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Inspiration and news from the Marians of the Immaculate Conception

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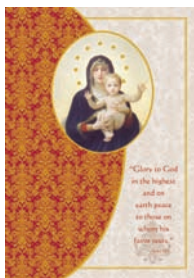


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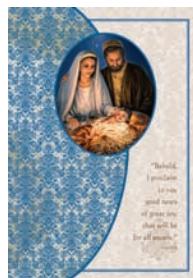
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On the cover: Newly perpetually professed Marians (from left) Brs. Gabriel Cillo, Keith Andre, Thaddaeus Lancton, Michael Baker, Allen Alexander and Jonathan Inskip, stand with the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, following the vows ceremony on Sept. 5, in Washington, D.C. 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.

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WHO WE ARE



Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

The Marians are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 20 countries around the world. We support the Holy Father and embrace the official teachings of the Catholic Church in our special calling to:



- Spread devotion to Mary as the Immaculate Conception.

- Offer our lives for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, especially the victims of war and disease.

- Operate publishing apostolates and assist where the need is greatest in parishes, shrines, and missions.

- Promote the Divine Mercy message and devotion.
- Organize people of good will to work with and through us to bring Christ everywhere.



Association of Marian Helpers (AMH)

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

More than 1.5 million members share in the spiritual benefits of the Holy Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marians.

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

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Fr. Dan talks about the saints

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Father Joseph Writes

Fr. Joseph, MIC

Consecrated to the Lord

It's an ideal time to share with you about the consecrated life — what it means for us Marians, what it means for the entire Church, and what it can mean for you, our Marian Helpers.

As you'll see in our cover story, six of our fine Marian seminarians had the great joy of professing their perpetual vows on Sept. 5.

What a blessed prelude to the year ahead. As you may have heard, Pope Francis has set the Year of Consecrated Life to run from Nov. 30, 2014, to Feb. 2, 2016.

To consecrate means to make something or someone holy, set apart for God alone. So when we use the term “consecrated life,” we are referring to those people who have chosen to dedicate their lives, their very being, to the service of God. In consecration, it's God who prepares us, both in body and soul, for His use and makes us holy. For our part, we respond with our “yes” to God and commit ourselves to pursuing His ways alone, avoiding all sin.

How do we do this as consecrated religious? Well, when we take our perpetual vows, as our six Marian seminarians did in September, we are accepting God's gift and offering ourselves back to Him for His exclusive use. Not only does this involve a private promise to God to pursue a holy life, but it also involves a public act by which we make known to the Church community our consecration to God for the rest of our lives through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

This is equivalent to one's wedding day — usually the happiest day in a person's life. I know firsthand what a beautiful experience it is to make perpetual vows as a consecrated religious.

In fact, the motto of our Marian Congregation, *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*, means

“For Christ and the Church” and captures the essence of our call as Marians to be set apart and fully dedicated to the service of God and His people.

As Marians, we also dedicate ourselves to each other through the fraternal bond of charity in our community life, as set forth in our Marian Constitutions. As brothers, we love each other and are prepared to lay down our lives for each other, as Christ told us to do (see Jn 13:34-35). There is an incredible feeling of joy and peace in knowing that we stand together as brothers. We are ready and willing to give up our possessions (poverty), live as celibate men for the sake of God's kingdom (chastity), and submit our lives to our superiors (obedience). It is in this way that we find true happiness as consecrated religious.

Strengthened by these fraternal bonds in community, we Marians have our marching orders. As such, we embrace the charism of our Congregation as envisioned by our Founder, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski, and then taken up by our Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis. This means spreading devotion to Mary as the Immaculate Conception, offering our lives for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and serving where the need is greatest in parishes, shrines, and missions. In our apostolic work, we also promote the Divine Mercy message and devotion, which fits perfectly with our charism.

But this year dedicated to the consecrated life is a special opportunity for *all* of us — not just the Marians and other professed religious — to consider how we can “consecrate” ourselves to God. In fact, Marian consecration (consecrating oneself to Jesus through Mary) is an excellent way for anyone, married or single, religious or lay, to deepen his or her spiritual life. Therefore, during 2015, let's all seek to become “consecrated” to God for the sake of the kingdom. I invite even those of you who have already made the Marian consecration to renew it during this special year. All for Jesus and Mary!

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

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Father Joseph's Mailbox

Marian Helpers share how they are inspired by the way the Marians live their call for Christ and the Church.

'The Marians changed my whole life'

I have been helping the Marians for almost 40 years. I moved here from New York City, met Fr. Pel, and started helping him out. I got involved, and I could never leave. I have all kinds of health problems, but I still go and volunteer. I ask God for His help, and He gives me the strength to volunteer at special events for eight or nine hours sometimes. I will help out the Marians until the day I die.



Being around the Marians changed my whole life. When I came to Eden Hill, it was like I was one step closer to heaven. I felt at peace. I used to do the wreaths and flowers and all kinds of things to help the Marians, but now I have to sit for most of the day, so I belong to the prayerline. I spend my day sitting and praying. I thank God for allowing me to continue to help the Marians.

— MD, Housatonic, Massachusetts

'They inspire us to show mercy'

Divine Mercy is just so important in our world today. We also know how important it is to get the word out about God's mercy. It is so wonderful that it is the Marians' mission to spread this message. We always tell people about Divine Mercy. We say the Divine Mercy Chaplet daily. We are also delighted that we have gotten to know the Marian priests and brothers at the Washington, D.C., House. It has been a joy for us to know more of the community. We enjoy helping out the Marians when we can. They inspire us to show mercy to the people we encounter in our daily lives. We realize that we all need mercy, and we are so thankful to God that He showers us with His mercy.

We were introduced to the Marians in 2001 when good friends of ours, Mary and Jeff Petrino, introduced us to Divine Mercy. We have been visiting Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, annually for the last five years. Our first trip reminded my husband of his

childhood. He remembered his grandmother making rosaries and collecting clothes and bringing them to Eden Hill. He always wanted to go on the trip, but there was never room in the car. So he was excited to visit Stockbridge and was delighted to discover his grandmother's name engraved on a marble pillar in Memorial Hall at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

— NC, Alexandria, Virginia

'The Marians inspire me in many ways'

I look up to the Marians and consider them my brothers and fathers. I got to know them well as they helped me discern my vocation. My relationship with them continues to grow. Now I hope to serve the Marians and God through a media production company I have started.



The Marians inspire me in many ways, but one way in particular is how they live according to this Blessed George quote: "[Our goal is] to bring Christ everywhere, to restore all things in His Spirit, to glorify the name of the Catholic Church in every place." They do this through their parish missions, book publishing, and being examples for Christ.

Recently, there was a tragic car accident in front of my family's business in which three people died. Though I wasn't there when it happened, I arrived minutes after. I ran up to one of the cars and tried to pry open the passenger door, but it wouldn't budge. I looked inside to see why the door was stuck, and to my horror, I saw the woman inside was dying. I looked over to the other car, and it was engulfed in flames. I just had to step back and pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for their souls. I learned from the Marians the importance of doing works of mercy and praying the chaplet.

— GM, Delray Beach, Florida

It's truly humbling and inspiring to read your letters. They encourage me to remain faithful to my vocation as a Marian. From the bottom of my heart, I thank each of you and all our Marian Helpers for your prayers and support.

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— Fr. Joseph, MIC



Share why you come again and again on pilgrimage to Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass., on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MarianHelpers](https://www.facebook.com/MarianHelpers) or e-mail us at mailbox@marian.org.



Father Joseph's Bookshelf



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FAUSTINA

THE MYSTIC AND HER MESSAGE

BY EWA K. CZACZKOWSKA, FOREWORD BY FR. KAZIMIERZ CHWALEK, MIC
MARIAN PRESS, 413 PP., 28-PAGE PHOTO INSERT, SPECIAL PRICE \$19.95

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This book is much more than simply another biography about St. Faustina. An award-winning journalist and historian Ewa Czackowska researches the life of Faustina with a relentless drive to discover what made her tick. As a journalist, she knows that she's breaking the big story about the mystic whose life and mission have inspired the *Divine Mercy* movement. As a historian, Czackowska knows that she needs to place Faustina within the context of her times.

No armchair researcher, Czackowska leaves no stone unturned as she follows in the footsteps of Faustina the mystic, visiting each of the locations the saint called home throughout her life. At each location, not only does Czackowska give readers an understanding of how the times and Faustina's environment shaped her, but the biographer also shares more

personally the testimonies of those who knew Faustina best.

As a result, Czackowska helps you get to know Faustina as a living, breathing human being. Among other things, you discover this future saint had a temper, disappointed her father when she came home late one evening from a dance, and doubted at times whether her visions of the Lord were real. And many of the testimonies and photos that Czackowska discovered for this biography are unique, the fruit of the author's passionate research.

