

A suffering family models faith • In war, St. Joseph to the rescue

Spring 2018

Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

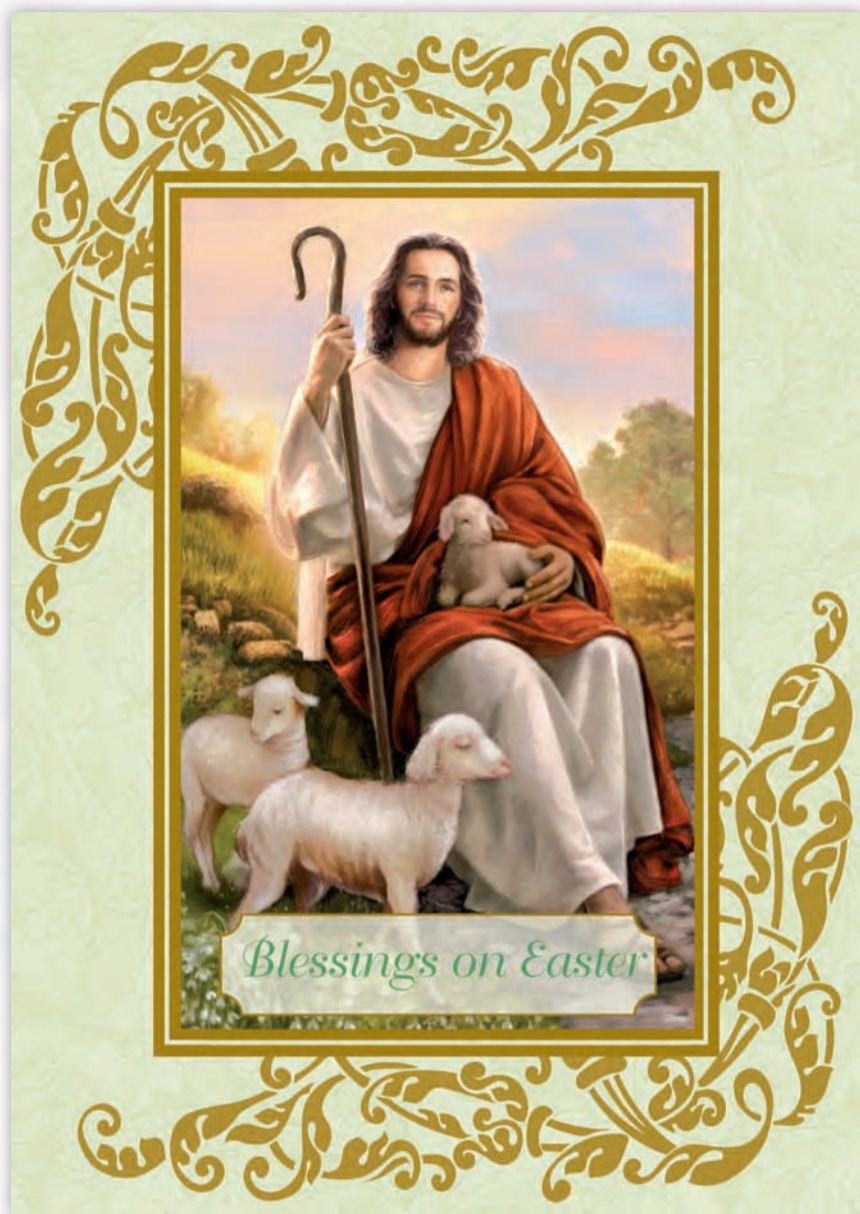
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In the Holy Land,
walking the Way
of the Cross

SHARE THE GLORIOUS GIFT OF EASTER



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(GOLD-FOILED, DIE-CUT)



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Fr. Joseph explains enrollments.

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Your offering helps support the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

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BY LOVE

In the Holy Land, on a spiritual journey along the *Via Dolorosa* (“the painful way”), staff writer Melanie Williams walked where Jesus walked and prayed where He prayed. In the process, she drew closer to His Merciful Heart.

10 ‘I knew God was reaching out to me’

A teen killed in a car accident in 2014 in Maryland continues to touch young lives. Meet one such soul, Brendan Pearl, who sees God’s hand in all of this.

18 A faith so strong

At a Marian parish in Illinois, one family shows what it means to suffer — and what it means to trust that the Heavenly Father has a plan.

22 Mercy: It’s written right into our bodies!

A world-renowned teacher of St. John Paul II’s “theology of the body” shares how we can better understand Divine Mercy. All it takes is an integrated vision of the human person.

24 ‘A gift and a privilege’

As a little girl, Sr. Ângela would pray at the tombs of two of the Fatima visionaries. She could never have imagined the lead role she would play in their canonizations.

26 Joseph: More than just a name

People from her village had already been shot. Still, relying on the intercession of St. Joseph, Mare Zgombic decided to try to convince the soldiers to release her husband.

28 Rooted in truth

There is something inherently pro-life about the Marian Fathers, founded on the basis of an absolute self-offering to defend and promote the truth of the Immaculate Conception.

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ON THE COVER: A mural in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The wall bearing the mural is located between Calvary and the tomb of Jesus. It depicts Jesus being taken down from the Cross, prepared for burial, and placed in the tomb.

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 © 2018 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

WHO WE ARE



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National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

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For pilgrimages:
(413) 298-1119
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marian.org
TheDivineMercy.org
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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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 1944, 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.



YouTube



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OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT US

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

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

Arrange a special gift:

- using stock, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: marian.org/plannedgiving

- to support a particular ministry or need: marian.org/give
- to create a memorial or tribute: MemorialsOnEdenHill.org
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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.

SUFFER NOT IN VAIN

You'll notice a theme of suffering in this issue of the magazine. With Lent beginning on Feb. 14, I thought it would be a good idea for us to revisit in these pages the truth of our faith regarding the defining moment of redemption for humanity.

That defining moment was not when Christ preached in the synagogues or performed miracles. It was when Love itself was nailed to a tree and drained of His blood. In this way, love and suffering became inseparable.

Here at the Marian Helpers Center, we've been enduring our share of suffering in these pre-Lenten days.

I for one was recently diagnosed with pulmonary embolisms (blood clots) that went from my knee up to my lung and posed a very serious health threat. I'm following my doctors' orders, although they are calling for me to rest, and I am finding that little difficult.

More critical is the health of one of our longtime employees, Suzanne Zavatter, a mother, a wife, and our manager of strategic development. Suzanne was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2015. She had a double mastectomy and underwent chemotherapy. For a year and a half, she was considered cancer free, but in November 2017, the cancer returned. Doctors told her that it had metastasized to her lymph nodes, and they also discovered a few lesions in her brain.

Statistically, people with this type of cancer only live about two years. Some live more; some live less.

"This is just a daily exercise in trust," she says. "When any kind of dark doubts start creeping in, I just try and remind myself how much God loves me, and that I need to trust in His plan."

Suzanne's strength and faith has inspired all of us here at the Center. For us, she underscores what saints of the Church have said all along — that God allows suffering; that from it, He will always bring about a greater good. Moreover, we can be both transformed by our suf-



Father Joseph, MIC, administered the Anointing of the Sick to Marian employee Suzanne Zavatter in January. Please join us in praying for healing for Suzanne, who has cancer.

fering as well as use our suffering to transform others.

Jesus said to St. Faustina: "You will save more souls through prayer and suffering than will a missionary through his teachings and sermons" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1767). He also told her, "If the angels were capable of envy, they would envy man for only two things: one is the receiving of Holy Communion, and the other is suffering" (1804).

Indeed, as St. John Paul II told us in his apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris* (*Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*), Christ sanctified suffering, making it salvific by His love. By God's grace, through our

suffering we can be partners in His redemption. And as John Paul II noted, the saving work of Jesus is not finished. He needs us to cooperate with His work of redemption. How?

Jesus tells Faustina, "Join your sufferings to my Passion and offer them to the heavenly Father for the salvation of sinners" (1032).

In other words: Don't waste your suffering!

This is what Christ teaches, what St. Faustina teaches, what John Paul II teaches — and what Suzanne now teaches.

With that said, I ask you all to join with us here at the Marian Helpers Center in praying daily for the healing of Suzanne through the intercession of Blessed George Matulaitis (1871-1927), the Renovator of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

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.

HELPING NURSES LIVE THE FAITH



As the former president of the National Association of Catholic Nurses U.S.A. (NACN-USA), Marylee J. Meehan of West Yarmouth, Massachusetts, has been helping nurses live out their Catholic faith in the workplace since the 1970s. Much like the Marians' Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, she sees it as her calling to help form the consciences of Catholic healthcare professionals so that through their work they can spread God's mercy to all their patients.

Why did you decide to start advocating for Catholic nurses?

It started because of my own experience. I worked at a hospital on Cape Cod in Massachusetts in the 1970s. Coworkers would come to me, knowing that I was Catholic, and tell me about the ethical issues they were facing. I worked with my Catholic coworkers and the bishop to start a local chapter of Catholic nurses to address such issues and advocate for Catholic healthcare professionals.

How did you become involved in NACN-USA?

I helped start this organization in the early 1990s. We realized Catholic nurses across the United States were facing similar ethical issues in the workplace and needed guidance.

Our national organization joined the International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants, which falls under the leadership of the Holy See. We have a non-governmental organization membership with the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). For several years, we were the only Catholic organization among thousands represented at WHO. The Church needs a bigger voice in the healthcare system. That begins by encouraging our healthcare professionals to understand the Catholic faith and to not be afraid to talk about it.

What difficulties are Catholic healthcare professionals currently facing?

In the clinical setting, many in our country don't

want religion brought up at all. They argue that that's the job of the chaplain. But nurses need to care for all aspects of their patients' wellbeing, including their spiritual health.

Our Catholic nurses constantly face ethical dilemmas at work. Many Catholic hospitals and clinics, for example, offer reiki and yoga as treatments. We are encouraging Catholic hospitals to inform patients about the potentially negative spiritual effects of these practices and to make sure that patients understand the Church's views. [Reiki is forbidden by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.]

I met a doctor from Austria who was talking to one of his patients about spiritual issues. A nurse overheard his conversation and reported him to the board of directors. He almost lost his job. Catholics around the world are being stifled by secular policies.

At the same time, our culture desperately needs God. Last year, 501 people in my diocese alone died from a drug overdose. Every day, 23 veterans commit suicide. While NACN-USA advocates in Washington, D.C., to address these issues, we also help nurses deal with these problems locally.

What attracts healthcare professionals to your organization?

Our Western society is a mess. Bioethics as practiced today was not created for determining right versus wrong, but to achieve the "greater good." Some in our society tell us that we have the right to happiness even if we pursue it by immoral actions. As a result, our country tragically aborts hundreds of thousands of babies every year.

Nurses in healthcare and at universities are overwhelmed by our culture's flawed ethics. They are attracted to our organization because the Church's views on ethics are clear and consistent. Through promoting natural law, which runs parallel to the Church's teaching, we have been able to help healthcare professionals make a positive impact on our society.

How does NACN-USA spread the message of God's mercy?

In the workplace, nurses have the opportunity to witness daily to their faith and tell everyone about the mercy of God. Nurses deal with people who are in a very vulnerable state. Our organization helps nurses know how to serve our patients well and lead them to health and holiness. One nurse in our organization, for example, has made it a policy within her Catholic hospital to place prayercards on the bedside of all the patients. With our support and guidance, our nurses are not afraid to offer those who are ill a chance to see a priest for Confession or Anointing of the Sick. They are not afraid to tell patients going off to surgery that they are praying for them and that God is with them.

MH

— Marc Massery

IN BRIEF

Here are a couple of Marian Helpers' responses to our "Pray the Rosary Daily" initiative:

As Hurricane Irma approached the Gulf Coast last summer, the forecast near my son's home outside of Fort Myers, Florida, was dire. They predicted flooding that would have put his home completely underwater. My son, who is in his early 40s, felt terribly sad. I suggested that we pray the Rosary together. Immediately after we prayed the Rosary, his countenance changed. He became more cheerful. Moments later, the storm changed course, passing east of his home. There was no flooding, and his home was spared. I claim a miracle and credit the intercession of our Blessed Mother!

The biggest miracle is that my son, who had been ambivalent about his faith, promised to make a novena to the Immaculate Heart in thanksgiving that his home was spared.

