

This Christmas, let's choose a side

Winter 2016-17

Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

marian.org



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begin with me'

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Fr. Joseph, MIC,
explains enrollments.



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with me**

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TheDivineMercy.org
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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1945, the Association began as a small group of friends who believed in and supported the work of the Marians. Now some 1.5-million members strong, the Association is a spiritual benefit society that continues to prayerfully and financially support the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Marian Helpers, by a decree of the Holy See, share in the following graces:

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

In other words, as associates, you share in all the spiritual benefits of our prayers, Masses, and works of mercy!



YouTube



Visit marian.org/social

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT US

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

- Thirteenth of the Month Club: marian.org/13th
- Friends of Mercy: TheDivineMercy.org/friends
- Holy Souls Sodality: PrayForSouls.org
- or call (413) 298-1382.

Arrange a special gift:

- using stock, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: marian.org/plannedgiving

- to support a particular ministry or need: marian.org/give
- to create a memorial or tribute: MemorialsOnEdenHill.org
- or call (413) 298-1382.

When making your will ...

A sample form of bequest to the Marians is:

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

THESE BEADS ARE NO SWEAT

My dear Marian Helpers, we're going to be talking and writing a lot in the coming year about one of the most astounding occurrences in modern times: Our Lady's appearances a century ago in the tiny village of Fatima, Portugal. As the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, I consider it a responsibility — and an honor — to do so.

With the cover story of this issue of *Marian Helper*, I am inviting you (urging you, actually) to join together with the Marian Fathers to heed Our Lady of Fatima's call to pray the Rosary daily for peace.

As my fellow Marian Fr. Dan Cambra likes to stress: "Our Lady of Fatima didn't ask us to make pilgrimages. She didn't ask us to read a lot of books. She asked us to do something that's easy and accessible to everyone — to children, to the educated, to the uneducated, each of us in our own way. She asked us to pray the Rosary for peace in the world."

"Easy," Fr. Dan called it.

"Easy?" you may be thinking to yourself.

"Yes, easy," I say.

But I'm obliged to admit I used to find praying the Rosary a little *difficult*, even tedious. I didn't understand it — all those Hail Marys, bead after bead of Hail Marys. Even as I grew deeper in my faith and began to seriously consider a religious

vocation, I tried diligently to hunker down and make the Rosary a part of my daily prayer life. But, despite my strong devotion to Mary, when it came time to pick up my rosary beads, all those Hail Marys that lay ahead seemed like such a formidable task. I would often find excuses to skip it all together.

It was not until I first joined the Marian Fathers that everything suddenly clicked. I recall I had

gathered with my future religious brothers to pray. As we began to recite the Rosary together, God gave me the grace to quiet my mind and simply listen. As I listened to one Hail Mary after the other, Our Lady spoke to my heart, telling me that those Hail Marys are not the main point of the Rosary. Rather, they serve as a "soundtrack," per se. Ah-ha! This soundtrack, beautiful and mesmerizing, is designed to center our attention on the "plot" itself: the biblical salvific events of Christ's life and their close connection with His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is as if the Hail Marys are the background music we hear while watching a gripping movie, and the mysteries are the plot we are to focus on. That day, the Mysteries of the Rosary became alive for me for the first time.

That day, I came to understand the power of the Rosary. Not until you understand the *power* of the Rosary can you love to *pray* the Rosary. The intellect precedes the will, as they say. It's that easy!

I ask Our Lady to pray for us that we might be faithful to the Rosary. With great trust and love, let us pick up those beads daily. Let's turn to Our Lady of Fatima who confirms for us our role, and hers, in bringing about a renewal of the world for the greater glory of God and the salvation of all.

Fr. Joseph, MIC

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



A 'hound of Heaven'



Time and time again, Patricia Cassidy of Dover Plains, New York, has been given heavenly assurance that Jesus keeps His promises to those who pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy* — an intercessory prayer given to the world through *St. Maria Faustina Kowalska* in the 1930s. Patricia, a frequent visitor to the *National Shrine of The Divine Mercy*, shares her story with us:

What happened that caused you to become an intercessor with the Divine Mercy?

In 1992, my daughter, Gerri, was 24 years old. She had just started attending college to study nursing, and she was dating a young man who wasn't Catholic. She had asthma really bad. One night she couldn't breathe and was rushed by ambulance to the hospital. She was put on life support. I called my family, her boyfriend, and our parish priest, and we gathered together around her bed while our priest administered the Anointing of the Sick. We spent the night repeatedly praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy because I knew that this was the most powerful prayer to be said for those in need, especially for the dying. The following day, the doctor informed us that Gerri, who had slipped into a coma, had only a one percent chance of living. I broke down.

Her boyfriend, John, broke down, too. I said to him, "John, you might say to Jesus that if He saves her, you'll become a Catholic." Every day we would pray the chaplet at her bedside. Then, on the ninth day of our prayers, she came out of her coma! She told us that while she was in the coma, she had seen Jesus. She had never felt so much love in her whole life. She said that she and Jesus spoke about a lot of things, but all she could remember was that He said, "The two most important things in life are love and knowledge." After that, she knew she would never be afraid to die. Despite her not wanting to leave Him, she was brought back to life. She said Jesus appeared before her one last time, in her hospital room, and assured her everything would be OK. Her asthma has been under control since then!

She returned to college, received her degree in nursing and was inducted into the Nursing Honor Society. John became Catholic, and they married soon after. They now have four beautiful children. She has taught them the chaplet, and they pray it together as a family.

Who have you prayed the chaplet for since then?

My first husband, Joseph, was not like my husband now, Harry. Harry and I pray the chaplet together all

the time, but Joseph didn't pray it with me. In 2002, Joseph was dying of cancer from smoking, and he was afraid of dying. I would pray the chaplet, and he would listen. I told him Jesus was so kind and loving, and Joseph and I had reconciled with each other. One day, our friends and relatives had just finished praying the chaplet with me by his bedside and the priest arrived just before he died to give him the Anointing of the Sick. He died at 3 o'clock in the afternoon — the hour of Divine Mercy!

When one of my neighbors became deathly ill with emphysema, I prayed the chaplet for her, even though she said that there was no God. Still, I remembered in her *Diary*, St. Faustina records Jesus saying, "When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer: O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You" (186-187).

I prayed this conversion prayer for her, and she died shortly after. At her funeral I saw rosary beads in her hands, so I'm hoping that something happened!

Now, I'm working on another miracle for a young man named Charlie who has three inoperable brain tumors. I have such faith that Charlie can be healed. That's why I'm driven to visit the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy so often. I venerate the relic of St. Faustina for Charlie. I will accept God's will if he is not physically healed, but I know I'm heard by God. I'm so obnoxious with my prayers, I know that I'm a hound of Heaven. I pray, and God must say, "Oh, it's her again!"

I pray the chaplet for many people who are sick and dying. Even if a miracle doesn't happen for some people I pray for, I'm still putting their lives into the right hands.

Who do you share the Divine Mercy message with?

I tell everyone about the Divine Mercy message and the chaplet, including through a special Facebook page. I give out Divine Mercy materials to those I know and those I happen to meet who are suffering in any way. I also leave booklets on the chaplet in the hospital that Gerri was taken to, with a note on it that says, "It's not by chance that you found this." I don't worry about the reactions I will get when I share the devotion, because Jesus said to St. Faustina, "Souls who spread the honor of My mercy I shield through their entire lives as a tender mother her infant, and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the Merciful Savior" (1075). I want to do anything I can to give people hope. MH

— Melanie Williams

IN BRIEF

Please pray for **Michael Bethea**, the singer/songwriter best known for "The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song," which was filmed at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in 2002 and frequently airs on EWTN. Now, he needs *our* prayers. Michael, who was diagnosed with end-stage renal failure in 2011, needs a kidney transplant.

"Michael's family and young children are desperate for him to live," said his chaplet co-singer, Trish Short. "They are praying to find a match for Michael within the next eight months' time."

Please lift Michael up in your prayers. Praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy seems most appropriate. To offer further assistance to Michael, visit transplants.org and click on "Find an NFT Patient." Then enter Michael's name into the search field.



Congratulations to the **Most Rev. Martin David Holley**, a *vir aggregatus* (associate member) of the Marian Fathers, who was appointed by Pope Francis as bishop of the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee in August.

"We are happy because not only is he a beloved shepherd of the Catholic faithful, a man of deep faith, of great love and of tender heart, but also because he has been very close to our community," said the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, provincial superior for the Marian Fathers in the United States and Argentina.

Before his new assignment, Bishop Holley served as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., where he spent a lot of time with the Marian Fathers in the Marian House of Study. Bishop Holley ordained Marian priests Fr. Andy Davy, Fr. Chris Alar, Fr. Angelo Casimiro, Fr. Ken Dos Santos, Fr. Ron McBride, and Fr. John Larson.



Safe travels to **Jerry Bauman**, founder of Divine Mercy for Youth, based in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He's heading up to Stockbridge later this fall to have his new Divine Mercy food trailer blessed by the Marian Fathers. He and his volunteers have been using the trailer to distribute free pizza, drinks, and Divine Mercy images to children in poor neighborhoods. The outside of the trailer has images of Jesus, Mary, St. Faustina, and St. John Paul II. "We call it 'Operation Mercy Relief,'" Jerry says.

We're looking forward to seeing it in person.

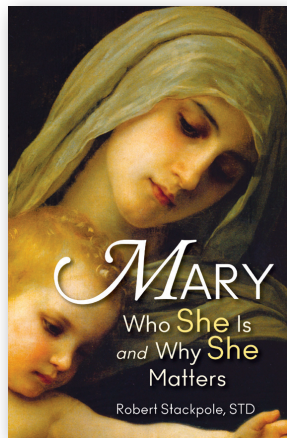
FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

Visit ShopMercy.org/b32 or call 1-800-462-7426.

