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MARIAN HELPER

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On the cover: The Most Rev. Timothy McDonnell, Bishop of Springfield, Mass., blesses the Third Station of the Cross on Eden Hill in Stockbridge. The Marians invited Bishop McDonnell to dedicate and bless all 14 life-size Stations of the Cross on Sept. 14. Photo by Felix Carroll.

MISSION STATEMENT

MARIAN HELPER is intended to serve members of the Association of Marian Helpers (AMH), a spiritual benefit society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The magazine seeks to provide spiritual nourishment, education about the Catholic faith, and information about the mission and good works of the Marians. It also provides information about Association services and presents opportunities to support the mission and good works of the Congregation.

MARIAN HELPER is published quarterly by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. It is sent free of charge to active members of the Association.

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- 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.



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The Association is a spiritual benefit society that prayerfully and financially supports Marian priests and brothers.

More than 2 million members share in the spiritual benefits of the Holy Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marians.

Through *Marian Helper* magazine and other printed materials, members receive information about the Marian family and are encouraged to strive for personal holiness.

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Father Joseph Writes

Fr. Joseph, MIC

Living the Year of Faith

Pope Benedict XVI dedicated his first encyclical letter to the theological virtue of charity (*Deus Caritas Est*). His second was on hope (*Spe Salvi*). The third, I assumed, would be on faith. It wasn't. Instead of an encyclical on faith, he has given us something even better: a *whole year* of faith.

The entire Church is now celebrating the Year of Faith. According to Pope Benedict, it's meant to be a time for "reflection and rediscovery of the faith." He also says it's meant to be a time for conversion and a deepening commitment to the new evangelization.

To help us live this "Year of Faith," I'd like to offer some suggestions for how you can enter more fully into this time of grace. My suggestions fall under three categories: (1) a time of reflection and rediscovery, (2) a time for conversion, and (3) a time for the new evangelization.

To make the Year of Faith a time of reflection and rediscovery of the faith, I recommend reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which, according to Pope Benedict, illustrates "the power and beauty of the faith." If you're intimidated by its size, you might want to start by reading my new book, *The 'One Thing' Is Three: How the Most Holy Trinity Explains Everything*. I wrote it using a popular style and summarized many of the main teachings of the *Catechism*, with the Year of Faith in mind.

(See Father Joseph's Bookshelf on page 6 for more details.) Also, you may be interested in starting our Hearts Afire Program at your parish. The program is dedicated to helping Catholics reflect on and rediscover the faith. (Call 1-877-200-4277 or visit AllHeartsAfire.org.)

If you don't read the entire *Catechism* during the Year of Faith, then you'll at least

want to read the section that's dedicated to the Ten Commandments (see 2052-2557). This section provides a thorough and insightful commentary on the Commandments and can be an amazingly effective tool for making an examination of conscience. Because the Year of Faith is meant to be a time for deepening conversion, this makes for perfect spiritual reading. Of course, it's also a good idea to follow up the reading by making a good confession.

The term "new evangelization," which was popularized by Pope John Paul II, has to do not only with spreading the Gospel but doing so by using new means and methods. Now, at the Marian Helpers Center here in Stockbridge, Mass., we're contributing to the new evangelization by utilizing new media to spread the message of Divine Mercy and devotion to Mary.

For years, we've been spreading the word on the Internet through our websites such as thedivinemercy.org and marian.org. More recently, we've ventured into the world of social media by creating Facebook pages such as "Divine Mercy Official." Also, we've created the immensely popular free mobile phone apps "Divine Mercy" and "Mary," which have been downloaded more than 100,000 times. Finally, we're beginning to release our most popular Marian Press titles as e-books, and now *Marian Helper* magazine is available in a digital format. (See our story on page 8.)

But what does all this have to do with you and the new evangelization? Everything! Not only can you download our faith-building apps, read our digital magazine, and visit our Facebook pages, but you can also spread the faith by telling others about these resources. For example, if your friends or family members have smartphones, you can tell them about the free Divine Mercy App. That's an easy way to evangelize during this special year.

I hope these suggestions will help you live the Year of Faith to the fullest, and I pray that it will be a special time of grace for you and your friends and family.

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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. Michael Gaitley, MIC.

Father Joseph's Mailbox



Pilot group members of the “Consoling the Heart of Jesus” small-group retreat meet for part two of the first stage of the Hearts Afire Program. This part of the program was released on Nov. 1.

We asked some of our Marian Helpers to share their thoughts after going through the first part of the Hearts Afire Parish-based Program for the New EvangelizationSM drawing from my book, *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*, and its accompanying materials.

‘Most important book in the last decade’

Consoling the Heart of Jesus is the most important book I have read in the last decade. It has reinvigorated and focused my spiritual life, deepened my appreciation for Jesus and Mary, and called me to daily works of mercy.

— Thomas Smith

‘A bit closer to the Holy Trinity’

Brothers and Sisters, after completing the “Consoling the Heart of Jesus” experience, I can truly say that I have advanced a bit closer to the Holy Trinity through the passionate Heart of Jesus. As I am truly a “little soul” and as I have recently begun my belated journey to God, I am so glad that this opportunity was offered me. Thanks to everyone.

— Bill Richardson

‘I’m drawn daily to console Him’

After 10 weeks of reading and reflecting on *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*, I’m drawn daily to console Him, receive His mercy, and out of thanksgiving, to pass it on to others. As an ambassador for Christ, it is my new job description. Father Michael, because of your tutoring, I’ve been given this wonderful duty. I thank God for the gifts that He’s given you and your staff.

— Gerrie Soine

‘Expanded my awareness of God’s mercy’

Consoling the Heart of Jesus has expanded my awareness of the actions and availability of God’s mercy in my life and the lives of

others. What a blessing to be able to immediately turn to that mercy and find peace and forgiveness when I have fallen, as I frequently do.

— Mary Brickweg

The retreat ‘has made Jesus so real’

Living the retreat “Consoling the Heart of Jesus” has changed my life in the most awesome way! Before this, I felt that God was “Our Father who art in heaven ...” a loving Father who was just “up there” and somehow just out of reach. The Consoling retreat has made Jesus so real — a living, loving God who loves me and wants me to spend time with Him, consoling Him, walking with Him through His Passion. It has brought me face to face with “Our Father,” and the journey has been amazing.

— Arely Deras

Reminded of grace available at 3 o’clock

I believe that the book and study materials really prepared me for some difficult news I got later in the summer — a spiritual battle within my own extended family. I feel so blessed to have been reminded of the importance of the grace available at the 3 o’clock hour, to meditate on the Passion, and to continue to hold Mary’s hand on the path to Jesus and to peace. Thank you, Fr. Michael Gaitley, and all those who made this material available.

— Maria L. Sylvester

A special thanks to all of you for sharing your experiences after going through the retreat based on Consoling the Heart of Jesus. I pray that you will continue to receive the Lord’s mercy, share it with others, and console His Heart by trusting in Him.

— Fr. Joseph, MIC

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Father Joseph would be happy to find a letter from you in his mailbox. Your letter may be edited for clarity and space. Send it to: Father Joseph’s Mailbox, Editorial, Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263, or mailbox@marian.org.



Father Joseph's Bookshelf



Online at www.marian.org/catalog/b17 or call 1-800-462-7426.

THE 'ONE THING' IS THREE

HOW THE MOST HOLY TRINITY EXPLAINS EVERYTHING
BY MICHAEL E. GAITLEY, MIC (FR. JOSEPH, MIC)
MARIAN PRESS, 390 PP., \$14.95, AVAILABLE NOV. 15
PRODUCT CODE: **B17-ONE**



If you're like my brother and sister, *The 'One Thing' Is Three* may make ideal reading for the Year of Faith. My sister has seven kids, homeschools, and doesn't have a lot of time to study theology. My brother also has a family and a demanding job — he, too, can't delve deeply into theology. So, I wrote this book in a style that's easy to understand, as a kind of "crash course" in Catholic theology for busy people.

The heart of the book is my search for the "one thing" that could bring together everything I learned in my more than 15 years of theology studies. During those many years of listening to lectures, reading numerous books, and writing hundreds of papers, I was always looking for the one thing that could provide a key to the Church's wisdom.

Now, having written this book as a recently ordained priest, I believe I've found it. It's the greatest mystery of our faith and not really a thing at all but rather three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — the Most Holy Trinity.

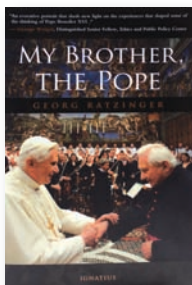
Unfortunately, the Trinity is often seen as esoteric, obscure, and outside of normal life. *The 'One Thing' Is Three* is meant to change that. It's meant to bring the Trinity home to our hearts, to make difficult theology easier to understand, and to share the highlights of my 15-year search for the one thing.

Let me share a highlight that changed the way I view heaven. As a child, I figured heaven was a spectator sport: all the saints and us watching God do what He does. Now, I know that heaven is our participation in the very life and love of the Trinity. We get in on the action, which should make us incredibly happy.

Learn more about how we get in on the action by reading my book.

MY BROTHER, THE POPE

BY GEORG RATZINGER AS TOLD TO MICHAEL HESEMANN
IGNATIUS PRESS, HARDCOVER WITH PHOTOS OF THE RATZINGER FAMILY, 270 PP., \$24.95
PRODUCT CODE: **B17-MBTP**



If you want an inspiring example of how a strong Catholic family can nurture vocations to the priesthood and even give us a Pope, I highly recommend this book.

In this memoir on Pope Benedict XVI, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, the Pope's older brother, starts by sharing about their parents' strong character and the family's deep Catholic roots in Bavaria. He recalls with fondness how their family life centered on the liturgical year at home and in the parish, enriched by many Bavarian customs.

