

Saint Joseph comes through, again • How to evangelize in a very strange age

Summer 2021

# Marian Helper

*Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception*

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**FR. SERAPHIM MICHALENKO, MIC**

1930-2021

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# A GREAT DIVINE MERCY EVANGELIZER IS CALLED HOME

Side by side with Blessed Michael Sopocho, Pope St. John Paul II, and St. Faustina herself, Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, stands as a central figure who helped make the Divine Mercy message and devotion the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Church.

## 4 Flippant prayer, big results

In this Year of St. Joseph, a Marian Helper shares a story of how the Patron of the Universal Church yearns to intercede for us.

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How can we safely reopen our Shrine where pilgrims come to draw closer to Divine Mercy Himself by means of prayer and the Sacraments? The answer to this historic challenge is right outside our windows.

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Ever wonder how the Divine Mercy message and devotion and the Bible are connected? Boy, have we got a resource for you!

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We here on Eden Hill mourn the death of a kind, compassionate, funny, and deeply talented member of our editorial staff. Please join us in praying for the repose of the soul of Marc Massery (1990-2021).

## 28 In fearsome times

These days it is increasingly difficult to see through the fog of information, disinformation, misinformation, and flat-out lies. So what is our path of evangelization?

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**AMH DIRECTOR/PUBLISHER:**

Fr. Chris Alar, MIC – “Father Joseph, MIC”

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR:** Felix Carroll

**DESIGNER:** Andrew Leeco

**WRITERS, ASSISTANT EDITORS:** Chris Sparks and Marc Massery

**AMH GENERAL PROMOTER:**

Br. Andrew R. Maczynski, MIC

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

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## WHO WE ARE



### Marian Helpers Center

Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
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1-800-462-7426

### National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

(413) 298-3931  
For pilgrimages:  
(413) 298-1119  
[ShrineOfDivineMercy.org](http://ShrineOfDivineMercy.org)



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## Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

## Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

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

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

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



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- **Support a particular ministry:** [marian.org/give](http://marian.org/give)
- **Create a memorial or tribute:** [MemorialsOnEdenHill.org](http://MemorialsOnEdenHill.org)
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# HE SHOWED US THE WAY

**W**here would we be without Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC? He died on Feb. 11, 2021, after several weeks struggle with the effects of COVID-19. It's fitting that he died on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, which commemorates Our Lady's apparitions to St. Bernadette Soubirous, special visitations during which the Blessed Virgin announced, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

It's also fitting that he died during the Year of St. Joseph, partly because St. Joseph is the Patron of a Happy Death, but also because Fr. Seraphim was one of my predecessors in the role of director of the Association of Marian Helpers with the title "Fr. Joseph, MIC." Father Seraphim used that time well to help set in motion what he called the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Church: the Divine Mercy movement.

As you will read in our cover story commemorating his life and ministry, it was Fr. Seraphim who brought the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska* out of Communist Poland and got it published. It was Fr. Seraphim who documented the beatification and canonization miracles for St. Faustina's cause, and Fr. Seraphim who traveled the world tirelessly proclaiming Divine Mercy to all who would listen.

Father Seraphim was keenly aware of the warning of Jesus: "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Lk 12:48). Divine Mercy is one of the most extraordinary treasures entrusted to the Church, and through his words and example, he shared it with us, and with the whole world.

He took up the call that our Marian Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, shared with our Congregation: to bring the laity into our ministry as collaborators. Father Seraphim showed us the responsibility we Marian Helpers have to educate ourselves in Divine Mercy, the "nucleus of the Gospel," according to Pope Benedict XVI, and become conduits of that same Divine Mercy in the world.

Father Seraphim's fidelity to Christ's call and the charisms of our Congregation has borne so much fruit for the Church and the whole world, it's almost beyond words. But in many ways, his work is just getting started. That's why we've dedicated so much of this issue of *Marian Helper* to Fr. Seraphim's life and legacy: to equip you all to continue the work of spreading Divine Mercy to every soul, to every place where darkness and despair tempt people to give up hope.

We Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception imitate the Lord Jesus, who even descended to the dead to liberate the captives, to let the saints of the Old Testament into Heaven. We Marian Fathers and our Marian Helpers bring the light of Divine Mercy into every darkness. We are children of Mary serving the Church where the need is greatest, especially in our ministry to the dying and the dead.

Father Seraphim showed us the way. We continue to share that work with you.

So pray for Fr. Seraphim, for all of us Marian Fathers in our ministries, and for all your fellow Marian Helpers. Pray for all the souls most in need of Divine Mercy. We're working to get the message and devotion out there, but we will only ever succeed by the grace of God. So we need your prayers and support. Take this issue and read it, then commit to acting like a spiritual child of Our Lady and Fr. Seraphim. Commit to doing your part to spread Divine Mercy and to beg for God's mercy on us and on the whole world. And please be assured of our prayers for you.

*Fr. Joseph, MIC*



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

# Flippant prayer, big results

**F**rancesca had never prayed for a husband before. She was 38 years old, studying Italian at Queens College in New York City, and had only recently begun to feel like something, or someone, was missing.

On March 19, 1970, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Francesca felt inspired to make a mini pilgrimage to a statue of St. Joseph. “I had always loved St. Joseph,” Francesca said. “I went to a church in my neighborhood, St. Gregory in Brooklyn. I can still see myself. ... I walked into the church. It was a big, long church. Anyone who got married there had a long walk. So anyway, I walked in, went right up to a statue of St. Joseph, lit a candle, and the first thing that came out of my mind was, ‘St. Joseph, I want a man like you.’”

After saying that spontaneous prayer, she thought to herself, “Well, let’s see what happens.” She had never prayed that prayer before, and she never repeated it again.

Exactly three months later, June 19, friends introduced her to another student at Queens College, a native of Ireland named Gerard Beahan. “All of us went to the operas together in the park nearby. Gerard and I were drawn to each other.”

Francesca realized that she had seen Gerard before around the school. “One January day on campus, I had seen Gerard walking out of the cafeteria. There was something about his bearing that struck me.” He had



Gerard and Francesca Beahan on their silver wedding anniversary, Sept. 19, 1995. They were married for 39 years.

made such an impression on Francesca that she had a dream about him.

“Saint Joseph had dreams, too. Mine was very, very strange,” she admitted. “I have kept a log of my dreams since I was 9 years old. In the dream, I was walking through a subway passage when all of a sudden, leaning up against the wall was a thin man, very tall, with blondish hair and wearing a sailor hat. He took my hand, and we went back through the passage together. There were so many obstructions from one end to the other, but we somehow got through.”

Back in the waking world, Gerard and Francesca felt immediately drawn to each other. But that dream Francesca had had before she and Gerard had even met served as a sign of things to come. A vocalist and pianist, Francesca had just received a scholarship to study music in Italy, which would take her away from Gerard. “Gerard didn’t want me to miss out of that, but he didn’t want me to go to Italy without me giving him a commitment.”

Though they had only known each other a short time, they decided to get married. In fact, they wed exactly three months from the day they had met — six months



after Francesca's almost flippant prayer before a statue of St. Joseph. They married in a church dedicated to St. Joseph, of course: St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church in Garden City, New York.

How was Gerard "a man like St. Joseph?"

"He was very kind. Very considerate," Francesca said. He was also a devout Catholic who had a great love for St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Francesca pointed out a line from *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father* by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, that reminded her of Gerard as soon as she read it:

If men today were more like St. Joseph — protectors and defenders of beauty, instead of users and abusers of the feminine mystery — what a different world this would be!

"That was my Gerard," Francesca said.

Unfortunately, early in their marriage, Gerard and Francesca faced another obstacle. Before they were married even a year, Gerard was diagnosed with kidney cancer. But this trial would only end up revealing to Francesca, in an even greater way, the virtue of the man St. Joseph had selected for her.

"When he was ill with cancer, he had a lot of pain," she said. "But not once was he ever bitter. Not once did he ever say, 'Why?' Not once did he complain about anything. He was concerned about me, and how I was managing!"

Exactly one year after they were married, Sept. 19, 1971, they received word that they had caught the cancer in time, and that Gerard was going to be all right. They celebrated their first anniversary in Gerard's hospital room, sipping ginger ale out of champagne glasses.

Gerard and Francesca were married 39 years. Since St. Joseph is traditionally known as the Patron of a Happy Death, it makes sense that Gerard's death, though of course heartbreaking for Francesca, came about peacefully.

"Hospice was there only one day," she said. "It was a Tuesday. ... I was by his side. We used to play a sort of game where we would say to each other, 'Guess what? Guess what? I love you.' They say the last sense to leave is hearing. As I was by his side, as soon as I said, 'Guess what?' his whole face changed. It became a little less anguished. That was the last thing I said to him."

— Marc Massery

## The consecrations continue!

If book sales are the barometer, we can safely assume that hundreds of thousands of people have been entrusting themselves to the paternal care of St. Joseph in this Year of St. Joseph using *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father* by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC.

More than 350,000 copies have sold in English and another 55,000 in Spanish (plus 4,400 eBooks), making it one of the best-selling books in Marian Press history. Since he published the book in January 2020, Fr. Donald has been sought after around the world for interviews and livestream talks. The demand increased exponentially after Pope Francis declared the Year of St. Joseph on Dec. 8, 2020.

On the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19, Fr. Donald led an entrustment of the United States to St. Joseph during a celebration at the National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere, Wisconsin.

Total consecration to St. Joseph means you make a formal act of entrustment to our spiritual father, a solemn prayer asking him to take care of your spiritual well-being and lead you to God. The person who consecrates himself to St. Joseph wants to resemble St. Joseph in virtue and holiness. Saint Joseph, in turn, will give those consecrated to him his undivided attention, protection, and guidance.

You can begin the 33-day preparation any day of the year, but Fr. Donald has recommended the following start dates:

- **July 20**, for consecration on the Feast of Our Lady of Knock on Aug. 21;
- **Sept. 30**, for consecration on All Saints' Day on Nov. 1;
- **Nov. 8**, for consecration on the Feast of Our Lady of Loreto on Dec. 10;
- **Nov. 23** (this year), for consecration on the Solemnity of the Holy Family (Dec. 26 this year);
- **Dec. 22**, for consecration on the Feast of the Holy Spouses on Jan. 23;
- **Jan. 1**, for consecration on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2;
- **Feb. 15**, for consecration on the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19;
- **March 30**, for consecration on the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1; and
- **April 11**, for consecration on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13.

Visit [ShopMercy.org/b50](https://ShopMercy.org/b50) or call 1-800-462-7426 to order *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*.

## FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

Visit [ShopMercy.org/b50](http://ShopMercy.org/b50) or call 1-800-462-7426.

*Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, died on Feb. 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. He was a giant in the promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion. Here are some of the essential resources that, without him, we wouldn't have.*

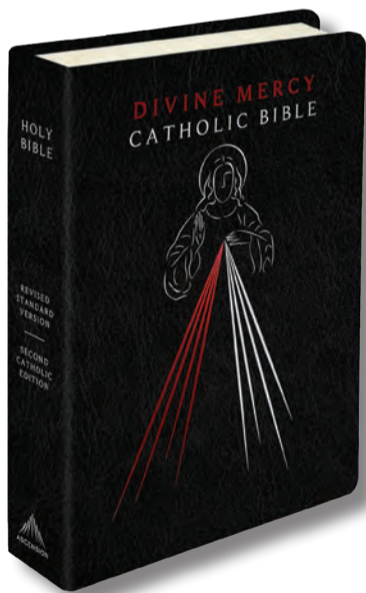
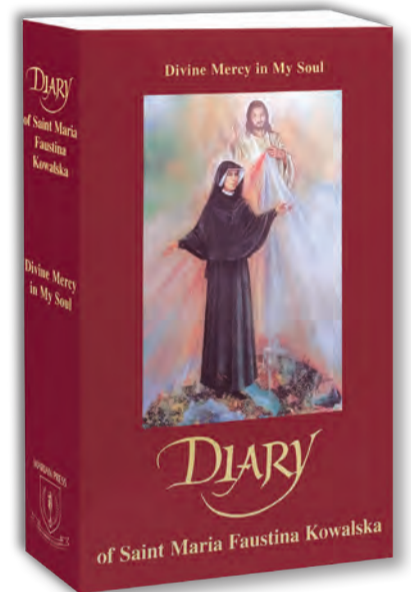


### DIVINE MERCY: MESSAGE AND DEVOTION

One of our most popular publications, this booklet, coauthored by Fr. Seraphim, helped bring the message and devotion of Divine Mercy to the world. Accessible, short, this is the resource to give out to those who aren't ready for St. Faustina's full *Diary*. \$3.99. **B50-M17**

### DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL: DIARY OF SAINT MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

Through St. Faustina's private revelations, the Divine Mercy movement kicked off across the world, changing the lives and hearts of millions. Get the message straight from the mystic's pen, thanks to Fr. Seraphim, who brought a microfiche copy of the original *Diary* out of Communist Poland and oversaw its publication and translation, allowing the Divine Mercy message and devotion to reach the whole world. This summer, check out the *Diary*, and get copies for your friends, as well. \$15.95. **B50-NBFD**

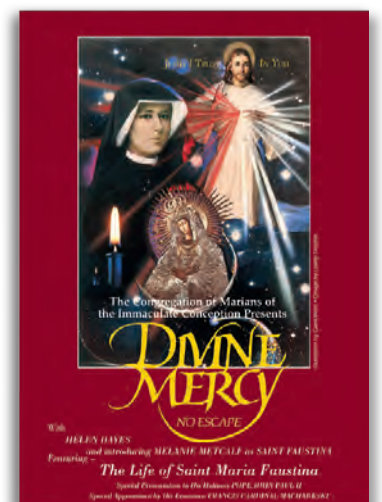


### DIVINE MERCY CATHOLIC BIBLE

Gathering together the insights and teaching of an array of Divine Mercy experts, this new study Bible offers unparalleled access to both the Scriptures and the best of Divine Mercy theology, all in one volume. With a foreword by Fr. Seraphim, one of the last of his writings to be published, this excellent resource will help you to be "competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17). \$49.95. **B50-BIDM**

### DIVINE MERCY: NO ESCAPE

This docudrama tells the moving story of St. Faustina, a young Polish nun chosen by God to share His message of mercy with the whole world. The screenplay was written and developed by Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Hermann D. Tauchert. Filmed in Poland, the Vatican, Germany, and the United States, this classic was narrated by Broadway and screen legend Helen Hayes. \$14.95. **B50-DMDVD**





Back in 2001, Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC, interviews Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, during the Divine Mercy Sunday broadcast on EWTN.

