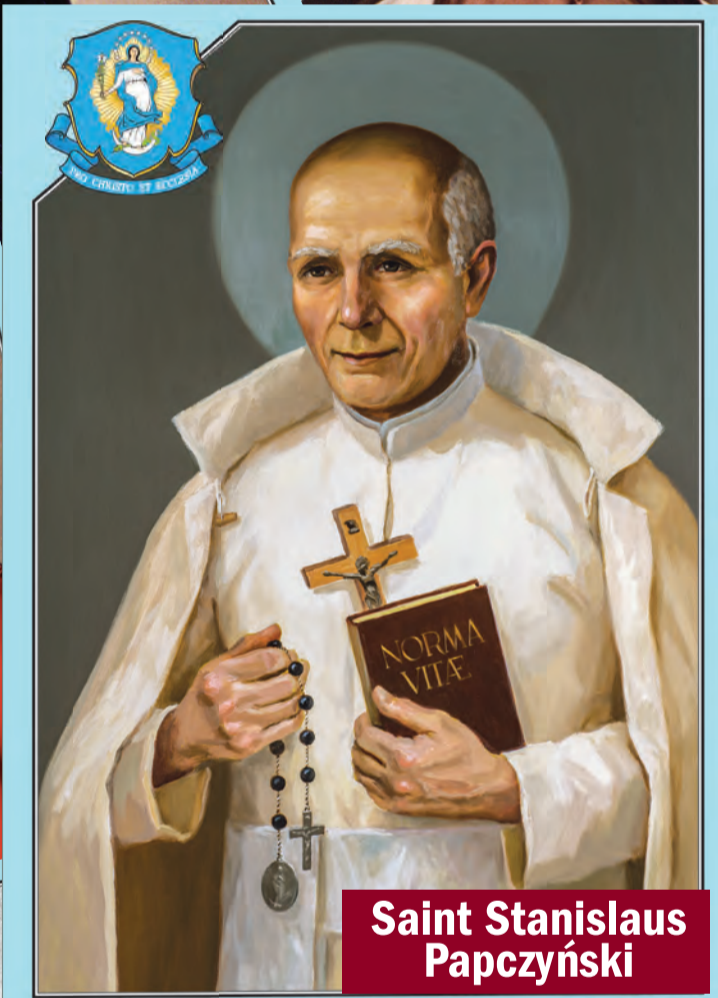
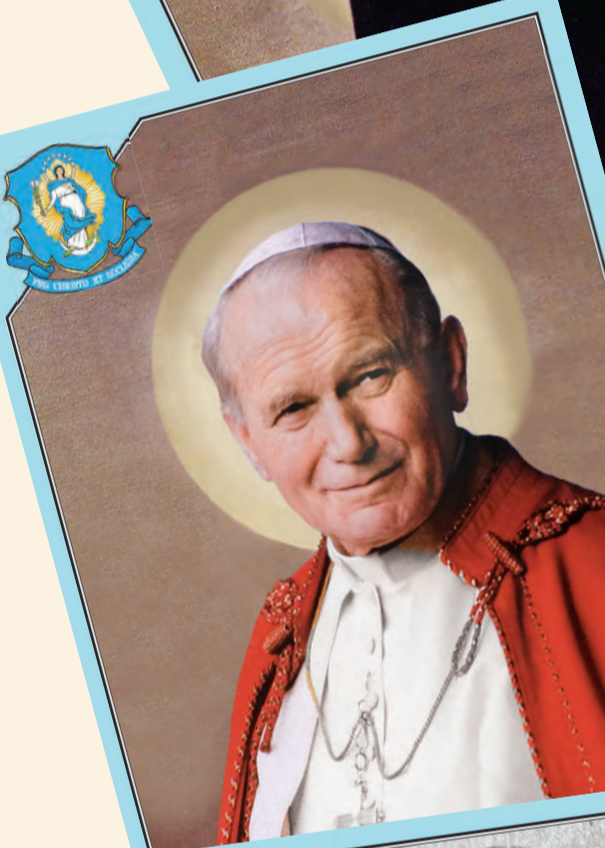
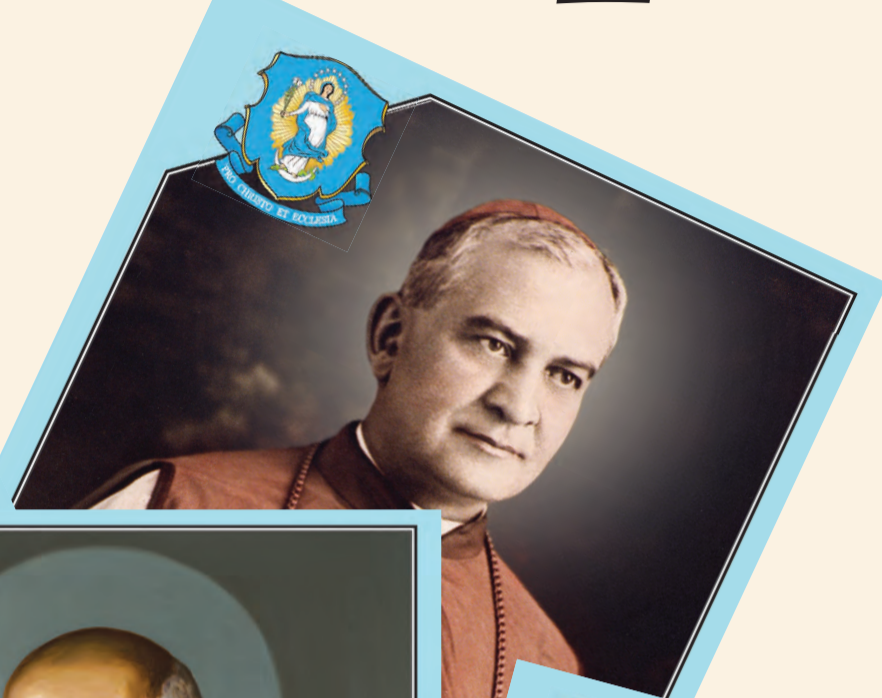


Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

Marian.org



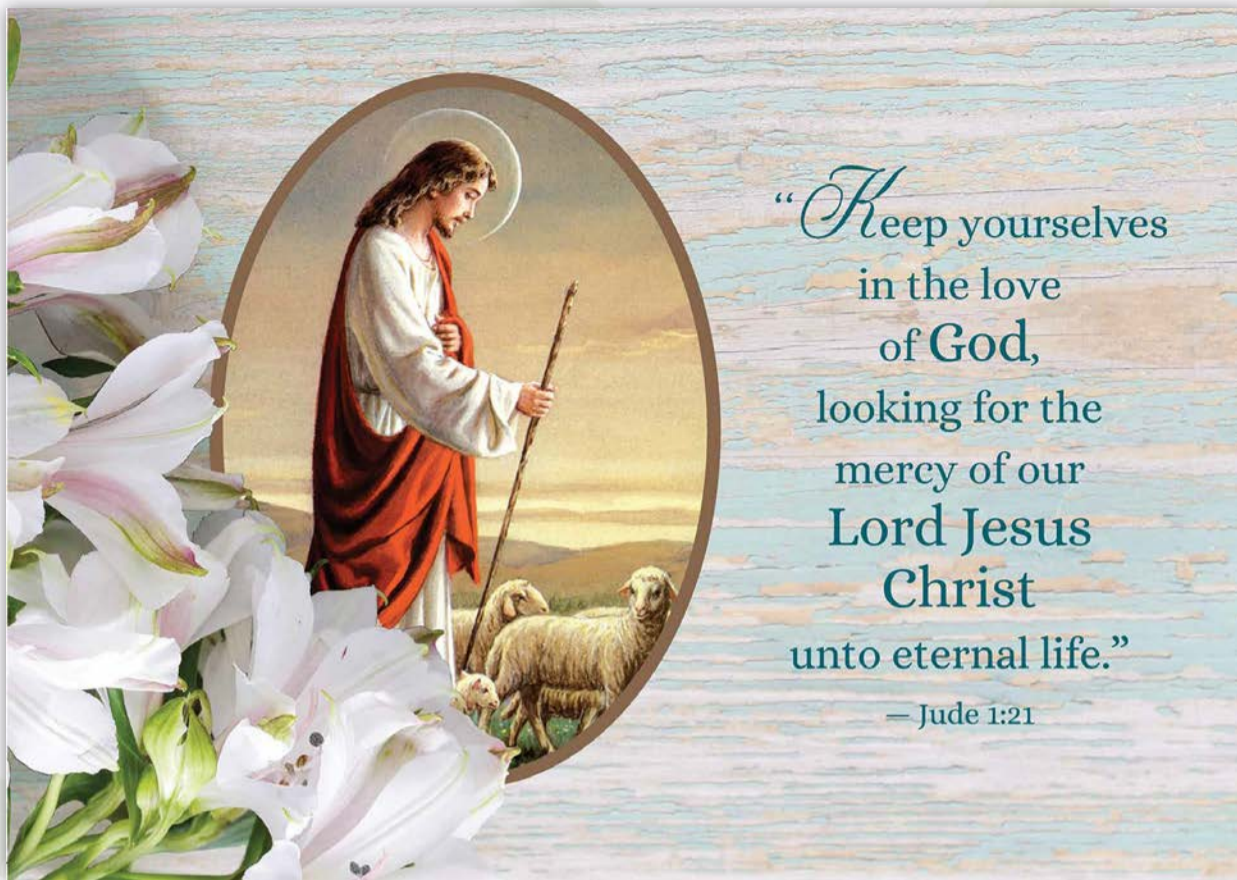
Saint Stanislaus Papczyński



TEAM MARIAN

Getting reacquainted with the 'stars'

SHARE THE GLORIOUS GIFT OF EASTER



B57-EG231 (GOLD FOILED)



B57-EG232

(SPOT UV)

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.

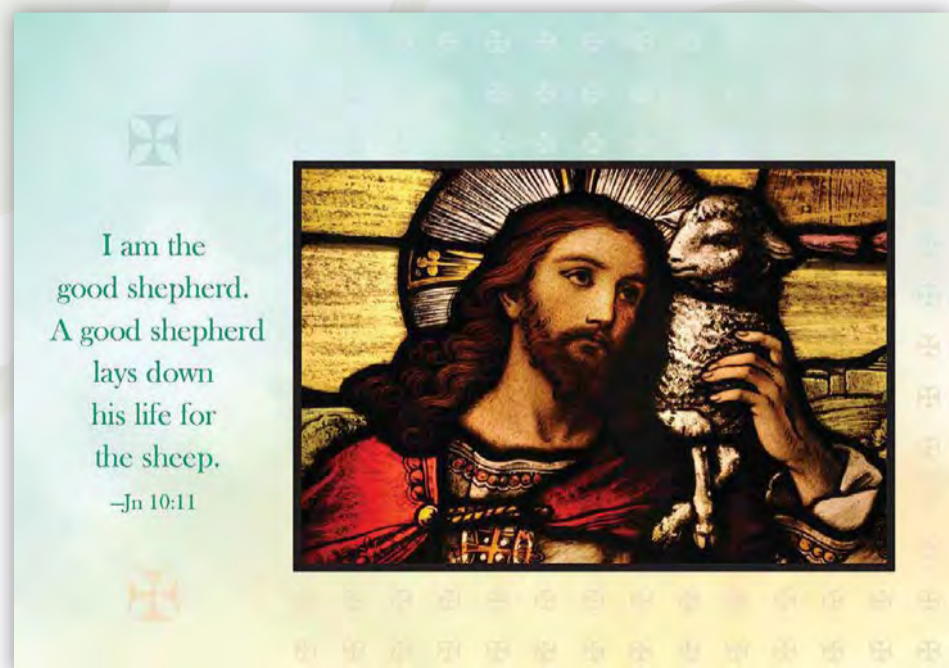


B57-EG233

(GOLD 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.



B57-AE23

(SPOT UV)

Enroll a loved one today!
1-800-462-7426 • Marian.org/b57/eg

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

TEAM MARIAN

As the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Marian Fathers' Congregation enters its final year, it's a good time to get reacquainted with the "star" players on "Team Marian." While not all members are consecrated Marians, each one has nonetheless played a pivotal role in our history, and each continues to be a wellspring of inspiration and grace.

12 A blacksmith's son is our founding saint

14 All hail the 'Holy Pole'

16 Enter 'The Renovator'

20 The great Apostle of Divine Mercy

22 'A priest after My own Heart'

24 Remember the martyrs

26 The Great Mercy Pope & Mary

8 A new way to stream

There's a new Marian website in town, Dr. Joe McAleer reports, and it's about to become your favorite destination on the internet. Introducing DivineMercyPlus.org.

10 Thank you from Ukraine

From Kharkiv, one of the hardest-hit cities in the ongoing war, the Marian Fathers express their gratitude to Marian Helpers for their continued generosity and prayers.

18 Consecrate your family!

Are you a parent or grandparent fighting to bring your children to Christ and teach your children Truth? Entrust your family to St. Joseph, suggests Scott L. Smith, Jr.

28 'Let merciful love shine'

As the Church and faithful pray for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who died on Dec. 31, 2022, we remember him as a Pope of Divine Mercy.

DEPARTMENTS

<u>3</u> Father Joseph Writes	<u>4</u> Marian Helpers in Action	<u>6</u> Father Joseph's Picks	<u>7</u> Notes from Rome
<u>11</u> New from Marian Press	<u>31</u> Outstanding Helpers	<u>33</u> Graces Received	<u>36</u> From the Vaults

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MISSION STATEMENT

MARIAN HELPER is intended to serve members of the Association of Marian Helpers (AMH), a spiritual benefit society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The magazine seeks to provide spiritual nourishment, education about the Catholic faith, and information about the mission and good works of the Marians. It also provides information about Association services and presents opportunities to support the mission and good works of the Congregation. *MARIAN HELPER* is published quarterly by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. It is sent free of charge to active members of the Association. Printed in the USA with ecclesiastical approval. Copyright © 2023 Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. All rights reserved. Send all correspondence to: Association of Marian Helpers, Editorial Dept., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: editorial@Marian.org Website: Marian.org

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Intercessory Prayerline
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prayer intentions.
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Marian.org/prayer

Websites
Marian.org
TheDivineMercy.org
ShopMercy.org
DivineMercyPlus.org



Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

The Marian Fathers are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 18 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 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.



Sign-up is easy: Visit MICPrayers.org



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 fund, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: Marian.org/Planned-Giving

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

To help you start or even complete your will for free online, visit Marian.org/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*

JOIN OUR 'TEAM'!

Do you play for “Team Marian”? Are you an active, interceding, mercy-working Marian Helper? We Marian Fathers and Marian Helpers are playing in the Big Leagues, after all. There’s no better way to put it — especially now, with Major League Baseball’s spring training just around the corner.

Saint Paul was one of the first Christians to use sports metaphors to speak of our lives as Christians here on earth:

Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified (I Cor 9:24-27).

We’re playing for the trophy, for the “wreath” or halo, that shows that we’ve won. In the great game of life, victory means salvation. And while every Christian is playing for keeps against the other side, by reason of our charisms, we Marian Fathers and all our Marian Family are playing against the championship teams of the other side — the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Marian Family is serving Mary Immaculate, after all; we’re devoted to Christ and His Church; we’re promoting the Divine Mercy message and devotion, given by our Lord to St. Faustina to prepare the world for His final coming (see

Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 429). We’re praying for the dying and the dead, snatching souls out of the very grasp of hell.

All of this? This is the big time.

All of this has huge ramifications for millions of souls and the future of civilizations.

And you, through your prayers, your good works, and your support play a critical role in our success. Many souls depend on you!

As we enter the final year of the jubilee celebration of the Marian Fathers, we all turn our attention to the theme “On the Charismatic Mission,” the path set before us by the charisms on which we are founded. In order to do that, in this issue of *Marian Helper* we offer you a refresher of the main “players” in the Marian story, great models of faith, works of mercy, and devotion to the central charisms of the Marian Fathers. Of course, not all these models, these great players in the game of life, are Marians, but they all support the “team” and its mission. They’re all part of our extended Marian Family, for we are first and foremost members of the Church, which is the household of God (see 1 Tim 3:15). We are all sons in the Son of God, all brothers and sisters through Adam and our Baptism.

Let “Team Marian” inspire you this Lent to examine your life. How are you doing at living the Marian charisms yourself — serving Christ and His Church where the need is greatest, especially by practicing and promoting the Divine Mercy message and devotion; loving and sharing Mary Immaculate with those around you; interceding for the Holy Souls in Purgatory? What can you do better? Lent is a great time to make some good changes.

That way, you’ll be better prepared than ever to out-hustle the competition and win the great game of life!

Fr. Joseph, MIC



“Father Joseph, MIC,” is the honorary title of the director of the Association of Marian Helpers. The current director is the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, interim Provincial Superior of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy Province in the United States and Argentina.

‘The pardon is the same’

By Marian Friedrichs

It was over. The emergency responders and hospital staff had done all they could, but in the end, the Fedele family of Madison, Ohio, were faced with the heartbreaking truth that it was time to say goodbye to Brian. Before the ventilator was shut off at about 15 minutes before 6 p.m. on March 16, 2022, Brian’s older sister Deborah Crosby knelt by his bedside, repeating the words she had prayed countless times during the past three hours: “For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

A few minutes past 3 p.m., the Hour of Mercy, Deborah had received a phone call from her father, Jerry Fedele, telling her he had just returned home and found Brian unconscious on the floor. Deborah rushed to her parents’ house, which was already crowded with paramedics and police. She dropped to her knees before her parents’ large Divine Mercy Image. “For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world,” Deborah repeated, as tireless in her prayers for her brother’s soul as

the paramedics were in their fight to revive his body.

