



# misericordiæ

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Priestly Society of Mercy  
Quarter II, 2020

## SAINT LEOPOLD MANDIĆ

### The Saint of the Confessional: A Source of Mercy

Saint Leopold Mandić was born Bogdan Ivan Mandić in the coastal town of Herceg Novi (Italian: Castelnuovo), on the Bay of Kotor, then in Habsburg Monarchy but today part of Montenegro. He was the twelfth child of Dragica Zarević and Petar Antun Mandić, owner of an Adriatic fishing fleet and natives of Zakučac.

Mandić grew up in the orbit of a community of Capuchin friars based in the Province of Venice who had served in his town for two centuries, dating from when the area was ruled by the Republic of Venice. Physically malformed and delicate, he grew to a height of only 1.35 m (4'5"), with a clumsy walk and afflicted by stuttering.

He felt called to the religious life and in November 1882, when he was 16, he went to Udine to enter the minor seminary of the Capuchin Venetian Province. His goal was to become a missionary to Eastern Europe. Two years later he was admitted to the friars' novitiate in Bassano del Grappa, where he was clothed in the Capuchin habit and given the religious name of Leopold of Castelnuovo. On 3 May 1885, he made his first profession of religious vows, after which he was sent to pursue his studies for Holy Orders in Capuchin friaries in Padua and Venice. He made his profession of perpetual vows in 1888.

On 20 September 1890, Mandić was ordained to the priesthood at the Basilica of Santa Maria della Salute in

Venice at the age of 24 by Cardinal Domenico Agostini, Patriarch of Venice.



After his ordination, Mandić was sent to posts in various Capuchin friaries in the Venice region and in his native Croatia, ultimately spending most of his time at the Friary of Santa Croce in Padua. Among his various tasks were the teaching of the seminarians who followed him, as well as the household duties of the house, such as porter. Common to all his assignments was that of the duty of a confessor at the church which the friars served. In this role he was extremely popular, and often spent 12-15 hours per day in the confessional.

Although Mandić initially wanted to be a missionary in Eastern Europe, he spent almost all his adult life in Italy, living in Padua from 1906 until his death. This included one year in an Italian prison during World War I when he would not renounce his Croatian nationality. In addition to his renown as "Apostle of

Confession," he was the forerunner of modern ecumenism. He dreamed unceasingly about reuniting the Catholic and Orthodox churches and going to the Orient. He later became known as the "Apostle of Unity" and his prayer for ecumenism was one of the first of its kind.

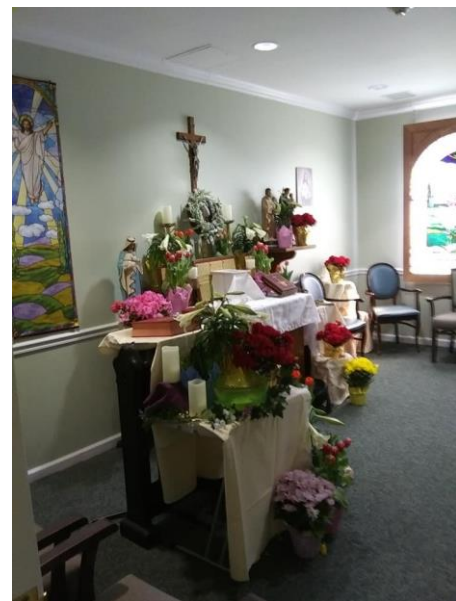
Mandić suffered from esophagus cancer, which would ultimately lead to his death at age 76. On 30 July 1942, while preparing for Mass, he collapsed on the floor. He was then brought to his cell, where he was given the last rites. Friars who had gathered at his bed began singing the *Salve Regina* and saw that Leopold died as they sang "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary".

As a result of the bombing during World War II, the church and part of the friary in Padua where Mandić lived were demolished, but his cell and confessional were left unharmed. He had predicted this before his death, saying, "The church and the friary will be hit by the bombs, but not this little cell. Here God exercised so much mercy for people, it must remain as a monument to God's goodness." The Sanctuary of Leopold Mandić was built to contain the confessional. Pope Paul VI beatified Leopold on 2 May 1976. He was canonized by Pope Saint John Paul II during the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on 16 October 1983. Leopold is hailed as the "Apostle of Unity" and his feast day is kept May 12.



Saint Gregory the Great Mission

At the personal request of Pope Francis, Mandić's remains were brought to Rome for veneration during the 2015–2016 Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. He and his fellow Capuchin friar, Pio of Pietrelcina, were designated as saint-confessors to inspire people to become reconciled to the Church and to God, by the confession of their sins. Their bodies were available for veneration, first at the Basilica of Saint Lawrence outside the Walls, administered by the Capuchin friars, then at St. Peter's Basilica.



Saint Helen of the Cross

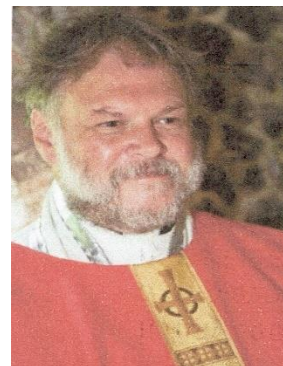
O God, true love and supreme unity, you adorned Saint Leopold your priest with the virtue of great compassion for sinners and filled him with zeal for Christian unity. Through his prayers grant that we, renewed in mind and heart, may be able to show your love to all, and confidently seek the unity of all believers. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## SOCIETY PHOTOS

### Photos from Around the Society

This year's Lent and Holy Week were unlike any other in recent memory. Instead of public services many watched online liturgies. Luckily, though, the clergy of the Society continued to offer Holy Mass and celebrate the sacraments either individually or with small communities where possible. Here are a few scenes from that time.

## IN MEMORIAM



### Father Paul Saunt Dies

Father Paul Saunt, born April 2, 1952 in Ibstock, Leicester died on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He was a priest of the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain. Please pray for the repose of his soul and for his wife, Tricia.