*Samuel U.
Orlando, Florida*

My father had been diagnosed with congestive heart failure at the same time that my brother was diagnosed with cancer. I prayed three 54-day Rosary novenas in succession for God's will to be done. I also prayed for my brother and his wife to return to the Church before he passed. During those 162 days of prayer, I was met with many challenges, including a house fire on day 157. Thankfully, Mary protected us from harm.

My father ended up dying from his illness, but he passed away peacefully. Most miraculously, my brother received the Anointing of the Sick and the Apostolic Pardon 22 hours before he died. He, too, passed away peacefully as I prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet by his side. But Mary wasn't finished. On the day of my brother's funeral, my sister-in-law went to Confession and received Communion, returning to the Church. Mary is faithful.

*Margaret W.
Ann Arbor, Michigan*

FACES OF MERCY

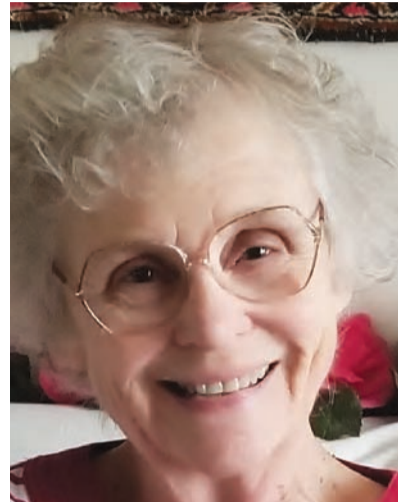
WHY DID YOU BECOME A MARIAN HELPER?

Karen Taff

Mansfield, Massachusetts

On the day of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, I went to the Adoration chapel at my parish where I used to live in Port Orange, Florida. I heard people crying, and I did not know what else to do. I devoted the next three days to prayer, especially the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. It calmed me down. That was when I decided to be a Marian Helper. I have 13 grandchildren, and sometimes with the world the way it is, I'm afraid for them. But Divine Mercy renews me and gives me hope.

Four years ago, I started bringing parishioners from my home in eastern Massachusetts by bus to [the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy] in Stockbridge, [Massachusetts]. We even collect donations for the Marian seminarians. On the bus rides, I have heard so many stories from people who have had powerful experiences at the Shrine. We all look forward to this bus trip every year because of the peace we feel there [on Eden Hill].



Zofia Karcz

Garfield, New Jersey

Five years ago, Fr. Andrzej Gorczyca, MIC, came to visit my husband, Wladyslaw, who had been ill for some time. Father gave him Holy Communion, and ever since then, we have stayed in contact.

Then, one evening, I had a very vivid dream in which I saw Jesus, the Divine Mercy, walking near my home. Suddenly, [St.] John Paul II appeared. He embraced me. It was such a “real” dream that I will never forget it. It strengthened my faith.

A few years ago, I visited [the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy] on Polish Day. When I looked around, I heard a little voice inside of me that said, “Your help is needed here.” I promised to myself that as long I am able, I will help support the Marians.

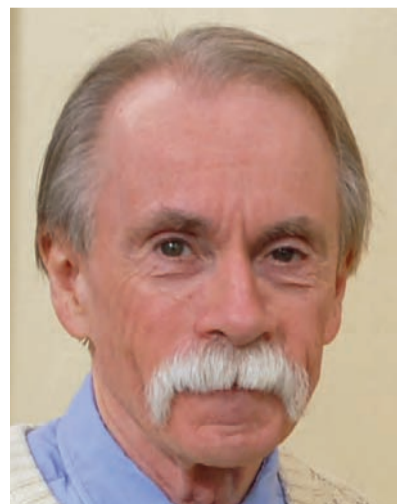
Dan Schoo

Dekalb, Illinois

I am a Marian Helper because I believe that our world desperately needs to hear and practice the message of Divine Mercy.

I prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy with my wife, Donna Marie, for the first time in my life shortly before she died in 2013. A few months following her death, I received a Lighthouse CD by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, entitled “The Second Greatest Story Ever Told.” After listening to that talk, it was as if I was struck by lightning. I was overjoyed to hear the Divine Mercy message.

The next spring, our pastor had us sign a pledge in which we promised to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every day during Lent. When Easter came, I did not see a reason to stop. Since then, I have continued to visit the Blessed Sacrament every day at 3 p.m. to pray both the Chaplet and the Rosary.



Kim Welch

Enfield, Connecticut

Five years ago, I was not partaking in the Sacraments, even though I was [volunteering] in various churches. One day, I was doing dishes when I heard God say to me, “You’re doing all these things for Me, but when was the last time you came to Me yourself?”

My friend brought me to [the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy], and on the doors to the confessional, I was struck by the words, “The greater the sinner, the greater his right to God’s mercy” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 423). Then I met a woman who told me, “The Blessed Mother’s waiting for you. She’s calling you back.” After that visit to the Shrine, I started to make changes in my life and became a Marian Helper.



Hildi Nolan (with husband Joe)

Jamaica, Vermont

In 1987, my friend showed me how to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and invited me on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje. Praying the Chaplet novena, I asked for a sign if I should go on the pilgrimage. One night during the novena, I had a dream about Our Lady and Jesus. So I decided to go on the pilgrimage, where I ended up having a powerful conversion experience and came back to the sacramental life of the Church.

After that pilgrimage, I vowed to spread the Divine Mercy devotion. In 1997, I met my husband at the [National Shrine of The Divine Mercy]. We went to the Shrine when he asked me to marry him.

We have been working to spread the message of Divine Mercy in southern Vermont, trying to get Divine Mercy Images into the parishes. MH



IN THE NEWS

Next stop: priesthood!

Growing up surrounded by dairy cows and soybean crops on his family’s farm in Carroll, Iowa, Joseph Lappe never imagined he would enter the religious life.

But on Jan. 6, 2018, Br. Joseph Lappe, MIC, became Deacon Joseph Lappe, MIC, ordained to the transitional diaconate at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

When he first felt the call to religious life, Deacon Joseph was over 30 years old and working as a bank cashier.

“After a while, I was just working for a paycheck. I started to think, ‘I should be doing something a lot more [fulfilling] than this.’”

During this time, he turned more and more frequently to the Rosary for comfort.

“A part of me thought, this is ridiculous — I’m over 30 years old. There’s no way God is calling me to the priesthood,” he said. But the call could not be ignored.

Deacon Joe entered the Marians in 2009 and professed final vows on Aug. 17, 2015. His ordination to the diaconate marks a significant step toward the priesthood.

Until then, Deacon Joe will continue working on his masters of divinity at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. He’s also helping to teach catechism to seventh graders at a parish in Maryland.

After the ordination, the provincial prefect of formation, Fr. Jim McCormack, MIC, said, “[Deacon Joe] has a great sense of humor, and it’s always fun to be around him. He’s a wonderful contribution to our community.”

Having been ordained, Deacon Joe can now give homilies.

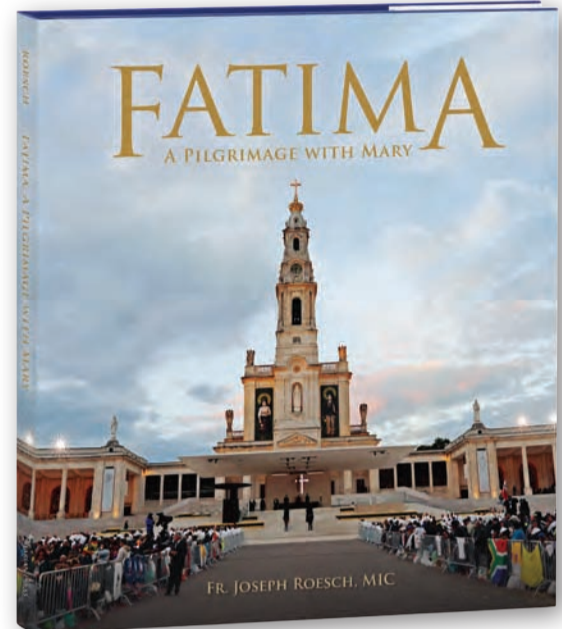
“Once I get more familiar with [homilizing], it will become easier,” he said. “I just need to remind myself that I’m not the sole power of it all. I just need to rely on God.” MH

The 100th anniversary of Fatima is over. But our work for Our Lady has just begun. Here, we offer some resources to help you turn to the Holy Family (all of whom appeared to the young visionaries on Oct. 13, 1917) and answer the calls of Our Lady of the Rosary.

FATIMA: A PILGRIMAGE WITH MARY

BY FR. JOSEPH ROESCH, MIC

Father Joe Roesch, vicar general of the Marian Fathers and author of “Notes from Rome” in *Marian Helper* magazine, shares his love for Our Lady of the Rosary’s 1917 apparitions at Fatima, Portugal, in this beautifully illustrated coffee table book. Exploring the past and present of Fatima, this special centennial edition will escort you on a spiritual pilgrimage of one of the most important apparition sites in the world. \$24.95. **B37-JRB**



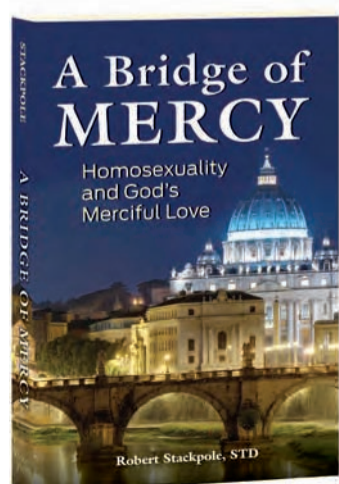
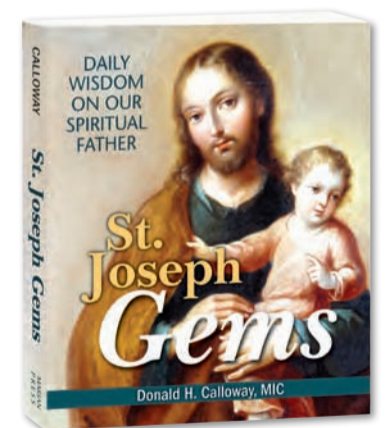
HOW TO MAKE THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS

Here in one booklet is everything you need in order to make the Five First Saturdays devotion. Designed to help people who are unfamiliar with the apparitions at Fatima as well as longtime devotees, this treasure trove of resources offers readings to guide your meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary; instructions on praying the Rosary, making a good Confession, and worthily receiving Holy Communion; and an overview by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, of what the Five First Saturdays are, as well as why they matter. \$3.99. **B37-FIVE**

ST. JOSEPH GEMS: DAILY WISDOM ON OUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

BY DONALD H. CALLOWAY, MIC

Rounding out his trilogy of Gems books, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, draws deeply on the writings of the saints and the Magisterium to provide a rich overview of the Church’s understanding of St. Joseph, the second greatest of all the saints after the Blessed Virgin Mary. This collection of wisdom will help you grow in your appreciation of and reliance upon St. Joseph, the Universal Patron of the Church. \$12.95. **B37-SJEM**



A BRIDGE OF MERCY: HOMOSEXUALITY AND GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE

BY ROBERT STACKPOLE, STD

Tranquillity written and extensively sourced, this overview of the Church’s teaching on homosexuality by Dr. Robert Stackpole, director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, covers a lot of ground including the evidence of the sciences and data from Divine Revelation on homosexuality. Written to help inform devout Catholics, this contribution to catechesis on the Church’s traditional teaching on sexuality will be welcome to many of our Marian Helpers. \$14.95. **B37-MBBK**

AT THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

I've been writing this column from Rome for more than a decade now, so I thought I would share with you what precisely the Marian Fathers are doing in Rome.

We are one of many international religious communities with headquarters in Rome, congregations that often need to receive permission from the Holy See for various matters. Our Congregation came to Rome early in our history. Initially, our Congregation was found-



The Marians in Rome celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Please pray for all of the Marians in our Roman house.

ed as a diocesan religious order in 1670. Our Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701), walked to Rome twice from Poland during his lifetime and sent another Marian to Rome to seek papal approval of our rule of life. It was not easy for the first Marian Fathers to receive the approvals they were seeking since they did not know many people in Rome and were coming in as outsiders. But eventually, in 1699, we received papal approval, permitting us to develop and spread internationally.

In Rome, at the end of the 18th century, our Congregation came to have stewardship for 20 years of a church dedicated to the Roman martyr St. Vito and a monastery. At the end of that century, Napoleon expelled all of the foreign religious communities from the city, including our own. Though the church had been entrusted to us in perpetuity, we never returned to the complex of St. Vito.

