

Father Gaitley discusses his forthcoming book

Marian Helper

Spring 2017

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

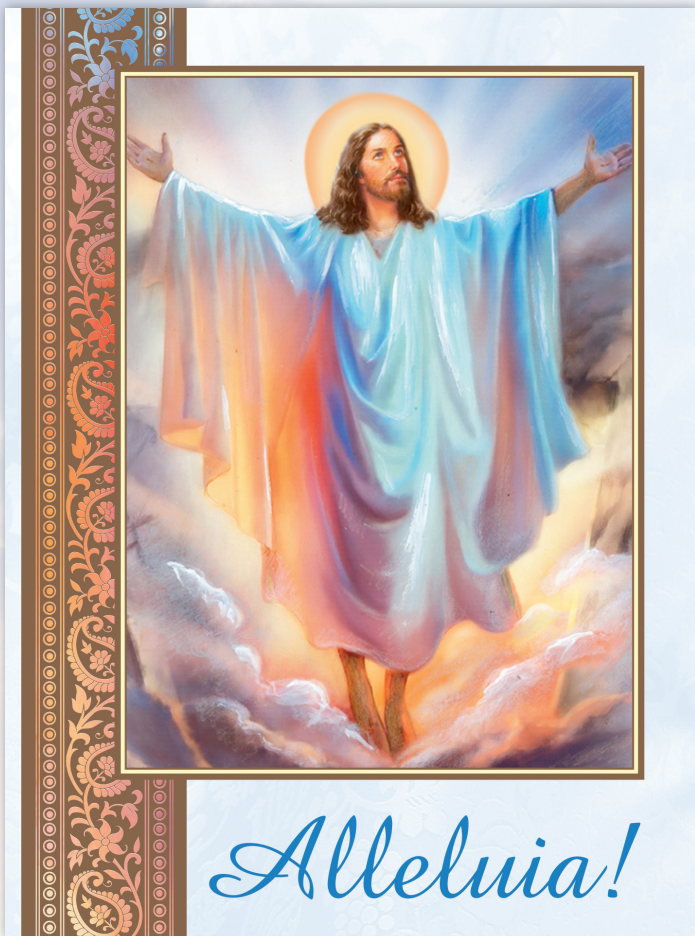
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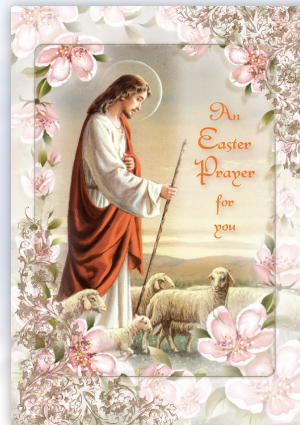
FATIMA

100 years later

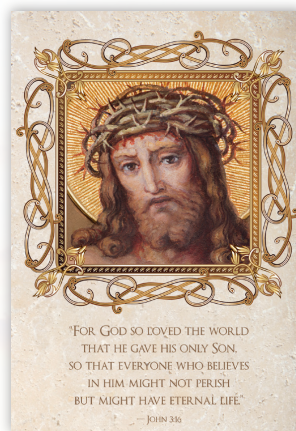
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Fatima: a place, a message

A century ago, three shepherd children reported that Our Blessed Mother, a being “brighter than the sun,” was making appearances to them in the small Portuguese village of Fatima. The consequences continue to this day.

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COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY.

MISSION STATEMENT

MARIAN HELPER is intended to serve members of the Association of Marian Helpers (AMH), a spiritual benefit society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The magazine seeks to provide spiritual nourishment, education about the Catholic faith, and information about the mission and good works of the Marians. It also provides information about Association services and presents opportunities to support the mission and good works of the Congregation. *MARIAN HELPER* is published quarterly by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. It is sent free of charge to active members of the Association. Printed in the USA with ecclesiastical approval. Copyright © 2017 Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. All rights reserved. Send all correspondence to: Association of Marian Helpers, Editorial Dept., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263. email: editorial@marian.org website: marian.org

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The Marians 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 1945, the Association began as a small group of friends who believed in and supported the work of the Marians. 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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- Friends of Mercy: TheDivineMercy.org/friends
- Holy Souls Sodality: PrayForSouls.org
- or call (413) 298-1382.

Arrange a special gift:

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When making your will ...

A sample form of bequest to the Marians is:

I give and bequeath to the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., Stockbridge, MA 01262, ___% of my adjusted gross estate (or \$_____, or a specific asset) to be used for its religious and educational purposes.

THE LENTEN WORD IS 'WE'

Though Lent doesn't begin until March 1, doesn't it feel as if it already began — that we've been summoned to an early start on this journey of repentance, suffering, sacrifices, purification, and conversion?

The ashes haven't even been placed upon our foreheads yet, but it already feels as though the Lord is allowing us to experience extreme difficulties, calling us to double-down in our role as Christians in this broken world. Lately, gauged by the weight of our own needs and the sufferings of others, the cross we've been conscripted to carry by virtue of our Baptism has never seemed heavier.

Look at all the suffering in the world — the cities and villages destroyed by terrorism; the millions of people forced to flee their homelands; and the husbands, wives, sons, and daughters who have lost loved ones in the crossfire of armed conflicts. Look at our own nation, our bitter political divisions and internecine feuds in matters relating to the right to life, economic policy, religious freedom, poverty, family, the social safety net, and protection of the environment ([see page 28](#)). Look at our sinful selves, struggling to break free from our vices and to abide by the Lord's commandments.

In this centennial year of Our Lady's message in Fatima ([see page 8](#)), we are reminded of the stakes — that while Satan, with fearsome efficiency, sows the seeds of discord, we are players in a spiritual battle for souls. The key word is "we."

If you need any convincing, just take a look ahead at the readings for Ash Wednesday. The opening prayer itself says, "Grant, O Lord, that *we* may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as *we* take up battle against spiritual evils, *we* may be armed with weapons of self-restraint ..."

In the first reading, the Lord raises His voice, saying "return to Me with your

whole heart ... proclaim a fast, call an *assembly* ... *gather* the people ..." (see Joel 2:12-18).

There's more. The responsorial Psalm is "Be merciful, O Lord, for *we* have sinned."

Finally, St. Paul, in the second reading, writes, "*We* are ambassadors for Christ ..." and *we* are to work "*together*" (see 2 Cor 5:20-6:2).

This is why Catholics believe in the *Mystical Body of Christ*. It is not just about "Jesus and me" but rather it is about "Jesus, me, and my neighbor." Indeed, the Christian life is intended to be a coordinated effort. When I look upon the ashes on the foreheads of others, I am encouraged knowing that these people are all on my team — we are soldiers together. And it was Our Lady of Fatima who, at the dawn of a violent and disordered age, reminded us that our weapons are not to be bombs and bullets, but rather prayer (particularly the Rosary), penance, and sacrifice.

She doesn't mince words. The hour is getting late. The armies are assembling. We must choose a side.

Moreover, she reminded us that she is present today. She continues to exercise her maternal role to help us in our struggles against sin and to guide our hearts to ponder the sacred mysteries of the Lord's mercy for mankind.

Particularly in this special centennial year, let us ask Our Lady for the grace to discern our role in this battle for souls and for the courage to respond heroically.

The world needs *our* witness, *our* sacrifices, *our* prayers, *our* hearts, and *our* helping hands. Dear Marian Helpers, the world is counting on *us*.

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](#).



‘My eyes were opened’

MELANIE WILLIAMS

He walked out on the secular world of business (and a lot of money) for the Lord. Marian Helper Alan Napleton, a parishioner at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Keller, Texas, and founder of the Catholic Marketing Network (CMN), shares his story.

Scripture tells us that after the Lord struck Saul from his horse on the way to Damascus and blinded him, Saul went to Damascus where his “eyes were opened” (see Acts 9:18). That has always been one of my favorite passages from the Bible because, in a way, the same thing happened to me nearly 30 years ago.

Growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania, everyone in our blue-collar family knew how to work hard. My immigrant grandfather had spent over 40 years in a western Pennsylvania coal mine. He taught my father to work, and my father in turn passed the lesson on to my siblings and me. Although I was the first of the family to graduate from college, I did so working my way through school.

Finding I had an aptitude for business, I began to climb the corporate ladder with a job I loved. We built and managed commercial real estate and had an exten-

sive portfolio all over the country. One of my responsibilities was to oversee some of these assets, and I was visiting one of our office buildings when I had my “Damascus experience.”

Hold on, let me back up a bit and explain what happened to me when I was a young child that had a great deal to do with my coming back to the Catholic faith. We were raised Catholic, and although we never missed Mass, faith was not discussed much at home. I attended the local Catholic grade school, which, like most parochial schools in the 1950s, was staffed with Catholic sisters. It was in this school that one of the good sisters told our class the story of the Fatima apparitions that was to later change my life in a profound way.

I didn’t know it at the time, but I received a special grace when I heard the story. Mesmerized by Our Lady’s visit to three young children who were about my age at the time, I was given the grace to know immediately that the story was true and that Our Lady had caused a great miracle to take place. I also was fascinated that secrets were involved and that one of these was to be revealed in 1960, or so I thought in my young mind.

It’s funny, but when Christmas came in 1959, I was not very interested because I thought for sure that when

we returned to school in the new year, the first thing we would be told would be the big secret! Of course, this didn't happen. The secrets weren't mentioned, life went on, and I grew up. It was 30 years later that I found myself in that office building performing an audit with the building manager. We were at her desk going through the budget when my eye caught sight of a little pamphlet with the picture of Our Lady of Fatima on the cover. I recognized the picture immediately, and when I asked who the pamphlet belonged to, the manager said she didn't know and that I was welcome to it. I put the pamphlet in my shirt pocket until that evening when, in my hotel room, I pulled it out and began to read the story of Our Lady of Fatima. It was at that moment "my eyes were opened." My life changed immediately and dramatically.

It was as if I was back in grade school because, once again, I knew the Fatima story was all true. Our Lady had come down from Heaven, given the three Fatima children important messages, and performed the great "miracle of the sun" that tens of thousands witnessed. I knew at that moment that I was a child of God and that I was not leading a life pleasing to Him. I had stopped going to Mass, knew little about my Catholic faith, and was probably on my way to perdition, although my business career was a success and I was making more money than I knew what to do with.

I decided then and there to leave the corporate world and spend the rest of my life serving Christ as best I could. Like each of us, my spiritual walk has been unique and not without its ups and downs. Still, leaving that job was without a doubt the best decision I've ever made, and the Lord has blessed me in many ways. Although I didn't know how I would serve Him, He has since given me many tasks that have put me in the company of many wonderful and holy people.

Over the past three decades I have worked on a number of projects, and it was through the Catholic Marketing Network, an organization I founded 22 years ago, that I first met priests of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception and became acquainted with their work to spread the message of Divine Mercy. CMN is a consortium of Catholic publishers, so my first introduction to the work of the Marian Fathers was through their publishing arm, Marian Press. Last year, while visiting the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, I was talking with the Marian Fathers about some bookstore-related work when they asked me to help coordinate the North American Congress on Mercy that was held in Houston this past October. It was a wonderful gathering and a blessing for me to be involved. Now, I've been asked to take on some additional projects, and I'm thrilled to do so!

I'm drawn to the work that is being accomplished by the MICs and their many volunteers. I love spending time at the beautiful Shrine, and the Divine Mercy devotion is now an important part of my spiritual life. I am happy and blessed to be part of this work as a Marian Helper!

MH

IN BRIEF

We lost two dear friends in December. We want to tell you a little bit about them.

Many of you who call in to our Divine Mercy Intercessory Prayerline may already know of **Blanche Koprek**, who died Dec. 27, at the age of 94. She was an amazing presence here at the Marian Helpers Center for more than 60 years. We featured her in this magazine back in 2015. We wrote, in part:

... Blanche is short in stature but a spiritual giant; bent earthward but focused upon Heaven; hard of hearing but keenly alert to the tread of others' misfortune. She's a small-town girl bounded by the big picture. She's practically oblivious to world events, yet well-versed in the matter of most consequence: Jesus seeks to save souls, He requests our help, and He hears our prayers. ...

"Blanche knows what she needs to know," said her friend and fellow Prayerline employee Br. Paul Brandt, FSD. "She sees the sadness of the world. She lives the realities of the 150 to 200 people whose prayer intentions she reads each day, and those realities profoundly affect her."

