

In the aftermath of suicide • How can you still be Catholic?
The power of a novena • A priest's journey of trust

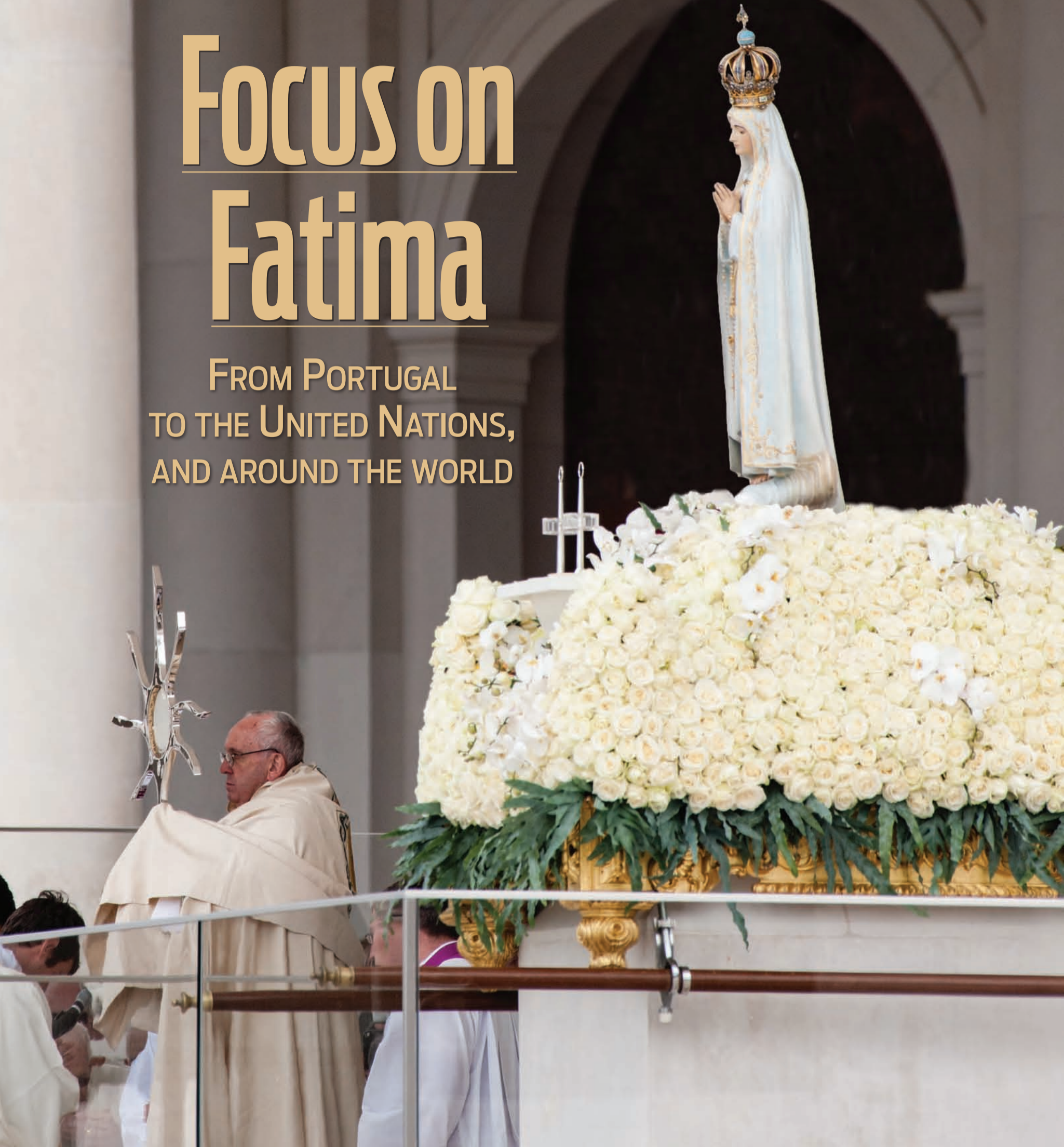
Summer 2017

Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception marian.org

Focus on Fatima

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12 Focus on Fatima

- In his visit to Fatima to mark the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions there, Pope Francis underscores the critical role Our Lady plays in the world. He also shares some important words about the Church's newest saints.
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In seeking to set the record straight with regard to real or imagined Church sins and transgressions, Christopher Sparks wound up writing a book.

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ON THE COVER: On May 12-13, Pope Francis marked the centenary of Our Lady's appearances in Fatima, Portugal, by visiting there and canonizing two of the three shepherd children. An estimated 500,000 people from around the world were in attendance. Photo by Joseph Romagnano.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1944, the Association began as a small group of friends who believed in and supported the work of the Marians. Now some 1.5-million members strong, the Association is a spiritual benefit society that continues to prayerfully and financially support the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Your enrollment means that, by a decree of the Holy See, you will now share in the graces that are extended to all our Marian Helpers. These graces include:

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



YouTube



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

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- or call (413) 298-1382.

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When making your will ...

A sample form of bequest to the Marians is:

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

OH, YES, THAT OTHER REQUEST

In this 100th anniversary year of Mary’s appearances in Fatima, I’ve received several letters from Marian Helpers expressing confusion with regards to one particular request made by Our Lady at Fatima. I think it’s important that I take this opportunity to bring clarity — and to raise a challenge.

The confusion concerns whether Russia was *really* consecrated to Mary’s Immaculate Heart, as Our Lady requested. We Marians stand with the Holy See in saying, “Yes, it has been accomplished.” But in the same breath, we make haste to emphasize and remind that Russia’s consecration was not *all* she asked for.

Specifically, in her apparitions to the three children, Our Lady stressed that we must respond to the great spiritual struggle with secularism by praying (including a daily Rosary), fasting, and doing penance for the conversion of poor sinners and to make reparation for the sins of the world. In her July 13, 1917 message, she spoke of evils to come, but promised “in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” She told Lucia she would return to make two requests essential for this Triumph. Eight years later, Our Lady appeared before Lucia and requested the Five First Saturdays devotion. Four years later, she requested the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart by the Holy Father in union with the bishops of the world.

Different popes have made a number of consecrations of both Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but according to Sr. Lucia herself, the 1984 consecration by St. John Paul II in St. Peter’s Square satisfied Our Lady’s request.

Led at the time by then-Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI), the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith released “The Message of Fatima” on June 26, 2000, which quoted Sr. Lucia’s letter from 1989 confirming that John Paul II’s solemn consecration corresponded to what Our Lady

wished. “Hence,” the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith concluded, “any further discussion or request is without basis.”

We, of course, trust the discernment of St. John Paul II; the assertion of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and the letters in which Sr. Lucia declared that Heaven had accepted the consecration. Still, a fair follow-up question is: Then why haven’t we experienced the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart?

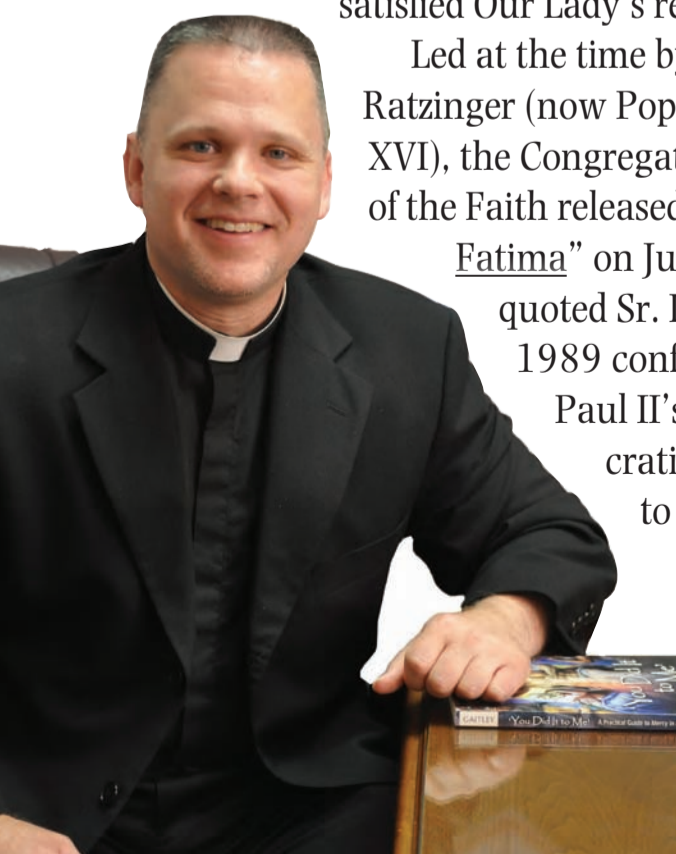
First, remember, the consecration was late in coming. As a result, by 1984, Russia’s atheistic errors had spread around the world, which is why John Paul explicitly consecrated “the world” as well as “nations that particularly need to be thus entrusted and consecrated.” In other words, by 1984, the Church had its work cut out for it.

Which brings me to the second point: Remember, Our Lady did not ask for *one* thing alone to secure the world’s conversion, sanctification, and peace. She asked for *two* things: the consecration of Russia *and* the First Saturdays devotion. The evidence suggests John Paul II did his part but that we have neglected to do our part.

To that end, I call on you to answer Our Lady’s request by making the Five First Saturdays a staple of your prayer life. On the first Saturday of five successive months, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, pray five decades of the Rosary, and keep Our Lady company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary.

That’s it. Our Lady doesn’t keep us guessing on how we are to get ourselves out of this mess.

Fr. Joseph, MIC



“Father Joseph, MIC,” is the honorary title of the director of the Association of Marian Helpers. The current director is Fr. Chris Alar, MIC.

On stepping out of the boat

Paula Marinoni, 65, has a husband of 30 years and four grown sons. “All five of the guys are Eagle Scouts,” she says. “I kid that, with their survival skills and mom’s praying, if the end times come, we’re ready!”

“Our Church leaders have been saying that, as Catholics, we need to be prepared to put out into the deep and to step out of the boat — to be evangelists and to share and spread God’s love for us,” says Paula Marinoni, a real estate broker from Fayetteville, Arkansas. Paula shares how she found herself out in deep water and what she decided to do next.

You’re a cradle Catholic. You say when you reached adulthood, you realized something wasn’t quite right in parish life?

Much to my surprise, when I went to Kansas City to start a career and found a Catholic church to attend, I found it anything but welcoming. In fact, I couldn’t get anyone to talk to me. For 10 years, nothing — except a lady told me once that she liked my dress and another time a lady turned around and asked me to move my purse, that it was in the way of her feet. I even volunteered to bring food for funeral meals, thinking that might be a way to serve and meet someone. One day I was out and came into contact with a woman who said

that my name was very familiar to her. She finally realized, “Oh, you’re on my Funeral Meals Committee!” I said, “Yes, and you have never called me in two years!” She said, “Well, you know how it is. It’s just easier to call the people you know.” (Boom, crash — bomb gets dropped!) I said, “But that’s why I signed up, because I don’t know anyone, and I want to help and meet other Catholics!”

In one parish that I joined, the long-time members were so territorial that any new person was considered an “outsider” and shunned, if not treated with hostility.

But instead of leaving the Church, you dug in?

Yes. When you say, “Here I am, Lord” and give yourself as a servant at His feet for whatever His will might be at any given time, then you will find that the Holy Spirit goes into overdrive. That’s what I did. I said, “Here I am, Lord.”

What I came to understand was that we have to first engage in evangelizing ourselves. Learn the faith. Wake

up, listen, contemplate, and take action in whatever way we are able. We can't expect our priests to be able to do it all. We move forward in evangelization only when the treasure of the Church — you and I, God's children — hear the command of Jesus and step out of the boat and walk in faith.

Such as how?

Be an evangelist right where you are. Pick up the phone and ask a family member who may not be going to church anymore, "Hey, how about coming to Mass with me? I'll pick you up, and we'll have lunch afterwards." Or, if you see a pamphlet, a prayercard, or inspirational Catholic booklet, ask permission from the priest to order some to put out in the prayercard rack or in the Adoration chapel. For every person who picks one up and reads it, you will have made a difference. I've managed to give out over 21,000 prayercards and booklets in the last five years. I certainly don't say this to be prideful, but to just stress that anyone can be an evangelist, a witness to the richness of our faith. Also, volunteer at your parish.

And make people feel welcome.

Yes! Change has to start on the most basic level of parish life. Ask yourself if your parish is welcoming. I think parishes need to have greeters at the main doors, especially on the lookout for new people. The exit of most Catholic churches is similar to that of a salmon run: "Stand back, they're coming through!" There needs to be an opportunity for people to talk to each other. Have an evangelization station with materials that can help Catholics grow in faith. Every parish needs a lending library because there are generations of us who were never fully catechized.

For me, I'll never forget the first time I was given the pamphlet *Divine Mercy Chaplet for the Sick and the Dying* from Marian Press. It was life changing. Thus, because I became a very vocal and active Divine Mercy promoter and pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy daily during the 3 o'clock hour, it has become eternally life changing for the many others for whom I pray. All this is the result of someone sharing a pamphlet with me.

So you sound like you've grown comfortable with stepping out of the boat.