More recently, the Marian Fathers opened a house in Rome in 1932, five years after the death of our Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis (1871-1927). In 1973, we demolished that building and built our present religious house on the same site.

Today, the superior general of the Marian Fathers lives here, along with his general council. I am one of the members, serving also as the Congregation's vicar general and local superior of the Roman house. Three other Marians also serve on the council, one of whom serves as

general secretary and the postulator general (our liaison with the Holy See); one councilor serves as the econome general (or the chief financial officer) of the Congregation; and the last councilor holds the office of rector of the Marian College. We Marians generally complete our initial formation

in our home province or vicariate, but after ordination, some priests come to Rome to study for advanced degrees. There are currently four Marian priests from Poland, Brazil, Cameroon, and Canada here doing just that. The superior general and his general councilors regularly hold meetings here to oversee the work of the Congregation around the world.

Our general promoter of the missions also lives here, although he is often on the road raising funds for our missionaries.

But the community doesn't just include the general officials of the Congregation. One Marian brother here serves as the local econome, taking care of the financial books of the house, helping with the shopping, and tending to house maintenance. Another Marian brother serves as librarian and archivist. There are also five Polish religious sisters, members of a community dedicated to St. Joseph, who live in a separate wing of the house. They have been working in this house for more than 40 years, cooking for us, doing the laundry and cleaning, and answering the door and telephone. Mass is offered daily in our own chapel here. We also meet in our chapel three times a day for prayers, as well as offer daily Mass in a number of nearby chapels for religious sisters, students, and laypeople from the area.

Please pray for all of the Marians in our Roman house!

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



Brendan Pearl believes the manner in which he received Dominik Pettey's memorial card was an act of God.

'I KNEW GOD WAS REACHING OUT TO ME'

By Melanie Williams

It was Nov. 1, 2014, at 2 a.m. A disabled car filled with teenagers was parked by the side of a highway in Bethesda, Maryland, when it was rammed by an SUV that had drifted onto the shoulder. One of the teens, Dominik “Dom” Pettey, was killed instantly.

Dom, 17, was a high school senior, star hockey player, and all-around “great guy,” according to those who knew him. As a child, his family visited the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Poland, where he played with the sisters and ran up to the tomb of St. Faustina to kiss and lay upon it. As a teenager, Dom didn’t preach his love for Jesus from a soap box, but friends and fellow students could see it in the genuineness of his smile and the kindness of his gestures towards others.

We featured the story of Magdalena and Patrick Pettey’s witness of faith and trust in Jesus since the passing of their son Dom in our August 2016 issue of our *Friends of Mercy*

newsletter, in an article entitled, “Tragic Death Makes an Apostle of Mercy.” Since his passing, Dom Pettey has been touching countless lives through Divine Mercy.

His parents saw to it that an Image of Divine Mercy was placed in front of the altar at the funeral Mass and on the memorial cards so as to spread the message of Divine Mercy to all those in attendance. His funeral Mass drew a standing-room-only crowd at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Those memorial cards with the Image and Chaplet of Divine Mercy have been a means through which Dom has become an apostle of mercy to thousands of people.

One of those touched is Brendan Pearl, a sophomore at the University of Delaware. The way in which he received Dom's prayercard seems to have been an act of God.

Brendan, originally from Syracuse, New York, was a high school junior when Dom was killed. He didn't know Dom, nor anyone who knew him. He was scrolling through his Twitter feed on Nov. 1, 2014, when he saw the news story of the accident.

"I read the article and realized that he was a kid just like me," Brendan said. "He was around the same age as me, and we were both high school athletes. He had his whole life ahead of him. It really impacted me, thinking that it could happen to anyone — any one of my friends, my siblings, or even me."

Brendan continued to follow Dom's story through news postings and hashtags on Twitter. Raised in a Catholic household, Brendan always made his faith a priority, so he began praying for the Pettey family. He told a couple of his friends about the tragedy, but other than that, he kept it to himself.

Fast forward to the fall semester of Brendan's freshman year at the University of Delaware. Going into class one day, he went to sit in the same seat he sat in every day. On that day, though, there was something different; there was a little prayercard sitting on his desk. He sat down, turned it over, and was dumbfounded by what he saw. It was Dom's funeral card with his face, his name, and the Divine Mercy Image and Chaplet.

"To me, that was an example of divine intervention," Brendan said. "I was one of the first people in the classroom that day. There were plenty of empty desks. And

that prayercard was on *my* desk. Knowing what that story meant for me, and that I had no other connection to him, I knew that it was God reaching out to me."

This apparent sign lit a fire in his faith.

"I can see now that God has a plan for all of us, and we may never know exactly what it is. Your life could come to an end at any moment, and I've learned that there's no point in living a life that you wouldn't be happy with if something happens to you or someone around you. A relationship with God is something you need — I know that He's there and He's listening to everything I have to say. I know He wants to help us to do what's best and follow His plan."

Brendan had been keeping Dom's prayercard in his wallet ever since it showed up on his desk, to remind him that God is with him. But then his bag went missing at school, and with it, the prayercard. His friend Kendall, a fellow student at the university, knew how much the prayercard had meant to Brendan. After some Internet searching, she found contact information for the Pettey family. The Petteys were thrilled to hear how their son is still impacting people's lives more than three years after his death. They sent another prayercard to Brendan; he carries the card in his wallet. From Dom to Brendan, from Brendan to those around him, God continues to spread His mercy, one soul at a time. MH

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/Pettey to read the original article on Dominik Pettey featured in the August 2016 Friends of Mercy newsletter. For more stories and testimonies to Divine Mercy, become a Friend of Mercy (see ad below).


Become a *Friend of Mercy*

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Join today and receive *33 Days to Merciful Love* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, as our gift to you!

To join: Visit TheDivineMercy.org/friends1 or call 1-800-462-7426.





'I am taking you into My school for the whole of Lent. I want to teach you how to suffer.'

— *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 1626*

T RANSFORMED BY LOVE

MELANIE WILLIAMS PHOTOS

By Melanie Williams

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land and a visit to the real Calvary enrolled me in the school of the Lord, and He has been teaching me how to better suffer ever since. As we begin Lent on Feb. 14, I would like to share some of the fruits of this school, and encourage you to open your hearts to Jesus, our Teacher and Divine Bridegroom, even as He calls you to suffer alongside Him.



Church tradition holds that the Body of Jesus was laid out on a slab of rock here so that His mother, Mary, and the women could anoint and wrap His Body before placing Him in the tomb.

Now I need to admit that I don't know how to suffer well. Suffering is something, naturally, which I have never wanted, nor have I ever enjoyed experiencing it. I don't know anyone who does. But, due to humanity's Fall and the effects of original sin, suffering is part of every human life. So how do we make the best of it?

Simple: We accompany Jesus on the Way of the Cross.

And by God's Providence, I was able to do that by retracing Christ's own steps. Now, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was a blessing in itself — to walk where Jesus walked, to pray where He prayed. Little did I know that, through such a great blessing, He was inviting me closer to His Heart through a spiritual journey along the *Via Dolorosa*.

The *Via Dolorosa* ("the painful way") in Jerusalem is the exact road on which Jesus carried His Cross to Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. Each of us, in our own lives, has a *Via Dolorosa* on which we walk the Way of the Cross with our Lord. Why are we on this "painful" and sorrowful way, and where are we heading? These are questions that often plague my heart when I face a bitter cross.

As I walked the *Via Dolorosa* on my pilgrimage in Jerusalem in late October-early November 2017, I was expecting to be shaken or moved in some special way.



To be honest, the first through ninth stations, located along the street leading to Calvary and the tomb, were quiet, solemn, and beautiful, but I experienced no interior flashing lights or "Aha" moments. It wasn't until I entered the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for the 10th through 15th stations — specifically those dealing with the Crucifixion, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus — that the Lord spoke deeply to my heart and Our Lady taught me how to hope in the darkness of suffering.

Throughout the week of my pilgrimage, the words of Jesus to St. Faustina had been echoing in my heart: "The bride must resemble her Betrothed" (*Diary*, 268). But what did this mean in my life? As I awoke the morning we were to walk the *Via Dolorosa* and I went out into the dark streets of Jerusalem, His words came to my heart again: "Melanie, the bride must resemble her Bridegroom."

Our group prayed at each station along the street, and as I said, it was solemn and beautiful. Over the past 2,000 years, the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt nine times. So the streets aren't the exact pavement that Jesus walked on, but due to the churches that have been built and rebuilt by Christians since the time of the apostles, each station is accurately placed where each event happened to Jesus.

As we entered the Church of the Holy Sepulcher,



Underneath the altar built on top of where Jesus' Cross was planted in the ground on Calvary, Melanie renews her commitment to Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom, and reflects on His Blood poured out for our sins.

I began to tremble, knowing full well I was on holy ground. In this massive church are two of the holiest sites on earth: Calvary and the tomb of Jesus.

The altar on Calvary is built on top of the spot where Jesus' Cross went into the ground. I had the opportunity to kneel underneath the altar and place my hand down into the hole that had held the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thought of His Precious Blood and Water that had gushed forth from His side and poured down into this very spot. I also thought, in almost a single instant, of everything that He has done for me in my life, of the times in which He has been faithful to me in my trials, sufferings, temptations, and sins. I wanted to pour myself completely out for Him there, ask His forgiveness for my sins, and renew my commitment to live for Him alone. I looked up and noticed that directly in front of me was an icon of Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom. I knew He was calling me to become one with Him — as He had said: to be the bride who resembles the Bridegroom. I knew at that moment more than ever before that the *Via Dolorosa* of my life is my path to union with Him and the path to eternal life in Heaven.

As I connected this experience to the Mass that we had celebrated in the tomb of Jesus just before we visited Calvary, I discerned once again that the suffering of this world will lead to a resurrection into eternal life.

The Mass was quiet and small, but was nevertheless one of the most powerful liturgies I have ever attended. Our pilgrimage director, one of the Marian Fathers, con-

ducted the Blessed Sacrament — the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ — upon the very altar under which He was buried and resurrected. In this liturgy, as in every liturgy, we remember the Passion and Death of our Lord, and profess the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I saw that every death comes with the promise of the Resurrection, in our own *Via Dolorosa* as well as in Christ's Way of the Cross.

We give up the things of this earth; we suffer the effects of sickness, emotional pain, and even physical death; but this is not the end.

We are living for Heaven. Why do we suffer? Why do we need to learn how to suffer well? Why did Jesus tell St. Faustina that He is going to teach her how to suffer? So that we might learn to be like Him — our Bridegroom, who loved even in the midst of suffering — and so inherit eternal life. By learning to keep our hearts open to God and others in the midst of suffering, we are transformed by the fire of Divine Love. This fire can be painful, but it divinizes us and makes us like Him.

The Lord brought this even further home as we walked to Calvary after Mass. We passed by a mural of the burial of Jesus (see cover), behind a slab of rock on

which, tradition holds, Jesus was placed while our Blessed Mother and others quickly anointed and wrapped Him for burial before sundown, when the Sabbath would begin. As I prayed there, I reflected upon what it must have been like for Our Lady on the *Via Dolorosa*. She saw her Son scourged, mocked, tortured, beaten, crucified, and buried.

As I gazed upon the image of Our Lady, the anguish



Each station along the *Via Dolorosa* is commemorated by a church or sculpture for pilgrims to pray at. Seen here are stations three, four, and five.

in her face struck me to the heart. Through the tenderness with which she places her face upon that of her beloved Son and the look in her eyes, you can see that she was in terrible, unimaginable pain. But she never let her heart be shut off from others by this suffering. She opened her heart and allowed it to be pierced, just like Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom, had done.

His Heart was pierced with a lance, and from it poured forth Blood and Water. As St. Catherine of Siena wrote many times, from His side came fire and Blood — the transforming fire of the Holy Spirit and the life-giving Blood of Christ.

As the Bride of Christ, the Church, we are all also called to learn how to keep our hearts open in the midst of suffering. Yes, as I said, sometimes suffering does feel like a sword piercing our hearts, but we can imitate our Savior. Out of our hearts can flow “blood and water” in reparation for our own sins and those of the world. And by that I mean the fire of Divine Love can transform our hearts to love like Him. Out of this suffering we (and others) can be born into eternal life.