Deborah and Brian’s mother, Cordy, did not yet know that the youngest of her nine children was about to be taken from this world. It was Wednesday, and every Wednesday afternoon, Cordy made a Holy Hour at her parish. As she prayed, Cordy felt prompted to make the Stations of the Cross for the intention of any dying souls whose salvation may be in danger. On her way home, she passed an ambulance and prayed for the person inside.



She would find out later it was Brian.

Caught in addiction's snare

When Brian Fedele died at 47 years old, he left behind two young sons, aged 10 and 11. Brian was a man who loved his family, fun, and music; relatives and friends remember his generous spirit and his beautiful singing voice. But addiction is not a respecter of persons. The most beloved and the most gifted can be caught in its snares. Not all of its captives find freedom in this life.

After being injured in a car accident in 1999, Brian had been prescribed Percocet to help him manage his pain. He became addicted, started abusing oxycontin as well, and found a doctor who would continue to supply him with the drugs. When that doctor's prescribing power became restricted, Brian turned to heroin.

In time, Brian's need for the substance consumed his life. He lost his job and, despite many attempts to gain new employment, never kept any subsequent work for long. In 2014, Brian's wife left him; in 2018, he lost his home and moved in with his parents. In December 2021, Brian was sentenced to 60 days in jail for possession of illegal drugs. He would spend his last Christmas on earth behind bars.

Brian finished his sentence determined to make a new start: to stay clean, hold down a job, and get his wife back. Brian went to Confession, started attending Mass again, and found work at the local Walmart. Jerry and Cordy were hopeful for their son's recovery, but Deborah and her siblings suspected their brother was still not free.

Brian no longer owned a vehicle, so he depended on his parents for transportation. On the morning of March 16, his mother took him grocery shopping and then dropped him off at the house before heading to church for her Holy Hour. After Cordy left, Brian took fentanyl — probably obtained from a drug dealer who told him it was heroin — and stopped breathing within seconds.

Now, it was over. On the floor beside Brian's hospital bed, Deborah begged for God's mercy on her brother, about to

stand before Him for judgment. Soon Deborah was joined by a priest, whom her sister-in-law had called. Brian was anointed, having made his last Confession only a few weeks earlier. When Brian's soul finally departed this world, Deborah, her son, two of her brothers, a sister-in-law, and Jerry were there, surrounding him with prayer and love.

Jesus' mercy had won

Cordy, treasuring the memory of the last morning she had spent with her son, chose not to be in the hospital room. After Brian's death, a fellow parishioner asked Cordy which of her sons had joined her at the Holy Hour on March 16. Cordy told the woman she had come to church alone that day, but when the parishioner saw Brian's photo, she insisted she had seen a man who looked

just like him, praying beside Cordy before the Blessed Sacrament that afternoon.

It was over. But what was over? Not Brian's life. No, it was the weary, years-long war against addiction that was over. It was any opportunity to fall again or to wander away from the Sacraments again that was over.

The Fedele family is firmly devoted to the Divine Mercy. They know Jesus' promises to St. Faustina: "**At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the pardon is the same**" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 811) and "**The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy**" (*Diary*, 723).

The fight was over. Jesus' mercy had won. True to His promises, He had reached down, picked up the soul fallen in battle, and raised him up, free from the snare forever.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the 107,375 people in the U.S. who died of drug overdoses in the year ending January 2022, 67 percent involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Learn more and find treatment options at [FindTreatment.samhsa.gov](https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

MH

**True to His promises,
Jesus had reached
down, picked up the
soul fallen in battle,
and raised him up, free
from the snare forever.**



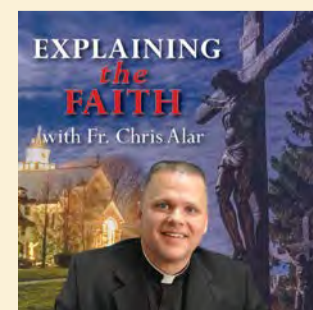
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NEED HELP?

Are you struggling with an addiction? Do you know of someone struggling with addiction? You are not alone. This pamphlet explains precisely why you have reason for hope and how you can find healing.

Order now: Visit ShopMercy.org/b57
or call 1-800-462-7426.

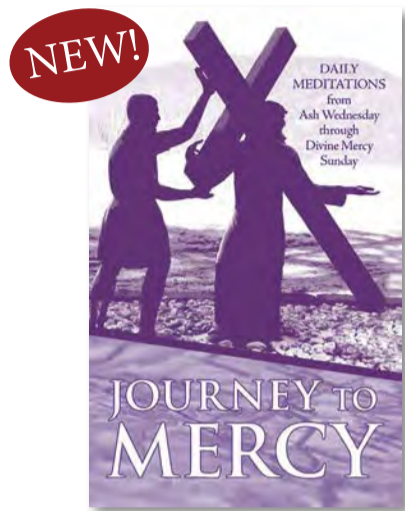
To view Fr. Chris Alar's talk on addiction,
please visit TheDivineMercy.org/addiction



FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

Visit ShopMercy.org/b57 or call 1-800-462-7426.

As we endure the winter and welcome spring, we prepare for Easter with Lenten penance, especially through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Be generous; do a great work of mercy, and share your faith! Here are some treasures to share for a fruitful Lent and Easter.



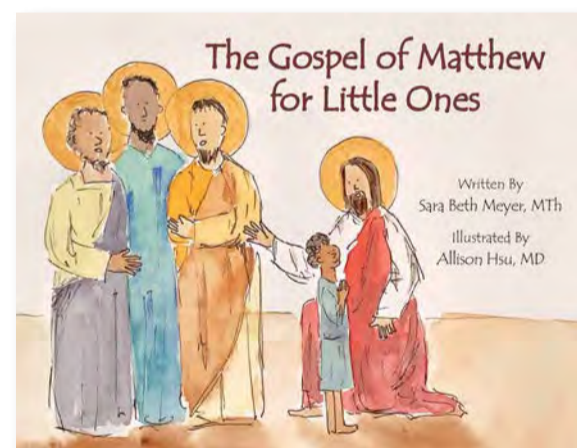
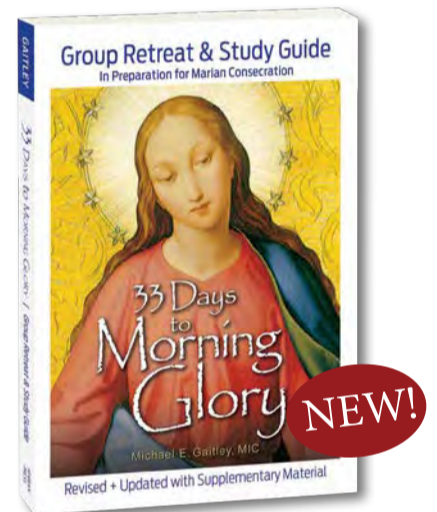
JOURNEY TO MERCY: DAILY LENTEN MEDITATIONS FROM ASH WEDNESDAY THROUGH DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, 2023

In Lent, we are reminded that here on earth, we are on pilgrimage toward our heavenly home, traveling through a vale of tears. *Journey to Mercy*, the 2023 Lenten devotional from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, will equip you to make your Lenten pilgrimage a truly transformative experience. Be strengthened and encouraged for your Lenten pilgrimage with these easy-to-read, short meditations for each day from Ash Wednesday through to Divine Mercy Sunday. \$6.95. **B57-LD23**

33 DAYS TO MORNING GLORY: GROUP RETREAT & STUDY GUIDE

BY FR. MICHAEL E. GAITLEY, MIC

The international bestseller *33 Days to Morning Glory* is presented in a new expanded study edition designed specifically for group retreats. Supplementing the original text for each of the 33 days leading to Marian consecration are thought-provoking questions to answer and discuss in a group setting. This new volume also provides exclusive access to retreat videos posted on DivineMercyPlus.org, to enrich the consecration experience and encourage group discussion. Using *33 Days to Morning Glory: Group Retreat & Study Guide*, readers will discover in a nurturing group setting that belonging completely to Mary is the quickest, easiest, and surest way to Jesus. \$24.95. **B57-3DRC3**



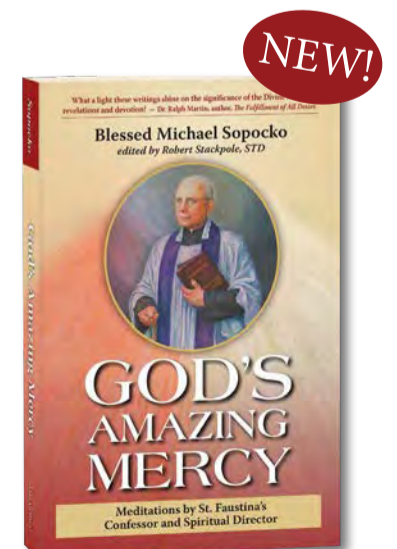
THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW FOR LITTLE ONES

In the midst of a world in chaos, Sara Beth Meyer felt a deep call to littleness and the joy of the Gospel. She approached Allison Hsu with the idea of creating *The Gospel of Matthew for Little Ones*. Their collaborative labor of love truly has been Good News! *The Gospel of Matthew for Little Ones* shares the Word of God in an inviting format: a vibrant illustration on the left, three stanzas on the right, and chapter notations in the right margin. \$19.95. **B57-GMLO**

GOD'S AMAZING MERCY: MEDITATIONS BY ST. FAUSTINA'S CONFESSOR AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

BY BL. MICHAEL SOPOĆKO; EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY DR. ROBERT STACKPOLE

Avital part of the treasury of the Divine Mercy message and devotion, this edition of *God is Mercy*, a short work by St. Faustina's confessor, Bl. Michael Sopoćko, introduces us to the place of Divine Mercy in salvation history. Enriched by Dr. Robert Stackpole's expert commentary, this special edition of a Divine Mercy classic belongs on every Catholic's shelf. \$14.95. **B57-SOPB**





THANK YOU, 'MAMMA'

In this issue, we'll meet Fr. Yves Oumarou, MIC, a Marian from Cameroon who is currently completing his doctorate at the Pontifical Salesian University here in Rome. The Marian mission to this west-central African nation began in 1999, and devotion to Divine Mercy is very popular there.

Tell us about your background.

I was born in 1981 in Betaré-Oya, a town in eastern Cameroon. The name is interesting. Germans, who created the map of Cameroon, asked the local people the name of the town. They thought they were asking where the king was, so they replied that he (Betaré) was sleeping (oya). My mother tongue is Gbaya, one of the 250 languages of Cameroon.

The Virgin Mary is called "Mamma" in Cameroon. I greeted her every day with a "Hail Mary." I lived near the Catholic parish, and served as an altar boy, lector, and member of a youth group.

I loved soccer and animal husbandry. I wanted to become a doctor, but after high school, I felt a call to the religious life to take care of souls.

Tell us about your Marian experience.

My formation in the Marians took place in Rwanda and Cameroon, and I was ordained in 2010. I then served in our parish in Atok, and I was the diocesan chaplain for the same youth group that I had belonged to from 2009-2014. I then studied in Rome for two years and received a licentiate in spiritual theology. I completed an internship in Poland during which I studied Polish.

My next experience was as the superior and rector of our House of Formation in Ngoya, Cameroon, for three years. I also taught the laity at the Catholic university there.

What are you doing now in Rome?

I have returned to Rome to complete my doctorate. My studies focus on spiritual theology, formation, and promoting



vocations. I am writing my thesis on the transformation of the person through the charism. A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit to a religious community to give the community its identity and purpose. Our charism is the living memory of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. I am exploring how we can live

our Marian charism authentically in Cameroon, so that we can become the spiritual leaders that God calls us to be.

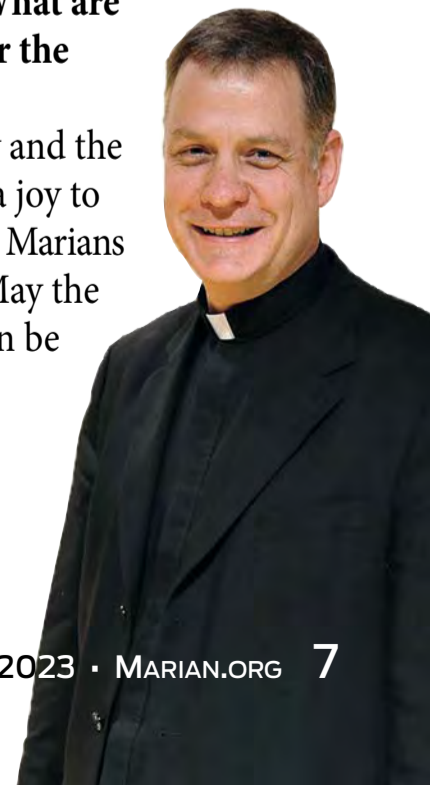
Can you tell us about the Marian ministry today in Cameroon?

Our vicariate is in full bloom! We have five Polish missionaries, six Cameroonians in perpetual vows, and five students of philosophy and theology. We have three novices, six postulants, and 20 aspirants. Vocations are thriving.

We work in a House of Formation, two parishes, and our Divine Mercy Shrine. We engage in works of evangelization; build chapels; and help children and adults through formation, various types of educational assistance, and getting them to the hospital for treatment.

The Marian General Chapter, held every six years, is taking place in Rome in February. What are your thoughts of being a delegate for the first time?

I am humbled by the responsibility and the expectations placed on me. It will be a joy to participate in the General Chapter with Marians from around the world. Pray for us. May the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our protection and our salvation!



Father Joe Roesch, MIC, is the vicar general of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He lives in Rome. Listen to his new podcast, reading and reflecting on the journal of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, on TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts and DivineMercyPlus.org.



Watch the Holy Mass live from The National Shrine of the Divine Mercy

DAILY AT 9am EST

FEATURED



Explaining the Faith Series



Ask a Marian Series

A new way to stream

By Dr. Joe McAleer

There's a new website in town, and it's about to become your favorite destination on the internet. Introducing DivineMercyPlus.org, the new streaming site for exclusive audio and video content produced by the [Marian Fathers](https://Marian.org) of the Immaculate Conception.

"Our evangelical outreach as Marians has always included audio and video," notes the [Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC](https://VeryRevChrisAlarMIC.com), interim provincial, who also serves as "Father Joseph," director of the Association of Marian Helpers. "During the pandemic, we really ramped up production, and the number of online viewers and listeners has been astonishing. Our livestreamed [Masses](https://DivineMercyPlus.org), [Rosaries](https://DivineMercyPlus.org), [Chaplets](https://DivineMercyPlus.org), and [Saturday talks](https://DivineMercyPlus.org) alone have hundreds of thousands of faithful viewers around the world."

With a large output comes a large backlist, much of it hidden over the years within layers of webpages, often inaccessible, even forgotten. Therein lay the challenge.

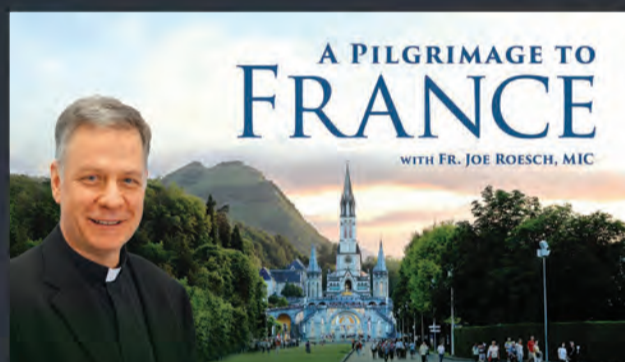
All in one place

"We have a huge library and archive of awesome Catholic content, and it made sense to collect everything in one, easy-to-access place," says Zeke Chichester, chief financial and marketing analyst and part of the large team that spearheaded the project.

DivineMercyPlus.org has been in the works for two years. Gathering everything posted on Marian websites (including Marian.org and TheDivineMercy.org) and our [YouTube](https://YouTube.com)



Living Divine Mercy Series
(as seen on EWTN)



France: A Pilgrimage with
Mary Series

channel (Divine Mercy) was an enormous undertaking.

“The overall mission was two-fold: organize everything in one place for easy access, and make everything searchable,” Chichester says. “I think viewers will be amazed at how much content there is, especially from past years.”

DivineMercyPlus.org will stream daily Mass, the Rosary, and the Chaplet from the National Shrine, as well as Fr. Chris’ popular “Explaining the Faith” talks on Saturday mornings (11 a.m. EST). There are video series such as “Marians Around the World” and “A Pilgrimage to France,” hosted by the Very Rev. Joe Roesch, MIC. Users will also find “Minutes” with the late Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC.

There are landing pages for past episodes of “Living Divine Mercy,” the weekly program on EWTN, as well as the popular “Ask a Marian” shorts. Instructional videos and recordings on how to pray the Rosary, for example, are also posted.

DivineMercyPlus.org is also podcast central, where you can listen to daily Mass homilies from the National Shrine, or one of the popular podcasts by Fr. Roesch, including “Saint Faustina’s Diary in a Year.”

Premium content

The majority of videos and podcasts are free. But there is also premium content, documentaries, feature films, spiritual nourishment programming, and series that will engage the whole family. The site offers learning modules associated with Marian consecration, such as videos and bonus material that are part of the new Marian Press publication, 33 Days to Morning Glory: Group Retreat & Study Guide.

New premium content will be continuously added to the site, some of it exclusive. Marian Press Productions and DivineMercyPlus.org are actively growing the streaming catalog, making available high-quality Catholic films and videos from top Catholic producers and directors.

“By registering, you can build your own playlist,” Chichester notes. “We encourage visitors to tell us their favorites, and share feedback.”

“As Marian Fathers, our constitution dictates we serve the Church where the need is greatest,” Fr. Chris concludes. “DivineMercyPlus.org is the newest evangelization tool in our arsenal.”