Czackowska also helps you delve into St. Faustina's rich interior life. For example, you can now follow the saint's visions of heaven, hell, and purgatory in a comprehensible way. Gaps in her inner life that are not clarified in her *Diary* are addressed, giving you a better sense of what was happening in St. Faustina's spiritual life as she received many of her revelations from Jesus.

To sum up, this groundbreaking biography gives you a compelling, fresh, and intimate portrait of this great mystic whom we know and love as St. Faustina. I highly recommend it.

— From the Foreword by Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC

DAY BY DAY FOR THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

365 REFLECTIONS

BY SUSAN TASSONE

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, 400 PP., \$16.95

PRODUCT CODES: **B24-DBD**



In this daily devotional, Susan Tassone gives us a cornucopia of reflections and resources that we can draw on throughout the year in remembering the *Holy Souls* and growing in our devotion to them. The sheer range of the daily reflections is astounding and even surprising.

For instance, *Divine Mercy* devotees will be fascinated to learn that next to Scripture itself, the *Diary of St. Faustina* is one of Tassone's most

frequently quoted sources. It turns out that Sr. Faustina had a deep devotion to the Holy Souls, many of whom would frequently visit her and plead for her prayers.

You expect quotes from the saints in such a book, but what may surprise you is that Tassone also includes many interesting reflections that shed light on the pivotal role the holy angels play in our devotion to the Holy Souls. As you use this devotional, you'll come to a deeper appreciation of how your guardian angel inspires your prayer for the Holy Souls.

Culled from the world's great literature, Tassone has also selected passages on purgatory from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. We learn that the ghost of Hamlet's father, for example, is in purgatory because he suffered an untimely death.

Tassone even includes the great Christian apologist and Anglican C.S. Lewis, who wrote, "Of course, I pray for the dead. ... I believe in purgatory. Our souls demand purgatory, don't they?"

Our own Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, spiritual director of the Holy Souls Sodality, says *Day by Day for the Holy Souls in Purgatory* is "a phenomenal book with fascinating insights." I couldn't agree more.

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Ask a Marian

with Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC

What's Bethlehem like today?

Q. In thinking about Christmas, I was wondering: What is life like now in Bethlehem, the Lord's birthplace?

A. I had the great privilege of studying in the Holy Land as a seminarian in the summer of 1990 and then leading a Marian Helpers Pilgrimage there in 1997. I remember looking at the city of Bethlehem from its hilly outskirts and being reminded of every Christmas card that I had ever seen of the shepherds abiding in the fields. I was touched by the simplicity of the grotto of the nativity where Christ was born. I also recall the nativity scenes hand-carved from olive wood that the Palestinian Christians sold in stores to support their families.

Much has changed in Bethlehem since then. In 2002, the State of Israel began constructing the West Bank separation barrier for security purposes. In some places, the barrier consists of a concrete wall that is up to 26 feet high. The Christians living in Bethlehem say that it is hard to survive when few tourists come to visit because of the security restrictions.

The population of Bethlehem is approximately 25,000. When I visited in 1990, the Christians made up about 60 percent of the population. They are often subjected to intimidation and persecution, so many move away, as many as 1,000 each year. It is estimated that the Christian population there today is only about 15 percent.

Pope Francis celebrated a Mass in Manger Square in Bethlehem on May 25, 2014. After thanking the civil authorities and the Roman Catholic patriarch, he also thanked the "bishops and ordinaries of the Holy Land, the priests, the good Franciscans, the consecrated persons, and all those who labor to keep faith, hope, and love alive in these lands."

We should pray for our Christian brothers and sisters living in the Holy Land. Life is not easy for them. We should try to support them in any way that we can. I can't imagine the Holy Land, the land where Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and all of the Apostles lived their lives without a Christian presence.

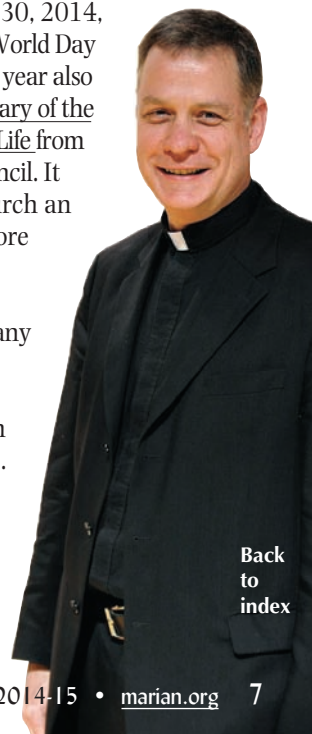
Q. Why did Pope Francis dedicate the year 2015 to the consecrated life? What exactly is the consecrated life?

A. The consecrated life is lived by Catholic Christians who have consecrated or dedicated their lives to God in a formal way. This includes members of religious orders and congregations of men and women, secular institutes, societies of apostolic life, as well as hermits, consecrated virgins, and new forms of consecrated life that have arisen in the Church.

The Pope is very familiar with the consecrated life since he joined the Jesuits in 1958 and served as a provincial superior and seminary rector. He knows that those who consecrate their lives to our Lord face many challenges today. These include reduced numbers and aging members, a lack of vocations in some parts of the world, and the influences of secularization on their way of life.

After the Second Vatican Council, there was a large exodus from convents and monasteries. In some places, however, the "new springtime" of vocations has begun that St. John Paul II spoke of. The Marians and other religious communities in the United States have been blessed with an increasing number of vocations. This creates the challenge of caring for the new members and forming them properly.

The year will run from the First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30, 2014, until Feb. 2, 2016, the World Day of Consecrated Life. This year also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Decree on the Religious Life from the Second Vatican Council. It will give the whole Church an opportunity to learn more about and to pray for consecrated persons. Among other events, many monasteries, convents, and religious houses are planning a one-day open house in February 2015. Let's pray for all consecrated persons and look for events in our areas.



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



Pope Francis talks to prelates as he arrives at the Oct. 18 morning session of the Extraordinary Synod at the Vatican. In his address to the bishops in the final session, the Holy Father cautioned against “hostile rigidity” by “so-called traditionalists” of the Church, but also called out “progressives” who would “bandage a wound before treating it.” The bishops reportedly responded with a four-minute standing ovation.

The family in crisis

The Church begins a yearlong discussion on family matters.

by Felix Carroll

If Fr. Bill Hayward, MIC, could stand before the Holy Father and tell him just one thing he’s learned from parish ministry, it would be that “families nowadays are stressed like never before, with too many demands placed on them.”

Father Ron McBride, MIC, would say the family is “in a state of severe decline. We’ve been losing them for years to the culture of individualism.”

Father Matthew Lamoureux, MIC, would say, “The family is everything. If families are weak, society is weak.”

All three Marian parish priests hasten to add that anything they would say to Pope Francis would only serve to reinforce what the Holy Father clearly knows: The family is in crisis, and the Church must re-examine its role in contemporary times.

Indeed, Pope Francis has placed family matters at the center of his pontificate as evidenced by the two-week Extraordinary Synod at the Vatican dedicated to the “pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization.” The gathering on Oct. 5-19 of some 250 bishops and laity from around the world served as the official opening of a yearlong

discussion leading to an Ordinary Synod of Bishops in October 2015.

Pope to address family matters

Drawing from those discussions, Pope Francis will then write an apostolic exhortation to chart the Church’s course for proclaiming the Gospel of the family in the 21st century. Illustrating his awareness of the complexity of the family in crisis, Pope Francis instructed Synod participants to speak freely. “Let no one say: ‘This you cannot say,’” he told the gathering.

He got what he asked for. There were disagreements among the bishops on the role of gays in the Church and whether divorced and remarried Catholics who haven’t had their first marriages annulled should be permitted to receive Communion. The so-called “relatio,” a mid-Synod summary of topics and comments, caused some dispute, and the public misconstrued it as official Church teaching. Then, in the Synod’s final address, the Pope affirmed the Church’s unchanging doctrine while calling for mercy in dealing with problematic moral situations in families.

Despite the controversy, the Marian

priests say they anticipate the Ordinary Synod and Pope Francis's subsequent exhortation will stress direct pastoral application. Moreover, they believe Pope Francis will help bring clarity to certain matters in which Church teaching has been misunderstood by the general public and "at times misrepresented by clergy themselves," says Fr. Matthew, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Yorkville, Illinois.



Father Matthew Lamoureux, MIC

Church must bear the burden

Meanwhile, concerns for the Church's influence in family life are substantiated by some grim statistics. For instance, in the United States, a Pew Research Center poll released in 2012 indicated that the number of Catholics who attend weekly Mass dropped from 47 percent in 1974 to 24 percent in 2012.

While the Marian priests acknowledge that an array of socio-economic changes and challenges to family life may account for much of the decline in Mass attendance, they agree the burden still falls squarely upon the Church to make the faith relevant in the modern world.

To that end, the Marians see signs of hope beginning with Pope Francis himself. Specifically, the Holy Father's emphasis on the mercy of God and his call for a Church that's more humble, charitable, and willing to take risks is not only drawing admiration worldwide, it's also inspiring clergy to step out from their comfort zones and become more involved in people's lives, just as Jesus did.