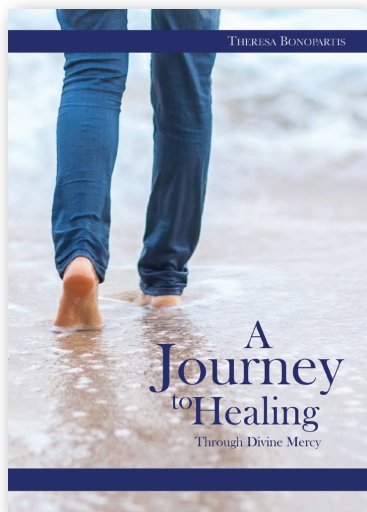
Blanche once told us, "People need prayers. A lot of people are struggling — really struggling. I feel privileged that I can help."

Divine Mercy Sunday volunteer **Christa Herbert**, 39, of Littleton, Colorado, died on Dec. 9, after battling cancer for more than eight years. She is survived by her husband, Todd, and their three young children: Veronica, Grace, and Daniel.

"As an ICU nurse, she prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet every shift she worked for the people being cared for in the wing that day," Todd said. "In her final moments of life, I was able to hold her hands and pray the Chaplet over her. She died at 3:03 p.m. I felt God's presence fill the room."

We thank the Lord for Blanche and Christa. May they rest in peace.

As we approach *Divine Mercy Sunday* on April 23 and the *Feast of Our Lady of Fatima* on May 13, check out these great resources on the tremendous power of Divine Mercy and the story of the apparitions at Fatima 100 years ago.



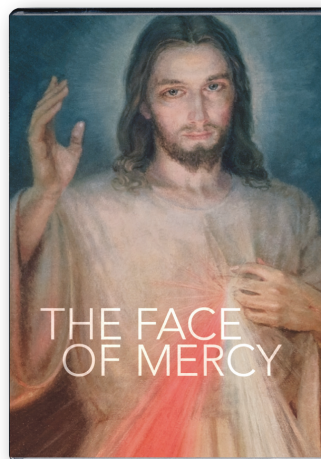
A JOURNEY TO HEALING THROUGH DIVINE MERCY: MERCY AFTER ABORTION

By THERESA BONOPARTIS

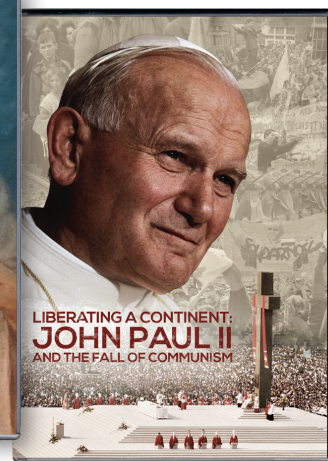
Sharing the fruits of her own long and often painful process of healing after having had an abortion, Theresa Bonopartis gives her testimony and offers a series of Divine Mercy meditations for post-abortive mothers and fathers. Drawing from the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska* and the words of the popes, Bonopartis shares profound insights to assist her wounded brothers and sisters to find healing and renewed relationships with God, their families and friends, and themselves. \$9.95. **B33-MERBK**

THE FACE OF MERCY DVD and LIBERATING A CONTINENT: JOHN PAUL II AND THE FALL OF COMMUNISM DVD

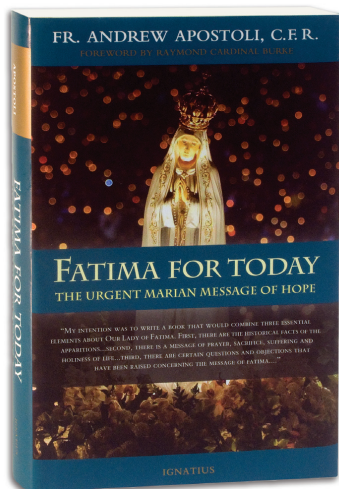
These two remarkable documentaries by the Knights of Columbus tell the stories of Divine Mercy and the Great Mercy Pope, St. John Paul II. *The Face of Mercy* includes the teaching of Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, and Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, as well as the Divine Mercy testimonies of Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and Eric Mahl, a Marian Helper and former NFL player. *Liberating a Continent* draws on interviews with many of the foremost experts on St. John Paul II in the world, including Marian Press author Ewa Czackowska, who wrote the outstanding biography *Faustina: The Mystic and Her Message*.



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FATIMA FOR TODAY: THE URGENT MARIAN MESSAGE OF HOPE

By FR. ANDREW APOSTOLI, CFR

In this highly readable and thoroughly researched book, Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR, shares the history of what happened at Fatima, as well as the apparitions that Lucia dos Santos continued to receive later in her life. He discusses Fatima's effects on world and Church history, as well as how we can and must answer Our Lady's calls today. Indispensable reading for the 100th anniversary of Fatima. \$16.95. **B33-FATIM2**



FATIMA SEALED THE DEAL

Our Lady of Fatima played a critical role in my vocation as a Marian. After I graduated from college, I was working as an actor and I badly needed a re-conversion to the fervent practice of my Catholic faith.

My parents were praying for me, and my mother often proposed books or articles for me to read. I usually showed little interest, but one day, she gave me a small paperback book on the young visionaries of Fatima, and for some reason, I read it cover to cover. I was quite moved by the story and by the sacrifices they made at such a young age. I then asked my mother if she had anything else for me to read, and she happily supplied me with more materials. I began praying the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, attending Mass daily, and going to Confession more frequently. As I was discerning my call to the priesthood and the religious life, I began corresponding by mail with the Marian vocation director in the United States.

Meanwhile, my mother was arranging a trip to Fatima during the summer for my younger brother. Unfortunately, it turns out he couldn't go because he had to attend summer school to make up a course. I ended up going to Fatima on a charter flight organized by the World Apostolate of Fatima. It was an old plane with very little legroom, and I had a middle seat. Early in the flight, the man sitting in front of me put his seat back practically into my lap. I thought to myself, "This will be a long flight. I have plenty of sacrifices to offer up, like the young visionaries!" By the way, that man eventually attended my ordination!

The vocation director in the United States had told me to look up the Marians when I got to Fatima since they have a house near the Shrine. I did so, and the first



Father Joe Roesch, MIC, by the house of Blesseds Francisco and Jacinta in a small village just outside of Fatima.

Marian I ever met face to face was from Portugal. He spoke some English, and he was the vocation director there. He asked me how old I was. I told him 24. He immediately said, "Twenty-four is the perfect age! Join now! Twenty-three is too soon and 25 is too late!" I think he used that tactic with all of his candidates no matter their age!

I did feel called to join the Marians, but I worried about being sent overseas to a place where I didn't speak the

language well. The Lord took away all of my fears during the pilgrimage. The Marians are a small community, and I thought that, if I joined, I would probably only work in America anyway. I came back from Fatima ready to join the Marians even though I had never yet met an American Marian. I visited the Marians in the United States several times that fall, and I joined the following January. I was ordained six years later and worked in the States for 13 years before being sent to work here in Rome 12 years ago. God has a sense of humor!

As I look back, I realize that, on that trip, He was preparing me for the future.

I still have my devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, and her message to the world is as urgently needed as ever. Our Lady asked the children to pray the Rosary daily, to make sacrifices in reparation for sins and for the conversion of sinners. The Immaculate Heart of Mary is our refuge that leads us to God. Let us pray for the triumph of her Immaculate Heart, for peace in our world, and an end to all wars.

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

FATIMA

The place. The message.

By Felix Carroll



This year marks the 100th anniversary of arguably the most consequential private revelations in the history of the Church. Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, on six occasions, between May and October 1917, delivering a message that, to this day, converts hearts and casts shivers down the spine.

Dressed in white and “brighter than the sun,” Mary spoke to the children of the dire costs if the world continues to reject God. She foretold events that would soon come to pass. She showed them a vision of hell. She taught them that God has designs for each of us.

Six popes have since proclaimed her specific and decisive call to conversion and repentance.

As his two predecessors did before him, Pope Francis, who had his papacy dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima upon his election in 2013 — and who subsequently consecrated the world to her — will underscore Fatima’s significance with a visit there in May to mark the centennial.

Fatima — 100 years ago a tiny hamlet, and now one of the most visited Christian pilgrimage locations in the world — is synonymous with the message Our Lady delivered there. At its core, the message is this: Without God, humanity walks in darkness, and we, individually,

are called to be players in the salvation of the world.

‘Queen of Peace, pray for us’

It was all as if Heaven had seen enough.

Our Lady put her foot down during the horrors of World War I, what Pope Benedict XV called the “suicide of Europe.” It was Pope Benedict who, on May 5, 1917, ordered that “Queen of Peace, pray for us” be added to the Litany of Loreto. On that day, he placed the peace of the world in Our Lady’s hands.

She responded eight days later.

At midday on May 13, in a field called Cova da Iria, in a rural backwater of Portugal, she appeared to three children pasturing their sheep and asked them to offer all their sufferings to the Lord for the sake of poor sinners. She told them they would have much to suffer.

“Say the Rosary every day to bring peace to the world



What does the message of Fatima mean for the world today?

COURTESY OF BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

and an end to the war,” she told Lucia dos Santos, 10, and her cousins Francisco, 8, and Jacinta Marto, 7. Their young lives, which had centered on chores, play, and perfunctory prayer, would be radically reordered to the things of God ([see page 12](#)). They were smitten with this lady encircled in light, this beautiful being who implored them, “Don’t be afraid of me.”

Our Lady instructed them to return to the Cova on the 13th of the month for the following five months.

On June 13, she told the children to keep saying the Rosary daily. “And after each one of the mysteries, my children,” she said, “I want you to pray in this way: ‘O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.’”

Our Lady told Lucia that Francisco and Jacinta would soon be taken to Heaven, but that Lucia would remain

on earth to establish devotion to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. (Francisco and Jacinta died in 1919 and 1920, respectively. Lucia would live to the age of 97, dying in 2005.)



About 70,000 people descended upon the tiny village of Fatima on Oct. 13, 1917, and bore witness to the “miracle of the sun.”

In the third apparition, on July 13, Our Lady gave a secret in three parts ([see page 13](#)) that includes a vision of hell and prophecies that would eventually come to pass, such as a greater war to come if people did not cease offending God.

By August, news of the apparitions had spread to the outer precincts of Portugal and beyond. Christian faithful and curiosity seekers alike flocked to Fatima. Furious and distrustful of the children, the local mayor temporarily took the three children into custody,

causing them to miss their rendezvous with Our Lady on Aug. 13. The children were released on the Solemnity of the Assumption, Aug. 15, and four days later Our Lady appeared to them on a hill a short dis-



The parish church where the Fatima visionaries spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament following Our Lady's first appearance to them.



PHOTOS BY FELIX CARROLL

"Lucia said she saw hell, and I believe her. Hell exists," says Maria dos Anjos, a niece of Sr. Lucia who still lives in the small village of the Fatima visionaries.

tance from their homes. Among other things, Our Lady told them, "Pray, pray very much. Make sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell, because no one is willing to help them with sacrifice."

On Sept. 13, Our Lady repeated her instructions to pray the Rosary daily for peace.

Then, as Our Lady promised, the sixth and final apparition in Fatima, on Oct. 13, proved startling. About 70,000 people gathered in the Cova da Iria where Our Lady proceeded to tell the children, "I am the Lady of the Rosary. ... People must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not offend our Lord anymore, for He is already too much offended."

Many in the crowd and from miles around witnessed the so-called "miracle of the sun" — the sun spun, changed color, danced about, sank to the earth, and then returned to its place.

Fatima today

A tiny chapel, the size of a potting shed, stands at the spot where Our Lady appeared in the Cova da Iria 100 years ago. Beside it is the thick-limbed evergreen oak under which the children would pray the Rosary and await Our Lady's coming.

TIMELINE

March 22, 1907: Birth of Lucia dos Santos.

June 11, 1908: Birth of Francisco Marto.

March 11, 1910: Birth of Jacinta Marto.

Spring, 1916: First apparition of the angel.

Summer, 1916: Second apparition of the angel; he appeals to the children to pray.

Fall, 1916: Third apparition of the angel; he brings them Communion and teaches them the Angel's Prayer.

May 13, 1917: First apparition of Our Lady. She asks the children if they will offer all they have to suffer for poor sinners. Our Lady further says, "Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war."

June 13, 1917: Second apparition. Lucia told that Francisco and Jacinta would soon be taken to Heaven, but Lucia would remain in the world to help establish devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

July 13, 1917: Third apparition. Our Lady gives the children a secret in three parts.

Aug. 13, 1917: The local mayor kidnaps the children, releasing them two days later.

Aug. 19, 1917: Fourth apparition. Our Lady says, "Make sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell, because no one is willing to help them ..."

