

CAUSE P.J. TRIEST

News on the beatification

Servant of God Peter Joseph Triest



“ What should move us to love God most of all is that He instituted for us the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.”

P. J. Triest



NEWS FROM THE CAUSE

Pentecost 2020 was our goal to finish the positio. With the lockdown, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we already got the happy news at Easter that the positio was finished and ready for printing. On 4 June, our postulator Dr. Waldery Hilgeman brought us the first bound copy, of which another copy was simultaneously submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

With all the documentation that had been collected – you will recall the conclusion of the diocesan phase when there were no less than 22,000 pages of documents in boxes at Saint Bavo's Cathedral – it was not easy to comply with the imposed 500 pages that the positio was allowed to have. However, we succeeded.



What does the positio include?

After a comprehensive general introduction outlining the main events of Father Triest's life as well as the chronology of his life, we immediately proceed to the description of his virtues and the way in which he lived them in an extraordinary way. This description is used to describe the reputation of holiness, both during his life and afterwards. This section is concluded by a brief enumeration of prayers that have recently been answered. We can say that this really is the heart of the positio, for it will have to be determined whether Father Triest indeed 'deserves' to be beatified and canonized.

We are already on page 100 and now come the accounts of the witnesses. There are 56 of them: bishops, priests, religious, and lay people who testify in a very original way what Father Triest means to them today. Since this was a historical process, there were of course no living witnesses left to be heard, so the questions were mainly about the significance that Father Triest still has today. Good for 120 pages.

The following 180 pages present a short summary of Father Triest's letters, texts, homilies, and speeches. It was a tremendous feat to find these among the multitude of writings that really typify Father Triest.

Finally, about 100 pages are dedicated to the biography of Father Triest. It was obviously important to check everything that had been written about Father Triest in the past very carefully as well as to verify it historically. This involved a lot of archival work, but we can now be very happy and satisfied to have a very accurate biography of Father Triest at our disposal. This is the biography we have recently published in three languages.

The positio ends with a report by the historical commission, an evaluation by a number of theologians, and a statement saying that there is no formal public ecclesiastical cult.

'What now?' is the question that arises immediately

The positio is now in the hands of Relator General, Fr. Vincenzo Criscuolo, who will see whether all the formal requirements have been met. Upon his approval, the positio will be printed for the first time with a grey cover and handed over to a committee of seven historical consultants who will assess the method used to carry out the historical research. They will mainly look at the documents that support the rest of the positio. The chairman of this

historical commission is Relator General, Fr. Vincenzo Criscuolo. They will certainly also look for historians who are familiar with the Belgian situation.

Their review will lead to a comprehensive report with an assessment which will also be included in the positio.

Then, the positio will be printed again, but with a red cover this time, as that will be the final version that will be presented to a committee of nine theologians. They will, of course, primarily be looking at the overview of the virtues practised, the reputation of holiness, and the answered prayers.

If the positio also passes this test, it will be ready to be presented to the College of Cardinals who will have to report to the Holy Father, and if this report is favourable, the Holy Father may declare our beloved Founder Venerable, as a step towards beatification and canonization. Because the latter always requires an approved miracle.

We have long awaited the completion of this great work, and once again this is an opportunity to thank all those who have worked on it. Needless to say, our special thanks go to the postulator, Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, and his colleague, Dr. Emmanuele Spedicato, without forgetting all those who contributed to its long preparation. Just think of those 22,000 pages of the original dossier that were transferred to Rome after the conclusion of the diocesan phase.

The next months and years are now important, and we hope that everything will go smoothly according to the outlined schedule. We have faith. But above all, we continue to pray daily for the beatification of our beloved Founder. And when there are answered prayers to be reported, be sure to submit them with a brief description. Always with the hope that, someday, a real miracle may happen.

Servant of God, hopefully soon-to-be Venerable Father Triest, pray for us.

Bro. René Stockman
Promoter of the Cause

FATHER TRIEST AND HIS FORGOTTEN CONGREGATION

In one go, we say that Father Triest founded four congregations: two for sisters and two for brothers, but that one of the congregations of brothers no longer exists. It has become like a forgotten congregation, of which the first building blocks were laid 200 years ago.