I'm definitely *not* always comfortable — but I don't recall Jesus ever saying, "Go, therefore, and make of My Church the best kept secret of all time."

MH

WHAT'S HAPPENING

In terms of confirmation from Heaven, you can't do a whole lot better than a white dove walking into your house with a tag attached to its leg that reads "Peace."

During a recent visit she made to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, **Tina Gilletto** of Kissimmee, Florida, shared with us her story of her daughter's death and the consoling aftermath. Her daughter, Carolyn Ann Wells, was 32 years old when she died in 1997 from complications of a clot in her pulmonary artery. She left behind her husband, 5-year-old daughter, and 2-year-old son.

"We were all so devastated," Tina said. Her constant prayer was for a sign that Carolyn was OK. "I wanted to know she was at peace."

Little signs would reveal themselves, but none as impressive as the one given that day in 1999. Tina's husband, Al, discovered the dove sitting on the front step. When he opened the front door, the dove followed him inside and made its way directly to Tina's prayer room, where it hopped up on the couch and stayed put for awhile, calm as can be. Al picked it up and discovered the tag attached to its ankle: "Peace."

Tina says that on that day, she got her answer to her question of whether her daughter was at peace. God put it in writing.

"I don't ask that question anymore."



Sister Thom Vu sends her gratitude to all Marian Helpers who extended prayers and financial assistance for her family. In the *Spring issue of Marian Helper*, Fr. Joseph, MIC, shared the story of the recent struggles of Sr. Thom, a friend from his seminary days in Connecticut who had since moved back to her native Vietnam.

In Vietnam, Sr. Thom was struggling to care for her sick father, and in the meantime, the family was broke and hungry. Just after the Spring issue went to press in March, her father died. He was only 58. In the two weeks before his death, donations from Marian Helpers paid for screens, which finally kept the mosquitoes out of his room (they had been feasting on his ravaged body). Donations also paid for his burial, and for the first time in their entire lives, the family has food on their table every day, as well as a stove and refrigerator.

"Your donations allowed my father to have a peaceful death," said Sr. Thom. "They allowed my family to survive — and for me to go back to my religious community."

We'll continue to keep Sr. Thom's family in our prayers.

FACES OF MERCY

WHAT WAS ONE OF THE KINDEST THINGS ANYONE HAS EVER DONE FOR YOU?

Jose Reyes

Phoenix, Arizona

Definitely one of the kindest things was from my father, after my wife and I lost our first child. My father is a man of few words, a stern man, a big, very strong man, a laborer his whole life. The comforter in my family was my mother. But when my wife and I lost our first child, my father took a lot of time and took me aside to talk to me and comfort me. That helped release a lot of emotions my wife and I were going through. That just meant the world to me.



Sherry Troelsch (with her husband, Steve) Lancaster, Pennsylvania

I was raised in the faith. Back in the day, growing up, we went to Church on Sunday, did what we were supposed to do, but didn't know why. As our children got older, I went out and decided to find out why we did those things, and God brought some really awesome people into my life, very faith-filled, real life disciples to help me along the way. Sister Dorothy Wilkinson comes to mind. She's been a great mentor. She's the director of religious education at our parish. She's holy, but also so real and down to earth. People like her who share their life authentically — that's such a blessing for me. And the forgiveness of my husband has been one of the kindest things I've received. We had some struggles for a long, long time. He's a very forgiving man. Coming to know the faith and then to experience forgiveness — it all ties together.

Raul and Vanessa Hiraldo

White Plains, New York

Raul: When I was 11, my parents brought me to this country from the Dominican Republic. That's got to be the kindest thing — all the sacrifice that went behind it, them wanting a better life for me, better education, more opportunities, more freedom.

Vanessa: It was my grandmother. She was the first in the family to come to the United States from Puerto Rico. She was a nurse. She taught me Spanish and she sparked my interest in medicine. I'm a psychiatrist and physician now. She taught my twin boys to pray the Our Father in Spanish. Her showing by example how to be a faithful woman — faithful to the Church and faithful to her family in passing on the language, the faith, and the customs from our culture — has meant so much to me.



Sara Sassine Queens, New York

It may sound like a small thing, but it wasn't. One year my sister, who was 5 years old at the time, wrote me a really nice card wishing me a happy birthday. She was just learning how to write. She wrote how much I mean to her and how much she loves me. Little things like that can really be important. I still have it, and I still read it.



Father Chris Gaffrey, OFM Winsted, Connecticut

Aside from Jesus dying for me, the kindest thing anyone has ever done for me was my mother entrusting me to Mary when I was in the womb. My mom essentially passed on what she knew as her spiritual inheritance. She was pregnant with me, and she had uterine cancer. She entrusted me to Mary because she didn't know what else to do. I didn't find this out till three years ago. I was praying the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament on Oct. 7, 2014, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and there was a statue of Mary, and I heard in my heart, "It's because of your mother that Mary is so close to you." I spoke to my mother shortly after and told her that some ladies from church had mentioned to me that they get a sense that Mary was probably really close to me while I was growing up. I asked my mom, "Does that make sense to you?" And she said, "Well, yeah, because I used to pray the Rosary over your crib, and I used to smell roses at times," and then she told me the whole story of her entrusting me to Mary in the womb. Yes, definitely the kindest thing anyone has ever done for me. And Mary has been there with me all along, in very powerful ways. MH



A ROSARY A DAY: ARE YOU IN?

As we announced in the *Winter* issue of *Marian Helper*, the Marian Fathers are calling on all our Marian Helpers to embrace Our Lady's call at Fatima to pray the Rosary daily for peace in the world.

Why now? Because Our Lady came to us 100 years ago at Fatima, to Catholics, to some of her children, and equipped us with the means to secure peace in the world. And if we don't respond faithfully, fully, generously, with love, then who will?

More than 1 million daily Rosaries have been pledged by Marian Helpers. Visit marian.org/fatima to see our running tally.

Pope Francis himself has echoed Our Lady's call. In his *Regina Caeli* on May 7, he said, "Please, let us pray the Rosary for peace, as the Virgin of Fatima asked us to do."

And while we're at it, we're asking you to help us spread the word about the power and the promises attached to praying the Rosary. Tell us: Why do you pray the Rosary? When have you seen the power of the Rosary through answered prayers, graces received, or even miracles of healing or conversion? Email thirteenth@marian.org with your testimony, along with your name (at least first name and last initial), your home parish and what town it's located in, and permission to share your testimony with our readership.

Another way to share your testimony is to use the hashtag #MyDailyRosary to post it on social media. Share photos of yourself holding the rosary beads you use every day and tell their story. Tell us where you pray. Do you pray in the car on the way to work, or with your family at the end of the day?

We may share these testimonies online and through our publications. This is an opportunity to obey the call of the Holy Fathers and the bishops to spread the faith through the New Evangelization. Get your family and friends involved! Have them help you make a video and post it on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/).

Answer the call of Heaven itself: Pray the Rosary daily for peace in the world in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, and encourage others to do likewise. We look forward to receiving your testimonies!



Our Lady's message at Fatima, delivered 100 years ago, has many parts. Here are some resources to help you answer her calls.

HOW TO PRAY THE ROSARY

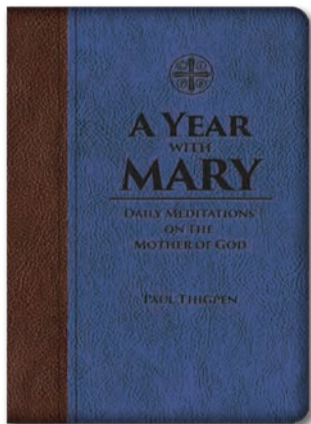
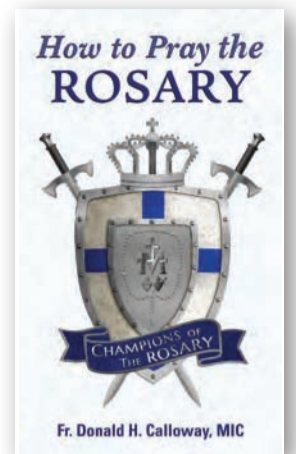
BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

A Rosary a day keeps the devil away — and helps bring peace in the world, as well! In this handy little guide, best-selling author [Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC](#), teaches you how to pray the Rosary well and why it matters, addressing issues such as:

- Why pray the Rosary?
- How long should a well-prayed Rosary take?
- What are the graces attached to praying the Rosary?
- How can I become a champion of the Rosary?

“Every Catholic should be praying the Rosary — Our Lady asks for it in Fatima and her other apparitions,” said Fr. Joseph, MIC. “In this booklet, my Marian brother Fr. Calloway does a great job explaining how to pray the Rosary and answer Our Lady’s call.”

Our Lady needs Rosary champions to help bring peace in the world. Will you answer her call to prayer? \$3.99. [B34-HPR](#)



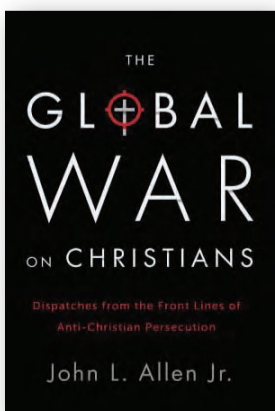
A YEAR WITH MARY: DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE MOTHER OF GOD

Paul Thigpen has crafted a great aid to prayer and spiritual reading, drawing from the writings of saints and scholars, magisterial sources, and masterpieces of devotion. Designed to allow the reader to begin it at any point in the year, this rich treasury of material for daily meditation offers us a tremendously fruitful way to grow closer to the Mother of God in the 100th anniversary of Fatima! \$44.95. [B34-TWMB](#)

LITTLE PRAYERS, BIG BLESSINGS

BY MAUREEN FLEMING

Do you make it a habit to bless your children? Many saints and clergy down through the centuries have recommended the practice, which is firmly rooted in Scripture and tradition. Now more than ever, your children need your blessing. As Fatima made clear, we’re in a time of great spiritual combat, where every grace is helpful and every prayer needed. Here’s a great collection of prayers to pray over your children, no matter their age! \$2.99. [B34-LPK](#)



THE GLOBAL WAR ON CHRISTIANS

BY JOHN ALLEN

The third part of the secret of Fatima included a dramatic vision of the persecution and killing of many of the clergy, religious, and faithful. It’s a vision that has been tragically fulfilled in the unprecedented martyrdoms of the 20th century and the ongoing (but often unknown) attacks on Christians today. Vatican journalist John Allen does an excellent roundup of the stories of tremendous persecution facing the Church right now, and offers us ways to help those in need. \$25. [B34-GWBK](#)



A PEP TALK FROM THE POPE

During our Congregation's General Chapter in February, which took place at our house in Rome, 40 of us Marians had a rare opportunity to attend a private audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

After warmly greeting us, His Holiness spoke to us about our work in the General Chapter, about our history, and about our future. He gave a heartfelt apostolic blessing to our entire Congregation and to our lay coworkers, which includes all of the members of our Association of Marian Helpers. Afterwards, each of us had a chance to personally greet the Holy Father. He was

warm and welcoming, a genuine and loving father.

In his address, he spoke of the importance of the principal work of this Chapter, that of reflecting on our Congregation's regulations and updating them. During the Chapter, which only occurs once every six years, we voted on changes to our Constitutions and Directory — the main purpose being to express more clearly and deeply our charism and identity as a religious community.

The Holy Father said, "I urge you, therefore, to carry out this reflection with fidelity to [your] Founder's charism and to the spiritual heritage of your Congregation and, at the same time, with a heart and mind open to the new needs of the people." He noted that religious communities are founded and called into existence by God for a specific reason. Our Congregation, he said, is called to exercise a "creative fidelity" to our charism — and finding innovative ways of living it out "with a heart and mind open to the new needs of the people." He called upon us to stay true to our heritage "of service to the poor and humble, through the proclamation of the Gospel with language understand-



"Only hearts that are fully open to the action of grace are able to interpret the signs of the times and to hear the calls of humanity in need of hope and peace," Pope Francis told the Marians on Feb. 18. Above, the Holy Father greets the Marians' Superior General, the Very Rev. Andrzej Pakula, MIC, with Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC, looking on.

able to them, with works of mercy and prayer for the souls of the departed."

He called us to "approach simple people with simplicity, such as those who suffer the most: the sick, children, abandoned elderly people, the poor, everyone."

Pope Francis expressed his wish that our Congregation's Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski, whom he canonized last

June in St. Peter's Square, would be our light and guide on the path to holiness. He also mentioned the spiritual legacy left to us by the Renovator of our community, Blessed George Matulaitis, who called us to boldly move forward "to work and to do battle for the Church wherever the need is greatest."

The Holy Father mentioned our missionary efforts in Africa and Asia as examples of such work. In the end, our Holy Father entrusted us to Mary Immaculate so that we would always remain united to Christ and the Holy Spirit on our journey of faith and growth. He prayed that Our Lady would make us witnesses to the power of the Resurrection.

In his brief address to the Pope, our newly re-elected superior general, the Very Rev. Andrzej Pakula, MIC, noted that the Marians have always been a rather small community — today numbering about 500 priests and brothers who labor in 20 countries. Our Holy Father responded that "the feeling of being small is really the first step towards trusting in God's power. Go forward along this path."

