

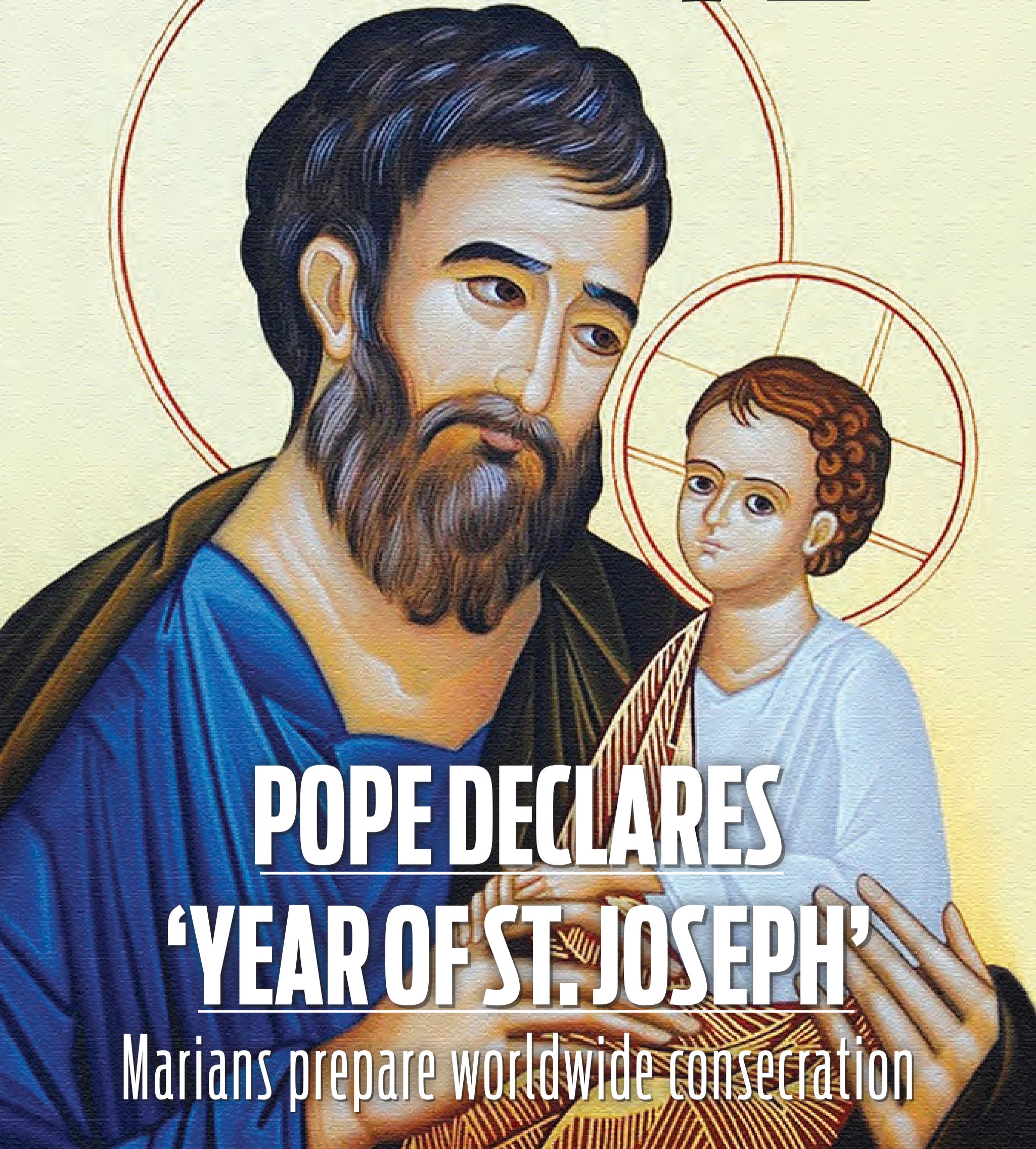
The vaccine: What should you know? • A Lenten primer for a suffering age

Spring 2021

Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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POPE DECLARES 'YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH'

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The Marian Fathers are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 20 countries around the world.

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

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

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1944, the Association of Marian Helpers is a spiritual benefit society that prayerfully and financially supports the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

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

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



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PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Look at the mess the world is in right now — morally, politically, spiritually, economically, socially, environmentally. Why are we in such a mess? Because humanity has been doing things our way. It's time we do things our Lord's way and Our Lady's way.

The remedy for (and rejoinder against) our troubled world is, dare I say, blindingly evident.

Each First Friday and First Saturday of the month, we must make a Communion of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That's what Jesus and Mary have asked of us: to repair the sins of the world with prayer and penance for the conversion of sinners and for peace throughout the world.

I'm now pleased to invite you to practice these devotions with us — the Marian Fathers. In this Year of St. Joseph, each First Friday and First Saturday of the month during 2021, we are livestreaming special prayer services from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Specifically, tune in on First Fridays at 8 p.m. and First Saturdays 3-5:30 p.m. (EST) at TheDivineMercy.org and on our Facebook page Divine Mercy (Official).

Why are we going to this effort? Let's review.

In order to rekindle the fire of love in the hearts of the faithful, Jesus introduced the First Fridays through revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Jesus said to receive Holy Communion on each First Friday in honor of and in reparation to His Sacred Heart. He made the following promise attached to this pious exercise: "I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays of nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment."

As to the First Saturdays devotion, it comes to us as a result of Our Lady's apparitions to Servant of God Lucia dos Santos and her cousins at Fatima in 1917. In the secret of Fatima, given July 13, 1917, we read:

*You have seen hell where the souls
of poor sinners go. To save them,*

God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. ... I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace

We still haven't seen the fulfillment of Our Lady's promise that "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

According to Sr. Lucia, St. John Paul II consecrated Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart on March 25, 1984. The USSR fell shortly afterwards. And yet there's still not peace in the world. Why? Have we been faithful to her requests, especially the First Saturdays of Reparation? No, we have not.

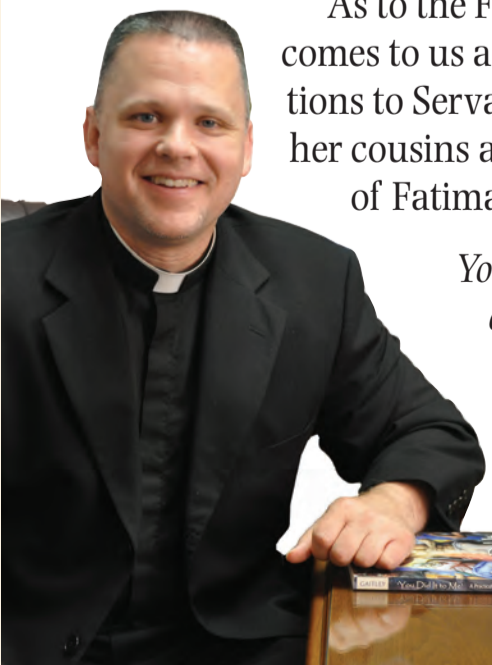
Mary said, "I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, in order to make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months:

1. Go to Confession
2. Receive Holy Communion
3. Recite five decades of the Rosary
4. Keep Mary company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary"

This reparation is for the blasphemies against Mary's Immaculate Heart, so join us each month in earnestly praying for the swift Triumph of the Immaculate Heart and the reign of the Sacred Heart in the world. Jesus and Our Lady didn't ask us for much. I urge you to make these devotions a part of your life of prayer each month.

Let's do it together!

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.

The vaccines



You probably have questions

To control the spread of COVID-19, nations around the world are now in the midst of the largest vaccination effort in history.

As is the case with many widely used vaccines — and many widely used pharmaceuticals, for that matter — we cannot positively say that any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines are entirely free from any connection to abortion. (The two vaccines approved so far in the United States, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, did not use fetal cells in their production. However, to validate the effectiveness of the vaccines, both reportedly were tested using fetal cell lines from decades ago.)

For Catholics — we who give preeminent priority to defending innocent human life, especially the lives of children in the womb — this can be a complex and confusing topic.

The following is a crash course on the COVID-19 vaccines and the Church's stance on their use. We ask that you give this a careful read and take it all to prayer.

Are you morally obligated to receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

No, you are not. In a Dec. 8 statement, the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) wrote: “The Catholic Church neither requires nor forbids the use of ethically problematic vaccines, but instead urges people to discern what decision to make after having carefully formed their consciences about the moral and prudential issues surrounding the vaccines that become available.”

The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) underscored this point in a Dec. 21 statement on the morality of COVID-19 vaccines, saying vaccination “must be voluntary.”

The Vatican hastens to add the following:

Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behavior, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.

But the Church approves use of the COVID-19 vaccines, correct?

Not only that, but the Church is encouraging coronavirus vaccinations. The CDF, in its Dec. 21 statement, says, “In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), too, is encouraging Catholics to receive the vaccination. In a statement released on Dec. 14, the USCCB referred to coronavirus vaccination as a “moral responsibility for the common good.”

This stance is in accord with previous statements from the Church, most notably the Pontifical Academy for Life’s 2005 statement titled “Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human fetuses” and the CDF’s 2008 bioethics document *Dignitas Personae* (*The Dignity of a Person*), considered the most authoritative magisterial teaching on the topic. Both conclude that, in the absence of alternatives, Catholics can,

in good conscience, receive vaccines made or tested using human fetal cell lines.

The CDF again reaffirmed this position with its Dec. 21 statement, referring to the COVID-19 vaccines as “morally acceptable.”

But wait a minute: The Church says it’s wrong to create abortion-derived cell lines, correct?

Absolutely correct.

But the Church judges that receiving vaccinations related to these wrongly created cell lines is remote material cooperation with evil, permitted in order to secure the common good in the face of historic threats to innocent human life and well-being.

The Church faced similar deliberations in decades past, notably with the rubella virus (also known as German measles), which reached epidemic proportions and has resulted in miscarriages and severe birth defects. The only available rubella vaccine, licensed in 1969, was developed using aborted fetal cell lines from two abortions in the 1960s. Those cell lines have been replicated to this day for use in rubella vaccines.

The Church has stated that parents are justified in having their offspring vaccinated against rubella, not only to protect their offspring, but also to prevent their children from becoming carriers of rubella and thereby possibly infecting pregnant women and endangering the lives of unborn children.

Not all bishops agree with the Church’s stance on vaccines that have a connection with abortion, correct?

Correct. Perhaps most notably, the Most Rev. Athanasius Schneider, an auxiliary bishop of Astana, Kazakhstan, and the Most Rev. Joseph Strickland, bishop of the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, joined other Catholic clerics in signing a Dec. 12 statement declaring it immoral to use vaccines with any connection to abortion.

“Any link to the abortion process, even the most remote and implicit, will cast a shadow over the Church’s duty to bear unwavering witness to the truth that abortion must be utterly rejected,” the statement said. “The ends cannot justify the means.”

Their position holds that abortion is so heinous that even remote cooperation cannot be permitted.

Aren't they correct? Wouldn't the use of vaccines with a connection to abortion make us complicit with evil?

Not according to the Holy See. In circumstances in which cells from aborted fetuses are used to create cell lines for use in scientific research and development, *Dignitas Personae* states “there exist differing degrees of responsibility”:

Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such “biological material”. Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their healthcare system make other types of vaccines available. Moreover, in organizations where cell lines of illicit origin are being utilized, the responsibility of those who make the decision to use them is not the same as that of those who have no voice in such a decision. (35)

In 2017, the Pontifical Academy for Life reconfirmed this position. The CDF’s Dec. 21 statement also reconfirmed this position and emphasized “*that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive.*” That statement continues:

It should be emphasized, however, that the morally licit use of these types of vaccines, in the particular conditions that make it so, does not in itself constitute a legitimation, even indirect, of the practice of abortion, and necessarily assumes the opposition to this practice by those who make use of these vaccines.

For its part, the USCCB in its Dec. 14 statement, likened the dangers of the coronavirus to that of rubella, stating that vaccination can be considered “an act of self-love and of charity toward others”:

First, at least at present, there is no available alternative vaccine that has absolutely no connection to abortion. Second, the risk to public health is very serious, as evidenced by the millions of infections worldwide and hundreds of thousands of deaths in the United States of America alone. Third, in many cases the most important effect of vaccination may not be the protection it offers to the person who receives the vaccination, who

may be of relatively robust health and unlikely to be seriously affected by the disease. Rather, the more important effect may be the protection it offers to those who are much more likely to be seriously stricken by the disease if they were to contract it through exposure to those infected.

But couldn't such reasoning also lead to complacency with regards to the evil of abortion?