## MUCH OBLIGED

I'll never forget the first time I met Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC. I was a 24-year-old candidate for the Marian Congregation, visiting the community in Stockbridge for the first time.

I had a wonderful weekend, praying with the community and meeting the Marians. I felt at home, like I was putting on a familiar pair of gloves. God was preparing the way for my entrance into the community and indicating to me that this is where He wanted me. My parents received the Marian magazine, which at that time was called the *Marian Helpers Bulletin*. I had read a number of articles by Fr. Seraphim about the *Divine Mercy*, so I was thrilled to meet him in person. He was very warm and gracious.

At the end of the weekend, as I prepared to go home, I said to Fr. Seraphim, "Thanks for all that you do!" His response surprised me a little because he answered a bit brusquely, "What have I done?" I said, "Everything that you do to promote the Divine Mercy!" He shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

After I joined the Congregation, I had the opportunity to work with Fr. Seraphim through the years on many Divine Mercy programs and EWTN broadcasts. We collaborated on workshops and Congresses in the United States, in Rome, in Poland, in the Philippines, and many other places. He spent time in Macau helping with the translation of St. Faustina's *Diary* into Mandarin or Cantonese.

He was tremendously knowledgeable about the Divine Mercy and the Blessed Virgin Mary. I found him to be amazingly generous with his time. If you asked him a question about something that he wasn't sure about, he would spend hours researching it in order to give the correct answer. He would spend hours talking to people

he barely knew. He had a warm smile and a good sense of humor. He was indefatigable, always ready to travel anywhere at the drop of a hat to promote the Divine Mercy.

I remember back 10 years ago when he had cancer and he had lost his hair and his beard to chemotherapy. He was very thin. I hadn't seen him in a while, and I didn't recognize him at first. I thought, "Who is this little man who looks like a bald eagle?" But he maintained his sense of humor and bounced back. I asked him awhile back how he was doing. He had trouble seeing out of one eye, his gait was a bit unsteady, and he had a few other problems. Still, he shrugged them off and kept going with equanimity.

But he also had that surprising way of answering people a little sharply sometimes, which could catch you off guard. I heard that he had been very shy when he was growing up, and so perhaps this mannerism came from a lack of interaction with others and perfecting all of the social skills. But as I think back on that first interaction with him on the weekend that I met him, I can think of another reason for his response. He was like Bartholomew in the Gospel who, when he first heard about Jesus, asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Father Seraphim was a man without guile. What you saw was what you got! He also didn't take himself too seriously.

Despite all that he had been doing to promote the Divine Mercy around the world, he was, in effect, saying to me, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do" (Lk 17:10).



In Memory of  
Fr. Seraphim



Father Seraphim's  
First Mass



Funeral Mass for  
Father Seraphim



The Message of  
Divine Mercy with  
Fr. Seraphim



The Meaning  
of Mercy

# FATHER SERAPHIM MICHALENKO, MIC

A great Divine Mercy  
evangelizer is called home



**A** humble servant, a spiritual giant, the world-renowned expert on the life and spirituality of St. Faustina, Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, died Thursday, Feb. 11, from illness related to COVID-19. He was 90.

Side by side with Blessed Michael Sopocko, Pope St. John Paul II, and St. Faustina herself, Fr. Seraphim stands as a central figure who helped make the Divine Mercy message and devotion the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Church.

He was the man who smuggled photographic images of the pages of St. Faustina's *Diary* out of Communist-occupied Poland in the 1970s and later documented her beatification and canonization miracles.

He drew his last breath at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. As God would have it, he died on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It was Our Lady of Lourdes who, in 1858, appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous and identified herself thusly: “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

“There are two days when Our Lady in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception is celebrated: the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception celebrated on Dec. 8, and the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes,” said the Very Rev. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, the provincial superior of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy Province of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. “The Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Marian Fathers’ Congregation, prepared her special son to enter into the Father’s House on her special feast.”

The Lord prepared Fr. Seraphim for eternal life throughout his whole life, Fr. Kaz said. In the minutes before his death, Fr. Seraphim received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and the Eucharistic Jesus, the food for the journey. He also received the Apostolic Pardon through the holy mysteries of our redemption for the release from all punishments in this life and in the life to come.



Father Seraphim Michalenko’s mortal remains were buried on Feb. 20, at the Marian Cemetery in Stockbridge.

## A boy from Adams

You could say Fr. Seraphim was born into his historic role.

Born Aug. 30, 1930, in Adams, Massachusetts, a mill town in northern Berkshire County, he grew up in the long shadows of the large, double-spired St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, built brick-by-brick by Polish immigrants, including his own kin.

This was the home parish of another man who would eventually become key to spreading the Divine Mercy message around the world: Fr. Walter Pelczynski, MIC, who established the Mercy of God Apostolate on Eden Hill in nearby Stockbridge, now home of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. It was the pastor at St. Stanislaus, Fr. Edmund Kempinski, who helped pull together the down payment that helped the Marian Fathers purchase the property in Stockbridge.

Father Seraphim recalls first hearing about Divine Mercy when he was a boy of 13 or 14.

“When Fr. Walter came home for vacation one time, he visited my parents,” Fr. Seraphim recalled in an interview several years ago. “He told them the story of St. Faustina. He also mentioned how in 1931, our Lord appeared to St. Faustina in a vision and told her to paint His Image as He appeared to her and include the signature, ‘Jesus, I trust in You!’”

That Image is now known as the Image of Divine Mercy.

“Jesus promised that the soul that will venerate this Image will not perish,” Fr. Seraphim said. “He said He desired that this Image be venerated, first in St. Faustina’s chapel, and then throughout the world” (see Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 47).

Father Seraphim’s parents obtained a copy of the Image, “and we hung it in our house. That’s how I found out

about Divine Mercy.”

Father Seraphim recalled that Fr. Kempinski invited the Marian priest Fr. Joseph Jarzebowski to speak to the priests at St. Stan’s about St. Faustina and her Divine Mercy revelations. It was Fr. Jarzebowski who first brought Divine Mercy materials from Poland to the United States during World War II. He was given the material by St. Faustina’s confessor, Blessed Michael Sopocko (see page 36).

“Our pastor was really moved by what he heard and accepted what Fr. Jarzebowski was saying,” Fr. Seraphim recalled. “He believed that he, too, should display the Image of the Divine Mercy publicly so it could be venerated. At some point in the mid-1940s, the Image was enshrined in St. Stanislaus — the first Image of the Divine Mercy enshrined in a parish church in the western hemisphere.”

Today, countless churches worldwide have the Divine Mercy Image enshrined within them, as Christ requested.

Father Seraphim said he, too, was greatly inspired by the Marian Fathers and the message of Divine Mercy.

“I knew in high school that God was calling me to the priesthood as a Marian,” he said. “And dedicating my life to spreading Divine Mercy, a work entrusted to the Marians, turned out to be God’s plan for me.”

## An assignment of a lifetime

Following his profession of priestly vows as a Marian of the Immaculate Conception on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 1956, Fr. Seraphim held various administrative roles in his Province and in the Congregation’s Generalate in Rome, as well as pastoral roles in Eastern Rite parishes in Australia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

Spreading the word about Divine Mercy became the all-consuming focus of Fr. Seraphim’s life work. As written in the *Diary*, Jesus not only revealed the message of the Divine Mercy to St. Faustina, but also put upon her the incredible responsibility to spread that message to the world. How could that be done, the obscure Polish nun wondered. She trusted, and God eventually called upon various people to help fulfill the call.

To help St. Faustina achieve the seemingly impossible task of sharing her revelations with the world, God chose people such as Blessed Michael; Karol Wojtyla, who became Pope John Paul II; Pope Benedict XVI; the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy; the Marian Fathers, who were entrusted as official promoters of the message; Fr. George Kosicki, CSB, who became involved in the Divine Mercy movement in the 1940s; and, of course, Fr. Seraphim.

Together with Archbishop George Pierce, SM, and Fr. George Kosicki, CSB, Fr. Seraphim served as a core member of the Bethany House of Intercession for Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, a spiritual renewal movement for Catholic clergy in the 1970s, serving priests from all over the world. In 1979, a year after Pope St. Paul VI had lifted the ban on Sr. Faustina’s writings and elements of the Divine Mercy devotions, Fr. Seraphim was assigned to lead the Divine Mercy Department at the Marian Helpers headquarters in Stockbridge.

In that position, he wrote a series of articles for *Marian Helpers Bulletin* and supervised the production of various books, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials dealing with Sr. Faustina’s writings, especially on the Divine Mercy message and devotion.



Father Seraphim professed his priestly vows as a Marian of the Immaculate Conception on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 1956.

Father Seraphim served as vice postulator for North America in the canonization cause of Sr. Faustina, an assignment he held for more than 20 years. He spent more than three years in Rome making a significant contribution to the successful conclusion of Sr. Faustina’s beatification and canonization processes.

He was likewise a first-hand witness to Maureen Digan’s miraculous healing attributed to Faustina’s intercession that opened the way for Sr. Faustina’s beatification in 1993. He was a coordinator of the efforts that served to verify not only that miracle, but the second, as well, which made it possible for Sr. Faustina to be declared a saint on Divine Mercy Sunday in the Jubilee Year 2000 as the first saint of the New Millennium, “God’s gift

to our time,” in the words of Pope St. John Paul II.

At a celebration marking Fr. Seraphim’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday 11 years ago, Bob Digan said, “Father Seraphim is a living sign of God’s presence in this moment of time.”

Bob Digan should know.

## About Those Miracles

Let’s back up to the seminal year of 1979, the year Fr. Seraphim was appointed by Rome to be vice postulator in North America of Sr. Faustina’s canonization cause, and the year a guileless, self-deprecating Marine veteran named Bob Digan first learned about the Divine Mercy message. Bob was spellbound. The prophetic revelations of St. Faustina seemed perfectly suited to meet the needs of our times — and the needs of his own suffering family.

Bob’s wife, Maureen, had an inoperable disease, lymphedema. His son, Bobby, had been born brain-damaged and had a severe seizure disorder that left him unable to communicate well or to move freely.

When Bob learned of Fr. Seraphim and how he had been put in charge of Sr. Faustina’s canonization cause, he packed up his family and drove three hours to the Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge. Once seated in Fr. Seraphim’s office, Bob announced that he had received a “collect call” from God to bring his family to Sr. Faustina’s tomb in Poland, and as a favor for making that trip, God would heal both Maureen and Bobby. Bob then looked squarely at Fr. Seraphim and, in his thick Boston accent, said, “We want you to witness the miracle.”

Together with Fr. Seraphim and Victor Daniello, a friend of the Marians, the Digans made their improbable spiritual journey to the tomb of the little-known nun in

Communist-controlled Poland. And indeed, two healings occurred. Bobby suddenly became a playful child, energetic like he had never been before, and Maureen's disease was halted. It was Maureen's healing that led to Sr. Faustina's beatification in 1993.

Victor would later recall Fr. Seraphim's crucial role in the miraculous events at Faustina's tomb.

"He made sure Maureen followed Christ's instructions on how to obtain His mercy," Victor said. "He urged her to make a good Confession and receive the Eucharist. He pressed that upon her. He was very priestly, very fatherly, leading her — and me, for that matter — to a deeper understanding of Divine Mercy. He embraced the Digan family as his own."

Victor continued, "Bob asked 'Would you come to Poland?' and Fr. Seraphim said 'yes.' That's what he's done his whole life. He's said 'yes' to God. And I believe that's why God has chosen Fr. Seraphim to fulfill such an important role, to be an ambassador of Divine Mercy."

Father Seraphim was also involved in the case in 1995 of Fr. Ron Pytel, from Baltimore, Maryland, who was miraculously healed from an inoperable heart defect through the intercession of St. Faustina. Father Seraphim helped guide the process of gathering medical records and witnesses' accounts connected with the healing. Together with Fr. Pytel, Fr. Seraphim presented the case to the Vatican.

## Spreading mercy to the ends of the earth

Father Seraphim served as theological advisor for the award-winning video docudrama "Divine Mercy — No Escape" and for the devotional video "Sister Faustina: The Promise of Mercy." He also played a significant role in the production and narration of a video released in 1992, "Sister Faustina: The Apostle of Divine Mercy." Then, from November 1991 to October 1995, he served as director of the Association of Marian Helpers under the honorary title "Father Joseph, MIC." In this capacity, he supervised the scripting and production of another video, "Time for Mercy," released in 1994 by the Marian Fathers and produced by Drew Mariani and his company, Marian Communications Ltd.

In October 1995, Fr. Seraphim was assigned to full-time

promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion, participating in Divine Mercy retreats, conferences, and symposia primarily through the Marian Fathers' John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy.

While Fr. Seraphim was serving as rector of the Divine Mercy Shrine in Stockbridge, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship elevated the Shrine to its national status.

Father Seraphim worked closely with Mother Angelica, who embraced the Divine Mercy message and devotion and spread it far and wide through her Catholic television



network, EWTN.

In 2005, he participated in the international symposium in Krakow, Poland, that gave rise to the World Apostolic Congresses on Mercy. He played a role in all four as an active participant and an inspiring speaker.

He assisted in the growth and development of the Divine Mercy apostolates Mother of Mercy Messengers, headed by Joan and Dave Maroney; Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, founded and directed by Dr. Bryan Thatcher; and Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, founded by Marie Romagnano, RN. He participated in all of the healthcare apostolate's 16 conferences.

"The Lord, in His mercy and love, was faithful to Fr. Seraphim and graciously helped him at every stage of his work in the promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion," said Fr. Kaz. "Father Seraphim always relied on the unfathomable mercy and kindness of our Lord, in whom he trusted completely. And he was never disappointed."

## Why Fr. Seraphim?

Here's the simple answer: Father Seraphim showed the character that God most admires. God wants to show His greatness through the humble.

