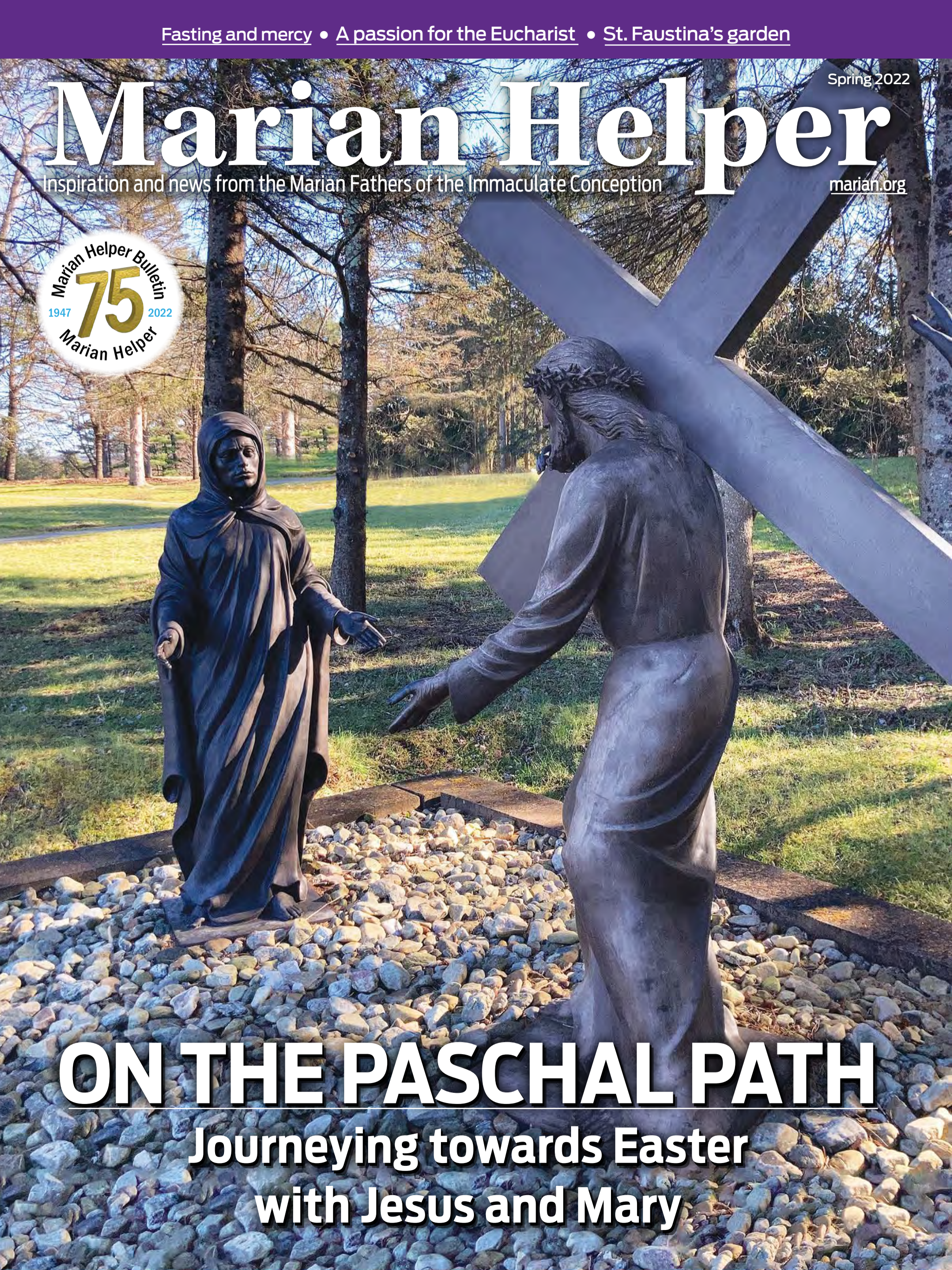


Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

marian.org



ON THE PASCHAL PATH

Journeying towards Easter
with Jesus and Mary

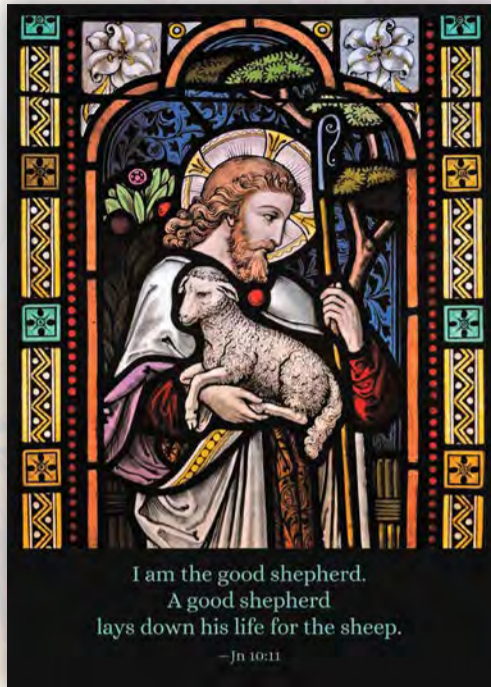
SHARE THE GLORIOUS GIFT OF EASTER



I am the **RESURRECTION** and the LIFE; whoever BELIEVES IN ME, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE.

— Jn 11:25-26

B53-EG221 (PREMIUM CARDSTOCK)



I am the good shepherd.
A good shepherd
lays down his life for the sheep.
— Jn 10:11

B53-EG222 (SPOT VARNISH)

Three Masses on Easter:

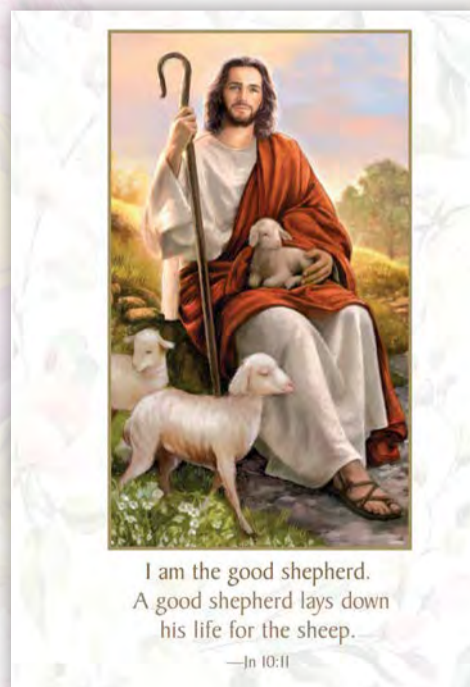
Send your loved ones these exclusive cards to announce that they will be remembered in the three Holy Masses on Easter at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.



B53-EG223 (PINK FOILED)

All Year: Have your loved ones remembered in prayer from this Easter to the next. They will share in the spiritual benefits of the Holy Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marian priests and brothers. Send one of these cards to announce your gift.

There is no charge for us to send you these cards. An offering is requested when you use the cards.



I am the good shepherd.
A good shepherd lays down
his life for the sheep.
— Jn 10:11

B53-AE22

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

8 ON THE PASCHAL PATH

As we journey together through the holy Lenten season, we reflect on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus — His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Glorification — and rely ever more strongly on the Eucharist, the Source and Summit of our Catholic faith.

10: A riveting journey through the holy wounds of Jesus;

12: Fasting like the Founder; 14: What is your passion?

16: Spreading the Good News; 18: Go to Joseph!

21 Confessions – and conversion – of a ‘newbie’

The new executive editor of *Marian Helper* has become one at last — and discovers that the benefits of membership in the Association are out of this world.

22 Two saints on caring for God’s creation

Mankind was created in a garden, and therefore given the task of tending it. Look to St. Faustina and St. John Paul II for advice on how to be good stewards of the planet.

24 Father Matthew Tomeny, MIC, is ordained

On Dec. 27, the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, the newest Marian priest, a U.S. Navy chaplain candidate, was ordained at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

26 We’re invited to a family meeting

The Vatican has called a “Synod on Synodality,” so it’s time to “put out into the deep,” as St. John Paul II would say, listen to our neighbors, and share our love of Divine Mercy.

28 Giving everything to the Lord, in song

As a child, Walter Burke played a starring role in his family singing troupe — until he was called to trust in the Lord and evangelize.

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MISSION STATEMENT

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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1944, the Association 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.



You Tube



Visit marian.org/social

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT GOD'S MISSION THROUGH US

- **Deepen your commitment of prayer** and support by joining one of our three spiritually nourishing prayer clubs: marian.org/clubs
- **Support a particular ministry:** marian.org/give
- **Create a memorial or tribute:** MemorialsOnEdenHill.org
- **Arrange a special gift** of stock, a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, a grant from your donor-advised funds, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: marian.org/PlannedGiving

Call 1-800-671-2020 to make a gift by phone or for assistance.

When making your will ...

A sample form of bequest to the Marians is:

I give and bequeath to the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. (Tax ID #20-8599030), Stockbridge, MA 01262, ___% of my adjusted gross estate (or \$_____, or a specific asset) to be used for its religious and educational purposes.

*Thank you
for your
support*

75 YEARS OF GOOD NEWS

This year *Marian Helper* turns 75! Our very first issue appeared in January 1947, just three years after the Association of Marian Helpers was founded. “You are 2,000 strong now!” my predecessor as Fr. Joseph wrote in that first issue. “But let’s not sit on our laurels! The ‘harvest is indeed great, but the laborers are few.’ That means that, like Christ, we have to go out and look for laborers. Our goal for the coming year — to have every present member send in at least one new member!”

Fast forward to today, and the Association is two million strong — and growing! Wouldn’t it be a great diamond anniversary gift to take up Fr. Joseph’s pledge and invite “at least one new member” to join the Association?

As a Marian Helper, you know the benefits — the bullet pointed list is on the opposite page. Helping souls to grow in holiness and guiding souls to Heaven is what the Association is all about. God wants to empower you and me to serve the Church and spread the Good News of the Gospel. And He wants us to invite others to a better way of daily living in intimate union with Him, and with Mary Immaculate as our spiritual Mother — and guide — in Heaven.

So let’s shoot for **four million** Marian Helpers!

As members of a spiritual family, we walk together with Jesus and Mary on our daily journey towards Heaven. We are all “On the Paschal Path,” meaning we are on the road to the Cross, Resurrection, and glory. That is the theme for this year’s observance of the 350th Jubilee of the founding of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

During the holy season of Lent, the Paschal Path passes through Holy Thursday, the Last Supper, and the institution of the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic faith. The Eucharist has been in the news lately, and that is welcome news. The U.S. bishops have announced plans for a three-year Eucharistic revival, with the stated

mission “to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.” Many dioceses have launched a “Year of the Eucharist,” including our home diocese here in Massachusetts, the Diocese of Springfield. “Jesus does the work if we let Him,” Bishop William D. Byrne says. “We will have many media and in-parish opportunities for people to learn about Jesus’ Real Presence, but the real key is for us to offer Adoration so that Jesus can do the real work in people’s hearts.”

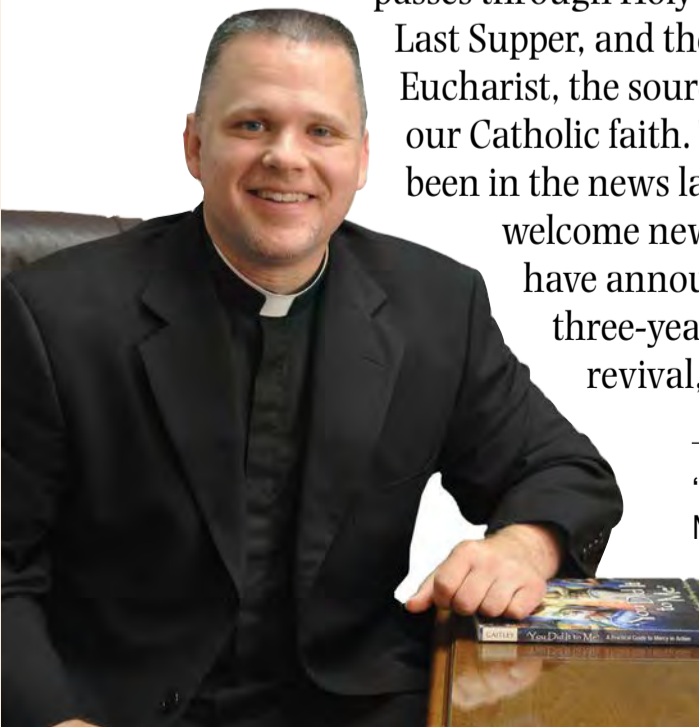
Amen to that! Parishes throughout western Massachusetts will offer the Forty Hours’ Devotion throughout the year, and Bishop Byrne has invited the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy to participate.

This penitential Lenten season, as you practice the traditional pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, spend time with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, before the tabernacle, or in Eucharistic Adoration. Jesus told St. Faustina, “**My great delight is to unite Myself with souls. Know, My daughter, that when I come to a human heart in Holy Communion, My hands are full of all kinds of graces which I want to give to the soul**” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1385).

These graces are ours for the asking. The God of mercy awaits our call. We will honor Him in a special way on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 24. Rest assured of our blessings and remembrance for you and your loved ones.

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.





Walking with the Lord

COURTESY OF
JOHN SULLIVAN

By Marian Friedrichs

John Sullivan of Watertown, Connecticut, prepares his soul for the two great feasts of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday just as his fellow Catholics do — with prayers and sacrifices — but adds an additional preparation. About halfway through Lent, John leaves his car at home a few times a week so he can walk to and from his workplace, 10 miles away.

Commuting on foot is not John's Lenten penance; it is training. On Friday of Easter Week, John will leave his house at around 4 in the morning to begin an even longer walk: to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, more than 50 miles from his door. It is a tradition John began 14 years ago to express his gratitude to God for three very special blessings.

John and his wife, Robin, were married in 1993. The couple was always open to life, and after waiting two years to conceive, they sought medical counsel. A doctor examined Robin and declared nothing wrong with her. After two more years, John and Robin made their first pilgrimage to Eden Hill to pray for a baby.

