

[Our environmental obligation](#) • [A prescription for Purgatory](#) • [A 'memorable' ministry](#)

Fall 2019

# Marian Helper

*Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception*

[marian.org](http://marian.org)



## AFTER SUICIDЕ

*There's Hope for Them and for You*

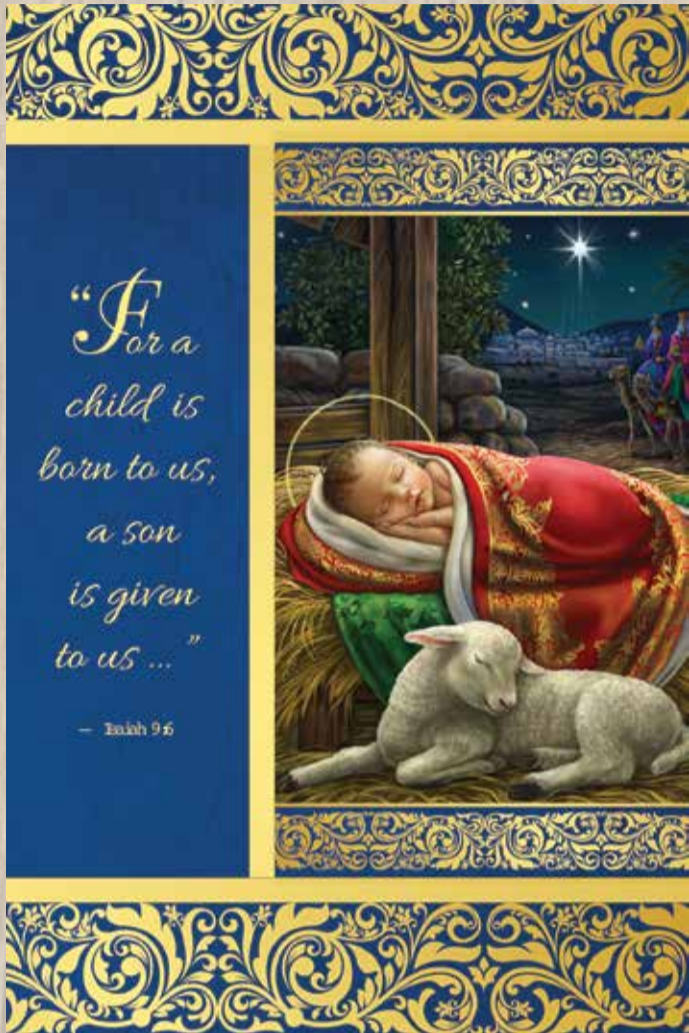
*Excerpts from the new book by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC & Jason Lewis, MIC*

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# 14 AFTER SUICIDE

A longstanding goal of Fr. Joseph, MIC, has come to fruition with the publication of *After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You*. Read excerpts from the new book.

## 10 The big picture

What's the connection between the pro-life cause and our obligation to environmental stewardship? In the latest in our series on Catholic social teaching, we rediscover doctrine that's only natural.

## 18 Prescription for Purgatory

Meet Dr. Michael Aiello, a physician determined to relieve suffering, including the spiritual anguish of the Holy Souls being purified in Purgatory. His efforts have since become a ministry.

## 20 Memory and mercy

A Marian Helper began visiting an assisted living facility and discovered ready and willing prayer warriors for the Kingdom of God.

## 24 A few (more) good men

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More than 15 years after the release of "The Passion of The Christ," a group of pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem led by the actor Jim Caviezel and one of his longtime admirers.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

*MARIAN HELPER* is intended to serve members of the Association of Marian Helpers (AMH), a spiritual benefit society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The magazine seeks to provide spiritual nourishment, education about the Catholic faith, and information about the mission and good works of the Marians. It also provides information about Association services and presents opportunities to support the mission and good works of the Congregation. *MARIAN HELPER* is published quarterly by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. It is sent free of charge to active members of the Association. Printed in the USA with ecclesiastical approval. Copyright © 2019 Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. All rights reserved. Send all correspondence to: Association of Marian Helpers, Editorial Dept., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263. email: [editorial@marian.org](mailto:editorial@marian.org) website: [marian.org](http://marian.org)

# WHO WE ARE



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the Association of  
Marian Helpers.  
1-800-462-7426

## National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

(413) 298-3931  
For pilgrimages:  
(413) 298-1119  
[ShrineOfDivineMercy.org](http://ShrineOfDivineMercy.org)



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## Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

The Marian Fathers are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 20 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 1944, the Association began as a small group of friends who believed in and supported the work of the Marian Fathers. Now some 1.5-million members strong, the Association is a spiritual benefit society that continues to prayerfully and financially support the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Your enrollment means that, by a decree of the Holy See, you will now share in the graces that are extended to all our Marian Helpers. These graces include:

- 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.



YouTube



[Visit marian.org/social](http://marian.org/social)

## OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT US GOD'S MISSION THROUGH US

**Deepen your commitment** of prayer and support by joining a special group of Marian Helpers:

- Thirteenth of the Month Club: [marian.org/13th](http://marian.org/13th)
- Friends of Mercy: [TheDivineMercy.org/friends](http://TheDivineMercy.org/friends)
- Holy Souls Sodality: [PrayForSouls.org](http://PrayForSouls.org)
- or call (413) 298-1382.

## Arrange a special gift:

- using stock, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: [marian.org/plannedgiving](http://marian.org/plannedgiving)

- to support a particular ministry or need: [marian.org/give](http://marian.org/give)
- to create a memorial or tribute: [MemorialsOnEdenHill.org](http://MemorialsOnEdenHill.org)
- or call (413) 298-1382.

## When making your 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., Stockbridge, MA 01262, \_\_\_% of my adjusted gross estate (or \$\_\_\_\_\_, or a specific asset) to be used for its religious and educational purposes.*

# OUR LADY WEIGHS IN

**A**mong my goals since becoming director of the Association of Marian Helpers five years ago has been to address the suicide crisis. The statistics are grim, indeed.

Since 1999, the suicide rate has risen 33 percent to its highest level since World War II. Currently, there are more deaths by suicide every year in the world than deaths by all the wars and homicides combined.

As you'll see in the [cover story](#) of this issue of *Marian Helper*, I'm pleased to report we now have an effective resource for this crisis.

*After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You*, written by Jason Lewis, MIC, and me, draws upon my own experience of losing my grandmother to suicide and the answers we discovered to key questions that had haunted me in the years following her death.

This was not an easy project. In fact, it was the most emotionally and spiritually taxing experience I've ever had, second only to my grandmother's suicide itself. But thankfully, Our Lady recently provided me with confirmation that all this prayerful work will bear spiritual fruit. Let me explain.

In June, as we were finishing the book, Jason and I gratefully accepted an invitation from a Marian Helper to lead a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, the site of alleged apparitions of Our Lady. We were joined by [Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC](#). While there, the spirit of Medjugorje quickly set into my soul — most powerfully in the form of two people whom Our Lady put before me.

Both were suicidal.

The first was a young Ukrainian woman whom I first saw from quite a distance away amidst the thousands of pilgrims. She and I made eye contact, and I saw she was crying, so I went to her. Not knowing if she spoke English, I asked, "Are you OK?"

"No," she said. With her permission, I prayed over

her. Afterwards, she told me she felt unloved and had no reason to live. "I want to kill myself," she told me.

Over a span of 45 minutes, I counseled her, drawing from some of the content in our book. I finally said to her, "You have so much to live for. You are intelligent. You are beautiful. And you speak English beautifully." She then interrupted me. "Father," she said, "I don't speak English. I don't know how I am speaking with you right now, but I know God sent you to me."

Apparently, among the graces some people report experiencing in Medjugorje is to understand languages with which they've had no familiarity. I was so moved by this, and by the time we were done talking, the despair had lifted from her. She was filled with joy.

I then met up with Jason and Fr. Seraphim. As I told them about my experience, a woman approached me and asked in broken English, "Are you an exorcist?" She was with a young man in his mid-20s, her son, who was kicking and screaming. Father Seraphim, who had been ordained an exorcist, then prayed over him. Afterwards, Fr. Seraphim asked the young man, "What is the issue?" The young man kept repeating, "I am going to kill myself."

We spoke with him for about an hour, again drawing upon our book. All the while, you could see this young man's disposition dramatically change from anger and distress to relief and joy. By the time we were done, the man was proclaiming belief in Jesus and his acceptance of Him as his Lord, God, and Savior.

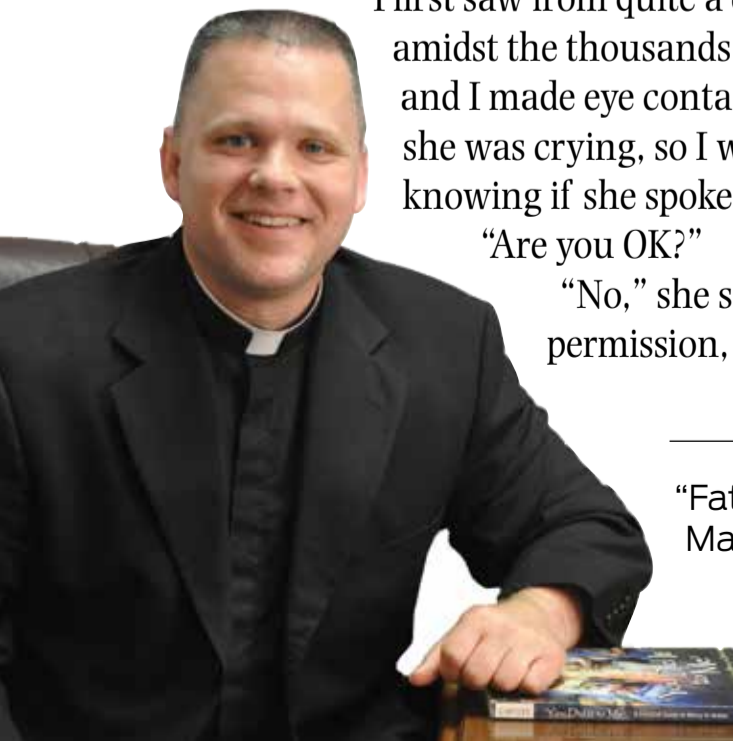
It was beautiful.

After all of our work on this book, the research and writing, the sleepless nights and times of self-doubt, Our Lady stepped in and added the final piece of punctuation: an exclamation point.

*Fr. Joseph, MIC*

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"Father Joseph, MIC," is the honorary title of the director of the Association of Marian Helpers. The current director is [Fr. Chris Alar, MIC](#).





Madeleine Prendergast (with her husband, Mike) shared a photo of some of her evangelization handiwork.

# DIVORCE, DIVINE MERCY, AND EVANGELIZATION

**D**ivine Mercy has the power to heal hearts broken by the tragedy of divorce. At least, it did for Madeleine Prendergast of Denver, Colorado.

When Madeleine was young, she witnessed her parents endure a bitter divorce. Though Madeleine's parents split, they continued to raise her and her two siblings Catholic.

"I always had a devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At age 9, I took seriously His promises to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque," Madeleine said. She went to Catholic schools and attended Mass every day.

In her adult life, as Madeleine pursued a career in magazine design, she continued to remain devoted to her faith. "I could, and frequently did, lecture people on being a good Catholic and a believer in Jesus Christ," she said. Madeleine, however, admits to living a somewhat duplicitous life herself. "Fearful of life's challenges — earning a living, developing a career, finding friendship and love — I misappropriated many of the gifts that God gave me," she said.

In her early 30s, not unlike her own parents, Madeleine briefly married and then divorced. "I thought I could love my first husband with Christ's love," she said. "I employed contorted logic to find in this marriage a solution to life's challenges. When it didn't work out, my first marriage and divorce embittered me toward God."

For a while, in her anguish, she turned her back on the Lord. "I left the Catholic Church, but I couldn't leave Jesus," she said. For 25 years, she went to evangelical and charismatic churches. "I benefited tremendously from these churches," she said. "My eyes were opened with amazement to the Bible and to prayer."

For a couple years during that time, Madeleine regularly drove with her sister from Boston, where they had been living, to Stockbridge, Massachusetts. "While my sister went on her errand, though I wasn't Catholic at the time, I stayed at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and prayed. This gave us both a sense of peace and hope," Madeleine said.

Around that same time, Madeleine's nephew taught her to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. "Eventually, Divine Mercy would bring me back to the Catholic Church," she said.

Around 2010, even while she was still away from the Church, Madeleine felt so inspired by the message of Divine Mercy that she started handing out Divine Mercy pamphlets to strangers.

"I remember a lot of snow one winter. The plows on those rural roads pushed snow higher than the mailboxes. People had to shovel out their mailboxes! I [would tuck] a leaflet for every household, safe in a clear plastic

bag, into every mailbox door, along with a prayer for their salvation,” she said.

Though Divine Mercy consoled her and gave her a sense of purpose, at age 45, Madeleine had all but completely given up hope that she would one day find love. “This made me sad, but I concentrated on other things,” she said.

Then she met a man named Mike at a social event after church. “God must have known that I was very lonely, even though I didn’t talk about it openly anymore, or even pray about it,” she said. “When Mike and I were engaged, I couldn’t believe that I could be so genuinely happy.”

After marrying Mike and moving across the country, Madeleine finally returned to the Catholic Church. “A Catholic church was always nearby. So I began to attend daily Mass again,” she said. “Once I was going to Mass again, I began to realize what a tremendous avenue the Church was for grace and holiness.”

Madeleine says that she’s received many gifts from the Lord through praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. “It’s wonderful to pray at the 3 o’clock hour in the church, along with other faithful. It’s something I can recollect, no matter where I am,” she said.

Madeleine has even volunteered at the Shrine in Stockbridge for Divine Mercy Sunday. “I can’t say enough about how kindly the volunteers were treated. Every consideration was given to answering questions in advance, so we knew what to expect,” she said.

