

Marian Helper

Winter 2024-25

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

Marian.org

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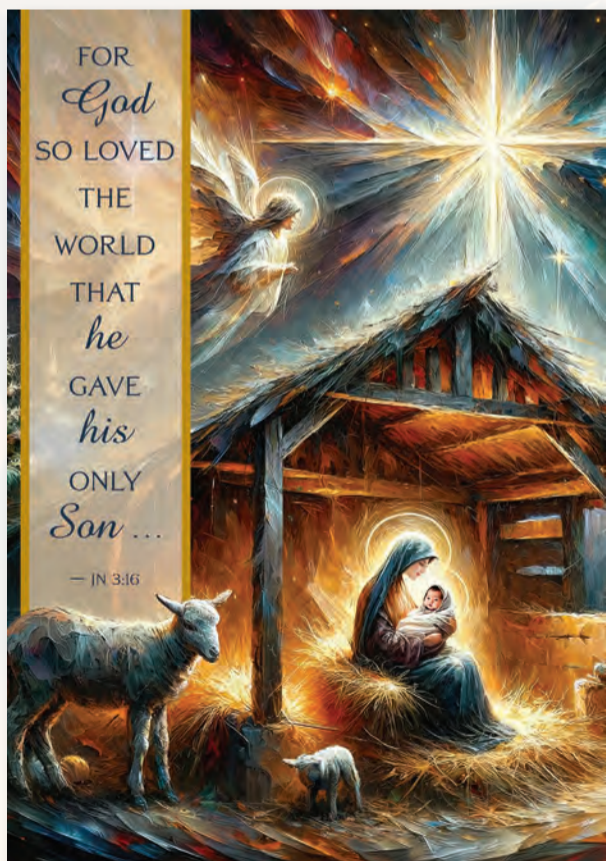


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— Isaiah 9:5

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If the Pope himself invited you to a celebration, would you attend? Of course! And Pope Francis' announcement that 2025 is a Jubilee Year of Hope is a personal invitation to participate in a year-long celebration of reconciliation and renewal of our faith. It all begins on Christmas Eve with the opening of a Holy Door in Rome.

10 Mary at the movies

The makers of "Faustina: Love and Mercy" present a new film on the Immaculate Conception.

11 Pray, forgive, heal

Father Matthew Tomeny, MIC, National Shrine rector, offers a post-election reflection.

15 A Jubilee of priesthood

Fifty years in the service of God and students: Congratulations, Fr. Timothy Roth, MIC!

16 Our heavenly helpers

The Marian Fathers have a group of patron saints: Chris Sparks reveals who made the list.

18 The historical Jesus

Dr. Robert Stackpole previews a new web series with the evidence concerning the Nativity.

20 Crèches galore!

Chris Sparks visits a Marian Shrine where it's Christmas all year round and mangers abound.

22 To Heaven, via marriage

Look to Sts. Zélie and Louis Martin, parents of St. Thérèse, as role models, says Caitrin Bennett.

24 The tragic consequences of IVF

It's time to remind Catholics of the dangers of playing God in the lab, warns Maria Gallagher.

26 Much ado about Medjugorje

The news from the Vatican brings much joy and hope to pilgrims, says Peggy Stanton.

29 The light of Luke

The next volume of the popular *Gospels for Little Ones* series arrives, reports Sara Beth Meyer.

DEPARTMENTS

3 Father Joseph Writes 4 Marian Helpers in Action 6 Father Joseph's Picks 7 Notes from Rome

8 On Eden Hill 31 Outstanding Helpers 33 Graces Received 36 From the Vaults

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MISSION STATEMENT

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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

The Marian Fathers are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 19 countries around the world.

We support the Holy Father and embrace the official teachings of the Catholic Church in our special calling to:

- Spread devotion to Mary as the Immaculate Conception.
- Offer our lives for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, especially the victims of war and disease.
- Operate publishing apostolates and assist where the need is greatest in parishes, shrines, and missions.
- Promote the Divine Mercy message and devotion.
- Organize people of good will to work with and through us to bring Christ everywhere.

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1925, the Association of Marian Helpers is a spiritual benefit society that prayerfully and financially supports the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Your enrollment means that, by a decree of the Holy See, you share in these graces:

- A daily Mass offered for all Marian Helpers.
- A share in the prayers, good works, and merits of the Marian priests and brothers around the world.
- A special Mass offered on feast days of our Savior and His Blessed Mother.
- A monthly Mass on each First Friday and each First Saturday.
- A Mass offered for deceased members on All Souls' Day.
- The perpetual Novena to the Divine Mercy.



Sign-up is easy: Visit MICPrayers.org



You Tube



Visit marian.org/social

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT GOD'S MISSION

- **Deepen your commitment of prayer** and support by joining one of our three spiritually nourishing prayer clubs: Marian.org/clubs
- **Support a particular ministry:** Marian.org/give
- **Create a memorial or tribute:** MemorialsOnEdenHill.org
- **Arrange a special gift** of stock, a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, a grant from your donor-advised fund, a gift through your will or trust, or annuity: Giving.Marian.org

Call 1-800-671-2020 to make a gift by phone or for assistance.

Free online help for your will, visit Marian.org/will.

A sample form of bequest to the Marians is: *I give and bequeath to the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. (Tax ID #20-8599030), Stockbridge, MA 01262, ___% of my adjusted gross estate (or \$_____, or a specific asset) to be used for its religious and educational purposes.*

‘PILGRIMS OF HOPE’

After a year dedicated to the urgent and the temporary, it's time to turn our attention to the perennial, the traditional, and the eternal. What do I mean? We've been immersed in a year like few others: an exhausting Presidential election, natural disasters, war, disease, and so many other urgent, important, but ultimately passing things.

But it's also been a year with a spotlight on our Lord in the Eucharist, as thousands traversed the country with Him from coast to coast and border to border, culminating in an astonishing National Eucharistic Congress and the sending forth of a new generation of Eucharistic disciples.

Talk about the unexpected!

Now, it's time to offer thanksgiving to God for His many gifts and blessings; to entrust to Him all these urgent, important, but ultimately passing troubles, tragedies, and emergencies; to gather with our families, set aside our differences, and remember that love of God and neighbor demands of us relationships that are stronger than the controversies of our times.

It's time to regain our perspective on what's really important. We celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, or Christ the King, on Nov. 24 this year, right before the blessed holiday of Thanksgiving. What a great reminder that we put our trust in Jesus, not in worldly wealth, strength, or wisdom! What a great reorientation after the fervor and confusion of a Presidential election year (see Ps 146:3)!

Take the time to really sit with the meaning of these feasts. If you can, go to Mass with your loved ones on Thanksgiving Day, and unite your personal thanksgiving to God with the transcendent thanksgiving of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

That sets us on the right course to prayerfully make Advent a truly penitential season — one filled with parties and family get togethers, sure, but also a time to grab whatever silent moments we can to

read a bit of Scripture and talk to God about His love for us, our love for Him, and the needs of our neighbors, many of whom have been suffering as a result of the emergencies of this year, especially in Florida, North Carolina, and the Southeast.

Let us be the face of the Father's mercy to our neighbors, something only really possible if we're plugged into the grace of God through regular reception of the Sacraments, regular prayer and spiritual reading, and regular works of mercy.

Then Christmas can be at its best for us and for all our neighbors, all our family, friends, and communities. And then we can enter the Jubilee Year as true “Pilgrims of Hope,” witnesses to hope, in imitation of St. John Paul II, the Great Mercy Pope.

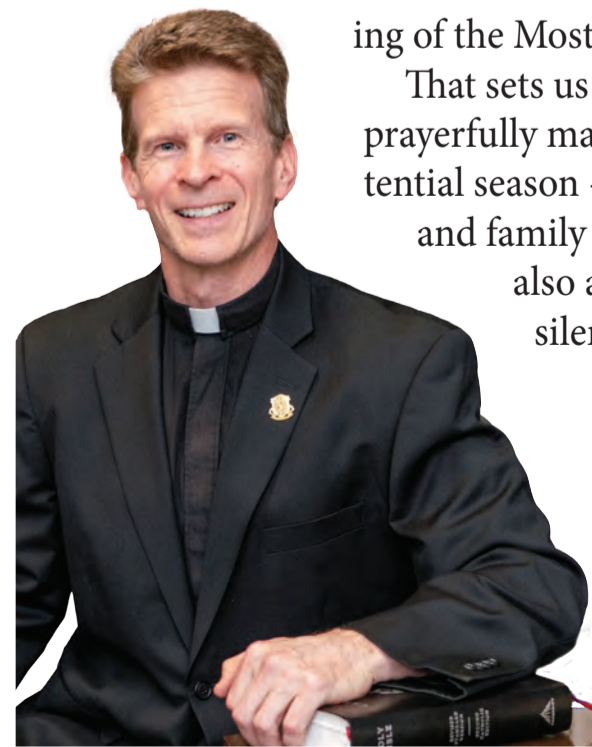
Last time, it was the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2015-16. This time, it's 25 years after the Great Jubilee Year 2000, when the Church marked 2,000 years since the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Faustina was canonized, and Divine Mercy Sunday was made a universal feast.

So this Advent isn't just the start of a new liturgical year. It's the preparation for a Jubilee Year, a time for the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation between enemies, and restored relationships between people who had been at odds. Let's take the lead as servants and friends of Jesus, the Divine Mercy Incarnate; as children of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculata, and of St. Joseph, Universal Patron of the Church.

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, and fear nothing!
May God bless you!

Fr. Joseph, MIC

“Father Joseph, MIC,” is the honorary title of the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, currently Fr. Mark Baron, MIC.



The Divine Mercy Image greets parishioners and passersby at St. Pius X Church in Westerly, Rhode Island.



SHOWING THE MESSAGE

By Marian Friedrichs

On a busy street in Westerly, Rhode Island, where summertime tourists often stroll as they spend sunny days enjoying the town and its beaches, a certain piece of art sometimes makes pedestrians slow their steps, stop, and look. Some even seek out a friendly local who might talk to them about the piece or answer questions.

Even for those who do not stop, the sight is nearly impossible to miss — a giant print of the Divine Mercy Image, displayed prominently on the stone exterior of St. Pius X Catholic Church.

Made you look!

Debra Carey, pastoral associate at St. Pius X, has seen the effect the Image has had on many passersby: “They’re looking at Him, and He’s looking back at them.”

Some know the history of the Image and share that they, too, have a devotion to the



Divine Mercy; some may never have seen it before, but “they recognize Jesus” and stop to inquire about the Image and its meaning.

This simple displaying of the Image and responding to the comments or questions it evokes illustrate the approach Deb recommends for drawing others into the light and warmth of the rays of mercy: “Don’t make it complicated.” Don’t explain, at that first inquiry, all about St. Faustina, her visions, and her Diary.

“Simply tell people that Jesus is an ocean

of mercy waiting for you no matter what you've done," Deb says. "Remind them that God's mercy is for everyone. People are longing to feel that mercy."

The story of the Divine Mercy devotion at St. Pius X Parish offers an example of what can happen when people follow that longing where God leads. In 2000, the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet had been part of Deb's daily prayer life for two years, ever since she had read *Divine Mercy in My Soul* as a Lenten devotion. So, when Deb received an urgent prayer request for Michelle, a young mother of three diagnosed with a brain tumor, she decided at once to confront Michelle's need with two of the most powerful prayer weapons she had.

"We invited anyone able to come before the Blessed Sacrament on Fridays at 3 p.m. to pray for Michelle," Deb recalls. She expected the band of intercessors to meet for a few weeks, but the parish Rosary and Divine Mercy Prayer Group gathered weekly for 14 years! (Their first petition was granted: Michelle is alive and cancer-free today.) And since 2020, parishioners have continued praying for one another's intentions through St. Pius X's Divine Mercy Intercessory Prayer Group, using Flocknote.