As Jesus told St. Faustina, “Know, too, that the darkness about which you complain I first endured in the Garden of Olives when My Soul was crushed in mortal



The roots of the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane are more than 2,000 years old. They were there when Jesus went to the Garden to pray and wept before His Passion.

her Heart — her trust in the Father that everything that was happening was according to His will.

It was that light of faith and hope in Mary’s Heart that burned throughout that Sabbath when she could do nothing but wait and pray. In our sufferings, we, too, wait with Mary for the final coming of Jesus when all suffering will cease and the Father will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

This Lent, walk with Mary on the Way of the Cross. Enter into the school of Jesus and allow Him to teach you how to suffer. Wait in hope with Our Lady when pain and darkness grips your heart like the darkness of Holy Saturday. Allow Jesus to transform you through suffering, so that you, His bride, will resemble the Bridegroom for all eternity in Heaven. MH

anguish. I am giving you a share in those sufferings because of My special love for you and in view of the high degree of holiness I am intending for you in heaven. A suffering soul is closest to My Heart” (*Diary*, 1487).

Our Lady was the first to accompany Jesus in His sorrowful Passion. She had to let go completely and leave her Son there in the darkness of the tomb. Can you imagine?

The only light left was the hope and faith still burning in

One way to walk the walk

To help you walk with Jesus this Lent, the Marian Fathers have prepared a booklet of daily Lenten reflections, called Footsteps to Mercy. Here is an excerpt:

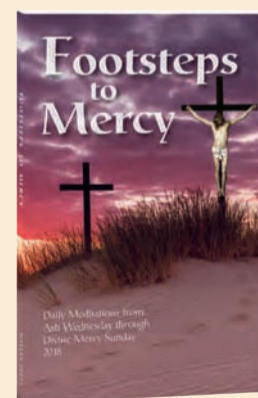
Consider not only the physical wounds Jesus endured in His Passion, but the psychological and emotional wounds inflicted upon Him when He was betrayed. Not only by Judas, but by Peter, too. Perhaps you know what it feels like to be betrayed. Or have you been one who has betrayed another?

Place yourself in the scene of the Last Supper in the Upper Room. Which person do you most relate with at this time — Peter, confident in his faithfulness but yet not realizing that in the face of persecution he will renounce the Lord; John, who rests his head on the Lord’s heart; another apostle confused at what Jesus is saying and having many questions in his heart; or Judas, who is willing to hand over the Lord for a sum of money?

No matter where you find yourself, even in the place of Judas, the Lord’s mercy is available to you. If you find yourself off the Lord’s path this Lent, this Holy Week, renew your commitment to Jesus. Implore Him for His mercy. Even Judas could have come to Jesus for mercy, as Peter did. No matter how great the sin, nothing is outside God’s mercy.

All of us are called to rest on the Lord’s Heart as John did. Draw near to His Sacred Heart this day and listen to it beating with love for you. If you allow yourself to do this, you will have the strength to follow Him even to the Cross, as St. John did.

To order *Footsteps to Mercy*, visit ShopMercy.org/b37 or call 1-800-462-7426. We will have the first week of the devotional online at marian.org/footsteps so you won’t fall behind.





LOVE REQUIRES SACRIFICE

THIS YEAR, LENT BEGINS ON VALENTINE'S DAY

By Marc Massery

This year, one of the most austere observances on the liturgical calendar coincides with a holiday synonymous with fancy dinners, fine wine, expensive jewelry, and rich chocolates. For the first time since 1945, Ash Wednesday falls on Feb. 14 — Valentine's Day.

The modern Valentine's Day hardly brings to mind the death of the ancient martyr, St. Valentine of Rome. One hagiographical account tells of a third-century priest named Valentine who was executed by Emperor Claudius II for officiating sacramental marriages at a time when Christianity was illegal. Another story tells of an ancient bishop named Valentine who, after having been jailed for his faith, restored sight to his captor's blind daughter. Before his execution, Bishop Valentine left a note to the girl whom he had healed, signing it, "Your Valentine."

Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare further romanticized this feast day through their writings. Since it fell in the middle of February, when birds were thought to mate, they associated it with courtly love and romance. By the 20th century, Hallmark was mass producing the Valentine's Day greeting card. Soon, our consumer culture had embraced this holiday as an opportunity to shower our significant others with tangible signs of affection in the name of romantic love. Today, Valentine's Day is a billion dollar industry. In 2016, Americans spent a record \$19.7 billion on Valentine gifts and festivities, according to the National Retail Federation.

Meanwhile, marriage rates in this country have hit a new low. In 2015, we averaged 6.74 marriages per 1,000 people with an expected decline over the next several years, according to Demographic Intelligence. Since love is seen as a mere fickle emotion, couples are no longer committing to each other in marriage. Hiding behind flowers and heart-shaped candies, we have lost sight of what it means to truly love. As Ash Wednesday coincides with

Valentine's Day, we are reminded of a hard truth: Love inevitably requires sacrifice.

At the beginning of the Lenten season, St. Faustina saw a vision of Christ hanging from the Cross. He said, "My pupil, have great love for those who cause you suffering. Do good to those who hate you." In response, St. Faustina told Christ that she did not feel any love for the souls who caused her pain. He replied, "It is not always within your power to control your feelings. You will recognize that you have love if, after having experienced annoyance and contradiction, you do not lose your peace, but pray for those who have made you suffer and wish them well" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1628).

True love does not depend upon our changing emotions, but on choosing to sacrifice for others. These choices may not give us the greatest feelings. In fact, sometimes we have to act against how we feel for the sake of love. When we do, we may suffer, but through this pain the Lord promises that we will find peace.

Through the mystery of faith, Christ can take all the sacrifices we make for one another and use them for a higher purpose. Saint Faustina writes, "Today I felt the Passion of Jesus in my whole body, and the Lord gave me knowledge of the conversion of certain souls" (*Diary*, 1627). Through our suffering, Christ can sanctify others. When we recognize this redemptive quality of suffering in our daily lives, we follow in the footsteps of the saints. We do not have to die as a martyr for our faith like St. Valentine or enter a religious order like St. Faustina to make use of our pain. Any time we suffer — whenever we become lonely, depressed, frustrated, or angry; whenever we experience rejection, feel misunderstood, struggle financially, or endure an illness — we can offer these sufferings to Christ, and He will transform them through the power of the Cross.



The best way to unite our sufferings to Christ is through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. During the offertory, we spiritually lay our burdens, our crosses, at the altar. At the consecration, when the priest says, “[F]or this is My Body, which will be given up for you,” we have the opportunity to say of ourselves, “This is *my* body given up for You.” When we consume Christ in the Eucharist, the appearances of our lives, our circumstances, our afflictions, our relationships may remain the same. But beneath the surface, Christ will transform our substance — our bodies, our blood, our souls, our intellects — more and more into His image. Christ loves us so much that even though He already suffered, died, and has risen in His own human nature, He wants to be with us as we suffer in ours. We can, therefore, rejoice in our suffering because through our pain we fill up “what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of His body, which is the Church” (Col 1:24).

Saint Faustina recognized the necessity of becoming a living sacrifice for Christ, especially in the season of Lent.

She said, “Throughout this Lent, I am a host in Your hand, Jesus” (*Diary*, 1622). In another entry, she said, “I want to become a sacrificial host for sinners. Let the shell of my body conceal my offering, for Your Most Sacred Heart is also hidden in a Host, and certainly You are a living sacrifice” (*Diary*, 908). When we give our whole lives over to Christ, we will be able to give ourselves more completely to others.

Our culture seldom sees the redemptive quality of suffering and often misses out on the beauty of self-sacrifice. Many of us, therefore, reject commitment, happy to give material gifts but afraid to give our lives to others. This “Ash Valentine’s Day,” let’s reawaken to the necessity of self-sacrifice. This Lent, let’s give up more than just one thing. Let’s give Christ everything, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him, renewing our minds through prayer and penance so that we may discern what is the will of God, what is good, pleasing, and perfect (see Rom 12:1-2).

MH

A FAITH SO STRONG



‘I KNOW AT THE END THERE IS A PURPOSE’

By Chris Sparks

Cancer. Factory closure. A home taken away. And more. Nohemi and Daniel Hinkle, parishioners at St. Mary Parish in Plano, Illinois, have had more than their fair share of tragedy and turmoil. Yet, with Job-like patience and perseverance, their faith remains unshaken. Here is their story.

In January of 2017, Nohemi suffered a miscarriage. She and Daniel had four living children at the time. When she asked for the remains of her youngest child, the medical staff was shocked. No one, they explained, had ever asked for the remains of a child that small before. But Nohemi was determined to have a funeral for her child, whom they named Faith Faustina. And their pastor, Fr. Andy Davy, MIC, celebrated the funeral.

“Father Andy was our biggest strength through it all,” said Nohemi.

But that was only the beginning.

Also in January 2017, their youngest living child, 2-year-old Olivia, came down with a fever of 103.8 degrees. They took her to urgent care where they were told that Olivia was simply fighting a virus.

But her symptoms continued to worsen. Olivia complained of pain in her legs. The Hinkles took her to their family doctor, who noted that Olivia’s white blood cell count was high. A bone marrow biopsy revealed nothing unusual.

By this time, Olivia was complaining of pain throughout her body below her neck. The family was referred to another doctor, who tested for arthritis. The results were negative. Meanwhile, Olivia had become anemic.

A month later, another bone marrow biopsy, a colonoscopy, and endoscopy all revealed nothing abnormal. To this day, Olivia’s blood cell levels have not improved.

By the end of March, Nohemi and Daniel were both frustrated and frightened. They’d lost one child, and now here was their toddler on pain medication with no diagnosis in sight.

Then everything got more complicated.

The diagnosis

In April, Nohemi found out she was pregnant again.

The following month, she noticed a lump on her right breast — a mass of tissue. Tests revealed she has Stage 4 breast cancer.

Nohemi’s gynecologist got to make the phone call to let her know what they’d found. The Hinkles remember the exact day and time they got the call: May 20 at 12:37 p.m.

“As soon as we saw the phone number, we knew it was bad news,” said Nohemi.

Bad news though a cancer diagnosis always is, in Nohemi’s case, it brought back memories of the long Calvary her family had already endured as a result of her mother’s illness and incapacitation.

Like mother, like daughter?

When Nohemi was 10 and her brother was 3, their mother, Olivia, was diagnosed with a tumor right by her brain, too close for other forms of treatment. Surgery was imperative.

The night after the surgery, Nohemi’s mother felt nauseous and couldn’t call anyone for help. She tried to get up and go to the bathroom, but she burst a blood vessel in the process.

“She came out [of the emergency room] with machines for everything,” recalled Nohemi. “She had the tubes to breathe, to eat. It took about six months for us to even be able to see her after her initial surgery. My grandmother was worried we’d see her and be afraid of how she looked because she was really swollen. By the time we saw her, she was still swollen, and we were afraid of her, so we did run out of the room.”

Nohemi’s mother was never able to talk again, and she remained paralyzed on her right side. She also never came home. She was in hospitals for 21 years until her tumor began to return, and she ultimately died in 2012.

“That is what I questioned the most: Why did you make her sick, and now you take me away from my children?” said Nohemi. “Thank God, He gave us the strength.”

A parish community

On the Saturday in May that she received her diagnosis, Nohemi was scheduled to volunteer at the St. Mary Parish School pig roast fundraiser. Daniel wondered if maybe she shouldn’t go, but Nohemi wanted to get out of the house.

So she was working in the kitchen at the school when Fr. Andy showed up.

“I felt pulled out to the parking lot,” remembers Nohemi.



A month before Christmas, unto the Hinkles, a child was born. Clockwise from the top: Daniel; Melody; Olivia; Nohemi holding baby Gianna; Daniel; and Aubrey.



When Fr. Matthew Lamoureux, MIC, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Yorkville, Illinois, resolved to build a pro-life shrine at his parish in 2014 in honor of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, he had two main intentions. Firstly, to provide a place of solace and healing for anyone who suffers from the loss of a child. And secondly, to celebrate life, specifically by emphasizing a model for contemporary families. The shrine has certainly served as a place of celebration and solace for Nohemi Hinkle (above).

Father Andy was there saying goodbye to another parishioner. When he saw her, he knew something was wrong. She told him what she'd just learned.

"Why didn't you call me?" he asked.

"I wanted to leave it at home," she said.

Of Fr. Andy, Nohemi said, "He's just amazing. I don't know what I would have done without him there."