Today, she continues to distribute Divine Mercy pamphlets to virtually anyone. “I’ve walked through small towns in Massachusetts, distributing leaflets, and I’m doing the same here in Colorado. I really enjoy being in touch with like-minded people at the Shrine about this task,” she said.

On a recent trip through Kansas, Madeleine was excited to see a Divine Mercy Image on the side of I-70, which inspired her to write in to the Marian Helpers Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and tell her story. “How many people are introduced to the love and mercy of Jesus, portrayed on these images by the side of the road?” she said.

One might ask the same question about Madeleine and her years spent handing out hundreds of Divine Mercy pamphlets. MH

— Marc Massery

## IN BRIEFS

### Introducing St. Stanislaus Papczynski (the app)

Following on the heels of the canonization in 2016 of St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701), the Marian Fathers have created a free app providing a thorough introduction to this Polish mystic, orator, writer, and Founder of the Marian Fathers. The app comes at a time when the Marian Fathers continue to receive many reports of graces received through the intercession of St. Stanislaus, whom the Holy See has named a “patron of those in mortal danger.”

The app includes an overview of his life, spirituality, writings, the Vatican-approved miracles that led to his beatification and canonization, and a video documentary. Interest in the saint is expected to increase as the Marian Fathers prepare to celebrate next year the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the religious Congregation he founded in 1670.

Visit [marian.org/apps](http://marian.org/apps) to download the app onto your smartphone.

### Calling all healthcare workers

The fourth annual Cleveland Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics & Spirituality Conference will be held Nov. 6-7, at St. Albert the Great Church in North Royalton, Ohio. Sponsored by Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, the conference is geared to all healthcare professionals and those seeking to integrate their faith into their healthcare practice.

Speakers will include Dr. Ashley K. Fernandes; Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC; Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC; Dr. Ronald Sobecks; Marie Romagnano, RN; Dr. Bryan Thatcher; and many others. For more information and to register, visit [TheDivineMercy.org/cleveland](http://TheDivineMercy.org/cleveland) or call 1-800-462-7426.

### Container sent to Philippines

Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM), an apostolate of the Marian Fathers, recently shipped a 40-foot container of donated medical supplies to Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, for use in hospitals caring for the indigent. In addition, Dr. Bryan Thatcher, EADM’s director, recently taped a 12-part television series titled “Understanding and Living the Message of Mercy” that will air later this fall on the Jesus Christ Network. If you would like Dr. Thatcher to speak at your parish, please call EADM at 1-877-380-0727. MH

# FACES OF MERCY

## **Adalberto Rolon (with wife, Rosa)**

New Rochelle, New York

I had a hip replacement surgery about a month ago. The people in the hospital told me that the recuperation would be very hard, with a lot of pain. And I told them, “You know what? Don’t tell me that. Because God, He helps me all the time. Maybe I’ll be walking fine pretty soon!”

I have a big image of Jesus in my house. Before my surgery, I prayed before it, “Don’t leave me! Please come with me! Please come with me to the hospital!”

After the surgery, when I opened my eyes, I said, “Look, look, look! You see? I see His image over here.” A miniature Divine Mercy Image was added to my chart at the hospital. I asked the doctor, “Did you bring it here?” He said, “No.” The hospital isn’t Catholic. We don’t know how it got there. I took a photo of it with my phone. I take that picture everywhere with me.

When I came back to my house after about a week, I started to use a walker. And then I would go down the stairs and go to the street just with my cane. The therapist was like, “Oh, you’re walking! Oh, you move your feet! Oh, you do everything good!”

And now I feel good! I’m walking! I use the cane a little bit now because the doctor said don’t leave it. I move my leg. I do everything! I have no more pain. Nothing! Thanks be to God. He helps me. All the time. He doesn’t leave me.

I told my wife, “Let’s go to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and say, “Thank You.””



## **Marcy Funk**

Morristown, New Jersey

I learned about Divine Mercy through a conference that Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, did about four years ago in Pennsylvania. I didn’t know anything about St. Faustina. I didn’t know anything about the Divine Mercy Image. I didn’t know anything about the Divine Mercy message.

I went there and was just so moved. I had never been on a retreat. After that, I devoured all his books!

I did his 33 Days to Morning Glory. I did my Marian consecration. I joined the Holy Souls Sodality because that had always been a part of my calling. And I came up [to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy] for the first time for a conference for the Holy Souls Sodality.

I’ve been coming here ever since. I visit several times a year. And every time I come here, the Lord provides exactly what I need. And it is different every time.

Last year, I was supposed to come up for a retreat and I was going to stay in the [St. John Paul II] Guest House for the first time. But there was no one to watch my kids. I thought I was going to have to cancel, and I was so upset. But my daughters said, “Why don’t we go with you?” They were 10 and 12 at the time. We had the most amazing experience. So, again, He provided it in exactly the way it was supposed to be and what we needed. And now *they* come with me. I don’t know that they’d let me come up here without them!



**Camille Thiesen** (on left)  
McHenry, Illinois

**Judy Loughman**  
Cairo, New York

**Judy:** I was here at the Shrine in fall for the monthly Healing Mass, but it was at night, so I wasn't walking the grounds to see it.

**Camille:** It's been about six years since I've been back. I'm from the same area as Judy, but about four years ago I moved to Illinois. And the first thing we wanted to do — because we used to come here all the time together — is to come back to the Shrine before I have to go back to Illinois.

**Judy:** We made sure we were here for devotions today.

**Camille:** It's our little day retreat.

**Judy:** Yeah, it is. We came here often together. We knew each other from our children when they were growing up. So, about 36 or 38 years?

**Camille:** Yes. I had moved into an apartment, and she had a house that was out at the end of those apartments. I knew nobody. So, in the mornings I used to walk around the circle. And this lady was just sitting out there all the time. And we got to know each other and became friends.

**Judy:** And spiritual friends and then sisters.

**Camille:** That's right. Now we're sisters in the Lord.

**Judy:** It's a beautiful friendship. It's God's blessings upon us to have each other to share this. MH

— Terry Peloquin

## IN BRIEFS

We ask for your prayers for the repose of the soul of **Kathleen Canavan**, 23, the daughter of our dear friends **John** and **Karen Canavan**. John, who promotes Divine Mercy in Australia on behalf of the Marian Fathers, said, "She was a very beautiful young lady. She had a big heart. It's the greatest loss a father could ever have."

Kathleen was killed on June 8 when the ultra-light aircraft she was riding in crashed into Lake Eildon in southeastern Australia. In addition to praying for the soul of Kathleen, please pray for peace for the Canavan family and friends, including John's step-brother, Danny, who was in the accident with Kathleen and survived.



*A Marian Helper, **Farrell Miller**, emailed us the following:*

Everyone needs prayers. Therefore, we would all do well to pray, as an act of love, for our neighbors — particularly those strangers we encounter daily: on the streets, in cars or trucks, in stores or offices, at meetings, or even in the media. To pray a Hail Mary takes but a moment, or simply ask God to bless them. No one is without the need for prayer, especially in today's culture, and we can be confident our prayers will be answered.

I was reminded of this when I read the article "A Reunion of Sorts" in the winter issue of *Marian Helper* magazine. David Reintjes recounts seeing — and praying for — a young stranger, a prisoner that looked "like something they just dragged out of the jungle." That young man has since become a considerably calmed down **Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**. An answered prayer.

It's not for us to fret or doubt, but only to trust. No prayer goes unanswered. In Fr. Donald's case and at all times: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good" (Ps 107:1). Indeed, "This is the day the Lord has made" (Ps 118:24). Perhaps this is the day that we help save a soul — maybe even a future vocation to the religious life.

*Got news or views you wish to share? Email us at [editorial@marian.org](mailto:editorial@marian.org)* MH

## FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

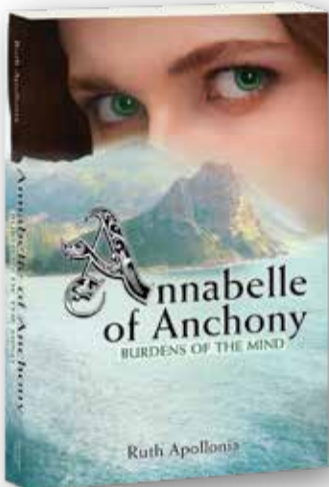
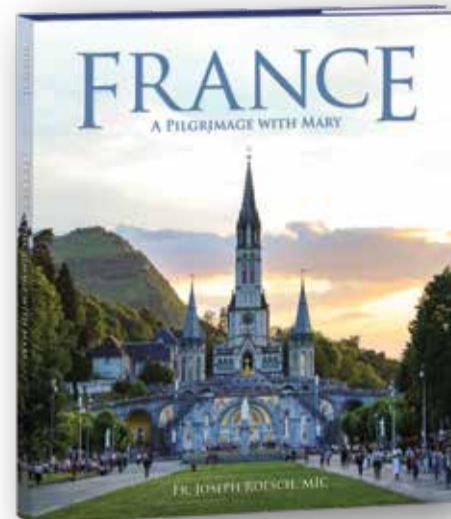
Visit [ShopMercy.org/b43](http://ShopMercy.org/b43) or call 1-800-462-7426.

As we journey into autumn, consider picking one of these *Marian Press* works to help feed your mind and renew your soul.

### FRANCE: A PILGRIMAGE WITH MARY

BY FR. JOSEPH ROESCH, MIC

In this richly illustrated spiritual pilgrimage, explore the beauties and blessings of the Marian shrines and holy places of France with the Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, as your spiritual director and guide. Traversing the length and breadth of the eldest daughter of the Church, you'll visit major apparition sites such as Lourdes, Rue du Bac, Laus, and Pontmain, hearing Our Lady's messages for us all. Spiritually enriching, visually stunning, this book is the perfect gift for families to share, and it serves as the next best thing for those who cannot make the journey in person. **\$24.95. B43-FRMBK**



### ANNABELLE OF ANCHONY: BURDENS OF THE MIND

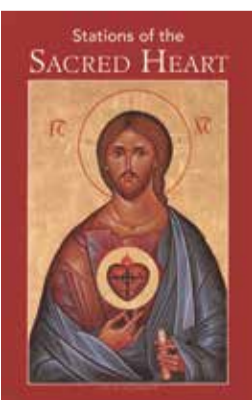
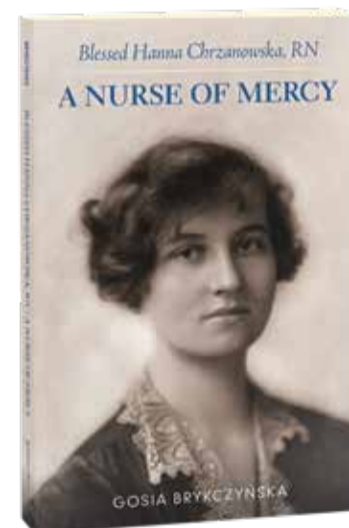
BY RUTH APOLLONIA

In Europe during the Middle Ages, Annabelle of Anchony finds herself trapped on an island, hunted by the vicious Demolites, and forced to trust a kindly stranger. As she grows up, sustained only by her Christian faith, she must find her family, her identity, and a path to peace in a kingdom torn by civil strife. But even when she does come home, everything is not as it seems. This award-winning novel by Ruth Apollonia is the first in a series, designed to fascinate and inspire the young adult readers in your family. **\$15.95. B43-ANCH**

### BLESSED HANNA CHRZANOWSKA, RN: A NURSE OF MERCY

BY GOSIA BRYKCYNSKA

Discover the inspiring story of the first lay registered nurse to be beatified! After Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska (1902-1973) helped tend war refugees during World War II, she worked closely with Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (later Pope St. John Paul II), hundreds of student volunteers, professional nurses, and committed lay and consecrated people of the Krakow Archdiocese so as to follow the Gospel call to love one's neighbor — even when the Communist government of Poland made that difficult. This extraordinary woman demonstrates that no matter the obstacles, lay Christians can be the light of the world in their ordinary lives. **\$12.95. B43-HANBK**



### STATIONS OF THE SACRED HEART

Modeled on the classic Stations of the Cross, these Stations of the Sacred Heart will gently and prayerfully lead you through the Scriptures to a greater understanding of and trust in the Sacred Heart. Written by the Visitation Sisters (one of whose members, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque [1647-1690], received the Sacred Heart private revelations), this devotion will be a blessing to all who love Jesus. **\$5.95. B43-STBKL**



# WE'RE COMING UP ON 350

**F**or many years, the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception considered Oct. 24, 1673, as the date of our founding by St. Stanislaus Papczynski. That date marks the approval by a bishop of the first house of the Congregation, in the Korabiew Forest of Poland.

However, at the General Chapter meeting held at the beginning of 2017, we approved a declaration that traces the founding to Dec. 11, 1670.

How could this be? A brief explanation is in order.

Before he founded our Congregation, St. Stanislaus was a member of a religious order called the Congregation of Piarist Fathers. He loved his order, but for a number of reasons, St. Stanislaus left the Piarists. He received an indult releasing him from vows and membership of the Piarist Fathers on Dec. 11, 1670.

The act of secularization, as it's called, was performed by the vice-provincial and two witnesses. At that moment, he was transferred to the status of a diocesan priest. At the close of the ceremony, the future saint professed in front of these three men what we refer to as his *Oblatio* — a solemn declaration that served as the foundation of his new religious Congregation.

Father Stanislaus believed that the Holy Spirit had placed in his heart a vision of a new religious community dedicated to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. In his *Oblatio*, he therefore offered himself totally to God in the Holy Trinity and to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He promised that, until the end of his life, and even at the cost of his own blood, he would, “in purity and zeal, serve Them in the Society of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception,” which he wanted to found “for the grace of God.” At the same time, he promised obedience and religious poverty, and he offered a profession of faith.