Through his subsequent writings and talks, and his role overseeing the Marians' publication of Divine Mercy materials sent from Stockbridge throughout the world, Fr. Seraphim became one of the most renowned experts in the world on Divine Mercy and the life of St. Faustina.

He would talk about Divine Mercy. Easy.

He would talk about St. Faustina. Easy.

But he was always reluctant to say much about himself.

Once asked, "Why does he suppose he was chosen as vice postulator?" he responded, "Because there was nobody else."

Was he pleased to have played such a major role in helping Divine Mercy become the greatest grassroots movement in Church history?

"Not because of me," he said, a tad bit annoyed. "It's on account of St. Faustina!"

The man who helped make St. Faustina a household name would often summarize the heart and soul of the call to live Divine Mercy.

"When we look into the Scriptures, we see three foremost commands from God. 'Be holy because I, your God, am holy,' and our Lord says in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' And we say, 'How can we be holy as God and perfect as God, when the Scriptures themselves say no one but God is holy; no one but God is perfect?'"

Father Seraphim would point to a passage in Luke's Gospel: "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

"So if you want to be holy as God is holy and perfect as God is perfect, we have to be merciful as God is merci-



ful," he would explain. "And how is that? That great convert and writer Gilbert Keith Chesterton defined mercy as 'loving the unlovable and pardoning the unpardonable,'" something that is possible for us only by the grace of God.

Father Seraphim held that the revelations of Divine Mercy are particularly tailored to our times.

"The Lord makes clear in Scripture that when He returns, He's not going to deal with sin, because He's done that once and for all," Fr. Seraphim said. "When He comes again, it's 'to bring salvation to those who eagerly await Him' (Heb 9:28). So when people ask me why is the message of Divine Mercy important for the

world today, the answer is simple: Through the message of Divine Mercy, our Lord is preparing us for His final coming.

"He told the great prophet of Divine Mercy, St. Maria Faustina, in one of a series of revelations in the 1930s: 'Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My Mercy'" (*Diary*, 300).

Father Seraphim hastened to add, "We who wish to stand ready and eagerly await Him should not forget [St. Faustina's] promise to us: 'Poor earth, I will not forget you,' she wrote. 'Although I feel that I will be immediately drowned in God as in an ocean of happiness, that will not be an obstacle to my returning to earth to encourage souls and incite them to trust in God's mercy. Indeed, this immersion in God will give me the possibility to boundless action'" (*Diary*, 1582).

Father Seraphim said, "May our going ever deeper into St. Faustina's life and writings, and our counting on her promised help, bring about what our Lord so much desires from us and needs from us to be able to fulfill His divine will in us: boundless trust in Him who is the unfailing Divine Mercy in Person."

MH

# Farewell to a dear friend

By Deacon Bob Digan

Back in 1981, I came to Stockbridge to see Fr. Seraphim about bringing my family to Poland, to the tomb of Sr. Faustina, so that my wife, Maureen, and our son, Bobby, would be healed from incurable diseases. With permission from his superior, Fr. Seraphim agreed to accompany us.

Before we left for Poland, Fr. Seraphim invited us to begin a Divine Mercy Novena for a safe and successful trip. We were in the Shrine's side chapel. But as we were praying, we heard a young woman's voice. We stopped to check who was there, yet we couldn't see anyone. We continued, but again we heard a woman's voice. She prayed when we did and stopped when we did. I checked the whole Shrine. No one else was there!

But once again, as we prayed, we heard the voice. Father Seraphim then pulled me aside. "Leave her alone," he said. "She is praying with us." I was bewildered. He explained, "You can't see her. That's Sr. Faustina!"

Nine days later, we were in Poland, at Faustina's tomb, ending our Novena. That was the evening when both Maureen and Bobby received healings. Maureen's healing was accepted by the Vatican as a miracle through the intercession of Sr. Faustina, a decision that led to Faustina's beatification.



## Off to Rome

After we left Poland in 1981, we went directly to Rome. Father Seraphim had a meeting at the printer. He was overseeing the first printed copies of Faustina's *Diary*. He was so diligent with all the last-minute details regarding the *Diary*. Our return flight to the States was scheduled for an early afternoon. With still so much left to do on the *Diary*, he was not ready to return. But then he learned the flight had been rescheduled until later that night. I said to Fr. Seraphim, "God has heard your prayer and given you this eleventh hour to get the *Diary* out." He said, "We will see. God willing."

Shortly thereafter, he came to me all excited. "Let's go," he said. "The printer just called!" I mentioned to Fr. Seraphim that I had an inspiration that the work of

Divine Mercy and Our Lady were interrelated. "Can you prove it?" he asked. I said, "Not at the moment, but I have a gut feeling."

When we arrived at the printers, Fr. Seraphim received 10 copies of the *Diary*. He was very pleased. He then turned to me, whacked me in the arm, and said, "Look over the door." The sign read, "Convent of the Immaculate Heart of Mary." This was a former convent! I said, "See, I told you! Mary and Divine Mercy go together!" Then, we dashed to the Vatican to visit then-Archbishop Andrew Maria Deskur, personal friend of Pope St. John Paul II. Father Seraphim would present him with three



Here are two monumental moments from the life of our beloved Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC. The first shows Fr. Seraphim in Rome in 1981 with Pope John Paul II, Maureen Digan, and little Bobby Digan. The photo was taken one week following the miraculous healing of Maureen that led to St. Faustina's beatification. The second photo was taken on the evening of the miracle, at St. Faustina's tomb outside Krakow, Poland.

printed copies of the *Diary*, one of which was bound in white for the Holy Father to read during his convalescence after the assassination attempt on his life.

Father Seraphim was in such a rush to get to the Vatican for his meeting. When we arrived, the archbishop asked, "Why are you all out of breath? Relax. Let us have a cup of tea!"

## A most caring heart

In May 1991, the night before our son died, Fr. Seraphim was with him at our home. At about 3:30 a.m., Fr. Seraphim celebrated Mass for Bobby. Bobby was almost in a coma, but at Communion time, Father explained with great sensitivity and kindness that he was going to dip his finger into the Precious Blood. Bobby, with his quivering tongue, received our Lord. It was beautiful. Father Seraphim stayed at Bobby's side all night and through the next day and late into the next evening when Bobby died at the age of 18.

MH

# Memories of Fr. Seraphim

Hundreds of people from around the world have sent us their memories of Fr. Seraphim. Here are just a few:

## Sister Victoria Michalenko, CMGT

One of Fr. Seraphim's sisters

Close to the end of his earthly life, when Fr. Seraphim could no longer speak, this is what happened. Marie Romagnano, RN, was able to set up FaceTime for us with Fr. Seraphim, at which time we prayed and sang "O Blood and Water ..." in Polish and a Polish Marian hymn of offering oneself to the Mother of God. Then, Sr. Mary Ann asked him to bless us, not with words, but in his heart, and we felt it.

Then she said, "Seraphim, Jesus loves you so much, and you love Him so much. Go to Him when He calls you." And I interjected, "Don't forget to say hello to Mom and Dad and to our brothers and sisters who are already there!" and he answered, "OK!" That was his last word to us. I will always remember and cherish that last word!

Jesus, the Divine Mercy, was his life and mission. Jesus was there at his birth to enable him to take his first breath, and the breath of the Holy Spirit sustained him throughout his entire life until Jesus and His Mother of Mercy received him upon his last breath. I am honored to be his sister.

## Grzegorz Górny

Polish reporter, essayist, and film and television producer

Thanks to Fr. Seraphim, every day at 3 o'clock p.m., the [Chaplet of Divine Mercy](#) is broadcast on EWTN from the Divine Mercy Shrine in Stockbridge.

There are priests about whom the faithful say, "This is a faithful priest." About Fr. Seraphim, I can say, "He was a holy man."



## Robert Stackpole, STD

Director of the [John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy](#)

When I first started work for the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy in 1997-1998, Fr. Seraphim took on the task of bringing me fully up to speed with the theology and spirituality of [Divine Mercy](#). He offered to do so through tutoring sessions, which he said we could do after he had finished his work each day at the Shrine. What I didn't realize at first was that Father usually finished each day's duties at about 11 p.m.!

So, day after day in Stockbridge, we would start our sessions at 11 p.m. and usually finish them about 2 or 3 a.m.

I would stumble back to my room, thoroughly exhausted, and sleep in until about 9 or 10 a.m. Many of those mornings, however, Fr. Seraphim (my senior by more than 25 years) would be up, spry and cheerful, to say the 7:15 a.m. Mass and start a new day's work. He was the "Energizer Bunny," and I had the unforgettable experience of sitting at his feet, so to speak, and learning from a true master.



## Dave and Joan Maroney

*Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM)*

When we received word that Fr. Seraphim had died, we were overcome with so much grief that we had to ask ourselves, "What was it about this man and our relationship with him that caused us to have such an outpouring of emotion? Why were our hearts so deeply pierced?" Then we realized we were overwhelmed by how Divine Providence had connected us with Fr. Seraphim and how this connection had led us down a path we were not necessarily looking for, but on which we have travelled together for over 20 years as MOMM, teaching the Divine Mercy message and devotion, how to live it, and how to spread it.

Father Seraphim was the first Marian Father we met. After a few days with him, he gave us his "approval and blessing" to work in this manner. He was our mentor and friend. He would meet with us to work on our DVDs. He was a night owl. He would call at 9 p.m. and say, "I'm on my way!" and then spend hours giving us his insights and making sure we properly communicated everything.

We loved being his students. Whenever we would call him with a question, we would need to be prepared to spend at least an hour receiving an answer. We would take copious notes. We finally got smart and started recording our conversations to make sure we didn't miss anything. What a treasure we now have.

Father Seraphim would always end our conversations with a blessing. When we would say, "Hope to see

you soon,” he would say, “God willing.” God willing, Fr. Seraphim will continue to be our close friend, leading and guiding us.



### **Bryan Thatcher, MD**

*Director of Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM)*

When the Marians were discerning about working closely with the laity to spread Divine Mercy, Fr. Seraphim searched for guidance and found it in the spiritual *Journal* of the Marians’ Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis (1871-1927), who wrote on Oct. 27, 1910:

We must strive to gather and organize about us people of good will. We must train and prepare them for work. Then, together with them and through them, we must bring Christ into all things and all places, renew and revivify all things in Christ, gain all for Christ, attract all for Christ. Lord Jesus, enkindle our hearts with the fire of this zeal!

In the early years, I knew Fr. Seraphim felt a strong desire to teach the laity — the future Divine Mercy apostles. Yet he had to deal with the likes of me, someone with no theological training. He was very patient. I remember several years ago, after I gave a talk titled, “Living the Message of Divine Mercy,” he came up to me filled with joy and said, “You summarized things so concisely!” I sensed in him a peace in knowing that the Marians, through the laity, would bring Christ to places in society where priests could not reach.

I was able to travel with Fr. Seraphim all over the world. Since his death, I have an even stronger desire to spread God’s love until I take my last breath. I know Father will be guiding me as the battle goes on.

### **Father Alexei Michalenko**

*One of Fr. Seraphim’s brothers*

Though we were raised in the Roman Catholic tradition of our mother, Seraphim was ordained according to the Byzantine Catholic tradition of our father, about which, until then, I was not even aware. Through Seraphim, I was introduced to a whole new tradition of the Church universal. I had no idea that I had been breathing my Catholic faith with only one lung and would soon begin to breathe with both.

Several years later, as a student of theology at The Catholic University of America, he was one of my professors and one of three examiners when I qualified for the licentiate degree in sacred theology. He then prepared me for ordination according to the Byzantine



(Eastern Catholic) tradition.

My ordination by Bishop Andrej Katkoff took place in the Byzantine tradition in our home parish of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Adams, Massachusetts (see photo). Seraphim remained for me a model of priestly ministry. In 1995, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint (That They Might Be One)*, pointing out that “the Church must breathe with her two lungs,” the Eastern as well as the Western tradition of Christianity. It was Seraphim who was instrumental in my (and many others) doing just that through our priestly ministries.

In the stories of many brothers, “sibling rivalry” plays a prominent role — beginning with Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. I feel most fortunate and blessed that Seraphim and I were co-ministers and collaborators, rather than rival competitors in purveying our ministry of Divine Mercy.



### **Father Chris Alar, MIC**

*Director of the Association of Marian Helpers*

As our patriarch and mentor, Fr. Seraphim’s tireless work in bringing to the world the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, the preservation and promotion of the Image of Divine Mercy,

the advancement of the Feast of Divine Mercy, and the beatification and canonization of St. Faustina has helped to fulfill God’s will to have the world know about His unfathomable mercy. The entire human race has benefited from his work, and we Marian Fathers will be forever grateful.

Christ said the student is never greater than the teacher (see Lk 6:40), and that has never been truer than for those of us — millions of us — who follow in Fr. Seraphim footsteps as disciples and apostles of Divine Mercy. I am blessed to have learned from him and will miss him dearly. In our hearts, we believe that Fr. Seraphim Michalenko is “S.M.” (see *Diary*, 1689).



Father Seraphim, left, with Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, Marie Romagnano, RN, and the Very Rev. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, at the first World Apostolic Congress on Mercy in Rome in 2008.

## Marie Romagnano, RN

*Director of Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy*

Father Seraphim always had a twinkle in his eye. With tremendous ease, he could unpack the most complex problems surrounding the spiritual care of patients. The most important thing he told us was that all healthcare professionals become the merciful presence of Jesus at the bedside.

I first met Fr. Seraphim in 1984. He personally taught my son, Joseph, and me the Divine Mercy message and devotion. Joseph and I prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the first time with Fr. Seraphim while traveling in a car in Poland.

In 2001, the world changed with the attacks of 9/11. Because I was a catastrophic injury nurse case manager, I started teaching other healthcare workers how to spiritually care for those injured and dying, both near and far away. I founded Nurses for Divine Mercy. It later became Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy. With the help of Fr. Seraphim and Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, we published the book *Nursing With the Hands of Jesus: A Guide to Nurses For Divine Mercy* (Marian Press). Father Seraphim, Fr. Kaz, and I began the annual Divine Mercy conferences for healthcare professionals.

I was his nurse in the capacity of a volunteer. It was a blessing that he died on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, whom he loved so dearly. I was at his bedside via iPad video, and I prayed the Chaplet for him during his final hours. What a profound grace to have known and

worked with Fr. Seraphim, a wonderful and beloved friend, spiritual advisor, confidant, and pillar of truth.

