

A Film By

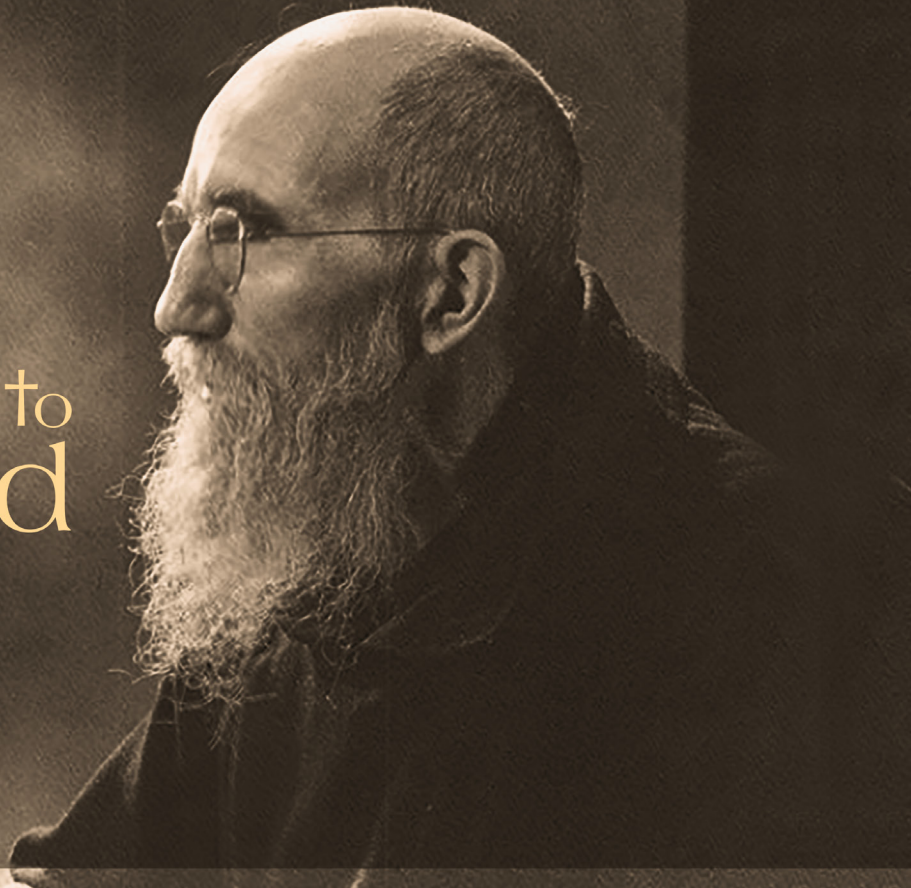


In Association With





# Blessed Casey's Journey to Sainthood



As we celebrate the journey of Detroit's own Bl. Solanus Casey to Sainthood, we can each take our own personal journey of discovery:

How does a humble boy from Irish Immigrant parents rise to the rare and distinguished honor of beatification?

Who was Bernard Casey growing up? What decisions did he make in his life that set him on a path to become one of the few humans to walk the earth as a saint and to ending up as a beacon of hope and prayers for those who believe?

What role did God play in each step of his remarkable pathway to sainthood?

What is the historical significance of the Capuchin Friars? Where did they originate, and among many order, what was it about this particular one that impelled Bl. Solanus Casey to become a Capuchin-Franciscan Friar?

What would life have been like for a Capuchin Friar in Detroit in the 20s, 30s and 40s? What impact did they have on the community? When specifically did the journey to sainthood begin for Bl. Solanus Casey, or was it preordained from his birth? How is sainthood decided? What constitutes a miracle in Catholic dogma? How has the power of prayer and faith helped others?

Over the course of the next year, Emmy awarded producer director Keith Famie, along with the crew at Visionalist Entertainment Productions, will dedicate their time and technical expertise to tell the story of "Blessed Casey's Journey to Sainthood".

We will delve deep into who the man in the habit was and what this will mean to the Motor City and, now, as he is revered among the most holy of icons in the Catholic Church, to the world.







# Capuchin Franciscan

## *Province of St. Joseph*

March 21, 2018

Dear Keith,

Thank you for your time yesterday and for meeting with the Capuchin Friars, Angela, and myself. We are enthused over your kind offer of creating a 60-90 minute documentary on the life and spirituality of our dear, Blessed Solanus Casey.