The Jubilee ends, and the 100th anniversary of the Fatima apparitions approaches. To help you better know and love Our Lady of the Rosary, the Immaculate Conception, we recommend these resources:

MARY 101 KIT

A book, a DVD, and a treasure trove of pamphlets, prayer-cards, and more: This is your one-stop introduction to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Get to know our spiritual mother better with information on the basic Church dogmas about Mary Immaculate, key prayers such as the Rosary, and answers to common Protestant objections to devotion to Mary. In our special 100th Anniversary of Fatima pack (included in the kit), we provide resources to help you learn about the apparitions and calls of Our Lady at Fatima, why these apparitions are still relevant today, and what we can do to bring about peace in the world. \$29.95. [B32-MKIT](#)

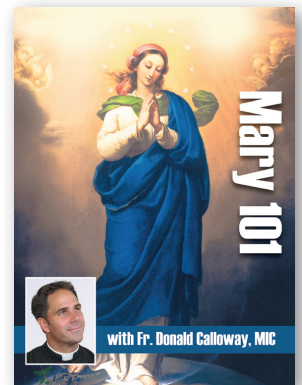


MARY: WHO SHE IS AND WHY SHE MATTERS

Theologian and author Dr. Robert Stackpole, STD, has written an overview of the basic truths about Our Lady and her ongoing role in the Church today with wit and knowledge, making this the perfect introduction to the Blessed Virgin Mary for readers everywhere. Offering answers to common Protestant objections to Catholic teaching about and devotion to the Blessed Mother, Dr. Stackpole's book should interest Catholics and non-Catholics alike. \$14.95. [B32-MBK](#)

MARY 101 DVD

Renowned Mariologist and bestselling author Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, gives an easy-to-understand overview of the best and loveliest of all women: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Learn from Fr. Donald why he loves Our Lady so much, and why we should, too. \$9.95. [B32-MDVD](#) (CD also available. \$9.95. [B32-MARYCD](#))



MARY CALENDAR 2017

In honor of the 100th anniversary of Fatima, we bring you the 2017 Mary Calendar, featuring beautiful Marian artwork and inspirational quotes. Designed to help you remember and celebrate special Marian feast days, learn the prayers given us by Our Lady and the Angel of Peace at Fatima, and spread how to pray the Rosary, this is the calendar for all children of Mary in the New Year. \$12.95. [B32-CAL17](#)



THE NEXT CHAPTER

Following the joyous canonization of our Marian Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczynski, on June 5 in St. Peter's Square, the members of our General Curia have had the opportunity to attend Masses of Thanksgiving in various countries.

I am writing this article from Lithuania where I'm attending just such an event. It is a chance to continue to rejoice over this great moment in our Congregation's history and to help more people come to know this new saint who has proven to be a powerful intercessor for Marian Helpers around the world.

But we're not just looking back — we're very much looking ahead. Indeed, another task that we have before us in our Roman House right now involves getting ready for our Marian Congregation's next General Chapter, which will take place in February.

Our Congregation's General Chapter is an important meeting that takes place every six years in Rome. About 30 Marians from around the world will attend. Either they were elected as delegates from their provinces or vicariates, or they are the religious superiors for a specific region. During the General Chapter, the Chapter members elect a superior general and his four-member council who will help him to oversee the work of the Marians all over the world.

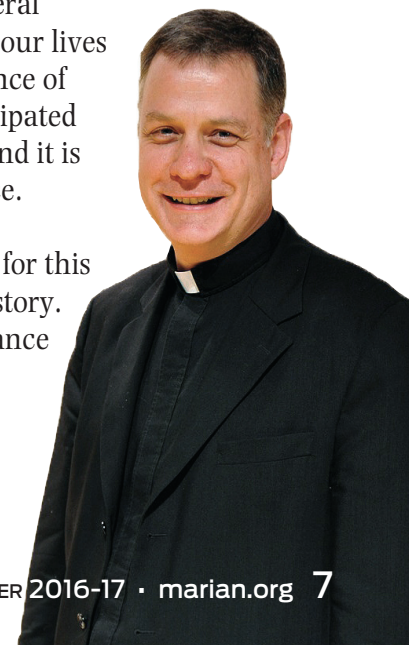
The General Chapter usually takes about two to three weeks to complete. The Chapter members listen to and discuss reports given by the various superiors on the progress of their provinces and vicariates over the past six years. The life of the religious community is analyzed and discussed. We talk about whether the Lord might be calling us to open a new mission elsewhere. Marians from all over the world can offer proposals that will be voted on and perhaps adopted as decrees or recommendations for the Congregation.

During this next Chapter, the Marian Constitutions, which are our rule of life, will be discussed. A commission has been meeting in Rome over the

last six years to prepare proposals on possible changes to update our Constitutions. A two-thirds majority vote by the Chapter members is needed to make any changes to the Constitutions, and from there we need the approval of the Holy See. We always hope that any such changes will better express our charism — the gift of our identity as a community that God has given us through our Founder. The Marian charism involves devotion to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayer for the souls in Purgatory, and assistance to diocesan priests in the apostolic works of the Church.

The Marian Constitutions state that the purpose of the General Chapter is primarily to protect the patrimony of the Congregation. This includes our history, our traditions, our properties, and all that we have inherited from the Marians who have gone before us. Our Congregation has existed for more than 300 years, and so we must plan and organize so that we can continue into the future, if it is the Lord's holy will. The Chapter should represent the entire Congregation and express the fraternal unity in charity of all the members and their concern for the common good. The General Chapter is a way of opening our lives to the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit. I have participated in three General Chapters, and it is always a powerful experience.

I ask you to pray for our Congregation as we prepare for this important moment in our history. May we be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit! Amen.

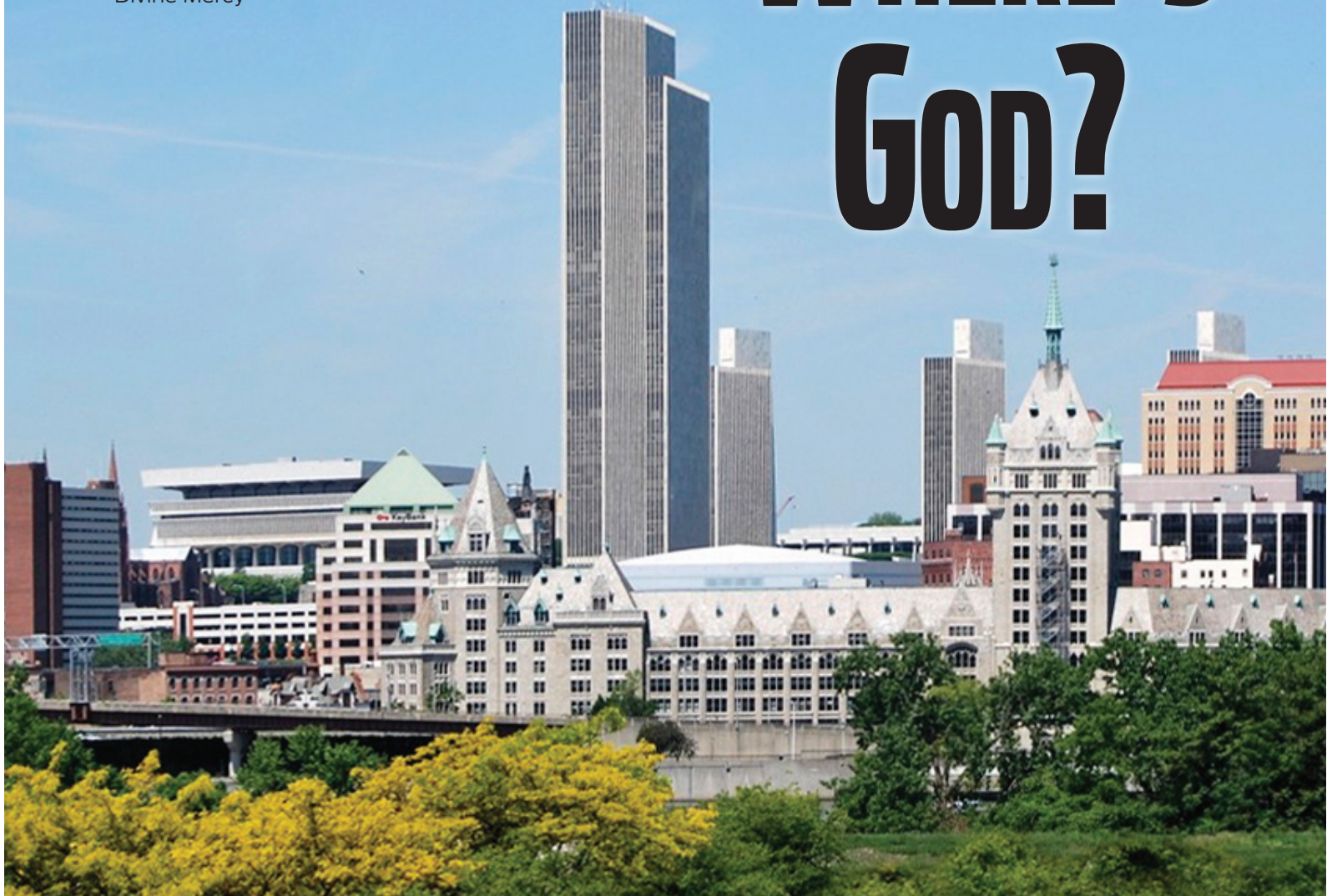


Father Joe Roesch, MIC, is the vicar general of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He lives in Rome.



The Consecration
Prayer to the
Divine Mercy

WHERE'S GOD?



By Felix Carroll

In a low-ceilinged, sneaker-scuffed gymnasium where generations of Catholic school children perennially performed Christmas pageants and played dodgeball, Fr. Brian Slezak dims the lights, switches on a projector, and takes his place on a fold-out chair, along with 50-plus of his parishioners.

On the screen, a young priest talks about how we're all called to become great saints.

"Saint Thérèse was known as the 'bold saint,'" the priest on the screen says. "She asked for bold things." The Lord, he said, desires that we do the same.

That's welcome news for a crowd with some rather bold requests, including the radical reordering of hearts and minds within a 10,419-square-mile diocese planted

in the number one "most post-Christian" region in the United States.

The greater Albany region of upstate New York holds that ignominious title, tied with San Francisco, based on a survey of Christian identity and practice that was released in 2015 by Barna Group, a polling firm that tracks the role of faith in America.

The leader of the Diocese of Albany, Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, isn't about to dispute those findings — and he isn't about to fall into despair, either. Too much is at stake, and there are too many reasons to be bold.

This summer, he invited his entire diocese to consecrate themselves to the Divine Mercy by the close of the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, on Nov. 20.

In the most 'post-Christian' region a diocese gets down to business



What that means is that those who take him up on his suggestion will proclaim their intentions to fight discouragement; be merciful in deed, word, and prayer; keep before their eyes their own weakness and sin, trusting that contrite hearts please the Lord; and declare their belief that the Lord can transform them into saints.

The tool with which to do so is the *33 Days to Merciful Love* retreat program written by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, which incorporates the spirituality of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

“There’s hope. You can make a difference in your family, your communities, your country, the world,” says Fr. Gaitley, the priest in the video. “How? By becoming saints, and it’s not so difficult.”

Not so difficult? As day turned to night on Tuesday,

Oct. 11, Fr. Slezak welcomed his parishioners into the since-shuttered school of Holy Trinity Parish in the city of Cohoes to find out.

Not so crazy

Alice Benamati left work early to be here. An hour’s pay forfeited. She’ll do so each Tuesday for the next four weeks until she stands in Albany’s Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception with hundreds from around the diocese, including Bishop Scharfenberger, to recite the prayer of consecration from *33 Days*.

Self-effacing and clearly relishing the fact she successfully goaded her husband, David, into joining her, Alice shrugs, saying, “This is not one crazy church lady with the idea to get people to pray. This is coming from the

top down.”

