

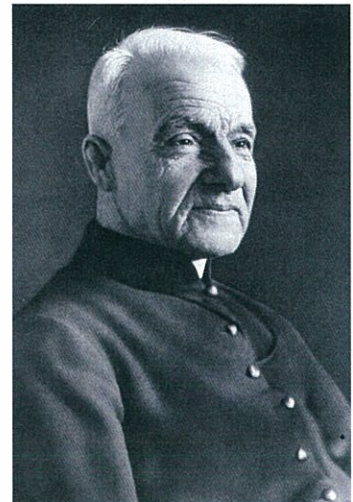


Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., to be canonized as first saint of the Congregation of Holy Cross

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NOTRE DAME, IN— Known popularly as the “miracle man of Montreal,” Brother André Bessette, C.S.C.—an unassuming porter who became legendary for his ministry to the sick and needy of Montreal—was formally recognized today by the Vatican as one of six candidates who will be canonized a saint later this year.

Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., declared Venerable by the Catholic Church in 1978 (the first step toward sainthood), and Blessed in 1982 (the second step), will formally be canonized on October 17, 2010, according to an announcement by Pope Benedict XVI on Friday, February 19.

Bessette will be the first saint in the history of the Congregation of Holy Cross, a Catholic order of priests and brothers, best known in the United States for its role in founding the University of Notre Dame, Indiana; St. Edward’s University, Texas; the University of Portland, Oregon; King’s College, Pennsylvania; Stonehill College, Massachusetts; Holy Cross College, Indiana; as well as numerous high schools. Two of the Holy Cross ministries in the U.S. that serve the poor are named in honor of Brother Andre: André House in Phoenix, AZ and André Cafe in Portland, Oregon. Founded in France in 1832, the Congregation today serves worldwide and is renowned for its focus on education and on direct service to the poor.

Born Alfred Bessette to Isaac and Clothilde Bessette on August 9, 1845, in Montreal, Brother André joined Holy Cross in 1874. He worked as a porter [door keeper] and barber at a Montreal school run by the Congregation, and it was there that his reputation as a healer and miracle-worker took hold.

Bessette's biographers recount tales of crippled rheumatics healed and fever-stricken schoolboys made suddenly well, often aided by "Saint Joseph's oil," a mixture that Bessette rubbed on wounds and sick limbs after burning it under a statue of the saint.

Rooted in his devotion to Saint Joseph and motivated by his compassion, Brother André dedicated his life to comforting those in greatest need, prompting the late Pope John Paul II to say, "We venerate in Blessed Brother André Bessette a man of prayer and a friend of the poor, a truly astonishing man.... In each age the Holy Spirit raises up such humble witnesses of the Gospel, who turn things topsy-turvy."

Over seventy years after his death in 1937, this member of the Congregation of Holy Cross is memorialized by millions of pilgrims who travel each year to St. Joseph's Oratory, which he founded in Montreal in 1904.

The December 19, 2009, announcement of Brother André's second approved miracle was a landmark occasion, according to Rev. Mario Lachapelle, C.S.C., vice-postulator for the cause of Blessed André Bessette. "The road to the canonization of Brother André is now open! The moment finally seems to have come. Today, one of the most significant pages in our collective history has been written," said Lachapelle.

Rev. Hugh Cleary, C.S.C., Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, added, "What a grace for our religious family, to count among its ranks such a model of the Christian life offered to the world, a true inspiration for a welcoming, compassionate presence. Such good news!"

"We are honored and moved beyond words at Brother André's formal recognition as a saint," said Rev. David Tyson, C.S.C., Provincial Superior of the Indiana Province of Holy Cross, "not only because this immensely humble man is the Congregation's first recognized saint, but because he is such an extraordinary example for every Catholic of every age. Not for him the trappings of power and status, of money and prestige; he was famous first as a ferociously hard worker at the high school where he served his whole life; he simply did everything and anything that was needed, from cleaning the floors to fixing shoes, from doing students' laundry to cutting hair. What an example of prayer in action, of active service to others as the most eloquent and powerful prayer of all! And *that* is the essence of the Congregation – we serve the Christ in every being, with our hands and hearts and souls, with all our might."

The Congregation of Holy Cross Priests and Brothers fulfills the original vision of founder Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., to make God known, loved, and served in educational, parish, and mission settings. In the Family of Holy Cross there are four congregations: the Priests and Brothers of Holy Cross, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, the Marianites of Holy Cross, and the Sisters of Holy Cross. To learn more, go to <http://www.holycrosscongregation.org/>

For more information about Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., or to interview a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, please contact Rev. Edwin H. Obermiller, C.S.C., at obermiller.2@nd.edu.

To request a review copy of *Brother Andre: Friend of the Suffering, Apostle of Saint Joseph*, contact Amanda Williams at awilli21@nd.edu.

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