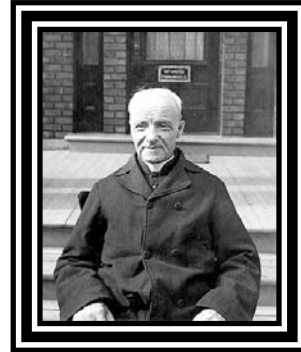


*The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Vocation Group invites you
and your family to read the story of one person who made a difference.
Why not read this story around the family dining table?*

A New Saint!
Saint Brother Andre, CSC
Miracle Worker of Montreal

Alfred Bessette (1845-1937)
Will be Canonized October 17, 2010
Article by parishioner Bob Day



Alfred Bessette was born in a small town near Montreal, Canada. He was the sixth of ten children. His father, a carpenter, was killed in an accident when Alfred was nine. His loving mother died when he was twelve. Being of a poor family and also of frail health, he received very little formal schooling. Before her death his mother tried to teach him what little she knew. At her death he was barely able to write his name and could read very little. After his mother's death, Alfred went to live with an aunt and uncle. His siblings were sent to live with other relatives.

Being orphaned and almost illiterate, Alfred was faced with the necessity of beginning some type of work to help pay for his keep. For thirteen years he worked at unskilled jobs in Canada and some in the United States. In 1870 Alfred entered the Congregation of the Holy Cross. His letter requesting admission was written for him by his Parish Priest. For the next forty years he joyfully and uncomplainingly washed floors and windows, cleaned lamps, carried firewood and worked as a porter, barber, messenger, and doorkeeper. He liked to repeat humorously, "When I left the novitiate my supervisors gave me the door. I remained there forty years without ever leaving."

While serving as doorkeeper, he found the strength to counsel countless people, and because of his gift of miracles many came for physical cures. When being thanked for their restoration of health or the correction of a physical handicap, the little Brother would always attribute what had taken place to the intercession of St. Joseph and their own personal faith in God.

Brother Andre was a very shy person, but knew how to speak of the love of God with such intensity he inspired hope in all who met him. His inner happiness communicated itself to others. He made no distinction among those who asked for his help. He received all, especially the poor and unfortunate, and he spent many hours visiting the sick and elderly in their homes.

Brother Andre was physically frail from birth. The midwife baptized him immediately after birth, thinking he wouldn't live. Throughout his whole life he suffered severe stomach problems. He existed mostly on gruel of flour softened in hot water with a little

salt. The nurse who attended him at his death called it “paste and glue, an unappetizing mélange.” Brother Andre appeared to enjoy the gruel and his stomach retained it.

As a young man, Brother Andre had a dream. He believed that a large church dedicated to St. Joseph should be built atop Mount Royal. Through his initiative and efforts this was begun, enlarged, and rebuilt. He died before the completion of St. Joseph’s Oratory of Mount Royal, the largest church in the world dedicated to St. Joseph. The shrine is the highest point in the city of Montreal, over 500 feet above street level and 850 feet above sea level.



This little Brother was so loved that long lines of people were always waiting to speak to him. For example, once he went to Ottawa to visit a friend and the newspaper printed the address of the host. More than 1,400 visitors showed up at his friend’s house. At his death, the newspaper reported that more than 1 million people climbed the slope of Mount Royal in wind, snow, and very cold weather to attend his wake and burial. Mourners came from Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

Brother Andre’s life teaches us to be humble, dedicated servants of the Lord. Although he was a frail, nearly illiterate man, the Lord used him to perform great deeds. Nothing is impossible with God’s help.

Check out the following websites for even more interesting information on Brother Andre:

<http://vocation.nd.edu/community/br-andre-bessette-c-s-c/>

The official website of Brother Andre's religious order, Holy Cross. This website includes lots of information about the order, as well as beautiful photos of important places in the story of Brother Andre's life, including his own room and his tomb.

http://www.saint-joseph.org/en_1001_index.php

The official website for St. Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal. This beautifully designed, interactive website includes detailed information about Brother Andre and his upcoming canonization. View vintage photos and video footage of Brother Andre and of the St. Joseph Oratory in various stages of its construction. Take a virtual walk up the enormous front stairway, while viewing photos and facts about Brother Andre's life and work along the way.

P R A Y F O R V O C A T I O N S

Promoting vocations is the responsibility of everyone.

One person CAN make a difference!



Blessed Mother Teresa