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

'THEY CUT US TO RIBBONS'

AMIDST FIERCE BATTLE, MARY KEPT HER PROMISES



Francis Kennedy (then and now) of Williamsville, New York, served both in Korea and World War II. He was awarded a Silver Star, two Purple Hearts, and three Air Medals for 156 combat missions. Francis and his wife, Jackie, married since July 3, 1948, have 13 children. After the Korean War, Frank became an entrepreneur.

By Francis Kennedy

This story is true. I know it's true because it happened to me. I ask no one to believe it; however, I must relate it so that those who have faith in the Good Lord will be strengthened in their faith.

I served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1952 as an artillery forward observer with the United States Army's Third Infantry Division. My reconnaissance sergeant, Corporal Dennis Sugrue; my radio operator, James Scully; and I became very close friends. We used to share with each other many personal stories about ourselves and our families.

One day after mail call, Dennis showed me a novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary sent to him by his sister Denise, a nun. The promises made to anyone who completed the novena were difficult to believe, to say the least. One promise was that if you made the novena, you would not have a violent death. Another was that

no metal would pierce the skin. As in all infantrymen's wars, being shot at on a daily basis can be the norm. So the novena was just what we needed.

I asked Dennis to please give the novena to me after he completed it, as I wanted to make it as soon as possible. Several weeks passed, and I had to nag Dennis about it. Each time he told me that he hadn't remembered to start the novena. Finally, he gave it to me and said, "You say it," and planned that he and Jim would pray it after I finished.

For the next nine days, I said the novena. Believe me, it was on the top of my priority list. When I finished, I believed that nothing could seriously harm me. Dennis and Jim never found the time to complete the novena. On June 3, 1951, Dennis, age 19, one of the finest men that God ever put on this earth, was killed from mortar and small arms fire. Our good friend Jim, age 18, lost

part of his leg from shell fragments and was returned to the States. Jim died several years ago, and I believe he probably never fully recovered from his war wounds.

I put 10 more months on the front lines after I lost my friends. The first replacement was killed after only three days with me. The second replacement was with me a week and ended up missing in action. Later, he was listed as a prisoner of war. Needless to say, I was more than a little concerned about my well-being. Then came the fierce battle at the hilltop known as “Little Gibraltar.”

At about 11 a.m., the whole front opened with artillery fire. I was in Korea at this time for about 18 months. In all that time, I never saw an artillery barrage anything like the amount that poured on us that day. It was relentless. There were only seconds between incoming rounds. As a trained, experienced forward observer, I was able to count at least 100 field pieces (howitzers, mortars, rockets, and artillery pieces) firing at us. They cut us to ribbons. I was completely frustrated. My radio had gone out, and after the first few incoming rounds, the telephone land lines were destroyed. My primary responsibility was to direct our artillery on the enemy, but without communication, I was helpless.

Fortunately, seven other GIs and I were in a well-built bunker of heavy logs, large stones, and sand bags. It was hit at least eight or nine times without killing any of us! As I looked out from the bunker, all I could see were bodies and body parts.

Perhaps only the faithful will accept the following narrative. Amidst the barrage of incoming artillery, I heard myself say, “Oh, God, please, let me get home to see my son Pat, and I’ll never ask you for another thing the rest of my life.” (Patrick, my third son, was born after I left for Korea). As I said this, I distinctly felt a hand on my left shoulder. I started to turn to see who it was when I heard a voice within me say, “Oh, you of little faith. Didn’t My mother promise that no harm would come to you?”

I was stunned, but the terror, frustration, and despair I was experiencing immediately vanished. I turned to my men and said, “Let’s go. We’re going to walk out of here.” They looked at me as if I were crazy, but they obeyed. If you can imagine walking the length of about 10 football fields in the rain and not even having one drop land on you, you can imagine what happened to

us. For us, it was raining artillery. All eight of us walked off that hill, through the enemy’s artillery (and our own artillery, for by that time we had all been given up for dead, and our Air Force fighter planes were strafing the area), and still none of us were wounded.

After I arrived at battalion headquarters, I realized that the left side of my face was like raw hamburger, injured from the initial barrage. Captain Konimitsu Ito, one of the best combat soldiers I ever knew, got me to the aid tent where a doctor treated my face. I was given the

needle, and along with the whiskey that “Konnie” Ito had given me earlier, it was the last thing I remembered for several days.

When I awoke, Capt. Donald McConnell was in the tent with me. Mac and I were good friends going back at least five years. He mentioned that as far as he knew, of the 235 men to go up on the hill, I was one of 23 to survive. He reminded me that I had had a very difficult time at the aid station, as my frustration about the radio and phone lines being out made me feel guilty and helpless.

When I went to see the doctor, we had a fine talk.

“What puzzled me in my examination of your wounds,” the doctor told me, “was that, when I probed, I could find no metal at all. I even used a magnet, but found only wood, mud, and stone.” I remembered the promises of the novena.

I’ve related this event only to my family and some of my closest friends, but after more than 65 years, I feel that it should be told. I went to one of my parish priests and told him how emotionally difficult it still is to share this with anyone. He suggested that I write it so that many people might see and benefit from the power of prayer.

I’m not sure that if I were to hear this story, I would believe it without reservation. However, it happened to me. I lived it, and I’ve got some of the wood, mud, and stone in my face to prove it.

Reflecting on some of my time “in” and return “from” combat, I realize that the novena to Our Lady was not the only thing that saw me through Korea. It was the many prayers and complete devotion of my mother and father to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the abundance of prayers and love of my wife, Jackie. I owe my life to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, my loving family, and Sr. Denise Sugrue.

MH

NOVENA OF MASSES FOR YOU

From July 4, leading up to the 100th anniversary of the July 13 apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, Fr. Joseph, MIC, will personally offer a novena of Masses for your intentions. Visit marian.org/b34 to send us your intentions.

Also, visit ShopMercy.org/b34 for a Novena Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary prayercard (Product Code: MMAPC), much like the one Francis Kennedy prayed during the Korean War.

FOCUS ON FATIMA

POPE FRANCIS TURNS WORLD'S ATTENTION
TO WHAT OUR LORD AND LADY ASK OF US

By Felix Carroll



Pope Francis' historic trip to Fatima on May 12-13 served not so much to simply mark the singular mystical experiences of 100 years ago in a tiny Portuguese village as it did to draw attention to the reality of God's workings in the world today.

The reality is Heaven is real, and so is hell. The reality is, God — whose greatest attribute is mercy — seeks to save souls, not cast them aside. The reality is, in the modern world, God sends the Blessed Virgin Mary to

Earth with a message for mankind on how to conduct itself. In Fatima, in six appearances over the span of six months, beginning May 13, 1917, Our Lady's message to the three shepherd children was to live holy lives, pray the Rosary daily for peace, and offer sacrifices for the conversion of sinners.

In essence, the message of Fatima is this: Without God, humanity walks in darkness, and we, individually, are called to be players in the salvation of the world.



Pope Francis' homily



Sister Stella talks about the children

“Today, the Virgin Mary asks all of us the same question that, 100 years ago, she asked the shepherd children: ‘Do you want to offer yourselves to God?’ Their answer — ‘Yes, we do!’ — makes us able to understand and imitate their lives,” the Holy Father said. “They lived life, with its share of joy and suffering, as an offering to the Lord. ... Like the shepherd children, tell Our Lady that you want to offer yourselves to God with all your heart.”

The Holy Father delivered those words to a special

gathering in Fatima of the sick and suffering. The sixth pope in a century to proclaim Our Lady of Fatima’s decisive call to conversion and repentance, Pope Francis tailored his words to a larger audience as well — to the spiritually sick and suffering around the world.

For Pope Francis, drawing attention to the reality of God’s workings in the world today included canonizing two of Fatima’s three child visionaries. Before a crowd of half a million people gathered at the very location Our



JOSEPH ROMAGNANO

Upon his arrival in Fatima on May 12, Pope Francis visited the Chapel of the Apparitions, where Our Lady first appeared to the shepherd children 100 years ago. The Holy Father left a golden rose at the foot of the statue of Our Lady, and he later led hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in the recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Lady first appeared to the children exactly 100 years prior, the Holy Father canonized the siblings Francisco and Jacinta Marto, whose place in Heaven was reaffirmed by the Vatican this spring with the approval of a miracle attributed to their intercession. The miracle involved the healing of a Brazilian boy named Lucas in 2013 (see page 15).

Francisco and Jacinta are the Church's youngest non-martyred saints. They died before the age of 12. The third Fatima seer — their cousin Lucia dos Santos — died in 2005 at the age of 97. Her beatification cause is advancing.

The Pope's two-day trip to Fatima drew worldwide attention, including from most major secular media outlets of the United States. The Holy Father made full use of the global media spotlight to underscore foundational Catholic teachings on Our Lady's role in salvation history, the power of the Rosary, and Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist.

Upon his arrival in Fatima, Pope Francis quoted Pope Paul VI when he said that "if we want to be Christian, we must be Marian; in a word, we have to acknowledge the essential, vital, and providential relationship uniting Our Lady to Jesus, a relationship that opens before us the way leading to Him."

Quoting from his own apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), Pope Francis said, "Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her, we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong, who need not treat

others poorly in order to feel important themselves."

Before leading pilgrims in the recitation of the Rosary on the evening of May 12, Pope Francis then said, "Each time we recite the Rosary, in this holy place or anywhere else, the Gospel enters anew into the life of individuals, families, peoples, and the entire world."

The following day, in his homily at the Mass of Canonization, Pope Francis stressed the critical role that Eucharistic Adoration played in the youthful lives of the Church's newest saints, who learned from Mary to entrust their sorrows and sufferings to Jesus.

"We can take as our examples St. Francisco and St. Jacinta, whom the Virgin Mary introduced into the immense ocean of God's light and taught to adore Him," the Holy Father said. "That was the Source of their strength in overcoming opposition and suffering. God's presence became constant in their lives, as is evident from their insistent prayers for sinners and their desire to remain ever near 'the hidden Jesus' in the tabernacle."

In Fatima, Pope Francis stressed that the calamity of the world into which Our Lady of Fatima appeared 100 years ago — the violence, war, and greed — has not been resolved a century later. It is primarily a crisis of faith — and the lack thereof — which then inevitably leads to indifference, self-centeredness, and conflict. Our Lady's message in Fatima, he said, serves as a reminder that we are not powerless in the face of evil, sin, and brokenness.

"Dear brothers and sisters," he said, "let us pray to God with the hope that others will hear us; and let us speak to others with the certainty that God will help us.

Indeed, God created us to be a source of hope for others, a true and attainable hope, in accordance with each person's state of life."

He said, "We do not want to be a stillborn hope! Life can survive only because of the generosity of other lives. 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' [Jn 12:24]. The Lord, who always goes before us, said this and did this. Whenever we experience the cross, He has already experienced it before us. We do not mount the cross to find Jesus. Instead it was He who, in His self-abasement, descended even to the cross, in order to find us, to dispel the darkness of evil within us, and to bring us back to the light.

"With Mary's protection, may we be for our world sentinels of the dawn, contemplating the true face of Jesus the Savior, resplendent at Easter. Thus may we rediscover the young and beautiful face of the Church, which shines forth when she is missionary, welcoming, free, faithful, poor in means and rich in love." MH

'WHAT DOES FATIMA ASK OF US?'

After Pope Francis led the recitation of the Rosary on May 12, in Fatima, the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, celebrated Mass. In his homily, Cardinal Parolin said, "In the midst of great concern and uncertainty about the future, what does Fatima ask of us? Perseverance in the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, shown daily by the recitation of the Rosary. And what if, despite our prayers, wars continue? Even though immediate results may not be evident, let us persevere in prayer. Prayer is never useless. Sooner or later, it will bear fruit.

"Prayer," said Cardinal Parolin, "is capital in the hands of God; He turns it to good account in His own times and ways, which are very different from our own."

WHAT WAS THE MIRACLE?

In a press conference in Fatima on May 11, details were revealed regarding the Church-approved miracle that paved the way for the canonization of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, two of the three shepherd children to whom Our Lady appeared in 1917.

João Batista and his wife, Lucila Yurie, of Brazil recounted the story of their son, who was miraculously healed through the intercession of the shepherd children.

"On March 3, 2013, before 8 p.m., our son Lucas, who was playing with his little sister, Eduarda, fell out of a window from a height of 20 feet. He was 5 years old," said the boy's father.

Lucas went into a coma. His heart stopped twice. As the days progressed, Lucas' condition worsened. "They told us that the chance of the boy surviving was low, and if he did survive, his recovery would be very slow" — that Lucas would likely live with "severe cognitive disabilities or even remaining in a vegetative state," his father said.



Pope Francis embraces Lucas as offertory gifts are presented during the canonization Mass of Sts. Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

João said that on March 7, they were able to reach by phone the Carmelite convent of Campo Mourão to ask for prayers. "One of [the sisters] ran to the relics of Blessed Francisco and Jacinta, which were next to the tabernacle, and felt the impulse to pray the following prayer: 'Shepherds, save this child, who is a child like you.' ... She also persuaded the other sisters to pray to the little shepherds to intercede for him."

