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Two Saints Align to Save the Poor and Abandoned

We honor Blessed Fr. Michael J. McGivney (1852 – 1890), who was recently beatified on October 31, 2020, and worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor Irish immigrants who were pouring into America in the last half of the 19th Century and settling on the East Coast. Fr. McGivney's spirit continues to shape the extraordinary charitable work of the Knights of Columbus, founded in 1882, who today continue to serve those on the margins of society, as our Founder served the widows and orphans of the 1880s.

The Founder of the Servants of Charity was St. Louis Guanella (1842 – 1915), who was beatified in 1964 and canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 23, 2011. Fr. Guanella's life was spent serving the poor and disenfranchised; especially the frail elderly and persons with developmental disabilities. To accomplish his goals, he moved throughout Italy building institutes to care for the abandoned of society, and dreamed of creating a congregation of priests who would spread his mission throughout the world. Thus, the Servants of Charity were formed in 1908. St. Guanella also visited the United States during 1912-13 to assist many poor Italian immigrants who were struggling to establish themselves in large American cities, and travelled from Baltimore to Chicago to establish an institute before returning to Italy.

This made both of these saintly men contemporaries, and their common trait was serving the poor and abandoned of society. The Servants of Charity came to Michigan in 1960 to manage St. Louis Center in Chelsea, MI, and are now celebrating their 60th Anniversary of service.

St. Louis School for Exceptional Boys broke ground in 1960 and was occupied by its first students the following year. The program began with four Servants of Charity priests, five "Holy Family" sisters, and a small staff of lay teachers who took it upon themselves to care for 60 boys with developmental disabilities from the Metro-Detroit area. The Center has continued the original vision with the construction of the new St. Louis Guanella Village.

Today there are nearly 150 employees, 70 residents, 5 priests, and a budget of over \$7,000,000 to care for a developmentally disabled population that requires specialized direct care and updated facilities. In 2020, the new St. Louis Guanella Village has added five new buildings with two Cottage Homes for the residents, along with a single family home and a duplex for families. An Administration Building has also been built as a leasing office for future homes that will be built in the Village.

Fr. McGivney and Fr. Guanella were successful at sustaining their missions by relying on Divine Providence and the laity of their era to assist them. St. Louis Center will do the same, and with the intercession of these two saintly men, we will continue to support "God's Precious People." We are grateful to all of you for continuing Blessed Fr. McGivney's vision and financially supporting St. Louis Center.

Please visit www.stlouiscenter.org for more information, and God bless you for your continued support.

Fr. Enzo Addari, CEO, SdC.

St. Louis Center is a caring, residential, family living and learning environment providing for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities.