

MAY 29

Blessed Joseph Gérard

Priest

Memorial

Introduction

Joseph Gérard was born on March 12, 1831 in Bouxières-aux-Chênes, in the Diocese of Nancy and received his religious training from the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, whom he joined at the age of twenty. He wasn't particularly gifted academically and quick at learning languages. Joseph Gérard moved to South Africa in 1853, and never returned to his home country again.

Joseph Gérard was ordained as a priest at Pietermaritzburg in 1854. He started his work as a missionary among the Zulus in the Vicariate of Natal, but met with little progress there. In 1862 he joined Bishop François Allard, OMI, the Apostolic Vicar of Natal, in starting the first Catholic mission in Lesotho. With permission from the Basotho chief Moshoeshe I, they founded the Motse-oa-'M'a-Jesu mission around 32 km south of Thaba Bosiu, at the site of present day Roma. By all accounts, Joseph Gérard was well respected by Moshoeshe for remaining in the country during the Free State–Basotho Wars, and it has been said that it was at Joseph Gérard's encouragement that the chief sought British intervention at the end of the conflict. However, Gérard's missionary work still progressed slowly: by the end of 1879, there were only 700 Catholics in the country.

In 1875, Joseph Gérard founded the St. Monica mission in the Leribe District in northern Lesotho. From there, he serviced not only the Basotho of Lesotho, but also those who lived in the neighboring Orange Free State. He returned to the Roma congregation in 1898,

where he continued his work as a missionary for the rest of his life. He died on May 29, 1914, aged 83. As a result of the work partially initiated by Joseph Gérard, Catholic Christianity is the majority religion in present day Lesotho.

Joseph Gérard, the Apostle of Lesotho, was beatified by Pope John Paul II on September 15, 1988, in a mass conducted at Lesotho's capital Maseru.

MASS OF BLESSED JOSEPH GÉRARD

(Texts approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments, Prot. 435/87, June 27, 1987)

Entrance antiphon

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, who proclaims salvation! (Is 52:7)

Collect

God, Source of peace and giver of rain and abundance, who called Blessed Joseph Gérard, your priest, to bring the light of the Gospel to the peoples of southern Africa; grant that through his intercession we may share his love for the poor and work for peace and reconciliation in the world. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

First Reading

All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God

A Reading from the prophet Isaiah (52:7-10)

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, "Your God is king!" Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem. The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Responsorial psalm (Psalm 15)

R/ I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel. Who even at night directs my heart.

or

R/ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (in the Easter Season)

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you. I say to the Lord: "You are my God." O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize.

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, who even at night directs my heart. I keep the Lord ever in my sight; since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right hand happiness forever.

R/ I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel. Who even at night directs my heart.

or

R/ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (in the Easter Season)

Second Reading

The love of Christ overwhelms us.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (5:14-20)

He gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. The love of Christ overwhelms us when we reflect that, if one man has died for all, then all should be dead; and the reason he died for all was so that the living should live no longer for themselves but for him who died and was raised to life for them. From now onwards, therefore, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh. Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh, that is not how we know him now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old, creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation.

In other words, God, in Christ, was reconciling the world to himself, not holding our faults against us, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ. It is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God.

Gospel Acclamation

R/ Alleluia, alleluia.

Go, make disciples of all the nations, says the Lord; I am with you always, yes, to the ends of the world.
(Mt 28,20)

R/ Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Go out to the whole world; proclaim the good news

+ A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
(16:15-20)

Jesus showed himself to the eleven, and he said to them: "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover."

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven; there at the right hand of God he took his place while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

Prayer over the offerings

Father of mercy, we have these gifts to offer in honour of Blessed Joseph Gérard, who bore witness to your mighty power. May the power of the Eucharist bring us your salvation. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

The presence of the holy pastors in the church

The Lord be with you.

R/ And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

R/ We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R/ It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For, as on the memorial of Blessed Joseph you bid your Church rejoice,

so, too, you strengthen her by the example
of his holy life,
teach her by his words of preaching,
and keep her safe in answer to his prayers.

And so, with the company of Angels and
Saints,
we sing the hymn of your praise,
as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

Communion antiphon

Go out to all the world, and tell the good news. I am
with you always, says the Lord. (Mt 28:20)

or

Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord. He
who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit.
(Jn 15:5)

Prayer after communion

Lord, Blessed Joseph Gerard worked tirelessly for the
faith, spending his life in its service. With the power
this Eucharist gives, make your people strong in the
same true faith and help us to proclaim it everywhere
by all we say and do. Through Christ our Lord.