After all, it was in 1820 that the mayor of Ghent explicitly asked Triest that his brothers could also provide care to the sick at home. Of course, he thought of the Hospital Brothers of Saint Vincent (the later Brothers of Charity) who, in the meantime, in addition to the 'Bijloke', were also working at Gerard the Devil's Castle in the care of

the mentally ill. Until the French Revolution, the domiciliary care in the city of Ghent was provided

by the Alexian Brothers, and at the foundation of his Hospital Brothers, Father Triest had foreseen that they, too, could possibly take on this apostolate. But in view of the precarious situation of the recognition of this congregation, which could only function by the grace of the Ghent city council, and perhaps also following the advice of superior Bro. Bernard, who insisted on the strict observance of the order of the day, Triest thought it better to look for another solution. The mayor offered him the Alexian monastery to organize the care of the sick at home from there.

Triest obviously knew this house all too well, because he had already sent a number of brothers there to take care of the mentally ill, but that had gone wrong. Yet, he was well disposed to the plan, and, as always, he ingeniously tried to find a solution. Establishing a new congregation was very difficult and giving the Hospital Brothers an additional task was hardly manageable and also, as already indicated, politically ill-advised.

His plan developed gradually. First, he would send a number of Hospital Brothers, in other words Brothers of Charity, to the Alexian monastery with a number of



mentally ill from Gerard the Devil's castle. It would look as if the monastery had become a branch of the 'Mannenweeshuis'.

In December 1820, he sent two brothers and one novice to the Alexian monastery.

Meanwhile, he started writing a specific Rule for a new group of brothers, who would have Saint John of God as their patron saint. This Portuguese saint had founded the 'Fatebenefratelli' or Brothers Hospitallers, and had been declared the patron of the sick, the hospitals, and the nursing staff. The 'new' Rule was practically the same as that of the Brothers of Charity, with a few specific points here and there concerning the domiciliary service. Inside, the brothers would wear the religious garb but outside they would be in civil dress. So, Father



Triest was very careful not to attract attention with his brothers in a somewhat anticlerical environment, which Ghent was in those days.

On 6 April 1822, the bishop approved of the Rule. Interesting to read a section of this special Rule about domiciliary care. "They must help the patient spiritually and physically, and as much as they can see to it that he receives the last rites of the sick. They will see Christ in the person of the patient, for works not done for God are not meritorious. In all that is allowed they should try to please the patient meekly and patiently, and they will never complain to friends or inmates about what the patient says or does or that he is impatient, but on the contrary, they will try to win his confidence by meek and kind words. They must never apply treatments without permission or prescription of the doctor, but be attentive and careful about the time when medicine must and may be administered. [...] When they stay at the house of the patient they will try to fulfil their religious obligations of Confession, Communion, Office and other devout exercises faithfully as when they are in the monastery, for if they arrange their work properly and do not waste time by doing useless work, they will find time enough to acquit themselves of their monastic obligations."

Among the novices of the Brothers of Charity, Triest had found a number of candidates to serve the sick at home. On 25 April 1823, when the last prisoner had left the Alexian monastery and only mentally ill were left, the moment was ripe to transfer the three novices to the Alexian monastery. Brother Basilius Delobelle, one of the pioneers of care for the mentally ill, accompanied them as their monitor.

The new congregation was founded canonically on 5 November 1823, and when the governor officially enquired at the request of the government who these



The coat of arms of the Brothers of Saint John of God

Alexians were and what they did, the vicars-general of the diocese of Ghent purposely gave an obscure and confusing answer. They wanted to give the impression that they were a kind of 'Brothers of Charity', because recognition of a new congregation by the government was certainly not an option.

From 1825, they very cautiously began their domiciliary care, and Brother Basilius remained a member of the Brothers of Charity until he joined the Brothers of Saint John of God in 1832. Upon his death, he was registered on the list of the deceased Brothers of Charity as well as the new congregation. In 1834, the brothers elected their own superior, Brother Dominicus Symoens.

But in the meantime, the new group had to look for a new home, because after the devastating report made by Dr. Joseph Guislain about Gerard the Devil's Castle, the Brothers of Charity and their mentally ill moved as

a group to the Alexian monastery in 1828. In January 1829, the Brothers of Saint John of God moved to the former Carmelite convent on Theresianenstraat, where they took care of five paying mentally ill patients before the eyes of the outside world, while most of the brothers took care of the sick at home and stayed with them. Once a week, the brothers had to return to the cloister.

After a huge fire in their monastery in 1843, they moved to the former Carthusian monastery on Meerhem, which later became an independent institution for the care of the mentally ill. However, they continued to provide domiciliary care for many years to come.



