

News and Views

Newsletter of the Divine Providence Province



Holiness of Work

Dear Confreres,

The month of May which is dedicated to Mother Mary (Remember that our Pope is inviting all of us to join in this marathon of prayer and to pray with him daily with the special intention for an end to this pandemic) begins with the solid personage St. Joseph the Worker, whose feast in turn expresses the sanctity of human labor and the salvific nature of all our activities.

Avoda, or **Avodah** (עבודת), is a Hebrew word that literally means "work, worship, and service." Paul encourages the Colossians, "And whatever you do, ... do it all in the name of Jesus giving thanks to God ... whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Col 3,17, 23). To work is a high calling! Perhaps the most powerful expression of our giving thanks to God comes through the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Here we see bread and wine on the Lord's table. These elements, the products of many hands and minds, come to the table, are blessed by God, and become for us the body and blood of our Lord. Alan Richardson writes, "Here is the perfect symbol of the unity of work and worship. The strange unbreakable link that exists between the bread that is won by the sweat of man's face and the bread of life."

Work was God's loving idea from the

beginning, in and through creation. After reporting the creation of male and female on the sixth day, the writer of Genesis quotes God as saying, "... Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (Gen 1,28). The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it (Gen 2,15).

The first glimpse we have of the human person in Scripture shows someone working as a farmer and manager of the rest of creation joyously, purposefully tilling the ground and exercising respectful stewardship over all the earth. The Bible portrays work as part of God's very nature. Elton Trueblood wrote in his book *Your Other Vocation*, "If God is the worker, then men and women, in order to fulfill their potentialities, must be workers too." We are exercising our dignity as creatures made in God's likeness when we work. Our work is the dual task of continuing God's creative process and taking good care of what God has entrusted to us.

The right and duty of persons to use their talents through work to participate in the ongoing creative activity of God has been a central theme of Catholic social teachings since the publication of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. The encyclicals that were published after *Rerum Novarum* were built on Pope Leo XIII's insights on the meaning of work. They affirmed again and again the right of every human person to participate in the life of God and humanity through work. Pope Pius XI, in *Quadragesimo Anno*, emphasized the significance of a person's participation through work. He proclaimed that every worker "by

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“Seeing themselves useful in the most simple farm works, the poor disabled feel that they are almost rehabilitated. With a very profound satisfaction, they love to show others that they are worth something and can earn their food..”

St. Louis Guanella

doing his duty is working usefully and honorably for the common good and is following in the footsteps of Him, who, being in the form of God, chose to be a carpenter among men and to

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be known as the Son of a carpenter.”

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* mentions, “Each person shares in the wonder of creation through work. Our every activity is an essential ingredient in the building of the earth and of the kingdom of God. This is our scriptural and theological understanding of work. Work is the means by which persons grow in union with God and participate in the salvific plan for mankind and the world. The people of God are scattered throughout every profession and work and precisely in that context, they exercise their spirituality of work.

Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si*, observes that Jesus, by spending most of His life on earth as a working person, as a carpenter, “sanctified human labor and endowed it with a special significance for our development.” He agrees with the words of Saint John Paul II, who taught that, “by enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity.” He mentions, “We were created with a vocation to work.” Therefore, helping the poor, such as those who are unemployed and those whose economic welfare is helpless due to physical and mental disabilities, must “be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs.” He adds “the broader objective should always be to allow the poor to create a dignified life through work.”

St. Guanella holds a sacred view for work and understood it as the means of education. He introduces in his institutions the tradition among the residents to work according to their capabilities. He searches for ways to assign them jobs according to their aptitudes, anticipating what today is known as vocational therapy. St. Guanella believes that work has its paramount importance for their development. He writes:

“The Lord truly blesses our efforts, or better yet, our good will, because we can see true marvels in those poor people to whom nature has given the gift of the intellect in a very limited measure. Seeing themselves useful in the most simple farm works, the poor disabled feel that they are almost rehabilitated. With a very profound satisfaction, they love to show others that they are worth something and can earn their food. Some also believe that they are special in their class, because they have learned to move soil, or to pull a little wagon of dirt on the temporary rails.”