## Eugene Michalenko

*Father Seraphim's nephew*

I've always admired Fr. Seraphim, my Uncle Stanley, for his faith, his spirituality, his intelligence, and his mellifluous voice. He was truly blessed to have completed his ninth decade with eyesight, intellect, and mobility still intact.

I was a schoolboy when he returned from Australia. Since my *babci* — my grandmother — lived on the first floor and we lived on the second, I was part of his visits, and they were memorable. I especially recall that, during his stays, he sang the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom daily in the living room of my *babci's* apartment. When he was joined by his sisters and brother — Sr. Sophia, Sr.

Victoria, Mary Adamczyk, and Fr. Alexei — it was “awe”-some, in the true meaning of the word. They assigned me to chant the Epistle.

Father Seraphim introduced us to the Eastern traditions of Catholic worship, and for someone like me who was raised in the Roman Rite, it was one facet of his spiritual life that had a profound effect on me.



## Father Dan Cambra, MIC

*Spiritual director of the Holy Souls Sodality*

In 2010, on the occasion of Fr. Seraphim's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, many Marians, employees, and volunteers at the Shrine were aware that his health wasn't good.

Both his cancer and the treatments were taking a toll on him, and many of us feared this might be his last birthday.

So as the Provincial at the time, I decided we needed to celebrate his birthday in a big way. He got wind that the Most Rev. Martin D. Holley was going to be the main celebrant at a Mass on Eden Hill and that Fr. George Kosicki and Fr. Seraphim's sisters would be among the guests. The more he heard about the coming celebration, the more he fretted. He worried it would be an excessive fuss and expense. He kept complaining to me that I shouldn't be making such a big deal and how embarrassing this was for him.

I responded by reminding him that this wasn't for him; it was for us. I told him he needed to accept this penance and allow the rest of us the opportunity to relive happy memories!



## **Father Michael Gaitley, MIC**

*Director of the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy*

One day, as Fr. Seraphim was dying and I was praying for him, a thought kept coming to me. Specifically, I wondered whether Fr. Seraphim remembered me and the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy. A short time later, on the evening of Feb. 11, while praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Fr. Seraphim with the Marian Missionaries, I got a phone call from the hospital chaplain who had been ministering to Fr. Seraphim over the previous few days. I took the call and left the room as the Missionaries kept praying.

The chaplain told me he had a message for me from Fr. Seraphim: “He prays for you and the Missionaries regularly.” Then, for the next 45 minutes or so, the priest told me about his extraordinary final conversation with Fr. Seraphim, which revealed the dying priest’s deep love for and trust in Divine Mercy.

The next morning, I got a text from the hospital chaplain, informing me that Fr. Seraphim had died precisely during our conversation about him. The chaplain wrote, “I consider that means we were talking about him and I think in a real way were praying for him as he passed.” After receiving that text, I thought to myself, “And I guess Fr. Seraphim also didn’t forget about the Missionaries and me — I suppose he was also praying for us.”

Over the next several days, a lot of little connections came together in my mind. For instance, I thought about how Fr. Seraphim was so excited that the Missionaries closed on their first residence, the Merrell Inn, on May 20, the anniversary of his priestly ordination. I also thought about how he had told me that it made “perfect sense” that the Missionaries would purchase that property because, as he once put it, “Every time I drove past that place since the 1940s, I’ve felt it calling out to me.”

I also thought about how the day of Fr. Seraphim’s death, Feb. 11, is the anniversary of the founding of the Marian Missionaries. Finally, I recalled how Fr. Seraphim is the one

who taught me something that gets to the very heart of Marian Missionary Spirituality, namely, to aim to console the Heart of Jesus with our trust, which means to praise and thank God for all.

I praise and thank You, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, for the gift that Fr. Seraphim has been to myself, to the Marian Missionaries, and to the Church.

## **Steve Hemming**

*Marian Helper*

I lived in Stockbridge between 1978 and 1980. One day in the spring of 1979, I took a walk around the Marian Fathers’ property. Father Seraphim saw me, introduced himself, and we struck up a conversation. I began to visit with Fr. Seraphim regularly. He would share Jesus Christ with me. While I had learned about Jesus when I was young, I didn’t have a relationship with Him. I thank God for Fr. Seraphim, for his friendship and loving kindness, but I am perhaps most grateful that God used him to lead me to His Son, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **John Belies**

*Marian Helper*

Father Seraphim was visiting during a mission in Fountain Valley, California, many years ago. I came late because I was working that day, and I stood in the back. All of the available seats were taken. He gave a great teaching. I felt an especially holy presence in the church. I smelled beautiful roses, which we were taught is often a sign of the Blessed Mother’s presence. I looked around for roses, but there were none.

I believe Mother Mary was with Fr. Seraphim during his talk, and I am grateful that I was able to be present as well.

## **Kimberly Bruce**

*Marian Helper*

I first met Fr. Seraphim in 1994. My husband, Paul, was working as controller at the Marian Helpers Center. During the years of Paul’s employment at the Center, he and I suffered two miscarriages. The moment Fr. Seraphim heard the news of our miscarriages, he told Paul he wanted to have a Mass said for our two babies with both of us present. He was unwavering in wanting to do this for us.

On a quiet Saturday, Fr. Seraphim celebrated Mass for Timothy and Krystyna in the Center’s oratory. Father had previously asked us to name our babies. He spelled “Krystyna” differently than my intended spelling of the name. However, the moment I saw his beautiful Polish spelling, I said to myself, “That’s the way it’s spelled.” MH

# Our urgent request



**W**e are faced with an unprecedented challenge here at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Jesus' Shrine has become an icon of hope during the pandemic, but as we welcome pilgrims back, we realize that, due to the many new health restrictions, we are not properly equipped to welcome the tens of thousands who visit this sacred space each year. How can we safely open this spiritual oasis where pilgrims come to draw closer to Divine Mercy Himself by means of prayer and the Sacraments?

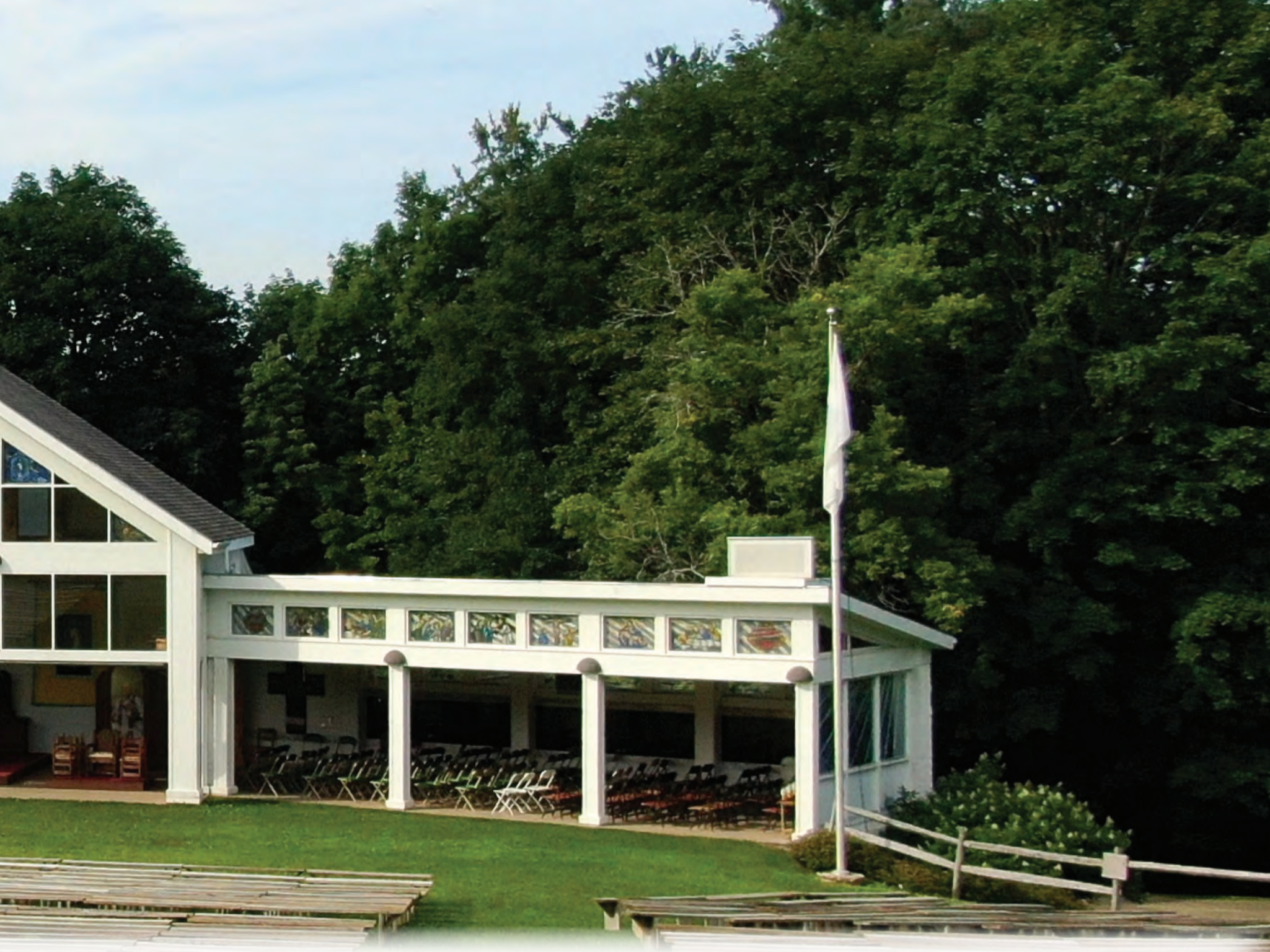
The answer to this historic challenge is right outside our windows, on the southern slope of Eden Hill.

If you've ever visited us here or if you have viewed our annual Divine Mercy Sunday broadcast on EWTN, then you're probably familiar with our Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine (MOMOS). We built this outdoor shrine 13 years ago to provide a protected, respectful setting for the celebration of the Eucharist on Divine Mercy Sunday and various ethnic days and feast days throughout the year that draw crowds too large for the National Shrine itself.

But now with COVID-19 continuing to direct the way our society gathers, we need this outdoor Shrine to play an even greater role in our ministry here on Eden Hill.

With that in mind, we urgently request your assistance to make necessary repairs and upgrades to our outdoor shrine that will allow for a safe, comfortable, and spiritually nourishing pilgrimage experience. With your help, we will raise \$375,000. Those funds will go toward the following:

- purchasing more durable and comfortable outdoor seating that will allow for safe social distancing;



- creating a plaza in front so that pilgrims will no longer have to trudge through mud and puddles;
- installing doors to enclose the space when weather and the seasons turn harsh;
- repairing and replacing extensive damage to the epoxy floor caused by harsh Massachusetts weather. These cracks are causing significant water damage and mold in our Shrine of the Holy Innocents; and
- building a new drainage system to protect our Shrine from water damage and pooling in front of the altar.

We know that many of our pilgrims come here to Eden Hill in spiritual crisis. We know that many come to pray for loved ones or simply to give thanks for the presence of God in their lives. Many graces are received here, including physical and spiritual healings. Our pilgrimage ministry is critically important — and it needs to continue.

That said, in a time when fears of the pandemic remain with us, what pilgrims will expect — and what they'll deserve — is an opportunity to spend their time on Eden Hill focused on the single most important thing: their relationship with God. We owe it to our pilgrims — and to God Himself, who has entrusted us with this mission of spreading Divine Mercy — to provide a safe and sacred experience. The projects we have identified will go a long way toward achieving those ends.

**To donate, please visit [marian.org/b50](https://marian.org/b50)**

May the Merciful Lord bless you and reward you,  
Fr. Joseph, MIC



PHOTOS  
COURTESY OF  
KEVIN O'HARA

"My sister Mary thinks this photo may actually have been taken on Eden Hill on the Assumption, 1957, two years after 'A Mother's Faith' takes place," says author Kevin O'Hara. Pictured are (back row, from the left) Jimmy, Mary, and their father, James; and (bottom row, from left) Dermot, Kevin, and Eileen Marie.

# A mother's faith

By Kevin O'Hara

**M**y mother would often remind us of the significance of the Solemnity of the Assumption on Aug. 15, the day she arrived in England, torn from Ireland and thrown to the mercy of the world. So it was no surprise when she led us into the car on that date in 1955, two weeks after she'd given birth to Eileen Marie, her first child born in America.



From the left, James O'Hara (with Jimmy on his lap), Mickey, Mary, Ellen, and Kevin. This photo was taken in Ipswich, England, in 1949.

We were driving to an outdoor noonday Mass held by the Marian Fathers at Eden Hill in nearby Stockbridge to give thanks to the Blessed Mother on this day of remembrance, when the Blessed Mother was bodily taken up to Heaven.

The day was a scorcher, but we still piled into the suffocating heat of our black Chrysler and rolled down its windows to grab a breath of air as if our lives were at stake. Dermot sat up in front, wedged between Mom and Dad, and Mary cradled little Eileen in the backseat, pleased pink to finally have a sister after three unruly brothers. Mickey sat dignified at one window as Jimmy and I jammed our heads through our own, grinning out like ear-flapping dogs.

We knew where we were headed, having attended nightly candlelight processions at Eden Hill the week before in preparation for this most holy day. These vigils were surprisingly entertaining, with hundreds of pilgrims flickering around like fireflies in the summer night, bearing candles and reciting the Rosary, bringing real festivity to the feast.

Despite our rambunctious youth, we boys were given our own candles cupped in waxed-paper lanterns, the four sides glowing colorfully with images of Marian shrines from around the world. Mickey would occasionally tilt his lantern into the breeze, making its tiny flame rage like a miniature inferno. Dermot and I gasped when Jimmy bravely dripped candle wax over his thumb, and marveled when he peeled it off on the ride home.

Unlike those cool nights with modest crowds, Eden Hill was jammed on the Assumption with thousands of pilgrims sweltering in the grassy amphitheatre under the sun. Dad led us through the sticky throngs, looking for seats near the half-shell altar, but had to settle for a long bench in the middle of the crowd, offering neither shade

nor comfort. I sat alongside Mom, pleased as punch to peek into her arms at our newest family member.