João said, "In the same way, all of us, the family, began to pray to the little shepherds." Two days later, on March 9, Lucas woke up, fully recovered.

"The doctors, some of them non-believers, said that his recovery had no explanation."

João said, "We feel a great joy because this is the miracle that leads to their canonization, but especially we feel the blessing of the friendship

of these two children who helped our child and who now help our family."



May 12 was the second time Our Lady of Fatima found herself at the UN. On Dec. 8, 1952, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, one of the Pilgrim Virgin Statues sent forth from the Shrine at Fatima made a unique journey to the UN. A number of the faithful prayed the Rosary for peace in the world and an end to war.

MARY IS ON THE MOVE

By Chris Sparks

On May 12, the eve of the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's first appearance in Fatima, a Marian Helper named Judy Studer and a four-foot-tall statue of Our Lady of Fatima entered the United Nations complex in New York City.

They were expecting her.

This is no small matter.

In the present age of globalization, there are many international figures with power and influence beyond the dreams of ancient emperors, but two offices on this earth have preeminence. One is the papacy, the office of the successor of St. Peter, who serves as the Vicar of Christ, the representative of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, to all the world. The other is the office of the United Nations Secretary-General, charged with diplomatically pursuing the peace and security of the whole world.

Both of those offices are currently held by people with uniquely close connections to Fatima.

Pope Francis, for one, had his pontificate consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima when he was elected in 2013. He has subsequently consecrated the world to the

Immaculate Heart, a re-consecration following in the footsteps of St. John Paul II's 1984 Act of Consecration (the act that, according to Sr. Lucia dos Santos, the longest-lived of the three Fatima visionaries, was accepted by Heaven as the requested consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart).

And the current UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres of Portugal, has a number of connections to Fatima, as well.

On Oct. 5, 2016, the Feast of St. Faustina in the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Guterres, a former Premier of Portugal, was nominated to be the next Secretary-General of the UN. He was appointed to the position by acclamation on Oct. 13, 2016, which happened to be the 99th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima. Guterres took office on Jan. 1, 2017, the Solemnity of the Mother of God and the World Day of Peace. He's a practicing Catholic, who has been staunchly and publicly pro-life and pro-traditional marriage throughout his political career, even in the face of pressure from his own Socialist political party. For a decade (2005–2015), he had served as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

when many refugees were Christians fleeing persecution — the sort of persecution that Our Lady had prophesied and the children had seen in the third part of the secret of Fatima.

“How is it possible?” said the Very Rev. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, provincial superior of the Marian Fathers in the United States and Argentina. “I mean, this is what is called God’s Providence at work. We see it, and the only thing I can do is be grateful for that.”

The statue’s appointment at the UN was part of a conference titled “The Centenary of Fatima and the Enduring Relevance of Its Message of Peace,” cosponsored by the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission and the Portuguese Mission to the UN. It drew a packed house of around 600 people.

“These were not just outsiders coming into the UN for this event who would have a devotion to the message of Fatima, but also many from within the UN system,” said Fr. Roger Landry, an attaché of the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission to the UN.

Talks were given by experts including Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See’s Permanent Observer at the UN; Johnnette Benkovic, founder of Women of Grace and an EWTN show host; Ambassador Alvaro Mendonca e Moura, the Portuguese representative to the UN; and others. They focused on how the Fatima apparitions modeled the roles of women and children in pursuing peace in every age, drawing from the teaching and insights of sources as varied as St. John Paul II’s apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (*On the Dignity of Women*) and the UN Charter.

Throughout the event, the statue — associated with many reported miracles — stood front and center. A small reliquary, containing first-class relics of Jacinta and Francisco Marto, was nearby.

This was all a dream come true for Judy Studer, a retired nurse and grandmother who lives with her husband in Rhode Island.

“Almost 15 years I’ve prayed to go to the UN,” said Judy, a longtime Marian Helper and custodian of the UN Pilgrim Virgin Statue, “and I truly know that Mary today touched their lives. ... She touched many, many people there today.”

“For me, it’s a miracle,” said Fr. Kaz, who was in attendance. “It’s a sign of Our Lady at work. Fatima’s not just something that took place 100 years ago. It is affecting today, 2017, when secularism rules, where any form of signs of religiosity is not ‘acceptable,’ but she is here.”

Yes, this is no small matter.

Many within the Church await the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart, promised by Our Lady in the second part of the secret of Fatima, given on July 13, 1917. Signs like those mentioned above indicate that the Triumph may be on its way. And there’s more.

Pope Francis traveled to Fatima to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Fatima apparitions and to, in his words, “entrust to Our Lady the temporal and eternal fate of mankind.” During Pope Francis’ visit, he canonized the two youngest Fatima visionaries, Francisco and Jacinta Marto (see page 12), and identified himself as a “bishop robed in white,” a clear reference to the third part of the secret of Fatima.

On May 13, while the Holy Father was in Fatima, the

UN Pilgrim Virgin Statue and relics of the newly canonized saints went to St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, the seat of the archdiocese containing the so-called “Capital of the World,” for a day of Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, and prayer. At the day’s peak, the cathedral was full of people drawn from

many nations, walks of life, and ethnicities, the full cross-section of humanity come to honor the Lady who promised them peace.

The signs of the times are pointing toward Our Lady being active in the world today, taking steps to signal to the Church and the world that her Triumph may be imminent. The consecration has been made. But because the consecration was made late, World War II happened and the Cold War ensued, including the destruction of many nations by revolution, civil war, and external pressures from both the USSR and the USA. The Church has faced persecution greater than ever before in her history, and endured the loss of faith by so many lapsed and apostate Catholics, especially through the triumph of materialism and secularism across the West and a globalized world.

The secret of Fatima has come true, and is still coming true. We live in hope of the final fulfillment of the promise of the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart and the coming of an era of peace in the world, but we must do our part, following in the footsteps of Sts. Francisco and Jacinta, of Sr. Lucia of Fatima and the Holy Fathers. We must pray the daily Rosary for peace and make the First Saturdays of reparation, make our consecrations to Our Lady, and spread devotion to her Immaculate Heart alongside devotion to Jesus’ Sacred Heart. We must answer the calls of Fatima in order to see an era of peace.

Our Lady is on the move. Let us put on the full armor of God and get moving, as well.

MH

ARRANGE A VISIT
Visit TheFatimaStatue.org
to arrange for a visit
by the UN Pilgrim
Virgin Statue.

'WE'VE GOT THE GOODS'



Fr. Dan talks about the saints.

By Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC

Our Lady told the three shepherd children in Fatima that unless people prayed, especially the Rosary, and did penance, fearsome events would unfold.

Clearly, enough people did not heed the call because, of course, fearsome events did unfold. Today, 100 years after her appearances, crisis continues to follow upon crisis, and history continues to leave much blood in its tracks. We live in an ever more damaged world, morally and spiritually.

But I'm optimistic, and I'll tell you why.

It's because we've got the goods — the spiritual goods — to save ourselves and to save the world. We have the makings of a new Pentecost. We — you and I — by virtue of being Marian Fathers and Marian Helpers, have embraced a spirituality whereby we strive to model ourselves on the virtues of Our Lady. And we have embraced the message of Divine Mercy, answering St. John Paul II's rhetorical question from 1997 at the tomb of St. Faustina: "Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope?"

Indeed, as St. John Paul II perceived, and as Pope Francis reiterates, through the message of Divine Mercy, God is providing a time of unprecedented grace in response to the unprecedented evil in the world. This message is a gift for our times, and thanks in no small part to the work of Marians and Marian Helpers, countless numbers of people are coming to know this.

I meet them every day. As a Marian priest who travels the country giving parish retreats, I see firsthand what happens when people turn their lives over to Mary. I see what happens when people take Jesus at His word when He said to St. Faustina, "The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy" (Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 723).

Consistently, I'm moved to tears in the confessional. This didn't use to be the case. People are feeling encouraged to leave so much sin and ugliness behind and to surrender it all to God. People in torment want to be healed, and they are feeling emboldened to step forward in trust, thanks to this gift of the Divine Mercy message.



Moreover, I meet people who recognize the optimism inherent in the message of Fatima — that Fatima is not so much a threat of annihilation as an invitation to consecration. It is not merely a warning of disaster, but far more an appeal of Divine Mercy to repentance and healing.

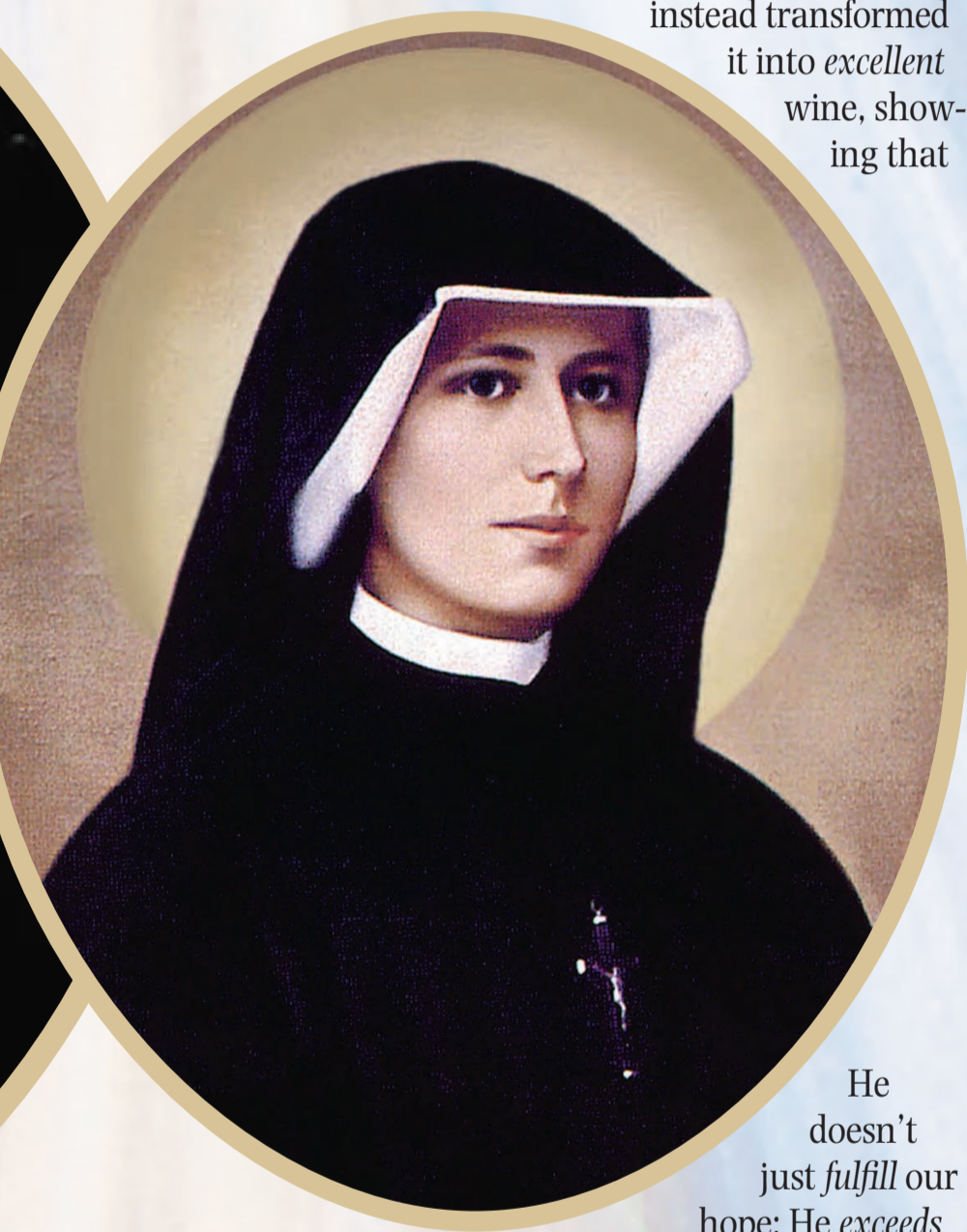
Thanks to the work of my Marian brother Fr. Michael Gaitley, a new generation is consecrating itself to Mary — two million (and counting) people — using his book 33 Days to Morning Glory. And what happens when we

consecrate ourselves to Mary? Our Blessed Mother sets hearts afire with the flame of divine love, a flame that dispels the darkness and indifference of our age, and consumes selfishness.

She answers our prayers, as she did for Faustina when the Polish nun prayed to be relieved of temptations against purity. She puts our hearts at ease, knowing we can trust in her Son as she did at the wedding feast in Cana when she said to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5).

And look what happened as a result of such trust. Jesus easily could have satisfied her by transforming water into wine similar to the wine they were drinking, but He

instead transformed it into *excellent* wine, showing that



He doesn't just *fulfill* our

hope; He *exceeds* our hope. He doesn't

just *love* us; He loves us *perfectly*. He doesn't just *forgive* us; He reestablishes us in *baptismal innocence*.

One hundred years after Fatima, a new generation is learning that Our Lady does not stand idly by. She uses these fruits of our devotion to deepen our holiness and to win souls for God.

