

17 JUNE

Blessed Joseph-Marie Cassant, priest

Joseph-Marie Cassant was born on March 6, 1878, in Casseneuil, the Lot-et-Garonne department, diocese of Agen, France. He received a solid education from his family and school. As he grew in the desire to be a priest, he diligently cultivated a spirit of solitude and prayer. On December 5, 1894, at the age of sixteen, he entered the Cistercian Abbey of Sainte-Marie du Désert, in the diocese of Toulouse. Inspired by his motto: "All for Jesus, all through Mary" and also by his devotion to the Eucharist, he made progress in simplicity of heart. He professed solemn vows on May 24, 1900. Then, after great hardship and struggles, he was ordained a priest on October 12, 1902. Exhausted by tuberculosis he offered his sufferings for love of Jesus and for the Church and died on June 17, 1903, at the age of 25.

Common - for a Religious - Monk

COLLECT

O Lord. Glory of the lowly,
who inspired a burning love for the Eucharist
in Blessed Joseph Mary,
and led him into the desert
through the Heart of Jesus;
grant, we beseech you, that by his intercession and example
we may prefer nothing to Christ,
that he may bring us to life everlasting.
Who lives and reigns...

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From letters of Blessed Joseph-Marie Cassant to his parents

Everything for the Heart of Jesus!

My dear Parents,

Christmas is here, like dawn of the new year; let us not let it pass without examining our thoughts. First, it must be said that this year has been a year of graces for the whole family: on 22 February the diaconate opened the door to the priesthood and on 12 October we saw the fulfilment of all our longings. We would be most ungrateful if we didn't see in all this the special protection of the Heart of Jesus.

For such a long time we hoped against hope to be able to have the whole family together after my ordination so as to share the joy of being present and receiving communion together at my first Mass. The good Lord heard our deepest wishes. It now remains to us to thank him and to enter more and more deeply into the greatness of the priesthood. Let us never dare to equate the Sacrifice of the Mass with earthly things.

So I wish you all a good, happy and holy New Year, in every way. No more worries! You all know that I am a priest now and will never forget you.

Let us be resolved to take advantage of the time given us in this life, which can be compared to water which flows away, to a puff of smoke which the smallest breath scatters, or to a flash of lightning which splits the clouds and then vanishes. Nevertheless, this brief time on earth must be well spent. To this purpose, we must do all out of love, being one with the Heart of Jesus, and rejecting any useless worries.

The best thing I can hope for is that you ever abide as one in the Heart of Jesus.

Thank you for your letter, written by your very heart!

I have just received the beautiful photos, and I thank you. They will make a fine family memento. May the Heart of Jesus be praised in all this. I want you always to revere this Heart, which is enshrined in your house. Let us be one in the Heart of Jesus as we beg his protection.

As for my health, it is always problematic. I am very well cared for. I am not going to any of the community exercises, but still, with the heat, my breathing is somewhat difficult. I also have a cold which is making me cough. All for the Heart of Jesus! I end with the wish that we always be one in the Heart of Jesus, on earth as in Heaven.

(Letters of Blessed Joseph-Marie Cassant to his parents, 23 December 1902 / 24 May 1903)

REPONSORY

cfr Hos 2:16; Sir 45:4

R. Christ led him into the desert * and spoke to his heart.

V. Through faithfulness and meekness he made him holy;
he chose him from among all people * and spoke to his heart.