That is to say, from the Holy Father (who has continually urged the faithful to prayerfully turn to Christ, who offers love, not scorn); from Bishop Scharfenberger (who trusts his diocese can flourish in faith from the tiny mustard seed of prayers and good works); and from her pastor, Fr. Slezak (who says, “If it has anything to do with Divine Mercy, there’s no way it won’t bear fruit”).

That’s why Alice is here — and because the spiritual decline of her own family painfully mirrors in microcosm that of the diocese itself. Of her six grown children, only one remains a regular churchgoer.

“Two come when I beg them to,” she says. “Two are devout atheists, and one is agnostic. This — and we sacrificed long and hard to send them all to Catholic school.”

It’s an all-too-familiar story.

Due largely to declining Mass attendance, the Albany diocese has closed dozens of parishes in recent years. Holy Trinity itself is the only remaining Catholic parish in Cohoes. There used to be seven.

The steady slide toward “post-Christianity” is hardly unique to Albany; it’s just that it’s happening more rapidly here than in other parts of the country, the Barna survey indicates. In the greater Albany region, 66 percent of those surveyed have decoupled themselves from affiliation with the Christian faith. The national average is 44 percent. Two generations ago, this would have been unheard of in a nation built from the beachhead of European Christian settlers.



Bishop Scharfenberger opens his diocese’s Holy Door in Albany last Dec. 8, at the start of the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. On Nov. 20, when that door closes, he knows other doors will open.

What’s missing here?

As they will do each Tuesday evening leading up to their consecration, the Holy Trinity parishioners participating in the *33 Days* retreat will break into small groups to pray and discuss their families, their faith, their diocese, the world, and their Christian responsibilities.

“We need to find out why people are leaving the faith in the first place,” Doris Blais says to her fellow group members on that opening night.

To that point, Bishop Scharfenberger, who took over the 334,000-member diocese in 2014, has a theory that breaks from the boilerplate excuse of collective moral abandonment.

“We are in an age where secularism has become a religion unto itself,” he says. “But we do need to

acknowledge that the secular mentality *wants* to be humanitarian, *wants* to be inclusive, *wants* to be forgiving. But what’s being lost in all of this is the integration between a life of good works and a life of prayer, which is oriented toward God, our Creator.”

To that point, the Diocese of Albany maintains its long-held role as a powerful force of civic good in its emphasis on Catholic works of charity, much of that done in tandem with other denominations and government agencies. “But are we praising God as the Source of all that’s good?” Bishop Scharfenberger asks. The question is rhetorical. The answer is, “Hardly.”

And this is where Fr. Gaitley’s program comes in.

The Jubilee Year connection

As Divine Providence would have it, just as Pope Francis was inaugurating the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy last Dec. 8, Fr. Gaitley was finishing writing *33 Days to Merciful Love*, a do-it-yourself retreat that — like his 2011 book on Marian consecration, *33 Days to Morning Glory* — can be done alone or in a group.

Indeed, as the Holy Father was calling upon the faithful to rediscover the mercy of God as the Source of strength and hope, Fr. Gaitley was unearthing and unpacking profound insights from St. Thérèse into the love of Christ, who longs to pour out His mercy, especially on sinners; her discernment that sinners often close their hearts to the Lord’s mercy, a rejection that causes

Jesus great suffering; and how she asked Jesus to pour into her soul all the rejected mercy that others didn’t want, so that she could distribute it through prayer to a broken world.

Since its release earlier this year, more than 100,000 people worldwide have made the consecration.

Father Gaitley wrote the book from his home at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, a mere four miles from the border of the Diocese of Albany. When he got wind of Albany’s “post-Christian” ranking, his Marian charism of going “where the need is greatest” kicked in.

He and Bishop Scharfenberger formed a close bond. Father Gaitley has made more than a dozen sorties into the diocese to speak about the consecration. The parishes

were already well primed. In 2015, Bishop Scharfenberger had encouraged his diocese to make the consecration to Mary using *33 Days to Morning Glory*.

“It was like a grace bomb was dropped on our diocese,” says Bishop Scharfenberger.

By means of the consecration, which nearly 2 million people worldwide have made, Bishop Scharfenberger and many of his pastors witnessed a spiritual hunger that had hitherto remained hidden.

He isn’t the only bishop to now turn his diocese’s gaze to *33 Days to Merciful Love*. Archbishop of Kansas City Joseph F. Naumann, too, has encouraged his flock to conclude the Jubilee Year by making the consecration.

Opening doors

It makes perfect sense to pastors such as Fr. Rendell Torres, who leads two parishes in the rural northern reaches of the Diocese of Albany. Like many clergy, he was struggling with what it might mean when the Holy Father concludes the Jubilee Year, which coincides with the closing of designated Holy Doors at basilicas, cathedrals, and shrines around the world.

“Does mercy ‘close’ with the end of the Jubilee Year? Obviously not,” says Fr. Torres. “So the consecration to Divine Mercy is such that the doors of our hearts will now be opened. We can receive the mercy of God that others reject and then give it back to the world by being channels of His mercy through our actions and testimony to the mercy of God in our lives.”

“To be consecrated means we become seeds planted in our diocese,” Fr. Torres says. “I don’t know how quickly the change will occur, but I do know we really need this now.”

‘I wring my hands’

Back at Holy Trinity Parish on the opening night, Fr. Slezak leads a closing prayer, which is punctuated by a



For the sake of their family and their diocese, David and Alice Benamati of Cohoes, New York, will consecrate themselves to the Divine Mercy on Nov. 13.

round of applause.

A life-size image of Jesus, the *Divine Mercy*, is set front and center in the gymnasium. In the image, Jesus steps from the darkness — His right hand raised in blessing, His left hand opening His garment to expose His wounded Heart. To those who eschew Christianity in no small part due to the misperception that God is a wrathful judge, punitive to rule-breakers, it’s worth noting that in this famous image, Jesus is not pointing fingers.

“You know,” says Alice, making her way past the image and toward the exit, “I wring my hands on a daily basis: ‘What else can I be doing?’ There is nothing else I haven’t already done. I’m reminded tonight that when you don’t know what to do, when you feel hopeless, all you can do is to put it all into God’s hands and say, ‘You got to help me with this.’”

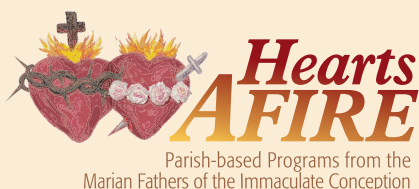
“I think that’s where we are as a diocese,” she says. “That’s where we are as families.”

Father Slezak opens the door for her.

“Well,” he says, “what I do know is that God is at work here. I know He is.”

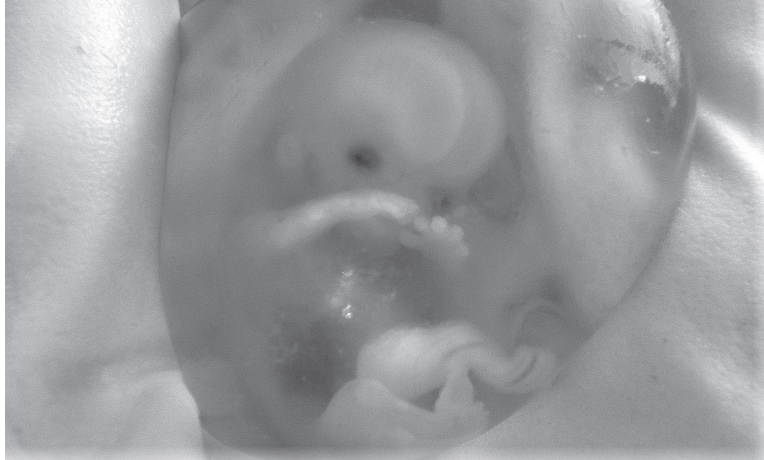
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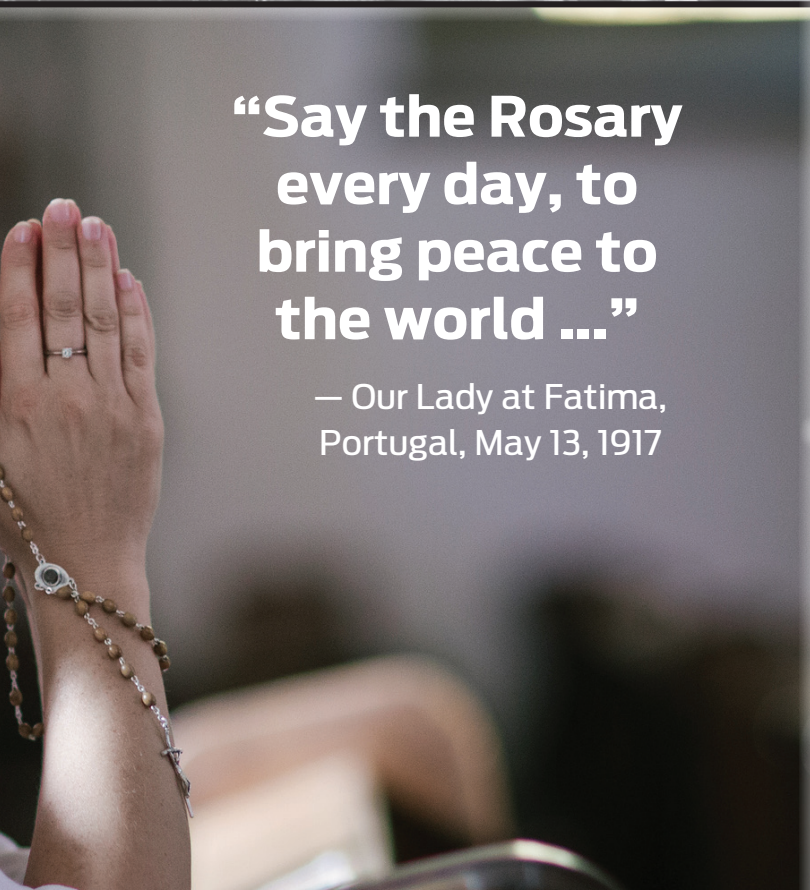
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Father Donald Calloway, MIC, talks about the history of the Rosary and its champions.

And let it begin **WITH ME**

A 'Hail Mary' play for peace



“Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world ...”

— Our Lady at Fatima, Portugal, May 13, 1917



By Chris Sparks

The world’s a mess. Let’s do a run down:

- Christians are being persecuted across the globe, as Pope Francis keeps pointing out and much of the Western world continues to ignore.
- Nuclear weapons appear to be quietly (and not so quietly) proliferating, including in nations such as North Korea.
- Abortion continues apace across the United States and around the world, symptomatic of the broader culture of death.
- Wars and violence continue to displace massive numbers of refugees, driving them

to turn to the hospitality of their neighbors in a desperate bid for survival.