John's sister, Sr. Veronica of the Divine Mercy, SV, had suggested the trip. John did not know much about the Divine Mercy message or St. Faustina, but in 1993, his sister and their parents had gone to the Shrine for the celebration of Sr. Faustina's beatification.

"They came home on fire," John recalls. His sister gave him a copy of Divine Mercy in My Soul, and, when she later joined the Sisters of Life and had to give away her possessions, she presented John with a large copy of the Divine Mercy Image, which a friend had brought back from Poland. To Sr. Veronica, it was clear that John and Robin needed to bring their intention to the Shrine.

Thrice blessed

On a rainy Divine Mercy Sunday in 1998, John and Robin prayed at the Shrine for God to bless them with a baby. Six weeks later, Robin was pregnant. Their first child, GraceAnne, was baptized on Divine Mercy Sunday the following year. In 2000, John drove up to the Shrine by himself on the Feast of Mercy and prayed for another child. John and Robin's son, Christopher, was born at the end of that Jubilee Year, on Dec. 30. The couple's third child, Caitlyn, arrived in March 2004 and was also baptized on the Feast of Mercy.

Over the next two years, the Sullivans made pilgrimages of thanksgiving to the Shrine: John alone in 2005, and the whole family in 2006. In 2007, John, who loves long-distance walking and has hiked portions of the Appalachian Trail, felt inspired to walk the route. He did, and even promised God that he would make the walk

every year as long as he was able. In 14 years, John has only missed the walk once, due to work obligations.

The journey takes him three days. On the first day, John walks about 35 miles, from Waterbury to Canaan, Connecticut. His brother, James, who is a priest at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, meets him there. They have dinner together and stay at a bed and breakfast. On Saturday, John covers another 19 miles and arrives at Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Sunday morning, John walks the final five miles to the Shrine, where his family meets him for Mass.

Ancient pious tradition

Walking pilgrimages have a long history in the life of the Church. They were very popular in the Middle Ages, and even today, hundreds of thousands of people follow covering hundreds of miles. While John is intrigued, for now he prefers his solitary walk through the New England countryside. Over the years, John has modified his route to avoid traffic, even though it means spending several hours in areas without cellphone service. Far from causing him anxiety, the isolation gives John a deep sense of peace. “I feel like I’m going into this zone where it’s just me and God,” he says. “It’s a feeling of freedom. This is my quiet time with God.”

John has many significant memories of the days he has spent walking: his discovery of an old, ruined Protestant church in the woods where he stops every year to pray; the time he was caught in a rainstorm “out in the middle of nowhere, completely exposed.” (“Now I always bring a rain poncho,” he chuckles.)

A conversation with Jesus

At home, John sometimes opens St. Faustina’s *Diary* and focuses on the words in bold letters — those spoken by Christ. Reading those words is “like a conversation” with Jesus, he says. On his annual walk, John continues and deepens that conversation. He may listen to music and Scripture studies, but he always leaves quiet time for dialogue with the Lord. He reflects on his blessings, especially thanking God for answering his and Robin’s prayers all those years ago and giving them the gift of a family.

John encourages other Catholics to consider this ancient, pious tradition and make a walking pilgrimage if they can. It will give them a precious opportunity, he says, to step away from ordinary life and connect with the God who loves them and waits for them.

“God wants to pour an ocean of mercy if we will only accept it,” John says. “Just trust in God’s mercy, giving your life to Him. It’s really the secret to peace.” MH

FRIENDS OF MERCY



While most of us were busy shopping in the days before Christmas, **Jean Marie Flanagan** of Newburgh, New York, opted instead for spiritual enrichment on a four-day retreat at the National Shrine. “I spent every afternoon in prayer for my family and finances,” she said. “It’s a tangible way to thank the Lord for the great things He’s done in my life.” Jean Marie was married for 36 years, and remembers especially her late husband and one of her five children who has died. “Divine Mercy enables me to unite my sorrow with Jesus,” she said. “It’s very comforting. The Shrine is the place I always venture to maintain my spiritual foundation.”



On her discernment journey to become a Salesian Sister of St. John Bosco, **Sr. Elfie Del Rosario, FMA** (kneeling at left, with her fellow sisters at Corpus Christi Parish in Port Chester, New York), was introduced to the message of Divine Mercy by her spiritual director. “It was a revelation,” she said. “Because of Divine Mercy, I realized that Jesus calls me to Himself regardless of my shortcomings, that His mercy and love really complete me. It’s a very powerful devotion, and I love to share it with others, especially the Chaplet and St. Faustina’s *Diary*.” MH

FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

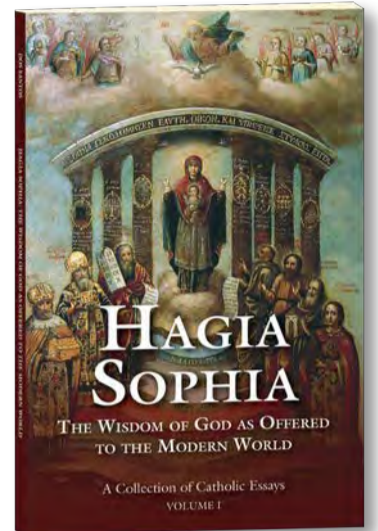
Visit ShopMercy.org/b53 or call 1-800-462-7426.

As we continue our earthly pilgrimage into the Lenten season, it's a good time to pick up some sound spiritual reading or viewing to help enrich your preparation for Easter, both the octave and the season.

HAGIA SOPHIA: THE WISDOM OF GOD AS OFFERED TO THE MODERN WORLD

BY FR. KEN DOS SANTOS, MIC

Taking on the hard questions and offering pearls of wisdom from the Church's treasury of teaching, Fr. Ken dos Santos, MIC, has written a book for our time. Calling us to a full embrace of the wisdom of God and resisting the lure of the knowledge of the world, *Hagia Sophia* represents an important service to Christ and His Church. \$10.95. **B53-HIAS**



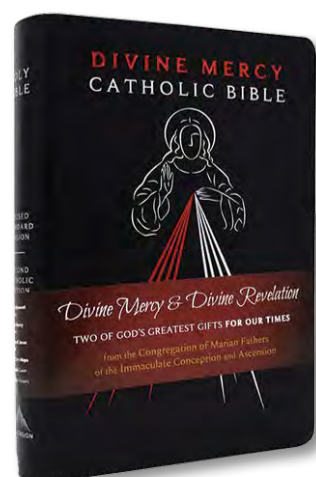
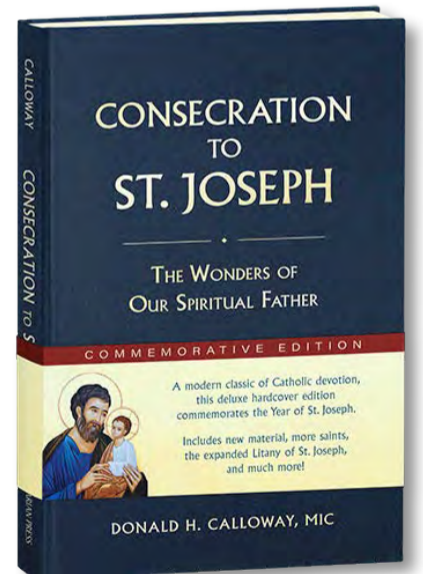
PURGATORY DVD

In this powerful exploration of what happens to us after we die, Polish filmmaker Michal Kondrat ("Love and Mercy: Faustina") interviews experts and shares stories from the lives of such saints as Faustina Kowalska, Padre Pio, and Stanislaus Papczynski to answer age-old questions about the afterlife. This moving film offers a sorely-needed corrective to the modern secular view of the end of life. Now with English voice-over. Runtime: 1 hour 45 minutes. \$14.95. **B53-PDVD** AVAILABLE FOR [STREAMING AT SHOPMERCY.ORG](http://SHOPMERCY.ORG)

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH – COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

The Year of St. Joseph drew to a close on Dec. 8, 2021, but the example and intercession of St. Joseph remain as powerful and as necessary as ever. Get your commemorative hardcover edition of *Consecration to St. Joseph*, the best-selling instant classic by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and equip yourself to live like a faithful child of the man whom Jesus called "father." This special edition includes a new foreword from Fr. Calloway, three ribbons for marking pages, papal additions to the Litany of St. Joseph, more quotes from saints and blessed about St. Joseph, Fr. Calloway's letter to the pope requesting a Year of St. Joseph, full-color artwork, and lots of other special new material. \$39.95. **B53-HCJO**



DIVINE MERCY BIBLE

There are few better ways to spend Lent than reading the Word of God, and reading the *Divine Mercy Bible* will be uniquely helpful in preparing you to celebrate the entire Octave of Easter, culminating in Divine Mercy Sunday. Packed with much of the very best, easy-to-read teaching on Divine Mercy to complement the RSVCE2 translation of Sacred Scripture, this Bible is a tremendous resource for any faithful Catholic. \$49.95. **B53-BIDM**



'OUR LADY' RESTORED

There is an image in Rome of “Our Lady Immaculately Conceived,” which is especially near and dear to the hearts of all Marians. What is the story of this image?

In 1776, during a General Chapter in Mariampole, Lithuania, the Marian Congregation decided to send two Marians to Rome to begin the beatification process of our Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski, and the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski. In 1779, they were able to purchase the eight-century Church of St. Vito and the adjoining monastery from the Cistercian Order, which had been there for 100 years. The church stands next to an arch that dates back 2,000 years. It was a gateway in the city wall of Rome.

The Marians began working in the Church of St. Vito and commissioned a Polish artist who was living in Rome at that time, Francis Smuglewicz, to do the above-mentioned painting. He created the painting in a classical style: one canvas depicting Our Lady Immaculately Conceived, and another smaller canvas above depicting the Holy Spirit and some cherubim, all enclosed in an ornate gold frame. It was placed above the main altar of the church in 1782.

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Rome and ordered all foreigners, including the foreign religious communities, to leave the city. The Marians had to abandon the Church of St. Vito, and we never recovered it. We had worked there for about 20 years, and three Marians were buried in the crypt of the church. Today, it is the parish church of the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Through the years, the church has undergone some renovations, while the canvas of the painting was badly damaged. It had been repaired, but poorly. In the 1990s the Marians took some pictures of the image and began promoting a Photoshopped restoration of the image (shown above).



“Our Lady Immaculately Conceived.”

This year, Fr. Pasquale Magagnini, the pastor, found some donors within his parish who paid to have the painting and the frame restored. Father Pasquale came to our Marian Archives at the General House to do some research so he could publish the true history of the image and the church.

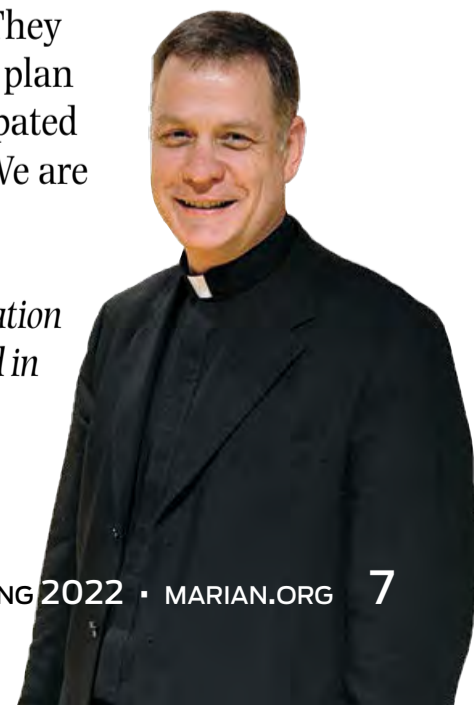
I was privileged to attend the Mass there on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception during which Bishop Daniele Libanori, one of the auxiliary bishops of the Diocese of Rome, blessed the restored image. It was a very moving experience to participate in the Mass as a Marian. I thought of the Marians who had faithfully served in that Church more than 200 years

before. As I looked at the beautiful painting of Our Lady, I thought of the Marians who had commissioned it and offered Mass under the watchful eye of Our Lady. No doubt they would not have wanted to abandon the church, but they had no choice because of the orders of Napoleon.

During his homily that day, the Bishop contemplated the experiences of Joseph and Mary at the time of the Annunciation and the birth of Jesus. They were very probably both frightened and confused at the unfolding of events. They were called to respond to the plan of God with a profound faith. God did not explain everything to them in advance. They both opened themselves to God’s plan in heroic ways and, thus, participated in the work of our redemption. We are called to do the same!

Look for the full story of the restoration of Our Lady Immaculately Conceived in the next edition of Marian Helper.

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





On the Paschal Path

CASPER VAN BATTUM / UNSPLASH

We are all on pilgrimage through the valley of tears in this life, a journey with its joys and sorrows, lights and glories, but all of it in the shadow of the Cross, of the limits and weaknesses that mar our human nature since the fall.

That makes Lent the Christian life in miniature. We must mortify our appetites, give up sinful habits, and ensure we are well-trained to share in the Passion, death, and Resurrection of our Lord. We prepare throughout this life, knowing that no matter how well we do, there still awaits the sorrow of death in the end. The Congregation of Marian Fathers has placed that Paschal Path at the heart of their jubilee celebrations this year.

Every year in Lent, we set out with the Church along the Paschal Path, along the road with Jesus to Calvary, and beyond — to Resurrection, to Ascension, to triumph. But the path to victory comes through the Cross. If we try to remain faithful to Jesus and Mary, there's something unavoidable about the Paschal Path. Jesus said as much in the Scriptures. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:24-25). We are called as Christians to be like Jesus, to live and love as He did and does. Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle explores what that looks like in her piece on sharing the wounds of Jesus. This embrace of penitential suffering (also called "mortification") is true to the spirit and spirituality of the Marian Founder, St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski (1631-1701), as Br. Stephen, MIC, will explain.

Welcome Jesus into our hearts

All our lives here below are Lent, and so even as we carry the Cross, we will celebrate Sundays and solemnities, feasts and times where the triumph of grace and God is glimpsed through this present darkness. We will receive the Eucharistic Lord, welcoming Jesus into our hearts and our lives, loving the Bread that came down from Heaven, as Dr. Bryan Thatcher explains.