MH

Thank you from Ukraine

The Marian Fathers assigned to Holy Family Parish in Kharkiv, one of the hardest-hit cities in Ukraine, have sent a message to all you generous Marian Helpers whose prayers and support have been so indispensable since the war began. They write:

At Holy Family Parish in Kharkiv, run by the Congregation of Marian Fathers, we have good facilities where we and volunteers can sort and donate needed items to people who have suffered as a result of Russian aggression. We want to thank our benefactors from different parts of the world, especially our benefactors from the U.S.A. for their generosity and constant prayers. Your support, both material and spiritual, is extremely important to us and the war-stricken people of Ukraine.

Our sincere thanks to Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Marian Helpers Center in the U.S.A., and all members of the Association of Marian Helpers in the U.S.A. for their tireless financial assistance and shipping of essential medical supplies. Thanks to the director of the Marian Helpers Association in Poland and all donors from Poland for organizing the purchase of food, medical supplies, toiletries, and warm clothing, and delivering this aid to Kharkiv.

We continue to abide, minister to those in need, and we send greetings. We still need help!

May God bless and protect you all!

The Marian Fathers from Kharkiv

Donations are still desperately needed to purchase humanitarian aid and medical supplies for Ukraine. Please visit Marian.org/Ukraine or call 1-800-462-7426 to make a donation. One hundred percent of funds received are used to support efforts in Ukraine.



Father Byelichev Mykola, MIC, serves at Holy Family Parish in Kharkiv, Ukraine, staffed by the Marian Fathers in one of the cities devastated by Russian forces in the ongoing war.



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY AND THE EUCHARIST

On Divine Mercy Sunday, **April 16**, EWTN will broadcast live from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, beginning with the pre-show at **12 noon EST**.

Produced by the Marians and hosted by the Very Revs. Joseph Roesch, MIC, and Chris Alar, MIC, the pre-show will focus on the Eucharist and feature an array of special guests. Please join us!

Embark on a 'Journey to Mercy'

By Kimberly Bruce

Why not make this your best Lent ever? To do that, maybe it's time to try something new that will deepen your faith and be a catalyst for growth in holiness.

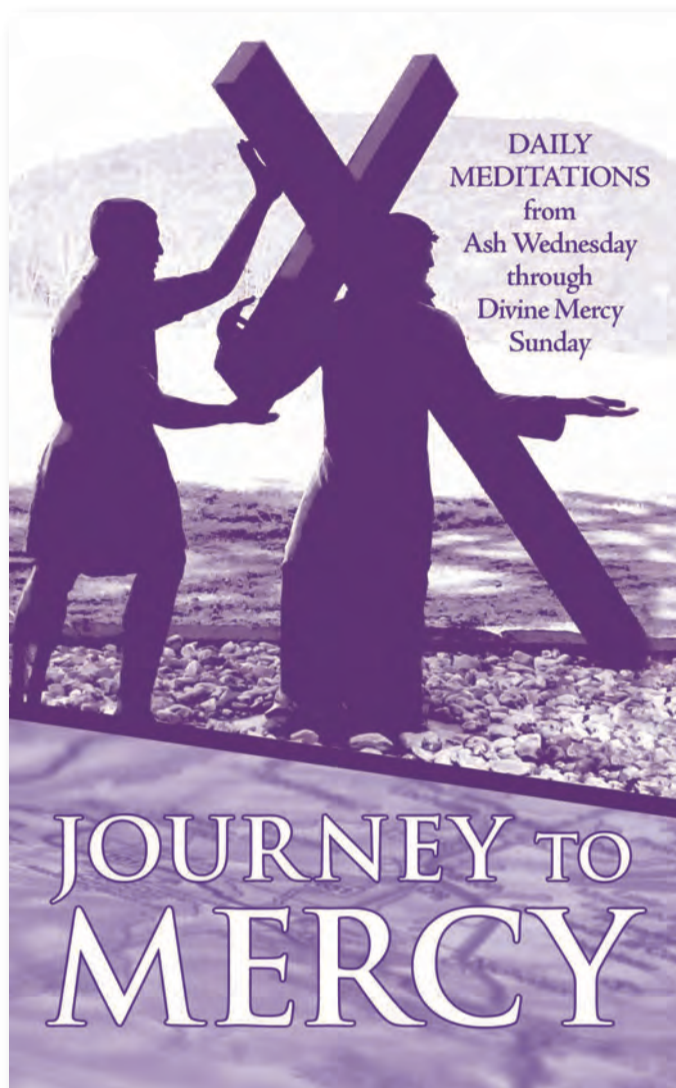
Personally, my most memorable and transformative Lents have been the ones in which I have spent time each day reading holy material as part of my Lenten practice. Through readings such as these, I have been able to see Christ's humanity and, likewise, His divinity in more profound ways. I have deepened my love for the Church and Holy Mother Mary and grown in knowledge and appreciation of His holy apostles.

Devotional

This Lent, Marian Press presents a new devotional booklet, *Journey to Mercy*. This differs from other Lenten devotionals. It begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, and takes one through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday but continues through the Octave of Easter to Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16. Each daily one-page entry cites the Mass readings for the day along with corresponding references from St. Faustina's *Diary*. A meditation for the day follows, based upon the Scripture readings.

Keep *Journey to Mercy* by your bedside and read it the moment you wake up in the morning. Or choose to read the day's reflection just before bed. If you attend daily Mass — an excellent practice during Lent! — spend a few minutes reading it before Mass begins. It will dovetail perfectly with the Mass, helping you to see the Scriptures in a new way. Keep a copy of St. Faustina's *Diary* handy, too, so you can read the referenced passages for an even deeper daily walk with Christ. Whichever way you choose to read *Journey to Mercy*, you will find yourself immersed in the day's Gospel narrative.

Journey to Mercy offers additional prayer material at the end of the booklet to enhance your Lenten experience. Both the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Novena to Divine



To order *Journey to Mercy* (Product code: B57-LD23), visit ShopMercy.org/b57 or call 1-800-462-7426.

Mercy are included. There is a handy Examination of Conscience to read before bed each night or to utilize before the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Also provided is St. Faustina's Way of the Cross for additional meditative reading.

Three Pillars

It is important as well to participate in the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are the practices recommended to us by the Church.

As Christians, we should engage daily in prayer with our Lord. During Lent, however, many choose to add some additional prayers such as attending daily Mass, and praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence for all in good health ages 18-59, while all Fridays are days of abstinence from meat for all those in good health ages 14 and above.

Fasting from some things we love, and offering these up in prayer, benefits ourselves and/or others. Whether it is fasting from food, social media, television, alcoholic beverages, or anything else we find hard to place on the "altar of sacrifice," we grow stronger in our commitment and obedience to God through self-denial.

We are also reminded to remember those less fortunate than us, particularly during Lent, by the giving of alms or by donating our time to charitable causes. This reminds us of our Lord's Passion and His total gift of Self for the forgiveness of our sins.

This Lent, I invite you to not only engage in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, but to add some holy reading to your routine. Emerge from Holy Week having been nourished by God's Word and more in love with Christ. *Journey to Mercy* can provide you with a most efficacious way of journeying through Lent to Easter and on to the glorious Feast of Divine Mercy!

MH

A blacksmith's son is our founding saint

By the Very Rev. Joseph Roesch, MIC

As a child, I collected baseball cards. I especially wanted to find the cards of my favorite players. As an avid fan, I knew the statistics of those players very well, and I could verify what I knew on the back of the cards.

In this issue, St. Stanislaus Papczyński is depicted as one of our favorite Marian “team players.” But we can easily ask, “Who was St. Stanislaus?” He founded the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception more than 350 years ago. However, for most of that history, even the Marian fathers and brothers would have had a hard time answering that question.

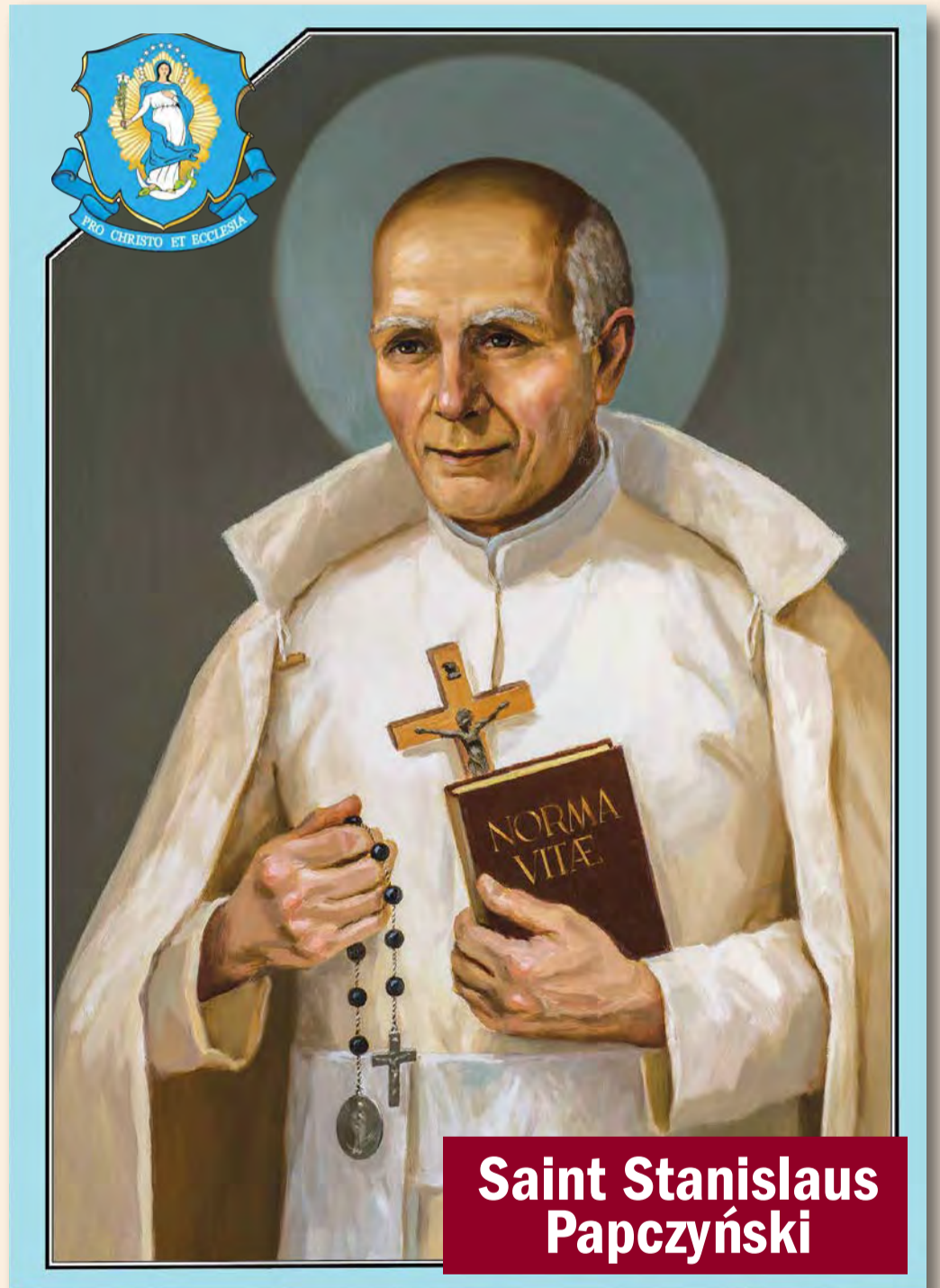
Why? Saint Stanislaus lived in the 17th century. For a long time, we only had a vague idea of what he looked like. Most of his writings were in Latin. Accurate translations of his writings have only become widely available in the last 20 years, in the 21st century! So generations of Marians were not familiar with his writings.

Turbulent past

Our Congregation has a very particular history. From the time of our founding in 1670 on, Poland and other parts of Europe were torn apart by centuries of wars, plagues, persecutions, and other types of sufferings. Often, people were just trying to survive. This left little time to accurately do historical research on figures from past centuries. To many, St. Stanislaus seemed like an abstract, distant figure. Some even doubted his sanctity.

So how did things change?

The process of St. Stanislaus’ beatification resumed in the 20th century. Prior to his beatification in 2007, his remains were exhumed. It was shocking to discover that his skeleton was almost completely intact after more than three centuries. His body wasn’t incorrupt, but the integrity of his skeleton did seem to be a sign from Heaven that this was a



**Saint Stanislaus
Papczyński**

holy man. Forensic studies allowed us to discover what St. Stanislaus looked like, and the portraits that we have of him now allow us to see a warm human being, a father figure who loves his spiritual children.

As we have grown more familiar with St. Stanislaus by reading his writings and discovering what a powerful intercessor he is, we Marians and many of our Marian Helpers

all over the world are developing a great devotion to him. He now has become a pro-life patron and a patron of those in mortal danger.

In fact, St. Stanislaus has become well known at the Divine Mercy Shrine in El Salvador City in Mindanao in the Philippines. Many couples there beg his intercession when they have trouble conceiving. So many couples have been able to have children after praying to St. Stanislaus that he has become a kind of “rock star” among Catholic saints there!


John was his name

So who was he? Stanislaus was born on May 18, 1631, in Podegrodzie, Poland, and was given the name Jan (John) at his Baptism that same day. “Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary” is his religious name. The youngest of 8 children to Zofia and Tomasz, a blacksmith, he had difficulties learning when he first went to school, so his parents withdrew him and sent him to tend sheep. However, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his ability to learn was miraculously awakened, and he was able to return to school.

Stanislaus joined the Piarist community and was ordained a priest in 1661. He published a book of rhetoric in 1663 dedicated to Our Lady, called *Messenger of the Queen of the Arts*.

The Holy Spirit placed in his heart a calling to found a Congregation dedicated to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Dec. 11, 1670, he received his release from the Piarists. That same day, St. Stanislaus professed his *Oblatio*, a self-offering that he made to God, which included his religious vows and his intention to found a new religious community to fulfill the calling he had in his heart. We trace the origin of our Congregation to that event.

Saint Stanislaus is a saint who is definitely worth getting to know better, especially through his writings! He wrote a beautiful work on spirituality for the laity called the *Mystical Temple of God*. I recently recorded a podcast on that work, which you can find on TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts and



TEAM MARIAN

STATS AND FACTS

Born: May 18, 1631, Podegrodzie, Poland
Died: September 17, 1701, Góra Kalwaria, Poland
Approval of the new Marian Congregation by Pope Innocent XII: Oct. 24, 1699
Canonized: June 5, 2016, by Pope Francis
Feast day: May 18

Saint Stanislaus Papczyński

- **Saint Stanislaus’ mother consecrated him to Jesus and Mary while carrying him in her womb. She did this when she fell out of a ferryboat during a storm and almost drowned.**
- **As a young student, St. Stanislaus almost died due to an epidemic of pestilence.**
- **The miracle that led to Stanislaus’ beatification in 2007 involved a baby in the womb who died and came back to life.**
- **The miracle that led to his canonization in 2016 involved the healing of a young woman who was engaged to be married. She was on the verge of death in the hospital, with the doctors considering her case hopeless.**

Talkin’ Marians



During his lifetime, St. Stanislaus brought a child back to life while offering Mass for that intention on an altar dedicated to St. Raphael.

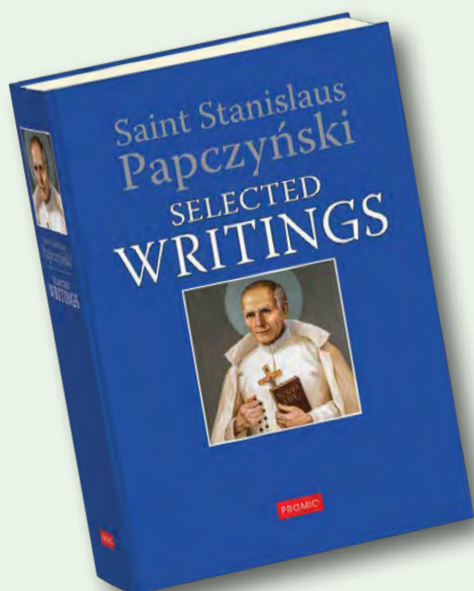
DivineMercyPlus.org. His *Examination of the Heart* contains a series of inspiring meditations based on the liturgical year.

Saint Stanislaus also wrote some powerful meditations on Christ’s Passion, *The Crucified Orator* and *The Suffering Christ*. They are all on my list for future podcasts!

Saint Stanislaus, pray for us!

[Father Joseph Roesch, MIC](http://FatherJosephRoesch.MIC), is vicar general of the Marian Congregation. Learn more about St. Stanislaus at StanislawPapczynski.org.

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GET TO KNOW THE FOUNDER

A rich spiritual treasury, *Saint Stanislaus Papczyński: Selected Writings* (Product code B57-PCZY) makes available in a modern English translation the majority of the works of the Founder of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, one of the outstanding figures in Polish Catholic history and culture.

Order now: Visit ShopMercy.org/b57

or call 1-800-462-7426.

All hail the ‘Holy Pole’

By Chris Sparks

Much has been written (and rightly so!) about the Founder of the Marians, St. Stanislaus Papczyński. But do you know the story about his eighth successor as Superior General, Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755)?

During his two terms in office (1737-41 and 1747-50), Fr. Casimir helped the Marians grow in merit, number, and geographic reach, accepting candidates to the Order from all over Europe. In fact, in 1753, he went to Portugal and founded the first Marian monastery in that country at Balsamao. Even today, Portuguese Catholics call him “Santo Polacco,” the Holy Pole.

Originally hailing from Jeziora Wielka near Warsaw, Poland, Fr. Casimir was known for his sanctity during his lifetime and has gained a reputation for being a powerful intercessor since his death. His cause for sainthood has been opened.

