

UNIVERSITA' PONTIFICIA SALESIANA

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Il Beato Artemides Zatti

*Research in the Process for the Cause of Sanctity
as presented in the document "Positio Super Virtutibus"*

Esercitazione per il Seminario de Spiritualita' Salesiana (TA2241)

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Introduction

When we were asked to select a person to analyse his sanctity basing on the process recorded in the process of beatification, our choice fell on the person of Blessed Artemides Zatti for various reasons. Mainly because of our eagerness to know more about him as a confrere whose name is still fresh in our minds after his beatification. Secondly he is a person with whom we can identify ourselves with. Born and brought up in an ordinary family of the time, accepting the call of Jesus to be a servant of his, as a lay religious he attained the fruit of the universal call to holiness. Thirdly, in the Salesian congregation as we are looking for more vocations to Brotherhood, to present his life as a model for any one to follow in their quest to serve God in others.

It has been a privilege for us to go through this document on his beatification and understand his virtues and life that led him to be declared a Beaty. In his life we are struck by the depth of his trust in the divine providence and his faith in seeing Jesus in the face of the sick and the poor.

In this work we present a short sketch of his life and virtues and the process of beatification as presented in the document “ Positio Super Virtutibus”.

1. A Brief Biography of a Holy Man and Exemplary Religious

1.1. Infancy and early childhood (1880-1897)

Artemides Zatti was born on 12th October 1880 to Zatti Luigi and Vecchi Albina at Boretto (Italy) and was baptised on the same day. He was the third among the 8 children (cf.Inf.7).It was a very religious family and often thier life was an example for other Christian families around especially at Bahia Blanca later. He entered the elementary school at the age of 6 in1886 and completed it in 1889. Then the situation in the family forced him to become a day labourer at the age of 9 until his 16th B'day (cf.Inf. 22-23).

1.2. The first years in Argentina, Bahia Blanca (1897-1902)

In 1897 (Artemides is 17 years old) the Zatti family migrates to Argentina, Bahia Blanca where an uncle of his, Giovanni Zatti, was already settled and who promised them of a better prospect in life and work.

There too Artemides goes to work in a brick factory to support the income of the family. In spite of the economic difficulties the family was going through, it is reported that Zatti family was a united family where a sense of God and faith in Him prevailed (cf. Inf.32).

1.3. Salesian Exposure

In spite of the anticlerical situation prevalent in Bahia Blanca, the Zatti family stuck to the regular participation in the church liturgy and the sacraments. The parish to which they belonged, was under the care of the Salesians and young Zatti became a volunteer assistant to the Pastor, Fr. Carlos Cavalli SDB, a man of piety and remarkable kindness. The young Zatti used to attend masses and receive the Holy Communion at least on every Sunday. In order to grow spiritually, following the advice from his spiritual director, Fr. Cavalli, he used to join the pastor in his visits to the sick, funeral services, serving the mass and even perform the duties of the sacristan whenever it was possible (cfr. Inf.36). This life and interior attitude of holiness, from the time he reached Bahia Blanca, was growing into maturity in him during the period between 1897 -1900.

1.4. His Vocation

The vocation to be a priest was a natural outcome of his spiritual life and the desire to be at the service of others. His contact with the Salesian community and the experience of the life of Salesians attracted him to be a member of the Salesian congregation (cf. Inf.36.) Having received a book on Don Bosco from his pastor he read through it with such eagerness that when finished he had a question in his mind: “Why don’t I become a Salesian”?