Mass was celebrated by three elderly Marianists who seemed oblivious to the oppressive heat that beat down upon the faithful. Mom breastfed Eileen early in the Mass and burped her over her shoulder, the baby's soft belch making me chuckle. Then Mom tucked the infant in the fold of her lap, shielding her from the sun by leaning forward. I stared at my new sister, finding her little twitches comical, as she grabbed my pinkie with her tiny hand. Many of the surrounding pilgrims also had their attention captured by Eileen. "An infant is hypnotizing," I'd often hear Dad say.

The blazing sun continued to flog the perspiring crowd, and Mom used her program to fan little Eileen. I noticed tiny droplets of perspiration forming on the baby's thistle-down brow, shielded by a cottony cap.

During the homily, a woman behind us leaned between my mom and me and scolded in an abrasive whisper, "That infant shouldn't be out on such a hot day. Look at the size of her."

I thought the woman's sharp tongue might cleave my mother in two. But Mom turned to the woman and addressed her calmly, her voice without quaver. "Do you think Our Lady would allow harm to come to my daughter on this, her feast day?"

Perhaps the woman was taken aback by Mom's Irish accent or struck by the simplicity of her faith in the Blessed Mother. Whatever the reason, the gruff woman shrunk back in her seat.

The only family member to hear this exchange, I leaned in to look closely at Eileen, sleeping peacefully in Mom's lap. Then I sat erect and upright, to help shade



Pictured with the family's black Chrysler are (from left) Dermot, Kevin, Jimmy, Mary, and Eileen Marie back in the summer of 1956.

Eileen, yes, but also to stiffen my backbone in support of Mom and her unflinching devotion.

Unlike Dad, who liked to ponder the perplexities of the divine mysteries, Mom's faith was pure and uncomplicated — a belief beyond questions — easy for any young lad to grasp.

"Follow the teachings of Jesus to the best of your ability," she'd often tell us. "Love God and your neighbors as much as yourself." No rule but the Golden Rule. How hard could that be?

Mom had a kind word for everyone and, if she hadn't, would say nothing at all. And unlike Dad, who enjoyed church festivities filled with pomp, Mom preferred the quiet retreat of the grotto in nearby New Lebanon. Her faith, I soon discovered, was contemplative yet practical, woven into her every day. She marked each soda bread loaf she baked with a sign of the cross, blessed herself when passing a church or cemetery, bowed her head in prayer when hearing the Angelus, and sprinkled us with holy water every time we set out from the house.

"Make a fuss of the little ones," she'd always say, "and offer a cheery hello to the old ones. Remember, the good you do in this lifetime will stand by you in the next."

Mom's down-to-earth faith put sainthood in anyone's grasp. You needn't be a great thinker like St. Augustine or Thomas Aquinas — or even Dad — to become a saint. No, it depended on one's actions every blessed day. For instance, one Sunday after Mass, Mom stopped on the church steps to tie an elderly woman's shoelace, lest she trip and fall. Mom was creating a bottleneck, and some parishioners grumbled as they had to crowd around the pair. I stood nearby, mortified, but Mom later set me straight. "Never be ashamed when you're doing the right thing."

On that sweltering August feast day, when Benediction concluded the Mass, Jimmy, Dermot, and I staggered across the expansive lawn to seek shelter beneath the leafy trees. Meanwhile, Mickey and Mary visited the gift shop to buy a Blessed Virgin medal for Eileen.

We met up again and slumped the quarter mile back to our car. Mom was wiped out, the heat taking its toll, and she gave the baby to Mary to hold. Dad took Mom's hand and recalled her determined march to Mass that holy day she first set foot in England, at the cathedral in Northampton on whose doorstep they would eventually meet. Mom smiled wanly, wiped her brow at the thought, and continued walking. I trailed behind, knowing I would follow my mother's footsteps for all time.

On the ride home, we took turns holding Eileen, or Me-Me as she came to be known, passing her from lap to lap like a football cradled in protective arms.

When it came my turn, I looked down at her, spellbound. I tickled her beneath the chin and whispered, "You're a lucky girl, you are. Lucky to be in a family like our own, with love all around." I vowed to protect her — all children, really — and lift the banner of Mom's faith to the heavens. I passionately wanted to grow up and become the person both Mom and God wanted me to be.

I gently handed Eileen back to Mary, transported into sanctity by my little sister, a plump, bonny baby dressed in white gown and blue-laced bonnet, in honor of my own blessed mother's favorite feast day. MH

*Kevin O'Hara of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is the author of the books *A Lucky Irish Lad* and *Last of the Donkey Pilgrims: A Man's Journey Through Ireland*, published by Forge Books.*

# Introducing a new Catholic Bible

Ever wonder how the Divine Mercy message and devotion and the Bible are connected?

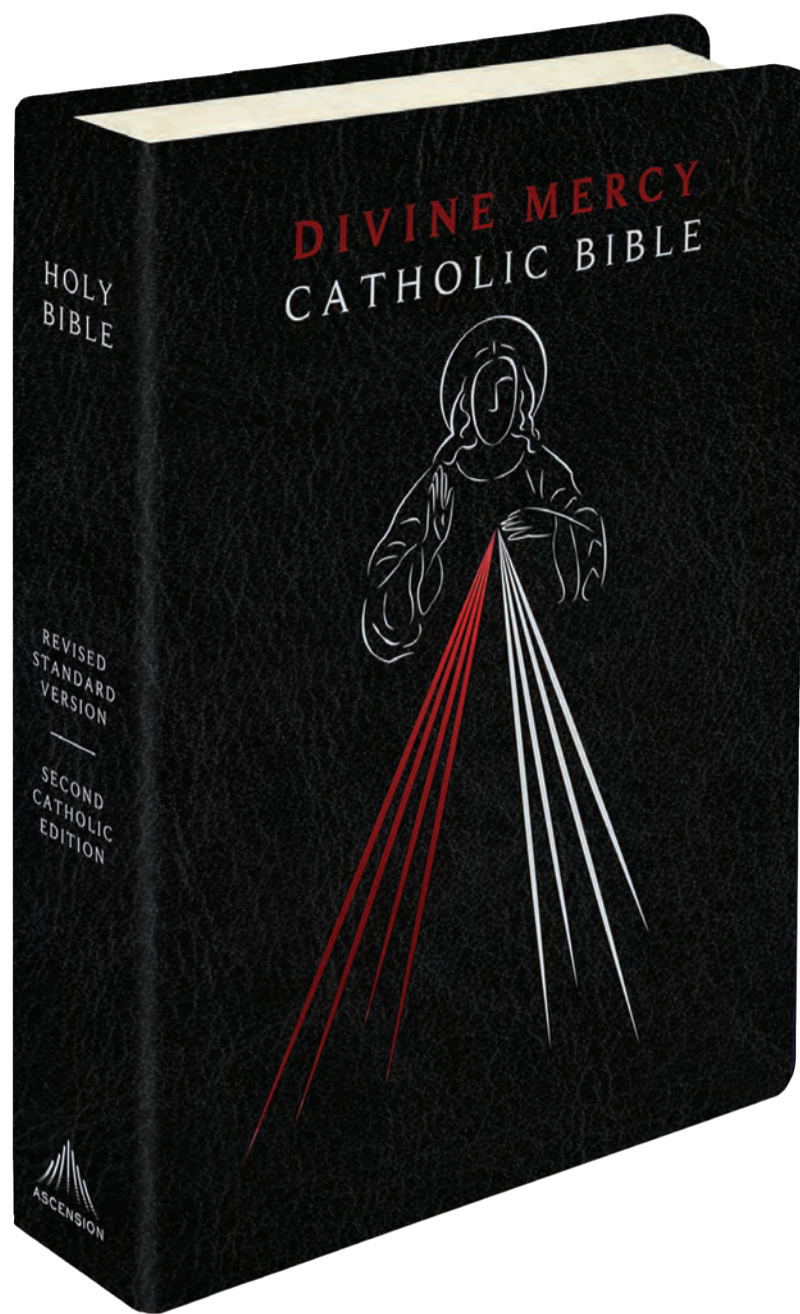
Boy, have we got a resource for you! The Marian Fathers, in collaboration with Ascension Press, have produced the Divine Mercy Catholic Bible, released this Divine Mercy Sunday.

Using the Revised Standard Version-Second Catholic Edition, this Bible includes a wealth of additional material on Divine Mercy theology, devotion, and how it all connects back with salvation history. One hundred seventy-five “Mercy Moments,” crafted by Dr. Robert Stackpole, director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, explore key acts by God and humanity in the Old and New Testaments that either caused us to need mercy, exemplify and reveal God’s mercy, or set in place God’s merciful plan of redemption, salvation, and sanctification.

Nineteen articles take deeper dives into Divine Mercy in the life of the Church, examine the life of St. Faustina Kowalska, explore the Divine Mercy message and devotion, and address topics like redemptive suffering and the works of mercy.

“The Sacred Scriptures have been an irreplaceable part of every significant spiritual movement in Church history,” explains Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, in his introduction to the Bible. “We will not be renewed — or be able to renew the world — unless we are steeped in the Word of God.”

As you read the Bible in light of the material on Divine Mercy, you will discover and rediscover the truth of Pope Benedict XVI’s insight that, “indeed, mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message; it is the very name of God, the Face with which he revealed himself in the Old Covenant and fully in Jesus Christ, the incarnation



To order the *Divine Mercy Catholic Bible* (Product code: B50-BIDM), visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426.

of creative and redemptive Love. ... From Divine Mercy, which brings peace to hearts, genuine peace flows into the world, peace between different peoples, cultures and religions” (*Regina Caeli*, Divine Mercy Sunday, 2008).

The whole work is framed by a foreword from the late Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, one of the greatest experts on the Divine Mercy message and devotion, as well as one of its greatest advocates. “The Scriptures paired with the Divine Mercy message and devotion will be uniquely powerful for encouraging souls, immersing them in the ocean of mercy, and moving them to trust in God’s mercy,” says Fr. Seraphim in one of his last published writings. “This useful resource will serve all the faithful who wish to receive the great graces God offers us and then join St. Faustina in her heavenly mission. The Divine

Mercy Bible will help prepare a generation of apostles of Divine Mercy who will faithfully proclaim God’s mercy, practice the works of mercy, and plead for his mercy on us and on the whole world.”

The world needs us to be as well-formed in our faith and transformed by the Holy Spirit as possible. So take and read the Scriptures, studying them through the lens of Divine Mercy. Open your hearts, your minds, and your lives to renewal and transformation. The Lord God waits to speak to you through His great love letter, through the words and deeds recorded in the Bible, through the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. By grace, by the Word of God, by the Divine Mercy Incarnate, we may all be made new, and become salt and light for a world so badly in need of God’s merciful love.

MH  
— Chris Sparks



# DISCOVERING THE *DIARY*: **MARC'S MESSAGE**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We mourn the death of a kind, compassionate, funny, and deeply talented member of our editorial staff, Marc Massery (1990-2021), who took his own life on the morning of April 10. Marc suffered from chronic Lyme disease. His death has been devastating to his family and the entire Marian family. We loved him, and we dearly miss him. He is survived by his parents, James and Natalie Massery, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts; his brother, Luke, and Luke's wife, Melissa, of Strongsville, Ohio; and his sister, Marisa, of Pittsfield; along with extended family, co-workers, and friends. We wish to share a reflection on Marc written by Annemarie Thimons, wife of our co-worker Tom and a great friend to Marc.*

**T**his year, our Easter celebrations came to a screeching halt when our beloved friend Marc Massery died suddenly on the day before Divine Mercy Sunday.

Marc lived the message of Divine Mercy and is well known for his weekly web series, "Discovering the Diary," in which he took the time to teach others how to live the



message of mercy in practical, accessible ways.

My husband, Tom, was close with Marc. He “adopted” Marc as a younger brother since Tom’s younger brother lived out of state. The news of Marc’s death crushed him. As we grappled with the trauma, we found ourselves filled with questions and denial. We begged God for consolation.

On the third day following Marc’s death, we awoke groggily in grief and tears. Again, we prayed to be sent “a profound consolation or a profound miracle.” Tom kept wanting to have one more time to talk to Marc, so I doubled down on my efforts, begging Marc to somehow communicate to us that he was OK.

That morning, as Tom walked out the door to work, I went into the kitchen and opened my curtains. Immediately, my eyes caught sight of a robin trapped inside our garden shed. The robin was on the windowsill of our one window in the shed, and it was furiously flapping its wings and pecking

the glass to get out of the dark shed. The robin fluttered and flew up the window and down the window, growing increasingly anxious and frazzled.

Calling to mind the “sacrament of the present moment,” I asked the Lord what He was trying to tell me through this moment. In my heart, I heard: “This is Marc ... I’m showing you what he went through.”

I watched the bird more closely, and I asked Marc in prayer, “What are you trying to tell me? I’m confused.” The bird was frantic. It could see the beautiful, lush lawn, the flowers, the trees. It saw it all, and it must’ve understood that was where it *should* be and *wanted* to be. But this thin piece of glass prevented it from enjoying the yard. The robin saw it all but was stuck. It was trapped. It could not reach what it knew it was made for and what it desired.

My mind began racing as I recalled the last conversation Marc and I shared the night before he died.

“I’m stuck,” Marc had said, flatly, several times in a row. “I just need a miracle. There’s no hope for me.”

I instantly knew that Marc was trying to show me what life is like with depression or mental illness, and also what life is like for those of us with loved ones battling seemingly insurmountable adversities.

As I watched the bird, Tom called on the phone, and I shared what was happening. Stunned, he proceeded to tell me he had walked into the kitchen the previous day and had seen a robin flying around the yard. In his mind, Tom had recalled the Scripture verse of how the Lord cares for “even the sparrow” (Ps 84:3). But instead of taking comfort in the verse, Tom had interiorly grumbled, “That’s great that You take care of birds. Birds don’t have issues. They don’t have problems.” The scene I had shared with him was not simply ironic; Tom took it as a tap on the shoulder from God.

