

Devotion, Artistry, and the Cult of St. Joseph

A Symposium

March 20, 2020

Xavier University of Louisiana

Administration Building Auditorium

1 Drexel Drive

New Orleans

Interest in and devotion to St. Joseph the Carpenter—the Virgin Mary's husband and Jesus's foster-father—has been present among Christians since the earliest centuries of the Common Era. Three academic institutions—Xavier University of Louisiana, Cabrini University, and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College (City University of New York)—have collaborated to organize the symposium “Devotion, Artistry, and the Cult of St. Joseph.” This unique event examines the patron saint of workers, sickness, and even a happy death from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Special emphasis will be given to how devotees of St. Joseph—in particular Italian Americans and African Americans—have artistically expressed their intimate connection to this wonder worker. Participants include scholars and New Orleans community members who will discuss the rich devotion and creativity for this holy figure.

Free and open to the public.

Cosponsored by the Institute for Black Catholic Studies and the Division of the Fine Arts and Humanities at Xavier University.

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Program subject to change.

Friday, March 20th

9:00-9:30

Welcoming remarks

Joseph Sciorra (Queens College)

Leonard Norman Primiano (Cabrini University)

Italian American Traditions

9:30-10

“Baking is a Form of Worship”: Saint Joseph’s Day Bread and the Sacred Alchemy of the Oven

Sara Jane Bell (Vance-Granville Community College)

10-10:30

Sicilian St. Joseph’s Tables and Political Advocacy in Southern California
Luisa Del Giudice (Independent Scholar)

10:30-11

Migration, Caritas and Pan Italian American St. Joseph Celebrations in
Rural Western New York

Karen Park Canning (GLOW Traditions) and Christine Zinni (College of Brockport SUNY)

11-11:30 The Transnational *Tavola*: Performance and Consumerism of Recent Sicilian Immigrants' St. Joseph Altars in New York City
Joseph Sciorra (Queens College)

11:30-12:15 Sandra Scalise Juneau with Kay Turner (New York University)

12:15-1:30 LUNCH

Catholic Practices and Beyond

1:30-2 A Stepfathers Legacy and Legend: St. Joseph, the Stepfather Role Model for the Modern World?
Michele Meservie Montecalvo (St. Francis College)

2-2:30 *Paternas Vices* and Saint Joseph in Eucharistic Prayers after Vatican II
Trevor B. Williams (Villanova University)

2:30-3 "How To Bury the St. Joseph Statue": Vernacular Devotions, Commercial Expediency, and the Tradition of the Patron Saint of Real Estate Post-Vatican II
Leonard Norman Primiano (Cabrini University)

New Orleans

3:30-4 From Masked Balls to Altars: St. Joseph's Day Celebrations in New Orleans
Laura Guccione (Independent Scholar)

4-4:30 A Different Man of (Different) Labor: St. Joseph and Vernacular Hagiology in New Orleans
Stephen C. Wehmeyer (Champlain College)

4:30-6 Honoring St. Joseph in New Orleans Afro Catholic, Spiritual Church and Baptist Ritual and Festival Performance
Cherise Harrison-Nelson, Maroon Queen of Guardians of the Flame Mardi Gras Indians; Spiritual Church Bishop Efzelda Booker; Big Chief Tyrone Casby, Mohawk Hunters Mardi Gras Indians
Moderator: Nick Spitzer (Tulane University and *American Routes*)