Sept. 13, 1917: Fifth apparition. Our Lady says, "Continue the Rosary, my children. Say it every day that the war may end. In October our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Saint Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world."

Oct. 13, 1917: Sixth apparition. The assembled crowd of around 70,000 witness the "miracle of the sun."

Oct. 24-25, 1917: Bolsheviks take power in Russia.

Nov. 11, 1918: End of World War I.

April 4, 1919: Death of Francisco.

Feb. 20, 1920: Death of Jacinta.



The simple home of Francisco and Jacinta, where the young Francisco would die a saintly death in 1920.

Each evening, pilgrims gather to recite the Rosary at the Chapel of Apparitions in Fatima.

Unlike the village nearby where the children lived, not much else in the Cova would be recognizable to the little shepherd children today. It's now all stone, statuary, and spires, stretching up toward the sky as if to meet Heaven half way.

The Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary was consecrated in 1953, 23 years after the Church declared "worthy of belief, the visions of the shepherd children." A second basilica was dedicated in 2007, built to accommodate the millions of pilgrims who press upon Fatima each year to pray the Rosary, receive the Sacraments, and offer petitions to Our Lady.

About a mile away are the homes of the Fatima visionaries, in the tiny village of Aljustrel, where a fish truck announces its arrival each morning and the bells of the parish church mark the hours.

At the edge of the village stands a hill of olive trees where Our Lady appeared when the children were unable to keep their Aug. 13 appointment in Cova da

Iria. Only a few hundred yards from that point is a rock outcropping where an angel appeared to the children in 1916 to prepare them for Our Lady's visits. Just beyond that, an unmarked trail leads to a tiny cave where Francisco used to hide out.

The hill has a Stations of the Cross ending at a chapel from which one can oversee all of Fatima, its basilicas, its hotels, and the commotion of commerce.

Fatima the place and Fatima the message both welcome the stranger — all those confused and frightened by the events of the world and the events in their own lives, all those who seek to understand God and the implications of His existence.

As Pope Benedict XVI said, the crisis of the world into which Our Lady of Fatima appeared 100 years ago "has not been resolved. From a certain point of view, it is still as serious as it ever was, as it is primarily a crisis of faith,

Continued on page 15

Dec. 10, 1925: Apparition of Our Lady and Jesus to Lucia in Spain. Jesus describes how Mary's Heart is wounded by blasphemies against it. The Blessed Virgin requests the Five First Saturdays devotion.

Dec. 17, 1927: Sister Lucia given permission by our Lord to write down the first two parts of the secret.

June 13, 1929: Our Lady asks Russia's consecration by the Holy Father in union with the world's bishops.

May 29-30, 1930: Our Lord reveals to Lucia five kinds of blasphemies against Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Jan. 25-26, 1938: Strange light in the sky across Europe, identified by Sr. Lucia as the signal Our Lady spoke of for a coming war.

March 12-13, 1938: Hitler announces Germany's annexation of Austria.

Jan. 3, 1944: Lucia writes down the third secret.

April 4, 1957: The envelope containing the third secret is placed in the Secret Archives of the Holy Office.

May 13, 1981: On the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady

of Fatima, St. John Paul II is shot in St. Peter's Square. He sees in his shooting Our Lady of Fatima's maternal intercession to save him from death.

March 25, 1984: Saint John Paul II, in union with the bishops of the world, consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart.

Aug. 29, 1989: Sister Lucia confirms the 1984 consecration fulfilled Our Lady's request.

Dec. 25-26, 1991: The USSR is dissolved.

May 13, 2000: Beatification of Francisco and Jacinta.

June 26, 2000: The Vatican publishes the third part of the secret of Fatima.

Feb. 13, 2005: Death of Sr. Lucia.

May 13, 2013: Upon his request, Pope Francis' pontificate is consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima.

Oct. 13, 2013: Pope Francis consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

May 12-13, 2017: Pope Francis to visit Fatima for the 100th anniversary.

Why children?

It's a fair question. Of all the people in the world to whom Our Lady could have appeared back in 1917, why choose three everyday shepherd children?

"We see throughout history God choosing the small and humble — the shepherds who travel to Bethlehem, King David, Mary herself, and many others," says Sr. Marta Marques Mendes of the Fatima-based Alianca de Santa Maria, a congregation helping to spearhead the canonization cause of two of the Fatima visionaries. "In Fatima, that's what happened. God chooses three humble children from a humble home exactly to emphasize that [this powerful message] doesn't come from man, but from God."

By all accounts, nothing was particularly remarkable about Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto before the heavens opened before their very eyes. They were good kids, playful. They would dutifully pray the Rosary. Sometimes they'd sneakily recite only the first lines of the Hail Mary and the Our Father to fast-track the whole affair. That way they'd have more time for play.

Jacinta, 7 years old at the time Mary first appeared, was known to be hardheaded, even a bit bratty. Francisco, 8, was kindhearted, a bit aloof. Lucia, 10, precocious and cheerful, liked to dance and to organize games.

The apparitions brought about a decisive change to their personalities.

In her first apparition, Our Lady asked the children, "Will you offer yourselves to God, and bear all the sufferings He sends you? In atonement for all the sins that offend Him? And for the conversion of sinners?"

"Oh, we will," they responded, "we will!"

And they did.

"They suffered without complaining, because they wanted their suffering to be pure," says Sr. Stella Guza of the Oblate Sisters of the Virgin Mary of Fatima, who helps educate pilgrims at Fatima.

No more cutting corners — all three would spend hours each day in prayer. Before the Blessed Sacrament,

Francisco was driven to console Jesus because of the sins in the world committed against Him. Jacinta was so profoundly moved by the vision of hell during the July 13 apparition that no penance seemed too great. Lucia led her two cousins in devising penances — such as foregoing food and drink — to the point where Our Lady instructed them to go a little easier on themselves.

They hardly needed to devise sufferings.

Despite the children's agreement to keep Our Lady's

first visit to them a secret, Jacinta spilled the beans. Many in their village of 25 families, including, for several months, Lucia's own mother, were distrustful of their claims and especially didn't take kindly to the overwhelming attention brought upon Fatima. The children were at one point kidnapped by the mayor who then harshly interrogated them and threatened to immerse them in boiling oil.

As Our Lady prophesied, Jacinta and Francisco

would soon be taken by the Lord — both victims of the Spanish flu. Jacinta's illness took a rather gruesome turn. Inflammation around her lungs prompted doctors to remove two of her ribs — without anesthesia. She died alone in a hospital bed, offering her pain for the conversion of sinners, for peace in the world, and for the Holy Father.

Francisco died at home.

"People would visit him, and they said it was like they were in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament," says Sr. Stella.

Saint John Paul II beatified Jacinta and Francisco in 2000, on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI authorized opening the cause for Sr. Lucia's beatification, just three years after her death.

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

One sure way to become like children? Like the Fatima visionaries, joyfully put away childish things and become apt pupils of Our Lady.

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This message is no ‘secret’

Through the message of Fatima, the Lord conceals nothing. Yet there is this matter of the so-called “secret of Fatima” that Our Lady shared with the three visionaries in 1917. The secret comes in three parts. The first two parts were revealed to the world back in 1941 through the child visionary Lucia, who had become a Carmelite nun by then.

They include the terrifying vision of hell, the importance of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a possible Second World War, and finally the prediction of the immeasurable destruction Russia would perpetrate in its embrace of atheism, communism, totalitarianism, and military might.

The Church did not reveal Lucia’s account of the third part of the secret until 2000. It is this third part that can serve as the very key by which to comprehend our world today, says Pedro Valinho Gomes, a resident theologian at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, in Fatima, Portugal.

It speaks of a pilgrim people headed by a bishop in white — the Holy Father. They climb a steep mountain, at the top of which is a big cross. Before reaching the top, the Holy Father passes through a city in ruins, filled with corpses and people in all manner of pain and sorrow, for whom he prays. Once they reach the top, the Holy Father and those with him are killed by soldiers. Two angels then appear, gather the blood of these martyrs, and with it, sprinkle the souls of those who were making their way to God.

“I cannot help but to think of St. Augustine and his famous allegory of two cities — this idea that we have this city of the world, whereby people live out of self-interest, which leads to destruction,” says Dr. Gomes. “Opposed to that, we have this other city, with people we can identify as the Church headed by the bishop in white, the pope. The origin of this other city is the Cross, meaning the giving of oneself for the sake of others, what we call love.”

The pilgrim people in this vision model Christ, says

Dr. Gomes, in that “they don’t want this city in ruins [to] be condemned to its ruins. They pray for the people. I believe this is what we, the Church, are called to these days — that in a world where so many people feel hopeless, the first vocation of the Church has to be to present

the hope found in the Cross, which means an attitude of self-giving and sacrifice. This is what the message of Fatima asks from us 100 years later — to look beyond ourselves, to others and to the Cross — a place that may be uncomfortable.”

He says, “Fatima has been called the most political of apparitions. I believe it is in the sense that it’s a call to apply ourselves to the world.”

The secret of Fatima also suggests that those who lead lives faithful to God and His commandments may not be the majority, and that the Church’s evangelization efforts may not always succeed. “Success can’t be gauged by numbers [the number of Christians], but rather by the fact that we continue to be witnesses of the Gospel that the world is missing.”

And as our Lord makes known through Our Lady of Fatima, we can lift up others along the way through our prayers and by offering up our own sufferings to God, who will use them for the conversion of poor sinners. As the third part of the secret of Fatima underscores, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christian renewal.

There is no question we live in an age of tension, violence, and self-destruction on both the macro and micro level. Our civilization lives as if there is no God. Meanwhile, old alliances are fracturing. We are a world at war. History didn’t end with the 1984 consecration of Russia made through St. John Paul II, following the request of Our Lady of Fatima. It didn’t end with the fall of communism.

Our work is ahead of us. Man’s future is in God, and we are to be active and accountable allies in fashioning that future. It’s no secret.

MH



In the foreground, the monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the Cova da Iria, where Our Lady first appeared to the visionaries.

FELIX CARROLL

What is the Immaculate Heart?

My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God. Our Lady spoke these words to Lucia dos

Santos, the eldest of the three visionaries of Fatima, when the Blessed Mother appeared in the Cova da Iria, on June 13, 1917. The shepherd children asked Our Lady to take them to Heaven, and she told them that Francisco and Jacinta would be in Heaven with her very soon, but Lucia would have to stay on earth a bit longer. (In fact, Lucia lived for another 87 years!)

Lucia was, understandably, very sad that she would not soon be in Heaven with the Blessed Mother and her cousins, and she asked, “Will I stay here alone?” Our Lady answered, “No, my daughter. ... Don’t lose heart. I will never forsake you.” She then spoke those words about her Immaculate Heart being a refuge and a path to God.

But what does it mean that her Immaculate Heart will be our refuge? And how is Mary’s Heart the way to the Lord?

Saint John Paul II shed light on this when he consecrated the world to Mary’s Immaculate Heart in 1984. Addressing Our Lady, he said, “You who have a mother’s awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we ... address directly to your Heart. Embrace with the love of the Mother and Handmaid of the Lord, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you ... We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God!”

He went on to say, “Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of people today” And he asked Mary to

deliver us from famine, from war, from sins against life, from hatred and every kind of injustice, and even from the loss of awareness of good and evil. He then asked that, through this consecration, there be revealed to the world once more “the power of merciful Love!”

So, the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a protection of sorts. Entrusting ourselves to Mary’s Immaculate Heart will do just that — protect us from the evils of the world and open us up to God’s profound mercy for us and for the world.

In his commentary on the Fatima apparitions, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger spoke about the heart as being the “center of human life” because it’s where “reason, will, temperament, and sensitivity converge” and where there is an interior unity. He wrote that “the ‘Immaculate Heart’ is a heart which, with God’s grace, has come to perfect interior unity and therefore ‘sees God.’”

Thus, to be devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means “to embrace this attitude of heart, which make the *fiat* — ‘your will be done’ — the defining center of one’s whole life,” Ratzinger wrote.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary, then, shows us the path to God because it helps us to imitate Mary’s “yes”— her “yes” which united her will to God’s will. That

is the path to God, and that is a central message of Fatima.

By imitating Mary and by entrusting ourselves to her Immaculate Heart, we, too, can seek God’s will for our lives in everything, thus uniting our wills to His holy will and bringing about peace in our families and in the world. Mary’s Immaculate Heart will lead us there.

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— Joan Lamar



Hey, he sure looks familiar!

