

*Blessed  
Are the Poor  
in Spirit*

**ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE**





My GRACE  
is Sufficient  
for YOU, FOR  
POWER is  
made Perfect  
in  
weakness.

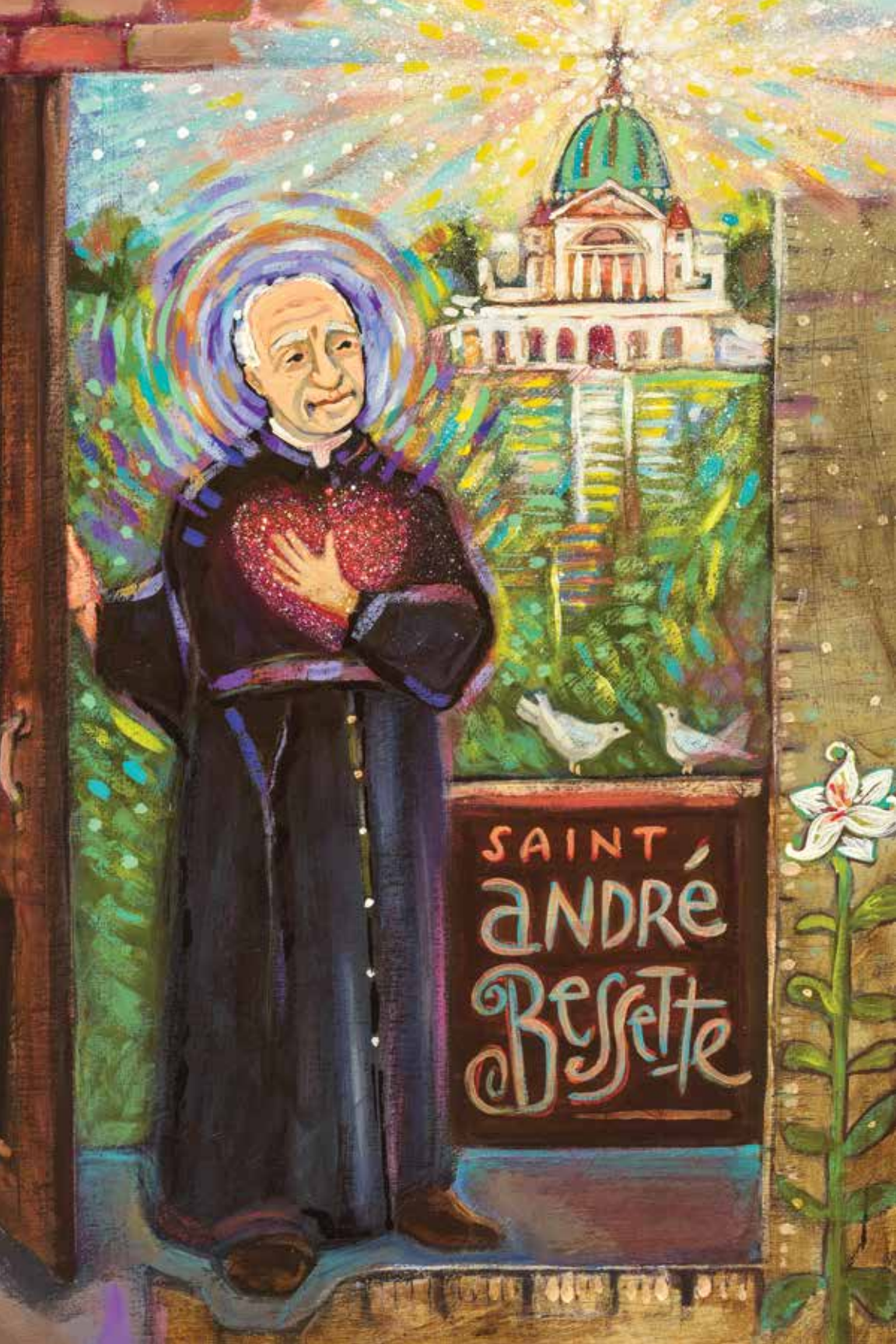
2 COR 12:9



## *A Scripture Reading*

As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him."