In 2002, Cathy Reese, a faithful participant in that Friday prayer group, was herself diagnosed with cancer and given only two years to live. Drawing "tremendous strength" from her "unwavering faith," Cathy lived six years longer than expected. During that time, she was among the prayer group members who contributed to the purchase of a large Divine Mercy Image to display inside the church.

Devotion expands

Over the years, as prayers continued to multiply, so did visible signs of the parish's devotion to the merciful Christ. Father Raymond Suriani bought a second large Divine Mercy Image to display in the rectory, and in 2011, St. Pius X held its first Divine Mercy Sunday celebration. Parishioner Sharon Furman had received a first-class relic of St. Faustina as a gift, and it has been venerated at the Feast of Mercy service every year.

In 2012, Fr. Ray led a group of more than 50 parishioners on pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, where the group received a tour from Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, who was then a deacon. Four years later, during the Year of Mercy, Father Ray led another pilgrimage to the Shrine. Deb recalls, "The grace and blessings experienced as

we walked through the Holy Doors of Mercy were profound."

Later that same year, the parish's new pastor, Fr. Michael Najim, introduced the "Pilgrim Icon of Divine Mercy" program, in which a family or individual hosted a Divine Mercy Image for a week and received a prayer card explaining how to consecrate their homes and themselves to Divine Mercy. Each hosting household was then given a certificate proclaiming Jesus as "King of their Home." Also in 2016, a couple donated yet another Divine Mercy Image, which, displayed in an enclave of the church, established a special area of prayer that has become the parish's own "Divine Mercy Shrine" (below).

Seed to tree

In time, non-parishioners began to perceive the remarkable honoring of God's mercy that had become part of St.

Pius X's parish character. During the 2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy, parishioner Christine Magowan lost her nephew, John Jerabeck, suddenly. Only 33 years old when he died, John was devoted to St. Faustina and the Divine Mercy message, and he frequently visited St. Pius X when he traveled from his home in upstate New York to see his aunt.

After John's death, his parents made a donation to the parish, which used the funds to install a stained-glass window, depicting St. Faustina holding a Divine Mercy Image (see opposite page).

In 2021, thanks to Fr. Edward Nadolny and the generosity of parishioners

Paul and Dolores Cusson, the large beckoning Divine Mercy Image was erected on the façade of the church. The current pastor, Fr. Daniel Mahoney, is organizing a Divine Mercy pilgrimage to Poland in May 2025.

The mustard seed planted 24 years ago in the form of a small group praying the Chaplet for a special intention has grown into a tall sheltering tree, where parishioners and strangers alike seek comfort in the shade of its branches.

After reading St. Faustina's *Diary* for the first time during that Lent so many years ago, Deb made an Easter promise to our Lord "to spread the message any way I could." Together with her pastors and fellow parishioners, Deb has done precisely that, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit toward ever more fervent, ever bolder devotion to Jesus, the Divine Mercy. She hopes others will do the same.

"Stay steadfast," she urges, "and you can always go deeper."

To purchase a Divine Mercy Image and other sacred art, visit DivineMercyArt.org.

MH



FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

Visit ShopMercy.org/b64 or call 1-800-462-7426.

As we enter Advent and approach Christmas, parties, family functions, and earthly celebrations are good, but we also need to be taking time in silence, prayer, and listening to the wisdom of our faith so our souls may truly have room at the inn for Jesus. Here are some great resources to do just that.



OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS, AND OUR HOPE JUBILEE PILGRIMS OF HOPE WITH MARY

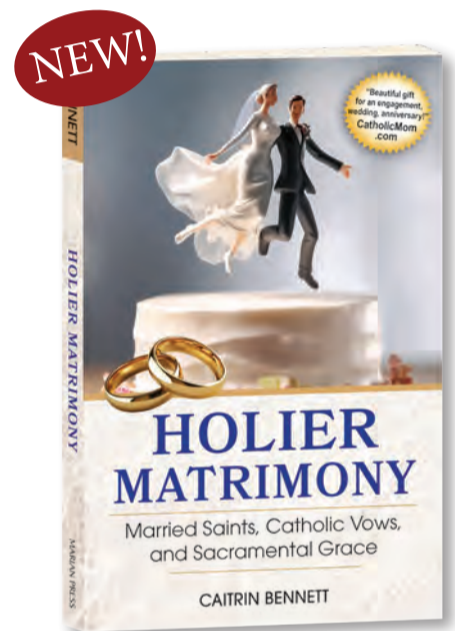
BY DONNA-MARIE COOPER O'BOYLE

Hope is truly a lifesaver! God is certainly the foundation of our every hope, and He has gifted us with a most eminent gift — His own Mother! This book presents many reasons for hope in our world today through the lens of Our Mother Mary and some of her apparitions around the world. Join Our Blessed Mother, “Our Life, Our Sweetness, and Our Hope,” on an inspiring journey to coincide with the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. \$16.95. [B64-POHB](#)

HOLIER MATRIMONY: MARRIED SAINTS, CATHOLIC VOWS, AND SACRAMENTAL GRACE

BY CAITRIN BENNETT

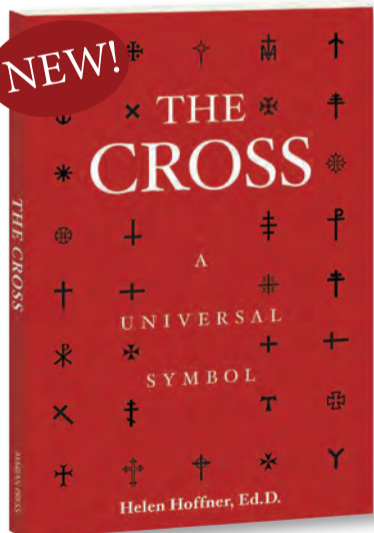
This book will help you unwrap and tap into the power of the gifts Jesus has given us through His Church. You will grow in your understanding of your marriage vows and become better equipped to live them out; befriend several married saints who also lived out these vows and ask for their intercession; and learn to strive constantly towards holiness and rely on marital grace when you and your spouse inevitably fall short. \$16.95. [B64-HLMY](#)



THE CROSS: A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL

BY HELEN HOFFNER

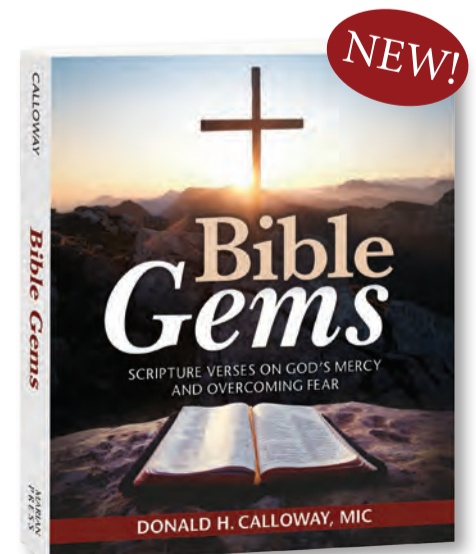
This beautifully illustrated book will help you identify and understand the history of crosses seen on historic monuments, houses of worship, flags, and anywhere your travels may lead. It also addresses crucifixes, or crosses that contain an image of the Body of Jesus Christ. Stories of crosses awaken curiosity about medieval knights, crusades, and the exploration of new lands. Every cross has a story to tell. Perfect for travelers and young folks off on fresh adventures! \$23.95. [B64-CRUS](#)



BIBLE GEMS: SCRIPTURE VERSES ON GOD'S MERCY AND OVERCOMING FEAR

BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

Perfect love casts out fear, and God is love (see 1 Jn 4:16-19). So let us allow His Word to find a home in our hearts each day with these 366 Scriptural exhortations to fear not (the basis of the Divine Mercy spirituality of trust taught by Pope St. John Paul II). We journey through the books of the Bible using verses drawn from the *Divine Mercy Catholic Bible* and daily reflections written by Chris Sparks and edited and arranged by Fr. Calloway. \$16.95. [B64-GEMB](#)





DOORWAY TO ETERNITY

The Catholic Church has declared a Jubilee Year in 2025, explained in the “bull” (letter) by Pope Francis entitled *Spes Non Confundit*, which means, “Hope Does Not Disappoint” (Rom 5:5). The Holy Father reminds us that the Church has been celebrating Jubilees at various intervals since the year 1300 to commemorate the anniversary of Christ’s birth. God called His people to celebrate Jubilees every 50 years in the Old Testament (see Lev. 25:1-13). Now we celebrate them in the Church every 25 years.

Some will remember the Great Jubilee of 2000. There was also an extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2016. The Pope explains that a Jubilee Year is a time of special grace, “characterized by the forgiveness of sins and in particular by the indulgence, which is a full expression of the mercy of God.”

The City of Rome is preparing for an expected 35 million pilgrims and tourists to visit the Eternal City for the Jubilee Year, under the theme “Pilgrims of Hope.” There are construction projects under way all over the city. We who lived through the pandemic in Rome are already a bit overwhelmed. Rome had become like a ghost town. Since the pandemic, rivers of tourists try to cross the streets near the Vatican every day.

We worry, “What will next year be like?”

The Jubilee, however, is a spiritual event for the whole Church, not just for those who are blessed to be able to make a pilgrimage to Rome. In his letter, Pope Francis expressed the desire that 2024 would be a preparatory year marked by a “symphony” of prayer. The best way to open our hearts to the graces that God wants to give us is through prayer. The Pope wants us to renew our desire to be in God’s presence, to listen to Him and to adore Him.

Pope Francis wants “Hope” to be the central message of this Jubilee. We live in a time when uncertainty about the future is leaving all of us feeling at loose ends. May this Jubilee allow us to renew our hope in Christ.

Pilgrims to Rome will be able to gain the Jubilee indulgence by passing through the Holy Year doors at the four Papal Basilicas in Rome, including the one shown on this magazine’s cover, St. Mary Major. On Dec. 29 this year, diocesan bishops all over the world will solemnly open the Jubilee Year in each diocese with the celebration of Holy Mass. Pilgrimages of Hope can take place to each cathedral.

There will not be Holy Year doors in every diocese as there were during the Jubilee of Mercy, but there will be many ways to obtain indulgences during the Jubilee. To

learn more, download the Jubilee app ([iubilaem25](#)) or visit the dedicated website, [iubilaem2025.va](#).

Jesus is the doorway to eternal life. Pope Francis wants each of us to experience a genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus during this upcoming Jubilee.

Let’s open our hearts!



The Most Rev. Joe Roesch, MIC, is the Superior General of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He lives in Rome. Listen to his podcasts, including “Saint Faustina’s *Diary* in a Year,” on [TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts](#) and [DivineMercyPlus.org/podcasts](#).



ON EDEN HILL



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Father Andy Davy, MIC, presided over the annual Blessing of the Animals on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4. "If you have a pet, just ask the Lord, 'What message do You want to share with me through this part of Your creation, this pet that You have entrusted me to take care of? How are You reminding me of Your faithfulness and love?' Allow that pet to move your heart always to praise, not the creation, but the Creator who made it all for you."



SAINT FAUSTINA'S FEAST

Hundreds of pilgrims visited Eden Hill on Oct. 5, a First Saturday this year, to celebrate the feast day of St. Faustina. A highlight was a talk by Sister M. Inga Kvassayová, OLM (top left), a member of St. Faustina Kowalska's order, the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of the



U.S. province, based in Washington, D.C. "The Lord said to St. Faustina that she will be the one who will prepare the world for His final coming, and I believe as many of us do I hope, that that will happen through Mary," said Sr. Inga. "So what both St. Faustina and Mother Mary teach us — that's trust. Trust in God. Why? Because they both know how merciful and good God is."



ROSARY CONGRESS

Bishop Robert McManus of the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts led the Eucharistic Procession closing the week-long Rosary Congress at the National Shrine. For seven days and seven nights, Oct. 5-11, volunteers spent time with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and prayed the Rosary hourly.





POLISH DAY

The annual Polish Day on Sept. 21 drew a large and festive crowd, which gathered for Mass (celebrated by the Most Rev. Andrzej Zglejszewski, Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Centre, New York), and Stations of the Cross (below).