Figuratively speaking, it wasn't the first time Fr. Jovanete Paulo Vieira, MIC, imagined himself in the shoes of the Fatima priest given the unenviable task 100 years ago of discerning claims of heavenly activity in a field just down the road.

But Fr. Jovanete was recently asked to take a significant step forward in those shoes. One of three Marian priests who serve in Fatima, the Brazilian native was approached by the producer of the upcoming six-part EWTN docudrama, "The Message of Fatima," to play the role of Fr. Manuel Marques Ferreira, the priest of St. Anthony's Parish in Fatima who interviewed the three shepherd children beginning just days after Our Lady first appeared in May 1917.

The series will air later this year. Father Jovanete's scenes were filmed in October in the original rectory where the children were brought before Fr. Ferreira for interrogation.

Described as practical and meticulous, it was Fr. Ferreira to whom the villagers turned when news of the apparitions first spread. He took the prudent approach by never accusing the children of lying and by advising Lucia's disbelieving mother to allow her daughter to visit the Cova da Iria at the appointed time Our Lady promised her second visit. The rest is history.

Admittedly, acting didn't come easy for Fr. Jovanete. He'd never done it before. "It was take after take after take," he said, smiling. But the experience helped him gain an even greater appreciation for the role priests play in helping people to discern the will of God in their lives.



Father Jovanete Paulo Vieira, MIC, on set with the 10-year-old actress playing Lucia.

HEADING TO FATIMA?

The Marians in Fatima own and operate the Essence Inn Marianos, a four-star hotel located a short walk from the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary. While the hotel is booked each 13th of the month from May through October this year, rooms are available on other dates. Email info@e-marianos.com or visit e-marianos.com for more information.

"It's so important for priests to have very strong prayer lives, to stay connected to God in all things," said Fr. Jovanete, who was ordained in 2000 — into the role of a lifetime.

MH

Fatima from page 11

hence a moral and social crisis."

Our Lady, ever attentive to history, has appeared to peasant children elsewhere since Fatima — Rwanda in the 1980s, for instance, where, with deadly accuracy, she prophesied "rivers of blood" if people did not mend their ways. Rivers of blood — literally — would flow soon enough during the Rwandan genocide that left more than a million people slaughtered.

All the while, our Lord, through Our Lady, shows us the way out of this crisis: Pray, fast, and do penance for the conversion of poor sinners and to make reparation for the sins of the world.

As late as 2005, Lucia, who had become a Carmelite nun,

would express frustration that the *true* message of Fatima was being ignored — that people dwelled on Fatima's miracles and secrets. She said, "We are going to be judged on the 10 Commandments when we die. We must stop offending God. We must know God." She summed this up in what she called her 11th Commandment: "Do whatever God tells you. That is what Our Lady wants."

Fatima today stands as a rebuke to a world that still conducts itself as if there is no eternity. It serves as a reminder that we are not powerless against advancing evil. It teaches that God the Father loves with the heart of a mother and that He *wants* this world to be saved.

From three shepherd children 100 years ago to 7 billion people today, Fatima is nothing less than an invitation to Heaven.

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Want to deepen your devotion to Mary?

Well, join the Club!

Think about how comforting it is when you know someone is praying for you. Now imagine being a member of a club with some 4,000 people who pray the Rosary for each other every month.

This is one of the many benefits of being a member of the “Thirteenth of the Month Club” — named “Thirteenth” in honor of the day of the month Mary chose for her appearances to the children of Fatima 100 years ago.

Besides joining a prayer chain of people across the country, members are remembered on the 13th of every month in a special Mass offered by the Marian Fathers in Fatima. By their prayers and generous offerings, members, in turn, support the Marians’ mission of spreading Divine Mercy and devotion to Mary Immaculate around the world.

“Members of the Club strive to lead holy lives and to help Our Lady spread grace, peace, and healing throughout all the world,” says Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, the Club’s spiritual director.

The “Thirteenth of the Month Club of Our Lady of Fatima” began in Detroit, Michigan, in May of 1948. The Marians had established a residence there only two months earlier and were operating on a wing and a prayer. A small group of people decided to lend support by their prayers and offerings. They would meet every month with the intention of following Our Lady’s call from Fatima.

The group flourished. Then, in 1952, they decided to prayerfully and financially support a Marian seminarian. The man chosen was named Stanley Michalenko. They could never have known what an important contribution they would make to his life and to the Church. More

on him in a moment.

The Marians left Detroit in the 1970s, and the Club fell dormant. In the late 1980s, knowing how much the Club had benefited both the Marians and Marian Helpers, Fr. Joseph, MIC, decided to recreate it by mail through a



The Marians in Fatima offer a special monthly Mass for Club members.

monthly four-page newsletter designed to inspire, inform, and foster a community of devotees of Mary bound in prayer and service to God and the Church.

What about the first seminarian the Club “adopted”? Well, Stanley Michalenko later became world-renowned Divine Mercy expert Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, who served as vice-postulator for St. Faustina’s canonization cause.

Time will tell what kind of important contributions members of the Club will make in the years to come!



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In her message to the children at Fatima in 1917, Our Lady called on us to pray the Rosary daily. Use this beautiful rosary as we answer her call 100 years later. Faceted blue and silver beads with silver spacers and a 100-year commemorative center medallion. Measures 19" with a 1 1/2" crucifix.

To order, visit ShopMercy.org/b33 or call 1-800-462-7426.



Father Donald Calloway, MIC, travels the world promoting devotion to Our Lady. But he also has a great love of St. Joseph, whose feast day we celebrate on March 20. Here, Fr. Calloway shares some thoughts on one of the greatest and most often forgotten saints in the Church.

I definitely had a deep devotion to St. Joseph before I entered the Marian Fathers, but it really grew during my novitiate in Stockbridge. Every day, we would go to Mass at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. When you enter from the Shrine residence, on the left before you get to the sanctuary, there's a beautiful statue of St. Joseph.

My love and my relationship with him really blossomed during that year because pretty much every day, I went over for at least a few minutes and poured my heart out to him, asking him to help me be holy and grow in virtue. I would pray for tons of different intentions: family situations; people who were asking me to intercede for them; and so forth. I just laid all that out constantly, day after day, at the feet of St. Joseph. Doing that really gave me the confidence to "go to Joseph," to take everything to Joseph.

We always talk about living under the mantle of Our Lady, but there's also a tradition of the cloak of St. Joseph being a protective shield. He's called the Guardian of the Redeemer, the Guardian of Our Lady. One of the things I love about St. Joseph is that he is the only one who has been called the "Savior of the Savior" by the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, for

'GO TO JOSEPH!'

example. Not even Our Lady has that title! When Herod sought the Child and His mother, it was Joseph who, responding to what he understood in his dream, took the Savior to a place of hiding, to Egypt. Without St. Joseph, we wouldn't have what we have today.

In his role of Savior of the Savior, he's the perfection of the Joseph of the Old Testament. The Joseph of the Old Testament, you remember, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt, where Pharaoh basically made him a son. During a time of great famine, Egypt was understood to be the breadbasket of the world, and Joseph was put in charge of all the granaries. He fed the people during the time of famine (see Gen 37-41).

The new Joseph, the Guardian of the Redeemer, the Savior of the Savior, takes Jesus, who becomes our bread and feeds the nations (see Jn 6), from the manger (a feeding trough filled with grain) in Bethlehem (literally, "House of Bread") into Egypt, the breadbasket of the world, and then the Holy Family comes out of Egypt back into the Holy Land (see Mt 1-2). So St. Joseph is fulfilling, in a more perfect way, what the Joseph of the Old Testament did.

Within the last 150 years or so, God has been using the Church and the popes to speak to us about St. Joseph's importance. In 1870, he was declared the Universal Patron of the Church. In 1889, Pope Leo XIII released an amazing encyclical on St. Joseph. It was only in 1955 that the feast of St. Joseph the Worker came into existence; in 1962 that Joseph's name was put into the Roman Canon, Eucharistic Prayer 1; and in 2013 that St. Joseph's name was put into all the Eucharistic prayers. Pope Benedict wanted to do it, but then he retired. So Pope Francis did that soon after he was elected to the papacy.

There are also some pretty significant things from approved apparitions in these last 150 years. At Fatima, for example, during the Sept. 13, 1917 apparition, Mary told the three visionaries that in October, St. Joseph would come and bless the world. Well, on Oct. 13, 1917, St. Joseph did come. He was holding the Child Jesus, and both the Child Jesus and St. Joseph blessed the world, making the Sign of the Cross.

Saint Joseph was also present at the approved apparitions of Our Lady of Knock. And then, recently, there was a whole series of apparitions with St. Joseph given in

Itapiranga, Brazil, the first part of which is fully approved on a diocesan level. (As is typical, the Church will await the death of the visionary before passing judgment on all of the apparitions.) The apparitions talk about how Heaven wants us to establish devotion to St. Joseph.

Why is this so important? Well, remember that St. Joseph is the patron of the Mystical Body of Christ. The root of the word "patron" is *pater*, father. When Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Head of the Mystical Body of Christ, Our Lady also gave birth to the members of the Mystical Body. In the same way, St. Joseph is not only the Guardian of Jesus in His physical body, but also the Guardian of His Mystical Body. So he's going to have a fatherly role in looking after the Mystical Body of Christ, just as he looked after the physical body of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the phrase was *Ite ad Ioseph*, "Go to Joseph" (Gen 41:55). Well, that's what saints have been saying for centuries, saints like St. Theresa of Avila, who said she always received graces when she prayed to St. Joseph; saints like St. Francis de Sales, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, St. Andre Bessette, St. Josemaria Escriva, Bl. William Joseph Chaminade, St. Bernardine of Siena, and so many others. "Go to Joseph."

Our times require us to turn to him, not only in intercession, but also in imitation. All children imitate their parents. When we look at Joseph, we can see that maybe we should be a little more quiet and not so sarcastic or critical, especially on social media. Maybe we should imitate our spiritual father a little more and keep our mouth shut. We can maintain a certain equilibrium, move forward, and not be paralyzed, but continue to strive towards virtue.

We need our spiritual father more than ever these days, in light of the chaos of the times. There's disorder, there's disunity in society and, sadly, even in the Church. There's a lot of confusion and a lot of people against each other right now. But we're a family. What do families do? During the holidays, we all come home. So even if relatives are arguing or fighting, generally people sit down at the table in their father's house and share a meal and put the sword away, so to speak, or bury the hatchet. Just so do we need to return to the fatherhood of St. Joseph to have unity and to have peace.

"Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you" (Gen 41:55).

► **Do a nine-day preparation for entrustment to St. Joseph by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC.**

MH

ST. JOSEPH NOVENA

Bring your family's intentions to faithful St. Joseph during the novena before his feast day March 20, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. (Visit marian.org/b33 for details.) As he does for countless Marian Helpers, St. Joseph can help you and your family through the hard times.



THE MAKING OF MARY'S MARINES

The following is an interview with Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, about his upcoming book, *Consoling the Heart of Mary: Basic Training for Mary's Marines*, which comes out this summer.

What inspired you to write this new book?

Well, as readers of *Marian Helper* may remember, last year Fr. Joseph, MIC, wrote a cover story called "Help Save the World" in which he invited our Marian Helpers to join him in making a consecration to Divine Mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday 2016 by using my book *33 Days to Merciful Love*.

Both he and I were blown away by the response. Tens of thousands of Marian Helpers joined us in making a Divine Mercy consecration on Divine Mercy Sunday, which was broadcast live on EWTN from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. At that moment, we were also struck by how the clouds opened up and the sun came out for the first time that day *right as we were making the consecration*.

We believe the consecration made an impact — and not just on the weather. In fact, this new book about Mary was inspired by the graces of so many consecrations to Divine Mercy that day. Specifically, the response

of so many Marian Helpers got me thinking: "Our Marian Helpers are ready to march and fight for our country and the world. They're serious about making a brighter future for their children and their families. I wonder what we could do to give them some advanced training as spiritual warriors."

The subtitle is "Basic Training for Mary's Marines." What do you mean by training "Mary's Marines"?

If tens of thousands of Marian Helpers made their consecration to Divine Mercy with us on Divine Mercy Sunday (with *33 Days to Merciful Love*), then it's likely that *hundreds of thousands* have already made their consecration to Mary with us through the precursor to that book, *33 Days to Morning Glory*. [Editor's note: There are currently more than two million copies of the book in print.] *33 Days to Morning Glory* shows us how to be Mary's spiritual warriors. This new book will help us to receive training as Mary's "Special Forces" by learning to go *deeper* with Marian consecration.

How so?