But in order to receive the Eucharistic Lord well and with hearts open to being made new, we need to have prepared ourselves through sacramental Confession, prayer, and studying our faith. As Scripture tells us, "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ"

(Rom 10:17). Dr. Veronica Szczygiel explores how the Marian Fathers are transmitting our faith through their podcasts, offering you some sources of Lenten spiritual listening. "Do not conform yourselves to this age but 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).

A great model for us

This Lent, we also celebrate the March 19 Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Year of St. Joseph came to a close on Dec. 8, 2021, but our relationship with our spiritual father, the Universal Patron of the Church, will continue into eternity. We are told by Scripture that St. Joseph was a righteous (or just) man, meaning he's a great model for us during Lent, just as he was a model for Jesus as the Son of God grew up, according to the ways of human nature. In the coming pages, we'll learn more about devotion to St. Joseph from Dr. Joan Kelly.

We'll also celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation on March 25, one of the great Marian feast days of the year. Our Lady is constantly there for us, even during Lent, even in the times of desolation and trial, just as she was for her Son. Our Lady accompanied Jesus along His Paschal Path, as you can see in the cover image, a shot of the Fourth Station of the Cross from our life-size Stations of the Cross at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. She was there for Jesus, and she is there for you, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

May God bless you this Lent, and may these articles help make this season a fruitful, holy time in preparation for the glory of Easter and the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday.

MH

A riveting journey through the holy wounds of Jesus

By Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle

The season of Lent is the perfect time to retreat from the busyness of the world as much as possible and try our best to carve out special times of prayer, striving to get closer to our dear Lord. On occasion, as we wend our way, those prayer times might take on new meaning or a life of their own as they get rearranged by our Divine Physician.

One Lenten season, I had been deeply meditating upon Jesus' sorrowful Passion when God's Divine Providence sent me on a riveting holy journey. It began as Holy Week approached. With bated breath, I left my house "in haste" for a procedure scheduled by my doctor.

The morning chill reminded me to grab my jacket from the hall closet, and I happily discovered my lost Rosary beads in the pocket. Off I went. On the way to meet up with my husband, I called my sister from my cellphone. A few tears trickled down my cheeks, as I shared my fears and concerns with Barbara. I didn't want to die — not yet, anyway. I wanted to be around for my five children, and maybe future grandchildren — to help guide them. My sister promised her prayers.

Upon arriving at the infusion center at the hospital, I met my nurse. Already extremely uneasy about the deadly bacteria that had invaded my body, I would now need to sign papers ensuring that I would not sue if my kidneys shut down or if I lost my hearing. These were common side effects of the intense medication that would be flowing through my veins for the next couple of hours.

Lord, have mercy, please.





In the infusion chair, I extended my left arm as instructed, and my nurse injected a burning jab before she would insert the very long intravenous tube up my arm. It didn't work. She jabbed again and the IV failed again. Another jab, and my arm was aflame with red-hot pain. All the while, I clenched my newly recovered Rosary discreetly in my right hand.

It felt like 'The Twilight Zone'

"Jesus, this is for You," I silently prayed. "You suffered intensely for me. I offer my pain, my fears, and my uncertainty for Your holy will. Please get me through this."

Suddenly, the realization of the profound timing of my dire situation pierced my brain. Wow, this is happening as Holy Week approaches. God is in control.

My thoughts were suddenly interrupted. My nurse spoke up. "No offering it up here!"

What? How could she know I was praying silently? I was absolutely stunned.

She didn't miss a beat. "It is not as if nails are being driven into the palms of your hands."

How uncanny! It felt like "The Twilight Zone"! I couldn't remain silent.

"Yes! I am offering it all up to God." I needed to defend my position.

Well, that sure broke the ice! The infusion finally commenced. I asked her if I would be able to travel in a week. She wanted to know the purpose of the trip. I told her I was a Catholic author and speaker and would be presenting at a women's conference.

"Oh! I am a Catholic. But not a very good one," she answered. I felt compelled to ask if I could give a copy of one of my books to her. She said, "Yes!"

It turned out that the infusion procedure was not a "one-shot deal." It would be 11 days of therapy to kill the deadly bacteria. That meant my nurse and I were engrossed in many long chats. On the very last day, I understood more fully why our dear Lord had allowed me to go through that suffering.

When it was time to bid goodbye to my nurse, she surprised me. Right in the middle of the infusion room, she hugged me tight and loudly exclaimed, "Donna-Marie, you came into my life just when I needed you most!"

Wow. What a gift! I thanked God for the opportunity to offer suffering to please Him, and to help another soul as well as my own.

Great graces are given

Yes, our Lord calls us to meditate upon His sorrowful Passion and to offer our sufferings to Him. In my book *52 Weeks with Saint Faustina: A Year of Grace and Mercy*, I wrote:

It might be difficult to meditate upon the bloody wounds and the other sorrows and sufferings of Christ. After all, the human heart tends to recoil from suffering. In addition, pondering what Jesus suffered for love of us can make us very sad. Sister Faustina deeply loved her Lord Jesus and often meditated upon His Passion. In fact, Jesus asked her to do so.

During the forthcoming season of Lent, we can recall Jesus' requests to St. Faustina. For instance, the young mystic wrote in her *Diary*, "Jesus told me that I please Him best by meditating on His sorrowful Passion, and by such meditation much light falls upon my soul" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 267). Jesus told her, **"There are few souls who contemplate My Passion with true feeling; I give great graces to souls who meditate devoutly on My Passion"** (*Diary*, 737).

We too, can aspire to please Jesus and be one of those "few souls." As I noted in *52 Weeks with Saint Faustina*:

When sufferings unfold in our own lives, we might want to run from the Cross. Yet our Lord calls us to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses, and follow Him. He will help us through our afflictions: As our Divine Physician, He knows exactly what we need and when we need it.

Let us wholeheartedly trust God with our lives and pray for the most holy Lenten journey ever.

MH

Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle, TV host and international speaker, is a best-selling author of more than 35 books, including 52 Weeks with Saint Faustina (Product code: B53-WEEKS) and Divine Mercy in a Woman's Life (B53-DMFW). Visit ShopMercy.org/b53 to order these books.



Fasting like the Founder

WHAT DOES ST. STANISLAUS PAPCZYŃSKI, THE FOUNDER OF THE MARIANS, HAVE TO TELL US TODAY ABOUT FASTING?

By Br. Stephen, MIC

An outcast. A runaway, arrested and imprisoned. Isolated, deathly ill, without medical treatment or access to the Sacraments. This was how St. Stanislaus began the year 1670, with a failed attempt to leave the Piarists and found a new congregation. On Dec. 11 of that year, however, he was permitted to retract his former religious vows. He made new vows to God in his *oblatio*, and thus began the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

Three-and-a-half centuries later, as this Congregation

inaugurated its Jubilee on the cusp of the year 2020, few could have predicted we'd all experience a similar isolation from medical and sacramental aids around the world. The virus now known as SARS-COV-2 was only observed in a few scattered places at that time. Nevertheless, our Father Founder, just canonized in 2016, would soon show how necessary was his intercession as the "Patron Saint of Those in Mortal Danger."

Saint Stanislaus can help us even in ordinary times, however: His life models the "Paschal Path," living in a

manner conformed to the dying and rising of Jesus Christ.

During Lent, when we contemplate Christ's suffering and death, St. Stanislaus reminds us of His call to "take up your cross and follow Me" (Mt 16:24) through the three traditional pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Now, St. Stanislaus belonged to a different time and culture, and we may not find helpful the penances he asked of his early followers, such as wearing scratchy garments, bland two-course meals, sleeping on straw, or self-flagellation three or more times a week. However, we should heed his wisdom about the inner logic of mortification.

Reparation and purification

What is this "inner logic?" It is expressed in two words: reparation and purification. Simply put, true mortification evicts sin and invites grace. We fast and abstain on the days appointed by the Church to repair the damage of sin and to grow in purity of heart.

Sin imposes chaos on the soul. This can be seen in ourselves, in the world around us, and in the suffering of the souls in Purgatory. By fasting and other mortifications, we deny ourselves disordered worldly attachments, and thus free our spirits to love God with all our hearts. Saint Stanislaus insists on the spiritual orientation of fasting in his *Rule of Life* (ch. 4), saying that it would be out of order to "hard press" the body and neglect the soul.

Love and mercy

The sufferings of the poor in this world further motivate our mortifications. Saint Stanislaus urges his followers not to ignore the poor as the rich man did Lazarus, but rather to show them great love and mercy. As Bl. George Matulaitis, MIC, the Renovator of the Marians, would later say in his *Instructions*, mortification should not hinder one's apostolic work for others, but should be an integral part of it.

Saint Stanislaus' call to "take up your cross" grows most eloquent when speaking of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. In order to free these souls, he not only performed strenuous earthly penances like those listed above, but asked his confrères to do the same. These penances, harsh as they

seem, are nothing compared to the torments souls suffer in their long path of purgation after death. The spiritual pains of Purgatory — longing for God, detachment, conformity to God's Will — better remind us of our final goal: union with God. As St. Paul reminds the Colossians (and us): "If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1).

In light of this goal, we can better see how mortification fits into the plan of God's Mercy. We deny ourselves to attack our sins, thus cooperating with Christ's coming to redeem us. Our sacrifices and abstinence open us up to the graces of sanctification that God planned from all eternity to grant us. We are both reformed from sin and transformed by grace.

Being Christ-like

Christian holiness lies in being Christ-like. This is the final end of all God's graces and our efforts: union with God. Holy Communion in this life is a foretaste of that union, of the eternal banquet of the Lamb.

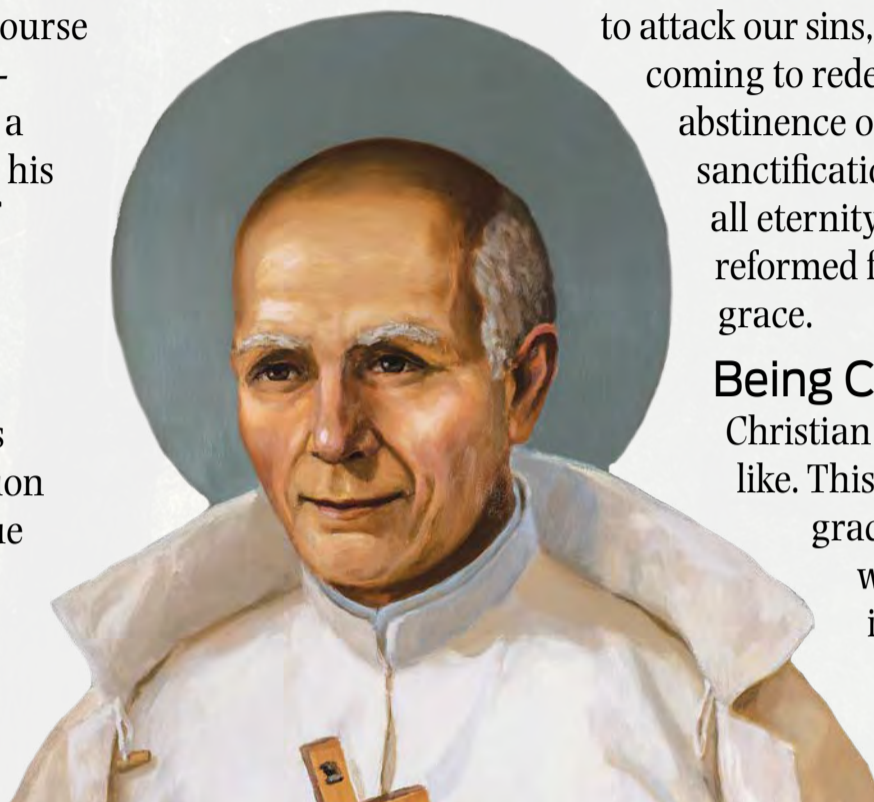
During the season of Lent, we are conformed to Jesus specifically in His death, to "the Lamb who was slain" (Rev 5:12). Hence the word "mortification"

(from the Latin words *mors* and *facio*, literally "to make dead") gains a new Christian meaning. Death in itself is fearful, but to die with Christ is (paradoxically) joyful. As St. Paul says to the Romans: "If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Rom 6:8). Death becomes life; mortification leads to resurrection.

This is the inner logic of the one-hour fast before receiving Holy Communion: This "Bread of Angels" is no ordinary food! It is also the reason for the good old practice of "giving something up for Lent," and meatless Fridays.

This Lenten Season, choose carefully the mortification you will practice. Consider whether it will help you grow in virtue, in true detachment from the world and attachment to God. Weigh its value for your work and your witness to others of the joy of the Gospel.

Finally, do something for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Without having to wear a hair shirt or sleep on straw, you will then be a true follower of St. Stanislaus' teaching about mortification.



**We should heed St. Stanislaus' wisdom:
We fast and abstain to repair the damage
of sin and to grow in purity of heart.**

MH



WHAT IS YOUR PASSION?

By Dr. Bryan Thatcher

We all need a passion in life, something that motivates and drives us. This passion keeps us going even in the face of adversity. Our Lord wants to instill in us just such a passion and love for Him in the Eucharist.

When a man has a passion, he concentrates and keeps his gaze on it. Without a passion, we lead an aimless existence and useless life. As Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM), our passion is to tell a hurting

world that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, and of His unfathomable love and mercy for all.

Think of the man who wants to achieve an honorable and lofty position in life. He will keep his focus and work

only for that; whether it takes him 10 or 20 years, it does not matter. "I will get there," he says. It motivates his life. He dedicates everything to and keeps his focus on his desire. It gives him strength to keep pushing on, even in the face of adversity.

In Scripture, we read, "For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14).

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life.

Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:48-51).

And yet we do not believe! We don't have the passion and burning zeal for Him that we should. Our Lord wants us to love Him and visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Saint Faustina knew Whom she was receiving when she went to Holy Communion, and wrote in her *Diary*, "I am going forward through life amidst rainbows and storms, but with my head held high with pride, for I am a royal child. I feel that the blood of Jesus is circulating in my veins, and I have put my trust in the great mercy of the Lord" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 992). In fact, St. Faustina loved Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament so much that she took as her name in religious life, "Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament."