"What we see with Pope Francis," says Fr. Matthew, "is that he has not been changing teachings, but he's been putting different wrapping paper on the gift, saying, 'Take a look at this — this beautiful gift that is the Church.' We have to be creative in how we reach people now. We have to deal with the present as it is, so we can bring people to the reality of Christ."

Still, Fr. Bill, pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Kenosha, Wisconsin, says the challenges are formidable. He ministers to families wrenched by financial hardships, divorce, and spousal abandonment. Families are stressed by "obligations to work, school, and sports," he says, "and even Sunday Mass seems like 'just another thing to do' for many families."



Father Bill Hayward, MIC

Father Ron, who serves at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Darien, Illinois, says that despite the challenges — including U.S. Catholics' increasing support of same-sex marriage, cohabitation, and contraception — "bending on orthodoxy is not the solution to the family crisis. The Church's *teachings* are the solution."

The three priests agree the best means the Church has to attract those who challenge, ignore, or reject Christ's promise of salvation is the message of Divine Mercy, which the Marians promote. The appeal can be summed up in these words of Christ to St. Faustina, His secretary of mercy, "The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy" (Diary of St. Faustina, 723).



Father Ron McBride, MIC

"This is where healing begins," says Fr. Ron.

A telling conclusion to the Synod

It was certainly no accident that Pope Francis concluded the Synod by beatifying Pope Paul VI, who shepherded the Church through a contentious period of reform during the cultural and social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s.

In his homily at the beatification Mass, Pope Francis quoted Pope Paul VI, who said, "By carefully surveying the signs of the times, we are making every effort to adapt ways and methods ... to the growing needs of our time and the changing conditions of society."

Perhaps foreshadowing Pope Francis's own pending prescription for the crisis of the family, it was Pope Paul VI who called for an authentic dialogue with the modern world while also standing firm on Church teaching. He stood firm most notably with his 1968 encyclical Humanae Vitae (*Of Human Life*), in which he affirmed the Church's teaching on married love and responsible parenthood while reiterating its opposition to artificial birth control as a serious violation of the procreative and unitive aspects of married love.

Interestingly, it was also Pope Paul VI who, in 1965, established the first Synod of Bishops.

With his beatification, Pope Paul VI's challenge to the Church has now been re-energized under Pope Francis, who said in his homily, "The Church is called to waste no time in seeking to bind up open wounds and to rekindle hope in so many people who have lost hope."

Synod, by the way, means "shared journey."

Says Fr. Matthew, it's a journey "guided by the Holy Spirit and our Merciful Savior." **MH**

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New U.S. director attends international AMH conference

Father Chris Alar, MIC, the director of the Association of Marian Helpers (AMH) based in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, had the opportunity to celebrate Mass at the tomb of the Marian Founder, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski. He was in Poland for the 16th International Conference of the Association of Marian Helpers, held at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lichen on Sept. 1-4, 2014 — his first such conference as “Fr. Joseph, MIC.”

A few days before the conference, Fr. Chris, along with General Promoter of the Association of Marian Helpers Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, and the Stockbridge Marian Helpers Center’s Director of Operations Kevin Dougherty, visited the town of Gora Kalwaria outside Warsaw. Designed in the 1600s as a center for pilgrimage and devotion, it’s also the place where Blessed Stanislaus spent his final years.

Father Chris called the experience of celebrating Mass in the presence of Blessed Stanislaus’s tomb “really amazing, a real wake-up call to go back to our roots, to really look back at what his intent was when he founded this community,” making sure all the efforts of the Association are serving the charism of the Congregation.

Among other new initiatives announced at the conference was a plan for the Stockbridge-based AMH to assist Fr. Mariusz Janiszewski, MIC, and Br. Piotr Jagodzinski, MIC, in launching the Association in the Philippines. Further, the fourth World Apostolic Congress on Mercy will be held in the Philippines in 2017.

The conference drew Association representatives from Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, and, of course, the United States.

Marians to promote mercy at WYD ‘16

Evangelizing youth and spreading Divine Mercy: these are two of St. John Paul II’s greatest legacies to the Church. With that in mind, the Marian Fathers are excited that the 2016 World Youth Day (WYD) will be held in Krakow, Poland, the global center of the



Father Chris Alar, MIC, director of the U.S. branch of the Association of Marian Helpers, was in Lichen, Poland, for the 16th International Conference of the Association of Marian Helpers held Sept. 1-4.

Divine Mercy movement.

What’s the theme for WYD 2016? Mercy.

More specifically, one of the beatitudes: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy” (Mt 5:7).

The Marian Fathers have begun planning how best to assist the 2016 WYD organizers to promote Divine Mercy.

“It’s such a great opportunity,” said Fr. Chris Alar, MIC. “Krakow’s unique place in the history of the Divine Mercy message and devotion will certainly play a role in the celebration. WYD 2016 will be held in the former archdiocese of the Great Mercy Pope, St. John Paul II, and the final resting place of the Secretary of Divine Mercy, St. Faustina. The current archbishop of Krakow and president of WYD 2016 is Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz, the former personal secretary to St. John Paul II.”

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The official website for WYD 2016 — krakow2016.com/en/ — features a guide to praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 o’clock every day, the Hour of Great Mercy.

Bring the message of Divine Mercy to your parish



Invite the Marians to speak about Divine Mercy. For information, call (413) 298-1349 or email parishmissions@marian.org.

In the News: Marians' Divine Mercy Apostolates

MOMM's Divine Mercy campaign spreads worldwide

Ebola. Satanists holding public black masses. ISIS. And the bad news just keeps coming.

Yes, America needs Divine Mercy now more than ever — and Dave and Joan Maroney, founders of Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM), are answering the call.

MOMM's Divine Mercy for America campaign turned two on Oct. 5, St. Faustina Kowalska's feast day, and now the campaign is spreading worldwide. The mission is "to increase awareness of the need for Divine Mercy for our country and the whole world," said Joan. To that end, the Maroneys are seeking to rally a million prayer warriors to intercede for America, especially through the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

"Our message to all the folks across the country who are working hard at their good causes — whether they are saving babies, teaching about end-of-life issues, advocating environmental stewardship, fighting hunger, promoting civil rights, or whatever — is that working arm-in-arm with the Divine Mercy is the surest way of winning the battle," explained Joan. "The promises are there. All we have to do is trust (see *Diary*, 1578). As Fr. George Kosicki [CSB] said, 'Ask for God's mercy, Be merciful, and Completely trust in Jesus.' Many are not 'Asking' enough."

The Maroneys *are* asking, and the campaign is spreading worldwide. "We made very good connections at the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM) in Bogota, Colombia, this past August to expand the program to other countries, including the recent launch of Divine Mercy for Nigeria, as



Joan and Dave Maroney, founders of MOMM, shown with Fr. Dante Aguero, MIC, at WACOM III, have spread their Divine Mercy campaign to Nigeria as well as Trinidad and Tobago. They will be expanding into Canada next year.

Spanish-language Eucharistic Divine Mercy conference. "I will be giving talks on 'Living the Message of Mercy' and 'The Eucharist and the Gift of Life,'" Bryan said. "I am so excited to be speaking at this conference as the number of Spanish cenacles continues to grow." To invite Bryan to speak at your parish or conference, please call the EADM office toll-free at 1-877-380-0727.

New speaker at Healthcare Conference

Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers (from the Vatican) will be the keynote speaker at the 11th Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference on May 6-7, 2015, in Worcester, Massachusetts. He is giving two talks: "The Recently Revised Charter for Health Care Workers" and "Pastoral Care in Health and the New Evangelization."

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Little Sisters of Catholic Maternity will not speak at this year's conference, but will be back soon.

To learn more about the conference or to register, visit thedivinemercy.org/worcester or call 1-800-462-7426.

Robert Stackpole's series: ► [Divine Mercy and Justice](#) ► [Healing in Name of Jesus](#)

THE APOSTOLATES WANT TO HELP YOU SPREAD DIVINE MERCY



For more information, call 1-866-895-3236
or visit thedivinemercy.org/ministries.

The Divine Mercy Apostolates represent four unique lay apostolates of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. They bring the message of Divine Mercy to communities throughout the world.



- ▶ Slideshow by Felix Carroll
- ▶ Slideshow by Marie Romagnano

MARK FANDERS

The Very Rev. Fr. Andrzej Pakula, MIC, the Marians' superior general, solemnly blesses the six Marians who professed perpetual vows. They are (from left) Brs. Keith Andre, Gabriel Cillo, Thaddaeus Lancton, Michael Baker, Jonathan Inskip, and Allen Alexander. In his homily, he called them "the sign of God's blessing."

THE NEXT 100 YEARS

**Marians, Marian
Helpers conclude
U.S. centennial
with look to
a bright future.**

by Felix Carroll

For a religious congregation with Polish roots, it's not out of character for the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception to break out into Polish song, regardless of where individual Marians may hail from.