In 2017, we accepted this as his religious profession and the beginning of our Founder's consecrated life in the new religious community. We found out that this was not a new idea. While the 1673 date had been accepted for many years as the date of our founding, we revisited

a long-held belief that St. Stanislaus, upon leaving the Piarists, had immediately become a Marian.

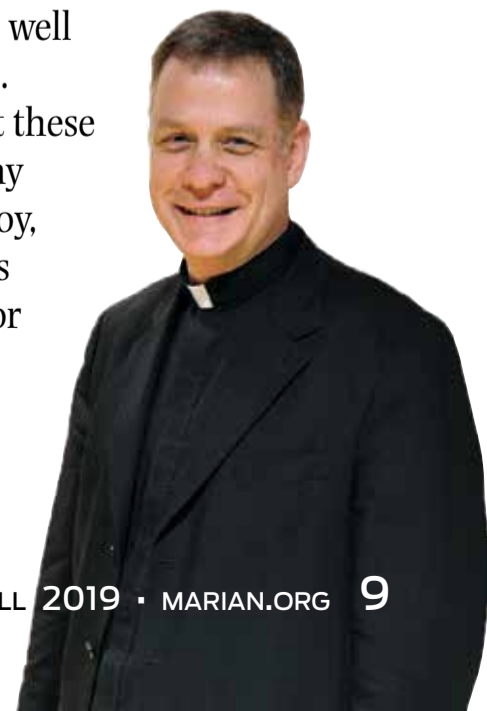
In fact, the oldest biography of St. Stanislaus stated that he was being obedient to the voice of God and His decrees by changing his vocation. The biography states that, with permission, “on ... December 11, A.D. 1670, he was released from his simple vows and his oath of perseverance. ... At the same moment, he offered to God and His Mother the new promise (the *Oblatio*) in his Congregation.”

A papal document from 1786 that approved the Marian Order summarized its history by stating, “In 1670, the Order ... by the Servant of God Stanislaus, was created.” So the declaration we approved reinstates a conviction that existed from the beginning that the date of the founding was the date of the *Oblatio*, Dec. 11, 1670.

So now, let's do the math: Our Congregation will shortly be celebrating our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

We will open our celebrations this Dec. 8, one year before the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Oblatio*. Each month during 2020, on our monthly days of recollection, we'll reflect on the theme “Consecrated for Christ and the Church.” In December 2020, all Marians will renew our vows using the formula of the *Oblatio*. We will continue our jubilee celebrations until 2023. Each year will have its own theme. We'll host international and local meetings of Marians as well as meetings with Marian Helpers.

You will be hearing more about these celebrations in the future. We pray that the jubilee will be a time of joy, reconciliation, and renewal for us and for our lay associates. Pray for us, and stay tuned!




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Father Joe Roesch, MIC, is the vicar general of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He lives in Rome.



# The big picture

## Catholic social teaching on environmental stewardship

*Catholic social teaching is one of the great treasures of the Church, and yet all too often, it's neglected or overlooked entirely. In this issue of Marian Helper, we continue our exploration of the Church's social teaching, this time focusing on the environment.*

By Chris Sparks

**N**ot everyone recognizes the connection between environmental stewardship and bringing about the culture of life.

In fact, failing to see the connection between the pro-life cause and good environmental stewardship (a failing of both the left and the right) is a classic case of failing to see the forest for the trees.

Indeed, we can get so focused on “our” issue — on the issue that makes most sense to us, or touches us directly, or that is addressed by “our” political party or favorite news sources — that we fail to see the bigger picture, the primordial, providentially intended connections between God, neighbor, body and soul, and the created order.

In his [2010 message](#) for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI put our environmental obligations into proper perspective. He wrote:

Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification,

the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions? Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of “environmental refugees,” people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it — and often their possessions as well — in order to face the dangers and uncertainties of forced displacement? Can we remain impassive in the face of actual and potential conflicts involving access to natural resources? All these are issues with a profound impact on the exercise of human rights, such as the right to life, food, health and development.

Reread and ponder the above carefully. Pope Benedict XVI clearly says that in order to ensure life, we need to have a clean environment. Degradation of the environment kills. Degradation of the environment threatens lives, not just of those of us walking around, but the unborn, as

well. The Church has taught this loudly, consistently, and clearly for a long time.

The most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution. ... Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God.

— Pope St. John Paul II,  
*1990 World Day of Peace Message*, 7, 16.

Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2415;  
cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 37-38.

Catholics don't have the option to be blind to the bigger picture. In fact, Catholics are called to environmental stewardship because of our pro-life convictions; because we are convinced that human beings have rights and responsibilities given to us by our Creator; and because the whole of creation is a gift, not just to some of us, but to all of humanity, past, present, and future (see *Catechism*, 2401-2406, 2415-2418).

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He looked out over His creation, before the fall of man, and He called it good. As Dr. Scott Hahn explains in his book *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*, humanity was given the Garden of Eden to 'abodah and shamar, Hebrew words that mean to "till" and "keep" (Gen 2:15) — the same Hebrew words that are used to describe the responsibility of the priests in the Temple (see Nm 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6).

The whole of creation, Dr. Hahn explains, was made by God to be a cosmic temple, under the stewardship of the high priests: humanity. The created world was meant as the medium for the message of God's love (see *Catechism*, 1147), and for the transmission of our love back to God through worship. The fall disrupted that transmission of life and love, and Christ's Incarnation restored it.

So our Catholic faith makes clear that all of the created order is given over to humanity for our use, yes, but also for our stewardship. We are meant to till and to keep the world, to make it fruitful and to defend it. We are to live prudently in the land, making sure that it flourishes and is fecund for generations upon generations down to the end of the world (see *Catechism*, 2415).

Our environmental stewardship (or failure to exercise environmental stewardship) directly affects us all, born and unborn alike. We can make use of the natural world and trust natural processes to clean it up, within reason. But past that point? Unless we take steps to render the poisons produced by industry harmless; unless we safeguard the radioactive waste generated by our nuclear power plants; unless we act as responsible stewards and clean up after ourselves, we will kill our environment and ourselves along with it.

We know the realities of climate change, as referenced by Pope Benedict. Moreover, according to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, since the Industrial Revolution, the ocean's acidic level has increased by about 30 percent. According to the World Wildlife Federation, an estimated 18 million acres of forest are cut down each year. Photos from space confirm our ocean now hosts massive garbage patches, including the so-called Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is more than twice the size of Texas.

The evidence is overwhelming that we are not acting as responsible stewards.

Think of a cook in the kitchen, or a carpenter at his bench, or children playing in the mud. They can choose not to clean up after themselves. The cook can leave the dirty dishes lying about; the carpenter can simply pile tool on tool and heap the sawdust to the ceiling; the children can go to bed filthy and keep getting filthier. But someday, that cook will poison someone. That carpenter will burn down his workshop. The children will fall ill.

Why would we imagine that our environment is any different? Why would we shirk ecological stewardship? Why would we imagine that our good God, who commands love of Himself and of neighbor as the two great commandments, would have no expectations of His children when it comes to the welfare and wellbeing of our common home?

Our neighbors are impacted by our consumerism and our materialism (see *Catechism*, 2404). The factory that belches smoke into the air and pours waste into the river impacts its neighbors, to whom, according to God, that factory owner has an obligation (see *Catechism*, 2432). We are our brother's keeper, after all (see *Evangelium Vitae*, 19).

So what do we do about all this?

The Church invites us to mark the ecumenical "Season of Creation" from Sept. 1, the Feast of St. Giles (c. 650-710), to Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (1181/1182-1226) and the Vigil of the Feast of St. Faustina

(1905-1938). During that time, let's commit to prayer, study, and action.

Let's pray for our spiritual and political leaders that they may wisely guide us in being good stewards of creation.

Let's study, turning to both faith and reason, both to Church teaching on environmental stewardship (such as Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*) and to good books, documentaries, or other reliable sources of scientific information about our environment. Let's find out what we need to do to be good stewards of the created order. Let's familiarize our-

selves with the environmental issues impacting our local communities, our state, our nation, and the globe.

And then let's act, taking part in works of mercy and justice, such as those laid out in our ecological examination of conscience (see page 13). Let's spend time in nature. Some of the greatest advocates of environmental stewardship have historically been outdoorsmen, hunters, and fishermen, like President Theodore Roosevelt, founder of the national park system.

Let's join their ranks and grow to love this tremendous gift from our loving Father. MH

## Beyond the half-truths



*To better understand our current environmental crisis, we spoke with Dr. Benjamin Wiker, a Catholic ethicist, professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville, and author most recently of In Defense of Nature: The Catholic Unity of Environmental, Economic, and Moral Ecology (Emmaus Road Publishing).*

**Dr. Wiker, what does the political left generally get right and wrong about the environment? And what about the political right?**

The left is typically deeply concerned about the natural environment but often considers human nature to be an invasive if not evil presence in an otherwise paradisaical garden. The right is typically deeply concerned about human nature, but is either indifferent or even hostile to concern for the natural environment.

So, while the left is obsessed with pollution of the natural environment, the right is obsessed with pollution of the moral environment. The unpleasant and obfuscating result is that each refuses to see the other's legitimate claims to truth because the other side seems to be tied inextricably to evident error. We know all too well how that works out.

The right looks at the left and thinks, "All those who are so hyped up about environmentalism are also rabidly pro-abortion and pro-gay marriage, therefore concern about the natural environment must be essentially corrupt, too."

The left looks at the right and thinks, "All those who are so hyped up about abortion and homosexuality are also rabidly destroying not just the beauty of our natural environment, but poisoning the water and land as well, therefore their concern about 'morality' must be essen-

tially corrupt, too."

Guilt by association, so to speak! The problem is that each side is satisfied with a half-truth as the whole truth. In my book, I'm trying to get both sides to see the whole truth about ecology.

**How did our understanding of the natural world get so skewed?**

Let's go back to the early 1600s with Francis Bacon who argued that nature itself isn't good, and that we

humans will only make progress in this world if we master nature by technology, squeezing from her whatever we happen to desire. Horribly, Bacon uses rape imagery.

This wasn't a call for "dominion," as it is found in Genesis, the taking care of creation as a kind of garden. This is the notion of mastery that we have with slavery, the brutal treatment of nature to extract from it greater comforts and pleasures, more technological power, and perhaps (Bacon hinted) even physical immortality.

In order to carry out this view, Bacon had to treat nature as something that needed drastic reconstruction to make it suit our will. The result of the "rape of nature" is wide-scale environmental destruction. But Bacon believed that we could master, and rework, human nature as well, just as we are doing today, making of ourselves anything we desire. Witness genetic manipulation, bizarre reproductive technologies, attempts to fuse human and animal DNA, and transgenderism.

**Explain what you refer to in your book as the "empire of waste."**

When you carry through with Bacon's project to



## Ecological Examination of Conscience

- Do I waste food, water, or other natural resources?
- Do I waste fuel or electricity?
- Do I look for ways to reduce my consumption of goods more generally?
- Do I help act as a steward of our common home through the following acts?
  - Plant a tree or garden
  - Generate less trash
  - Observe the Church's days of abstinence from meat
  - Where possible, buy my clothes second-hand
  - Arrange a home energy efficiency assessment through my power company or state agency
- Have I embraced the spirit of poverty to which the Church calls me (see *Catechism*, 2407)?
- Do I recognize that I am a steward of a portion of the goods of the earth for a time, and have an obligation to use resources with consideration of those who come after me (see *Catechism*, 2402-2405)?

increase our pleasures, comforts, and conveniences without limit, and try to remove all pain, suffering, and even inconvenience, you end up creating more and more waste as a byproduct — i.e., quite literally, mountains of trash.

Before my first visit to a landfill, [my family] treated trash like everybody else. We put it into black plastic bags and then into the trash can for pickup. It thereafter went, so we supposed, to a magic, hidden destination where it disappeared for good. Out of sight; out of mind.

But then, after we moved to the country, I had to take some of our own larger trash items to the landfill myself — a life-changing experience. If you have never been to an actual landfill — never seen the acres and acres of ugly and malodorous detritus daily cast off by our consumerism, never ridden across a quarter-mile road of smashed bottles, decaying food, soiled diapers, and shards of particle board — you *really* should.

We produce way too much waste, and that's both an environmental *and* moral problem. Environmentally, it not only uses enormous amounts of energy to produce all the stuff that we're throwing away, but disposing of all the waste is becoming more and more problematic. There's a moral problem as well, one that every Catholic must admit. We are over-consuming because we're so pleasure- and comfort-addicted, and that violates one of the four cardinal virtues, the virtue of temperance.

Happily, those on the left are *not* moral relativists about our creating this much trash. They understand that it is *wrong* to treat nature this way, to uglify the landscape and allow toxins to ruin the soil and groundwater, and even that we need to have something like the virtue of temperance. This is a great advance, morally, in our cultural debates, because

the left is often associated with moral relativism.

Here's the next step in the reasoning the left needs to take: If it's wrong to pollute nature because the natural order is good, then it is wrong to pollute human nature because it, too, is part of the good order of nature, of creation. So, I introduce the notion of *moral pollution* as well, looking at the destruction of our sexual nature that occurs through the epidemic of pornography — and it's just as ugly and toxic as a landfill.

### **What can we do, as individuals, to defend nature?**

We really need to understand the complexity of the problem. I'll use an example of why "simple" solutions aren't enough. We like to think that we can solve the problem of the production of so much trash by recycling. While recycling can be done well, the truth is that far too much of our recycling is either shipped to other countries like China who basically use slave labor to deal with it, or it's just thrown into landfills in the U.S. The real problem is that we are producing so much trash to begin with, and that's tied in complex ways to how we live.