Absolutely. The USCCB, in its Dec. 14 statement, warns against this.

The NCBC, an agency that promotes and safeguards the dignity of the human person in medicine and the life sciences, urges Catholics who take an abortion-linked vaccine to do so “under protest.”

“A person who discerns in conscience that he or she can take such a vaccine has an obligation to make known his or her opposition to abortion and the use of abortion derived cell lines,” the organization said in a Dec. 7 statement.

Calling the matter an “existential challenge,” the NCBC noted that we live in a time that holds “potential for real scientific progress.”

In light of that, “we should redouble our efforts to create alternatives to vaccines that utilize abortion-derived cell lines. Together, with courageous witness and hard work, we can help build a culture of life,” the statement concluded.

What do we know about the COVID-19 vaccines currently in use?

While many companies around the world are developing COVID-19 vaccines, as of our publication date, only two vaccines have been given an emergency authorization for use in the United States: those developed by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

Both vaccines are said to be about 94 percent effective.

Unlike the coronavirus vaccine developed by Oxford/AstraZeneca, in use elsewhere in the world, neither the Pfizer-BioNTech nor the Moderna vaccines were designed, developed, and produced using abortion-derived cell lines.

However, as we already mentioned, to validate the effectiveness of the vaccines, both reportedly were tested using fetal cell lines from decades ago.

The USCCB considers the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna options less directly linked with abortion than the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

As more vaccines are approved, will we be able to choose the least morally compromised?

We hope and pray that it would be possible. The distribution of vaccines is still in its early stages. This is a matter we all must pay close attention to.

Should we be concerned about the vaccines' safety considering how rapidly they have been developed?

No, says Alan Taege, MD, assistant professor of medicine and staff physician for the Cleveland Clinic's Department of Infectious Diseases. He has spoken at healthcare conferences sponsored by Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy. He told us this:

What we have seen in the trials is that there have been no unexpected long-term side-effects The short-term side-effects are pretty much what you could expect with a lot of vaccines. ... What we know, historically, for the majority of people who have taken vaccines: If you don't see [side-effects] in the first two or three months, it is quite uncommon to see long-term side effects thereafter.

For anyone with concerns about the vaccines' safety with regards to fertility and pregnancy, Dr. Taege said the vaccines "should not have any effect on fertility at all." He said:

The anticipation is it should be safe for everyone. But when you don't have a fully functional immune system, you may not develop as good antibody levels. But that would be true of any vaccine.

Where do the Marian Fathers stand on this issue?

The Marians faithfully follow the directives of the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church, which provide sound moral guidance. Thus, the reason for this article. We hope that by careful and prayerful reading of it, each member of our Marian family will greatly benefit from the scope of its research and come to an informed decision on this critical topic. To review: The Church does not command that we receive a COVID-19 vaccine, but it allows us to receive it. With so many factors involved, there is no "black or white" answer. Be informed. As St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, follow your well-informed conscience. MH

A healthcare conference that proved virtually excellent

By Ronald M. Sobecks, MD

Marie Romagnano, MSN, RN, the founder of the Marian Fathers' Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, started to plan the 16th Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference for May 2020. However, in March 2020 when the pandemic hit, she realized the conference would have to be canceled. As I was planning our next conference for November 2020 in Cleveland, we had concerns that an in-person conference was still not safe.

So with the help of the Marian Fathers' IT department — and by the grace of God and Our Lady's intercession — we went virtual! The conference was presented on Nov. 6-7 to participants who registered from around the world, healthcare professionals and non-professionals alike. Their feedback revealed that they had enjoyed a significant educational and spiritual experience.

The conference included world-renowned Marian priests who provided rich pastoral guidance. Marie further addressed the need for urgent spiritual care during the pandemic. Keynote speaker Sr. Gaudia Skass, OLM, reminded viewers of their mission to not only help save physical lives, but eternal lives through courageous prayer and suffering. Dr. Michael Parker encouraged viewers to know and live their Catholic faith to the fullest. Dr. George Delgado's presentation on abortion pill reversal provided great hope for women who regret using the abortion pill. Todd Lentocha's testament of hope after recovering from a catastrophic head injury helped viewers more fully appreciate God's power and unfathomable mercy. Doctors Brian Burkey, Alan Taege, and I spoke respectively on having difficult conversations with patients, COVID-19, and healthcare provider burnout.

Bioethical concerns in medicine were beautifully addressed by Bishop Robert McManus, Fr. Joseph Koopman, and Dr. Christopher Klofft.

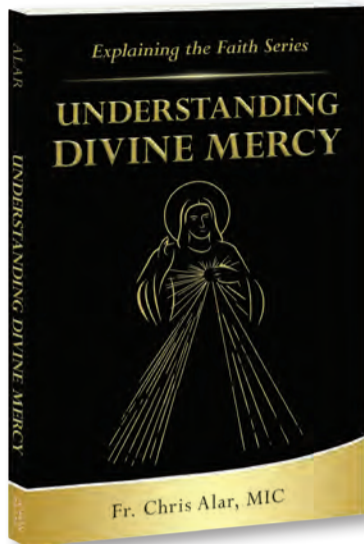
We look forward to continuing this virtual option in the future and to helping the world more fully appreciate that the Lord's Divine Mercy is the definitive source of all healing!

Dr. Sobecks is a professor of medicine at the Cleveland Clinic's Taussig Cancer Institute. To join Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, Visit TheDivineMercy.org/healthcare/join MH

FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

Visit ShopMercy.org/b49 or call 1-800-462-7426.

As we pass through Lent on the way to Easter Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday, “be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2). Here are some resources to help you do just that.



EXPLAINING THE FAITH SERIES UNDERSTANDING DIVINE MERCY

BY FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC

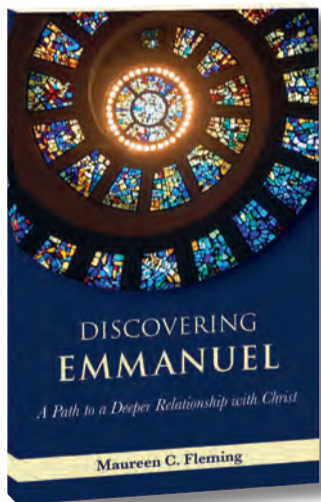
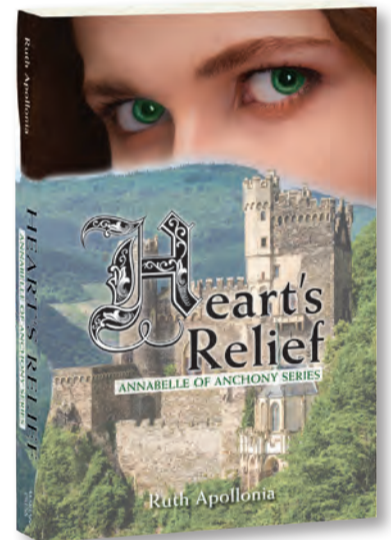
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DISCOVERING EMMANUEL

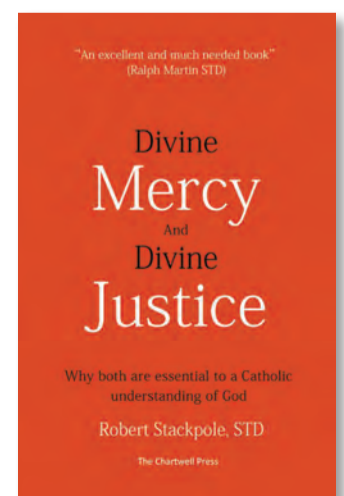
BY MAUREEN FLEMING

In this beautiful book of Christian meditations, Maureen Fleming leads the reader on a pilgrimage back to the heart of everything — to Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate. Fleming weaves in the fruits of her own walk with the Lord throughout these inspirational meditations, which will either help you discover Emmanuel (“God with us”) for the first time or guide you to renew your relationship with Jesus. These moving reflections on faith, trust, and love are a gift to the ordinary Christian. \$9.95. **B49-DSEM**

DIVINE MERCY AND DIVINE JUSTICE: WHY BOTH ARE ESSENTIAL TO A CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

BY DR. ROBERT STACKPOLE, STD

With vigor, Dr. Stackpole has entered the debate on damnation, salvation, and the nature of God’s justice and mercy. Drawing on his decades of thought and scholarship, he examines the Church’s perennial teaching, deals with contemporary new theories on Divine Mercy and Divine Justice, and closes with a summation of the Church’s teaching on social justice. This will be a valuable reference work for anyone proclaiming the mercy of God. \$14.95. **B49-DMDJ**





A JUBILEE IN A TIME OF COVID

Typically, each year, the Marian Fathers in the Roman House celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in a very formal way. A bishop presides at Evening Prayer and offers us some reflections. We invite around 30 of our friends and collaborators from the Vatican and the diplomatic and academic communities in Rome to a formal dinner.

This year, because of COVID-19, we only had one guest, Cardinal João Bráz de Aviz, the prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life. He presided at our formal evening prayer on Dec. 9, and then he joined us for a socially distanced dinner.

He had to leave early to get back to the Vatican since there is a 10 p.m. curfew in Rome due to the pandemic. We were grateful for his presence since we are celebrating our 350th Jubilee of the founding of the Marian Congregation.

The Cardinal is the representative of the Holy Father to the religious congregations. Our Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701), had worked diligently to receive papal approval of our Congregation before his death. After having finally received the long-sought papal approval, two Marian confreres returned from Rome to Poland in March of 1701. Our Marian Founder made his solemn vows that June, and he died in September.

The Cardinal Prefect was very warm and gracious that evening, reflecting with us on our difficult history, on the challenges faced this year because of the pandemic, on our Jubilee, and on the place of Mary in our lives.

Our celebrations extended through the whole week. On Monday evening, Dec. 7, we made a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament in our chapel, and we reflected on the Circular Letter that our Superior General had written to the worldwide Marian Community on the Solemnity and the meaning of the Jubilee that we are celebrating.

On Tuesday, the solemnity, we celebrated Mass as a

community in our chapel at noon. During the Mass that day, we would normally have renewed our profession of vows. However, this year, in remembrance of the Jubilee, all of the Marians around the world repeated the *Oblatio* — or self-offering — that our Founder had made of himself to the Lord in 1670. The beginning of our Congregation is traced to that moment.

The words he used that day remind us of the sacrifice on the altar during Holy Mass, and they were his profession of religious vows. All of us who had already professed our perpetual vows in the Congregation then received a beautiful Profession Cross. This same cross will be given to all of the Marians around the world in the future as they profess their final vows. There is a crucifix on the front, and on the back, there are symbols of God's Providence, of the Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Finally, on Friday, Dec. 11, we had a festive lunch to commemorate the Jubilee. Back in 1670, St. Stanislaus had wanted a large celebration with many of the faithful present in the Cathedral in Krakow, Poland, to mark the moment when he would make his *Oblatio* and put on the white habit. However, he wasn't permitted to do so since he had to get permission to change the habit. Therefore, his *Oblatio* took place a few days later in a private chapel with only a few witnesses.

God has allowed the Congregation to remain for 350 years since that moment. May we remain faithful to our vows, our offering of ourselves to the Lord!

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



PHOTO BY
ANNIKA GORDON
ON UNSPLASH

HOW TO OBSERVE LENT

WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY SUFFERING

Fatigue, fever, chest pain, trouble breathing, vomiting, and coughing up blood. These are some of the symptoms of tuberculosis, the debilitating illness that ultimately took the life of St. Faustina in 1938 when she was just 33 years old. But they could easily describe the symptoms of the coronavirus — the illness that for the past year has dramatically changed all of our lives.

As we approach the season of Lent, the season of penance and sacrifice, which begins Feb. 17, many of you may be thinking to yourself, “Why should I choose to ‘suffer’ more, as a spiritual practice, when we’ve already suffered so much this year?”

After all, social distancing, lockdowns, quarantines, and political unrest have caused many of us to feel lonelier and more isolated than ever. Many business owners

and their families have lost their livelihoods, while other businesses struggle to keep their doors open. Consider the impact the global pandemic has had on young children, whose most formative years took place during this crisis separated from their peers, educators, and pastors.

Nearly all of us, to some extent, will experience the psychological effects of this global disaster for years to come. And what about those who had already been suffering before the pandemic? Surely it has magnified their pain. And of course, let’s not forget those who have tragically suffered and died from the virus itself and the hundreds of thousands of families in the United States alone who have had to bid their loved ones goodbye.