So amidst a three-day celebration from Sept. 5-7 that marked the conclusion of the 100th anniversary year for the Congregation being established in the United States, Marian priests, brothers, and seminarians broke out into a spirited rendition of "Sto lat," the traditional Polish song for birthdays.

Sto lat! Sto lat! Niech zyje, zyje nam. ...
Rough translation: *A hundred years, a hundred years, let him live, live for us.*

By the shape of things, the prospect of another 100 years of fruitful ministry for the Marians in the U.S. is well within reason. Indeed, as much as the jubilee celebration, held

in Washington, D.C., marked an opportunity to look back with thanksgiving to God, it also was cause for forward-charging hope about the future. That's because six men professed perpetual vows, two of whom were ordained to the diaconate on the following day.

"A jubilee is a year of blessing, especially for the path which still awaits us," said the Superior General of the Marians' worldwide Congregation, the Very Rev. Fr. Andrzej Pakula, MIC, in his homily before the six men became permanent members of the Congregation. "I can say the sign of God's blessing is found in these six men."

Marians professing perpetual vows on Friday, Sept. 5, were Br. Allen Alexander; Br. Keith Andre; Br. Michael Baker; Br. Gabriel Cillo; Br. Jonathan Inskip; and Br. Thaddaeus Lancton. All except Br. Keith are pursuing the priesthood. Brothers Jonathan and Thaddaeus

took a further step closer to the priesthood when, on Sept. 6, the Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout, auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C., ordained them to the transitional diaconate. The events were held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

'The happiest day of my life'

Immediately following the profession of perpetual vows, Br. Allen tapped the microphone and looked out upon a reception hall filled with fellow Marians, family, and Marian Helpers from throughout the United States. Affable, intellectually gifted, and much loved by his Marian brothers, "Big Al" has become a spokesman of sorts for the zealous crop of Marians currently in formation. Though of dissimilar backgrounds and talents, the men are drawn to live the Marian call of spreading Divine Mercy and devotion to Mary Immaculate, as well as offering their lives for the Holy Souls in Purgatory and serving where the need is greatest.

"This day is the happiest day of my life," Br. Allen told the crowd, "and I want everyone to know that when I gave myself to God today, I gave myself to all of you. It's me saying, 'I love You, God, and I love each and every one of you.'"

Indeed, the Marians' ministry in the U.S. is a joint effort — by design — between religious and laity.

It was in August 1913 that the Marians established a permanent presence in the U.S., under the direction of a Lithuanian priest with a commanding presence and Founding-Fathers-like foresight. Father George Matulaitis, since beatified, had secretly joined the Congregation four years prior when it had dwindled to a single member due to suppression of Catholic religious orders under Czarist Russia.

In the U.S., Blessed George would pursue much more than mere asylum for his Congregation. The U.S. would serve as a testing ground for his bold experiment to reshape for contemporary times the Congregation founded in 1673 by Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski. Namely, Blessed George recognized that to be effective evangelizers, the Marians needed to gather people of goodwill — lay helpers — who could be trained to bring Christ into places where religious have no easy access.

So Blessed George — now referred to lovingly by the Marians as "Father Renovator" — inspired the Association of Marian Helpers, the fruits of which include an American ministry headquartered in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, that has played a key role in the worldwide dissemination of the Divine Mercy message and devotion, as revealed to St. Faustina. The Association now has 1.5-million members.

It was Blessed George who famously wrote, "May [I] be like that common dust cloth which, when worn out, is tossed into a dark corner somewhere ... worn out if only your



Brother Allen Alexander, MIC, with his mother, Sharon, at the reception following his profession of perpetual vows with five other Marians. "I prayed one of my children would have a vocation," Sharon said, "and God answered that prayer today."

glory may grow and spread, if only I may thus share in the growth of Your Church." Those words put into sharp focus the longstanding Marian motto *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* — "For Christ and His Church" — not as high-minded Latin words calcified on a crest, but as a rousing and realistic code for daily service.

Tapped for a divine task

Awestruck by the Congregation's history that predates him and the coming work ahead, Br. Michael — who joined with his five Marian brothers in pledging to perpetually live "in conformity to the life of Christ, who was poor, chaste, and obedient" — said he couldn't help but reflect upon the words of our Lord to St. Faustina. Specifically, he said, he thought of Christ's directive that she would help prepare the world for His final coming (see Diary of St. Faustina, 429).

"As perpetually professed members, we're now perpetually linked to that mission of helping to prepare the world for His final coming," said Br. Michael, a California native. "I am both humbled and filled with gratitude to be a member of the religious congregation who, by

God's Providence, has been given the awesome task of helping aching mankind encounter the Divine Mercy Himself — Jesus Christ."

For a Congregation that seeks to serve as a humble "dust cloth" in the hands of the Lord, being center stage is rare. But, upon the closing of the jubilee celebration, the Marians were placed in the spotlight by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington, D.C.

"One can't help but think that the reason the Congregation was restored, renewed, and kept from going out of existence more than

100 years ago was precisely because our Lord and His mother had in mind that there would be a Congregation dedicated to proclaiming Divine Mercy. We're so grateful that you do that, and you do it so beautifully," Cardinal Wuerl said as the principal celebrant during the Marians' Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, Sept. 7.

Noting the Marians' publishing apostolate, mission work around the world, many ministries in parishes, and administration of the [National Shrine of The Divine Mercy](#) in Stockbridge, Cardinal Wuerl told hundreds gathered in North America's largest Catholic church that the Marians "have always been joyful heralds of a very clear and simple message — the message of God's mercy, consolation, the message that God is always there for us."

In imitation of Mary, he said, the Marians "have always said yes" to God's plan of salvation and have inspired countless laypeople to do likewise.

Sharing in the Marians' call

The many Marian Helpers who attended the centennial events echoed the very public acknowledgment by Cardinal Wuerl of the Marians' long labors for the salvation of souls.

"We've been involved with the Marians for many years," said Dorothea Creaven of Delaware. "We're excited to be a part of this movement of spreading Divine Mercy and love for Our Lady. We've received many graces as a result."

"I learned about St. Faustina and her *Diary*

through the Marians," said Don Keith, who flew in for the celebration from California along with his wife, Jan. "It has inspired me to step out and be present to people."

"It has been amazing to watch how [the Marians'] mercy apostolate has been taking the Church by storm, just in the last few years alone. It seems to be everywhere now," said Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette, SS, a formation advisor and spiritual director at The Catholic University of America's Theological College in Washington, D.C.



The Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, presents Cardinal Donald Wuerl with an image of Divine Mercy at the conclusion of the Mass for Thanksgiving. In his homily, Cardinal Wuerl called the Marians "joyous heralds of this message of mercy and consolation, spreading this Good News and bringing hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness."

"I look at the young guys in formation, some of whom we've known for quite awhile, and it gives me a lot of hope, especially with the world today and the disaster it seems to be in," says KC Davy of Maryland, mother of Fr. Andy Davy, MIC, pastor of St. Mary Parish and School in Plano, Illinois. She knows well the "dust cloth" quote from Blessed George.

"I keep thinking of that quote," she said. "And it's true. The Marians are a small congregation, comparatively speaking, but they're everywhere — writing the books that they're writing, being humble parish priests on the front lines, among many other things."

Indeed, it can truly be said that throughout the world, the Marians are thriving, especially in the U.S., where the Congregation has doubled in the last 10 years to about 70 members — "and there's a whole slew of guys looking to join," said [Vocation Director Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC](#).

"On the occasion of this centennial celebration," said the [Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC](#), provincial superior of the Marians in the United States and Argentina, "we recommit ourselves to the vision of our Founder and our Renovator, and we thank God for our friends and benefactors who have suffered, worked, and prayed with us throughout our history."

"Sto lat," Marians and Marian Helpers!

In a world suffering under unprecedented evil and brokenness, may the next 100 years add up to eternal blessings for countless souls led to Christ, the Divine Mercy.

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MH



COURTESY OF CATHERINE WILEY

Catherine Wiley and her husband, Stewart, receive a special blessing from Pope Francis during the “Family, Live the Joy of Faith” pilgrimage that drew 250,000 pilgrims to Rome on Oct. 27-28, 2013.

A call to Grandparents

How Catholic grandparents are getting help to pass on the faith.

Interview by Felix Carroll

Pope Francis has placed family matters at the center of his pontificate, as evidenced by the Extraordinary Synod on the Family, held Oct. 5-19 (see story, page 8). A friend of the Marian Fathers — and a special guest at the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, last April — Catherine Wiley has dedicated her life to the cause of keeping faith at the heart of family life. She’s the founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA). We spoke with her about her ministry.

What is the goal of the Catholic Grandparents Association?

