

# **Saint Philip Benizi**

## **Confessor. Plus Some August Saints... Saint Cajetan or Gaetano, and Saint Joseph Calasanzius**

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Died AD. 1285. Feast on August 23.

THIS principal ornament and propagator of the religious order of the Servites in Italy was of the noble families of Benizi and Frescobaldi in Florence, Italy and a native of that city. He was born on August 15, in the year 1233, which is said by some to be the very feast of the Assumption on which the seven Founders of the Servites had their first vision of our Lady. His parents, Giacomo and Albaverde, had been long married but childless, and Philip was a child of prayer. Through their care, assisted by grace, Philip preserved his soul untainted by vice and the world, and daily advanced in the fear of God. At the age of thirteen, having gone through preliminary studies in his own country, he was sent to Paris to apply himself to the study of medicine, in which charity was his motive; and the writings of Galen, though a heathen of the second century, was a strong spur to him in raising his heart continually from the contemplation of nature to the worship and praise of its Author. From Paris he travelled to Padua, where he pursued the same studies, and took the degree of doctor in medicine and philosophy at the age of nineteen. After his return to Florence, he took some time to deliberate with himself what course to steer, earnestly begging God to direct him into the path in which he should most perfectly fulfill His will. For a year, he practiced his profession, spending his leisure time in the study of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers and in prayer for guidance, especially before a certain crucifix in the abbey-church at Fiesole and before a picture of the Annunciation in the Servite chapel at Carfaggio, just outside the walls of Florence.

At this time, the Servites, or Order of the Servants of Mary, had been established fourteen years, having been founded by seven gentlemen of Florence as described under their feast on February 12, but had not yet been officially recognized by the Holy See. (Note that their feast-day is now February 17.) At their principal house on Monte Senario, six miles from Florence, they lived in little cells, something like the hermits of Camaldoli, possessing nothing but in common, and professing obedience to Saint Buonfiglio Monaldi, one of the founders. The austerities, which they practiced, were great, and they lived mostly on alms; Saint Buonfiglio was the first superior of this company.

On the Thursday in Easter Week, 1254, Philip was in prayer at Fiesole when the figure on the crucifix seemed to say to him, 'Go to the high hill where the servants of My Mother are living, and you will be doing the will of My Father.' Pondering these words deeply Philip went to the chapel at Carfaggio to assist at Mass, and was strongly affected with the words of the Holy Ghost to the deacon Philip, which were read in the epistle, or first reading of that day, 'Go near and join yourself to this chariot.' His name being Philip he applied to himself these words as an invitation to put himself under the care of the Blessed Virgin in that order, and he seemed to himself, in a dream or

vision, to be in a vast wilderness (representing the world) full of precipices, rocks, flint-stones, briars, snares, and venomous serpents, so that he did not see how it was possible for him to escape so many dangers. Whilst he was thus in dread and consternation he thought he beheld Our Lady approaching him in a chariot and about to speak to him, but he was recalled to his surroundings by Saint Alexis Falconieri, another of the founders, who, thinking he was asleep, had shaken him by the shoulder. 'God forgive you, Brother Alexis,' said Philip. 'You have brought me back from Paradise.' But that night the vision was repeated and our Lady called him to her new order.

Reflecting that great watchfulness and an extraordinary grace are requisite to discover every lurking rock or quicksand in the course of life in the world, and persuaded that God called him to this order as to a place of refuge, he went to Monte Senario and was admitted by Saint Buonfiglio to the habit as a lay-brother, that state being more agreeable to his humility. 'I wish,' he said, 'to be the servant of the Servants of Mary.' In consideration of the circumstances in which he had joined the order, he retained his baptismal name in religion. He began his novitiate at Carfaggio but was afterwards sent back to Monte Senario, where he was made gardener and put to work at every kind of hard country labor. The saint cheerfully applied himself to it in a spirit of penance and accompanied his work with constant recollection and prayer; he lived in a little cave behind the church where, in ecstasies of divine love, he often forgot the care, which he owed to his body. He concealed his learning and talents till they were at length discovered; but those who conversed with him admired the prudence and light with which he spoke on spiritual things. He was sent in 1258 to the Servite house at Siena and on the way there, he un-designedly displayed his abilities in a discourse on certain controverted points, in the presence of two learned Dominicans and others, to the great astonishment of those that heard him, and especially of his companion, Brother Victor.

The matter was reported to the prior general, who examined Saint Philip closely and then had him promoted to holy orders, though nothing but an absolute command could extort his consent to such a step. He was ordained by the Bishop of Florence on Holy Saturday in 1259 but did not say his first Mass until the following Pentecost.