It follows the spiritual path of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who started a worldwide movement of Marian consecra-

tion that aims to win the whole world for God, as quickly as possible, under the generalship of Mary Immaculate. Like Fr. Joseph's cover story last year, Kolbe aimed high. He had a bold goal — and so do we, with this new book. We want to help train Marian Helpers, in the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe, to become highly trained spiritual warriors for Mary to win our whole country and the world for her Son.

This is the 100th anniversary of Fatima, but as you point out in your book, it's also another important anniversary.

Yes, on Oct. 16, 1917 — just three days after the last apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to the three shepherd children — Our Blessed Mother inspired St. Maximilian to found his spiritual army for Mary Immaculate, the Militia Immaculatae. So, just as it's the 100th anniversary of Fatima, it's also the 100th anniversary for the Militia Immaculatae.

How do these two anniversaries go together?

Well, most people know that Our Lady of Fatima promoted the Rosary for world peace. But she also promoted what's perhaps the greatest Marian devotion of all: total consecration. Marian consecration is also part of her plan for world peace and the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart.

For instance, we probably have all heard about how Our Lady of Fatima asked for Russia to be consecrated to her Heart. But through St. Maximilian Kolbe, it's clear she also wants individuals to be consecrated to her Heart. She must have known that the consecration of Russia would be late in coming. That's why, I believe, she inspired Kolbe with his Militia Immaculatae. By that, it seems she was saying, "If they won't consecrate the world, then I'm going to inspire this priest to get the whole world consecrated, one person at a time."

So, this book is really about deepening Marian consecration.

Right. But it's not simply a book that calls us to prayer. Rather, it's calling us to *action*. That's Kolbe's main focus. He wants active spiritual warriors, ready to fight. I think too often we think that the way we change the world is only through prayer. Yes, prayer is important! But I think we forget that the "three degrees" of mercy that Jesus taught St. Faustina begins with deeds (see *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 742). Faustina explains that if you can't do a deed of mercy, then you assist someone with words, and if you

can't assist with words, then you assist with prayer. But deeds come first.

Kolbe lamented that many Catholic Christians are too passive. He looked around and saw that the people who are most active in the world — the *doers*, let's say — are those organizing and strategizing to defeat so much of what Christianity stands for. The same is true today — to an even greater degree.



Father Michael Gaitley, MIC

Tell us more about the forces of evil that were organizing in Kolbe's day and how Kolbe responded.

It started in the winter of 1917. From across the broad Square of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Maximilian Kolbe and a small group of seminarians witnessed a disturbing demonstration right below a window of the Pope's main residence. It was the Masonic Order, the Freemasons, the great nemesis of the Church in the modern era. They were yelling insults at the Pope and blasphemies against God.

This was too much for Kolbe. He was pierced to the heart. He wanted to fight those Freemasons, not with fists and bullets but with spiritual weapons. As he himself put it, "The thought came [to me] of setting up an association committed to fighting Freemasonry and other servants of Lucifer." Just as Kolbe started an active movement in his day to spiritually fight the enemies of the Church, we want to start a movement that will spiritually fight the enemies of the Church today. But again, it's more than just prayer. It's also through deeds, as the new book will explain.

So what does all this have to do with the title of the book, *Consoling the Heart of Mary*?

As we know from the messages of Our Lady of Fatima, Mary is sad that so many of her children are in danger of going to hell. On the other hand, she's consoled when people offer themselves completely to her to fight with her and for her for the kingdom of her Son. That's why this book is called *Consoling the Heart of Mary*. It teaches people to say, "Mary, I know you're sad that so many of your children are being lost. I give you permission to use me to help them. I will fight for you and your Son." That makes her very happy, and that's our goal with this book.

Anything else you want to say?

Yes. I ask all the Marian Helpers who may be interested in this book to please pray for me as I finish writing it over the coming months; please pray that it will console the Heart of Mary.

MH



HOW FAR SHE'S COME

Below is an excerpt from Marian Press author Theresa Bonopartis' book, [A Journey to Healing Through Divine Mercy: Mercy After Abortion](#). For Theresa, the healing from her own abortion came through Divine Mercy. Since being healed, she has dedicated her life to helping others suffering in the aftermath of abortion.

At 18, I honestly believed I was the only one not having sex. I gave in to peer pressure and slept with someone I was seeing occasionally. I remember vividly the day I phoned the doctor for my test results and learned I was pregnant.

After months of denial, I was nearly four months pregnant, so I knew the answer long before the word “positive” was uttered. I was overwhelmed by a range of feelings: happiness at the thought of a child growing within me, but also fear of telling my parents — the reason I had “denied” it for so long.

I immediately told the father of the child, and we decided to get married. Although we planned to tell our parents together, I blurted out the truth to my mother and father. Their reaction took me by surprise. Shocked, angry, and disappointed, they told me to leave the house and forget that I was their daughter.

... They believed that premarital sex was wrong and thought it would be a disgrace to have a child out of wedlock. At least, I thought, my parents were practicing Catholics and would never ask me to abort my child. I left the house with no job, no money, no home, and nowhere to turn, feeling utterly abandoned and alone. It wasn't long before the baby's father and I broke up. Still, I was certain I would not get an abortion. I wanted my child.

A friend's mother invited me to stay in their home. ... During this period, my father sent several messages urging me to have an abortion. He even offered to pay for it. I refused. But as I began to feel more desperate, I decided, finally, to let the abortion happen.

... Thirty years later, I still can't remember how I got to the hospital. But I do remember being alone in the hospital room when a doctor entered, and I'll never forget the sadistic look on his face as he injected saline into my abdomen.

No one explained to me the baby's development or what the abortion would be like. I had no idea what was going to happen. I lay there just wishing that I could die. I could feel the baby thrashing around as his skin and lungs were burned by the saline. He was dying. Labor began. After 12 hours of labor, alone in the room, I gave birth to a dead baby boy.

I looked at his tiny feet and hands. All I wanted to do was to pick up my son and put him back inside of me. I couldn't fathom what I had done. I rang for the nurse. She came in, picked up my son and dumped him in what looked like a large mayonnaise jar, a jar marked "3A." Then she left the room and I was alone again, filled with hatred for myself. The thought of death seemed comforting. My downward spiral had only just begun. MH

Editor's note: Theresa's eventual conversion came about through a powerful experience of Divine Mercy and the prayer, "Jesus, I trust in You."

Order *A Journey to Healing Through Divine Mercy* at ShopMercy.org/b33 or by calling 1-800-462-7426. (Product code: B33-MERBK)

► **[A Q&A with Theresa Bonopartis.](#)**



Theresa Bonopartis speaking at a pro-life prayer rally.

MARIAN PRESS NEWS

Marian Press is feverishly trying to keep up with the demand for the new book by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, *Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon*. Released on Aug. 8, on the Feast of St. Dominic, the book is already in its fourth printing. Within a couple months, it ranked number one on Amazon's bestsellers in the Catholicism category.

In a recent interview with *National Review*, Fr. Calloway said the Rosary saved his life. Before converting to Catholicism in his early 20s, his life "was a mess," he said. But when he was introduced to the Rosary and began praying it daily, it served as a major catalyst to his conversion and eventual priestly ordination.

We thought we would share some of the comments we found on Amazon.

One reader wrote, "For those of us who have been saying the Rosary for awhile, it confirms what we already know — that saying the Rosary every day fulfills Mary's request at Fatima in 1917 to say the Rosary every day for world peace. But also, it will help us to overcome our sinful nature. ... When we say the Rosary, the Blessed Virgin Mary now has our back, and old sinful habits fall by the wayside, while strong evangelization takes their place."

Another reader shared, "This book is a treasure. Very well researched, it is a source of inspiration for everyone who wants to know more about the Rosary. Answers all kinds of questions about the Rosary, linked to Scripture and history. Describes impossible battles won because of the assistance obtained through it."

And finally, a reader wrote, "As we approach the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, this is a must-read for all Catholics."

*To order *Champions of the Rosary*, visit ShopMercy.org/b33 or call 1-800-462-7426. (Product code B33-CRBK)*



Father Anthony Gramlich's pro-life ministry led to the recent construction of the Shrine of the Holy Innocents on Eden Hill.

Father Anthony Gramlich, MIC, the rector of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, leads the Marians' ministry to women and men struggling with the emotional and spiritual pain of abortion. We spoke with him about Pope Francis' decision to permanently extend the Jubilee Year of Mercy grant for all priests to be able to absolve the grave sin of abortion.

What impact do you think this will have?

Oftentimes canon law regarding abortion is misinterpreted. Previously, in order for the sin of abortion to only be absolvable by a bishop, the person who had had an abortion or performed one must have been more than 16 years old, known the applicable canon law, had full knowledge of what they were doing, and freely chose it at the time of the abortion. My experience is that most people have never read canon law, and 99 percent of people who have had abortions were coerced or pressured in some way or another into having the abortion, which meant that they do not need to go to Confession to a bishop for forgiveness from God. Up until now, local bishops could give the priests in their dioceses dispensation to forgive all abortions — no matter the circumstances of the abortion. Now, the Pope has given that dispensation to all priests. This is a very merciful thing the Holy Father has done. This is not to downplay the gravity of abortion — which is the taking of a human life — but mercy needs to be readily available for those who are repentant and grieving.

What message do you think this sends to post-abortive parents?

This sends a tremendous message. A lot of people who were post-abortive did not even know of this canon, so when the news came out about the Pope extending the dispensation, a lot of people came to me with ques-

tions. Many post-abortive men and women feel that they are condemned by God and by the Church, calling abortion the “unforgiveable sin.” That’s not true. What must never get lost is the fact there is mercy for everyone who is repentant. A message of mercy and welcoming is huge for those who are post-abortive because it shatters the lie they may be believing, which is they can’t be forgiven. Abortion is forgivable because Jesus died for all sins, and He forgave all sins by His Blood on the Cross. There is not one sin that Christ excluded from that redemption. I have met people that beat themselves up for years because of their abortion and don’t go to Church anymore. To let them know that they don’t have to beat themselves up, that they can be forgiven, that there is mercy — that is life-changing.

Does this mean men and women forgiven before the Jubilee Year have not been forgiven and need to go to Confession again?

No, people forgiven in the past do not need to go to Confession again. If they wanted to re-confess the sin of abortion they could, to make sure it was validly forgiven, but I do not think that people need to worry too much about it. The Pope is heading in the right direction with mercy.

Is this grace only for those who have had abortions or also for those who pressured others into having one, or the doctors and nurses who have performed abortions and are repentant and grieving?

This is for anyone who has been involved in procuring an abortion — directly or indirectly. There is mercy and healing for everyone.

MH

— Melanie Williams

Shrine sets Divine Mercy Sunday plans

More than 20,000 people are expected for the annual Divine Mercy Weekend celebration at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

The Marian's dear friend and co-worker in the spread of the Divine Mercy message, Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger of the Diocese of Albany, New York, will be the principal celebrant for the Solemn Liturgy at 1 p.m. on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23.

Both the Sunday liturgy and the Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 22, will be celebrated on Eden Hill at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

On Saturday morning, the Marian Fathers will host their annual Mercy Weekend Conference. The theme is "Our Call from Fatima and Faustina." The speakers include Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and Fr. Chris Alar, MIC. The conference will run from 10 a.m. to noon. General admission is \$15 (bag lunch included). Admission is free for members of the Thirteenth of the



Bishop Edward Scharfenberger (left) with the Marian's Provincial Superior, the Very Rev. Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC.

Month Club, Friends of Mercy, and the Holy Souls Sodality. To register, please visit TheDivineMercy.org/mwc or call 1-800-462-7426 (Press 5).

Throughout the weekend, tents will be set up on Eden Hill for Confessions, Adoration, and the Divine Mercy Gift Shop.

One highlight of the weekend will be the prayer banner composed of thousands of pieces of cloth. Each one will bear a Marian Helper's prayer intention for Divine Mercy

Sunday. Please visit marian.org/prayerbanner to submit intentions.

Due to the unpredictable spring weather in the Berkshires, pilgrims are advised to dress in layers. Wear comfortable shoes that have traction, and don't forget rain gear.

If you can't make it to the Shrine on Divine Mercy Sunday, you can view the celebration live on EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network). The show begins at noon EST, followed by the Solemn Liturgy at 1 p.m.

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/celebrate for information.

Discover God's mercy when grieving a child



To remember a deceased child at the Shrine of the Holy Innocents with a glass tile, visit MemorialsOnEdenHill.org/sohi or call (413) 298-1382.



‘DOC’ BRINGS HIM HOME

Nature was always Dusty Frank’s “church,” where he connected with the divine. That connection now has an added conduit.

