

# Marian Helper

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

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# 6 HELLO, NEIGHBOR

In a time of pandemic, Fr. Andy Davy, MIC, presses “Record” and gets to work.

## 10 Acting like Christ

Jonathan Roumie is a Divine Mercy devotee who stars as Jesus in the hit series “The Chosen.”

## 16 Serve Jesus. Serve truth.

We are supposed to serve truth in the face of the lies of hell. But we are also meant to love our neighbor and to desire their ultimate good.

## 18 Why light candles?

Have you ever wished you could be in two places at the same time? Did you ever have to say, “I’ll be there in spirit”? Well, you can. How? By lighting a votive candle.

## 20 Like family

For the past 25 years, a Marian priest has driven down quiet country roads leading to a remote hillside where the residents apply themselves to the perfection of divine love.

## 24 ‘We will never forget,’ remember?

A retired combat chaplain reflects on these turbulent times.

## 26 On the path to canonization

Our African-American brothers and sisters in Christ have had to endure a “poison” for centuries. Here are some of those brethren, traveling the path to sainthood.

## 28 Formation at the farm

The Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy have been digging deep. But they’re growing more than crops. With the grace of God, they’re raising a heavenly harvest.

**DEPARTMENTS:** 3 Father Joseph Writes 4 Marian Helpers in Action 9 Notes from Rome  
31 Outstanding Helpers 33 Graces Received 36 From the Vaults

**AMH DIRECTOR/PUBLISHER:**

Fr. Chris Alar, MIC – “Father Joseph, MIC”

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR:** Felix Carroll**DESIGNER:** Andrew Leeco**WRITERS, ASSISTANT EDITORS:** Chris Sparks, Marc Massery, and Terry Peloquin**AMH GENERAL PROMOTER:**

Br. Andrew R. Maczynski, MIC

**MISSION STATEMENT**

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## WHO WE ARE



### Marian Helpers Center

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### National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

(413) 298-3931  
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(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.



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for your  
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# FULFILLED, TO 'THE LETTER'

I'm not easily astounded. But a friend recently pointed out to me a passage from *The Letters of Saint Faustina*, published in 2006 by the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland, and I nearly fell out of my chair.

In one particular letter, written by St. Faustina in April of 1936 to her confessor and spiritual director Blessed Michael Sopocko, she writes about a vision of the future that refers, in part, to the Association of Marian Helpers. The letter says:

... I see that there will be a huge association of lay persons to which anyone can belong and by deed remind others of God's Mercy, particularly by showing mercy to one another. Please do not think that these thoughts are [mere] madness, for they are sincere truth, which will shortly be carried out in deed, even if I would have no one in favor of this work; still, I am not discouraged by anything, for it is enough for me to know that this is the will of God. (p. 31)

A mere eight years later, in 1944, St. Faustina's vision would begin to come to life here in Stockbridge, Massachusetts — now home of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and the Marian Helpers Center.

As you may know, upon St. Faustina's death in 1938, Blessed Sopocko became the bearer of the Divine Mercy message and devotion as revealed to St. Faustina by our Lord. With the Nazis advancing from the west and the Soviets advancing from the east, Fr. Sopocko thought it best to give key Divine Mercy materials to a Marian priest, Fr. Joseph Jarzowski (see page 36), who was leaving Europe to join his Marian brothers in the United States.

To cut a long (and incredible) story short, Fr. Joseph made it to the U.S. in May 1941. The Marians, including a seminarian named Ladislaus ("Walter") Pelczynski, became convinced that our religious Congregation should promote Divine Mercy. It was Fr. Walter who would discover the Stock-

bridge, Massachusetts property that the Marians would purchase for our headquarters in North America. Here on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, the Marians and the lay faithful would work together to get the Association of Marian Helpers off the ground. Year by year, the Association would grow.

Eden Hill has since become the world epicenter for the spread of Divine Mercy. We are the publishers of St. Faustina's *Diary* in many languages. Our printing presses produce religious artwork, pamphlets, magazines, prayer cards, books, and appeals — some 50 million pieces of literature and images a year — which are sent out to a world yearning for meaning, mercy, and healing.

I'm convinced we are a part of that "huge association of lay persons to which anyone can belong." You and I are the ones St. Faustina envisioned: we who lead countless souls to Christ in the spirit of childlike trust in God and love of neighbor.

Thank you for helping us continue to fulfill this mission that St. Faustina anticipated, a mission that Pope St. John Paul II himself blessed when he said in an apostolic blessing to the Marian Fathers, "Be apostles of Divine Mercy under the maternal and loving guidance of Mary."

Please continue to tell others about our Association. Invite friends, family, and fellow parishioners to become Marian Helpers by visiting MICprayers.com or calling 1-800-462-7426.

Let's trust in the promise of Jesus, who said, "Souls who spread the honor of My mercy I shield through their entire lives as a tender mother her infant, and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the Merciful Savior" (*Diary*, 1075).

*Fr. Joseph, MIC*



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

KISSELL FAMILY  
CINEMA  
Enjoy the Show

Perfect Love  
Casts out Fear



An interview  
with Carson



MARIAN  
HELPERS  
IN ACTION



“My pain has a purpose,” says Carson, shown here with his mother, Kristy, during a recent livestream of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

# Meet Carson Kissell

Age 13, bringing souls to Christ

**A** little friction can cause skin peeling and blistering anywhere on his body. But suffering from a debilitating skin disease called Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) doesn't stop Carson Kissell, 13, of Cincinnati, Ohio, from leading more than 150 people every day in praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

“It's a rare genetic condition,” Carson's father, David, explains. “He was born missing the genetic code that tells the layers [on his skin] to stay attached. Any friction leads to blisters and causes the skin to just peel right off.”

Carson is wrapped from neck to toe with pads and bandages, helping to protect him and mend a number of chronic wounds around his body. Every other day, Carson's mother, Kristy, spends hours replacing his dressings.

“My condition not only affects my skin, but it can

affect my eyes and pretty much everything,” Carson said. “I get blistering on my esophagus. When it heals, it gets tighter, so every six to eight months they have to go in and stretch it out again. So, I've had more than 20 surgeries in my life.”

Carson can eat normally, but at night he receives extra nutrition directly into his stomach from a feeding tube. “Nutrition is huge because so much of the calorie intake goes to trying to heal the wounds,” David said.

Despite his chronic illness, when the pandemic began

early last spring, Carson thought of how he could reach out to comfort others. He started livestreaming himself praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy from his mother's Facebook page.

"We've been praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet since I was little," he said. "Recently, my friend was praying a live Rosary every night, and that got me thinking, 'Maybe I could do something.' I've been praying for an end to the pandemic and for other people's intentions as well."

At first, he only had a few people praying with him daily. "But on the day that Pope Francis did the blessing of the world, praying in front of an empty St. Peter's square, one of my videos reached 60,000 views," Carson said. In that viral video, in addition to praying the Chaplet, Carson described his skin condition and his daily struggles. The popular video caught the attention of EWTN, which published an interview with Carson. Ever since, at least 150 people have been tuning in every day to pray the Chaplet live with Carson on his Facebook page, "[Praying with Carson.](#)"

"Our world is just in a tough place right now," Carson said. "It's hectic. People needed something to turn to. When they found me, I guess I just touched them. We've been getting so many intentions, and we've been praying for those. A lot of people tell me how much of an inspiration I am to them."

"It's a constant reminder of why we started this," David said. "In our world right now, prayer is what we need to be doing most, turning back to God and His Divine Mercy."

Even at the young age of 13, Carson understands -the redemptive power of suffering. "My pain has a purpose," he said. "Whenever I suffer, I offer it up for the intentions left in my Facebook comments and all those around the world."

"It's unexplainable the joy that can radiate from him despite his suffering, challenges, and hardships," David said. "It's hard to fathom, but that's God's grace."

Carson is the oldest of three boys. His brother Charlie, 8, does not suffer from EB. But Kolbe, 5, does. "We knew there was a 25 percent chance our children would have the condition because it's genetic," David explained. "We just discerned that God was calling us

to grow our family."

David continued, "It's hard to see your child suffer. In some cases, you're caring for a wound, and that causes them pain, but you've got no choice. There's nothing you can do. It gives me a glimpse of how Our Blessed Mother had to feel on Good Friday staring up at the Cross, helpless and wanting to take it all away, yet trusting that God had a greater purpose and plan. You have to just give it to Him."



Carson (left) with his two brothers, Charlie, 8, and Kolbe, 5, and his mother, Kristy and father, David.

Ever since praying the Chaplet publicly, Carson and his family are seeing the fruits of their prayers in their own lives. "Carson has had a chest wound for more than 10 years that hasn't healed," David said. "We have just tried to keep it clean, but now it's starting to show little patches of healing in these past months. The healing is starting in the center of the wound, and we've never had that before."

"If the chest wound heals completely, it would be the miracle of the century," Carson joked. "But we have to put a lot of trust in God that hopefully my chest wound will heal one day, and that there will be a cure for EB in the future."

He said, "Even though I have one of the worst conditions, I can still be a happy person. Most other people might be down a lot if they had my condition. I guess in their eyes, they would feel hopeless. But everyone has a purpose. I guess my purpose is this." MH

— Marc Massery



Fr. Andy's Virtual Neighborhood

# HELLO, NEIGHBOR!

In time of pandemic, Fr. Andy presses 'Record' and gets to work

By K.C. Davy

**W**ith many schools shut down since the coronavirus pandemic, I am thankful to God for the fact that school children with access to the internet can tune in each weekday and watch the “holy goofiness” of a particular Marian priest.

Sitting in a bright blue chair flanked by Clifford the Big Red Dog, Fr. Kermit the Frog, and Snoopy, this priest starts each episode with a hearty, “Well, hello there. I hope you are having a good day.” Then, he leads a prayer. After that, he goes wherever the Holy Spirit leads him.

His name is Fr. Andy Davy, MIC.

He's my son.

I couldn't be prouder.

If you find yourself and your children or grandchildren stuck home due to the coronavirus, I strongly suggest you visit [YouTube.com/StMaryPlanoIL](https://www.youtube.com/StMaryPlanoIL) or [facebook.com/StMaryPlanoIL](https://www.facebook.com/StMaryPlanoIL) to watch “Fr. Andy's Virtual Neighborhood.”

Yes, the program title is a nod to the great Mister Rogers, a hero of Andy's who helped instill in him a deep appreciation for the virtue of kindness, the gift of family, and the sacred bond of community. For Andy, these fine things were like seeds that held the promise of creativity, adventure, and compassion. Sown in his heart, they would quickly blossom.

When Andy was in middle school, I gave birth to his

youngest brother, to whom Andy would soon devote himself. Loving him, caring for him, and entertaining him became fundamental elements in Andy's development. He would later study child development and work at a pre-school and then a day care.

He would visit his former Catholic elementary school and introduce praise and worship songs to my first grade religion classes. Later, as a Marian seminarian and a priest, he would visit all the classes at my school and bring the joy of the Lord to the students.

He developed a way of sharing that makes the reality of God tangible. Furthermore, he shows that the priesthood itself can be a wondrous and courageous calling. And by the way, almost every student he encounters comes away knowing who St. Faustina is and can explain the Divine Mercy Image.

In other words, he's a "cool" priest who exudes holiness and joy! (And, yes, I call it a "holy goofiness.")

Father Andy now serves as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Plano, Illinois. The parish has an elementary school where Fr. Andy has long been a beloved presence.

This past March, when the quarantine hit, many priests around the world worked hard to find creative ways to reach their flocks. For instance, the Marian Fathers at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, began livestreaming a daily Mass, Rosary, and Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

But what about programming specifically for children whose lives have been totally disrupted? Think about it. For many kids, the pandemic has meant no more seeing friends and teachers, and no more sports and activities. Moreover, many children have felt fear and anxiety about the future, about their loved ones' health, and about their family's economic wellbeing.

