

# Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

[marian.org](http://marian.org)



## HE LED US IN THE CHAPLET

So when Michael Bethea became critically ill, we prayed it for him



B36-SC171 *A CHILD IS BORN* PEARL FOILED & EMBOSSED

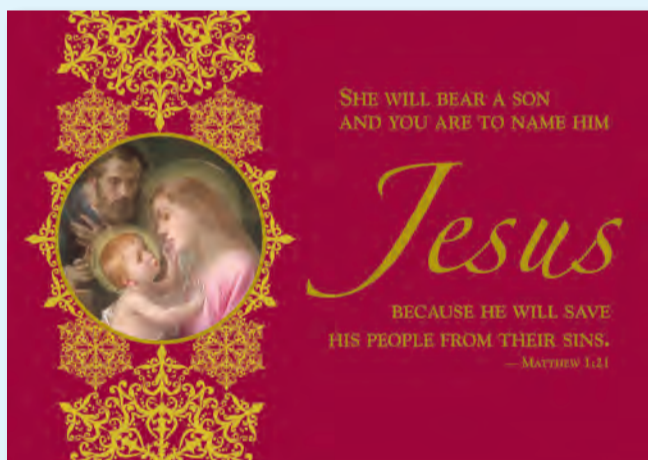
# More than a card — it's Three Masses on Christmas



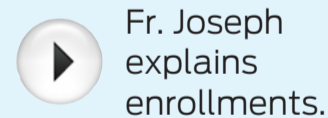
B36-SC172  
*STAINED GLASS ADORATION  
OF THE CHILD JESUS*  
GOLD FOILED & SPOT VARNISHED

Wish your loved ones a blessed Christmas with our exclusive cards. They'll be remembered in the three Masses on Dec. 25 at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

**Enroll a loved one today!**  
**1-800-462-7426**  
**[marian.org/b36/sc](http://marian.org/b36/sc)**



B36-SC173 *HOLY FAMILY* GOLD FOILED



Fr. Joseph explains enrollments.

## CHRISTMAS ENROLLMENT CARDS



B36-AXC16  
*LITTLE ANGELS (CHILDREN'S)*

Your offering helps support the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

## All Year Through:

Remember your friends and loved ones in a Mass at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy every day. Enroll them in the Association of Marian Helpers from this Christmas to the next.



B36-AX17  
*SHRINE AT CHRISTMAS*  
SILVER FOILED WITH  
REMOVABLE PRAYERCARD

You know him from “The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song.” When Michael Bethea needed a kidney transplant, Marian Helpers came to his aid.

## 10 Fatima: What are we missing?

As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fatima winds down, we note that the First Saturdays are being neglected. Let us do our part, and trust in Jesus and Mary to take care of the rest.

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**ON THE COVER:** (Inset photo) From left, Crystal Yates, Michael Bethea, and Trish Short singing the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song* DVD.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

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

## WHO WE ARE



### Marian Helpers Center

Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
Headquarters and  
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1-800-462-7426

### National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

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



### Mercy Apostolates

Learn about our  
lay ministries.  
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### Evangelization Team

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[parishmissions@marian.org](mailto:parishmissions@marian.org)

### Hearts Afire: Parish-based Programs (HAPP®)

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### Intercessory Prayerline

Send us your  
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1-800-804-3823  
[marian.org/prayerline](http://marian.org/prayerline)

### Websites

[marian.org](http://marian.org)  
[TheDivineMercy.org](http://TheDivineMercy.org)  
[ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org)



## Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

## Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

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

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

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



YouTube



[Visit marian.org/social](http://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](http://marian.org/13th)
- Friends of Mercy: [TheDivineMercy.org/friends](http://TheDivineMercy.org/friends)
- Holy Souls Sodality: [PrayForSouls.org](http://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](http://marian.org/plannedgiving)

- to support a particular ministry or need: [marian.org/give](http://marian.org/give)
- to create a memorial or tribute: [MemorialsOnEdenHill.org](http://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.*

# ‘PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!’

**S**aint John the Baptist was sent to announce, “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Mk 1:3). In Advent, we do exactly that: We wait and we hope for Jesus, giving testimony to the Light coming into the world.

But which coming do we prepare for? People often think we’re only getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but actually that’s not all! In Advent, we prepare for all three comings of Christ: the Incarnation; the Second Coming of Christ; and Jesus’ entry into our hearts through the Sacraments and prayer.

So yes, in Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus. And a key element to preparing the way of the Lord is penance, which enables us to share in the Cross of Christ. As Fr. John Hardon, SJ, used to say, “Love and suffering are inseparable.”

Many have forgotten that Advent is a penitential season, and used to be a full 40-day fast like Lent. (The Orthodox Church still observes that fast.) By performing fasting and penance in Advent, we prepare to celebrate Christmas with clean hearts and minds by offering reparation for our sins, strengthening our weakened wills, mortifying our disordered desires, and renewing our minds (see Rom 12:2). We offer some helpful Advent practices to prepare your hearts and your families for Christmas in our pamphlet “Living the Spirit of Advent” (Product code B36-AVPF), which you can order through [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or by calling 1-800-462-7426.

So when does the true Christmas season start? If you listen to the commercials and the media,

*Advent* is the Christmas season. For them, Christmas begins the day after Thanksgiving, when the gift buying season begins, and ends after Christmas Day. Actually, the opposite is true. The Christmas season begins on the Vigil of Christmas — Christmas Eve — and ends in

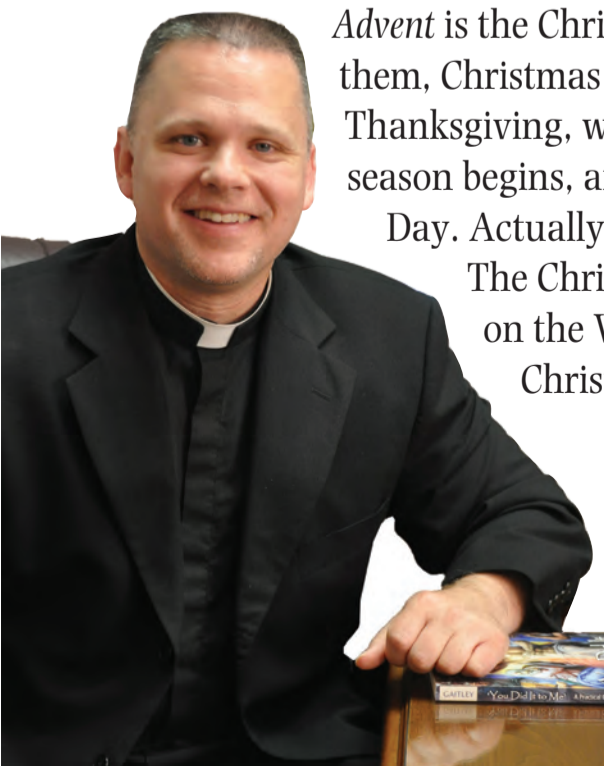
January, on the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord, which is the Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany (when we celebrate the manifestation of our Lord during the visit of the Three Magi). That is the true Christmas season, when we ought to have Christmas decorations all around the house. Christmas to Epiphany is 12 days — traditionally called “Christmastide,” or the 12 days of Christmas.

There is, however, one particular Advent decoration: the Advent wreath. Its shape is a circle, with no beginning and no end, to symbolize eternity. The wreath is made out of evergreen, so named because it always stays green, and thus symbolizes eternal life.

We light candles on the wreath because Christ is the Light of the World. Those four candles symbolize hope, faith, joy, and peace. The purple candles represent penance, but the one rose candle (lit on Gaudete Sunday in the third week of Advent) represents joy. It’s like this little oasis in the desert of a fasting and penitential season. As the days grow darker, we light more candles, showing that the light of Christ is shining over the horizon, that once again, a people in darkness are seeing a great light (see Mt 4:16). We have hope; Christ is coming. When we light the rose candle, we’re within two weeks of Christmas.

So in this Advent season, let us pray to our great saints and with our Catholic brethren for hope, faith, joy, and peace for ourselves and our world. Let us be prepared to worthily receive the gifts of God, especially the Incarnate Divine Mercy.

*Fr. Joseph, MIC*




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



# ‘THIS IS YOUR IDEA’

*More than 20 years ago, Marian Helpers Carol and Joe Pallazola founded the lay apostolate The Divine Mercy Movement in San Diego, California. Here, they share how they spread the word about Divine Mercy in the early 1990s before St. Faustina was canonized, and they talk about what goes into making their annual Divine Mercy Conference a success.*

## **How were you introduced to Divine Mercy?**

In 1992, after Mass, I picked up a skinny piece of paper someone had left behind in a pew. It had instructions on how to say the Divine Mercy Novena and Chaplet. Somebody had hand-written on the side, “If you start this novena on Good Friday, you’ll receive special graces.” I did the Novena myself and told my husband, Joe, about it later. The next year, Sr. Faustina was beatified, so Joe and I started talking to others about Divine Mercy.

## **Why did you start spreading the message of Divine Mercy?**

It’s an exciting message. When many people hear about it, they ask in disbelief, “Will He really forgive me

for [my sins]?” We just say, “Yes, He will.”

In the early 1990s, no one in our area — San Diego, California — was doing anything to recognize Divine Mercy Sunday. There had been a group spreading Divine Mercy here back in the 1970s, but they fell apart before we got started. In 1993, a local deacon agreed to hold an observance for us. We put up fliers about 10 days before Divine Mercy Sunday, and about 350 people showed up.

## **How did your Divine Mercy outreach expand?**

We really started to expand in 1996 after we attended a Fortnight of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, to study Divine Mercy for 10 days. Since then, we have traveled the world with the Marians, attending conferences and learning everything we can about St. Faustina’s message.

For the first 10 years of our organization, we had monthly meetings with representatives from parishes all across San Diego. We instructed parishioners on how to approach their priests about having a Divine Mercy Sunday observance in their communities. By 1998,

more than 40 parishes in the area were observing Divine Mercy Sunday.