MERCY FOR SOULS CONFERENCE

Father Dan Cambra, MIC, was the keynote speaker at the 14th annual Mercy for Souls Conference, held on Sept. 7. The theme was, “Mary, the Immaculate Conception, and the Holy Souls in Purgatory.” “Any time we cooperate with God’s grace in our lives, the good that we do is still a mere shadow of the goodness of God,” Fr. Dan said. “The mercy that we show to another person is but a mere shadow of the mercy of God for us. When you and I were baptized, we were baptized into the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ. We were made partakers in the mystical life of Christ.”

PARISH MISSION NIGHT

“We will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)” was the theme of a Parish Mission Night held on Oct. 1. Moderated by Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers (second from left), the featured speakers from Australia were (from left) Dr. Robert Haddad (who spoke on “The Eucharist: The Glory Presence of the New Israel”), Charbel Raish (“How Islam Led Me Back to Christ”), and Kevin Bailey (“From Success to Significance”).



Mary at the movies!

Mark your calendars: A new docudrama on the Immaculate Conception, from the filmmakers who brought us “Faustina: Love and Mercy” and featuring the Marian Fathers, is premiering in cinemas across the United States in December.

“I Am the Immaculate Conception,” presented by Fathom Events, will open on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, and run for several days.

The film had its world premiere at the 14th annual Napa Institute Summer Conference last July 25.

Expert interpretation

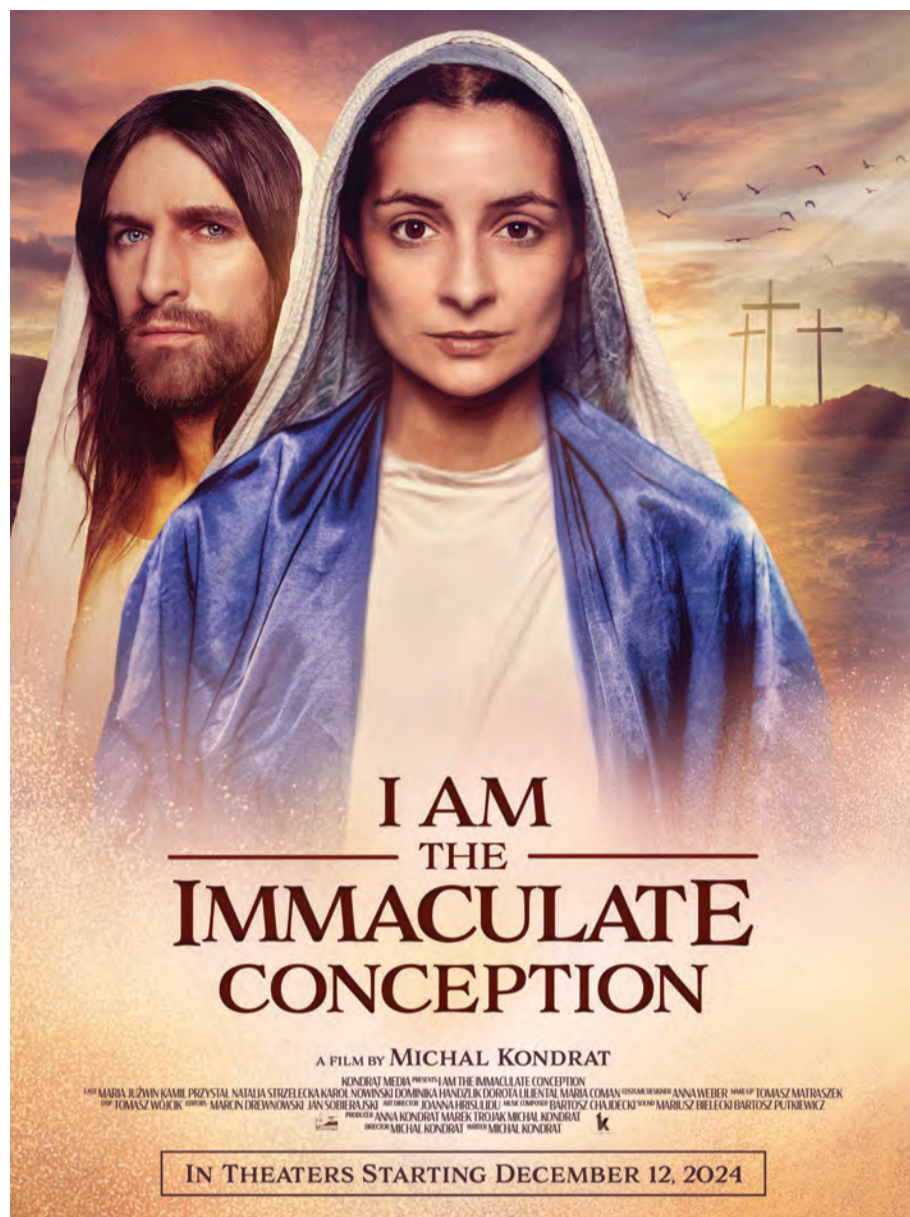
The title recalls how Our Lady introduced herself to St. Bernadette Soubirous in the grotto of Lourdes, France, in 1868: “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

The film addresses the questions: Why does Mary present herself this way to St. Bernadette? And why does she emphasize her Immaculate Conception in other apparitions as well?

“The mystery of the Immaculate Conception is at the very heart of our faith,” said Pope St. John Paul II.

Interspersed with dramatic recreations of the most important moments in the lives of Mary and Jesus are commentaries by experts and scholars on Scripture, Tradition, revelation, and dogma.

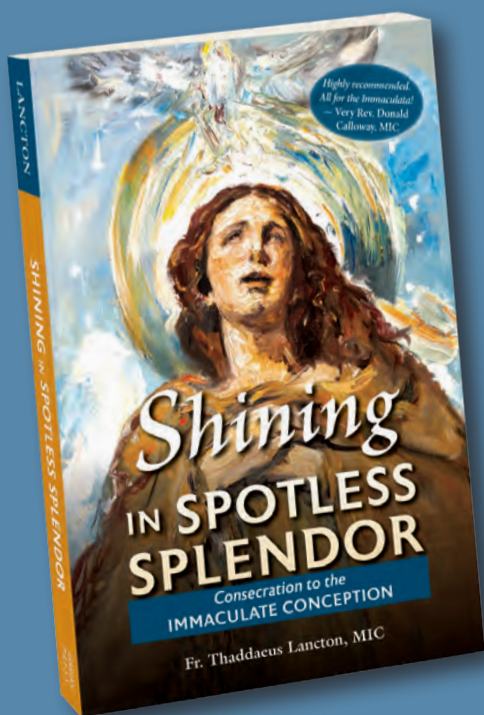
Among the familiar Marian faces are the Most Rev. Joseph Roesch, the Very Rev. Chris Alar, Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, the Very Rev. Donald Calloway, and Fr. Boguslaw Gil.



Marian participation

“We are so grateful to the Marian Fathers for their collaboration on this film that is going to bring audiences to a point of reflection on Mary during the season where we honor her and her role in God’s plan for salvation,” says Michal Kondrat, producer. “This is a movie for today’s world in need of the sound teaching of the Church and the presence of Our Mother, Mary, the Immaculate Conception. We encourage families, parishes, and schools to see this movie together to grow in their love and devotion to Mary and her Son, Jesus.”

Visit [Fathom Events](#) online for showtimes in your area. MH



JOIN IN THE CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!

A new daily series by Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC, based on his book. Watch LIVE at 9 a.m. ET on Facebook ([DivineMercyOfficial](#)), Instagram ([TheDivineMercy](#)), and [DivineMercyPlus.org](#).

Shining in Spotless Splendor (B64-BELH) is available in [book](#) and [eBook](#) formats on [ShopMercy.org](#).

Pray, forgive, heal

By Fr. Matthew Tomeny, MIC

Every November, the month of the Holy Souls, the Church exhorts us to pray for the souls in Purgatory. We can especially pray for the souls of all the patriots who have died in service of the United States. In return for our assistance through prayers, sufferings, penances, and acts of charity, we can ask them to pray and assist our country in this crucial time. (While the Holy Souls cannot pray for themselves, they can pray for us, the Church Militant.)

Needless to say, the Presidential election was contentious and divisive. But the political tensions that arose should not lead us to sin, especially that of anger or hatred, but rather be opportunities for our love to be purified. All the prayers we offer for our country will be weakened if we don't have forgiveness in our hearts.

It would be sad to see fellow Americans we don't agree with politically as enemies rather than neighbors. Even soldiers have shown incredible forgiveness of their enemies. There are remarkable stories of veterans from World War II befriending an enemy soldier after the war and even having their families visit years later.

How much easier should it be to forgive our neighbor than an enemy trying to kill us!

Merciful to others

Just as the Lord has been merciful to us, we must be merciful to others. At our judgment after death, the mercy and forgiveness we receive from the Lord will be limited by the mercy and forgiveness we gave to others. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

As Marian Renovator Blessed George Matulaitis put it, "My party is Christ." While we must carry out our civic duties as Catholic citizens of the United States, we must remember our ultimate citizenship is of the Kingdom of Heaven.

As Catholic citizens, we turn then to Mary, the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States. Just as she was preserved from original sin by the grace of her

Immaculate Conception, the grace of her Immaculate Conception can preserve our country from sin and evil.

As our Mother, she wants all her children, all citizens of our country, living and deceased, to be pure and holy. The Immaculate Conception shows it is possible to be completely purified of all sin by the graces of the Divine Mercy and to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

For us, if we don't reach that purity in this lifetime, we may yet by the mercy of God in Purgatory, where, as St. Faustina saw, Mary comes as Star of the Sea to refresh the Holy Souls and guide them to Heaven when fully purified (see Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 20).

"O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." And may all

our American brothers and sisters who have gone before us, especially those who gave their lives in defense of its freedom, rest in peace.

Father Matthew Tomeny, MIC, is rector of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, and soon to be a chaplain for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A. MH



'It would be sad to see fellow Americans we don't agree with politically as enemies rather than neighbors.'

HERE COMES THE JUBILEE!



By Veronica Szczygiel

If the Pope himself invited you to a celebration, would you attend? Of course! And Pope Francis' announcement that 2025 is a Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church is essentially a personal invitation for us to participate in a year-long celebration of reconciliation and renewal of our faith.

But what exactly is a "Jubilee"?

The basic definition is "special anniversary" and "season of celebration," but that only scratches the surface. "Jubilee" comes from the Hebrew word *yobel*, which means goat horn. The Hebrews used a *yobel* to announce the beginning of a jubilee year, marking the occasion to conduct a spiritual "reset": "For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you" (Lev 25:12).

Rest and restoration

The Old Testament describes how the jubilee was a time of rest for the land and restoration for its people. The jubilee was a year for social justice: there was a restitution of land

to original owners, a forgiveness of monetary debts, and the liberation of any slaves or indentured servants. The Hebrews were asked to "proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants" (Lev 25:10).

The Hebrews ceased their celebration of the jubilee year in 600 B.C., when the Jews were held captive in Babylon, and have not resumed the practice since. The Catholic Church aimed to restore the sacredness of this celebration by instituting a jubilee year approximately every 25 years. In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first one in Church history. Since then, the Church has celebrated 26 ordinary and three extraordinary jubilees. Many will remember the last jubilee

year in 2015-16, the “extraordinary” Jubilee Year of Mercy.

This upcoming “ordinary” jubilee, which begins Dec. 24, 2024 and ends Jan. 6, 2026, will mark the occasion of several key milestones. Next year is the 1,700th anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea, during which a unanimous vote approved of the Nicene Creed that we recite every Sunday at Mass. What a beautiful way to celebrate a renewal of our faith!

Additionally, the Eastern and Western Christian churches’ calendars will providentially be in sync so that Easter will be celebrated on the same day, April 20. Pope Francis is using this as an opportunity to invite Eastern Orthodox communities to a discussion about unity, such as regarding calendars.