The family's Catholic faith sustained them through the horrors of World War II and helped foster in both Georg and Joseph (the future Pope) their vocations to the priesthood. As Georg writes poignantly of his reunion with his family after the war ended:

Even before I said anything, I sat right down at the piano and played the *Te Deum*: "Holy God, we praise Thy Name." To me, it was no coincidence that we could all be together again but, rather, a providential arrangement The fact that we had come through so many trying situations during the war unscathed confirmed us both, my brother and me, in our conviction that God had plans for us. . . . We literally looked death in the face. That brought with it a certain new orientation and caused us to suddenly treasure many things we had previously taken for granted. Yet it confirmed us all the more in our intention to try to become priests.

Georg also shares insights into how particular qualities from each of their parents helped form Joseph's character to give us the Pope we know today:

My brother "inherited" a lot from our mother. Like her, he is very tenderhearted; he loves animals and flowers. . . . He got that from our mother, and from our father somehow his rational side. These two qualities of our parents combined in him in a special way.

Ask a Marian

with Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC

Why the Way of the Cross?

Q. What's the origin of the Way of the Cross? And why is it in every church?

A. The earliest Christians in Jerusalem probably marked the Way of the Cross of Christ from the very beginning. There is even a tradition that the Blessed Virgin Mary would visit the places of the Passion daily.

Then, there was a desire by Christians from different countries to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to do the same thing. Obviously, it was not possible for everyone to make the journey. This was especially true when the Turks closed down access to the Holy Land in the 11th century. Christians then sought to build replicas of the holy places in their own countries for the sake of those who couldn't get to Jerusalem. The Franciscans began their almost continuous presence in the Holy Land in 1217, and the holy places there were entrusted to them in 1342. It's likely that the present form of the stations with indulgences attached can be traced to this time period.

There is a varied history to the stations that draws from many sources. Apparently, in the early days, pilgrims would begin at the site of the Crucifixion and work their way back to Pilate's House. There would be a varying number of stops along the way from as few as 5 to as many as 42.

Tradition tells us that the practice of remembering the stations as a devotion in a chapel began with St. Francis of Assisi. From there, it began to spread to churches throughout the world. One Franciscan was even called the "preacher of the Way of the Cross," St. Leonard of Port Maurice. In a 20-year period in the 18th century, he erected 571 sets of stations. He is probably the one who reversed the order to the way we know it today. It is a beautiful devotion, which can be practiced at any time. The devotion is often done communally on Fridays during the season of Lent.

Q. Can you tell me about the Advent season and some of the main customs?

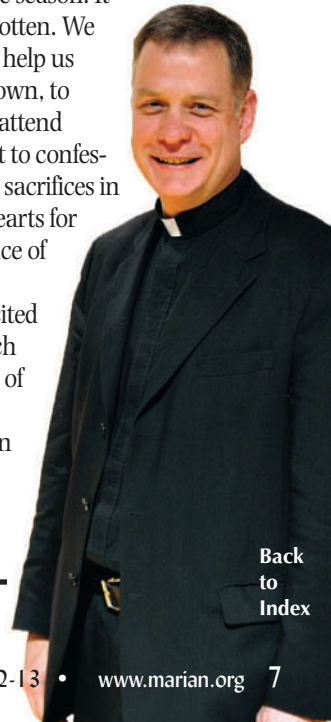
A. The Advent season, which begins four Sundays before Christmas, marks the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. It is a time of preparation for the solemnity of

Christmas and for the whole Christmas season. The word Advent comes from a Latin word that means "coming to." It refers to the coming of Christ.

The first half of Advent has liturgical readings that speak of Christ's coming at the end of time. After Dec. 17th, the readings refer to Christ's coming at Christmas. We are also called to reflect on Christ's coming into our lives daily through the Sacraments and through His grace in various ways.

Among the Advent traditions are the Advent Wreath with four candles that are lit each Sunday accompanied by prayers in the home or at church. An additional white candle at the center represents Christ and is lit at Christmas. An Advent Calendar with tiny doors representing each day of the season has become another way of preparing. In some cultures, a series of dawn Masses before Christmas is celebrated. The feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe fall during Advent. Our Lady is especially associated with Advent because of the nature of the season — waiting in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior — as she did during her pregnancy.

In our Western culture, Christmas shopping, the playing of Christmas Carols from the beginning of November, and the general stress of that time of the year have made it difficult for many Catholics to observe the season. It can easily become forgotten. We might ask Our Lady to help us find the time to slow down, to pray more, perhaps to attend Mass more often, to get to confession, and to offer some sacrifices in order to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Prince of Peace. The beautiful O Antiphons that are recited before Christmas, which are found in the verses of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," can be a wonderful source for our meditation throughout Advent.



Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC, welcomes your questions. Send them to: Ask a Marian, Editorial, Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263, or e-mail ask@marian.org.

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Hill Stations of the Cross. It's as if you are there at the event with the Marians. You can also click on the thumbnails of the individual stations and gain access to a full-size photo with prayers for that particular station.

If you are interested in enrolling friends and loved ones for the Year of Faith, it just got easier. (Turn to page 21 to see our ad for this new enrollment.) In this case, click on the enrollment card in the e-magazine. Then, you can immediately go online to make an offering and have the card sent to whomever you want to enroll in the Association of Marian Helpers for the Year of Faith.

Take an active role

You can also quickly access the web pages for our Divine Mercy apostolates, memorials on Eden Hill, seminarian support, and the Marian Evangelization Team by clicking on the highlighted areas of the relevant pages.

Further, you can reach the Marians and share the magazine through Facebook and Twitter.

Please check out all the new features, share the e-magazine with others, and even put the web address to the digital magazine in your parish newsletter. You can also share the link to a particular story with others. In all these ways, the digital version can help you answer your call as a Marian Helper by sharing what has inspired you with your family, friends, and coworkers.

It's your choice

As good stewards of the environment, the Marian Fathers want to give you the option of only receiving the digital version of the magazine. But the Marians also want to give those who enjoy reading the print edition the option of continuing to receive it. In fact, some of our readers will want to receive both the digital and print versions, so we are offering that as a third option.

1. To continue to receive *Marian Helper* in the print edition only, you do not need to do anything.
2. If we have your e-mail address, you will receive an e-mail notice of the availability of the digital magazine with each issue.
3. If you want to receive the electronic version only or to receive it in addition to the print version, go to www.marian.org/mh/signup.

Whatever you decide, please keep the Marians and all the Marian Helpers in your prayers and thoughts as we seek new ways to evangelize during this Year of Faith. Also, let Fr. Joseph, MIC, know what you think of the interactive version of your magazine. **MH**

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You can quickly access the web pages for our Divine Mercy apostolates, reach the Marians through Facebook and Twitter, and much more. Please note that if a blue box appears (example above) when you run your cursor or finger over the page, it indicates something interactive is available.

Please Enroll My Loved One

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FR. DANTE AGUERO, MIC

From the new Marian Helpers Center in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, Fr. Dante Aguero, MIC, is leading the Marian Fathers in expanding their Divine Mercy outreach into more of that country's parishes.

Marians open Helpers Center in Argentina

By Dan Valenti

The Marian Fathers have exciting plans for Argentina, the southernmost part of their Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy Province.

The province includes all of the United States and Argentina, and we've shared on this page about the Marians in the U.S. conducting Divine Mercy parish missions across the country. Now, the Marians in Argentina, who currently minister in two parishes, have opened a new center to bring The Divine Mercy message to more parishes in their country.

On Aug. 4, Fr. Eduardo Alvarez, MIC, pastor of St. Casimir Parish in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, blessed the new Marian Helpers Center, which is attached to the parish church. It is a modest but modern two-room facility staffed by Fr. Dante Aguero, MIC, and a part-time office manager. Father Dante serves not only as director of the center but as superior of all the Marians in Argentina.

"Everything we have in the center was being stored in my room prior to opening [the new facility]," says Fr. Dante, adding with a smile, "and my room isn't big. So we moved all of the papers, records, and documents into the new office, purchased the business equipment we needed such as desks, file cabinets, and computers, and we are ready to go."



Fr. Dante Aguero, MIC

The goal in Argentina is similar to the one the Marians have in the U.S., says Fr. Dante: "We have begun our parish outreach, and on these visits, we bring statues, images of The Divine Mercy, and prayercards. The need is great. The people in the parishes know about Divine Mercy, but they don't know enough. They think it's 'just another devotion,' and we are trying to change that [perception]."

It's a huge job, says Fr. Dante, and he shares his strategy with the proviso that, mainly, he's leaving the outcome in God's hands: "We are teaching the people how important this message is not only for the world but especially for their own personal lives."

Father Dante notes that the trend toward secularization as well as social problems such as gang violence, drug use, and family discord make the work more difficult, and one of his prayers is for patience, so that he doesn't expect too much, too soon. To the people, Fr. Dante says, "Always, when something is wrong in your life, that is a sign that you need to run to God's mercy."

"People who come to our missions are looking for something. When they are here, they are like children waiting for candy. When they begin to understand the importance of Divine Mercy, they find more than candy. They find eternal food for the soul."

To donate, visit marian.org/argentina. MH

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Bring the message of Divine Mercy to your parish



Invite the Marians to speak about Divine Mercy. For information, call Valerie Laurizio at (413) 298-1349 or e-mail her at parishmissions@marian.org.

In the News: Marians' Divine Mercy Apostolates

MOMM's goal: Make Year of Faith 'time of grace'

The Year of Faith, which began Oct. 11 and runs through Nov. 24, 2013, is a time in which the faithful are called to embrace a deeper relationship with Jesus, especially through encountering Him in the Eucharist and the other Sacraments. The year has one simple purpose: to help us rediscover our faith in Christ.