By Melanie Williams

Dr. Richard “Doc” Aulicino and Dusty Frank are friends with a spiritual connection such as few ever find. They both have made it through adversities — for Dusty, *tremendous* adversities — and lived to share their story.

Twenty years ago, Doc, a holistic dentist from Lake George, New York, had a nightmare about a large, dark “humanoid figure,” an evil presence. Although he was paralyzed in the dream, he wasn’t afraid. He said the name of Jesus and was fully protected. As he started to wake up, it took him awhile to move again. He was lethargic all morning and, for no reason, angry at his wife and daughter. Doc decided he needed to get away for a while. He cancelled all of his appointments and went up to his house in Ghent, New York, for a week-long retreat.

One day, he took a drive to the Berkshires in western Massachusetts and went for a hike. The temperature outside was in the single digits — bitterly cold. He soon found himself at a chapel: the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, in Stockbridge. The time was 3 p.m., known as the Hour of Great Mercy, when Jesus died on the Cross and when the Marian Fathers and Shrine pilgrims recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, as Jesus requested to the world through St. Faustina.

Jesus told her, “In this hour you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world — mercy triumphed over justice” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1572).

Not that Doc knew anything about any of this.

What he did know was that it was nice and warm inside the Shrine, so he decided to stay for awhile. He listened to the chant of the Chaplet — “... For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.” He found a booklet in the pew with the words to the prayer, and he joined in.

He decided to make the same hike again the following day. By the end of the Chaplet on the second day, the lethargy, anger, and darkness that had clung to him as a result of that dream completely lifted. He felt light, happy, and like his old self again. From then on, he learned all about St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy.

Sometime after this experience, Doc met Dusty.

A friendship begins

Dusty owned a local restaurant. He was also a rock musician. Rarely, if ever, did he speak to his customers, but one day, Doc came into the restaurant and, for some reason, Doc caught his eye. He knew he needed to speak to him. They immediately hit it off.

“We each recognized a spiritual connection in each other,” Dusty said.

Dusty had had a life of great suffering. When he was a boy, he attended Catholic school where he says he experienced terrible physical and psychological abuse from the sisters and sexual abuse from his priest. When he

spoke up about it, no one believed him. He never finished school. Life didn't get a whole lot better. Several attempts at a business career ended in failure.

Then, in 1983, he was badly burned in a house fire and spent six weeks in a burn unit. In 1998, he was in a car crash that kept him hospitalized for nearly a year. He underwent 11 spine surgeries. In 2007, he was diagnosed with cancer in the spine and went through extensive treatments and chemotherapy. Most recently, in 2013, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and was given three months to live if he did not start aggressive conventional cancer treatment.

That was the breaking point.

'I'll die right here'

Upon hearing the diagnosis, Dusty went out to Lake George — his old stomping grounds — where Doc ran his dentistry business. In his boat, he traveled out along the large, secluded, serpentine-shaped lake to a hidden cove at the base of a mountain. It's a special place for him. It's where he used to pray as a boy when he was being abused in school.

"God was my best friend when I was a boy," Dusty recalls. "He was all I ever had to fall back on."

Despite the cold, steady rain, Dusty stepped out onto the rocky shore, fell to the ground, and cried out to God, "Take me. I don't see any rhyme or reason to this life of mine! Why can't You cut me a break! I'm not fighting anymore. I'll die right here. Just take me!" He lay there, sobbing, for hours, wishing to die. He finally got up and made his way back onto his boat and noticed he had missed a phone call from Doc. He called him back.

"Yeah, Doc, what's up?"

"Where are you?" Doc asked.

"I'm halfway up the lake in the rain."

"Well, I'm down here sitting on the beach. The rain has stopped here," Doc said.

This was the same beach Dusty would pass by to get back to his house.

Dusty thought, "I'm not interested in visiting anybody. I'm numb with despair. I just want to go home. I only have a few months to live, hoping it will be less. But I always feel better when I talk to this guy."

Dusty moored his boat, met up with Doc, and let loose.

"You shouldn't worry," Doc told him. "You're doing exactly what you need to do. You're unloading this problem to God and letting Him handle it."

That was the day that changed Dusty's life. Their friendship became closer and deeper. Doc — who had suffered polio as a child that resulted in permanent damage to his legs — taught Dusty about organic foods, natural medicine, and, most important of all, the power of drawing closer to God through prayer.

'Conduit to the divine'

Dusty was bitter towards the Catholic faith due to the abuse he had suffered as a young boy, but he decided to keep an open mind as Doc brought him to the Shrine in Stockbridge. Over the span of several visits, he was given the grace to forgive all those who had hurt him throughout his life.



Doc and Dusty enjoy time on Lake George, where they were brought together in Dusty's darkest hour.

Because of his illness, he had been told he wouldn't see Christmas 2013, but he attributes his healthy diet, natural medicine, and prayer to his cancer now being in remission, and he's no longer on any of the 15 pharmaceutical medications he had been on for pain and other chronic issues for the past 15 years.

"I never thought I would enter a Catholic Church ever again," he said, "much less

recognize it as a sacred conduit to the divine, but the Shrine feels like home to me now. Whether troubled or grateful, there's no place that I'd rather be to connect with God."

To this day, Dusty and Doc often come to the Shrine.

"The thing that I've identified with over the last three years," Dusty said, "is that Jesus Himself suffered extreme adversity. It's more difficult to relate to someone's suffering if we haven't suffered. I knew throughout life that God could relate to my suffering and that He loved me, but I could never find a satisfying conduit of direct communication with God. Over the past three years, the Shrine has become an absolute haven for me, and the peace I find there has helped transform me from a troubled, ill, dying, and very angry man into a serene, happy, and very grateful child of God, now possessing a sense of inner peace that I've sought after my whole life."

MH

► [**Click for more stories about Divine Mercy triumphing over cancer.**](#)

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: LET'S REVIEW

Back in November, Robert Stackpole, STD, director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, gave an address in the nation's capital on the principles of Catholic social teaching. With a new administration taking the reins in Washington, his talk serves as a reminder of the Church's guideposts for effective and sensible public policy. Here's an excerpt:

At the very heart of what we call Catholic social teaching is Christ Himself. While the Church never puts forth a detailed set of economic and social policies (much less a political platform), she does leave little doubt that the world would be a vastly better place than it is now if it followed His command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Unfortunately, "Divine Mercy" and "social justice" are two phrases that are rarely coupled. They are also rarely propagated by the same people. I'm often dismayed by the self-defeating division of the faithful between those convinced that cultivating spirituality and piety (including through the Divine Mercy devotion) is what's most important, and those who claim that the fight for justice and peace is what's most important. In

U.S. NAVY PHOTO/GEORGE TRIAN

truth, the two are inseparable. Authentic love for God should lead us to care for the wellbeing of all His children. And authentic love for our neighbors must be rooted in God's revealed truth.

Over the last century, the Catholic Church has repeatedly called upon her members to address — through prayer *and* action — the social and economic injustices that define the crumbling civilization in which we live. In other words, we mustn't become mere “bunker Catholics,” so convinced that the world is irreversibly going to hell that all we focus on is going to Mass, saying our Rosaries, and looking after our own families. Indeed, we have an obligation to contribute to the common good.

Human dignity

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* (sections 105-117) teaches that the first and most fundamental social principle is the God-given dignity and worth of every human person. As there are no “throwaway” people, so there are no throwaway *kinds* or *classes* of people.

This Church teaching should not sound strange to the ears of Americans. Our Declaration of Independence established that all human beings are “endowed by their Creator” with certain “unalienable rights.” Chief among these are the rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” — *in that order*. Without a secure right to “life,” all other human rights are in jeopardy.

In our own time, the Church has repeatedly spoken out against threats to the dignity of the human person, threats that include poverty and political tyranny. However, a more subtle and insidious threat to human dignity is the pervasive stripping away of the fundamental right to life of the unborn and the terminally ill through the legalization and social acceptance of abortion and euthanasia. Out of His infinite love for every human being, our Lord is still calling out to us today through His Body, the Church, to become faithful and fervent defenders of the gift of life. As Jesus said, it extends especially “to the least of my brethren” (Mt 25:40).

Solidarity and subsidiarity

Now, when we Catholics start to address social issues and public policy, there are two principles we need to have at our disposal. Both principles contribute to a better understanding of the second great commandment, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and how this commandment should be applied.

1. Solidarity — This involves a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. The answer to Cain's question after he killed his

brother Abel, “Am I my brother's keeper?” is simply, “Yes, to some extent you *are* your brother's keeper, and your neighbor's keeper, at least in the sense of helping ensure that they have access to the basic goods needed for human survival and the pursuit of happiness, such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care — and, of course, access to the truth of the Gospel.”

As Catholic citizens, we need to ask how the policies pursued by our leaders will impact the most vulnerable members of our society.

2. Subsidiarity — This principle basically states that our authorities, especially central governmental authorities, are only our brother's keeper of *last resort*. The main work of practicing solidarity is to be accomplished by individuals, families, churches, voluntary organizations, private charities, and even *local* levels of government.

Of course, the interplay of these two principles and their application in the complex realities of the day is what leads to legitimate debate among Catholics; while we may embrace the same principles, we can come to very different conclusions as to how and when to apply them.

Thinking ‘out of the box’

To me, one of the exciting and challenging things about Catholic social teaching is that it often directs us to think unconventionally about matters of politics. Ever since the 19th century, the western world has been polarized between two equally unpalatable options.

First, there is socialism in its various forms, which gives vast powers to a centralized government. No doubt government, at various levels, *does* have a legitimately significant role to play in matters such as funding and ensuring a dignified “safety net” for the sick, elderly, and unemployed; the protection of workers from gross exploitation; the prevention of concentrated economic power; and the protection of the environment from reckless exploitation and pollution.

Nevertheless, the Church has repeatedly condemned socialism, communism, and even democratic socialism, as systematic violations of the principle of subsidiarity.

At the opposite extreme is free-market capitalism and libertarianism, which basically hold that “government is best that governs least,” and that the unfettered production and exchange of goods and services will lead to liberty and prosperity for all, or mostly all.

No doubt, the market is indeed an extraordinarily efficient mechanism for the overall production of wealth, but as our most recent popes have been careful to point out, free-market capitalism also leaves many people behind (such as those lacking good educational and job opportunities, as well as the elderly and the chronically

ill). As someone once wisely said, the trouble with *laissez-faire* “trickle-down economics” is that it works: What makes it “all the way down” to the poor is not more than a “trickle”!

That said, it would be false to say that the Church merely recommends a kind of “golden mean” between these two extreme ideologies. Rather, she calls us to utilize to the full the three main social principles that we have already discussed: the dignity of every human life, solidarity, and subsidiarity. Suffice it to say, the gross neglect of any of these three main Catholic social principles will lead to all sorts of miseries (and already has). Catholics have a responsibility to pray, petition, and vote to prevent these social ills from spreading.

The preferential option for peace

Let’s be clear: The Church’s position on the promotion of peace is not “peace at any price.” *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that if non-violent means prove insufficient to stop an aggressor from spreading grievous injustice and attacks on the dignity of human life, then states can and should intervene (see 2302-2317).

Recourse to arms, however, must always be a last resort, because even when it succeeds in stopping a grievous and unjust aggression, it still leaves in its wake sufferings and miseries of all kinds, sometimes even sufferings that can sow the seeds of future conflicts.

Let’s give St. Luke the last word

Perhaps the story of the Nativity of our Lord is the best place to conclude.

Saint Luke makes it clear that the true Lord and Savior of the world is not Caesar Augustus, who was called “Savior of the World” in his day. Rather, as the angels sang, we shall find the One who is truly “the Savior, Christ the Lord ... wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.”

And the armies that bring about the dawning of God’s Kingdom are the armies of angels serving and praising the birth of the Messiah — not the violent, world-conquering Roman legions. And the Messiah was sent first to the poor, to a young peasant woman and a carpenter, and to shepherds abiding in the rural backwater of Bethlehem, not to the powerful in the palaces of the Roman Empire.

As Mary sang: “He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry he hath filled with good things ...” (51-54) — and He has done so, not by leading a violent revolution, or by putting forward a social utopian ideal, but among other things, by honoring the dignity of every human life, solidarity, and subsidiarity, and by calling His followers to do the same. MH

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/teaching to read the full text of Dr. Stackpole’s talk.

MARIAN APOSTOLATES NEWS

Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM) continues its large shipments of donated medical supplies, religious items, and clothing to the poor worldwide. The most recent container arrived in Ukraine in the fall. “We are in great need, and this is a tremendous blessing,” said Fr. Viktor Lutkovskiy, MIC, who is among the 20 Marians stationed in Ukraine.