All Philip's hopes of living out his life in quiet and obscurity, serving God and his brethren as a lay-brother, were now at an end. He was appointed assistant to Saint Buonfiglio, who had retired from the generalate and been made colleague to his successor, which involved travelling about with him throughout Tuscany, Umbria, Emilia, and Lombardy, visiting the houses of the order. Buonfiglio died in 1261 and Saint Philip thereupon went to the Siena monastery as novice-master. He filled this congenial office for only eighteen months, being taken from it to be one of the four vicars appointed by the chapter to assist the prior general; soon after he became himself colleague of the prior general. In 1267, a chapter of the whole order (which had been in effect recognized by Pope Alexander IV eight years before) was held at Carfaggio; at this chapter Saint Manettus, again one of the saintly founders, resigned the generalship and, in spite of his protests, Saint Philip Benizi was unanimously elected in his stead.

During his first year of office, he made a general visitation of the provinces of northern Italy, which at the time were torn and distracted by the strife of Guelf and Ghibelline, strife between political supporters of the Papacy and the 'Holy Roman' Emperor. It was on this tour that his first miracle was reported of him, very similar to one attributed to Saint Dominic and other saints: owing to the troubles, the Servites of Arezzo were unable to get food and were on the verge of starvation; when they assembled for supper there was nothing to eat until, when Saint Philip had exhorted them to have faith and had prayed before our Lady's image in the church, a knock was heard at the

monastery door and two large baskets of good bread were found on the steps. He codified the rules and constitutions of the Servite order and this work was confirmed by the general chapter held at Pistoia in 1268; afterwards he submitted them to Pope Clement IV at Viterbo and would on the same occasion have asked leave to give up his office. But he was so warmly dissuaded by his colleague, Brother Lottaringo, that he resigned himself to holding it so long as his brethren should wish, which proved to be for the rest of his life.

Upon the death of Clement IV, the conclave assembled at Viterbo early in 1269, and it was rumored that Cardinal Ottobuoni, protector of the Servites, had proposed Saint Philip to succeed him, and that the suggestion was well received. When word of this came to Philip's ears he ran away and hid himself in a cave among the mountains near Radicofani, where he was looked after for three months by Brother Victor, until he deemed the danger past (the cardinals were unable to agree and it was not till September 1271 that Theobald Visconti, Archdeacon of Liege, was elected as Gregory X). During this retreat, Saint Philip rejoiced in an opportunity of giving himself up to contemplation; he lived chiefly on dry herbs, and drank at a fountain, since esteemed miraculous and called Saint Philip's bath, situated on a mountain named Montagnata. He returned from the desert glowing with zeal to kindle in the hearts of Christians the fire of divine love.

After the chapter at Florence at Whitsun (Pentecost) of the same year he appointed a vicar general there to govern his order and with two companions, Saint Sostenes and Saint Hugh, two more of the seven original founders, undertook an extensive mission, preaching with great fruit at Avignon, Toulouse, Paris, and in other great cities in France, and also in Flanders, Friesland, Saxony, and Higher Germany. He left Sostenes at Paris in charge of the scattered Servite houses of France, and proceeded to establish the order in Germany, where he deputed Hugh as vicar and gave him as assistant the neophyte Blessed John of Frankfort, who became one of the saint's most loved disciples. Philip visited Germany again in 1275 and 1282, but before that, he was summoned by Blessed Gregory X to be present at the second general council of Lyons. At it, he made a profound impression and the gift of tongues was attributed to him, but his reputation did not serve to obtain for the Servites that formal papal approbation for which Saint Philip worked continually. The Council in fact reiterated the decree of the fourth Council of the Lateran forbidding new religious orders, and the Servites were more than ever in danger of suppression till the death of Blessed Innocent V in 1276; even then the desired confirmation did not come till 1304, nineteen years after Philip's death.

The saint announced the word of God wherever he came and had an extraordinary talent in converting sinners and in reconciling those that were at variance. Italy was still horribly divided by discords and hereditary factions. Holy men often sought to apply remedies to these quarrels, which had a happy effect upon some; but in many, these discords, like a wound ill cured, broke out again with worse symptoms than ever. Papal Guelfs and imperial Ghibellines were the worst offenders, and in 1279, Pope Nicholas III gave special faculties to Cardinal Latino to deal with them. He invoked the help of Saint Philip Benizi, who wonderfully pacified the factions when they were ready to tear each other to pieces at Pistoia, and other places. He succeeded at length also at Forli, but not without first exposing himself to many dangers. The seditious insulted and beat him in the city, but his patience at length disarmed their fury, and vanquished them. Peregrine Laziosi, who was their ringleader and had himself struck the saint, was so powerfully moved by the example of his meekness and sanctity that he threw himself at his feet and with tears begged his pardon and prayers. Being become a model penitent, he was received by him into the order of Servites at Siena

in 1283, and continued his penance till his happy death in the eightieth year of his age. So evident were his holiness and perseverance that he was canonized by Benedict XIII in 1726.