They stayed an independent congregation until 1946, but due to a lack of growth they decided to join another diocesan congregation, the Hieronymite Brothers of Sint-Niklaas, who were also active in the care of people with mental illness. This marked the end of the fourth, and now somewhat forgotten congregation founded by Canon Peter Joseph Triest.

Bro. René Stockman

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF PETER JOSEPH TRIEST IN AND THROUGH THE LIVES OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF JESUS AND MARY (2ND PART)

Experiences of Growing Faith

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary report the following experiences of growing faith through prayer to Father Triest and his inspiration.

In Congo, thanks to the figure of Father Triest, there is greater enthusiasm for missionary work, especially among the most vulnerable. There is a growing faith in God's Providence, as well as a noted change in the quality of life of the Associates, which attracts others to join the Congregation as well.

In Mali, one Sister experienced a deepened sense of being called to be where no one else would go. There is also a growing sense of commitment to help, support, and share with the poor in the spirit of Father Triest.

In India, the regular reading of Father Triest's writings, his sermons, his biography, etc. is motivating and inspiring for many Sisters in their lives and mission. Father Triest's expressions such as "my daughters", "you are another Christ", "you are angels/gods on earth" and the like have been very inspiring and motivating for

many. Inspired by Father Triest, a number of Sisters chose to go to the “peripheries” to take up the cause of the poor.

An Indian Sister experienced the gift of daring faith, which enabled her to face challenges in life and in difficult ministries. Another Sister saw Father Triest’s holiness reflected in the troubled years of life. Father Triest’s motto, “God will provide”, empowers a Sister to put all of her trust and confidence in God; his daring faith in God challenges her.

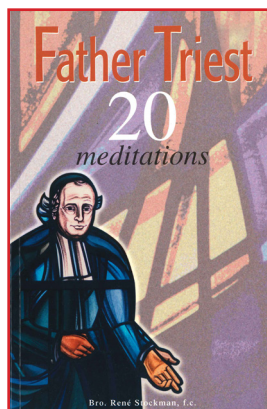


Through the life and work of Father Triest, an Indian Sister could grow in faith, inner peace, and joy and in the values of compassion and tenderness for the poor. Another Sister feels proud to be a Sister of Charity of Jesus and Mary; she feels urged to a life of simplicity, humility, and dedicated service to the poor. Yet another Sister grew in faith

and love for the poor and needy, and she was touched by Father Triest’s compassion and generosity.

The Sisters in India experience a strong growth as faithful daughters of Father Triest through the devotional practices he introduced: devotion to the Holy Eucharist, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Sacred Heart, Mary as our model...

In Pakistan, the Sisters have been inspired and strengthened to live their lives and mission through readings and retreats on Father Triest’s spirituality. Father Triest inspires them to a life of simplicity, sacrifice, and self-surrender. Through Father Triest, they grow in communion with God and with one another. Students and parents in Pakistan are drawn to the spirit of Father Triest, as well; consequently, there are now more vocations.



In Europe, a Sister feels guided by the spirit of Father Triest; he is an inspiration in her services with the poor.

A Sister received the gift of forgiveness through the example of Father Triest’s forgiveness of his enemies. The relic of Father Triest also brought in a unique closeness to the person of Father Triest.

Efforts to Share the Spirit of Father Triest

The Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary make efforts to share the spirit of Father Triest. For instance, students in Congo who have studied with the Sisters are enriched

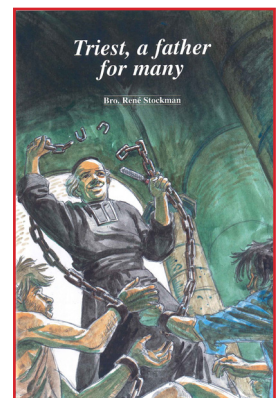
by the spirit of their Founder. They carry with them his spirit of service and are enabled to live a dignified life in society. They distinguish themselves from others by the values they acquired from their interaction with the Sisters.

Still in Congo, the spirit of Father Triest is visible by being at the service of the most vulnerable in our society, enabling them to live a life of dignity as children of God: helping the homeless find a home, supporting the abandoned, people with disabilities, etc.

The evolution of the charism of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary in Congo is shared with co-workers, students, and other beneficiaries, through the narration of the history and of significant events, conferences, songs and hymns, dance, etc.