The purpose is to help grandparents pass on the faith to their grandchildren and to value and support them in this role. This is not easy in this day and age. Most of my own generation grew up surrounded by people of faith. In many cases, that’s no longer true for children growing up these days. To help

fill the gap, CGA organizes pilgrimages; we hold prayer appeals; we promote grandparents days in schools; and we promulgate the Universal Prayer for Grandparents, composed in 2008 for us by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. We also hold seminars and workshops. In short, the Association does everything it can to raise awareness of the great vocation of grandparents.

How many countries has the Association reached?

We’re now established in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Malta, the Philippines, and Japan. Just this year, we have introduced the CGA to the United States, with its headquarters in Boca Raton, Florida. We now have more than 12,000 grandparents who attend the Annual National Grandparents Pilgrimage in Knock, Ireland, every year.

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PIOTR DZUBAK

On April 24, 2014, Marie Romagnano, RN, interviews Floribeth Mora, the recipient of the miracle recognized for the canonization of John Paul II. Marco Antonio Rodriguez Pellitero, press officer for the Embassy of Costa Rica to the Holy See, looks on. Floribeth takes every opportunity to share about the miracle.

'A MIRACLE FOR THE WORLD'

Floribeth Mora reflects on her healing through John Paul II's intercession.

Interview by Marie Romagnano, RN

Here we offer portions of two interviews with Floribeth Mora, the recipient of the miracle recognized for the canonization of John Paul II. One was an exclusive interview granted on Feb. 13, 2014, to Marie Romagnano, RN, director of *Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy*. In the other interview, Marie was among a pool of reporters at the Vatican interviewing Floribeth on April 24, 2014, three days before the canonization.

Could you describe your illness?

I had a cruciform aneurysm on the right side, which ruptured and bled inside my brain. It caused the left side of my body to be paralyzed. I had surgery to try to seal the leakage on the artery. When I went into surgery, I was holding a John Paul II prayercard. I prayed, "John Paul II, you are so close to God, tell Him that I don't want to die because of my children." They wanted to clamp the artery, but, unfortunately, the aneurysm was

located in an unreachable part of the brain. The doctor explained that there was nothing he could do. In Costa Rica, they don't perform such risky surgery. I would have to go to Mexico or Cuba, but I couldn't afford that surgery. The doctor said I could live for a month, maybe a week, maybe an hour. He said that the aneurysm would rupture in less than a month, and I was going to die.

What was it like after you returned home?

The atmosphere at home was tense with my husband and five children. My daughter Gabriela was pregnant, and I remember her saying, "Mommy, you need to fight, I want you to meet my baby." My children would come to my room and shake me because they couldn't tell if I was sleeping or if I was dead. My husband didn't sleep; he would bless me and hold my hand until I would fall sleep. My youngest child would put a chair next to my bed and would tuck his little feet inside my

blanket. He wanted to be close to me when I died. Those moments were difficult.

I asked my sisters to take care of my children and help my husband to raise our family. It was important for me that my family remained united. When I was in the hospital, I told my children just like I had taught them, "Always together." We are a very close family. Since my children were little, I have taught them that we are one flesh.

Why did you seek the intercession of Blessed John Paul II?

I was 19 when Pope John Paul II came to Costa Rica. I was amazed to see him even though I was far away from him. I had chills in his presence. I admired him because of how he helped the needy and the sick. Even when he was alive, I always saw him as a saint because he was so full of God.

Could you briefly describe the miracle?

The day of the beatification of John Paul II was approaching, and my fears were growing every day because the end of the

month was coming, too. I woke up at 8 a.m. on May 1, 2011. I was in my bedroom when I heard a voice telling me to get up. Then, I heard the voice again, saying, "Get up. Don't be afraid." Immediately, my eyes were fixed on a newspaper that was on top of the TV. On the front page was a picture of John Paul II with his hands raised, and I saw his hands come out of the image signaling for me to get up. I got up. I felt peace. It was an amazing peace. It gave me the certainty that I was healed.

It wasn't confirmed until seven months later when I went for the results of an MRI. You should have seen the look on the face of the neurologist. He would read the report and then turn to look at me. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. My husband finally asked him, "Doctor, what are you seeing?" The neurologist replied, "Nothing. I don't see anything." I immediately told him that I knew God had healed me through the intercession of John Paul II.

I then flew to Italy to be seen by other doctors. They performed different tests. When they did the angiography, they were able to confirm that there was nothing on my brain,

not even a spot. Nothing showed that my artery was damaged at any point in time. An aneurysm like the one I had shouldn't have healed the way it did. They told me that I should have died a long time ago.

When you prayed to Blessed John Paul II, did you doubt you would be healed?

I'm glad you asked that because many times people have doubts. I stood up, but I didn't just jump out of bed. No, God worked on me first spiritually. He gave me an unexplainable peace, the certainty that I was healed even though my body said otherwise. Despite the fact that my left side was still paralyzed, I knew that I was healed. God gave me [the graces] slowly so my faith could grow. He didn't give it to me all at once, but instead little by little until now I am a healthy person.

Based on your spiritual experience, what would you tell the sick who are at home or in hospitals, as well as the injured and the dying, about hope?

I want to tell them that when they are facing a difficult time, don't despair; don't lose faith in the Lord. Everything will come in God's time, not ours. I know we despair when we have to face serious conditions, but we need to have faith. It's difficult when you have something serious. I went through it. I was living in fear. I believe it's my mission to help people who are losing hope. When you are in the last moments of life, you tend to lose hope. But I want the seriously ill to know that hope is the last thing they should lose.

How did the faith of the nurses and doctors encourage your faith and hope in God?

I have tremendous admiration for the doctors and nurses who took care of me. I was touched the most by those who had hope and talked to me and my family about maintaining our faith and hope. My physician Dr. Alejandro Vargas Román is very much a doctor of faith. He always told us, "God is there. You have to ask God to help you." I always said this miracle is not exclusively for Floribeth. It's a miracle for the world because God wants everyone to know He exists. **MH**



Floribeth Mora, with her husband, Edwin, carries the reliquary during the canonization of John Paul II on April 27, 2014. From the very start of her illness, she turned to John Paul II.

GRANDPARENTS

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How did your ministry begin?

It started more than 10 years ago. I knelt in prayer on Our Lady's birthday and asked her what I, as a mother and a grandmother of 10 beautiful grandchildren, could possibly give her as a present. The answer came in the recognition that I should honor her parents, *St. Anne* and *St. Joachim*, who were the grandparents of Jesus. I realized I needed to start somewhere, so I spoke with and enlisted the help of a number of key people, both clergy and laity.

What are the greatest challenges grandparents face in passing on the faith?

The world and the Church passes by way of the family, so when the Church is weakened, the family is weakened, and when the family is weakened, society is weakened. We need to build up the kingdom of God on earth. There is a real danger that we will be the generation that breaks the chain of faith going back to the early Church. Maybe we think it's up to somebody else to pass on the faith, or we take it for granted that it's being done by somebody else when, in fact, maybe it's not.

Explain the potential that grandparents have to evangelize the next generation.

We live in unprecedented times of broken and fragmented families, and grandparents

Excerpt from Papal Prayer for Grandparents:

Lord Jesus, You were born of the Virgin Mary, the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne. Look with love on grandparents the world over. Protect them! They are a source of enrichment for families, for the Church, and for all of society. Support them! As they grow older, may they continue to be for their families strong pillars of Gospel faith, guardians of noble domestic ideals, living treasuries of sound religious traditions. Make them teachers of wisdom and courage, that they may pass on to future generations the fruits of their mature human and spiritual experience.

— Pope Benedict XVI, 2008

tend to be a fixed point in a fast-changing and often confusing world. Often the grandparent may be the only person in their grandchild's life who is a believing, practicing Christian. We

Discover God's mercy when grieving a child



To remember a deceased child at the Shrine of the Holy Innocents with a glass tile, visit MemorialsOnEdenHill.org/sohi or call 1-800-671-2020.



Helen Kowalska (left) is shown in Lodz, Poland, with her sisters Josephine (center) and Eve. This rare photo of Helen before she entered the convent was analyzed by forensic experts due to doubt about its authenticity.

A PROMISE NEVER TO SHAME HER FATHER AGAIN

Did this incident inspire Helen Kowalska to become a saint?

Excerpted from *Faustina: The Mystic and Her Message* by Ewa Czaczkowska

During the 16 years that Helen spent in her home village of Glogowiec, there was one event that left a deep imprint on the family's collective memory and also left its mark on the future saint. It was an ordinary country dance, one of many organized in the nearby town of Swinice Warckie. No one remembers the date. It might have taken place in 1919. The goal of the festivities was a noble one: The proceeds were earmarked for the needs of the parish. Josephine, the oldest daughter of the Kowalskis, was invited to the dance. From the family's varied accounts of the event, one might gather that either the parents sent Helen to accompany her sister, or Josephine convinced her to come along. Their father supposedly knew nothing about them going out, which seems unlikely.

