

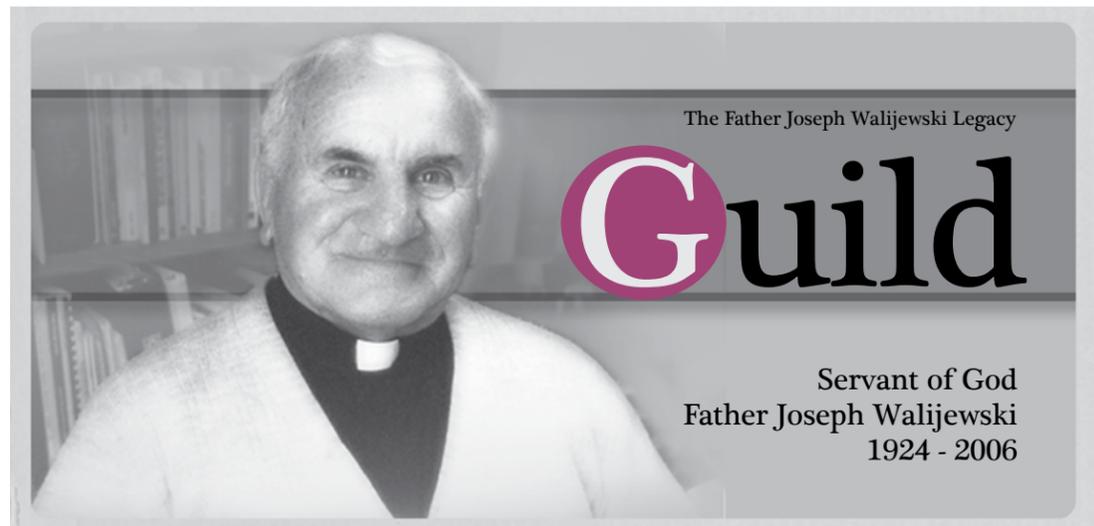


Diocese of LA CROSSE

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"I am just a pencil in
Our Lord's Hand"
- Father Walijewski



SPRING 2018

A Season of Holiness

By Bishop William Patrick Callahan

We, in the Diocese of La Crosse, are very fortunate as we enter into a tremendous time of Grace and special blessings for our Sesquicentennial Anniversary celebration. In one hundred and fifty years our Diocese has seen an amazing growth of holiness and spiritual depth throughout western and north central Wisconsin. Among the more prominent in our minds and hearts at this time is the excitement concerning the ongoing activity regarding the progress of the Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God, Father Joe Walijewski.

Father Joe's Cause continues to move forward. We will, of course, mark the fifth anniversary of the initiation of the

Cause on Sunday 18 March 2018 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman at 10:30 AM. We hope that many of you will attend. In addition, we are preparing to close the investigation of Fr. Joe's life required by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. A Mass celebrating that historic and significant action will take place on Sunday 27 May 2018 at 10:30 AM also at our Cathedral.

Please keep the Cause in your prayers. Many people are becoming more interested and excited—especially the sick and those in need who experience consolation from Fr. Joe's intercession. We sure do need your prayers. God be with you. Fr. Joe, pray for us.

Assembling a Case for Father Joe's Heroic Virtue

By Monica Organ

As the investigation of the Cause for Father Joseph Walijewski's Beatification and Canonization comes to a close in May, the Tribunal will be presenting their report of the life and times of Father Joe. This report, called the Acta, will be taken to Rome to be part of the case.

Monsignor Michael Gorman, the Episcopal Delegate for the Tribunal, says that he and the fellow members have a responsibility to investigate Fr. Joe's life for the purpose of providing information to the

Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome, with the hopes that eventually they and the Holy Father will find him worthy to be declared venerable.

The Tribunal was appointed by Bishop Callahan on May 1, 2013. During that Mass, the members took their oaths. The Tribunal is composed of an Episcopal Delegate, Monsignor Gorman, who is in charge of seeing that the investigation is completed. The Promoter of Justice,