Saint Philip made the sanctification of his religious brethren the primary object of his zeal, as it was the first part of his charge, and he attracted a number of notably good men to himself. Among them were Blessed John of Frankfort and Saint Peregrine, mentioned above; Blessed Joachim Piccolomini, who met Philip at Siena; Blessed Andrew (Andrea) Dotti, a soldier, and Blessed Jerome, both of Borgo San Sepolcro; Blessed Bonaventure of Pistoia, converted by a sermon of the saint from a life of violence and crime; Blessed Ubald of Florence (he was also from Borgo San Sepolcro originally), whose quarrelling had turned Florence upside down; and Blessed Francis Patrizi (of Siena). In 1284 Saint Alexis Falconieri put his niece Saint Juliana under the direction of Saint Philip, and from his advice to her sprang the third order regular of the Servants of Mary. He was also responsible for sending the first Servite missionaries to the East, where some penetrated to Tartary and there gave their blood for Christ. Throughout his eighteen years of generalship of his order, Philip had as his official colleague Lottaringo Stufa, whom he had known and loved from boyhood. They remained the closest friends and the utmost confidence subsisted between them; Philip made Lottaringo his vicar whenever he had to leave Italy, and was followed by him in the generalship. Their long association was an ideal partnership.

Four hundred years before the founder of the Trappists, Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, the Abbot de Rancé, Saint Philip Benizi realized that a religious community in which regular discipline is weakened and those who profess the rule are strangers to its true spirit is not a harbor or place of refuge, but a shipwreck of souls. Scarce could a saint be able to resist such example or the poison of such an air, in which everyone is confined. Though gross crimes of the world are shut out, the want of the religious spirit and a neglect of the particular duties of that state are enough to damn souls. To preserve his family from so fatal a misfortune, he never ceased to watch and pray.

Judging at length by the decay of his health that the end of his life drew near, he set out in 1285 to make the visitation of the convents of his order and at Florence convened a general chapter at which he announced his approaching departure and handed over the government to Father Lottaringo. 'Love one another! Love one another! Love one another!' he adjured the friars, and so left them. He went to the smallest and poorest house of the order, at Todi, where he was enthusiastically received by the citizens, and when he could escape from them he went straight to the altar of Our Lady, and falling prostrate on the ground prayed with great fervor, and said, 'This is the place of my rest for ever.' He made a moving sermon on the glory of the blessed on the feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God, but at three o'clock in the afternoon of that day was taken seriously ill. He sent for the community, and again spoke of brotherly love 'Love one another, reverence one another, and bear with one another.' Seven days later the end came; he called for his 'book,' by which word he meant his crucifix, and devoutly contemplating it, calmly died at the hour of the evening Angelus. The cultus of Saint Philip Benizi was confirmed for the whole Church by Pope Clement X in 1671.

#### SAINT CAJETAN OR GAETANO, CONFESSOR.

FOUNDER OF THE CLERKS REGULAR (The Theatines).

DIED in a.d. 1547. Feast on August 7.

SAINT CAJETAN was son of Gaspar, Count of Thienna (Tiene), and Mary di Porto, of the nobility of Vicenza, Italy, where he was born in 1480. Two years later, his father was killed, fighting for the Venetians against King Ferdinand of Naples, and his widow was appointed guardian of Cajetan and

his two brothers. The admirable example and teaching she gave her sons of her adoration of the Almighty bore quick and abundant fruit, and Cajetan in particular was soon known for his unusual goodness. His love of prayer taught a constant recollection, and the application of his mind to eternal truths made him shun all loss of time in amusements or idle conversation: for no talk was interesting to him, unless it tended to raise the mind to God. His affections were accordingly sweetened into a loving charity towards all men, particularly the poor and all that were in affliction. He went for four years to the University of Padua where the long exercises of devotion, which he daily practiced, were no hindrance to his studies, but sanctified them and purified his understanding, enabling him the better to judge of truth. He distinguished himself in theology, and brilliantly took the degree of doctor in civil and canon law in 1504.

He then returned to his native town, of which he was made a senator, and in pursuance of his resolve to serve God as a priest, he received the tonsure from the Bishop of Vicenza. Out of his own patrimony, he built and founded a chapel-of-ease at Rampazzo, for the instruction and benefit of many on his mother's estate there who lived at a considerable distance from the parish-church. In 1506, he went to Rome, not in quest of preferment or to live at court, but because of a strong inward conviction that he was needed for some great work there. Soon after his arrival, Pope Julius II conferred on him the office of proto-notary in his court, with a benefice attached. Happily, the saint had the art to join interior recollection with public employments, and to live retired among distractions, for his office was no sinecure. He became, unconsciously, an expert consultor for the ecclesiastical authorities, who often confidently referred disputed questions to him, so wide and exact was his knowledge. Moreover, Venice having been attacked by the League of Cambrai on behalf of the Pope, he was active and successful in negotiating for reconciliation and peace.