Lastly, this jubilee year will also help us look forward to 2033, the 2,000th anniversary of the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, a truly momentous occasion in our faith history.

Rekindle our hope

While this jubilee year will celebrate important historical markers, the announcement is also the Church’s personal invitation for us to have an authentic experience of love of God, through reconciliation, mercy, and forgiveness. It is an invitation for us to rekindle our hope in salvation through Jesus Christ.

In fact, Pope Francis announced that the theme of this upcoming jubilee year is hope. Our faith is anchored in hope. Christ’s death and Resurrection showed us God’s redemptive grace. We have hope for healing, forgiveness, and eternal life by believing in Him and spreading the Good News. Saint Paul writes, “We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God ... because God’s love has been poured into our hearts” (Rom 5:2, 5).

We should take comfort in our Christian hope. But Pope Francis knows that sometimes it’s hard to hope in the tumultuous times we live in. Evil, violence, and darkness exist tangibly in our world.

In response to this reality, the Pope asks us not to be tempted into thinking that evil can overwhelm us. We can persist in hope by desiring and praying for peace in our world and for sharing an enthusiasm for life. He asks us especially to consider how to revive a joy for living that is not tied to materialism, appearances, or expectations.

Signs of Hope

One way to find hope is to share it with others. Pope Francis calls us to be “tangible signs of hope,” especially to the most vulnerable communities: the imprisoned, the sick and disabled, the youth, the displaced, the elderly, and the poor. He invites us to action during this jubilee year, writing that

“all baptized with their respective charisms and ministries are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God’s presence in the world.”

We should think deeply about the special talents that we each have and how we can use them to bring hope into our own families and communities, especially to the vulnerable populations who probably need hope most of all.

To be witnesses of hope, we need also attend to our own inner spiritual lives. The jubilee is an invitation to do so, mainly through pilgrimage and Reconciliation. The Pope urges us to rediscover the joy and healing of the Sacrament, encouraging us to approach Confession as an authentic encounter with God and to savor His forgiveness of our sins.

As we are forgiven, we, too, should seek to forgive others. While we can’t change the past, we can change the course of our future by not letting anger or vengeance take hold of our hearts. Additionally, the faithful can obtain the jubilee indulgence, a gift of God’s infinite mercy.

Pilgrimage

Another fundamental aspect of every jubilee year is pilgrimage. The Holy Father encourages us to rediscover silence, effort, and simplicity as we traverse to holy shrines, always keeping Jesus close to us. There’s a host of activities and celebrations planned at the Vatican over the next year (see page 14).

But we need not hop on a plane and travel far to go on our spiritual journey. Many of us may not be able to physically or financially do so, and listening to online Masses and talks can be a spiritual journey. But if we are able to physically journey, a nice way to engage in a pilgrimage is to visit a Marian shrine such as the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy!

The Pope has written that Mary is the supreme witness of hope, as she never abandoned her hope and trust in God even when her Son was being violently crucified. Marian shrines, then, will be special places for the rebirth of hope during the jubilee year.

The jubilee year is an opportunity for us to grow closer to our God, deepen our faith, and anchor ourselves in hope. It is a chance for the Church to unify in its defense of all life and bear witness to the rest of the world the light of Jesus Christ. We can partake in the celebrations by attending to our interior spiritual lives, through Reconciliation and pilgrimage especially, and by sharing our gifts and talents for the glory of God, particularly with those in need.

Let’s accept the Pope’s invitation and ready ourselves for a festive and fruitful jubilee year!

MH

The Jubilee Year is an opportunity for us to grow closer to our God, deepen our faith, and anchor ourselves in hope.



JUBILEE 2025

GENERAL CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2024

24 December

Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica



Photo Vatican Media

JANUARY 2025

24-26 January

Jubilee of the World of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025

8-9 February

Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

15-18 February

Jubilee of Artists

21-23 February

Jubilee of Deacons

MARCH 2025

8-9 March

Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

28 March

24 Hours for the Lord

28-30 March

Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

APRIL 2025

5-6 April

Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

25-27 April

Jubilee of Teenagers

28-29 April

Jubilee of People with Disabilities

MAY 2025

1-4 May

Jubilee of Workers

4-5 May

Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

10-11 May

Jubilee of Marching Bands

12-14 May

Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

16-18 May

Jubilee of Confraternities

30 May - 1 June

Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents and the Elderly



JUNE 2025

7-8 June

Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

9 June

Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 June

Jubilee of Sport

20-22 June

Jubilee of Governments

23-24 June

Jubilee of Seminarians

25 June

Jubilee of Bishops

25-27 June

Jubilee of Priests

JULY 2025

28 July - 3 August

Jubilee of Youth

SEPTEMBER 2025

15 September

Jubilee of Consolation

20 September

Jubilee of Justice

26-28 September

Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025

4-5 October

Jubilee of the Missions

4-5 October

Jubilee of Migrants

8-9 October

Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 October

Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

31 October - 2 November

Jubilee of the World of Education



NOVEMBER 2025

16 November

Jubilee of the Poor

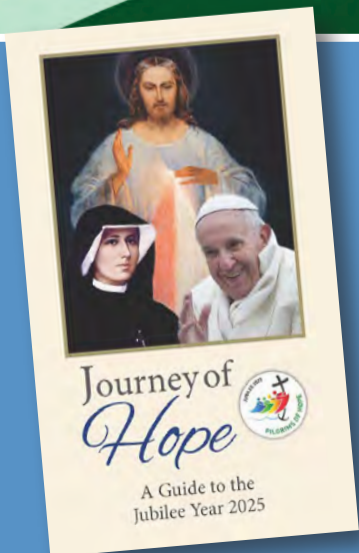
22-23 November

Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025

14 December

Jubilee of Prisoners



Celebrate the
JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE
with a new Guidebook from Marian Press!

Visit ShopMercy.org/b64 or call 1-800-462-7426.

By Chris Sparks

Where would we be without our priests? No Sacraments. A much harder road, with far less grace, and far fewer of the blessings (quite literally) that God intends for us to have on the long pilgrimage of this life, the straight and narrow path to Heaven.

So when you hear of a priest celebrating his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination — Fr. Timothy J. Roth, MIC — it's news of a great gift to Christ, to His Church, and to all of us members of the Mystical Body of Christ!

Marianapolis ministry

Born on Aug. 22, 1948, in Cleveland, Ohio, Fr. Timothy made his first vows as a member of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception on Aug. 15, 1967 in the old St. Casimir Province in Chicago, and made his perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1973.

A graduate of the Catholic University of America, the Sacred Heart School of Theology, and Assumption College, he was ordained a priest on Sept. 14, 1974.

For Fr. Timothy, 50 years of priestly life has, in many ways, meant service at Marianapolis, a Catholic preparatory high school in Thompson, Connecticut.

Marianapolis was founded by the Marians in 1926 in Illinois as a house of formation for Lithuanian students. When Archbishop — future Blessed — George Matulaitis toured the United States in 1926, he visited what was then called Marian Hills Juniorate. In 1931, the school moved to Connecticut and began the transition to an all-boys prep school offering high school and college degrees. In 1974, girls were admitted.

In 2001, the Trinity Foundation completed the purchase of Marianapolis; Marians continue to reside on campus and

remain an integral part of the community.

Father Timothy joined the school shortly after ordination, and over the years served as a teacher of religious studies and psychology, dean of students, and resident director.



Father Timothy J. Roth, MIC, in the chapel of Marianapolis Preparatory School, with a portrait of Blessed George Matulaitis in the background.

A Jubilee of priesthood

“One of the things that every Marian needs is support, not only financially but more spiritually, and most important in ministry,” said Fr. Timothy. “Your prayers make a tremendous amount of difference. In the religious life, knowing that we’re being prayed for helps us in our ministry for others, to bring them to Christ, and to share His message successfully.”

From 1988-2001, Fr. Timothy was headmaster of Marianapolis, stepping down when the school ownership changed. Today, he serves as chairman of the religious studies department and chaplain. He teaches moral and ethical dilemmas and social justice, and coaches golf and intramural basketball.

“I take a pastoral approach in presenting the faith to students,” he says. “We do not force. We invite and encourage, with the knowledge of what is good. It’s about putting Christ forward towards others to see His message.”

Outside of school, Fr. Timothy presents Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends for couples, a ministry he has done for 45 years.

He’s also writing the history of Marianapolis Preparatory School in anticipation of its centennial in 2026, with 11 chapters published so far. “I’m working on the draft for the year 1948,” he says.

Without which, nothing

And of course you Marian Helpers have all played a role with your prayers and financial support of the vocations of men like Fr. Timothy.

MH

OUR HEAVENLY HELPERS

By Chris Sparks

In these trying times, we need all the help we can get. Fortunately, the entire Marian Family — Marian Fathers as well as Marian Helpers — are blessed with a great wealth of patron saints whom we can beseech for their intercession.

All are members of the Communion of Saints specifically invited by the Congregation to help us all as we journey on the road home to Heaven, following the path laid out for us by the Marian charism and its three components: to profess, proclaim, and honor the mystery of the Immaculate Conception; to assist the dying and the Holy Souls in Purgatory; and to spread the Kingdom of God on earth, serving the Church where the need is greatest — all undertaken with a special emphasis on spreading the message of Divine Mercy in the modern world.

First and Foremost: Our Lady

The titular Patroness of the Congregation is, of course, the **Immaculately Conceived Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church**. The mystery of her Immaculate Conception (celebrated this year on Dec.

9, as Dec. 8 is the Second Sunday of Advent) has been, from the beginning of the Congregation more than 350 years ago, a particular sign, strength, and joy of the Marian vocation.

The Congregation also honors past members who serve “as a model of the faithful fulfillment of the Marian vocation”: the Father Founder, **St. Stanislaus Papczyński** (feast day: May 18); the “Renovator,”

Blessed George Matulaitis (feast day: Jan. 27); **Blessed Martyrs Fr. Anthony Leszczewicz** and **Fr. George Kaszyra** (feast day: June 12); and **Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski**.

Fellow Patrons

Then there are the “official” patron saints of the

Congregation whom we should invoke and imitate in a special way:

- **Saint Michael the Archangel:** Holy Scripture describes St. Michael as “one of the chief princes” (Dan 10:13) and leader of the forces of Heaven in their triumph over the powers of Satan and his followers. He has been especially honored and invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles. Feast day: Sept. 29.
- **Saint Joseph:** “Saint Joseph was never in the forefront. He was a man of prayer, who was a protector and a guardian, and he was a humble servant of God,” as the late Br. Fred Wells, MIC, put it. Feast days: March 19 (Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary) and May 1 (the Worker).
- **Saint Peter:** “You are Peter,” Jesus said, “and upon this rock I will build my church” (Mt 16:18). When the Romans were going to crucify him, tradition tells us, St. Peter was too humble to be killed in the same way as his Lord, so he convinced them to crucify him upside down. Feast day: June 29.
- **Saint Paul:** The son of a Roman citizen, Saul (as he was called until after his conversion) was sent to Jerusalem to



PATRON SAINT
OF THE MARIANS



POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

be trained in the famous rabbinical school headed by Gamaliel. Here, in addition to studying the Law and the Prophets, he learned a trade, as was the custom: tent-making. Feast day: June 29.

- **Saint Francis of Assisi:** One day, as he prayed in the humble little church of St. Damian outside the walls of

Assisi, Francis felt the eyes of the Christ on the crucifix gazing at him and heard a voice saying three times, “Francis, go and repair My house, which you see is falling down.” Feast day: Oct. 4.