Before the feast became official, the Marians published a booklet listing the states and the cities that had Divine Mercy Sunday observances. Our diocese had more than most states. It was a grassroots effort from the people.

After the feast became official, we stopped holding monthly meetings and focused on our annual conference. Next year will be our 20<sup>th</sup> conference.

### **How many attend the conference each year?**

About 850 to 1,000 people. It's not the largest in the country, but Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, told us that it is one of the most organized. It's definitely one of the most fruitful conferences, though it's taken years to learn how to run things better. And it's still spreading. We have a lot of regular attendees, but new people are coming, too.

### **What happens at a typical conference?**

The doors open at 8 a.m. on Saturday. Attendees receive a packet of information on the conference along with prayercards. We sell religious articles and Divine Mercy materials. Most of our proceeds go toward the next year's conference and helping spread the message of Divine Mercy.

We have three talks in the morning, and three in the afternoon. Confession is available all day. We have recitation of the Rosary and the Chaplet, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and we close with Mass. Next year, the conference will be on Oct. 13, 2018. Father Donald Calloway, MIC, and Jesse Romero will speak.

### **What is your fondest memory of running the conference?**

In 1999, we picked up Fr. Seraphim and his sister, Sr. Sophia Michalenko, CMGT [*see page 32*], at the airport because they were speaking at our conference. Father Seraphim informed us that Sr. Faustina was going to be canonized. Halfway through the conference, Joe asked him, "Aren't you going to announce it to everyone?" He said, "No. I'm going to let my sister do it."

At our conference, for the first time publicly, Sr. Sophia announced that Sr. Faustina was going to be canonized.

### **What difficulties have you faced in running this annual conference?**

If a religious conference is going to be good, the devil does everything he can to disrupt it. When our workers get sick or the printers break down, we say, "Oh boy, it's going to be a heck of a conference."

For the first few years, I was running around like a maniac because the conference stressed me out. Then one day, I said, "Wait a minute now." And I pointed up to Heaven, and I said, "This is Your idea; You do it." Then all of a sudden, everything started falling into place.

MH

— Marc Massery

## **IN BRIEF**

The National Shrine of The Divine Mercy is seeking experienced parking lot attendants for Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend 2018, as well as an experienced traffic coordinator-leader. If interested, please contact the Volunteer Office at [volunteers@marian.org](mailto:volunteers@marian.org) or 413-298-1114.



When asked about volunteering on Divine Mercy Sunday, **Sheila F.** said, "Observing the faith of the people. I come away with a clear sense of who is the future of our Church. I always walk away feeling comforted and full of hope."

Another volunteer, **Hilda M.**, added, "Just experiencing the wide range of ages that make up the crowd on Divine Mercy Sunday. I also enjoy getting to meet pilgrims who have traveled great distances to be here and how that reflects their devotion to Divine Mercy."



Responding to our "pray the Rosary daily" initiative, **Bernadine Seminack** of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, wrote to tell us how she experienced the power of the Rosary:

My family lives in Boca and Naples, Florida. They refused to leave their homes during Hurricane Irma. On Sept. 9, right before the storm, I prayed three Rosaries for their protection. I had also prayed to St. Therese. She promised to send roses as a sign that Heaven had heard your prayer. My family was supposed to get a direct hit with a Category 5 storm. Soon it was reduced to Category 2. My family members stayed safe, and their homes had minimal damage. It was a miracle. The day after the storm, one single red rose bloomed from my rosebush.

# FACES OF MERCY

HOW HAS THE ROSARY STRENGTHENED YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?

**Kathleen Hayes** (with husband JJ)  
Staten Island, New York

The Rosary saved my life. I'm a recovering alcoholic. One time, when I was still drinking, I was lying on the ground drunk and couldn't get up. The only holy thing I had in my house was my First Communion rosary beads. The rosary has little white plastic beads with some silver plating on the chain, but now all you can see is the brass. I was trying to pray the Rosary, but was crying because I couldn't remember how to say a Hail Mary. I thought, "How can you forget how to say a Hail Mary?" I didn't get sober right away, but when I finally did, I realized several months later that my last drink was on Oct. 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. I'm 35 years sober, and I think Our Lady took me there. Now my husband and I pray the Rosary out loud together every night holding hands. I still have my First Communion rosary beads, but they're very fragile. I can't carry them around with me, but I always say the Rosary on those beads on the anniversary of my sobriety.



**Patricia Moots**  
Hopbottom, Pennsylvania

Sometimes I get up in the middle of the night. I can't sleep [and I start] worrying about my kids, so I pray the Rosary for them. My mother had this set of rosary beads from the Holy Land that she would use. After she died, my father would say his Rosary on them. Then, before he died, he gave them to me. I like to meditate on the Sorrowful Mysteries because they make me feel thankful for all the blessings that God has shown my family.

**Debbie Vanden**  
Latrobe, Pennsylvania

One time, I heard that one of my friends had left the Church. I was distressed and felt a strong urge to pray the Rosary. I chose the Luminous Mysteries with the intention that she would feel drawn back to the Eucharist. I found out later that she had decided to return to the Catholic Church during the moments in which I was praying that Rosary.

Another time, I had a friend that was in a difficult custody battle. Her court date was on the Feast of the Transfiguration. On the way to court, she started to get really upset. We prayed part of the Rosary in the car, and I prayed really hard that she would be transfigured into a place of peace. She went into court calm and composed. She was, indeed, transformed.

In telling these stories, I'm reminded about how much joy Mary has brought into my life. She has been 100 percent faithful to me.



## John Daniel Winston-Salem, North Carolina

I was raised a Baptist, so growing up, I did not know much about the Rosary. When I started RCIA, I thought that Marian devotion was too intense for me. In class, though, we started learning more about the Rosary. We began praying it together as a group. I participated mostly because I did not want to be the odd man out. Then, it started to grow on me. I started praying it alone at home, too. Eventually, I could not stay away from it. Now, I honestly do not understand how someone could have Christ to the fullest extent without a strong Marian devotion. I'm consecrated to Mary, and I pray the Rosary every day. It has become a way to constantly grow spiritually. She's kept me on track, and led me to become a Marian Missionary of Divine Mercy.



## Mary Rizzo Boston, Massachusetts

When my mother had Alzheimer's in the last years of her life, the only two things that calmed her down were listening to music and praying the Rosary.



Now, I love to pray the Rosary, especially the Scriptural Rosary. It puts you more into the life of Christ. I pray the Rosary at least twice a day. The way I pray the Rosary has changed since I went through Fr. Michael Gaitley's Marian consecration because I give all my intentions to the Blessed Mother. I still pray for specific intentions for my family, though, who are away from the Church. I pray that my grandchildren get baptized. I pray that my family experiences God's love and that they come into a full relationship with Him.

MH

## IN THE NEWS

### Update on Medjugorje

In a March interview with the Polish KAI Catholic news agency, Most Rev. Henryk Hoser, archbishop of Warszawa-Praga in Poland, answered questions about his work as pastoral visitator to Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, site of reported Marian apparitions from 1981 to the present day. In the course of the interview, he also offered insights as to the future of the site of the purported apparitions.

"I heard that the Vatican commission, which worked under Cardinal Camillo Ruini, stated that the first seven apparitions are authentic, though nothing has been officially published hitherto," said Archbishop Hoser. "Regarding the later apparitions, nothing has been said ... based upon the presupposition that first you must see [their] fruits and results."

The Archbishop added, "Everything points to the apparitions being approved, maybe even this year. Let us not forget that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith handed over all the documentation concerning the apparitions to the Secretariat of State, who is now working on it.

"I believe that comprehensive knowledge of the events in Medjugorje is not possible, because we are entering into the mystery of God and the mystery of man," Archbishop Hoser continued. "These are mysteries whose depths we cannot fathom. We can approach them by examining them phenomenologically and judge the situation both in depth and in breadth, but [our knowledge] will never be exhaustive. Spiritual things are going on there, which are often surprising and quite deep, but only the Lord God knows what is found in the heart of man."

Previously, Archbishop Hoser had served on a medical commission in the 1990s that evaluated the Marian apparitions at Kibeho, Rwanda. If the Church approves the first purported apparitions at Medjugorje while remaining silent on subsequent apparitions, she will be acting in a way similar to her decision regarding Kibeho.

No matter what decisions the Church reaches regarding Medjugorje, our duties remain the same: faith, hope, and love; obedience to the Holy Father and the bishops in communion with him; and remembering that even approved private revelations are not indispensable to living a good Christian life, but rather ought to prudently be received by the faithful in order to allow the will of God to guide our devotions and works of mercy.

As we approach Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, it's a great time to focus on our family, the Mystical Body of Christ. These picks center on prayer for some of those most in need of God's mercy (suicides and Holy Souls in Purgatory) and the recipient of God's greatest act of mercy: Mary Immaculate.

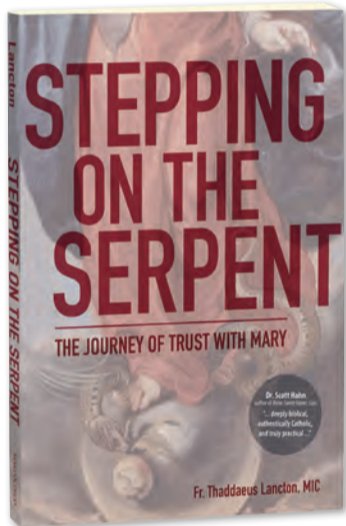
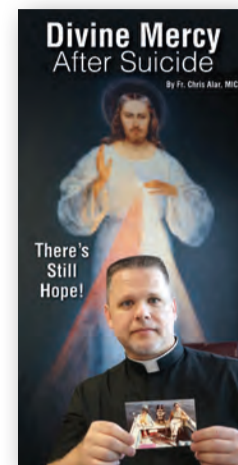
## DIVINE MERCY AFTER SUICIDE: THERE'S STILL HOPE

PAMPHLET BY FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC

**M**any Catholics believe the Church teaches that those who commit suicide are automatically condemned to hell. That's not true. Here, Fr. Joseph, MIC, the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, explains how he first learned the true teaching of the Church on the grave sin of suicide, how we can (and should!) offer prayers for those who have already died, and the power of the Divine Mercy Chaplet to open the doors to God's saving action at the moment of death — even for someone who died long ago. **B36-HOPE** ▶ FATHER CHRIS SPEAKS ON DIVINE MERCY AND SUICIDE.