Zealous religious

“Father Casimir was a very zealous religious who deeply loved his Order, its Founder, and its charisms,” notes Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, vice postulator in North America and Asia for Marian causes of canonization. “He was also a protector of the underprivileged, especially peasants abused by the clergy and upper-class people. He sent a petition to the pope asking for the special protection of those people by the Church.”

Born in 1700, the year before St. Stanislaus died, and given the baptismal name “Januarius Francis,” the future Marian started his life as a layman, becoming a civil servant and setting himself on track for secular success.

But he was also a man of deep faith. He joined the Marians under unusual circumstances. His brother, Joseph, was a Marian novice. But when Joseph joined a campaign to relax religious discipline within the Congregation and sided with a group seeking to disband the Order entirely, Januarius Wyszyński felt great remorse — and leapt into action. He asked to be admitted to the Marians, saying, “I want to make up for what my brother ruined; I ask you for the habit.” He was admitted and took the name “Casimir of St. Joseph.”



**Venerable Servant of God
Fr. Casimir Wyszyński**

Evangelical perfection

From the very beginning of his religious life, Fr. Casimir distinguished himself in his zeal for evangelical perfection. During his time as general superior, he made a number of visits to the different houses of the order. In one letter announcing a visitation, dated June 1, 1739, he gave a beautiful summation of the essence of Catholic life:

From the Marians whom I intend to visit I am anxious to learn whether love of God and neighbor is practiced in your life. God is loved when His commandments are kept and the Rules of our Holy Institute are observed, when sinful desires are curbed, avoiding those things

which lead to sin. Fraternal charity is evident when we wish no one harm. Where charity is lacking anything we do is without merit; where charity flourishes everything serves for holiness.

Father Casimir wrote extensively, encouraging his priests and brothers to discipline, fidelity, and holiness. "God made me your superior not to lord it over you, but to be one of you, an understanding father, a brother full of respect, a leader, a concerned shepherd watching over you," he wrote. "Are we living and acting according to this Spirit? Are we seeking vain glory? Are we manifesting the spirit of poverty and peace? Is our fraternal charity marred by jealousy? Do your local superiors, your spiritual guides, correct you in a gentle manner?"


Like a shepherd tending his flock, Fr. Casimir sought unity and fraternity:

We want to be sure that no one strays from the faith, fails in fraternal charity and peace. We want to see whether we all strive to promote God's glory and honor due to his Holy Mother, the Immaculate Mary. We are anxious to verify that the Rule and Statutes and decrees of our chapters are faithfully observed. We will do all we can to look into these matters with every solicitude, that order be preserved in the monastery. We desire that the Spirit of truth and joy touch all of you.

Father Casimir died on Oct. 21, 1755 at Balsamao. His reputation for sanctity has endured for 200 years, especially in Portugal during periods when the Church was persecuted and, at one point, the Marians were exiled from the country.

A few years after his death, the beatification process was begun. Interrupted during the partition of Poland in the 19th century and the political turmoil in Portugal, it was reopened in 1953. He was declared a Venerable Servant of God in 1989.

Let's ask Ven. Casimir Wyszyński's intercession in all our



TEAM MARIAN


STATS AND FACTS

Born: Aug. 19, 1700, Jeziora Wielka, Poland
Died: Oct. 21, 1755, Balsamao, Portugal
Ordained to the Marians: 1726
Declared Venerable Servant of God: 1989

Venerable Casimir Wyszyński

- When he was 2, Casimir and his family had to flee from the Swedish army's devastation of Poland. After a few years of wandering, the Wyszyński family came back to their estate.
- As a young man, Casimir made a vow to go on a pilgrimage to St. James' tomb in Compostela, Spain. Illness meant he could not complete the pilgrimage; instead, he visited the churches of Rome and carried out works of mercy.
- A few years after his death, the beatification process was begun. This process, interrupted during the partition of Poland in the 19th century and the political turmoil in Portugal, was reopened in 1953 in Rome.

Talkin' Marians



Father Casimir founded the first Marian monastery in Portugal, at Balsamao, where he died.

needs, trusting that, through the mercy of God, we may receive special graces and even miracles through the prayers of our brother in Christ. And let us pray for the beatification of Ven. Casimir so that the whole Church may better know him and benefit from his powerful prayers.

If you have received graces through the intercession of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, please write: Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA, 01263. Email: graces@Marian.org

MH



SAVE THE DATE — JUNE 7-9

18th Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference

Healthcare professionals desiring to learn how to integrate their faith in their practice: Join us at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy! Visit TheDivineMercy.org/healthcare or call 413-298-1303.

Enter 'The Renovator'

The 350th anniversary of the founding of the Marian Congregation by St. Stanislaus Papczyński is a cause for celebration! This year, the Marians are observing another milestone: the 110th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation in the United States.

A history lesson is in order. Before our 110 years in America, the Marian Congregation suffered more than 100 years of persecution in Europe. From the pride of partitioning powers who wiped Poland-Lithuania off the map, to the devastation brought on by the tri-color troops of Napoleon, to relentless harassment by the Czar of Russia, the Marian Congregation went from a high point of 147 members in 1781 to just one member by 1910.

Down to one Marian

One member. That's all that was left of a once vibrant and thriving community — and he was dying. Of course, the Czar and his men were quite satisfied with themselves as they prepared to

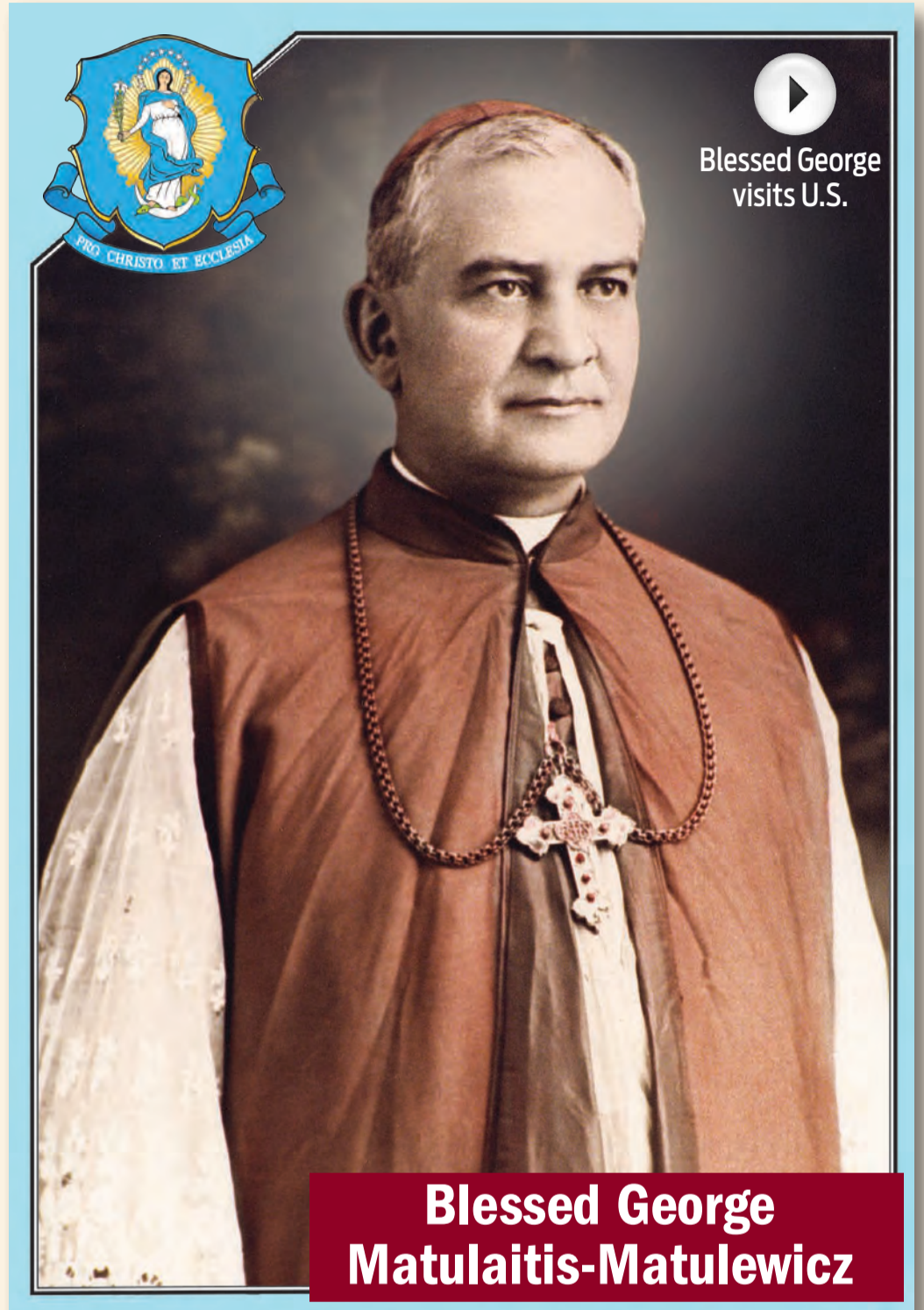
This year, the Marians are observing the 110th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation in the United States, during Blessed George's visit to our country.

celebrate the long-awaited demise of another Catholic religious congregation. In fact, when Fr. Vincent Sękowski, the last of the Marians who wore the white habit, finally did die in 1911, the enemies of the Church surely did rejoice. But theirs wasn't the final word.

Little did the Czar and his anti-Catholic men know, but an intelligent, hard-working priest had given up the promise of prestigious positions in the Church to save the Marians in secret. Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz of Lithuania was re-establishing the Marians, refashioning them to be an exponentially greater force for Christ and the Church.

He is known as "The Renovator."

The only problem was that the new Marians had to lay low and keep quiet, even after Fr. George moved the training



of his men to the free nation of Switzerland — for even in Switzerland, the Czar's spies were on the lookout.

But Fr. George's plans for the Marians were certainly not about laying low and keeping quiet. He wanted to bring the greatest possible glory to God. He wanted to work for the salvation of countless souls, and wanted his men to be filled with a zeal that would set all afire.

So, what did he do? He moved some of his men to America, where they would be free to be everything he wanted them to be.

Freedom in America

On July 9, 1913, Fr. George arrived in America with two other Marians, Frs. Felix Kudirka and Julian Kazakas,

to establish the first Marian house of the renovated Congregation. He had been invited there by Fr. Anthony Staniukynas, who wanted to join the Marians and had offered them a place to stay in Chicago, Illinois. Once in Chicago, Blessed George presented himself to the archbishop there, the Most Rev. Edward Quigley, who warmly welcomed the Marians to his archdiocese and even offered them a parish.

Then, only about a month after their arrival, on Aug. 18, 1913, the first house of the new Marian Congregation was formally established in Chicago — 110 years ago.

The importance of this event shouldn't be overlooked. It was in America, with her freedom of religion, that the new Marians could finally be who they were meant to be. And who were they meant to be?

According to now-Bishop George, the Marians were called to serve the Church where the need is greatest. And in his opinion, "One of the most pressing needs of our time ... is to involve larger groups of people from every segment of society in a more active apostolate for the faith and the growth and defense of the Church."

Harnessing the laity

Indeed, he believed that by gathering lay people around them, the Marians could give even greater glory to God and serve the Church better. But simply gathering people wasn't what he had in mind. Rather, he said the "special characteristic" of the Marians in their work with the laity is "to organize, unite, and direct them toward the task of spreading the faith and defending the Church."

And that's exactly what the Marians have been doing in the U.S.A. for the last 110 years, thanks to the great gift of religious freedom found here. And this gift of freedom, allowing the Marians to be who they were meant to be, allowing the Marians to unite with the laity, our Marian Helpers, for the work of evangelization, has led to a tremendous amount of

TEAM MARIAN

STATS AND FACTS

Born: April 13, 1871, Lūginė, Marijampolė, Lithuania

Ordained to the priesthood: Nov. 20, 1898

Profession of Marian vows in secret: Aug. 29, 1909

Elected Marian Superior General: July 14, 1911

Ordained bishop: Dec. 18, 1918, Kaunas, Lithuania

Died: Jan. 27, 1927, Kaunas, Lithuania

Beatified: June 28, 1987, by Pope St. John Paul II

Feast day: Jan. 27

Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz

- Blessed George suffered tuberculosis of the bone as a child, and experienced chronic pain his entire life.
- He founded two orders of sisters and helped 10 other orders renovate their constitutions according to Canon Law.
- In his *Journal*, he wrote, "If I may ask, Lord, let me be but a kitchen rag in your Church, a rag used to wipe up messes . . . so that Your House would be a little cleaner and brighter. And afterwards, let me be thrown away like a dirty, worn out dish rag" (Jan 13, 1911).

Talkin'
Marians

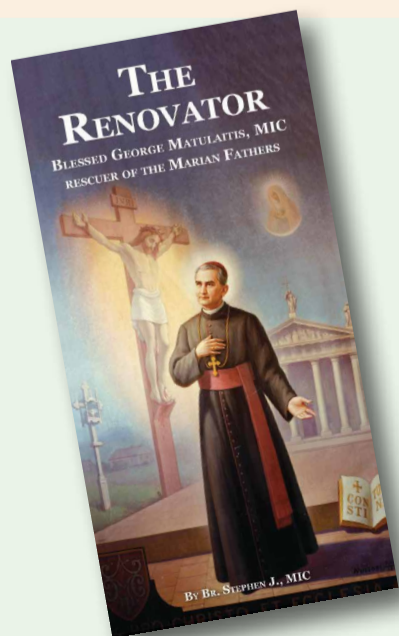


Favorite quotation: "Non in commotione Spiritus Dei" — "The Spirit of God cannot be felt in turmoil."

fruit for Christ and the Church.

Editor's note: Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, vicar general of the Marian Congregation, has launched a new podcast, reading from the journal of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz. To listen, visit TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts, TheDivineMercyPlus.org, or find the podcast on Apple, Google, Spotify, and other streaming platforms.

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BLESSED GEORGE MATULAITIS, MIC, RESCUER OF THE MARIAN FATHERS

Without him, there would be no Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception at the epicenter of the promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion. Meet Blessed George Matulaitis, MIC. This pamphlet offers you an overview of his life, teaching, and spirituality.

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CONSECRATE YOUR FAMILY!

By Scott L. Smith, Jr.

Sister Lucia, the longest-lived Fatima visionary, said, “The final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan will be about marriage and family.” There is greater confusion on these matters today than in any previous era of human history. I don’t know if this is the “final” battle, but it’s a battle that needs to be won. Or else.

There are only a precious few to fight this battle, too. As

Prime Minister Winston Churchill said of the beleaguered and vastly outnumbered Royal Air Force fighting the German Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain, “Never was so much owed by so many to so few.”

We are the ‘few’

Are you a parent or grandparent fighting to bring your

children to Christ and to teach your children Truth? We are the thin red line. We are the “few.”

Unfortunately, our margin for error seems to be getting smaller and smaller, too, as the institutions we have so long relied on also come under attack.

We have to be *perfect* parents. Despite all our weaknesses, inadequacies, and defects as parents, our children and grandchildren need us to be perfect. “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

But how? How is this possible?

There were only ever two perfect parents. Mary and Joseph. The Immaculate Virgin Mother and St. Joseph.

My wife and I have found that it is possible to overcome our many failings as parents. All our imperfections as mothers and fathers can be hidden within Mary’s mantle and beneath St. Joseph’s cloak.

This is the heart of consecration to Jesus through Mary and Joseph. Please consecrate your families. Father Donald Calloway, MIC, and I have created a *Consecration to St. Joseph for Children and Families* to do exactly this.

Number one reason

Why should you entrust your family to St. Joseph? What’s the number one reason?

Because God Himself did. God entrusted the Holy Family to St. Joseph to keep them safe. Jesus has provided us a champion and protector — the very same man who protected Him as a child, the man under whom He “increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Lk 2:52).

I have five children (and counting). Their ages are 10, 8, 6, 4, and 1. I tried leading my family in Fr. Donald’s *Consecration to St. Joseph* around the dinner table. Let’s just say, it didn’t go smoothly. Maybe a food fight or two. My copy of Fr. Calloway’s book still bears some food stains.

Eventually, my wife, “far more precious than jewels,” turned to me. I wiped the smashed English peas from my glasses so I could see her. She said, “Maybe we should write

a version of Fr. Calloway’s book for children.”

When I brought the idea to Fr. Donald, he said that, among all the thousands and thousands of people he has spoken to around the country and world about his *Consecration to St. Joseph*, there has been one request repeated over and over. People had been asking him for a version for children and families, and he didn’t know when he would find time to write it.

So Fr. Donald and I created a follow-up to his book together. Our *Consecration to St. Joseph for Children and Families* also includes a “consecration calendar” and stickers. My dinner table experience has taught me that the kids need a focal point during our 33 days of consecration readings and prayers. My kids always know what day of the consecration we’re on, because their turn to place a sticker on the calendar is extremely important to them.



We invite you to send us your intentions for the St. Joseph Novena. See the attached envelope or visit Marian.org/b57 to have your intentions remembered.

Time to consecrate

A special opportunity to consecrate your families is fast approaching.

Besides Sundays, there is only one solemnity — a feast day of the highest possible rank — that always occurs during Lent. It is our oasis in the desert of Lent. A feast among all the fasting! It is the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19.

The solemnity should be a feast of special magnificence for our families.

It should not merely be the day a couple days after everybody wears green on St. Patrick’s Day. Please don’t allow the craziness of St. Patrick’s to overshadow the Solemnity of St. Joseph. Prepare yourselves and your families for this very special day.

How? Consecrate your families to St. Joseph this March 19. The 33 days of family prayer begins on Feb. 15. If you miss that window, there’s another start date on March 30, leading to the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1.