The girls enjoyed themselves for what must have been a long time. They came home late. In one version of the story it was 10

o'clock, but according to another, it was after midnight. To add insult to injury, the girls were accompanied home by a certain Mr. Kociurski. Stanislaus Kowalski wasn't asleep; he was up waiting for his daughters. "Is this how I raised you, so you would bring shame and disgrace onto my house?" he reproached them, very upset.

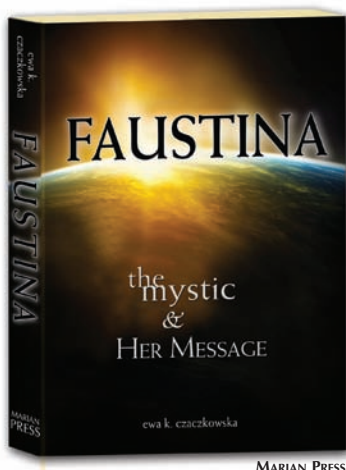
For Helen, her father's reprimand was a ground-shaking experience. She knew that he was disappointed in her. He had gotten so angry at her, and this, supposedly, for the very first time. Thereafter, when she was asked to go to a dance, she would say that she had to ask her father. But that event had deeper repercussions. Helen said as much to her sister Jeannie when she visited Helen in the convent in Warsaw. She admitted — as Jeannie recalled years later — that when her father got angry with her, she desired to "never bring shame on her father again, but

would try hard so as to give him a good reputation and solace, and not disgrace.”

Was it then, indeed, that she decided to become a saint? Like one of the saints in the stories read aloud by her father at home? “I desired to become a great saint from my earliest years,” she would write years later in her *Diary* (1372).

Helen wanted to be obedient to her father, but she defied him on one point — she entered the convent. The dictates of her heart and God’s call were stronger than her parents’ stubborn refusal.

Yet, before this took place, Helen left home to work in the city. On a little over seven acres of arable land, Stanislaus Kowalski was not only unable to provide an education for his eight children or dowries for his daughters; he couldn’t even feed or clothe them. For this reason, once the Kowalski daughters were old enough, they worked as maids to earn a living and to help their family. This was the typical course of events for children from large peasant families. From their overpopulated villages, where there was too little



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land and too many hands to work it, young people would venture out into the wide world to make a living, sometimes going as far as the New World across the Atlantic. In Polish cities and towns, men would hire themselves out as day laborers, and girls as housemaids.

The Kowalski household must have been utterly poverty-stricken, since the parents agreed in 1916 to allow their 8-year-old daughter Natalia to leave home in order to work in the home of distant relatives, where she took care of the younger children.

Helen was older when she first left home to go work — she was 16. For one or two years, she had already been talking to her parents about going away for work. She argued that her father’s work was arduous and that she didn’t have anything to wear on Sundays; she had the worst dress. Her parents agreed. It just so happened that an acquaintance of the Kowalskis, Jane Lugowska from the neighboring village of Rogow, had recently mentioned that her sister Leocadia Bryszewska was looking for a maid. She lived

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in Aleksandrow, near Lodz.

She returned to Glogowiec one year later. It was then that she first asked her parents' permission to enter the convent. Years later, Marianna Kowalska recalled the words of her daughter: "Mommy, I must enter the convent."

Both parents, however, flatly refused to give their permission. Her father argued that he was in debt and had no money to pay for the dowry required by various congregations at that time. Helen told her parents that she "didn't need any money" because "the Lord Jesus Himself will lead me to the convent." But she didn't get anywhere. Her parents were tough, and they didn't agree.

Natalia recalled that it was probably then that their pastor, Fr. Roman Pawlowski, urged Helen's father to sell the family's cow to provide his daughter with a dowry and postulant's wardrobe, since she had such a great desire to enter the convent. Her father wouldn't hear of it because "how will we make a living with such a large family?" And in any case, the cow was needed to pull the plow.

Since she couldn't enter the convent, Helen left once more to work as a servant. This time she worked in Lodz. It was probably during this period — from 1922 to 1924 — that she used to come to visit her parents. But

from the moment she left Lodz for Warsaw in 1924 and entered the convent, she didn't visit Glogowiec again until 1935 — 11 years later. She returned as a nun named Sr. Faustina. She had seen her parents only once since 1924, when they travelled to Krakow for Faustina's first profession of vows in 1928.

Sister Faustina came to Glogowiec from the convent in Vilnius after being alerted by her family to her mother's serious illness. Marianna Kowalska was having severe attacks of acute liver pain. Having received permission from her sister superior, Faustina boarded the train on Feb. 15, 1935. She was in Warsaw by morning, and by eight in the evening, she had already arrived in Glogowiec. "She came to my room, praised God, and knelt down beside me

by the bed and said at once, 'Mommy, you will get up yet.'" Thus, Marianna Kowalska recalled the words of her daughter after many years.

To her own astonishment and that of the rest of the family, Marianna immediately sat up in bed on her own. "I saw her — already I got well. The next day was Sunday. She was getting ready for church. My husband harnessed the horse, and I went to church with them. And I have been healthy to this very day," said Marianna Kowalska in 1952. **MH**

**Aug. 1,
1925: Helen
applies to the
Congregation
of Our Lady
of Mercy at
their convent
in Warsaw, and
she is accepted.**

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Parents make pilgrimage of thanksgiving to Shrine

by Chris Sparks

It was the worst possible news. Stuti was driving to school on Jan. 15, 2013, when she spun out on some ice and smashed her car — and her head — against a pole.

The next day, her parents, Ajay and Lisa Jawahar of Shreveport, Louisiana, were told by her doctors, “She’s not going to make it. Even if she does, she’s going to be in a vegetative state for the rest of her life.”

It was a terrible prospect for a girl who had been in the middle of her senior year of high school, smart, popular, with great college prospects and all the hope in the world. Ajay, a neurosurgeon, had known Stuti’s condition was serious from the start, but hearing that prognosis from his colleagues threw him and Lisa, a radiation therapist, into despair.

Then, his godmother called from India. “They have a little shrine of the Divine Mercy in the western part of India, in the city of Jodhpur,” Ajay explained. “My aunt said, ‘I want you to do something. I want you to not lose hope, and start saying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3 p.m. your time.’”

“She said, ‘Here, we have already talked to the priest and all the devotees of the Divine Mercy, and we are going to start a 33-day novena at 3 p.m. Indian standard time. Hopefully, you will be shown a miracle.’ And Lisa and I prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy sitting by Stuti’s bed in the ICU.”

Ajay and Lisa haven’t stopped praying the chaplet every day at 3 p.m. in the more than a year and a half since then.

“Day after day, we were approached by the medical professionals encouraging us to sign



Ajay and Lisa Jawahar drove 27 hours from Louisiana to the National Shrine to give thanks for their daughter’s recovery. For more than a year and a half, they prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet daily for their daughter after her terrible accident. She is now leading a nearly normal life.

and say, ‘Pull the plug, do not resuscitate.’ And we just started saying that we are hoping for a miracle.”

Then, Stuti began to recover, healing to the point where she could leave the intensive care unit and begin therapy. One day, Ajay was told by a speech pathologist that Stuti would be speaking three-word sentences in three or four months. Later that afternoon, he was called by a nurse into a room where Stuti sat facing him, a white board in front of her — he

couldn’t see what was written there.

The rehabilitation specialist said, “Stuti, can you read what’s on the board?” Stuti looked at the board and read aloud, “I love you, Dad.” Ajay broke down. It was 3 p.m., the Hour of Great Mercy.

Over the span of a year, Stuti went from being at death’s door to walking on her own, talking, laughing, and leading a nearly normal life. She’s now a college student.

This past July, Ajay and Lisa drove 27 hours from Louisiana on pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy to give thanks for their daughter’s recovery. “We timed ourselves so that we would be there at 3 o’clock,” right in time for the Shrine’s daily chaplet, said Ajay. “I just can’t fathom myself living a single second of my life without Divine Mercy.”

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Save the date

In 2015, Divine Mercy Sunday will fall on April 12. For more on the Feast of Mercy, see thedinivemercy.org/celebrate and read about the great promises and graces attached to the feast.



WHAT WILL YOUR GIFT BE?

Take time for Jesus this
season and then decide.

iStock

Like these children in Poland, celebrate the visit of the Magi at Epiphany. Focus your heart in particular on the gift that you will offer the Baby Jesus in response to receiving Jesus Himself, the greatest gift of all.

by Fr. Angelo Casimiro, MIC

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, we should take time to reflect on the greatest gift God could ever give to us — His only begotten Son, Jesus, who was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary can show us how. Without her *fiat*, her “yes” to God, the Incarnation would not have been possible. She is the greatest example in teaching us how to respond to God’s gifts, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus, Emmanuel (“God-with-us”). In fact, she even received a unique gift that prepared her to receive Jesus. Let me explain.