### PAMPHLET PRICING

MIN QTY.	TOTAL
10	\$1.60
100	\$14
1,000	\$100



## STEPPING ON THE SERPENT: THE JOURNEY OF TRUST WITH MARY

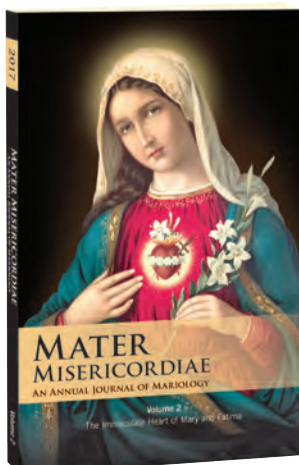
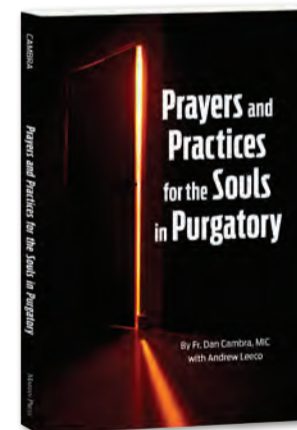
BY FR. THADDAEUS LANCTON, MIC

**I**n his first book, Fr. Thaddaeus has composed a unique and fascinating meditation on living the prayer “Jesus, I trust in You.” He points to an essential element: being accompanied on the journey by the Blessed Virgin Mary. Imitating Our Lady's trust in the Word of God, we can then step out in faith during the deepest darkness, even when that means walking on water or stepping on the ancient serpent, the devil. A great way for Divine Mercy devotees to go deeper in their faith and devotion. \$14.95. **B36-JBK** ▶ FATHER THADDAEUS TALKS ABOUT STEPPING ON THE SERPENT.

## PRAYERS AND PRACTICES FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

BY FR. DAN CAMBRA, MIC

**I**n this collection, Fr. Dan has gathered together writings on various elements of Catholic doctrine on Purgatory, demonstrating that it really does exist and we really are obligated to pray for the dead. Father Dan shares a wealth of devotional practices, all with remarkable power to aid the Holy Souls in Purgatory, in this treasure trove of teaching on one of the most neglected (and yet most essential) of the works of mercy. A wonderful resource for all Marian Fathers and Marian Helpers devoted to praying for the Holy Souls. \$14.95. **B36-PRBK**



## MATER MISERICORDIAE, VOL. II

EDITED BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC, AND DR. ROBERT STACKPOLE, STD

**I**n this second annual volume of the Marian Fathers' journal of Mariology, Fr. Donald and Dr. Stackpole have gathered contributions from saints and scholars, all shedding light on the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Particularly appropriate in this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fatima, this edition will be of interest to both academics and devotees of Our Lady. \$14.95. **B36-MMV2**



# MARIANS ARRIVE IN VIETNAM

**I**n September 2015, Fr. Bogusław Gil, MIC, was prepared to begin a new Marian mission in Vietnam. Just before his departure, however, he learned that there was no room for him in the house where he had planned to live. This news left Fr. Bogusław with no time to search for a new place.

He nevertheless departed as planned — not knowing where or with whom he would live in a city of 8 million people. “Not for a moment did I feel alone,” Fr. Bogusław explains. “Somewhere in the depths of myself, I recalled the words of the Gospel: ‘Do not be afraid; just have faith!’ (Mk 5:36). This gesture of trust bore fruit in my experience of peace, flowing from my conviction that I am not accomplishing my own plans, but that I am participating in the mission that the Lord has entrusted to me.”

At first, Fr. Bogusław rented a room and began to learn the language and culture of Vietnam. He prayed for vocations, and God provided the first candidates to join the Marian Fathers. “One day, I visited a parish that contained relics of St. John Paul II,” he recalls. “After a short prayer before the relics, I left the Church and noticed a nearby convent. I visited the sisters, and then one of them presented a young man to me — a student, working in their garden. I found out that the student, Diên, had desired for a long time to enter a Marian religious congregation and to become a priest.” Eventually, Diên and three others came to live with Fr. Bogusław in a rented house in Saigon. Two of them became postulants on Dec. 17, 2016.

This year, on May 18, this fledgling Marian community in Vietnam celebrated the first feast of our



Father Bogusław Gil, MIC, celebrates St. Stanislaus Papczynski's feast day on May 18 with candidates, their families and guests at the Marian House in Vietnam.

Founder since his canonization. Father Bogusław, together with two postulants and three candidates, spent three weeks translating the first chapter of a book about St. Stanislaus into Vietnamese. They developed a booklet that will serve to

spread devotion to the Founder in Vietnam. A novena in Vietnamese was prayed before the feast. “Many people from outside of our home asked for this Novena because they felt touched by the short history of our Founder’s life and of the Congregation,” said Fr. Bogusław. “They particularly remember the history of the renovation of the Congregation in 1909.” Father Bogusław invited the families of the candidates, friends, and helpers to the community’s celebration. He celebrated the Mass and preached the homily in Vietnamese. The relics of St. Stanislaus were venerated at the end of the Mass, which was followed by a meal enjoyed by all. Since the feast day, the candidates now always speak about “our Congregation.”

Two of the postulants are now going to travel to the Philippines to improve their English and enter the novitiate next year under Fr. James Cervantes, MIC. Other candidates are arriving, and another Marian priest is preparing himself to join Fr. Bogusław in Vietnam.

These are the sorts of fruits we can expect from faithful trust and prayer. And so I ask you: Please pray for our mission in Vietnam!



# FATIMA: WHAT ARE WE MISSING?

By Chris Sparks

**T**he 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, is winding down; the visionaries Francisco and Jacinta are now canonized saints; the United Nations Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima once again visited the UN; and we've prayed many, many daily Rosaries for peace. Yes, we should celebrate all this and more. But the Marian Helpers Center has also seen something surface that I find deeply alarming.



## ACCORDING TO THE HOLY SEE: THE CONSECRATION'S BEEN MADE. BUT ...

### The question of the consecration of Russia

Throughout the year, we've received letters and calls from a number of our Marian Helpers, especially in response to the column by Director of the Association of Marian Helpers Fr. Chris Alar, MIC ("Fr. Joseph Writes," Summer 2017), and my piece ("All Heart," Fall 2017). These messages repeat a popular Catholic rumor: The consecration of Russia, as announced by Our Lady in the second part of the secret given at Fatima in July 1917, and requested by Our Lady in 1929, has not been performed by any of the popes — not even by St. John Paul II in 1984.

We've been sent a number of articles and excerpts from books and magazines that some of our readers believe prove this rumor true. These writings often rely on claims of forgery, character assassination, and so forth, all supposedly committed by the recent Holy Fathers or their close collaborators. The writers of these pieces usually conclude their argument with the apparently devastating final blow: "If the consecration of

Russia has been performed as Our Lady requested, why isn't there peace in the world?"

### Dispelling a rumor

Here's the problem with that rumor: To believe it's true is to believe that recent popes (including a canonized saint) have been enmeshed in a conspiracy of epic proportions. But why would they have bothered? After he was shot on May 13, 1981 (the anniversary of the first Marian apparition at Fatima), St. John Paul II took the message of Fatima very seriously and tried several times to perform the consecration. If Fatima visionary Servant of God Sr. Lucia dos Santos had told him that the 1984 consecration had not been accepted, there's no reason to suppose he wouldn't have tried again and again until he got it right. No, to the contrary: The Holy See and Sr. Lucia have said conclusively that the consecration of Russia has been accepted by Heaven.

In the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith's "The Message of Fatima," released June 26, 2000, as

part of the Holy See's official publication of the full secret of Fatima, we read:

Sister Lucia personally confirmed that this solemn and universal act of consecration corresponded to what Our Lady wished (“*Sim, està feita, tal como Nossa Senhora a pediu, desde o dia 25 de Março de 1984*”: “Yes it has been done just as Our Lady asked, on 25 March 1984”: Letter of 8 November 1989). Hence any further discussion or request is without basis.



Saint John Paul II consecrated Russia in 1984. Fatima visionary Servant of God Sr. Lucia dos Santos personally confirmed that this act of consecration had been accepted by Heaven.

In *Fatima for Today* (Ignatius Press, 2010), pages 193-199 and Appendix C, Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR, lays out evidence that St. John Paul II understood the consecration requested by Our Lady to have taken place, in large part because Sr. Lucia confirmed it repeatedly in letters and to Fr. Luis Kondor, the vice-postulator for the causes of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco. Father Michael Gaitley, MIC, expands on the history of papal consecrations and why the world needed consecrating (not merely Russia) by 1984, in his book *The Second Greatest Story Ever Told* (Marian Press, 2015), Chapter 8.

## Where's the peace?

But concerned Catholics dismiss all of this history, theology, and guidance from the Church and ask, “But if the consecration of Russia has taken place, then why don't we have peace? Where's the conversion of Russia? Where's the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart?”

The answer is in the secret of Fatima.

The consecration of Russia is not the *only* requirement

for the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart, the conversion of Russia, and the coming of the era of peace. Our Lady *also* requested the Communion of reparation. From the second part of the secret:

I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace ... .

Saint John Paul II did his part. Are we doing ours?

## What are the First Saturdays?

Our Lady explained the First Saturdays to Sr. Lucia dos Santos on Dec. 10, 1925:

See, my daughter, my Heart encircled by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you, at least, strive to console me. Tell them that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, in order to make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep

me company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the ... mysteries of the Rosary.