Passing a construction site, a pedestrian asked three bricklayers what they were doing. The first said that he

was earning a living to feed and clothe his family. The second said, "I'm throwing these bricks together to build a wall." The third responded, "I am helping to build a cathedral for the glory and worship of God." What a difference your perspective makes in giving meaning to your work! May we work hard like St. Joseph and enjoy it more each day.

Please keep in your prayers all those who are suffering due to this pandemic.

Please keep in your prayers our confreres who are to renew their religious vows on May 26th.

Please accompany the three postulants who are about to begin their novitiate on May 30th.

Fr. Ronald J, SdC

Provincial Superior

May Calendar of Fr. Provincial

- 4-15 **Chennai:** Classes - DGMS
- 15-20 **Annual Retreat**
- 26 **Chennai:** Renewal of Vows - DGMS
- 30 **Bangalore:** Entrance into Novitiate

Day of Joy



PROVINCIALATE - Fr. Antonysamy, Director of the Communication Center, celebrated his birthday on April 24st. Holy Mass was celebrated with other fathers of the community and in the presence of our staff. Fr. Anandhan, Director of DGSS, participated in the Mass and shared his experience with Fr. Antonysamy. After Mass Mr. Justin, the provincial, honored Father with a garland. The celebration ended with a dinner banquet and delicious cake. We thank Fr. Provincial who wished and allowed to celebrate his birthday. A special thanks to Fr. Dina for arranging the dinner and the celebration.

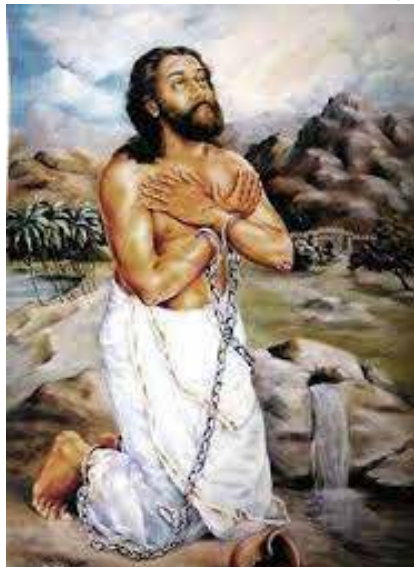
Bl. Lazarus (Devasahayam) – The First Indian Layman to become a Saint

By Fr. Franklin, SdC

"Martyrdom and the vocation to martyrdom are not the results of human effort, but the response to an initiative and a call from God, they are a gift of His grace, which makes one capable of offering one's life for love of Christ and of the Church, and thus of the world." These words of the Holy Father Benedict XVI are fully applicable to the life, sufferings, and the brave death of Blessed Devasahayam (very soon to become a saint - <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-05/pope-bd-charles-de-foucauld-six-others-to-be-named-saints.html>).

Blessed Lazarus, called Devasahayam, was an 18th-century Hindu married man who converted to Catholicism. Nilakanda Pillai was born on April 23, 1712, as an upper-caste Hindu Nair converted to Christianity. He was a member of the royal service and was close to King Marthanda Varma, then ruler of Travancore. He was very much loved by the king and was a good man who was faithful to his duty. Due to the devastation of a monsoon and other factors, he became penniless. Nilakandan shared his worries with a devout Catholic, a Dutch official named Benedictus Eustachio De Lannoy, who explained to him the meaning of suffering in light of the Book of Job. For Nilakandan, Job's example and his trust in God were decisive. Convinced of the truth of the Christian mysteries, Nilakandan asked for Baptism, which he received in 1745 from the hands of Fr. Giovanni Battista Buttari, a Jesuit missionary, after nine months of preparation. He took the name Devasahayam, the Tamil translation of the biblical name Lazarus, which means "God has helped."

Devasahayam dedicated himself to the proclamation of the Gospel for four years. However, the heads of his native religion did not look kindly on his conversion to Christianity. He was threatened, beaten, mistreated, imprisoned, and tortured uninterruptedly for three years. Despite his sufferings, Devasahayam remained firm in his faith. His wife, Bhargavi Ammal, became Catholic and took the name Gnanapoo Ammal (Theresa). Their conversion antagonized upper-caste Hindus, and the King commanded Nilakandan to reconvert to Hinduism, but he refused. Devasahayam



stood firm and did not listen to the King or anyone, so he was dismissed from the king's office and was arrested and thrown into prison on February 23, 1749. The following day he was condemned to death by the King, to be eliminated as "an enemy of the state." Before execution, the King again gave a fresh order to take him around through the most important and populous towns of the Kingdom for his disgrace. He was paraded in all the important towns in the Kingdom most shamefully, seated backward on a buffalo with an Erukku flower garland around his neck, his hands tied behind his back and the executioner holding the end of the rope by which the prisoner was bound in his left hand, and a sharp raised sword in his right hand. This was the ultimate kind of shame and mockery at that time.