With the encouragement of then-Pope John Paul II, Ukraine has played a crucial role in the Marians’ efforts to help re-evangelize Eastern Europe since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The recent shipment went to Gorodok, where the Marians founded Ukraine’s first senior center, called Divine Mercy Senior Center.

In other EADM news, its **cenacle program** has added a new publication to its formation material: **Dr. Robert Stackpole’s** new Marian Press title, *Mary, Who She Is and Why She Matters* (B33-MBK).

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/eadm or call 877-380-0727 to learn more about EADM.



Save the date! The 13th Annual **Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference** will be held May 3-4 at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. The conference is hosted by **Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy**.

“We’re focusing on the medical miracle that led to last year’s canonization of the Marians’ Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski,” said **Marie Romagnano, RN**, the founder of the Marians’ healthcare apostolate. “The miracle took place in 2008 in Poland and concerned a young woman, Barbara Rudzik, who suffered Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome concurrent with pneumonia, septic shock, multiple organ failure, and quadriplegia.”

Barbara’s attending physician, **Dr. Waldemar Szyplulski**, the department chief and specialist of the Intensive Care Unit from Elk, Poland, will discuss Barbara’s treatment and cure. The line-up of speakers also includes **Kathleen B. Scoble**, dean of Elms College School of Nursing, whose talk is titled “Healthcare Professionals as Leaders in the Spiritual Care of Patients.”

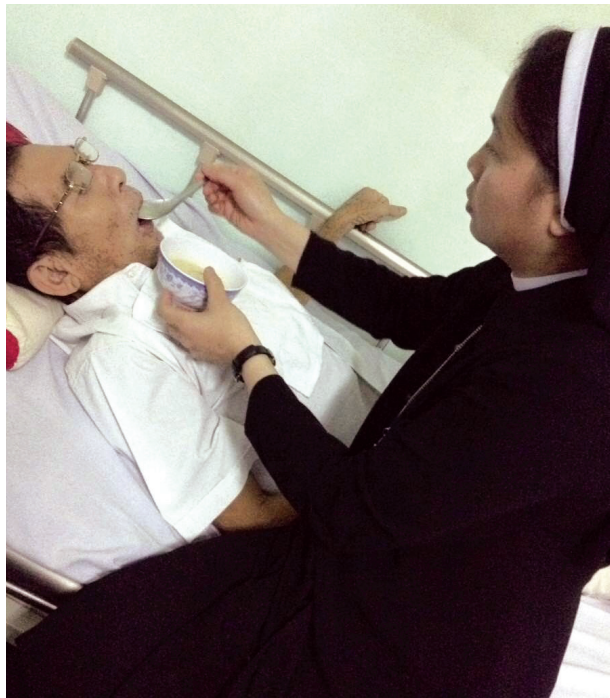
Visit TheDivineMercy.org/healthcare for registration or call Peter Markavage at 413-298-3691.

Fr. Joseph's personal plea

As a priest, it is not uncommon for me to come into contact with many holy people throughout my travels and daily activities. But I am not sure if I have ever met someone quite like a nun from South Vietnam named Sr. Thom Vu. Sent to the United States six years ago by her religious community from Saigon (Lovers of the Holy Cross), Sr. Thom was tasked to learn English and earn a masters degree in theology. I met her while I was a seminarian at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut, and I was quickly humbled by her work ethic, her tireless dedication to her community, and, most of all, her unwavering love of God.

After I was ordained in 2014, we parted ways but remained in contact. Then, on Jan. 20 of this year (after completing her degree), Sr. Thom returned to Vietnam. What she discovered was heartbreaking. Not being told by her parents, so as to not worry her during her studies, she learned that her father, Bang Van Vu, was very sick. So sick, in fact, that he is going blind and is bed-ridden in the hospital with kidney failure. At this point, only dialysis will keep him alive, but the doctors say with this treatment he can make a recovery. She takes turns with her mother at his bedside, each doing 12-hour "shifts" to provide the smallest amount of comfort and prayer for him. The problem for the family, however, is that they don't have insurance for this kind of medical care, and they do not have any money for even the most basic of all necessities, such as food.

So how did they get into this situation? Well, the Vietnamese culture is quite different from ours in America. In their family structure, the youngest son has an "obligation" to provide for his parents in their elderly years, and then his son will provide for him and his spouse as they age, and so on. Unfortunately, Sr. Thom's brother (Bang Vu's son) died a few months ago of appendicitis. In



other words, not only do they have no money to provide for basic living expenses, and what little money they had has been spent in desperate hope of keeping this patriarch of the family alive, their son is no longer there to provide for them. To compound the issue, neither of Sr. Thom's parents are able to work because of health issues (he is only 58 years old). It is truly a situation that requires the utmost trust in God.

Trust — well, that is exactly what this family has held on to. In a Communist country such as Vietnam, being Catholic is not only rare, it's downright dangerous. Yet this family has

been Catholic since the French came to Indochina decades ago and brought the faith with them. It is now this faith that is seeing this family through in the toughest of situations. Therefore, I beg your prayers for this special nun and her family. I know many of us are in need, but this family has been given a special cross from our Lord, and I feel personally compelled to try to aid in any way I can.

Would you please consider joining me in praying for them? In addition, any amount of financial assistance would be greatly appreciated. This is a special lady who has given her life to serve Jesus and His Church in a country that doesn't understand what it means to be a Christian. Yet, she certainly does.

If you are interested in helping, please offer your prayers and any donation, if possible. Please do not feel obligated, as this is not the intent of this story — prayers are the most important thing. But if you discern that you are able to help, checks may be made to: Association of Marian Helpers (with the memo note: Fr. Joseph's Fund for Sr. Thom). Mail to: Association of Marian Helpers, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Or you can call 1-800-462-7426 or visit marian.org/SrThom and donate by credit card.

Thank you, God bless you, and know that you are in my prayers.

MH

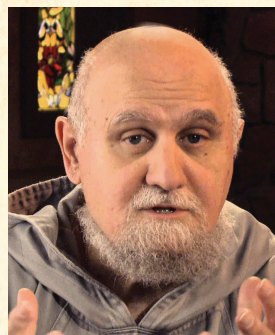
Join us for the 12th Annual **Divine Mercy Conference!**

The Message of Fatima and Divine Mercy: Refuge for Sinners

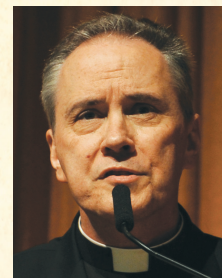
April 8, 2017

9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Cardinal Spellman High School
Bronx, N.Y.



Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR



Monsignor
James Lisante



**Bobby
Schindler Jr.**

Terri Schiavo's
brother



Fr. Chris
Alar, MIC



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Sponsored by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) and Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFR).

FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

TheDivineMercy.org/bronx • 1-800-462-7426

PREPARE FOR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

DISCOVER WHAT MERCY IS AND WHY IT MATTERS



DIVINE MERCY MATTERS

Visit DivineMercyMatters.org

'Against all odds'

I testify here to the grace received through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski.

My daughter, age 38, had to undergo surgery for a life-threatening ulcer in her throat. Since she was losing weight at an alarming rate, the doctors believed she would not survive. Her weight went down to 100 pounds. Meanwhile, I was reciting the novena to Fr. Casimir, asking for his help. The surgery took place in October, and it was a success — “against all odds,” as the surgeon said. Two weeks later, my daughter was back home, and she was immediately able to resume taking care of her family. She feels very well.

I give thanks to Fr. Casimir for this wonderful grace, and I will offer a Holy Mass for his beatification.

— Jadwiga, Poland

The following are testimonies collected by the Marian priests and brothers from Portugal:

A newborn is healed

There was a healing of a child in France. The little boy was born with orange-colored skin. The doctors' prognosis was that the baby had only hours to live. Blood work was ordered at once, and the newborn was transported to another clinic.

Meanwhile, his mother prayed to the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir for help. Some four hours later, the doctor pronounced him suddenly healed. They allegedly said it was a miracle. The child presently stays with his grandmother. I personally saw him and testify that he looks like the picture of perfect health.

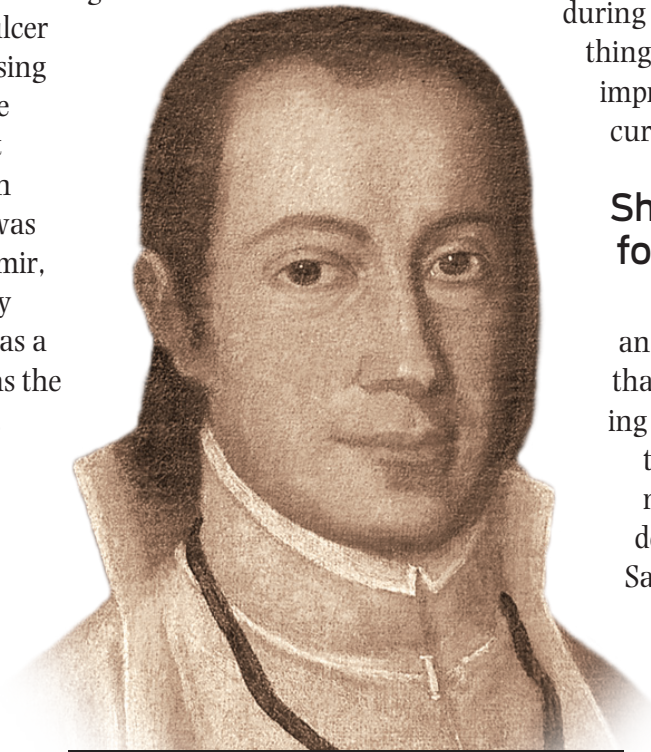
Sight for sore eyes

A widow came to the tomb of Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski to give thanks for the miracle performed by the Lord God through Fr. Casimir's inter-

cession. The woman had leukoma in one eye and was afraid she would soon lose sight in the other as well. Therefore, she prayed to Fr. Casimir, pledging — should she regain her eyesight in the next five days — to proclaim it publicly. One afternoon during that period, she began to see things better. Her eyesight kept slowly improving until she was totally cured of blindness.

She was preparing for death

A married couple came to make an offering at Fr. Casimir's tomb in thanksgiving for the grace of accepting God's will that was granted to the wife. She was suffering from malarial bronchitis and was near death. She came to receive the Sacraments. Meanwhile, as her husband prayed for Fr. Casimir's help — promising to offer a Holy Mass for his beatification and to make a barefoot pilgrimage to his tomb if she were to be healed — the wife opened her eyes and felt her health markedly improve. Now she is feeling well.



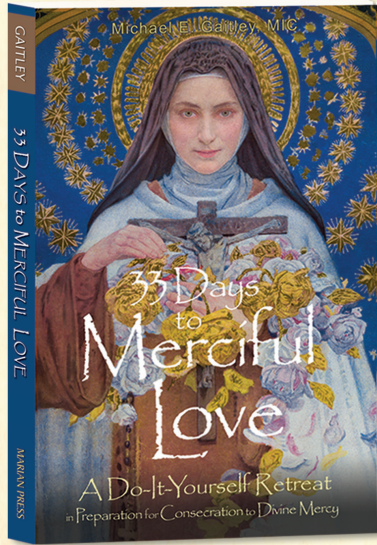
Acknowledgements of graces received through the intercession of Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski (1700-1755).

A child's suffering alleviated

A man came to give thanks for the grace granted by God through Fr. Casimir's intercession to a young child. This child had misshapen arms and was unable to hold up his head. The man reports that soon after he prayed to Fr. Casimir asking that the child be healed, the child was able to straighten his neck and hold up his head, which was regarded as a miracle.

For a Venerable Casimir prayercard (B33-BCWP), 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.