Why *five* First Saturdays in particular? Jesus explained this to Sr. Lucia on May 29-30, 1930, saying:

Daughter, the motive is simple: There are five kinds of offenses and blasphemies spoken against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**First:** blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception

**Second:** against her Virginity

**Third:** against the Divine Maternity, refusing, at the same time, to receive her as the Mother of mankind

**Fourth:** those who seek publicly to implant, in the hearts of children, indifference, disrespect, and even hate for this Immaculate Mother

**Fifth:** those who revile her directly in her sacred images

Here, dear daughter, is the motive that led the Immaculate Heart of Mary to petition Me to ask for this small act of reparation. And, out of regard for her, to move My mercy to pardon those souls who have had the misfortune to offend her. As for you, seek endlessly, with your prayers and sacrifices, to move Me to mercy in regard to these poor souls.

If we've made the Five First Saturdays once, are we done for life? "No!" writes noted Mariologist Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. "You can and should make the Five First Saturdays more than once. In fact, I highly recommend it as a great spiritual practice!"

### What's next?

So we've got a job to do. Let me offer an examination of conscience to help us discern where we go from here.

- Are we performing and promoting the First Saturdays devotion in our families, parishes, schools,



To order the pamphlet "Five First Saturdays In Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary" by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC (Product code B36-FDPF), visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426.

and communities?

- Are we spreading the First Saturdays with the same effort and emotion we're putting into being concerned about the state of the Church and the world?
- Are we letting our concern for the Church and the world fuel our daily Rosary for peace in the world, our fidelity to the First Saturdays, and our devotion to the Immaculate Heart?
- Are we living trust in Jesus and Mary, and in the Church?

We are told by St. John Paul II, "Be not afraid!" and shown by his example that we should give ourselves totally to Mary. We are told by St. Faustina to trust in Jesus and His Church, preferring the Church's guidance even to private revelation (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 497, 535). We are told by the Church that the consecration has been made, and we can see clearly that the First Saturdays are being neglected. Let

us do our part, and trust in Jesus and Mary to take care of the rest.

MH

## FRUITS OF FATIMA

The Church's attention has been on Fatima throughout the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions in Portugal. And there have been many fruits:

- The two youngest Fatima visionaries, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, were canonized by Pope Francis on May 13 this year. Both child seers died within a couple years of the Marian apparitions, leaving Lucia dos Santos, the eldest of the visionaries, to carry on the mission of promoting devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary until her death in 2005.
- We're seeing Marian consecration sweeping the globe. Whole dioceses and even nations are consecrating themselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary, often using 33-day preparations like Marian Fr. Michael Gaitley's *33 Days to Morning Glory* (Product code B36-33DAY; available at [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or by calling 1-800-462-7426). Scotland and Canada have held national consecrations through their bishops' conferences. Many other diocesan or national consecrations have been planned or have taken place.
- The Marian Fathers and Helpers have pledged more than one and a half million daily Rosaries for peace in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary.
- And word is spreading about the First Saturdays devotion, specifically called for by Our Lady of Fatima. Some parishes are beginning to put the First Saturdays on their calendars and are celebrating them as a community.

Have you seen any special or unusual fruits from this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fatima? Please share your story with us at [editorial@marian.org](mailto:editorial@marian.org) or by writing Association of Marian Helpers, Editorial Dept., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263.



PHOTOS COURTESY  
OF MICHAEL BETHEA

Michael Bethea (from “The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song”) is all smiles as he heads for surgery to receive a kidney transplant. The life-saving surgery on Aug. 23 also meant freedom after eight years of dialysis.

# PRAYERS WORK!

WHEN MICHAEL BETHEA NEEDED A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT,  
MARIAN HELPERS CAME TO HIS AID.

By Theresa Peloquin

**H**is quiet speech was hardly recognizable as that of the singer whom fans had dubbed “The Man with the Voice of an Angel” — but then, Michael Bethea had only been recuperating for a few short weeks since his kidney transplant.

Despite occasional throat clearings and pauses to catch his breath, his voice still sounded animated as he talked about trust in the Lord.

That’s something Michael knows a lot about.

## A notable talent

Michael's singing voice kindled what is now a 30-year friendship with musician and long-time Marian Helper Trish Short. The first time Trish heard Michael sing, he was with a band performing for a telethon at a local television station in Florida. "After that, she would come out to the restaurant where we were playing," he said.

Apparently, Trish had a good ear for music. By the time they had met, Michael had attended Jackson State University on a full vocal scholarship. He would go on to record two albums while under contract to RCA Records and share the stage with Keith Urban, CeCe Winans, Bo Diddley, Jeff Carlisi (from the band 38 Special), and Greg Barnhill (singer-songwriter for Vince Gill and Amy Grant).

Over the years, Michael and Trish collaborated on and off with singer Crystal Yates. That relationship led Trish to ask them both to join her in recording "The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song," which she was producing.

Of course, they accepted.

"All three of us were from different denominations," Michael noted. "It's amazing how God uses anybody, no matter where they're from, to give Him glory."

"The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song" also brought Michael a level of celebrity status that surprised even him. Strangers would recognize him in public, and friends would call to confirm that they'd seen him on television. "Several years ago, when I was singing at a restaurant," Michael recalled, "this lady came up to me and told me she was from the country of Panama. She said, 'I see you on EWTN, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.' And it hit me! I already had been thinking about stopping doing secular music and just totally devote using my voice for Christ. When she said that, I thought, 'What kind of message am I sending to people if they see me in 'Divine Mercy in Song' on television, pouring my heart out, and then she comes in [to the restaurant] and sees me?' Not that I was singing anything that was bad or sexual or anything like that, but it's still like crossing over the fence."

## An urgent plea

Last summer, Trish sent an email to dozens of her contacts. Her subject line cried out, "CRITICAL KIDNEY TRANSPLANT needed for MICHAEL BETHEA ... Please, please PRAY!"



Luann and Michael Bethea walk the halls of the hospital as they recover from kidney surgery. As part of a kidney exchange program, Luann donated a kidney and Michael received one.

Among Trish's email recipients was the Very Rev. Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, provincial superior of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy Province. He in turn alerted Fr. Chris Alar, MIC ("Father Joseph, MIC").

Because Michael is a beloved figure among the Marian Helpers, the next issue of *Marian Helper* magazine (Winter 2016-17) included the following request:

Please pray for Michael Bethea, the singer/song-writer 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."

Despite a few post-surgery complications, Michael now says he's feeling much better. "I would like to tell everyone that I'm so grateful for all their support," he said. "I'm also glad that I was able to bring some people back to the Church. That's my goal. That's what I want to do full-time, and just allow God to use me — to use my voice."



Please lift Michael up in your prayers. Praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy seems most appropriate.

A similar announcement appeared on our Facebook pages ([@MarianHelpers](#) and [@DivineMercyOfficial](#)) on the evening of Sept. 19, 2016.

## An outpouring of prayer

By the next morning, the Facebook post had reached almost 400,000 readers, and thousands had clicked on the links to the sung chaplet.

The post also received 15,000 reactions, comments, and shares. Here are a few of the readers' comments:

- It was because of the televising of the Chaplet and Pope Francis' message of mercy that I have returned to the Faith and the Catholic Church after a 40-year absence. God bless and heal Michael.
- All things are possible with God. My prayers for Michael, whose voice on the Chaplet CD led and inspired me to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet in such a beautiful way.
- We have loved his singing on this Chaplet video for many years. May our Lord bring healing to Michael and faith and strength to his beautiful family. All in our prayers ...
- Lord Jesus, unfathomable Divine Mercy, we trust in Your mercy for Your beloved servant, Michael, for You to give him the kidney transplant and healing he so desperately needs! Saint Faustina, pray for him, please!

Early on Sept. 20, a grateful Trish Short sent a message to Fr. Kaz and Fr. Chris. "I called Michael this morning to take a look at your Facebook page to read the comments. [They] will greatly uplift him and give him hope for his critical stage transplant."

She noted that, in just the first 100 of the hundreds of comments, two people offered to donate a kidney if they were a match. Many offered prayers, and some donated to help cover medical costs.

Father Kaz replied that he was grateful for the outpouring of love and prayers for Michael. "We have complete confidence in the power of our Lord's love and mercy for him," he wrote.

Father Chris also sent Trish his prayers and encouragement. "As I travel often," said Fr. Chris, "it is amazing to still hear how many people continue to be touched by your Divine Mercy Chaplet recording on EWTN ... truly a great way to evangelize millions about God's tender love and mercy."

## Answered prayers

On July 6, 2017, Trish emailed the Marians good news: A kidney donor had been found. Michael and his wife, Luann, would participate in the NFT Emory Paired Donor Exchange Program in Atlanta, Georgia. Their carefully orchestrated swap would involve 10 people in four states who were scheduled to give or receive a kidney.

This donor exchange program would allow Luann to donate her kidney to someone from South Carolina, and the donation chain would continue back to Michael.

On Aug. 23, Luann underwent surgery to donate a kid-

ney. That same day, Michael had his transplant surgery. After eight years, Michael was officially off of dialysis.

“God has blessed me to receive a kidney,” Michael said, “and He’s blessing me with my wife. This couldn’t have happened as soon as it did without her. She wanted to donate her kidney to me, but she wasn’t a match. But she was still like, ‘What can I do?’”

Despite a few post-surgery complications, Michael now says he’s feeling much better. “I would like to tell everyone that I’m so grateful for all their support,” he said. “I’m also glad that I was able to bring some people back to the Church. That’s my goal. That’s what I want to do full-time, and just allow God to use me — to use my voice.”

On Sept. 19, 2017 — exactly one year after the original Facebook post requesting prayers for Michael — the Marians’ social media pages included an update about the Betheas. The posts again asked for prayer and for financial support, since the couple would not be able to return to work for at least several weeks.