- **Saint Thomas Aquinas:** Towards the end of his life, when laboring over his great treatise, *Against the Pagans (Summa Contra Gentiles)*, a sacristan saw Thomas kneeling before the altar and heard a voice, coming, it seemed, from the crucifix, which said, “Thou hast written well of Me, Thomas; what reward wouldst thou have?” To which Thomas replied, “Nothing but Thyself, Lord.” Feast day: Jan. 28.
- **Saint Joan de Valois of France:** Unloved and despised by her husband, she bore all torments with heroic patience and humility. Being physically impaired from childhood, Joan suffered rejection, humiliation, unjust opinions, and physical, moral, and spiritual sufferings. Her faith and trust in God — together with her special devotion to Our Lady — protected her. Feast day: Feb. 4.
- **Saint Ignatius Loyola:** While praying in a little chapel on the road to Rome, Ignatius had a vision. God appeared, commending him to His Son, who shone radiantly beside Him, though burdened with a heavy cross, and a voice

said, “I will be helpful to you at Rome.” On this second visit, the Pope received the first Jesuit priests cordially and accepted their services. Feast day: July 31.

- **Saint Vincent de Paul:** With grace, the anger-prone Vincent became tenderhearted to the point of looking on the troubles of all mankind as his own. Self-denial, humility, and an earnest spirit of prayer were the means by which he attained to this degree of perfection. Feast day: Sept. 27.
- **Saint Faustina:** She had only three years of simple education, but received extraordinary revelations — or messages — from our Lord Jesus. Her notebooks are known today as the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, and the words contained within are God’s loving message of *Divine Mercy*. Feast day: Oct. 5

- **Saint John Paul II:** It was Pope St. John Paul II who told the Marian Fathers: “Be apostles of Divine Mercy under the maternal and loving guidance of Mary.” We’ve been faithfully following his instructions ever since. Both in his teaching and personal life, St. John Paul II strove to live and teach the message of Divine Mercy. Feast day: Oct. 22.

You can find their feast days marked in our Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception 2025 Wall Calendar. You can also find prayers to the patrons and a little information about them on our new prayer cards!

Patrons of the Marian Fathers and the whole Marian Family, pray for us!

To order the *2025 Calendar (B64-CAL25)* and the new *Patron Saint prayer cards*, visit ShopMercy.org/b64. MH

PATRON SAINT
OF THE MARIANS



SAINT FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

THE HISTORICAL JESUS



By Robert Stackpole, STD

Two of the evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Luke, open their Gospels with accounts of the Nativity of Jesus, including a prophetic star and the coming of the wise men, and angels appearing to shepherds to herald the birth of the newborn King. There are even remarkable accounts of the miraculous conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, His mother, while she was a virgin.

It's hard to believe that some New Testament scholars wonder if all of this is true. Surely, they say, if anything in the Gospel records smacks of myth and legend, it is these colorful stories of the conception and birth of the Son of God, laced as they are with angelic visitations, and miraculous signs and wonders. But what does the historical

evidence actually suggest?

Matthew and Luke

The accounts of the Nativity by Matthew and Luke are obviously very different from each other. For example, Luke tells of the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin

Mary, the Roman census, angelic messengers appearing to shepherds abiding in the fields, and the finding of the Baby Jesus in Bethlehem “wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:12). Matthew, on the other hand, tells us of St. Joseph’s dreams, a special star, the coming of the wise men, the flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the innocents.

Obviously, these two accounts of the Nativity are drawn from completely independent sources. On the other hand, they also manifest important similarities:

- *In theology:* In both accounts, Jesus is said to be conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary.
- *In lineage:* He was born to Mary and Joseph, the latter at least a descendant of King David.
- *In geography:* Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.
- *In chronology:* His birth took place during the reign of the tyrant Herod the Great (who died somewhere between 4 and 1 BC).

These similarities lend an initial probability that they have an historically factual basis. Some, however, remain controversial among historians working in the field.

Born in Bethlehem?

As surprising as it may seem, some historians doubt that Jesus actually was born in Bethlehem. Princeton scholar James H. Charlesworth, for example, notes that Jesus is never called “Jesus of Bethlehem” but always “Jesus of Nazareth.” Mark 1:9 states “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee,” so Charlesworth considers that “If Jesus came from Nazareth, he may have been born there” (see Mt 21:11, Mk 6:1, Jn 1:45-46). The only strong evidence he presents in favor of this possibility, however, is that “Nicodemus is unable to reply to the charge that Jesus cannot be a prophet or the Messiah, because no prophet is to come from Galilee, which includes Nazareth” (see Jn 7:52).

But in Luke’s Gospel, the designation of Bethlehem as Jesus’ birthplace is not tied to any prophecy. Rather, Bethlehem was just the temporary residence of Mary and Joseph, who had journeyed there for the Roman census.

This explains why, although both Matthew and Luke

report that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, they continue to call Him “Jesus of Nazareth” throughout their Gospels: because it was surely not the Jewish custom to name a person after a birthplace that was merely en route, but after their permanent family home, which in this case, as both Gospels tell us, was Nazareth.

Finally, none of the early Christian writers outside of the Gospels report that Jesus was born in Nazareth, and none of the early Jewish polemicists (who attacked so many other aspects of the Gospel accounts) cast doubt on His birth in

Bethlehem. In short, the preponderance of the historical evidence still strongly supports Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Shepherds and caves

Further corroboration of St. Luke’s Nativity accounts include the fact that there really were shepherds who tended flocks on the outskirts of Bethlehem in those days, and caves in the hillsides that were used as stables for animals (which is why an early Christian tradition holds that Jesus was born in a cave). Even the Christmas tradition that places an ox and an ass beside the stable stands to reason: If there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the “inn” in Bethlehem, so that Jesus had to be born elsewhere, and was laid in a “manger” (see Lk 2:7 and 2:16), then he was most likely born in a stable for sheltering animals.

If Matthew and Luke were probably accurate on all the major aspects of the story of the Nativity of our Lord (the star, the wise men, the

slaughter of the innocents, the location of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, the Roman census, the shepherds, and the manger), then they are not telling myths or concocting legends here. Rather, they are trying to inform their readers about events that they believed — and had good grounds for believing — really happened.

And so can we.

Dr. Robert Stackpole is the director emeritus of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy. His new weekly web series, “Jesus of Nazareth: The Historical Evidence Behind the Greatest Story Ever Told,” begins on Monday, Dec. 1 on TheDivineMercy.org.

MH



We invite you to send us
your intentions for the
Three Christmas Masses
on Dec. 25 at the
National Shrine of
The Divine Mercy.
Visit Marian.org/b64 to
have your intentions
remembered.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS SPARKS

CRÈCHES GALORE!

By Chris Sparks

At the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette in Attleboro, Massachusetts, roughly two hours away from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, there's an unexpected spiritual treasure. The museum at the La Salette Shrine has one of the largest collections of crèches, or Christmas Nativity scenes, in North America.

I discovered this by accident on a recent pilgrimage to an assortment of different shrines and holy sites in New England, delving into some of the other spiritual treasures available to pilgrims who come to see us in Stockbridge, if only you have some extra time and plan ahead.



Spiritual treasures

The La Salette Shrine has a beautiful church dedicated to commemorating Our Lady's historic apparition on Sept. 19, 1846, to two children, Maximin Giraud, 11, and Mélanie Calvat, 14, in La Salette-Fallavaux, France. There's a lovely

Rosary walk; *Angels Unawares*, a powerful sculpture of immigrants joined by the Holy Family (“the archetype of every refugee family,” as Pope Ven. Pius XII said in *Exsul Familia Nazarethena*) by Timothy Schmalz, the same sculptor who made Eden Hill’s life-sized *Stations of the Cross*; a dedicated confessional area; colorful Christmas lights; and much more.

But outstanding among the spiritual treasures of the La Salette Shrine is the artistic treasure of the crèche collection, featuring some 2,000 Nativity scenes from more than 100 countries worldwide.

The Gospel in art

The collection is overwhelming; beautiful; peaceful; luminous. Shelf after shelf of glassed-in Nativities of great artistic complexity or lovely simplicity, of all ethnicities, reflecting an array of artistic traditions, drawn from all nations, going on for rooms. It is a stunning display of the true unity and universality of our Catholic faith. Every people on earth seems to have been touched by the Gospel story and moved to incarnate it in their own works of art.

Indeed, all nations gather at the crib of Christ every year, as Nativity scenes go up around the world in public, in our churches, and in our homes — or in secret.

There are very few devotions that cross the Protestant/Catholic divide, and fewer that bridge the Eastern and Western divide, across the schism of 1054. Yet there the Nativity scene is.

The Secular Franciscan Order shares with us the belief that St. Francis of Assisi created the very first crib scene in the year 1223, featuring live animals and even a miraculous appearance of the Infant Jesus. It’s said that miracles happened when the sick were touched with the straw from the manger on which the Child lay.

Of course one of the best beloved of all the saints (and a patron of the Marian Family!) would have given us this widely beloved devotion!

Cultural heritage

According to the Shrine website, the museum was founded by the late Fr. Manuel Pereira, MS (1939–2022), a Missionary of Our Lady of La Salette and a native of the Azores islands (an autonomous region of Portugal).

“While stationed at La Salette Shrine in Attleboro, Fr.

Manuel started the museum to share his passion for Christmas and Azores’ traditions,” the site explains. “Visitors can witness all of this in the *presépio* that Fr. Manuel created, which evokes his native hamlet and Christmas traditions in the Azores. Soon after, people began donating crèches to add to his collection, and the museum continued to develop thanks to donations from individuals and organizations all over the world, preserving, in this way, cultural heritage and creative legacy.”

The collection bears silent witness that Christmas has

now reached the entire world. The Gospel has been preached to all nations, and if anyone has escaped that preaching, it’s not been for lack of missionaries trying.

That means that Christmas unites the human race as few other things can, a fact witnessed to by the crèche museum. The figures come from all over the world, in all styles of art, depicting the Holy Family, the shepherds, the Magi as being from every

race and ethnicity under the sun — an artistic witness to the truth of the Biblical prophecies (see Ps 117:1; Rom 15:11).

Importance

The fundamental moments of our faith, the roots — these are as plain as plain can be.

A baby, the child of a woman whose husband could not get them rooms at an inn, is laid in a manger, a feed trough for animals, because, well, they were short a crib. They endured being strangers in the city where you would have thought members of the royal family of Israel would have been welcomed, would have even been enthroned. And though they are marked by a star, visited by shepherds and wise kings, Magi, alike, the most important part of the story is the most prosaic, the most familiar, the most common: Mary gave birth to a Son.

That’s why the Nativity scene stands in for Christmas in our minds, stands in for the Incarnation, for light in the darkness, for grace overcoming sin, for hope.

That’s why the Jubilee Year of Hope begins on Christmas Eve.

That’s why we need both Nativity scene and Jubilee right now, in the midst of dark times, difficult tragedies, and much suffering in our own country and around the world.

Visit LaSaletteAttleboroShrine.org for more information on the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette. MH





Saints Zélie and Louis Martin are among the married saints featured in *Holier Matrimony*, a new book from Marian Press. Their five daughters become holy nuns, including the youngest, the beloved St. Thérèse of Lisieux. She wrote, “The good Lord has given me a father and a mother who are more worthy of Heaven than of earth!”

TO HEAVEN, VIA MARRIAGE

By Caitrin Bennett

Because family is at the absolute heart of the Christian faith, one of the most important tasks of the Catholic Church is to support families. Countless men and women are seeking Heaven via the vocation of marriage, and the Church offers us three gifts as we walk this beautiful but often difficult road.

First, we are given a comprehensive list of marital vows to help map the terrain. Next, we have saints who were married to serve as guides and encouragement along the way. Finally, the Church extends the sacramental grace that will help us continue on when we are weak.

First Gift: Our Marital Vows

I have been to several weddings with unique vows, often written by the bride and groom themselves. These can be sweet, but they are often vague (“*I promise to cherish you.*”), impossible to keep (“*I vow to always make you happy.*”), or just plain silly and irreverent to the monumental undertaking of marriage (“*I promise not to hog the covers.*”).

When we hear the familiar vows of a Catholic wedding ceremony, though, we have confidence that all the meaningful aspects of marital love have been covered, and that the whole Church bears witness to exactly what the couple has promised one another.

The Church has truly given us a gift in our marriage vows. The “job description” for a spouse striving to have a holy union is provided to us so that we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. If you want to be a better husband or wife today, find a new way to love your spouse freely, fully, faithfully, and fruitfully; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; until death parts you.