As a lay apostolate of the Marian Fathers, Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM) will be working hard to help Catholics deepen their knowledge of the faith through their presentations to parishes and schools across the country. MOMM's acclaimed multimedia presentation for parishes, *Tell All Souls About My Mercy*, brings viewers into dynamic contact with the heart of the message of Divine Mercy. MOMM also has programs and materials geared toward reaching youth.

"We are filled with joy, yet humbled, by the number of ways we are able to respond to the Holy Father's directives and wishes for the Year of Faith," says MOMM's Joan Maroney, along with her husband, Dave, MOMM's cofounder.

At the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith put forth a letter with recommendations "to encourage a ready response to the invitation of the Holy Father to live fully this Year as a special 'time of grace.'"

"We have been blessed to create presentations, products, support materials, and services that have centered on living and spreading the fullness of the Catholic faith, particularly through the message of and devotion to Jesus, The Divine Mercy," Joan says. "During this special year, we will work to help the local Church



Joan (above) and Dave Maroney, cofounders of Mother of Mercy Messengers are working hard to help children and youth understand and live the faith through their multimedia presentations at schools across the country.

respond to many of these recommendations."

For example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith proposes that "every initiative that helps the faithful to recognize the special role of Mary ... as a model of faith and virtue is to be encouraged." To that purpose, MOMM has developed a beautiful meditation in *Tell All Souls About My Mercy* called "Mary's Way of the Cross," which strengthens souls in accepting God's will as she did in all things, in both the joys and the sorrows of life.

The Vatican Congregation also calls for catechetical events, especially for youth and those searching for a sense of meaning in life, and for paying greater attention to Catholic schools. Here, MOMM has developed youth programs that catechize, inspire, and build faith.

"Perhaps most exciting for us is the opportunity to help respond to the call for penitential celebrations and to help support greater faith and frequency in the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and the fervent celebration of the Eucharist," says Dave.

Parishes interested in MOMM's programs can call Joan or Dave at 1-830-634-7765 or visit thedinemercy.org/MOMM. MH

DIVINE MERCY APOSTOLATES WANT TO COME TO YOUR PARISH!



For more information, contact Mark Fanders at 1-866-895-3236 or mfanders@marian.org, or visit thedinemercy.org/ministries.

The Divine Mercy Apostolates represent four unique lay outreach ministries of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. These four apostolates bring the message of Divine Mercy to churches and communities throughout the country.



FRANK CARROLL

A crowd of about 300 pilgrims takes part as the Most Rev. Timothy McDonnell, Bishop of Springfield, Mass., blesses the Second

‘Dream come true’ for Marians

Eden Hill Stations of the Cross are blessed on Sept. 14.

By Dan Valenti

Half a century is a long time, as humans measure it. For God, it’s a different story.

For two score and 12 years, the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception had envisioned a life-size Stations of the Cross to grace Eden Hill. The God-inspired vision took the form of prayer, spoken and unspoken.

It took 52 years, but on Sept. 14, 2012, the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, the Marians welcomed the Most Rev. Timothy McDonnell, Bishop of Springfield, to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass., to formally dedicate and bless the 14 life-size Stations of the Cross. The bishop blessed each of the magnificent bronze stations, the work of renowned master sculptor Timothy P. Schmalz.

A crowd of about 300 pilgrims accompanied the bishop along the Way of the Cross. The Eden Hill stations are one of only five in North America that are life-size.

Though the statues are grand and monumental, the stations focus not on art or aesthetics but on the Suffering Christ in His

Passion. These works are religious art of the first order.

“These statues depict human suffering born out of love for another,” said the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, provincial superior for the Marians in the United States and Argentina. “For a Catholic Christian, such art is a form of meditative prayer on Christ’s life, especially the final moments of His life. This is the mystery of our faith. Jesus — the Son of Man and Son of God — manifests God the Father’s absolute love for humanity. We proclaim here the message of Divine Mercy. The greatest expression of God’s mercy for us is God’s offering of Himself on our behalf, so that we may not suffer the consequences of our wrongdoing and sin.”

In welcoming the bishop and pilgrims to the Shrine, Fr. Kaz invoked God’s blessing on this “joyous day.”

‘Truly a dream come true’

Father Kaz noted the long wait: “Today, all of us rejoice, for this is truly a dream come true. When the Marians built and opened the

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[To view as slideshow](#)

Stations of the Cross



FIRST STATION



SECOND STATION



THIRD STATION



FOURTH STATION



FIFTH STATION



Station of the Cross on Eden Hill. The Marians invited Bishop McDonnell to dedicate and bless all 14 life-size Stations on Sept. 14.

Shrine in 1960, we had already picked the location for each of the stations. We only had to wait for God to send us a benefactor.” In 1997, the Marians took a pragmatic step toward fulfilling the dream when the Congregation reserved a large section of Eden Hill for the stations.

About 10 years later, a couple — who wish to remain anonymous — came along. They were inspired to initiate the project by outdoor stations they’ve seen during pilgrimages to some of the world’s most famous shrines.

“When we saw Eden Hill, we thought it would be a very nice setting for life-size Stations of the Cross, to proclaim the whole restoration of mankind through Christ’s salvific graces,” the couple said.

From the expressions and body language of the sculptures to the layout of the Stations, the couple worked closely with the Marians and the sculptor.

In his opening remarks, Bishop McDonnell called the statues “magnificent. The Way of the Cross reminds us that God loves us so much that He gave us His only begotten Son, and that Christ loves us so much to lay down His life for us.”

At each of the 14 stations, Bishop McDonnell led with a meditation on the mean-

ing of the station. The reflections were those of Pope John Paul II, who as Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, gave the Lenten retreat in 1976 for Pope Paul VI and the Roman Curia (the Holy See’s administrative body).

In his comments prior to the blessing,

Bishop McDonnell noted how the “God of all” has saved us through the death and Resurrection of Jesus. Therein lies the “spiritual value” of the Stations of the Cross, the bishop said: “[They] vividly remind us of the outpouring of love God bestowed on us as sinners. They remind us of our need to follow the Way of the Cross with all

we have, all body, mind, heart, and soul.”

“[The Stations] vividly remind us of the outpouring of love God bestowed on us as sinners,” Bishop Timothy McDonnell said. “They remind us of our need to follow the Way of the Cross with all we have, all body, mind, heart, and soul.”

Redeemed ‘by His blood’

In the opening prayer, Bishop McDonnell noted this love: “Christ Jesus has loved us and redeemed us by His blood. With praise and thanksgiving to Him who has died and risen for us, let us call upon Him by saying, ‘O Lord, you have redeemed us by Your blood.’” That served as the refrain for the assembled pilgrims.

At each of the stations, after Bishop McDonnell read the meditation of Pope John Paul II, Marian novice Tim Childers and Br. Chris Alar, MIC, alternated with reading the response.



SIXTH STATION



SEVENTH STATION



EIGHTH STATION



NINTH STATION



TENTH STATION



Felix Carroll

desires but on the will of God (3:18-4:2).

Father Ken said that the stations reinforce that point, that through Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection, God has broken the hold of sin over humankind:

"Jesus said, 'I am the way.' This 'way' is the Way of the Cross. We all suffer, but if we offer it up to God, as Jesus did, we can 'break with sin.'"

Pilgrims, who arrived from many areas of the country, remarked on the life-like, almost animated nature of the statues.

Sculptor Timothy P. Schmalz, shown talking with Bishop McDonnell, says, "The idea behind life-size figures is to convey a sense of presence in the eyes of the viewer. There's something so powerful, so human, in seeing life-size depictions. Something mystical happens to us when we see human figures depicted on a life-size scale."

After the final station had been dedicated, the bishop blessed the faithful with a relic of the True Cross. He thanked everyone for their attendance and remarked how thrilled he was to have taken part in such a major event for his diocese: "These stations will long be here, and it's wonderful to think of all the joy they will continue to bring, for generations yet to come, to all who visit this glorious Shrine."

In addition to Fr. Kaz, Marian priests attending the blessing and dedication included Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC; Fr. Ken Dos Santos, MIC, rector of the National Shrine; Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, director of the Marian Evangelization Team; Fr. David Lord, MIC; and Fr. Bob Vennetti, MIC, assistant Shrine rector. Father John Britto Anthony, CSC, also participated.

Father Ken mentioned the Scripture reading that followed the introductory rites, which included singing "*Vexilla Regis*" ("The Royal Banners") led by Shrine music director Dr. Jeff Petryk. That reading, proclaimed by Br. Chris, was from the First Letter of Peter:

For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that He might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, He was brought to life in the spirit. ... Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude (for whomever suffers in the flesh has broken with sin) so as not to spend what remains of your life in the flesh on human

'I feel like I'm there with Jesus'

"When I see these figures, I feel like I'm there with Jesus," said James Roberts from Wisconsin. "I get some idea of what it must have been like to go through [the Passion]. It humbles me to know that Christ did this for me, and He would have done it the same way for me even if I was the only person on earth. There's something about seeing the size [of the statues]."

Schmalz, the sculptor, who attended the dedication, also brought up that certain "something about the size."

"The idea behind life-size figures is to convey a sense of presence in the eyes of the viewer," Schmalz said. "There's something so powerful, so human, in seeing life-size depictions. Something mystical happens to us when we see human figures depicted on a life-size scale."

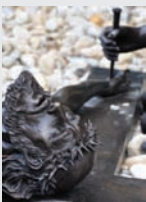
"When I look at these sculptures, I look at them not as the end of my sculpturing career but the beginning," Schmalz said. "In these statues, we have all the magnificence of the Catholic Church, more than 2,000 years old. And you have this place here [referring to the National Shrine], which has become the setting for a renaissance of artwork that, I hope, will 500 years from now still be the place to go, the same way as pilgrims now go to Europe to view holy art. I hope that for pilgrims, it's a sign that the Church is alive, well, and going strong."