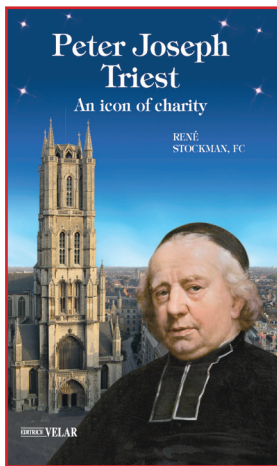
Father Triest’s spirituality is also shared with young women in Congo. Some of them share their experience: a greater sensitivity towards the poor on the road, a positive change in behaviour, welcoming back a “prodigal son” and attending to his studies, taking in an abandoned child as a family that was cast out as a “witch” and caring for the child, reconciliation among family members.

The life and spirit of Father Triest is also shared with children and young people at school in Congo. The idea of being among the “Friends of Triest” seemed to appeal to them. Some of them created a musical programme about Father Triest and presented it at a school function, other school children organized a fête to raise money to help the poor in their neighbourhood.



Associate members of the congregation collect funds, especially during Lent and Advent, and use it to meet some of the needs of the poor and vulnerable, especially those with disabilities.

In India, there are schools named after Father Triest, which makes groups of children at these schools read about him. Father Triest’s charism, life, and mission is shared with staff members, students, and parishioners. There are quotes from Father Triest placed in prominent places in each house. They also pray together with parishioners and the poor in their houses, and food and other useful things are distributed to the poor and needy. Sometimes, there are quiz competitions and short plays about Father Triest’s life in the parishes. Father Triest’s life and mission are explained and shared with various groups associated with the Sisters. Also, an annual calendar with the vision of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary as the theme is distributed.



In Pakistan, the relic of Father Triest was taken to all the centres where the Sisters live and minister. The portrait of Father Triest will be given a place of honour in all communities and institutions. The prayer for beatification is given to all Associates and Christian students. The life and mission of Father Triest are shared verbally and in writing with the Associates. Once

a week at school assembly, there are reflections on the "Thoughts of Father Triest". There are also interschool tableaux, quiz competitions, and short plays based on Father Triest's life on different occasions. Songs about Father Triest are composed in the local language and sung on various occasions.

Feasts Celebrated

The foundation day of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary is celebrated with co-workers, parishioners, friends of the community or the province, beneficiaries, the poor, etc. as a day of thanksgiving for the many blessings received through their Founder, Father Triest.

The day of Father Triest's birth and death is also commemorated with friends, family members, and Associates; and, wherever possible, with the Brothers of Charity.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Feast of the Annunciation are also occasions during which Father Triest is commemorated for his devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Mary.

Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary Generalate

ADORATION: SURELY NOT A WASTE OF TIME

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament held an important place in the life of our Founder. We found it in his order of the day back when he lived in hiding as a priest in Ronse, and when his first congregation was founded, he immediately placed it on their order of the day, and later even extended it to perpetual adoration when there were enough sisters to achieve this. It is a practice that is honoured to this day by the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary. As they are spread across the globe, it became easier to organize.

The Brothers of Charity kept to the weekly adoration, which was part of the order of the day until the Second Vatican Council. Afterwards, it became optional and disappeared in many places.

We can call it a happy turnaround when, today, we see that, in many regions, this has been reintroduced as a standing item on the agenda. Generally, an hour of adoration is held on Thursday evenings.

Within the Church, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a deeply liturgical moment, both Eucharistic and contemplative. Of course, it requires faith in the real presence of the living Lord Jesus in the Eucharist, and it requires practice to spend an hour in silence with Jesus. But both are expected of us religious, surely? Today, we also see on a parochial level how more attention is being paid to adoration. During a visit to Canada, I noticed that, in a parish where the brothers resided, a perpetual adoration had recently been started in a side chapel of the parish church, and of course the brothers had registered to take a turn. It is also striking how young people particularly appreciate this form of prayer once they get to know it. It always reminds me of this beautiful story of the Curé of Ars who saw an old farmer sitting at the back of his church every day. When he asked him why he came to church every day, he answered: "He looks at me and I look at Him." Talk about pure contemplation!