1.4.1. The Salesian Aspirant at Bernal (1900-02) and Viedma (1902-08)

After having shared with his father his dream of becoming a Salesian priest, at the age of 20, he entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Bernal, in the province of Buenos Aires, on 19th April 1900. His mother accompanied him to Bernal and entrusted him to the director Don Bartolomeo Molinari with these words. “Here you have my son, Father, he is good enough and I believe he will be obedient. But if he is not, use the wooden

paddele!” (cfr. Inf. P39). Though he found life and studies difficult, he courageously immersed himself in the life of the community.¹

In 1902 young Zatti was detected to have tuberculosis and his entrance in to the novitiate was suspended and the Superiors decided to send him to the Andes to rest and recuperate. But with the intervention of Fr. Cavalli the pastor, Zatti was sent to the Salesian house at Viedma, where Fr. Evasio Garrone, a skilful Salesian infirmarian, had a missionary hospital and the climate was more suitable for the sick person. This change and sickness would radically change the course of future life and vocation of Artemides Zatti.

Zatti reached the Salesian house at Viedma on 4th March 1902, and was under the care of Fr. Garrone for his treatment. Here too being an aspirant, Zatti fully immersed himself in the ministry of caring for the sick with Fr. Garrone (cf. Inf. 51)

1.4.2. The intervention of Mary.

When Fr. Garrone detected the seriousness of Zatti’s illness, he told him to pray to Mary Help of Christians to restore him to health, and to promise that his cure would be taken as a sign that he should dedicate himself for life to the sick inmates of the hospital.² He did that and remarkably regained his health. He said about this: “ I believed, ... I Promised I was Cured ...” (cfr. Inf. 75). From then on his future life was crystal clear to him, and he accepted it enthusiastically. Here he decided to become a Salesian Brother and devote his entire life in the service of the sick and the poor around.

1.5. His Years of Religious formation. (1904 -1911)

During the years 1902-1904, Artemidis Zatti was an ‘Aspirant’ and recuperating from his illness with the assistance of Fr. Garrone. On 23rd January 1905 he applied to be admitted to enter the novitiate.

¹ Remember that Zatti was already 20 years old and he had discontinued studies after his elementary schooling 11 years back. His companions were much junior to him in age

² Fr. Garrone also realized that he too is becoming too old to continue his work of looking after the sick and was on the look out for some one to take up the responsibility. Having seen the dedication and interest of young Zatti, he felt that Zatti is the right person to continue that work for the poor and the sick.

Finally, in 1906, respecting his physical situation he was allowed to stay on in Viedma and be guided by the master in his religious formation, though novitiate was not in Viedma. Meanwhile he continued his work in the hospital.

On 11 January 1908, he made his first profession as a Salesian Brother after having completed two years of Novitiate.³

On 5th June 1908, he wrote his will and testament bequeathing everything till his death to the then Provincial, Fr. Giuseppe Vespignani of Bahia Blanca.

On 18th Feb. 1911 he made his final profession.⁴

During these years of formation Zatti grew greatly in his spiritual life. He had an unflinching trust in God and in the maternal assistance of Our Lady. He is never found complaining about his sickness or suffering. All the letters he wrote to his family bear testimony to this fact. He always concluded his letters by thanking God and Our Lady for all the gifts they have given him and keeping him well (cf. Inf. 74).

1.6. His mission. 1908-1951

Br. Zatti's entire life was spent here in the St. Joseph's Hospital at Viedma for the sick and the poor.

From 1905 his work became regular in the Pharmacy. After the death of Fr. Garrone in 1911, the responsibility of the administration of the hospital was entrusted to Zatti by his Provincial placing much trust and confidence in him. Zatti totally dedicated his life to the responsibility that was entrusted to him with all his heart. This is affirmed in the letter of Mons. C.M. Perez to the provincial: "After the death of Fr. Garrone, we have a person who is totally dedicated to the service of the people" (cf. Inf. 89).

After Giacinto Massini left the congregation in 1913, Zatti became the sole person responsible for the running of the St. Joseph's Hospital.

³It was allowed by the constitutions, those who are going to be lay Brothers, to have a longer period of Preparation.

⁴It is very edifying to note all along his formation in all the stages- admission to Novitiate, First profession, Final profession etc. - he had all the councils positive votes.

Soon he qualified himself to be the official administrator of the Pharmacy. He enjoyed the deepest respect of the patients and also of the health authorities.