But we lack that passion! Our Lord told St. Faustina, "**My great delight is to unite Myself with souls. Know,**

my daughter, that when I come to a human heart in Holy Communion, My Hands are full of all kinds of graces which I want to give to the soul. But souls do not even pay any attention to Me; they leave Me to Myself and busy themselves with other things. Oh, how sad I am that souls do not recognize Love! They treat me as a dead object" (*Diary*, 1385).

On several occasions, St. Faustina saw the same rays coming from the monstrance that she saw in the Image. She wrote, "That same day, when I was in church waiting for confession, I saw the same rays issuing from

the monstrance and spreading throughout the church. This lasted all through the service. After the Benediction, [the rays shone out] to

Love Jesus in the Eucharist. Have a passion and fervor to receive Him and visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament as your station in life permits. Dedicate all your thoughts and labors to Him, for loving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the unchanging way to holiness.

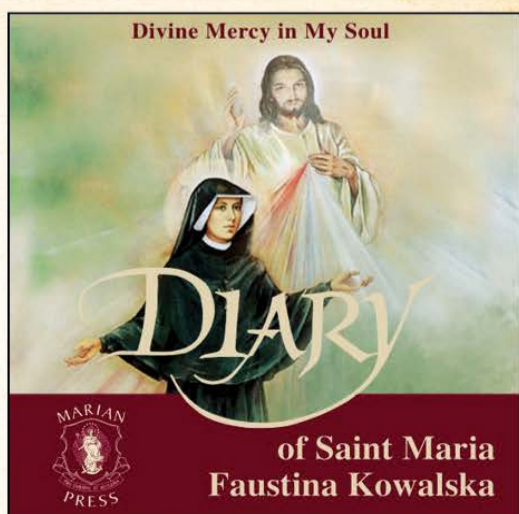
both sides and returned again to the monstrance. Their appearance was bright and transparent like crystal. I asked Jesus that He deign to light the fire of His love in all souls that were cold: Beneath these rays a heart will grow warm even if it were like a block of ice; even if it were as hard as a rock, it will crumble into dust" (*Diary*, 370).

This Lent and beyond, love Jesus in the Eucharist. Have a passion and fervor to receive Him and visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament as your station in life permits. Dedicate all your thoughts and labors to Him, for loving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the unchanging way to holiness.

Bryan Thatcher, MD, is director of EADM, an apostolate of the Marian Fathers. Please visit TheDivineMercy.org/EADM to view his weekly "Mercy Unbound" video interviews with Divine Mercy experts. "Pearls of Divine Mercy," Dr. Thatcher's podcast of short teaching vignettes, is posted on TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts.

If you would like a free packet on starting a Divine Mercy cenacle, or information on how to obtain a copy of the papal blessing from Pope St. John Paul II, contact EADM at 877-380-0727 or email ministry@sprynet.com

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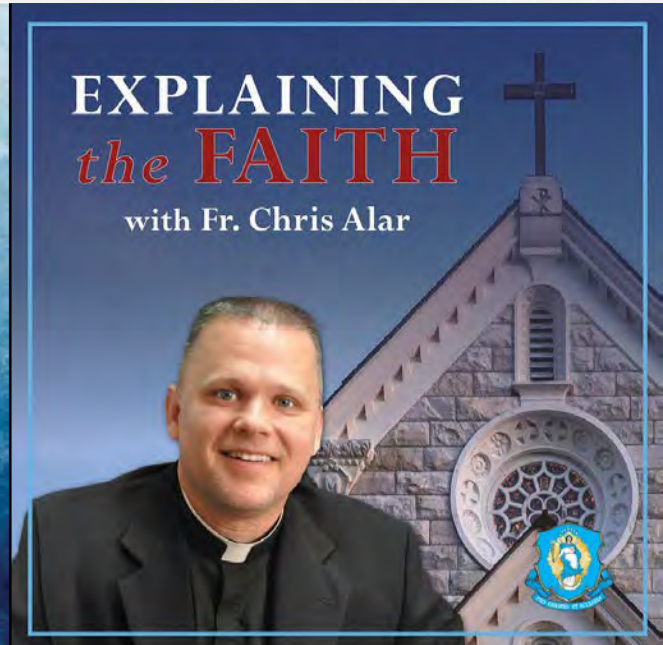
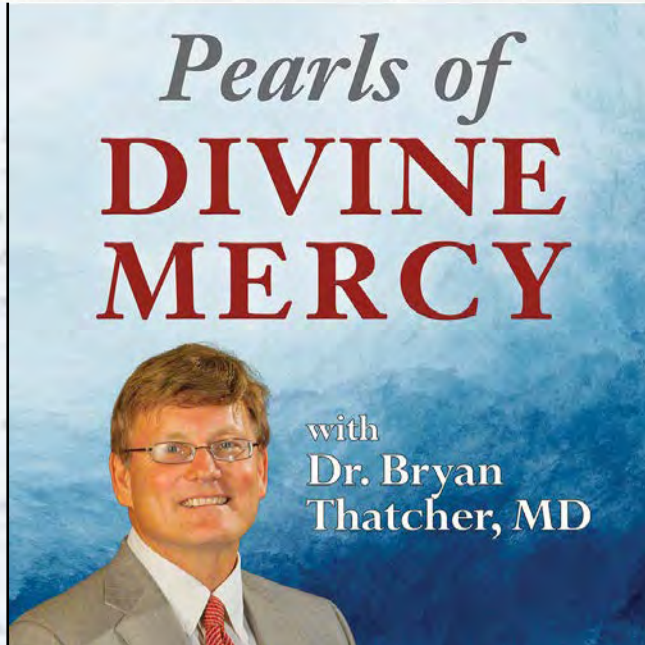
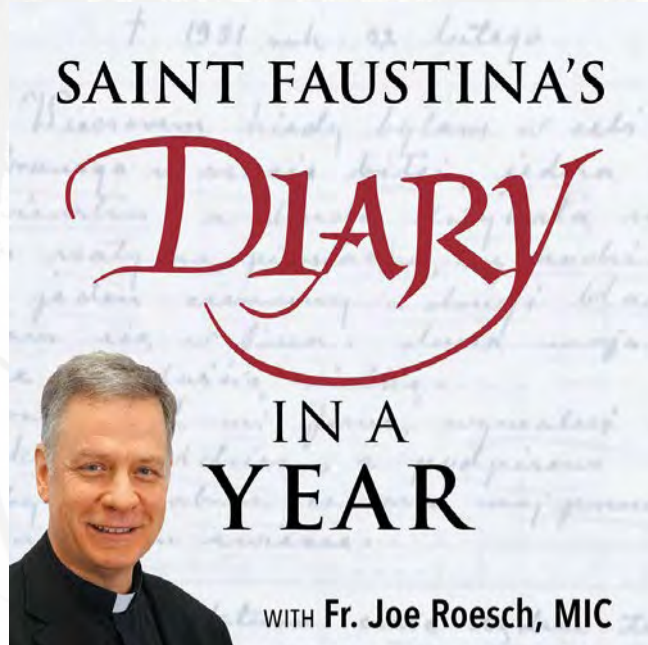
The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina



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ON THE **PASCHAL PATH**

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS, ONE DOWNLOAD AT A TIME

By Dr. Veronica Szczygiel

Looking to supplement your Lenten spiritual preparation? Then please lend us your ears! Modern problems sometimes need modern solutions. In this age of audiobooks and podcasts, spiritual listening may fill the role spiritual reading has held for many Catholics across the centuries.

Sometimes it's hard to find time for God during busy, day-to-day life. When this happens, we can turn routine responsibilities into encounters with the Lord by turning on a podcast. In fact, 52 percent of podcast fans have reported listening to episodes while driving, and 59 percent while doing housework. As 155 million Americans listened to a podcast last year alone, that's a lot of roving listeners — and clean houses.

Millions of people are double-dipping with their time. Catholics can do the same.

The Marian Fathers and Association of Marian Helpers produce six high-quality podcasts to tune into when tuning out the monotony in our lives. Like books in a library, you can pick and choose podcast episodes you find most interesting or timely for your life (unless binge listening Netflix-style appeals to you). Podcasts can also be used as teaching resources in catechism classes or parish discussion and prayer groups.

The Marian podcasts share, explain, and expand upon the message of Divine Mercy as a path to holiness in listeners' lives. The purpose of these podcasts is to help us understand God's fathomless mercy, be inspired by it, and, of course, pray for mercy.

To learn about Divine Mercy, listeners can dive into the *Diary* that dared to describe it. In his podcast, ***Saint Faustina's Diary in a Year***, the Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, vicar general for the worldwide Congregation, begins each daily episode by reading an excerpt from the saint's *Diary* so that, after 365 days, listeners will have completed the entire book. In a booming, baritone narrative voice that is part Leonard Cohen and part divine, Fr. Roesch delivers short and sweet commentary on the takeaways of each day's entry. Fragmenting the *Diary* into digestible chunks can help cultivate a disciplined prayer life, as listeners can follow along in the book, writing down reflections in its margins. *Episodes are 5-8 minutes long.*

In ***Pearls of Divine Mercy***, Dr. Bryan Thatcher, founder of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, an apostolate of the Marian Fathers, uses quotations from St. Faustina's *Diary*, Church teachings, and important Catholic thinkers to explain the nuances of Divine Mercy.



HOMILIES *from the* NATIONAL SHRINE



Catholic SAINTS

with Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC



SPARKS of MERCY



with
Chris Sparks

This podcast is especially beneficial for listeners new to its message or who want to learn more about the core tenets quickly and thoroughly. “I hope listeners realize the message of Divine Mercy is much more than the beautiful Image, Feast day, or the powerful Chaplet, but rather a spirituality and way of life,” Dr. Thatcher says. Each episode of *Pearls* is like a glistening jewel beaded on a string: The more episodes you listen to, the more complete and beautiful the necklace becomes. *Episodes are 5-9 minutes long.*

Mercy is a fulcrum of our Catholic faith, which Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, explores in ***Explaining the Faith***. In this podcast, taken from his popular Saturday talks, he addresses a wide variety of topics that range from Heaven, Marian apparitions, Noah’s Ark, and forgiveness to Sept. 11, the Crusades, and so many more. Each TED Talk-style episode begins with an intriguing question answered comprehensively and accurately with evidence from Church teaching and the Scriptures. Passionate and engaging, Fr. Chris becomes the wise, entertaining professor you wish you had to keep you awake in your college lecture hall. To see the slides that Fr. Chris references, you can watch the talk on the official Divine Mercy Facebook page. *Episodes are 40-90 minutes long.*

Similarly, you can pan for more podcast gold in the ***Homilies from the National Shrine***, featuring daily and Sunday Masses sermons celebrated at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. These episodes work well as a supplement (not replacement!) for Sunday Mass. If you can’t get to weekday Mass, you can review the liturgical readings on your own and listen to the homily for a daily dose of wisdom from different Marian priests. *Episodes are*

5-25 minutes long.

The Marian podcasts provide fuel for inspiration to live out the message of Divine Mercy. In ***Catholic Saints with Fr. Dan***, Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, tells saint stories to give us, he explains, “reasons to hope as well as tips on how to become the saints we were called to be at Baptism.” To help us strive for holiness, he boils down the virtues unique to each saint that we can emulate while highlighting how human they were, too. When Fr. Dan speaks about his personal connections with these saints, the podcast sounds like you’re having a phone conversation with an old friend. *Episodes are 3-8 minutes long.*

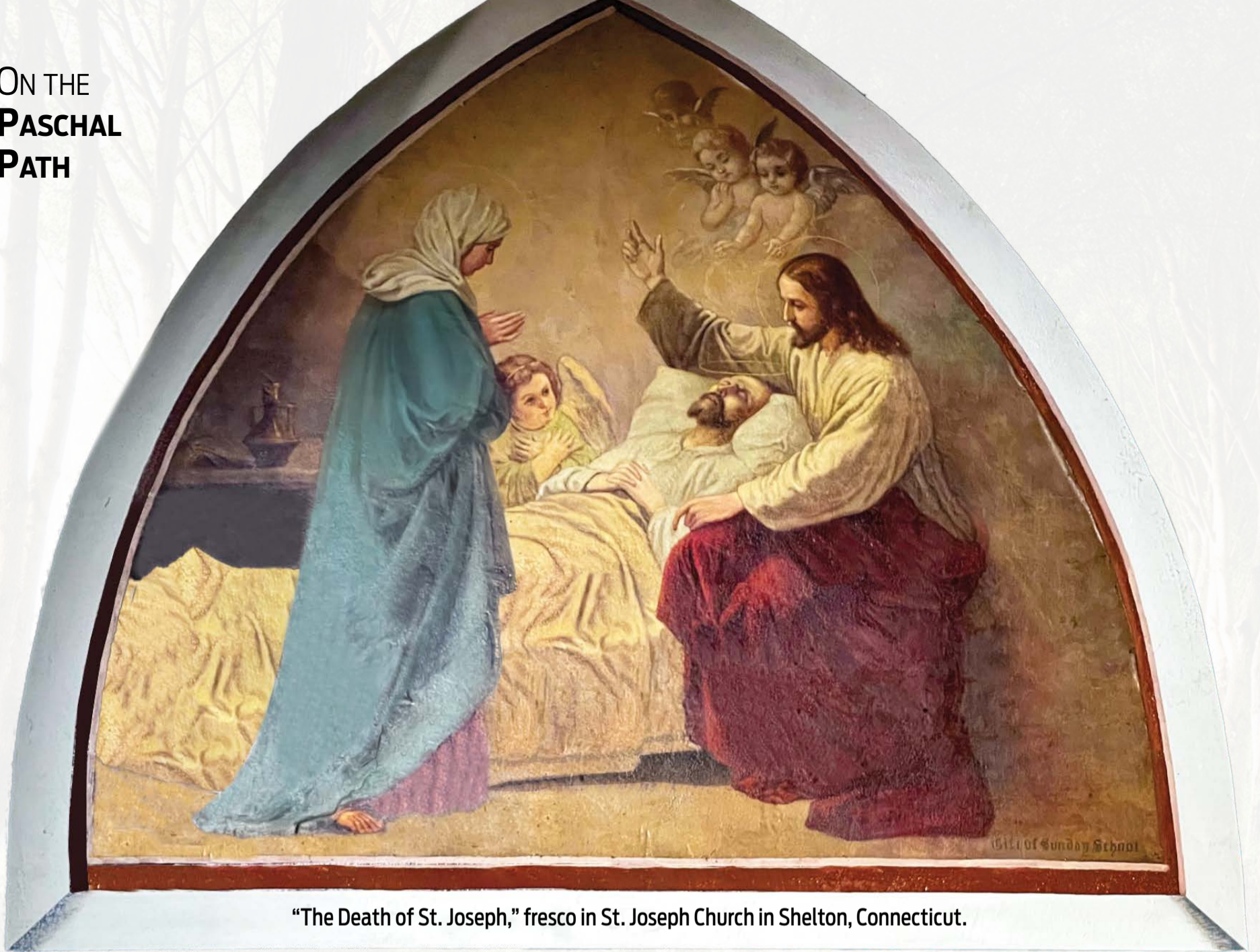
In ***Sparks of Mercy***, conversations with writers, book editors, and readers offer real and down-to-earth wisdom for our spiritual journey. Marian Press senior books editor Chris Sparks asks his guests thought-provoking questions that not only delve into literary content but the lives of “just plain faithful folks.” He says the podcast shares “insights on how to live the love of God in the world, how it leads us to love of neighbor, and the practical, every day, ordinary ways to live that love in the world.” Each episode is meant to ignite a spark (pun intended) that will set your faith life aflame. *Episodes are 40 minutes long.*