And the parish rallied behind the Hinkles, as well. "Through it all, we've had so much support from the church family and school," said Nohemi. "They did a fundraiser for our family in October. We are beyond blessed to have each and every one of them in our lives."

Surgery and a woman's choice

As part of her cancer treatment, a pregnant Nohemi met with a surgeon and set up a double mastectomy. During that initial meeting, he asked if she wanted to

"terminate her pregnancy" in order to allow her the greatest possible range of treatments for her cancer.

That was not the right question to ask.

"I told him no. I asked him, 'How dare you even ask someone that? What if it was my first child, and you still asked?' He hadn't even asked if I had other children. He apologized."

That decision affected her treatment options, causing her doctors to go with a lower-dose course of chemo starting in July than she might otherwise have had. At the same time, she started regularly seeing a doctor specializing in high-risk pregnancies, who would accompany her to every meeting with her oncologist and surgeon, acting as an advocate for the unborn child.

Before her surgery, Nohemi went to the shrine to St. Gianna Molla on the grounds of St. Patrick's Parish in nearby Yorkville. There, Fr. Andy and his fellow Marian,

Fr. Matthew Lamoureux, the pastor of St. Patrick's, blessed Nohemi with relics of St. Gianna, the 20th-century Italian pediatrician, wife, and mother. Saint Gianna, like Nohemi, suffered a tumor while pregnant. Saint Gianna refused both an abortion and hysterectomy, despite the risk to her own life. The saint died after giving birth to her sixth child.

Father Matthew had overseen the construction of the shrine several years ago as a place of solace and healing for anyone who suffers from the loss of a child and to celebrate life, specifically by emphasizing a model for contemporary families.

Over the course of her pregnancy, Nohemi and her family were able to attend a few of the special Masses offered monthly at St. Patrick's in honor of St. Gianna.

They would need the graces, for there was more to come.

On July 18, Daniel learned that the factory where he works as a process mechanic would be closing in March 2018.

On July 19, the Hinkles were told that their home, the place they had moved to after losing an earlier home in the market crash, would be torn down. They had to move again.

And on July 31, their 9-year-old daughter, Melody, fell off their hammock and broke her hand. Nohemi started experiencing contractions, so they were in the ER for more than one reason.

Keep in mind: Nohemi had started chemo in July. As the family went about relocating, "house-jumping" in between losing their home and finally settling into a new home on Sept. 8; as Daniel and Nohemi still grieved the loss of Faith Faustina and awaited the coming of their unborn child; as Olivia continued to suffer with no diagnosis in sight; as all of this was going on, Nohemi was also dealing with the effects of chemotherapy.

It's appropriate, then, that Daniel has a devotion to St. Joseph. The Guardian of the Redeemer also had to help his family travel when his wife was pregnant. Saint Joseph also had to be the provider for and the pillar of a family in the face of uncertainty and peril, in the face of a threat to the life of their child, and find new work in a strange land.

He also had to believe, in the face of so many reasons to doubt or despair.

Our Lady of Fatima

Just before Nohemi was due, Our Lady of Fatima came to stay.

As happens in many parishes, a statue of Our Lady of Fatima (originally donated by Fr. Matt's parents) cir-

culates among the families of St. Mary Parish. Nohemi had been intending to sign up to have the statue for some time, but somehow had never gotten around to it. As she was leaving church one Monday, the lady in charge of the ministry rolled down the window of her car and told Nohemi to take the statue. "She wants to be with you even if you're not there."

"That night we kissed her and prayed," said Nohemi. "We felt peace knowing that she was here."

At the end of the week, on Nov. 21, 2017, Nohemi's labor was induced and the baby arrived. Daniel and Nohemi named her Gianna.

Mother and child went home on Thanksgiving Day.

Two weeks later, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima left the Hinkle home — but it seems she left a blessing behind. Their baby was born perfectly healthy.

The pilgrimage continues

Nohemi is undergoing treatment now for her cancer, receiving chemo and radiation. She has shared her story on Facebook, largely, she said, to make sure people realize they can get cancer at any age, and that everyone should be getting regular checkups. "Find out sooner rather than later!"

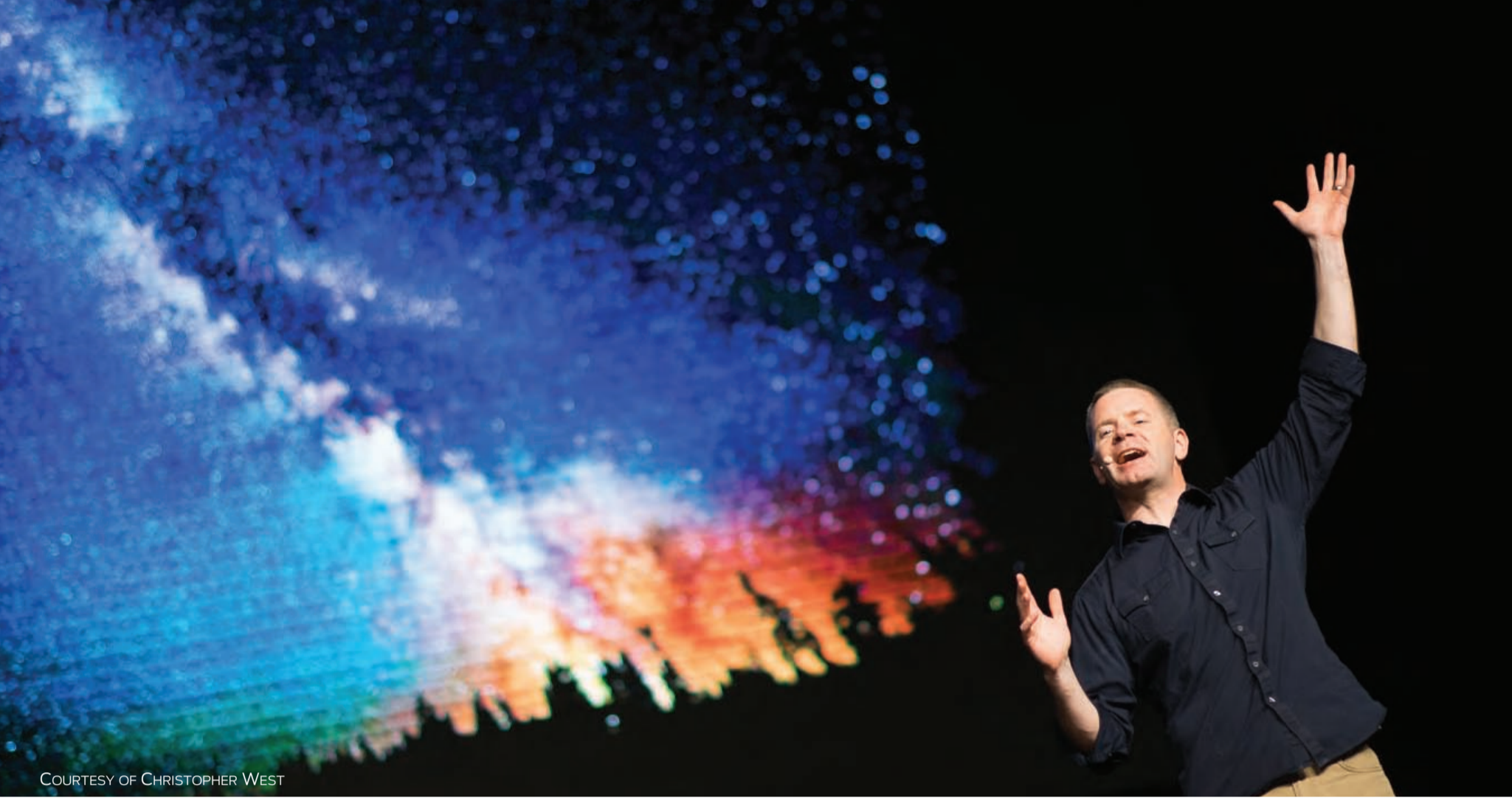
In the meantime, the Hinkles live with uncertainty, enduring their many trials and giving thanks for their many blessings — among others, their family, their parish, and their faith.

"I'm OK with what's going on because I know at the end there is a purpose," Nohemi says. "I don't question anymore."

This is what ordinary faith looks like in extraordinary circumstances. Please keep the Hinkles in your prayers! MH



Nohemi in the hospital for one of her treatments. Right: husband Daniel and daughter Olivia.



COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER WEST

Internationally renowned theology of the body speaker Christopher West speaks on the interrelationship of Divine Mercy and theology of the body to an audience in Hungary.

MERCY

IT'S WRITTEN RIGHT INTO OUR BODIES!

By Christopher West

It is no coincidence that both the Divine Mercy devotion and St. John Paul II's theology of the body were born in Poland. I would say this is providential, and we can't understand one without the other. Maybe it's more obvious that we can't understand the theology of the body without Divine Mercy because we're talking about the realm of the body, of human sexuality, of marital love, and we all know that we fall short of the ideal. So obviously we need Divine Mercy to live the truth of the theology of the body.

But how is it that we can't understand Divine Mercy without the theology of the body? Here's why: the Divine Mercy Image. Mystics throughout Church history have said that the flow of the Blood and Water from the Heart of Christ has a spousal significance.

Saint Augustine says that, on the Cross, Christ is consummating the marriage with His Church, with His Bride. The flow of Divine Mercy, the flow of Blood and Water from His open Heart is, as it were, the spiritual seed of the Bridegroom. The gift given by the Bridegroom to the Bride is His Merciful Love.

There are two very important words for mercy that help us understand how Divine Mercy only makes sense in light of the spousal symbols of Scripture — *misericordia* and *rachamim*. The word *misericordia* has a more masculine meaning, and *rachamim* has a more feminine, bridal meaning. *Misericordia* is Latin; it means “a heart that gives itself to those in misery.” As the Bridegroom, Jesus gives His Heart to His Bride, the Church — we who are in our own misery. *Rachamim* is a Hebrew word for mercy that means

“womb,” which is a bridal and motherly aspect of mercy. The mercy of the Church is always the mercy of a mother. It’s the mercy that allows us to be born again. Not only do we see this mercy given in the Sacrament of Confession, but also primarily and fundamentally in the Sacrament of Baptism, which cleanses us from original sin. The Church has always understood the baptismal font to be the womb of the Church from which Her children are born again.

This powerful spousal (or nuptial) meaning of mercy is also written right into our bodies as male and female. Written right in my body as a husband, as a man, is the call to give myself as a gift to my spouse — that life-giving gift of *miser cordia* — the heart that gives itself to those in misery. As a husband, I must be willing to take on the burdens of my own wife. This is what Scripture means when it says, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the Church.” It means I must be willing to take on the burdens of my wife so she can be without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing (see Eph 5:25-27). That’s the dimension of mercy proper to the bridegroom in theology of the body.

The bridal dimension of mercy, *rachamim*, is written right into the womb of a woman, to show that love that welcomes, gives life, nurtures, and enables us to be born again. That’s always what mercy does. It enables us to be

born anew. This is the connection, in both directions, of the need to understand Divine Mercy in order to understand the theology of the body, and the need for the theology of the body in order to understand Divine Mercy.

This is what my new book, *Love is Patient, but I’m Not: Confessions of a Recovering Perfectionist*, is all about. My book explains how in day to day life, we encounter our need for mercy, and how, in all of us, there’s a gap between what we’re called to be and what we actually are in our broken humanity. That gap is either going to be filled with our own striving and perfectionism, or it’s going to be filled with mercy.

We don’t have to pretend we have it all together. If we don’t have a paradigm of mercy, we think that our misery repulses God. That’s kind of the environment that I grew up in: I thought my misery made me unlovable. So what does that create? It creates a need to hide and pretend I have it together so I can be considered lovable. Well, the revolution of the Gospel is that God is not only not repulsed by our misery, but rather it is our misery that attracts His Heart to us. MH

West will go deeper into this connection between Divine Mercy and St. John Paul II’s theology of the body (and how it affects our daily lives) at the 13th Annual Divine Mercy Conference (see ad below).

Join us for the 13th Annual Divine Mercy Conference!

Featured speaker



Christopher West
Theology of the Body

April 28, 2018

9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Cardinal Spellman High School, Bronx, N.Y.



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JOSEPH ROMAGNANO

During the canonization of Sts. Francisco and Jacinta Marto on last May 13, Sr. Ângela de Fátima Coelho, MD (center), walks with Lucas Baptista, whose miracle led to the saints being canonized.

