

Joseph Natale Video

Most Holy Family Monastery, Berlin, New Jersey, 1992

Benedictine Oblates of Saint Jude

An interview with Brother Joseph Natale O.S.B, Superior

To be a Superior frightened me. To govern other men frightened me. But yet there was something, a feeling that I had to do it whether I liked it or not. This is what makes it very strange as far as getting this community started.

When I first got this place it was only the house, a 17 room home, a wooden structure. I would come here every day and do a certain amount of work until 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning, all by myself. So even going through this process, even working in this here house in the beginning, I still had a fearful feeling, maybe even an inferiority complex or something but yet, I can't explain it, I can't put it in words, I can't find the words except that this was all piecemealed together. It's built, more than half of the bricks and blocks and mortar, or more, maybe 75% of all the material, was from materials they would throw away.

The main thought in the beginning actually was to establish a community for handicaps. That was the main option. In the love of God that I felt I had, in adoring God and the feeling I got in this, even though I suffered all my life ... I know nothing of suffering. I saw a nucleus in the handicapped themselves offering to God their sufferings before the Holy Eucharist, giving to God what people who were not handicapped were not giving to God. That, in affliction, we may bring about more glory to God and bring others into that realm.

As far as the Diocese was concerned it made it quite difficult, almost impossible, to continue with handicapped young men, it was necessary to take them out of that community, take them to the parish church ... ice, snow, rain ... that got to be very difficult for them.

The battle to get this place started; in the beginning we received almost nothing ... nothing. It took over seven years before we started to get an income in that would start to pay even for the heating, the electrical, the telephone.

A community for handicaps ... I let that idea go, for only handicaps. These doors are not closed to handicap persons but it's not a community only for handicaps any longer. But any handicap person who is truly seeking a vocation I will give them that opportunity to fulfill it.

I hesitate a little, but I am very careful of what I do say. But in that one respect I listened ... "Joseph, my priests are handicapped. Help them".

Things in life, God directs, He allows them to happen. He changes your course. He's the greatest chess player ... you know, there is no other chess player like Him. So he maneuvers you where he wants you. But the main thing is that we must listen, obey and so on.

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That's the biggest problem, I think, God has with us. We don't always obey. We prolong things to our own doubts, our lack of understanding and so on ... but we go through that process, the process of growing, developing.

So getting back to this community, this is as far as the Latin Tridentine Mass is concerned, when you see people looking, hunting for what they once had ... why should they be denied this? This is the way they want to worship. This is the way they've always worshipped. And they want to continue to worship in the same manner. That was my responsibility also to give it to them, to hold them together, to preserve what they knew to be Catholic and their Faith. When you look into their eyes you saw them crying out. It's a matter of their salvation. And when you see people crying out at a matter of salvation, even by the law of the Church, we cannot turn our backs upon these people. When it's put down as a matter of salvation we must do everything in our power to preserve the faith and their salvation.

So, really you have no other course to take. You must bring about ... bring the mass to them, give them the mass, give them the Sacraments and the teachings that go with it.

This is a responsibility and we must uphold that responsibility. We cannot shun it and say "no you have to do this" and lose those souls. You cannot lose them. There is room in the Church, there should be room in the Church, as far as the Catholic faith is concerned, even after the changes came about, we cannot say or the Bishops cannot say ... "oh forget about those people". So I couldn't see possible, to go along with the trend and the changes, to deny those who were being denied their heritage.

The newsletter was developed to bring out truth. Catholics are the most uneducated people as far as their faith is concerned. We must fight this battle with truth, Catholic dogma and teaching. And all the newsletters we had put out, there is nothing in there that is contrary to the Catholic dogma. It is based totally on Catholic dogma and teaching.

So even some letters we get back criticizing us ... it doesn't even bother us for the simple reason that there is only a small amount of the letters we get who are not pleased.

The Church right now is fragmented. We must teach Catholics, traditionalist Catholics we may use that terminology, I'd rather use the word Roman Catholic. We must unite. We must, if we do not unite and come together and working for one goal and that goal is the Holy Mother Church, upon this rock I will build my Church, Peter. We must maintain that structure. We must uphold that structure no matter what the cost may be. We must uphold the structure of the Papacy. And we must try to unite the Church not fragment it.