During 1930-40 Zatti is elected the Vice-President of an association called “Circulo de Obreros Catolicos” of Viedma .⁵

1.6.1. Life of Artemidis Zatti at St. Joseph’s Hospital.

Since the existing hospital was in a bad shape, with the intervention of the then Rector Major, Fr. P. Recaldone, Zatti managed to rebuild and inaugurate the new hospital building on 5th October 1915.

His whole life was devoted to the hospital. Day after day he laboured there with a dedication nothing short of heroism. He was there for every work and was available to every one who needed him. He personally attended to the sick, explained things to them and their people, he assisted the doctors in the operation, he personally paid the people employed; in short he was the life blood of the hospital. Every poor person who went there felt wanted and cared.

Br. Zatti cared for not only those who came to the Hospital but also the sick in and around the neighbourhood. His regularity and availability to the sick and old in their houses became proverbial in the town. Morning and evening he would leave the hospital on a bicycle to be available to the sick who has called him. He always rendered his service as a charity to the needy. If anything was received for his service it would be spent for the hospital.

1.7. The sickness and death. (1950-51)

Br. Zatti had been healthy and strong after having recovered from Tuberculosis. He always did everything with serenity and joy even the hardest of responsibilities. But on July 19th 1950, at the age of 60, he had a fall while climbing on a ladder to repair a broken water tank in the hospital. But then on he felt constant

⁵ It is an association of the members of the parish and citizens of the place and during this period the membership became the highest. His presence and activities became an inspiration for others in their life.

pain on his left side and he himself admitted that it was a tumour in the pancreas. He knew too that it had no remedy for it!

On 27th February, at his insistence he received the anointing of the sick and the Viaticum. On 15th March 1951 Br. Zatti returned to his Creator after having completed his mission in His service (cf. Inf. 201).

2. The Process of Investigation of the Cause of Sanctity

2.1. The Process Begins in the Archdiocese Viedma in Argentina

Brother Zatti's cause actually began with the swell of faith surrounding his death and the immediate recognition of his holiness among the people for whom he served. The formal process, however, was introduced in 1976 for investigation into the holiness of Artemides Zatti as a man to be emulated in virtue and faith. In 1976 the introduction of the process was requested by the Argentine Episcopal Confederacy. Within one year, on 31st May, 1977 the bishop of Viedma applied to the Congregation to the Process of the Saints for the authorization to start the process, which was granted one year later on 1st June, 1979. On 22nd March, 1980 the Recognition Process is opened in Viedma. And on 24th May, 1981 the actions are put forward to the Roman Congregation.

2.2. The Process of Investigation Officially Opens in Rome

On 10th December the remains of Brother Zatti were taken to the church of Sacred Heart of Jesus in the parish of Saint John Bosco in Viedma. In March, 1985, after the favourable declaration of the Recognition Process the Cause is given to the General Teller, who finished his report in June, 1990. Seven years pass as the investigation is carried forward. On 7th July, 1997 Artemides Zatti is declared Venerable. All the preceding decrees were published in the presence of the Holy Father on this occasion. Pope John Paul II declared that "as a *Servant of God* his Cause has officially begun." When the Holy Father agrees that a person has lived a life of Heroic Virtue they are called *Venerable*. With the acceptance of a miracle, and following the Rite of Beatification, they are called *Blessed*. With a second miracle and the Rite of Canonization they are called *Saint*.

On 14th April, 1998 the Ecclesiastical Tribunal is established in Buenos Aires to study a presumed miracle. And on 27th November the Congregation of the Process of the Saints approved of the actions.

2.2.1. The Miracle of Fr. Bosio, Argentine Salesian and Provincial

In 1980, a young Salesian priest, Fr. Carlos Bosio, entered his first year of theology in the province of Patagonia. In March of that year he traveled to Bahia Blanca with his classmates and fell ill. At the hospital it was determined that Fr. Bosio's appendix had burst and an appendectomy was performed, but within three days peritonitis and deadly gangrene developed. The gangrene advanced to the lungs, Bosio's infectious fever rose, and his body went into septicemic shock. Dr. Zabalza, the attending physician believed there would be no possible way to save the young man.

