

CANONIZATION of ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE



Pilgrims took their seats for the ceremonies in Vatican Square.



Marianite Sisters gathered for a photo with Antonio, beloved bus driver.

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens."
Ecclesiastes 3:1

The following are excerpts taken from longer reflections. In making these edits we sought to show unique expressions of a beautiful experience, like facets in a diamond; as processed by individual Marianites:

Sr. Renée Daigle

"Surreal" is the best word to describe my experience of the canonization on Sunday. I had to remind myself that I was actually in Rome, sitting in St. Peter's Square, and it was the actual canonization of someone who means something to me! It was a BIG celebration – on all levels – and it certainly was a privilege to have been there.

The highlight of the trip for me was Monday. Both the Mass of Thanksgiving and the social that evening at the Generalate of the Congregation of Holy Cross were marked experiences of the family that I am blessed to be a part of. The Mass, with prayers specific to André and what he was about, was so special – the intimacy (compared to St. Peter's Square), the beautiful music, and the fact that every person crowded into that space was there to celebrate the same humble man created a unity that was palpable. And then, Monday evening, to reconnect with and meet other members of Holy Cross was the icing on top of the very sweet cake that was this pilgrimage! Priests, brothers and sisters from all parts of the world simply celebrating life – the life of André and what he modeled for us, and the life of Holy Cross and the hope that we bring to the world. I am blessed and grateful for the opportunity to be part of the celebration and to share this experience with many of my Marianite sisters!

Sr. Ann LaCour

120,000 gathered in St. Peter's Square... most of us knowing only a few people but each of us gathered in faith...there was no pushing; no name calling; few complaints about lines and length of time... a spirit of joy and excitement could be felt within and among the participants. In a world filled with evil and negative energy- there was for a few hours a world of peace and hope... a large group of people gathered for good... believing in a God who works in and through people like you and me.

The gift of the mind is wonderful in that I can remember that experience time and again but more especially – I have the power to use that energy to do good! When the world feels glum or my day is a mess – I can recreate St. Peter's Square on Oct. 17, 2011 in my mind eye and more especially in my heart and believe in the energy of hope...

Sr. Joel Miller

The dictionary defines the word *pilgrim* as a person who travels to a shrine or holy place as a religious act. Certainly, I was a pilgrim on a journey to a Canonization of a very holy man, Brother André Bessette. I also learned about the life of five other holy persons who were canonized at the same time.

Before going to Rome, I read the life of Brother André and was amazed at his humility and compassion. He spent his entire life talking to God about other people and to other people about God. My hope and prayer is that I can imitate his ways.

Sr. Mary Beth Mouch

Our time in Assisi invited me to search my soul in light of my personal response to God's call. Fr. John Phelan, CSC pointed out in a sermon that Brother Andre' and St. Francis of Assisi shared many of the same characteristics within their call to religious life and their desire for peace. It became even more obvious that this daily choice to be People of Peace is difficult.

Rome presented another gift...the awareness of the artist's ability to see God and creation in a piece of marble or on an empty canvas. Their desire to communicate the vision in their hearts is beyond extraordinary. The challenge for us is to meet God in the persons and places of each day – to "draw" out from each person the God within.

Sr. Kathleen Stakelum

As I reflected on my first trip to Rome, Oct. 13-19, 2010, I realized what a blessing it was not just to travel as a tourist, but as a pilgrim going to celebrate the Canonization of Brother André Bessette, CSC, first canonized saint in the family of Holy Cross.

There was a special excitement about traveling with thirteen other Marianites to Assisi and Perugia and then converging on Rome on Saturday as we visited the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica. We saw banners of the six people to be canonized the next day and the thousands of chairs set out in St. Peter's Square. The Vigil Prayer Service for Brother André in St. Andrew of the Valley Church gave us an idea of the vast number of

people all coming to celebrate this humble and extraordinary brother. The Church was packed with pilgrims from Canada, France, Rome, the United States, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and other Holy Cross missions ... God's loving Providence was so evident! I realized what a gift to the Church each of the Saints is and how God can use each of us in amazing ways.

Sr. Suellen Tennyson

What touched my spirit most about both Brother André's canonization in Rome and the Mass of Thanksgiving in Montreal was the faith of the people. I experienced through them that their faith was strengthened by the simple loving goodness of Brother André. This was a source of inspiration for me. May our faith also be strengthened as we reflect on the example of Brother André, a man of prayer and compassionate listening, bringing healing to many.