For more about the stations on Eden Hill, visit thedivinemercy.org/stations.

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ELEVENTH STATION



TWELFTH STATION



THIRTEENTH STATION



FOURTEENTH STATION



ROBERT CURSI
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L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO

On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina. The event was celebrated concurrently in Rome and at St. Faustina's convent chapel in Lagiewniki, Poland (see inset). At both locations, large screen televisions were set up for a simulcast. Many people believe that Sr. Faustina prophesied this simulcast celebration in 1937.

PROPHET FOR OUR TIMES

CONSIDER THESE PROPHECIES OF ST. FAUSTINA THAT HAVE PROVED TRUE.

by Rev. George W. Kosicki, CSB, and David Came

Adapted mostly from the Marian Press title Faustina, Saint for Our Times.

A ban, a simulcast, and a spark all figure in the remarkable prophetic ministry of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-38). We'll start with the ban.

On March 6, 1959, after studying some incomplete and inaccurate accounts of Sr. Faustina's visions and mission, the Holy See prohibited further "spreading of the devotion according to Sr. Faustina," pending clarification of its concerns.

Not only did St. Faustina prophesy about the ban, she also told her spiritual director, Fr. Michael Sopocko (now beatified), that he would suffer much as a result of it:

Once as I was talking with my spiritual director, I had an interior vision — quicker than lightning — of his soul in great suffering, in such agony that God touches very few souls with such fire. The suffering arises from this work. There will come a time when this work, which God is demanding very much, will be as though utterly undone. And then God will act with great power, which will give evidence of its authenticity. It will be a new splendor for the Church, although it has been dormant in it from long ago. ... When

this triumph comes, we shall already have entered the new life in which there is no suffering. But before this, your soul [of the spiritual director] will be surfeited with bitterness at the sight of the destruction of your efforts (*Diary*, 378).

The ban would continue for nearly 20 years, and Fr. Sopocko would, indeed, suffer much, dying in 1975, three years before the prohibition was lifted on April 15, 1978.

'A new splendor for the Church'

Six months later, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope John Paul II (now beatified). Interestingly, his papacy seems to have fulfilled the part of St. Faustina's prophecy about what would happen in the Church after the ban was lifted: "And then God will act with great power, which will give evidence of [the message and devotion's] authenticity. It will be a new splendor for the Church" (*Diary*, 378).

Divine Mercy was clearly on the mind of John Paul II early in his papacy. On the First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 1980, he published his second encyclical letter, *Rich in Mercy (Dives in Misericordia)*, in which he describes the mercy of

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Fathers Dan Cambra, MIC, Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, and Larry Dunn, MIC, celebrate Mass on Aug. 12 at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine on Eden Hill to mark the Silver Anniversary of their priesthood.

HONORING FAITHFUL SERVICE

Three Marian Fathers celebrate the Silver Anniversary of their priesthood.

by Dan Valenti

They are known and loved by the Marian community and those they serve as Fr. Kaz, Fr. Larry, and Fr. Dan.

On Sunday, Aug. 12, 2012, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass., the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC; Fr. Larry Dunn, MIC; and Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, each celebrated a quarter century of faithful priestly ministry to God's people. The celebration, which drew many Marians and an estimated 600 well wishers, included a festive luncheon at the Shrine residence and Holy Mass at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

Father Kaz serves as provincial superior for the Marians in the United States and Argentina; Fr. Larry at the Marians' house of formation in Washington, D.C.; and Fr. Dan as director of the Marian Evangelization Team. Father Kaz was ordained on June 20, 1987; Fr. Larry on Aug. 1, 1987; and Fr. Dan on Oct. 4, 1986.

'Beautiful moments of encounter'

Father Kaz says he was humbled looking at all the people who came for the celebration,

including many friends and loved ones from all walks of life and all parts of the country.

"The Lord provides us with these beautiful moments of encounter," Fr. Kaz says.

"It's God's goodness on display. These are moments of grace. God has given us the gift to reach out to each other, to recognize the dignity in each other, to persevere in friendship, which are extensions of His love."

When asked if his 25 years of priestly ministry seems like a long time, Fr. Kaz says, "I feel like it was yesterday." He then said that it's 32 years since he entered the Marian community as a postulant. Is there a sense of bittersweet concerning the swiftness of time? "There's no bitter. There's only sweet."

For Fr. Dan, who preceded Fr. Kaz as provincial superior, the occasion brought a reflection on what it means to be a priest.

"To be a priest is to be a man who is responsible for all souls, Catholic and non-Catholic, believers and non-believers. The surest sign that God loves us can be found in the people who come to this holy Shrine. It amazes me, the love that people have who

"Each of the three of us, Larry, Kaz, and myself, all have had a long time in God's service, even before we became priests." Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, said. "It's been a life full of those little moments that mean so much."

come here to Eden Hill. People come here because they experience love, and if the priesthood is not about love, then it's not the Catholic priesthood."

Father Dan gave thanks to God for permitting the long service of his two confreres and himself: "Each of the three of us, Larry, Kaz, and myself, all have had a long time in God's service, even before we became priests. It's been a life full of those little moments that mean so much."

'I fought His call to be a priest'

"It's hard for me to put into words the significance of this," says Fr. Larry. "God says to His priests, 'I trust you. I trust you to be the ambassador of My love. I trust you to be the channel of My mercy. I trust you to bring your brothers and sisters closer to Christ.' Despite our ordinariness, he chooses us, but we are often stubborn. I fought His call to be a priest."

Father Larry had served as a Marian brother for 15 years and become "comfortable" in that role. He served the Congregation in many ways, including as assistant chaplain at a hospital. As a brother, though, he began noticing that in certain situations, especially those involving ministering the Sacraments, he wanted to do more. That's when God started to hound him.

"I was middle aged, I didn't have an undergraduate degree, and I thought of all the obstacles in my way of becoming a priest," Fr. Larry said. "God, though, had other plans. He kept asking me in those sacramental moments: 'Why not you?' God challenged me. He grabbed me by the collar and issued a direct challenge to leave my comfort zone. I fought it, but I now realize that when we get comfortable, we can lapse into a false sense of security. We can become

tepid and lukewarm."

Father Larry took a year to weigh what God was telling Him. He told himself that if, at the end of the year, the call still gnawed at him, he would act on it. A year passed, and



Father Dan gives a humorous, memorable homily during Mass for the Silver Anniversary celebration at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass. Below, Fr. Kaz and Fr. Larry are amused by Fr. Dan's homily, which included stories about a special audience with Pope John Paul II.



the "call was there, stronger than ever. I kept asking, 'Why me?' I'm just an ordinary guy, nothing special, but that's who God often calls."

Father Larry answered that call. He went back to school in middle age. He had to overcome many obstacles along the way. The "staying power of faith," as he calls it, saw him through the ups and particularly the downs.

Reflecting back a quarter of a century on that choice, was it the right one?

"Absolutely," says Fr. Larry. "I just hope God thinks it was the right choice," he says with a laugh. "But he's stuck with it. It was His choice."

'They have remained faithful'

Marian Vicar General Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC, in from Rome for the occasion, goes back a long way with these men.

"I remember attending the diaconate ordination of Larry and the priestly ordination of Kaz," says Fr. Joe. "It's a great blessing to see how their ministries grew and flourished over the years — to see just how far they have come with the grace of the Lord."

"The religious life is full of ups and downs, and for sure each one of us faces numerous challenges. It's a blessing to see how these men have handled their priestly ministries, with love, through perseverance that comes from deep and abiding faith. They have remained faithful in serving the Lord."

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MARIE ROMAGNANO

Saint Faustina's prophecy about "the spark" was made famous by Pope John Paul II. Before he entrusted the world to Divine Mercy on Aug. 17, 2002 at the International Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki, Poland, John Paul II quoted the *Diary* passage about "the spark" from Poland that will prepare the world for Christ's final coming.

PROPHET

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God as the presence of love that is greater than evil, greater than sin, and greater than death. In it, he summons the Church to plead for God's mercy on the whole world.

On Divine Mercy Sunday, April 18, 1993, Pope John Paul II further highlighted the need for The Divine Mercy message and devotion at Faustina's beatification:

"I clearly feel that my mission does not end with death, but begins," Sr. Faustina wrote in her *Diary*. And it truly did! Her mission continues and is yielding astonishing fruit. It is truly marvelous how her devotion to the merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world and gaining so many human hearts! ... The balance of this century, which is now ending, in addition to the advances which have often surpassed those of preceding eras, presents a deep restlessness and fear of the future. Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope? Believers understand that perfectly.

"Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope?" became an important theme of John Paul II's pontificate.

At the canonization of St. Faustina, John Paul II also "canonized" The Divine Mercy message and devotion by declaring the Second Sunday of Easter as "Divine Mercy Sunday" for the universal Church. Of Divine Mercy Sunday, he said in his homily: "It is important that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the Word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church will be called 'Divine Mercy Sunday.' ... By this act, I intend today to pass this message

on to the new millennium."

Even Pope John Paul II's death on Saturday, April 2, 2005, the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, gave evidence of the authenticity of The Divine Mercy message and devotion. He had prepared a written message for Divine Mercy Sunday 2005. The message was shared posthumously with the faithful on April 3, Divine Mercy Sunday. In this last will and testament of mercy for John Paul II, he reminds the faithful. "How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy!" Then, the Great Mercy Pope sums up Faustina's message of mercy with this prayer inspired by her *Diary*: "Jesus, I trust in You, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world. Amen."

The simulcast at the canonization

Now, let's turn to St. Faustina's prophecy about a simulcast. On Divine Mercy Sunday, April 30, 2000, before some 250,000 pilgrims and the television cameras of the world, Pope John Paul II canonized her as "the great apostle of Divine Mercy." The canonization was celebrated concurrently in Rome and at St. Faustina's convent chapel in Lagiewniki, Poland. At both locations, large screen televisions were set up for a simulcast — with live images shared simultaneously by those celebrating.