Though the arrival of a vaccination has served as a sign of hope for many, things haven’t yet gone back to

the way they were. Against this backdrop of world-wide struggle and uncertainty, it makes sense if you're dreading a season dedicated to penance. So this year, instead of depriving yourself of something that helps you cope, remember that there're plenty of precedents for *adding* a prudent spiritual practice during Lent, especially when you've already been suffering.

Saint Faustina provides the perfect example for us. She wanted to fast during Lent, but her debilitating illness presented an obstacle. Taking her condition and circumstances into account, her confessor encouraged her to continue to eat, but he asked her to "meditate on how the Lord Jesus, on the Cross, accepted vinegar and gall" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 618) while she ate. She wrote:

This would be my mortification. I did not know that this would be so beneficial to my soul. The benefit is that I am meditating constantly on His sorrowful Passion and so, while I am eating, I am not preoccupied with what I am eating, but am reflecting on my Lord's death. (618)

The Lord must have had a hand in prescribing this penance for her because it smacks of prudence and spiritual reverence. It shows that not all penances need to be arduous. The word "penance," after all, is not necessarily synonymous with great pain. "Penance" derives from a Latin word that means "to be sorry." Saint Faustina's penance, meditating on the Lord's Passion while she ate, surely inspired a sense of sorrow within her.

Several times in her *Diary*, St. Faustina writes about how much of an effort it often took her to eat (see 1428-1429). So in a sense, it may have been a bit more of a sacrifice for St. Faustina to eat rather than fast. But of course, when one is sick, one needs nourishment if one wants a chance at regaining health. Saint Faustina's confessor, therefore, came up with the perfect solution to both sustain her physical health and help her observe Lent with due reverence.

During this global pandemic, we're all suffering, if not physically then at least emotionally. So, this Lent, let's choose a spiritual practice that improves our mental or physical health, which also inspires within us a sense of sorrow for our sins.

Exercise is crucial for both mental and physical health: How about a walk every day while meditating on the Lord's Passion? So is healthy eating: How about instead of fast food, you cook a healthy meal while meditating on the Lord's Passion? We all need recreation: How about spending more time drawing, playing an instrument, snowshoeing, or whatever recreation you enjoy



"I thirst. I thirst for the salvation of souls. Help Me, My daughter, to save souls. Join your sufferings to My Passion and offer them to the heavenly Father for sinners."

— Jesus to St. Faustina (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1032)

most — while meditating on the Lord's Passion?

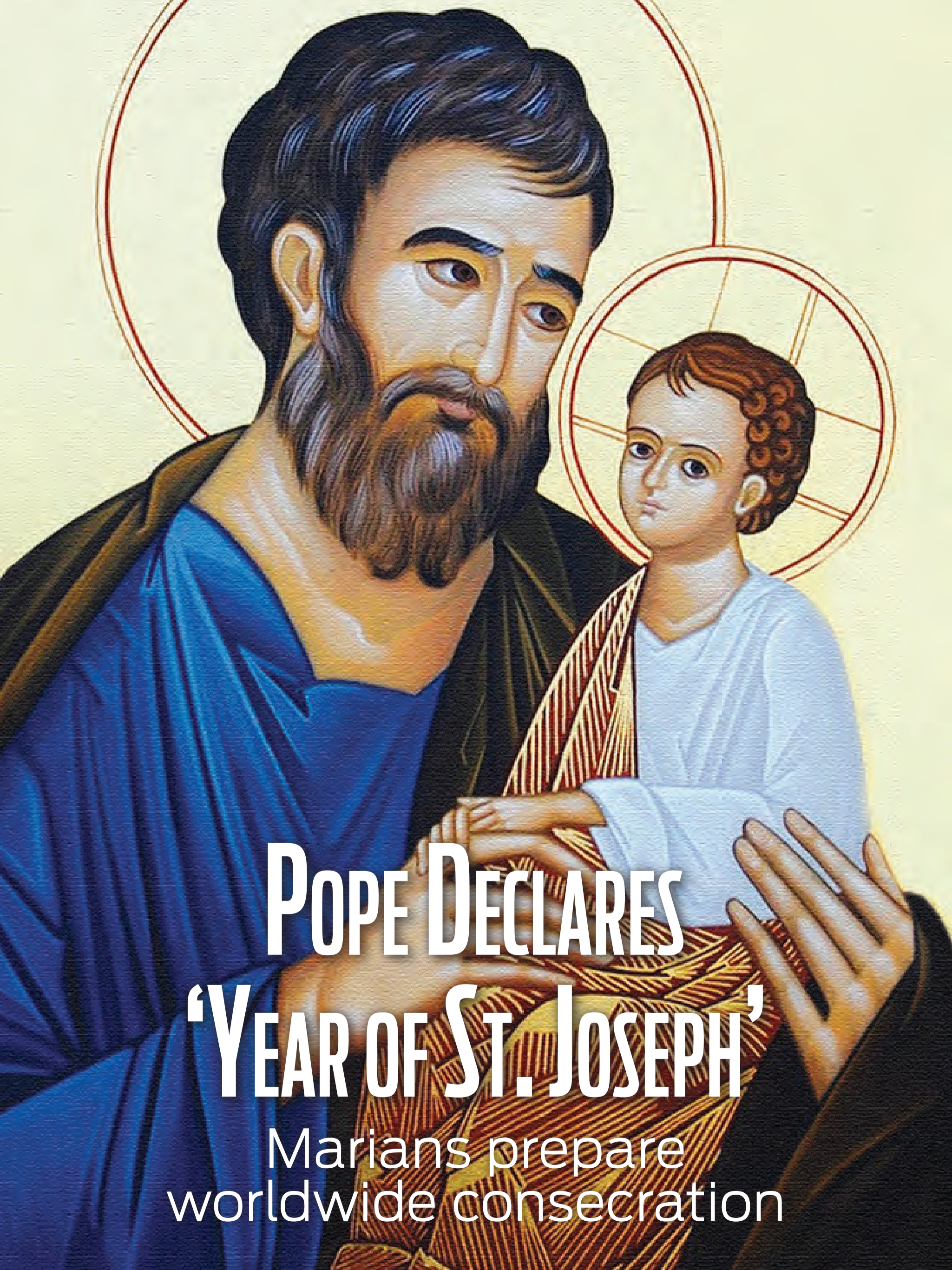
Whatever you find edifying, whatever healthy outlet nourishes you, think about doing more of it this Lent, and like St. Faustina did, meditate upon the Lord's Passion while doing it.

Spiritually nourishing but prudent — these are the kinds of penances the Lord must want us to observe this Lent. And if we're to take a lesson from St. Faustina, we would do well to look for the blessings and graces the Lord is bestowing upon us amidst our suffering. She wrote:

I made an hour of adoration in thanksgiving for the graces which had been granted me and for my illness. Illness also is a great grace. (1062)

Discovering that St. Faustina thanked the Lord for her illness may sound unsettling at first. Then again, Catholicism is a religion of paradoxes. We call the Friday upon which the Lord suffered and died "good." I would understand if you're not ready to thank the Lord for the coronavirus yet. But we'd be remiss if we didn't consider the blessings and graces that the Lord has bestowed upon us this past year amidst our pain and suffering. Because in the end, all pain and suffering will pass away. But the Lord's goodness, His blessings, and His graces endure forever.

MH



POPE DECLARES 'YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH'

Marians prepare
worldwide consecration

In a decision that brings enormous momentum to the Marian Fathers' yearlong effort promoting consecration to St. Joseph, Pope Francis dropped a spiritual bomb on Dec. 8.

He declared a "Year of St. Joseph" extending from Dec. 8, 2020 through Dec. 8, 2021.

"I couldn't be more pleased with Pope Francis' decision. This is going to bring so many graces to so many people," said Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, whose book *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, released Jan. 1, 2020, may well have played a role in the Holy Father's decision (see page 15).

The Holy Father announced this special year of graces against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Quoting the Holy Father's new Apostolic Letter, entitled *Patris Corde* ("With a Father's Heart"), Vatican News said the worldwide pandemic "has helped us see more clearly the importance of 'ordinary' people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, 'the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,' who nonetheless played 'an incomparable role in the history of salvation.'"

Upon the declaration, the Marian Fathers announced efforts to promote what could become the largest worldwide consecration ever to St. Joseph — on March 19, his feast day. (See page 17 for more details.)

A spiritual model

The announcement corresponded with the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. The date also marked the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast day of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, and 350 years since the founding of the Marian Fathers.

Indeed, in 1670, St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701) — a Polish priest, mystic, preacher, and writer who staked his life upon the mystery of the Immaculate Conception — made what's known as his *Oblatio*, offering himself to God and the Blessed Mother, and professing his intention to found his spiritual Congregation.

A patron of the Marian Fathers, St. Joseph has been a spiritual model for Marian priests and brothers since the Congregation's founding. Through Marian Press, the Marians have promoted St. Joseph as a spiritual model for all the Church, most notably with the publication of



Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father.

The book has so far sold more than 150,000 copies in the United States, making it one of the fastest selling Marian Press books of the last decade. It has routinely been in Amazon's top 10 list of Catholic books. Sales have been strong in the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, as well. The book is available in Spanish. It will soon be available in German, French, Slovakian, Polish, and Croatian (in those given countries). A streaming audiobook launched this past summer has been a major success.

Before the Holy Father's decree, the book's publication prompted 12 dioceses in the United States and two in England to declare a Year of St. Joseph.

"It's incredible. It's just been off the charts," said Fr. Donald. "My phone has been ringing every day, all day, for months. I am receiving emails from around the world. There is so much happening with St. Joseph I can't keep up with it."

A letter to the pope

For the record, on May 1, 2019, Fr. Donald wrote a letter to Pope Francis asking him to consider declaring a Year of St. Joseph for the entire Church.

Father Donald had the letter translated into Spanish. On May 4, 2019, Bishop Hector Zordan from the Diocese of Gualaguaychu, Argentina, hand-delivered the letter to Pope Francis while in Rome.

The letter said, in part:

... As you know, in recent centuries the Church has done much to promote St. Joseph. Your illustrious predecessors Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius XII, John XXIII, and John Paul II did wonderful things to promote St. Joseph. I am very grateful that you have a tremendous love for St. Joseph,



FOTO ©VATICAN MEDIA

Bishop Hector Zordan delivers a letter to Pope Francis from Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, on May 4, 2019.

as well. I personally thank you for placing the name of St. Joseph in all the Eucharistic prayers and consecrating Vatican City State to St. Joseph.

Dearest Holy Father, I believe you can bring about much good for the Church if you declare a universal Year of St. Joseph for the Church! In the 2,000-year history of Christianity, we have never had such a year. Today, we need St. Joseph more than ever. The Church and families are under attack. A Year of St. Joseph will greatly help the Church and families in these difficult times. ...

On the morning of Dec. 8, the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Fr. Donald heard from a friend in Rome who asked, "Are you in shock?"

"I responded, 'What do you mean?'" Fr. Donald recalled. "She then responded, 'The pope has just declared a Year of St. Joseph.'"

Did Fr. Donald have something to do with this?

It's a reasonable question. Did Fr. Donald Calloway's letter to Pope Francis have an influence on the Holy Father declaring a Year of St. Joseph?

Here is what we know. We know the Church has a long tradition of the faithful petitioning the See of Peter for various things. For instance, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, many bishops and lay faithful successfully petitioned for the Church to declare the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception (which she did in 1854) and the Assumption of Mary (in 1950).

When St. Joseph was proclaimed the Patron of the Universal Church in 1870, the decision came following various petitions to the Holy See. Similar successful efforts were made to have St. Joseph's name added to the Mass (approved in 1962).

Father Donald's efforts began in 2018 when he urged the Oblates of St. Joseph to write an official letter asking the pope to declare a Year of St. Joseph. The Oblates loved the idea and followed through with it that year. They never heard a response, so they instead declared a Year of St. Joseph for their community.

Father Donald didn't let it go at that. In 2019, he wrote a letter to every bishop in the United States asking each to declare a Year of St. Joseph on the diocesan level. Concurrently, he asked members of the faithful to also petition their bishops with a similar request.



In all, 12 bishops followed through.

Father Donald didn't stop there. He wrote his letter to the Pope, which was hand-delivered on May 4, 2019, by a friend of the Marians, Bishop Hector Zordan from Argentina.

We know the Pope and the bishop opened the letter and had a conversation about it.

That's when the picture you see here was taken.

Father Donald didn't stop there. In anticipation of the Jan. 1, 2020 publication of his book *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, he wrote a letter to the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary in May 2019 asking for a plenary indulgence for all who make a consecration to St. Joseph using his book.

"I thought it was a long shot," Fr. Donald admitted.