On April 17, after telling Fr. Bosio's parents to prepare for his imminent death after the immune systems in their son's body had totally collapsed, they stood vigil at his bedside. In the morning, Fr. Bosio awoke from a coma without a fever and asked for food. Within one month of this amazing recovery, Fr. Bosio showed signs of a complete cure.

Fr. Bosio fell ill precisely at the moment that Artemides Zatti's cause for Beatification had been introduced. Two Salesians of the province urged all their communities to obtain the grace of a cure by the intercession of Zatti. So astounded by this turn of events, Fr. Agnello collected medical documentation to be presented in Rome. Five medical experts agreed that the cure was impossible medically and this report was voted upon favorably by the panel of theologians in Rome on 9 March, 2000.

2.2.2. Acceptance of the Miracle and Beatification

On 9th March, 2000 this miracle is accepted by the experts. On 24 April, 2001 Pope John Paul II signed the decree of conclusion of the beatification process. On 14 April, 2002 Artemides Zatti was declared Blessed.

3. Particular Examination of the Charism and Virtuous life of Blessed Artemides Zatti

The texts offered in the *Positio* are a compilation of sworn testimonies from those who knew of or worked with Artemides Zatti. Much of the witnesses are those whose testimonies informed the work of Fr. Entraigas who composed the first comprehensive biography of this Salesian coadjutor. The fundamental aspects of his spirituality are offered with a simplicity and directness which imitates the style of Blessed Zatti's life of virtue.

3.1. A Spiritual Profile

At the occasion of the promulgation of Zatti's virtuous life as he was confirmed to be "Servant of God" by Pope John Paul II, a summary statement was drawn which epitomized the life of this saintly man and it is quoted here from the *Positio*: "Unanimously and without reservation on the part of all the witness giving deposition for the Cause of this Servant of God, Artemides Zatti, is the acknowledgement that heroic practice of one virtue: his entire life was inspired only by the love of God and totally consecrated to the poor and the sick in a total self-donation and sacrifice of his own life with great joy."⁶

Dr. Peter Echay exclaimed, "The only miracle I have seen in my life was in the extraordinary character of Zatti and the length to which he would go to watch over others."⁷ But this capacity did not come without great cost. From his earliest days, as he aspired to priesthood, he suffered a transforming humiliation upon his return to school. When Tuberculosis hit him, he came to the brink of death and it was on this threshold that the Mother of God restored him and sent him on his holy mission to this life dedication. It seemed, from that moment on, Artemides calmly and completely gave his entire life, despite

⁶ *Positio*, Summ. Adds, p. 215. n. 875

⁷ *Positio*... Adds, p. 215. n. 875

the personal defeat to turn away from studies to the priesthood and despite the often overwhelming realities of his new mission: the repugnance of sickness and the adversity of unrelenting poverty at the hospital of St. Joseph. The recurring image of this dedicated man is Blessed Zatti riding in the cold and the rain on his bicycle, singing songs, totally available to anyone sick and in need. Fr. Garrone characterized this image by asserting that to the people, the beloved hospital was open anytime of day or not, without fail. It was, as Fr. Garrone continued, his love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that sustained as he placed every person and situation there calmly into the hands of God.