Now more than ever, we need parents, especially fathers, leading their families in prayer around the dinner table. Please make the most of this opportunity.

To order *Consecration to St. Joseph for Children and Families*, visit ShopMercy.org/b57 (Product Code: B57-CJHB).

The great Apostle of Divine Mercy

By Dr. Robert Stackpole

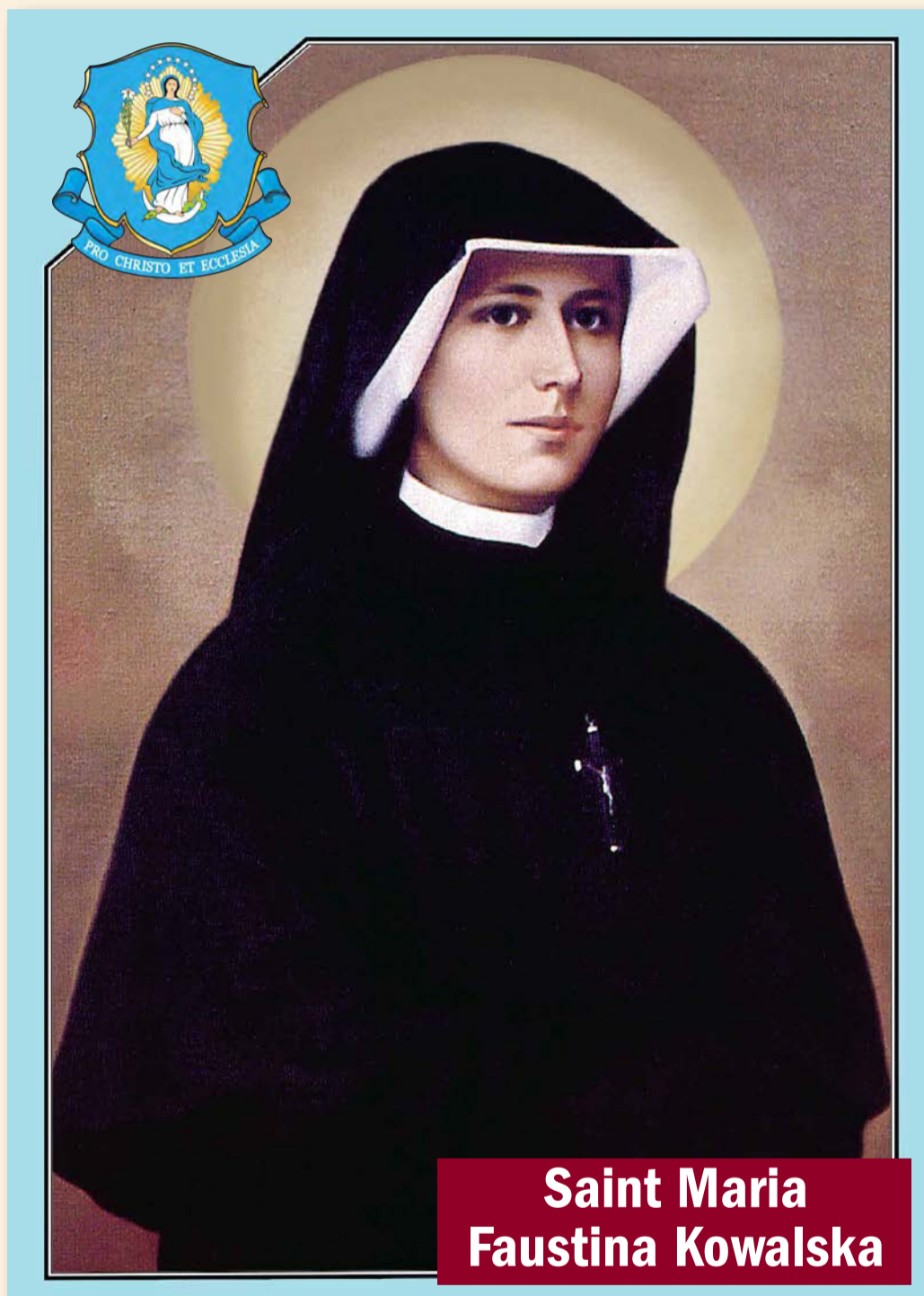
“**H**e has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly” (Lk 1:52) — in her Magnificat, the Blessed Virgin Mary summed up God’s *modus operandi* for the saving work of His Son. And in the 20th century, when God purposed to renew the trust of humanity in His merciful love, He adopted the very same strategy with St. Faustina.

Helena Kowalska came from very humble beginnings. Born in 1905 in a poor Catholic farming family in rural Poland, she grew up in the war zone of the Eastern front during World War I. As a result (with schooling largely suspended), she received barely three semesters of formal education. Nevertheless, little “Helenka” was naturally bright and energetic, diligent about all her duties at home, and exceptionally devout. From childhood, she exhibited a sincere love for the poor, for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for Mary Immaculate.

Call in her heart

As a teenager, Helena discerned a call in her heart to the religious life. After a period of intense inner struggle, and despite her parents’ reluctance to give their consent, with hardly a penny to her name she boarded a train to Warsaw to search for a convent that would welcome her as a postulant. After a few years serving as a domestic servant and mother’s-helper for Catholic families in the area, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and received the religious name “Sister Maria Faustina,” adding her chosen epithet “of the Most Blessed Sacrament.”

Many of those reading this article will know the rest of the story well: how in 1931 Jesus appeared to her in the evening in her cell, “clothed in a white garment. One hand was raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating



Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska

two large rays, one red, the other pale.” After a while, Jesus said to her, “**Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world**” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 47). Our Lord also told her of His desire for a Feast of Divine Mercy to be established on the Second Sunday of Easter in the universal calendar of the Church, and

taught her a special form of prayer called the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to be used to plead for an outpouring of God's merciful love upon the whole world.

After two years, Jesus provided Sr. Faustina with a spiritual director of extraordinary wisdom and holiness, Bl. Fr. Michael Sopoćko, to be her guide and helper in discerning clearly and fulfilling our Lord's requests. Over the next five years, through a series of extraordinary revelations (as recorded in the *Diary* that Bl. Sopoćko asked her to keep), Jesus fashioned in her heart a spirit of total, childlike surrender to the Merciful Heart of Jesus, strengthened by His living presence in the Holy Eucharist, and nourished by the maternal love of Mary, the Mother of God and model of all virtue.

United with Jesus

As she suffered more and more from the ravages of tuberculosis that ultimately took her life in 1938, Sr. Faustina wrote in her *Diary*:

O my God, I am conscious of my mission in the Holy Church. It is my constant endeavor to plead for mercy for the world. I unite myself closely with Jesus and stand before Him as an atoning sacrifice on behalf of the world. ... O God, how I desire that souls come to know You and to see that You have created them because of Your unfathomable love. ... I feel that I am going to remove the veil of heaven so that earth will not doubt Your goodness (482-483).

Sister Faustina's prophecy here has already largely become true: devotion to Divine Mercy has now spread throughout the entire world. When he beatified her in Rome in 1993, Pope St. John Paul II summed up Faustina's role in God's plan for winning humanity back to His merciful Heart — words that remain true today:

It is truly marvelous how her devotion to the merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world, and gaining so many human hearts! This is doubtless a sign of the times ... [which] presents a deep restlessness and fear of the future. Where, if not in the Divine Mercy,

TEAM MARIAN

STATS AND FACTS

Born: Aug. 25, 1905, Głogowiec, Poland
Entered religious life: Apr. 30, 1926, Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy
Jesus reveals the Divine Mercy Image to her: Feb. 22, 1931
Died: Oct. 5, 1938, Krakow, Poland
Canonized: April 30, 2000 by Pope St. John Paul II
Feast day: Oct. 5

Saint Faustina Kowalska

- As a child, Helena dressed in rags and went from house to house in her village to beg for alms for the poor.
- The other sisters in her religious congregation turned to Sr. Faustina for counsel about their problems so often, they gave her the nickname "The Dump."
- Jesus revealed to Sr. Faustina the Image of Divine Mercy in 1931 on the same day as the Eastern Catholic "Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Icons."

Talkin'
Marians



Sr. Faustina was the first Catholic saint to be canonized in the third millennium.

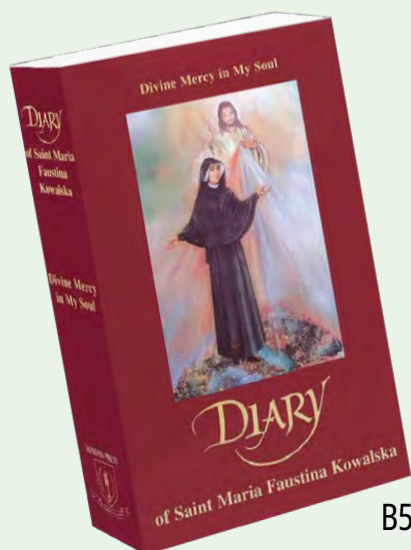
can the world find refuge and the light of hope? Believers understand that perfectly.

The Congregation of Marian Fathers continues to play a key role in this great mission of Mercy, including participating in a fresh effort to have the Holy See declare St. Faustina a "Doctor of the Church" (that is, one of the greatest teachers of the Catholic faith). Please sign our petition for this good cause: visit TheDivineMercy.org/doctor.

May St. Faustina pray for us who serve in all Marian apostolates that spread His merciful love!

Robert Stackpole, STD, is director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy.

MH



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THE BOOK THAT SPARKED THE DIVINE MERCY MOVEMENT

The *Diary* chronicles God's message given through St. Faustina to the world to turn to His mercy. The message of Divine Mercy has become an integral part of Catholic practice, including the celebration of the Feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter.

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or call 1-800-462-7426.

‘A priest after My own Heart’

By Dr. Robert Stackpole

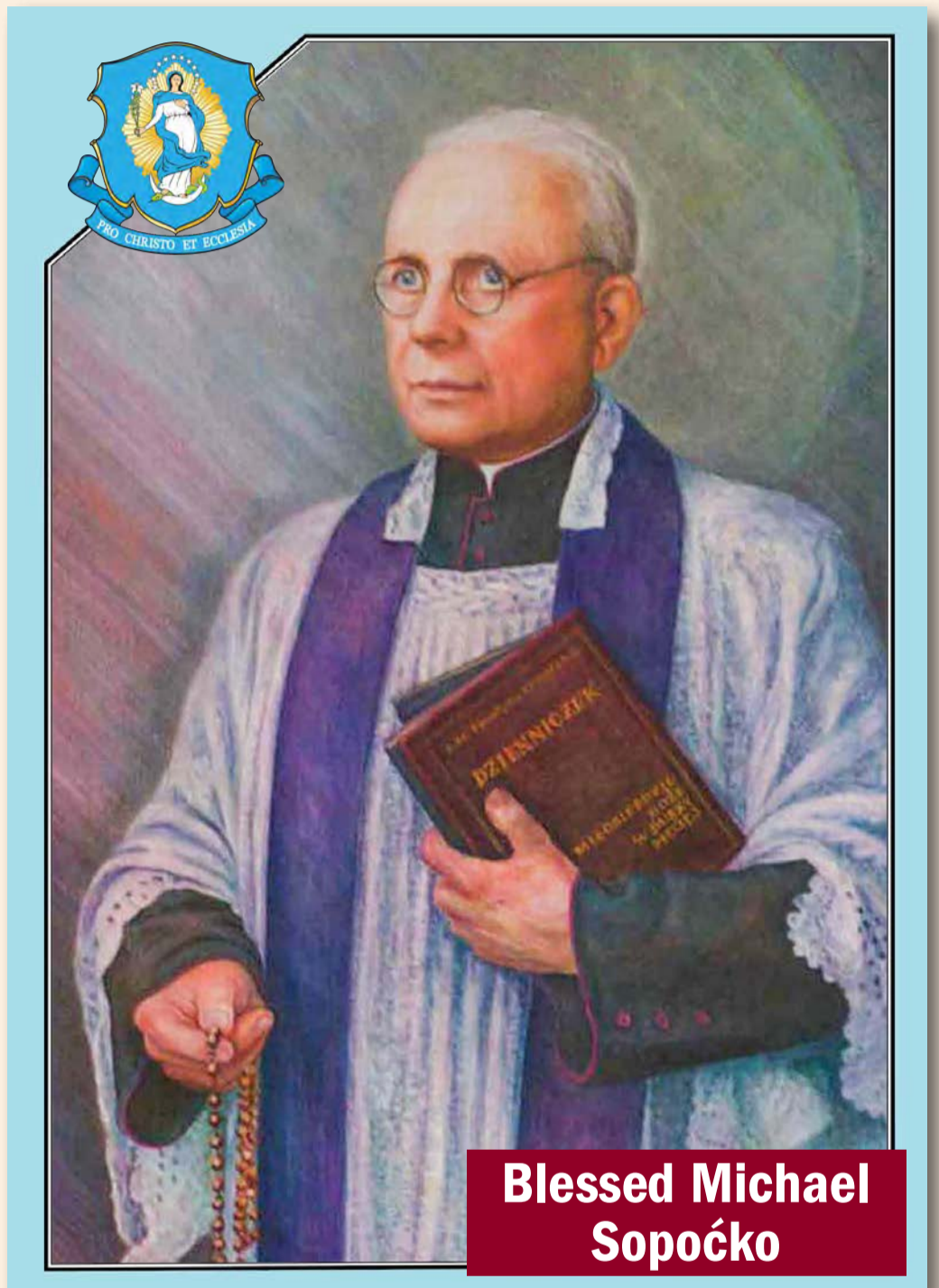
We often think of St. Faustina’s spiritual director, Bl. Fr. Michael Sopoćko, as merely the primary witness of her sanctity, and perhaps as the agent that God used to arrange the painting of the Image of the Divine Mercy. But he was so much more than that! He was a true guide for her soul, and a man of enormous wisdom and courage — so much so that the Church beatified him in 2008. Indeed, he was a man of sanctity in his own right — a sanctity forged in the fires of trials and tribulations, as well as through his close relationship with St. Faustina.

Blessed Fr. Sopoćko was also a great Divine Mercy theologian, and the principal instrument that our Lord used to spread the devotion to the Divine Mercy to the ends of the earth. Jesus Himself revealed all this one day to St. Faustina, as she recorded in her *Diary* (1256).

Pious youth

Michael Sopoćko was born in what is now Lithuania in 1888 into a noble family, but one that had fallen into poverty. They worked out in the fields, and barely scraped together enough to survive. Yet they were a deeply devout Catholic family, as well. Young Michael was especially pious; he even built in the family home a little altar that he would use to help him pray. Not surprisingly for such a boy, he sensed within his heart a call to the priesthood when he was just 10 years old. It was only through the generosity of the rector of the seminary in Vilnius, however, that Michael was able to study there for four years for the priesthood, and that he was finally ordained in 1914, right at the start of the First World War.

In 1918, Fr. Sopoćko sought to study for a degree in theology in Poland at the University of Warsaw, but illness and the worsening situation of the war forced him to delay. A year later, he signed up as a military chaplain, serving the Polish army in a field hospital during the conflict with Russia. After only a month, however, he asked to be sent to the front lines to serve the soldiers who were in the thick of the fighting. In addition to saying Mass for them, hearing confessions, and anointing the dying, he often found himself called on to



Blessed Michael Sopoćko

organize better care for the wounded.

The Bishop of Vilnius recognized Fr. Sopoćko’s academic brilliance and pastoral zeal and appointed him director of military chaplaincies for the entire Vilnius region, responsible for the pastoral care of more than 10,000 soldiers. Father Sopoćko also worked to complete his doctorate in theology, served as spiritual director of the seminary in Vilnius, and headed the pastoral theology department at Stephan Batory University (now Vilnius University).

In all this, what do we see in Fr. Michael Sopoćko? Our Lord had fashioned him by poverty and hardship into a character of extraordinary toughness, perseverance, and courage,

as well as great compassion for the suffering. Although he was not aware of it at the time, he would need all these virtues in abundance when he was appointed in 1932 to be the confessor to the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Vilnius. There, of course, he encountered a most extraordinary holy soul and visionary, Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska.

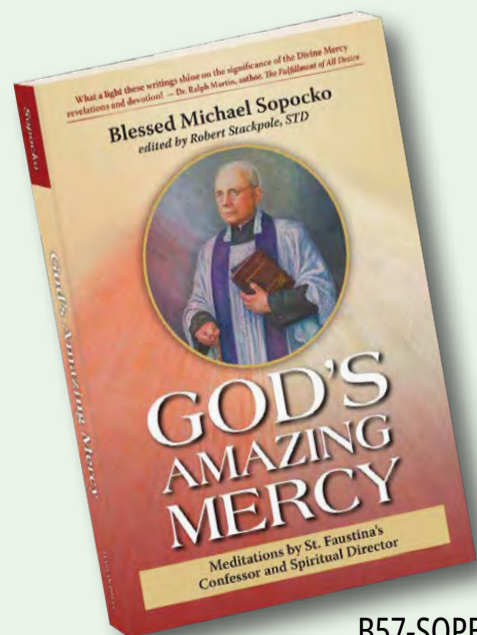
Confessor duties

It was actually in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that he first met Sr. Faustina, a very humble nun who was carrying a tremendous weight on her shoulders. The Lord had begun revealing to her His message of Divine Mercy — an urgent message that He wanted her to share with the entire world. But no one would believe her, not even her superiors in the convent, nor any of her regular confessors, save one: Fr. Joseph Andrasz, SJ.


Sister Faustina, therefore, had prayed to the Merciful Jesus for a spiritual director, someone who would help her and guide her on an ongoing basis to discern and do His will. Father Sopoćko was the answer to her prayers, and eventually he became the main promoter of her revelations. It was primarily through him that she would answer the Lord's call to spread Divine Mercy throughout the world. Seeing Fr. Sopoćko in chapel, St. Faustina wrote, "suddenly I heard a voice in my soul say, **This is the visible help for you on earth. He will help you carry out My will on earth**" (*Diary*, 53).