Every podcast episode is a prayer, inviting God’s Word into our ears and His presence into our hearts. So pop in your wireless earbuds or sport your 80s-style headphones and listen to these “prayercasts” while you run, shop, wash dishes, or drive. Or simply soak them in with a cup of coffee. Regardless of how or when we listen, let’s fill our lives, not just with tasks, but with the sounds of God’s grace and mercy. Lent is a great time to start. MH

How to listen to the Marian podcasts

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts to access all of the Marian podcasts mentioned in this article, free of charge. You can also search for them on your favorite listening platform, including:

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“The Death of St. Joseph,” fresco in St. Joseph Church in Shelton, Connecticut.

GO TO JOSEPH!

By Dr. Joan M. Kelly

Devotion to St. Joseph is as old as the Catholic Church and has never been stronger, thanks in part to the recently-concluded year-long celebration of the foster father of Jesus. But how much do we know for certain about the husband of the Virgin Mary, patron of the Universal Church?

Not as much as we'd like. Joseph never speaks in Scripture. Mark never mentions Joseph. John refers to Jesus twice as the son of Joseph, and that's it. Our information about St. Joseph comes primarily from Matthew and Luke, the only two Gospels that tell the story of the Incarnation and aftermath. But once Jesus is found in the Temple by His parents, Joseph disappears. We don't know how old he was when

he died a “happy death,” only that it occurred before our Lord's Passion, as Mary is alone at the foot of the Cross. And he has no tomb. Several “relics” purported to be Joseph's are venerated in Italy, including his wedding ring (Perugia), staff (Camaldoli), and cloak (Rome).

For centuries, artists depicted Joseph as a wizened old man, even though the Church has never made a definitive

statement about his age when he was betrothed to Mary. Suffice it to say, as Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, has done, that old men don't walk 40 miles from Bethlehem to Egypt, pulling a donkey with Mary on top carrying a baby. Nor do old men walk 80 miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem and back again for the Roman census.

We can be certain that Joseph was a loyal husband and father, honorable and trustworthy. Despite his royal lineage (as recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel), Joseph didn't complain about his poverty. He had hardships, like all of us have. The flight into Egypt meant that he was a refugee, along with his wife and Son. He labored in his carpenter shop carefully, probably training his Son in the work. He went through the trials of parenthood, with a son being lost. It is interesting and beautiful that, in Italy, Portugal, and Spain, March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, is Father's Day.

Why March 19? As early as the 10th century, the day was thought to be Joseph's birthday. The custom stuck, and in 1570, Pope St. Pius V added the feast to the calendar in his apostolic constitution *Quo primum* ("From the first"), which standardized the Missal for the Latin Church.

Solemnity

As a solemnity (from the Latin *sollemnitatis*, meaning a festival or celebration), March 19 offers a respite from the deprivations of Lent, a reminder of the noble role of St. Joseph in the upbringing of Jesus, in preparation to do His Father's work.

Regarding work, in 1889, Pope Leo XIII wrote the encyclical *Quamquam pluries* ("Though many times"), in which he reaffirmed St. Joseph as the protector and defender of the Church as proclaimed by his predecessor, Pope Blessed Pius IX. Pope Leo consecrated the entire month of March to St. Joseph. At a time of labor unrest and in the face of the disruptive forces of modernity, the pope upheld the dignity of work as a vocation, and identified Joseph as the model for laborers at all levels:

For Joseph, of royal blood, united by marriage to the greatest and holiest of women, reputed the father of the Son of God, passed his life in labor, and won by the

toil of the artisan the needful support of his family. It is, then, true that the condition of the lowly has nothing shameful in it, and the work of the laborer is not only not dishonoring, but can, if virtue be joined to it, be singularly ennobled. Joseph, content with his slight possessions, bore the trials consequent on a fortune so slender, with greatness of soul, in imitation of his Son, who having put on the form of a slave, being the Lord of life, subjected himself of his own free-will to the spoliation and loss of everything.

Similarly, Pope Ven. Pius XII, to counter the spread of Communism, also defended the dignity of work in 1955 when he established the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on "May Day," May 1.

Happy death

What about that "happy death" associated with St. Joseph? In 1920, Pope Benedict XV officially bestowed that title in his motu proprio *Bonum sane* ("Good and healthy"). Affirming the popular belief that Joseph had a "happy" death in the presence of Jesus and Mary —

the desire of us all — the Holy Father called him the "most efficacious protector of the dying" and urged priests to promote "those pious associations instituted to supplicate Joseph in favor of the dying, such as those

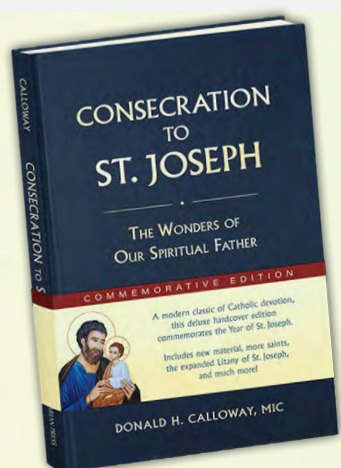
'of a Happy Death,' of the 'Transit of St. Joseph,' and 'for the Dying.'"

In proclaiming the recently-concluded Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis continues the practice of his predecessors in encouraging devotion to the foster father of our Lord. He keeps a statue at his bedside of the sleeping St. Joseph, a reminder of how the angel communicated to Joseph in his dreams. Every night Pope Francis places his own intentions under the statue, praying that maybe he'll be enlightened while sleeping or that prayers will be answered in the morning.

And so, in the words of St. André Bessette, the great champion of St. Joseph, "*Ite ad Joseph!*" Go to Joseph! MH

Joan M. Kelly, DMin, is a professor in the Catholic studies department at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

We invite you to send us your intentions for the St. Joseph Novena. Visit marian.org/b53 to have your intentions remembered.



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WHY IS COMMUNION ‘CLOSED’?

By Chris Sparks

You may have non-Catholic or non-practicing family or friends who’ve gone to Mass at some point, probably for a wedding, funeral, or first Sacraments. At some point, the priest may well have explained that while Catholics in a state of grace are welcome to come up and receive Holy Communion, non-Catholics are welcome to come forward to only receive a blessing.

In other words, your friends or family confronted the issue of “closed Communion.” What is it, and why does the Church do it?

The simplest, bluntest answer is that people who are not “in communion” with the Catholic Church should not take Catholic Communion. If you do not share the Catholic faith or morals, then don’t eat the Eucharist. If you don’t believe in the Real Presence, don’t receive.

Why do people find this offensive? I think because it seems exclusive. It says that not all people are absolutely equal, that some are permitted to take full part in the banquet and others are not. After all, don’t we believe that God welcomes all humanity into His Church?

Scriptural foundation

Everyone is welcome to come to Mass, yes, and everyone is free to become a Catholic. But not even Catholics are always welcome at the table of the Lord. It’s a very simple principle that has a clear Scriptural foundation. Saint Paul teaches:

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying (1 Cor 11:27-30).

Why are Catholics sometimes not supposed to receive Catholic Communion? Because we sometimes fail to meet Paul’s criteria. Sometimes, we are not capable of

“eating the bread or drinking the cup” worthily. We need to go to Confession.

Why? Because we are not alive in Jesus Christ when we are in a state of mortal sin. The Trinity is not dwelling within us, so we are not temples of the Holy Spirit. We are not prepared to receive the Son into ourselves. We need to go to Confession.

People who are not baptized, who don’t believe in the Real Presence, or who are not in the state of grace, are not ready to eat the bread and drink the cup worthily. I’ve had to abstain from receiving Communion repeatedly. Having fallen in one way or another, I am sometimes absolutely unprepared to receive Jesus properly. So I go to Mass, I step aside to let others go up to receive, and I wait until I’ve been to Confession to receive again.



It’s Jesus

But why does the Eucharist matter so much? Again, look at Paul’s words. “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.” The Eucharist is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist *is* Jesus.

Now, does this mean that only people who are practically perfect in every way may receive the Eucharist? No, of course not. Jesus is the Divine Physician — He’s here to heal the sick, not hang out with the healthy. He is the Redeemer — He’s here to help the sinners, not merely spend time with the saints.

Make sure you go to Confession when you are aware that you’ve committed a serious sin (like breaking one of the Ten Commandments or committing one of the Seven Deadly Sins), but don’t be afraid to receive the Eucharist if you’re a baptized Catholic and you’ve done your best to go to Confession when you know you need it. MH

Adapted from “Question 33: How can you still be Catholic when your Church has closed Communion to everyone other than Catholics?” in How Can You Still Be Catholic? 50 Answers to a Good Question (Marian Press; Product Code B53-BCBB). Visit ShopMercy.org/B53 to order.

CONFESSIONS — AND CONVERSION — OF A ‘NEWBIE’

By Dr. Joe McAleer

Are you a “newbie” like me? I have a longstanding devotion to St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy. Three or four times a year, for more years than I can remember, I’ve made a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Every visit was inspiring and restorative, even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic — loved the drive-in Confessions!

I’ve made donations to the Shrine over the years, but I was never an official, full-fledged Marian Helper — until now, after visiting MICPrayers.org to sign up.

Membership benefits

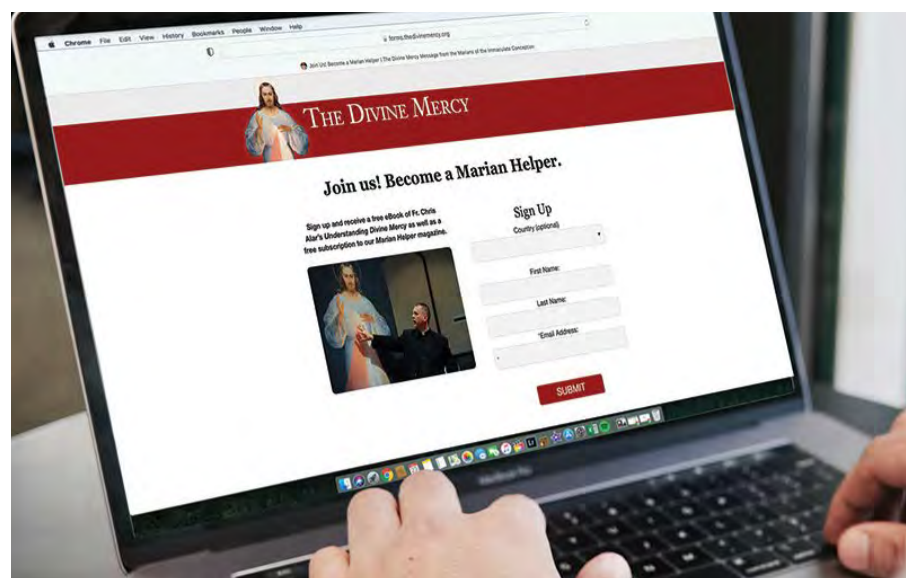
Honestly, I had no idea what I’ve been missing. In fact, I am discovering the benefits of membership every day. Here’s a refresher:

- The Association of Marian Helpers is now in its 81st year and has two million members, united in prayer as one great big spiritual family.
- As a Vatican-approved association, Marian Helpers share in the same graces, prayers, good works, and merits of the Marian priests and brothers.
- Marian Helpers are remembered at Mass every day, as well as on feast days of Christ Our Savior and His Blessed Mother, and in the perpetual Novena to Divine Mercy.
- There’s also a monthly Mass for Marian Helpers on each First Friday and First Saturday, and a Mass offered for deceased members on All Souls Day.

It’s awesome to think that I have a vast army of prayer warriors in my corner, united in our common mission to save souls.

And how about this: In 1936, St. Faustina said that Jesus revealed to her that one day, an association of lay people would exist for the propagation of the devotion of Divine Mercy: “These persons will have a share in all the merits and privileges of the whole [congregation]. Everyone in the world can belong to this group” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1157). The Association of Marian Helpers is divinely inspired!

As the new executive editor of *Marian Helper*, I turned



to a long-time Marian Helper, Gloria Marone of Harrison, New York.

“Spiritual health is as important as physical health,” Gloria insists. “Divine Mercy brings a sense of peace, calm, and comfort that is so desperately needed in this world. I spread the message with everyone I meet.”

Marian Helpers like Gloria and all of you support the work of the Marian Fathers in any way they can. Our vast world-wide mission of evangelization is depends upon your generosity.

Donations from Marian Helpers also support the very future of the Congregation: our seminarians in formation, who are discerning and preparing for a life of service to Christ and His Church.