See ASSEMBLING on next page

SAVE THE DATE

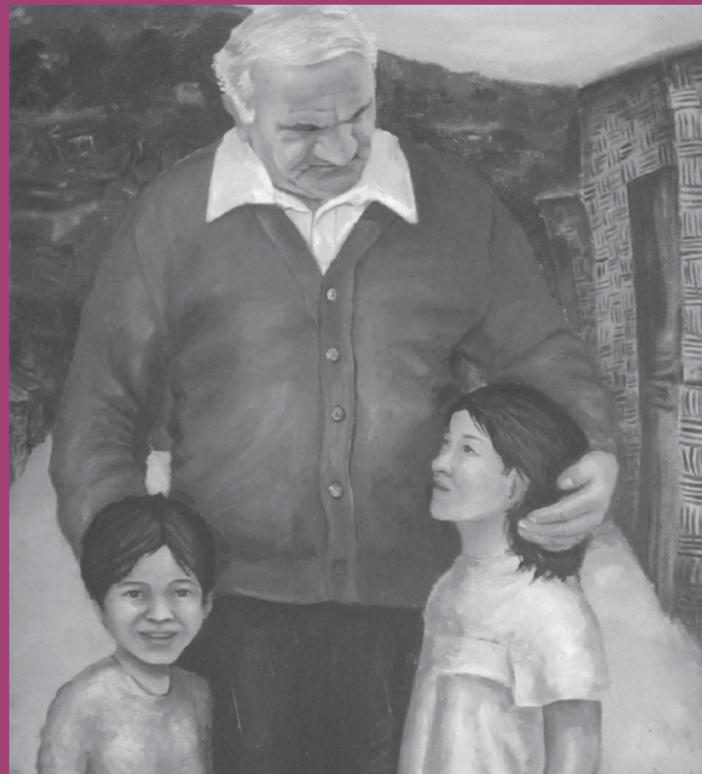
Sunday, March 18, 2018 at 10:30 a.m.

Mass for the 5th Anniversary of the Initiation of the Cause



Sunday, May 27, 2018 at 10:30 a.m.

Mass for the Closing of the Investigation of the Cause



Both Masses will take place at **St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral in La Crosse**

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The Most Rev.
William Patrick Callahan
Bishop of La Crosse

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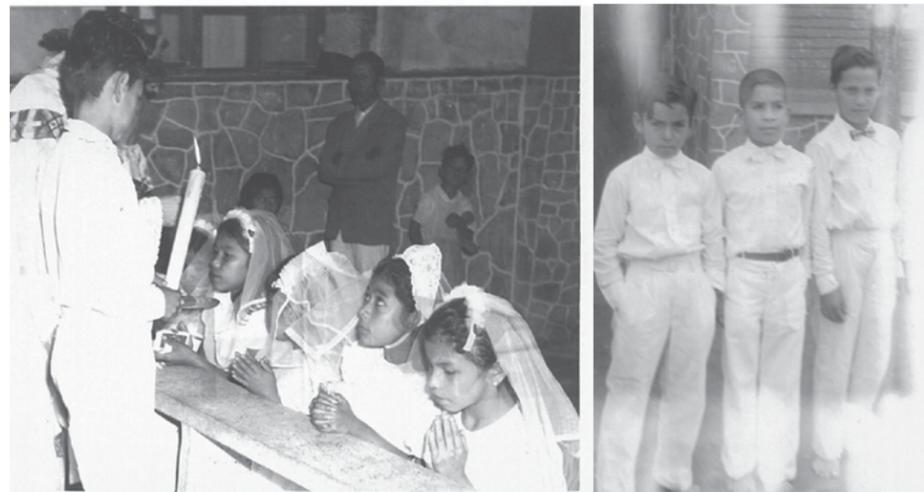


Clearing the Path to First Communion

La Crosse parishioners made First Communion outfits for children in Bolivia

May 3, 1958 was a big event for Father Joe and his parishioners in Bolivia. They were planning the dedication Mass for the church in Santa Cruz, built using the \$20,000 Lenten donation from the Catholic Students in the Diocese of La Crosse. Father Joe was also preparing 50 boys and girls for their first Holy Communion.

However, Father Joe soon realized there was something holding these children back from receiving their first Communion ... clothes. Father knew that many would fail to appear for their First Communion out of shame and embarrassment if they did not have the proper clothing for the occasion. The families in Bolivia were so poor they couldn't afford to give their children new clothes for such a special



event. Father Joe was not going to let that obstacle stand in their way of receiving the Eucharist, so he reached out to his home diocese for help. He asked the people of the Diocese of La Crosse to help him "to bring closer to the altar the people who have been without the altar for so

many years."

Members of the La Crosse Council of Catholic Women made and shipped nearly 150 sets of First Communion dresses and suits and other articles of clothing, plus rosaries and medals to be used for this historic occasion.

ASSEMBLING continued...

Monsignor Joseph Hirsch, is the one who presides over the deposition of the people who have been called as witnesses. Several notaries are included to verify the authenticity of the documentation and numerous typists are involved in the transcription of the witness stories, in the language the testimony was given.

Monsignor Hirsch says he is honored to be a part of sharing Father Joe's story and to

hear accounts from all the witnesses, which include many stories he's never heard before.

"When we do the interviews, I am hearing, first-hand, stories that no one has ever heard before," he says. "I always think, we just listened to another chapter. As part of the Tribunal, we get to hear the whole book and that's the privilege we have. We get to hear all the chapters and we can begin to piece together the

inspirational life of Father Joe."