3.2. The Heroic Faith and the Prayer Life of Blessed Zatti

Faith for Brother Zatti has been characterized as his internal engine, an engine which drove him to tireless and joyful service of the sick and the poor in the most adverse and discouraging conditions. And it was this engine, also, which propelled him to his own personal sanctity, so marked by his persistent joy. Bishop M. Perez wrote of this faith: “My impression of this man was that he was always with the Lord! His deep prayer was the breathing of his soul, his behavior demonstrated a total dependence upon God, the primary object of his life, with his complete heart, mind, and soul.”⁸ Witnesses elaborated this by insisting that this constant prayer could be seen and heard as he rode his bicycle, attended to patients, worked with the doctors, dealt with the people, and in whatever he did. By this, he gave witness to his total union with God at all times. Zatti wrote in a letter home that his family in 1914, “In case any of you wish to find me, especially Mother, you can try to find me in the sweet heart of Jesus any day. From 5:30 AM to 7:00 PM, this is where you will find me.”⁹ His time in prayer, before the Eucharist, and in the evening, became that place where he entrusted all to God and his Mother. And this union remained with him at every moment. It was his Eucharistic Lord that he found in the

⁸ Summ., p. 43, n. 160

⁹ Summ., p 96, n. 106 (writings of Artemides Zatti)

patients, going so far as to ask for clothing or materials for “the old man Jesus” or “for my twelve year old Jesus!”¹⁰

As devoted as he was to the Eucharist, he was also keenly aware of his own personal sinfulness and confessed regularly. His confessions often confused the confessors because he underwent great anguish to accuse himself deeply and frequently. But this never spilled over into his joyful mission. He put the will of God first before all other endeavors and his prayer guided him to free himself from sin, accept any trial, and trust in God. In a letter to his parents after his sickness, he told them that God needed even fools and that he would be spared to accomplish the will of God. But the life of faith was not merely the jurisdiction of private prayer or within the hours of prayer in the chapel, his life of prayer was demonstrated repeatedly in the way he handled individuals at the hospital. As cited above, he considered every patient to be Jesus himself and treated that person in that manner.

The great Fr. Peter Berruti of the Superior Council made a visit to Patagonia and filed this report: “This hospital is truly a miracle of Providence...Brother Zatti is a man sent by God...The hospital is a prodigy of God’s care. I cannot understand how it can actually carry on.”¹¹

3.3. *Heroic Hope*

There are many virtues which must be attributed to Blessed Zatti, but perhaps the most characteristic and important virtue demonstrated throughout his life and ministry is hope. With the poverty and sickness of the people around him, Blessed Zatti’s hope became a beacon of light for countless people lost in the darkness of their own lives. It is said that Blessed Zatti often attended to the dying spreading this living hope and joy. He would often tell them that their greater life was still to come and give them consolation in their fear. Even in the

¹⁰ In the Biography of Br. Artemides Zatti, *An Angel Becomes a Nurse*, stories are recounted in which Br. Zatti refers to his patients as Jesus. “On one occasion, a poor man arrives covered with rags. He is treated and receives medicines, but he cannot depart wearing again his tattered clothes. Zatti asks a family: ‘Don’t you have clothes to lend to the Lord?’ They bring out some worn out items. He adds, ‘Don’t you have better ones? To the Lord we must give the best we have.’” Another time a local native shows up dirty and bent over. Zatti shouts to the nurse, ‘Sister, get a bed ready for the Lord.’”

¹¹ Summ. P. 226

face of his own death, he was totally at peace and believed in the power of God to keep the important work of attending to the poor going after his death. He radiated hope in every enterprise, never discouraged, even in the face of dire poverty. Where administrators and doctors would panic, Br. Zatti trusted. In fact, he would collect from those who could pay, but he promised care to the penniless as well.

3.4. Heroic Love of God and Charity toward All

What has been mentioned here is already evidence of the virtues of a profound love of God and undying charity toward all others, especially the sick and the poor. Added here are merely a few citations of witnesses to further illustrate this “driving engine” within Blessed. Zatti. “To me, the clearest sign of his love of God was found in his profound mercy. And he found this mercy in the joy of his Salesian vocation. This mercy won the hearts of the doctors, patients, nurses and benefactors. They felt the affection of Br. Zatti in all he did, in every struggle, and in every success.