Because of Fr. Andy's love and compassion for children and his creative mind, he began "Fr. Andy's Virtual Neighborhood," a series of 30-40 minute weekday videos. In this worrisome time, he has recognized the need to reach out to children — to present a friendly face

and a respite from the daily bad and scary news.

He recognized how children must be feeling. So he turned on the video camera, pressed record, and simply began to talk to the children. He greeted them directly and personally, much the same way Mister Rogers spoke to his audience.

Father Andy has now done more than 100 broadcasts. People tune in from around the country. The feedback has been tremendously positive.

They can see in Fr. Andy's eyes and smile that he

really loves them and cares how they're feeling and what they're thinking. In every episode, he speaks of God's goodness and love for them. He shows that even in uncertain times when our families have to stay home, the Lord knows our every need and is with us on this great adventure. Since the episodes are recorded, they continue to be viewed long after the initial posting. This virtual neighborhood provides a safe place of fun, exploration, and holiness.

As I myself began to watch the show, I found myself thinking, "I wonder what is going to happen today?" Each episode brings me a little closer to God.

Episodes have showcased a variety of topics: disc golf out-

side with Fr. Kermit; a visit to a therapeutic horse riding center; drum lessons; visits from exotic animals; a tour of the church; the Stations of the Cross; a model of the Ark of the Covenant and articles from the Holy Land; and a friend who makes Rosaries.

Father Andy often has a story time. He addresses important topics such as bullying, selfishness, and hard-heartedness, as well as truth, goodness, and beauty. He featured stories of Winnie the Pooh. His goal is to read through the entire *The Chronicles of Narnia* before the summer ends.

He leads the viewers to discover the rewards of putting others before ourselves and of being good neighbors to all during these difficult times. He encourages viewers to allow God into our hearts that we may embark upon holy adventures of faith.



A couple of young Marian Helpers from Gaithersburg, Maryland, enjoy an episode of "Fr. Andy's Virtual Neighborhood."

He asks, “How can you be more patient with your family members and be sensitive to those who might be really sad, nervous, afraid, or angry about being cooped up at home? How can you make someone’s day brighter? Go to the Lord in your heart. He is present in you and is on this adventure with you! Make sure you connect with Jesus every day and ask Mama Mary to help you.”



He teaches that God can bring good from even the most difficult situation, and he encourages the children to grow in holiness.

When I asked Fr. Andy if he follows a script, his answer was, “Pretty much I rely on the Holy Spirit!”

Who would have thought that in this time of pandemic, God would provide this busy pastor with that most precious gift, the gift of time, that he might undertake a most vital ministry for children?

In Fr. Andy’s eyes, you can see the sincerity and the simple love he has for Jesus Christ. I am reminded of Mister Rogers himself. It is through these eyes that one can

relive the timeless lessons of truth and joy that help us to live out our calling of falling in love with Jesus.

Maybe you could be Fr. Andy’s virtual neighbor, too?

*K.C. Davy is a teacher at the Mother of God School in Gaithersburg, Maryland.*

## Let’s annoy Fr. Seraphim

Here at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, we remain blessed to have Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, living and working among us. If it’s information regarding St. Faustina you’re after, he’s your man. He might squint, direct his eyes skyward, and take a deep breath as if gearing up to haul down heavy luggage from an overhead compartment, but he’ll haul it down all right.

Yet, curiously, if it’s information regarding himself that you’re after — how his life has interlocked with the mission given to St. Faustina — he’ll likely hit the mute button on his memories.

“What can I say?” he’ll respond, a glint in his eyes, the clue his stonewalling is part humility, part mischievousness.

What can he say? He could tell you how he smuggled the photographic record of each page of St. Faustina’s Diary out of Communist Poland in the late 1970s. Upon delivering his precious cargo to the Marian Fathers in the United States, it was he who arranged for the Polish typescript to be translated into English.

He was a witness to the first miracle attributed to St. Faustina’s intercession that opened the way for her beatification. He served as coordinator of the efforts that

served to verify that miracle and a second miracle that made possible St. Faustina’s canonization in 2000.

As an instrument of God’s mercy, Fr. Seraphim was sharpened by his surroundings at a ripe young age. In the mid-1940s, his home parish in Adams, Massachusetts, became the first in the western hemisphere to enshrine an Image of Divine Mercy. He was even tapped as a child to help clean the residence in Stockbridge in preparation for the moving in of the Marian Fathers.

Sure, he’ll talk about Divine Mercy. Easy. He’ll talk about St. Faustina. Easy. But he won’t say much about himself. For example: Why does he suppose he was chosen to play such a prominent role in St. Faustina’s canonization cause?

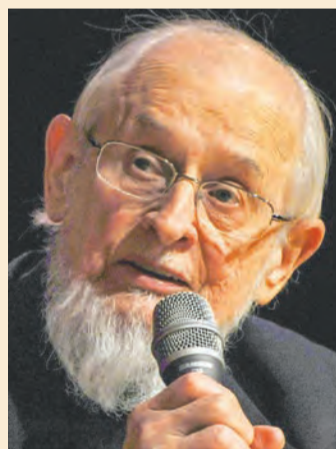
“Because there was nobody else,” he says.

And: Is he pleased to have played a major role in helping Divine Mercy become the greatest grassroots movement in Church history?

“Not because of me,” he says, annoyed. “It’s on account of St. Faustina!”

Why are we mentioning all of this now? Because Fr. Seraphim turned 90 years old on Aug. 30. Happy birthday, dear friend!

So there.



**Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC**

MH



# A ROAD TRIP, WITH INTENTIONS

**A**t the crack of dawn on Wednesday, July 1, I began a five-hour trip by car from our house in Rome to the Shrine of St. Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo, where Padre Pio lived as a friar. I had some important things on my mind.

Joined by three fellow Marians — a religious brother and two of our student priests — I went to pray for an end to the coronavirus pandemic.

Since I lost both of my parents last year, and since they both had a great devotion to Padre Pio, I prayed and asked them to accompany us, spiritually, on our pilgrimage.

It was a blessed day. We hadn't known that the Capuchins — the religious order of which Padre Pio was a member — celebrate each July 1 as a solemnity to mark the Feast of Our Lady of Grace. This particular July 1 marked the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of the Padre Pio Pilgrimage Church and 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the dedication of what is known as the new Church of Our Lady of Grace, where we concelebrated a Mass.

Padre Pio had celebrated Mass there many times. We were able to pray at his tomb and visit his cell where he had lived. One can see his books and other belongings that he kept in his room. I was struck by all of the towels and bandages marked with the blood of St. Pio. As you probably know, he had received the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, on his hands, feet, side, and shoulder, and he suffered the Passion of Christ each time that he celebrated Holy Mass.

I was reminded of the Divine Mercy prayer “O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 84).

Padre Pio found joy in what he had to endure for



At San Giovanni Rotondo, Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC, visited this statue of Our Lady before which St. Padre Pio would pray before and after Mass.

Christ. He didn't want to suffer, nor did he enjoy suffering. However, he found great satisfaction in fulfilling God's will, in giving glory to God by fully living his vocation as a priest and as a consecrated religious, and by helping to save souls by offering up his sufferings and uniting them with Christ's.

After a delicious lunch near the Shrine, we continued our pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Michael the Archangel, which is about a half-hour drive from San Giovanni Rotondo. The Shrine is located on a hill with a beautiful panoramic view.

We entered the church in the village of Monte Sant'Angelo, and then we descended many steps to arrive in a cave — known as “the Celestial Basilica” — where the archangel had appeared in the fifth century. We arrived just after 3 p.m. while prayers were being offered before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. The prayers included the Litany of the Precious Blood, which is prayed each day during the month of July.

We then were present for Benediction. We prayed and asked St. Michael to intercede for the end of the pandemic, since he

had miraculously saved Rome from a deadly plague at the end of the sixth century.

We arrived back home that evening tired but happy. God had arranged our day beautifully. Surely, St. Pio and St. Michael will continue to intercede for our world. Let's take the advice of Padre Pio: “Pray and hope, don't get agitated. Agitation will not lead to anything. God is merciful and He will hear your prayer.”

# ACTING LIKE CHRIST

Jonathan Roumie lands  
a role for the ages

By Marc Massery

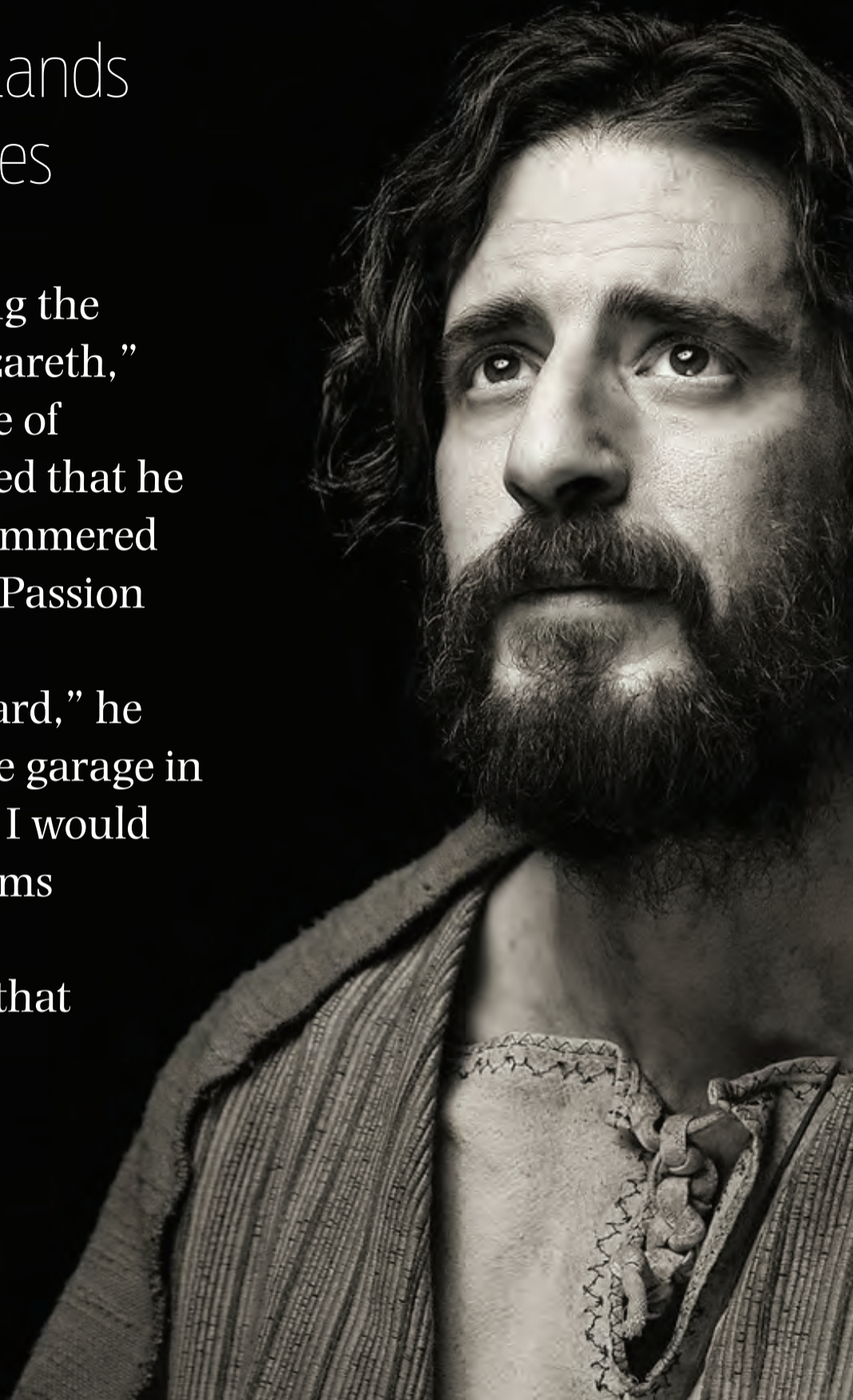
**T**hirty years ago, after watching the television series “Jesus of Nazareth,” 12-year-old Jonathan Roumie of Massapequa, New York, felt so inspired that he grabbed a couple of two-by-fours, hammered them into a cross, and reenacted the Passion narrative.