Again, readers responded with prayer and donations. At the same time, however, Luann received some disconcerting news.

## About trust

A few days earlier, Luann had been praying about the job she’d had for eight years, and she asked God to carry her out of that situation. “You’ve got to be careful what you ask for!” quipped Michael. “Two days later, all of a sudden she got a call that they were getting ready to

close their doors that weekend.”

After all that Michael and Luann had been through, how did they react?

“Well, that’s it,” Michael said. “We trust in God with everything. We just both sat down and we prayed, because we know He has a better job for her, He has a bigger plan, He has a bigger plan for me also. It’s all about us putting our trust in Him, not being weary. Have peace and have joy, even in our situation right now.

“You have to not try to take over,” he continued. “Just do what it says in the Bible and allow God to take over your plans. We all have plans, and God gives us some vision. But what He doesn’t do, He doesn’t give direction on how to get to that. When we see our vision, we see a straight line there. But it’s not always like that. I know that I would love to be able to just go all over the world and sing and bring people to Christ as I’ve been doing. But I don’t know what His plan is. I don’t want to try to take over.”

As for the sheer numbers of those who have prayed or donated, “overwhelming” is what Michael calls it. “I do not take any of them for granted,” he said. “I just pray and thank God for them. For everyone. I *mean* everyone.” Michael’s appreciation was unmistakable. You could hear it in his voice.

Visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) to purchase the “*The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song*” on DVD (product code B36-DMSDVD) or CD (product code B36-DMSCD2). You also can hear this rendition of the Chaplet on weekends on EWTN. MH

# ‘A testimony of love’

## The Church’s teaching on organ transplants

In 2015, when Pope Francis met in Rome with the Transplant Committee for the Council of Europe, he called the act of organ donation a “testimony of love for our neighbor.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches:

Organ transplants are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity. It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent. Moreover, it is not morally admissible to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons (CCC, 2296).

Keep in mind, though, that donations must be made freely, not as the result of external pressure, and donors must be given the opportunity to withdraw from a procedure. Organ donation is not something that others have a right to demand. Nobody has more right to your organs than you do. As an act of pure generosity, organ donation can be celebrated and encouraged.

Registering as an organ donor is easy. Visit [OrganDonor.gov](http://OrganDonor.gov) to find out more.



# WHY SHEPHERDS?

By Marc Massery

**E**very Christmas, we sing about the shepherds who kept watch over their flock by night, but over the centuries, we have lost a sense of their deeper significance.

In the first century, the Jewish people treated shepherds as second-class citizens. Shepherds, after all, often could not observe the Sabbath properly because their flocks required daily attention. Furthermore, the nature of their gritty work made it almost impossible for them to remain clean enough to follow the demands of ceremonial law. But God chose these outcasts to receive the first announcement of the Incarnation.

While their part of the world lay asleep, an assembly of shepherds near Bethlehem remained vigilant. They looked out for thieves, predators, or anything that might threaten their flock. Still, they had no reason to expect an intrusion of the supernatural. It would have seemed more reasonable for a message regarding the birth of a king to come to the elite of the nation.

Yet the most powerful men in the world did not receive any announcement regarding the birth of the Savior. Instead, a few pagan philosophers had to deduce the birth of Christ from their knowledge of the stars. Even after the Wise Men discovered the star in the east, they did not know where they could find this Child. Herod had to call in the chief priests and the scribes; they could only say where Scripture historically said the birth of such a savior would take place — Bethlehem.

Herod feared that this king would replace him. So he sent the Wise Men to find this Child. Despite telling the Magi otherwise, Herod intended to destroy Christ as soon as he could.

But the shepherds in their lowliness posed no threat to Christ. God's angel, therefore, told the shepherds not only who was born but where to find Him, how to recognize Him, and what it all meant.

The angel said, "[T]o you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:14).

After this announcement, the shepherds went "with haste" to Bethlehem. They said, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Lk 2:15). They did not go to see if what the angel said was true. They already believed. In their humility, they sought the Savior with joy.

Still, these lowly shepherds had a unique importance even before the angel appeared to them. In the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests would sacrifice an unblemished

lamb every day, both morning and evening. According to Scripture scholars, these shepherds likely pastured those same flocks from which the Temple authorities took their lambs for sacrifice.

Even knowing that their sheep had special importance, these shepherds left their flock alone to seek Christ. They abandoned the atoning sacrifice under

the old law in order to seek the eternal sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The imperfect means of atonement, of the Old Covenant, were already beginning to pass away.

If it had not been for the description that the angels had given them, the shepherds would not have found Christ. Knowing that a Child was born in Bethlehem would not have been enough information alone. What was unique about the angel's description of Christ was that He was "lying in a manger." Probably few babies were born that night in the small town of Bethlehem. Surely, only one Child was so poor as to be lying in a feeding trough. The shepherds, therefore, recognized Christ on account of His poverty. They did not seek royalty in a palace, but an impoverished family, partially exposed to the elements. They did not seek a monarch surrounded by lords and servants, but paupers among ox and ass. They did not look for a ruler sitting on a throne, but a newborn cradled in a feeding trough. Because of Christ's poverty, the shepherds approached the Creator of the world without hesitation. Christ appeared to them as they were: poor, unclean outcasts from society. In the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, Christ appeared to St. Faustina as a child. He said to her, "I keep company with you as a child to teach you humility and simplicity" (*Diary*, 184).

We, too, look for the Savior of the World in His poverty every time we go to Mass. We seek Him under the appearance of bread, the most ordinary substance in the world. We, therefore, do not hesitate to approach the Creator. When we encounter the incarnate God, He transforms our hearts so that we can return to our everyday lives like the shepherds, "glorifying and praising God for all [we have] heard and seen" (Lk 2:20). We have found the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God. We cannot stop glorifying and praising Him. God has made Himself like us, so that we might make ourselves like Him.

## **Christ appeared to them as they were: poor, unclean outcasts from society.**



Above: Father Chris Alar, MIC, gives a parish mission talk at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Batavia, Illinois. Below: Father Chris speaks with parishioners after one of his talks. He also celebrated Mass for the parish elementary school.



# MISSION POSSIBLE

MARIAN FATHERS TRAVEL  
TO PARISHES TO SPREAD THE  
MESSAGE OF DIVINE MERCY





PHOTOS BY MARC MASSERY

By Marc Massery

**F**ather Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers, has only been ordained three and a half years, but he's already lost count of the number of times he's boarded an airplane to spread the message of Divine Mercy. Since 2010, under the leadership of Fr. Chris and Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, the Marian Evangelization Team has been bringing a piece of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy to parishes nationwide.

## Genesis

The idea to assemble a parish mission team started with Fr. Chris before he was even a perpetually professed Marian brother. After spending some time in Marian formation, Chris left the Marians in May 2009 to discern a call to marriage. In late January 2010, he came back to the Order for good. Since he had missed the beginning of the winter semester in seminary, Chris returned to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where he would remain until school began in the fall. "I just started going into the Marian Helpers Center, meandering through the halls, getting involved in all kinds of different projects," Fr. Chris said.

That February, a parish in Rochester, New York, called Fr. Dan, the Marian Provincial at the time, and asked if he would deliver a parish mission. Father Dan



had not given a parish mission in many years. "I brought Chris along with me," Fr. Dan said. Before they left for Rochester, Fr. Dan was struck with the idea to bring along a few boxes of Divine Mercy pamphlets and images. He also made Chris carry a few boxes of Marian Press books.

"The first night [of the mission], Fr. Dan hit a home run," Fr. Chris recalled. The parishioners told Fr. Dan that it was the best parish mission they had ever been to. They took every last Divine Mercy pamphlet and prayer-card, and they purchased every book.

On the third and final night of the mission, Fr. Dan was still hearing confessions before his talk at 7 p.m. "He had a line a mile long. Everyone wanted to go to Confession," Fr. Chris said. Five minutes before Fr. Dan was supposed to speak, in between penitents, Chris peeked his head into Fr. Dan's confessional and told him that it was time to go on.

"Don't you know something about St. Faustina?" Fr. Dan said. "Go up there and tell them the basics." That night, without the advantage of wearing a collar, Chris Alar gave his first parish mission talk.

"The way people responded, we realized that they were hungry for the Word and hungry for Divine Mercy," Fr. Chris said.



## Exodus

When they returned to Stockbridge, Fr. Dan and Chris drafted a letter addressed to nearby parishes, telling them that if they could not bring their community to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, then the Marian Fathers would bring the Shrine to them through a parish mission.

Father Dan gave Chris permission to mail the letter to parishes within a 50-mile radius of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. They soon started receiving invitations from around the country. “We took invitations to go to parishes without regard for whether or not they could pay us anything,” Fr. Dan said. Thus, the Marian Fathers’ parish mission team was born.

Since his first brief talk about St. Faustina in Rochester, New York, Fr. Chris himself has spoken to more than 100,000 parishioners across the country. Though Fr. Dan has been listed as the spiritual director of the Marian Evangelization Team, he attributes most of its success to Fr. Chris. Other members of the team include: Fr. Mark Baron, MIC; Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC; Fr. Jim McCormack, MIC; Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC; and Fr. Anthony Gramlich, MIC, among others — and in a special way, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC. Now, the Marian Evangelization Team has spoken to parishes in almost every state in the country — including Hawaii and Alaska.

Proceeds raised through good-will offerings and sales of Divine Mercy material at the missions have gone to support the seminarians. “We did not start a parish mission team to raise money. But now that we have so many seminarians, it would be difficult to afford them without it,” Fr. Chris said. Each seminarian costs almost \$40,000 per year to house, feed, insure, and educate. With over 30 seminarians in formation, costs exceed \$1 million a year. “We feed the people spiritually, and they feed us physically,” Fr. Chris said. He added that though the main goal of the parish missions is to spread the message of Divine Mercy, it also serves as an opportunity for the Marian Fathers to connect with Marian Helpers

around the country and to invite new members into the Association.

