



"LOVE WHOLLY, WITHOUT HALF MEASURES, AND WITHOUT RESERVE." —VENERABLE BRUNO LANTERI, OMV FOUNDER

WHEN LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

A reflection by Fr. William Brown, OMV

"Be careful what you pray for; you just might get it." Two times in my life I can recall how true these words are. One prayer was made after I graduated from the University of Santa Clara in 1982. During college, I had returned to the practice of my faith after having been away for several years. For the first time, I had a personal relationship with Christ that was real. One day, in my newfound fervor, I prayed, "Lord let me suffer for you and for the sake of others." In my naiveté and with the impetuosity of St. Peter, my prayer was heard. I have never made the prayer since and have learned that it is the wiser course not to pray for suffering because in life suffering will surely find you.

My second prayer was also heard and for that I will always be grateful to God. The year was 1983 and I was visiting my parents in Sacramento. As I was making a left turn onto Elkhorn Boulevard, driving my blue Datsun pick-up truck, I uttered the words, "Lord, when my mom and dad need me most, let me be there to take care of them." Twenty-five years later the prayer was answered in ways I could never have imagined. It would teach me about a love stronger than death.

While home on vacation in 2008, my mother was experiencing chest pain along with difficulty in breathing. After a series of tests in late September, we learned that she had lung cancer which was incurable. Any treatment would only prolong her life for a few short months with painful side effects. Having weighed all her options and after discussing it with my father and me, she decided against chemotherapy. Instead she chose to spend her remaining days at home with her family while receiving palliative and hospice care. She was able to do so until her death on November 18.



While this time was difficult, it was also a gift. I found myself doing things of which I never thought I was capable. My service to my mother stretched my capacity to love. It would also prepare me for what would happen next.

In 2009, my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer which would require an operation. The only problem was that his heart was not strong enough to undergo the procedure. As a consequence, he had to have quadruple bypass surgery. This would be the beginning of a journey for my father and me that would change both our hearts.

After a successful surgery, a series of problems ensued. These included bi-lateral paralysis of the vocal chords, a tracheotomy, a feeding tube, multiple CAT scans, numerous minor operations, various infections and the loss of twenty-five pounds, just to name a few. After being hospitalized for over three and a half months at three different hospitals he returned home and regained his independence. His persevering spirit would prepare him for the next series of health challenges, colon cancer surgery being primary.

Pictured: Fr. Bill's Father

Senior Master Sergeant William Brown, US Air Force

Pray With Us for OMV Vocations

O Glorious St. Joseph,
model of masculinity and purity,
you were the head of the holy household in Nazareth. You
are also the special patron of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.
We now entrust to you the Oblates' future, and their desire
for growth in vocations and mission for the sanctification of
its members and the salvation of souls.
Through your powerful intercession, make them numerous,
faithful, wise and courageous sons of Mary.

Amen



While the surgery was successful, unintended effects followed. After four more months of hospitalizations, this eighty-five-year-old man, who had survived over fifty

combat missions in World War II and the Korean War, could no longer win the battle he was facing. In the

early hours of the morning in 2010, after I had been reading the Psalms to him, my father breathed his last breath.

During these months, I learned the power of love. During the long hours each day that I spent by my father's side as his advocate in a health care system, where I saw the good, the bad and sometimes the ugly, I came to realize that I was not only serving him, he was also serving me. I was not only living for him; he was living for me. It was his love for me throughout my life that allowed my love to be there for him when he needed me most.

One day a physical therapist who was working with my father said to me, “Your father must be a good man.” Her words struck me since she had just met my father for the first time. When I asked why she said this, she replied, “Good sons come from good fathers.” In the short time she was in the room, she saw how I

attended to my father, which was a testament to his character and goodness.

The mark of a servant is reflected in how one

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serves and how one serves begins at home. When I returned to Boston in 2011 to resume my ministry, my experience with my parents had made a mark upon who I was, who I became and who I wanted to be. The challenge we all face whether it is in our families, churches or places of work, is to let our actions and our lives lead others to say, “Your God must be a good God, because good sons, good daughters come from a good God.”