A contemporary, the Archbishop of Taranto, wrote: It is impossible to tell the difficulties, contradictions and tiresome obstacles which Cajetan had to meet and overcome... The arduousness of the business was beyond description... The Venetian ambassadors found in him great prudence, strong and impressive authority, opportune and wise counsels...

On the death of Julius II in 1513 he refused his successor's request to continue in his office, and devoted three years to preparing himself for the priesthood, for he was still only a cleric in minor orders; he was ordained in 1516, being thirty-three years old, and was in retreat for three months before celebrating his first Mass, at Saint Mary Major on Christmas day. He returned to Vicenza in 1518 to visit his dying mother.

Cajetan had joined, and perhaps founded, a confraternity in Rome, called 'of the Divine Love', which was an association of zealous and devout clerics who devoted themselves by pious exercises and regulations to labor with all their power to promote God's honor and the welfare of souls. At Vicenza, he now entered himself in the Oratory of Saint Jerome, which was instituted upon the plan of that of the Divine Love but consisted only of men in the lowest stations of life. This circumstance gave great offence to his friends, who thought it a reflection on the honor of his family. He persisted, however, and exerted his zeal with wonderful fruit. He sought out the most distressed persons among the sick and the poor over the whole town and served them with his own hands, and cared for those who suffered from the most loathsome diseases in the hospital of the incurables, the revenues of which he greatly increased. But his primary concern was for the spiritual life of the members of his Oratory; he gave them frequent conferences and encouraged them to frequent Communion, then not at all customary. He set them on fire with divine love and his fellow-citizens

were proud to follow where he led. 'In this Oratory', he said, 'we try to serve God by worship; in our hospital we may say that we actually find Him.'

He founded a similar Oratory at Verona and then, in obedience to the advice of his confessor, John-Baptist of Crema, a Dominican friar of great prudence, learning, and piety, Cajetan went in 1520 to Venice, and taking up his lodgings in the new hospital of that city, pursued his former manner of life there. He was so great a benefactor to that house as to be regarded as its principal founder, though his chief care was to provide the sick with every spiritual help possible. It was the common saying at Rome, Vicenza, and Venice, that Cajetan was an angel at the altar and an apostle in the pulpit. He remained in Venice three years, and introduced exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in that city, as well as continuing the promotion of frequent Communion; 'I shall never be content till I see Christians flocking like little children to the priest to feed on the Bread of Life, and with eagerness and delight, not with fear and false shame,' he wrote.

The state of Christendom at this time was not less than shocking. The general corruption weakened the Church before the assaults of Protestantism and provided an apparent excuse for that revolt, and the decay of religion with its accompaniment of moral wickedness was not checked by the clergy, many of whom, high and low, secular and regular, were themselves sunk in iniquity and indifference. The Church was 'sick in head and members'. The obscure friar John-Baptist of Crema saw this and was distressed; then he had an inspiration from God: he told his holy penitent Cajetan to go back to Rome and once again to associate himself with the Oratory of Divine Love there, the principal members of which were no less eminent for their learning and prudence than for their goodness. This he obediently did in 1523 and he deliberated with them on some effectual means for the reformation of life among Christians, grieving that the sanctity of religion should be so little known and practiced by the greatest part of those that professed it.

All agreed that this could not possibly be done otherwise than by reviving in the clergy the spirit and zeal of those holy pastors who first planted the Faith, and to put them in mind what this spirit ought to be, and what it obliges them to, a plan was formed for instituting an order of regular clergy upon the model of the lives of the Apostles. The first associates of Saint Cajetan in this design were John Peter Caraffa, afterwards pope under the name of Paul IV but at that time bishop of Theate (Chieti); Paul Consiglieri, of the family of Ghislieri; and Boniface da Colle, a gentleman of Milan.

Those among them who had ecclesiastical livings asked Pope Clement VII for leave to resign them with a view of making such an establishment. His Holiness made great difficulties with regard to the Bishop, but at length gave his consent. The plan of the new institute was drawn up, laid before the Pope, and examined in a consistory of cardinals in 1524. In order to break down and avoid avarice, always fatal to the ecclesiastical order where it gets footing, and to establish in the hearts of those engaged in that state a spirit of disinterestedness and entire disengagement from the world, the founders wished it to be observed, not as a precept but as a counsel, that this regular clergy should not only possess no property but also should be forbidden to beg, content to receive the voluntary contributions of the faithful and relying entirely upon Providence. The cardinals objected, not unnaturally thinking it inconsistent with prudence. But their opposition was overcome by Cajetan, who urged that Christ and His apostles having observed this manner of life, it could be followed by those who were their successors in the ministry of the altar and of the word. But a clause was added, that if a community should be reduced to extreme necessity they should give public notice of their distress by tolling a bell. The institute therefore was approved by Clement VII and Caraffa was

chosen the first provost general. From his episcopal name of Theatensis, these clerks regular came to be distinguished from others as Theatines.