‘A gift and a privilege’

By Melanie Williams

As a little girl growing up in the 1970s, Sr. Ângela de Fátima Coelho would pray at the tombs of Jacinta and Francisco Marto, two of the visionaries of Fatima.

She could never have imagined that years later she would play a lead role in the cause of their canonizations.

Sister Ângela — who will be the keynote speaker at the 14th Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference (see ad on following page), followed by presentations at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, on May 12-13 — recalls as a child gazing upon the statue of Our Lady of Fatima at the Cova da Iria and knowing she wanted to give herself totally to God as a religious sister.

She had another calling on her heart, as well — to become a medical doctor. She graduated with her medical degree in 1995 and was accepted the same year to the Congregation of the Alliance of Holy Mary, a religious order whose mission is to cooperate in the New Evangelization through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

especially by spreading the message of Fatima.

For years, Sr. Ângela practiced medicine — even taking care of some of the Marian Fathers in Portugal, who celebrate Mass daily for her community of sisters.

On June 25, 2009, Sr. Ângela received an unexpected invitation: She was nominated to become the postulator for the cause of canonization of then-Blesseds Jacinta and Francisco Marto. This was a unique privilege: to verify that a healing is scientifically inexplicable and can be attributed solely to the intercession of the little Fatima visionaries.

“When I received the invitation to be [the] postulator ... my first reaction was the sense that I was receiving a mission that was bigger than my strength and capabilities,” Sr. Ângela explained. “I was scared. I asked the Lord in my heart: ‘Do You know what You are asking me? I will not make it’ ... So I went to pray and in my soul echoed the words of Jesus to St. Paul: ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ (2 Cor 12:9). I then realized that all that was left for me to do was to say: ‘Jesus, I trust in You.’”

For the past eight years, Sr. Ângela has enthusiastically lived her life with great confidence in Jesus and Our Lady.

Every time she received a medical case reported to be a miracle, she had to take a risk — a risk of putting long hours and heart-filled dedication into a study, many times concluding that the case would not be approved.

“That is the risk that a postulator takes,” Sr. Ângela said. “In those moments, as expected, is frustration, feelings of deception and discouragement. I had to pray and abandon myself to God’s will many times, knowing that He knew better than I did what the right time was to grant us the grace of the canonization of the little shepherds.”

On March 3, 2013, in Brazil, a 5-year-old boy, Lucas Baptista, fell out of a window from a height of 20 feet while playing with his sister, Eduarda. He landed on his head.

After surgery, doctors told his parents that Lucas had little to no chance of survival, and if he did survive, he would be in a permanent vegetative state. His parents and a convent of Carmelite nuns turned to Blessed Jacinta and Francisco Marto for their intercession.

Six days later, on March 9, 2013, Lucas woke up and began to speak. Since that time, Lucas has been completely well and has absolutely no lingering effects from the accident.

Lucas’ case was submitted to Sr. Ângela and her team. Sister Ângela shared that from the moment she started sensing that the medical case of Lucas was pre-

senting the characteristics needed to be approved as a miracle, she lived in a constant state of commotion.

She said, “The work that I had ahead of composing the *Positio* (the official documentation of the case to submit to the Vatican for approval as a miracle), though complex and arduous, seemed light to me. [It] was my joy.”

On March 23, 2017, the Vatican promulgated their decree approving the miracle. Sister Ângela said, “It was the moment for me to pray my Magnificat.”

Jacinta and Francisco Marto were canonized by Pope Francis on May 13, 2017, during his pilgrimage to Fatima.

“The canonization gave a new meaning to my love for these children, who touched [my heart] since I was little,” Sr. Ângela shared. “Until the date of my nomination [to become the postulator], Francisco and Jacinta were only the little shepherds of Fatima. Since then, they became part of my life and mission. And I feel that a postulator cannot desire to have a life different from the life of the saints which he or she represents. Thus, since 2009, Sts. Francisco and Jacinta have become a portion of the identity of my vocation. This is a gift and a privilege that only in eternity I will be able to entirely understand, but for which I already thank the Lord.”

Sister Ângela continues to practice medicine to this day. In 2014, she consented to be a vice-postulator for the cause of beatification of the third and final Fatima visionary, Sr. Lúcia de Jesus dos Santos. MH



14th Annual Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference

MAY 10-11: Sister Ângela de Fátima Coelho, MD, postulator for the causes of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco, will be the keynote speaker at the conference hosted by Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. The Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC; Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC; and Marie Romagnano, RN, along with several other notables, will also be speakers. Visit TheDivineMercy.org/worcester or call (413) 298-1303 for details.



Left: some of the Zgombic children, including (from left) Marica, Peter, Joseph, and Anton. Center above: Joseph Zgombic leaves Croatia in 1962 to come to America. Center bottom: Joseph working in construction at a water treatment plant in Wantagh, New York. Upper right: Joseph flanked by his parents, Ivan and Mare, in 1969. Bottom right: Joseph and his wife, Linda, visit the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in December 2017.

JOSEPH: MORE THAN JUST A NAME

By Marc Massery

Croatian native Joseph Zgombic owes St. Joseph more than just his name. He is indebted to St. Joseph for saving his father's life.

The Zgombics come from a small farm in Malinska, a village located on the western side of the Island of Krk on the Adriatic Sea. Throughout World War II, Joseph's family would go to sleep listening to the sound of war-planes passing overhead.

On May 18, 1944, the Feast of the Ascension, German soldiers surrounded his family's Catholic church.

"[The soldiers] warned that if anyone tried to run away, they would shoot them," Joseph said. "They

grabbed many of the men to send them to work. They needed [people] to clean up the streets of Germany after all the bombings."

German soldiers captured dozens of men from Malinska and sent them north, across the bay, to nearby Rijeka, Croatia. The Nazis imprisoned these men until they could transfer them across the German border and force them to work.

For the moment, Joseph's father, Ivan Zgombic, was spared from capture. "He had gone to a different Mass that day," Joseph said.

At the time, Ivan's wife, Mare, was nine months preg-

nant with their fourth child, Joseph. On that day, Ivan was taking his oldest son, also named Ivan, to see a dentist for his terrible toothache.

“When they came to the dentist’s office, there were two German soldiers there ... and the dentist was not in,” Joseph said. The soldiers allowed young Ivan, a boy of about 12, to return home.

“But they grabbed my father,” Joseph said. “They sent him to prison in Rijeka with the rest of the [captives].”

When Joseph’s mother, Mare, heard the news of her husband’s capture, she panicked. The Zgombics already had enough difficulties. “We were so poor you wouldn’t believe it,” Joseph said. “We had no electricity, no running water. We made our own bread. We had no money coming in from anywhere. We had only what we produced from [my father’s] farm.”

Nine months pregnant with no money to her name, Mare was now in danger of losing her beloved husband and the provider for her growing family. So Mare relied on the only thing she had left: faith.

“She prayed to St. Joseph. [She had already been praying] to St. Joseph for an easy birth and to protect the family,” Joseph said.

As soon as she could, Mare went to the local priest hoping that he could help. “He knew a little German so he wrote a note asking if they would release my father on account of her being pregnant,” Joseph said. The next day, Mare boarded a boat and traveled across the bay to Rijeka, hoping to find her imprisoned husband.

“She had to go in front of the German soldiers with their guns,” Joseph said. “[My family had known] two people in our village who protested against the Germans,

and they were shot right in front of their houses.”

But relying on the intercession of St. Joseph, protector of the family, Mare had hope that she could convince the German soldiers to release her husband.

“[When the soldiers] saw her coming, big with child, along with the note from the priest, they released my father and sent him home,” Joseph said.

Many of the Zgombics’ relatives and friends were not so fortunate. “[The others] never came back. They died of starvation,” he said.

Less than two weeks after Ivan’s return, Mare gave birth to her fourth child. “She named me after St. Joseph because he saved my father,” Joseph said.

According to Joseph, it was common back then for parents to name their children after relatives from previous generations. “But I’m the only Joseph in my family,” he said. “There are Peters and Johns, but no Josephs.”

When Joseph was 15, he took a job as a bricklayer and brought home the first paycheck his family had ever seen. He moved to the United States in 1962 and went on to spend 50 years working in construction. His wife, Linda, boasts of his talent for carpentry.

“I’m so happy with my name,” said Joseph, who lives in New Fairfield, Connecticut. “I’ve always had devotion to St. Joseph, especially in my work. Fifty years in construction, and I never got injured.”

MH

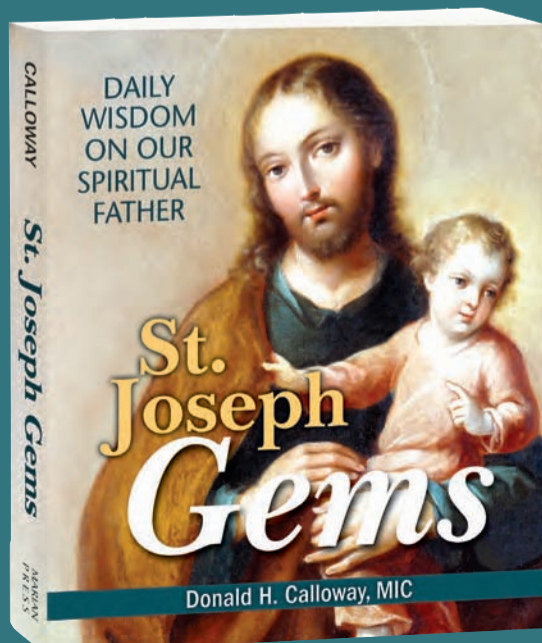
Visit marian.org/b37 to bring your family’s intentions to faithful St. Joseph during the novena before his feast day March 19, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. As he does for countless Marian Helpers, St. Joseph can help you and your family through hard times.

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ROOTED IN TRUTH

To serve the Immaculate Conception means
serving the pro-life cause

By Chris Sparks

There is something inevitably, inherently pro-life about a religious order founded on the basis of an absolute self-offering — an *oblatio* — to defend and promote the truth of the Immaculate Conception.

In 2017, a general chapter of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception determined that the founding date of the Congregation would change. The founding had been dated to Oct. 24, 1673, when Bishop Stanislaw Jacek Swiecicki arrived at the hermitage in Korabiew Forest to conduct a canonical visitation. But from now on, the Congregation would acknowledge Dec. 11, 1670, as the official day of their founding. Why? Because that was the day that St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631–1701) made his *oblatio*, professing publicly his intention to found the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He concluded thusly:

I avow that I believe in whatever the Holy Roman Church believes and will successively teach to be believed, mostly indeed I avow that the Most Holy Mother of God Mary was conceived without original stain and I promise to propagate and defend her honor even by suffering the loss of my life. ...

From that self-gift to God and His Mother has flowed forth all the history, works, and spiritual fruits of the Marian Fathers.

The Marian Fathers are rooted, then, in the truth that life begins at the moment of conception because they defend and promote the truth that the person whom we honor as the Mother of God with all her many titles began to exist at that first moment of her conception.

Further, the Marian Fathers know that the Blessed Virgin Mary has total enmity with the devil. That, after all, is what “immaculate” means — she was preserved

from all stain of sin from the first moment of her conception, and she never fell into sin at any point in her life.

Therefore, she was perfectly and purely pro-life, for she gladly welcomed the Incarnation of the Son of God in her womb. She welcomed both natural and supernatural life, life both divine and human. And she gives life to the world through her Son. She is the spiritual mother of all those who turn themselves over to her. She works miracles for many, aiding us in our physical necessities. But she also mediates grace to us, the grace that gives eternal life.

So under her patronage, the Marian Fathers have been and will always be pro-life.

That pro-life stance has manifested itself in many ways over the years, from the heroism of Marians in serving the Church where the need is greatest, even to the point of martyrdom (as happened at Rosica, Belarus, in 1943), to the more ordinary “white martyrdom” of living a faithful Catholic religious life.

That pro-life stance also has manifested itself in participating in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., each January to demonstrate in defense of life from conception to natural death, as called for in St. John Paul II’s prophetic encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*).