At Sr. Faustina's insistence, Fr. Sopoćko commissioned a painting of the Image of the Merciful Jesus, and he directed her to write down all that was happening in her relationship with Jesus Christ, which she recorded in her *Diary*. He also supervised the printing of the first copies of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Novena, and prayers, as well as litanies that he himself arranged, based on the words and phrases that Jesus had spoken to Sr. Faustina.

Sister Faustina wrote about Fr. Sopoćko several times in her



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TEAM MARIAN

**STATS
AND
FACTS**

Born: Nov. 1, 1888, Nowosady, Lithuania

Ordained: June 15, 1914

Died: Feb. 15, 1975, Bialystok, Poland


Beatified: Sept. 28, 2008

Feast day: Feb. 15

Blessed Michael Sopoćko

- **Father Sopoćko was the artist's model for the Vilnius Divine Mercy Image, wearing the priestly vestments so that the painter, Eugene Kazimirowski, could see how they lay when someone was wearing them and standing as Jesus stood in St. Faustina's vision. His face, however, is not that of Jesus.**
- **In 1947, Fr. Sopoćko founded the women's religious order St. Faustina had foreseen, the Congregation of Sisters of Merciful Jesus.**
- ***Marian Helpers Bulletin*, the precursor of *Marian Helper*, published articles in English by Fr. Sopoćko.**

**Talkin'
Marians**



His feast day, Feb. 15, is the same day as the feast of the early Christian martyr St. Faustinus, from whom St. Faustina took her name as a woman religious.

Diary, including statements about him made by Jesus Himself that she recorded, such as "**He is a priest after My own Heart; his efforts are pleasing to Me**" (*Diary*, 1256). Such extraordinary statements from Jesus were not only a divine confirmation to Sr. Faustina that she could put her complete trust in Fr. Sopoćko's spiritual guidance, but also a prophecy of the tremendous role that his efforts and writings would play in the spread of the Divine Mercy message and devotion throughout the world in the decades to follow.

GOD'S AMAZING MERCY

MEDITATIONS BY ST. FAUSTINA'S CONFESSOR AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

This edition of *God is Mercy*, by St. Faustina's confessor Bl. Michael Sopoćko, introduces us to the place of Divine Mercy in salvation history. Enriched by Dr. Robert Stackpole's expert commentary, this special edition of a Divine Mercy classic belongs on every Catholic's shelf.

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or call 1-800-462-7426.**

Remember the martyrs

By Dr. Veronica Szczygiel

The ravages of war are broadcast daily on television and the web, atrocities committed by Russia on Ukraine as the first anniversary of the invasion approaches. Thousands of innocent Ukrainians have perished, along with countless Russian soldiers. Our Marian Fathers in Kharkiv and other cities are in the line of fire, enduring hardships, yet persevering daily to serve their communities and shine the light of Christ in the darkness.

We cannot yet know how many martyrs will emerge from the Ukraine war. But such wickedness brings to mind the fact that “Team Marian” includes seven Marian priests who were martyred by Nazi Germany and Soviet Communism. Each Marian is on the road to canonization.

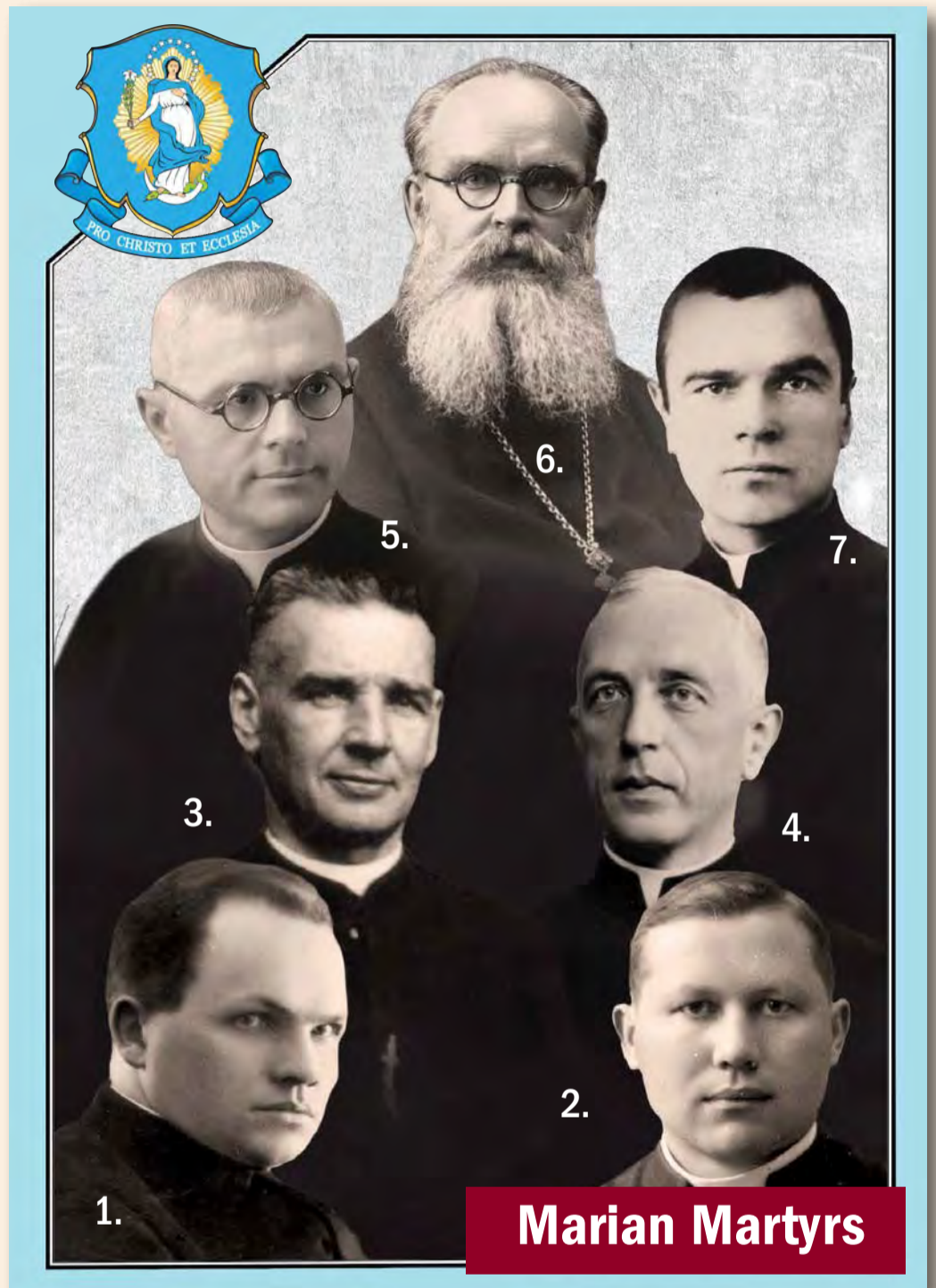
They died for the faith. Let us make sure they are remembered, and ask for their prayers.

Twin evils

The 20th century saw the rise of two great evils: Nazism and Soviet Communism. Both movements thrived parasitically through oppression. Believing a warped ideology of racial purity, Hitler and the Nazis advanced racial genocide, killing millions of Jews and also non-Jewish people with disabilities, Poles and Slavs, Romani, homosexuals, and others. Similarly, Stalin and the Soviet Communists extinguished millions, breeding fear with false accusations and cruel “interrogation” methods to silence dissident voices, advancing their atheistic agenda.

Poland and its sister Slavic nations suffered tremendously at the hands of the Nazis and Soviets. It is fitting, then, that Jesus appeared to a humble Polish nun to reveal His redemptive message of Divine Mercy. Saint Faustina communicated in her Diary a message from Jesus specifically concerning Russia.

Shortly before Stalin’s Great Purge in 1937, Jesus said to Faustina: **“I cannot suffer that country any longer. Do not tie my hands, My daughter”** (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 818). She also warned her fellow sisters that a “long and terrible war” was coming, meaning World War II, which began with Hitler’s invasion of Poland in 1939, just one year after Faustina’s death. Clearly, Jesus revealed His



merciful message at the place and time when it was desperately needed.

Marian Blessed

These great evils contradict the essential dignity of the person in that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. Incredibly, many Catholics, including members of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, defended their faith, knowing full well that standing up for what was right and holy could get them killed. In this way, Marian Fathers Blessed Anthony Leszczewicz (1890-1943) and Blessed George Kaszyra (1904-1943) were martyred by the Nazis.

Father Anthony was appointed superior of mission work in Rosica, a town that was occupied by the Bolsheviks in 1939 and then the Germans in 1941. To aid his evangelical mission, he summoned Fr. George to join him. In 1943, the Nazis terrorized Rosica, rounding up the elderly, mothers, and children into the Marian Fathers' church. Fathers Anthony and George voluntarily stayed with the people all day and night, feeding the terrified victims, hearing confessions, praying, and administering the Holy Eucharist and other Sacraments. Ultimately, the Nazis set fire to Rosica and many neighboring villages.

Though their lives ended in tragedy, Frs. Anthony and George were examples of great Christian courage, and for their martyrdom, Pope St. John Paul II beatified them among 108 martyrs of World War II in 1999. "The blessed martyrs cry to our hearts: Believe in God who is love! Believe in Him in good times and bad! Awaken hope! May it produce in you the fruit of fidelity to God in every trial!" the Pope said in his homily.

Marian Servants of God

Marian priests were also martyred by the Soviets. Five Marians are now Servants of God, and their causes for sainthood were opened to mark the 350th jubilee celebrations of the Marian Congregation.

Father Fabian Abrantowicz, who ministered to Russian Catholics in China, was captured by German forces in 1939 and handed over to the Soviets. They imprisoned him in Moscow, where he brutally suffered and died in 1946. Pope Pius XII appointed **Fr. Andrew Cikoto** to replace him in China. However, in 1948, Chinese forces arrested him and likewise handed him over to the Soviets. Father Andrew was sentenced to 25 years in a labor camp, where he celebrated daily Mass, heard confessions, and ministered to the imprisoned. He died of failing health in 1952.

Father Eugene Kulesza became superior of the Marian house in Druya, Belarus, in 1938, where he supported priests and nuns in defending their faith during Bolshevik persecution.

Father Eugene was arrested and murdered in 1941 by Soviet soldiers fleeing the Germans.

During this time, **Fr. Vladislovas "Vladas" Mažonas**

was editor of the Catholic magazine "Šaltinis," where he reported the Soviets' persecution of Christians. The Soviets also arrested him in 1941. Deported to Siberia, Fr. Vladas was interrogated and tortured. He ultimately died in 1945.


Later, in 1950, **Fr. John Mendriks** was arrested by the Soviet secret police and sentenced to a labor camp for 10 years. When prisoners protested after Stalin's death in 1953, armed forces were summoned to intervene. Father John courageously moved to the front of the crowd, and as he recited the formula of absolution, the Soviets shot him dead.

Jesus knew it wouldn't be easy for us to follow Him, yet He calls us to spread His good news anyway. He asks us to trust in His Divine Mercy. He promises us eternal life. We must stay strong, as our Marian martyrs have modeled, making the ultimate sacrifice.

If you have received graces through the intercession of the Marian Martyrs,

please write: Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA, 01263. Email graces@Marian.org

MH



TEAM MARIAN


**STATS
AND
FACTS**

"The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church"
— Tertullian

The Marian Martyrs

1. Blessed Anthony Leszczewicz (1890-1943)
2. Blessed George Kaszyra (1904-1943)
3. Servant of God Vladislovas "Vladas" Mažonas (1881-1945)
4. Servant of God Eugene Kulesza (1891-1941)
5. Servant of God Andrew Cikoto (1891-1952)
6. Servant of God Fabian Abrantowicz (1884-1946)
7. Servant of God John Mendriks (1907-1953)

**Talkin'
Marians**



The feast day of Blessed Anthony and Blessed George is June 12. They share the feast with 106 other martyrs of World War II.

Jesus knew it wouldn't be easy for us to follow Him, yet He calls us to spread His good news anyway. He asks us to trust in His Divine Mercy.

He promises us eternal life. We must stay strong, as our Marian martyrs have modeled, making the ultimate sacrifice.

The Great Mercy Pope & Mary

The worldwide phenomenon *33 Days to Morning Glory* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, which has encouraged millions to consecrate themselves to Mary, is now available in a new, expanded edition from Marian Press, designed specifically for group retreats and offering exclusive access to videos and bonus material on DivineMercyPlus.org.

In honor of the Great Mercy Pope who established Divine Mercy Sunday as a universal feast in the Church calendar, we share here an excerpt about Pope St. John Paul II from Day 28 in *33 Days to Morning Glory: Group Retreat & Study Guide*.

On May 13, 1982, exactly one year after being shot in St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul II went to Fatima, Portugal, "in order to give thanks that the mercy of God and the protection of the Mother of Christ" had saved his life. On that occasion, he delivered a heartfelt homily that's a rich source of the theology of Marian consecration and entrustment.

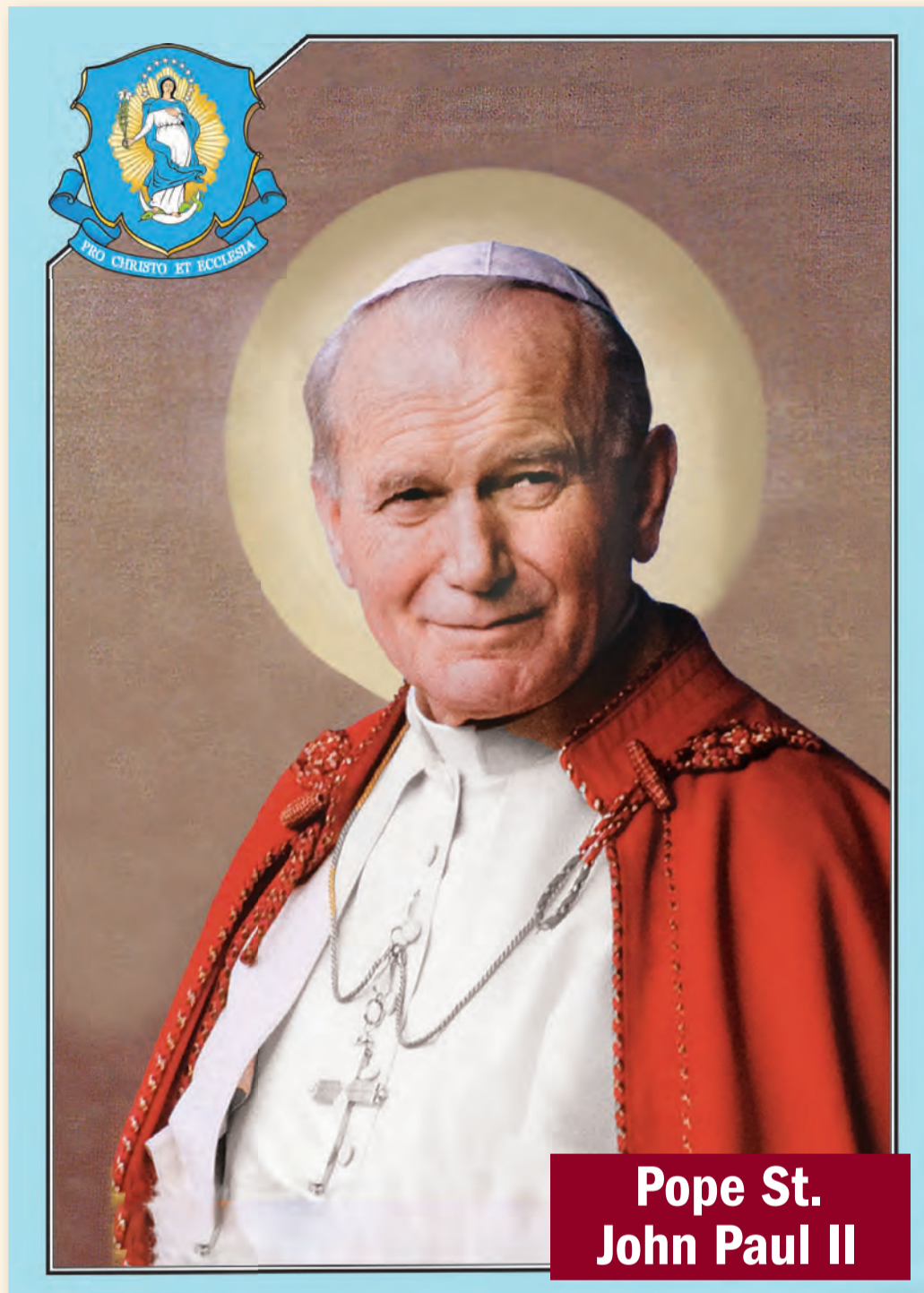
The entire homily and Act of Entrustment are too long to cite here. So, I'm going to summarize. Specifically, I'm going to draw out from them the connection the Pope makes between consecration to Mary, *Divine Mercy*, and the redeeming consecration of Christ.

Mary and Divine Mercy

Let's start with the connection between Mary and Divine Mercy. Before we begin, a few things about Divine Mercy:

1. According to John Paul, Divine Mercy is the limit imposed by God on evil, the love of God in the face of evil;
2. Divine Mercy is symbolized by the pierced side of Christ and the blood and water that gushed forth from His side;
3. A central part of the modern Divine Mercy devotion is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which offers atonement and implores mercy for our sins and those of the whole world.