Secondly — and here I'm addressing Catholics in particular — we must actually study nature, get to know our own ecosystem, study birds, trees, flowers, deer, and so on. This is a key theological task. Nature is creation; it's God's handiwork. The more you know about the order of nature, the better. At the same time, study human nature, human biology, human psychology, as well as theology. See how, in both, violations of the order of nature cause evident harm.

Then, start to talk to people on the "other side." Show them why we need to protect both nature and human nature.

MH

— Felix Carroll

# HOPE AMIDST A BRUTAL CRISIS

Excerpts from the new book, *After Suicide*

*It's now available for order!*

Marian Press is pleased to announce the publication of the book *After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, and Jason Lewis, MIC.

Two years in the making, the new book honestly and pastorally addresses the hard issue of suicide (or death by any means) and draws from the teachings of the Church, the message of *Divine Mercy*, and Fr. Chris Alar's own experience of losing his grandmother to suicide.

The following are excerpts from the book:



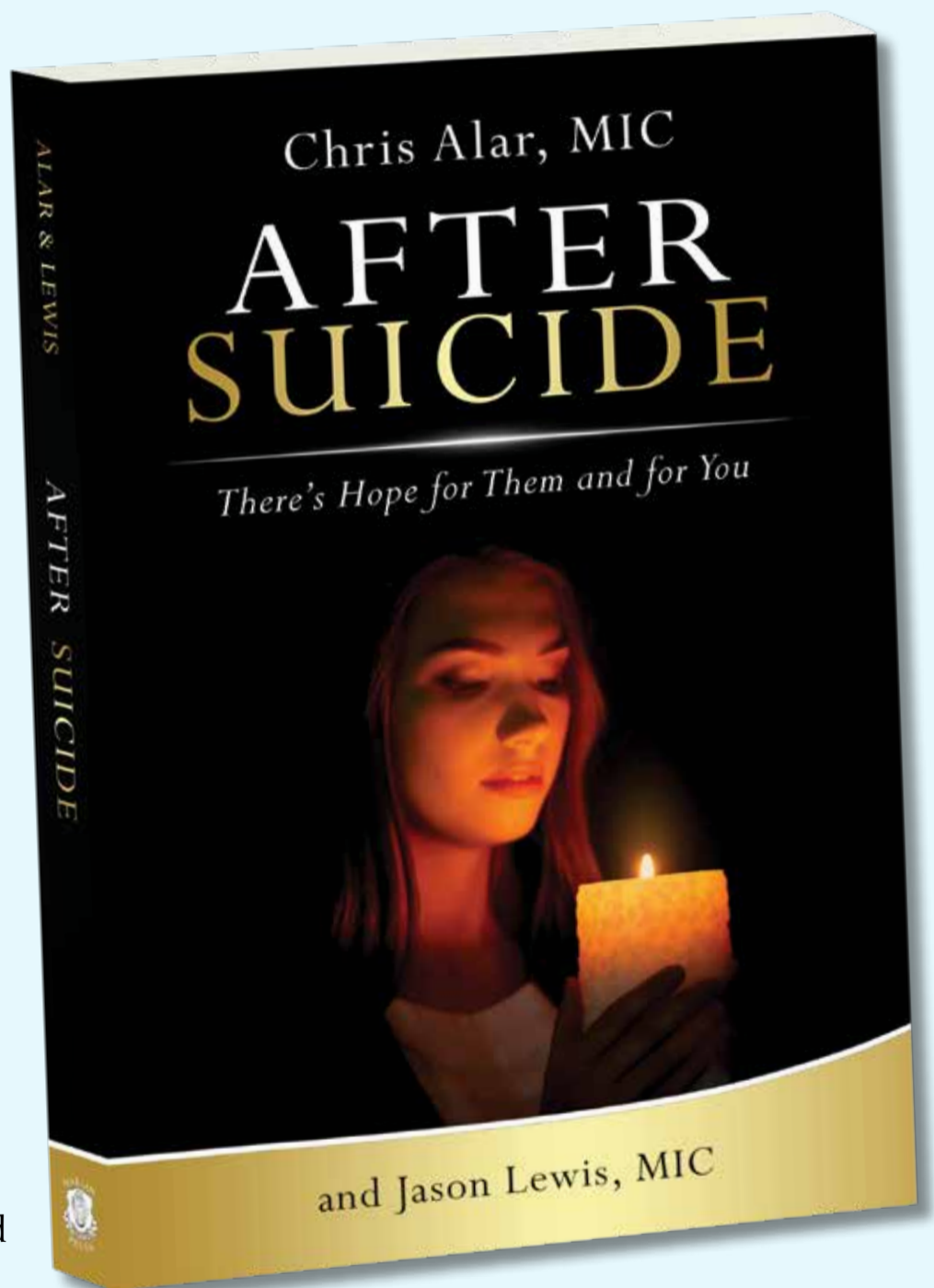
## **On the root cause of the suicide crisis ...**

As I looked into some of the specific and varied reasons for the suicide problem today, they all seemed to underscore Pope St. John Paul II's spot-on diagnosis that we are living in "a culture of death," a phrase from his papal encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*). I was troubled when I reflected on this reality. Does Christ not bring us the "Gospel of Life"? Has He not conquered sin and death and set the human spirit free for abundant life? ...

After much thought and prayer, I came to the conclusion that there is one fundamental root cause of our modern suicide crisis: a lack of faith in God. Coupled with this primary cause, there are also secondary factors that contribute to the lack of faith in our individual and communal lives — namely, a disordered attachment to "the world" and the influence of the demonic.

## **Is suicide necessarily damnable? ...**

As a priest, in saying that there's hope for those who have taken their own lives, I want to emphasize that suicide is never the answer. In this life, it's a permanent response to temporary problems. Furthermore, it hurts the people who are left behind, causing all sorts of heart-



ache and harm in ways the deceased would never have imagined.

I also want to emphasize that while what I'm about to explain reveals that there certainly is hope after suicide, there is no guarantee of salvation for anyone. There is often great cost to the souls of those who die in this way. It's more than likely that they will have to at least suffer

great pains in Purgatory, including remorse over having cut their own lives short and the knowledge that they've hurt those who love them. As we'll soon see, however, there's something you and I can do that's very effective for shortening, or even eliminating, that suffering. And so the hope remains. ...

[Which] brings us to the central question of this chapter: If suicide (and assisting anyone in suicide) is a serious sin and should never be considered the answer to any problematic situation, why isn't it necessarily damnable? Expanding on the idea above, there's a difference between committing a wrong act and being fully culpable, or *guilty*, of that wrong act. ...

When we consider the particular case of my own grandmother — and by extension, of the many who have died by their own hand — we must keep a few things in mind regarding whether or not her sin is “damnable”: (1) We know that the act of suicide is objectively grave matter and a truly serious offense against love of God, neighbor, and self. (2) She may or *may not* have had *full knowledge* of the gravity of her action. (There is no way for us to know for certain.) But (3) did she really commit the act with full freedom of her will? Did she really *want* to take her own life apart from any undue influence and burden? I believe not. If this is the case, her sin was not damnable — and the same points apply to anyone else who has completed suicide.

Likewise, the Church teaches that “although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God” (CCC, 1861). In other words, we can know that an act is objectively grave, but we cannot know if it is actually “mortal,” because we don't know exactly what someone knew or didn't know about the seriousness of the act, or if their will was entirely free when committing it ...

The *Catechism* addresses this question directly, saying, “Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide” (2282). Read that

again. Please, read and reread this declaration of Mother Church. Let it sink into your heart, as if coming from the lips of a tender, loving, and understanding mother. Our beloved's culpability, the responsibility for their action, may be reduced if they experienced “grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture.” In the case of suicide, one could even argue that “torture” could apply to mental, not just physical, duress.

I believe that most suicides happen as a result of one or more of those conditions. It seems that my grandmother's did. ...



Jason Lewis, MIC, book editor Chris Sparks, and Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, put the finishing touches on their new book, which according to Dr. Peter Kreeft “fills a terribly deep need with a terribly deep clarity, charity, and wisdom borrowed from the saints.”

Reading the words of Jesus to Faustina about the depths of His mercy for the souls of the dying, we can come to one conclusion: There's hope. No matter how someone died, no matter how far beyond hope they seem to be now or at the hour of their death, there's still hope for their salvation!

### **Spiritual principles for healing ...**

Now that we have discussed the nature of grief and some of the unique complexities of a suicide, drawing from resources offered by grief professionals, let's shift our focus to the critical spiritual approaches we can take in the healing process. Here are three spiritual principles that can assist you in your healing from bereavement

and offer you real hope.

- 1) We admit that we are powerless over the loss of our loved one.
- 2) We come to trust that Jesus, the Divine Mercy, can restore our lives to manageability.
- 3) We make a decision to entrust our will, our lives, and our loved one to the loving care and protection of God.

One thing is for certain: If you are grieving the loss of a suicide, many things will not make sense about the circumstances in which you find yourself. It will be impossible to “figure out” the chain of events that has overwhelmed you. However, these three spiritual principles for coping with suicide bereavement can work together to help place you on more solid footing. Of course, the time it takes to return to “manageability” — to get things “back on track” — will vary for each person. It may be difficult to see right now, but the Father loves you and will not leave you orphaned in your anguish. He *will* help you.

### **An act of entrustment to Jesus ...**

If you are now ready to fully trust in Jesus’ care and protection for you and your loved one, you can make your entrustment concrete by offering this prayer (or one that is similar):

Jesus, I trust in You. You are mercy and goodness itself. In this very moment and forevermore, I offer myself to You entirely to do with me as You will. Remove from me any obstacle that stands in the way of Your grace. I also offer and entrust to You my beloved \_\_\_\_\_ (name loved one). Take them fully into Your care and protection, now and for all eternity, and may I be fully reunited with them in Heaven. May Your will always be done in my life. Jesus, I trust in You!

... When you make this offering with a sincere heart, you can think of it as planting a “mustard seed” of hope, with the anticipation of growth. Growth in what? A sense of peace and harmony. You may begin to feel relief from the deep-seated agony that has seized control of your daily life. The hopelessness that pervaded your mind will begin to fade away. You will grow more confident in Jesus’ care for the one you lost. A new sense of power and strength may emerge, along with love and gratitude for the nearness of Jesus and His loving mercy. These are all consequences of the integrated grief stage, whereby new strength and understanding often begin to take hold.

### **A mother’s thoughts following her daughter’s suicide ...**

Earlier, I mentioned the spiritual bond I’d forged with Sammie Wood. ...

I asked her two tough questions. I asked, “How is life five years later after the loss of Clare?” And much more awkwardly, with a lump in my throat, I asked, “Can you see any ‘greater good’ from this experience?”

Let’s listen to how Sammie answered these questions in a way that only she could:

... We will always, always, always miss her. I tell her many times a day in my heart that I love her and that I miss her. I pray for her always, especially the Chaplet. ...

We will never see her live out her vocation. All our joys have the added color of missing her, but maybe we also have a deeper appreciation for those joys. We certainly don’t take as much for granted as we once did. ...

I know losing Clare has changed all of us. It has changed me. I’m not as naive as I used to be, and I’ve lost some of my innocence. I never dreamed something like this could happen. I hope and pray I’m more compassionate, but I’m not sure if I am. I think for sure my faith is stronger. I’m sure (and rightly so) that losing Clare has humbled me. I used to think I had things figured out, and now I’m absolutely certain I don’t know much at all. Thankfully, I do know God is in control — I do know that He has it figured out! I’m thankful for the great gift of eternity and thankful for His Infinite Mercy.

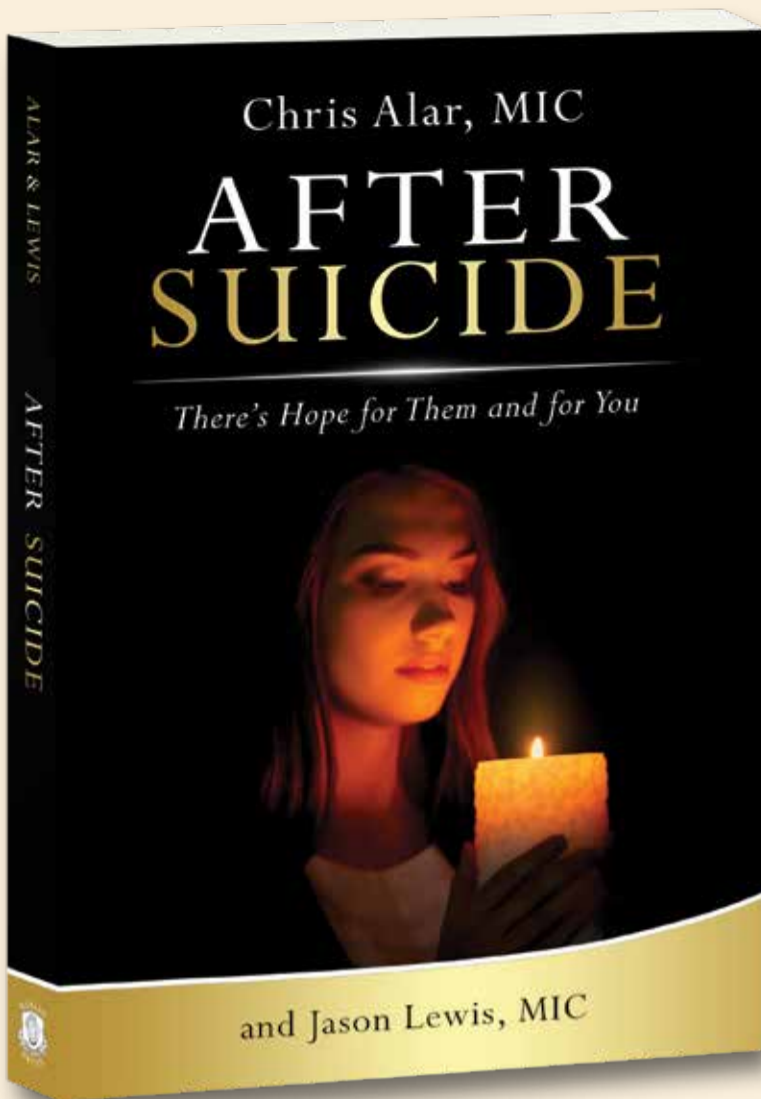
### **On the ‘prescription of hope’...**

The mustard tree of hope will blossom through our continued trust in Christ’s loving mercy, sometimes quickly, sometimes gradually.