“I would process around the backyard,” he recalls. “I would plant the cross in the garage in a cinder block to hold it up, and then I would stand on the cinder block with my arms outstretched.”

Thirty-three years later, he’s doing that for a living.

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“[My devotion to Divine Mercy] has allowed me to see everybody who I approach, especially in the context of scenes, with a sense of love,” said Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in the hit series “The Chosen.”



## It’s about Christ and ‘encounter’

In the clamor of newfound celebrity, Jonathan Roumie has gotten a bitter taste of a modern byproduct of fame: cancel culture.

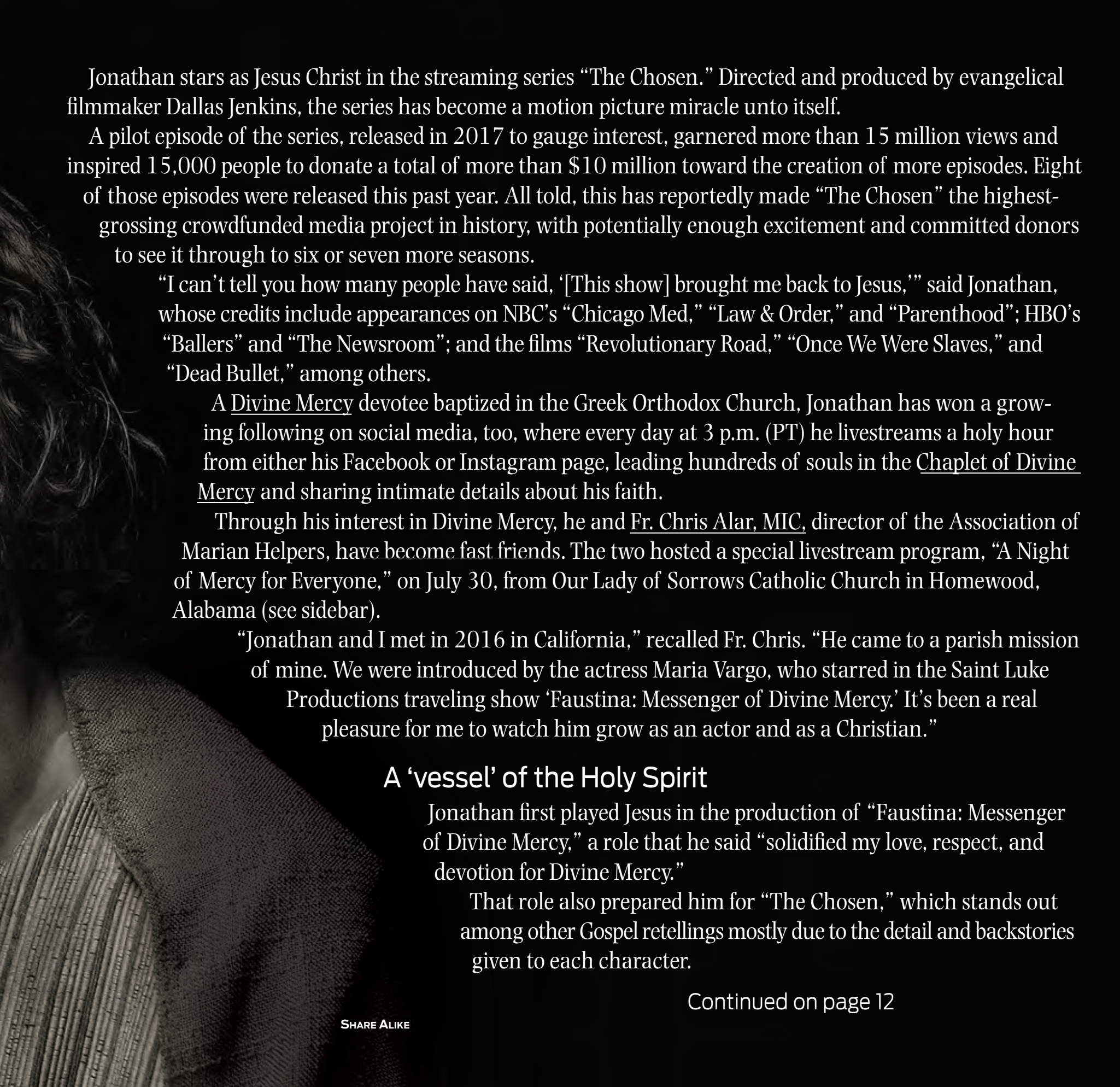
In early August, he announced on Instagram and Facebook plans for a “Virtual Evening of Reflection” with Fr. James Martin, SJ, whose views about homosexuality have been widely criticized for their ambiguity on proper Church teaching.

Be assured: The Marian Fathers always stand with the Church and all her teachings. For his part, Jonathan also clari-

fied on social media that he, too, stands with Church doctrine.

He explained that the intention for the evening of reflection was to discuss three topics near and dear to him. The first: Jesus Christ. The second: “The Chosen.” The third: Fr. Martin’s 2014 book, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, which was endorsed by Dr. Scott Hahn and served as an invaluable resource in Jonathan’s preparation for the role of Jesus in “The Chosen.”

The “Virtual Evening of Reflection” was livestreamed on Aug. 21.



Jonathan stars as Jesus Christ in the streaming series “The Chosen.” Directed and produced by evangelical filmmaker Dallas Jenkins, the series has become a motion picture miracle unto itself.

A pilot episode of the series, released in 2017 to gauge interest, garnered more than 15 million views and inspired 15,000 people to donate a total of more than \$10 million toward the creation of more episodes. Eight of those episodes were released this past year. All told, this has reportedly made “The Chosen” the highest-grossing crowdfunded media project in history, with potentially enough excitement and committed donors to see it through to six or seven more seasons.

“I can’t tell you how many people have said, ‘[This show] brought me back to Jesus,’” said Jonathan, whose credits include appearances on NBC’s “Chicago Med,” “Law & Order,” and “Parenthood”; HBO’s “Ballers” and “The Newsroom”; and the films “Revolutionary Road,” “Once We Were Slaves,” and “Dead Bullet,” among others.

A Divine Mercy devotee baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church, Jonathan has won a growing following on social media, too, where every day at 3 p.m. (PT) he livestreams a holy hour from either his Facebook or Instagram page, leading hundreds of souls in the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and sharing intimate details about his faith.

Through his interest in Divine Mercy, he and Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers, have become fast friends. The two hosted a special livestream program, “A Night of Mercy for Everyone,” on July 30, from Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Homewood, Alabama (see sidebar).

“Jonathan and I met in 2016 in California,” recalled Fr. Chris. “He came to a parish mission of mine. We were introduced by the actress Maria Vargo, who starred in the Saint Luke Productions traveling show ‘Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy.’ It’s been a real pleasure for me to watch him grow as an actor and as a Christian.”

## A ‘vessel’ of the Holy Spirit

Jonathan first played Jesus in the production of “Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy,” a role that he said “solidified my love, respect, and devotion for Divine Mercy.”

That role also prepared him for “The Chosen,” which stands out among other Gospel retellings mostly due to the detail and backstories given to each character.

Continued on page 12

SHARE ALIKE

Upon announcing the livestream, Jonathan was met with harsh criticism from some of his social media followers. Many also defended him. In his own defense, Jonathan reminded people on social media that Jesus Himself rejected no one — that while Christ never condoned sin, He sought first to see the good in people.

Indeed, the ethos of “cancel culture” — that of withdrawing association with public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable — runs contrary to the message of Divine Mercy and the very mission of the Catholic Church.

“Love one another as I have loved you,” Jonathan, quoting

from John 15:12, said in a social media post amidst the uproar. “That’s what I have got going on with most of my encounters with people — hopefully, most of the time. And when I don’t, shame on me. ... I believe there’s a ton more compassion that we can bring — and love and mercy — when we have interactions with people.”

We present this story on Jonathan for two reasons. The first is that in “The Chosen,” he presents Jesus the way we have come to know our Savior through St. Faustina’s *Diary* — as the very face of God’s mercy and love for all humanity. Secondly, Jonathan has a beautiful witness to share. God has clearly been at work in his heart.

MH

“Because of the significance that the disciples and the apostles played as evangelists over the years, there’s been this natural tendency to feel they are distant from us somehow as people,” Jonathan said. “What this show strives to do is reconnect people with the humanity that these major players in our faith history truly had and possessed.”

With “The Chosen,” Jonathan is among a cast and crew of mostly Evangelical and Protestant Christians. He said he relies on his Catholic faith and devotion to Divine Mercy to direct his steps.

“I try to empty myself out as much as I can in the process for this particular role and pray the Holy Spirit uses me as the vessel to say these words and to experience the compassion and the mercy and the love that Christ had for humanity in every moment possible on set.”

Indeed, playing Jesus Christ is far more than just a job for Jonathan; it’s a calling. He believes God has been preparing him for this role for a long time.

“He has a design behind all of this,” Jonathan said. “He had a design from when I was 12 years old reenacting the road to Calvary in the backyard.”

## A westward leap of faith

A first generation American of Egyptian and Irish decent, Jonathan, 46, said his early interest in music and drawing led him to study film in Manhattan.

In the 1990s, he took a job as a set-builder, working on several seminal hip-hop music videos featuring pop music icons such as Biggie Smalls and P. Diddy. He was also a location scout for the blockbuster “I Am Legend,” starring Will Smith. He’s taken jobs as a voiceover artist, was a recurring character on some television soap-operas, and landed some “small roles in some other big films.”

In his 30s, he took a leap of faith by moving to Los Angeles to try to fulfill his dream of making it there as a full-time actor.

“If I had known how hard it was going to be, I may not have been so decided on moving out here,” he said. “But it’s allowed me to really be comfortable with who I am as a person and an artist. The trial of fire of coming out here has really shaped my faith journey and brought me to a place now that I’m just trying on a daily basis to surrender my will and go where He leads me.”

Not long after Jonathan moved to Los Angeles, God opened doors for him to portray Jesus.

The role in “Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy” felt like a spiritual homecoming of sorts for him. Jonathan’s father had been praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet since the early 1990s. And as a graphic artist, Jonathan had long been intrigued by the Divine Mercy Image, given to the world through St. Faustina in the 1930s. In fact, when he was still on the East Coast, Jonathan had experienced a small “Divine Mercy miracle” that would be a

# A call to prayer crosses denominations

**T**hrough a frequent prayer hour on Instagram, Jonathan Roumie’s sharing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is uniting people from different generations, locations, and denominations. Here’s one family that can give an example of all three.

On June 9, a retired Methodist pastor, Ronda Hawkins from Michigan, wrote to us:

I just found out tonight that the Chaplet was prayed by my niece at my sister’s deathbed [in 2008]. Neither my sister nor I were Catholic. I have recently been introduced to the Chaplet and to St. Faustina. Thank you for your ministry.

We can thank the actor, Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in “The Chosen” for introducing a bunch of people — especially Protestants — to the Chaplet on his ... prayer hour on Instagram. And of course my niece, Kathleen, one of the most devout Catholics I know.



Jonathan Roumie frequently takes to social media to talk about the faith and to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a prayer he first learned about through his father. His efforts are bearing a lot of fruit.

Ronda, a big fan of “The Chosen” series, had come across Jonathan’s 3 o’clock prayer service this past Lent. “I listened to as many as I could, and I was struck by how beautiful the Chaplet is.”