He heard back on Dec. 30, 2019, from none other than Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, granting the request for the year 2020.

As last year unfolded and Fr. Donald's book became a bestseller, Fr. Donald said he began to hear chatter from Rome that big news may be coming.

On the morning of Dec. 8, the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Fr. Donald received word about the Year of St. Joseph.

The decree was signed by Cardinal Piacenza.

"You cannot tell me there isn't *some* kind of connection," Fr. Donald said with a laugh.

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Father Donald sees the Holy Spirit at work in all of this.

"Something is up," he said. "Think about it: Since 1870, when Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church — telling the world to turn to Joseph as our loving father, our spiritual father — there has been so much momentum, and now it's reaching a crescendo.

"Now it's time to bring in St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family, and ask him to bring us closer to Jesus and Mary. I think that's what the Holy Spirit has been doing, building up to this moment. The whole Church is now coming around to St. Joseph," said Fr. Donald. "I never anticipated the book being this big, but at a time when families are under attack, marriages are falling apart, when people have turned away from God, when there's so much anxiety and fear, we really do need St. Joseph. We need his protection. Now is the time of St. Joseph."

In tandem with the Holy Father's declaration, the Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree granting plenary indulgences for the year "to perpetuate the entrustment of the whole Church to the powerful patronage of the Custodian

of Jesus.” Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment due to sin.

According to the decree, throughout the year, the faithful will have the opportunity, “with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St. Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today.”



Here are the conditions for receiving the plenary indulgence:

According to the decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on Dec. 8, the plenary indulgence is granted under the usual conditions (sacramental Confession,

Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the Holy Father’s intentions) to Christians who, with a spirit detached from any sin, participate in the Year of St. Joseph in any of the following ways:

- meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord’s Prayer because St. Joseph “invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God’s will”;
- take part in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph;
- follow St. Joseph’s example by performing a spiritual or corporal work of mercy;



FR. KAZ CHWALEK, MIC

- recite the Rosary in families and among engaged couples in order that “all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family”;
- entrust their daily activity to the protection of St. Joseph;
- invoke the intercession of St. Joseph so that those seeking work can find dignifying work;
- celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph;
- celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 with an act of piety or prayer;
- pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of any month;
- honor Joseph with an act of piety or

approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph;

- recite the Litany of St. Joseph for persecuted Christians (Byzantine Catholics have the option of an Akathist to St. Joseph); and
- recite any legitimately approved prayer or act of piety in honor of St. Joseph.

In addition, amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the gift of the plenary indulgence is also extended to the sick, the elderly, the dying, and all those who, for legitimate reasons, are unable to leave their homes. They can obtain the plenary indulgences if they are detached from any sin and have the intention as soon as possible of going to Confession, receiving Holy Communion, and performing an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, offering to God the pains and hardships of their lives.

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Patris corde (With a Father's Heart)

Here's a summary of key points from the apostolic letter from Pope Francis that accompanied his declaration of a Year of St. Joseph:

One hundred fifty years after Blessed Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph “Patron of the Universal Church,” Pope Francis shared some personal reflections on the earthly father of Christ and the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “My desire to do so increased during these months of the pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how ‘our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked,’” Pope Francis said.

Though the Gospels don't say much about St. Joseph, they say enough to help us appreciate the sort of father he was. The Gospels tell us that Joseph was only a lowly carpenter, that he was troubled at first by Mary's mysterious pregnancy. It also says that he was obedient to the voice of God revealed through his dreams. Despite his limitations, by accepting his role as the spouse of Mary and as Christ's father on earth, St. Joseph placed himself, as St. John Chrysostom put it, “at the service of the entire plan of salvation.” “All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty,” Pope Francis said.

On account of St. Joseph's outstanding virtue, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than St. Joseph. He's been declared the Patron of the Universal Church, Patron of Workers, Guardian of the Redeemer, and Patron of a Happy Death.

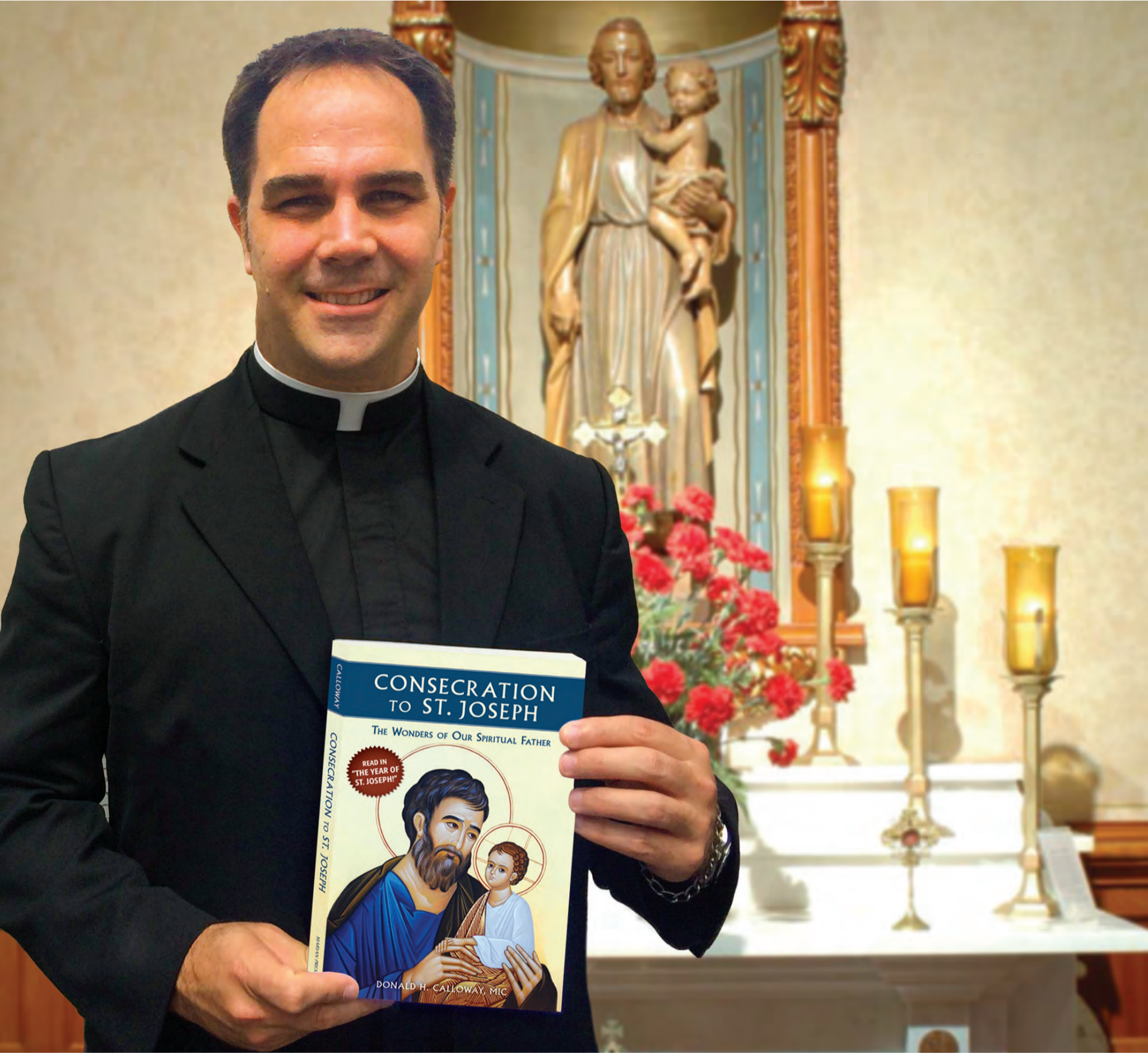
As the earthly father of Christ, Joseph taught Jesus to do the will of the Father in Heaven. Pope St. John Paul II said, “Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood ... he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation.”

After Joseph “dismissed Mary quietly,” (Mt 1:19) the Lord spoke to him in a dream, telling him not to be afraid to take Mary as his spouse, and Joseph obeyed. Often things happen in our lives that we do not understand. We may have the temptation to rebel. Pope Francis said, “Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history.”

Those weren't the end of St. Joseph's challenges. He arrived with his family at Bethlehem with no place to stay. Then he found out that King Herod was intending to kill Christ, so Joseph had to flee with his family to Egypt. “The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger,” Pope Francis said.

Joseph protected Mary and Jesus amidst their poverty and need. “Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is ‘the child’ whom Joseph continues to protect,” Pope Francis said.

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More Year of St. Joseph Resources

St. Joseph, Terror of Demons Rosary

This sturdy Rosary was designed exclusively for us! The chain is made of silver-plated brass, colored to resemble vintage bronze. The crucifix and centerpiece are made to match from zamak alloy. The rugged, masculine appearance is completed with beads made of genuine hematite. A great gift for the father, or father figure, in your life. Measures 25" long.

B49-SJTR \$53.95



Year of St. Joseph 2021 Wall Calendar

Celebrate the Year of St. Joseph with this 2021 wall calendar! Celebrate the Year of St. Joseph with this 2021 wall calendar! Features St. Joseph artwork and prayers for each month of the year. Calendar includes the Litany of St. Joseph, Act of Consecration and Memorare to St. Joseph, and information on the plenary indulgences available in the Year of St. Joseph.

B49-JHWC \$12.95

JOIN US!

LET'S TURN TO ST. JOSEPH, OUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

How does this sound: The world's largest consecration to God through St. Joseph? What an incredible opportunity! So let's do it.

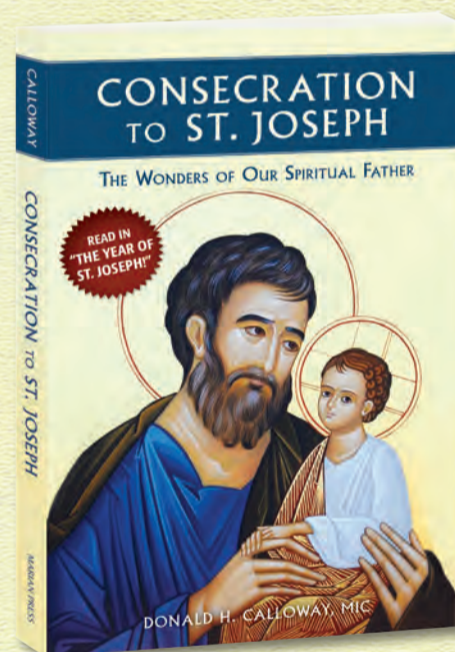
In this Year of St. Joseph, let's join together for an outpouring of grace. Let us each entrust ourselves entirely to St. Joseph and, in the words of Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, "become a faithful, loving, and trusting companion to Jesus and Mary!"

Here's what to do

✓ Get the consecration book *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. Price: Your donation, plus \$5.25 shipping. Offered until March 1. Visit marian.org/stjoseph or call 1-800-462-7426 and please use product code B49F-FCSJ. (One per household. Continental U.S. only.)

✓ Begin the consecration on Feb. 15 so that you can complete the consecration on March 19 — the Solemnity of St. Joseph!

If the timing is too tight, here's another option: Begin the consecration on March 30 so that you can complete the consecration on May 1 — the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker!



Year of St. Joseph Terror of Demons Retractable Banner

Perfect for your parish during the Year of St. Joseph! This image depicts St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus who is piercing a serpent with the lily-spear of His earthly father. Display is portable, lightweight, retractable, and sets up quickly wherever you go. Includes a black carrying case for convenient travel and storage. Measures 81⁷/₈" x 33⁷/₈" x 15". **B49-ROJTD \$199.95**



Sleeping St. Joseph with Shelf Base

According to the Gospels, St. Joseph is said to have received messages from Heaven while he was asleep. This Sleeping St. Joseph Statue with shelf base offers a place for your prayer requests or even a Rosary under the statue. Made of resin and measures 6" x 4". **B49-JOSB \$27.95**



St. Joseph Gems: Daily Wisdom on Our Spiritual Father

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'Go to St. Joseph'

Michael Klinger did. Here's his incredible story.

Lilian and Michael Klinger, at the baby shower for their son, Luke, one year before Lilian's death in 2019. The two were married on Feb. 23, 2002.



His heart wrecked, Michael Klinger stepped into the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on a rainy Saturday in August 2019. He knew where he needed to be.

He took a left into the side chapel — the one dedicated to St. Joseph — to plead for the intercession of the saint who had so clearly come through for him 20 years prior.

Go to St. Joseph. Michael had heard this refrain before. Go to St. Joseph and trust that your prayers will be heard. God trusted St. Joseph with His Holy Family. We can trust him, too.