There’s also support for the National Shrine, which hosts the largest annual Divine Mercy Sunday celebration in North America, televised worldwide on EWTN. And speaking of EWTN, there’s “Living Divine Mercy,” our weekly program that spreads the message of Divine Mercy through lessons and profiles of people who put Divine Mercy spirituality into practice in their daily lives. I hope you’re watching!

The ultimate cause

Obviously, there are costs involved to support these and many more evangelization efforts as well as vocations. That is why we depend on donations from you, our devoted Marian Helpers. And you have responded in droves, because you know the money is put to good use, and for the ultimate cause: the salvation of souls through the message of Divine Mercy, devotion to Mary Immaculate, and prayer for the Holy Souls.

As you can probably tell, I am now a converted Marian Helper, like all of you. Please join me in inviting family members and friends to join our growing spiritual family by visiting MICPrayers.org or by calling 1-800-462-7426.

Let’s keep each other in prayer — newbie or not — as we progress through the penitential season of Lent to the glory of Easter and the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday. MH

TWO SAINTS ON CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

By Chris Sparks

The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it (Gen 2:15).

Saint John Paul II loved to ski. A great outdoorsman, even as pope, he notoriously would sneak away from the Vatican to hit the slopes every so often, leading to some incredible stories of stupefied passersby who recognized (or thought they recognized) the smiling Polish man.

But his love of the outdoors didn't stop there. As a priest, he would take groups of the college students whom he was teaching or serving as chaplain on hikes and camping trips, all of which served as an inspiration when he founded World Youth Days as pope. There are famous pictures of him on those campouts celebrating Mass using an overturned canoe as an altar, with oars lashed together to form a cross.

Salvation from a garden

He knew that nature is more than just decoration in God's creation, but rather a profound part of a healthy human life. We come from a garden (Garden of Eden); our salvation came from a garden (Garden of Gethsemane); and at the end of time, when God is all in all (see 1 Cor 15:28) and the new heavens and the new earth come to be, the tree of life will grow before the throne of God (see Rev 22:1-2).

Creation is the foundation of "all God's saving

plans," the "beginning of the history of salvation" that culminates in Christ (*Catechism*, 280).

Now is that tree of life a symbol of some spiritual reality? Perhaps. But given the resurrection of the dead and the life in the world to come, it sounds like nature in some form will be with us into eternity.

That makes our approach to the environment all the more important, and puts recent concerns of the Holy Father, bishops, and world leaders in perspective. After all, we weren't set loose in the world without any sort of responsibility for it. At the beginning of human history, we were created in a garden, and mankind was given the task of tending and keeping it.

How well we respond to that responsibility has a real impact on our eternal destiny, especially since the created order was given to all of humanity for all time, not just us or our present generation. We have received the world from those who came before us, and we are stewards of it now, not masters, who in time will have to turn it over to the next generation. Just as the Church must carefully maintain and preserve the fullness of the faith, handing on faithfully what she has received, so too must we all be responsible caretakers of another piece of



Divine Revelation, of the created world, the great work of art by the greatest Artist.

The right to private property, acquired or received in a just way, does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind. The *universal destination of goods* remains primordial, even if the promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise (*Catechism, 2403*).

We are certainly given the created order for use, as a source of food and the other necessities of life. But our use must be sustainable. We must be stewards so that we do not use the last of everything, but rather maintain our inheritance in good condition for it to be passed on to the next set of heirs, to our brothers and sisters to come. Further, as with all our talents and treasures, we are given them as members of a common human family and the Mystical Body of Christ. We are meant to be sharing the gifts of God with our brethren.

Saintly steward

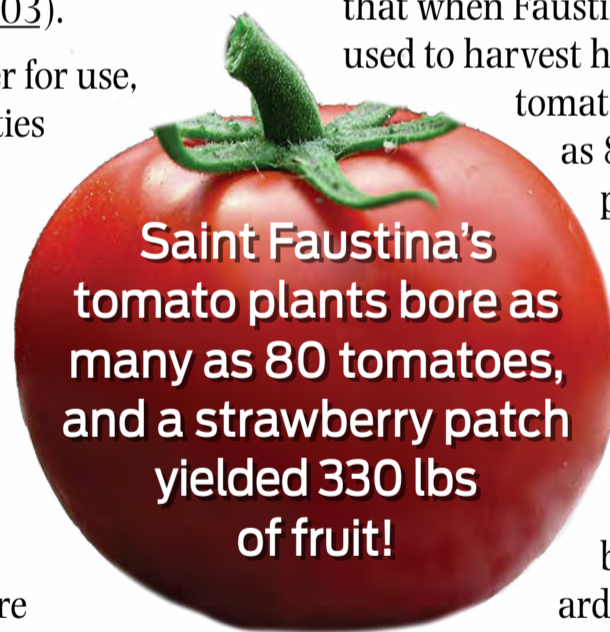
Saint Faustina shows us the way.

Among her many duties, she served for a time as the gardener in the convents where she was assigned, tending and keeping vegetable and fruit gardens that helped put food on the table for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and their wards. Because she was a good steward — indeed, a

saintly steward — the created world responded remarkably well to her work. Though the work was hard, St. Faustina was incredibly successful (perhaps even supernaturally so). As Ewa Czackowska, in her book *Faustina: The Mystic & Her Message*, recounts:

[D]espite her declining physical strength, the results of her work were astonishing. Sister Clementine recalled that when Faustina worked in the garden, the nuns used to harvest huge amounts of cucumbers and

tomatoes. Some tomato plants bore as many as 80 tomatoes, and a small strawberry patch yielded 150 kilograms of fruit daily. [That translates to 330 pounds of fruit!]



We often think man must conquer nature to make it fruitful. Saint John Paul II would say all creation is a gift, received without cost, to be welcomed with gratitude and stewarded well, taking what we need and returning the first fruits to God as an act of thanksgiving and praise. Saint Faustina shows us how fruitful that spirituality of gift and gratitude is in practice.

Let us study the Church's teaching on our rights and responsibilities as children of God in the garden He has created, prioritizing obedience to Christ and His Church over political considerations. As we enter Lent, let us give thanks for the gifts of God and generously share them with our neighbors, being good stewards, trusting in His ongoing provision.

MH



Provincial Superior, Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, congratulates the newest Marian priest.

FATHER MATTHEW TOMENY, MIC, IS ORDAINED!



Father Matthew Tomeny, MIC, is ordained.



Father Matthew's first Mass.



During the Ordination Mass, Deacon Matthew prostrates himself, a sign of overwhelming humility before the call to priesthood.

On a crisp December morning, on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, Fr. Matthew Tomeny, MIC, was ordained to the priesthood for the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

The Most Rev. F. Richard Van Handel Spencer, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, was the main celebrant and ordaining bishop. Father Matthew is a lieutenant (junior grade) in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a chaplain candidate. He will be called to active duty as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy after three years of priestly ministry.

Joining a large group of Marian priests, brothers, and seminarians were Fr. Matthew's parents, Dr. Patrick and Nelly Tomeny, along with eight of his nine siblings, assorted relatives, and friends.

"Today you are to be configured as Christ, the Eternal Priest," Bishop Spencer said in his homily. "Let your teachings be nourishment for the People of God. Let your holiness of life be a pleasing fragrance for Christ's faithful, so that you may build up by word and example the House which is the Church of God. Keep always before you the example of the Good Shepherd, who did not come to be served but to serve, and who came to seek and to save what was lost."

Father Matthew celebrated his first Mass the following day, Dec. 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Father Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers, was the homilist.

In thanking Dr. Patrick and Nelly Tomeny for the gift of their son, Fr. Chris also paid tribute to Marian Helpers for their prayers and support of vocations, sparking a genuine renewal of the priesthood. "This is what it's all about," he said. "This is why you support the Marian Fathers. This is why you are part of the Marian family.

"Jesus told St. Faustina, **'To priests who proclaim and extol My mercy, I will give wondrous power; I will anoint their words and touch the hearts of those to whom they will speak'** (*Diary*, 1521)," Fr. Chris concluded. "We need priests to proclaim the Divine Mercy of Jesus, and that is the priest I know you will be, Fr. Matthew."

Father Matthew, who is currently serving at our Marian parishes in Illinois, St. Mary's in Plano and St. Patrick's in Yorkville, credits his parents for setting a good example, gathering their 10 children every night to pray the Rosary before the Divine Mercy image.

"What Fr. Patrick Peyton, CSC, said is absolutely true: 'The family that prays together, stays together,'" he said.



As a symbol of his obedience to the bishop and his successors, Deacon Matthew places his hands inside those of Bishop Spencer.



Father Matthew consecrates the bread and wine during his first Mass on Dec. 28.



Father Chris Alar, MIC, delivered the homily at Fr. Matthew's first Mass.



The proud Tomeny family: parents Dr. Patrick and Nelly, with Fr. Matthew and eight of his nine siblings.



Marian priests, brothers, and seminarians join Fr. Matthew for a family photo after his first Mass.



WE'RE INVITED TO A FAMILY MEETING

By Chris Sparks

The household of God is confronting a whole slew of issues, so the Holy Father has called a family meeting — and we're all invited to take part.

How? Well, the Catholic Church is trying something out. It's called "synodality," and as [Marian Helpers](#), we're already well prepared to participate.

The Church is inviting the whole people of God to take part in "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." This "synod on synodality" formally convened on Oct. 9, 2021, and anticipates a Synod of Bishops in October 2023. According to Pope Francis, "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium."

The *Modern Catholic Dictionary* by Servant of God Fr. John Hardon, SJ, explains that a synod is "An assembly of ecclesiastics, not necessarily all bishops, gathered together under ecclesiastical authority to discuss and decide on matters pertaining to doctrine, discipline, or liturgy under their jurisdiction."

At its heart, "synodality" means the members of the Body are all connected, all communicating with one another, so as to ensure that each is receiving what each needs for the life and the good of all. Think, for instance, of the pain you feel if your foot has broken bones. The pain isn't just confined to your foot. It affects the whole body — how you move, what you do, and what action you

take. If your foot was hurt and not transmitting that pain to the whole body, you could well destroy it by continuing to act as if the wound wasn't there.

Health and growth

The same thing holds true for the Mystical Body of Christ. All the members, the local and regional churches, have our own blessings and burdens, strengths and weaknesses. Getting everyone communicating and listening to each other is indispensable for the health and growth of the Mystical Body of Christ.

This rather unique preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops is in some ways a new thing, and like all new things, may or may not work the way it's intended. But as St. John Paul II said to us repeatedly when he was alive and serving as pope, "Be not afraid!" He also told us, "Put out into the deep!" The Church in the widest reaches of the world is alive and growing; the Church in the West in many places is dying. Given that state of ecclesial emergency, drastic measures may be required to save some of the Body's limbs, frostbitten by the arctic winds of error, atheism, and modern materialism. We are called to have courage and take risks in the service of Christ and His Church. So this synod and synodal path are well worth trying.

The heart of the idea of a synod, of an ecclesial gathering to pray, discuss, and discern about some issue in the life of the Church, is simply being present and listening to each other. We've been practicing for just this sort of event in the life of the Church every time we go to Eucharistic Adoration. We've been taught how to recognize the presence of Jesus in the most unlikely or unrecognizable of places — under the appearance of bread, or in the face of our neighbor. We've been taught how to listen, how to open ourselves to the movement of the Holy Spirit, how to place ourselves in the presence of God and be still. We've been taught to search the Scriptures and to be attentive to the teaching of the Church, even when that teaching

seems hard or impossible.

By living the love of God, we are also being trained to love what God loves — our neighbor; our neighborhood; ourselves; the whole world; the whole Church. We are trained by our love of God to see the face of Jesus in the Eucharist, in the poor, in our fellow Catholics, in the clergy, in all the most likely and unlikely of places. We are trained for the sort of family meeting that is the upcoming synod — the whole Church communicating amongst its members, finding out what hurts where and setting out to do something about it.

Who is being fed, and who is not? Who is well, and who is ill? Why? Where does the Body have problems, and where is the Body strong?

And what can the dying members of the Body learn from the parts of the Church that are alive and growing?

The merciful gaze

Listening and being present, all out of love. We should be ready to take part in this, we who have practiced Eucharistic Adoration and the Divine Mercy spirituality that reached the world

through St. Faustina and St. John Paul II. Listening and being present to God and neighbor is the spirituality of the merciful gaze, and of compassion, of "suffering with" the Crucified Christ and our needy neighbor — then doing something about it.

So, as Marian Helpers and faithful Catholics, we join the rest of the Church on this journey into synodality ahead of the synod. Let's listen to our neighbors and be willing to share some of our treasures, such as our love of Divine Mercy, the importance of Mary Immaculate in our lives and our prayer, and the need to pray for the Holy Souls. Let's be honest about our struggles, either with our own faith and doubts, or with the doubts of family or friends. Let's make sure the whole Church hears where God's grace reaches us and where the wounds are, all in the service of Christ and His Church, all for the salvation of souls.

Visit USCCB.org/Synod to learn more.



Let's listen to our neighbors and be willing to share some of our treasures, such as our love of Divine Mercy, the importance of Mary Immaculate in our lives and our prayer, and the need to pray for the Holy Souls.

Giving everything to the Lord, in song

By Marian Friedrichs

When Walter Burke was a young man, he took up a challenge with God. Father John Randell, a priest who ran a prayer meeting Walter attended in Providence, Rhode Island, said one day, “God will never be outdone in generosity.”

“God,” Walter thought, “I’m going to outdo you. It’s on.”

Decades later, Walter admits he lost that challenge and Fr. Randell was right. God’s patient, pursuing, unlimited love has been a refrain running constantly through Walter’s life.

Born in 1951 to Walter and Anne Burke, Walter was one of 10: five boys and five girls. Poor in money, the Burkes were rich in their faith and generous with their love.

Trust in Mary

When Walter was five years old, he pushed his little sister out of the way of an oncoming bus and was hit himself. Walter spent several weeks in the intensive care unit, not expected to live. Even after he was moved to a regular hospital bed, the Burkes were told that their son would most likely never walk again. They commended little Walter to Our Lady and vowed to buy a grand statue of her if their son was healed.