During Advent, the Church celebrates the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8. Some Catholics have the mistaken belief that this feast is about the conception of Jesus when it is actually about the conception

of Mary. On Dec. 8, 1854, the Catholic Church made the dogmatic proclamation that the Blessed Virgin Mary “in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved immune from all stain of original sin.”

What this “singular privilege” means is that this completely free gift from God prepared Mary to be the sinless Mother of God-made-man. It fittingly allowed her to give Jesus an immaculate human nature identical to her own, which respects the law of motherhood since, in the case of Jesus’ conception, no human father was involved.

In receiving the gift of her Immaculate Conception, Mary is the greatest recipient of Divine Mercy, which is nothing more than

God's undeserved grace that He pours out upon us to help us overcome our miseries and meet our true needs.

Bear with me now for a brief theology lesson to help us understand better the nature of the grace Mary received. In her Immaculate Conception, she received the form of Divine Mercy theologians call *prevenient grace*. It comes from the Latin *prae-venire*, which means to "come before." In other words, even before we ask for it, and quite apart from the fact that we do not deserve it and have not earned it in the least, God graciously takes the initiative and comes to our aid. We can see a faint reflection of such prevenient grace in parental love. Consider that a child is loved by his parents not because he has earned it, or even asked for it in any way. Rather, the parent's love comes right from the start, a completely free gift, just because the child is the parent's own.

So, too, with Mary's Immaculate Conception: she did not merit it, nor could she ask for it. It was something done in her and for her by the Father of Mercy, solely on the basis of the foreseen merits of His Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. In fact, the Immaculate

Mary's Magnificat

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is His name.

His mercy is from age to age
to those who fear Him.

He has shown might with His arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry He has filled with good things;
the rich He has sent away empty.

He has helped Israel His servant,
remembering His mercy,
according to His promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and to His descendants forever."

— Luke 1:46-55

Conception is the supreme expression of God's prevenient, unmerited mercy. As St. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Rich in Mercy*, "Mary is the one who experienced mercy in an exceptional way — as no one else" (sec. 9, par. 2).

It was precisely in view of Mary's Immaculate Conception that God gave His

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Graces Received

'Turned my daughter's life around'

Graces received for daughter and son

I am writing to tell you about two graces received from God through the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski.

First, my daughter had been sick with a chronic illness for the last three years. I asked Blessed Stanislaus daily for his intercession. She found a very compassionate neurologist in Boston who listened to her and validated her symptoms. He prescribed a medication that has turned my daughter's life around.

The other grace was for my son. He had been given notice that he was no longer needed at his company. I made a novena to Blessed Stanislaus, and on day nine, my son was given a different position within the company.

— RMF, Worcester, Massachusetts

'We have a home to call our own'

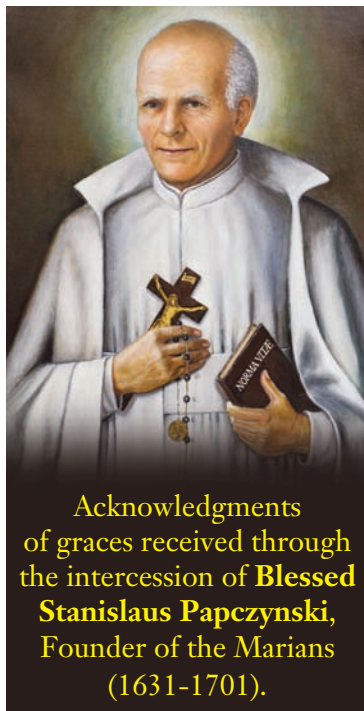
I was in a homeless shelter with a newborn baby, and I was unable to find proper housing for us. I asked Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski for his intercession because I was starting to lose my strength and hope.

My prayers were answered! My daughter and I were able to get into a program, and now we have a home to call our own. I truly believe it was Blessed Stanislaus's intercession that led to this grace.

— AB, Utica, New York

'Now free from jail'

I believe Blessed Stanislaus interceded for my son. In January, I received a call that my



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

son was in jail.

It felt as though someone had put a spear through my heart. I cried and asked Blessed Stanislaus for his intercession. Later that night, I got another call that said my son was now free from jail. Blessed Stanislaus answered me when I needed him the most.

— EM, Sleepy Hollow,
New York

'The house sold in May'

My son's house was for sale for three years. A friend gave me an issue of *Marian Helper* with a letter from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, that mentioned a house selling. I ask Blessed Stanislaus to intercede for us in March. The house sold in May.

— MC, Nashua, New York

'I quickly returned to health'

Last May, I came down with pneumonia. By June, my illness had taken its toll, and I was suffering from depression, insomnia, anemia, and high blood pressure. In desperation, I turned to Blessed Stanislaus to help me. I prayed daily as the doctors scheduled me for another round of tests. I continued to pray after having a number of lab tests run. Two weeks after the tests, all the results came back normal. I quickly returned to health. I want to thank Blessed Stanislaus for my good health.

— JG, National City, California

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For a Blessed Stanislaus prayercard (B24-CPPC), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: graces@marian.org.



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Remembered on Eden Hill

by Andrew Leeco

Marge and Ed Shivers have actively supported the pro-life movement for many years in Massachusetts.

“We have prepared a pro-life retreat at St. Benedict Abbey in Still River, Massachusetts, for the past five years. We do everything from setting the date and booking a priest (we have had Fr. Anthony Gramlich [MIC] in the past), to advertising, mailings, and writing articles in the diocesan newspaper,” Ed said. “We do a number of other pro-life activities such as a ‘Baby Bottle Campaign’ at churches and Catholic schools to benefit ‘The Friends of the Unborn’ in Quincy and displaying pro-life brochures at our local parishes. Finally, I have done a pro-life presentation for a First Friday men’s group in Fall River. Pro-life ministry is an important aspect of our lives that we feel the Holy Spirit has led us to.”

They also come on pilgrimages to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge on a regular basis. “We consider Eden Hill as a special place to renew our spirituality for a few days,” Marge said.

It was on one of these pilgrimages that Fr. Anthony showed them the Shrine of the Holy Innocents and told them about the Protectors of the Sanctity of Life register. The Protectors register is a list of names of those who wish to proclaim their respect for life.

“We instantly wanted to be a part of such a holy and unique shrine,” Ed said. “We also wanted to help give the Holy Innocents all the prayers that they deserve.”

Marge and Ed also wanted to pay tribute to

their friends Al and Rose Thoman by adding their names to the register.

“Al and Rose devoted so many years to promoting the pro-life movement, including praying outside of abortion clinics and creating the pro-life retreat that we took over from them,” Ed said. “We felt that they deserved to be recognized. Al has since passed away, but Rose is still with us.”

Ed and Marge feel that being Protectors is an important part of spreading the pro-life message.

“As Protectors, we feel that we can educate and spread the sanctity of life to those whom we encounter on a daily basis,” Ed said. “It gives us additional aspects of pro-life ministry that we were lacking. It gives us more ‘ammunition,’ so to speak. When we bring up the subject of the Holy Innocents, people listen!”

For an offering of \$100, you may enroll yourself, a friend, or a loved one, living or deceased, as a Protector. All Protectors are remembered daily in the Rosary for Life, in Holy Mass, and in the prayers at the Hour of Great Mercy at the National Shrine. They are also remembered in special Masses on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe; Dec. 28, the feast of the Holy Innocents; and on the third Saturday in July. Further, Protectors are perpetually enrolled in the Association of Marian Helpers. A certificate is sent to each Protector upon joining.

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 MemorialsOnEdenHill.org. **MH**



Protectors of the Sanctity of Life like Ed and Marge have their names listed on the register in the Shrine of the Holy Innocents.

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YOUR GIFT

Continued from page 25

only begotten Son into her loving care at the Annunciation. This is why the Archangel Gabriel greeted her by saying, "Hail, full of grace," in St. Luke's Gospel (1:28).

So how did Mary Immaculate respond after giving the angel her yes and receiving Jesus, the greatest gift of all? The first thing she did was to go in haste to share the gift of Jesus with her cousin Elizabeth, since she could not keep Him and His presence just to herself. When she visited Elizabeth, she could not contain her joy over this most wonderful gift, so she praised God in her Magnificat, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord" (Lk 1:46).

Further, St. Luke tells us that Mary pondered and treasured in her heart the gift of her Son after the visit of the shepherds on that first Christmas night (see 2:19). It must have been a precious time of wonder, joy, and awe for her as she held the Baby Jesus in her arms and gazed upon Him, pondering how He would fulfill His mission as the promised Savior of the world, as announced by the angels to the shepherds. Indeed, on that night of nights, she assuredly gave the precious gift of herself perfectly to Jesus as His mother. Thus, receiving God's greatest gift in Jesus inspires the gift of herself, which should inspire us as well.