We believe this project is important on many levels. We are particularly excited with your message of hope and faith; that Bl. Solanus was an ordinary man whose extraordinary faith touched (and continues to touch) countless lives. As Blessed Solanus has taught us, we, too, can tap extraordinary faith. Perhaps your documentary will show audiences how to do just that!

We also appreciate your goals to educate and inspire. We know that those who are already in relationship with Blessed Solanus have been inspired in many ways. We are hopeful your documentary will introduce our Blessed Solanus to a wider audience (both nationally and worldwide) and prove to be a springboard of inspiration.

As we understand it, there would be no cost to the Capuchins and we would have final approval on the project. We further understand that you would be contacting PBS as a distribution point for the documentary.

One aspect of the Capuchins' mission includes prayerfully building sister-brotherhood in the world. We are hopeful that your documentary will help us with our mission as well as sharing the holiness of our Blessed Solanus.

We remain prayerful that you are able to secure benefactors to assist you in making your vision a reality.

We are most grateful for you!

Kindly,

Colleen K. Crane, Public Relations Director  
Capuchin Province of St. Joseph





February 20, 2018

Keith Famie  
Visionalist Entertainment  
28345 Beck Road  
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

It was great meeting you to discuss "The Father Solanus Casey Story." Father Solanus was certainly an inspiration to those he served as well as the thousands he inspired to follow him into the service of others.

Local history programs are always of great interest to our viewers, especially documentary and other content that are relevant to the broader public television audience, nationwide. The recent beatification ceremony at Ford Field certainly displays the power of his story.

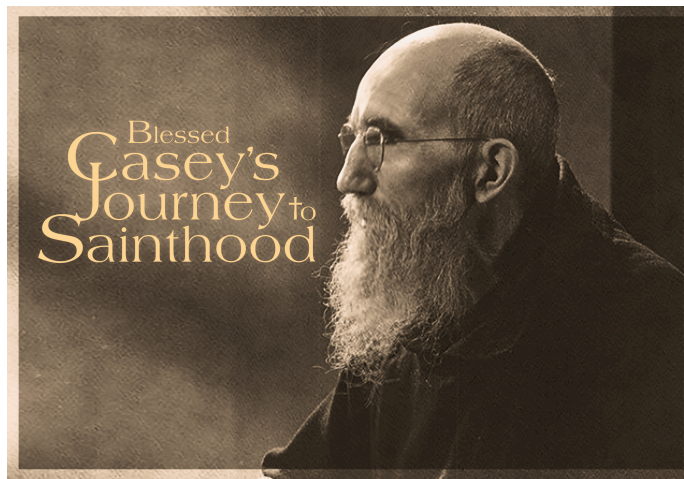
Let's come together to identify a partnership that would allow us to continue our work together on important topics like this one. I look forward to speaking with you again soon. In the meantime, let's align on a plan to bring this film to public television.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred'.

Fred Nahhat  
Senior VP, Production  
Detroit Public TV





## **PRODUCTION RESEARCH**

*“Bl. Solanus Casey spent his life as a servant of God. He loved without limits, discrimination, or prejudice, since all were Children of God. Race, color, another creed, or conviction – none of these mattered. He respected the conscience of all. He was always available to help strangers. The poor and sick had a preferred place in the life of the Servant of God. He regarded solidarity with even the least of his brothers and sisters as a distinctive mark of his order. The meaning of his life consisted in the glory of God and the service of others.”*

~ Fr. Thomas Rosica, CSB

- Born November 25, 1870
- Childhood spent on Wisconsin farm along the Mississippi River
- Child 6 of 10 boys and 6 girls
- Learned obedience, diligence and piety from his God-fearing parents at a very early age
- Farm life
  - Practical
  - Resourceful
- At 17 years old, Bernard Casey (as he was known at the time) left home after crop failures to find work in Stillwater, Minnesota to help with the family income
  - Tried and failed with 3 different jobs
    - Log-booms worker
    - Part-time prison guard
    - One of the 1<sup>st</sup> streetcar operators
- In 1892 Bernard was able to pursue his long-cherished dream of becoming a priest
  - Studied at St. Francis Seminary High School in Milwaukee
  - Called by God to Capuchin order in 1897
    - Given new name of Solanus
    - Became model of religious observance, ever-faithful to the holy vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience
    - Because of difficulty with German language, Capuchin professors considered him intellectually deficient. Therefore, in July 1904, he was ordained a Simplex priest, where he would not be allowed to hear confessions or to preach publicly.
- In 1904, priestly ministry began in New York
  - 14 years served at Sacred Heart Parish in Yonkers, NY
  - Appointed to Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in New York City in 1918
  - Appointed to Our Lady of Angels Parish in Harlem, NY in 1921
- Appointed to the Capuchin Friary of St. Bonaventure in Detroit in 1924
  - Always available to the poor, the sick and the troubled souls, brought comfort to people from every age and walk of life
- During the great Depression in 1929, his concern for the poor helped him to co-found along with the Detroit Capuchins, their Soup Kitchen
- In 1945, he was transferred to St. Michael's Parish in Brooklyn, NY.
- In 1946, he was semi-retired at St. Felix Friary in Huntington, IN