Many people believe that Sr. Faustina prophesied this simulcast celebration in a vision back in 1937:

I took part in [a] solemn celebration simultaneously here [in Lagiewniki] and in Rome, for the celebration was so closely connected with Rome that, even as I write, I cannot distinguish between the two, but I am writing it down as I saw it. ... The crowd was so enormous that the eye could not take it all in. ... The same celebration

was held in Rome, in a beautiful church, and the Holy Father, with all the clergy, was celebrating this Feast [of Mercy] (*Diary*, 1044).

'The spark' from Poland

Finally, we consider the prophecy about "the spark" from Poland, which was made famous by Pope John Paul II. Before he solemnly entrusted the world to Divine Mercy on Aug. 17, 2002, John Paul II referred to St. Faustina and her *Diary* passage about "the spark" from Poland that will prepare the world for Christ's final coming. Many think that the passage, at least in part, refers to St. Faustina and The Divine Mercy message, as well as to John Paul II and his ministry as the Great Mercy Pope:

Today, therefore, in this Shrine, I will solemnly entrust the world to Divine Mercy. I do so with the burning desire that the message of God's merciful love, proclaimed here through Saint Faustina, may be made known to all the peoples of the earth and fill their hearts with hope. May this message

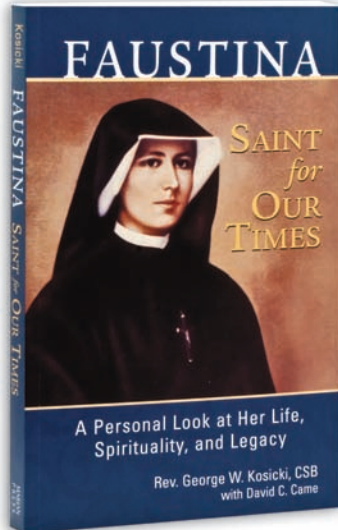
radiate from this place to our beloved homeland and throughout the world. May the binding promise of the Lord Jesus be fulfilled: From here there must go forth "the spark which will prepare the world for [His] final coming" (*Diary*, 1732).

This spark needs to be lighted by the grace of God. This fire of mercy needs to be passed on to the world. *In the mercy of God the world will find peace and mankind will find happiness!* I entrust this task to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to the Church in Krakow and Poland, and to all the [devotees] of Divine Mercy who will come here from Poland and from throughout the world. *May you be witnesses to mercy!* (emphasis in original).

John Paul II's entrustment and this prophetic passage from St. Faustina's *Diary* have inspired World Apostolic Congresses on Mercy as a way to pass the "fire of mercy" on to the world.

On April 2, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the first World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM), held in Rome on April 2-6, 2008. In his homily, Benedict presents St. Faustina as "a prophetic messenger of Divine Mercy."

At the conclusion of the Mercy Congress, Pope Benedict also used the forceful language of a "mandate" in encouraging the nearly 4,000 delegates from every corner of the globe to "go forth and be witnesses of God's mercy, a source of hope for every person and for the whole world."



Faustina, Saint for Our Times by Rev. George W. Kosicki, CSB, with David Came, makes for ideal reading as we mark this special year for St. Faustina in preparing for the 75th Anniversary of her death next fall. Ordering information can be found on page 30.

'A wildfire of mercy'

The second WACOM was held October 1-5, 2011, in Krakow-Lagiewniki, Poland, ending on the feast of St. Faustina. Nearly 2,000 Divine Mercy apostles from 69 countries gathered for the historic event. This Mercy Congress underscored two truths: the

urgency of The Divine Mercy message and the fittingness of the metaphor that defines its spread, from "spark" to "flame" to "wildfire."

"The fire has been set, and now its light is reaching more and more hearts in more and more places around the world," said congress attendee Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, the Marian's provincial superior in the United States and Argentina.

Saint Faustina's prophecy is being fulfilled in our time. What began as a spark from Poland has become a wildfire of mercy that is spreading across the face of the earth. May this fire continue to spread and help many more souls receive the Lord's mercy before His final coming (see *Diary*, 1732).

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MH

Military Pilgrimage, May 17-27



Join Fr. (Major) Donald Van Alstyne, MIC, as he explores the D-Day landing beaches of Normandy. Other stops include Paris, Lisieux, Caen, and Lourdes.

Estimated cost: \$3,200 per person.

For more information, contact Fr. Van Alstyne at (915) 261-3769. You can also contact Peter Markavage at (413) 298-1303 or e-mail him at PMarkavage@marian.org.

Father (Major)
Donald Van Alstyne, MIC





Father Jim McCormack, MIC, says he remembers using enrollments when his grandmother (left) died in 1999, shortly after his sister graduated from college. He also believes it helped him discover his vocation with the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

YOUR GIFT OF PRAYER

Enrollments in the Association assure those you love of the Marians' prayers.

By Fr. Jim McCormack, MIC

Enrollments played a role in my vocation to the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

I don't remember how it began exactly. Perhaps it was the Association of Marian Helpers enrollment folder I received when I graduated from college in 1994, or when my grandmother died shortly after my sister's college graduation in 1999. But I do distinctly remember that my family had enrollment folders or cards from the Association on hand. So, at times, I would send one to a friend or family member, usually upon news of the death of a loved one.

What better gift could I give to someone close to me on such an occasion than the gift of prayer?

I think that's how I came to discover the Marian Fathers. They were the religious congregation behind all those prayers being offered. I also think that's where I first saw the image of The Divine Mercy — on one of those enrollment cards or folders.

In fact, the Marians' promotion of The Divine Mercy message and devotion is one of the main reasons I decided to join the Congregation. And I now realize that sending my friends and family enrollments is an important way that I show mercy to others in need of prayer. Sending them was and con-

tinues to be a ministry of mercy.

What exactly is an enrollment?

The Association's enrollments come either as a card or in a folder. Folders range in size and thickness and have a certain distinguished look, making them ideal for display of the enrollment by the recipient. A variety of religious images appear on the cards and inside the folders, with the most popular being those of Jesus and Mary. Inside the card or folder is the text presenting and explaining the enrollment. There is also space for writing the name of the person to be enrolled and the signature of the sender.

Even better than the attractive appearance of the enrollments is what they contain or, rather, what they promise.

The Association of Marian Helpers is a spiritual benefit society. As such, an enrollment in the Association means that a person, whether living or deceased, is being prayed for *every day*. In general terms, those who are enrolled (also called associates or Marian Helpers) share in the spiritual benefits of the daily Masses, prayers (including Rosaries), and good works of all the Marians.

But what do these spiritual benefits involve?

In addition to the daily remembrance by the Marians at Mass and in prayer, a special Mass is offered on feast days of our Lord and Our Lady as well as on the First Friday and

First Saturday of every month. A Mass is also offered for the souls of deceased Marian Helpers on All Souls Day. Further, those enrolled share in the Divine Mercy Novena prayed daily at 3 p.m., the Hour of Great Mercy, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass.

Along with these spiritual benefits, keep in mind that there are different enrollments you can use for various occasions such as for Christmas (see the inside front cover) or the Year of Faith (see below). Also, you can enroll someone for varying lengths of time, anywhere from one year to perpetually. You are requested to make a donation when you send someone an enrollment. Your offering supports our Marian seminarians.

Personally, I love to send the Perpetual Folder to people I know who have lost a loved one. What a comfort it is for them to know that the Marians will pray for their deceased loved one until the end of time.

Another important aspect of being enrolled is that we Marians provide our new Helpers with many opportunities to join us in prayer, making the Association a powerful union of prayer involving *both* the Marians and Helpers. These include the opportunity to participate in various novenas at the National Shrine. New



The Marian Fathers offer a variety of enrollment cards for many different occasions, all with beautiful images to inspire prayer.

Marian Helpers also receive a free subscription to *Marian Helper* magazine.

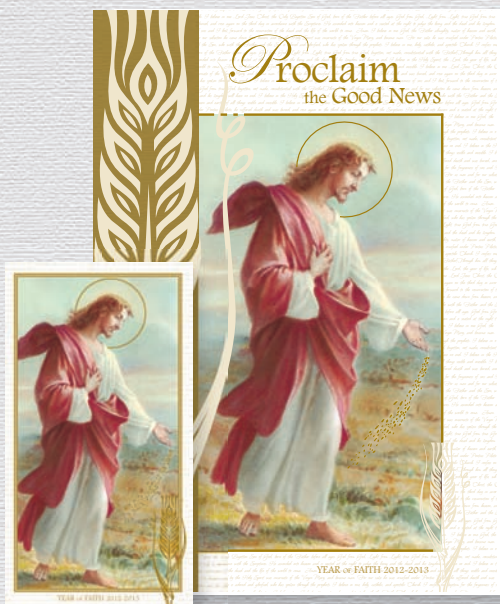
Among all these benefits of enrollment, the promise of daily Mass and prayer stands out as extraordinary. Imagine being prayed for every day by the Marians joined by many of their Marian Helpers. Most of all, imagine being remembered daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the most powerful prayer in heaven and on earth.

Well, you don't have to imagine it. If you're enrolled in the Association, it's a reality. MH

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Fr. Jim McCormack, MIC, was ordained to the priesthood on July 10, 2010. He is currently pursuing a Licentiate Degree in the Theology of the Consecrated Life. He lives in Rome.

"We want this Year to arouse in every believer the aspiration to profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope." — Pope Benedict XVI



B17-NZ2013

Exclusive gold-foiled and embossed "Year of Faith" Enrollment Card with matching prayercard.

Your offering helps support the Marian Fathers, their seminarians, and their many ministries.

Share your Faith

by enrolling loved ones in the Association of Marian Helpers for the Year of Faith, they will share in the benefits of all the Holy Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marian Fathers.