And that’s just skimming the surface. Why are we facing such troubled times? What does it take to achieve peace in this world? And does God even care?

Pope Francis has a decisive answer for us in his 2016 message for the World Day of Peace: *“God is not indifferent! God cares about mankind! God does not abandon us!”*

So what’s going on? The Holy Father explains: *“Peace is both God’s gift and a human achievement. As a gift of God, it is entrusted to all men and women, who are called to attain it.”*

Peace is in God's gift, yes — but we have a part to play, as well.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's appearances to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, the Marian Fathers ask all Marian Helpers to answer Our Lady's appeal to pray the Rosary daily for peace in the world.

"This will be a powerful way of being renewed in the faith and entering into the realm of the divine in this world," says Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers. "Praying the Rosary daily, as Our Lady requested, allows us to enter into union with the divine plan of our salvation — a plan that promises peace in our hearts, peace in our families, and peace in the world."

Peace comes from right order, from a culture of life leading to a civilization of love, to a world in which relationships are rightly ordered according to natural and divine law, where God's will is our will, and God's will is done.

And all this comes through our cooperation with grace, or not at all.

Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, to obtain the peace of the world and the end of the war, because only she can obtain it — Our Lady at Fatima, Portugal, July 13, 1917.

Another presidential election has come and gone, and many people are speaking as though the choice of a president will make all the difference in the world. At each presidential election, both parties essentially say to the electorate, "Vote for *my* preferred candidate or else apocalypse looms!" In reality, the world is shaped less by power, wealth, and strength, and far more by the children, the elderly, and those who are weak in the eyes of the world.

Look at the life and impact of St. Faustina Kowalska, for instance.

A religious sister in pre-war Poland, a largely uneducated gardener, cook, and gatekeeper in a religious order dedicated to taking care of women and girls who had fallen into prostitution and other forms of sin — this does

not sound like the resume of one of the most influential women of the 20th century. And yet the Divine Mercy message and devotion that she passed on to the Church and the world from Jesus through her spiritual director, Blessed Michael Sopocko, has sparked what has often been called the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Church.

In the Kingdom of God, both on earth and in Heaven, the last shall be first and the first shall be last (see Mt 19:30; 20:16).

So in our tumultuous age, the solution to the problems of the present day will not ultimately be found in presidents and prime ministers, in politics and power, in military might or diplomatic cleverness. No. Our answer will be found in God and His Church.

Our answer will be found right where Heaven has been saying it is for these past 100 years.

Continue the Rosary, my children. Say it every day that the war may end — Our Lady at Fatima, Sept. 13, 1917.

Our Lady of the Rosary came to us at Fatima and told us what we needed to do to obtain peace in the world. Have we done it? Have we individually, as families, as parishes, as a Church, responded to her instructions? Or have we been like Naaman the leper?

Naaman was a Syrian, a man of great wealth and power, who suffered from leprosy. He came to Israel to seek healing and was told by the prophet Elisha, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." The Scriptures tell us:

But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage.

It was only after his servants reasoned with him, pointing out that if the prophet had told Naaman to do



The three Fatima visionaries. From left: Lucia Dos Santos, Blessed Francisco Marto, and Blessed Jacinta Marto.

something difficult, he would have done it willingly, that Naaman consented to go and do the simple, seemingly meaningless task set him by the prophet. And guess what? His leprosy was healed. He was made clean (2 Kgs 5:8-14).

Have we fallen into the same error? Do we dismiss the Rosary, saying (as so many have done in the history of the Church!): “It is a prayer for old women and for children! It went out with Vatican II. We’re more advanced than that now. We have better ways, more liturgical ways of prayer. We are too spiritually mature to do something as simple or superstitious as praying the Rosary.”

If you or someone you know dismisses the Rosary like that, share with them *Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon* by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. Share with them the litany of great saints and scholars, of popes and ordinary people who saw great miracles, won extraordinary victories, and welcomed the triumph of the Blessed Virgin Mary into their lives, their times, their particular troubles. This devotion has wrought miracles before, and will do so again, if only we take it up with faith, if only we respond to Our Lady’s call.

The Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families ... that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the holy Rosary — Servant of God Lucia Dos Santos, one of the three Fatima seers.

Non-Catholics are watching. Other people suggest that it’s our fault, Catholics’ fault, that we don’t have peace in the world.

Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, tells a story that a priest ministering in Japan shared with him in Rome. This priest was present at an international gathering of Christians from across the world, attended by foreign dignitaries. The ambassador from Japan approached the priest, verified that the priest served in Japan and was a Catholic priest, and then said, “War is your fault.”

The priest was surprised and asked what the ambassador meant. The ambassador said, “You Catholics, all of you —we do not have peace in the world. It is your fault.”

The priest said, “Ambassador, why do you blame us?”

The ambassador said, “I’ve read about this. The Lady came to you at Fatima, right? That’s what you believe? She told you what to do to secure peace in the world. Well, there’s no peace in the world, so obviously you Catholics haven’t done it.”

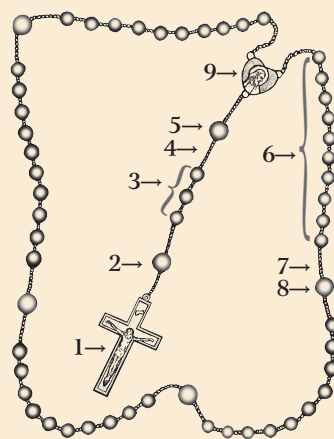
The priest had to acknowledge that the ambassador was correct, but still tried to protest, saying, “Isn’t peace everyone’s responsibility?”

The ambassador was vehement. “No, she came to you Catholics. Not to Buddhists. Not to Hindus. She came to you, and it is your responsibility.”

That ambassador had more faith than a lot of Catholics! So let us respond with faith and fervor as we approach the 100th anniversary of Fatima. Let’s commit to praying the Rosary daily in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary for peace in the world.

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How to pray the Rosary



1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say the “Apostles’ Creed.”
2. Say the “Our Father.”
3. Say three “Hail Marys.”
4. Say the “Glory Be to the Father.”
5. Announce the First Mystery; then say the “Our Father.”
6. Say 10 “Hail Marys,” while meditating on the Mystery.
7. Say the “Glory Be to the Father.” After each decade, say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.”
8. Announce the Second Mystery: then say the “Our Father.” Repeat 6 and 7 and continue with the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Mysteries in the same manner.
9. Say the “Hail, Holy Queen” on the medal after the five decades are completed.

Visit marian.org/rosary to learn more about the Rosary, including its four sets of mysteries.

WHY PRAY THE ROSARY?

The following is an excerpt from the Marian Press title *Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon* by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC:

The Rosary is a spiritual sword made by the Divine Craftsman. Popes and saints have repeatedly emphasized this reality. Pope Leo XIII stated very clearly: “The origin of this form of prayer [the Rosary] is divine rather than human.” The genius of this spiritual sword is that it is easily memorized and can be prayed anywhere, anytime, and in almost all circumstances. It encapsulates the life-giving wonders of the Sacraments and the teachings of the Church, and brings them into your home and into every aspect of your life. The Rosary is mobile, portable, and greatly feared by the enemy. Saint Louis de Montfort once said: “The devils have an overwhelming fear of the Rosary. Saint Bernard says that the Angelic Salutation puts them to flight and makes all hell tremble.”

To pray the Rosary is to pray the Word of God. What better devotional prayers could ever be said than the Our Father and the Hail Mary? The words of the Our Father came from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. The words of the Angelic Salutation were uttered on God’s behalf by a holy angel (St. Gabriel). God has providentially arranged for the majority of the prayers recited in the Rosary to be directed to Mary, because it is through her that the world received the instrument of our salvation, the flesh of the God-Man. Through Mary’s cooperation with God, the sacred Flesh and holy mysteries of the God-Man were entrusted to the Church. Through Mary, the God-Man has conquered the darkness and vanquished the evil one forever. ...

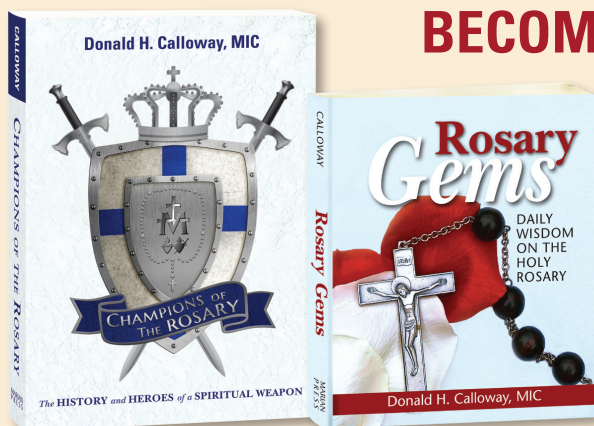
The Rosary is an evangelical tool that brings the light of Christ into all situations. It has the power to bring about world peace because the mysteries focus on the

Truth, that is, on Jesus Christ. The original purpose of the Rosary, as revealed to St. Dominic by Our Lady, was to combat heresy (false teachings). This clarification of truth was not just meant for the 13th century, but for all time, since Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (see Heb 13:8). For this reason, Pope Leo XIII rightly stated, “Our need of divine help is as great today as when the great Dominic introduced the use of the Rosary of Mary as a balm for the wounds of his contemporaries.”

In subsequent apparitions of Our Lady, as at Fatima, Mary reiterated that the Rosary should be prayed every day in order to help people return to Jesus Christ and have peace. She even noted that the Rosary has the power to stop wars. In light of that, it becomes plain that praying the Rosary benefits individuals, families, and the entire world. Popes and saints have incessantly taught this reality. Pope Leo XIII emphasized the following in this regard: “The Rosary, if devoutly used, is bound to benefit not only the individual but society at large.”

The Rosary was born in an age of chivalry. The world is once again in need of knights who are willing to fight for truth and peace. Only truth will bring about world peace. Today’s knight must use this spiritual weapon to win people back to the light of the Gospel. ... The forces of darkness in the world today threaten the very foundations of human civilization, but they are no match for the power of the Rosary. Historically, the Rosary has been proven to overcome all falsehoods. A Rosary crusade and a new Holy League are very much needed today to bring the light and peace of Christ back into souls. MH

To order *Champions of the Rosary*, visit ShopMercy.org/champions or call 1-800-462-7426. (Product code: B32-CRBK).



BECOME A CHAMPION OF THE ROSARY!

Let these two books from Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, help deepen your devotion to the Rosary. This special set contains Fr. Donald’s newest book, *Champions of the Rosary*, plus *Rosary Gems*, one of the largest collection of quotes on the Rosary to ever appear in print. Product code: **B32-RGCR** \$24.95

To order, visit ShopMercy.org/b32 or call 1-800-462-7426.

Books are also sold separately.

CELEBRATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FATIMA

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's appearances to the children at Fatima. To commemorate these miracles, Marian Press has created resources to help you learn more about Our Blessed Mother and let her guide you to a deeper relationship with her Son, Jesus Christ.

Mary 101 Kit

Who is the Blessed Virgin Mary? Why do Catholics focus so much attention on her?

The Mary 101 Kit is designed to answer these and many other questions! Learn how Mary helps us to become holy and guides us to do the will of God more faithfully.

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

***Also includes the Fatima Pack shown below.**
B32-MKIT \$29.95



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Items also sold separately.



100th Anniversary of Fatima Pack

The 100th Anniversary of Fatima Pack includes: Fatima Guidebook, 5 x 7 canvas image of Our Lady of Fatima; Pamphlets: "Fatima Edition of Pray the Rosary Daily," "Fatima Prayers," "Five First Saturdays," "Graces Offered by the Brown Scapular," and "I Am the Lady of the Rosary." A Promise of the First Five Saturdays Prayercard.

B32-FAMPK \$6.95 (if purchased separately from kit)

To order, visit ShopMercy.org/b32 or call 1-800-462-7426.



The finest gift we bring

If we can agree destabilization defines our world today, Christmas cannot come quickly enough. This holy day marks the anniversary of the birth of Christ, the most “destabilizing” event in human history — and the only prism through which this mad world makes any sense.

You know the players. A Child born in Bethlehem in a cold, uncomfortable manger. A mother smitten. A foster father whose eyes and allegiances are firmly fixed. Angels of Heaven with a proclivity to startle. Three magi at the point of no return. A worldly king enraged.

In the chill of a high desert evening, the world comes to a standstill, but not for long.

You know the story. The Child is the Son of God, our Savior, born of the Virgin Mary. Joseph, the humble

carpenter, has been chosen by God to be the protector of the Holy Family. The magi are sent by King Herod on a not-so-benevolent reconnaissance mission to size up the situation.

When they arrive at the manger, it’s clear this newborn King will baffle the world. They themselves are stirred to bow before the Infant Jesus. Then, obeying the injunction of an angel, they make haste for their homelands, refusing to aid and abet Herod and his ill intent.

Joseph himself is then summoned by an angel of the Lord to gather his young family and flee to Egypt because Herod, realizing that the magi had deceived him and fearing the Child may jeopardize his reign, orders the massacre of every boy in Bethlehem under the age of two. He figures one of them has to be the Christ Child.

From the darkened world of 2016, let's be reminded that the drama of the ages begins in Bethlehem. To this very day, all manner of disorder, pain, or peril can best be understood by stepping toward the manger, whose humble inhabitants kindly bid us forward — we who are encumbered with mad tidings, our news disheartening, appalling, and unparalleled.

Indeed, more than 2,000 years after the birth of Christ, the Herods of the world are still having their way.

Persecution of Christians, for instance, “is stronger than in the first centuries of the Church,” says Pope Francis. From North Korea and Indonesia, through the Middle East, Africa, and all the way to the Americas, there are mobs, militias, assassins, and entire regimes intent on wiping Christianity off the map. Each month, more than 300 Christians are killed for their faith; more than 200 Christian properties are destroyed; and more than 700 forms of violence are committed against Christians, such as beatings, abductions, rapes, arrests, and forced marriages — this according to Open Doors USA, a watchdog group that advocates for Christians around the world.

More than 2,000 years after the birth of Christ, the weak are still forced to flee their homelands. More than 60 million people are now displaced, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That's four times more than merely a decade ago, a result of land grabs, pogroms, and civil wars, most especially affecting our non-Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East and Africa.

More than 2,000 years after the birth of Christ, the innocents are still being slaughtered — but at a pace Herod himself could never have imagined. Each day, approximately 125,000 babies are aborted, according to the World Health Organization. Moreover, according to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty.

More than 2,000 years after the birth of Christ, two armies continue to square off, each with its own factions and followers. We are obligated to choose a side.

The Herods of the world still seek to slay the essence of love. The magi still summon the courage to thwart

them. The Herods anchor themselves to the possessions and obsessions of the material world. The magi open their treasures for the weak and the meek.

The Herods take the torch of their ancestor to scorch the earth. The magi understand the Herods may know not what they do. The Herods are found in high places and low, everywhere that hatred is given a dwelling place. The magi are found in all who listen to the voice of Heaven spoken through Scripture and the witnesses of the saints and martyrs.

The magi of the world know they, too, can be led astray. They recognize the Herods of their own hearts. They know they are susceptible to the temptations to double back toward the monarch's earthly palace. But they prayerfully recall the radiant face of Mary who stands beside the Christ Child. They know that at Fatima and elsewhere, she attempts to checkmate the Herods of the world through her instructions to love through prayer and penance.

The magi of the world have felt the bitter blows. They've experienced the loneliness of the outnumbered. They know faith is not for the faint of heart; that we may be asked to pay in blood; that the earth is not our final resting place; that by joining the army of angels, we arm ourselves only with love, forgiveness, and compassion — weaponry that leaves us vulnerable.

This Christmas, let's step from the shadows and present ourselves before the Child who summons all. As St. Faustina writes in her *Diary*, Jesus wants “aching mankind to snuggle close to [His] merciful Heart” so that He “may fill it with peace” (1074).

Let's place before Him all our fears, sorrows, frustrations, weaknesses, and humiliations. Let's sit by His fire and listen to the choir of angels sing of He who brings peace to earth to men of good will.

For the Child who awaits us, the finest gift we bring is ourselves. MH

— Felix Carroll

To be remembered at the three Christmas Day Masses at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, visit marian.org/b32.

Susan Conroy talks
about her time with
St. Teresa.



A CASE OF motherly love

By Joan Lamar

It felt like the height of Roman summer as Marian Press author Susan Conroy arrived in Italy to take part in the international media coverage surrounding Mother Teresa's Sept. 4 canonization. The air conditioning in her hotel room wasn't working, but as she ironed her clothes in preparation for the first of several interviews — indeed, as a CBS News crew was setting up in an anteroom off the hotel lobby — Susan wasn't sweating it.

Despite the heat and having had no sleep in 24 hours, the author of the new book *Praying with Mother Teresa: Prayers, Insights, and Wisdom of Saint Teresa of Calcutta* was calm, cool, and collected.

How did this quiet, unassuming, deeply prayerful woman from South Portland, Maine, get to this point? It took three mothers. Susan's devotion to Mother Teresa is overshadowed only by that of her own biological mother (who once gave her a prayercard and holy books that changed her life) and her spiritual mother, the Blessed

Virgin Mary, whom she says with a smile “is my book agent” who continually opens doors for her.

This most recent door was huge. Millions around the world had the opportunity to listen to her share her experiences of her dear friend Mother Teresa of Calcutta, not just on CBS News, but also on NBC News, EWTN, and other news outlets.

Heaven and earth come calling

One of 10 children, Susan says Our Lady played a big role for the Conroy family while she was growing up. “Every night we would hear my father's voice say, ‘Prayers,’ and we all knew where to go,” she said. They would kneel before a painting of the Blessed Mother holding her Divine Child Jesus, and they would pray.

Susan said that her parents understood that their primary task was to help their children get to Heaven. “I was taught that life on earth was a journey and that this

isn't Heaven yet," she says. "Even St. Thérèse used to say that life is our barque, not our home."

Back in the mid-1980s, when she was a student at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Susan would receive weekly letters from her mother, Ruth, back in Maine. In one such letter, Ruth enclosed a prayercard with a painting and words from Mother Teresa. It read: "We all long for Heaven where God is, but we have it in our power to be in Heaven with Him right now — to be happy with Him at this very moment. But being happy with Him now means: loving as He loves; helping as He helps ... serving as He serves ... touching Him in His distressing disguise."

Susan read the prayer and thought to herself, "Sign me up! I want to be happy with God now!" She got right to it. This 21-year-old college student packed a bag, boarded a plane, landed in Calcutta, and ventured into its poverty-strewn and perilous streets to seek out Mother Teresa. She volunteered at Mother's orphanages and at the famed Home for the Dying.

Over the course of 11 years, Susan spent time in both Calcutta and New York working alongside this living saint, whom she said was "radiant with peace and luminous with humility. You received graces just being in her company."

In Rome, under the bright lights of CBS News, Susan was asked about this Nobel Peace Prize winner — a slight woman who stood less than five feet tall, but who built a towering legacy.

"She wasn't aware of her own greatness," Susan told CBS News correspondent Seth Doane. "I felt like tapping her on the shoulder and saying, 'Don't you realize how significant you are?'"

An agent *par excellence*

Susan's whirlwind canonization experience only underscored the role the Blessed Mother has played in her life. Years ago, when she had completed her first book and had no game plan for how to publish it, a friend informed her she wouldn't be able to publish a book without an agent.

Well, Susan said to herself, "I've never published a book before. I don't have an agent, and I don't know how to get an agent." So, she turned to the Blessed Mother and asked, "Will you be my book agent?" She felt in her heart that the Blessed Mother accepted the invitation with a smile.

"What's the role of a book agent? It's to open doors and make the right contacts for you," Susan says. "So who's in a better position than the Blessed Mother to open doors?"

Susan has now written 10 books with Holy Mother Mary as her agent. *Praying with Mother Teresa* broke the top five in Amazon's bestsellers list in the Catholicism category.

"I'm just her little helper," Susan said. "That's why it's an honor to publish with Marian Press and work with the Association of Marian Helpers. I have been walking with Mary for a long time, and now we're walking with Our Lady together."

***Praying with Mother Teresa* can be ordered at ShopMercy.org/b32 or by calling 1-800-462-7426 (Product code: B32-PWMT).**

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Susan Conroy at Mother Teresa's canonization on Sept. 4.

Marian Press hits it big

Buoyed by the success of authors Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, and Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, who have become household names in the Catholic world, the Marian Fathers are expanding their book publishing efforts under their Marian Press label.

"In recent years, we've published three to four titles a year, and our goal now is to expand to about 10 to 12 titles a year," said Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers. "We are working hard to find authors who have something to say to broader Catholic audiences, while remaining faithful to spreading the Marians' devotion to Divine Mercy, the Blessed Mother, and the Holy Souls in Purgatory."

This fall, Amazon had three Marian Press books in its top 20 Catholic titles, including Fr. Donald's *Champions of the Rosary* (which reached number 1), Fr. Michael's *33 Days to Morning Glory*, and Susan Conroy's *Praying with Mother Teresa*.

Meanwhile, the book projects are piling up.

Upcoming Marian Press releases include Dr. Robert Stackpole's *Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters*; Theresa Bonapartis' *A Journey to Healing through Divine Mercy*, meditations for post-abortive healing; and a book on athletes who were drawn to the priesthood, by Trent Beattie, an editor, author, and journalist for the *National Catholic Register*.



