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23 June

## Saint JOSEPH CAFASSO

priest

Memorial

Joseph Cafasso, a fellow citizen of Don Bosco, was born at Castelnuovo d'Asti on 15 January 1811. After his priestly ordination in 1833, he entered the Ecclesiastical College of Turin where he remained for the rest of his life. He combined the work of the teaching of moral theology and the formation of priests with the ministry of the confessional and the service of pastoral charity to the poor, and particularly to prisoners and those condemned to death. He was of great material and spiritual help to Don Bosco at the beginning of the latter's priestly work, and was his spiritual guide from 1841 to 1860, supporting and defending him by his moral authority. He died on 23 June 1860 at the age of 49. At his funeral Don Bosco described him as a model of priestly life, teacher of the clergy, outstanding counsellor, consoler of the sick, comforter of the dying and friend of everyone. Pius XII declared him a saint on 23 June 1947.

*From the Common of Pastors; or from the Common of Saints: for a saint noted for works of mercy. Psalms of the day as in the Ordinary.*

### Office of Readings

#### SECOND READING

From "Meditations for Clergy Retreats" by St Joseph Cafasso.

*(Turin 1925, 240-257 passim)*

#### *The virtues of the priest*

A spirit of patience, poverty, humility, love of recollection, of work, of religious practices - these are the necessary virtues and indispensable qualities for the priest. But more is needed in spirit, virtues and other works for a true minister of God who, as the light of the world and the salt of the earth, is destined to enlighten and sanctify souls.

If he wants to be like the divine Redeemer, if he wants to do good in the evangelical field, the priest must be a man of prayer. He has no need to look for other teachers: the good workers who became outstanding in this science were all pupils at the same school, all of them copied from this divine Teacher.

The apostolic man needs to have fixed times for prayer. If we do not follow this teaching we shall no longer be copies of this model but only mere human material lacking soul and spirit, apostles in no more than name, clanging cymbals ((cf. 1 Cor 13,1) and nothing more. Furthermore, we must keep our heart directed towards God during the day, before starting any work in the exercise of our ministry, before and after doing anything. Our heart should move frequently towards God, keeping the road open for the preservation of a continual relationship with him; so that when we have some need, or find ourselves in some danger and in need of light, we can go to him at once, talk to him and seek explanation. This is what prayer means, and anyone who does it can be called a man of prayer.

By gentleness we shall make ourselves dear to others and win hearts on earth. The divine Redeemer made himself a model, the most perfect model, even to the extent of saying: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11,29). Of him it is written that "he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed" (Acts 10,38). Be gentle therefore with everyone; be particularly so with those who least deserve it or who behave badly towards you: this is the very best thing for you to do. If the divine Redeemer showed any preferences in this matter it was always towards sinners, to such an extent that his enemies called him a sinner and friend of sinners (cf. Lk 11,2; Jn 9,24). We are not to be the friend of their disorders, but show them friendship so as to convert them and win them over. Let us gain for ourselves the consolation of having treated others with kindness and charity, of implanting in them the seeds of hope and salvation as they recall the memory of a person who treated them with sympathy and understanding.

The apostolic man has no aim in life but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. This is the teaching left us by the divine Master: "I do not seek my own glory... I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 8,50; 6,38). This integrity and purity of intention has always been the mark of apostolic men. Working with such purity of intention, the priest almost never notices the burden of his labours, because working for God is rather a joy than a hardship. God alone and nothing else.

#### RESPONSORY

Cf Phil 4,8,9; 1 Cor 16,13

**R/.** Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, think about these things: \* and the God of peace will be with you!

**V/.** Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong:

**R/.** and the God of peace will be with you!

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

### Morning Prayer

#### SCRIPTURE READING

Heb 13, 7-9a

Remember your leaders, who preached the word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be for ever. Do not let yourselves be led astray by all sorts of strange doctrines.

#### SHORT RESPONSORY

**R/.** I placed watchmen on your towers, \* they watch over your Church.

I placed watchmen on your towers, they watch over your Church.

**V/.** They will never cease to tell of the name of the Lord, by day and by night,

\* they watch over your Church.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

I placed watchmen on your towers, they watch over your Church.

**Ant. At the Ben.** In his merciful love  
God has made you a minister of reconciliation in Christ.

#### INTERCESSIONS

United in the prayer of praise with St Joseph Cafasso and all the saints, let us say:

*God our Father, be mindful of your Church.*

Father, you call us to be holy as you are holy:

- pour out your Spirit upon the Church, so that it may glorify you by its holiness.

You have reconciled us through the death and resurrection of your Son:

- enlighten all spiritual guides and those you have constituted ministers of reconciliation.

Father, you want us to share the banquet of the new covenant:

- grant that we grow in love around the table of your word and the bread of life.

You promised the Kingdom of heaven to those who recognize your Son in the poor, the suffering, and the outcasts:

- help us to build a more fraternal world by welcoming those sorely tried in body and spirit.

You gave to St John Bosco a friend and sure guide in the person of St Joseph Cafasso:

- help every educator to guide others to Christ through the pedagogy of kindness.

Our Father

#### **PRAYER**

O God, Father of infinite goodness, you endowed your priest, Saint Joseph Cafasso, with outstanding gifts of charity and wisdom to train according to Gospel principles ministers of the word and reconciliation; grant to us, through his intercession, a sense of brotherly compassion, so that we may walk in holiness and justice all the days of our life. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is God, and lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

*In the evening, Evening Prayer of the Solemnity of St John the Baptist.*