When times of doubt, heartache, and grief reemerge — as they undoubtedly will — seek to renew trust in Jesus, and recall your decision to offer yourself and your departed loved one to His care and protection. Repeat the words of our “prescription of hope” — *Jesus, I trust in You*. He has proven Himself in countless ways and will unfailingly come to you in His mercy again and again. He cannot and will not deny your plea, even if you don’t clearly see His response or fully understand how He is present. In time, you will again rest securely in the hope of His never-ending love. MH

Visit [ShopMercy.org/b43](http://ShopMercy.org/b43) to order *After Suicide: There’s Hope for Them and for You*.

**Visit our website: [suicideandhope.com](http://suicideandhope.com)**

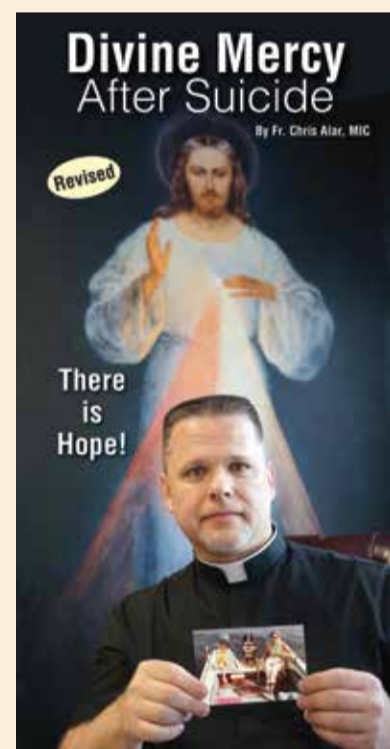


# There is hope.

## **After Suicide:** There's Hope for Them and for You

What does the Church really teach about suicide? Addressing the hard issue of suicide honestly and pastorally, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, draws from the teaching of the Church, the message of Divine Mercy, and his own experience of losing his grandmother to suicide in order to offer readers two key forms of hope. With co-author Jason Lewis, MIC, Fr. Chris reveals that there's hope for the salvation of those who've died by their own hand, and there's hope for the healing of those whom they've left behind. **B43-ASTH \$14.95**

Our new prayer card includes a prayer from the *Order of Christian Funerals* for those lost to suicide. **B43-FRJPC**



## **Divine Mercy** **After Suicide (revised)**

Many give up hope for those who have committed suicide and believe their souls are lost. This pamphlet explains why you should never give up on them – and what you should do instead. **B43-HOPE**

**Pamphlets:** 10 FOR \$1.60 • 100 FOR \$14.00 • 1,000 FOR \$100.00  
**Prayer cards:** 10 FOR \$1.20 • 100 FOR \$10.00 • 1,000 FOR \$60.00

Order online at [ShopMercy.org/b43](http://ShopMercy.org/b43) or call 1-800-462-7426



The ministry called Walking with Jesus meets monthly to pray for the souls in Purgatory. Front row, from left, Dr. Michael Aiello, Sandy Maher, and Donna Nelson. Back row, from left, Jeannie Brockett, Diane Labaro, Fr. Richard Dellos, Nancy Aiello, and Concetta Carcone (not pictured, Josie Abounader).

# Prescription for Purgatory

On a mission to ease the suffering of Holy Souls

By Marian Friedrichs

**T**aking an opportunity to relieve someone's pain is a no-brainer for Dr. Michael Aiello of Utica, New York. After all, he's a physician — and a Catholic, with a devotion to the souls in Purgatory.

"Who wouldn't want to be able to directly relieve someone of intense suffering?" he says.

In his medical practice, he travels long distances to help relieve the physical ailments of patients, many of them strangers.

As devotees of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, Dr. Aiello and his wife, Nancy, with some of their fellow parishioners at St. Joseph and St. Patrick Church in Utica, similarly seek to relieve the *spiritual* anguish of souls — many of whom they may never have met in this life. In doing so, they are following the Church teaching that we, the living, are

duty-bound to offer our prayers, sacrifices, corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and almsgiving for the release of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Indeed, the Church even has a month — November — specially dedicated to remembering these souls who, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins or have not fully atoned for past wrongdoing. They "are debarred from the Beatific Vision," as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* puts it — that is, they are kept from Heaven until their souls become purified in Purgatory.

About three years ago, Dr. Aiello began investigating ways to help these souls. He read about the plenary indulgence granted by the Church to souls detained in Purgatory when the Christian faithful devoutly visit a cemetery and pray for the dead. This indulgence can be gained each day

from Nov. 1 through Nov. 8. This discovery inspired Dr. Aiello to research other ways to aid departed souls. He learned that, through simple actions such as reciting the Rosary in a church or an oratory, we can provide relief to a suffering soul in Purgatory, up to one plenary indulgence per day.

He and Nancy had already known about the power of Gregorian Masses — a series of 30 Masses, offered for 30 days in a row — to release from Purgatory the soul for whom they are offered. The couple had requested many Gregorian Masses over the years for departed friends and relatives. But now they were determined to begin regularly performing a variety of indulgenced actions for the sake of souls in Purgatory — souls they knew and souls they've never met.

The following year, Dr. Aiello and Nancy began recruiting others from their parish to assist in their efforts. They made announcements at Masses leading up to All Souls' Day, Nov. 2. A small group responded to the call, and together they visited a different cemetery each day during the first week of November. Many members had the opportunity to pray at the graves of deceased relatives and loved ones. When the week ended, the group decided to continue its activities.

They've since named their ministry Walking with Jesus and meet monthly to pray for the souls in Purgatory and enjoy Christian fellowship.

As Dr. Aiello points out, interceding for the souls in Purgatory, a work of mercy, benefits not only the souls, but those who pray for them as well. When souls are released from Purgatory and welcomed into Heaven, they in turn intercede for members of the Church on earth, but especially those who helped to hasten their purification.

Dr. Aiello also points out that the prayers of these souls can be particularly valuable when we reach our final moments.

“At death, the devil is his strongest,” he says. “[He makes] his final attempt to bring us to hell. We need all the help we can get to ensure our successful journey to God. How wonderful will it be [to have] the numerous souls we helped free from Purgatory interceding before God, asking Him to protect us during our death.”

When Dr. Aiello addresses a congregation about interceding for the Holy Souls, he notes that after death, we may find ourselves in great need of prayers and sacrifices from the faithful, including complete strangers.

“If some souls can spend 50 or 100 years in Purgatory,” he explains, “their friends and relatives will be long dead. That means there will be no one to pray for them or have

Masses celebrated for them. These souls will be ‘abandoned.’ That could be us.”

His parish has warmly embraced the ministry. Eager to do more, this November, the Aiellos will visit neighboring parishes to teach about gaining indulgences for the souls in Purgatory.

Dr. Aiello has noticed that older people respond more enthusiastically to the invitation to pray for the Holy Souls. He wonders if this may be due to more catechesis about the dogma of Purgatory in earlier generations. He laments that the need to pray for the Holy Souls is rarely preached from the pulpit. He and Nancy hope that their



**‘If we were generous in freeing souls from Purgatory, how much more generous will God be toward us at our death and judgment. God will never be outdone in kindness, good works, and mercy!’**

— Dr. Michael Aiello

outreach will lead to more recruits pledging to pray and offer sacrifices for souls.

There's reason for hope. The Aiellos recently met a young mother who makes a point to bring her children to cemeteries to pray for departed souls, including complete strangers.

“If we were generous in freeing souls from Purgatory [when we were on earth],” Dr. Aiello says, “how much more generous will God be toward us at our death and judgment. God will never be outdone in kindness, good works, and mercy!”

*Praying for the souls in Purgatory, that they may be purified and welcomed into Heavenly glory, is a founding charism of the Marian Fathers and a work of mercy that's deeply needed in the Church. We invite you to join the Marian Fathers this November in our month-long remembrance of all the faithful departed. Visit [marian.org/b43](http://marian.org/b43) to join us in our November Remembrance.*

*Visit [PrayForSouls.org](http://PrayForSouls.org) to learn about other ways to help the souls in Purgatory.*

MH



“I found people who craved prayer,” says Stephen Robertson. “And it was like God tapped me on the shoulder to call my attention to what was so obvious.”

# Memory and mercy

One Marian Helper’s unforgettable ministry

By Terry Peloquin

**E**very Thursday, Stephen Robertson visits Grace House assisted living in Silver Spring, Maryland. There, he leads its residents in the praying of the Angelus, the Holy Rosary, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Many of the nearly 30 people living there contend with poor short-term memory. Their condition, however, doesn’t prevent them from being, as Stephen calls them, “prayer warriors.”

Before Stephen began this weekly practice, he was visiting Rev. Arnold W. Deporter there on a regular basis. Father Deporter had been a priest at the nearby Our Lady of Grace parish. “He was one of the priests who was part of the process of me returning to my faith as an adult Catholic,” said Stephen, who was confirmed in 2013.

About the same time, Fr. Deporter was having memory loss issues. The source of the problem turned out to be brain cancer. He underwent surgery, but his memory continued to decline over the next two years.

## I know you

Thanks to Fr. Deporter’s influence, Stephen was dedicating himself to daily Mass, daily Rosary, daily prayer, and daily study. “Father Deporter told me, ‘When I’m gone, I want you strong enough to not need me except for Confession.’”

Toward the end, Fr. Deporter began to forget people. “I was one of the few people he still remembered,” Stephen says.

Then one day, Fr. Deporter told him, “I feel bad.” Stephen asked, “Father, why do you feel bad?”

Father Deporter replied, “Because I know who you are.” But he couldn’t say Stephen’s name.

So Stephen asked, “Father, how do you *know* you know me?”

The priest went to his Bible and opened it up. “It’s written right here, ‘You will know My followers.’” He paused and asked, “Have you ever heard of the Greek word *fortoula*?”

Stephen said that he had.

“Well,” said Fr. Deporter, “the Greeks have this belief from when they were converting to Christianity. They refer to it as the ‘Light of God,’ the ‘*Fortoula*.’ You could look at a person, and when that person had the Spirit of God within them, the light would shine from their eyes. And I see that you’re trying to carry God’s light in your eyes. So I know you.”

“I just sobbed,” Stephen recalls. “Because at the deepest core of his being, one of these foundational truths of the Roman Catholic faith could not be wiped from his brain. Not even by cancer.”

## Visiting new friends

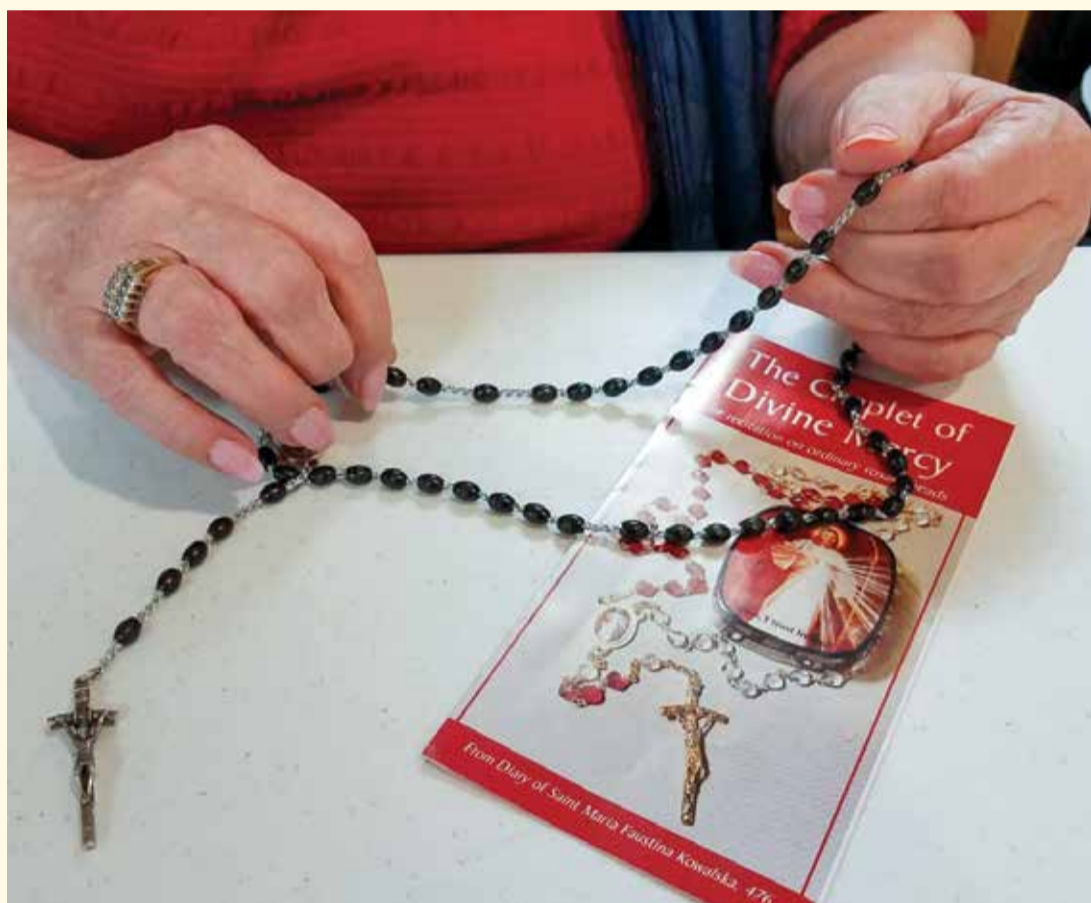
Father Deporter entered into eternal life June 10, 2018. During the priest’s final days, Stephen visited almost daily, if only to keep him company.