On September 14, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the four original members laid aside their prelatical robes and made their profession in Saint Peter's in the presence of the papal delegate Monsignor Bonziano, Bishop of Caserta. The principal ends which they proposed to themselves were to preach sound doctrine to the people, assist the sick, oppose errors in faith, restore the devout and frequent use of the sacraments, and re-establish in the clergy disinterestedness, regularity of life, sacred studies (especially of the Bible), preaching and pastoral care, and the fitting conduct of divine worship.

They lived at first in a house in the Campo Marzio, which belonged to Boniface da Colle, but soon moved to another, on the Pincian, where their life and work attracted the attention of many visitors and several religious works were entrusted to them. But the success of the new congregation was not immediate, and in 1527, when it still numbered only a dozen members, a calamity happened which might well have put an end to it. The army of the Emperor Charles V, which was commanded by the Constable of France, marched from Milan to Rome, and took it by assault on May 6, 1527. The Pope and cardinals retired into the castle of Saint Angelo, while the German and other Catholic and Lutheran mercenaries plundered the city and were guilty of greater cruelties and excesses than had been committed by the Huns and Goths a thousand years before. The house of the Theatines was rifled, and almost demolished, and a soldier who had known Saint Cajetan at Vicenza as a member of a rich family, gave information to his officer to that effect; whereupon he was barbarously abused to extort from him the wealth, which he had not got.

After all had suffered great hardships he and his companions left Rome, with nothing but their breviaries and their clothes, and escaped to Venice, where they were kindly received and settled in the convent of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. Caraffa's term as general expired in 1530, and Saint Cajetan was chosen in his place. He accepted the office with reluctance, but did not let its cares abate the energy with which he worked to inspire the clergy with his own fervor and devotion, and his charity was made most conspicuous during a plague which was brought to Venice from the Levant, and followed by a dreadful famine. Moved by his example, Saint Jerome Emilian founded another congregation of regular clerks, called Somaschi, from the place where they lived between Milan and Bergamo, the object of which was to bring up orphans and such children as were destitute of means of education, and Cajetan himself helped Jerome in his foundation. He was at this time also at work with Caraffa and others on the revision of the Divine Office, whose length and complication was a serious tax on busy priests.

At the end of the three years of office, Caraffa was made general a second time, and Cajetan was sent to Verona, where both the clergy and laity were tumultuously opposing the reformation of discipline which their bishop was endeavoring to introduce among them. He induced the people to see that the proposed reform was one of which they themselves would reap the advantage. Shortly after, he was called to Naples to establish the clerks regular there. The Count of Oppido gave him a large house for that purpose, and tried to prevail upon him to accept an estate in lands; but this he refused. In vain, the Count, backed by the religious of the city, pointed out that the Neapolitans were neither so rich nor so generous as the Venetians. 'That may be true,' replied Cajetan, 'but God is the same in both cities'.

A general improvement at Naples both in the clergy and laity was the fruit of his example, preaching, and labors, and he was foremost in the successful opposition to the activities of three apostates, a layman, an Augustinian, and a Franciscan, who, respectively Socinian (Trinity denying), Calvinist, and Lutheran, were corrupting the religion of the people.

In 1536, Caraffa was created cardinal by Paul III, and in 1540, Cajetan went back to Venice, being made general a second time; here he had again to cope with the Lutheran friar Ochino, whose errors were for a long time not recognized by the authorities. Then in 1543, at the request of its citizens, he returned to Naples, and governed the house of his order in that city until his death. During the last years of his life he established with Blessed John Marinoni, the benevolent pawnshops (*montes pietatis*) sanctioned some time before by the Fifth Lateran Council. Worn out with trying to appease a civil strife, which had broken out in Naples, and disappointed by the suspension of the Council of Trent from which he hoped so much for the Church's good, Cajetan had to take to his bed in the summer of 1547. When his physicians advised him not to lie on the hard boards but to use a mattress in his sickness, his answer was: 'My Savior died on a cross, allow me at least to die on wood.'

He lingered for a week, the end coming on Sunday, August 7. Many miracles wrought by his intercession were approved at Rome after a rigorous scrutiny, and he was beatified by Urban VIII in 1629 and canonized by Clement X in 1671.

Saint Cajetan was one of the most outstanding figures among the pre-Tridentine Catholic reformers, and his institution of clerks regular, priests bound by vow and living in community but engaged in active pastoral work, played a very great part in the Counter-Reformation. Today, with the one tremendous exception of the Jesuits, all their congregations have been reduced to small bodies, but continuing their original life and work. Thomas Goldwell, Bishop of Saint Asaph and last survivor of the old hierarchy of England and Wales before its final abolition by Queen Elizabeth I, was a Theatine, who entered their house of Saint Paul at Naples in the year of Saint Cajetan's death.