Second Gift: Married Saints

It can be inspiring and encouraging to find individuals within the diverse Communion of Saints that we connect with in specific ways. As husbands and wives, we can imitate the married saints, knowing that imitating them will ultimately mean imitating Jesus.

All the saints share God’s deepest desire: that we would all be together as a family in Heaven. Married saints offer their lives and marriages as examples for us, and they are ready and willing to pray for us on our own spiritual journeys.

The saints we meet in my book from Marian Press, *Holier Matrimony: Married Saints, Catholic Vows, and Sacramental Grace*, had more in common than just being married, and their commonalities are noteworthy if we want to live like them. These saints had daily prayer routines, studied Scripture, and participated in the liturgical practices of their day. They built strong sacramental lives because they thirsted for more grace. They knew that God’s grace would empower them to grow in virtue and fortify their marriages. The desire to reach out to the poor, sick, and needy is deeply evident in

all their lives.

Additionally, they all took on voluntary sacrifices and mortifications. Smaller acts of self-denial gave the saints mastery over themselves and prepared them to be faithful to God when larger sacrifices were asked of them.

All these common practices resulted in a general aura of peace around each of our holy role models. Though each of them faced trials, even as painful as the death of children or their own martyrdom, the constant faith of the married saints protected the peace of Christ they held in their hearts.

If we adopt some of their habits, we, too, can hope to see this peace abide in our own hearts and homes.

Third Gift: Marital Grace

Marriage is too hard for us to do well by our own power, but thankfully we can fall back on marital grace when the going gets tough. In the very Sacrament that made us husbands and wives, we received the graces that will help us become saints by this vocation.

The specific graces communicated in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony strengthen us “to love sacrificially, to bear wrongs, to forgive offenses, to be chaste, to welcome and educate children, and perhaps even to die in the service of one’s family.”

Marital grace will supercharge us on our paths to sainthood. All we have to do is cooperate with this grace by removing barriers to its flow within our lives and marriages. This means frequenting Confession and cutting out unhealthy attachments to sin and material goods. Then, we can call on

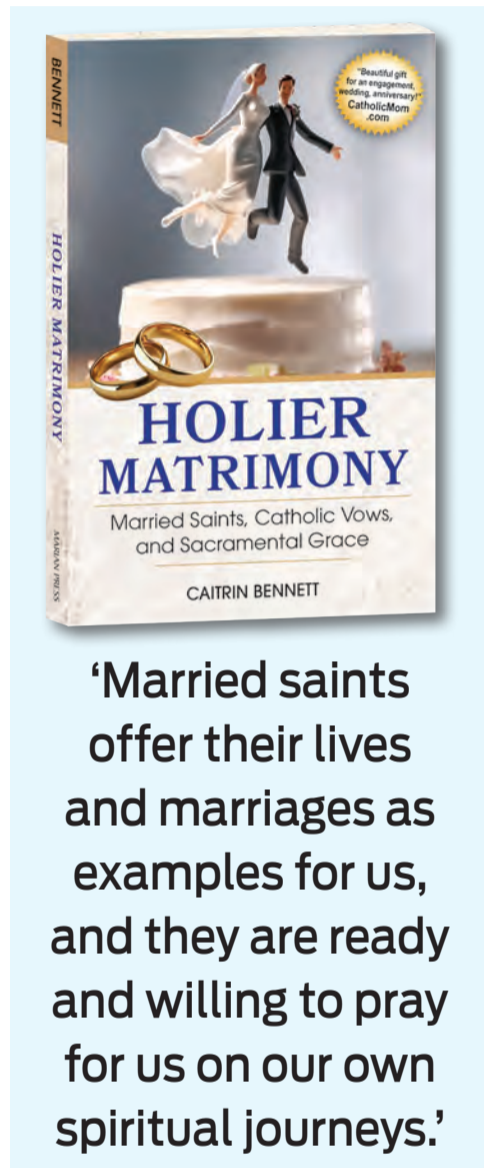
God to get us through tough times by means of the grace He bestowed upon us on our wedding day. (Try one of the short prayers sprinkled throughout my book!)

For His first public miracle, Jesus blessed the married couple at Cana with gallons upon gallons of the choicest wine. In the same way, He continues to offer superabundant grace to bless our marriages. As long as we keep it flowing, sacramental grace will never run out on us.

The Holy Spirit, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us (#1624), is “the ever-available source of [our] love and the strength to renew [our] fidelity” to our spouses, until death do us part.

Excerpted from Holier Matrimony: Married Saints, Catholic Vows, and Sacramental Grace (B64-HLMY) by Caitrin Bennett, published by Marian Press and available on ShopMercy.org/b64 or call 1-800-462-7426.

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‘Married saints offer their lives and marriages as examples for us, and they are ready and willing to pray for us on our own spiritual journeys.’



Is IVF Pro-Life & Pro-Family?
Marian Teaching with
Fr. Mark Baron, MIC

THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF IVF

By Maria V. Gallagher

The Internet post expressed the kind of deep-seated sadness that in vitro fertilization (IVF) can bring: “I’m an IVF baby, and I feel like a mistake.” The Reddit post went on to say he or she felt as if “I should’ve just died off with the rest of them since the process is so evil and corrupt.”

The individual was referring to the other human embryos created during her parents' IVF process. By definition, IVF refers to removing eggs from a woman's ovary and fertilizing them with sperm in a laboratory to form human embryos.

We know that no human being is a mistake, that each one of us is beloved by our Heavenly Father. A child born as a result of IVF is not a lesser being, but is greatly and passionately loved by the Lord.

We can honor and respect the child who results from IVF, while also recognizing the inherent evil associated with playing God by creating human beings in a laboratory.

Not the answer

Infertility is a heartbreaking experience for couples throughout the U.S. We need to show the utmost compassion to those for whom childbearing is medically impossible, while promoting a beautiful alternative: adoption.

IVF is not the answer to the plight of couples yearning for a child. Consider another post from Reddit. The headline reads, "Created embryos and now regret it, what should I do?"

The individual went on to write:

"(My wife and I) managed to create some embryos, which are now frozen.

"I've had a crisis of conscience and now regret it. I should never have helped make them. I don't want to use them. I think it's unnatural and against God. We shouldn't have played God like this ...

"My wife would never consent to destroying or donating (the embryos). I love her and I don't want to go through a civil divorce and a court battle over this ..."

Quandaries

These are the types of quandaries which arise as a result of IVF. Multiple embryos are created that then may be discarded if the couple deems them to be imperfect. No matter what the imperfections might be, the destruction of human embryos is a tragic offense against innocent human life.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains why IVF techniques are morally unacceptable:

They disassociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person." Such a relationship of

domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children (2377).

"IVF treats children as though they were commodities to be produced for adult needs," adds Dr. John Haas of the National Catholic Bioethics Center (ncbcenter.org). "Some embryos, some tiny human beings, are almost always killed through this procedure. Doctors choose only the healthy embryos to place in the womb. The 'leftover' ones are either killed or are experimented upon. Some are frozen in liquid nitrogen for future implantation or experimentation. This is no way to treat human beings, even tiny embryonic ones."

There are an estimated 1 million human embryos in frozen storage in the U.S. alone. Theologians and ethicists are divided on what to do

with these innocent lives in limbo. Some suggest embryo "adoption" by an infertile couple (the so-called "snowflake babies" born as a result), while others condemn the idea, saying it only legitimizes the IVF process.

What does unite the two sides is the urgent need to shut down an immoral process akin to an assembly line.

What can be done?

Sadly, politicians from both major political parties have not only failed to condemn IVF — they have openly embraced it. In this context, what can we do as faithful citizens to combat this grave evil?

To begin with, let us all pray for a greater respect for human life, especially for the most vulnerable. Certainly, no one is more vulnerable than an innocent human being at the embryonic stage of development.

Next, engage with your public officials, both at the state and national level, to let them know about the inherent dangers of IVF. This engagement can include emails, phone calls, and personal meetings. Many legislators may be unaware of the troubling implications of this procedure.

Finally, consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Thanks to the Internet, such letters can receive a worldwide audience. Through your letter, you just may educate someone who is totally unaware of the immoral aspects of IVF.

As Catholics, we are the keepers of the flame of truth. Let us use it to teach others about the dangers of playing God in the laboratory.

Maria Gallagher is the author of Mercy's Power: Inspiration to Serve the Gospel of Life (B64-MPOW) and Glorious Encounters with Mary: A Guide to Living the Mysteries of the Rosary (B64-GLMY), both available on ShopMercy.org. MH

'IVF treats children as though they were commodities to be produced for adult needs.'



Pilgrims pray around the statue of Our Lady on Apparition Hill above the village of Medjugorje. Millions navigate the rocky path to the summit every year (Photo by Giuseppe Mignano).

MUCH ADO ABOUT MEDJUGORJE

By Peggy Stanton

Just as startling — and as welcome! — as the famous “dancing sun” above Medjugorje was the Sept. 19 announcement from the Vatican: “The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the assent of Pope Francis, grants approval for devotion linked to Medjugorje, recognizing the abundant spiritual fruits received at the sanctuary of the Queen of Peace, without making a declaration on the supernatural character of the Marian apparitions.”

Could this be true, after so many years and so much controversy?

The small village in Bosnia-Herzegovina has captivated the world's attention since 1981, when six young people ("visionaries") began receiving apparitions from the Blessed Virgin Mary. More than 50 million people over the past four decades have made the arduous pilgrimage to Medjugorje, including Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, who led a group of 200 in September.

The Medjugorje approval from the Vatican was given under the new norms for discerning the authenticity of claimed apparitions, issued last May. Under those norms Medjugorje received the highest possible rating available to claimed apparitions: a "*nihil obstat*," meaning "Nothing stands in the way."

Great joy

The news was received with "great joy" in Medjugorje, where the local pastor, Fr. Zvonimir Pavlicic, concelebrated the Mass with 96 priests.

"We are grateful to Pope Francis that he has this little place of great faith in his heart," he told the congregation. "We are grateful to God because He calls us to His closeness again and again, and feeds us His words and the Body of Christ. We are grateful to the Mother of God, the Queen of Peace, who started all this and guides it all. We are grateful for those who came before us and bore the weight and grace of these events We are grateful for every pilgrim; for every testimony of faith, hope and love. Finally, we are grateful that God always, always shows us his mercy."

It must be said that pilgrims like myself whose lives were changed by the numerous journeys we made there are extremely grateful to God that His Church has, at last, after 43 years, given approval to the remarkable spiritual experience that is Medjugorje. Frankly, it has not been easy to profess faith in apparitions and the spiritual quality of Medjugorje without official Church approval.

Rightly cautious

Granted, there are some devotees who are disappointed there was no outright declaration from the Holy See that

Mary has appeared in Medjugorje and is still appearing there, but that is exactly the problem: The alleged apparitions and messages are still ongoing. The Church, which is rightly cautious, cannot give approval to evidence yet unseen and unheard.

What the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF)

did do was carefully analyze the evidence that has been seen, and could not be denied: chief among them, the "abundant fruits" from the amazing spiritual benefits that have resulted for the millions of pilgrims who have traveled to this part of the world for more than 43 years.

"The positive fruits are most evident in the promotion of a healthy practice of the faith in accordance to the traditions of the faith," the DDF stated. "This applies to those who had been previously distant from the faith, as well as those who had practiced only superficially. The uniqueness of the place lies in the large number of such fruits."

Abundant fruits

Among these are "abundant conversions;" a return to the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation; many vocations to the priesthood and

religious life; deeper faith; deeper prayer life; marriages reconciled; renewal of marriage and family life; large numbers of young people present (50,000 at the annual Youth Festival); and increased activity of pastoral work in the parish, including retreats and seminars.

Furthermore, Medjugorje has been a major pilgrimage destination for decades, even during wartime and a pandemic.

