



The Decree of Juridical Validity of the Diocesan Inquest of the Servant of God Brother Fortunatus Thanhäuser has been issued



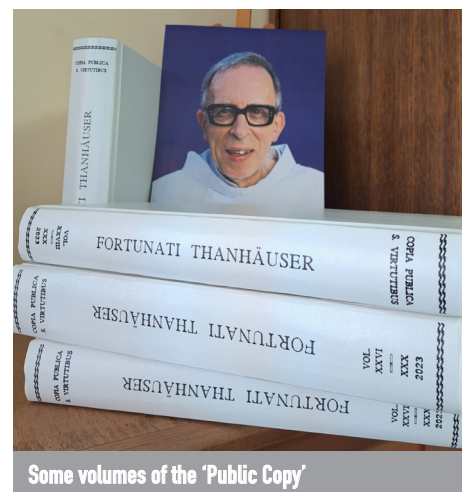
Brother Fortunatus consoling a sick person

The Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, at its Ordinary Congress of 21 June 2023, issued the “Decree of Juridical Validity” of the Diocesan Inquest for the Cause of the Beatification and Canonisation of the Servant of God Brother Fortunatus Thanhäuser”, a document drawn up after the closure of the Cause in

Kanjirapally (India) on 31 January 2023. This document was published following the verification conducted into the formal aspects of the procedural Acts and the consistency of the evidence produced: the number and status of the witnesses, documents collected and compliance with all the procedures to be followed in the inquiry. The Process Proceedings, consisting of more than 10,000 pages, have been collected in 30 volumes. Recognition of the juridical validity of the process is an important milestone as a result of the work performed with passion and competence in the diocesan phase. We offer our special thanks to the members of the Tribunal and all those who have contributed.

The Postulator General will now request the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to appoint a *Relator* who will guide the external collaborator and the Postulator to prepare the “*Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis*” of the Servant of God. We thank Our Lord for the gift of this brother, an authentic disciple of Jesus and faithful follower of John of God. Brother Fortunatus was popularly called “Vallivachan” which means “Great Father”. The

Christian virtues practised in his work of charity and his humility made him “famous” among his people, but above all with his life lived wholly united with Christ in prayer and with the mission of hospitality he continues to speak to us today, and demonstrate that holiness is a pathway that is possible and is accessible to everyone. The Servant of God knew how to perfectly combine an active life with a contemplative life, making his existence a wonderfully harmonious life that people willingly “listen to” and “look at” as a preferential way of living according to their vocation.



Some volumes of the 'Public Copy'



Brother Mathias Barrett 1900 – 1990 “Always obedient to Charity”

Born in a modest house on the old Yellow Rod Road, Ballybrit, on the outskirts of Waterford, Ireland, on 15 March 1900, to Margaret and Tom Barrett, he was baptised Maurice Patrick.

As a child, he was enrolled with the ‘St Joseph’ school run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He would later say that the Brothers ran the school “*with an iron fist*” and did not allow any breaches of the rules. In 1914, he came home from school one day and told his mother that he was leaving school to join a community of Brothers. His mother responded very firmly: “*Go but don’t come back!*”. Such was the prevailing attitude of the times towards a son or daughter preparing to leave home for the religious or priestly life. On 17 March 1916, accompanied by his father, Maurice Barrett, he boarded the Dublin-bound train to begin a journey that would take him to live in France, Canada, Ireland and the United States. At the age of sixteen, Mathias received the religious habit of the Hospitaller Brothers of St John of God, formally becoming an aspirant to the Religious life. In 1920, he left Ireland for his novitiate period in Lyon, France, where he made his temporary profession on 21 November 1921 and solemn profession on 21 November 1924. Bound by the vow of obedience, he agreed to go to Montréal (Quebec, Canada). On 14 April 1927 he entered the port of Halifax (Nova Scotia) with two Brothers, Brother Laurent Cosgrove and Brother Hilary Lesprit. In 1934 he was appointed Provincial Superior of

the new Province of St John of God, and in the next 14 eventful years he founded five centres: a reception centre to cater for the needs of 200 men; a 500-bed hospital; a soup kitchen; a home for epileptics and another one for 75 convalescents.