When the parade was over, he was then handed over to soldiers for execution. Left under the open sky, he was tied to a neem tree with fetters, hugging the tree with his legs bound in chains so that he could not move, sit or stand or recline. He was exposed to the hot, burning sun, heavy rains, freezing wind and sometimes was almost submerged in the slush. He endured these most grievous sufferings for seven months. Amid so much suffering, his only sorrow was the delay of death, and his only fear was that he might lose the crown of martyrdom.

Finally, after three years of gruesome torture, he was taken to a secret prison at Aralvaimozhi, where condemned criminals were sentenced to death by the King. He was beaten daily on the route to the forest, pepper was rubbed in his wounds and nostrils, and he was exposed to the sun and given only stagnant water to drink. He was tortured so much to the point that he was exhausted and unable to walk. The soldiers carried him to the nearby hill, Kattadimalai. Finally, a little before midnight between January 14-15, 1752, he was taken to the place of his execution. There he was shot dead by the soldiers. As five bullets hit him, he uttered for the last time, "Jesus save me." His body was cast away into the forest to be torn up by wild animals. Priests and other faithful tried to get hold of his body.

At last, on the fifth day, his bones were found shorn of flesh. His tongue was lying apart, incorrupt. They were

The Simplest Form of Gratitude



CHENNAI - “Joy is the simplest form of Gratitude” says Karl Barth. Don Guanella Special School celebrated the event named “Anbin Vizhuthugal” in order to remember and thank our benefactors, donors, well-wishers and all who supported by rendering their contribution as a token of love for the development and success of DGSS in the 2020–21 Academy. The event was excellent and well organized by the school. All benefactors who are rooted in the School’s mission were invited. During the event our special children danced very beautifully and made everyone happy. We honored our guests and benefactors with the gifts and shields for their continuous support and love. The evening ended with a delicious dinner. The guests departed with happiness.

A Gift of Technology

CHENNAI - Computers are the instruments that move



the world of knowledge and technology. Don Guanella Special School has not been able to use computers to enlarge the knowledge of the students due to a lack of availability. It has long been a desire to have a computer room at DGSS, and through the generosity of the ITI Company called Accenture, DGSS received 10 computers. At last the computer room was well set-up.

It was inaugurated by Fr. Benson, Mr. Lionel Huggett and Mr. Anto John. The entire community is grateful for this new initiative for the students.

Aid from Welfare Office

CHENNAI - Don Guanella Special School staff received 500 UDID forms from the District Differently Abled Welfare Office (DDAWO), Thiruvallur, Chennai in order to enroll the beneficiaries in Government assistance programs. The staff is very happy to help the government officials because these programs help the development of DGSS a lot. The staff is always engaging themselves in working for the betterment of the special children.



Volunteers Help with Magazine

CHENNAI - On May 27th, the Don Guanella Special School staff helped the Communication office in a special way to prepare the magazines to be sent through the postal service. The DGSS Director invited the entire staff to participate in the work of joy in collaboration with the Communication Center. After the work was complete, the Director of Communication Center thanked all the brothers and staff who helped prepare the magazines for mailing.



Triduum Begins

BANGALORE - On April 1st, Holy Thursday was celebrated in a simple manner in an open area. The Holy Mass was presided over by Fr. Kulandaisamy with



Frs. Gabriel & Praveen concelebrating with him. After Mass, the Holy Eucharist was taken to the altar of repose prepared in the chapel. The lay faithful reverently and actively participated in Adoration both silently and with periods animated by religious sisters and Guanellian fathers. Adoration came to a close at midnight.