*— John 9:1-3*



SAINT  
ANDRÉ  
Bessette

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

**St. André Bessette of Montreal  
(Alfred Bessette)**

Born August 9, 1845, in Québec, Canada.  
Died January 6, 1937, age ninety-one.

Beatified May 23, 1982.  
Canonized October 17, 2010.

Feast Day: January 6 (January 7 in Canada)

Patron saint of home caregivers.

*Warm Up:* How does this image speak to you?



## *One Small Step*

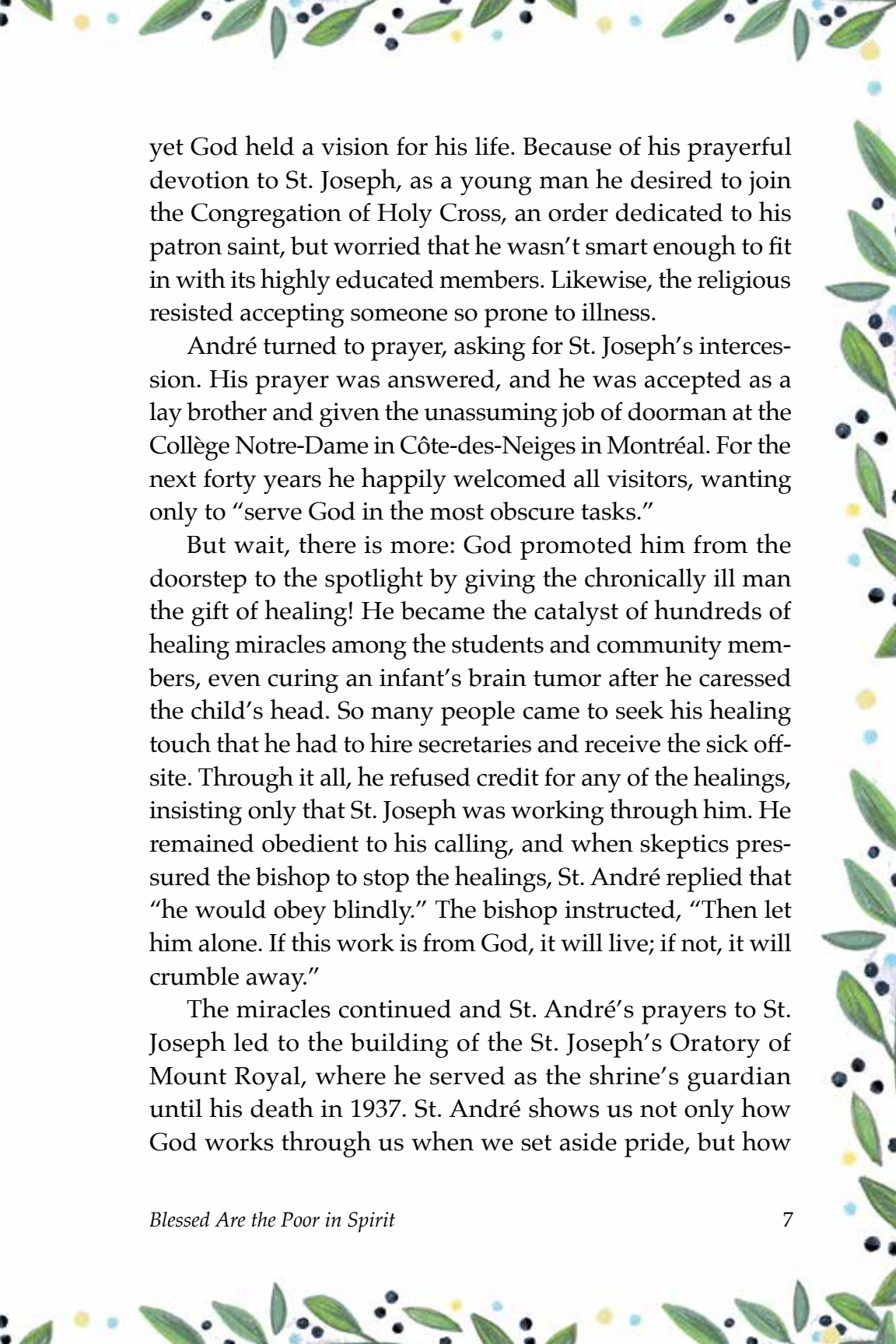
### **ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE**

Welcoming humility can be scary. If you excel at a particular skill, you might take pride in being defined primarily by your ability. But God is the source of every gift. Our aptitudes, big and small, are merely tools by which he might lead us into deeper being.