In what follows, notice how these three aspects of Divine Mercy are central to the Pope's most important homily on



Consecration to Mary is "drawing near to the Fountain of Life that sprang from Golgotha."

Marian consecration.

The homily's context is the widespread, "almost apocalyptic" evil of our time, an evil that "menaces," is "spreading," and gathers "like a dark cloud over mankind." The Pope confesses that this evil causes "trepidation" in his heart. Despite this, he finds hope in "a Love more powerful than evil" which no "sin of the world can ever overcome." This Love he identifies as "merciful Love."

And what about this *merciful Love*? What does it have to do with Marian consecration? Everything. It has everything to do with consecration because Mary is the one who brings us to the source of merciful Love. Mary is the one who brings us to the love that is more powerful than evil. Indeed, as John Paul says in his

homily, consecration to the Immaculate Heart means “drawing near, through the Mother’s intercession, to the very Fountain of Life that sprang from Golgotha.”

What is this fountain of life? The Pope identifies it as “the Fountain of Mercy.” It’s the pierced side of Christ from which blood and water flowed as a source of grace and mercy. And it’s through this wound in Christ’s Heart that “reparation is made continually for the sins of the world.”

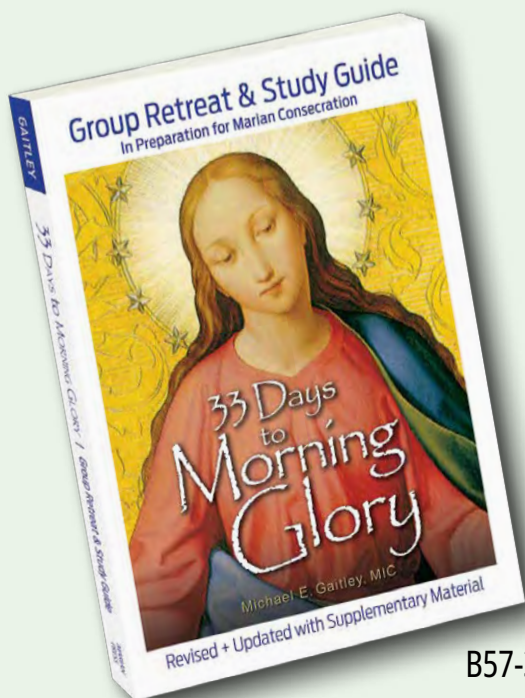
Moreover, through this Fountain of Mercy, we find “a ceaseless source of new life and holiness.”

The Pope goes on to explain that consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means “returning to the Cross of the Son.” It means bringing the world and all its problems and sufferings to “the pierced Heart of the Savior” and thus “back to the very source of its Redemption.” It means bringing the world, through Mary, to Divine Mercy! The power of the Redemption, the power of merciful Love, “is always greater than man’s sin and the ‘sin of the world’” and is “infinitely superior to the whole range of evil in man and the world.”

Power of Redemption

Now, Mary knows the power of the Redemption, the power of merciful Love, better than anyone. In fact, John Paul says she knows it “more than any other heart in the whole universe, visible and invisible.” Therefore, she calls us not only to conversion but “to accept her motherly help to return to the source of Redemption.” Mary’s task is to bring us to the Fountain of Mercy, to the pierced side of Christ, to His Merciful Heart.

Essentially, then, consecrating ourselves to Mary “means accepting her help to offer ourselves and the whole of mankind” to the infinitely Holy God. It means entrusting ourselves to her who was most united to Christ’s own consecration: “Hail to you who are wholly united to the redeeming consecration of your Son!” It means entrusting



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TEAM MARIAN

STATS AND FACTS

Born: Karol Wojtyła, May 18, 1920, Wadowice, Poland
Ordained: Nov. 1, 1946
Papacy began: Oct. 16, 1978.
Died: April 2, 2005
Canonized: April 27, 2014 by Pope Francis
Feast day: Oct. 22

Pope St. John Paul II

- Karol Wojtyła was an avid skier and hiker, and loved soccer. He followed the Cracovia football team in Poland, which retired #1 in his honor.
- He worked briefly as an actor, and wrote several plays, including “The Jeweler’s Shop” (1960).
- When John Paul canonized Sr. Faustina on April 30, 2000, he also, on the same day, surprised the entire world by establishing Divine Mercy Sunday as a feast day for the entire Church. On that day, the Holy Father declared, “This is the happiest day of my life.”

**Talkin’
Marians**



It was John Paul II who told the Marian Fathers: “Be apostles of Divine Mercy under the maternal and loving guidance of Mary.” We’ve been faithfully following his instructions ever since.

ourselves to Mary’s prayers, that she may “help us to live with the whole truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family of the modern world.”

In other words, consecrating ourselves to Mary means relying on her motherly intercession to help us offer ourselves more fully to Christ in His own consecration for our redemption.

MH



FOTOGRAFIA FELICI

Father Kaz Chawlek, MIC, presents a copy of St. Faustina's *Diary* to Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 at the first World Apostolic Congress on Mercy in Rome.

'LET MERCIFUL LOVE SHINE'

As the Church and faithful pray for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who died on Dec. 31, 2022, we remember him here as a Pope of Divine Mercy. Here are some reasons why, in the Holy Father's own words.

First message as Pope, April 20, 2005:

At this time, side by side in my heart, I feel two contrasting emotions. On the one hand, a sense of inadequacy and human apprehension as I face the responsibility for the universal Church, entrusted to me yesterday as Successor of the Apostle Peter in this See of Rome. On the other, I have a lively feeling of profound gratitude to God . . . this deep gratitude for a gift of Divine Mercy is uppermost in my heart in spite of all. And I consider it a special grace which my Venerable Predecessor, John Paul II, has obtained for

me. I seem to feel his strong hand clasp mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and hear his words, at this moment addressed specifically to me, "Do not be afraid!"

Regina Caeli Address for Divine Mercy Sunday on April 23, 2006:

The Servant of God John Paul II ... wanted the Sunday after Easter to be dedicated in a special way to Divine Mercy, and providence disposed that he should die precisely on the vigil of that day (in the hands of Divine Mercy). The mystery of the merciful love of God was at the center of the pontificate of my venerated predecessor.

Address to the Sick at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Lagiewniki on May 27, 2006:

Dear friends who are sick, who are marked by suffering

in body or soul, you are most closely united to the Cross of Christ, and at the same time, you are the most eloquent witnesses of God's mercy. Through you and through your suffering, he bows down toward humanity with love. You who say in silence: "Jesus, I trust in you," teach us that there is no faith more profound, no hope more alive, and no love more ardent than the faith, hope and love of a person who in the midst of suffering places himself securely in God's hands.

General Audience on May 31, 2006 following his pilgrimage to Poland where he visited the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Lagiewniki:

[Being here] allowed me to emphasize that only Divine Mercy illuminates the mystery of man. In the convent near this shrine, on contemplating the luminous wounds of the risen Christ, Sr. Faustina Kowalska received a message of confidence for humanity, the message of Divine Mercy, which John Paul II echoed and of which he became the interpreter. It is a really central message for our time: Mercy as the force of God, as the divine limit against the evil of the world.

Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 15, 2007:

The Lord took his wounds with him to eternity. He is a wounded God; He let himself be injured through his love for us. His wounds are a sign that he understands and allows himself to be wounded out of love for us. These wounds of his: how tangible they are to us in the history of our time! Indeed, time and again, he allows himself to be wounded for our sake. What certainty of his mercy, what consolation do his wounds mean for us! ... And what a duty they are for us, the duty to allow ourselves in turn to be wounded for him!

Angelus message on September 16, 2007:

In our time, humanity needs a strong proclamation and witness of God's mercy. Beloved John Paul II, a great apostle of Divine Mercy, prophetically intuited this urgent pastoral need. He dedicated his second Encyclical to it and throughout his Pontificate made himself the missionary of God's love to all peoples. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, which darkened the dawn of the third millennium, he invited Christians and people of good will to believe that

God's mercy is stronger than all evil, and that only in the Cross of Christ is the world's salvation found.

Regina Caeli message on Divine Mercy Sunday, March 30, 2008:

Indeed, mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message; it is the very Name of God, the Face with which he revealed himself in the Old Covenant and fully in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of creative and redemptive Love. May this merciful love also shine on the face of the Church and show

itself through the sacraments, in particular that of Reconciliation, and in works of charity, both communitarian and individual. May all that the Church says and does manifest the mercy God feels for man, and therefore for us ... From Divine Mercy, which brings peace to hearts, genuine peace flows into the world, peace between different peoples, cultures and religions.

Homily on the third anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, April 2, 2008:

The Servant of God John Paul II had known and personally experienced the terrible tragedies of the 20th century and for a long time wondered what could stem the tide of evil. The answer could only be found in God's love.

In fact, only Divine Mercy is able to impose limitations on evil; only the almighty love of God can defeat the tyranny of the wicked and the destructive power of selfishness and hate. For this reason, during his last visit to Poland, he said on his return to the land of his birth: "Apart from

the mercy of God there is no other source of hope for mankind" (Homily at Krakow-Lagiewniki, August 17, 2002).

Regina Caeli message after the close of the first World Apostolic Congress on Mercy on April 6, 2008:

To all the participants I address my cordial greeting which now becomes a mandate: go forth and be witnesses of God's mercy, a source of hope for every person and for the whole world. May the Risen Lord be with you always!

Learn more about Pope Benedict XVI in Divine Mercy: A Guide From Genesis To Benedict XVI by Robert Stackpole, STD, available now on ShopMercy.org/b57 (Product code: B57-AGGB2).



'Mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message; it is the very name of God. May this merciful love also shine on the face of the Church and show itself through the sacraments, in particular that of Reconciliation, and in works of charity, both communitarian and individual.'

Walk Lent Faithfully



Busy?

Think you don't have time for prayer and meditation?

See how your time at the bus stop, on lunch breaks, and between phone calls can become an oasis of peace with *Pausing to Pray*.

Get a daily email with an inspiring passage followed by a meditation by one of our Marian priests.

Runs Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, through Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16.

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at EMiller@Marian.org
or (413) 298-1380.



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MADE WITH LOVE ... AND MERCY

The striking blue enamel color attracts attention first. Then folks notice the medal. Some know immediately that this is the Miraculous Medal. Some ask what it is, and that's when Gayle Schoemehl delights in telling them about Our Blessed Mother.



Gayle's story begins in the heartland of Chesterfield, Missouri. Married to John for more than 40 years, they shared a special devotion to Mary. In 2016, their world was turned upside down — John was diagnosed with cancer. It was John's illness that seemed to be the catalyst for a ministry that Gayle wouldn't have ever dreamed that she'd be creating.

Messages from Mary

When John was first diagnosed, Gayle got a book to take notes at the doctor's office. The very first time she opened it up, she wrote the Memorare prayer — it just came to her. John in turn produced a prayer card from the time his mother had died — and on one side was the Memorare!

Another time, Gayle vividly remembers seeking solace. "As I was leaving church, I heard a voice or felt it on my heart. It was the Blessed Mother, and she said to me, 'I've got this. Don't worry about him.'"

Gayle felt that Mary had gotten her attention, and wanted her to try her hand at making earrings out of the Miraculous Medal. Not one to wear a lot of jewelry, Gayle didn't know how to start. But she forged ahead, secure in her faith that Mary's guiding hand was upon her.

Gayle soon realized this was a great way to evangelize. "She is the Mother of Jesus. I don't try to preach," she says. "People just see and it registers. They're aware that this is Mary."

And people did notice! Once, a young nurse stopped her in the hospital. Gayle soon realized this was a great way to evangelize.

Good with everything

"Our Blessed Mother goes good with everything" is Gayle's fashion motto. "It's fun when I go to church and see the ladies with them on."

After John's death, Gayle turned back to Mary and said, "Now what?" Again, Mary answered. Gayle was presented

with abundant opportunities to help at her parish, Ascension Catholic Church. She has led Bible studies, and is a lector and Eucharistic minister. A little over a year ago, she became part of a small group that recites the Divine Mercy Chaplet every day during the Hour of Great Mercy.

For Gayle, Divine Mercy has a special meaning. "God our Father is merciful — He's going to be loving us more than He's going to be judging us," she says. "Jesus came and gave Faustina the story and the Image, and that makes it very personal."

When John died, Gayle asked for donations to the Marian

Fathers in lieu of flowers. Her own donations are always directed toward supporting seminarians. "The Marianists are amazing men of faith whom I trust to lead more men to Christ," she says. A tip: "My donations are cash from my IRA distribution, which saves the amount donated from incurring income tax."

If you would like to learn more, please contact Hope at hponsart@Marian.org or call (413) 298-1387.



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



PREPARE FOR LENT AND DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY



UPCOMING EPISODES:

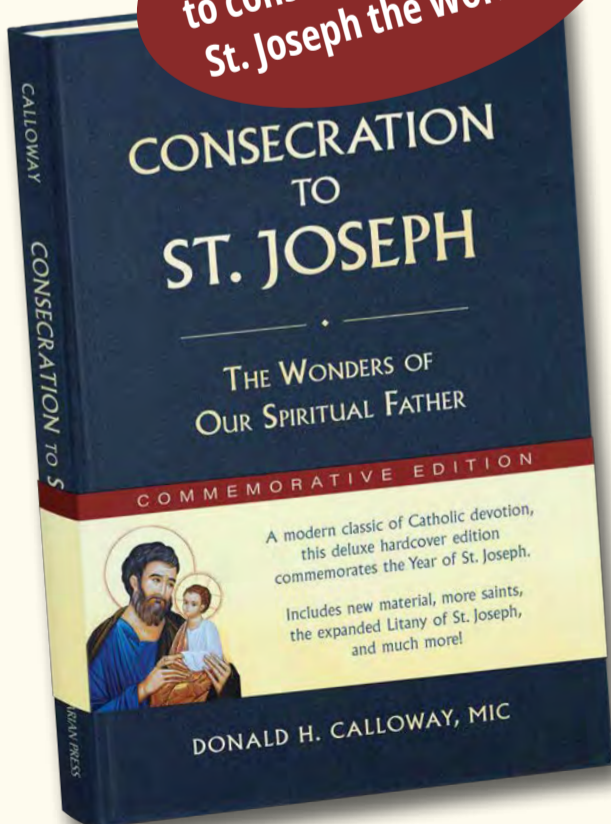
- ASH WEDNESDAY
- CONFESSION
- PENANCE
- HOW TO BECOME A SAINT
- THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
- ARK OF THE COVENANT
- CONNECTION BETWEEN PASSOVER AND THE LAST SUPPER

TUNE IN TO
"LIVING DIVINE MERCY"
EACH WEDNESDAY
AT 6:30 P.M. (EST)
ON EWTN OR EWTN.COM

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Consecrate to St. Joseph!

Start on March 30
to consecrate on May 1,
St. Joseph the Worker



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

An expanded edition of one of the most popular and best-selling Catholic books in recent years, this premium hardcover edition of *Consecration to St. Joseph* includes a new foreword from Fr. Calloway, 3 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. **B57-HCJO \$39.95**

Order at ShopMercy.org/b57
or call 1-800-462-7426.

GRACES RECEIVED

Daughter overcomes addiction

I started praying for our daughter on Labor Day 2021 to Blessed George. She lost her marriage, professional career, house, and three years of her young life to depression and alcohol addiction.

On the Friday before Labor Day 2022, she had her mother and I over for dinner at her apartment, a rarity. She said she had some interviews but follow-ups were not happening. But she announced that, in the meantime, she had taken a part-time job as a hostess at a bar/restaurant nearby.

Obviously, we were not thrilled with the bar idea, but any productive activity was welcome and, in light of the last three years, a miraculous development.

When I reported this to Fr. Jim McCormack, MIC, he informed me that Blessed George has a special charism for employment needs. I had no idea!

Thank you, Blessed George!

— MK, email

Heart surgery not needed

I have been praying to Blessed George for quite a while. But for the last three months, I was praying to him to intercede for me when I was told I had a severe heart mitral valve.

I had to go to a hospital for a preliminary test to determine if I was a candidate for the procedure.

When I went for my results of the test, the doctor told me the valve wasn't as bad as they had thought, and I wouldn't need the mitral valve chip unless I started to have problems.

By the grace of God and the intercession of Blessed George, my prayers were answered!

— DM, Peoria, Arizona

Son offered position out of blue

My son felt that he needed to find a steady full-time job to support his wife and newborn son. He had spent many years being a freelance graphic designer, making a good income, but he now wanted more financial stability.

I prayed a novena to Blessed George, and he is now the creative design director of a large international company. I know in my heart that this was due to the intercession of Blessed George because this position was offered out of the blue.

Thank you, Blessed George!

— NB,

Westland, Michigan

Joint pain goes away

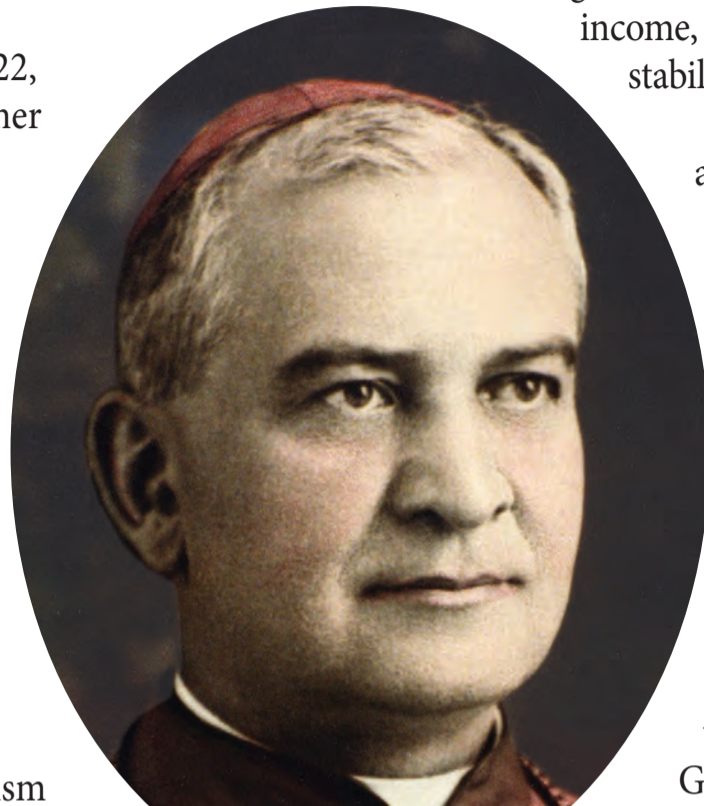
I believe I have received graces through the intercession of Blessed George.