Another person who emphatically defended the importance of adoration was Mother Teresa. In an interview, she took the decision of their Chapter to introduce daily adoration as a great step forward. She did not see this at all as a reduction of their commitment to the poor. "Oh no, it's a miracle of God. Our work has not diminished. Our whole life and our work are based on prayer, for the fruit of prayer is a deeper faith. And the fruit of faith is love. And the fruit of love is service. Our work for the poorest of the poor, the dying, the mentally ill, the crippled, the unloved and rejected, the lonely, and the lepers, that is simply putting our love for Jesus into action. My call is not to serve the poor. My call is to follow Jesus."

No, adoration is not a waste of time at all, as some might say. On the contrary, as Mother Teresa put it, it may give our time and our commitment more fruitfulness, leading to greater service. But that will never be the primary intention, only a positive result. The intention remains, as Saint Bernard expressed it when asked about the reason for loving God. "The reason to love God is God; the measure, to love without measure." The real and ultimate reason for man to love God is that He loved us first, as John says in his first letter (1 John 4:10). The whole of our existence, which can only be grasped in God's love, is therefore a reason to love God, in response to his invitation to enter into his love. Is there any more powerful moment imaginable than in the adoration of the Eucharist when we can show our immeasurable and boundless love to God? We are simply there for Him and with Him. What we possess and what we have, we give to Him and to Him alone: our time!

Let this brief account on adoration be an invitation to all of us to willingly waste time sharing our love with God, or rather to let ourselves be shined upon by His love. The fruits of this adoration, to quote Mother Teresa once more, we gladly accept!

Bro. René Stockman

TESTIMONY

Greetings, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am excited to share how my life has changed and how I have been tasting victory in Christ Jesus.

In July 2017, I completed my bachelor's degree and hence I started searching for a job. I searched on so many job websites and applied to so many job vacancy announcements, I can't even count how many job applications I sent. I did a lot of interviews. Again, I couldn't count how many, but there were a lot. Unfortunately, none of them were a success.

Two years passed with no job. I was just at home and I felt very disappointed. I was really praying and fasting for God to hear and answer my prayers, but there were no answers yet. Early 2019, I started visiting a shrine near our home. It was a shrine to Father Triest. The first time



Triest Shrine, Tanzania

I entered the shrine, I felt overwhelmed. I was alone and quiet. I looked at the altar, at the statue of Mother Mary and went down on my knees and said: "Dear Lord,

here I am. I am in this shrine just to ask you and pray for one big reason, I want a job." I prayed for a few more minutes there, and that

was the beginning for me that I started praying at the Father Triest shrine and specifically for a job.

In May 2019, I got a call from a certain company. They called me for an internship. I went for that internship and said: "God, I know this is a step forward. I believe much more will follow."

I still kept on going to pray at the shrine and I asked God for a permanent job because I was still at a low point in my life. I was not able to finance myself



and my life in general. As Job 5:9 says: "He performs wonders that cannot be performed, miracles that cannot be counted."

In March 2020, I was called for a job interview, which led to a success and a breakthrough. I did the first interview and the second interview, and a few days later, they called me to go sign the job contract.

God answered my prayers. It is a job in a government sector, which is where I dreamed of working every day. And not only that, but it is also a life time contract job, which pays a lot, to the extent that I can figure out how to finance myself, and it comes with more allowances.

My job search was a very frustrating journey, but after four years God finally answered my prayers through Father Triest in Jesus' name. I felt that God asked me to trust him and not give up on anything. I believe that God can move mountains in my life and nothing is impossible for him. In Jesus Christ, everything is possible. I praise and thank God for his faithfulness. He has pulled me from the valley of fear and blessed me with his abundance.

Noela Josephat Magesa (Tanzania)

QUESTIONS, FAVOURS, AND ANSWERED PRAYERS

All questions concerning the process of beatification, favours received, and prayers answered can be directed to the Cause Secretariat.

For a full list and more information about ordering publications on Father Triest, including the publications on pages 4 and 5, please visit our website at www.causapjtriest.org

You can also order by contacting the Cause Secretariat using the details below.

Secretariat of the P.J. Triest Cause

Publisher: Bro. René Stockman, f.c.

BELGIUM

Postulatio P.J. Triest
Stropstraat 146
9000 Gent
BELGIUM
Phone: (+32) 9 241 19 38
E-mail: causatriest@fracarita.net

ROME

Postulatio P.J. Triest
Casa Generalizia Fratelli della Carità
Via Giambattista Pagano 35
00167 Roma
ITALIA
www.causapjtriest.org