The window that the bird was stuck behind could not be opened from the outside. I could not go and simply release the bird. The latch was on the inside, and of course the bird could not open the window on its own. On its own, the only way out would be for the bird to turn around, face the darkness of the shed, and find its way back to the hole through which it had entered. And it was too scared to try to reencounter the valley of darkness, so it stayed at the window. I wanted to help the bird so much that I considered breaking the window, but I feared hurting the bird in the process. The only way to help the bird was if someone much bigger, more capable could throw open the shed doors wide and release it.

People struggling with depression are similarly stuck inside their thoughts and anxieties. They see no way out, even when it’s easy for us on the outside to see the way out. God is the only One who can throw open the doors to relieve them of their pain. In the bird’s case, even when we threw open the doors, it did not fly out. It remained at the window. It was determined. It wanted its release to be through the window because, from what it could tell, that’s where its healing was.

I realized that as family members and friends, we want to do everything right for those we love who are suffering. We want to say the right thing, give one more hug, check all the boxes, cover all the bases. But ultimately, the latch to open that window and reach healing is on their side. And even when the Father “throws open the

shed doors,” it’s up to them to turn around, face the darkness, and fly through them.

In our case with the bird, we eventually coaxed it toward freedom.

In Marc’s case, things turned out much differently. I recall that morning how I had asked Marc aloud, “What do you want people to know?” As I prayed for guidance, my email popped up on my computer. It was the Divine Mercy Daily email. God’s timing is never ironic.

The subject line read “Pray the Chaplet Unceasingly.” “OK, Marc. I get it.”

My heart beat fast as I read the passage from St. Faustina:

Once, as I was going down the hall to the kitchen, I heard these words in my soul: Say unceasingly the chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. Priests

will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy. I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy.

*(Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 687)*

We sometimes feel incapable and unsure with how we can best minister

to loved ones who are suffering. One more movie night together, one more phone call, one last hug may not make the difference. But praying the Chaplet for loved ones will. If you have a relative or friend who is suffering — and if the Chaplet releases great mercy at the hour of death, as Jesus promises — then absolutely this is the remedy for those watching outside “the shed.” People living in the darkness of despair may constantly be “at the hour of death,” and so of course they need constant Chaplets prayed on their behalf!

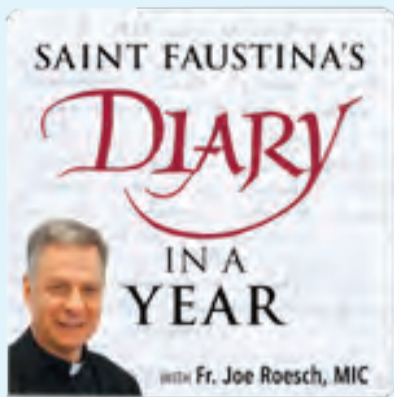
Marc wants us today to know something very crucial for our generation: We have the power in our hands. Pray the Chaplet unceasingly. You can’t always throw open the doors of the shed, but you can guide loved ones to healing in the most powerful way possible, even if they have already given up trying.

*Lord Jesus, make me more aware of the power of the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a prayer for Your infinite mercy for sinners, for the dying, and for the whole world. May You inspire me to pray it unceasingly.*

MH

**Marc wants us today to know something very crucial for our generation: We have the power in our hands. Pray the Chaplet unceasingly.**

# NEW! Check out our podcasts



## Saint Faustina's *Diary* in a Year

For anyone who may think the *Diary* is too thick and formidable, Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, has the solution. Join him for a few minutes each day as he reads from the *Diary* and offers commentary. Over the span of one year, you will have "read" the *Diary*, beginning to end. Together, through the mystical writings of St. Faustina, let's come to better know the tender love of Jesus for all humanity.

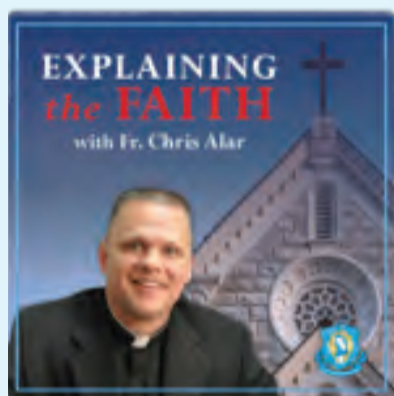
## Homilies from the National Shrine

These difficult times demand that we turn back to the beautiful mystery of who God is and what it means to be His cherished children. Listen in to the daily homilies from the Marian Fathers. May they help you to live by God's will that you may play an active and effective role in a world whose wellbeing requires authentic Christian witness!



## Explaining the Faith

Each week, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, examines an essential element of faith and morals that Catholics are called to proclaim, live, and celebrate. With wisdom, wit, and infectious enthusiasm, Fr. Chris digs deep into the richness, beauty, and truth of the faith. May this podcast encourage your love of our Lord and love of your neighbor.



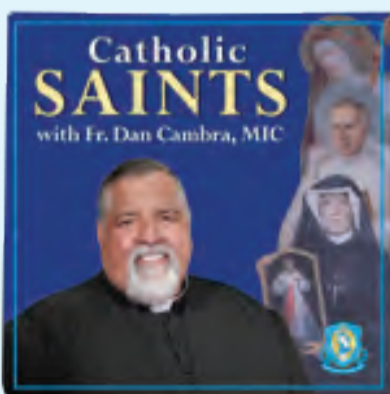
## Ask a Marian

You have questions about the Catholic faith, and the Marian Fathers have answers. In this weekly podcast, a Marian priest answers one of the many questions we receive from people around the world. We pray this series helps you to grow in your faith and increase your love of our Lord and Our Lady.



## Catholic Saints with Fr. Dan

Father Dan Cambra, MIC, shares about the life and spirituality of holy men and women in history who led lives in union with God and who were rewarded with eternal life.



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# IN FEARSOME TIMES

## WHAT'S THE PATH OF EVANGELIZATION?

**W**e live in a hyperpolarized, conspiracy theory-ridden, weird age. Left, right, and center are increasingly not even on speaking terms, convinced the other sides have given support to monstrous evil.

People are spreading rumors and fears online in ways that are having real world consequences, including inciting destruction. It is increasingly difficult to see through the fog of information, disinformation, misinformation, and flat-out lies flowing along the digital superhighway, streaming into our homes, onto our phones, and into our lives at an ever increasing rate.

It's easy to lose your bearings in this sort of storm. That's why St. Don Bosco (1815-1888) shared his vision of the ship of the Church, the Barque of St. Peter, enduring attack from a fleet of enemy ships and caught in a violent storm. Despite all the assaults of the enemies of the Church, the ship continued to float, continued to fight on, sailing until she could be safely secured to two pillars standing up out of the storm-tossed ocean. On one pillar stood Mary, Help of Christians, and on the other, the Eucharist. When the Barque of Peter was safely

secured to the two pillars, the enemy ships were cast into a panic, attacked each other, and were destroyed. The storm ended. Don Bosco explained:

The enemies of the Church are symbolized by the ships which strive their utmost to sink the flagship. Only two things can save us in such a grave hour: devotion to Mary and frequent Communion. Let us do our very best to use these two means and have others use them everywhere.

Jesus and Mary are our two pillars, standing up out of the storm-tossed chaos of the world, guiding us to safe harbor. Where we find Jesus and Mary, we also find the Mystical Body of Christ, the communion of St. Joseph and all the rest of the saints. We find every good and perfect gift given to us by God. We find the Way, the Truth, and the Life (see Jn 14:6).

Jesus and Mary are our hope in the storm, not any earthly insider, secret whistleblower, or hope of salvation through secret knowledge. Everything we need for salvation remains Public Revelation, not secret insider information that only the dedicated or discerning can make out. Jesus is Lord. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). The Gospel hasn’t changed, hasn’t been overtaken by events. Christ’s promises remain in force: The Church is indefectible.

Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt 16:17-19)

Catholic Christians should know better than to ever put all our trust in any one politician, political party, or earthly solution. We have the wisdom of the Scriptures, the Tradition, and the Magisterium that all warn us against that mistake. Every earthly evil is passing; the good God is eternal. The schemes and structures of sin constructed by the devil and his minions are ultimately rooted in chaos and are reduced to the nothingness from which they came in the first place; the Church is destined to outlast the present cosmos and find its home in the new heavens and the new earth.

We are summoned to live “Jesus, I trust in You.” That means trusting in Goodness Himself, Truth Himself, Love Himself, Divine Mercy Himself, Beauty Himself, and not solely in our own strength, our own wisdom, or our own righteousness. That means trusting in light, not darkness, and remembering that “One may not do evil so that good may result from it” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1756, 1761, 1789).

That means that we trust Jesus’ mission to save us all, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). We are not the righteous, separated from

those people over there, the unrighteous. For every person alive today who has not achieved perfect sanctity, the wisdom of Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is true:

The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart —

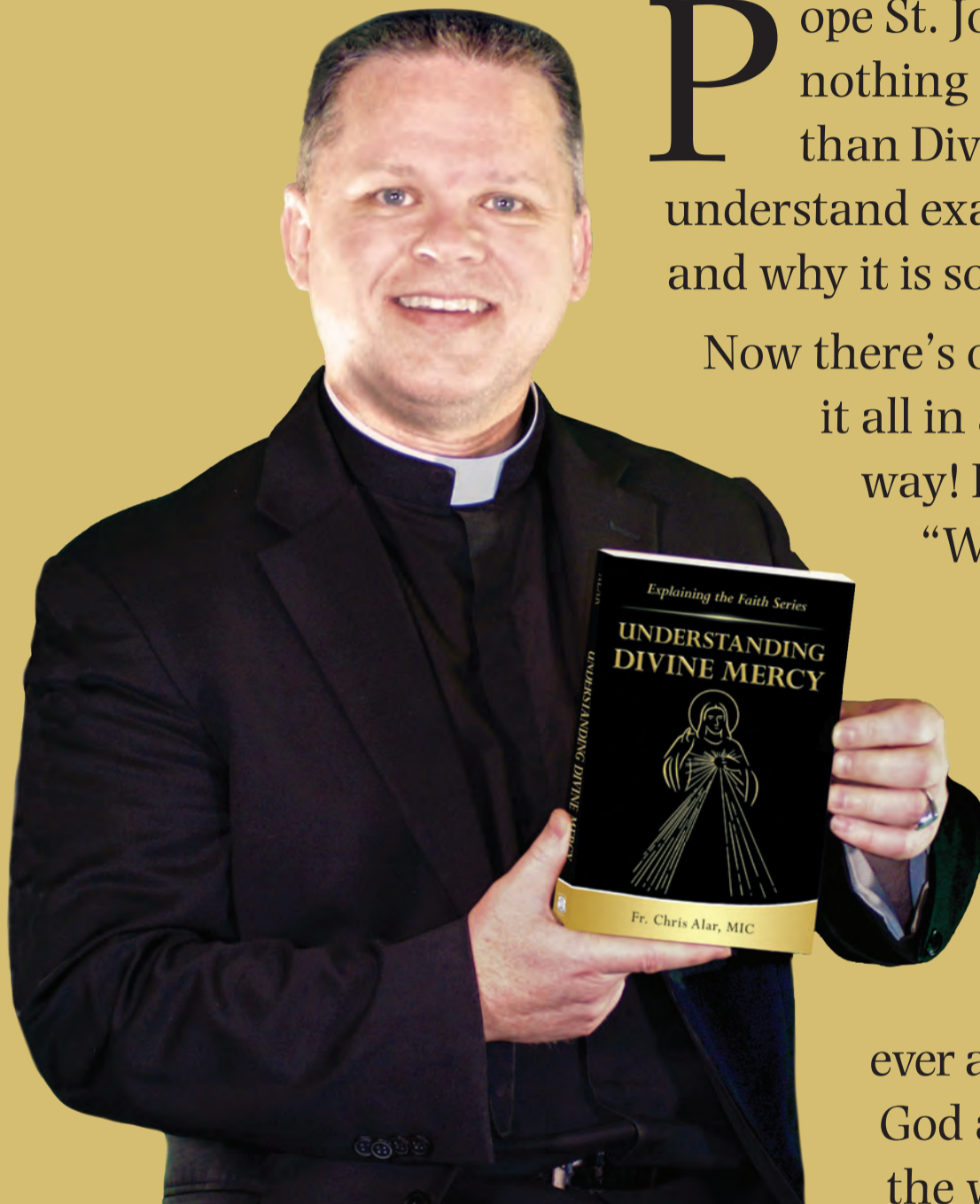


and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an unrooted small corner of evil.

If we live “Jesus, I trust in You,” we shall be salt and light in the world, attracting everyone to the city on a hill that is the Kingdom of God. Let us recommit to the Gospel, not to conspiracy theories; to the Catholic faith, not to partisanship; to works of mercy, not power politics; to the new evangelization of the Gospel of Life, leading to a culture of life that forms a civilization of love. MH

— Chris Sparks

# THE MESSAGE FOR OUR TIMES



**P**ope St. John Paul II said there is nothing the world needs more than Divine Mercy, yet few people understand exactly what Divine Mercy is and why it is so critical for our times.

Now there's one book that summarizes it all in an easy-to-understand way! Have you ever wondered

“What exactly is Divine Mercy and who is St. Faustina?”

Would you like to know how to receive the extraordinary promise Jesus offers only one day a year, on Divine Mercy Sunday? Have you

ever asked, “How could a merciful God allow so much suffering in the world?”

If you answered yes to any of these questions, *Understanding Divine Mercy* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, is for you. In this first volume of his Explaining the Faith series, Fr. Chris shares, in his engaging style, the elements

## Get your copy for just a donation



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of the Divine Mercy message and devotion and explains why Jesus told St. Faustina that Divine Mercy is “mankind’s last hope of salvation.”



# GREEN SIGNALS

## ‘GO’ ... TO ST. JOSEPH!

**A**fter retiring from the Air Force and relocating for a government position at the Pentagon, Franz Chenet was shocked when he was told his job was being eliminated.

Struggling to find work, he accepted the only job offer that became available, in Texas near relatives. With an urgent need to sell their home, he and his wife, Jomary, turned to St. Joseph.

Selling their Virginia home was no easy task. “We were doing novenas. We had so many showings,” recalls Jomary. “We kept dropping the price.” Having no success selling the house, when it came time to move to Texas, they decided to temporarily rent it.