## A Recent Mission

This year during the weekend before the Feast of St. Faustina, Fr. Chris travelled to Batavia, Illinois, to give a parish mission at Holy Cross Catholic Church, a community of about 3,500. He gave a series of three talks, as is his custom, one each night starting on Sunday.

A day before the mission, Fr. Chris arrived in Batavia to immerse himself in the life of the parish community. He gave the homily at all the weekend Masses; he attended a fundraiser at the home of a family from the parish; and he even prayed the Rosary and the Chaplet with dozens of parishioners outside of an abortion clinic. Later during the mission, he celebrated Masses, heard confessions

until almost midnight, and spoke to all 420 students at the parish elementary school, then visited several of the classrooms individually.

Father Jim Parker, pastor at Holy Cross, was hoping that Fr. Chris’ parish mission would inspire lukewarm parishioners and encourage those who were already fervent. Almost 500 parishioners came each night of the mission. “It was a phenomenal response,” Fr. Parker said.

Father Chris hopes that as the Marian Fathers grow in number, they will be able to expand the Marian Evangelization Team and spread the message of Divine Mercy to more parishes. Currently, parish missions are being booked for Fr. Chris even into 2019. “We’re teaching the teachers,” Fr. Chris said. “Catholics need to know how to teach Divine Mercy. But first we have to help them understand it.”

*Please visit [TheDivineMercy.org/events](http://TheDivineMercy.org/events) to see if the Marian Fathers are coming to an area near you. We are booking for next summer and beyond. Visit [TheDivineMercy.org/mission](http://TheDivineMercy.org/mission) or call (413) 298-1349 to arrange for a mission at your parish or school.*

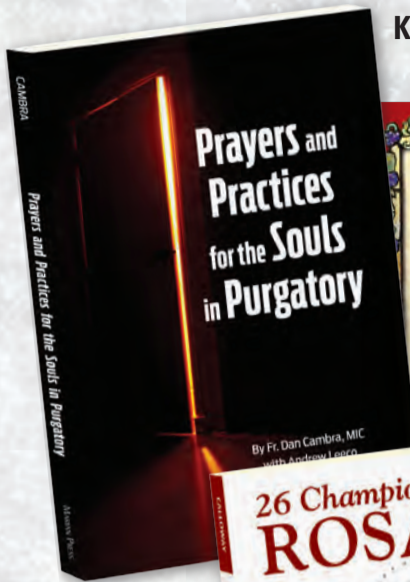
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**Father Jim Parker and Fr. Chris pose with parishioners after the parish mission. Top: Father Chris leads Holy Cross Elementary School in prayer.**

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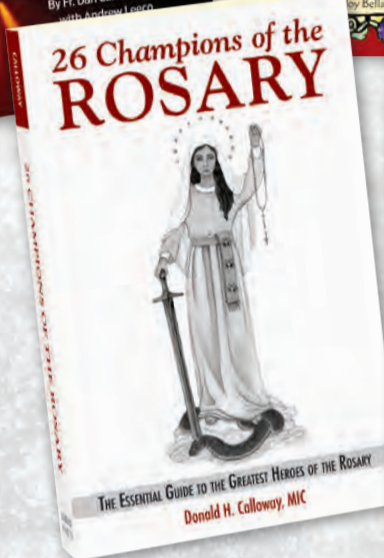
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# UNEXPECTED PRAYER PARTNERS

Heavenly visitors  
come to help heal  
sick woman

By Marc Massery

**J**ust 12 days after he died, Pope St. John Paul II was seen visiting an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at a hospital on a rainforested island off the coast of Alaska.

On the second Saturday of April, 2005, Carole Denkinger of Sitka, Alaska, began feeling ill. But she could not let a mere respiratory infection slow her down. She owned and operated her own bustling bed-and-breakfast in a tourist town, so she had to keep working.

By Thursday, however, she could not take in enough air to cough. She spoke on the phone with her son, Todd, an emergency room doctor in Seattle, Washington. “He said that I sounded like the worst respiratory patient he had ever had in the ER,” Carole said.

Carole’s husband drove her straight to the hospital. The doctor examined her lungs with his stethoscope. “I can still see him sit back with this grave-looking face,” she said. The doctor said that he could not hear any air moving in her lungs. He was concerned they were shutting down. An x-ray revealed pneumonia. On top of that, she had a history of asthma. Carole was immediately admitted to the ICU.

Nurses wheeled her away, put an oxygen tube in her nose, inserted an IV in her arm, pumped her with antibiotics, and left her to rest.



Alone in her hospital room, the reality of her situation began to set in. Carole thought about her four children, of course, but she was especially concerned about her husband, who had just been diagnosed with Stage 4 lymphoma in February. “I pleaded with Jesus for mercy, to not take me now. I prayed ‘Jesus, I trust in You’ over and over,” Carole said.

She started to cry. Then she remembered her dearest friend, Barbara Rocheleau. Just months earlier, they had made a pact: If either one of them faced death, they would pray the Chaplet together.

In between breaths, Carole told Barbara over the phone what was happening and asked her to come pray. “She could barely speak,” Barbara said.

As soon as Barbara arrived, she placed her folding Divine Mercy image on a ledge and blessed Carole with Holy Water from a spray bottle. The lights were hurting Carole’s eyes, so Barbara shut the shades, closed the door, and hit the light switch. Carole had Barbara sit back several feet from her so Barbara wouldn’t catch her illness.

In this dimly lit room, Barbara blessed herself and invited the recently deceased Pope to pray with them from Heaven. She started to say the Chaplet aloud while Carole, too weak to speak, mouthed the words and followed along on her rosary beads.

They had prayed about a decade of the Chaplet when Barbara saw something suddenly appear on the wall opposite her. “In full 3-dimensions on the wall, I saw Carole’s deceased mother, standing in full daylight in a field,” Barbara said. “She looked as though she had been gardening.” Barbara remembers that Carole’s mother was wearing dungarees, a red and white checkered shirt, and had a kerchief tied around her head. She, too, was holding a rosary, and was praying with them.

Then Barbara saw even more. “There were perfectly lined up rows of [Carole’s] ancestors who were also praying. I couldn’t hear them, but I could see them,” Barbara said. Mesmerized, she continued to pray.

Then suddenly the scene changed. Carole’s mother and ancestors faded. That same wall lit up with an intense, heavenly light.

In the midst of that light stood Pope John Paul II, strong and vibrant, in his white cassock, cape, and zucchetto. He strode into the room, crossed in front of Barbara, and stood right before Carole. He laid his hands on Carole’s head and prayed in silence.

Barbara said, “I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t expect him to show up.”

Barbara began to cry. She was so moved that her throat closed up and she could not speak. “Time stood still — I realized I needed to just watch,” she said.

All this time, Carole had her eyes closed. “I thought Barbara was crying because of her concern for me, so I began to pray for her, and waited ... for her to continue to pray the Chaplet,” Carole said.

Barbara watched as the Pope finished praying over Carole, who was oblivious to the miracle happening right before her. The Pope proceeded to kneel at the foot of the bed, head bowed in prayer. Finally, he stood up, turned his head toward Barbara, smiled, and walked back into the light.

“He just had this pure purpose about him,” Barbara said.

After he left, Barbara finished praying the Chaplet aloud. As soon as the last prayer was finished, she rushed over to Carole’s bedside and said, “Carole, you are so loved!”

“I am?” Carole responded.

Barbara told her everything she had just witnessed.

That same morning, Carole began feeling much better. By the afternoon, she was calling her friends and relatives, telling them about Barbara’s vision and her rapid recovery.

Two days later, doctors released Carole from the hospital. Air was now rushing through her lungs.

“I have witnessed the power [of the] Chaplet of Divine Mercy,” Carole said. “I am eternally grateful for having received the mercy of Jesus.”



Barbara Rocheleau (left) came to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet with her friend Carole Denking, who was in the hospital. She didn’t expect to have the late Pope John Paul II and Carole’s ancestors join them.



# HOPE AND HELP

Catholics struggling with mental illness  
can combine faith with treatment

By Marc Massery

**D**uring the Advent and Christmas seasons, we have an opportunity to perform an important work of mercy, serving some of those in greatest need. We can encourage our loved ones struggling with anxiety and depression, making sure they're aware that there is help available to them and that healing is often possible.

Unfortunately, most of the 42.5 million Americans suffering with mental health conditions did not seek treatment this year. Sixty-four percent of people with mental illness report that the holidays make their conditions worse, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Catholics with mental illness appropriately turn to prayer to help them through their illnesses. But accord-

ing to Dan Offsay, a licensed professional counselor and convert to Catholicism, we must also seek professional medical attention for such conditions.

"If you have a legitimate mental health condition," he explained, "you should pray and receive the Sacraments, of course, but you also want to avail yourself of [medical] remedies so you can get healing in that part of your person, too." According to Dan, unless someone has the gift of healing, prayer alone will probably not be enough to cure a patient with a diagnosed mental illness any more than prayer would be enough, all by itself, to heal someone of a broken leg.

But unfortunately, Dan continued, not all Catholics see the importance of mental health treatment. "In

some Catholic circles, there are people who think they do not need to avail themselves of anything [medical] if their problems [are emotional],” Dan said. He believes that since mental illness is not primarily a supernatural problem, but a natural one, we ought to address it clinically. “Sometimes we forget the importance of healing our nature. We have the theological principle that grace builds on nature; it doesn’t replace [nature], but builds on and perfects [it],” he said.

According to Dan, some Catholics with mental health conditions have the tendency to attribute their problems to spiritual failures and overlook deep-seated emotional wounds. “If a person is going to Confession every week saying, ‘I can’t believe I did it again,’ obviously something else needs to be involved in the process,” Dan said. He used the example of someone who suffers from an addiction. A habit may become so deeply rooted that the sufferer’s behavior reaches beyond ordinary willpower. In these cases, Dan believes a therapist can help a patient break the cycle of internal misery.