- In 1956, he returned to Detroit for medical treatments.
- Bl. Solanus died on July 31, 1957 at the age of 86
  - Some of his last words: “I’m offering my sufferings that all might be one. If only I could see the conversion of the whole world. I give my soul to Jesus Christ.”
  - Bl. Solanus died of complications of old age
    - Buried at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit
      - Exhumed in 1987 to place his body inside the St. Bonaventure Chapel
        - Body was clothed in a new habit, placed in a metal casket and re-interred in the north transept of St. Bonaventure Church

### **Priesthood**

- Lifelong dream for Bernard Casey
- 1892, 21 years old
  - Bernard Casey entered St. Francis Seminary High School in Milwaukee

### **Journey to Sainthood**

- First step is canonization, which cannot begin until 5 years after the candidate’s death
  - Gives the church time to prove candidate enjoys a true and widespread reputation of holiness and prayer
- Next, Rome investigates the candidate’s life of faith, spirituality and relationship to God
  - If they’ve led a heroic and virtuous life, they receive the title of Venerable
  - Solanus received the title of Venerable (and became Venerable Solanus Casey) in 1995
  - Exceptional favors that can be viewed as miracles are considered to further the process
  - A Positio (puh-ZEET-see-oh) is a document or collection of documents used in the process of declaring someone Venerable
    - It is a collection of the evidence obtained by a Diocesan Inquiry into the candidate’s heroic virtues
    - Prepared for presentation to the Congregation of the Causes of Saints
- Third, there is more investigation of the “miraculous” things the candidate has done
  - Healing by Venerable (at the time) Solanus was investigated and Venerable Solanus became Blessed Solanus
    - Title of Blessed → candidate is acknowledged as one who is in heaven, in union with God
    - (Now) Blessed Solanus received this title in front of 60,000 people at his Beatification at Ford Field on November 17, 2017
- Fourth step is attaining title of Saint
  - Although Bl. Solanus has not yet been declared a Saint, the journey is as follows:
    - After being beatified, another miracle is required for the person to be canonized and officially declared a Saint
      - Miracle must have occurred as a result of the person’s intercession
      - The Prefect of Congregation then sends the cause for canonization to the pope, who makes the final decision
        - The pope declares the candidate as Saint in an official way at a special Mass in honor of the new saint

Capuchin-Franciscan Friar



- Vow of poverty
  - “We attend simply and directly to the spiritual and other basic human needs”
  - Poverty is a fundamental part of the Franciscan identity and to live without anything of one’s own was a primary, if not the only, way that Francis chose to follow the poor and humble Christ. Poverty allowed Francis to bring himself into a true and open relationship with everyone he encountered and it should allow us to do the same as followers of Francis and disciples of Christ. This choice of voluntary poverty can be a message of hope to the poor that God is with them in their sufferings and truly cares for them, and makes us available to do what we can to relieve that suffering.
  - In everyday life, the vow of poverty means that a friar will live as simply as possible, not being overly attached to anything and being dependent upon God and upon one’s community for one’s needs. Individual friars do not have any bank accounts or own any property. Any income they earn from their ministries is given to their community so that all the members of the community can take care of one another.
  - Since all of the needs of the friar are taken care of by the community, before a man enters the order, he commits to not using any assets he already has. The new friar does not get rid of his assets right away however- he still retains ownership of them and only when he is about to take solemn vows does he dispose of them.
- History
  - Inspired by the gospel of Jesus and St. Francis of Assisi
  - St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi created a community of equality
  - The Capuchin Friars in Mid-America honor St. Conrad of Parzham as their heavenly patron
  - Roman Catholic order of brothers shaped by heritage
  - Founded in 1528 in Italy
    - Emphasize prayer and contemplation, preaching and physical care of the needy
    - 115 other Capuchin Friars are also saints
      - St. Conrad is just one of 115 Capuchin friars and nuns, from the 16th to the 20th century, who have been honored by the Church as Saints and Blesseds.