Ronda told her niece, Kathleen Miller, about Jonathan’s prayer hour, and then she asked about the Chaplet.



SHARE ALIKE

Jesus (Jonathan Roumie), right, heals the leper in episode six of the hit series “The Chosen.”

sign of things to come.

He recalled thinking, “I love the Image of Divine Mercy, but I wish I could find a version of the Image that was in the style of a Greek Orthodox icon, because I had never seen anything like that.”

So he prayed for something nice and small that would fit on his wall.

“And three days later, an icon about 4 by 10 [inches] showed up outside my door on top of the mailboxes,” he said. “It was the Divine Mercy in the style of a Greek

Orthodox icon.”

He told the story to Leonardo Defilippis, the creator of “Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy,” who promptly responded, “Well, clearly, you’re the guy who has to play Jesus in the story about Divine Mercy.”

## A struggling actor surrenders

Just six months after landing that first role as Jesus, Jonathan auditioned for a short film called “The Two Thieves,” produced by Dallas Jenkins, which tells the

Kathleen, a long-time Marian Helper from Indiana, responded enthusiastically. “I had actually mentioned the Divine Mercy Chaplet to Ronda a few times earlier,” she says. But it didn’t resonate with Ronda at the time.

Kathleen said she came to love the message of Divine Mercy thanks to the Marian Fathers. She told Ronda about St. Faustina and the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Eight years later — now that Ronda would appreciate the gift of the Chaplet being prayed at her sister’s deathbed — Kathleen told Ronda about it.

Ronda’s sister Judy, who was not Catholic, was married to Kathleen’s father. Judy nevertheless attended Mass with her husband and prayed with Kathleen. One day, Kathleen checked in on Judy and her father and discovered Judy lying on the floor, conscious, but having suffered a stroke.

Once they arrived at the hospital, Judy lost consciousness. Kathleen asked for the chaplain. “I just knew the power of Divine Mercy, of the Chaplet prayer — the promise for when you pray it for someone dying.” Jesus



A retired Methodist pastor, Ronda Hawkins is now “on the Jonathan Roumie boat.”

told St. Faustina:

Write that when they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the merciful Savior. (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 1541*)

“My dad knew the Chaplet,” Kathleen said, “and the Protestant chaplain joined us as I led the Chaplet prayer over Judy. I prayed that, whatever else happened, Jesus would take care of it.

“The Lord took her peacefully,” Kathleen continued. “We were honoring the promise the Lord made to St. Faustina. Everyone does their part in the salvation story.”

Ronda, of course, was deeply moved by this story — and by the power of the Chaplet.

“Ronda loves the Lord very much,” Kathleen said. “And now she is on the Jonathan Roumie boat.”

MH

— Terry Peloquin

story of the two men crucified beside Christ. Jonathan wanted the lead role as one of the two thieves, but once again he was cast as Jesus.

“I was slightly disappointed because Jesus only had five lines,” he said. “But, you know, it’s Jesus.”

Playing Jesus in this role for Jenkins, of course, would set Jonathan up to take the lead as Jesus in “The Chosen” a few years later.

Until that breakthrough role, though, Jonathan would struggle to make his dream working as a full-time actor a reality.

“I was juggling seven different side jobs, voiceover coaching, dialect coaching, I did work as a care provider,” he recalled. “I was a caterer in two different companies. I was just finishing driving up for a rideshare company. I was painting houses. Anything I could cobble together to make money, I did it.”

Eventually, this way of living led Jonathan to a breaking point. In May 2018, he found his bank account overdrawn \$80 and had just \$20 cash in his pocket.

“So, I literally was on my knees in prayer on a Saturday in May two years ago. I said, ‘If this is what I’m supposed to be doing, You need to show me. You need to step in and take these problems, these obstacles out of my life right now, because I don’t know how to think them out myself. I’ve tried, but I’m done. So, I’m just going to surrender it all to You, and now it’s Your problem.’”

That afternoon, Jonathan received four checks in his mailbox, acting residuals he hadn’t been expecting. “That cleared all my bills coming up, put food on my table, and literally changed my life, just by God merely answering that prayer. I was so dumbfounded. I remember looking up at this crucifix that hangs over my kitchen, saying, ‘So this is how it’s going to be, huh? Complete surrender? OK, You got it.’”

Three months later, he was confirmed to play Jesus in “The Chosen” series.

“It’s pretty profound, and I have A n’t had that nature of stress since,” he said. “I don’t allow anxiety to affect me in that way anymore because of my commitment to surrendering ... . Even amidst this pandemic, I’m not stressed because I’ve given complete and utter trust, and as I’ve done that, God has been so great and taken such great care of me, it’s profound.”

## Stirring conversations

Since “The Chosen” went viral during the nationwide lockdown in the spring, reaching more than 50 million views, Jonathan has been using his popularity to spread the Gospel message outside the context of acting.

As to his daily holy hours on social media, he said, “I’ve gotten so many Protestants asking about Divine Mercy, you have no idea. Thousands of people have been tuning in over the last several weeks.”



## ‘A Night of Mercy,’ a night to remember

**T**he questioner wanted to know: Why does Jonathan Roumie turn to the Chaplet of Divine Mercy as a daily prayer?

Another questioner wanted to know from Fr. Chris Alar, MIC: What can one do to bring loved ones back to the Catholic Church or to foster a religious vocation?

Parishes and individuals around the world tuned in on July 30, for a special livestream program, “A Night of Mercy,” featuring Fr. Chris and his friend Jonathan. The two discussed Divine Mercy, the beauty of the Catholic

faith, and a whole lot of other things as well, including who Jonathan would choose to have dinner with, if it could be anyone. (His first three choices would be Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, followed by Bono, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Al Pacino.)

Broadcast from Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Homewood, Alabama, “A Night of Mercy” included a personal testimony by Jonathan; a discussion about the Divine Mercy message and devotion by Fr. Chris; Benediction; and music by Danielle Rose.



Back in 2016, while the play “Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy” was on tour, Maria Vargo (center), the actress who portrayed St. Faustina, brought Jonathan Roumie (left) to a parish mission in southern California given by her friend Fr. Chris Alar, MIC (second from right). Father Chris had seen the play and loved it. After the parish mission, the three of them, along with Fr. Anthony Gramlich, MIC (far right), spoke into the night about their love for the Catholic faith and Divine Mercy.

“One guy said, ‘I’m not Catholic, but I have been saying the Chaplet. I used to have anxiety attacks and these attacks have stopped since I started praying the Chaplet.’ I could send you screenshot after screenshot of people thanking me for saying the Chaplet and that they never prayed it before.”

And what’s the future for “The Chosen”?

It has secured funding from crowdsourcing to make the first five episodes of season two, which Jonathan

hopes will start filming by the end of 2020.

“What really makes this different from anything else is the conversations that are being had,” Jonathan said. “It’s stirring up these ecumenical conversations and trying to foster unity among Christians that most other projects have never done before.”

MH

**To watch the “The Chosen,” download “The Chosen” app on your smartphone or find the show on YouTube.**

The evening began with the Q&A in which Fr. Chris and Jonathan fielded questions emailed in from as far away as Saudi Arabia.

As to that query about why he prays the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Jonathan shared how the Chaplet honors the Lord’s request through St. Faustina to meditate on Christ’s Passion at the 3 o’clock hour, the hour when He died on the Cross. Clearly moved by the thought of it, Jonathan spoke of how Jesus, tortured and dying on the Cross, took the time to pray for His killers, saying “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

“That was the example that was set for us,” said Jonathan. “So if I can pray the Chaplet as a minor, infinitesimal token of my appreciation for the sacrifice of Christ, I’m going to do it. And I get peace from that.”

As to the question of how best to go about bringing loved ones back to the faith and fostering religious vocations, Fr. Chris said, “First of all, you need to surrender, to let it all be God’s will, not your will.” Then, he suggested four more things:

1. Have Masses said for those loved ones.
2. Add them to your intentions when you pray the Rosary

and the Chaplet.

3. Be sure to portray joy. “If someone sees in you that the Catholic faith ... is dragging you down in guilt and depression and ‘Woe is me ...,’ that isn’t going to work,” Fr. Chris said.
4. Offer up everything that happens to you — the good, bad, joyful, and painful — to God. “Those graces can be used to foster vocations and return to the Church,” said Fr. Chris.

Later in the evening, in his testimony, Jonathan spoke movingly of the two central themes of the Christian life that we are all called to embrace. The first is humility, “the foundation of all virtues,” he said. The second is mercy, the greatest attribute of God (see *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 180).

“How lifechanging for the world at large would it be if we, as a species, embraced these concepts with open arms, with the same humility and mercy that Christ opened His arms for us on the Cross,” he said.

The broadcast was sponsored by Catholify and Arise. Visit [TheDivineMercy.org](http://TheDivineMercy.org) video section to watch “A Night of Mercy.”

MH



ROBIN WORRALL ON UNSPLASH

# SERVE JESUS. SERVE TRUTH.

By Chris Sparks

**T**here's an old saying: "A lie can travel around the world before the truth has gotten its boots on."

It comes to mind because I spend far too much time on social media. It's a hard habit to break when so many of my friends and family are thousands of miles away. They post their news to social media. I keep tabs on birthdays, and somehow it all seems so indispensable.

One of the things I've noticed, though, has been the prevalence of fake news. It flies around the internet, running the gamut from mistaken reporting to confident ignorance masquerading as insight into the way things really work. There're a ton of unfounded or erroneous

conspiracy theories about all sorts of things — people, organizations, and so on.

Now, we live in a time where any number of very real scandals have hit the news, where the sins and crimes of the great and the apparently good have rightly shocked consciences and led many people to ask some hard questions about whom to trust. I'm not condemning anyone for following the truth wherever it leads. But there's a subtle and important distinction between following the truth wherever it leads and chasing scandal.

To follow the truth is, in some sense, to follow Christ, for He is "the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6).

We are meant to bring light into dark places, after all, and hunger and thirst for righteousness. We are supposed to serve truth in the face of the lies of hell.

But we are also meant to love our neighbor, to desire their ultimate good (see Mt 5:44). We are not permitted to wish ill on our enemies, even when they deserve it.

When Christians run after conspiracy theories, believe the worst, and spread pernicious interpretations of others' words and deeds, we give scandal to the world. We are meant to be apostles of truth and Divine Mercy, models of charity and love. Proclaiming and living the truth must be our priority, not announcing the sins and lies of others. As Scripture tells us:

[P]roclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances ... (2 Tim 4:2-5).

It's bad enough when we neglect spreading the Gospel in favor of announcing our preferred scandal of the day. It's even worse when we spread calumnies and falsehoods. We are supposed to be worshipping Truth, Jesus Christ. We are supposed to let others know we are Christian by our love. Given that sin always hurts the Mystical Body of Christ and our neighbor, there's no such thing as a harmless bit of conspiracy theorizing that falsely attributes monstrous motives, actions, or desires to public figures, organizations, or others (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2477-2479).

As Ewa Czaczkowska recounts in Faustina: The Mystic and Her Message (Marian Press), St. Faustina was the subject of much gossip throughout her life, enduring the murmuring of her fellow sisters and offering it all up in union with Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of souls. The cruel gossip and falsehoods spread about her constituted one of her greatest crosses, just as Jesus, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, suffered most at the hands of the Jewish priests, scribes, and Pharisees because of their malicious lies.

Truth matters. In fact, it ought to matter more to Christians than it does to those around us because we

worship Truth in Jesus Christ. And so we have a multifaceted call.