And let's remember, Fatima isn't the only place where God has sent the Blessed Mother in modern times. What some call the “age of Mary” dawned with the apparitions of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in

Paris in 1830. Since that time, we've had many Church-approved Marian apparitions. God is sending His Blessed Mother on a mission to earth. He did so in La Salette, Lourdes, Pontmain, Quito, Banneaux, and Kibeho, to name just a few.

In Fatima and elsewhere, Mary presents the solution to what ails us. We are to place ourselves under her direction and daily ask her to help us to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that, like her, we can say, “I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

While it's true that I see fewer people in the pews than there were 25 years ago, it's equally true that the people who are there are far more educated in the faith, far more prayerful, far more devoted to the Sacraments, and far more engaged in doing works of mercy than people were 25 years ago. They are far more inclined to make choices that have a positive and grace-filled impact on others. They are far more inclined to heed Our Lady of Fatima's call to “pray, pray very much. Make sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell, because no one is willing to help them with sacrifice.”

When you have Divine Mercy and Mary, you have the order of God returning to people's lives. You have lines to the confessional. You have parishioners organizing into prayer cenacles and consecrating themselves to Mary and to the Divine Mercy.

They pray knowing that each Hail Mary is like taking a hammer and whacking the devil on the head. They pray with confidence in the saving power of God's merciful love, knowing — through Fatima, through Faustina — that such prayer pierces the Heart of God and can help save the world.

Jesus told St. Faustina, “For your sake I will withhold the hand which punishes; for your sake I bless the earth” (*Diary*, 431).

In my travels, I meet people who understand there is a great deal of suffering in this world, and it well might get worse before it gets better.

This 100th anniversary year of Our Lady's appearances in Fatima provides us with an opportunity to recall the reality that God is very much at work in the world today, and He is giving us an enormous role to play in the salvation of souls.

This news is good.

I'll see you in the pews.

Father Dan Cambra, MIC, is director of the Marian Evangelization Team. Encourage your pastor to book a parish retreat. Email parishmissions@marian.org or call (413) 298-1349.

MH

‘I LEAVE IT IN HIS HANDS’



BRITT FISK

By Melanie Williams

“**T**he sun could have *not* risen that day and it would have been less surprising than what actually happened.” Sammie Wood, a mother of three, homemaker, and cattle rancher from Clayton, New Mexico, spoke through tears as she recalled the events of Aug. 10, 2014.

The night before, a Saturday, Sammie, her husband, and her daughter Clare, 17, went to Mass. Afterwards Clare, her youngest, went to a dance before the start of her senior year of high school.

Tall, slender, beautiful, and fun-loving, Clare valued laughter, friendship, and faith. She often would dance and sing around the kitchen with her mom and two siblings. She played volleyball, and was a cheerleader and National Honor Society member. She would tell people she would pray for them. She loved the Lord and wrote little notes to herself that said things like, “Make God loved.”

She was no saint. She did many, many good things and also made mistakes. For her Confirmation saint, after much research, she chose St. Margaret Cortona, famously willful.

That Sunday morning, Sammie went to Clare’s bedroom to check in and to snuggle. She asked her how the dance went. Clare wasn’t too responsive. She didn’t

want to talk. She said she was tired. Sammie held her for a moment, then, as she did every morning, she took her rosary beads with a relic of St. Faustina and went for a walk to pray the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy for her daily intention of praying for someone who would die that day.

When Sammie returned home, Clare was up and asked her, “Mamma, where were you?”

“Out for my morning Rosary and Chaplet, praying for someone who will die today,” Sammie said.

The sunny New Mexico morning turned uncharacteristically overcast. Chip, Sammie’s husband, grilled steaks outside for lunch, but the foul weather drove the family inside. Sammie and Chip eventually settled in to watch a golf match as Sammie worked on a needlepoint Christmas stocking. Clare settled in another room to watch a different program. At one point, Sammie checked in on her. She knelt beside her and asked her if she wanted to join them. Clare still seemed despondent, and she declined, saying she didn’t really like watching golf.

Before leaving her be, Sammie leaned in and told Clare she knew that returning to school for the fall semester wouldn’t be easy, with all of the preparation Clare needed to do for college. But Sammie told Clare

that she loved her, and Sammie blessed her. She made the Sign of the Cross on her daughter's forehead. That was the last time Sammie saw her baby girl alive.

Clouds continued to roll in across the high plains when Chip and Sammie heard what sounded like a sharp “pop” coming from outside. They figured it was weather-related. But minutes later, Sammie's father rushed into the house screaming, “Clare shot herself! Clare's dead!”

Sammie's parents live on the family ranch, in a house close to the barn. They had heard the gunshot. Clare had driven her car up to the barn, stepped out onto the cement apron, and taken her own life. She was wearing her scapular, which was not typical. She had left a note in her car that read, “I love you guys so much. Please forgive me. I'm so sorry.”

As Sammie and Chip came upon their daughter's lifeless body, the skies began to pour. They carried her body inside the barn for shelter and called 911. The Wood family lives 33 miles away from the nearest town. The emergency responders took three hours to get there.

All the while, as family gathered at the ranch to mourn, Sammie embraced her daughter's body. She wailed, wept, and prayed.

The Woods would eventually discover that Clare had been having trouble with girls at school and was a victim of cyberbullying. She had shared with her sister that a fellow volleyball teammate's ex-boyfriend was romantically interested in her, and though Clare wasn't interested in him, some girls in her class were giving her a hard time about it all.

The Woods also would learn that at the dance the night before, the boy had asked Clare to dance. They were seen kissing on the dance floor. Clare was upset with herself that she had allowed that to happen and wanted to call and apologize to her teammate, but the girl and some others had already started talking about it. In a small town, in a class of 50 people, gossip and rumors spread like wildfire.

“I never saw anything in Clare that I thought was unusual,” Sammie said. “She was a typical teenager. But the day Clare died, she was going through the ‘perfect storm’ in her mind to cause her to take her own life.”

Clare also suffered from extreme eczema, asthma, and

allergies, for which she was on medication. Sammie later found out that the medication can have a serious side effect — suicidal thoughts.

Sammie immediately turned to the Blessed Mother, who knows as well as anyone what it's like to lose a child.

“The night Clare died, of course I didn't sleep much — tossing, turning, weeping, pacing,” Sammie recalled. “We have a big window in our living room with rocking chairs in front of it. In the early morning hours, I got up and went to sit in one of those chairs. The skies had cleared, and it was the night of the big ‘honey moon.’ The moon was huge in that big window. As many people say, I believe the moon stands for Our Blessed Mother — reflecting the light of her Son. I believe she was silently keeping vigil with me — praying and standing with me.”

At the funeral, many students approached Sammie to tell her that Clare had helped them through difficult times, including deep depression. Some shared that Clare had protected them from bullying.

Sammie racked her brain for days and months trying to make sense of it all. Had she missed

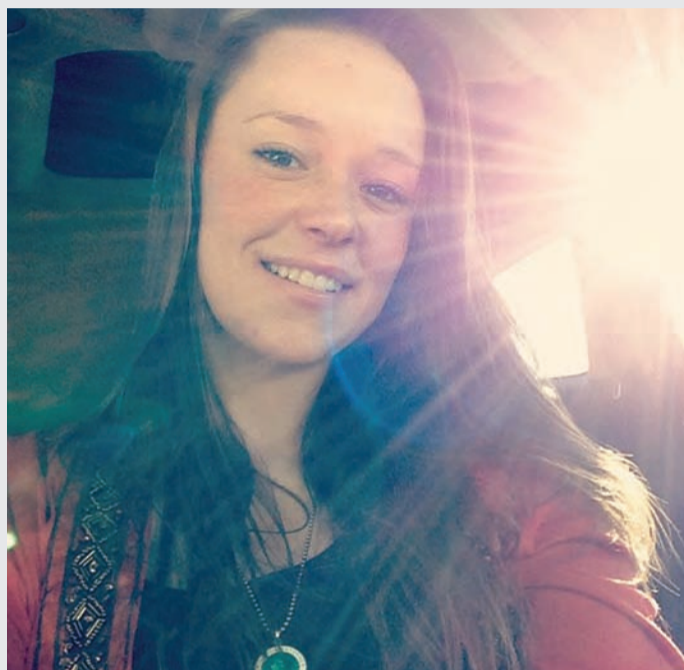
something? Did she somehow give Clare “permission” to kill herself by telling her that her daily prayer intention was for someone who would die that day?

Why didn't God save her daughter? Why didn't He show her what Clare was going through? Why did she go out to pray instead of staying at home when she saw that her daughter was downcast? But she came to realize that she would never understand all of the “whys,” and even if she did, it would still never make sense to her or be enough of a reason for her daughter to have done what she did.

Seeking help and support in her grief, Sammie looked in her parish and in her Catholic faith, but could not find any specific program or ministry that could help her.

“I knew the devil wanted to use this to annihilate my family,” Sammie said, “but I refused to let that happen.”

Two months after Clare's death, Sammie took one of the notebooks that she had bought Clare for school and began to record suitable passages from Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and quotes from saints who had made it through hard times. This notebook has become the makings of her new life's mission — to create a Catholic grief ministry program that can spread from



Clare Emily Wood
Oct. 7, 1996–Aug. 10, 2014

parish to parish so that no one would have to grieve alone.

In the meantime, Sammie, her friends, and her family have offered hundreds of Masses for the repose of Clare's soul. Sammie wants others to know the importance of praying for the souls in Purgatory.

"People need to remember to pray for their loved ones who have passed," she said. "Don't just assume they went to Heaven."

One night about six months after Clare died, Sammie begged her "Clara" to come to her in a dream and let her know that she was OK. She needed a sign.

That night, Sammie couldn't sleep. She walked around the house most of the night. Not until the early morning hours did she finally fall asleep — and she got her sign. She dreamed she was in a big hotel. Two girls were playing inside a gift shop and trying very hard to make her laugh. She laughed and smiled at them. She couldn't see their faces because they had donned masks and feathers from the gift store to cover their faces. At one point, though, the girls exchanged masks, and Sammie saw that one of the girls was Clare. She ran up to her and called her name and kissed her on the cheek. Clare had a huge smile. She took Sammie by the arm and led her down a hallway.

In the dream, Clare said, "I have to get back now, Mom. I have to get back!"

Sammie replied, "Clare, why do you have to get back?"

"I've tasted everything here, Mom," she responded, "and everything tastes so much sweeter there. I've done everything here, Mom, and everything's so much greater there."

Sammie said, "What's so great there, Clare?"

She said, "I gaze on the beauty of God."

At that moment, Sammie's alarm went off, and she awoke. This dream brought great consolation to Sammie, and she even wondered if the other girl was the baby she had miscarried before having Clare.

Since then, Sammie's journey has been one of healing and forgiveness.

"I don't seek out the girls who bullied my daughter," she said, "but I do forgive them, and I pray and sacrifice for them so that their lives go well and they be good and holy young women."



BRITT FISK

Forgiveness, she said, is a process that sometimes requires a bending of her will.

"Eventually the bending of your will softens your heart," she said, "and forgiving becomes much easier."

Even more difficult, though, has been forgiving herself. Even today she still struggles with guilt. "She was my baby," said Sammie. "There are days when I scream out into the air, 'Clare, please forgive me!' I pray to the Blessed Mother to lend me her hope, her trust, and her faith."

She said, "The future is hard, but I stay close to Jesus and the Blessed Mother, and I feel closer to Clare now more than ever before. I'm a simple woman, I don't have much to offer, but I don't want anyone to have to grieve alone or turn to other things like mediums or 'seers' or anything else.

In our Catholic faith, we have redemptive suffering, the saints, the Blessed Mother, the Eucharist. These are what can bring us through anything in life, even the most difficult times."

Her other children, Sally and Gus, have been tremendously helpful in reminding her that she is, and always has been, a good mother. Sammie continues to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every day for Clare.

"I know that God is outside of time and space," she said. "I know He can apply graces from my prayers to the moment of her death. I leave it in His hands, knowing that mercy is His greatest attribute. I know He loves Clare infinitely more than I am capable of. I trust that my God has Clare in His loving care. As St. Faustina taught us, our words have to be 'Jesus, I trust in You!'"

MH



PILGRIMAGE SEASON HAS A COLORFUL START

In the cold monochrome of a wicked winter, Michael Slattery's thoughts turned to his passion for color — and bringing color to the Passion.

Our Lord's Back, Crown of Thorns, Christ's Knees — these are just some of the names of the new plants and flowers that now adorn the outdoor Stations of the Cross at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

"This will be the most colorful pilgrimage season we've ever had," said Michael, the head of Eden Hill's Property Maintenance Department.

The plantings this spring at the 14 life-size Stations follow a traditional arrangement dating back centuries — that of matching plants to a particular aspect of the saving Paschal Mystery of the suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's Back (also known as *millefolium*) consists of masses of red florets traditionally seen to symbolize the welts of Jesus' scourged back. It's now found at Station One, as is Crown of Thorns (*Euphorbia splendens*), whose deep red flowers call to mind the droplets of Blood on Jesus' forehead. The red and flesh-tone petals of Christ's Knee (*Tigridia pavonia*) — symbolizing the bloodied wounds from His falls while carrying the Cross — adorns Stations Three, Seven, and Nine.