On that Saturday in 2019, Michael's prayer was simple: "Help me to find someone who will help me raise the children."

Three months prior, Michael's beloved wife, Lilian, had died suddenly from a blood clot in her lung. Only 40 years old, Lilian left behind their daughter, Caroline "Callie" Grace, and two sons, Jacob Michael and Luke Joseph. The children were 17, 11, and 10-months old at the time.

She went by "Lil" or "Lilian," and St. Joseph often holds the lily flower in works of sacred art to symbolize his purity. Lilian had been a student at St. Joseph's College in West Hartford, Connecticut, when the two first met. These details did not go unnoticed by Michael. Lilian had been an answer to a previous prayer he had made to St. Joseph.

Yes, 20 years prior, Michael was 27 and eagerly hoping to meet a woman and raise a family, but things weren't looking promising. One weekend, he decided to hand it all over to St. Joseph, so he hopped into his car and drove the eight hours from his home in Connecticut to the largest shrine in the world dedicated to the Patron of the Universal Church: St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, Canada.

"I figured St. Joseph, out of all the men in history, was chosen to be the foster father in God's Holy Family on earth, so he would help me find a family," Michael said.

He spent the weekend in the cavernous, heavenly oratory, attending Mass, praying the Rosary, reading Scripture, and beseeching St. Joseph for a wife.

"I knew when I was driving back home that God was going to do something after that effort," he said.

He was correct. Six months later, a co-worker of his introduced him to Lilian. Who knew St. Joseph's role in Heaven included romantic matchmaker?

On their first date, they went to see the movie "Pearl Harbor." They fell in love.

On the night of their rehearsal dinner, before they wed, everything added up: her name, the college she attended. "I put two and two together," said Michael. "Saint Joseph had set this up."

They gave birth to their three beautiful children. Michael was working in sales and marketing for a medical company. Lilian was a special education teacher at a nearby elementary school. They were raising their children Catholic. They attended Mass each week.

But on May 19, 2019, their world came crashing down. That morning, Lilian had said she wasn't feeling well. She had decided to take it easy and stay in bed. Their oldest, Callie, spent most of the day with her until she had to go to the high school for a meeting. Then their middle child, Jacob, would keep her company. For old times sake, they were watching "Pearl Harbor," in fact.

Then, from downstairs, Michael heard Jacob shout, "Dad, get up here!"

When Michael arrived in the bedroom, he saw Lilian gasping for air. By the time the paramedics arrived, her breathing had returned to normal. But on the way to the ambulance, she collapsed. After a half hour of trying, the paramedics were unable to revive her.

Michael and his children were left distraught. He joined a widower group. He worried about his children. He worried about paying the bills. He was angry with God, but that anger eventually dissipated as he came to accept that Lilian was with Jesus.

"I figured St. Joseph, out of all the men in history, was chosen to be the foster father in God's Holy Family on earth, so he would help me find a family."

— Michael Klinger

"What better place could she be?" he thought.

"I became grateful for her life and the time God gave us with her," Michael said.

He found consolation in the fact that Lilian had died on a Sunday, our Lord's Day. He would later note that the two feast days on the Church calendar dedicated to St. Joseph are March 19 and May 1. "So her dying on May 19 was like a blessed combo," Michael said with a laugh. "She died in the month of one of St. Joseph's feasts and on the day of one of his other feasts, in the month of Mary. The Holy Family surrounded her passing."

Still, following Lily's death, Michael was in a state of depression. That's when a good friend of his summoned the courage to say what may have seemed unspeakable at the time: "You need to start dating again."

"What?" Michael responded.

"You need to be happy for your children," his friend

“God, through St. Joseph and Lilian, brought this person into my life. I consider it a miracle. The kids love and care about her. She’s a very kind and good soul.”

— Michael Klinger

told him.

Michael said he needed to think about it. More importantly, he needed to pray about it.

Go to St. Joseph and trust that your prayers will be heard.

That’s when Michael decided to make a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Upon arrival, his first order of business was to arrange to have Gregorian Masses said for Lilian. Then he made his way up to the side chapel and knelt before the statue of St. Joseph.

Nearly 20 years prior, his prayer had been for a wife. Now here he was turning to St. Joseph once again — *and* to his deceased wife.

“Help me to find someone who will help me raise the children,” he prayed.

This past November, Michael returned once again to the Shrine and shared the news of a great grace received through the intercession of St. Joseph: that a mere one and one half months after praying in the Shrine that August afternoon, he had met a woman named Sara, a practicing Catholic, an occupational therapist, and now his fiancée.

“God, through St. Joseph and Lilian, brought this person into my life,” Michael said. “I consider it a miracle. The kids love and care about her. She’s a very kind and good soul.”

To top it off, Sara’s favorite flower is the calla-lily, a name that sounds a lot like “Callie-Lilian.”

“You can’t even make this stuff up,” Michael said.

“What I want to tell people is: Pray to St. Joseph,” he said. “Pray to become a saint. Pray through your struggles that St. Joseph help you become saintly. We have to hear these stories to know God is listening.” MH



— Felix Carroll Michael, with Sara. The two became engaged this past September.

Explaining the Faith

From livestreamed talks to a new book series, we're working hard at the New Evangelization

By Fr. Chris Alar, MIC

We have a tradition in the Church of priests going on mission. We travel to evangelize. Even great televangelists like Venerable Fulton Sheen didn't just stay in their TV studios.

When you can stand in front of people, talk directly to them, and help them hear the Good News of Jesus Christ — nothing can replace that sort of ministry. We are a sacramental faith. We believe that some graces ordinarily need to be dispensed in person.

But in a year like 2020, we all had to make do with what God provided, and so we Marian Fathers started to livestream. People need to hear the Gospel, after all, even in the middle of a pandemic. So the Marian Fathers and Marian Helpers here on Eden Hill

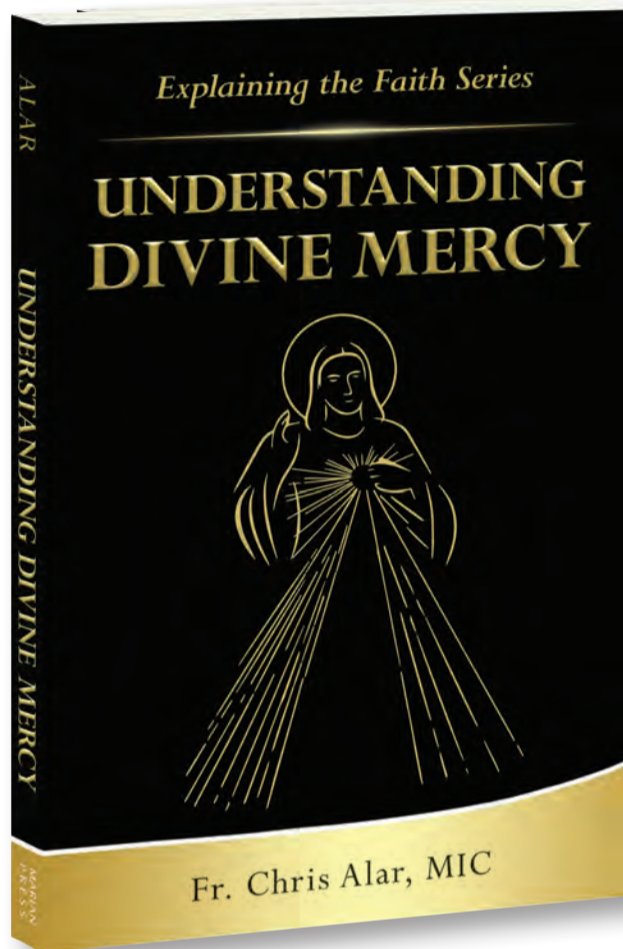
went to work. We made Masses, talks, and various forms of devotion available to you on TheDivineMercy.org and our social media pages.

Guess what? A whole lot of people who'd never heard of the Marian Fathers before watched.

Clearly, there's a hunger out there for what we Marian Fathers have to bring to the table with our charism of promoting devotion to [Divine Mercy](#), [Mary Immaculate](#), and the [Holy Souls in Purgatory](#), and serving the Church where the need is greatest. Clearly, there's a hunger for rich, easy-to-understand teaching on our Catholic faith.

So now we're taking the next step. We're going to be publishing a series of books laying out basic truths of the faith. We'll start with something very close to my heart as a Catholic, as a priest, and as a Marian Father. In March, Marian Press is releasing my new book *Understanding Divine Mercy*, the first of our new *Explaining the Faith Series*.

People want to hear some good news these days, and there's nothing better to share with them than God's



To order, visit ShopMercy.org/b49

Divine Mercy. In this book, my hope is to take the deep truths of God's Divine Mercy and synthesize them into something "easy to digest." I hope to provide you with a full understanding of the Divine Mercy message and devotion and everything you need to know to receive the graces Jesus promised through [St. Faustina](#).

And this is just the beginning! In future volumes, we'll continue to explore the vast and infinite riches of the Catholic faith. In a world starving for truth, we would be guilty of dereliction of duty if we didn't share the truths of our Catholic faith.

So in future volumes in the series, we'll talk about some of the crucial teachings and practices of our faith. I'll share with you what

I've learned in seminary, in my ministry as a priest, and from living as a consecrated religious. These books will be based on my [online talks](#) I do live every Saturday at 11 a.m. (EST). I have to say, serving you as "Fr. Joseph, MIC" has certainly been educational! Your letters, emails, comments, and calls all have raised questions I might never have considered otherwise.

Those messages will all continue to bear fruit. I'll be appearing on EWTN in April, just before Divine Mercy Sunday, to lead you in a five-part series about this message and devotion. We've also recently begun our new ["Ask a Marian"](#) video series, in which I answer your questions about the faith. And this new book series will take my efforts to a whole new level.

The Gospel message is a light in this present darkness. We're trying to proclaim it to all nations, but we can only do that if you, our Marian Helpers, lend a hand. So watch and share our videos. Pick up a copy of my new book (see [page 34](#)) and share it with others. Help us to save souls!

For Christ and the Church

“There is so much joy in my heart!” said the Very Rev. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, in his Dec. 12 homily for the Mass of Perpetual Vows of Br. Mark Fanders, MIC, and Br. David Guza, MIC.

Amidst a nationwide drought in religious vocations, the Marian Fathers continue to celebrate an increase in zealous men giving their lives to Christ and His Church as Marians.

Most recently, Br. Tyler Mentzer, MIC, and Br. Matthew Tomeny, MIC, were ordained to the transitional diaconate on Jan. 2, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

In addition, Br. Mark Fanders, MIC, and Br. David Guza, MIC, professed perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, thereby becoming full members of the Marian Fathers on Dec. 12, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

The Marians now have more than 30 men in formation. “They are orthodox and faithful to the Church,” said Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, the Marians’ vocations director. “They’re very ‘Marian’ — they love Our Lady immensely. They have a very Eucharistic-centered spirituality, and they want to be apostles of mercy.”

The fourth of 10 children, Br. Matthew of Tampa, Florida, joined the Marians in 2013, drawn to their devotion to Mary and their Divine Mercy evangelization efforts.

“Since Matthew was born, I prayed to the Divine Mercy that he would have a vocation to the religious life,” said Br. Matthew’s mother, Nelly. “And then I asked

Rest in Peace, Fr. Walter Gurgul, MIC (1930-2020)



Remembered as a gentle soul, a scholar, and a dogged defender of the Catholic faith, Fr. Walter Gurgul, MIC, died Dec. 7. He was 90. Born on Sept. 28, 1930, in eastern Poland, he had a simple, happy childhood that came to an abrupt end in 1939 when the Soviets invaded. “The 10th of February 1940, a day one remembers so well,” Fr. Gurgul shared in a recent interview for *Marian Helper* magazine.

The Gurgul family of eight and their neighbors were among the hundreds of thousands of Poles forced onto freight cars and brought to Siberia where they were placed into squalid labor camps. At least half of their fellow Poles died from starvation or disease. “It was bitterly cold,” Fr. Gurgul remembered. “And we were constantly reminded that we were ‘destined to die here like dogs.’”

His beloved father eventually fell ill and was sent to a hospital, never to be seen again. Meanwhile, young Walter attended school. His father’s words to him echoed in his ears: “My dear little boy. Child, learn; learn as much as possible. It will be useful and serve you in your life.”

On a cold night in November 1941, pulling their children behind them on sleds, Walter’s mother and aunt escaped, eventually arriving in Uzbekistan, where they were greeted by the Polish army, who safeguarded them. Walter’s new life

the Blessed Mother to always, always, protect the vocation, and she did, and I'm so thankful for that."

