



The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Vocation Group invites you and your family to read the story of one person who made a difference:

St. Josephine Bakhita

Submitted by parishioner Ann Respass

Josephine Bakhita was a former Sudanese slave who experienced innumerable and unspeakable sufferings in her journey to both human freedom and freedom of faith, a journey which culminated in the consecration of her life to God – the true Master – as a Canossian Sister in Italy. Born in Sudan in 1869, this African flower knew the anguish of kidnapping, slavery, and torture from the early age of nine. During this time, slave traders gave her the name **Bakhita**, meaning “the lucky one,” as she was sold and resold in the markets of Elobeid and Khartoum. In Khartoum she was bought by the Italian vice-counsel, who gave her to the Michielis family upon his return to Italy.

Signor Michielis sent Bakhita to the convent of the Daughters of Charity of Canossa for her education. It was there that she learned and embraced the Catholic faith and at the age of 21 was baptized, taking the name “Josephine.” Choosing to remain at the convent, Josephine was welcomed into the Canossian community of sisters, made her novitiate, and on December 8, 1896, took her religious vows.

For over a half century **Madre Moretta** (“black mother”), as she was called, served as a Canossian Daughter of Charity, comforting and feeding the poor. Her holiness and devotion were demonstrated in her labors as a cook, gatekeeper, and keeper of the linens. Mother Josephine traveled throughout Italy glorifying God and raising funds for missions. On February 8, 1947, Josephine died in Schio, Italy, revered by the people of her adopted land, yet not forgotten by the Sudanese, as reflected by her portrait which hangs in the cathedral at Khartoum.

Pope John Paul II beatified Josephine on May 17, 1992, in the presence of 300 Canossian sisters and pilgrims, many from Sudan. At her beatification, the Holy Father declared:

In our time, in which the unbridled race for power, money, and pleasure is the cause of so much distrust, violence, and loneliness, Sister Bakhita has been given to us once more by the Lord as a universal sister, so that she can reveal to us the secret of true happiness: the Beatitudes....Here is a message of heroic goodness modeled on the goodness of the Heavenly Father.

On October 1, 2000, Blessed Josephine was canonized a Saint.

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