- We are to earnestly endeavor to learn the truth, seeking out primary sources, fact checking claims before we spread them, and serving the truth at least as well as the secular folks do.
- We are to be charitable toward others, hearing them speak and observing their actions with the best possible interpretation, according to right reason and wise discernment.
- We are to prioritize mercy, knowing that Jesus is the Just Judge and we are not; that God sees clearly and knows with certainty while we suffer from the consequences of original sin, including from darkened intellect.
- We are called to tell the truth in charity, governed by the duties of our state in life, as well as prudence as to the time and place of that truth telling.
- We are to live according to the truth that Christ has revealed to us through human reason

and supernatural faith, acknowledging in sacramental Confession our failures to do so and allowing the knowledge of our own fallibility to give us patience and charity with the failings of our neighbors.

- We are to be a light in the darkness, bearing truly prophetic witness even if those truths are inconvenient or unwelcome to the rich, the powerful, or to our neighbor.

Above all, we must resist the temptation to become Gnostics, recklessly pursuing hidden knowledge about the evils of the world rather than abiding in the truth and grace of the Gospel. We shouldn't attach more importance to knowledge than to life, as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. Divine Mercy calls us to base our lives on trust in Jesus, not on secret knowledge or understanding the works of the enemy.

Worship Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the light will shine in the darkness.

Jesus, I trust in You!

**Chris Sparks serves as senior book editor for the Marian Fathers. He is the author of the Marian Press book How Can You Still Be Catholic? 50 Answers to a Good Question.**

**We are meant to be apostles of truth and Divine Mercy, models of charity and love. Proclaiming and living the truth must be our priority, not announcing the sins and lies of others.**



MARIE ROMAGNANO

**T**he Catholic custom of lighting candles has its roots in early Christian times, emerging from the Church teaching that Christ is the Light of the World (see Jn 8:12).

“A votive candle really represents our prayer before God,” says Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers. “We join our prayers to the light of Christ, allowing that light to burn on and on in our souls, even when we cannot be in a shrine physically. Christ is the Light of the World, and when we see the light of the candles, we are reminded of that hope.”

The Marian Fathers are committed to making sure you have plenty of opportunities to have a candle lit. Most of our outdoor shrines on Eden Hill are also candle shrines, with an opportunity to light a real wax candle for your intentions.

Especially when people can't go to shrines in person (such as in this age of the coronavirus), the importance of the candle shrines here on Eden Hill becomes even more apparent.

The intentions that are phoned, mailed, or sent in electronically are remembered by

# Why do we light candles?



the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception every day during Holy Mass and in their personal prayers, and by the Divine Mercy Intercessory Prayer Ministry. Each prayer intention is prayed for individually before the Blessed Sacrament in Our Lady of Mercy Oratory. Each prayer intention is kept strictly confidential.

To request the lighting of a candle, please visit [marian.org/votives](http://marian.org/votives) or call 1-800-462-7426. You may also join our perpetually burning monthly candle program, Circle of Light, by visiting: [MyCircleofLight.org](http://MyCircleofLight.org)

— Terry Peloquin



**CIRCLE OF LIGHT**  
*Light a perpetually burning candle*

**Keep a candle burning for  
your most fervent intentions**

**Join us:** Visit [MyCircleofLight.org](http://MyCircleofLight.org)  
Call 1-800-462-7426



FELIX CARROLL

When the Sisters first arrived in the Berkshires, among their first orders of business was to find chaplains. God provided. Above, the Very Rev. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, and Mother Joan Bernadette in front of the Sisters' monastery.

# Like family

## Meet the Sisters down the road

**N**either the natural elements nor the gloom of a pandemic stands in the way. Each and every morning, the Marian Fathers fulfill a daily responsibility for the sake of a group of women praying for the salvation of souls.

For the past 25 years, a Marian priest, a courier of the Sacraments, each morning climbs into a car at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and drives down quiet country roads only to arrive 20 minutes later at a remote hillside. There, a monastery rises from bedrock, bathed — as you might expect — in misty morning light.

The residents there, cloistered, contemplative religious sisters who apply themselves to the perfection of divine love, couldn't be any more grateful.

"It's one of the great joys of our ministry," said the Very Rev. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, the Marians' provincial superior for the United States and Argentina. "The Sisters are joy-

ful, humble witnesses to God's love. Together, prayerfully, we share a similar mission — to make present and known God's love for all people."

In other words, the Sisters are like family.

Thankfully for us who live in these parts, the Lord has seen to it that this rural corner of Massachusetts con-

tains two holy outposts of Christian renewal, where the mystical life can be lived, precisely for the world's redemption.

From one hilltop (Eden Hill in Stockbridge) to another (in the tiny town of Tyringham) — 8 miles as the crow flies — the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and the Visitation Monastery uphold complementary spiritualities that have deepened and enriched the life of the modern Church.

For the Sisters, members of the the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary founded by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal in 1610 in France, the mystery of the Visitation provides a model for a life of faith — particularly in Our Lady's response to God's call to her and in her zeal for tending to souls in need.

For the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, founded by St. Stanislaus Papczynski in 1670 in Poland, the mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception serves as both proof and solace that Christ had conquered sin and that we are all called to eternal life in Heaven.

But the two religious congregations share another profound similarity: By God's Providence, they both have found themselves at the center of the history and promotion of two specific private revelations that have reshaped the Church.

For the Sisters, it was the revelations of the Sacred Heart given by Jesus in the 1670s to a sister of their own order, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

For the Marian Fathers, it was the Divine Mercy revelations given by our Lord to St. Faustina in the 1930s, for which the Marian Fathers have been the Church's most prominent promoters, beginning in 1941.

"It seems that as society gets more and more secular and materialistic, our Lord has to remind us, through the Sacred Heart and Divine Mercy, that He is here, He's still here," said Sr. Mary Emmanuel, VHM. "Society keeps moving away, and our Lord keeps coming back to show us His love."

A few curious details bear mentioning.

Saint Margaret Mary, like St. Faustina, had doubts at first about her revelations. Both young women had confessors who encouraged them to embrace the special role the Lord had given them. For St. Margaret Mary, that priest was St. Claude de la Colombiere, SJ (1641-1682). For St. Faustina, that priest was Blessed

Michael Sopocko (1888-1975). Since both religious sisters led cloistered lives, the burden of spreading the Sacred Heart and Divine Mercy messages and devotions to the outside world fell to the two confessors.

Saint Claude de la Colombiere died on Feb. 15, the same day Blessed Sopocko died. Not to put too fine of a point to it, but Feb. 15 happens to be St. Faustina's name day — the feast day of her patron saint, St. Faustus.

A final interesting fact: The Visitation Sisters recently found out the original Divine Mercy Image was painted in the former house of the chaplain for the Visitation Sisters' monastery in Vilnius, in present day Lithuania.



In the words of St. Francis de Sales, co-founder of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, "Our little congregation is really the work of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Our dying Savior gave birth to us from the wound in His Sacred Heart."

"We're thrilled to pieces to have learned that," said Mother Joan Bernadette, VHM.

The Visitation Monastery is one of the Order's 11 houses in the United States and one of 150 worldwide. Dressed head to toe in habits identical to those of the first women who entered the order in 1610, the Sisters were founded "to give to God daughters of prayer," in the words of St. Francis.

In all, 19 women live in the Visitation Monastery in Tyringham, six of whom are in formation. They describe their daily life as "contemplative, simple, sisterly, true, and joyous." They wake each morning before sunrise and go to bed long after sunset. They sing the Liturgy of the Hours five times a day. They do spiritual reading. They administer a popular prayerline; take care of household tasks; run a garden; and create items used for liturgical celebrations.

"We think of our lives as lives of silence and prayer



CHRISTINA RAHR LANE

“We remain in the Heart of Christ,” said Mother Joan Bernadette (right). “People often ask us to pray for them, to help them with family problems. And we announce those requests in our community, with intention. This is the commitment we’ve made.”

and work,” said Sr. Miriam Rose, VHM.

“— And fun,” Sr. Mary Emmanuel hastened to add. (They do have a basketball net out behind the parking lot.)

When the Sisters first moved to western Massachusetts from Delaware in 1993 and began plans to build their Tyringham monastery, one of their first orders of business was to find chaplains. They were directed to the Marian Fathers.

Mother Joan recalled visiting the Shrine in Stockbridge for the first time and entering the side chapel dedicated to St. Faustina. The Sisters knew they had come to the right place because there before them was a stained-glass window depicting the Sacred Heart appearing to St. Margaret Mary.

“When we saw that,” said Mother Joan Bernadette, “we were really convinced that God’s hand was leading us to be more closely associated with the Marians.”

The Marians’ ministry to the Sisters includes hearing confessions and celebrating daily Mass in the monastery’s high-ceilinged chapel. Masses, held each morning at 7:45, are melodic, powerful prayers of thanksgiving, praise, and deeply felt appeals on behalf of a broken world.

Candles are lit. Incense burns. A bell inside the tower clangs — loudly, deeply, solemnly — enough to make the trees tremble. Through

## Lockdown in the Sacred Heart

By a Visitation Sister of Tyringham, Massachusetts

Most of us have heard the familiar saying, “Man proposes, God disposes.” In this year 2020, the Visitation Order and devotees of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonization of that great apostle of the Sacred Heart, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690). Our sister, St. Margaret Mary, a member of the Visitation Order founded by Sts. Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal, was the recipient of very important messages from the Lord Jesus that became the basis of the Church’s modern devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Big celebrations, special Masses, meetings, conferences, spiritually-stimulating activities, and immersion in all things “Sacred-Hearty” were planned to take place in Paray-le-Monial, France, where our saint lived out her religious life from 1671-1690 in the Visitation Monastery there. What transpired was something quite different. Instead of high activity came a far more reclusive and contemplative response. We were, by Heaven’s allowance, called to “lockdown in the Heart of Jesus.”

Saint Margaret Mary, an ardent lover of the hidden life who had such an aversion to going to the visiting parlor

and writing letters, must be chuckling to herself on high. She never wanted her name to be bandied about, and as she approached her end on earth her great desire was to destroy all that she had ever written to prevent any word from ever being spoken of her. She wrote, “I wish to be buried, annihilated in eternal oblivion.”

In an unexpected twist of events, our saint’s centenary celebrations have been much subdued. While on earth, she always wanted the emphasis to be taken off herself and placed on the Lord. Under the present circumstances, her celebrations have all but evaporated. Instead, we are now given the opportunity to be engaged in a lockdown with the Heart of Jesus, where we can spend time to get to know and love Him better.

Just like our saintly sister who immersed herself in prayer in her secluded environment, we can wait on the Lord and place ourselves in His presence during these challenging times. We can use these precious moments in our homes and workplaces to lift up our hearts to the merciful and Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Saint Margaret Mary, in several significant visions of the Lord Jesus, experienced for herself His burning love for all

Holy Mass, the Sisters' hours of silence and their love for the Lord finally find release — through song. The sound of sopranos quietly peeks through the stillness like light upon the landscape, like the break of day, as if to anoint all things. The voices gradually join together in melody and form, in praise and petition, and rise to the rafters.

The Masses are gorgeous — and open to the public.

The Sisters continually remember the Marians in their prayers.

“We always want to express our gratitude for the Marians,” said Mother Joan Bernadette. “They have always been so outstanding and wonderful to us. Their generosity and the time they have given us over the years have been mind-boggling.”

Incidentally, the Marian Fathers and the Visitation Sisters share something else in common. Before the pandemic hit, both had big plans for 2020. The Marian Fathers were to celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their founding. The Sisters were to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonization of St. Margaret Mary.

The Marians' anniversary events have been canceled. The Sisters' events planned for May were canceled. Plans for October remain up in the air.

For now, they are in lockdown with the Lord (see sidebar). Really, who could ask for more?

MH

— Felix Carroll



CHRISTINA PAHR LANE

Prayer, spiritual reading, meals, chores, and recreation are the hallmarks of life in the monastery (with a few Oreo cookies thrown in, too).