When we lose sight of this, pride can wreak havoc in our lives. Believing we are in control, we feel anxious as we compare ourselves to others. Attempting to maintain composure, we are driven to find fault in others and defend our egos. Fearful hearts harden with walls of arrogance, keeping peace and love at arm's length. But that's no way to reach the promise of eternal happiness. No, for this journey into living the Beatitudes, we must embrace our poverty of spirit.

Those who are "poor in spirit" are open to receiving God's grace precisely because they know how much they need it. St. André Bessette, the "Miracle Man of Montreal," reminds us that God loves even the most fragile among us.

Brother André wasn't considered valuable by worldly standards—his greatest spiritual assets were hidden within his "inability." Born poor and sickly, he lost both his parents while he was young. He could not read until age twenty-five,



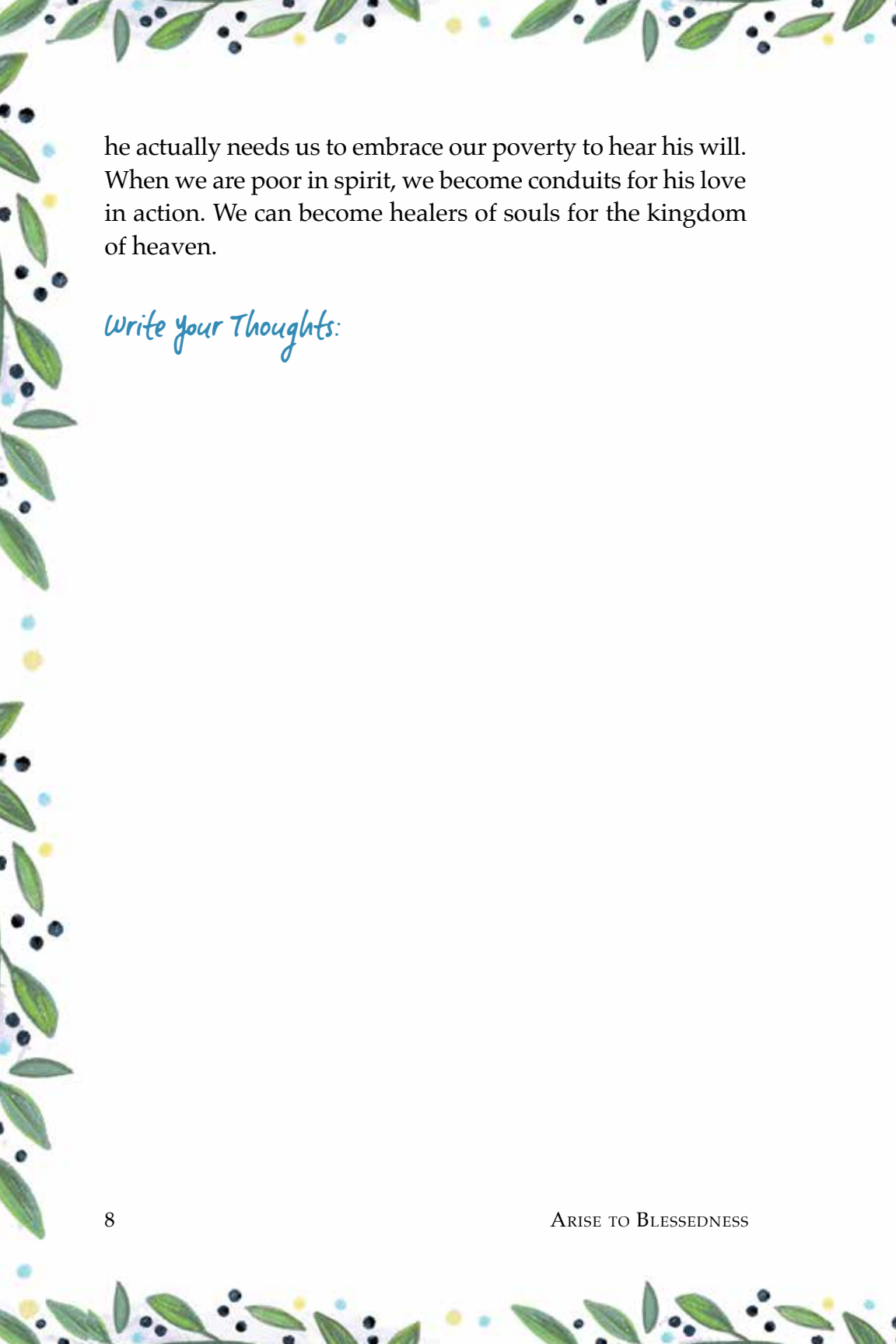
yet God held a vision for his life. Because of his prayerful devotion to St. Joseph, as a young man he desired to join the Congregation of Holy Cross, an order dedicated to his patron saint, but worried that he wasn't smart enough to fit in with its highly educated members. Likewise, the religious resisted accepting someone so prone to illness.