In all, some 45 new types of plants and flowers have

been added to the Stations this spring, made possible by a new greenhouse built off the maintenance garage. The greenhouse allows Michael and his gardening assistant, Bonnie Baldwin, to raise plants in bulk in a controlled climate (even when there's nothing but ice and snow outside, which often was the case this past winter).

The Stations comprise just 14 of the 27 gardens scattered throughout Eden Hill's 350 acres. This season, all the gardens contain plants and flowers raised in the greenhouse.

"When the pilgrims walk the grounds here, we want this to be like Heaven on Earth — a place to connect with God, the Creator," says Michael, a Cornell Cooperative Extension-trained Master Gardener, who is utilizing his education to help the Marian Fathers be excellent stewards of some of the most beautiful land in the region.

Some of Michael's new initiatives include raising honeybees, establishing a tree nursery (including a stock of sugar maples, which will be tapped for maple syrup), and building rain gardens to reduce the amount of storm water run-off from Eden Hill.

"In the future, we also want to be able to utilize the greenhouse so that we can offer plant cuttings to pilgrims," he said. "For instance, how cool would it be to be able to say, 'I have an offspring of a Bleeding Heart grown at the Twelfth Station?' Wouldn't that be great?"

SHRINE CELEBRATES FATIMA

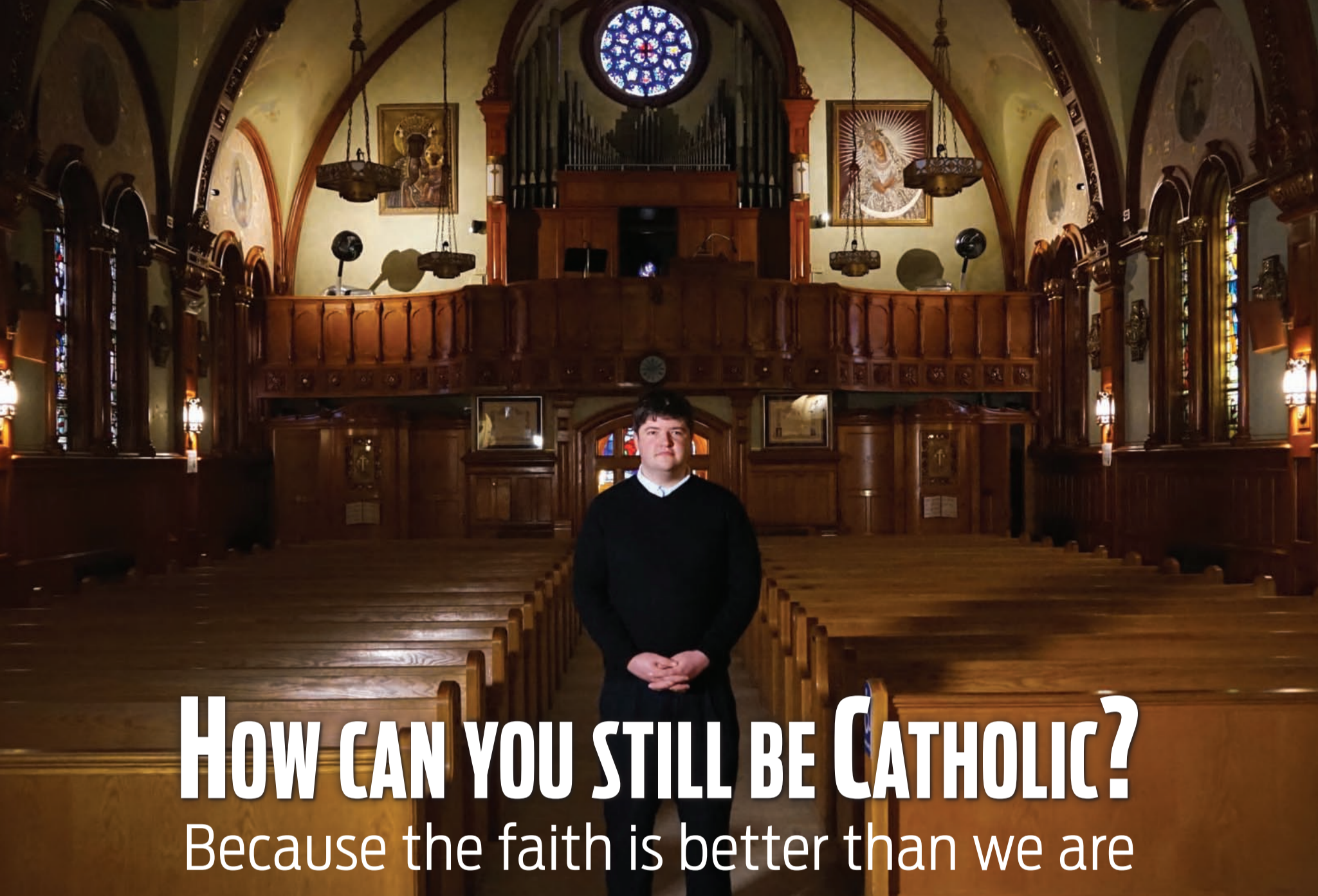
The Shrine will host a series of talks on the First Saturdays from now to October (except August, due to Encuentro Latino) from 11–11:30 a.m. in our new Welcome Center, behind the Divine Mercy Gift Shop.

On the 13th of each month through October, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima will be placed prominently

in the National Shrine for veneration, and the Mass celebrant on those days shall discuss the apparitions at Fatima in his homily.

On Oct. 13, there will be a special day of retreat, hosted by Fr. Anthony Gramlich, MIC.

The talks will be followed by our usual liturgical schedule. Visit TheDivineMercy.org/shrine or call (413) 298-3931 for more information.



HOW CAN YOU STILL BE CATHOLIC?

Because the faith is better than we are

Christopher Sparks, senior books editor of Marian Press, explains the impetus for his newly published book, How Can You Still Be Catholic?: 50 Answers to a Good Question, available for pre-orders now.

When I was an undergraduate student, a number of friends and I would gather on a regular basis to eat and talk. Anything and everything was fair game, including politics and religion. One of the recurring subjects was Catholicism, and one question arose repeatedly: “How can you still be Catholic when the Church/Catholics have done such awful things?” Among the subjects mentioned: the Crusades, the Inquisition, sexual abuse of children by priests, and many other sins and transgressions.

How can you still be Catholic in the face of Church history? How can you still be Catholic when the Church is so full of sinners?

I started off with long answers and wound my way down to a short answer. The long answers would usually start by trying to correct the record:

- The Crusades were wars of defense in response to Islamic invasions that had begun in the seventh century, several hundred years before the First Crusade;
- the Inquisition could not possibly have caused the

deaths of millions, since there weren’t millions of people in Europe to be executed without causing society to collapse (it was more like 4,000 over several centuries);

- less than 8 percent of priests abused young people during the worst phases of the crisis;
- and so on.

Though there are certainly great sins in the Church’s history, the version of history most people accept without question is often legend, not history at all.

I’d also try to point out that for some reason, these conversations usually would circle back again and again to the sins (real or alleged) of the Church and her members, but wouldn’t often take into account the saints or the good works of the Church.

These long answers were sometimes helpful, sometimes not. And gradually I came to realize that my first priority didn’t need to be correcting the record or talking about saints. I needed to focus on the short answer.

The short answer to the question “How can you still be Catholic?” is this: The faith is better than we are. That’s it. The faith is better than we are — better than every pope who ever lived, better than every bishop or priest, woman or man, every member of the Church except for Jesus and Mary. The faith is (way!) better than I

am, better than every person who teaches or seeks to live the faith.

The only two people in the history of the Church to have fully lived the Catholic religion are Jesus and Mary. Everyone else, no matter how holy, falls below their stature.

The Catholic faith is better than we are, and Catholicism is true. That is more than enough of a reason to still be Catholic — indeed, to always be Catholic, to cling to the Church and her faith through thick and thin.

And should the sinfulness of your fellow Catholics give you scandal, ask yourself the question posed by C.S. Lewis: “If I, being what I am, can consider that I am in some sense a Christian, why should the different vices of those people in the next pew prove that their religion is mere hypocrisy and convention?”

The Church is full of sinners? Then it’s doing its job, and we are to bring as many more in as we can persuade to enter. That work of evangelization is especially an obligation for those who love the Divine Mercy message and devotion. That’s why I wrote *How Can You Still Be Catholic?: 50 Answers to a Good Question*. I wanted to give the simple answers to the question — the Catholic faith is true, and it is far better than we are. But I also wanted to give friends and foes alike a sense of the facts and reasoned arguments that answer the stumbling blocks preventing people from finding Jesus, who is waiting to make them sons and daughters of God.

I wanted to share the fruits of years of reading and research, of discovering how infinitely rich are the answers and the reasons for belief, and how completely so many seemingly insuperable obstacles can be overcome.

And more — I wanted to point people beyond my own answers to some of the many great resources available today, put out by saints and scholars, by the Magisterium and ordinary Catholics faithful to the Magisterium. I wanted to bring out treasures old and new from the storehouse of the Church and help a world that is starving for the Sacraments, for grace, for love of God and neighbor. I hope I’ve managed to do all that with this book, and that you’ll share it with those who ask hard questions and have the patience to hear the answers, even hard answers.

After all, we owe them answers. It’s a reasonable question after 2,000 years of sinners and saints, of tragedy and triumph. “How can you still be Catholic?” In fact, Jesus was the first one to ask it when He said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?”

And 2,000 years later, the answer has yet to change:

“Master,” Simon Peter answered him, “to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:67-68). MH



To order *How Can You Still Be Catholic?* visit ShopMercy.org/b34 or call 1-800-462-7426. Product code: B34-BCBB

New titles on tap for Marian Press

Marian Press is rolling out the titles. First, we have a couple of projects from our veteran writers and bestselling authors, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC.

Building on the success of his bestselling book *Champions of the Rosary*, Fr. Donald just released a booklet, *How to Pray the Rosary*. This handy little guide teaches you how to pray the Rosary well and why the Rosary matters. It’s also a great resource to answer Our Lady’s call at Fatima to pray the Rosary daily for peace. Father Donald is also working on another excerpt from *Champions of the Rosary*, entitled *26 Champions*, due out this summer.

In the coming months, Fr. Michael will publish a new book, *Consoling the Heart of Mary*, designed to train Marian Helpers in the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe to become spiritual warriors for Mary to win our whole country and the world for her Son. Father Chris Alar, MIC, the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, got a sneak peek at the manuscript and said he thinks this is Fr. Michael’s best book yet!

Marian Press is introducing three new authors this year. A children’s book, *King of the Shattered Glass*, by Susan Belavance, will be released in June. Set in medieval times and beautifully illustrated, it’s ultimately a story about asking for forgiveness and receiving mercy.

Marian Press has just printed *How Can You Still Be Catholic?* the first book by Christopher Sparks, senior books editor at Marian Press (see page 24).

And Marian priest Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton is publishing his first book, *Stepping on the Serpent* (see page 26), which delves into the spirituality of trust and how Mary is the model for us in growing in our trust in God. This book will be released in September. Visit ShopMercy.org for all Marian Press titles.

TRUST

This has
been my
journey ...



Visit Fr. Thaddaeus' blog.

FELIX CARROLL

This September, Marian Press will publish the first book by Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC, titled Stepping on the Serpent: The Journey of Trust with Mary. Below, Fr. Thaddaeus shares his first encounters with the challenge of trusting in God.

I learned about the Divine Mercy message and devotion as teenager. Its call to trust in the Father's mercy poses quite the challenge. My forthcoming book doesn't come only from research; it comes, first and foremost, from my own journey of trust in the Lord — a journey I've walked with Mary.

I was born and raised in Houston, Texas, the youngest of five children in a Catholic family. When I was 2 years old, our pastor gave us a statue of Our Lady of Fatima shortly before my mother died of melanoma. My dad put Our Lady in the center of the living room in place of the TV, and on Sunday mornings, we would pray the Rosary. That had a great effect on me.

I didn't know my mother personally. The first mother I related to was Mary, and she has been walking with me and teaching me how to trust in the Father as she did.

In the last month of my senior year of high school, my dad went to the hospital with a headache that wouldn't go away. The doctors found increased pressure in his brain because he had lung cancer. The cancer had spread. He was dying.

After my high school graduation ceremony, my dad and I pulled back into our carport and sat there for a moment. We both knew he would die soon. He reminded me of an incident when I was in seventh grade. I was lonely at the time and very unpopular. I was devoted to the Lord. I had recently read St. Thérèse's *Story of a Soul*, and one day, in the midst of lots of tears and complaints to my dad, I said, "There's nothing else I can do with my life, so I'm going to become a saint."

That's what my dad reminded me of the night of my graduation. "Thaddaeus," he said, "I want you to fulfill your promise. I want you to become a saint." That was his dying wish for me. This is why I write about trusting in the Lord with Mary — because that's been the project of my life. That's been the Father's will for me. Trusting in Him is the only way to become a saint.