FELIX CARROLL

Mother Joan Bernadette stands in the Sisters' chapel, which includes a painting of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque receiving the Sacred Heart revelations.

the souls He created. He appeared to her in a blaze of glory with His five wounds shining like five suns and flames issuing from all parts of His human form. Opening His divine breast, Jesus disclosed His utterly affectionate and merciful Heart and asked for her love and the love of all of us in return. For those who do not love Him, the Lord informs us that we can make up for their deficiencies, and He will use our prayers and sacrifices to work wonders for souls.

Before St. Margaret Mary died, her only desire was to occupy herself “with no other thought than that of the Sacred Heart of my Jesus.” In her lifetime, she was given her first chance to pay public tribute to Jesus' Sacred

Heart. As directress of novices, she asked her young charges, instead of honoring her for her feast day, to direct their compliments to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They readily agreed, and a small shrine was erected in the novitiate. This provoked some opposition from a few of her fellow sisters who thought she was introducing novelties into the community, and she was forbidden to mention the devotion in public for awhile. Yet, the Lord quickly promised her that He would reign, in spite of all opposition. And as we know, the devotion to His Sacred Heart spread throughout the Church.

The words from the Sacred Heart of Jesus ring through the ages and are a reminder of His powerful intervention in our lives and in our world today. May this special year of remembrance of this great friend of Jesus' Heart — St. Margaret Mary Alacoque — bolster our spirit because Christ's Heart is ready and waiting to conquer all hearts with His all-encompassing mercy and never-failing love. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is unstoppable and His love will prevail in the end. MH

**Marian Press has recently published a booklet prepared by the Visitation Sisters. *Stations of the Sacred Heart* will take you through the Scriptures and into a deeper love of and trust in the Sacred Heart. Visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) to order. (Product code: B47-STBKLT)**



CHRIS HARDY ON UNSPLASH

# ‘We will never forget,’ remember?

By a Marian Father of the Immaculate Conception

One of the most poignant memories I have as a retired 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division combat chaplain is when I gave what’s known as the “final brief” to our soldiers getting ready to board the plane for combat in Afghanistan.

As the soldiers walked single file in their full battle gear to board the plane, they shook the hands of the Brigade Commander and the senior non-commissioned officer leadership who were giving brief words of encouragement. I was last in line to look each soldier in their eyes offering a blessing. That instant was a moment of hard reality, for I saw in their face an array of emotions — stoicism, resoluteness, fear. Regrettably, 23 of those soldiers never returned home.

I’ve been thinking a lot about that moment as I consider the protests, civil unrest, and polarization that have shaken our nation this year. What I see causes me deep

pain for our service members, considering the sacrifices they have made.

When soldiers face death fighting for our country, they’re not necessarily thinking about the First Amendment concerning freedom of speech and the right to protest for a redress of grievances. Nevertheless, these freedoms are precisely why our service members and their families make the sacrifice.

This is why when I see peaceful protests, I’m encouraged; when I see protests turn destructive, I’m dismayed; and when I see political leaders and opinion makers stoking fear and promoting division for self gain, I’m alarmed.

Indeed, our nation is marching down a dark road. We’re once again hearing that reckless refrain from the Vietnam era: “Our nation: Love it or leave it!” We’re forgetting the ideals for which our men and women in

uniform have risked their lives.

The American people learned a very hard lesson during the Vietnam era. In words and actions, many Americans were abusive toward our service members upon their return from Vietnam. To this day, as a chaplain to the Veterans Affairs Hospital, I often speak with Vietnam veterans. All of them, bar none, still feel anger and pain from that turbulent time.

Fortunately, what we now commonly say to our service members is, “Thank you for your service.” But those words are beginning to ring hollow today, and here’s the reason why. We seem to have forgotten a key element of who we are.

Remember the words adopted in 1782 on the first Great Seal of the United States: *E Pluribus Unum*, Latin for “Out of many, one”? Do we hear this motto now from those who promote division? Do we hear it from those who forgo scrupulousness, integrity, and kind-heartedness in favor of winning at all costs?

Entrenched polarization blinds us to our many shared ideals. It weakens us. It affects our economic security. It drives our bitter cultural wars. If left unchecked, it will destroy America as we know it. The sacrifices of our men and women in uniform will have been in vain.

Indeed, we seem to have forgotten that our nation’s strength rests in its diversity.

As an Army chaplain, one of my responsibilities was to provide for soldiers’ religious needs. Depending on a soldier’s religious affiliation, I may not have been able to perform particular ministries, in which case I was tasked with connecting the soldier with a chaplain who could. If that support was unavailable on post, I was expected to work with religious leaders in the local community to help the soldier. The mandate of all chaplains is to “perform or provide.”

Why is this a mandate? Because the military gives highest priority to what we call “unit cohesion.” Our strength is found in the diversity — racial, religious, cultural — of each soldier. Unit cohesion requires respecting and cherishing our differences. That is the means through which soldiers reliably and effectively join together in common cause. This, too, is how we reflect the legacy of America.

With that in mind, we must never forget the vision that

empowered our Founding Fathers. By means of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, they firmly rooted our nation to the ideals of justice, liberty, tranquility, and the common good. I have no doubt God’s Providence had a hand in the founding of our nation.

Considering today’s turmoil and division, I believe now is a perfect time to contemplate three questions posed by the Rev. John Flavel Bigelow in 1861 in his book *Hand of God in American History*:

To what other nation has God given such a history? To none. Then are we adequately conscious of, and adequately grateful for, the single distinction which has been vouchsafed to us? Do we appreciate the peculiarities of our past history and our present condition?

**Entrenched polarization blinds us to our many shared ideals. ... If left unchecked, it will destroy America as we know it. The sacrifices of our men and women in uniform will have been in vain.**

With our military men and women in mind, these same questions can be asked of us. Do we appreciate their sacrifices? Do we embrace their common cause? Are we forgetting the fundamental principles that make America great among the global community of nations?

As the United — not “Divided” — States of America, we need to remember the experiment called democracy is not over; it’s still

being tested. After 245 years, we still have work to do. That work stretches out before us, across wheat fields and deserts, from the mountains to the prairies, from sea to shining sea.

We therefore need to ask our Merciful Savior for forgiveness and reconciliation with regard to our disrespect for our diversity. We need to seek love and peace, healing and hope in a world made dark by fear, hatred, and brokenness.

Help us, Lord, to rebuild this nation by seeking Your image in the faces of others. Help us to discover the best in all of us that we may serve those who are the least, the lost, and the lonely. Help us that we may have the ability to look into the eyes of a stranger and see our brother and sister. Help us that we may find strength in our diversity and have the courage to live the words “in God we trust.”

May we again be reminded of the sacrifice of our service members and their ultimate sacrifice so that we may long remain “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

MH

# On the path to canonization

In 2017, Archbishop Charles Chaput, then occupant of the see of Philadelphia, said, “Racism is a poison of the soul. It’s the ugly, original sin of our country, an illness that has never fully healed.”

Our African-American brothers and sisters in Christ have had to endure that poison for centuries. Here are some of those brethren traveling the path to canonization.



## Venerable Servant of God Henriette Delille

Venerable Henriette Delille (1812-1862) founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans in 1842. The great, great granddaughter of an enslaved African and the granddaughter of an enslaved woman who freed herself and her children, Delille defied the severe restrictions of racist laws and traditions aimed at all people of African descent in the deep South. In 1836, when she was a mere 24 years old, she revealed her intention to devote herself to God and social justice when she recorded her prayer in the front of her prayer book. It reads: “*I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God.*” In that same year, she founded a confraternity of pious free women of African descent, the Sisters of the Congregation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The members pledged personal piety, to care for one another, and to care for their people. In 1842, she again challenged the racism that defined her as inferior and thus deemed her unfit to join any of the many religious sisterhoods in the city when she founded the Sisters of the Holy Family. The 12 free women of African descent who joined her vowed to provide care for the “poorest of the poor,” whether enslaved or free, black or white. The Sisters, under her direction, cared for the poor, the abandoned, and the elderly. Following Delille’s death in 1862, the Sisters grew in numbers. In all, hundreds of Holy Family Sisters pledged themselves to caring for others as they spread their ministry throughout the United States and into Central America and Africa.

## Venerable Servant of God Pierre Toussaint

Born a slave in Haiti in 1766, Pierre Toussaint was taught to read and write by the Bérard family, his owners. Pierre’s treatment by the Bérards appears to have been humane enough to have won his loyalty and love. He was brought by the eldest Bérard child, Jean Bérard, and his wife to New York City in 1787 just ahead of the Haitian revolution. Toussaint was apprenticed to one of the most notable hairdressers in the city. When Jean Bérard returned to Haiti and died, Toussaint became the main breadwinner for the Bérard family in New York. Madame Bérard freed Pierre on her deathbed. One of the preeminent hairdressers in New York, Toussaint bought the freedom of family members and his fiancé, then became one of the major benefactors of charities and other institutions in New York City, causing some to call him the father of Catholic Charities in the city. Toussaint died in 1853 and was buried in Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral, whose construction he’d helped fund. His remains were later transferred to the present day St. Patrick’s Cathedral.



## Servant of God Julia Greeley

Called Denver's "Angel of Charity" or "Angel of Mercy," Julia Greeley was the Denver Archdiocese's model of mercy for the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy (2015-2016). Outstanding for her devotion to the Sacred Heart and her charitable work, Julia Greeley was born a slave in Hannibal, Missouri, sometime between 1833 and 1848. One of her eyes was destroyed when a slaveowner was whipping her mother and the whip caught Julia in the face. As a freedwoman, Julia came into the service of the family of William Gilpin, Colorado's first territorial governor, and around 1878, arrived in Denver, where she'd live the rest of her life. She entered the Catholic Church in 1880, joining Sacred Heart Parish. Called by one writer a "one-person St. Vincent de Paul Society," Julia often was seen walking the streets in a floppy hat, oversized shoes, and pulling a red wagon behind her filled with food and other things for the poor. She died on June 7, 1918, the Feast of the Sacred Heart.



Courtesy Archdiocese of Chicago

## Venerable Servant of God Fr. Augustus Tolton

John Augustus Tolton was born a slave in Missouri in 1854. His family escaped slavery during the Civil War, crossing the Mississippi River into Illinois. Raised Catholic, he found his vocation to the priesthood through the ministry of Fr. Peter McGirr, pastor of St. Peter's Catholic School in Quincy, Illinois, which Tolton attended. Tolton was not permitted admission to any seminary or religious order in the United States because of his race — so he went instead to Rome for his studies. Ordained a priest in 1886, Fr. Tolton returned to the U.S. and a hero's welcome. The first recognized African-American priest, Fr. Tolton exercised his priestly ministry first for three years at a parish in Quincy, then moved to Chicago to begin St. Monica's parish for black Catholics, where he served until his death from heat stroke in 1897. A model priest, Fr. Tolton was outstanding in his charity, evangelical zeal, and excellent preaching.

## Servant of God Mother Mary Lange, OSP

Elizabeth Clarisse Lange was born around 1784 in either Haiti or Cuba, was well-educated, and came to the United States in the early 1800s. By 1813, she was established in Baltimore, Maryland, a black free woman in a slave state. Recognizing that the children of her fellow Caribbean immigrants needed access to education, she began teaching out of her home. In 1828, she founded a school, and then she proceeded to found the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a religious community for women of color, serving as its first superior. She and fellow religious took first vows in 1829 and went on to become leaders in the works of mercy in Baltimore, educating, tending to the sick, and much more. After a long life of service, faith, and charity, Mother Mary Lange died on Feb. 3, 1882.



Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, fspa.org

## Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA

Born Dec. 29, 1937, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, Thea Bowman was drawn to become Catholic as a child by the love and witness of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA) and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, her teachers and pastors respectively at Holy Child Jesus Church and School in Canton. She would later enter the FSPA herself and spend her life as an educator at the primary, secondary, and university levels, a singer, and a voice for fraternal love among all God's children. Diagnosed with cancer in 1984, she bore heroic witness to faith, love, and grace in the midst of suffering until she passed away in 1990.