THE DOORS THAT HAVE UNLOCKED

At the outset of the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis decreed that prisoners who pass through the doors of their cells may receive the indulgence usually attached to passing through a designated Holy Door if they turn their hearts to God's mercy. With that in mind, we reached out to Fr. Gordon J. MacRae, an inmate at New Hampshire State Prison, to share with us his thoughts on living the faith during this Jubilee Year. Father MacRae writes for the award-winning blog *TheseStoneWalls.com* at the behest of the late Cardinal Avery Dulles. Here's his surprising response:

On Sept. 23, 1994, I was taken to prison with a 67-year sentence after three times refusing a "plea deal" that would have released me after *one* year. It's a tough story that has been extensively covered, including a

series in *The Wall Street Journal*.

For the last 23 years, I have lived in a harsh world of concrete and steel, an asphalt jungle surrounded by high walls and razor wire. It's a world where prison gangs vie for influence, for control of young minds and the suppression of hope. It was into this world that a profoundly powerful grace has unfolded. This tough story is now no longer about justice or injustice alone. It's now about Divine Mercy, a term once foreign to this imprisoned world. It started with a series of what seemed to be mere "accidents."

Two lives converge

Refusing to plead guilty came with a price steeper than just the length of my sentence. For my first seven years in prison, I was confined with seven other men in

a cell built for four.

Unbeknownst to me, a person who was to become pivotal to this story of Divine Mercy spent that same seven years in a prison in a neighboring state confined in a polar opposite circumstance: the utter cruelty of solitary confinement. Pornchai Moontri was brought to the United States from Thailand at age 11. His story is told wonderfully, painfully, powerfully by Felix Carroll in his celebrated Marian Press book, Loved, Lost, Found.

After a series of moves and seemingly unrelated events, Pornchai's life and mine converged. He was moved to this prison eight years ago. He and I became cellmates, sharing a two-person cell. Two years after his arrival, in 2010, Pornchai announced his decision to become Catholic. He chose my birthday to be baptized and confirmed, but due to other seemingly unrelated "accidental" events, it was postponed until two days later. On Sunday, April 11, 2010, Pornchai was received into the Church. It also just so happened to be Divine Mercy Sunday, the day in which the Lord promised "all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened" (Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 699).

Mary comes knocking

A few years earlier, I had introduced Pornchai to St. Maximilian Kolbe, whose image in both his priestly and prisoner garb is fixed above the mirror in our cell. Pornchai was so inspired by his life and sacrifice that he took the name "Maximilian" as his Christian name. Pornchai-Max was called from darkness into a wonderful light, and his response to that call has led other prisoners here to examine the direction of their own lives.

Three years later, in 2013, the transformation — not only of Max, but of our prison — took another major step. The Marian Fathers sponsored a group of volunteers to introduce into prison the consecration to Jesus through Mary using the 33 Days to Morning Glory group retreat written by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC. It was the first such effort in any prison, and Max and I were invited.

There was just one problem: We were not going. We did not understand what the retreat was all about, and in the previous months we had been hit with a barrage of trials and disappointments, small things that add up painfully behind prison walls. In the midst of this spiritual warfare, I asked Max if he wanted to attend, and he responded with a sullen, "Not really." I felt the same way.

However, these Marian-trained volunteers were not giving up so easily. After missing the first session, we learned that it would be repeated for the "stragglers."

"I think that's us," I told Max. We also learned that St. Maximilian Kolbe appears prominently in the 33 Days

book and retreat. "So I guess we're going," said Max.

Several others who had originally opted out also changed their minds. The retreat culminated in our consecration on the Solemnity of Christ the King, Nov. 24, 2013.

Seeing signs in a cellblock

Our consecration didn't result in thunder and lightning, and our spiritual warfare continued. That's the nature of prison life. Only in hindsight could we see the immense transformative grace that was given to us. This consecration to Jesus through Mary changed not only our interior lives, but our environment as well.

In the months to follow, many other inmates signed up for subsequent 33 Days group retreats. Several prisoners converted to Catholicism as a result. Others, such as our friend Michael Ciresi, have come home to their Catholic faith, which they had abandoned. Of the 60 prisoners in this one cellblock, a full 20 percent have entered into Marian consecration.

The Marian-trained prison volunteers have returned to guide two additional groups of prisoners to consecration through 33 Days to Morning Glory and have also led our original group through two other retreat programs in Fr. Gaitley's Hearts Afire program.

"Part of the risk of real mission and service is the uncertainty of whether it will make any difference," said Jim Preisendorfer, one of the volunteer retreat leaders. This risk paid off.

Moreover, in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pornchai Maximilian Moontri and I were invited by Fr. Gaitley to become Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy, a group committed to consciously and deliberately trying to win the whole world for God through the two powerful spiritual weapons of Divine Mercy and Marian consecration.

On Divine Mercy Sunday 2016, in the prison chapel, Jim witnessed our commitment to the Missionaries' life and mission.

Walking across the walled prison yard on the way back to our cell that day, Max and I felt like the disciples who met the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus (see Lk 24:13-53). Having once seen life as not worth living, Max, holding his Marian Missionaries handbook, turned to me and said, "How did this happen?"

In announcing the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which began last Dec. 8, the Holy Father spoke of how the thresholds of prison cells can signify inmates' passage through a Holy Door, "because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom."

We're thankful for the Holy Father's beautiful gesture. But it seems Mother Mary beat him to it!

MH



Peter battled Darth Vader on his Make-A-Wish trip to Disney World in May 2016. He said to his mom, “Mommy! I was thinking about Jesus and Mary fighting the bad guys!”

TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

By Melanie Williams

Running around the living room as a superhero, fighting “bad guys” with his toy sword, making forts and jumping on beds, Peter Dunn seems like a typical 5-year-old boy. He goes to pre-school and loves playing with his siblings. No one would know he only has half a heart — that he needed three surgeries to survive his first two years of life, and is awaiting yet another surgery in the coming months.

In 2011, Kerri and Mark Dunn of Foster, Rhode Island, had been happily married for 11 years. The two high school sweethearts had five healthy children. When Mark, a firefighter, and Kerri, a stay-at-home mother, learned she was expecting a sixth, they decided to pick out a boy and a girl name. If the baby were a girl, they would name her



Peter recovers after his third open heart surgery, which completed the rerouting of blood through his heart.

Maria Faustina. If the baby were a boy, he’d be Peter.

At their 20-week ultrasound, they found out their baby was a boy. What they didn’t expect was that he had a severe and rare congenital heart defect called Hypo-Plastic Left Heart Syndrome.

Distraught, Kerri turned to prayer. “God, how will I do this? How should I be praying?” Very clearly she heard in her heart: “Do not offer Me your anxious petitions. ... Pray as you always do, coming to Me every day. I know what you need. You don’t even have to ask. Just trust in Me. To Me, this is small.”

From that day forward, Kerri turned to the prayer that had brought her comfort for many years: “Jesus, I trust in You.” Her devotion to Divine Mercy began in high

school. When she was stressed, her mother would direct her to go sit in the church. Kerri usually knelt before the Image of Divine Mercy, which brought her solace. How freeing those words were that are inscribed at the bottom of the image: “Jesus, I Trust in You.”

Weeks before Peter’s birth, Kerri held on to those words.

Knowing Peter would need immediate surgery, doctors delivered him on Sept. 29, one week before his due date. Peter looked healthy. But he wasn’t. He was transferred to Boston Children’s Hospital and attached to heart monitors and IVs to keep him alive until he could undergo his first surgery. Kerri and Mark had a few days to hold him. It had been love at first sight. Those days were filled with many tears, as they knew they might lose him.

At five days old, Peter underwent the first and most challenging of his open-heart surgeries. The following morning was Oct. 5, the Feast of St. Faustina. Kerri awoke and said a prayer. “Good morning, Faustina!” she prayed. “Happy feast day! While you are celebrating up there today, could you please say a prayer for my boy Peter? You know that I would have named him after you had he been a girl, so I believe that still makes him special to you.”

That day, Kerri and Mark visited Peter in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. Swollen and sedated, he was connected to monitors and a breathing machine. Chest tubes were draining blood and fluid from around his heart. Kerri and Mark placed a Divine Mercy Image over his bed. One of the doctors was so surprised to see how well Peter was doing, and that brought great hope to Kerri and Mark.

But no sooner had the doctors left his bedside than the machines connected to Peter started sounding alarms. He flatlined. Peter was dying.

Kerri and Mark were escorted out of the room. In the waiting room, crying, they prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Kerri pictured herself handing Peter over to the

Father. She did not ask for Peter’s life; rather, she asked for God’s will, aware that the closing prayer of the chaplet says let us “not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy Will, which is Love and Mercy itself.” Kerri felt at total peace.

A doctor came out looking grim. He told Kerri and Mark that they could not revive Peter, but they were going to put him on a heart and lung machine with the hope it would allow time for his heart to build up strength to beat on its own again. There were no guarantees.

After the doctor left, Kerri and Mark continued the chaplet. Soon another doctor came in and said that they did not need to put Peter on the machine after all. His heart had begun to beat on its own again! Even though his brain had been deprived of oxygen during the cardiac arrest, brain scans showed no brain damage. Against all medical odds, he would have no physical and cognitive delays.

The Dunns believe they witnessed a

miracle wrought through St. Faustina’s intercession.

Not that life has been without its challenges. Peter underwent two more surgeries in his first two years of life to complete the procedure of rerouting the blood in his heart so it could function as if it was a whole heart. He has a slow heartbeat due to the scar tissue from all his surgeries. He’ll soon have a pacemaker placed in his chest.

As he runs around with his dragon wings on, fighting bad guys, Peter has a heart for Jesus and Mary. His favorite color is blue — because it’s Mary’s color, he’ll say. Kerri taught Peter to say, “Jesus, I Trust in You” when he takes his heart medication every day. That way Jesus gets His Heart consoled. One of his siblings even recently referred to Peter as their medicine, because “he always makes us feel better.”

“Peter’s life has taught me the great lesson of trust in God,” Kerri says. “I have learned that all I can do is trust his little heart to Jesus. I know with all that I am that I can have complete reliance upon the Father’s care.” MH



Peter and his “best buddy,” his brother Isaiah, help Jesus carry His Cross at the Stations of the Cross here on Eden Hill.



NACOM — Mass for the
Feast of Saint John Paul II



Photo gallery: Day 1



Photo gallery: Day 2



Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Texas, welcomed the second North American Congress on Mercy to his archdiocese during the Feast of St. John Paul II.

THE JUBILEE ENDS; MERCY CONTINUES

“Witnesses to Divine Mercy.” That’s how the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, vice-coordinator for the North American Congress on Divine Mercy (NACOM) and provincial superior for the Marian Fathers in the United States and Argentina, characterized the participants in NACOM II, held from Oct. 21-22 at Prince of Peace Catholic Community in Houston, Texas.