Prepare for Divine Mercy Sunday



33 Days to Merciful Love A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for Consecration to Divine Mercy

33 Days to Merciful Love journeys with one of the most beloved saints of modern times, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and concludes with a consecration to Divine Mercy. So whether you want to deepen your love of Divine Mercy or have a devotion to St. Thérèse, 33 Days to Merciful Love is the book for you.
B33-33DML \$14.95



Divine Mercy 101 Kit

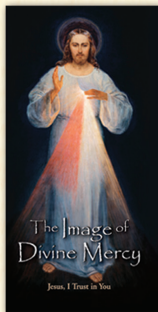
Includes: "The Divine Mercy Explained"; "Now is the Time for Mercy"; "Divine Mercy 101" DVD; Father, Forgive Them Prayercard; Divine Mercy Tri-Fold Card; and the following pamphlets: Works of Mercy; How to Make a Good Confession; Devotion of Divine Mercy; The Message of Divine Mercy; and Father, Forgive Them. PLUS everything in the Fatima Pack (see page 17).
B33-DMKIT \$29.95



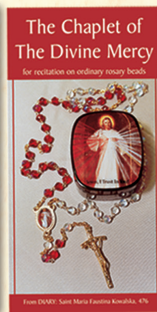
Divine Mercy Rosary

Designed exclusively for the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, this rosary bears the official Marian crest and comes enclosed in a matching gift box.
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Divine Mercy Pamphlets



B33-MPI



B33-CDML



B33-LFMCN

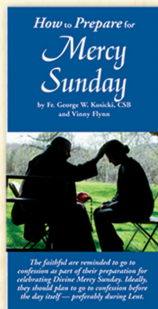
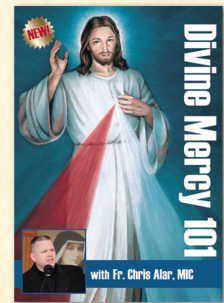
Divine Mercy 101 DVD

This popular presentation by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, is better than ever: all the basics of Divine Mercy in a clear, one-hour presentation.

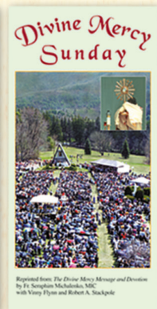
B33-DM102 • \$9.95

ALSO AVAILABLE AS A CD:

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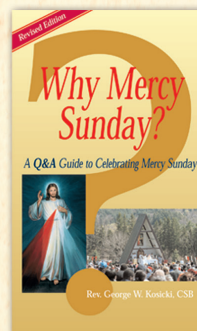
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B33-LFFM

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MIN QTY.	TOTAL
10	\$1.60
100	\$14
1,000	\$100

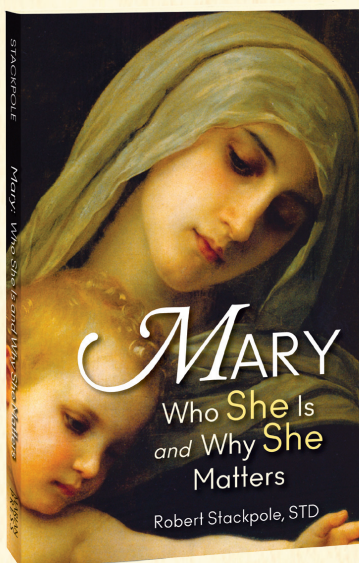


Why Mercy Sunday?

A popular Q&A booklet on the feast day.

B33-WMS \$3.99

About Our Lady and the Rosary



Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters

Who is Mary and why does she matter? This overview of the basic truths about Our Lady and her ongoing role in the Church today is written with wit and erudition, making this the perfect introduction to the Blessed Virgin Mary for readers everywhere!

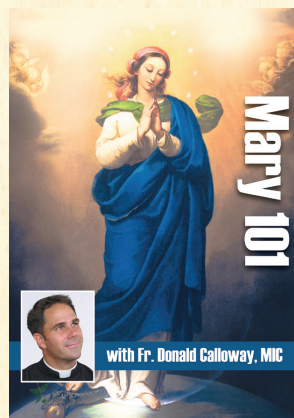
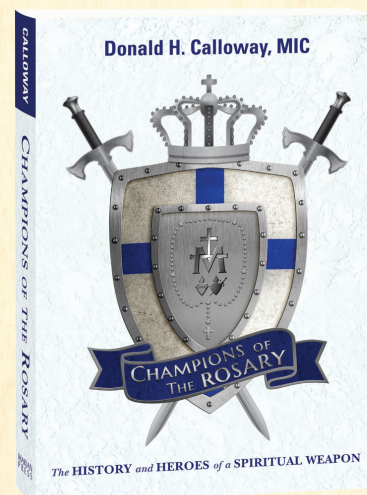
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Champions of the Rosary

The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon

The latest book by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, presents a complete history of this spiritual weapon, 26 of its greatest heroes, detailed accounts of its victories, and 30 color images of the Rosary in art!

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Mary 101 DVD

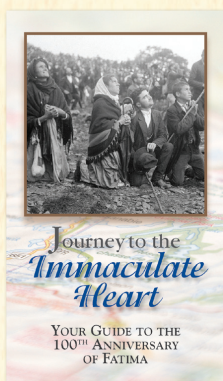
Renowned Mariologist and bestselling author Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, gives an easy-to-understand overview of the best and loveliest of all women: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Learn from Fr. Donald why he loves Our Lady so much, and why we should, too. 50 minutes.

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Journey to the Immaculate Heart

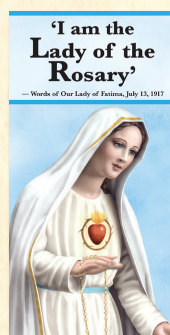


Your Guide to the 100th Anniversary of Fatima

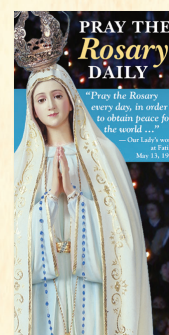
What was the secret of Fatima? What did Our Lady ask of us? Why do we need to respond? All this and more awaits in *Journey to the Immaculate Heart*.

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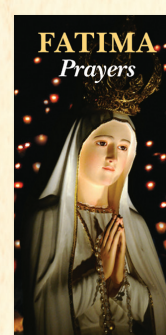
Mary Pamphlets



B33-ILR



B33-PR3



B33-FTPF

See page 34 for pamphlet pricing.

Order Info

Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of phone or online orders;
2-4 weeks for mail orders. Operators are available
(Eastern Time): Mon.- Fri. 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

toll free: 1-800-462-7426 **shop online:** ShopMercy.org

mail: Order Department

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Stockbridge, MA 01263

Checks payable to: Association of Marian Helpers

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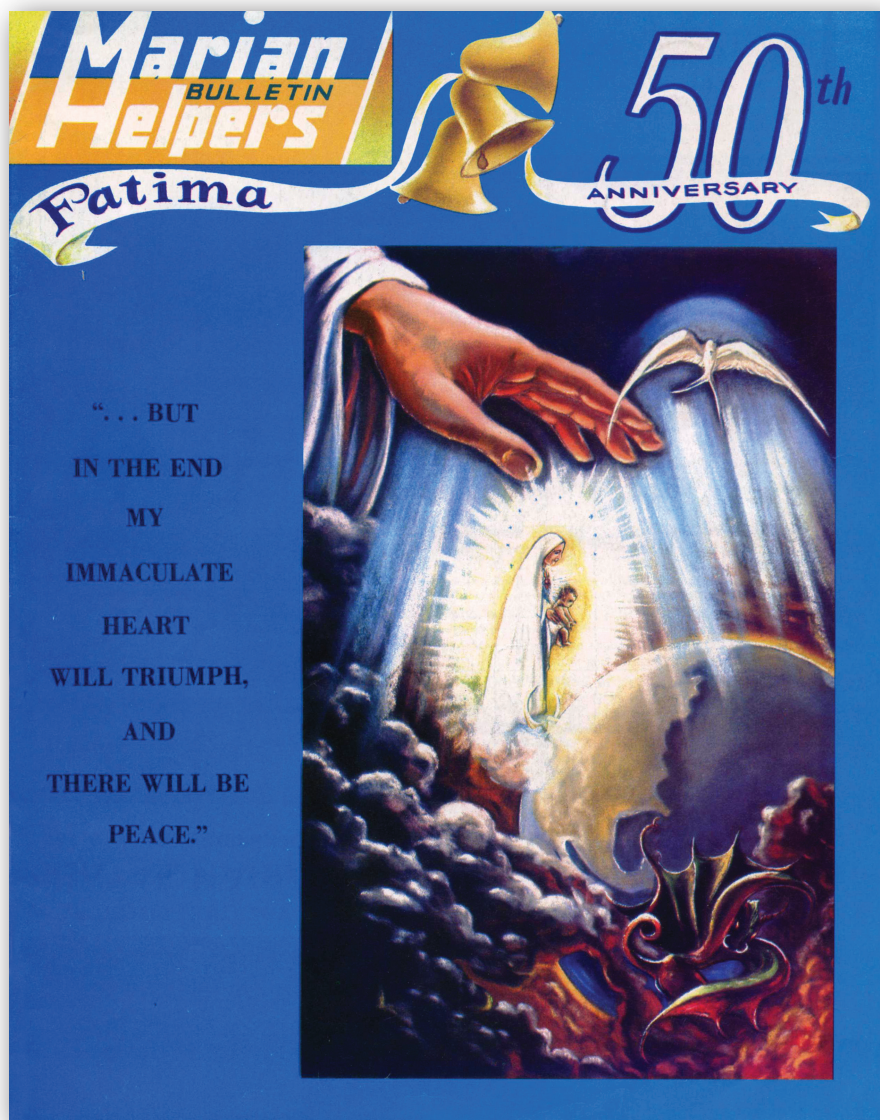
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Canada

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From Our
ARCHIVES



A half century ago, the Marians were as determined to spread the message of Our Lady of Fatima as we are today. So much so that, the very first time we published a color cover for the Marian Helpers Bulletin (the precursor to Marian Helper magazine), it was a special issue dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Fatima.

As we celebrate the centennial of the apparitions, let's look back 50 years at the description of this cover art, a painting done by a Marian priest. The editor at the time writes of the cover:

It is descriptive of Our Lady's triumph over the devil and thus brings us peace, happiness and grace through her Divine Son whom she again presents to the world through her Immaculate Heart for mankind's salvation. The picture is reminiscent of the prophetic words of Pope Pius XII, who in his encyclical "To the Queen of Heaven," wrote: "Upon this (the consecration of the human race to the Immaculate Heart) there is founded a great hope that there may arise an era of happiness that will rejoice in the triumph of religion and in Christian peace."

Live the call!



Marian Helper Kathy:

The year was 2008 and my day began as usual, reading the prayer requests on our ministry website. I opened an email from a man who was requesting prayers for discernment to a religious vocation. I immediately responded to him and told him that he could be assured of my prayers. He eventually applied to the Marian Fathers and from that moment on, I knew our Lord had called me to pray in a special way for Br. Alexander Chung, MIC. It is a true blessing to know Br. Alex, and I feel honored to intercede on his behalf.

Brother Alexander Chung, MIC:

I had a conversion back to the faith in 2005. Still, Satan often tried to convince me that I would eventually go back to my old ways. So I wrote to many different groups asking for their prayers. Kathy wrote back and promised me much prayer support. Around the same time, I applied to the Marians and asked Kathy about the order. She said she was good friends with Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, and she was involved in helping the Marians spread the message of Divine Mercy. I knew then that God had led me to the right religious community.

Attend a retreat

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

The next retreat will be:
March 31-April 2

Learn more

Email: vocations@marian.org

Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806

Visit: marian.org/vocations

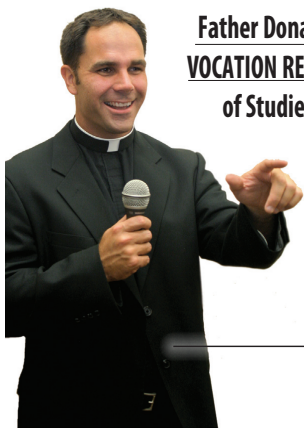
Write: **Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**
Vocation Director
Marian Fathers of the
Immaculate Conception
515 Belleview Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952

Support

Want to help the seminarians?

We have more than 30 men preparing for religious life and the priesthood.

To donate, visit
marian.org/give/seminarians
or call (413) 298-1382.

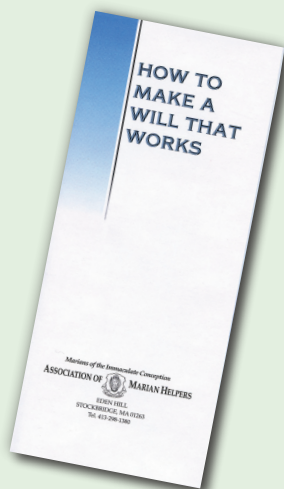




EXERCISE WILL POWER

At least 50 percent of Americans die without a will. They miss a chance to make a difference.

To help you plan your will or review your will, please request our booklet. Email helpers@marian.org or call 1-800-462-7426 and press 5.



Whatever you do, please make sure you have a will and that you provide for those you love.

Visit marian.org/PlannedGiving for more information.