3.5. Heroic Prudence

Every day Brother Zatti had to deal with people from every level of authority and walk of life. He encountered destitute patients, learned doctors, construction workers, government officials, his own religious community, and countless others. Because his work was always among the poorest, his life was dedicated to many endeavors to find materials and better conditions for the patience, better treatments for their illness, and to expand and build the poor little hospital of St. Joseph. His was not an insular existence but one that demanded interaction with people in every avenue of business and administration. And witnesses confirm that he managed his audience and his meetings with the consistency and delicacy appropriate to every situation. This required heroic patience and prudence as the path was never easy or clear, but he was untiring in his search for what was most helpful to the sick and the poor. In fact, some witnesses testified that his prudence was even supernatural, it was so strong and consistent. Testimonials have been offered describing his dealings with officials, government authorities, religious authorities, and more. And the evidence is one of complete prudence and wisdom. A case is remembered when Brother Zatti had to go out and among the poor families where there was much despair and anger. Whenever he went into these dangerous areas, he seemed to inspire confidence and

drive away fear. There was much human misery wherever he went, but his goodness inspired much confidence in him. His manner was prudent and wise, saying what needed to be said to fight off diseases of both body and soul. But this was done in such a fashion as to be acceptable to nearly any audience. And with this wisdom came also a respect for boundaries. He was never inappropriate when dealing with others, no matter the circumstance. And among women, he was always respectful, dignified, and aware of his company.

Perhaps his most difficult “patient” was death. On a daily basis he was confronted by death. He was solicitous to spare the other patients from discouragement even going to the length of personally carrying the deceased away from the hospital, doing so with delicacy and dignity. But in dealing with those who were dying, with their distraught families, and even with the healthcare workers, he had the gift of being frank and clear while maintaining a warm sense of comfort.¹²

3.5. Heroic Justice

Briefly stated, Brother Zatti’s preoccupation was for the fair treatment of the sick and the poor and did whatever he had to in his pursuit of justice for the disenfranchised. He had a characteristic frankness in dealing with authorities and it was marvellous to many that he never lost his patience or resolve in the face of even the most insurmountable difficulties and injustices.

3.6. Heroic Fortitude

Artemides Zatti, at age 20 began studying to become a priest and this goal was derailed by a nearly fatal illness. In this crisis, he embraced his vocation as a lay religious with determination and carried his determination into a most difficult life of unending work. He was never known to complain, though he also had a reputation for frankness both within his Salesian community as at the hospital. He had a reputation for a strong and hot temper, yet this he kept in check. When the money and materials were lacking for the hospital, which seems to have been a chronic problem even to the point of the demise of one hospital

¹² Summ., p. 300. n. 1185 and Summ., p. 289. n. 1149

building, Brother Zatti never gave way to criticism or vindictive anger. He had occasion to lose control when property was taken from him at one point, losing a farm at an agricultural school because of the carelessness of another educator. But he remained frank and composed.

3.7. The Evangelical Virtues of Temperance, Poverty, Chastity, and Humility

So much has already been said about the virtues of Blessed Artemides Zatti that would lead one to conclude that the “engine” driving his life would certainly include the virtues proposed by the evangelical counsels. It is noteworthy simply to draw a synthesis here that his personal temperance and sense of unattached living contributed to his all-consuming passion for caring for the sick entrusted to him. He did this with the prudence and balance already outlined. The *Propositio* quotes both Salesians and medical professionals on his dignity and sense of boundaries in dealing with persons of all manner of background. There was never any question about his propriety in dealing with women. There was never doubt about his motivations in dealing with those in authority, those with financial resources, or those involved in politics. And the cloak he wore over all of these virtues, the true mark of his sanctity was his deep humility. With this, we return to the beginning of the assessment of his life: one dedicated totally to the service of others, pouring himself out for the poor and the sick and consecrating his life to this task joyfully. No amount of self-gain was ever uncovered in this investigation. Brother Zatti remained humble and self-effacing even in the acceptance of his own cancer. His only concern was for his patients and the staff.