From an early age, Br. Tyler of Hanover, Pennsylvania, was known affectionately as the monk — "because he was never one for possessions," his mom, Valerie, said.

He was attached to relationships and his faith. He joined the Marians in 2015.

"I just feel the overwhelming sense of God's love, the immense love that He pours out," Br. Tyler said. "I'm so grateful for the opportunity to say yes to Him."

Both newly ordained deacons are pursuing the priesthood.

As for Brs. Mark and David, both men are diligent workers for the Kingdom of God — and both prefer to remain behind the scenes. For their profession of perpetual vows, however, they were front and center as more than 20,000 viewers from around the world tuned in to watch the livestream, via [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [TheDivineMercy.org](#).

The viewers have Br. Mark to thank for the livestream. Since the worldwide coronavirus pandemic hit last spring, it was he who researched how to bring the daily [Masses](#) and devotions to the world via livestream. He's been the man in the choir loft making it all happen ever since.

Born and raised in Florida, Br. Mark earned an architectural degree and worked two decades as a director for Florida's largest architectural firm.

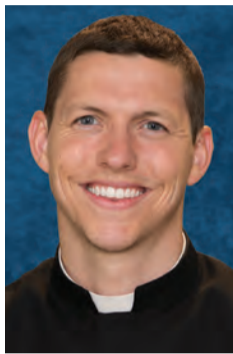
"In 2012, I was in my office, in a high-rise, overlooking the traffic jam of Tampa, and I asked myself, 'Is this really all there is to life?'" he recalled.



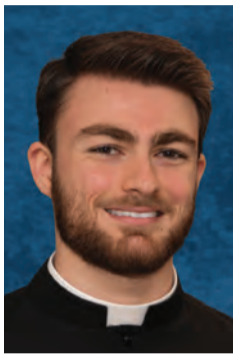
Brother Mark Fanders, MIC



Brother David Guza, MIC



Deacon Tyler Mentzer, MIC



Deacon Matthew Tomeny, MIC

At the time, he was tithing to the Marians and would receive *Marian Helper* magazine. In one particular issue, he was moved by a story on the evangelization efforts of [Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC](#), who served at the time as director of the [Association of Marian Helpers](#).

"It seemed like he may need some help," Br. Mark recalled. He contacted the Marians. In 2012, he prayed "Jesus, I trust in You," sold everything he owned, and came to Stockbridge. Ever since, he's played key roles in amplifying the Congregation's spiritual outreach.

Brother David, originally a farm boy from Michigan, first professed perpetual religious vows with the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in 1986. He came to the Marian Fathers in 2014 to work with the [Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy](#), doing street ministry and helping with the Missionaries' construction and farming needs. He decided to stay.

"The two of you have dedicated yourselves completely to the service of God," said Provincial Superior the Very Rev. [Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC](#), in his homily on Dec. 12. "You want to serve, fully. You don't waste time. You don't even waste a moment. You want to take advantage of every moment that's given to you. For what? For the promotion of the Gospel — sometimes with words, but mostly with works."

The Marian Fathers wish to thank our Marian Helpers for their prayerful and financial support of our seminarians! **Visit [marian.org/vocsupport](#) to learn more about our Campaign for Holy Priests.**

MH

included picking cotton. Desperate for meat, at one point his mother killed a stray dog. A few days after that meal, the whole family, save the eldest boy, fell ill with typhoid. Walter witnessed the death of his 2-year-old brother and 4-year-old sister. Eventually, under the British Protection Act whereby Polish survivors were sent to British colonies, his mother and the youngest children were sent to Kenya, while his eldest brother was sent to Egypt. Walter was sent to Palestine. He attended grammar school in Nazareth and a Salesian high school in Jerusalem.

In 1947, Walter was sent to England where he was reunited with his mother and siblings. Meanwhile, [Fr. Joseph Jarzebowski, MIC](#) (the Marian who brought the Divine Mercy devotion to America), and other Marians had just arrived in England and established a novitiate. Walter was accepted into the Congregation in 1953. He was ordained in Rome on July 4, 1960.

"It was the most beautiful day of my life, because my mother was there to witness it," he recalled.

Following his ordination, Fr. Gurgul taught in England. He came to the United States in 1997. Most of his years in the U.S. were spent in Stockbridge, where he earned a reputation as an excellent confessor.

Father Walter said, "My advice to all who will listen: One, make your last words of the day an Act of Contrition for anything you might have done to offend God. Two, stay in touch with Our Lady. She brings us to Jesus. Three, always carry a Rosary, wear a scapular, or have a prayer card with you.

"Also, keep in mind what Our Lady said at Fatima. ... She's worried about our future, about our final happiness, like any mother. ... God will help anyone, as He helped me, if they approach Him through a love of Mary. She never fails us."

MH

“You’ve committed an unforgivable sin. You’ve killed a baby,
and they don’t let people like you into Heaven.
You are damned where you stand.”



A MOMENT OF TRAUMA

Followed by transformation

By Marc Massery

On a remote military outpost in Afghanistan in July 2008, United States Marine Lieutenant Matt Ingold of Troy, New York, authorized the bombing of a building that resulted in the deaths of eight innocent women and children.

“I felt like a monster. I felt like I had committed the unforgiveable sin,” he said. But thanks to the unfathomable mercy of God, that wasn’t the end of Matt’s story.

On the day of the tragic event, a resupply unit had been ambushed by the enemy seven miles away from Matt's outpost. "They called for air support. You have to be certified to direct pilots where to drop their bombs, and I was the only one in the area certified. So, I wasn't there on site. I was in our command center seven miles away."

He called in two F-18 combat aircraft and could watch what was going on through a computer monitor. "[There was] this building on the edge of a small village made of mud huts. They said that this was where the fire was coming from. I was able to dial in on where it was, talk the pilots onto it, and I gave them the 'cleared hot,' which is the command saying that you can drop a bomb on them."

Moments later, in the command center seven miles away, the room shook and the computer screen flashed. Matt's fellow officers started high-fiving in celebration.

"There was a moment where I had really seen this as an opportunity to prove my worth, to prove that I was a warrior," Matt recalled. "And in that moment, there was this real recognition that I had taken a human life. And there was almost a shame in how impersonal it was. It was almost like a video game for me, watching on a screen, pressing a button. ... In that moment, I didn't feel like celebrating."

Soon, calls started coming in from local contacts.

"They all kept saying the same thing — that there was nothing but innocent people in that building I had just leveled."

'Interiorly, I was dead'

As Matt hoped against hope that they were receiving bad intelligence, a platoon commander went to assess the damage on the ground.

"The reports start coming in of these people sifting through the rubble, these local Afghans pulling bodies out," Matt said. "At first it was a woman and then a teenage boy. The bodies kept getting smaller. I remember my platoon commander looking at me and saying, 'Sir, are you sure you want to be in here?' ... Despite what was going on interiorly, I said, 'Yeah. I got this.'"

"Then the radio crackled and the operator said that they had just pulled a baby from the rubble," Matt continued. "I felt as if my soul had left my body. That's a common phenomenon reported by people in combat, that when something terrible happens, they feel as if their soul leaves

their body. I felt that. I know that didn't actually happen, but I know what they mean when they say it. I felt inhuman, and all I could do in that moment, in the midst of my pain, was get up, walk out the door, and hide."

Matt paced outside the command center, puffing on a cigarette he had bummed off another Marine. He didn't typically smoke. "I wanted to feel something, but I wanted to numb myself too," he said.

As he paced, in his heart he heard a voice, "Matt, you know what you've done," the voice said. "You've committed an unforgivable sin. You've killed a baby, and they don't let people like you into Heaven. You are damned where you stand."

Though Matt recognized the voice was interior, outwardly he nodded in agreement to what had been said. "It was the epitome of despair," Matt said. "I wished death on myself. Interiorly, I was dead."

He walked to his tent, sat on the edge of his cot, and vomited. "I curled up into a ball on my cot, prayed one Hail Mary, and fell asleep. When I woke up during the night, I felt terrible. I just thought to myself, 'I'm going to be one of those people now. This is my story.

I'm going to wake up to this nightmare

for the rest of my life, and I'll never be able to escape this."

'Matt, fear not'

In the wake of this tragedy, God's mercy first began to comfort Matt through the empathy of his fellow Marines. A few shared stories with him about how they had unintentionally taken innocent lives, casualties of war. Furthermore, Matt's air officer told him that he had been listening to the call over the radio. "I saw everything you saw," he said. "Had you not given weapons release authority, I would have jumped in and given it for you, and I would have doubted your ability to do your job."

Those little experiences of mercy pointed Matt down a path toward healing. "The most profound moment, though, was when my JAG officer was coming out to do an investigation. He said, 'Matt, fear not. I'm bringing you the Eucharist.' Until then, none of us had had the opportunity to receive Holy Communion. When Jesus showed up on that outpost, it changed everything."

Though he was still shy in his Catholic faith, Matt notified several other Marines that the Eucharist would be available soon. The interest of others inspired Matt to initiate a Lord's Day every Sunday at the outpost.

"[My JAG officer] said, 'Matt, fear not. I'm bringing you the Eucharist.' Until then, none of us had had the opportunity to receive Holy Communion. When Jesus showed up on that outpost, it changed everything."

— Matt Ingold

“I said, ‘Why don’t we get together every Sunday, and we’ll go through the Mass as best we can?’ We started doing that.”

He also started praying a daily Rosary on Aug. 16 with a handful of Marines. “We took our last casualties on Aug. 14, and pulled out Dec. 4,” Matt said. “It wasn’t that we stopped getting shot at or ambushed. But the Blessed Mother, I believe, was covering us with that Rosary.”

For the rest of his career as a Marine, Matt continued to pursue a role as a spiritual leader. “That’s where I started to find this deeper identity, that I didn’t need to be a combat hero. The more I entered into that role, the more I loved it,” he said. “My men were in need spiritually, and that was a way I could be a unique gift to them.”

Healing in Confession

When Matt finally returned from deployment, his sister prayed over him.

“During that prayer, she had a vision of me kneeling at the foot of the cross crouched over and weeping,” he said. “I was surrounded by eight people, each trying to lift me up. That was a healing moment. It was like God was telling me that not only could I pray for those who were killed, but that I could have a relationship with them, and that they desired a relationship with me.”

He also went to Confession for the first time since the tragedy.

“One of the things I realized in my Examination of Conscience was, to some extent, that I was guilty of the sin of murder,” he said. “Not so much because I authorized the dropping of a bomb that killed eight innocent people, but because there was a desire to exalt myself as a combat hero, and the means to achieving that end was to kill the enemy. To that extent, I desired to use another person as a means to an end, which is always sinful.

“Being able to confess that was so healing and empowering because it helped me to no longer be a victim. ... You have to take responsibility where you can and repent where you can. And God’s mercy is just waiting for that. That mercy transforms you. That love in that place of misery, that heart that gives itself to those in misery, transforms you. It uproots the lie planted by trauma. Trauma will always plant a lie. God’s mercy removes the lie. The lie was that I was a baby killer, that I was damned where I stood. God replaced the lies with a deep, intimate, abiding truth.”

A few years later, sitting before the Blessed Sacrament, Matt felt the Lord invite him to revisit the trauma once again.

“I said, ‘Jesus, I’ve had my big cry. I don’t want to go back there. I’m healed.’”

He felt the Lord say to him in his heart, “I want to show you where I was that day.”

Jesus by his side

In his mind’s eye, Matt found himself back in the command center in Afghanistan.

“It was as if I were a camera man, watching myself,” said Matt. “I watched that moment, when the call was coming in from the radio. Then I noticed Jesus was sitting next to me, looking at me. It was clear in His face that He was experiencing everything I was experiencing, all the pain.

“When I got up and walked out, He followed me. As I was smoking and pacing, He was moving in front of me, wanting to embrace me. As soon as I’d get close to Him, I’d pivot and go the other direction. ... Then when I went to the tent, got sick, and curled up in a little ball on my cot, Jesus came in after me.

“He had His hands over me. There was such sorrow and pain on His face,” Matt continued. “Then it was as if the camera widened out, and I noticed a new presence in the room. It was the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was right next to Jesus. ... She never took her eyes off me. She had this fierceness yet this tenderness about her. She knelt down next to me and started rubbing my shoulder and singing to me, like a mother singing to a child. In that moment, that’s when I prayed the Hail Mary.

“I look back on that moment now, and there’s still sadness there. It’s very sad what happened. But in the same sense,



“Being able to confess that was so healing and empowering because it helped me to no longer be a victim. ... You have to take responsibility And God’s mercy is just waiting for that. That mercy transforms you.”