Now this might sound strange, to some people that I know, we must maintain ourselves within the framework of that Church. And fight with whatever tools the Church allows us to fight with. I'd like to say as far as our day is concerned, as you just said, the darkness that we are in is not coincidence. It's diabolical. The seed of Satan has been sowed.

Scripture speaks about how someone who came within the hours of darkness and planted bad seed. The bad seed has been planted. Pope Paul VI stated ... "the smoke of Satan fills the whole Church".

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To my surprise, as you hear many of the clergy speak, and even the Bishops, that what they're saying is that for 2000 years we were wrong ... that we just saw the light; Vatican II gave us the light. So when you look back and see throughout the ages the guidance of the Church, as you try and evaluate what they're telling you, the only answer I come back at them, in a sense, is that it doesn't make sense. What you're telling me is that we've been totally wrong. At our right today everything else we just sweep away.

All the great Saints from the past, the great culture ... they came through the Church. The development and everything, Christian morality, which let me say Catholic morality ... it's all swept under the table.

I remember I went to the ??? office and I said to Bishop Gilfoil (?), I said the Bishops of the Diocese of Jersey, the State of New Jersey, passed sex education. The conversation went on about how the vote passed it and about young people, about the problems of young people ... and he was a young person ... I said we were all young persons at one time. I said we all have the same type of problems to overcome. But I said, right now Bishop you took the moral law and you threw it out the window. In other words there are no guidelines.

We have abortion, homosexuals, lesbians and other names ... you could have a list a mile long ... of all the abominations that has taken place out of the Church and in the Church. And even in the Holy of Holies. So how can we justify this type of reasoning of today and discard what we had, (sound doctrine, and precise doctrine? What was sin and what was not sin but today everything is grey.

So people are confused. They come here and say "brother I'm confused". I say go to your parish priest. They say "I come out confused when I talk with him so I come to you and afterwards I know what sin is, Brother".

Today we have rationalized things, we've split hairs and, whatever terminology you want to use, to justify wrong. And why do we justify wrong? Those in authority have corrupted themselves. And they must justify their own actions. And even that is dangerous to say but we have to say the truth.

I think we have prepared a way. We are crying in the wilderness as Saint John cried. We are preparing people for what's coming ... the horrors of our day.

To see how the government is unfolding before us and the destruction of what we call Christian morality ... it almost doesn't exist any longer. So, we must take it upon ourselves to create a place of refuge, a place where we'll be Catholic. Where people can come and learn their Faith, to develop in that Faith and have a place to go as a family, as a city of God, a refuge.

In my office I get many people who come in and I ask them, it is part of a ritual I go through when people are in the office as a group, and I always ask them ... "do you believe in God?" And as the all nod their heads say yes and yes and this goes around. I hesitate a little, I sit back in my chair and just look at them until quiet comes over the room. And then I say ... "So why do you believe in God?". They all look at me like ... "this Brother, there something wrong with him". I say "do you realize that Satan believes in God. Who know God better than he? But do you love God? Do you adore God? Do you worship God?"

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The first lesson we must learn is to “know” Him; which is followed by our love for Him. We must adore and glorify ... there are three different categories in growing and prayer. And then it’s worship.

Believing ... we start there but we can’t stay there. We must adore, glorify (like I said) and worship Him. And so, the ingredients is, the first question I ask and I wait for the right answer ... “Do you love God?” And they answer, yes. And that’s enough for me.

It sounds contradictory ... I’m very frightful, but I’m willing to go and be ordained. I don’t look at the priesthood in a sense for any glory. You know a guy goes into the army or wears a uniform or something ... he’s there strutting down the street thinking he’s something, somebody. **But I think about the priesthood for myself ... it frightens me, like I said before, but what can be accomplished, as far as the Sacraments are concerned, for my own good and for others also. To truly develop a community, with a Superior being ordained and even possibly eventually become to be an Abbot.**

But a Superior is a lonely job and his source of comfort, his source of wisdom, **his source of knowledge must come from God himself.**