The Passion Comes to Life

BANGALORE - On the morning of the passion of the Lord, April 2nd, under the leadership of



Fr. Kulandaisamy, the superior of the community, the passion of the Lord was enacted. Guanellian Cooperators, Guanellian Lay Movement members, non-teaching staff, choir members, brothers of Guanella Preethi Nivas and other volunteers all collaborated in the effort. The faithful from surrounding areas and with all the precautionary measures participated prayerfully. At the end of the devotion, everyone was provided with

some refreshment. That evening the veneration of the cross service was held.

Faithful attend Easter Vigil

BANGALORE - The Easter vigil on April 3rd, was presided over by Fr. Kulandaisamy. The faithful



actively participated in the Easter vigil services. Faithful were allowed to attend with facemasks and seating was arranged with social distancing. The liturgy was arranged with the help of the lay faithful and everything was beautiful.

Birthday Celebrated

BANGALORE - Three students: Ms. Sarah, Ms. Sneha and Ms. Sandhra, from Christu Jayanthi College, came to Don Guanella Aged Home for a mission experience. They were helping the grandfathers by giving them



motivational classes and talks. In the meantime they were also lending a hand to keep the home neat and clean. Ms. Sandhra celebrated her birthday on April 9th with our grandfathers by cutting a small cake and sharing it with them. The entire community is grateful to them for the service rendered to our institute.

Life is a Journey

BANGALORE - Fr. Gabriel celebrated his birthday on April 20th. There was a simple



cake cutting. Fr. Gabriel thanked God for the gift of his life and the gift of the people who surround him.

Celebration of Life

VATLURU - It was a joyous month gloriously celebrating Easter saying, "The Lord is Risen, Alleluia". Guanella Karunalaya celebrated the birthdays of Frs. Christu Raj



and Assisi on April 1st and 6th with the local confreres, boys, domestic workers and parishioners. Everyone participated in the holy Mass and honored them each with a shawl and garland. A cultural program was organized to felicitate the fathers with songs, creative dances, skits and also offering them memorable gifts. Everyone had a good time. Fr. Assisi thanked the whole community for their generosity, love and concern.

Sports Day

VATLURU - Games and sports are part and parcel of our life which makes our body hale and healthy. It makes us fit, fresh, active and social. They teach the



lessons of discipline, team spirit and leadership. They also teach the lessons of brotherhood and unity. "One man practicing sportsmanship is far better than 50 preaching it." – Knute Rockne. Games and sports were organized at Guanella Karunalaya to help commemorate "Uggadi" (Telugu New Year). Fr. Assisi, local superior, inaugurated the sports day with a small prayer and honored Mr. B. Vidya Sagar with a shawl. He was our special guest and referee of the day, conducting all the events of the sports for the boys. Frs. Christu and Jose Rambabu also participated in the event.

A Warm Welcome

KOPPAKA - As the joy of Easter moves on, God showers blessings upon blessings amidst the chaotic



moments in our lives. The event of Easter multiplied the number of Christians in the early Christian community; the number grew every day. It was a sign that the Lord was guiding them in the initial stages of formation of the Early Christian community. On April 6th, Dn. Anil Merugu came to the Koppaka Community to have the experience for his diaconate ministry. The superior Fr. Arul Raj and the other confreres of the community warmly welcomed him. In his

welcome address, Fr. Arul said "the Lord blesses our community by adding one more new confrere." He wished Dn. Anil Merugu a happy and fruitful stay at Guanella Bhavan.



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gathered diligently and buried in front of the main altar of the famous church of St. Francis Xavier, the present-day Cathedral of the Diocese of Kottar.

Bl. Devashagam's inspiring life and ministry continue to influence and inspires everyone. Let us ask God to bless and inspire us through this great saint.

To this day, water can still be drawn from the miraculous fountain that sprung from the rock during the passion and death of Blessed Lazarus at Muttidichan Parai.



National Webinar Features St. Louis Center

CHELSEA - St. Louis Center is a member of a national organization called "Together for Choice," which is committed to supporting residential choice for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. On Thursday, April 8th, SLC was featured in a national zoom conference that featured SLC and the new St. Louis Guanella Village. Led by COO Deana Fisher and Public Relations Director Joe Yekulis, the seminar began with the 61 year history of SLC, and then detailed the evolution of SLGV and its completion as an intentional community,



providing a continuum of care for children and adults with I/DD. SLGV is being portrayed as a national model for how to care for people with I/DD.