Some months ago, I developed joint pain, which made it difficult to walk. About the same time, I read about Blessed George in *Marian Helper*. I asked Blessed George to intercede to relieve my joint pain. My doctor told me my pain could only be treated with pain medicine, which did little good.

Shortly after I began my prayers to Blessed George, my pain went away.

Thank you, Blessed George!

— TP, Washington, New York



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

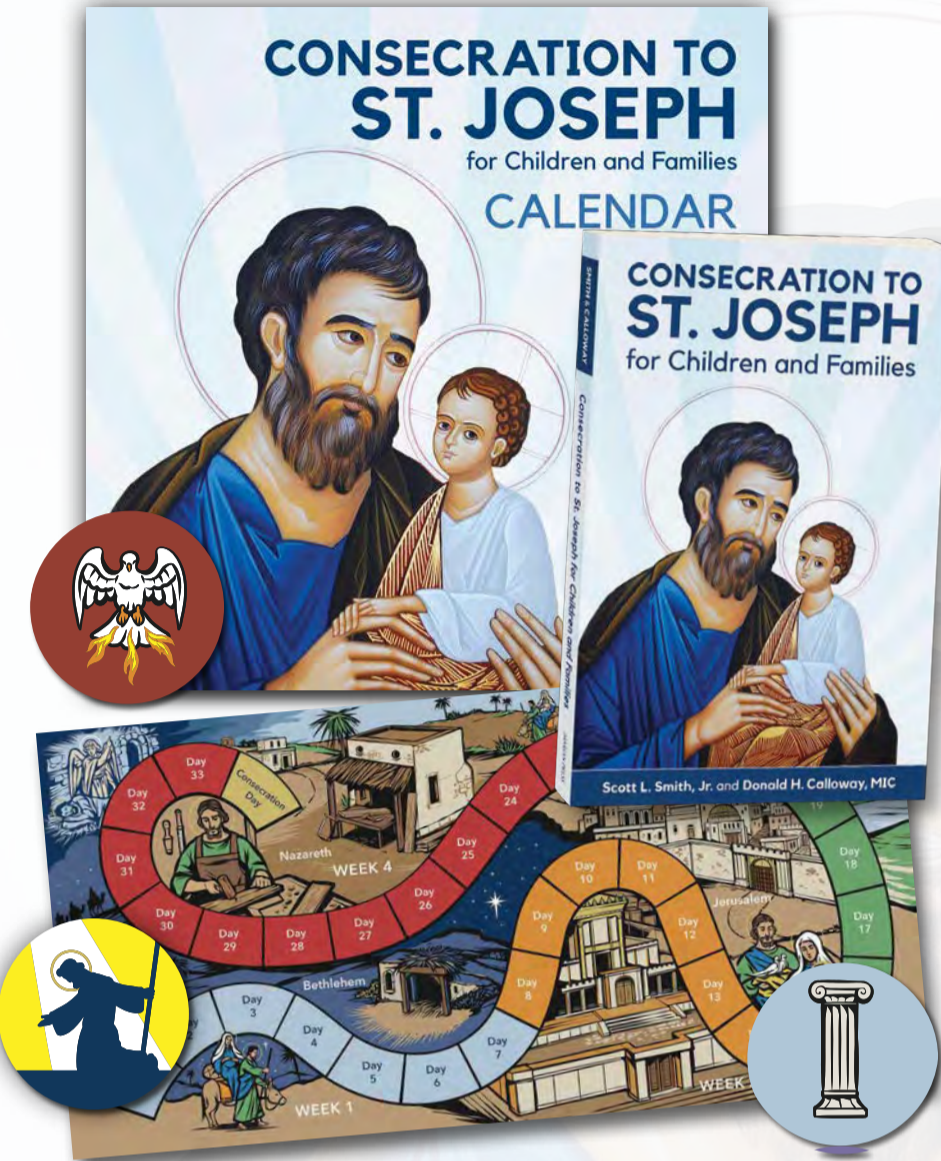
For a Blessed George prayercard (B57-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA, 01263. Email: graces@marian.org.

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 ...

Honoring St. Joseph



Consecration to St. Joseph for Children and Families: Book and Calendar Set


God entrusted the Holy Family to St. Joseph to keep them safe, and so should you, using this engaging guidebook and colorful calendar and sticker set. Drawing on the wealth of the Church's living tradition, Fr. Donald H. Calloway, MIC and co-author Scott L. Smith, Jr., call on all of us to turn to St. Joseph, entrusting ourselves, our children and families, our Church, and our world to our spiritual father's loving care. Kids can chart their progress to consecration with stickers representing each of the 33 days. Watch for wonders when the Universal Patron of the Church opens the floodgates of Heaven to pour out graces into your family's lives!

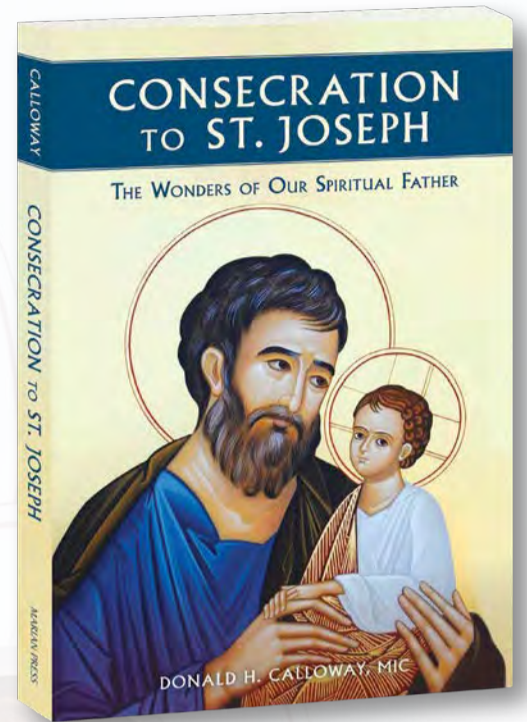
Book & Calendar Set: B57-CALST \$19.95

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St. Joseph Statue

This is a warm and expressive statue of St. Joseph holding the Baby Jesus in his arms. The faces are exquisitely detailed. The colors are soft, mellow, and beautiful. This statue is made of resin and stands 10" tall.

B57-SJOE \$44.95



Sleeping St. Joseph

According to the Gospels, St. Joseph received messages from Heaven while he was asleep. Place your prayer requests under this 8" resin statue, just like Pope Francis does, and trust that St. Joseph will answer them in his dreams. **B57-SLEEP \$21.95**




Antique Silver Sleeping St. Joseph Statue

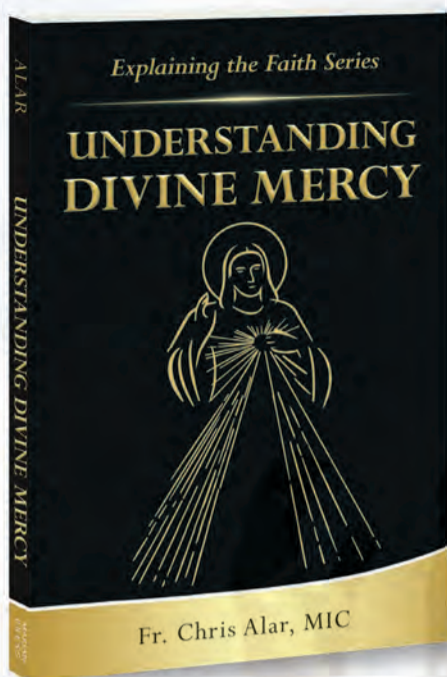
This Sleeping St. Joseph statue features a highly detailed depiction of this sleeping saint in an antiqued silver finish. Makes a great gift for those who have special devotion to St. Joseph. Measures 8" wide. **B57-SLVJ \$19.95**

Prepare for Divine Mercy Sunday

Explaining the Faith Series

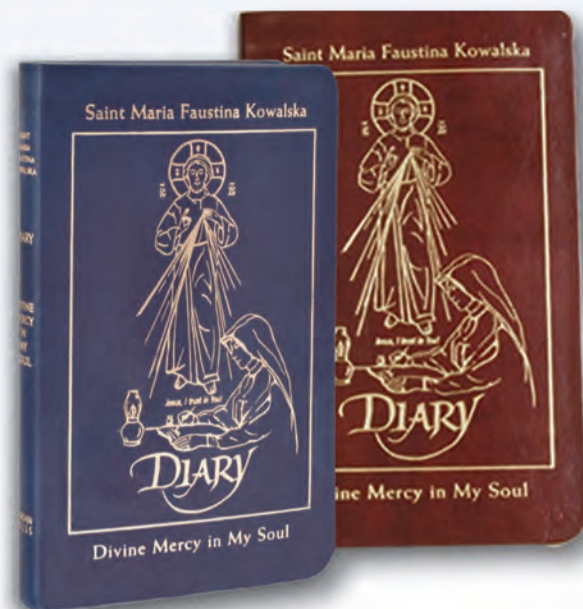
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Diary Of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, Compact Edition

The compact-size edition of St. Faustina's *Diary* chronicles the message that Jesus, the Divine Mercy, gave to the world through this humble nun. 739 pages. **\$12.95 EACH**
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The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion

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.


B57-M17 \$3.99 

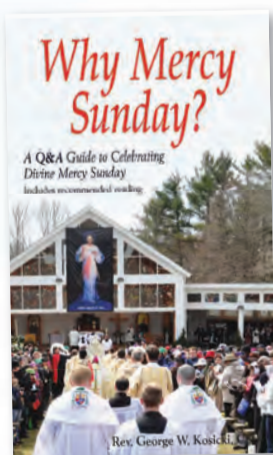
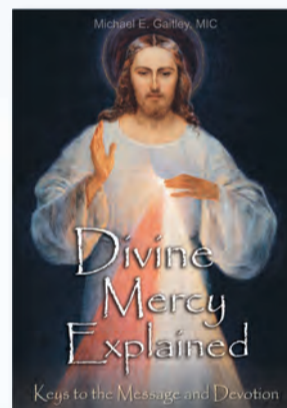
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This booklet by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, gives you a brief and easy-to-understand introduction to the Divine Mercy message and devotion. It includes the full prayers of the Divine Mercy Novena and St. Faustina's Litany to Divine Mercy, as well as two bonus appendices: Divine Mercy prayers and Divine Mercy wisdom from Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. 67 pages. **B57-DMX \$3.99** 



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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 entronement prayer, and two bonus appendices. 72 pages.

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From the
VAULTS



Divine Mercy weekend at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy approaches, observed this year April 15-16. Thousands of pilgrims will gather in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, for Mass, the Rosary, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

In 1956, a decidedly space-age structure was built on the site to shelter what was then called the “Field Altar,” used especially during the annual Marian Week celebration in August. The curvy structure, designed to mimic the surrounding Berkshire hills, lasted until the 1980s. Following its demise, two structures took its place until the current outdoor shrine was opened in 2008.



Live the call!



Lydia and Bob O'Donnell:

Bob writes: Many years ago, my individual discernment process concerning a vocation to the priesthood revealed that God had other plans for my life (husband, father, business owner). Fast forward 45 years: In appreciation to the Marians of the Immaculate Conception for promoting the message of Divine Mercy, my wife Lydia and I are privileged to financially support the development of seminarians that God, in His wisdom, chooses to be His future priests.

Brother Patrick, MIC:

I am in my fifth year of formation and currently preparing to begin my theology studies in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was drawn to the Marians because Our Lady is at the very heart of their identity and mission, and it was because of her that I started discerning religious life in the first place. So, it felt very fitting that she would lead me to this Congregation. My vocation to the Marian Fathers has been a tremendous blessing in my life, and I am truly grateful for the prayers and support of all of our benefactors.

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

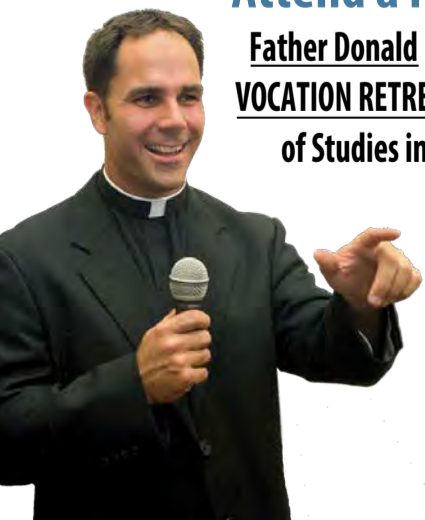
Write: Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC
Vocation Director
Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception
350 Belleview Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952

Support

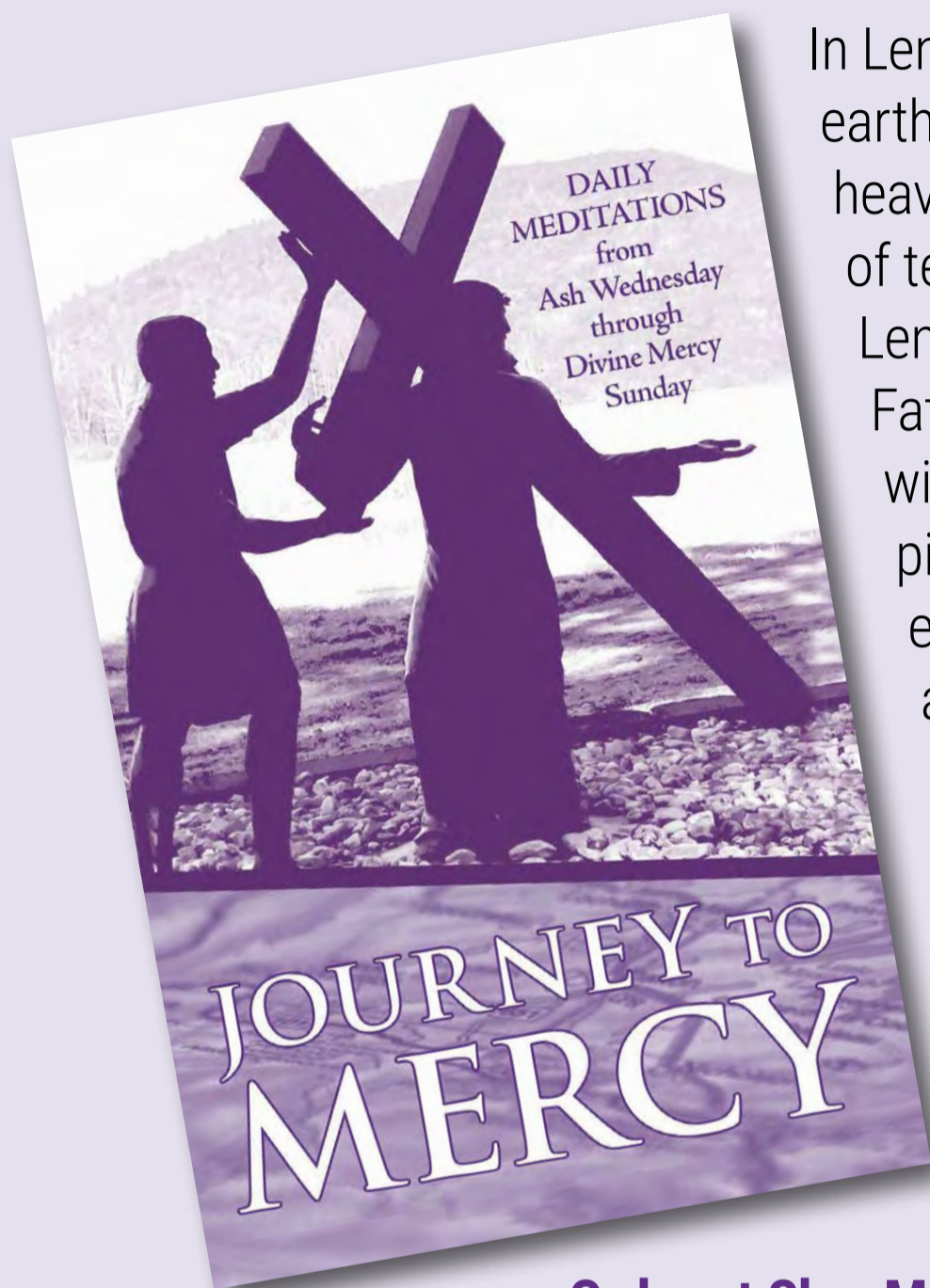
Want to help the seminarians?

We have more than 20 men preparing for religious life and the priesthood.

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



JOURNEY TO MERCY: Daily Lenten Meditations from Ash Wednesday through Divine Mercy Sunday, 2023



In Lent, we are reminded that here on earth, we are on pilgrimage toward our heavenly home, traveling through a vale of tears. *Journey to Mercy*, the 2023 Lenten devotional from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, will equip you to make your Lenten pilgrimage a truly transformative experience. Be strengthened and encouraged for your Lenten pilgrimage with these easy-to-read, brief meditations for each day from Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, through to Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16. 64 pages.

B57-LD23 \$6.95

Order at ShopMercy.org/b57 or call 1-800-462-7426.