In the Song of Songs, it is written, “Love is strong as death” (8:6). Through my experience and witnessing the trials others have courageously faced, I have learned that not only is love strong *as* death, it is stronger *than* death. Jesus taught this both by how he lived and how he died. It is his love that endures. It is this love that gives us hope and the reason why we serve.

Venerable Bruno Lanteri knew suffering and loss in his life, whether it was the death of his mother at the age of four or the many siblings who preceded him in death. However, in the midst of these losses and the griev-

ing that accompanied them, his faith was strengthened. He experienced the grace of Jesus and his companionship and the presence of Mary. In the suffering of Jesus, Lanteri came to know that love is stronger than death. This gave him hope and provided purpose to his life and ministry and offered to encouragement to others. May the love of Jesus that is stronger than death, be the reason for our hope and give purpose to our lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Guild Meeting

Friday, March 24 at 7pm online



GALA - Support OMV Seminarians

Saturday, April 29 at 5:30pm

omvusa.org/gala



Final Profession of Vows

Br. Jorge Sanchez, Br. Jonathon Hank

Friday, May 19 at 7pm

St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine

An excerpt from the book *Men of Mercy, Sons of Mary* by Cabrini Pak, Ph.D.

On spiritual life with the OMV fathers and brothers: pg. 77

“Their ministry continued what God started for me: a season of grieving.”

Many of the men and women that I interviewed lost a loved one in death and were helped in their grieving by Oblates in ways that stayed with them for many years afterwards. “My husband died, and two other family members died, and I had experienced a longing for God and healing in a season for grieving,” said one, now also a spiritual director trained by the Oblates. “The Lord had me in a season for grieving for almost five years. My encounter with the OMV put language to the prayer that God was teaching me. They have a deep and wonderful charism. It renews and revives spirituality and fits me so well because it’s rooted in sacred scripture.”

Another interviewee lost his brother through suicide and for years carried heavy guilt in his heart. He told me of a time when he went to confession with an Oblate priest: “My experience in all confessions is good. But that one was life-changing. I was able to release this horrible guilt that I had killed my brother. He told me, your brother was mentally ill. God will take care of everything. He may very well be in heaven, but trust in God. I was able to release myself from it and truly believe that I didn’t send my brother to hell, and he has every chance to be in heaven, and I look forward to seeing him when I get there. And I’m perfectly at peace with that. It was a great experience.”

Key Dates in Venerable Bruno Lanteri's Life

On February 15, 1732 Nikolaus Albert von Diessbach was born. He was twenty-seven years older than Pio Bruno Lanteri and the decisive influence in Bruno's life.

Of Diessbach, Venerable Lanteri would write: “At times he preached in Italian, French, and German on the same day in different churches. He was a deeply learned man and was aware of all that occurred in the culture around him, noting immediately how these events related to the glory of God. He was gifted in his speech, and his conversation was warm, well-mannered, cordial, discreet, and prudent. He knew how to win the hearts of all, whence all sought him and took pleasure in being with him.”

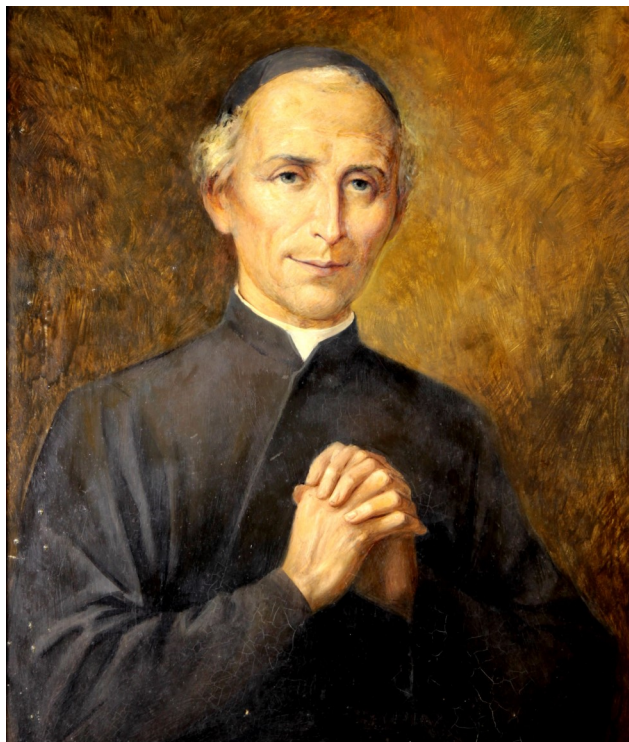
On March 11, 1901: Fr. Lanteri's body was transferred to the Oblates' church of the Sacred Heart in Pinerolo. Future rector major Fr. Domenico Pechenino was present, and years later recounted his memories of that day:

“I remember as if it were today, that when the worker opened the tomb and lifted the cover of the wooden casket, with these eyes I saw Fr. Lanteri, dressed in the habit of the Oblates, with his biretta on his head, his hands folded, and his thin face with the pallor of the deceased. After a few moments, as it came into contact with the air, that venerable figure, which appeared just as depicted in the painting in Pisa (that was made from his body when he lay on his deathbed), dissolved, disappearing from the gaze of the onlookers, who stood there as if numb.”



OMV Vocations Update

On January 1, 2023, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary launched a new vocation initiative called, **NOW WE BEGIN**. The purpose of the plan is to increase the number of OMV priests and brothers so we can continue the mission of Ven. Bruno Lanteri, which he began in 1826. The goal of the plan is to have 70 active Oblates in the United States by the year 2050. This would be a forty percent increase in the number of Oblates priests and brothers. Each Oblate is responsible to do his part to invite prospective young men to consider a vocation to the Oblates. We also ask for the help of all our Oblate friends and benefactors to pray for vocations and refer men to our community who you think might have a call to the priesthood and religious life. **Venerable Bruno Lanteri, pray for us...**



Pray With Us *for Venerable Bruno's Cause*

Prayer for the Intercession of Venerable Bruno Lanteri

O Father, fountain of all life and holiness,
You gave Venerable Bruno Lanteri great faith in Christ, your son, a lively
hope, and an active love for the salvation of his brethren.
You made him a prophet of your word and a witness to your mercy. He
had a tender love for Mary
and by his very life he taught fidelity to the Church.

Father, hear the prayer of Your family and, through the intercession of
Venerable Lanteri, grant us the grace for which we now ask ***

May he be raised to the altars that we may give You greater praise. We
ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

LITANY TO BEGIN AGAIN

*(Compiled by a layperson from the words of
Ven. Bruno Lanteri, OMV)*

Lord Jesus, through the intercession of your
Mother Mary,

grant. . .

That I may begin immediately,
That I may never fail to begin again,
That I may begin even without devotion,

That I may begin each day,
That I may begin every day,
That I may begin every hour of the day,
That I may say with boldness, "Now I begin,"

That I may begin humbly and with full confi-
dence,

That I may begin with holy tenacity,
That I may begin with faith,
That I may begin with gentleness,
That I may begin with peace,

That I may decide always to begin,
That I may begin again, firmly convinced that
God forgives me,
That I may rise immediately and begin again,
Venerable Bruno, pray for me.

Amen

TESTIMONIALS

From a laywoman, spiritual director:

*"Continually thanking you in my heart for sending the links to the 10 half-hour
talks that you did on Venerable Bruno's spiritual direction.*

*I have listened carefully and prayerfully to all of them and am now going back
through them again. Love them, love them, love them! They are a continual
source of rich spiritual listening...a source of hope and encouragement, indeed!
And inspiration from him . . . for the time I spend with spiritual directees.*

*I continue to ask Venerable Bruno--I call him "Father"--for his intercession. And
he continues to give me hope and encouragement! "*

From a permanent deacon:

*"My wife and I recently read and are continuing to read, "Overcoming Spiritual
Discouragement" It was a blessing and was a great introduction to Venerable
Bruno Lanteri and his spirituality. We have offered numerous teaching sessions
at our parish and are interested in using some of the DVD series."*

From a recent widower:

*"Bruno Lanteri's message is now again bringing me out of this place and restor-
ing hope and keeping me away from the discouragement that Lanteri warned
us against. I just came from the garden having been reading the book, and I
was inspired to write and say that it is giving me the tools to make the next step
now and helping me to deal with those 'dry days.' "*