The DDF also provided extensive analysis of the alleged messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary given on the 25th of each month, saying, "The messages overall possess great value and express the constant teachings of the Gospel in different words."

My own favorite message is the reason given for the apparitions: "I have come to tell the world God exists. He alone is the fullness of life. To enjoy this fullness and to



'The positive fruits of Medjugorje are most evident in the promotion of a healthy practice of the faith in accordance to the traditions of the faith.'

Continued on page 28

obtain peace, you must return to God.”

And this: “Dear children, this is the reason for my presence among you for such a long time: to lead you on the path of Jesus. I want to save you and, through you, to save the whole world. Many people now live without faith; some don’t even want to hear about Jesus, but they still want peace and satisfaction! Children, here is the reason why I need your prayer: prayer is the only way to save the human race.”

“A few messages,” however, cautions the DDF, “stray from these positive and edifying contents, and even seem to go so far as to contradict them.” The DDF wants us to be aware of these quotes as “these few confused elements overshadow the beauty of the whole.”

Indeed, by my count, the DDF cites more than 80 messages as positive, compared to less than 15 messages questioned.

“Some people,” according to the DDF, are apparently troubled when Our Lady is upset that her messages are not being followed. In one instance, she allegedly said, “Now it is Lent and you, as a Parish, can adhere to my call out of love. If you do not do that, I do not wish to give you any more messages.”

While these tones may puzzle the Vatican, they made pilgrims like myself pull up our socks, fearing if we didn’t shape up, she might ship out! Consider that her Son shows similar irritation in the Gospels at times when His disciples experience brain fog over His messages. “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you?” (Mt 17:17)

And honestly: would the “old apple vendor” (as I like to call the evil one) be selling such products of peace, love, and conversion?

The DDF cites as “particularly beautiful” this message regarding the quality of signs: “You ask me for a sign that my presence may be believed. The sign will come. But you do not need it. You, yourselves, must be a sign for others.”

The human “signs” are the reasons I believe in Medjugorje. In 10 pilgrimages (my first was in 1988), I have never seen

Mary myself, nor witnessed the famous spinning sun, nor the Cross on Mt. Križevac lighting up without benefit of electricity, though I have had friends who claimed to have seen all of the above.

My Rosary did turn from silver to gold, but that was not the sign that impressed me. What moved me most was the behavior of people, both residents and pilgrims.



A silver Rosary Peggy Stanton bought in Rome turned gold when she visited Medjugorje.

‘I have come to tell the world God exists. He alone is the fullness of life. To enjoy this fullness and to obtain peace, you must return to God.’

Personal witness

I personally have witnessed lives changing; conversions to Catholicism; Protestants on pilgrimages; priests marveling at the quality and quantity of Confessions they hear; nuns telling me Medjugorje is where their vocations bloomed. One Dominican Sister related her father was miraculously healed in Medjugorje. Twice, I have accompanied people who risked their lives to travel to Medjugorje.

That little mountain village changed my life so dramatically I wrote a book to catalogue the revolution: *From the*

White House to the White Cross.

In the end, can we not perhaps abide by Jesus Christ’s prescription for discerning the truth about the authenticity of spiritual claims?

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns or figs from thistles? So every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits (Mt 7:15-20).

Peggy Stanton is the author of From the White House to the White Cross: Confessions of a TV News Correspondent (B64-WHWC) and The Order of Malta Minutes with the Catechism (B64-OMTK), both from Marian Press and available now on ShopMercy.org/b64.

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The light of Luke

By Sara Beth Meyer

We are beginning Lectionary Cycle C, where most of the gospel readings are from St. Luke, who accompanied St. Paul on his missionary journeys and was warmly regarded as “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14). Similarly, I am blessed to continue my Gospel journey with pediatrician Allison Hsu, MD, with *The Gospel of Luke for Little Ones*, in this third volume of *The Gospels for Little Ones* series from Marian Press.

I am also thrilled with the ongoing partnership with the Marian Fathers, as Luke is the most Marian of all of the Gospels. Believers who have a devotion to the Rosary, especially those who cherish the Joyful Mysteries, may delight in knowing that they are all uniquely contained in St. Luke’s Gospel. Moreover, Luke is known as the “Gospel of Mercy,” so publishing with Marian Press is truly grace upon grace.

Melodic verse

Like the first two volumes, *The Gospel of Luke for Little Ones* shares the love of Jesus in melodic verse and beautiful watercolor illustrations. Every chapter of the Gospel is represented, and chapter citations are included on the far right margin of each page to guide readers to the Bible itself, for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* instructs us that Jesus is the Word to whom all biblical words point (102).

When looking at the cover of *The Gospel of Luke for Little Ones* (B64-LUKB), readers will see a dramatic change from both *The Gospel of Matthew for Little Ones* (B64-GMLO) and *The Gospel of Mark for Little Ones* (B64-MRKB). The bold yellow lettering recalls that Luke means “light,” and the tender manger scene reminds us that Jesus is the Light in our darkness. It is the only cover in the series that depicts Jesus as infant “Emmanuel,” God with us.

Since we began proclaiming the Good News in this fresh way, little ones of all ages have shared our enthusiasm and eager anticipation of the release of each successive volume. In workshops and public readings, listeners have often said that St. Luke’s Gospel is their favorite. I agree with them, enjoying the Lucan focus on prayer and mercy, and careful attention to women, children, and the marginalized — perhaps the littlest in our midst.

My husband and I named our firstborn son “Luke,” and

now that his oldest little one is big enough to turn the pages, I am excited to share *The Gospel of Luke for Little Ones* with her. I encourage all parents, grandparents, and godparents to snuggle in and read each volume aloud, as the Good News is meant to be proclaimed.



Guess the ending

To check for understanding, ask your little ones which stanza aligns with each illustration. Have fun prompting them to guess the ending rhyme of each quatrain, and always, always thank God for your sacred time together, for Jesus assures us, “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20).

May God bless you and your beloved little ones this Advent and Christmas, and may we all remain little, only enlarged by the hope, peace, joy, and love of this blessed season.

All three volumes in *The Gospel for Little Ones* series can be purchased now on ShopMercy.org/b64 or call 1-800-462-7426.

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B64-KWPQ

STILL WORKING FOR ST. FAUSTINA

This story is a continuation of a story of creative giving — and not just the kind that involves a checkbook. This is a special story about a Marian Helper who found a way to reach out beyond his parish, beyond his state, even beyond his understanding — because St. Faustina put it on his heart to help the Marian Fathers’ mission to bring the message of Divine Mercy to the world.

You may remember meeting Joe Gugliuzzo of New York. We profiled him just before the pandemic wreaked its havoc on the world. He established a ministry that truly exemplifies Jesus’ call that we live the message of Divine Mercy, that we “show mercy ... always and everywhere,” that “even the strongest faith is of no avail without works,” as Jesus told St. Faustina (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 742).

Joe was the man who drove all over New York State visiting parishes. He left behind the bright red pamphlets (LFMCN) printed by the Marian Fathers that explain the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Novena of Chaplets. His hope — his prayer — is that people, including those who have fallen away from the Church, would take a pamphlet, read it, and be drawn to the Divine Mercy message and devotion, and maybe even visit the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge!



feet in the air. I felt like she approved.” Then another important Mercy figure visited — “then-blessed Kateri Tekakwitha appeared in white with a white bandana, smiling. Both stayed with me while I was praying the Rosary. I’d been a volunteer at the Auriesville Shrine and became close to St. Kateri there. I felt like she, too, was happy that I was spending more time with Divine Mercy.”

A blessing from Joe’s effort — more parishioners are supplying their churches with Chaplets!

To date, Joe has sent more than 140,000 pamphlets — wow! — to smaller cities in nearly every state along the Eastern seaboard and a good part of the Midwest. This includes

parishes, and university campus ministries.

“Jesus wanted everyone to say the Chaplet and entrusted St. Faustina to help in this world and the next,” Joe says. “We all know in this life we all need lots of prayers.”

Our Lady’s idea

The idea to do more started with Our Blessed Mother. Joe describes the purported encounter:

“At an outdoor Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in 2011, a clear vision of Our Blessed Mother appeared high up during the beginning part of the Mass. I bought Divine Mercy pamphlets in bulk for the first time, and started to drop them off in the Utica area.”

After distributing pamphlets at St. Malachy’s Church in Sherburne, New York, Joe believes he saw Our Lady again. “I was amazed to see Our Lady very clearly, maybe 50-70

Taking stock

Here’s another creative way to help support the Marian Fathers and our evangelization efforts — a gift of stock! Many Marian Helpers don’t realize there’s a large tax break associated with giving stock that you’ve owned for at least a year. You don’t pay capital gains tax on the stock’s appreciation, and you’re allowed to claim a charitable gift deduction for your stock’s current fair market value. By using stock, you can actually increase your philanthropic efforts!



Hope Ponsart Hansen is a major gifts officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact her at (413) 298-1387; helpers@Marian.org; or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit Giving.Marian.org to learn more.

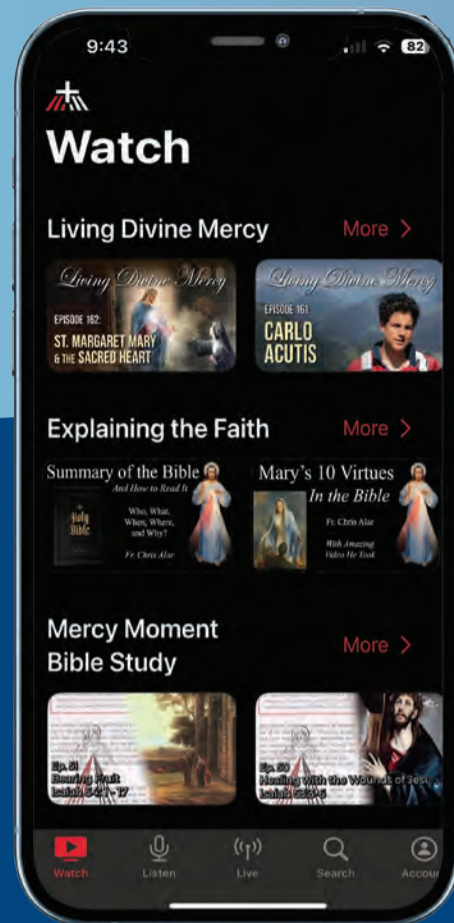


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GRACES RECEIVED

Husband finds new job

My almost 60-year-old husband was recently fired from his job. We were not quite ready financially for possible retirement, so he searched and searched for work. Not long after he lost his job, I saw in the “Graces Received” section about Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski! What a blessing from God and answer to prayers!

After only seven weeks, he found a great new position and one that required significantly less travel.

God certainly had a plan and Venerable Casimir knew of it!

Thank you and thank You, Lord. We always pray to do Your will.

— S.A., email

Son gets internship

Thank you, Venerable Casimir!

My son was having difficulties finding an internship in mental health counseling due to lack of experience, lack of availability of supervising counselors, and lack of opportunity. If he was unable to secure an internship by the August start date, he would not be able to continue with his class, affecting his ability to graduate in the spring. He had completed all other academic classes needed to earn a master’s in counseling, except the internship.