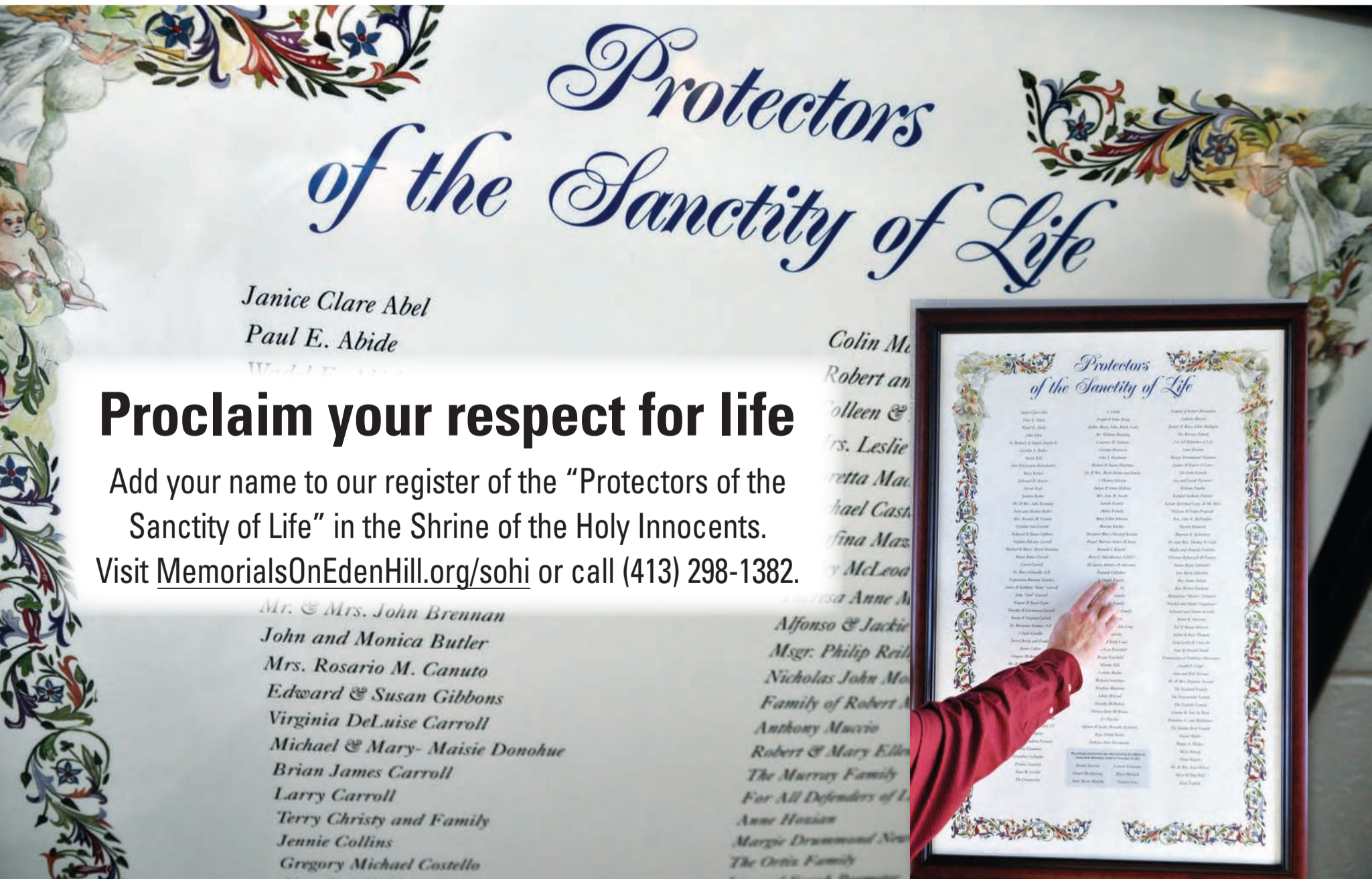
That pro-life stance is evident in the Shrine of the Holy Innocents, located below the Mother of Mercy

Outdoor Shrine from which the annual Divine Mercy Sunday Mass is broadcast on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). Nestled below the big outdoor altar — metaphorically, in the womb of the building — is a shrine dedicated to memorializing the unborn, deceased children, and innocents taken in an untimely fashion. Here, in this place of prayer and remembrance, awaits a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn.

And that pro-life stance is made plain in the priestly ministry of the Marian Fathers, in their bestowal of supernatural life through the Sacraments, in their resurrection of hope in so many hearts through the promotion of Divine Mercy, and in their service to the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

On and on it goes, a great service to life on this earth and life everlasting, to our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and to Our Lady, the Mother of All the Living.

Let us join the Marian Fathers in praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Rosary for those far from God; for the enemies of life; for those most in need of God’s mercy that they may be converted and become allies once again of our God, who is Life, Love, and Divine Mercy. And let us turn to Our Lady for intercession and an example of how to be purely, thoroughly pro-life. MH



Protectors of the Sanctity of Life

Janice Clare Abel
Paul E. Abide

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Add your name to our register of the “Protectors of the Sanctity of Life” in the Shrine of the Holy Innocents.

Visit MemorialsOnEdenHill.org/sohi or call (413) 298-1382.

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Volunteering creates feeling of family

In the early 1960s, Joanne Clough, a devout Catholic, noticed a small bronze medal that she did not recognize on her coffee table at her home in Albany, New York. The medal was engraved with Polish lettering and bore an image of Christ.

“I don’t know how it got there,” she said. “I’m an Italian and was living in an Italian neighborhood. Who would give me a Polish medal?” She put this mysterious token away in a small box and did not think about it for a long time.

In the 1980s, Joanne traveled to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to visit the Marian Fathers on Eden Hill. There, she discovered that what was stamped on her mysterious bronze medal was the Divine Mercy Image. After that bus trip, Joanne started bringing her nine children to the Marian Fathers on Divine Mercy Sundays.

“The crowds were not nearly as big as they are now,” she said.

Ever since they first started attending these Divine Mercy Sunday observances, Joanne and her family have felt a strong connection to the Marian Fathers and the message of Divine Mercy. In fact, in April 2000 — the same month that St. Faustina was canonized — Joanne’s husband of 55 years, Ken, was confirmed into the Catholic faith. He had been a non-practicing Episcopalian most of his life, but thanks to Joanne’s encouragement, he embraced Catholicism.

“Now we go to daily Mass and pray the Rosary and the Chaplet every day,” Ken said.

In 2002, Joanne and Ken began volunteering at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

“People ask me why I volunteer here so much. I tell them that it’s because I have a lot of blessings,” Ken said. “We have nine children, 16 grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. We want to give back.”

The Cloughs spend just about every weekend at the Shrine. Ken volunteers to chauffeur pilgrims around Eden Hill, and Joanne works in hospitality, answering pilgrims’ questions.

Joanne said that she first felt inspired to volunteer at the Shrine because of Pope St. John Paul II’s message to the world at St. Faustina’s canonization. “He asked us to turn to God’s mercy to answer the problems of our time,” she said. “So we decided that we wanted to help those who visit [the Shrine].”



Ken and Joanne Clough have been volunteering at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy since 2002.

For the past decade, Joanne and Ken have been in charge of organizing the Adoration tent on the Shrine grounds during Divine Mercy Sunday weekend. “The crowd seems to grow every year,” he said. “We’ve met people from all over the world and all walks of life. People [from] as far away as Australia.”

The Cloughs said that they keep coming back to the Shrine because of the community there. “It feels like a family,” Joanne said. “We have a chance to get to know [all the pilgrims], and pray for them. In turn, they pray for us.”

Even though Joanne has been volunteering all her life, she says that she still has hesitations when assigned a new task. “Sometimes, when I volunteer I’m unsure whether or not I can do the job,” she said. “When I feel that way, I just go before St. Faustina’s and John Paul II’s relics in the chapel and ask them to help me know what to do.”

Even when bad weather overshadows Divine Mercy Sunday weekend, Joanne and Ken have seen this inconvenience as an opportunity to practice mercy. “When it rains or snows, we just offer it up for the Holy Souls, because that’s what St. Faustina is all about,” Joanne said.

“I encourage people to sign up as volunteers,” Joanne continued. “God is full of surprises and you’ll be amazed at how many talents you have.”

This year, the Shrine has a particular need for parking lot attendants and crowd control volunteers, among other positions. To volunteer for Divine Mercy Sunday, please contact the volunteer coordinator, Peter Markavage, at volunteers@marian.org or call (413) 298-1114. MH

— Marc Massery

Preparations underway for Mercy Weekend

The Marian Fathers at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, expect more than 20,000 people to attend the annual Divine Mercy Weekend celebration on April 7-8.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, former president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, will be the celebrant for the Liturgy at 1 p.m. on Divine Mercy Sunday.

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

On Saturday morning, the Marian Fathers will host the annual Mercy Weekend Conference. The speakers will include Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, and a special guest: the Irish singer Dana, who will perform and give her witness. Check-in begins at 9 a.m. 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 Month Club, Friends of Mercy, and the Holy Souls Sodality. To register, please visit TheDivineMercy.org/mwc or call 1-800-462-7426.



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

Since Divine Mercy Sunday falls earlier than usual this year, pilgrims are advised to dress in layers and wear comfortable shoes with traction.

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 (Eastern), followed by the Solemn Liturgy at 1 p.m.

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/celebrate to learn more.

PREPARE FOR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

DISCOVER WHAT MERCY IS AND WHY IT MATTERS



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LONG-TIME HELPERS COMBINE DEVOTION WITH MARRIAGE

Andrea and Ed Barr are proof of the power of prayer! They were introduced by a mutual friend, in spite of Ed having *declined* the invitation to meet someone. In fact, Ed had been blunt: He had told his friend that he was not interested in meeting anyone at that point in his life. But Andrea had been praying.

Andrea had been a widow for a number of years, and she had been praying to meet a man with whom to share her life. In fact, long before she started a novena to meet her future husband, she kept feeling called to pray for “the protection of her future husband,” even though that prayer made little sense to her. But pray she did. Midway through her novena, she and Ed were introduced. Suddenly, all those prayers made sense: Ed was in the Marines. In fact, he had spent years in Afghanistan and Iraq, in constant danger, while Andrea prayed for the protection of a man whom she had not even met.

Andrea has been a Marian Helper for 25 years. Shortly after they met, since Divine Mercy is such an important part of her life, Andrea suggested to Ed that he read *The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion*, a small booklet published by Marian Press. Ed not only agreed, he actually read it. And when Andrea suggested that they each pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every day for the intention of their relationship, Ed agreed to that, too.

And that wasn’t the end of the surprises in store. Ed is of Polish descent and knew that his mother had received mailings from the Marian Fathers and the Association of



Marian Helpers. But he did not know that his mother had enrolled *him* as a member until he gave us his new address and received a certificate congratulating him on having been a Marian Helper for 20 years. So the Marians have been praying for him for decades as well as for Andrea!

Both of the Barrs know that praying the Chaplet has helped them through the difficulty of their long distance courtship and the inevitable challenges of any relationship. But through prayer, compromise, and Divine Mercy, their relationship has flourished. Andrea then began praying that, if they were meant to marry, Ed would propose on a feast of Mary. She was thrilled when Ed then proposed on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary. Until we spoke, she had not known that it was also the octave of the Feast of the Assumption, part of a very special week for the Marian Fathers. All those decades of graces received by being a Marian Helper surely bore fruit.

A final note — the celebrant surprised Andrea and Ed at their wedding (which was on the weekend of Divine Mercy Sunday) by leading a decade of the Chaplet right before they said their vows. No wonder Andrea and Ed have included the Marian Fathers in their wills. What a beautiful legacy to ensure that the Marian Fathers can continue to spread the message and devotion of Divine Mercy!



Mary Flournoy is a donor relations officer for the Marians. Contact her at (413) 298-1381; helpers@marian.org; or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit marian.org/PlannedGiving to learn more.

Cancer is in complete remission

We wanted to thank Venerable Fr. Casimir Wyszynski for his intercession in healing my mother's sister-in-law. After she was diagnosed with a tumor in her sinus cavity and began chemotherapy, my mother started praying to Fr. Casimir for her recovery. Now she is in complete remission and has returned to her normal life. Thank you, Fr. Casimir.

— RW, Evansville, Indiana

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

Son healed from epileptic attacks

One day, the mother of a young man came to me to offer a Mass for the intention of her son's health. He was tormented by attacks of some unidentified illness, similar to epilepsy, which would happen nearly everywhere — even in the street — and he would have to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. However, the doctors could not identify his ailment. After we celebrated Mass for the intention of the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, as well as asking for the healing of this young man, the attacks stopped.