MH

— Chris Sparks

# FORMATION AT THE FARM



PHOTOS BY MARIE ROMAGNANO

By Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC

When COVID-19 hit the United States this past winter, I had to make a difficult decision. Up to that time, I'd been working with a group of young men and women who give a year (or more) to serve the poor and lonely in the Northeast. Those Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy, as they're called, deeply inspired me and were helping a lot of people. Problem was, if they continued their ministry in the midst of the pandemic, they risked infecting those they served or catching the virus themselves and spreading it to the rest of the Missionary community.

So, I had to decide: Send the Missionaries home or keep them on?

Thankfully, the decision wasn't just mine to make.

This past February, a young, dynamic Irish priest, fresh from the Marians' novitiate, came to help me full-time with the Missionaries. For the first time in six years, in the person of Fr. James Devine, MIC, I had much-needed priestly support with a thriving ministry that I loved. But before we could really get started, Fr. James and I first had to decide if we should cancel the program.

After a lot of hand-wringing, we made the tough decision to send the Missionaries home. Then, for the next two months, Fr. James and I racked our brains about how we might bring them back. But how could they return when their main ministry was now impossible?

One day, I had an idea: A focus on the farm.

## Little Way Farm

Back in 2017, in the idyllic Tyringham Valley of western Massachusetts, just a 10-minute drive from the

National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, the Marian Missionaries had bought an old dilapidated farm.

For the past three years, on days when the Missionaries didn't have ministry, many of them worked the farm, getting it ready for animals and crops. Well, by this May, "The Little Way Farm," as we call it, was finally ready to receive seed in the ground and animals on the fields — and so, yes, it was perfect timing for a bunch of Missionary farm workers.

But would the Missionaries be interested?

Surprisingly, they were.

So, Fr. James and I welcomed the Missionaries back and, together, got to work. We planted vegetables. We sent away for 60 chicks, 12 pigs, and honeybees. We also helped create a two-acre pond and a 250-foot-long retaining wall complete with a Marian grotto.

As I write this in August, the crop is a bumper one, the animals are thriving, and the bees are making delicious honey. The pond is slowly filling with mountain spring water, and a four-foot outdoor statue of Mary is soon to be placed on her pillar just in time for the Feast of her Assumption.

Now, all that is great. But my favorite part by far is those super-trooper Missionaries.

## Growing vocations

Some people say that young people these days are lazy, entitled, and self-absorbed. I hate to say it, but I've found that to be true! At least I've found it to be true for many of the Missionaries when they *first* enter our program. However, after spending time in regular prayer, hard work,



ministry, and an environment of unconditional love, they change. They *really* change.

For instance, I've watched college-aged men and women who came to us glued to their smart phones slowly tear themselves away from digital distractions so as to enter into authentic community life, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and the beauty of creation in the midst of honest labor. Of course, that was all taking place through our program before the pandemic, but two things have seemed to supercharge the changes in our Missionaries: consistent hard work on the farm and heroic pastoral care.

What I didn't realize when this idea of farm work first arose was just how powerful it would be for young people, especially when they're surrounded by incredible beauty and see holy mentors working right beside them.

One of the greatest of those mentors is Br. David Guza, MIC, who has been helping with the program since its beginning. Never in my life have I seen someone work so hard as Br. David, who is constantly building walls, fixing tractors, planting crops, or teaching Missionaries what seems to be unparalleled practical wisdom.

Also, several outstanding former Missionaries have

stayed on to help with the program, and they work right beside the Missionaries, listening to their struggles and loving them with the Heart of Christ. And now there's

Fr. Francis Dankowski, who has recently joined the team as a Wendell Berry-loving "farmer priest." When he's not tending the garden, feeding animals, or canning crops, he's hearing the Missionaries' Confessions and giving them spiritual direction. Finally, there's Fr. James, the Irish priest who has been heroically accompanying each Missionary, helping them to love Jesus and Mary Immaculate with all their hearts.

I'm now happy to report that all this effort is bearing fruit. For instance, two of our Missionaries are entering the seminary. Apart from them, the Missionaries have sent no fewer than five vocations to the Marian Fathers. Also, all of our current Missionaries want to give yet another year of service. Between them and the new batch of Missionaries coming in September, about 10 Missionaries will be discerning vocations to the priesthood. Most importantly, we're hoping that all of the Missionaries will one day become saints.

So, please pray for us that we might grow saints on our Little Way Farm until we can get back to serving the poor and the lonely in the region.

MH



With winter approaching, the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy could use some financial help to renovate their barn. If you'd like to help, please visit [MarianMissionaries.org](http://MarianMissionaries.org) or call 413-944-8500.



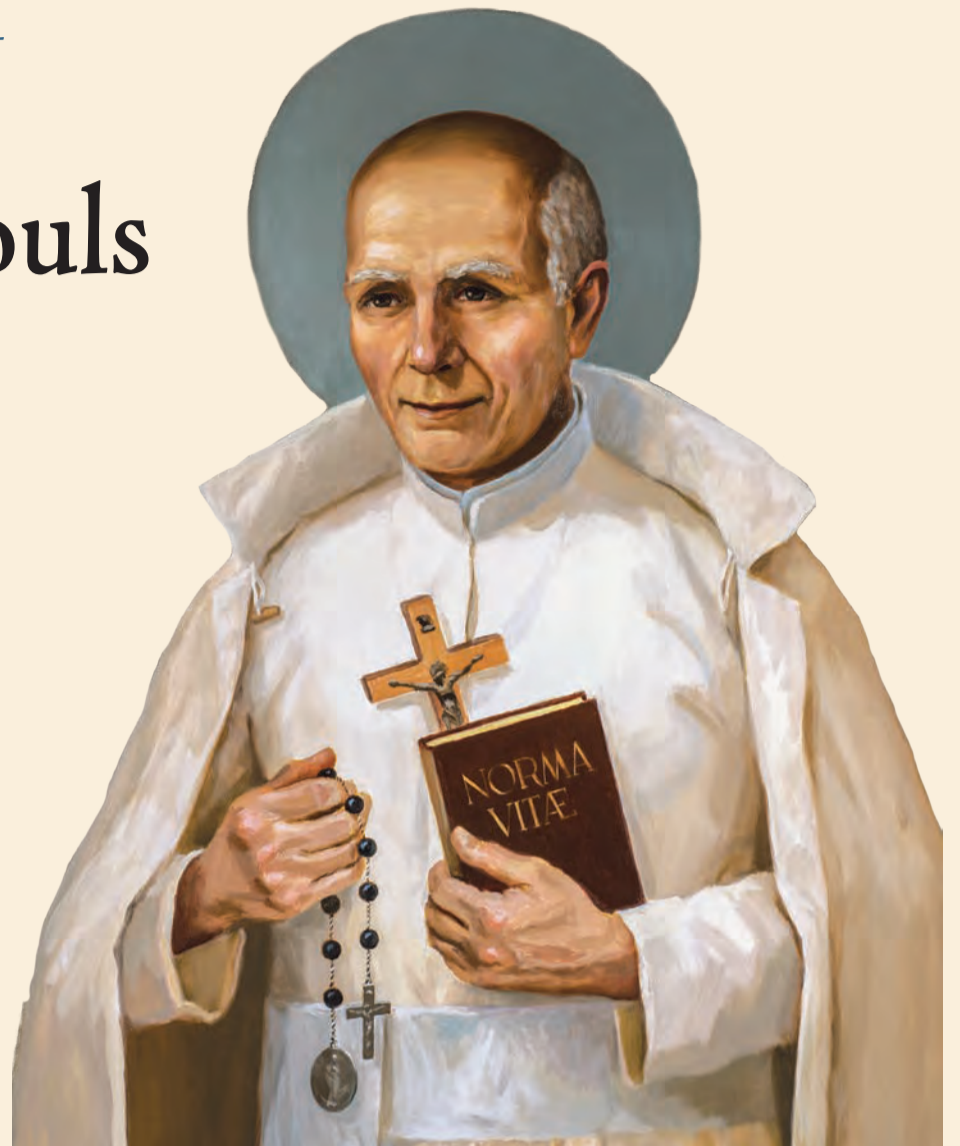
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## MEDICINE, MARY, AND MERCY

**M**edical doctors Marcos and Janice Maldonado of Tampa, Florida, are an inspiring couple. Cradle Catholics and consecrated to the Blessed Mother, they serve God by serving others.

In their medical practices, they see a lot of suffering. Knowing well that incredible advancements in medicine don't change the simple fact that spirituality can bring comfort, even healing, even redemption, for the sick and dying, they incorporate their faith into first-rate care of physical ailments. Often that may come in the form of praying for their patients and colleagues. Sometimes, when they feel the Lord calling them to do so, they provide spiritual counsel as well.

They agree this isn't always an easy task. They rely on our Lord and Our Lady to guide them. "I give the day to God, offer everything for His glory. I accept whatever will come," said Dr. Janice, a neurologist and faculty member in the Department of Neurology at the University of South Florida. She works specifically with patients suffering from multiple sclerosis and headaches. Many of her patients are coping with the loss of basic motor functions. Many feel isolated.

"Whatever words of encouragement and hope I can give are what Our Lady models, and what Jesus models, and they're both our example to follow," Dr. Janice says.

When opportunities for evangelization present themselves, "I often let the Holy Spirit do His work," explained Dr. Marcos, chief rheumatologist at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa.

By allowing the Lord to shine through his work, Dr. Marcos said he hopes to prompt conversations that could, ultimately, lead to spiritual conversion. "I want them to think, 'There is something different about him; I wonder what it is?'" Subsequently, he said, "maybe then I can talk to them about Mother Mary, the Marian Fathers, and Divine Mercy."

The coronavirus pandemic has brought a new set of obstacles when counseling patients. Namely, fear. Recently, Dr. Marcos tended to a patient who was anxious about contracting COVID-19. He could tell she was devoted to our Lord and in need of some positive reassurance.

"I said, 'What's the worst thing that can happen? Do you love Jesus?'" Dr. Marcos recalled.

The Maldonados, parents to three grown children, pray the Rosary together each evening.

Married for 30 years, the Maldonados said their own devotion to the Divine Mercy grew when they lived in Miami and attended a parish, St. Agatha, which has a large Divine Mercy Image prominently displayed. Pope St. John Paul II visited the parish in 1987. A plaque commemorates the visit. The Maldonados believe these factors fueled their devotion to the Divine Mercy.

They are grateful for the spiritual nourishment the Marian Fathers have been providing since the beginning of the pandemic in March. They especially enjoy participating in the Sunday livestream of the Divine Mercy Chaplet from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

"We find that very powerful to unite ourselves online to the Marian Fathers, to see the Shrine," says Dr. Marcos.

Like the Maldonados, if you have benefited from the Marian Fathers' virtual outreach during these challenging times and would like to support our mission to bring the message of the Divine Mercy to others through digital talks, livestreaming, and new video programming, you can still participate in our Marian Fathers Appeal 2020, or visit [marian.org/urgent](http://marian.org/urgent).

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Kevin Walto is a donor relations officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact him at (413) 298-1381; [helpers@marian.org](mailto:helpers@marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit [marian.org/urgent](http://marian.org/urgent) to learn more.