The example of this saint displays that disinterestedness which Christ has laid down in His gospel. He teaches us that all inordinate desire or care for the goods of this world is a grievous evil prejudicial to Christian virtue; he impressed upon his followers in the strongest terms the duty of fighting against it, showing them how avarice steals the heart against charity and even common humanity, and excludes all true ideas of spiritual and heavenly things. Disinterestedness and contempt of the world, necessary in all Christians, is more essentially the virtue of the ministers of the altar: it formed the character of every holy priest. But it is not unknown for the idol of covetousness to find a place even in the sanctuary itself, to the scandal of the faithful and profanation of all that is sacred or good. New barriers have been often set up against this evil, but all become useless for those who do not try to ground their souls in the true spirit of the opposite virtue.

SAINT JOSEPH CALASANCTIUS.

CONFESSOR, FOUNDER OF THE PIARISTS.

DIED in a.d. 1648. Feast on August 25.

JOSEPH CALASANCTIUS, called in religion 'of the Mother of God' and one of the foremost figures in the educational activities of the Counter-reformation, was the youngest of five children borne by Donna Maria Gastonia to her husband Don Pedro Calasanza. He was born in his father's

castle near Petralta de la Sal in Aragon, Spain, in the year 1556 and in due course was sent to study the humanities at Estadilla, where his fellow-students regarded his virtue and religious observances with considerable disrespect. He refused to be moved by their mischievousness and ridicule, and being no less fervent in his studies, he completed his course of rhetoric with distinction at the age of fifteen.

He then returned home, and his father wanted him to be a soldier and start on that career at once; but Joseph had other ideas and induced Don Pedro instead to send him to the University of Lerida, where he took his doctorate in law before going on to Valencia. It is said that he left this university in order to escape the attentions of a young kinswoman, who subjected him to a temptation similar to that undergone by his namesake many centuries before at the court of Pharaoh; certainly he continued his theology at Alcala, and there met Ascanio Colonna, who as a cardinal and viceroy of Aragon befriended him in after years.

In 1579, Joseph's only brother died childless and Don Pedro naturally wished his surviving son to marry and perpetuate the family in the male line. Joseph temporized, for he had not only determined to be a priest but had already taken a private vow of celibacy, and, after graduating, accepted an invitation from Monsignor Gaspar della Figuera, Bishop of Jacca, to be his *socius* (or associate). After a year, his father required him to return home and renewed his entreaties that Joseph should follow a secular career; these entreaties were checked by a sudden illness, which brought the young man near to death, and Don Pedro was so frightened of losing him altogether that no further objections were raised to Joseph's vocation.

In 1583, he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Urgel, being already twenty-eight years old, and was at once recalled to the service of Monsignor Figuera, now bishop of Albarracin. He was made the bishop's confessor and theologian, and synodal examiner and procurator of the diocese, and when shortly afterwards, Monsignor Figuera was translated to the see of Lerida, Don Joseph accompanied him.

Already the fame of his wisdom, learning, and goodness was spread abroad; he was consulted by Father Aguilar about the reform of the Spanish Augustinian friars, and assisted his bishop in an apostolic visitation of the great monastery of Montserrat, which was disordered by internal disputes. During the course of this work, Monsignor Figuera died and, when the charge had been handed over to the Bishop of Vich, Joseph resigned his own position in order to go to Calasanza, where his father also was nearing his end. After Don Pedro's death, Joseph remained at home for a time administering the estate and helping its dependents until he was appointed by the Bishop of Urgel as vicar general of the district of Trempe.

He was so successful here that he was sent to deal with the Pyrenean part of the diocese, which comprises the valleys of Andorra of which the Bishop of Urgel was joint sovereign prince (he still holds the title) as well as ordinary. This lonely and inaccessible region was in a terrible state of religious and moral disorder, and Saint Joseph conducted a long and arduous visitation of which the first task was to bring the clergy to a sense of their responsibilities and obligations; on its completion he returned to Trempe and remained there until he was made vicar general of the whole diocese. But for some time he had been listening to an interior call to undertake a quite different sort of work; at length he resigned his office and benefices, divided the Calasanza patrimony between his sisters and the poor, reserving a sufficient income for himself, endowed several charitable institutions, and in 1592 left Spain for Rome.

Here Joseph met his friend of Alcala, Ascanio Colonna, already a cardinal, and for five years, he was under the direct patronage of the Colonnas. He was theologian to the aged and venerable Cardinal Marcantonio Colonna, tutor to his little nephew, Prince Filippo, and spiritual director of the whole family, to which he gave a conference every week in the church of the Apostles.

