



*Daughters of Charity of Canossa*  
**CRISTO REY PROVINCE**

February 8, 2009  
The Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita  
The “Universal” Sister

Dear Friends,

**Have you ever met a slave?**

Chances are your first reaction would be one of disbelief – of course, I have not met a slave, and yet in the Saint we celebrate today, you do just that, you meet a slave up close and personal. Saint Josephine Bakhita, taken against her will, did not even know her name much less the name of Jesus. Although she had not yet met Jesus, she knew He was there, someone loved her. What a beautiful hope in the face of unspeakable terror, a hope which helped her survive!

Do we turn to Jesus in the face of adversity and rely on His love or do we suffer from the unnecessary ailment of thinking we can go it alone? One cannot help but see the Hand of God in the life of His beloved Josephine. St. Paul calls it seeing through the glass darkly before we know Christ, but seeing and hoping saved our sainted slave from fate far worse than could be metered out at the hands of her captors, the fate of being unloved, having suffered every humiliation and degradation. When years later, after joining the Daughters of Charity, whose work is “to make Jesus known,” having met her Lord and Savior and fallen completely in love with the One who loves her, the One she always felt even when His name was hidden from her, a reporter asked her what she would do if she came face-to-face with her captors. St. Josephine, stunned the reporter with her response, “I would fall to my knees and kiss the hem of their garment, for by their inhumanity I began my journey to Jesus.”

St. Josephine Bakhita demonstrates for us the lengths to which we should go to know Jesus, to suffer all willingly, confident the outcome greatly outweighs the pain. She testifies the pain is real and in our nature we recoil from it, but if we will join it to the suffering of Christ, it is the most important act of our life. Today her spiritual Sisters reach out to the suffering as they did to Saint Josephine, to those enslaved by life choices, sometimes made by ourselves, sometimes thrust upon us. Our Sisters work with the poor, those seeking Jesus through religious education, the newly-arrived, those in the eyes of the world marred and disabled and those who desire to deepen the knowledge of Our Lord. They serve you in prayer every day, offering their lives of service so that one more might be freed from ‘slavery,’ be it in the Sudan or right in your own community. From the real horror of forced labor, torn from your home, to the slavery of ignorance, our Sisters strive “to make Jesus known,” and once known, loved.

This is the great work we are asking you to help us with through your gift. We are counting on you and even in these difficult times are confident of your support. Thank you. I have the privilege of knowing a slave and following in her footsteps and the joy of knowing her freedom, leading me to close the way I began with the question: Have you ever met a slave? Help us to offer freedom to those still waiting, still hoping. Your small act of kindness will bear great fruit. I give thanks for your caring hearts and generous spirits, as I implore my Sister, Saint Josephine, to pray for you.

Sincerely in St. Magdalene (Foundress of the Daughters of Charity of Canossa),

*Sr Anne Bosio*

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Provincial Superior

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