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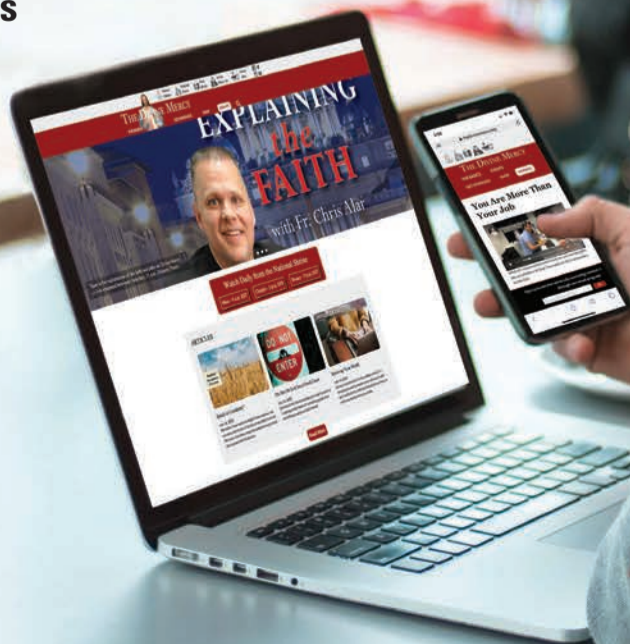
“The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus. When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

— St. John Vianney

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## GRACES RECEIVED

### Suddenly ill on vacation

While on vacation in Florida, my husband suffered a serious illness and was hospitalized. I remembered reading about Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz and the many graces received through his intercession.

I prayed to Blessed George to get us home safely and to help us find knowledgeable doctors to assist us with the problem. After two months at home and with the right doctors, he completely recovered. I thank Blessed George for his help.

— EG, email

### Loved ones find jobs

My daughter is a registered nurse and wanted a weekend position so she could spend time with her 9-month-old baby boy during the week. I prayed for her to Blessed George after reading about people who received special graces for employment struggles through his intercession. About one month later, she obtained a weekend position, and it is on the maternity ward. She was so thrilled, as this was her favorite place to work in nursing school. Then, I started praying for her husband who had been trying for two years to get into a pharmaceutical company well known for being good to their employees. About two weeks after my daughter got her new job, my son-in-law got a call from the pharmaceutical company. My daughter works Friday and Saturday nights, and my son-in-law works Sunday through Wednesday. Now they don't have to worry about a sitter. More importantly, they can attend Mass as a family.

— SF, email

### Sons stop fighting

I said a novena to Blessed George for his intercession to bring peace between my two sons. The very next day after my novena, my two sons did not fight nor argue. What a blessing. I prayed this peace between them would be lasting.

Now I am praying for healing of vision for my daughter, son, son's father-in-law, and myself. I believe everything is possible with God. Everything.

I will continue to pray to Blessed George to intercede for our healings until my prayers are answered.

— CD, email



Acknowledgements of graces received through the intercession of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, Renovator of the Marians (1871-1927).

### Found new job

In February 2019, I encountered some difficulties at work and began searching for a new job. I was unsuccessful. A friend told me to start praying to Blessed George as he and his family have received graces from Blessed George in the past. He also prayed to Blessed George on my behalf as well. Once I started this daily ritual, I began going on interviews and then ultimately landed a position in September 2019. I continue to pray to Blessed George and am grateful for his intervention on my behalf.

— ARSB, Westchester, New York

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For a Blessed George prayercard (B47-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: [graces@marian.org](mailto:graces@marian.org).

### Prayer for a Special Grace through the intercession of Blessed George

O God, our Lord and Father, You surround us always by Your care; receive our humble petition, and through the intercession of Blessed George, who suffered so much for Your glory and for the increase of Your Kingdom here on earth, grant me the grace ... , for which I ask You with confidence, promising to live from now on with greater fidelity to Your commandments. Amen.

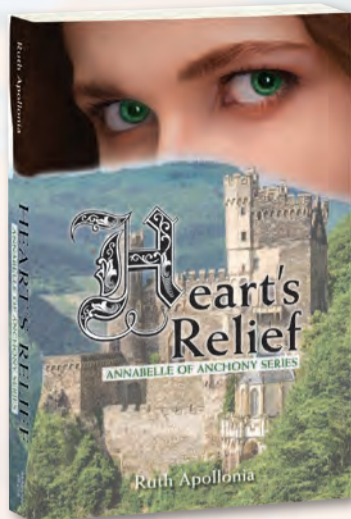
*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

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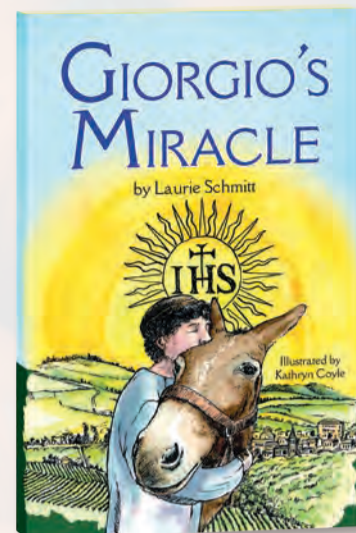
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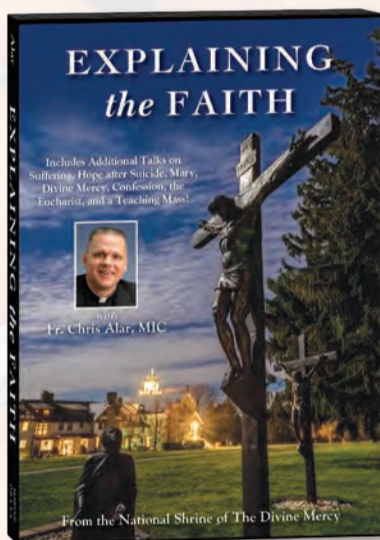
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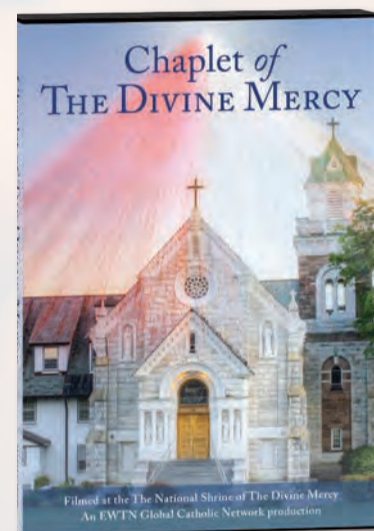
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## CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY

The Divine Mercy Chaplet, which millions recite today, was taught to St. Faustina as an invocation of trust in our Lord. Jesus' words to St. Faustina encourage us to pray this powerful Chaplet. This beautiful new video recording of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy was shot by EWTN on location at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Included are five different versions of the Divine Mercy Chaplet featuring the life-size Stations of the Cross on the grounds of the National Shrine and artwork from around the world. Runtime: 75 minutes.

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# Remember the Holy Souls in Purgatory



## Purgatory: A Guide

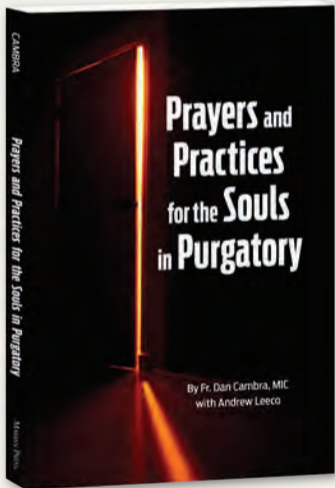
This pocket-sized overview of the doctrines and practices of the Church regarding the Holy Souls in Purgatory equips you to explain and defend one of the greatest works of mercy. See how you can help the Holy Souls.

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## Purgatory Pack

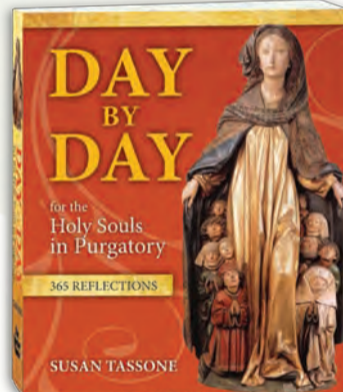
The Purgatory Pack has everything you need to help souls reach Heaven. Includes: *Purgatory: A Guide* booklet; pamphlets, Explanation of the St. Gertrude Prayer; To Eternity; Heaven, Hell, & Purgatory; Your Sorrow Will Be Turned to Joy; Teaching Kids to Pray for the Souls in Purgatory; An Introduction to Indulgences; Prayers with Partial Indulgences; The Four Daily Plenary Indulgences; and St. Gertrude prayer-card. **B47-PURGPK \$6.95**



## Prayers and Practices for the Souls in Purgatory

Discover the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, its roots in Scripture and Tradition, and what this means for our lives and devotion.

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## Day by Day

Includes insightful quotes with powerful prayers to be used as a day-by-day guide to loving and aiding the Holy Souls. Among those quoted are Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC. **B47-DBD \$17.95**

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Pray with expectant faith to help bring souls from the darkness of Purgatory into the merciful light of our Savior.

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We love this photo! While recently cleaning up the basement at the Marian Fathers' residence adjacent to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, maintenance staff came across an old locker belonging to Fr. Ladislaus ("Walter") Pelczynski (1916-2000), the founder of the present-day Association of Marian Helpers. Inside the locker was Fr. Walter's personal photo collection. Within the collection was this one, taken in the 1950s at the Marians' house in Hereford, England. It shows Fr. Walter (left) with the Marian priest responsible for bringing the Divine Mercy message and devotion here to the United States, Fr. Joseph Jarzebowski, MIC (1897-1964).

Though Fr. Joseph was quite tall and Fr. Walter was quite diminutive, both men are giants in the modern Divine Mercy movement.

In 1941, as the war in Europe raged, Fr. Joseph journeyed from his native Poland through Lithuania, Russia, Siberia, and Japan, then onward to the U.S., carrying with him Divine Mercy materials he'd received from St. Faustina's confessor and spiritual director Blessed Michael Sopocko. Specifically, Fr. Joseph carried a copy of the Divine Mercy Image and copies of two documents written by Blessed Sopocko, one of which was a manuscript on the Feast of Divine Mercy. Having arrived safely in the U.S., Fr. Joseph dedicated himself to spreading Divine Mercy. After a retreat he conducted for the Felician Sisters in Enfield, Connecticut, Fr. Joseph asked the Sisters if they would print in Polish the Divine Mercy Novena, Litany, and Chaplet. This modest, black-and-white edition — 2,000 copies in all — quickly sold out, and not long after, the Marians began to receive many letters of thanksgiving to Divine Mercy. This outpouring led other Marians in America to dedi-



cate themselves to spreading the devotion, including Fr. Walter, who would establish the Association of Marian Helpers in Stockbridge in 1944.

Father Joseph remained in the U.S. for two years. He then worked among Polish exiles in Mexico and then went to England where he organized schools and cultural programs. He is remembered today as the man who "exported" the Divine Mercy message and devotion from Poland. And Fr. Walter is remembered as the man who, through sheer charisma, spiritual zeal, and hard work, ran the Association of Marian Helpers, which has been responsible for introducing Divine Mercy to millions of people around the world.

# Live the call!

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Marian Fathers' newest priest :  
Fr. David Smith



## Father David Smith, MIC:

On a pilgrimage to Poland, I learned about St. Faustina, Divine Mercy, and our Founder St. Stanislaus Papczynski. The story of St. Stanislaus' bravery in giving his life for the Church motivated me to learn more about the Marian Fathers. I was also moved by the talks given by Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. As a way to live out my consecration to Our Lady, I felt the Marian Fathers would be a great place to discern my vocation to the priesthood. And it was! On Aug. 17, I was ordained a Marian priest.

## Marian Helpers Deacon Ed and Adele Robinson:

Over the last 22 years, we have met many of the Marian priests and seminarians. They are so devoted in their love of Mary and very dedicated to spreading the message of Divine Mercy. In them, we see our hope for the future of the Church. Without priests, there would be no Mass, no Eucharist, and no Confessions. We feel blessed to be supporters and to take an active role in the formation of these priests, who will ensure the future of our Church.

## Attend a retreat

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

The next retreats will be:

Nov. 27-29

Dec. 11-13



## 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**  
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