It was a widow’s-mite gesture, for the Burkes did not have money to spare. But they placed their trust in the Queen of Heaven, and she did not disappoint them. Walter made a full recovery, and the Burkes managed to buy a large and beautiful statue of Mary, which now stands in Walter’s own backyard.

“Her protection,” he says, “has continued for my entire life.”

Walter Burke, Sr., was a church organist, and the whole family loved music. For young Walter, singing provided special solace because he stuttered when he spoke, as did two of his siblings. But “you don’t stutter when you sing,” so when a sibling proposed, “Let’s sing!” one evening after family prayers, he happily joined in. Their father was struck by the beauty of the children’s voices and began volunteering them to perform



The Burke Family Singers' first album, 1964: Walter is seated at right.



Jimmy Durante was the emcee for the Burke Family Singers' sold-out concert at the Boston Garden in 1962.



Anne Burke (right) greets Pope St. John Paul II.



Karen and Walter Burke today.

at Church events, Catholic schools, and local hospitals. At one children's hospital, a talent agent heard the family sing and asked to represent them. Thus began the professional career of the "Burke Family Singers."

Fame and fortune

From 1959 until 1972, the Burkes lifted their voices together. They appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and the *Tonight Show*; live performance venues included Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, the New York World's Fair, and the Trapp Family Lodge. The Burkes' sold-out concert at Boston Garden was emceed by Jimmy Durante. Through God-given talent and hard work, the family was lifted from poverty and moved to a more spacious home in Providence.

Still, despite Our Lady's intercession for him as a child, his family's piety, and the many hours he spent singing sacred music, Walter struggled with his faith. As a teen, he questioned God's existence. He was frequently involved in fist fights whenever teased about his stutter. Once again, Heaven stepped in.

One Friday evening, Walter and his brother Peter decided to hitchhike to a high school dance. They split up, as it was easier for one boy to find a ride than two. Walter was picked up by a man who "was on fire with the Lord." Not wanting to reveal his stutter, Walter did not say much but listened

helplessly to this stranger telling him how much Jesus loved him. When the driver invited Walter to a prayer meeting at the nearby La Salette Shrine, Walter tried to say no but could not get the word out. After struggling to respond, he finally said, "Yes" without difficulty.

At the prayer meeting, Walter was stunned to run into Peter, who had been picked up by a different driver also headed to the Shrine. The brothers sat down together. Walter closed his eyes and prayed, "Lord, if you are real, prove it to me now." A few moments later, Walter recalls, "I just burst out crying ... It was the most amazing love that I have ever felt in my life. I knew it was Jesus."

Opening his eyes, Walter saw Peter in tears, too. "Did you feel that?" Peter asked. Walter never doubted God's existence again.

After that night, Walter knew he was called to evangelize and trusted God to help him overcome his stutter. He did. Walter formed prayer groups for young people, including one in prison and one that grew into the hundreds for Sacred Heart Parish in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, where he lived in the rectory for a time while discerning a possible religious vocation. After realizing that God was not calling him to the priesthood, Walter settled into a career at a home for troubled boys called St. Aloysius, where he worked for 25 years.

Through his sister Anne, Walter met his future wife, Karen. They raised four sons together in a home as devout as the one in which Walter grew up. After St. Aloysius closed, Walter became director of parks and recreation for Bristol, Rhode Island, from which he retired. He and Karen, now married 46 years, are expecting their second grandchild.

'Not to Us, Lord'

Walter and Karen made their first pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Dec. 8, 2021, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception — and Karen's birthday. Walter credits his wife's deep and longstanding devotion to St. Faustina and the

Divine Mercy for his own interest. "Together we are trying to spread St. Faustina's message," he says.

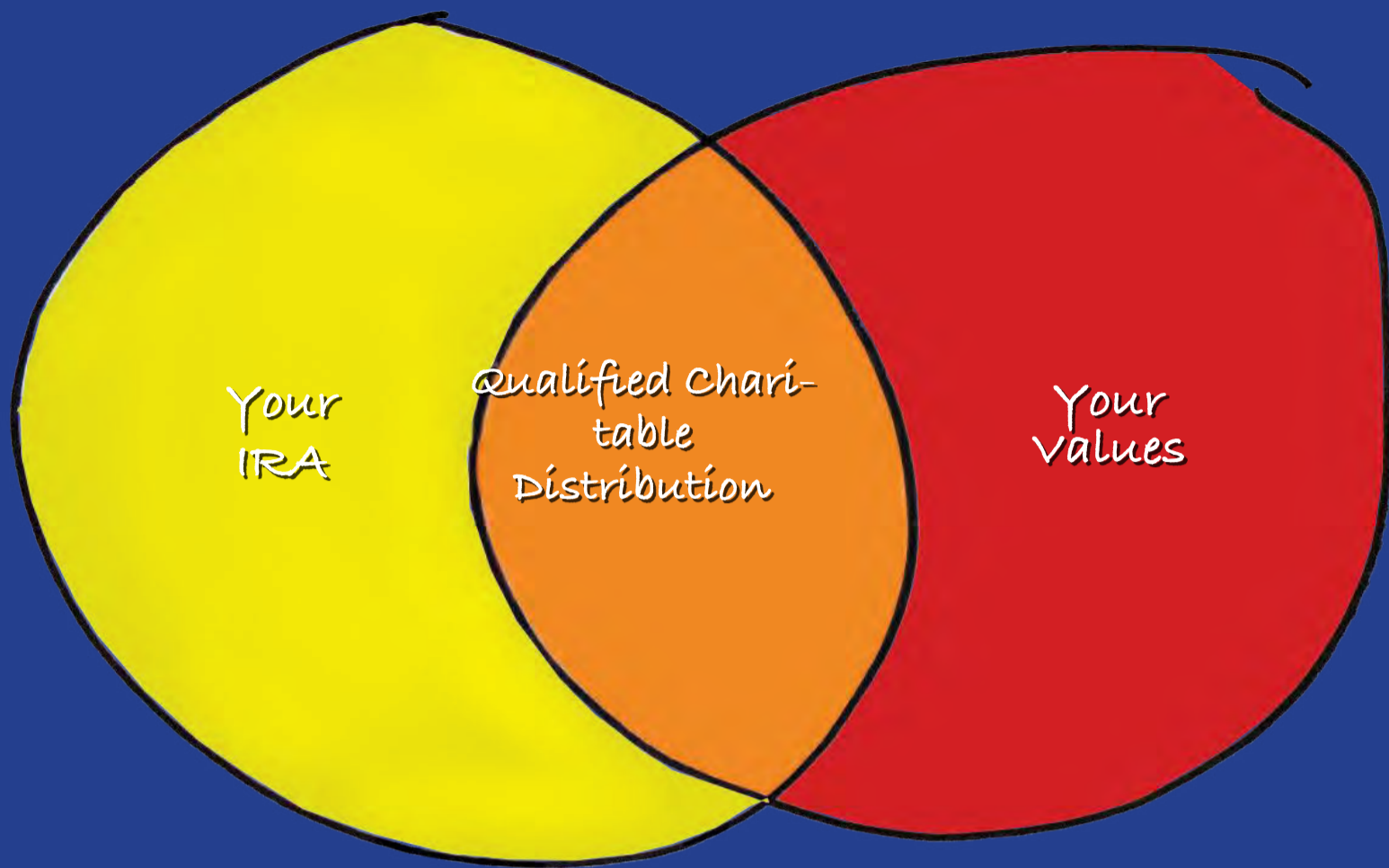
Reflecting on his life's journey, Walter recognizes "it was always the Lord ... taking care of me." He remembers the hymn with which his family opened every performance: "*Non Nobis, Domine*" ("Not to Us, Lord"), in which the singer assigns all glory and honor to God.

"I believe," says Walter, "from all those thousands of concerts, we got the blessing of giving everything to the Lord" — that same Lord Who will never be outdone in generosity. "There were so many miracles. I'm just waiting for the next thing to happen."

MH

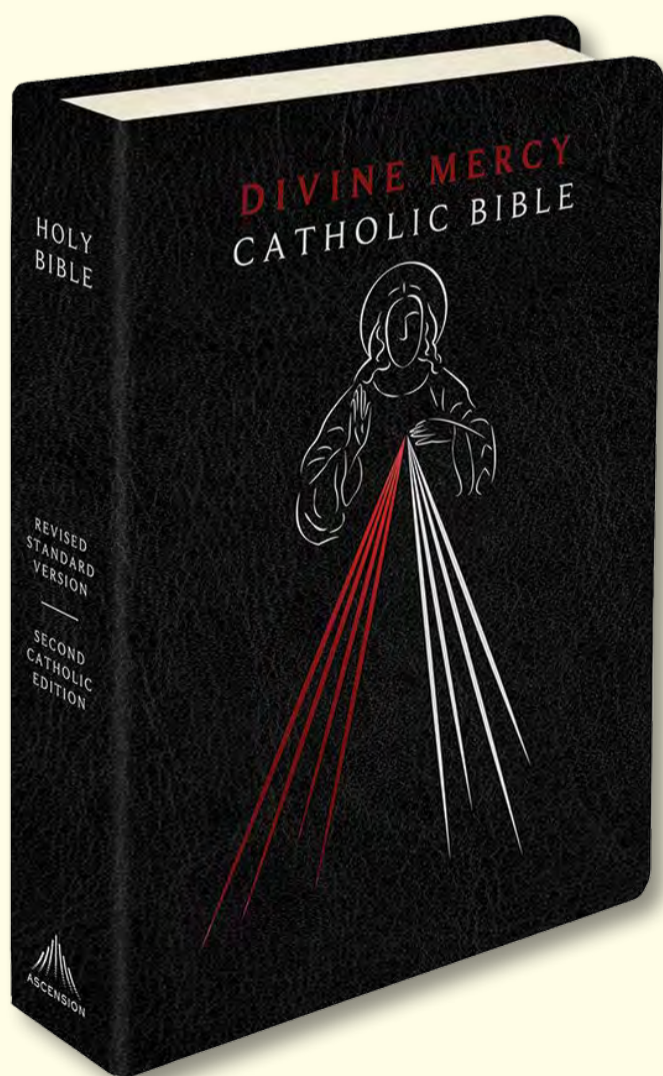


The statue of Mary purchased by Walter's parents in thanksgiving for his healing.



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GIVE MERCY, RECEIVE MERCY



Ann Marie visits the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy frequently. “The Marian Fathers were always part of our family,” she explains. “My mother and grandmother were Marian Helpers. They loved the Blessed Virgin and loved supporting a congregation that followed her model.”

In the same spirit, Ann Marie says, “I know how hard the priests work. They feed us so that we can be an extension of their mission.

“I support the Marian seminarians with a monthly gift. It may sound strange, but each time I see the charge on my bank statement, my heart soars! They will be the priests of tomorrow who will bring the Eucharist.”

Through the Marians, and especially through Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, of happy memory, Ann Marie developed a special bond with St. Faustina. Fr. Seraphim once told her, “You may never know the impact of sharing Divine Mercy, but when you share it, the gift will be returned to you.”

Ann Marie has had many experiences of this, including this one.

“I knew they were short-staffed at the hospital where I worked, so I agreed to work an extra shift. As I started that evening, I overheard some of the other nurses talking about getting some help for a young patient who was pregnant. I realized that they were going to refer her to Planned Parenthood for an abortion.

“I felt trepidation as I approached her room, but I remembered St Faustina, when she shared with Jesus that she felt unequal to her task ahead, and Jesus said, **‘Do as much as is in your power, and don’t worry about the rest. ...Be at peace so long as you do all that is in your power’** (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1295). I then asked St. Faustina to help me to know the right time to listen and the right time to speak. The young woman noticed the cross I was wearing and said, ‘I used to be Catholic.’”

As they continued to talk, Ann Marie learned that the mother felt pressure from the staff to get an abortion because she was poor and at a real low point in her life. “She said, ‘I want to keep this baby but the other nurses

said that it would be too hard for me so they are probably right.’ She had been estranged from her family. Her sister and mother reached out to her but she was too embarrassed to talk to them. We spoke about God’s mercy. I offered to place the phone call for her. When I returned, the young woman had a radiant smile. She told me, ‘I called my sister who forgave me and loves me. She called my mother and they are picking me up in the morning to take me home. They will help me with the baby!’ Praise be to God.”

Several years later, after a day at work that left her tired and frustrated, Ann Marie visited the Adoration Chapel at her parish. She recalls, “I was desperate for affirmation that my work was meaningful at all.

“I noticed two people who were there: One was wearing scrubs and was kneeling in prayer. The other, who was sitting in the back, approached me with a radiant smile and said that she was doing very well and wanted to show me a photograph of her child. She said, ‘You are the best. You turned my life around. I am so proud that you can see me like this.’

“And there was more. I then apologized to the adorer in the front for carrying on a conversation in the chapel. Her reply was another gift: ‘I think God sent you. I’m in nursing school and I was going to quit. Now I know that I will be able to help people. I want to be a nurse.’ Thank you, St. Faustina!”

In order to help the Marian Fathers continue spreading devotion to Mary and Divine Mercy, Ann Marie has also included a gift in her will. Mercy endures forever, and it changes lives!

I would be delighted to speak with you about arranging a monthly gift or a gift in your will or other estate plans.



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

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GRACES RECEIVED

The miracle of a granddaughter

I want to share the story of an angel born Aug. 21, 2021, because of a plea for the help and intercession of Bl. George.

My son and daughter-in-law had been trying to have a baby for four years. They had been to multiple physicians, endured operations, therapies, comments, and speculations, and through each frustration wondered more and more if they were worthy to be parents.

In September of 2020, I began praying every morning to Bl. George and requesting through his intercession the gift of a baby for my family.

By Thanksgiving, it looked as if pregnancy was highly unlikely. I, of course, had no clue and just kept praying and asking Bl. George for his assistance.

It was late Christmas morning when my son and daughter-in-law arrived for the day. They asked if we would open their gifts for us first and handed us a little red box that contained a pacifier. They were expecting!

With odds so slim, there is little medical explanation for why this beautiful baby girl was born. When I looked at Bl. George's picture on the day of her birth, I was certain he was smiling.