— Matt Ingold



there’s gratitude there, too, because how would I have experienced the depths of God’s mercy that I’ve experienced without that tragedy? ... In the places of trauma, the reason they’re so traumatic is because you feel so abandoned, so alone, so unlovable. Healing comes when Jesus reveals to you where He was during those moments.”

Matt married his wife, Erin, in 2011. He has since founded Warrior’s Redemption, an online self-development course for veterans, first-responders, and their spouses. He also co-founded Metanoia Catholic, which helps clients develop interior lives of faith and to develop their true life mission.

For years, Matt and Erin struggled with infertility. In the fall of 2017, they received news that Erin was pregnant.

“I remember being in the ultrasound room, and they projected our daughter Avila’s due date. It was going to be July 20, almost 10 years to the day that I had heard they had just pulled a baby out of the rubble. Ten years to the day that they pulled this lifeless baby from the rubble, I would be receiving this new life from what had been the barren womb of my wife. I remember just beginning to cry in that moment, realizing the new depths of God’s love. The Scripture ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (Rev 21:5) comes to mind.”

MH

A walking, talking testament to faith

Before Christopher Maffuccio of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was even born, doctors told his parents that he would never be able to walk or talk. “The doctor told my parents that I would be in a vegetative state,” Chris said. “They told them they should ‘terminate the specimen.’ That’s the phrase they used. But my mom, she was a convert from Lutheranism to Catholicism. She said that she would never do that. She said that whatever God sent her, she would accept.”

Chris was born 10 weeks early, on Aug. 29, 1997, weighing just 2 pounds, 12 ounces. He was born with a condition called Spina Bifida, a birth defect that affects the spine. Despite the circumstances, Chris went on to prove doctors wrong. Sure, he wears leg braces and uses a walker — but he can walk. And not only can he speak intelligently, he’s earned an associate’s degree in hospitality, and he’s working on a bachelor’s degree.

“After I got out of the hospital, my family took me to a Catholic church. They put me on the altar and with a few nuns said a lot of prayers over me, and here I am,” he said.

Chris has the most severe form of Spina Bifida called “meningocele.” “[Doctors] can’t explain how I’m able to function as well as I do. If you held an MRI of my spine up to an MRI of another person with Spina Bifida who was completely debilitated, who couldn’t walk or talk, the images would look the same,” he said. “God has been so good to me. He’s never let me down.”

Perhaps it was the faith of his parents, or perhaps it’s because he’s living proof that “miracles” can happen, Chris fell in love with his Catholic faith from an early age. “Even as a child, I wanted to be a Catholic priest someday,” he said. “I’m facing some challenges and barriers because of my disability. But I’m not giving up, because I’ve overcome lots of challenges,” he said. One of the big-



ger challenges he faces is not being able to drive. “But one day, I hope to learn,” he said.

Chris’ trust in God and his love for the Blessed Virgin Mary keep him going through the tough times. “There have been lots of times when I’ve been discouraged. There have been really dark times, but I keep pushing forward. Whatever trials or temptations come my way, I will always have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Even though sometimes I get discouraged, I am always devoted to her. Like St. Louis de Montfort said, ‘To Jesus through Mary.’”

The stories of some of Chris’ favorite saints inspire him to persevere, too. He likes Pope St. John Paul II and St. Maria Faustina Kowalska.

But he’s especially inspired by Mother Mary Angelica of the Annunciation, PCPA, the founder of the Eternal Word Television Network. You know her as “Mother Angelica.” One story about Mother Angelica in particular gives Chris hope. When she was a religious novice, Mother Angelica was severely injured in an accident. After about 40 years of walking with the assistance of crutches and braces, she was miraculously healed at a prayer-meeting during the recitation of the Holy Rosary. She said, “Lord, all of these years You have used me as a comfort and an example for all of the handicapped and crippled. If You want to change this, it is OK with me.”

Though Chris faces many challenges, his faith in God keeps him hopeful about the future. “Everybody tells me I have a positive attitude. The truth is, I don’t let my Spina Bifida define who I am as a person. I don’t think I would have endured what I’ve been through without my faith. I wouldn’t have come this far. ... The Blessed Virgin Mary has helped me a lot, especially in regards to overcoming various sins and temptations. I’ve had a lot of struggles, but I just keep invoking her in prayer.”

— Marc Massery



Paul Malinowski (right) with his father, Leonard.

DIVINE MERCY IS THIS FAMILY'S BUSINESS

Paul Malinowski grew up in a devout Catholic family. His father, Leonard, worked long hours and travelled a lot. Over the years, Paul watched his father not only establish a successful *business*, but a successful *ministry*, working for God!

God was a big part of the Malinowski family. Paul's uncle, the Rev. Francis Malinowski, was a Holy Ghost | Father. Leonard studied for seven years in the seminary hoping to follow in his brother's footsteps. But his superiors felt his vocation lay elsewhere, so he found another way to serve the Lord. He started his own religious goods business, New Jersey Church Goods. When the family moved to Pennsylvania, it became Spiritan Arts.

Leonard traveled all over the United States, and in later years, even began to expand internationally. He sold to churches, stores, shrines, and retreat houses. Paul remembers that his father viewed his business as a way to spread the faith. "He visited thousands of people over the years, and probably saved a few souls along the way."

The company sold Divine Mercy Images and pictures of St. Faustina. Paul was a salesman for his father in the early 1980s. His territory was New England — including Massachusetts — and he used to call on the Divine Mercy Gift Shop on Eden Hill! He can't remember the buyer's name, but "she was a very nice lady who always gave me a good order."

He thought the Berkshires, here in western Massachusetts, was the greatest place in the world with all the cultural offerings: Tanglewood, Shakespeare & Company, the Red Lion Inn. But he says, "I was a very poor Catholic in those days. I knew nothing about Divine Mercy even

after my visits to the Shrine. I did not realize until much later that the Shrine was the real treasure of the Berkshires, the beating heart of the Berkshires."

Paul came to be as devoted to Divine Mercy as his father was. In the last months of his father's life, every day at 3 p.m., Paul and Leonard would watch on EWTN the Chaplet of Divine Mercy from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. It brought them both much peace, and it continues to bring Paul that same peace every day.

They also enjoyed watching the Divine Mercy Sunday broadcast from the Shrine each year on EWTN. Now Paul and his mother continue the tradition; they never miss watching it.

Several years ago, Paul met Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, at a mission in their parish in State College, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, "Dad was not well enough to attend," Paul said. "I wish he had met Fr. Cambra. He [Fr. Cambra] said he was a big opera fan. There was no bigger fan of opera than my father!"

Leonard spent his life helping spread the message of Divine Mercy, so it's no wonder that Paul and his mother have included the Marian Fathers in their wills. It's a wonderful way to ensure that Leonard's work, and that of the Marian Fathers, will live on.



Hope Ponsart Hansen is a donor relations officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact her at (413) 298-1387; helpers@marian.org; or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. To learn more, visit marian.org/PlannedGiving

‘Very simple and straightforward’

START YOUR FREE WILL NOW!

Laura called to thank the Marian Fathers for providing the FreeWill online tool for preparing your will. If you are thinking about writing or updating your will, or you know someone else who may benefit from this tool, listen to what Laura has to say:

For several years, I needed to update my last will and testament, but because of the legal expense involved, I was procrastinating, unsure of where to turn for help. Then, I discovered the FreeWill tool that was being offered by the Marian Fathers on their website.

I believe it was Divine Providence that gave me the opportunity, at this moment in time, to use this trusted source and be able to rewrite and update my will.

I hesitated at first, thinking that navigating it on my own might be complicated, but I tried it and found out that it was very simple and straightforward. It guided me each step of the way, and zeroed in on the questions I needed to ask myself and reflect upon. It also gave me the option to record my wishes for a funeral Mass (music, readings, etc.). Now that I have a valid will, I find peace in knowing that my children (now adults) will not have to make those decisions for me.

Out of a sense of profound gratitude, I was inspired to bequeath a donation to the Marian Fathers in support of all the means entrusted to them for spreading the Divine Mercy message.

I hope this testimonial might encourage others to consider all that is available to them through the ministries of the Marian Fathers.

Jesus, I trust in You!

Laura W.

If you have questions on how to arrange a gift, please call Ellen Miller at (413) 298-1380 or email her at EMiller@marian.org.



[VISIT MARIAN.ORG/WILL](https://www.marian.org/will)

GRACES RECEIVED

I'm able to drive again

I first learned of Blessed George through *Marian Helper* magazine. On Feb. 2, 2019, I had two cerebral strokes. Needless to say, I went through a lot of rehabilitation and I made some progress, but I was far from being 100 percent. After my rehabilitation, I had a true desire to drive a car again, but first I needed to pass the road test at the local DMV. I turned to Blessed George for his intercession and prayed to him very hard, along with an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be that he would help me be successful. At the end of it all, I did pass. One of the first things I did was to offer prayers of thanksgiving to Blessed George.

— FR, Billerica,
Massachusetts

Sister finds a new job

My sister has spent the previous year looking for a new job. Although she liked the duties at her job, the environment was very anti-Christian, especially anti-Catholic. She dealt with many negative comments and immoral behaviors on a daily basis. After receiving my Fall issue of *Marian Helper*, I decided to ask Blessed George for his intercession on her behalf. During this pandemic, I have been teaching myself to pray the Hail Mary and Our Father in Latin. To strengthen my prayers for my sister, I prayed my novena in Latin. On the seventh day of my novena, she was contacted regarding a new opportunity. On



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

the ninth day of my novena, she was offered the position. Not only is she starting an exciting new job, it is in a Catholic hospital! Thank you, Blessed George. I am extremely grateful for your intercession. Thank you, Marian Fathers, for introducing me to Blessed George.

— CH, Cincinnati, Ohio

Daughter gets new job

Since giving birth to her first child, my granddaughter, who is a nurse, had a hard time looking for a nanny. She was unable to practice her profession because she had to look after her daughter. She began feeling depressed because of this.

I always read *Marian Helper* magazine, and I know Blessed George helps people who are in need. I began praying to him to intercede for my granddaughter to overcome her depression and hopefully find work as a nurse. Before Christmas, one of the best hospitals in the area offered her a job. She is now on her

third week of pre-job training.

Thank you, Blessed George! My prayers were answered. You were a big help to her sagging career.

— EA, Philippines

For a Blessed George prayercard (B49-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: graces@marian.org.

Prayer for a Special Grace through the intercession of Blessed George

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

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

Explaining the Faith Series

Understanding Divine Mercy

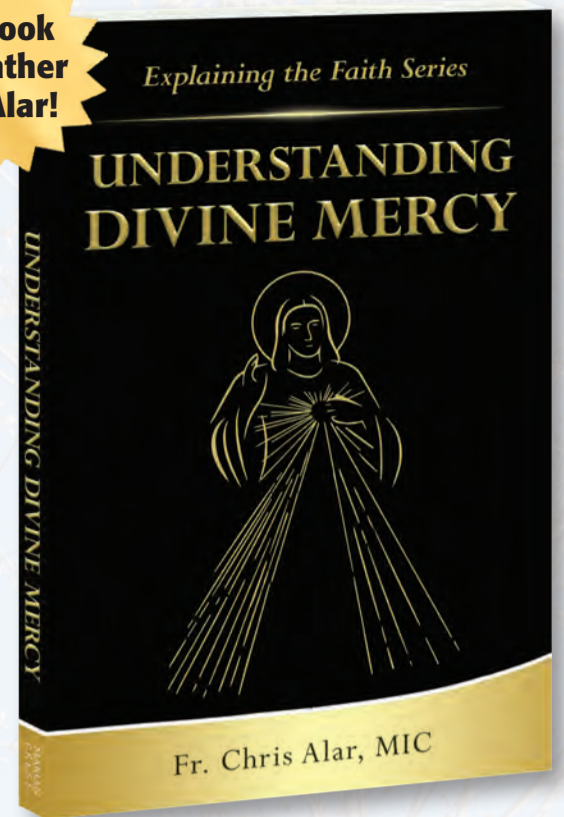
Pope St. John Paul II said there is nothing the world needs more than Divine Mercy, yet few people understand exactly what Divine Mercy is and why it is so critical for our times. Now there's one



book that summarizes all of it in an easy-to-understand way! Have you ever wondered "What exactly is Divine Mercy and who is St. Faustina?" Would you like to know how to receive the extraordinary promise Jesus offers only one day a year, on Divine Mercy Sunday? Have you ever

asked, "How could a merciful God allow so much suffering in the world?" If you answered yes to any of these questions, *Understanding Divine Mercy* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, is for you. In this first volume of his *Explaining the Faith series*, Fr. Chris shares, in his engaging style, the elements of the Divine Mercy message and devotion and explains why Jesus told St. Faustina that Divine Mercy is "mankind's last hope of salvation." **B49-EFBK \$14.95**

**New Book
from Father
Chris Alar!**



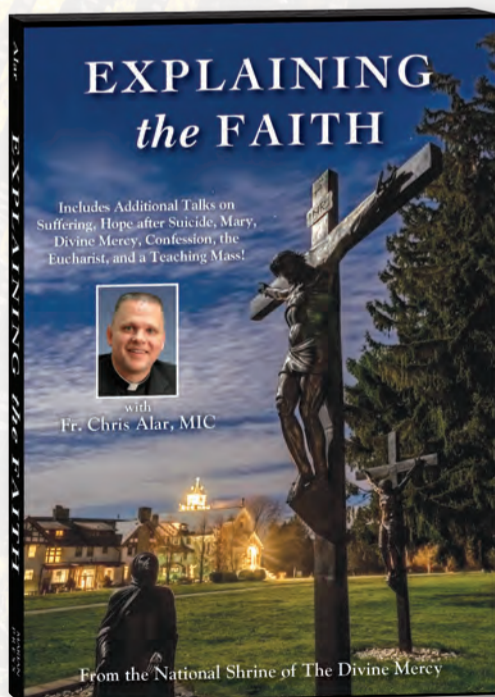
More from Fr. Chris Alar, MIC

Explaining the Faith DVD

Jesus' promise of Divine Mercy Sunday. Catholic devotion to Mary. Church teaching about suffering and suicide. Are you able to defend our faith when questioned about these topics and others? In this DVD series, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, offers his favorite 13 talks to address all of these topics and explains the Mass in a way you have never heard before. Three DVDs.