“I noticed that some of the residents were former parishioners of Our Lady of Grace,” he says. “So these are all

people I know. Then I began visiting *them*.”

He began praying with the residents individually. Then, someone suggested using the residence’s chapel so everybody could pray together. Stephen agreed. The consensus was that Thursday worked best for everyone. “Depending on people’s schedules, I get anywhere from two to as many as 18 people in there.”

Stephen has noticed how each of them, in their own way, demonstrates their faith. “One person has very profound memory problems, but when we start praying the Rosary, it’s like he suddenly comes back to life, and he keeps pace with everybody. I asked him, ‘Why is prayer the one thing you can hang on to?’ And he said, ‘My earliest memories of my family was hearing them pray.’”



**Pamphlets like this one from the Marian Fathers help residents continue to express their faith, despite memory loss.**

As is common in such cases, the residents who have difficulties with short-term memory or gaining new memories tend to retain old memories. When some lose their memory, they can even revert to their mother language. One resident, for example, is Italian. “There are times when she is praying the ‘Hail Holy Queen,’ she starts to pray in Italian because it’s so automatic for her.”

## We can still pray

When Stephen had first received an order of pamphlets from the Association of Marian Helpers, he put one pamphlet into the hands of a memory impaired woman. She smiled and told him, “I know that if I have this before I go

to bed I can pray this by myself.”

Trying to memorize the prayers has therapeutic advantages, Stephen points out. He encourages residents to try to memorize as much as they can, but they can still follow the words on the page if they need to.

“What ultimately matters,” Stephen says, “is that God is seeing the content of our hearts. He sees that we are assembling here together to pray for ourselves and for each other. We’re also here in gratitude for what He has given us.”

Stephen says that when relating to people who are dealing with memory loss, failing health, or aging, a key ingredient is *consistency*. “So I knew that things were beginning to come together when one particular person said, ‘Oh! Stephen’s here. It must be Thursday.’”

Rather than trying to be there every day and risk burning out, Stephen is happy with the scheduled prayer time. “I make sure that I’m there every single week without fail. I realize that if I ever missed a day, I would feel terrible because they need me. And I need them. And I’ve come to love them.”

As one resident said to him, “Stephen, most of my family has passed away. Your being here reminds me that there is a family still here. It is my Christian family. It is my Catholic family.”

### Treasured words

Once residents began using the Marian Press prayer

pamphlets, Stephen noticed something. “These people *guard* those pamphlets,” he said. “When they’re done with them, they fold them up correctly. They put them back up at the altar.”

The residents at Grace House pray the Rosary, the Chaplet, and the Angelus. The prayers are repetitive, and there is comfort in that aspect of the prayer as well.

There’s another reason the Angelus is so important to these residents, Stephen says. “They are from a generation of people who remember when the bells would ring at that certain time, and people, wherever they were, would stop what they were doing and pray. And that’s the amazing thing. Some people, even with profound memory loss, when you start to pray the Angelus — it’s like they become young again.”

Stephen explains, “It’s a part of that perpetual renewal. In

Psalm 111 it says, ‘He remembers His covenant forever.’ In other words, by remembering His covenant, He’s forgetting our sins, but He’s also demonstrating to us over and over again, He renews our memory of His past deeds. He’s showing us who He is and who we are in relation to Him. And that’s the other end of that covenant: that if we keep faith with Him, He will always be there for us. So in that way, the prayers come *from their souls*. Despite the memory loss. Despite the sufferings. Despite the trauma. Despite the age.”

MH

**‘Stephen, most of my family has passed away. Your being here reminds me that there is a family still here. It is my Christian family. It is my Catholic family.’**

— Resident at an assisted-living program

## A much-needed ministry

**S**tephen Robertson urges others to visit nursing homes and assisted living facilities in their own communities.

“I would love to encourage anyone who has a Rosary and a pamphlet to take it with them to a nursing home, visit their chapel, and encourage the residents to go there.”

Can’t make a regular time commitment? Stephen says to deliver the prayer pamphlets to nursing homes and assisted living facilities and encourage

residents to gather weekly or even daily for devotions.

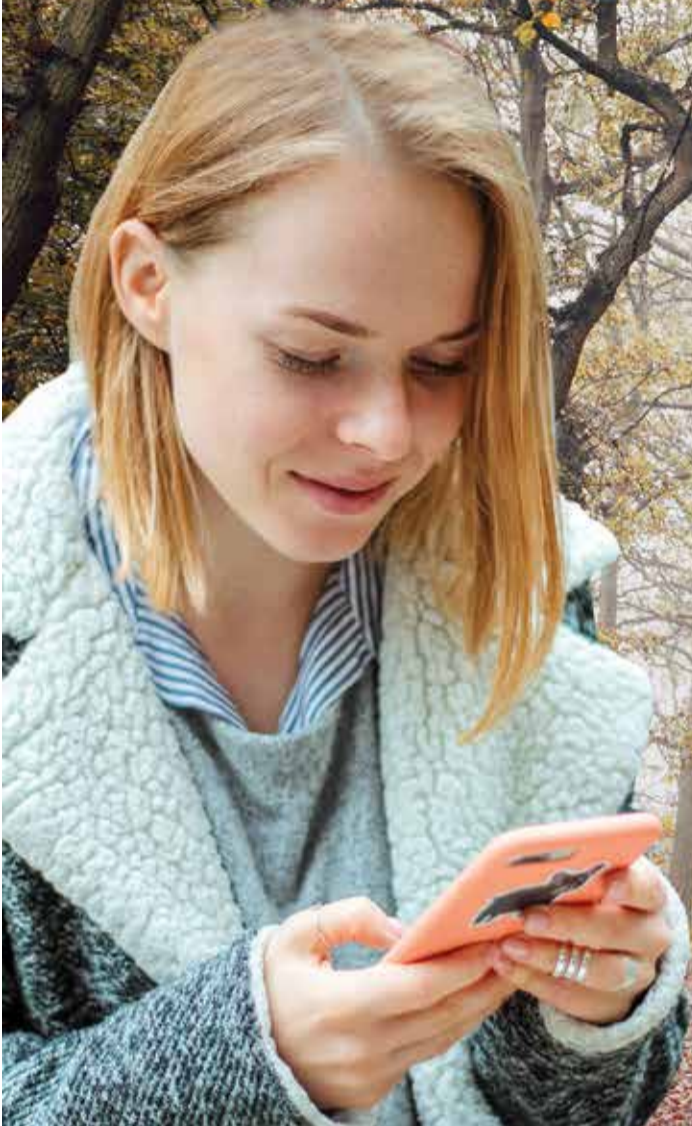
“Just tell them, ‘I want to help you rediscover that this wonderful outpouring of mercy is at your disposal,’” Stephen says. “All *you* need to do is say, ‘Here I am, Lord.’”

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Brother David Smith, MIC, and Br. Matthew Tomeny, MIC, professed their perpetual vows.



Five profess first vows.

Among the many professions of vows this year, 13 Marian seminarians renewed their vows on Aug. 15, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

# A few (more) good men

By Terry Peloquin

**A**t a time when the media is filled with stories of scandal in the Church, lost faith, and despair, the Marian Fathers continue to have more men in religious formation than at any other time in their history.

That these two things — difficult times and growth in vocations — are happening simultaneously comes as no surprise to Vocation Director Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC.

“What does God send to us in difficult times? In times of crisis? When it looks like everything is going to be destroyed?” Fr. Donald asked in a homily earlier this year.

“Priests,” he said. “Zealous priests. Men who desire to save souls.”

Indeed, the Marian Fathers are growing when the world needs them most.

Two men — Fr. Michael Baker, MIC, and Fr. Matthew Holladay, MIC — professed their priestly vows this past spring. Another five men — Fr. Fidele Malanga, Br. Benancio, Br. Nicholas, Br. Stephen, and Br. Stephen — professed first vows on Aug. 15. That same day, another six men entered the community, either as novices or

postulants. And the following morning, Br. David Smith, MIC, and Br. Matthew Tomeny, MIC, professed perpetual vows.

The Marian Fathers continue to have more men in formation (30 plus) than most dioceses.

Father Donald credits this growth to the Divine Mercy, Our Lady, and the brotherhood of the Marian Fathers.

“When guys come and visit us, they really get a sense that we’re men of the Church, and we want to give everything for people to get to Heaven,” he said. “And the guys love that!”

His theory echoes true with the Marian Fathers’ newest perpetually professed men, Br. Matthew and Br. David.

“I first heard the call to the priesthood when I was 13,” Br. Matthew said. “I was reading a book on hell. As I finished it, the convicting thought I was inspired with was that I wanted to be a priest to save souls.”

Upon first visiting the Marian Fathers for a vocations retreat, Br. Matthew said he felt “peace” and “at home.”

“I was impressed by the devotion the Marian Fathers had,” he

recalled. “They knew that the priesthood was a serious vocation. Even Fr. Calloway wasn’t shy of talking about the dire state of the Church.”

He liked one other thing. “I noticed that there was a variety of ministries within the Marians, and I like that — that you could be a parish priest, a foreign missionary, or a military chaplain.”

At the same time he was discerning a call to the priesthood, he was also considering serving the men and women of the armed forces. “I thought about how if I was in that situation, I would want the Sacraments. Especially in a war zone, you’d want the Blessed Sacrament and Confession. And even just the presence of a spiritual father.”

This past spring, Br. Matthew committed to five years of military chaplaincy ministry. He is now a commissioned ensign in the U.S. Navy as a chaplain candidate.

“In our classroom in the novitiate,” Br. Matthew recalled, “there’s a picture of St. Stanislaus Papczynski, the Marians’ Founder, on a battlefield giving the last rites to a Polish soldier. It did seem very fitting as a Marian to bring that Marian spirituality and also to bring the message of Divine Mercy.”

For Br. David, the call to the priesthood came about much farther from home.

“I made a pilgrimage to Israel with my local parish priest and our community,” he recalled. “And after lots of prayer and going to Mass daily, I felt a deeper call to follow the Lord. I continued to pray for the whole year. The next year, I went on a pilgrimage to Poland. It was there that I learned about St. Faustina, the Marians, [the Marians’ Renovator] Blessed George, and also learned about Fr. Donald Calloway — whom I had heard about in talks when I was a child growing up in the L.A. area. And that’s where I felt called after continually going to Adoration — to join the Marians as a priest.”

Brother David hopes that if, by the grace of God, he is ordained to the priesthood, he’ll continue to grow in prayer — “so I can hear the Lord speaking to me, so I can follow what the Holy Spirit is guiding me to do.”

He looks forward to the priesthood, when he can “preach what Christ is calling us to do today in this world and in our lives — to follow the Gospel message more deeply and to help others love God and neighbor more perfectly.”

Like Br. Matthew, Br. David sees the Marian Founder, St. Stanislaus, as a role model.

“He felt called to promote the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception. I want to follow him in that



The Marians’ two newest priests — Fr. Matthew Holladay, MIC (left), and Fr. Michael Baker, MIC (right) — professed their priestly vows this spring. Provincial Superior the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC (center), has noted the enormous role God has given to the Marian Fathers as official promoters of the Divine Mercy message. “We, as Marians, were given this wonderful gift ... this privilege, under the guidance of Our Lady,” he said. “So we have to live our lives faithful to the calling from God. ... We must help Him to save souls.”

model, to proclaim Mary Immaculate, and to help grow in my prayer personally with the Lord, and to spread that message to others throughout the world.”

The world needs this message.

Father Donald is grateful to Marian Helpers for their prayers and every kind of support to help them minister to a world in need.

“A lot of times people pray and they’re like, ‘Does God hear my prayers?’ or ‘What’s the fruit of my prayers?’ Well, here’s one that’s very evident. We see the men that we’re getting. The benefactors’ prayers *do* bear fruit for us, and we’re grateful for that.” MH

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Father Donald Calloway, MIC, with Jim Caviezel on a tour boat on the Sea of Galilee.

# IN THE HOLY LAND

With the man who played Jesus

By Marc Massery

**O**n an evening during Lent 2004, not many months after he was ordained to the Catholic priesthood, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and a few other Marians went to the movies to see the new Mel Gibson movie, “The Passion of The Christ.”

“On the ride back from the theater, nobody said a word in the car,” Fr. Donald recalled. “To me, it was the most real depiction of our Lord that I have ever seen.”

Serving as the assistant rector at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy at the time, Fr. Donald presided over the 7:15 a.m. Mass the following day. “During the Consecration, I had tears in my eyes,” he said. “Afterward, a woman came up to me and asked if I saw the movie last night. She could tell that I was emotional on

the altar. It was pretty obvious I had just seen the film.”

He was most impressed by Jesus, portrayed by actor Jim Caviezel. “I don’t think they could’ve gotten a better person than Jim Caviezel to play Jesus,” he said.

Since Fr. Donald had become such an admirer of Caviezel, it was not surprising that last year, when

206Tours asked him to serve as spiritual director for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Hollywood star, he jumped at the chance.

On Divine Mercy Sunday 2019, Fr. Donald, Caviezel, and 240 others traveled to Jerusalem to spend 10 days on pilgrimage. During the trip, in between visits to Gethsemane, Mount Tabor, the Sea of Galilee, and other holy sites, Jim gave two talks about his Catholic faith.

“They were such powerful talks,” Fr. Donald said. “Someone of that fame, talking about how we need to be dedicated to Christ, be faithful, and strive to be saints. He got a standing ovation. Everyone was applauding like crazy.”