After nine months of that, Jomary decided to go to St. Joseph. “This is the funny thing: I had ordered the St. Joseph consecration book as one of the Father’s Day presents for Franz through Amazon, and it never came,” says Jomary, referring to Marian Fr. Donald Calloway’s *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*. After waiting some time and listening to recommendations from friends, Jomary decided to order the book from [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org), and the book arrived the exact same day their tenants moved out. Excited to start the consecration, Jomary sent a picture of the book to their real estate agent, who was also Catholic, with the message, “Wow, just in time!”

They began the consecration in September. “Franz read it out loud every night,” Jomary says. The day they finally made their consecration to St. Joseph, their real estate agent notified them that someone had made an offer on their home. Relieved, Franz and Jomary turned their attention to finding the right house to buy. They made many offers, but each time they were significantly outbid. One particular house caught their attention.

“It had a green roof, and I said, ‘Why would somebody put a green metal roof on their house?’” recalls Jomary. “And in the pictures, it just looked like it needed a lot of work.” With so many possible houses to view, they decided to do a novena to St. Joseph. On the last day of the novena,

they would go look at houses.

The house with the green roof had been on the market for months. They almost didn’t even go to look at it. Turns out, they were pleasantly surprised. It was much nicer than the photos depicted. It had just the right amount of space, a nice backyard, a workshop, and a brick courtyard. They bought it.

Married for 27 years with five kids, two at home, and three grandkids, Jomary and Franz now have a place to host their growing family. “This house is literally everything we wanted and didn’t think we could get,” says Franz. They closed in December, a week after Pope Francis declared 2021 the Year of St. Joseph.

Just recently, a friend was visiting, and Jomary remarked how they almost didn’t view the house because of the green roof. Her friend replied, “Well, that’s St. Joseph.” Jomary didn’t understand what her friend was getting at. Later, while praying the Rosary, Jomary glanced at the St. Joseph statue and the St. Joseph, Terror of Demons painting, commissioned by Fr. Donald, in their prayer room. Each showed St. Joseph wearing a green sash or robe, and it suddenly dawned on her that her friend was right: Green is St. Joseph’s color. “Now, I love the green roof!” Jomary said.

To show their thankfulness, the Chenets decided to donate a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of their home to the Marian Fathers. They also provided Fr. Donald’s book to parishioners interested in making the consecration to St. Joseph this May 1, on the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. “We definitely see St. Joseph’s hand in all of this, and we are very grateful,” says Jomary.

The Chenet family provides a great example of a creative way to give. If you would like to learn more about creative ways to support the Marian Fathers, please visit [marian.org/planned-giving](http://marian.org/planned-giving)

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Kevin Walto is a donor relations officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact him at (413) 298-1381; [helpers@marian.org](mailto:helpers@marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263.



'M ay all our thoughts, desires, and longings be directed toward that one goal: to bring Christ everywhere, to restore all things in His Spirit, to glorify the name of the Catholic Church in every place.'

— Blessed George Matulaitis,  
Renovator of the Marian  
Fathers (1871-1927)



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## GRACES RECEIVED

### Grandson had tumor in spine

Every night I say the prayer for a special grace through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski for my grandson.

In August 2019, my 10-year-old grandson was falling and having leg weakness. An MRI showed a benign tumor on his spine. He had surgery, and the tumor was removed. He spent five weeks in the hospital and has since returned to being a healthy child,

That is the good news. The bad news is that he was diagnosed with NF2, a condition in which his tumor suppression gene does not work. He gets MRIs every six to nine months to check for tumors growing in his nervous system. I pray that he will not get any more tumors and for all sick children and their families. Thank God my grandson has had two clear MRIs, and I believe that this is by the grace of God through Fr. Casimir Wyszynski's intercession.

— PH, email

### Son gets two job offers

After many unsuccessful attempts by my 22-year-old son, a college senior, to secure a job, I was at my wits' end.

Although he was drained of self-confidence, my husband and I convinced him not to give up hope for an interview from the final round of job applications. It was about that time that I received the winter edition of *Marian Helper* and read about favors received through the intercession of Venerable Casimir Wyszynski. I began to pray to Venerable Casimir that my son would have

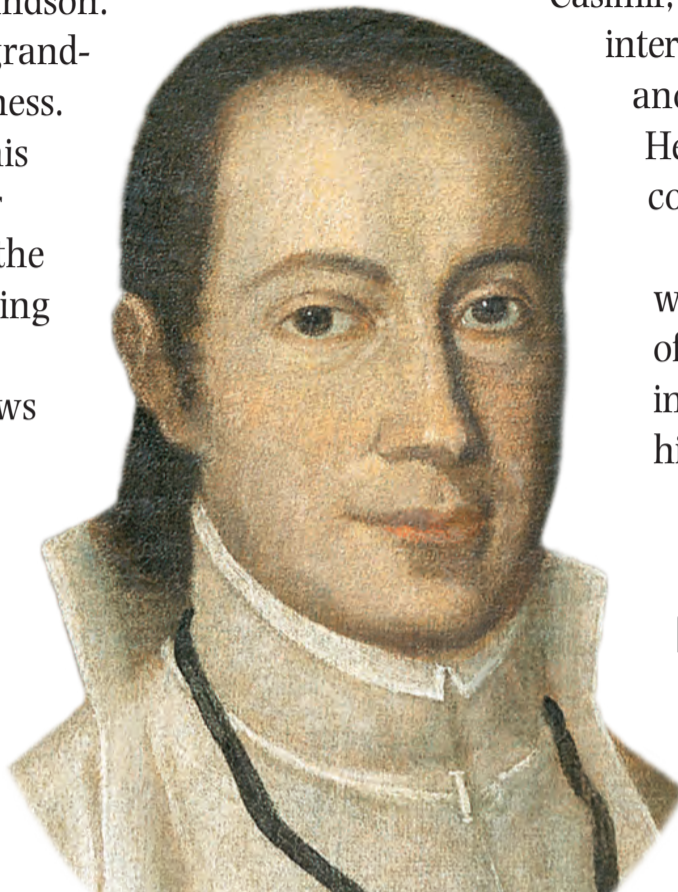
some sort of success in his life. I prayed that something would go his way in hope of increasing his self-confidence.

Within a week and a half of praying to Venerable Casimir, my son received a phone call for an interview. Two days later, he received another call from a different company. He was soon offered a position in both companies.

We are so grateful that Fr. Casimir was not only helpful in obtaining an offer from one company, but also helped increase my son's confidence by helping him be sought by two companies.

— A.G.

Springfield, Illinois



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

### Daughter finds job

My daughter Ann was without a job for two years. She is a single mother and has a mortgage. It was getting very difficult for me to help her with her debts. I prayed two novenas to the Venerable Casimir Wyszynski, and she finally got a job. It is a good one, and she is doing well. I am making novenas in thanksgiving to Fr. Casimir for his intercession. I continue praying for

him to become "Blessed Casimir."

— JUM, email

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For a Venerable Casimir prayer card (B50-BCWP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: [graces@marian.org](mailto:graces@marian.org)

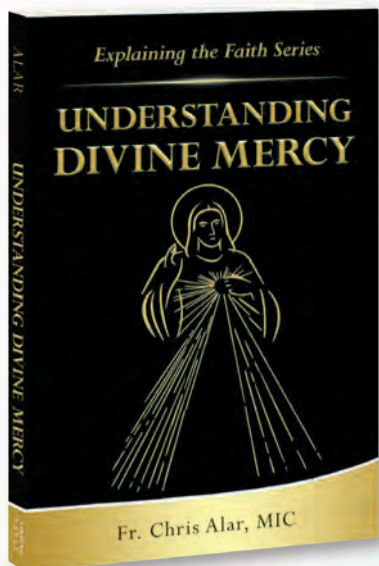
### Prayer for a special grace through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski

O God, Merciful Father, in the heart of Your Servant Casimir, You aroused a great zeal for accomplishing corporal and spiritual deeds of mercy; deign to grant to me (to us) through his intercession the grace ... for which I (we) implore You. Amen.

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory Be to the Father ...*

# Popular Marian Press Titles

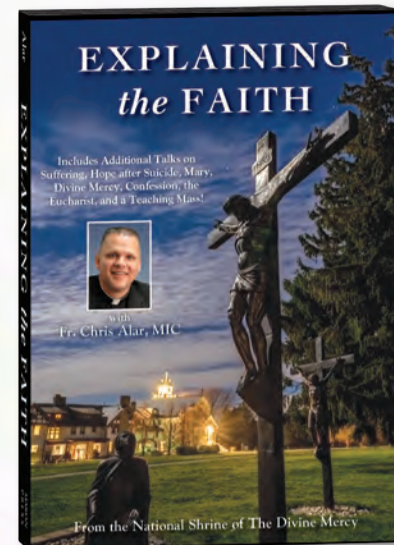
From Fr. Chris Alar, MIC



*Explaining the Faith Series*

## Understanding Divine Mercy

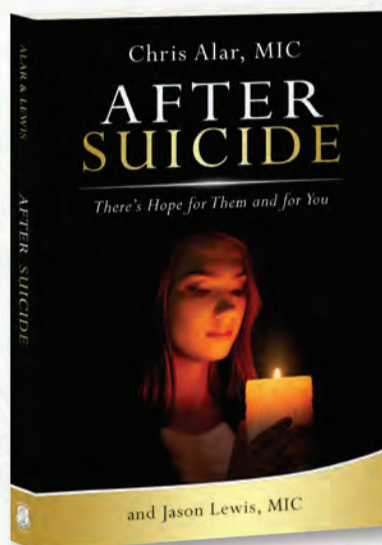
The entire Divine Mercy message and devotion is summarized in one, easy-to-read book! Explaining the teaching of Jesus Christ as given to St. Faustina, *Understanding Divine Mercy* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, has it all. Written in his highly conversational and energetic style, this first book in his *Explaining the Faith* series will deepen your love for God and help you understand why Jesus called Divine Mercy "mankind's last hope of salvation." Paperback, 167 pages [B50-EFBK](#) \$14.95



## Explaining the Faith DVD

Jesus' promise of Divine Mercy Sunday. Catholic devotion to Mary. Church teaching about suffering and suicide. Are you able to defend our faith when questioned about these topics and others? In this DVD series, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, offers his favorite 13 talks to address all of these topics and explains the Mass in a way you have never heard before. Three DVDs. Runtime: 10 hours.

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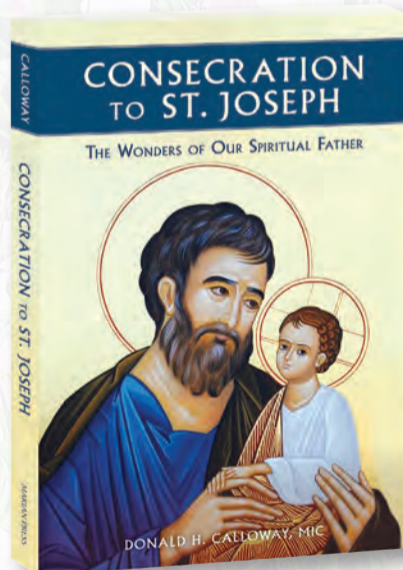
## After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You

Addressing the hard issue of suicide simply and pastorally, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, and Jason Lewis, MIC, draw from the teaching of the Church, the message of Divine Mercy, and their own experience of losing a loved one to offer readers two key forms of hope: hope for the salvation of those who've died by their own hand, and hope for the healing of those left behind. This book is a must-read for all those trying to make sense out of such a difficult subject. Remarkably, the spiritual principles of healing and redemption apply not only to a loss from suicide, but by any means of death. Paperback, 195 pages.

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From Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

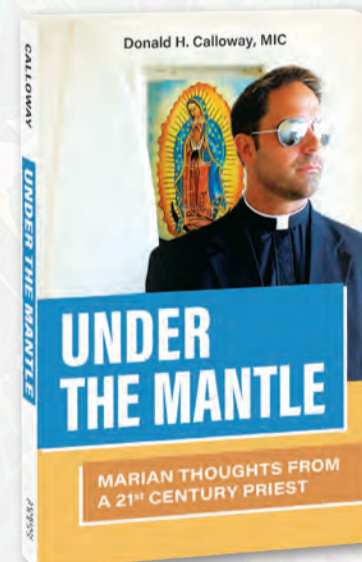


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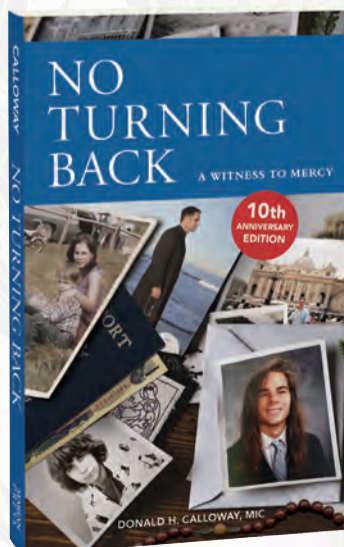
## Under the Mantle: Marian Thoughts from a 21st Century Priest

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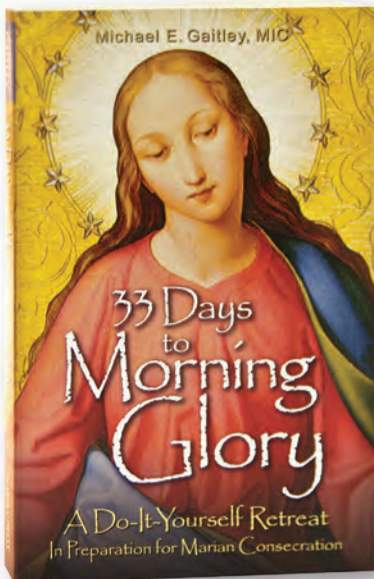
In this 10th anniversary edition, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, looks back on the past decade in a new introduction to this Christian classic, a perennially powerful witness to the transforming grace of God and the Blessed Mother's love for her children. His witness proves a key truth of our faith: Between Jesus, the Divine Mercy, and Mary, the Mother of Mercy, there's no reason to give up hope on anyone, no matter how far they are from God. Paperback, 288 pages. Includes photo section. [B50-ANTBK](#) \$14.95



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*From Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC*