4. Blessed Zatti’s Reputation for Holiness and the Hunger for Personal Holiness

Dr. Echay once said, “If there was ever a saint, it was Brother Zatti!” The testimonies gathered for the *Positio* all have in common one detail: the townspeople, the patients, and the medical staff all referred to Brother Zatti as a saint before his death. They were impressed by his total dedication to the sick so much so that his reputation spread far and wide. They spoke of his “constant joy even in the face of daily problems in the

material and the moral domain.”¹³ A priest of the diocese of Viedma, who was one of the thousands who attended his funeral, mentioned that “on the occasion of the death of this Servant of God, the entire town poured out in participation in all its levels and the people recognized Zatti’s hunger for holiness.”¹⁴ The Salesian provincial reiterated this by claiming, “If the system of canonization subsisted in the voice of the people, Brother Zatti would already be a saint.”¹⁵

Immediately after his death people began to call him “the Saint Nurse of Patagonia” and the “kinsmen of the poor.” This desire to be a saint was evident in the way he lived but not for self gratification, but simply to do all for the glory of God and to pour himself out to Jesus present among the sick and the poor.

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The biography of Artemides Zatti by Fr. Entraigas written as soon as 1952 spread far and wide and even before the official process began, this holy man was known and loved throughout Argentina and Italy, one called upon for intercession by the Salesians worldwide. The devotion to Artemides grew so fast that his

¹³ Summ., p. 120. n. 482

¹⁴ Summ., p. 274. n. 1097

¹⁵ Summ., p. 294, n. 1168

¹⁶ Summ., p. 120. n. 482

¹⁷ Summ., p. 274. n. 1097

¹⁸ Summ., p. 294, n. 1168

remains were transferred to the front of the Church of St. John Bosco where there was more room for the faithful to gather.

Over the years, the hospital, a river, and many other locations have been named for this national hero in Argentina. Today, the world awaits the second miraculous sign to venerate this holy man as a universal saint of the Church.

5. Conclusion

As we researched the holy life of Artemides Zatti, we were blessed to find a paper written on the example of this holy man held up for religious and for Salesians particularly. The article is entitled, “The Salesian Brother’s Growth in Apostolic Life in the light of Blessed Artemides Zatti’s Life,” by Brother Abraham M. Antony, SDB. Brother Abraham addressed this paper to the Fifth Congress of the Salesian Brothers held in December 2003 and January 2004 in Hyderabad, India. His reflections, paraphrased here, serve as a pointed and poignant conclusion to this study. In both the provinces of India and the United States, pertaining to the experience of this paper’s authors, the vocation of the lay religious, for the Salesian Coadjutor, remains unstable and disproportionately low in numbers compared to clerical candidates. As this could well be expanded into a voluminous study, the ecclesial, social, and cultural causes for this will not be addressed here. Suffice it to say that the vocation of the Lay Religious is suffering from ambiguity, at best, and from obscurity at the sad end of the spectrum. Brother Anthony began his reflections of Blessed Zatti by conducting a hermeneutics for the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Departing from this reflective analysis, he applied the elements of this parable to the life of Blessed Zatti. As he did this, prominent elements unfolded beautifully. Blessed Zatti’s vocation became interrupted, as was the Good Samaritan’s journey. Rather than turning away from this detour, the obstacle for both figures became a call to service.

Brother Anthony continued with his reflection by drawing out of this comparison a more profound comparison to Mary, the Mother of God in her openness to ponder all that she perceived and to seek to promote the mission of her Son, Jesus. These elements are highlighted as the apex of Blessed Zatti’s response to God’s call following a cure he received in his youth from a deadly illness—a cure he attributed to the hand of our Lady.

This presentation for the Brother's Congress turned outward from a focus upon Artemides and the Gospel figures specifically toward the religious gathered. Blessed Zatti's life was presented as a rallying cry for the integrity of the Lay Religious vocation and the importance of living a life of prayer, availability, and service, choosing to find God in the detours of our lives and bringing forth his presence into the lives of the people to which that detour leads.

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