Enroll someone today for the Year of Faith!

1-800-462-7426
marian.org/enrollments



The Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, leads a procession of more than 300 people during the enshrinement of a first-class relic of Blessed John Paul II on Aug. 12 at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

Blessed John Paul II relic enshrined

The National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass., has a tangible sign of the presence of Blessed John Paul II, the Great Mercy Pope, with the first-class relic given to the Marian Fathers by Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland.

The relic consists of a drop of John Paul's blood on a small piece of white linen cloth. Cardinal Dziwisz presented the relic to the Marians at the second World Congress on Divine Mercy, celebrated in Krakow in October 2011. John Paul II was beatified in Rome on May 1, 2011, by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI.

The Marians enshrined the relic in a celebration on Aug. 12 at the National Shrine. With more than 300 pilgrims attending, the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, incensed the relic, instructed the pilgrims to pray for Blessed John Paul's intercession, and installed the cloth in a white marble encasement attached to a kneeler in one of the Shrine's side chapels. The papal relic is located near the first-class relics of St. Faustina.

"By coming to our Shrine, [Blessed John Paul II] came [back] to his spiritual home," Fr. Kaz said. "Even though he never visited our Shrine in Stockbridge — we were too small at the time — he belongs here as one of the great promoters of Divine Mercy. Now, we can experience his presence and protection more fully."

Plaza offers memorials

The newly enshrined relic of Blessed John Paul II is but one of several signs of the Great Mercy Pope's presence at the National Shrine.

The Shrine is home of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, a learning center that teaches clergy and laypeople about the message of Divine Mercy. Pilgrims also are familiar with the beautiful, life-size statue of the beloved Pope located at the entrance to the offices of the National Shrine.

The statue is the centerpiece of the latest improvement of the grounds of the National Shrine, centering as it does the Blessed John Paul II Plaza. The redesign of the office entrance incorporates a brick-floored plaza, with the statue in the center. The bricks offer pilgrims the opportunity to memorialize a loved one, create a tribute, or celebrate special events such as a wedding, an anniversary, a birth, or an ordination.

Those interested in a memorial brick can visit memorialsonedenhill.org/jpiiplaza or call 1-800-462-7426, ext. 5.

Divine Mercy Sunday falls on April 7

Divine Mercy Sunday this year comes on April 7. Lois Fusco, Shrine pilgrimage director, reminds all those who are coming on busses that it's best for their pilgrimage group to register early, preferably online. All busses must register in advance.

The April date falls in early spring, and in the Berkshires, that means any kind of weather is possible, from wintry conditions to summer heat and everything in between. Pilgrims should dress accordingly and be prepared for any conditions, from pleasant and clear to stormy and cold.

Advance registration can be done at mercysunday@marian.org. If you want to volunteer for the day, call the Shrine at 413-298-9321 or e-mail volunteers@marian.org.

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“Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” – Matthew 5:16



4 reasons to join the Circle of Light

Candles: At least one votive candle will be lit each month for your most fervent intentions.

Prayers: All intentions are individually prayed for by our Intercessory Prayer Ministers.

Mercy: Every candle you have lit for someone is an act of mercy.

Support: Your monthly or annual offering supports the Marian Fathers and their apostolic ministries around the world.



Facebook.com/
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For a free information packet or to join, call

1-800-462-7426 or go online to

mycircleoflight.org.





Sample of Mercy 101 by
Br. Chris Alar, MIC



FELIX CARROLL

“We have a lot of work ahead of us,” says Br. Chris Alar, MIC, of the challenges parents, educators, and Church leaders face with regard to youth. Above, he speaks to religious education students in the Buffalo, N.Y., area.

ANSWERS TO THE TOUGH QUESTIONS YOUTH ASK

Marian seminarian offers frank advice to parents in a secular age.

by Felix Carroll

For more than two years, Marian seminarian Br. Chris Alar, MIC, has traveled with the Marian Evangelization Team, speaking in parishes all across the United States. His interactions with youth, in particular, stand out as some of the most powerful experiences he’s had and point to reasons for optimism as well as for deep concern.

“I’m seeing so many kids asking questions about the faith,” Br. Chris says. “They’re growing up in such a secular world, and they’re confused and want answers.” He shares his thoughts here.

Brother Chris, what do you find encouraging with regard to our youth?

By far, the most rewarding thing is seeing the youth preparing for the Sacraments. Through Holy Communion and Confession, they will be given the grace of God, and in Confirmation, they will be sealed in the Holy Spirit. So the rewarding part is knowing what they’re about to receive. Also, they want to hear from us regarding Church teachings — even if it’s just to challenge us. We should be encouraged by that. Another reason to be hopeful is seeing how the youth have embraced the pro-life movement. After all these years, the tide is turning in favor of the pro-life movement, largely because so many young Catholics are determined to fight against the injustice of abortion.

In what ways have your experiences with the youth been disconcerting?

They face huge obstacles to holiness every single day. Sexual imagery, materialism, and immoral behavior have been almost deified in our culture. And these things are coming at them from all directions — from television, movies, music, advertisements, and the Internet. Every day, they are bombarded with messages that go against Church teaching. God has been shoved aside. The youth can be treated as outcasts for daring to show they put God and faith above all things. Sinful behavior is celebrated. The youth especially are highly impressionable. What our culture teaches and imposes upon us is: “I make my own truth. There is no absolute truth, so don’t force your values on me.” This all can lead to a belief that “anything goes, morally.” Therefore, if you speak out against, say, contraception or the practice of homosexuality, you are being “intolerant.” Parents, particularly, have a lot of work ahead of them to counteract all these powerful and conflicting messages their children are receiving.

So what’s your advice to parents?

Number one is prayer. We have to pray for our country and our leaders every day. We have to beg the Lord for mercy and the conversion of hearts. If every family prayed together, the

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whole world would change. Number two is parents taking authority for their children's own good. They must say "no" sometimes. If their children are listening to music that is inappropriate, tell them "no." If their children are constantly putting their own needs above the needs of others, tell them "no." Number three is leading by example. A child will most likely grow up sharing their parents' value system. We have to be way more attuned to these things.

We no longer take things at face value. We demand proof. Catholics are not immune to this, particularly the youth.

Absolutely. Let me just say, first, the Church's own views on what we call "hot-button" issues are greatly misunderstood and misrepresented. As Catholic leaders, educators, and parents, we all have to brush up on our catechesis. We have truth on our side — and logic. We need to be able to speak knowledgeably about our faith. We cannot just say, "Don't do drugs, don't have premarital sex, don't support gay marriage, don't have abortions" without explaining why.

So let's tackle the "hot-button" issues, beginning with contraception.

When using contraception, what you're doing is you're saying, "I want to give myself to you but not completely, I'm going to put up a barrier between us." With this barrier, you separate the "unitive" — that is, we are designed to unite in true love — from the "procreative," which are the two purposes of marriage. You're blocking your love from being so great that it

can create a third person. Only God — not a piece of latex or a pill — should determine when life should or shouldn't enter the world.

Abortion?

Contraception actually leads to a mentality in which abortion is viewed as a valid choice. So when a couple is not open to life, the mentality can easily become, "We will terminate this pregnancy because it wasn't supposed to happen." What we need to do a better job teaching is that God is the author of life, not us. Therefore, the child has rights that even the mother cannot take away. Since life begins at conception, abortion is murder. Now, what I get asked a lot by the girls is, "What about conception brought about through rape or incest?" What God wants us to know is we already have one victim, so why would we want to make a second victim of such violence? Abortion is an act of violence against an innocent life, and at no time can we justify the killing of an innocent person for the crime of another. Victims of rape or incest often say that abortion made things worse. The beautiful thing about God is He will always make a greater good out of even the worst evil. So the child is that greater good. The ones who keep the child will have the opportunity to see that greater good. They will also be more likely to forgive.

How do the girls you explain this to receive it?

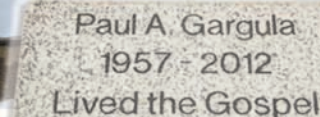
I have gotten through solidly to probably a third of them. The other third will really think

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Help pave the way for God's mercy

Create a lasting tribute with an engraved paving stone in the Blessed John Paul II Plaza at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

Memorialize a loved one, create a tribute, or celebrate a special event such as a birthday, First Holy Communion, wedding anniversary, or ordination.



Paul A. Gargula
1957 - 2012
Lived the Gospel



Add your personalized paving stone to the Blessed John Paul II Plaza:

MemorialsOnEdenHill.org/JPIIPlaza
1-800-671-2020



Graces Received

'Several graces obtained for my family'

Blessed's 'intercession is indeed powerful'

I am writing to thank your holy Founder, Blessed Stanislaus, for several graces obtained for my family this year through his intercession.

I turned to him when my brother-in-law was facing big decisions about treatment of his progressing melanoma. He decided against invasive and experimental treatments. He and his wife decided to live each day of life he would be granted to the fullest, and they did. He also had the grace to die peacefully at him home with his wife and daughter.

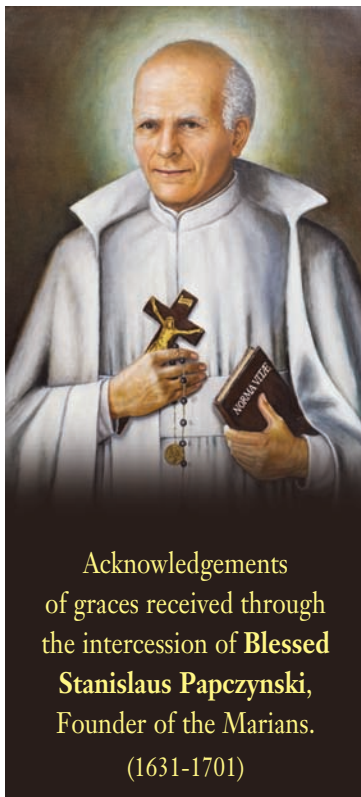
I also asked Blessed Stanislaus to intercede for my grandniece — she wanted to become pregnant but was unable to. Then, she became pregnant but had a miscarriage. At last, she again became pregnant, carried the baby to term, and survived a very difficult delivery. I thank Blessed Stanislaus that little Madelaine Joy is perfect.