During the plague of 1595, he distinguished himself by his devotion and fearlessness, and entered into a holy rivalry with his friend Saint Camillus of Lellis as to who should expend himself the more freely in the service of the sick and dying. He was one of the first to welcome to Rome some friars of the new Carmelite reform of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, influenced Cardinal Marcantonio in their favor, and helped to obtain for them the church of our Lady della Scala in the Trastevere.

But during these years Saint Joseph never lost sight of the work, which had drawn him to Rome, namely, the instruction of young children, of whom there were many, neglected or homeless, in the most urgent need of interest and care. He had become a member of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, whose business it was to teach the Faith to both children and adults on Sundays and feast-days, and in so doing was brought home vividly to Saint Joseph the state of degradation and ignorance in which so many of the children of the poor lived. He was soon convinced that periodical instruction was utterly inadequate to cope with the situation, and that free day-schools for both religious and secular education were required.

He therefore first of all invited the official parish-schoolmasters to admit poor pupils to their schools without payment, but they would not undertake the extra work without a rise in salary, and this the Roman senate refused to grant. He then approached the Jesuits and the Dominicans, but neither order could see a way to extending its activities, for their members were already fully engaged.

Saint Joseph then came to the conclusion that it was God's will that he should begin the work himself, single-handed if necessary. Don Antonio Brendani, parish-priest of Santa Dorotea, offered him the use of two rooms and his own services, two more priests joined them, and in November 1597, the public free school was opened.

At the end of a week, the school had a hundred pupils and before long many more, and the founder had to engage paid teachers from among the un-beneficed clergy of the city. In 1599, it was moved into new quarters and Saint Joseph obtained permission from Cardinal Ascanio to leave the Colonna household and take up his residence on the school premises with the other masters; they lived a quasi-community life and the founder acted as superior, with the title of Prefect of the Religious Schools. During the following couple of years the pupils increased to seven hundred, and in 1602 another move was made, to a large house adjoining the church of Saint Andrea della Valle.

While hanging a bell in the courtyard, Saint Joseph fell from a ladder and broke his leg in two places, an accident the effects of which were a source of lameness and pain for the rest of his life; but while he was in bed he had the consolation and encouragement of receiving three valuable recruits for the school in the persons of Doctor Tomasso Vittoria, Canon Gellio Ghellini, and Gaspar Dragonetti. The last named was ninety-five years old, but had still many years of vigorous work before him, and was 120 when he died in 1628.

Pope Clement VIII having made a grant of 200 scudi a year towards the rent and people of consequence having begun to send their children to the school, the parish-schoolmasters and others began to criticize it with some vehemence; complaints of its disorders were made to the Pope and

he directed Cardinals Antoniani and Baronius to pay it a surprise visit of inspection. This was done and as a result of their report, Clement took the institution under his immediate protection. In similar circumstances, the same course was taken and the grant doubled in 1606 by Paul V, who also appointed Ludovico de Torres, Archbishop of Monreale, as cardinal protector; but these difficulties were the beginning of trials and persecutions, which beset Saint Joseph until the end of his life.

Nevertheless during the succeeding five years the work prospered and grew in spite of all opposition, and in 1611 a palazzo, a grand building almost a 'palace', was purchased to house it near the church of San Pantaleone; there were about a thousand pupils, including a number of Jews whom the founder himself invited to attend and encouraged by his kindness.

Two years later, with the permission of the Holy See, Saint Joseph united his informal congregation to the recognized institute of the Clerks Regular of the Mother of God, founded by Blessed (now, since 1938, Saint) John Leonardi in 1574, but this arrangement did not work well. By the beginning of 1617, the Roman schools were in a state of decline, and Joseph was hastily recalled from Frascati where he had been inaugurating a new school. He laid the matter before the Pope, and Paul V revoked the brief of union, at the same time recognizing the priests of the Religious Schools, Joseph's institute, as a separate institute, with simple vows and the obligation of teaching children gratuitously. On the feast of the Annunciation, Father Joseph of the Mother of God received the religious habit from the hands of Cardinal Giustiniani, and himself conferred it on his fourteen assistants.

The Roman school under the new regime at once began to recover, another was opened near Saint Peter's basilica and others were called for at Sabina and Narni; the time was come for the new congregation to have definitive constitutions, and after a retreat for forty days, Father Joseph began to draw them up. They were not finished before the death of Paul V but were at once submitted to his successor, Gregory XV; after some difficulty they were accepted and at the end of 1621 the congregation was recognized as a religious order under the name of the Pauline Poor Clerks Regular of the Mother of God of the Religious Schools, (Pious Schools); early in the following year it was granted the privileges of a mendicant order and Saint Joseph was named its superior general.