Nine days after our conversation, I watched my dad die in the hospital. It was in those final moments of his life that I really had to learn what "Jesus, I trust in You" means. To have to watch someone I love, someone who was my last anchor in this world, leave me — I felt I was totally losing control. I dealt with a lot of anger, rebellion, and bitterness after his death, and the serpent of distrust — Satan — attempted to provoke me to give in and reject the Lord. At one point, the temptation became clear: I either choose Jesus — and I trust in Him that my life has meaning — or I choose *nothing*, because life has no meaning at all. Mary took my hand and led me along the path of trust.

A year later, I was still struggling with my dad's death and still struggling to trust. One day I was weeping, and I took the Divine Mercy Image off the wall because I wanted to be close to the Lord. I held Him to my heart and just wept. I prayed over and over, "Jesus, I trust in You." It's all I could get out from all that pain and confusion. Days later, I asked Him, "Why did You do this?" The answer came back almost immediately: "Because I want you to believe that I'm your Father, too."

We, as Christians, are made unique by the fact that we believe God is Father. We are called to trust in the Father, to stake our whole lives on the Father, just as Jesus did.

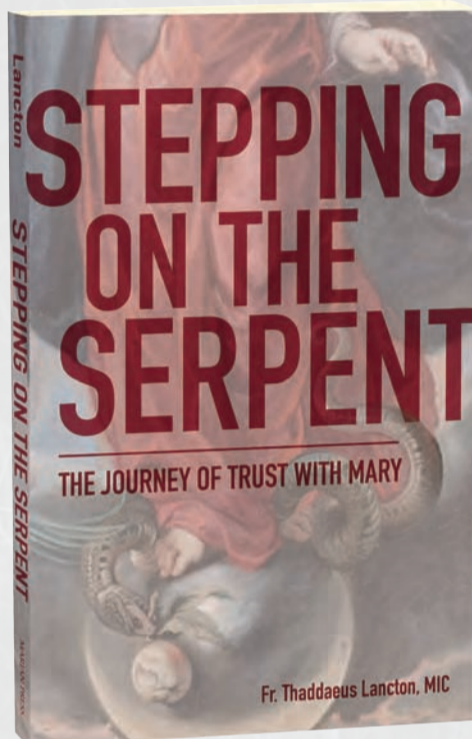
Later, I found out the Father hadn't taken away my biological father without any thought given to me. Quite the contrary. It turns out that when my dad had had a heart attack and a stroke when I was 12 (which he had survived without too much of a problem). He had prayed that he would live to see me graduate high school. The Father answered that prayer.

So what seemed, in one sense, a terrible event, was, in fact, the Lord orchestrating everything. The Lord asks for patience and trust — that even during difficult moments when everything seems dark and we don't understand, we simply should say, "I trust You ... I don't understand,

but I trust You, and I trust that You will see me through this."

Jesus, in the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, said that distrust pains Him the most (see *Diary*, 50). Why is the world not changing for the better? Because we distrust, because we don't let the power of God enter our lives in those moments of suffering and pain. Trust is powerful. Trust is that door that allows the Lord to enter into our hearts in the most difficult moments, in the most critical moments, and in the most ordinary moments. He enters into our hearts and transforms us.

So I come to you not just as a teacher and priest, but as a fellow Christian who walks this path of trust with you, holding Mary's hand. The path of trust is the way of the Cross. That's the way that we learn trust. Satan is very happy to offer us different paths around the Cross, but Mary teaches us how to crush his head and trust in the Lord like she did every moment of her life. My hope is to accompany you along this path! MH



Father Thaddaeus' book will be available this September.



**Bryan Thatcher, MD,
talks about Divine
Mercy as a way of life.**



Bryan Thatcher, MD, with an early supporter of his ministry, Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, during the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy in 2014.

25 YEARS AGO

HE WAS HANDED THE *DIARY*. NOW LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED.

By Bryan Thatcher, MD

It's been 25 years since a friend handed me a copy of the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*. I was a mess at the time. I was not living a holy life, my priorities were out of order, and I was not a model husband and father.

I took the *Diary* home and started reading it. A quote jumped out that wound up changing everything for me. It's the passage from entry 723 where Jesus tells St. Faustina, "The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy."

For the first time, I truly understood God's love and mercy for me, the greatest of sinners. And for the first time, I felt the call to holiness.

JOIN US!

Learn how you can get involved with EADM.
TheDivineMercy.org/EADM
1-877-380-0727.

My wife and I soon started what we called a "Divine Mercy prayer cenacle" in our home parish in Florida, integrating the *Diary* with Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. And so began Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM), dedicated to living the Divine Mercy message

through word and deed.

I soon left my career as a medical doctor treating physical suffering to become an apostle of Divine Mercy using the great resources of the Church to treat people's spiritual suffering.

The Marians welcomed us as one of their lay apostolates in 1998, viewing this as a great opportunity to

help fulfill the call of the Marians' Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis (1871-1927), who wrote in his spiritual *Journal*, "One of the most pressing needs of our times is, it seems to me, 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. ... [F]ired with holy zeal, [lay men and women] could then be organized into groups and actively involved in the task of spreading the faith. They could bring Christ into those places where we priests do not have access."

Blessed George must be smiling in Heaven because today, there are 3,500 Divine Mercy cenacles in the United States and countless others in more than 40 countries.

In addition to studying Scripture, the *Catechism*, and St. Faustina's *Diary*, EADM cenacles commit to Eucharistic Adoration; praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and dying; and engaging in other works of mercy. We frequently send shipments of medical and educational materials to the poor worldwide. Many cenacles also engage in prison ministries.

Just to give you a taste of the sort of "active apostolate" Blessed George visualized, I want to share with you some of the great work of two EADM cenacles: one in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the second in Brentwood, California.

The cenacle based at the Cathedral of Saint Paul started in 2007. Members have shared incredible experiences of how the Divine Mercy message has improved their lives.

"I believe in Jesus' words and promises more completely than ever before," says JoAnn F. "Divine Mercy has taught me to want to learn more about my Savior and what it means to offer my actions and suffering to console His Sacred Heart."

"The Divine Mercy Image and message helped me to enter the Catholic Church and also to deal with the deaths of my parents," said Mary H.

"I've learned to believe fully in the words 'Jesus, I

trust In You' and offer my daily life to Him in trust and mercy," said Jeanne E.

Among the cenacle's works of mercy, it distributes Divine Mercy books, pamphlets, and prayercards at the cathedral; it assembles and distributes to the needy "evangelization packets" that include prayercards, a rosary, and a Miraculous Medal; it travels to parishes throughout the Archdiocese to give Divine Mercy

presentations and to provide guidance on how to start cenacles; and it promotes the Hearts Afire Parish-based Programs of Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC.

In Brentwood, Elizabeth Gomez began a mission to the Divine Mercy in 2010 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, under the leadership of Fr. Carl Arcosa. It's now a diocesan-wide ministry with 150 members and 11 Spanish-speaking cenacles.

The ministry hosts Divine Mercy conferences twice a year,

gives parish missions, and helps start new cenacles. Its works of mercy include visiting families weekly with Divine Mercy Images and praying the Chaplet for the needs of the families. All the while, cenacle members have witnessed physical and spiritual healings, including conversions.

Elizabeth herself now gives talks on Divine Mercy both inside and outside of the United States. She helped EADM get started in the Diocese of Sacramento, California, as well as in Mexico and Guatemala.

This is what can happen when you combine the brokenness of the world with the hope of the Divine Mercy message.

These past 25 years have been incredible. I thank God. I thank my family. I thank the Marian Fathers. I thank the thousands of new friends I've made around the world who, like me, have become "fired with holy zeal," who have found in the *Diary* a blueprint for how to live, and who believe Jesus' words to St. Faustina that "Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My Mercy" (300).

MH



The cenacles in Brentwood, California (above), and St. Paul, Minnesota, are among the 3,500 such Divine Mercy cenacles in the United States.

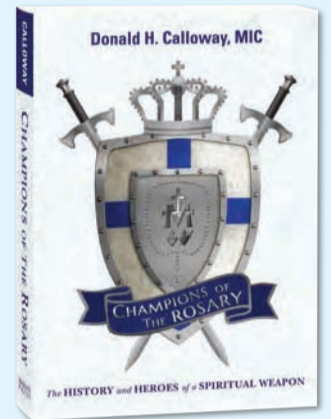
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July 13	The Assumption	Aug. 15
July 20	Queenship of Mary	Aug. 22
Aug. 6	Nativity of Mary	Sept. 8
Aug. 10	Holy Name of Mary	Sept. 12
Aug. 13	Our Lady of Sorrows	Sept. 15
Sept. 4	Our Lady of the Rosary	Oct. 7
Oct. 19	Presentation of Mary	Nov. 21
Nov. 5	Immaculate Conception	Dec. 8
Nov. 9	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Dec. 12
Nov. 29	Mother of God	Jan. 1
Dec. 31	Presentation of the Lord	Feb. 2

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A WAKE-UP CALL FROM OUR LADY

I met Irene Krueger when she signed up 13 of her family and friends for our Thirteenth of the Month Club. (Club members receive a monthly newsletter designed to help them deepen their knowledge about Mary.) I was moved by her great devotion to Our Lady. Irene is proof that our Lord and His Mother are always waiting for us to open our hearts to them.

Irene is the oldest of five children and was raised in a devout Catholic family. Her father, when he was a child, was even healed of Sydenham's chorea (also known as "Saint Vitus' Dance") through the intercession of (now St.) Andre Bessette of Montreal! Needless to say, Irene was "taught her prayers at her mother's knee," she said.

But after her Confirmation, Irene had no adult faith formation, and as the years went by, she drifted away from the Catholic Church. She was left with a hunger that could not be assuaged. By her 40s, Irene had completely made her break from the Church, thinking there must be more to be found elsewhere. She even tried another religious denomination.

When she entered her 60s, Irene experienced health problems and became incapacitated. She felt alone. Channel-surfing one day, she saw Mother Angelica in full habit, and instantly felt again the joy of her own childhood faith! Her love for the Catholic Church reawakened, and she endeavored to learn about her faith. She read books by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC; Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC; and Dr. Mark Miravalle.

Inspired by her reading, Irene asked Our Lady in prayer, "What do I do with you? Other than praying Rosaries and novenas, what is your role in my life?" She heard a response in her heart. "She reached into my heart," Irene explained. "She got my attention, and asked me to talk about her. This was confirmed for me when

my sister painted a statue of Our Lady holding Baby Jesus for me for my birthday last year! I turned in prayer to Our Lady of Fatima, and I had the sense in my heart of her saying, 'If I came a second time, would they listen?'"

Irene recently read the Marian Press book Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters, by Robert Stackpole, STD. The book and other literature Irene receives from the Marian Fathers have inspired her to speak of Mary with her family and friends, and to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. She gave copies of the book to many family members and friends, and enrolled them in the Thirteenth of the Month Club to further prompt conversation with them about Mary in the course of their everyday lives.

Now, Irene and her family and friends talk about the memories they have of praying the Rosary as a family and of their grandparents' devotion to Mary. They also share what's going on in their own spiritual lives. Everyday discussions now turn into opportunities to share their faith!

"We can only speak to others about what we hear and know," Irene said. "I give thanks to the Lord for the Marians, who break the silence and set the example of opening our hearts to God's light through Mary."



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



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Job finds husband

I am writing to let you know about what I believe to be graces received through the intercession of Blessed George. I had no knowledge about Blessed George until my friend sent me “Graces Received” from the *Marian Helper*.

Our friend knew that my husband had lost his job last August, so she gave us the article and told us to pray to Blessed George.

Daily, we called upon him to intercede for us. After almost three weeks, my husband found a job. Although the job is not in his profession, my husband happily accepted this welcome surprise from God. We did not see it coming because my husband did not apply for this position. Instead, it was offered to him. Now we pray that he will find joy in this job.

— DD, Toronto

Niece overcomes complications

I want to thank Blessed George for interceding for my niece’s health. My niece (who is partially paralyzed from polio) developed a kidney infection due to two kidney stones. The infection went into her bloodstream and caused a fever of 107. Her blood pressure dropped substantially. Because of the fever, they could not remove the stones. She was rushed into surgery where doctors put a stent in her kidney. It took hours to stabilize her. The high fever and infection weakened her heart, so the doctors couldn’t remove the kidney stones until her heart was stronger. Once doctors were sure her arteries were not clogged, she was given medication to strengthen her heart so she could have the surgery. I prayed to Blessed George throughout this ordeal.

I continued to pray to Blessed George as my niece finally underwent surgery, but again she developed a fever. After recovering from her fever, she developed an abscess in the hip area requiring a special procedure since the antibiotics were not working. Again, I turned to Blessed George praying that the procedure be successful and the antibiotics could do their job. All went well,

and she is recovering nicely. I will never stop thanking Blessed George.

— NM

Fiancé gets two jobs

I was flipping through the 2016-17 Winter issue of *Marian Helper* when the eyes of Blessed George caught my attention.

I decided to ask Blessed George for his help. My daughter’s fiancé needed to find a job as a respiratory therapist. He had been without a job for six months. He had depleted his savings, and his unemployment benefits were to expire soon. His daughter, her husband, and their two children live with him, and she was expecting a baby in a few weeks. The pregnant daughter’s part-time job was supporting the family.