Blessed Stanislaus's intercession is indeed powerful with God, and he is full of love and compassion for the needs of people who are suffering. I pray he may soon be declared a saint.

— Sr. MT, Guatemala City, Guatemala

'He got his first full-time job in five years'

My husband had been searching for a full-time job for the past several years. A couple of months ago, in *Marian Helper*, I found a prayer for Blessed Stanislaus's intercession. I saw that job offers seemed to be at the forefront of many of the graces obtained, so I



Acknowledgements
of graces received through
the intercession of **Blessed
Stanislaus Papczynski,**
Founder of the Marians.
(1631-1701)

began to seek his intercession for my husband.

Then, out of the blue, my husband suddenly found out about three jobs, two of which yielded interviews — something rare, I can assure you. The first interview didn't result in a job, but I kept turning to Blessed Stanislaus for help. A few days later, my husband got his first full-time job in five years.

He started today, and I wanted to share with you how Blessed Stanislaus has again come to help the unemployed, who are just trying to support their families and stay strong in their faith. Believe me when I say that this was a miracle in so many ways.

— MK, Charlottesville, Va.

'I continued to pray for healing'

My friend was suffering from complications after emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix. I began asking Blessed Stanislaus to intercede for his recovery. After a second emergency surgery, his condition was critical. The doctors told his wife he was dying. I continued to ask Blessed Stanislaus for his intercession for my friend's healing and recovery. Thanks to Blessed Stanislaus my friend recovered, and after six months, he returned to work.

— JH, York, Pa.

For a Blessed Stanislaus prayercard (B17-CPPC), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Mączynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. E-mail: graces@marian.org.

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"Helping Souls to Heaven"
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Blessed Stanislaus
made praying for the
Holy Souls a priority.
Make it one of yours.

Visit prayforsouls.org or
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Remembered on Eden Hill

by Andrew Leeco

Florence Prokopiak discovered Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass., to be a special place the first time she came to visit the area.

Among her travels, she found the spirituality of this sacred place to be unique.

“I was visiting many different shrines, but I didn’t feel anything,” Florence said. “Then a

woman said she was going to the Shrine of The Divine Mercy, and I said I would go with her. Let me tell you, the minute I entered the Shrine I felt so at peace. Of all the other shrines I visited over the years, this was the first and only place that I felt at peace.”

Florence says she has made a point since then of telling others what a special place Eden Hill is.

“Now I tell everyone that if they go visit the Shrine, they will feel so at peace. They will feel like a new person when they come home. It is unlike any other place. I just enjoy my trips there tremendously.”

Florence says she tries to come as often as she can. Whenever there is a bus trip scheduled to Eden Hill, she’s on board.

“I just love going there,” she said. “I love the Shrine, I love the memorials and all the statues. And I’m excited about the Stations of the Cross that the Marian Fathers have built.”

Florence has had a connection to the Marians since the 1980s.

“My mother taught me about Sr. Faustina, and I watched a movie on her in 1989. In addition, my sister was in the same convent as Sr. Sophia Michalenko, CMGT, who is the sister of Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC.

Florence said because she felt such a connection to the Shrine and Eden Hill, she believed it was the right place to honor her family.

“It’s such a joy to feel a connection to the Marian Fathers and all those on Eden Hill. I know that the Marians will pray for my family every day, and my family will be remembered.”



As a lasting sign of being remembered by the Marian Fathers, names are etched in the Rays of Mercy stained-glass windows at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

She has been generous and has created many memorials at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine in honor of her family. She has remembered her parents, her three sisters, and other family members in the stained-glass windows, the granite frieze, and candle holders.

Like Florence, benefactors can have a name etched on a bronze plaque, on a stained-glass window, or engraved in granite or marble at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

All benefactors and those they honor are remembered daily at Holy Mass and the Perpetual Novena to The Divine Mercy at the National Shrine. To learn more about these and other special opportunities, please contact Father Joseph’s Assistants for Special Gifts at 1-800-671-2020 or visit online at MemorialsOnEdenHill.org.

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The place that mercy calls home

Create a lasting remembrance and have that special someone’s name etched in brass, stained glass, granite, or marble at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

Call 1-800-671-2020
or visit MemorialsOnEdenHill.org.

BR. CHRIS

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about it, and to the final third, no matter what you say to them, it will not matter — they will be obstinate. The girls have brought this up — that a woman has a right to control her own body. But lovingly, I point out to them that the child's body is not the mother's body. It is a separate human being. The child is an independent union of body and soul.

Premarital sex?

Let me begin by saying this: When I become a priest — God willing — there will be no kid who comes to my confessional whom I will not have the ultimate empathy for when it comes to their struggles with chastity. But what I've learned is that only through God's grace can we live a chaste life. How do we achieve that grace? By asking for it. I'm finding very few people who are asking for that grace. The Church also teaches we need this grace even after we join in Holy Matrimony. Why? Because sexuality is not simply a source of pleasure. It's designed by God as a sacred covenant, an act of love shared in union with God. It's a gift from God geared to the innermost being of the person. That means that by engaging in sex outside of marriage, we commit purely a physical, selfish act that's devoid of God. Our body seeks pleasure for pleasure's sake only, which is a form of slavery.

To read the rest of the interview, including Br. Chris's advice for youth and parents with regard to substance abuse, gay marriage, and the practice of homosexuality, click [HERE](#).

So let's turn to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Conjugal love ... aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility" (1643). What I tell teens is that through marital love only, a man and woman make a covenant that says, "I am one with you, in body and soul. I want to spend my entire life with you. I love you so much that I want to create another life with you. I want another one like you in the world." What's interesting is that in the marital act, we're most like the Trinity because in the Trinity the love between the Father and Son is so great it generates a third person, the Holy Spirit. That's what's so important about marriage. In the *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, there is a quote I love: "I do not know yet whom I will marry, but I do not want to betray my future [spouse] today."

To support the education of Br. Chris and our other Marian seminarians, visit marian.org/seminarians.

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Outstanding Helpers

by Ellen Miller

'The Marians are a spiritual rock ... of my faith'

Mary was born on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, so it's not surprising that her parents named her Mary. Since she was born early, Mary has always taken it as a sign that Our Blessed Mother was claiming her as her spiritual daughter.

As Mary grew up, her grandmother nurtured her faith. "I can still picture my grandmother on her knees in front of an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus," Mary says.

"When I was a little girl, she gave me an image of the Holy Family, and I hung it over my bed. I knew that they would always be there for me."

When Mary got her first job in 1971, she decided that she would give a portion of her income to charity. Her mother suggested that she become a Marian Helper and support the Marians of the Immaculate Conception. Mary says, "Of course, I thought this was perfect."

In addition to sending offerings and intentions to be remembered in the novenas of Masses at the Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Mary followed the example of her grandmother and purchased images of the Sacred Heart from the Marian Helpers Center to give to friends and loved ones.

"At that time, the Marian Fathers were not promoting The Divine Mercy message and devotion. [This was before the ban was lifted in 1978.] The Sacred Heart devotion prepared me for devotion to The Divine Mercy," she says. "I still order holy cards, pictures, and books to give to friends and my teenage niece and nephews. We all need to be encouraged in our faith."

A number of years ago, Mary read an article about a woman who collects religious materials to send to prisons. She contacted the woman and discovered that she lived only five miles from her. With her encouragement and help, Mary started her own ministry of sending



Shown with her husband, Bob, Mary said, "I have been supporting the Marians since I was in my 20s. So many people today are hurting. The Marians are getting out the message of God's love and mercy."

Divine Mercy materials to prisons. She includes her old issues of *Marian Helper* magazine.

Reflecting on more than 40 years as a Marian Helper, Mary says, "The Marians are a spiritual rock that supports the foundation of my faith. Life is full of challenges. I find inspiration in *Marian Helper* magazine. I remember when the community celebrated the 300th anniversary of its founding in 1673. The magazine had a picture

of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the cover. It was a beautiful image that I had never seen before. I framed it, and it still hangs over my desk."

I first spoke to Mary when she was preparing her last will and testament and wanted to find out how to arrange a bequest to the Marian Fathers. She said, "I have been supporting the Marians since I was in my 20s. So many people today are hurting. The Marians are getting out the message of God's love and mercy. People need to hear this message."

To get ready for her meeting with her attorney, she was preparing a list of the people and charities that she wanted to include in her plans. She called me to get the Marians' proper name and address: Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01262.

If you have questions regarding your will or want to make a gift to help the Marian Fathers, please feel free to contact me.



Ellen Miller is Fr. Joseph's Director for Special Gifts. You can contact her at: Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263, or call her toll free at 1-800-671-2020. E-mail: helpers@marian.org.

Available Nov. 15

The 'One Thing' Is Three:

How the Most Holy Trinity Explains Everything

by Michael E. Gaitley, MIC

With humor and ease, Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, deftly unlocks the "one thing," the key to the Church's wisdom, and the greatest mystery of the Catholic faith: the Most Holy Trinity. Far from being an academic read, *The 'One Thing' Is Three* makes deep theology accessible to everyday Catholics. Further, it makes even what's familiar or forgotten new, exciting, and relevant. See the review on page 6. An ideal resource for the Year of Faith. B17-ONE • \$14.95



This is the best example I have ever seen of "the new evangelization" in the form of a book for contemporary Catholics. It covers just about everything, yet slowly and clearly. If you wonder what God is doing in the Church today to convert and convince the modern world, read this book.