But Dan also believes that faith can certainly aid in the healing process. “I see myself as a therapist first, but there’s a ministry piece to it,” he said. Though his work focuses primarily on the emotional and behavioral aspects of mental illness, when it’s appropriate, he recommends that his patients pray a daily Rosary for peace and spend time with the Lord in Adoration. “You see people in counseling who have distanced themselves from the Church and the Sacraments,” he said. “It’s good for me to have a relationship with a priest so then I can point them in the right direction.”

Over the course of a decade in the field, Dan has heard of Catholics who have gone to secular therapists, only to receive advice contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. “It’s primarily around the issue of sexual moral-

ity, but the secular psychology field is getting more and more politicized,” Dan said. Secular therapists tend to deviate from the Church’s teaching on the indissolubility of marriage, homosexuality, and now even transgenderism. “When a therapist attempts to undermine your faith, you should find someone else,” Dan said.



**“No one needs to go through this alone. There are mental health professionals who are also practicing Catholics available to help,” says Dan Offsay, a licensed professional counselor and convert to Catholicism.**

Dan believes that Catholic therapists will inevitably address some issues better than secular counselors. Since Catholic therapists are so few in number, he offers counseling over the phone and through Skype for distant patients. Depending on the circumstances, though, he does not believe that having a specifically Catholic therapist is always necessary. “It’s a requirement that the person not be hostile to our faith,” Dan said. “There’s a relatively large percent of [secular] mental health professionals and therapists who respect religion.”

Doctor Elaine Hantman, a clinical psychologist, is one of those therapists. She specializes in treating anxiety disorders and runs her own practice in Williamstown, Massachusetts. “I would never tell someone to go against their religion,” she said. “But I would have them examine their beliefs and ... consult with someone who is more knowledgeable about their particular religion than me.”

Therapy, according to Dan, is not a one-size-fits-all solution. And Dr. Hantman agrees that, depending on your condition, finding the right therapist and the right treatment may take time. “It’s not about the degrees a therapist may have or where they went to school,” says Dr. Hantman. “It’s about a good fit and results.”

So spread the word: There is hope and help available for Catholics wrestling with mental illness. Let us pray for all those who are struggling with this tremendous burden, that they find the help they need to either lighten the load or heal themselves entirely. MH

*Dan Offsay, doffsaycounselor@yahoo.com or (860) 303-8471.*



Sister Ângela de Fátima Coelho da Rocha Pereira da Silva, MD

## Save the dates!

**MAY 10-11:** Sister Ângela, postulator for the causes of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco, will be the keynote speaker at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference. Visit [TheDivineMercy.org/worcester](http://TheDivineMercy.org/worcester) for details.

**MAY 12-13:** Sister Ângela will speak at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Visit [TheDivineMercy.org/shrine](http://TheDivineMercy.org/shrine) to learn more.



*“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”  
— Saint Augustine*

BR. MARK FANDERS, MIC

# A broken man walks into a bar ...

By Melanie Williams

**H**e went from a high paying job, night clubs, and a divorce to leaving it all behind, entering the Catholic Church, and answering God’s call to the priesthood as a member of a Catholic religious order. Yes, we know: Marian Br. Timothy Childers’ journey sounds highly unlikely.

Born in Tampa, Florida, to an English mother who was a practicing Anglican and a Baptist father who was in the U.S. Navy, Timothy Childers grew up a practicing Lutheran since the Lutheran church was closest to his house. Tim believed in God and that Jesus had died for his sins, but that was the extent of his faith. His pastor,

Roger Robinson, became like a second father to him, and Tim began going to him with his questions regarding the faith. When his pastor passed away while Tim was in high school, Tim’s church attendance also died away.

After being bullied at school for his size, Tim became severely depressed and started searching for fulfillment in the world — in possessions, money, relationships, and eating. After graduating from high school, he spent his time working and partying. He had a couple different girlfriends, one of whom he married — but it didn’t last long.

After his divorce, Tim and his buddies began going to the bar on Friday nights. One fateful Friday, he was a

couple hours late to the bar. When he arrived, there was only one seat left, next to a young woman named Tasha. She was talking with a young man, and Tim joined in. Tasha was a newly converted Catholic and eager to share her faith.

It was an election year, so politics and faith became the topic of discussion — not typical for the bar scene.

It was also just before Lent, so Tasha asked Tim what Lutherans did for Lent. He had absolutely no idea.

She asked him if he went to church. No answer.

Tasha asked if he even wanted to go to Church, and to his own surprise, he answered, “Yes.”

“I realized I had said ‘yes,’ but I had no idea where that answer came from,” Tim said. “I realized there was something deeper inside me that was longing for God, and I didn’t even know it.”

The next Sunday, he returned to his childhood church, and for the first time in a very long time, he wanted to be there. He knew that his life was changing.

Tasha invited Tim to come to the Stations of the Cross at her Catholic parish, and it changed him. Praying the Stations involved a lot of kneeling and standing, and by the ninth station, he started to black out. Although he was experiencing the natural effects of fainting, he immediately knew that there was even more going on inside of him — something spiritual.

“I knew I was walking with the Lord in His Passion, and He in mine. I knew that suffering had a purpose,” Br. Tim continued, “because of what Christ had done for me.”

After the Stations concluded, he sat down and knew one thing: He needed to become Catholic.

In the following months, Tim learned as much as he could about Catholicism and went through RCIA. He was also introduced to St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body and learned about the priesthood. He soon realized he might have a vocation. Tim received an annulment for his marriage on Christmas Eve 2008 and entered the Church at the Easter Vigil of 2009. He wanted to stay local and be a diocesan priest, but he felt a tug to check

out a religious order.

Tasha introduced Tim to the Divine Mercy message and devotion. This became integral to Tim’s healing and reconciliation with God and neighbor. The message of God’s mercy was exactly what Tim had been longing to hear after years of searching in the endless void of pleasures. The world had promised to bring him happiness, but he had found it incapable of filling the

God-shaped hole in his heart. He also began praying the Rosary and came to know Mary as his Heavenly Mother.

The last piece that led him to the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception was the conversion story of Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. Hearing Fr. Calloway’s story brought Tim hope that Jesus’ words to St. Faustina were really true: “The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy” (Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 723).

After one weekend of visiting the Marians, Tim completely changed his mind about aiming for the diocesan priesthood and applied to enter the Congregation in August 2011. In 2016, Br. Tim professed his perpetual vows, meaning that he was vowing to be a member of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception for his whole life.

“Much like St. Augustine,” Br. Tim noted, “before I intimately

knew God, I was searching for Him without knowing it. God now uses all of my past sins and experiences so that I can speak to others who are in similar situations, knowing what it’s like to be where they are at. That gives them a sense of hope.”

This past May, Br. Tim graduated from Franciscan University of Steubenville with a BA in philosophy, and he has now begun his coursework in theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. He expects that, in a few short years, he will be ordained to the priesthood.

“I am thankful to all of our Marian Helpers for their support and prayers,” said Br. Tim, “which have made it possible for me to be a Marian for the rest of my life.” MH



BR. TIM CHILDERS, MIC

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## ‘MARY IS AN EXPRESS TRAIN TO JESUS’

**F**or many of us, life presents joys, but also brings trials. Patricia Gullett of Chestertown, Maryland, knows this all too well. She has buried a husband and three of her five children.

Patricia prays in answer to those challenges. In particular, she’s always turned to Our Blessed Mother for her intercession. In fact, she still remembers her first “Rosary Procession.” (She was 15.) She knows that Our Blessed Mother is a “fierce Mama Bear” who watches over us all, and she counts on that! So when this prayer warrior is worried about her own children and grandchildren, she prays to Mary. “I learned a lot late in life,” she says. One lesson stands out: “Mary is an express train to Jesus!”

And Pat has seen results from her prayers. One of her sons (who had been away from the Catholic Church for a while) returned to the Sacraments and told his mom, “I’m okay, Mom; I am in the state of grace. I’m okay.” Just a week later, after having felt compelled to pray the Chaplet “over and over,” Pat learned that that same son was dying. She was able to be at her son’s side as he died. She held her rosary and prayed to Mary, “He is mine, and I am yours.”

Pat has learned how important Mary is, especially at the end of our lives. “When you are focused on saving souls, those are the most important times,” she said.

Because of her devotion to Our Blessed Mother, Pat felt that the Marians were a cause she wanted to support.

Pat felt particularly compelled to give to the Marians because for the first time in her life, she is in a parish that doesn’t offer a Mass every day. “When I read an article about your growing number of seminarians, I thought, ‘This is it!’” she said. She knew that the Marian Fathers

had been around for a long time, and “if you were getting new seminarians, this was the place I wanted to support.”

We know we need more priests, now and in the future. The Marian Fathers are committed to serve wherever the need is greatest in the Catholic Church, and with such a shortage of priests in this country, our robust and growing number of men discerning vocations to the priesthood and religious life is part of the answer to that need!

This fall, the Marians are, again, blessed to have more than 30 men studying for the priesthood and religious life. With the support of our Marian Helpers, these men will prepare to serve Christ and the Church as Marians as they discern God’s will for them.

Pat arranged for a charitable gift annuity with the Marians, designating that the donation be used to support seminarians. With a charitable | gift annuity, Pat gives twice — once at the time of the gift, and once when she is called home to our Lord and His mother.

If you would like to support the Marian Fathers through a charitable gift annuity, an IRA, or a gift of appreciated securities, please feel free to contact me at [MFlournoy@marian.org](mailto:MFlournoy@marian.org) or call 413-298-1381.




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Mary Flourney is a donor relations officer for the Marians. Contact her at (413) 298-1381; [helpers@marian.org](mailto:helpers@marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Please visit [marian.org/PlannedGiving](http://marian.org/PlannedGiving) to learn more.