André turned to prayer, asking for St. Joseph's intercession. His prayer was answered, and he was accepted as a lay brother and given the unassuming job of doorman at the Collège Notre-Dame in Côte-des-Neiges in Montréal. For the next forty years he happily welcomed all visitors, wanting only to "serve God in the most obscure tasks."

But wait, there is more: God promoted him from the doorstep to the spotlight by giving the chronically ill man the gift of healing! He became the catalyst of hundreds of healing miracles among the students and community members, even curing an infant's brain tumor after he caressed the child's head. So many people came to seek his healing touch that he had to hire secretaries and receive the sick off-site. Through it all, he refused credit for any of the healings, insisting only that St. Joseph was working through him. He remained obedient to his calling, and when skeptics pressured the bishop to stop the healings, St. André replied that "he would obey blindly." The bishop instructed, "Then let him alone. If this work is from God, it will live; if not, it will crumble away."

The miracles continued and St. André's prayers to St. Joseph led to the building of the St. Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal, where he served as the shrine's guardian until his death in 1937. St. André shows us not only how God works through us when we set aside pride, but how





he actually needs us to embrace our poverty to hear his will. When we are poor in spirit, we become conduits for his love in action. We can become healers of souls for the kingdom of heaven.

*Write your Thoughts:*



## *Prepare to Climb*

### **A VISIO MOMENT**

Turn again to the beginning of this chapter, to the image of the mountain. At the bottom, you will find an image of a man emerging from the darkness with a wolf barking at his heels. He is only looking forward, mindful of his next step. He cannot see that heaven is at the end of his journey, at the top of the mountain, which is far from him. He is not concerned with looking up, only with looking forward to where he is being led by the Spirit, doing his best not to stumble on the rocks and roots.

Where do you see yourself in this picture? Where have you found stumbling blocks or moments of encouragement in your own journey?



## JOURNAL CHALLENGE

St. André Bessette said, “Those who are cured quickly often are people who have no faith or little faith. On the other hand, those who have solid faith are not cured so quickly, for the good God prefers to allow them to suffer so that they will be sanctified even more.”

What do you think of this statement? Does it affect the way you see those who struggle? How do you view this statement in light of your own suffering? Do you view hardships as punishment or a gift?

True humility is present even when no one is looking. When was the last time you felt God working in you and through your talents to show his love to the world? Did others recognize your efforts, and how did that make you feel? Write a prayer, inviting God into your reflection. Ask him to show you his plan.



## TODAY'S SMALL STEP

St. André maintained a lifelong devotion to St. Joseph, asking for his intercession in his most humble moments and crediting the saint with his achievements. Find a saint, a scripture passage, or an affirmation that you can turn to for guidance this week as you encounter opportunities to be humble. Does having this reference change or add awareness to your actions? Write about your experiences.