“They’re real,” said Fr. Kaz. “Their commitment to Christ is visible.” Their dedication to Divine Mercy is not the work of one day; “they’ve been teaching, guiding, instructing, inviting, inspiring — these are the leaders. And that’s why I’m very, very happy.”

Organized by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception in conjunction with the Catholic Marketing Network (CMN), and Fullness of Truth Catholic Evan-

gelization Ministries, the Congress attracted more than 900 attendees from 19 states and around the world, including pilgrims from Bahrain, Singapore, and the Philippines.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Texas, was lead celebrant at Mass on the second day of the Congress.

“Sisters and brothers, it is a joy to be present with you this morning on this Memorial Feast Day of St. John Paul II in the midst of a Congress on Divine Mercy,” said Cardinal DiNardo, “for indeed St. John Paul II was a great apostle of Divine Mercy, and led on by his friendship and by the spiritual communion he had with St. Faustina, he was able to bring to the whole Church the beauty of understanding the depth of the Scriptures and the Church’s faith and tradition on the overwhelming mercy of the Lord.”

The Congress was opened by the new episcopal coordinator of NACOM, the Most Rev. Edward B. Scharfenberger, bishop of the Diocese of Albany, New York (see page 8). The bishop had accepted Fr. Kaz's invitation to get involved in the North American Congresses because, he said, Divine Mercy is at the heart of the Church's mission to the world today.

"That's what the New Evangelization is all about," he explained, "telling our experience of how good God has been to us, in spite of our weaknesses and our sins — in fact, because of them. The more we need God's help, the more mercy God has available for us.

"The call of Divine Mercy is a call to look to ourselves and say, 'What am I doing to allow the Lord into my life?'" continued the bishop. "Public virtue only comes when people live lives of private virtue. Only when our own hearts are changed does the whole society change itself, like the leaven in the dough, as Jesus said (see Mt 13:33)."

And that leaven was certainly worked in at the Congress. At the end of Mass each day, the Congress prayed St. John Paul II's 2002 Solemn Act of Entrustment of the World to Divine Mercy. Confession was available, and many attendees spent time praying before the Eucharistic Lord in the tabernacle. The Congress paused each day for prayer at the 3 o'clock Hour of Great Mercy.

Occurring toward the end of the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Congress answered Pope Francis' call to prepare the faithful to transmit God's mercy to the whole world. For the first time ever, the Marians Fr. Michael Gaitley, Fr. Chris Alar, and Fr. Donald Calloway all spoke at the same event. Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, handed on rich Divine Mercy theology, and Fr. Kaz recounted the history of the world, national, and regional Congresses.

Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz, former private secretary to St. John Paul II, sent the noted Divine Mercy theologian Fr. Jan Machniak as a personal representative to the Congress. Most Rev. Eugenio Lira, general secretary of the Mexican Bishops' Conference, gave a well-received talk in Spanish.

Other speakers included Doug Keck, EWTN president and chief operating officer; Kitty Cleveland, an internationally recognized singer/songwriter; and Marie Romagnano, RN, founder of Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy, an apostolate of the Marian Fathers.

Pope Francis' message for the Church in the Americas on the occasion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy was shown, as well as video presentations by Fr. Patrice Chocholski, general secretary for the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy, and Dr. Bryan Thatcher, founder of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, an apostolate of the Marian Fathers.

A concert of powerful spiritual music was provided Friday night by the Mandolin Choir from Sacred Heart Church in Conroe, Texas, and the Catholic African-American Mass Choir (CAAM) led by Dr. Andre La Cour and other directors. The Galveston-Houston Archdiocese's St. Mary's Seminary provided their Schola for the music at the cardinal's Mass.

Valerie Romero, a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Uvalde, Texas, called the Mass celebrated by Cardinal DiNardo "amazing; very inspiring." She came looking for "a stronger faith, not just for me but for everybody here, and that we take it back and we share it with our families, friends, and loved ones, and that we're able to inspire them just as much as we have been inspired today." MH

Visit MercyCongress.org for our full coverage of the Congress.

— Chris Sparks

Next stop: the world

The fourth World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM IV) is coming right up!

Centered on the theme "Communion in Mercy, Mission for Mercy (Called by Mercy, Sent for Mercy)," WACOM IV will be held in Manila in the Philippines from Jan. 16-20, 2017. Organizers anticipate the presence and participation of all the bishops of the Philippines, as well as a number of members of the broader Asian hierarchy.

The Marian Fathers have had a hand in the organization of the Congresses from the beginning, working as close collaborators with WACOM President Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn and WACOM General Secretary Fr. Patrice Chocholski. Speaking of the mission of WACOM at the last Congress in Colombia in 2014, Fr. Patrice said, "WACOM wants to be an answer to the universal call to the Divine Mercy John Paul II gave on August 17-18, 2002. It was a universal call to the universal Church and also to the world, and so we feel the duty to answer this call with the whole Church."

Previous World Apostolic Congresses were held in Rome (2008), Krakow, Poland (2011), and Bogota, Colombia (2014).

Visit wacom2017.org for more information.



EUGENE SERGEEV

KIDS ARE US (IN MANY WAYS)

Dave and Joan Maroney of Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM), an apostolate of the Marian Fathers, have been traveling the country for more than 15 years. They visit parishes and schools to teach about the Lord’s call through St. Faustina to turn from sin, embrace the Sacraments, and be merciful to others. We asked them to share what they hope the fruits will be of this extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. They said, “One of our biggest hopes — and one of the things we’ve been stressing all year — is that more parents are inspired to raise their children in the faith. We need strong Catholic families.” In this age of “listicles,” Dave and Joan won’t demur. Forthwith, their tips for raising kids in the faith:

1. Be a great Catholic yourself.

1. Raising your kids in the faith begins with your faith. You are their primary role model. Be sure to be the best you can be so that they may walk with you along the path of holiness.

2. Build upon the basics.

2. By beginning with the basics — teaching them who God is, why He made them, and what they must do to gain the happiness of Heaven (which, by the way, is to know, love, and serve God in this world) — you provide them with a firm foundation upon which to build their faith and a valuable compass that points them toward truth.

3. Unmask the devil.

3. Appropriately revealing the reality of evil and the tortures of hell isn’t intended to “scare the hell out of them,” but to make them aware of the consequences of rejecting God. Many of today’s movies, television shows, games, and more glorify evil and sin, and seldom do priests speak of these things. Saint Faustina was shown hell on many occasions and was even commanded to write about it:

... I noticed one thing: that most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that there is a hell (Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 741).

4. Provide proper shelter.

The red and pale rays depicted in the Divine Mercy Image denote the blood and water that gushed from Christ's side at the Crucifixion. They represent the outpouring of mercy through the Sacraments of the Church; the white ray for Baptism and Penance, which purify the soul, and the red ray for the Eucharist, which nourishes it.

Jesus told St. Faustina that these rays (or Sacraments) "shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him" (*Diary*, 299).

Provide this most important shelter by taking your family to Confession on a regular basis and attending Holy Mass as often as possible. Make visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and allow them to bask in the rays of mercy, even if only for a few short minutes.

5. Enthroned the Divine Mercy.

Formally claim ground for Christ by having a simple ceremony that enthrones the Divine Mercy Image in a place of honor in your home. Ideally, have the home blessed and all family members sign a certificate

acknowledging His kingship. Jesus promises: "By means of this Image I shall be granting many graces to souls; so let every soul have access to it" (*Diary*, 570).

6. Consecrate your family to Divine Mercy.

We encourage everyone to recite the following prayer of consecration: "O Jesus, You showed us Your infinite compassionate love by exhausting the very last drop of blood and water from Your body. From this day forward, with full confidence, we entrust our families to Your Divine Mercy. We abandon our past, our present, and our future to You. We place into Your wounds all of our wounds, which are caused by lack of love, understanding, and trust. Jesus, expel Satan and all evil from our families, free us from the consequences of sin, and protect us from further harm. Heal our wounds. May our families learn to venerate Your Divine Mercy Image so that they will never perish but experience Your loving mercy. Amen." MH

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/momm to learn more about Mother of Mercy Messengers.

MARIAN APOSTOLATES

Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy mourns the death of Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, who served as president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers and for Health Pastoral Care. He died on July 13. He was the author of the Marian Press title *On the Way of the Suffering Person: God Has Visited His People*. The following is an excerpt from his talk at the Healthcare Professionals' annual conference in 2015:

It is true indeed that life is a gift from God entrusted to us as stewards. When we are in good health, we may sometimes get the false impression that we are in control of everything, to the extent of even thinking that we are the absolute masters of our own lives. However, it takes an experience like that of serious illness, to realize how much we depend on others, above all, on God. This is a truth that is often obscured or challenged in contemporary [secular] society.

Convinced of the therapeutic power of faith, the Christian tradition sees prayer as an instrument of healing. Often people ask for healing, for grace, or for the capacity to accept illness in a spirit of faith and conformity with the will of God. Healing obtained through the power of prayer has different forms [physical, emotional, or spiritual]. Prayer truly contributes to transforming illness into a journey of faith that gradually helps a sick person to strengthen his or her relationship with God, to learn the lesson of weakness and human limita-

tion, to have a renewed adherence to the fundamental options of life, to grow in solidarity with those who suffer, and to deepen faith in eternal life.



Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM) saw significant growth in the number of new prayer cenacles in this Jubilee Year. The cenacle program integrates St. Faustina's *Diary* with Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. There are some 2,000 EADM cenacles worldwide.

Also, EADM recently shipped a 40-foot shipping container of donated medical supplies to the Philippines, where they were distributed to hospitals and nursing homes. A second 40-foot container of medical supplies, religious items, and clothing will arrive in Ukraine in December. The Marian Fathers there will distribute the goods to the needy.

If you would like Dr. Thatcher to speak at your church or conference, or if you would like to receive a free packet on how to start a cenacle, call 1-877-380-0727.



"Why is the Blessed Virgin Mary so important in the Catholic faith? Protestant Christians ask this question of Catholics all the time. But do we Catholics really know how to answer it?"

So begins the latest Marian Press book by Dr. Robert Stackpole, the director of the **John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy**. *Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters* is available now. See page 6 for more information.

ADD YOUR NAME!



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Nov. 17.

DIVINE MERCY MATTERS

Visit DivineMercyMatters.org



Marie White, with her husband, Nicholas; their daughter, Kristen; and their grandsons Preston (center) and Joseph.

IT'S TIME: BE 'ALARMED'

Every day, I am blessed to speak with Marian Helpers from all across the country, and I'm inspired by how they incorporate their faith into their lives, sometimes without even realizing the impact those actions can have on others. Recently, I spoke with one Helper whose devotion to prayer has already spread to three generations in her family.

Marie White of Piedmont, South Carolina, has been a member of the Association for less than two years. She has already enrolled 55 friends and family members into the Association so that they and their intentions are remembered by the Marian Fathers in a Holy Mass every day here on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Her frequent requests for enrollments even inspired her husband, Nicholas, to donate to the Association through an IRA charitable rollover.