Back in Aktion

CHELSEA - After more than a year of remaining at home and doing on campus projects, the St. Louis Center Aktion Club was able to go out to the community to offer a helping



hand. Eight club members from St. Joe Hall went to the Grass Lake Sanctuary to help with spring clean up. They assisted Tom Egan by cleaning up sticks and debris from around the pond. They all really worked hard, but had a fun time. SLC staff took them out for pizza and pop after all the hard work.

Jesus Gathers His Flock

E. PROVIDENCE - The children of Sacred Heart Church gathered for the final preparations before First Holy



Communion. On April 24th 15 children received their first Reconciliation. Fr. Silvio DeNard took the time to explain that Jesus loves all of His sheep, including them, and will welcome the lost sheep no matter how far they may have strayed. This is a beautiful metaphor to help the children understand the importance of confession, to stay close to Jesus. Fr. Silvio and Fr. Peri were both on hand to hear their first confessions. After they received the sacrament, they had a quick rehearsal for First Communion and then they placed the sheep that they made before the altar so that parishioners will remember to pray for them as they await the final days before meeting Jesus the first time in Holy Communion.

State Legislators Visit

CHELSEA - On Monday, April 26th, two Michigan State Legislators and a Congressional Field Rep were on hand to visit St. Louis Center and St. Louis Guanella Village. State Representative Julie Alexander from nearby Jackson County and State Representative Bronna Kahle (from Lenawee County to the south), came to the Center to see for themselves the good work that was being done to care for the children and adults who call SLC their home. Dustin Krasny, representing U.S. Congressman Tim Walberg, was also present at the beginning of the meeting. Rep. Alexander was very impressed with the new facilities, and is seeking additional funding in the State budget to support SLC through the rest of this fiscal year. Rep. Kahle on the other hand, was present to observe SLC to determine what she could do to help with her connections in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee. Both representatives are key members of the Michigan House of

Representatives who have pledged to do what they can to support SLC now and into the future.



May Calendar of Events


- 1 **St. Joseph the Worker**
Grass Lake: Josephian Rosary and Procession
- 12 **Grass Lake: Mother of Divine Providence Day-**
PUSJ
- 13 **The Ascension of the Lord**
- 19 **Grass Lake: St. Joseph Day- PUSJ**
- 23 **Pentecost Sunday**
- 26 **Anniversary of the Ordination of St. Louis**
Guanella (1866)
- 27 **Anniversary of the Birth of Blessed Clare**
Bosatta (1858)
- 28 **Anniversary of the Baptism of Blessed Clare**
Bosatta (1858)
- 30 **The Most Holy Trinity**
- 31 **The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
Anniversary of the First Mass of St. Louis
Guanella (1866)



Best Wishes and Prayers to:

- 1 **Fr. Maria Paul, Bro. John Peter M.:** birthday
- 4 **Fr. Vinnarasan:** birthday; **Fr. Arul Raj, Fr. Felicks, Fr. Gnanaraj:** ordination day
- 5 **Fr. Jayasoosai:** birthday
- 8 **Bro. Rajesh Kumar:** birthday; **Fr. Enzo Addari:** ordination day
- 13 **Fr. Stalin, Bro. John Baptist Hoang Luong, Bro. Philip Victor A, Bro. Anthony Samy A:** birthday
- 15 **Fr. David Stawasz, Fr. Pino:** ordination day
- 16 **Fr. David Anburaj, Fr. Arockia Vanathaiyan:** birthday
- 19 **Fr. Ligori, Fr. Visuvasam:** ordination day
- 21 **Fr. Felicks, Bro. Melvin Raj S:** birthday
- 22 **Fr. Edal Vinoth Joe:** birthday
- 24 **Fr. Umberto Brugnoli, Fr. Charlton Viray, Fr. Johndass, Fr. Piero Lippoli:** birthday; **Fr. Sagayaraj:** feast day
- 26 **Fr. Dennis Weber:** birthday; **Fr. Eduardo Cerbito:** ordination day
- 28 **Fr. Maria Antony Rajan:** birthday
- 30 **Fr. John Kennedy A.:** birthday

Talks on St. Joseph



• Every 3rd Sunday of the Month

• TIME •
6 PM

• PLACE •
Pious Union of St. Joseph
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Shrine Website: www.piousunionofstjoseph.org

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