



Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home  
& Rehabilitation Center  
C'est la Vie Apartments  
*News Notes ~ October 2010*

**First Saint in Holy Cross**

Rejoice with us as we celebrate the life and legacy of Brother André Bessette, CSC who is being canonized this month as a saint in the Catholic Church. In the Catholic tradition, a saint is a person who leads a life in union with God through the grace of Christ and receives the reward of eternal life. During their life-time, Saints practice heroic virtue and make the Kingdom of God visible by their lives. All who claim the name Christian are called to strive for such virtue and unity with God. *We are all called to be saints.*

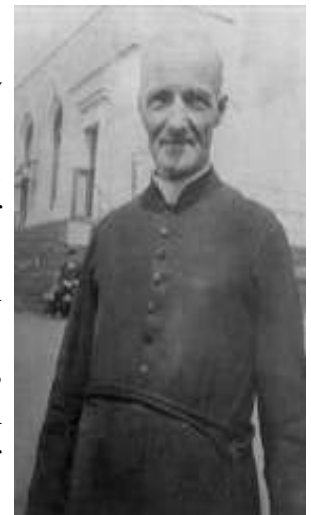
Contrary to the popular idea that the Pope makes saints, the process is a bottom-up and not a top-down process. The Church initiates a cause for canonization in response to a sense on the part of believers that someone who died exhibited heroic virtue while alive.

Without waiting on validation from Rome, these believers begin praying for that person to intercede before God on their behalf. If prayers are answered, the word is spread and the person develops a reputation for sanctity.

When the person becomes widely recognized as having led a holy life, the bishop of that local church will usually begin an investigation into his or her life. This is the first step toward possible canonization. The process of being declared a saint can be a long one, and involves a series of stages including: first, declaring the candidate a "Servant of God," then "Blessed," and finally a "Saint." The actual moment of canonization is the solemn declaration by the Pope that a deceased member of the faithful may be called a model or intercessor to the Christian faithful and venerated as a saint. It is important to note that canonization does not make someone a saint. Instead, canonization is the formal recognition that a person is already a saint.

An unlikely candidate for saint-hood, Alfred Bessette was born in 1845 in Quebec, Canada. Orphaned at a young age, Alfred was physically frail throughout his life and remained largely without formal education. As a young man, he spent several years as a laborer on farms, in mills, and in various trades throughout New England and Canada, but his poor health made work difficult.

While he was small in stature and lacked physical strength, he exuded spiritual fortitude. From his earliest years, his faith was always constant, as was his great love for St. Joseph. Knowing of his piety, Alfred's pastor in Quebec encouraged him to join a religious congregation and sent him to a nearby community of Holy Cross brothers with a letter



boldly telling its superior, “I am sending you a saint.” Alfred was admitted to the Congregation of Holy Cross Priests and Brothers in 1870.

In Holy Cross, he became a religious brother and he took the name *Brother André*.

### **What is a Religious Brother?**

From the earliest days of the Church, men and women have consecrated themselves to Christ through lives of poverty, celibacy, and obedience. These consecrated religious have made their entire lives a sign to the world of the Kingdom of God. For all consecrated religious, the culmination of their “yes” is the profession of perpetual vows committing their lives to Christ in a religious community. Some professed religious serve as “Sisters” or “Brothers” living their vows in community in service to the Church. Founded by Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau in the 1830s in Le Mans, France, together with the Priests of Holy Cross and Marianites of Holy Cross, the Brothers of Holy Cross minister as teachers, parish ministers, administrators, and other positions serving the mission of the Church throughout the world.

### **Legacy of Brother André**

Although Brother André did not have much formal education, he was an exemplary “educator in the faith.” While he never taught school, he taught the faith to thousands. He loved to spend time talking with people about St. Joseph and about the Lord’s Passion, teaching them to pray by lovingly praying with them. His consistent faithfulness to prayer underscores our opportunity to share the faith in every aspect of life.

As doorkeeper in one of the Holy Cross schools in Montreal, he fostered devotion to St. Joseph among the sick. He soon became known as the “Miracle Man of Montreal.” In 1904, he founded a simple shrine that would later become the world-renowned St. Joseph’s Oratory sitting on one of the highest hills in the city of Montreal. *Today it is the largest shrine to St. Joseph in the world.*

Nowhere was Brother André’s trust in divine providence more evident than in the foundation and expansion of St. Joseph’s Oratory. Despite the many obstacles he encountered during its construction, he knew in his heart that this shrine was God’s will. Time after time, friends and benefactors came forward to lend their skills and resources to the project when all seemed lost. At one point when the basilica lacked a roof, Brother André famously said: *“Put a statue of St. Joseph in the center of the church and if he wants a roof over his head, he’ll take care of it.”* The dome was completed and it is the third largest of its kind in the world.

During his lifetime, Brother André was widely acclaimed, not just because of St. Joseph’s Oratory and the miracles that happened there, but also for his personal holiness and spiritual wisdom. People often sought out the presence and touch of this man for comfort from their own loneliness and struggling spirit. When he died on January 6, 1937, it was front-page news. His body lay in state for a week after his death, and nearly one million



people braved the bitter Montreal winter to pay their final respects and pray to their “Brother André.”

He was beatified on May 23, 1982, and will be *canonized in Rome on October 17, 2010*. He is the first member of the Congregation of Holy Cross to be recognized as a saint as well as the first Canadian-born male saint. His legacy endures in the work of St. Joseph’s Oratory and in the faith that his work inspires. This humble servant continues to serve God’s church as a heroic witness to Christ, a powerful intercessor in heaven and a modern-day example of God’s love and concern for each of us.

October Birthdays – *Praying in gratitude for each of you and wishing you very special blessings of the day and of the year!*

*Nellie Corbello*

*Rita Cormier*

*Leta Forestier*

*Sr. Linda Galyean, MSC*

*Irene Guidry*

*Louise Guillory*

*Beverly Johnson*

*Dewey Ledoux*

*Darabell LeJeune*

*Lierra Meche*

*Sr. Philip Schexnayder, MSC*

*Betty Taylor*

*Sr. Mary Kay Viellion, MSC*

*Rose Young*



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