor wretch on his doorstep. The centre of his life is himself.

Doesn't one have to be poor in spirit to be a neighbor? To love? To share?



*Saint Joseph, whose son was born in a manger,
you had to work hard all your life to supply the needs
of the Holy Family. May our hearts be poor in spirit,
like yours and like Brother André's,
ready to see, to love, and to share.*



ANDRÉ DESCÔTEAUX a Dominican for the past 30 years, was ordained a priest in 1992. A native of Montreal, *this* André is pleased to come and preach at Saint Joseph's Oratory, founded by Brother André, CSC. Within the Order of Preachers, Father Descôteaux was prior of the Saint-Albert-le-Grand convent in Montreal, provincial treasurer and, for the past six years, has been serving as prior of the Province Saint-Dominique of Canada. He is also a visiting professor at the l'Institut de pastorale des dominicains in Montreal, and the Dominican University College. His pastimes include reading, music and cooking.



Day 8 Friday MARCH 17

✠ A Confidence Put to the Test

Young Joseph, favoured child, becomes a slave! A confidence put to the test: he will become the most powerful man in Egypt (after the Pharaoh) and will save his own family from famine.

Joseph, husband-to-be, who intends to renounce Mary after he finds out that she is pregnant. A confidence put to the test when he feels he was betrayed in his love. Joseph, with Mary and Jesus, must flee into exile in Egypt to escape the same misfortune as all the children massacred by Herod! A confidence put to the test by the unknown.

Brother André, never let himself be overcome by difficulties. He will plant medals of Saint Joseph on the mountain side. A confidence in Saint Joseph, a confidence in his God. Brother André never stopped arousing and sustaining confidence within those who suffer.

A sad confidence on the part of the owner of the vineyard who, after the murder of his agents, sends his own son to the tenants in the hope that they will listen to him. A sad confidence on the part of the beloved Son who weeps over Jerusalem. "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)

Nevertheless, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes!" (Matthew 21:37) A confidence which saves!



Saint Joseph, may we have an unshakable confidence in the goodness and love of God our Father despite any sort of hardship, in the same way as did Saint Brother André. Fortify us to be able to reassure and encourage all who are experiencing troubles.

Day 9 Saturday MARCH 18

✠ An Inheritance to Retrieve

The parable of the prodigal son, one of the most beautiful of Jesus' parables! It leads us into the heart of God, but just as well into the drama of human experience.

"Give me the share of the property that belongs to me." (Luke 15:12) Right here is the human tragedy: to think you can be happy without God! To exploit everything around you as soon as possible: nature at the brink of extinction; other people subjugated, reduced to poverty or slavery.

"All these years I have been working like a slave for you, and for what!" (Luke 15:29) This is the reaction of the elder son toward his father when the messed-up younger son comes home and is gladly welcomed back.

From the parable, we understand that our God can hardly wait for our return. He sent his Son Jesus into our streets to seek us out. He was even seen in disreputable corners. His life did not end well: crucified! Nonetheless, it is on the cross that he bestows God's pardon upon us. He dies so that we can be reborn with him into life and can retrieve the inheritance that only God can give: life in abundance.

This is the most prized inheritance: to accept God as Father and others as sisters and brothers. An inheritance which initiates us into an effort to create a world of peaceful sharing.



Saint Joseph, whom Jesus called father, may we accept Jesus because even today he comes looking for us to lead us home to take full possession of the promised inheritance: the love of the Father and life in abundance.



A HERITAGE TO CELEBRATE

Lord, we thank you
for this wonderful heritage
left us by Saint Brother André.
Grant us the same steadfast faith
that guided him throughout his life.

Transform our hearts
that we may accept our sisters
and brothers as he did — with compassion.
Teach us to turn with confidence
to his friend Saint Joseph
as we entrust to him the anxieties and
the afflictions of those who appeal to us.

Give us the grace to discover
in the very act of acceptance and service
the path toward joy and peace of heart.
We pray to you, Father
through your Son, in the Spirit.
Amen



Photo: Nathalie Dumas



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