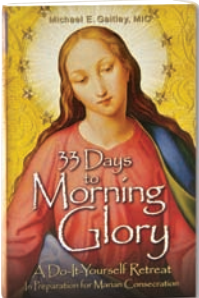
— Peter Kreeft, Ph.D, author of *Catholic Christianity* and *Christianity for Modern Pagans*

33 Days to Morning Glory • Consoling the Heart of Jesus

Both books are available as group retreats!

Brought to you by the Marians and Hearts Afire Parish-based Programs for the New EvangelizationSM

Hearts Afire is perfect for your prayer group, Rosary sodality, Knights of Columbus council, cenacle, and more. Visit AllHeartsAfire.org or call 1-877-200-4277 for more information.



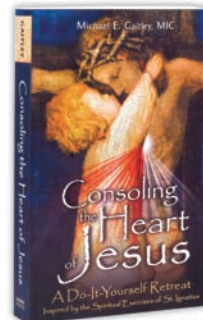
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Consecrate yourself to Mary with the help of 33 Days.

STARTING DATE CHART

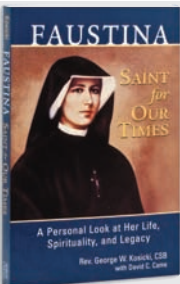
Start 33 Days | Consecration

Nov. 5	Dec. 8
Nov. 9	Dec. 12
Nov. 29	Jan. 1
Dec. 31	Feb. 2
Jan. 9	Feb. 11



This do-it-yourself retreat combines the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius with the teachings of Sts. Thérèse of Lisieux, Faustina Kowalska, and Louis de Monfort.

B17-CHJ • \$14.95



Faustina: Saint for Our Times

As we mark this year for St. Faustina in preparing for the 75th Anniversary of her death next fall, this book makes for ideal reading on the great Apostle of Divine Mercy. Father George W. Kosicki, CSB, a Divine Mercy authority, gives us a compelling, personal portrait of the saint and points to the urgency of her message of mercy for our times.

B17-SFT • \$14.95

Read excerpt on page 15.

Your purchase helps support Marian vocations and efforts to spread Divine Mercy. Thank you.

Christmas items under \$15



LED Advent Votive Set

No matches or flames needed for this set of four votive candles for Advent, yet the candles give the warm look of candle glow. Three purple and one pink, these LED Advent votive candles are excellent for nursing homes, classrooms, or home use. They will give an even, steady burn for days. 2" x 1 3/4". **ALED \$12.95**



Holy Family Ornament

This beautiful ornament depicts the Holy Family in traditional styling with color shading and soft accents. 4" tall. **HFSO \$8.95**



Christmas Pens and Bookmarks

Celebrate the real reason for the holiday season with these inspirational pen-and-bookmark sets. They make great stocking stuffers or favors for your Christmas party. 5 1/2" metal pen and 2" x 6" bookmark. **\$2.00 each**

- A. Hark the Herald Angels Sing: B17-APEN**
Angel on pen clip and Nativity art on bookmark.
- B. Christ the Savior is Born: B17-CSIB**
Star on pen clip and Baby Jesus art on bookmark.
- C. Keep Christ in Christmas: B17-CPB**
Cross on pen clip and Holy Family art on bookmark.



Adoring Santa Lantern Ornament

This lantern ornament is a great way to share the glory of the Christ Child with loved ones. Children are sure to love the "pop-up" feature. Each full-color ornament comes flat and includes a mailing envelope. Measures 5 1/8". **ASLO \$0.99**



Angel With Lamb Ornament

Share the gift of peace this Christmas with this traditional angel with lamb ornament. This keepsake ornament is beautifully crafted of resin with elegant detailing and can hang on a tree or sit upright on a flat surface. 4 1/4" high. **AWLO \$9.95**



All prices are in U.S. funds. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of phone or online orders. To order by mail, please see "Order Info" on page 3.

Christmas items on sale



11-Piece Nativity Set

Celebrate the Savior's coming with this 11-piece Nativity Set. Each set is elegantly crafted and expertly hand painted. Nativity includes Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, Ox, Donkey, Shepherd, Sheep, Gloria Angel and three Wise Men. Made of Resin. Figures are 8". B17-EIN8 ~~Retail Price: \$99.95~~. Sale Price \$59.99.



Holy Family Music Box

This beautiful Holy Family music box plays "Silent Night." Made of fine resin. 5 1/2" high. Individually boxed. B17-HFMB ~~Retail Price: \$22.50~~. Sale Price \$11.25.



Let Heaven and Nature Sing Votive Holder Set

A holiday classic design with a timeless motif. This elegantly sculpted design features red cardinals and holly in a sprinkle of sparkly snow and inscribed with "Joy to the World," "The Lord is Come," "Let Earth Receive Her King." Resin. 1.5" to 3" High. Set of 3. Candles not included. B17-LHVH ~~Retail Price: \$19.95~~. Sale Price \$9.95

Manger Scene Advent Calendar



The magi and shepherds look on as Mary and Joseph rejoice in Christ's birth. A classic nighttime Nativity! Prepare for Christmas by opening a window each day during Advent to reveal a special picture and a Bible reference. Calendar sits easily on any table top or flat surface. Calendar measures 18"x 9". B17-ACMS ~~Retail Price: \$9.95~~. Sale Price \$4.95.

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Our Lord’s words to St. Faustina. (*Diary, 48*)



Father Joseph, MIC, is pleased to announce a new initiative in collaboration with Divine Mercy Art. This initiative involves the ambitious goal of getting a Divine Mercy image into every home and every church for the Year of Faith. The images offered include versions of the image of Divine Mercy and Mary Immaculate, all beautifully reproduced on canvas at affordable prices, in various sizes, and with different framing options. For more information, go to www.divinemercyart.com.



Vilnius

This original version was painted by art professor Eugene Kazimirowski under the supervision of St. Faustina and her confessor, Blessed Michael Sopocko, in Vilnius. It was completed in 1934 and underwent a restoration in 2011. **CVILN**



Hyla

This rendering was made in 1943 by artist Adolf Hyla, who donated it to St. Faustina’s convent in Thanksgiving for his family’s preservation during World War II.

CHYLA



Skemp

This popular rendition was commissioned in the 1970s from American artist Robert O. Skemp. In it, unlike previous images, the rays of mercy extend more directly toward the viewer.

CSKMP



Immaculate Conception

Artist Francesco Smuglewicz depicts the beautiful Virgin, crowned with stars and attended by angels. Under her foot, she crushes a serpent, choking on the apple, as a reference to Genesis 3:15.

CIMAC

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Between Us

by a Marian and a Helper

How I share my faith

When I share my faith, my aim has always been to touch people's hearts in some way. It's because I think that many people today have a head knowledge of the faith but not necessarily a heart knowledge. After all, to have faith in God also means to have a personal relationship with Him.

When I talk to young people especially, I like to tell them that their faith has to move from their heads to their hearts. It has to become personal.

As for myself, I spent the first 30-something years of my life only knowing God in my head but never fully knowing Him in my heart, because I didn't really have a relationship with Him. And if

"My prayer is that I will be able to reach the hearts of those listening, so God can touch them."

I did, it was probably very one-sided. Then, I went through a reversion, and as I slowly opened my heart to the Lord, He was finally able to come in.

When I share my faith, I talk about how loving and merciful God has been to me. I mention the remarkable difference that He has made in my life.

I think that's why personal testimonies are so important when it comes to sharing the faith. A testimony gives people something they can relate to. It's comforting for them to know that another person has gone through some of the same things, that they're not alone.

It's why any time I deliver a homily or give a talk, I try to include something personal from my own life that might be applicable. My prayer is that I will be able to reach the hearts of those listening, so God can touch them. It's all about Him.



Fr. Angelo
Marian



Patti
Marian Helper

Much of my life was a pagan one until 1991, when I experienced a Paul-like conversion. In an instant, interiorly, I met Jesus, loved Him deeply, and knew the Catholic Church held the truth. Aware that this gift of faith was an extraordinary grace, I prayed to witness to this faith by being a vessel of God's love.

Years later, I was invited to the south of France to visit my friend Mary. One afternoon in her breathtaking seaside home, we dined with friends. One of them, I'll call Janet, had survived beyond expectations with stage-four ovarian cancer, yet the prognosis remained grim.

"I asked [Janet] questions concerning faith, and she said she had no faith."

During a lively discussion, Janet unexpectedly ran from the table, crying. As my work includes comforting the sorrowful, I went to see if I could help her. I asked her questions concerning faith, and she said she had no faith. I shared Mary's and my hope to go to Lourdes soon, and she asked to join us.

Setting out, Mary and I offered our pilgrimage for Janet. When leaving Lourdes, Janet seemed joyful. She said that "something special" had occurred, yet she offered little more.

After I returned to America, I communicated with Janet. She valiantly fought this disease and was an example of perseverance in adversity. I learned of Janet's death 18 months later.

My friend Mary accompanied Janet through her illness and witnessed her being baptized into the Catholic Church. We can only guess that the "something special" Janet encountered at Lourdes came through Our Lady's intercession, as Mother Mary led Janet to her Son.

Fr. Angelo Casimiro, MIC, is associate pastor at St. Peter's Parish and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii Parish, both in Kenosha, Wis.

Patti Lewis is founder of Alexandra's House in Kansas City, Mo., an apostolate for terminally ill unborn/newborn babies and their families.

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Join us?

We have nearly 30 men in formation in our province. Come join our mission to spread the message of Divine Mercy and devotion to Mary Immaculate.

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Vocation Director

Marians of the

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Website: marian.org/vocations

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



The next retreats will be on:

Dec. 14-16,

Jan. 25-27,

Feb. 8-10



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