— JR, Wilmington, North Carolina

I found the perfect job for me

Since early October, I had been unemployed when my contract job expired. I had applied for many opportunities,

often several a day, without success.

One morning, I glanced at the recent *Marian Helper* magazine and noticed a letter in "Graces Received" that told of people who had prayed to Bl. George for employment. So I offered the prayer printed on the page. Upon saying the last words of the prayer, my phone rang. It was a job recruiter. The young man was insistent that I apply for this position. He expressed unusual confidence that the job was perfect for me. We spoke for only 10 minutes.

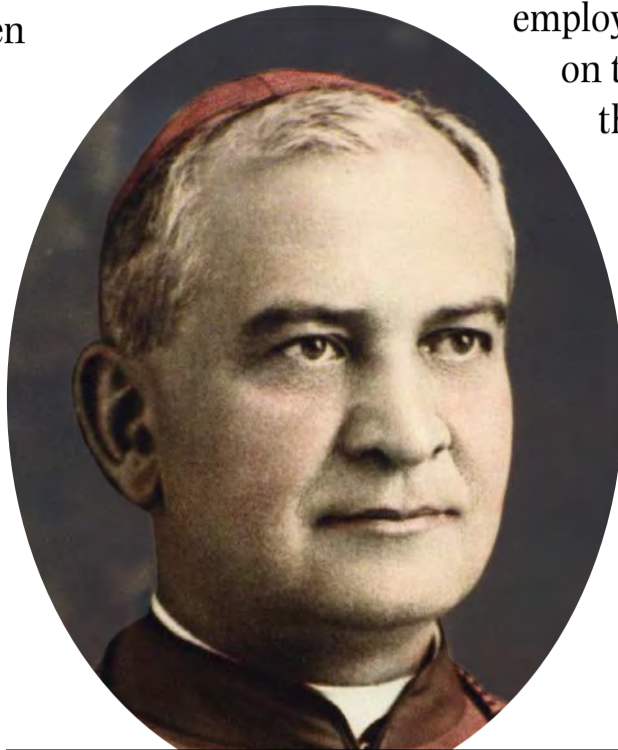
When I hung up, the thought came in my mind: "This is the job I'll get." I was even a little troubled with how powerful and direct the results of the prayer had been.

As a couple of weeks passed, I even had to cancel an interview with that company, but they calmly rescheduled. And sure enough, I am now employed by that very same company. Work hours begin late enough that I will be able to attend Mass in the mornings.

After being graced by multiple little miracles, I now encourage others to turn to Bl. George for help.

Thank you, Bl. George!

— WB, Rochester, New York



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

For a Bl. George prayercard (B53-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 ...

ShopMercy Exclusives



Marian Helper Tote Bag

The new and exclusive Marian Helper tote bag! This roomy tote has plenty of pockets to keep you organized, and a zippered closure to keep your things safe. Sturdy polyester construction will stand up to frequent use. Purple and grey print. Bag imprint reads, "Do not fear or be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9). 18 3/4" x 14" x 4 1/2". **B53-TMHG \$12.95**

National Shrine of The Divine Mercy Stained-Glass Window Scarf

The rose window that dominates the front of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy becomes wearable art in the form of this beautiful scarf. Vivid colors complement the classic stained-glass design. A gentle reminder of God's mercy each time you put it on. Made of a cotton/poly blend. Measures 23" x 74".

B53-SCRF \$14.95



Chaplet of Divine Mercy Stylus Banner Pen

This stylus and pen combo includes an insert that pulls out and retracts to reveal the classic Divine Mercy Image on one side and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy on the other. The barrel reads, "Jesus, I Trust in You" and features a comfort grip. A convenient way to keep your favorite prayers with you at all times. Writes in blue ink.

B53-BANN \$4.95



Divine Mercy & L'Innocence Double-Sided Garden Flag

This attractive garden flag beautifully adorns any yard or landscape. It features the Divine Mercy Image on one side and the popular Bouguereau "L'Innocence" on the other. Reminds you and all who visit your home to place their trust in our Lord and Our Lady. Measures 12" x 18" with a 1" rod pocket for hanging. Stake not included.

B53-FLAG \$16.95

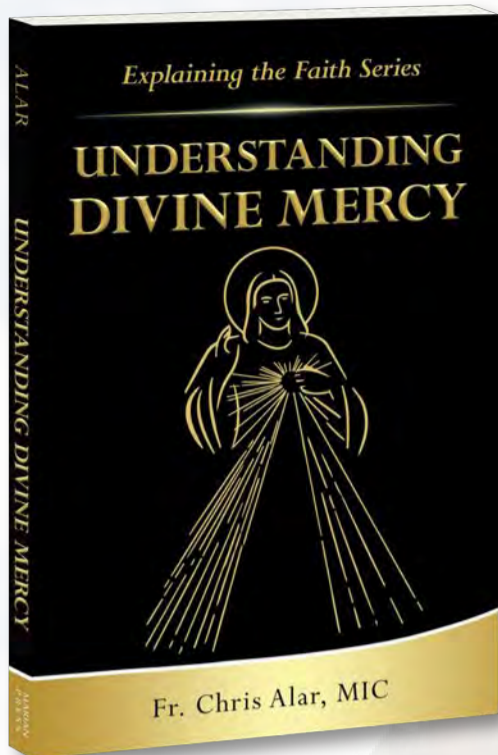


'Pray, Hope & Don't Worry' Cooler Bag

Features an inspiring quote from St. Padre Pio to remind yourself and others to pray, hope, and not worry. The large zippered and insulated main compartment allows you to pack everything you need and then some! Front slash pocket and 31" handles allow for easy and comfortable transportation. Measures 8" x 15" x 22".

B53-CBYA \$24.95

Prepare for Divine Mercy Sunday



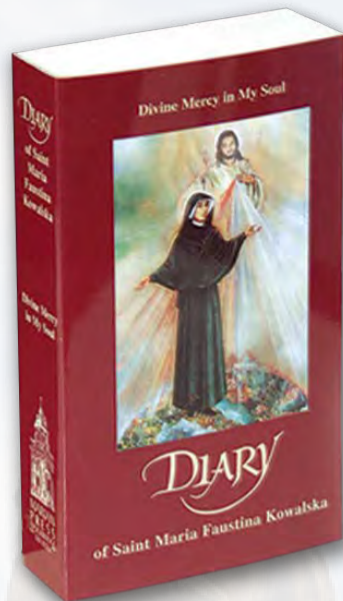
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Understanding Divine Mercy

The entire Divine Mercy message and devotion is summarized in one easy-to-read book! Explaining the teaching of Jesus Christ as given to St. Faustina, *Understanding Divine Mercy* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, has it all. Written in his highly conversational and energetic style, this first book in his *Explaining the Faith* series will deepen your love for God and help you understand why Jesus called Divine Mercy "mankind's last hope of salvation." Paperback, 167 pages. **B53-EFBK \$14.95**

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Our most popular pocket-size handbook on Divine Mercy covers every aspect of the message and devotion. By Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, with Vinny Flynn and Robert A. Stackpole, STD. 88 pages.

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Divine Mercy Explained

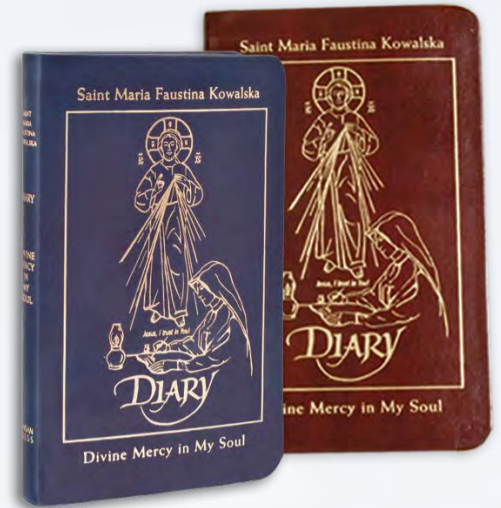
This booklet by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, gives you a brief and easy-to-understand introduction to the Divine Mercy message and devotion. It includes the full prayers of the Divine Mercy Novena and St. Faustina's Litany to Divine Mercy, as well as two bonus appendices: Divine Mercy prayers and Divine Mercy wisdom from Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. 67 pages. **B53-DMX \$3.99**



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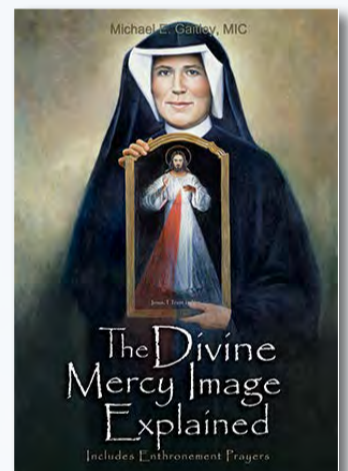
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The Divine Mercy Image Explained

This booklet by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, reveals hidden gems and highlights inspiring truths about the Divine Mercy Image. Also includes instructions on how to enthrone the Image in your home, an enthrone prayer, and two bonus appendices. 72 pages.

B53-DMIX \$3.99

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Marian Helpers Bulletin

Vol. 1 — No. 1

January, 1947

Foreword:-

Dear Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord!

At the last meeting of the Director of the Association, Superior and House Counsel, it was decided to send out quarterly to the Members of the Association of Marian Helpers a Bulletin or "gossip sheet". Its purpose is to keep you informed about what goes on here at the Novitiate, our plans, our mission work, our successes and failures, etc. You, by your membership are an active and integral part of our Community. It is only fitting then, that you should know of the immense good your support does.

There is no charge for this Bulletin. It will be mailed to you freely four times a year. We hope you will find it a welcomed "letter from your friends back here at the Novitiate". We are very anxious to have you interested in us and in what we do. Please do not hesitate to write us your criticisms or to keep us informed about yourself.

IN RETROSPECT

As we look back over the past year we are amazed at the way in which the Provident Hand of God guided the Association and increased its membership. You are 2000 strong now! But let's not sit on our laurels! The "harvest is indeed great, but the laborers few". That means that, like Christ, we have to go out and look for laborers. Our goal for the coming year - to have every present member send in *at least one new member!* Can we do it? Of course we can! But, like the Apostles of old we have to go out and find them and bring them in.

SUMMER 1946

During the summer months the peace and quiet of Eden Hill were shattered by the shrill and jubilant voices of youth! We had 16 boys - all students and future priests in the Congregation - here for



the summer months. There was a varied summer program that included a little of study, some work and a good deal of play. I believe what the boys enjoyed most was their weekly outing and fishing trip on one of the nearby mountain lakes.

Marian Helpers Bulletin, the precursor of *Marian Helper*, made its debut 75 years ago as a one-pager, published quarterly. By January 1947, the Association of Marian Helpers was just three years old with some 2,000 members. As you can read here, the Marian Fathers felt the need for a "gossip sheet" to keep Marian Helpers "informed about what goes on here at the Novitiate, our plans, our mission work, our successes and failures, etc. You, by your membership are an active part of our Community. It is only fitting, then, that you know of the immense good your support does."

The first edition was well-received, judging from the reaction printed in the second edition in April 1947. "Not enough of it!" was the chief objection. Patience, please! Rome was not built in a day. Your cooperation and zeal in promoting Christ's cause by prayer and getting new members will decide the size of this publication."

Indeed they did. *Marian Helpers Bulletin* grew in size and format over the years, transitioning from black-and-white to color and adding photos and illustrations. The name was simplified to *Marian Helper* in the Summer 2001 edition.

Seventy-five years and 300 issues strong, the promise made to the now two million Marian Helpers in the U.S. by *Marian Helper* remains the same today as that made in our very first edition: "We hope you will find it a welcomed 'letter from your friends here at the Novitiate.'"

MH

Live the call!



Ms. Sharon Bisco, Marian Helper:

My love for the Blessed Mother drew me to the Association of Marian Helpers after my mother died from cancer. Through them I learned about Divine Mercy and the wonderful work the Marian priests do. As a member of the Marian family, I continuously ask for their prayers and intercession and have received comfort and many blessings. My support for the Marian seminarians and priests is my small contribution for their work continuing well into the future.

Brother Alex, MIC:

When I was discerning, I was attracted to the Marians' charism of praying for the dead. It was something that I grew up doing and understood the importance of. There was such a sense of peace and joy when I visited on a retreat. I had a strong sense from God that this is where I belonged, and this is where He wanted me to be. I continue my journey through God's grace and the support of friends and family. Also knowing that so many of our benefactors are praying for me and supporting me in so many ways is both inspiring and humbling. I want to give my life to the community and to God, so I can be of some use to the world.

Attend a retreat

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

More retreats will be coming soon. Visit marian.org/vocations for more information.

Learn more

Email: vocations@marian.org
Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806
Visit: marian.org/vocations

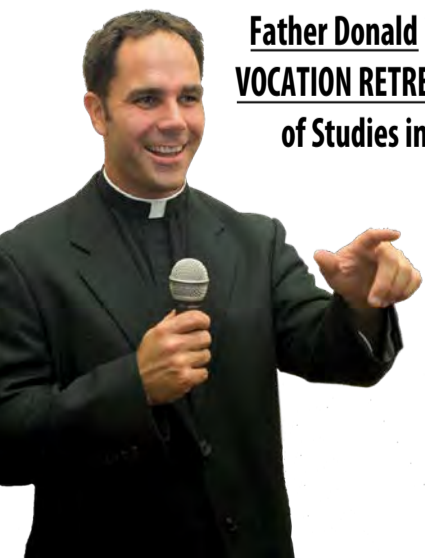
**Write: Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC
Vocation Director
Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception
350 Belleview Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952**

Support

Want to help the seminarians?

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

To donate, visit marian.org/give/seminarians or call 1-800-462-7426.



Listening to Jesus

Daily Meditations from Ash Wednesday
through Divine Mercy Sunday

“Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). Offering easy-to-read, brief meditations for each day from Ash Wednesday through to Divine Mercy Sunday, *Listening to Jesus*, the 2022 Lenten devotional from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, will equip you to make your Lenten pilgrimage a truly transformative experience. 64 pages.
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