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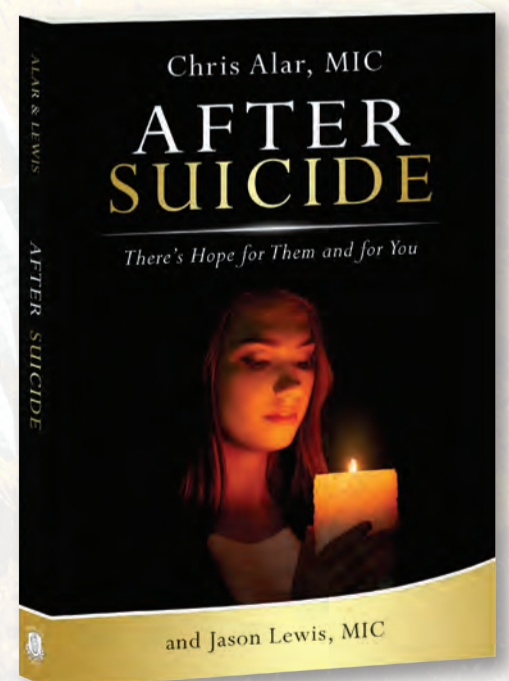
After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You

Addressing the hard issue of suicide simply and pastorally, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, and Jason Lewis, MIC, draw from the teaching of the Church, the message of Divine Mercy, and their own experience of losing a loved one to offer readers two key forms of hope: hope for the salvation of those who've died by their own hand, and hope for the healing of those left behind. This book is a must-read for all those trying to make sense out of such a difficult subject.

Remarkably, the spiritual principles of healing and redemption apply not only to a loss from suicide, but by any means of death.

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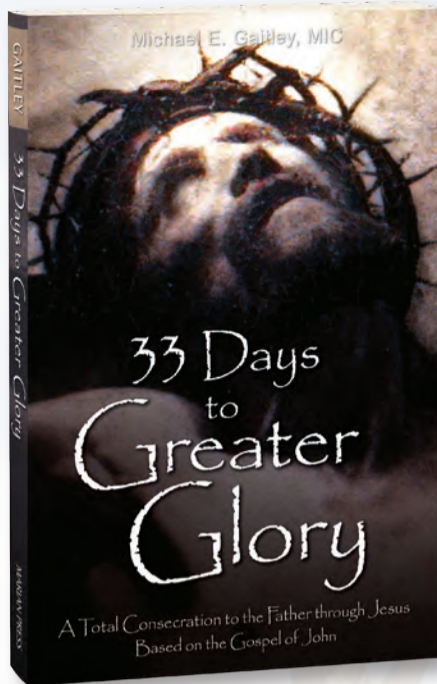
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Prepare for Divine Mercy Sunday



33 Days To Greater Glory: A Total Consecration to the Father through Jesus Based on the Gospel of John

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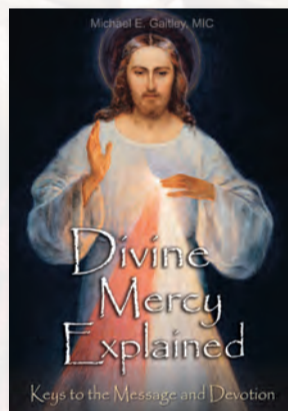
The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion

Our most popular pocket-size hand-book on Divine Mercy covers every aspect of the message and devotion. By Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, with Vinny Flynn and Robert A. Stackpole,

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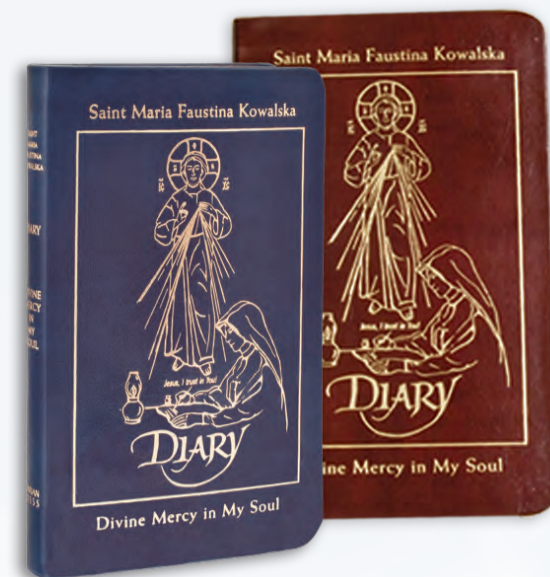
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The Divine Mercy Image Explained

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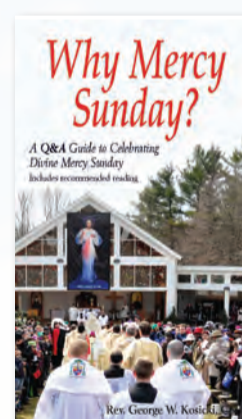
Divine Mercy Explained

This booklet by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, gives you a brief and easy-to-understand introduction to the Divine Mercy message and devotion. It includes the full prayers of the Divine Mercy Novena and St. Faustina's Litany to Divine Mercy, as well as two bonus appendices: valuable Divine Mercy prayers and Divine Mercy wisdom from Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. 67 pages. **B49-DMX \$3.99**

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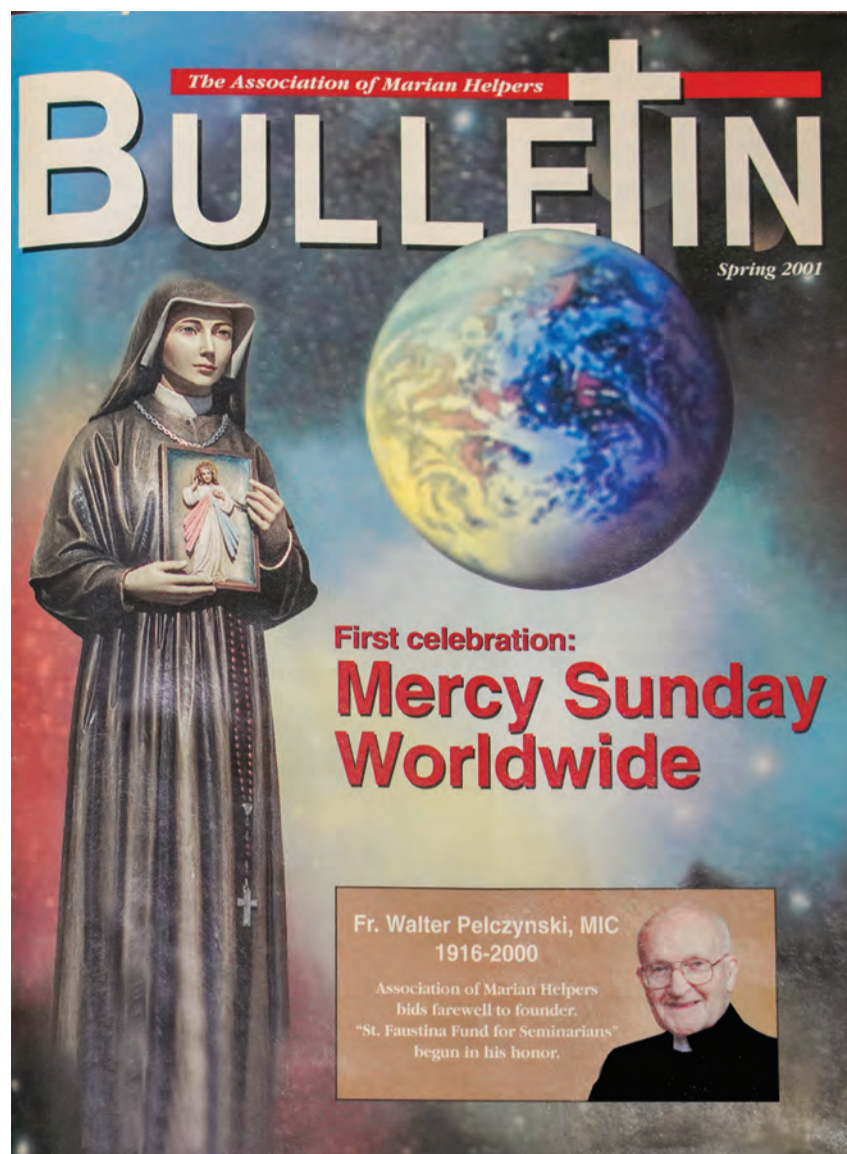
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From the
VAULTS



Twenty years ago, in the Spring 2001 issue, we wrote in anticipation about the first worldwide celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday. Here's a sampling of the cover story then:

What really thrills the heart is an unexpected gift — and that's exactly what the first worldwide celebration of Mercy Sunday will be, says Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, the priest who worked for St. Maria Faustina's canonization for more than 20 years.

When Pope John Paul II declared, during St. Faustina's canonization last year [2000], that from now on the Second Sunday of Easter will be known as Divine Mercy Sunday, Fr. Michalenko says most of the nearly 250,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square were surprised.

"The Holy Father caught many people off guard," Fr. Michalenko says. "We expected that he would fulfill the Lord's request to put the celebration on the Church calendar, but we didn't know how he would handle it or when he would do it."

The pope's announcement was followed by a decree from the Holy See's Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, officially adding to the "Second Sunday of Easter" the title: "Divine Mercy Sunday."

"Having Mercy Sunday as a universal celebration in the Church is a great gift to us and to the entire world," Fr. Michalenko explains. "In his homily at her canonization, the Holy Father called St. Faustina 'a gift of God to our time.' His declaration that Mercy Sunday will be celebrated worldwide is also the Lord's gift to us.

"It's the fulfillment of the prophecy St. Faustina made about the Lord's desire for Mercy Sunday to be celebrated throughout the whole Church," he says. "Every prophecy she made has now been fulfilled."



Fr. Mark talks about Mother Mary.

Live the call!



Fr. Mark Baron, MIC:

I felt called to join the Marians because of my devotion to Our Lady and the Divine Mercy message and devotion. I actually discovered the Marians at a vocational awareness day at Franciscan University in 1996 when I walked in and saw that they had a picture of Mary and the Divine Mercy Image on display in their booth. I thought: "A community that promotes not just one of these powerhouse devotions, but both of them, is a group that I could be a part of."

Marian Helper Irene Matelski:

Though our parish closing was very difficult, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. A priest friend suggested we join St. Peter's in Kenosha, administered by the Marian Fathers. Since I was a little girl, I had known that my mother sent money to the Marians for Masses. Today, I get to know them personally. We desperately need more priests. The seminarians giving up everything to serve God moves me. I particularly pray and thank God for the promulgation of the message of Divine Mercy by the beautiful devotion and dedication of these chosen priests.

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:

March 5-7

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Learn more

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