The canonical novitiate was opened at Saint Onofrio, but the requirement of new schools in Lombardy and Liguria brought an increase of novices which a few years later necessitated its transfer to bigger and healthier premises. Saint Joseph did not let the cares of the generalate diminish either his numerous religious observances or his care for the needy, the sick, and any to whom he could be of service. About this time there came to Rome, with his wife and family, an English gentleman, Mr. Thomas Cocket, who by abjuring Protestantism had brought himself within reach of the penal laws; him the saint assisted, and the Pope followed his example, assigning a pension to the refugee converts.

For ten years the congregation continued to prosper and extend and spread from Italy into the Empire; at Leipzig the example of the fathers led to wholesale conversions in faith and morals, and the Lord of Strasnitz wrote to the founder: 'This city, this county, and all the neighborhood, might well be called a nest, in which an endless brood of heretical sects was continually springing into life: Calvinists, Lutherans, Picardians, Hussites, Anabaptists, Atheists, and so on. Now, on the contrary, we see almost all of them brought to the one true Faith, full of zeal and devotion, and that in a very short time.'

In 1630 was admitted to the institute at Naples one Mario Sozzi, a middle-aged priest, who in due course was solemnly professed. For several years his forward and perverse behavior made him a great nuisance to his brethren but, having by a show of burning zeal for right faith gained the good will and influence of the Holy Office, he contrived to get himself, in 1639, made provincial of the Clerks Regular of the Religious Schools in Tuscany, with extraordinary powers and independence of the superior general. He proceeded to administer the province in the most capricious and damaging way, harmed as much as he could the reputation of Saint Joseph with the Roman authorities, and, when his ambition had led to his banishment from Tuscany for intriguing in affairs of the state, he denounced Saint Joseph to the Holy Office on the false charge of having instigated the Grand Duke to that action to spite Mario and the sacred congregation. Cardinal Cesarini, as protector of the new institute and in order to vindicate Joseph, ordered Father Mario's papers and letters to be seized; these included some documents of the Holy Office and that congregation, spurred on by Mario, straight away had Saint Joseph arrested and carried through the streets like a felon. He was brought before the assessors and only saved from imprisonment by the intervention of Cardinal Cesarini.

But Father Mario was unpunished, and continued to plot for control of the whole institute, representing Saint Joseph to be too old and doddering for the responsibility; he managed by deceit to get him suspended from the generalate and contrived that a visitor apostolic be appointed who was favorable to himself. This visitor and Father Mario became in effect in supreme command, and Saint Joseph was subjected by them to the most humiliating, insulting, and unjust treatment, while the order was reduced to such confusion and impotence that the loyal members were unable to persuade the superior authorities of the true state of affairs.

Towards the end of 1643, Mario died and was succeeded by Father Cherubini, who pursued the same policy for his own evil designs. Saint Joseph bore these trials with marvelous patience, urging the order to obey his persecutors for they were de facto in authority, and on one occasion sheltering Cherubini from the violent opposition of some of the younger fathers who were indignant at his treachery.

The Holy See had some time previously set up a commission of cardinals to look into the whole matter, and at length in 1645 it ordered the reinstatement of Saint Joseph as superior general; this announcement was received with great joy but led at once to renewed efforts on the part of the malcontents, who now aimed at having the order reduced to the status of a congregation without vows. They were successful, and in 1646, Pope Innocent X published a brief of which the effect was to make the Clerks Regular of the Religious Schools simply a society of priests subject to their respective bishops. Thus in his ninetieth year Saint Joseph saw the apparent overturning of all his work by the authority to which he was so greatly devoted and the indirect disgrace of himself before the world; when the news was brought to him he simply murmured, 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

The business of drawing up new constitutions and regulations for the shattered institute of Religious Schools was entrusted to Father Cherubini, but within a few months, he was convicted by the auditors of the Rota of the maladministration of the Nazarene College, of which he was rector. He retired from Rome in disgrace, but returned in the following year to die, repentant of the part he had played and reconciled to Saint Joseph, who consoled him on his deathbed. A few months later, on August 25, 1648, Saint Joseph himself died, and was buried in the church of San Pantaleone; he was ninety-two years old.

There is an obvious parallel between this history and that of Saint Alphonsus Liguori and the early days of the Redemptorists, and during the troubles of his young congregation Saint Alphonsus used to encourage and fortify himself by reading the life of Saint Joseph Calasancius; he was canonized in 1767, six years before the death of Alban Butler, who only gives to him a brief notice in his Lives, wherein he is referred to as 'a perpetual miracle of fortitude and another Job' – a comparison made by Cardinal Lambertini (afterwards Pope Benedict XIV) before the Congregation of Sacred Rites in 1728.

The failure of Saint Joseph's foundation was only apparent. Its suppression was strongly objected to in several places, especially Poland, Germany, and Moravia, and it was reconstituted with simple vows in 1656 and restored as a religious order in 1669. Today the Clerks Regular of the Religious Schools (commonly called Piarists or Scolopii) number over 4000 religious with 350 schools in various parts of the world.

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