I had prayed to Blessed George for only one week when my daughter’s fiancé received an offer for a part-time job. It was something! Two weeks later, he received a full-time job offer and is now working at two hospitals until he can catch up on past-due bills. Working 60 hours a week, he now needs prayers for good health.

— AC, Humble, Texas



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

Good news after delaying tests

I had delayed going to the doctor for some tests, fearing the worst. Before finally going to the doctor, I asked Blessed George for his intercession, and my prayers were answered. It turns out that my diagnosis and overall health can be positively affected through diet and exercise.

— ML, Collingswood, New Jersey

For a Blessed George prayercard (B34-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: graces@marian.org.



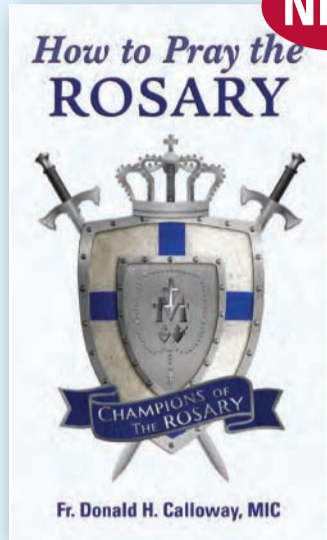
Father Donald Calloway, MIC, helps you answer Our Lady's call!

How to Pray the Rosary

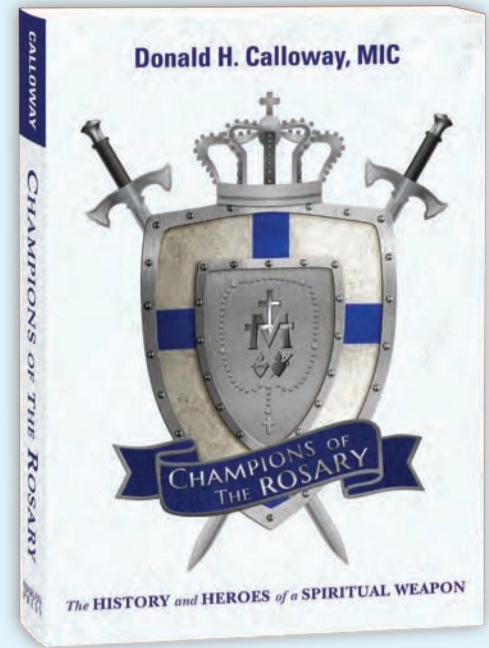
In *How to Pray the Rosary*, best-selling author Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, teaches you how to pray the Rosary well and why it matters. **B34-HPR \$3.99**



Father Donald Calloway, MIC, talks about the power of the Rosary.



NEW

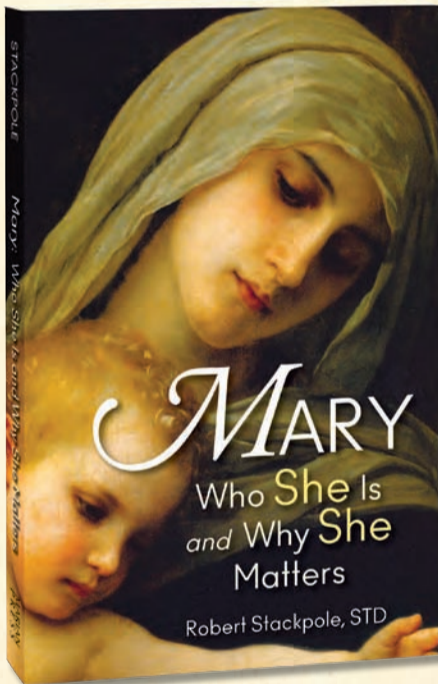


Champions of the Rosary

The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon

The latest book by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, presents a complete history of this spiritual weapon, 26 of its greatest heroes, detailed accounts of its victories, and 30 color images of the Rosary in art! **B34-CRBK \$16.95**

Great reads for the summer



Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters

Who is Mary and why does she matter? This overview of the basic truths about Our Lady and her ongoing role in the Church today is written with wit and erudition, making this the perfect introduction to the Blessed Virgin Mary for any reader! **B34-MBK \$14.95**



NEW

Little Prayers Big Blessings

Maureen Fleming offers parents an array of blessings to pray over their children after they're baptized, throughout their childhoods, and at significant milestones in their lives. **B34-LPK \$2.99**

NEW



King of the Shattered Glass

Set in Medieval times, *King of the Shattered Glass* is a beautifully illustrated story about a scullery maid, Marguerite, who broke the King's precious glass. Ultimately, this is a story about asking forgiveness and receiving mercy! **B34-GLASS \$12.95**

Fatima resources



Items also sold separately.

100th Anniversary of Fatima Pack



Pack includes: Fatima Guidebook, 5" x 7" canvas image of Our Lady of Fatima. Pamphlets: "Fatima Edition of Pray the Rosary Daily," "Fatima Prayers," "Five First Saturdays," "Graces Offered by the Brown Scapular," and "I Am the Lady of the Rosary." A Promise of the Five First Saturdays Prayercard. **B34-FAMPK \$6.95** (if purchased separately from kit)

Mary 101 Kit

◀ Kit includes: *Mary* book, "Mary 101" DVD, The Holy Rosary booklet, Mary tri-fold card, Our Lady of Guadalupe rosary. Pamphlets: "Pray the Rosary Daily," "The Hail Mary," "Practice of the Three Hail Marys and Efficacious Novena," and "What is the Immaculate Conception?" Prayercards: Chaplet of the 10 Evangelical Virtues and Hail, Holy Queen (*Salve Regina*).

***Also includes the Fatima Pack shown below.**

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The DVD series *Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told* captures the power and drama of Marian Fr. Michael Gaitley's best-selling book.

B34-SGDVD \$99.95

Order Info

Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of phone or online orders;
2-4 weeks for mail orders.

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

mail: Order Department

Association of Marian Helpers
Stockbridge, MA 01263

Checks payable to: Association of Marian Helpers

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over \$125 . . .	10% of subtotal	... 15% of subtotal

Then ...



We dug back exactly 65 years ago to the Summer 1952 issue of the *Marian Helpers Bulletin* and found this photo of a bus group from New Britain, Connecticut, who had traveled to Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to celebrate what the editors described then as the “proposed Feast of Divine Mercy,” occurring that year on April 20.

This was only five years after the Marian Fathers had founded their home in Stockbridge — and a full 48 years before Pope St. John Paul II would honor our Lord’s request to St. Faustina and make Divine Mercy Sunday a universal feast day of the Church. Still, back then, thanks to the work on Eden Hill done by the Marians and Marian Helpers, word was getting out about the Divine Mercy message and our Lord’s call for this special feast day to be celebrated on the second Sunday of Easter in honor of His mercy for poor sinners.

The New Britain bus group was one of four or five buses that showed up that year to celebrate Mass. Back in 1952, Eden Hill didn’t yet have the stone chapel we know today as the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. It didn’t have the outdoor field altar, where Divine Mercy Sunday Mass is now celebrated for upwards of 20,000 or more pilgrims. Back then, Mass was celebrated in the downstairs of the Marian monastery. Plenty of room!

Now ...



In all, 163 buses made their way to Eden Hill this past Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23, including this one carrying happy parishioners from St. Alphonsus Church in Toronto.

Brother Timothy's conversion story.

Live the call!



The Van Sise family:

Our family does whatever we can to help support and encourage the Marian seminarians, whether that be financially, physically, or, most importantly, prayerfully. They are not only the future of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, but the Catholic Church, as well. The formation and education they are receiving now is preparing them to be leaders, protectors, and spiritual providers for the faithful.

Brother Timothy, MIC:

When I came into the Catholic Church during Easter Vigil 2009, I was hearing the call to the priesthood quite clearly. As a new Catholic, the diocesan priesthood was all I was familiar with, but I wanted to look into the priesthood in a religious order, in case that was where God was calling me. Ultimately, the Lord used Our Lady, the Divine Mercy message, and Fr. Donald Calloway's conversion to lead me to my home with the Marian Fathers.

Attend a retreat

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

The next retreats will be:

Aug. 18-20
Sept. 1-3
Oct. 20-22
Dec. 1-3

Learn more

Email: vocations@marian.org

Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806

Visit: marian.org/vocations

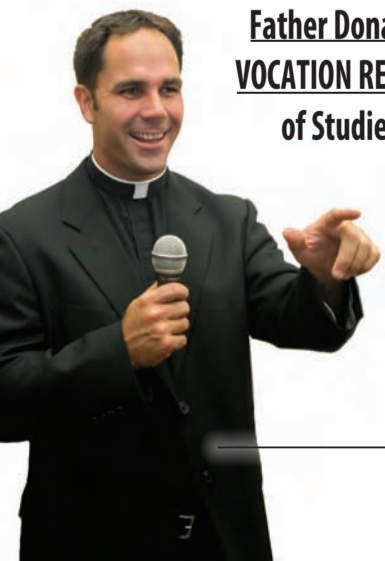
Write: **Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**
Vocation Director
Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception
515 Belleview Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952

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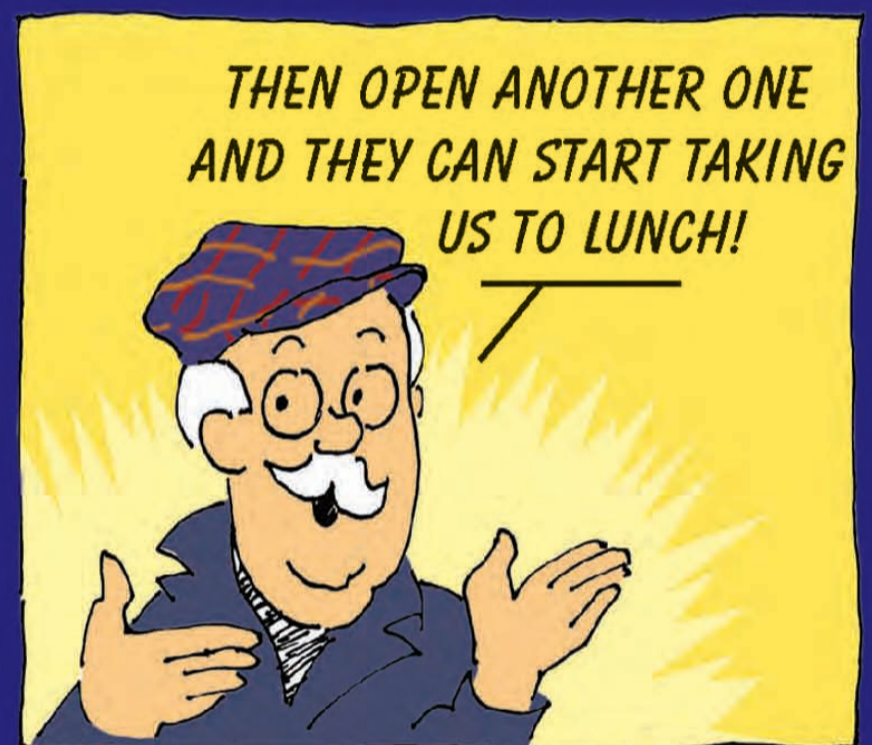
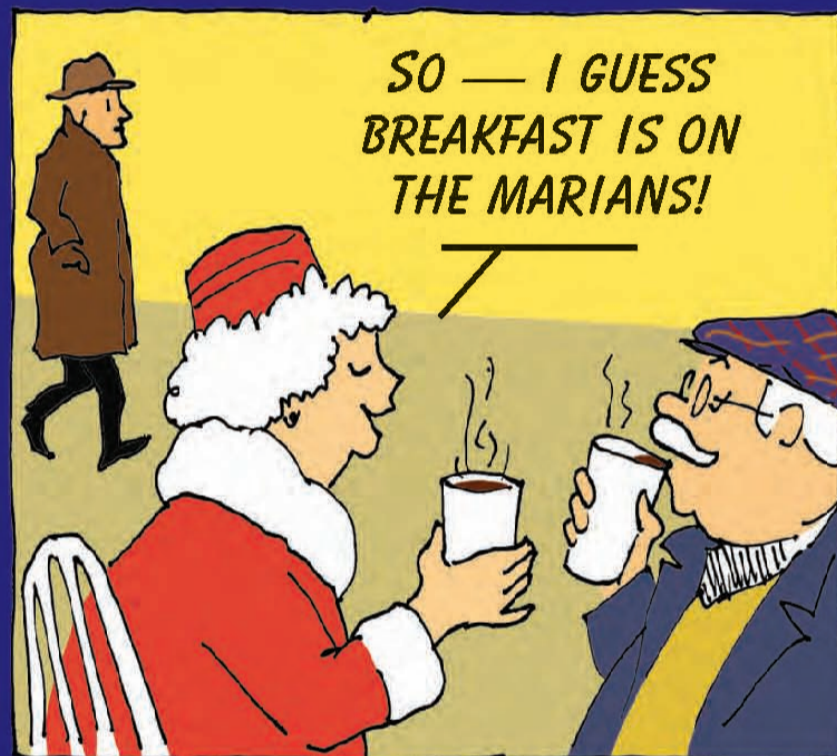
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