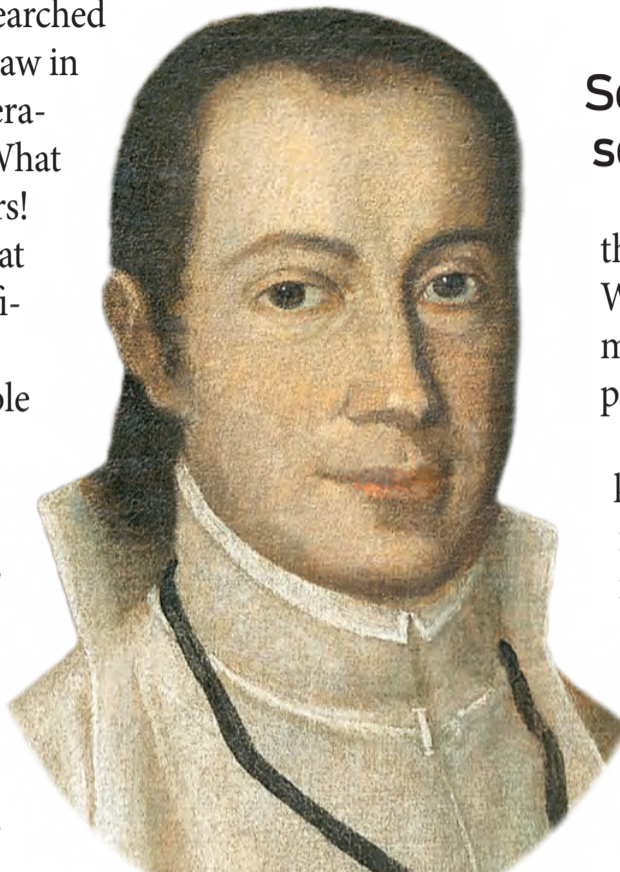
There was a great deal of pressure, especially considering the deadline required to secure the internship. During the two months, he applied at more than 30 sites, and interviewed at many, as well. He’s well qualified academically, but, being young, the opportunity was offered to someone with more life experience.

We began to pray to Venerable Casimir.

In the final week, he was offered several positions and obtained an internship at a Christian counseling practice.

We attribute this blessing and grace to Venerable Casimir!
Praise be to God for His goodness and for Venerable Casimir!

— B.E.S., email



Acknowledgments of graces received through the intercession of Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski (1700-1755).

Son accepted to private school

I’m writing to share my story of how the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski interceded on my behalf to help my son get accepted to a very rigorous private school in our community.

I tried to get my son into this school for kindergarten, but the competition was fierce, and I was not able to secure a spot for him. Thankfully, we found a school community that has been a very good fit for him for the past several years.

As he entered middle school, it became apparent that a change was needed. Serendipitous events occurred that led me to apply to this same school again.

I have prayed daily to Fr. Casimir that, if it’s God’s will for my son to attend this school, and if it will be a good fit for him, then please let him be accepted. Today, I found out he was accepted!

Thank you, Fr. Casimir for your intercession on behalf of my son.

— K.R., email

For a Venerable Casimir prayer card (B64-BCWP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA, 01263. Email: graces@Marian.org

Prayer for a special grace through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski

O God, Merciful Father, in the heart of Your Servant Casimir, You aroused a great zeal for accomplishing corporal and spiritual deeds of mercy; deign to grant to me (to us) through his intercession the grace ... for which I (we) implore You. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory Be to the Father ...

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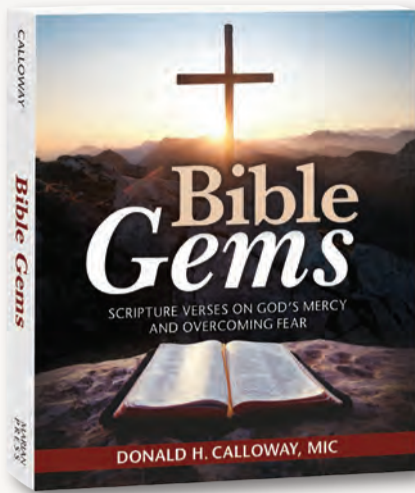


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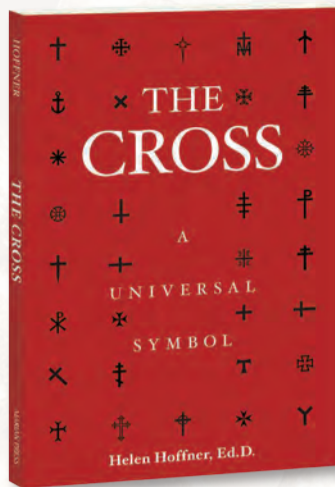
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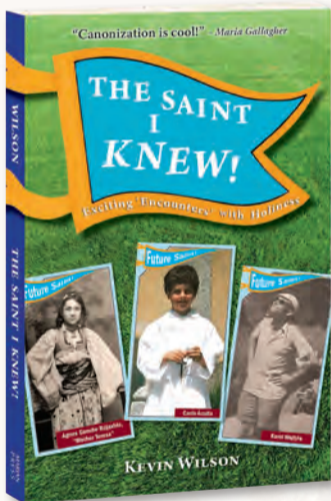
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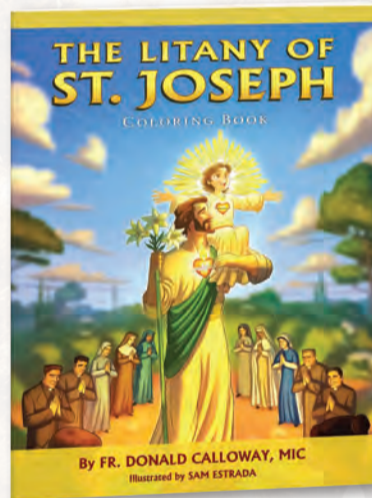
The Marians of the Immaculate Conception 2025 Wall Calendar

The Marians of the Immaculate Conception bring you this exclusive 2025 Mary calendar, featuring beautiful artwork and inspirational quotes for each month of the year. Calendar includes "How to Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy." Measures 8 1/2" x 11". **B64-CAL25 \$12.95**



The Saint I Knew! Exciting "Encounters" with Holiness

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Pope Ven. Pius XII
opens the Holy Door for
the 1950 Jubilee Year.

From the VAULTS

As we await the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica by Pope Francis on Christmas Eve, we turn the clock back in our memory 75 years to a similar occasion with Pope Ven. Pius XII. On Dec. 24, 1949, he struck the blocked door with a golden hammer, causing it to fall over. The Holy Jubilee Year of 1950 would witness the momentous proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“There are periods in the history of humanity in which the voice of God becomes more insistent, more strong, more earnest, in calling mankind to a greater and better realization of the eternal truths. One of these solemn occasions is certainly the Holy Year,” reported *Marian Helpers Bulletin*. “This is not as some believe, a year of celebration, but rather a year of expiation and sanctification.”

In a world still recovering from the ravages of World War II, the Marian Fathers issued a call to action.

“Whoever you are dear friend, take to heart this urgent call of the Holy Father. Much depends on your own participation in the spiritual rebirth that will save the world. Your simple, fervent and oft-repeated prayers and your countless good deeds multiplied millions of times the world over will rise like a pleasing sacrifice to God. Souls will find peace with God, nations will be converted, and in your own little heart will burn the warm Pentecostal fire of divine love.” Sound advice for the 2025 Jubilee Year!



MH



Pray for us!

Please pray for our Marian men in formation
as they in turn remember you in prayer!

Br. Alex, MIC; Br. Stephen, MIC; Br. Ruben, MIC;
Br. Patrick, MIC; Br. Ryan, MIC; Br. Christopher, MIC;
Br. Elliott, MIC; Br. Jacob, MIC; Br. Harrison, MIC;
Br. Mike, MIC; Br. Jeffrey, MIC; Br. Joseph, MIC;
Br. David, MIC; Br. Michael, MIC; Br. Joshua, MIC;
Br. Joseph, MIC; Br. Alex, MIC;
Br. Philip, MIC; Br. Paul, MIC
Novices: Nate, Matthew, Hank, Mark, Austin.
Postulants: Aaron, Mark, Matthew, Nate, Henry.

Attend a retreat

Father Donald invites you to
attend a **VOCATION RETREAT**
at the Marian House of
Studies in Steubenville, Ohio.

The next retreats:

Nov. 29-Dec. 1
Dec. 13-15
Feb. 14-16
Feb. 28-March 1

Learn more

Email: vocations@Marian.org

Visit: Marian.org/vocations

Write: **Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**
Vocation Director

**Marian Fathers of the
Immaculate Conception**

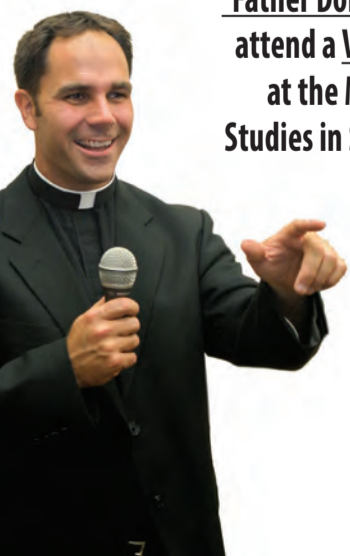
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Support

Want to help our seminarians?

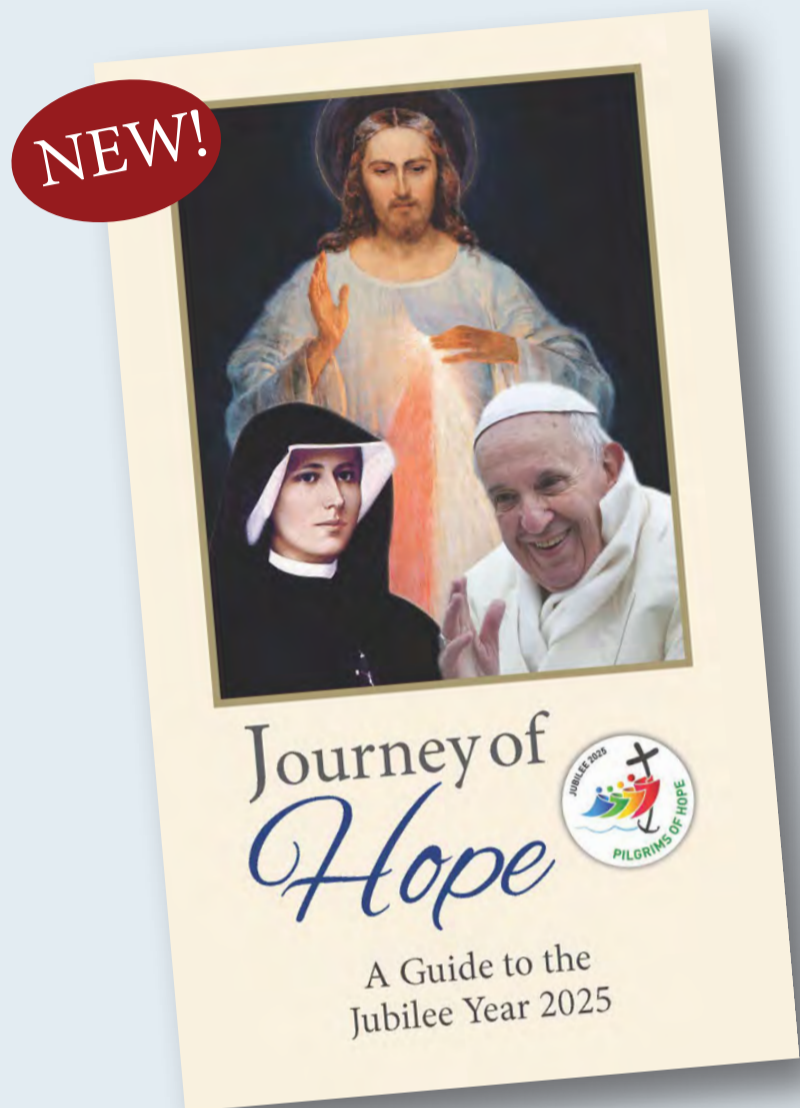
We have more than 20 men
preparing for religious life
and the priesthood.

To donate, visit
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Journey of Hope

A Guide to the Jubilee Year 2025



In this guidebook, you'll read about how the Church will celebrate the Jubilee Year. You'll learn what you can do to answer the call of the Holy Father to both know the face of God's mercy — Jesus Christ our Hope — and to show that face of mercy — true hope — to your friends and neighbors (as well as your enemies!). You'll also read about the importance of the Sacrament of Confession and rediscover the Divine Mercy devotion that will assist you to unleash the many graces God wishes to give you in your own life and to the whole world. Blessed Jubilee! Paperback, 88 pages. B64-JYOH \$3.99

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