Jim especially captured everyone’s attention when he spoke about the suffering he endured throughout the filming of “The Passion of The Christ.” For instance, as a result of hanging on a cross for long hours exposed to the cold and wind, Jim started to suffer from hypothermia. He also endured a separated shoulder, and at one point during the filming he was struck by lightning. As a result of all this physical stress, after the production he underwent two open heart surgeries.

“He really went through a difficult time in the filming of ‘The Passion.’

He would have to be on the cross for hours, and his body was being pushed to the limit,” Fr. Donald said.

Some other eerie details punctuate Caviezel’s unique role of playing Jesus Christ. For instance, he was 33 years old when he was asked by Mel Gibson to play the part. Furthermore, his initials are “J.C.”

“It’s almost hard to imagine Jesus not looking like Jim; he’s so perfect for it,” Fr. Donald said.

But Fr. Donald was inspired most by the way Caviezel talked about his Catholic faith. “He’s done so much, and he’s so well known, yet the main core of his message is not fame or money. It was that we need to become saints in a very difficult time in history. He spoke from the heart. This guy really loves our Lord. What also came across was his great love for Our Lady,” Fr. Donald said. “He talked about spending time with her as our spiritual mother and how that strengthens you and helps you to be more faith-

ful to Christ. You never hear stuff like that from actors in Hollywood.”

Father Donald said that since Caviezel is such an outspoken Catholic and especially since he starred in “The Passion of The Christ,” many in Hollywood have treated him unfairly.

“Yet he said he’s not giving up,” Fr. Donald said. “He



**Jim Caviezel has said of his role playing Jesus: "I don't want people to see me. I just want them to see Jesus. And through that, conversions will happen. That's what I wanted more than anything, that people would have ... to finally make a decision whether to follow Him or not."**

said, ‘I am dedicated to our Lord even with my own weaknesses. I love Jesus, I love the Church, and I’m going all the way.’”

Though Fr. Donald said that Jim is really just a regular guy like anyone else, he also said, “At the same time, he will go down in history as the man who played Jesus the best in any film.”

More than 15 years since the release of “The Passion of The Christ,” Mel Gibson and Jim Caviezel are teaming up once again to create a sequel on the Resurrection.

“He wasn’t allowed to talk about it to us,” Fr. Donald said. “But he gave hints that it’s going to be amazing.”

Caviezel has requested prayers for the film, Gibson, himself, the writers, and everyone working on it — that they remain under the protection of Mary Immaculate and continue to do the will of God, creating something beautiful for His Kingdom.

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Tracked by GPS internet software, here is the route Fr. Gregory Plow, TOR, recently took.

# RUNNING ON TRUST

## This priest chooses to spell it all out

For many years, Fr. Gregory Plow, TOR, the director of priestly discernment at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, in Steubenville, Ohio, has found joy in running. He's completed a number of marathons and ultramarathons and runs as often as he can.

Several months ago, Fr. Plow was at a conference in Boynton Beach, Florida, when he was struck with an idea.

"I was at a seminary that has a very large field as part of its property, about a half a mile long and maybe 100 yards or less [wide]," he said. "I have a GPS watch, so whenever I run, I upload the data to my GPS internet software. You can view the routes that you took. I figured, well, it would be kind of fun to make a message."

It took some planning and a little math, but he decided that the phrase "Jesus, I trust in You" would be the perfect message.

"I was a math major," he said. "I did some simple arithmetic to see how I would space out the letters, and if it would fit on that field, how tall would the letters have to be."

Knowing his stride was about one meter, he simply estimated the width of each letter by the number of strides he would take. "I also estimated how much distance should be in between each letter and each word," he said. "Each letter was about 100 feet tall and 100 feet wide. So I did the best I could."

He didn't put any markers down on the field. As he ran, he simply counted his paces, trying to run in the

best shape of the letter as he imagined it would look from above, from the perspective of the GPS satellites.

"If I had a curve to run in along a horizontal distance — like the bottom part of the letter 'u' in 'Jesus' — I would add a few extra strides to try to make the letter as wide as it should be. All those calculations I did in my head for a little while the morning on the day I did the run," he said.



**'I think long distance running is similar to the spiritual life. You're in it for the long haul. In good times and in bad, keep on striving for the finish line and constantly trusting in Him.'**

— Fr. Gregory Plow, TOR

Father Plow finds a connection between running and the spiritual life.

"I think long distance running is similar to the spiritual life," he said. "You're in it for the long haul. In good times and in bad, keep on striving for the finish line and constantly trusting in Him."

He said that this particular message, "Jesus, I trust in You," gives him hope that he will be running for a long time.

"I'm 43, and even though I'm in very good health, there's always a risk of injury," he said. "But I trust in the Lord to keep me healthy."

MH

— Marc Massery

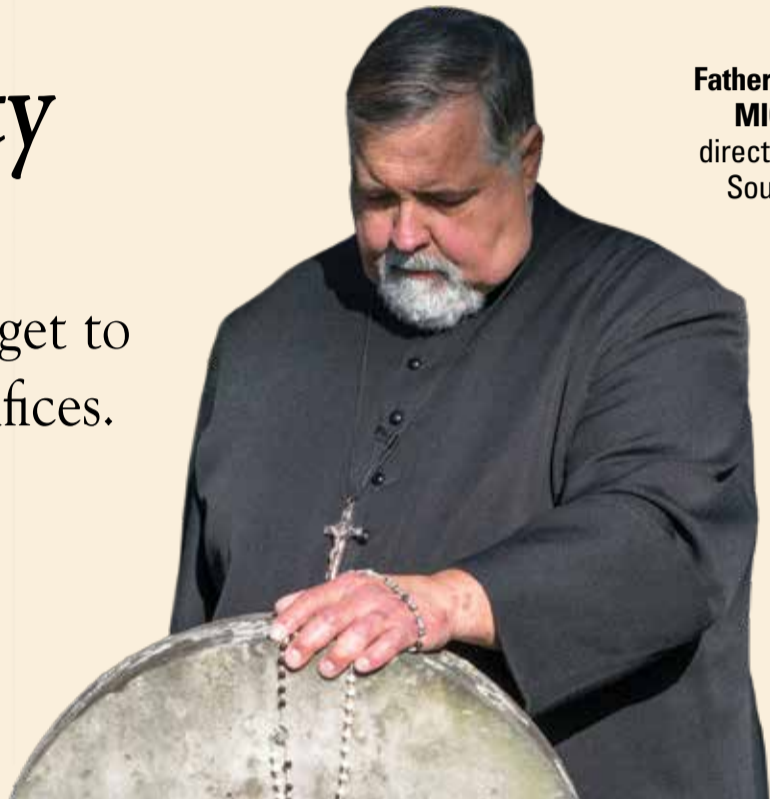


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**Father Dan Cambra, MIC**, spiritual director of the Holy Souls Sodality.



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**Angelina Carey**

# LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER

**E**very night at 8 p.m., the Carey family would gather around a small statue of Our Lady of Fatima to pray the Rosary. After all, when Our Lady appeared to the shepherd children in Fatima in 1917, she instructed them to pray the Rosary daily. Angelina Carey made sure her family honored that request.

One of her five sons, Bob, who is now 90 years old, continues this daily devotion of praying the Rosary, this powerful prayer centered on contemplation of the salvific events of Jesus' life and their close association with Our Lady.

Because he displayed such a great love for Our Lady, Bob's mother asked him to do even more. A month before she died, Angelina gave Bob a book of prayers dedicated to Our Mother of Sorrows and asked him to promise to pray for priests, religious, and seminarians every day. Bob asked his mother if she was making this same request of his four brothers. She said, "No, but I know that Our Lady can depend on you."

She was right. Bob was wise enough to know that when Our Lady or your mother tells you to do something, you listen. He hasn't missed a day. As he prays, he visualizes the Blessed Mother protecting under her mantle all the seminarians, priests, and religious in the world. And, he says emphatically, "I depend on the Blessed Virgin for an awful lot. It just has to be done."

Bob's description of his devotion to his heavenly mother and the mother who brought him into the world is filled with admiration, love, respect, and gratitude.

He now lives in a studio apartment. Along with the small statue of Our Lady of Fatima and the prayer book his mother gave him, Bob treasures a Divine Mercy Image that was blessed by Pope St. John Paul II.

The image was a gift from a fellow parishioner who had introduced Bob to the Divine Mercy message and enlisted

his help to distribute pamphlets for the Divine Mercy Novena. Bob acknowledges, "We need graces so much. We are so fortunate to be given such great things."

He's generous with his prayers and also generous in donating to causes important to him. Indeed, a few years ago he was pleased to discover another "pocket" for making charitable gifts, namely his IRA.

Feeling secure with his pension, he is happy to direct the custodian of his IRA to make Qualified Charitable Distributions directly to the Marian Fathers and his other favorite charities.

Taking advantage of this special provision of federal tax law results in tax savings even if Bob does not itemize deductions on his tax return. By giving directly to charity from his IRA, he does not increase his income, so he does not owe taxes on the distributions. The gifts also count toward his Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

If you are at least 70 ½ years old and interested in making an IRA gift to the Marian Fathers, please ask your IRA custodian for a form to arrange for a QCD or contact me for more information.

You will need our legal name (Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.) and our tax identification number: 20-8599030.

Thank you, Bob, and thank you to all our Marian Helpers who prayerfully and financially support the mission of the Marian Fathers!



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Ellen Miller is director for Special Gifts. Contact her at (413) 298-1380; [helpers@marian.org](mailto:helpers@marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit [marian.org/PlannedGiving](http://marian.org/PlannedGiving) to learn more.



“Let us ask for Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir’s intercession in all our needs, trusting that, through the mercy of God, we may receive special graces and even miracles through the prayers of our brother in Christ,” said Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, vice postulator in North America and Asia for Marian causes of canonization.

## Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski

# HE HEARS OUR PRAYERS

By Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC

I want to introduce you to one of my boyhood heroes, a great Marian priest and humble man who we hope someday will be raised to the honors of the altar.

Why should you take an interest in the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski (1700-1755)?

As vice postulator of Marian Causes of Canonization in North America and Asia, I receive many reports of graces received through the intercession of Fr. Casimir. Marians and Marian Helpers have discovered in him a powerful intercessor in Heaven.

Allow me to share why I first became so interested in Fr. Casimir.

I grew up in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Warsaw, Poland. This was a Marian parish, and therefore devotion

to Mary Immaculate was ingrained in all things.

We, of course, were taught about the Founder of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701), who was canonized in 2016.

But equally so, we were taught about this man, Fr. Casimir, who had a great deal to do with our Founder’s eventual canonization. Father Casimir wrote the first published biography on the future saint. He prepared the paperwork to initiate the beatification process for him as well. We have Fr. Casimir to thank for collecting eyewitness accounts attesting to St. Stanislaus’ virtues and sanctity.

It was Fr. Casimir who believed the most effective way to spread the Marian Fathers’ spirituality throughout the world was by working to elevate

### Prayer for the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski

*Let us pray for the beatification of Venerable Casimir so that the whole Church may better know him and benefit from his powerful prayers.*

O God, joy of the saints, make us glad by the raising to the honors of the altar of Your faithful servant Casimir and grant us the zeal to imitate him on our way to holiness. Amen.

Father Founder to the honors of the altar.

I was always struck by Fr. Casimir's love and loyalty toward our Founder and our Congregation. Of course, these two loves were rooted in his great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Father Casimir wrote, "Christ left us, in His own Mother, the most perfect example of His life. She knew exactly the ways of God; her holy virtues show us how we should follow Christ. Only by imitating Mary shall we be her true venerators and servants. To imitate the Mother of God means to imitate most faithfully Christ Himself. More than all the saints, she knew Christ's teachings and way of life."

Father Casimir was driven by his love for Our Lady in all things. Indeed, his zeal to spread devotion to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception led him to join the Marian Fathers.

But his is not your typical vocation story. He was in his early 20s visiting shrines in Rome when he met a Marian priest, Fr. Joachim Kozlowski. The priest told him of disputes at the time within the young Marian Congregation and how Wyszynski's own brother — a Marian novice — had done much harm. Particularly, his brother had banded with others who sought to ease religious discipline within the Marian Congregation and had also sided with a group seeking to disband the Marians entirely.

Moved by this news, the future Fr. Casimir said, "I want to make up for what my brother ruined."

He took the Marian habit on Nov. 18, 1723, and accepted the name Casimir of St. Joseph.

In 1726, he was ordained a priest.

He quickly set about quelling an internal dispute within the Congregation, a dispute that centered on whether the Marians were to be a contemplative order or an apostolic order. A true spiritual son of the Founder, Fr. Casimir set about grounding the Marians as an apostolic religious congregation that serves where the need is greatest.

While fixing the wrongs of his brother, Fr. Casimir became a great reformer and builder of our religious community.

He referred to himself as a "thorn in the side" to those who would deny Mary's Immaculate Conception. Mind you, this was more than a century before the Church would declare

as dogma in 1854 that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception.

He was a zealous promoter of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Blue Scapular. He guided his confreres and the laity toward more fully embracing Father Founder's

devotion to the souls in Purgatory. Moreover, he was a protector of the underprivileged, especially peasants abused by the clergy and upper-class people.

His fellow Marians elected him to serve in many leadership roles, including as superior general twice. All the while, he helped the Marian Fathers grow in merit and number. Under his leadership, the Marians became an international community and accepted vocations from all over Europe.

In 1753, he founded the first Marian monastery in Portugal, at Balsamao. He died there on Oct. 21, 1755. The beatification process for him began only a few years

later. The Church declared him a venerable servant of God in 1989.

His earthly remains are enthroned in Balsamao, where the faithful still refer to him as "*Santo Polacco*," the Holy Pole.