Niece regains consciousness

A woman from the nearby town came to our chapel, wishing to offer a Holy Mass for the intention of her 20-year-old niece. Her niece had overdosed on some strong medicine and lost consciousness. After a month, she still had not regained consciousness and was on artificial nutrition.

Before going to see her niece, the woman attended Holy Mass for the beatification of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski and the healing of her niece. As she arrived at the hospital, she found everyone greatly amazed, because her niece had regained consciousness. After a while, she went back home in good health.

Son recovers from serious illness

A woman who lived nearby came to tell us about her son. He was a veterinarian and worked for state-owned farms in the north of the country. He had contracted a disease from the animals. He was sent for treatment to Lublin. His mother, fearing for his life, offered a Holy Mass for the beatification of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski and for the healing of her son. Some time later, she received the news that her son was doing better and had left the hospital. The woman attributed this grace to the intercession of Fr. Casimir.

Feuding families reconcile

Two families had a long-lasting feud which seemed impossible to reconcile.

Family members

prayed to Fr. Casimir Wyszynski for his intercession in this matter during the celebration of the novena and Holy Mass for his beatification. Soon the two families reconciled

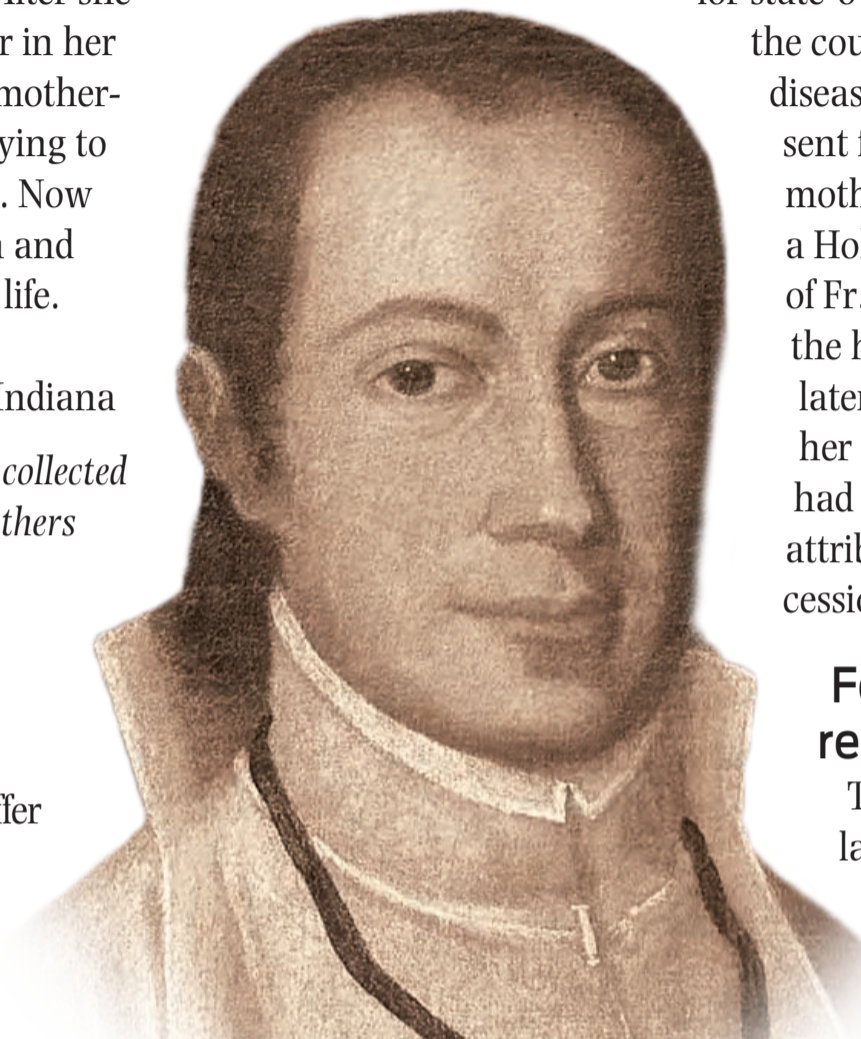
and the feud was forgotten.

The following is a testimony collected by the Marian priests and brothers from Portugal:

Woman's tumors disappeared

For three years, a woman had tumors on her head, one of which looked bad and was particularly painful. The doctor thought that a surgery was necessary. After the woman recited the novena to Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, the tumors disappeared during the next month. Only small traces of the tumors remain on her head.

For a Venerable Casimir prayercard (B37-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.



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

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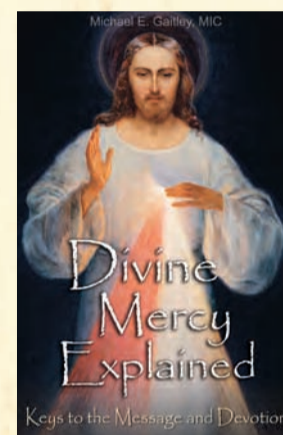
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The Divine Mercy Image Explained

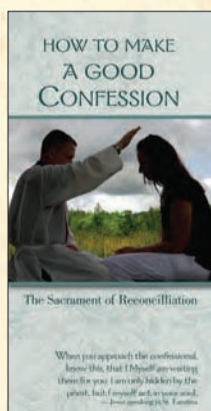
This booklet by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, reveals hidden gems and highlights inspiring truths about the Divine Mercy Image. It covers the great graces and key elements of the Image with remarkable depth and clarity. Also includes instructions on how to enthrone the Image in your home, an enthronement prayer, and two bonus appendices. Helpful for experts as well as beginners. **B37-DMIX \$3.99**



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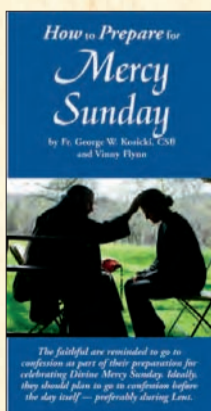
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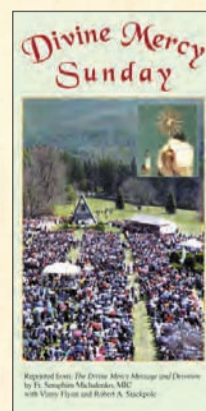
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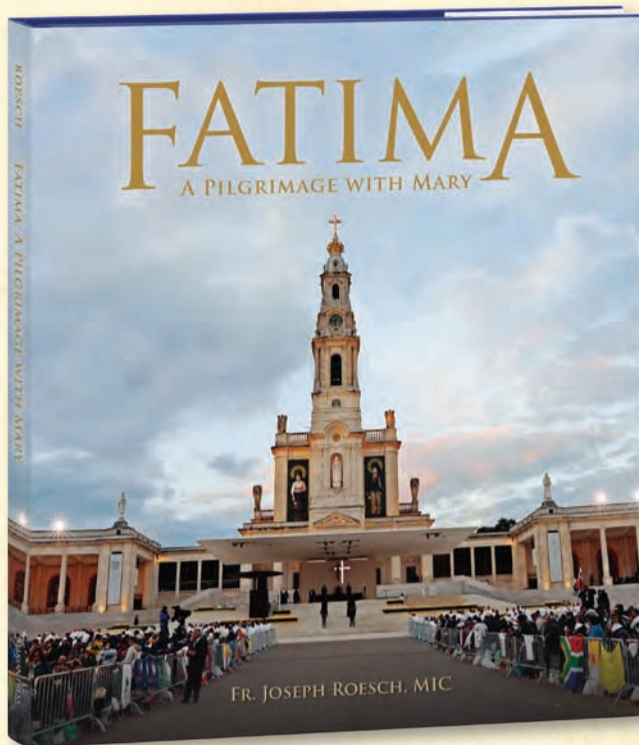


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By Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC

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This handy manual gives readers everything they need to perform the Five First Saturdays devotion and receive the tremendous graces promised by Our Lady of Fatima.

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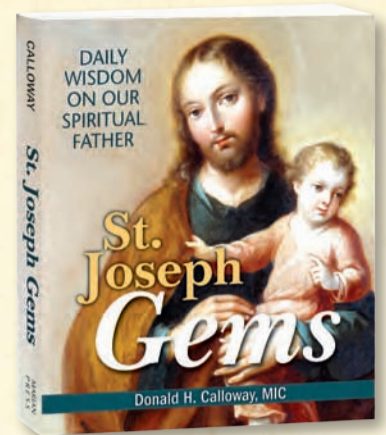


St. Joseph Gems

By Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

Inspired by his own love for St. Joseph (also known as the "Terror of Demons" and the "Universal Patron of the Church"), Fr. Calloway has gathered and arranged into one book the largest collection of quotes about St. Joseph to ever appear in print. This is the perfect book to help you rediscover the second greatest saint in the Church, after the Blessed Virgin Mary!

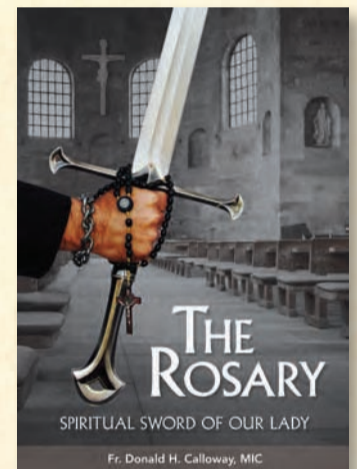
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In this innovative presentation, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, best-selling author of *Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon*, explains the power of Our Lady's favorite devotion: the Rosary. Surveying the entire history of the Rosary, including its greatest victories and champions, Fr. Calloway will make you want to unsheathe the spiritual sword of the Rosary and become a champion of the Rosary yourself!

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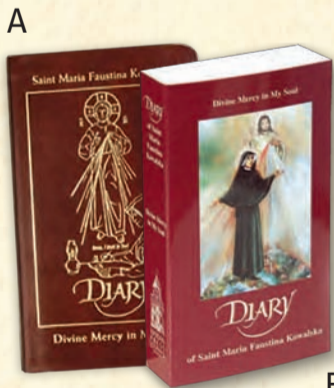
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From Our
ARCHIVES



The cover of the April-June 1968 Marian Helpers Bulletin was intended to bring a smile to the faces of the Marian Helpers who received the magazine. We wanted to give the Easter gift of love and hope during a stressful time for our war-torn country. This message still rings true 50 years later:

The innocence, sincerity, and Godlikeness in the happy, smiling face of a child is always a captivating experience. No man can resist the ringing laughter of a child's voice. One is forced to smile, chuckle or burst forth with thunderous laughter when even the tiniest babe draws attention to its infantile but humorous gestures. Like the picture on our cover. We'll bet your bottom nickel that for a moment or more you forgot about your troubles in this weary, war-torn world of ours when you spied this photo ... and you smiled. This is our Easter gift to you in order to remind you to smile always because Christ is telling us through the mystery of His Resurrection that He loves us. "Unless you become like the little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 18:3). MH

Live the call!



Dr. Scott Hahn talks about Divine Mercy.

Dr. Scott (and Kimberly) Hahn:

For the last quarter century, I've been greatly blessed, as an educator, to share in the mission of the Marians. Their message of Divine Mercy is so timely and urgent. It's always a joy to have Marians in class as they discern their vocations, receive their formation, and get sent out to serve as agents of the New Evangelization. The way they exude and share the joy of the Gospel — it makes them feel like family!

Brother Christopher Orante, MIC:

When I began discerning my vocation to the priesthood, I didn't have to look into the Marians. They came to me. In 2011, one of my good friends, Fr. James Cervantes, MIC, was ordained at our parish in California. There were about 20 Marians there. I met some of the Marian seminarians and immediately felt a strong brotherhood. After making a retreat with the Marians, I knew I had found my calling.

Attend a retreat

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

The next retreats will be:
Dec. 1-3, Jan. 12-14,
Feb. 2-4, March 16-18,
April 13-15.

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
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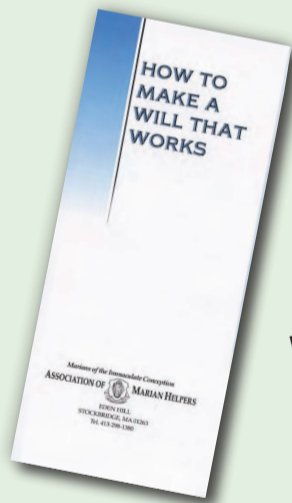




EXERCISE WILL POWER

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