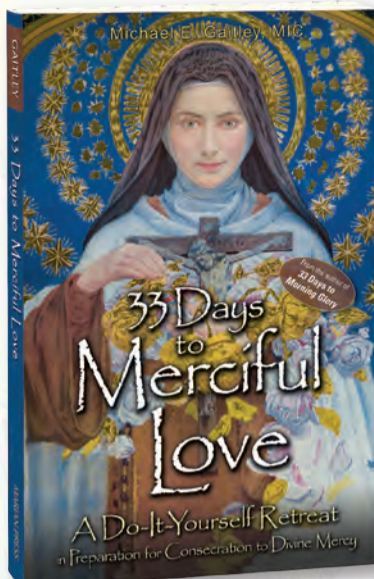


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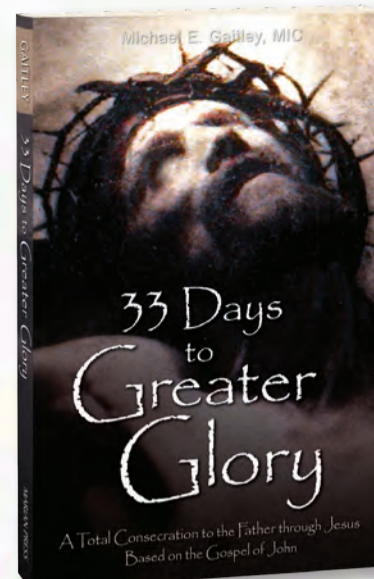
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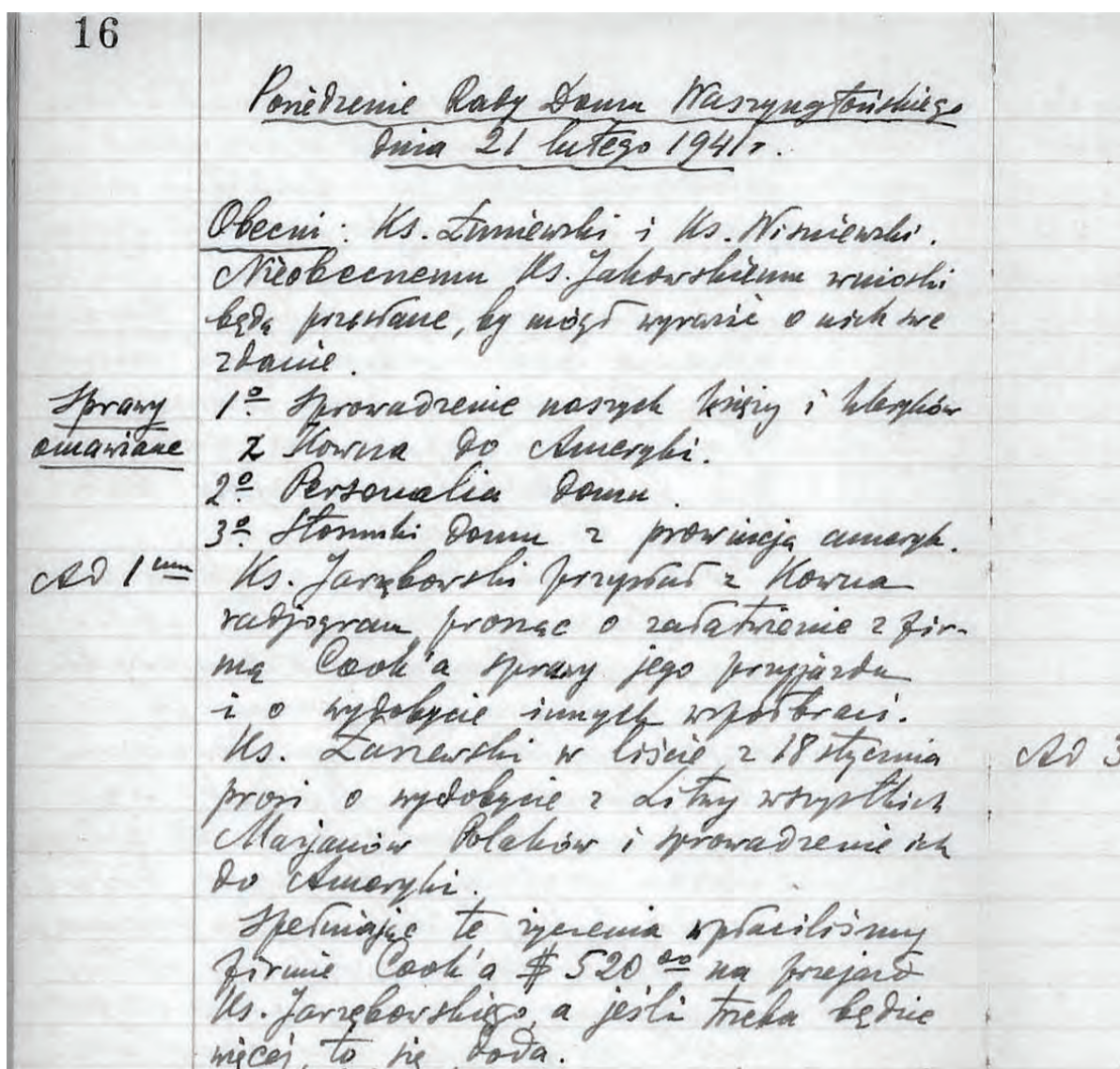
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Look what our Provincial, the Very Rev. Kaz Chwalek, MIC, found!

Here are rather momentous minutes from the Marian Fathers' Washington House Council meeting held on Feb. 21, 1941. Among the matters discussed was bringing our priests and seminarians from Kaunas (a city in Lithuania) to the United States. At the time, Kaunas was transitioning from the repressive occupation of the Soviets to the repressive occupation of Nazi Germany.

In the minutes, you'll note the name "Jarzebowski." In 1941, hardly three years after the death of Sr. Faustina, it was Fr. Jarzebowski who brought the Divine Mercy devotion to the U.S. He had been given the materials by Sr. Faustina's spiritual director, Blessed Michael Sopocko. Here's a translation of the minutes:

Father Jarzebowski sent a radiograph from Kaunas, asking for travel arrangements with Cook [Travel] Company to arrange his arrival and to bring other confreres [to America]. In his letter of January 18, Fr. Luniewski asks for all Polish Marians to be removed from Lithuania and to be brought to America. Fulfilling these wishes, we made a payment of \$520 to Cook Company for Fr. Jarzebowski's travel expenses, and if more is needed, it will be added.

After a harrowing journey across Asia, Fr. Jarzebowski landed on American shores in May 1941 with Divine Mercy materials in hand, and the rest is history.

MH

# Live the call!



## Brother Jason Lewis, MIC:

My conversion took place through Mary, the Queen of Peace. And Jesus has been incredibly abundant in His mercy towards me. When I discovered the Marians, I realized that these two charisms are intrinsic to the Congregation's identity and mission. It fit me like a tailor-made glove. Proclaiming Divine Mercy and Mary Immaculate fills my heart with joy beyond words. I cannot imagine doing anything else with my life.

## Marian Helpers Colleen and Bill Wildner:

Our life on earth is just a blink. What is our goal? Where we spend eternity! We are children of God. He made us to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and eventually be supremely happy with Him forever in Heaven. The Marians help us focus on that, because faith in God is the foundation of our existence. We support the Marians' mission to spread devotion to Our Lady, to promote Divine Mercy, and to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory because it brings us that much closer to Heaven on earth.

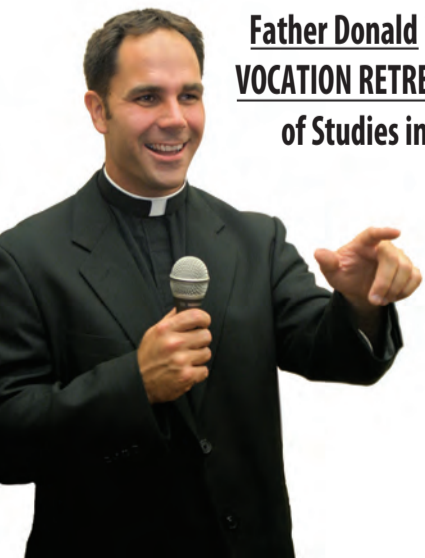
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## Learn more

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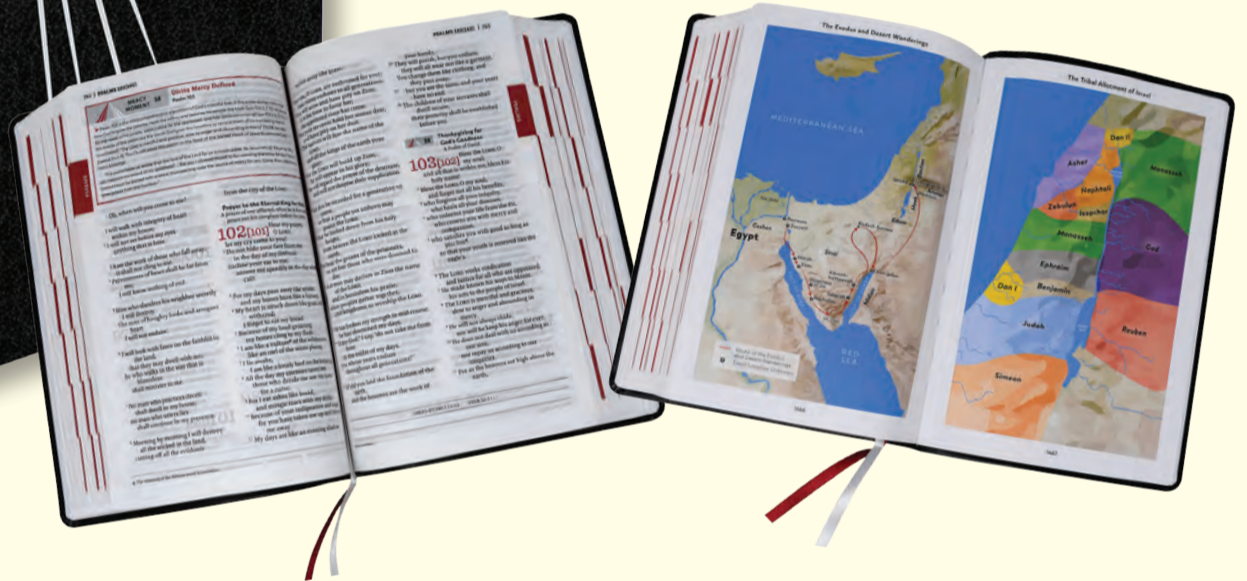
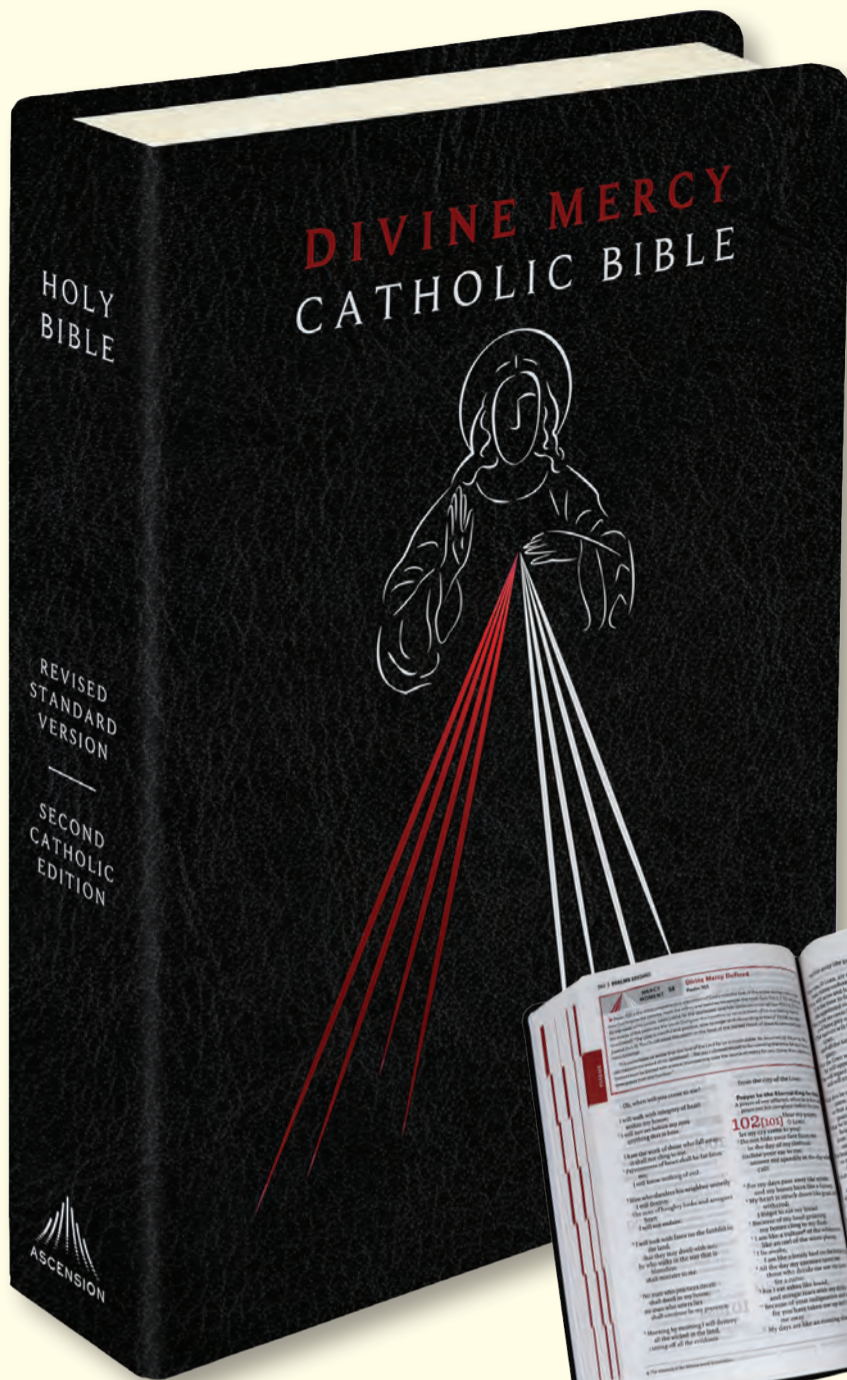
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