A final story I wish to share with you occurred in the 1950s. The Marians were in Balsamao exhuming Fr. Casimir's remains and placing them in a new coffin. As they were doing this, the bells in the church tower started ringing without anyone tolling them — indeed, without any natural cause.

To this day in Balsamao, they still talk of "the miracle of the bells."

Through that incident and through the many answered prayers through his intercession, Fr. Casimir makes his presence known.

MH

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Please email news about any cure or other graces received from God through the intercession of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, requests for biographies and prayers, or any other correspondence, to [graces@marian.org](mailto:graces@marian.org) or to the following address:

Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization  
Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception  
2 Prospect Hill Road  
Stockbridge, MA 01262

### 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  
such 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 ...*

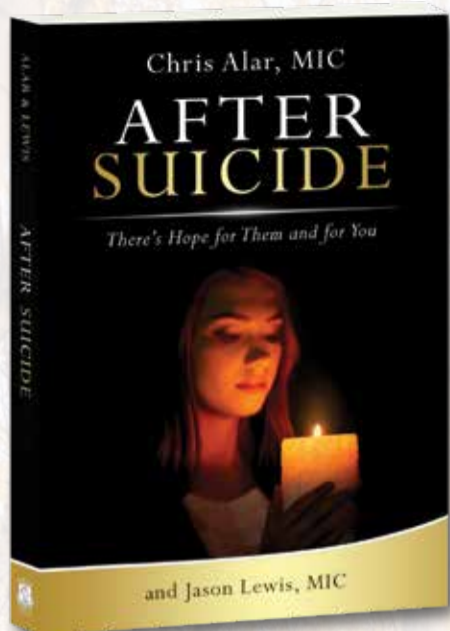
*Glory be to the Father ...*

NOTE: It is recommended that this prayer  
for a particular intention be complemented  
by Confession and Holy Communion.

## Newest releases from Marian Press

### After Suicide:

There's Hope for Them and for You



By Fr. Chris Alar, MIC  
& Jason Lewis, MIC

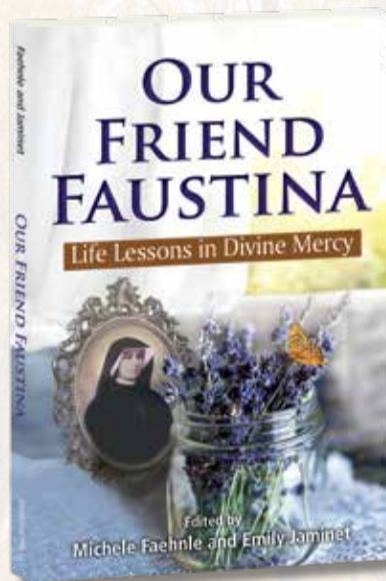
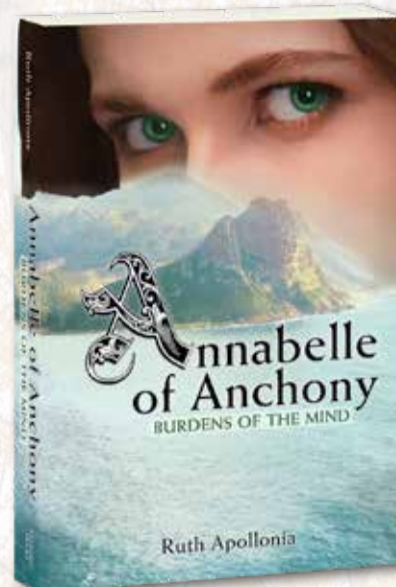
What does the Church teach about suicide? Addressing the hard issue of suicide, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, draws from the teaching of the Church, the message of Divine Mercy, and his own experience of losing his grandmother to suicide to offer readers two key forms of hope: hope for salvation of those who've died by their own hand, and hope for healing of those they've left behind. 195 pages. **B43-ASTH \$14.95**

### Annabelle of Anchony: Burdens of the Mind

By Ruth Apollonia

Locked in a race for survival, sustained only by her Christian faith, Annabelle of Anchony must make her way to a home she barely remembers, find a family she's largely forgotten, and deliver a mysterious package to the king – and that's only the beginning. An adventure novel for young adults and pre-teens. 400 pages.

**B43-ANCH \$15.95**



### Our Friend Faustina:

Life Lessons in Divine Mercy

In this joy-filled anthology, Michele Faehle and Emily Jaminet (the writing team behind *Divine Mercy for Moms*) present modern women's testimonies to the powerful witness and intercession of St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938) in their busy lives. 176 pages. **B43-FFRD \$14.95**

## Ask Mary's help in all the knotty problems in life!

### Mary, Untier of Knots Medal and Prayer Card

This Mary, Untier of Knots medal is a reminder of the blessings you will receive when you pray for help and turn the "knots" in your life over to Our Blessed Mother. The card includes the story of the devotion to Mary, Untier of Knots. Silver-toned medal measures 7/8" on an 18" chain.

**B43-NOTPC \$9.95**



### Our Lady, Undoer of Knots

In this booklet we delve into the history of devotion to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, which, with the election of Pope Francis, stands among the Church's fastest growing devotions today. **B43-MABK \$3.99**



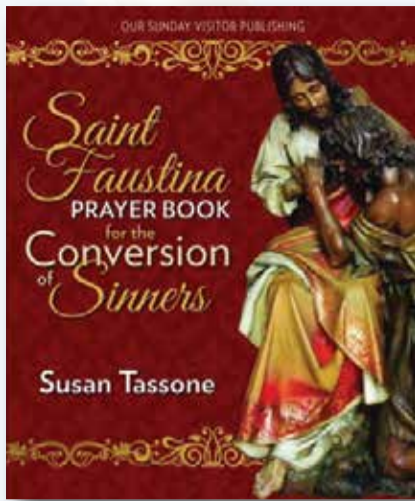
### Our Lady, Undoer of Knots Cord Bracelet

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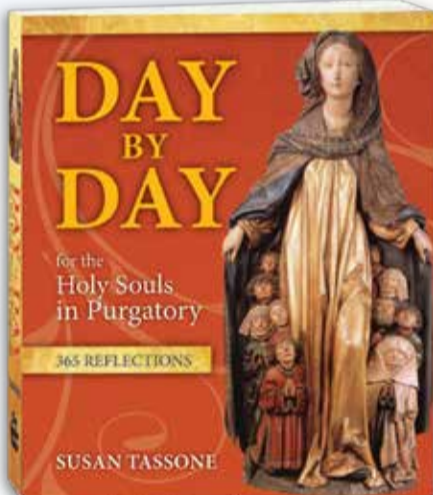
Shop online: [ShopMercy.org/b43](http://ShopMercy.org/b43)

# Remember the Holy Souls in Purgatory



## St. Faustina Prayer Book for the Conversion of Sinners

Purgatory expert Susan Tassone invites you to learn how to live the message of conversion daily, avoid Purgatory, and become more faithful in praying for others. **B43-FFCBK \$16.95**

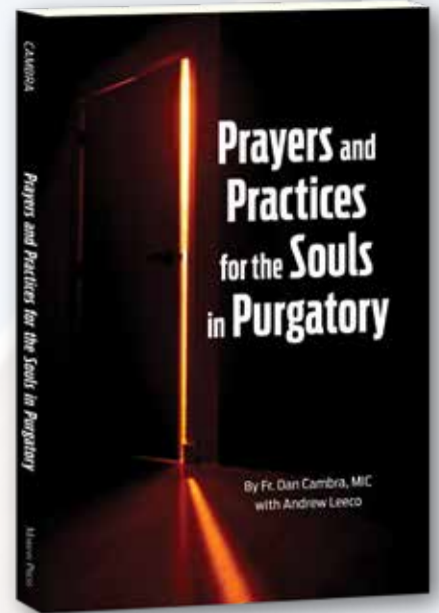


## Day by Day for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

Insightful quotes with powerful prayers to offer readers a day-by-day guide to loving and aiding the Holy Souls. Includes quotes from Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC **B43-DBD \$16.95**

## Prayers and Practices for the Souls in Purgatory

Sharing a wealth of devotional practices, all with remarkable power to aid the Holy Souls in Purgatory, Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, spiritual director of the Holy Souls Sodality, has gathered a treasure trove of teaching and practice on one of the most neglected (and yet most essential) of the works of mercy. **B43-PRBK \$14.95**



## Purgatory: A Guide

This pocket-sized overview of the doctrines and practices of the Church regarding the Holy Souls in Purgatory equips you to explain and defend one of the greatest works of mercy. See how you can help the Holy Souls. **B43-SOULS \$3.99**



## Holy Souls Rosary

Stay mindful of the Holy Souls! As you move from the darkest to the lightest beads, you pray with expectant faith to help bring souls from the darkness of Purgatory into the merciful light of our Savior. **B43-HSR1 \$9.95**



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**B43-EOGPF**



**B43-CLDPF**

## Pamphlets:

10 FOR \$1.60

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1,000 FOR \$100.00

## Order Info

Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of phone or online orders; 2-4 weeks for mail orders.

**toll free:** 1-800-462-7426 **shop online:** [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org)

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\$75.01-\$125...	\$9.50	... \$13.50
over \$125...	10% of subtotal	15% of subtotal

Postage costs may vary for online orders.

Sixty years ago, the *Marian Helpers Bulletin* contained the following notice on the man responsible for the establishment of Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Fr. Ladislaus (“Walter”) Pelczynski, MIC. In 1944, he established the “Mercy of God Apostolate” on Eden Hill — now home of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and the Marian Helpers Center. The apostolate soon became the Association of Marian Helpers. By the way, Fr. Pelczynski had always prayed for a holy death. He died at the age of 84 on Dec. 8, 2000, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the biggest patronal feast of the Marian Fathers.

**Marian Helpers Bulletin**

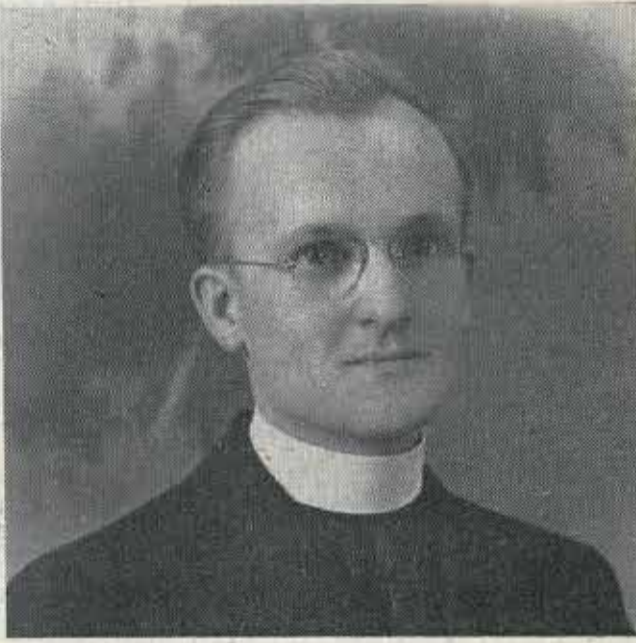
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**in 1943**

a newly ordained priest of our Congregation was sent from Washington D. C. to New England to find a site for a novitiate for a growing community. He arrived in the Berkshires with thirty-five dollars in his pocket and the project of buying some empty estate. Our Blessed Mother knows what She wants, and visitors prove to themselves that Eden Hill is an ideal name for the location.



Once established, the Novitiate of the Immaculate Conception became the center of our branch of the Marian Congregation to which letters began to pour in from new friends everywhere, telling us of their eagerness to aid us in our work. Again the lot fell on Father Pelczynski, who now spent most of his time in the office answering letters and sending out Christmas cards and leaflets.

As the years rolled on, seeing a valuable organizer in the same priest, the superiors appointed him to the office of procurator at the novitiate. However, when the new Province was formed, our Father, now a priest for six years, besides his work as Director of the Mercy of God devotion, and the Marian Helpers Association, received the additional office of procurator of the Province.

Eden Hill's under-current flows to the top now as the Provincial Chapter places on his shoulders the burden of superior of the Immaculate Conception Novitiate.

Our condolences and hearty Congratulations to you, Father Ladislaus! May Our Immaculate Mother direct you in this, your new duty.

*Father Ladislaus, M.I.C.  
Our New Superior*

# Live the call!



## Marian Helper Cheri Hill:

Growing up at St. Mary Parish in Plano, Illinois, I recall my parents and the congregation persistently praying for new vocations. I honestly didn't think God was listening until 40 years later when our young Marian priests arrived. I now feel called to pray for our priests, and I thank God for answering those prayers. I have worked with Fr. Andy for 10 years through Light of the World Evangelization Ministry, which serves St. Patrick and St. Mary parishes. Father Andy inspires others to follow the Holy Spirit's calling. Those under his guidance are truly being shepherded by his caring, gentle, and visionary way.

## Father Andy Davy, MIC:

I joined the Marians in 2003 after learning of their history and charism. I wanted to live my life in service to others; to live the Divine Mercy message and to allow it to touch others through me and through the priesthood; to allow the mystery of the Immaculate Conception to be a guiding star; and to preach the hope that comes from Christ, especially in this culture right now, which is suffering from so many fears, uncertainty, and darkness. I have served at St. Mary's in Plano, Illinois, for all 10 years of my priesthood. I can say that I *love* being a Marian priest more with every passing year.

## Attend a retreat

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

The next retreat will be:  
Nov. 29 - Dec. 1  
Dec. 13-15



## Learn more

Email: [vocations@marian.org](mailto:vocations@marian.org)  
Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806  
Visit: [marian.org/vocations](http://marian.org/vocations)

**Write: Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**  
**Vocation Director**  
**Marian Fathers of the**  
**Immaculate Conception**  
**515 Belleview Blvd.**  
**Steubenville, OH 43952**

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or call (413) 298-1384.



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