Then, at the Epiphany, Mary sees how the gift of her Son, the long-promised King of all, inspired the visit of the Magi and the gifts they

brought as being prophetic of her Son's mission. How her mother's heart must have treasured this visit as she pondered the meaning of those gifts. The gold signified her Son's kingship, and the frankincense as a prized aromatic oil pointed to His divinity, but what of the myrrh? Traditionally used for burials, it pointed to His death, His ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

With Mary as our example, what will our response be this Christmas to receiving Jesus, the greatest gift of all? How can Mary help us to prepare our hearts to receive this gift? What can we offer Jesus in return? Let us imagine ourselves as one of the shepherds or Magi approaching Mary and seeking her advice. She encourages us to just spend time adoring and thanking Him — taking the time to really receive Him into our hearts as God's greatest gift — before we offer Him our gift.

Let us take some quality time just to be with Jesus, whether it is before the manger in our home or in church, or in Eucharistic Adoration. We can do this throughout both the Advent and Christmas seasons. Then, on the Epiphany, like the Magi did, in the presence of Mary, we can give Jesus our gift.

What will your gift be?

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Fr. Angelo Casimiro, MIC, serves as postulant director and rector of students at the Marian House of Studies in Steubenville, Ohio. He was ordained in 2011.

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Outstanding Helpers

by Ellen Miller

A mother's 'happy death' inspires gift

Working with donors to arrange gifts, I am often inspired by their motivations and the creative ways they can accomplish their charitable goals. Carolyn describes a special gift that she and her husband, Jim, arranged:



Carolyn and her husband, Jim, felt her mother's happy death was a beautiful gift from God. It inspired them to create a gift annuity to support Marian seminarians.

My mother, Myrtle, died in 2011. For 10 years, every time I saw her, she asked me to pray for a blessed death, and every day I prayed that God would bless her with His love and peace, especially at the hour of her death.

Her happy death was such a beautiful gift from God. My husband, Jim, and I felt so much gratitude, not only for her happy death but also for the blessings of her life. Our hearts were overflowing with gratitude, and we wanted to make a gift in thanksgiving to Holy Mother Church.

God gave me the inspiration to create a gift annuity to support the education of seminarians, with one-half of the annual payments going to the Marian Fathers and one-half going to our archdiocese.

We are so blessed to support seminarians during our lifetime and to know that the gift will continue to help after our death. Seminarians are going to be carrying on our faith for years after we are no longer here. These future priests will help people know God, love Him, and receive the Eucharist.

Further, Jim and I share a devotion to the Blessed Mother, the Divine Mercy, and the Holy Souls. It is so awesome that we share all three of these with the Marians.

You can never outdo God in generosity. You are blessed over and over again. We were overjoyed when we learned that with our gift of the annuity, we would also receive the precious gift of Gregorian Masses (30 consecutive Masses),

which will be offered for us when we are called home to the Lord. We are the only Catholics in our family, and we are so grateful for this gift.

We converted to Catholicism in 1995. In 2000, Jim got a copy of St. Louis de Montfort's *Total Consecration to Mary*. In the back of the book, he saw

information on enrolling in the Association of Marian Helpers, and he sent in a request to enroll us. We keep the perpetual enrollment folder in our living room, and it reminds us of the Masses and prayers being offered for us.

In hindsight, you can see God's hand in it. When Jim enrolled us, we had no idea that the Marians were also involved in spreading Divine Mercy and praying for the Holy Souls. We did not even understand all that we were receiving; we grew into it.

Of course, we also want to support vocations in our local archdiocese. It is a great privilege and joy to give with an open heart out of love. It is a joy to know that in some small way we are helping the seminarians.

It is also a gift to share this story, if it gives glory to God and touches the hearts of others who wish to give with hearts full of joy and gratitude for God's blessings.

If you, too, would like to support the Marian seminarians or learn how to establish a gift annuity that will provide you with fixed payments for your lifetime, please get in touch with me.



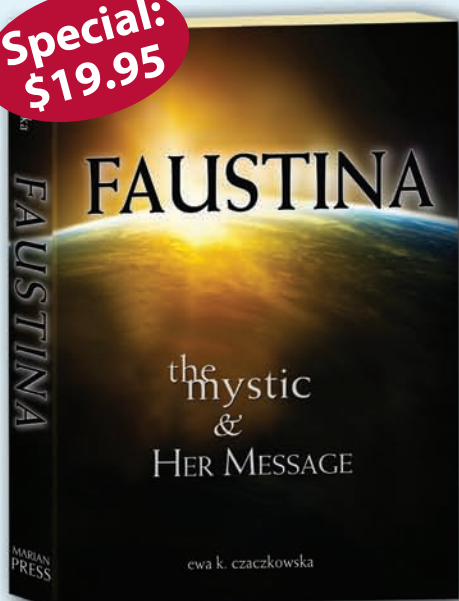
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Ellen Miller is Fr. Joseph's Director for Special Gifts. You can contact her at: Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263, or call her toll free at 1-800-671-2020. Email: helpers@marian.org.

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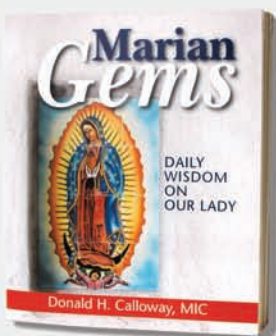
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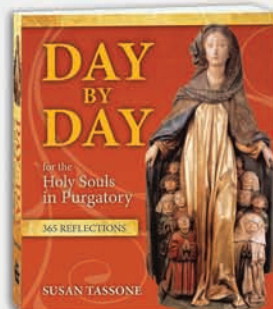


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[See review on page 6](#)

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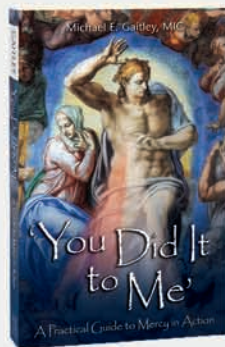
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Between Us

by a Marian and a Helper

'How I live my vocation'

Our former Provincial Superior Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, said to me in 2009, "I need you to feed your brothers, not just food, but feed them in sanctity." Ever since then, I've been the cook at our Marian house in Steubenville, Ohio. At 64 years old, I'm also the "older brother" in more ways than one.



**Br. Keith
Marian**

I prepare simple food, but plentiful and nutritious. Most days, I rely on the Blessed Mother to give me inspiration: "Cook this," she tells me in prayer, and we're good to go. In addition to professed Marians, we have

"Most days, I rely on the Blessed Mother to give me inspiration: 'Cook this,' she tells me in prayer."

men living with us who are pursuing vocations. I'm usually the first one they meet when they walk through the door. Part of my role here is to listen to them, help them

in their struggles as they discern the will of God in their lives, and, yes, I even hound them if I have to.

Importantly, I make it possible for us to gather each evening around the dinner table, to talk, laugh, share. This is so important in developing a sense of who we are as a "family." God gives us relationships to help each one of us get to heaven. I have come to realize that, as with any family, we Marians were not only made for God, but we were made for one another.

Jesus said to His disciples, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (Jn 4:34). I love that. God is giving me a chance to help Him accomplish His work.



**Ann Marie
Helper**

Since learning about the message of Divine Mercy, my career as a registered nurse has become a vocation. Through St. Faustina, the Lord demands we be merciful to those in greatest need. This call prompted me to transfer from serving an affluent community to serving the inner city poor. Since then, Jesus has consistently shown me how He showers graces upon those who turn to Him in trust.

One experience I'll never forget is when I was asked to visit an ill man who lived with his extended family in a very small apartment. I entered a chaotic atmosphere. Even as I was able to stabilize the man, he grew agitated. Adding to the challenge: we didn't speak the same language.

I needed a moment to collect myself and went into the kitchen where I begged Jesus for help. When the ill man's wife came into the kitchen, I got up and hit my head on a shelf. We both reached to catch an object that was falling. It was a picture of St. Faustina!

The wife struggled to ask me in English if I knew about Faustina. I nodded, trying not to cry. She excitedly hurried back to her husband. When I entered the room, the family members, including the ill man, were all smiling at me.

It didn't matter that this family and I came from different backgrounds. What mattered was our common recognition that only through trust in Jesus can we receive true peace. This experience has encouraged me in my vocation to serve those in greatest need.

"Through St. Faustina, the Lord demands we be merciful to those in greatest need."

Fr. Keith Andre, MIC, who professed perpetual vows on Sept. 5, serves his community as a brother.

Ann Marie Chandler, who lives in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, serves the poor as a registered nurse.

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Live the Call!



▶ Three men profess first vows.

We have nearly 30 men in formation in our province. Come join our mission to spread the message of Divine Mercy, devotion to Mary Immaculate, and prayer for the Holy Souls. Want to learn more? Visit marian.org/vocations.

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Father Donald talks about
the Formation process.
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**Want to know
more about a
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as a Marian?**

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Vocation Director
Marians of the
Immaculate Conception
515 Bellevue Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952

Email: vocations@marian.org
Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806
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at the Marian House of Studies
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Dec. 5-7,
Jan. 16-18,
Feb. 6-8,
March 6-8,
and April 3-5.



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