But Marie does more than request prayers. Indeed, if you happen to be in her presence as the clock strikes 3 o'clock, you'll probably hear church bells clanging from inside her purse. It's the alarm on her phone to remind her that the Hour of Great Mercy has arrived, the hour that recalls Christ's Death on the Cross. Time to pray!

"In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion," Jesus tells St. Faustina (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1320).

Daily, Marie prays the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the intercessory prayer given to St. Faustina from Jesus. What a simple and effective way to remember to pray! Recently, when I called Marie and Nicholas to thank them for a gift to the Marian Fathers, which helps us to spread Divine Mercy throughout the world, I could hear her church bells clang. It was precisely 3 o'clock. How perfect is that?

Marie first learned about St. Faustina and Divine

Mercy from her parish priest, Fr. Dac Tran, when he returned from a vacation in Vietnam and brought back an Image of Divine Mercy. He soon began spreading devotion to Divine Mercy among his parishioners at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish. He was so dedicated that, as he was preparing to leave the parish for a new assignment, "he made the new pastor promise to keep an Image of the Divine Mercy somewhere in the church," Marie said. The new pastor, Fr. Dwight Longenecker, "now has quite a devotion to Divine Mercy, himself," she said.

And now, in keeping with the request Pope Francis made that dioceses build a lasting memorial to God's mercy to mark the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Our Lady of the Rosary is doing its part by constructing a new church. The chapel on the lower level will be dedicated to Divine Mercy. It's all an answer to Marie's prayers.

Marie's daughter, Kristen — inspired by her mother — also has a great devotion to praying the chaplet. And whenever Kristen's 6-year-old son, Preston, hears those church bells clang, he knows the hour is at hand. "It's time to pray the Divine Mercy," he says excitedly.

The alarm has now resonated with three generations. It's an alarm that reminds the Whites to *not be alarmed*: Our Lord is with us.

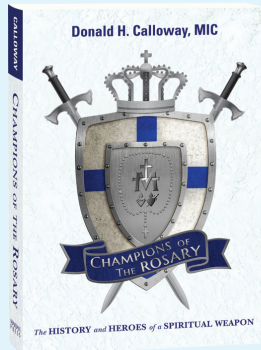


Ellen Miller is director for Special Gifts. To explore an IRA charitable rollover, contact her at: Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263; helpers@marian.org; or (413) 298-1380. Visit marian.org/PlannedGiving to learn more.

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*Immaculate Conception
Novena* (Nov. 29-Dec. 7)

and the Solemnity
of the Immaculate Conception
of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dec. 8

After months, husband gets job

I am writing to tell you about a favor I believe I received from Blessed George.

My husband is a computer consultant and works on a freelance basis.

Usually, when he finishes a job, another comes pretty quickly. But in 2015, months went by and nothing was happening. We have a lot of debt, so we both need to be working. (I got downsized out of my job of 14 years last year and was able to get another one, but at half the pay!)

I had read about Blessed George in your magazine, and the prayers he answered happened to be about needing and getting jobs, so I thought I would pray to him and ask him to help us. I started, and about three weeks into it, I came home and my husband told me he had a new assignment starting that Monday. I've been praying for months, and now right after I started praying to Blessed George, my prayers were answered. I believe that God wanted him to be the one to intercede for us. I am so relieved and grateful.

— LC, Woodlyn, Pennsylvania

Brother's kidney can be saved

Last November, my 60-year-old brother was told he would have to lose a kidney due to infection. I told him to carry the Blessed George prayercard with him wherever he went, as a reminder to pray. This week his specialist called and said his kidney could be saved. My brother keeps the prayercard in his room. Also, my sister didn't have a job for months. I asked Blessed George to intercede, and two weeks ago she got a job she loves. I pray for his intercession and for the Holy Souls in Purgatory daily.

— AT, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Son gets the right job

I promised Blessed George that I would write to you if my son received a job that was good for him.

One day I read the Spring 2016 issue of *Marian Helper*. I saw Blessed George's face, and I felt his eyes looking directly at me. I read three stories about sons finding good jobs, and I asked Blessed George to help my son get the one that God had chosen for him.

A few hours later, my son called me and told me that he had had interviews with two companies that visited his college. His interviews took place about the same time I first made my prayer.

A few days later, my son told me that another company had called him for an interview. They flew him in and paid for all his expenses. They offered him a position. And another company also did the same. Both offered him a generous salary.

I believe that my son will be doing the work that God created him for and will allow him to be economically self-sufficient after years of hard work.

— DG, New York, New York



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

Sister-in-law gets job

My sister-in-law had to resign from a teaching job six months ago due to a hostile work environment. It was difficult as she had poured all of her efforts into her work with little support from her superiors. She applied to several teaching positions, but younger, less-qualified applicants seemed to be hired. Since she was working at temp jobs, her finances were strained. I asked Blessed George to intercede, using the prayercard you sent. I am happy to report that my sister-in-law started her new teaching job today that's only a short drive from her home.

— JP, Lewiston, Maine

For a Blessed George prayercard (B32-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: graces@marian.org.

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Prayerful gifts for Christmas giving



2017 Mary Calendar

In honor of the 100th anniversary of Fatima, the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception bring you the 2017 Mary Calendar. It features beautiful Marian artwork and inspirational quotes. Also includes special Marian feast days, Fatima prayers, and how to pray the Rosary. **B32-CAL17 \$12.95**

Angel
B32-STARA



Lamb
B32-STARL

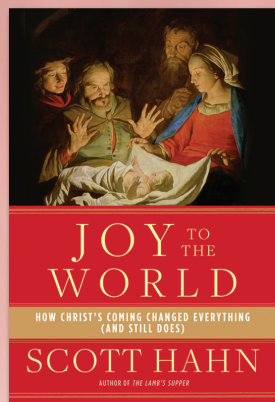


Shepherd
B32-STARs



Christmas Star with Nativity Scene

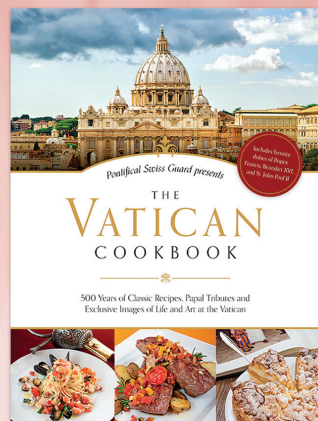
Perfect for decorating a desk, shelf, or table, this gold-embossed Christmas star makes a great gift or addition to your seasonal decor. 2 3/4" x 2 1/2" **\$3.95 each**



Joy to the World:

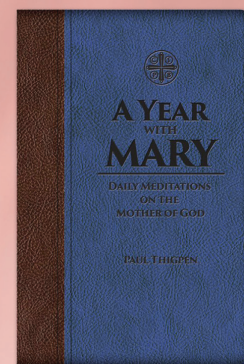
How Christ's Coming Changed the World (and Still Does)

Bestselling author Scott Hahn explains that Christmas is fundamentally a family story. Christmas is the story of a father, a mother, and a child — their relationships, their interactions, their principles, their individual lives, and their common life. **B32-JOY \$23**



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OUR LADY of PEACE

by WILLIAM SAYERS

PEACE — a magic word, the object of the prayers and longings of the human race since the fall of Adam and Eve. But what is peace? It is the harmony between man and God, and among men themselves. To restore this harmony, which has been disturbed by sin, the Prince of Peace at the proper time came down from heaven. Under the influence of His teaching, sealed by His death and resurrection, the face of the earth was renewed. We have been so distracted by the things of this world that we all too often forget that He is ready to help us, if we but ask.

When Our Lady appeared at Fatima, she foretold all that has come to pass so far in this country, if men did not turn their hearts to God. She told of the great holocausts which would envelop the world unless reparation is made for the sins committed against God.

Our Lady stated that reparation could be made by the praying of the rosary. In the world, how many people say the rosary for peace? This is a question which only God can answer. If we look at the chaos of the world, it can be said with some degree of certainty that too few rosaries are being said for the cause of peace.

Statistics show that in our country the average family watches television for five hours a day. The rosary, said with full meaning as to what is being said, takes about fifteen minutes. If a family can watch television for hours at a time, is it a great hardship for them to give God at least fifteen minutes a day? The family should take time to say the rosary as a group. Even if there are small, squirming children who will not remain quiet during an entire rosary, then one decade, well said, is better than no rosary at all. Surely Our Lady will smile at the fidgeting little ones.



"Fifteen minutes a day reciting the rosary can prevent this!"

St. Francis of Assisi, knew that peace did not begin with the instantaneous conversion of an entire country, but that it must begin with the regeneration of the individual. Peace must begin with each person in his or her own sphere of influence, no matter how small or unimportant the person may feel. No matter how small a contribution from each of us may seem, it is important and needed. Like the turning on of one light after another in a great metropolis after dark, the total effect of millions of small lights spells the difference between radiant brightness and inky darkness.

The bigger problems in the world have their roots in the selfishness of one person after another. By the same token, the world can be changed for the better insofar as each person does his part to apply divine love to every facet of human affairs. ■ ■

Long after we decided on our cover story for this issue of Marian Helper magazine that you now hold in your hands, we dug through our archives and discovered this article from precisely 50 years ago in the Marian Helpers Bulletin (the precursor to Marian Helper). Looking toward the 50-year anniversary in 1967 of the 1917 Marian apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, our magazine predecessors urged Marian Helpers to follow Our Lady of Fatima's call to pray the Rosary daily for peace. (They took a slightly different approach to convey the critical nature of the situation — an artist's rendering of a mushroom cloud over New York City, with the United Nations in the foreground.)



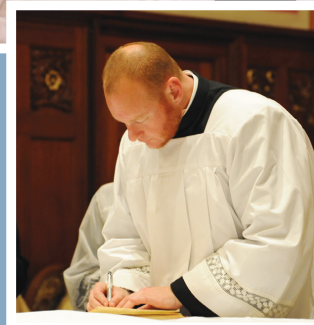
2016 perpetual vows ceremony.

Photo gallery

Live the call!



Deacon Gabriel Cillo, MIC's ordination and first homily.



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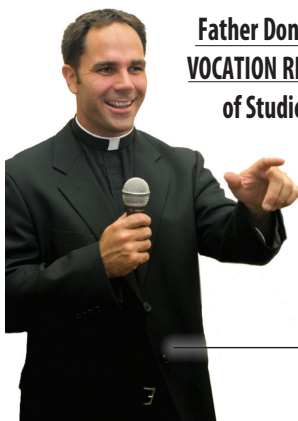
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Vocation Director
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Father Donald talks about vocations: marian.org/vocsupport/ blessings



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— Roy, a Marian Helper



Ellen Miller explains gift annuities.

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