The witnesses are people who knew Father Joe, including family members or friends he had growing up in Michigan and people that worked and interacted with him in La Crosse and in South America.

As part of the Tribunal, two commissions were formed, broken into historical and theological focuses. The Historical Commission is responsible for composing a

What Father Joe would want me to do

By Monica Organ

In 1955, Father Joe was the assistant pastor at St. Peter Parish in Stevens Point. He would soon return to his mission work in South America, but not before first touching a few lives here in the Diocese of La Crosse.

Wilma Reis was in high school when she decided to become Catholic and it just so happened that Father Joe gave her instructions in the Catholic faith. Wilma credits Father Joe as the reason she became a strong Catholic, having grown up in the Lutheran faith.

Wilma recently passed away from a long-term illness, but her daughter, Lois Slatery, said her mom shared her story often and spoke fondly of Father Joe and knew that he should be a named saint.

About five years ago Wilma decided that she wanted to sponsor an entire family at Casa Hogar, the orphanage in Peru that Father Joe founded. Lois said Wilma really enjoyed being a family sponsor and actually displayed her Casa Hogar family photo on her refrigerator and did not even have her own biological family photo displayed.

Due to her illness, she was homebound toward the end of her life and Lois said it always gave her mom such joy to receive the Christmas card and family portrait from Casa Hogar. Her family displayed her most recent Casa Hogar card and family photo at her wake service.

She had always followed Father Joe's journey over the years and often said she wanted to become a sponsor because she thought that is what Father Joe would want her to do.

report on the life and times of Father Joe and the Theological Commission looks at his writings and homilies, assessing them to make sure they don't contradict Catholic doctrine.

All the testimonies have now been gathered, so the next step is to send the Acta, assembled by the commissions and the Tribunal, to the postulator of the cause, Dr. Andrea Ambrosi. It is his responsibility to take all the information and create what's called a Positio. This book will advocate to the Congregation why Father Joe should be declared venerable.

Now that the investigation is almost over, Monsignor Gorman reflects on all he's learned about Father Joe over the last five years. While he was acquainted with Fr. Joe in the 1980s, it was through this process that he learned about the many remarkable things he accomplished through his faith in God.

"I learned a lot about the hardships he experienced, of basically hacking a parish out the jungle of Bolivia and everything going awry. It's amazing that he was able to accomplish so much with so little material resources, but out of poverty people came together and shared things and things happened," he says.

"It shows the power of faith and the grace of God and really his own determination. He was a 'what you see is what you get' kind of person. He was very simple and very humble and just didn't get flustered when things didn't go well. He was patient and allowed the grace of God to do his work."

STEPS TO SAINTHOOD

1 SERVANT OF GOD



Father Joseph Walijewski



Brother James Miller, FSC

This first step examines the life and writings of the candidate. Evidence that shows the candidate lived a holy life is gathered and submitted in a special report called a Positio to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

- Father Joseph Walijewski (1924-2006)
- Ordained for the Diocese of La Crosse in 1950
- 2013 cause opened
- Brother James Miller, FSC (1944-1982)
- Born in Stevens Point
- 2010 cause opened

2 VENERABLE

The pope declares a person venerable after Church officials conclude their investigation that the person led a life of heroic virtue.



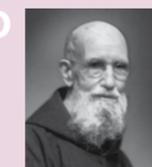
Father Samuel Mazzuchelli



Bishop Frederic Baraga

- Father Samuel Mazzuchelli (1806 - 1864)
- Helped bring the Church to the Iowa-Illinois-Wisconsin tri-state area. He founded a number of parishes in the area, and was the architect for Saint Gabriel Church in Prairie Du Chien.
- 1964 cause opened
- 1993 declared venerable
- Bishop Frederic Baraga (1797-1868)
- Known as the "Snowshoe Priest," he reestablished the Catholic Mission at La Point, WI
- 1973 cause opened
- 2010 declared venerable

3 BLESSED



Father Solanus Casey

The pope declares a person blessed after a miracle attributed to his or her intercession is canonically recognized.*

- Father Solanus Casey (1870-1957)
- Born in Oak Grove, just south of Prescott, WI
- 1982 cause opened
- 1995 declared venerable
- 2017 declared blessed

4 SAINT



Kateri Tekakwitha

One is declared a saint in an elaborate ceremony after another miracle is canonically recognized.

- Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680)
- First Native American to be recognized as a saint
- 1884 cause opened
- 1943 declared venerable
- 1980 declared blessed
- 2012 declared a saint

* A martyr may be declared blessed without a miracle Source: CNS