From the moment he boarded that train to Dublin all those years ago, Brother Mathias never doubted that he should devote his life to serving others. With absolute trust and completely abandoning himself to God’s will, he devoted himself totally to the Order and its mission, through caring service to his neighbour. It was said of him: *‘Ireland gave him, France sent him, Canada received him and the United States welcomed him’*. Circumstances during his life caused him to suffer alienation, misunderstandings and rejection. He experienced the anguish of failure, as well as the joy of success. Another train journey took him to California. That was in 1941. Brother Mathias arrived in Los Angeles dressed in his old, tattered religious habit, wearing a pair of oversized, worn-out shoes “*with the soles coming off and making a noise on the pavement*”, and carrying a small cardboard suitcase. True to himself and to the commitment he had made, he founded hospitals, nursing homes and night shelters around Boston and Los Angeles



Brother Mathias Barrett

over the following nine years. Inspired and sustained by his vow of hospitality, he responded to the many needs of the poor and suffering with enormous energy and total abandon, even if that meant offending the sensibilities of some of his more conservative Brothers and even his friends and benefactors. His spontaneous response when confronted by people’s evident needs upset many. Disorientation and misunderstandings perhaps lay behind his decision one day in September 1950, that was to prove both fatal and providential, to send his request to leave the Hospitaller Order he had loved so much. Until the day of his death, St John of God continued to be his source of inspiration and he never ceased to love the Order. Although deeply saddened, he always remained responsive to the



mysterious will of God. His simple but solid and unshakeable Irish faith told him that he could still serve his neighbour somewhere and in some way. Despite suffering misunderstandings and separation from the Order, he was always available to serve and he accepted that his friends and even his enemies might use him, provided, however, that it was for the love of God whom he loved simply and humbly, and for love for the poor and needy, whom he always served with such zeal.

The Gospel qualities of readiness to serve, hospitality, flexibility and respect for life that was so well embodied in this little white-haired Irishman, would soon find practical and positive expression in the home and the apostolate of a new Religious family called 'Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd'. Father Gerald Fitzgerald, the founder of the Servants of the Paraclete, took him in; Archbishop Byrne sent him on a mission and Monsignor José Garcia provided him with two hovels that were al-



Brother Mathias with two benefactors

most in ruins, while the citizens of Albuquerque gave him the support and help he needed to continue his works of 'boundless charity', just as they are continuing to do to this very day.

He founded centres, shelters and homes for the poorest, particularly for the homeless, the elderly, the mentally ill, abused women accompanied by their children, AIDS patients, and finally for teenagers living on the streets and in difficulty. Soon Mathias' Brothers spread beyond the borders of New Mexico and the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd founded centres in Canada, Britain, Ireland and Haiti. And all this simply because Mathias had

never hesitated to risk and love! Before he died, Brother Mathias Barrett was able to see his community given official recognition from Rome as a Congregation of Pontifical Right. His remains rest in the memorial crypt of Villa Mathias, the house that also serves as the Curia of the Religious Family he had founded.

His last words reflect his personality: *'Goodbye, and thank you everyone!'*

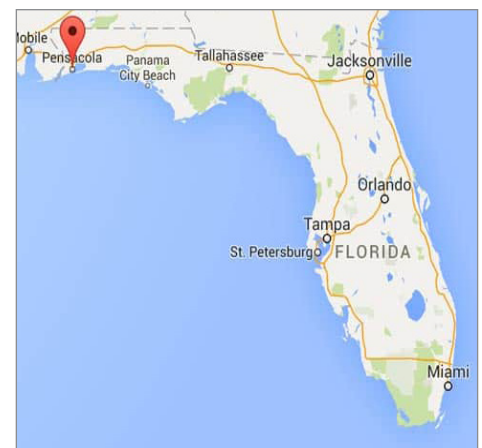
He died in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on 12 August 1990.

In 2015, the little Family he had founded returned to become part of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God.

Cause of the Blessed Martyrs of Florida

The diocesan phase of the 57 martyrs of Florida (Antonio Inija and 56 companions), which include is one of our own brothers - Brother Felipe Orbalas - is drawing to a close. Through the research of the Historical Commission involved in the Cause, we know that the brother's family originally came from the city of Guipúzcoa, in the Basque Country, Spain. Furthermore, the documents provided indicate that Brother Felipe had been sent to Pensacola (Florida) on 7 May

1707 by the General Council of Mexico City to replace the elderly surgeon Brother Diego Gómez to undertake the mission there. While serving as a surgeon, Brother Felipe Orbalas was the Prior of the Nuestra Señora de las Angustias Hospital from 1708 until 26 August 1712, the day he was martyred while nursing the wounded near Fort *San Carlos de Austria*. The diocesan phase will end on 12 October 2023 in Tallahassee Diocese of Pensacola.



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