

THE CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, FATHER BERNARD J. QUINN

Dear Friends of Father Quinn:

Father Bernard J. Quinn (1888-1940) was the founding pastor of St. Peter Claver Church, the first parish established for Black Catholics in the Diocese of Brooklyn in 1922. Ten years later, in 1932, he opened the Church of St. Benedict the Moor in Jamaica, New York. Father Quinn was also the founder of Little Flower House of Providence Orphanage in Wading River, New York, the precursor of Little Flower Children's Services. This was an enormous undertaking at the time, in an era when racism and prejudice were facts of life. In his first pastoral letter to his parishioners' on June 1, 1922, Father Quinn pledged to "...willingly shed to the last drop, my life's blood for the least among you." Such was the life giving sacrifice of this shepherd to his people

On June 18, 1918, Father Quinn was commissioned as a First Lieutenant and assigned as an army chaplain of the 333rd Machine Gun Infantry Regiment in the Burgundy region, which saw one of the deadliest battles of the First World War. He fell a victim of the monstrous war by being gassed along with a squadron of soldiers with mustard poison. After recovering, he fearlessly resumed his priestly duties but suffered the debilitating effects from the gassing for the rest of his life. After celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the soldiers on Christmas Day, he returned to his billet and began reading "The Story of A Soul", the Autobiography of Soeur Therese. When learning that Alencon was only 50 kilometers from his station, he obtained permission for leave and visited the Martin Home where he arrived the evening of January 1st. On January 2, 1919 something remarkable happened which Father Quinn himself records: **"on the following morning, the Little Flower's birthday, I had the supreme pleasure of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the room where she was born. I speak of this as a very great privilege, because I was the first priest to say Mass there."**

Upon his return to Brooklyn, he began the first novena in her honor at St. Peter Claver Church in 1925, the year of her canonization. This novena was attended by over 2 million persons in the course of five years, where the number of devotees compared to the famous Shrines of Our Lady of Lourdes in France and St. Anne-de-Beaupre in Canada.

In 1983, as a newly ordained priest assigned to St. Peter Claver, I could not help being moved by the loving recollections of Father Quinn by the many parishioners, more than forty years after his death. Their admiration was extraordinary. I decided to write the biography of Father Quinn, an undertaking of over twenty years, which culminated in *"Quintessential Priest", the Life of Father Bernard J. Quinn*, (Editions DuSigne, Publisher 2005) and work for his canonization. It is most fitting in this Year for Priests (June 19, 2009 – June 19, 2010) as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney, the patron of parish priests, that we recognize, like his sainted predecessor, Father Quinn was the example of a holy and dedicated priest, who emulated Jesus Christ the High Priest in his service and sacrifice.

I invite you to join me in work and in prayer to further this honorable cause.

May God bless you.

Rev. Msgr. Paul W. Jervis
Postulator of the Cause

The Cause Timeline and Information:

January 13, 2008 The Cause of Beatification and Canonization was opened by
The Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D., Bishop of Brooklyn

October 17, 2008 Father Bernard J. Quinn was declared "Servant of God" by the
Congregation of the Causes of Saints, Vatican City.

February 21, 2009, The Father Bernard J. Quinn Guild began.

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.

Bishop of Brooklyn

Petitioner of the Diocese of Brooklyn

Of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of

The Servant of God, Monsignor Bernard John Quinn

Postulator of the Cause

Rev. Msgr. Paul W. Jervis, B.A., M.Div.

Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish, Brooklyn, New York

Father Bernard J. Quinn Guild Executive Committee

Delores Casey, Chairman

Frank Caesar, Vice Chairman

Mary Jane Theresa Ryan, Secretary

Veronica Quinn, Treasurer