# Please pray for the repose of Sr. Sophia's soul

"Sister Sophia was a faithful, tireless servant of Divine Mercy, and a true Marian Helper," said Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers. "We ask all our Marian Helpers to pray for the repose of her soul. She will be greatly missed."

Sister Sophia Michalenko, a member of the Community of the Mother of God of Tenderness in Danbury, Connecticut, died on March 31, 2017. Born in Adams, Massachusetts, Sr. Sophia was the fifth child of 11 born to Victoria (Betleja) and John Michalenko.

Sister Sophia was the author of *The Life of Faustina Kowalska: The Authorized Biography*, one of the best introductions to the life and writings of St. Faustina available. The book has been translated from Polish into more than 20 languages.

Her brother, Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, vice postulator for St. Faustina's cause for canonization in North



America, was responsible for bringing the text of St. Faustina's Diary out of Poland on film during a time when it could not be published in Poland because of restrictions imposed by the communist authorities. Sister Sophia transcribed the text from the film and prepared it to be taken by Fr. Seraphim to Rome for publication.

Sister Sophia touched the lives of many people through her work. As entry 1075 of St. Faustina's *Diary* says, "Happy is the soul that during its lifetime immersed itself in the Fountain of Mercy, because justice will have no hold on it."

Sister Sophia is survived by her religious community (Sr. Victoria Michalenko and Sr. Mary Ann Socha) and three of her brothers: Joseph (and his wife, Joan), Fr. Seraphim, and Fr. Alexei. MH

To order The Life of Faustina Kowalska (product code: B36-DML6), visit ShopMercy.org or call 1-800-462-7426.

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## Two intercessions in one year

I want to thank Blessed George for interceding for my family twice over the past year.

First, my son has worked for a company for about 12 years. He is often praised for his work. He had always gotten along well with all his co-workers until a new worker was transferred into his unit. This worker made life very difficult for my son. He was making many errors and passing the blame onto my son. I prayed to Blessed George to intercede for my son and relieve this stress in his life. Soon, my son was given a promotion and transferred to another division within the company.

The second grace we received was when I prayed to Blessed George for my daughter's boyfriend to get a job. He hadn't worked for about 12 years. Blessed George interceded, and within two weeks, my daughter's boyfriend was hired and is still employed after nine months.

— JS, Saint Michael, Minnesota

## Grandson gets job after two years

My grandson had been trying for two years following college to get a job in the technology field but was having no luck.

I read about Blessed George in *Marian Helper* magazine and how he interceded for others looking for work. I sent for a prayer card and had said the prayer to Blessed George for two weeks when my grandson got the call for an interview. He got the job that day and started the following Monday.

— EF, Lake Charlotte, Nova Scotia, Canada

## Son finds new job quickly

My son lost his job due to the company being sold. We receive *Marian Helper* in the mail, and I started reading the stories about loved ones getting employment.

I started praying that day to Blessed George that he might intercede for my son. It was not long before my

son applied for a job and received the gift of employment.

— JK, Tinley Park, Illinois

## Operation goes well for niece

My niece (who is paralyzed from polio and confined to a wheelchair) developed a wound at the top of her paralyzed leg. Visits to doctors confirmed it would not heal without an operation, and even then there was no guarantee. I prayed to Blessed George that the operation would be a success (it was quite an operation) and that she would heal. I am happy to report that not only was the operation a success, but she has started to heal.

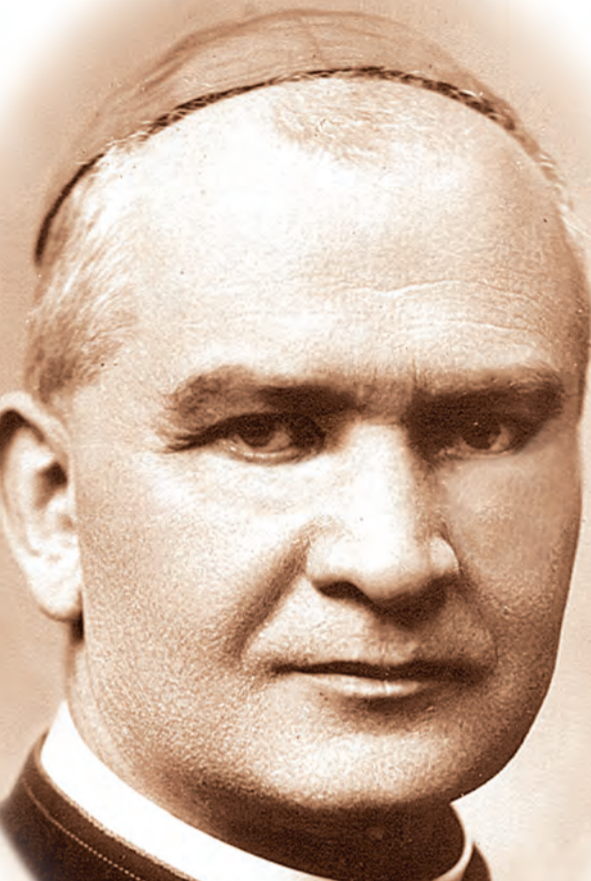
— NM, Syosset, New York

## Able to avoid a fourth surgery

I had open-heart surgery about two years ago. Six months after the surgery, I fell and injured my shoulder. While at the hospital, I underwent routine tests. The tests revealed that I needed a pacemaker. As I was recovering from the surgery for the pacemaker, I had to undergo abdominal surgery. Through all this, my shoulder continued to give

me problems. My doctor wanted to do surgery to repair it. At the time, I felt I was not able to undergo yet another surgery. I prayed to Blessed George to intercede and allow me to avoid the surgery ... and he did! Within days my shoulder began to feel better. Since then I have had minimal problems with it. I believe that without his intercession I would have had to endure a fourth surgery — or not have use of my shoulder.

— LO, Rensselaer, New York



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

For a Blessed George prayer card (B36-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](mailto:graces@marian.org).

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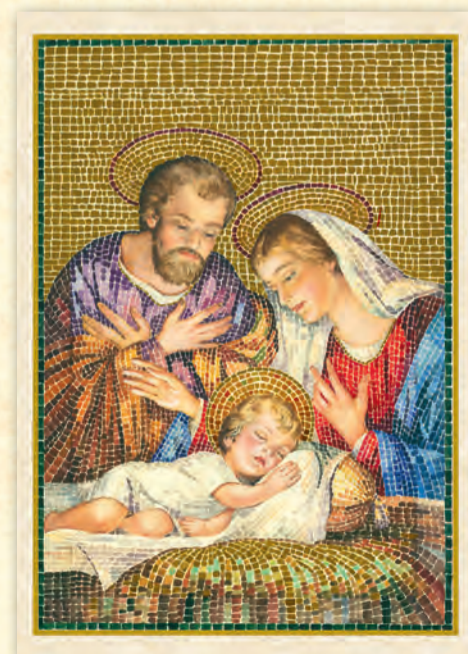
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**MOSAIC HOLY FAMILY**

GOLD-FOILED

[B36-XC171](#)

# Prayerful gifts for Christmas giving

## 2018 Calendars

The Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception bring you these exclusive 2018 calendars, featuring beautiful artwork and inspirational quotes for each month of the year. Mary calendar includes "How to Pray the Rosary." Divine Mercy calendar includes "How to Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy."

\$12.95 EA.



MARY: [B36-CM18](#)



DIVINE MERCY: [B36-CJ18](#)



### O Holy Night Wall Ornament

This hanging wall ornament beautifully tells the Nativity story through painted plaques, with artwork by Caroline Simas, connected by gold chiffon ribbon. Quarterboard. 16" total length.

[B36-OHN](#) \$14.95



### Madonna and Child Snowflake Ornament

Celebrate the birth of our Lord with this ShopMercy exclusive Madonna and Child ornament. This snowflake-shaped ornament features a full-color image and hand-polished, bright finished metal. Comes with a white ribbon accent. Ornament measures 3" x 3 1/2". [B36-MHCO](#) \$9.95



### Nativity Gift Wrap

Say "Merry Christmas" with this Nativity patterned gift wrap. Printed in Italy, this wrap features traditional Nativity art and includes a matching gift card with gold foil detailing. Single sheet. Measures 27" x 39".

[B36-NGW](#) \$2.95



### Heavenly Night Kid's Jigsaw Puzzle

This beautiful puzzle makes a great gift for a child, or for use as a fun, educational family activity in anticipation of Christmas. Made in the United States with recycled materials. This puzzle includes 100 pieces and measures 19" x 13" when completed. Ages 6+. [B36-HNJP](#) \$9.95

## Great Stocking Stuffers!

### Pen and Bookmark Sets

Celebrate the Christmas season with these inspirational pen and bookmark sets. Make great stocking stuffers or favors for your Christmas party. 5 1/2" metal pen and 2" x 6" bookmark. \$2.00 EA

A. COME LET US ADORE HIM [B36-ADOR](#)

B. CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN [B36-CSIB](#)

C. KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS [B36-CPB](#)



A.

B.

C.

### Order Info

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

**toll free:** 1-800-462-7426 **shop online:** [ShopMercy.org](#)

**mail:** Order Department

Association of Marian Helpers  
Stockbridge, MA 01263

**Checks payable to:** Association of Marian Helpers

**Postage/handling: U.S.**

**Canada**

\$0.01-\$20.00 ... \$5.25 p/h

... \$6.75 p/h

\$20.01-\$35.00 ... \$7.25 p/h

... \$9.50 p/h

\$35.01-\$75.00 ... \$8.50 p/h

... \$11.25 p/h

\$75.01-\$125.00 ... \$9.50 p/h

... \$13.50 p/h

over \$125.00 ... 10% of subtotal

... 15% of subtotal

Postage costs may vary for online orders.

**I**n this issue, we bring you reflections on Christmas from the Winter 1952 Marian Helpers Bulletin.

*It's a message of love and hope during a stressful time for the country. The Korean War was ongoing, we were moving deeper into the Cold War, and the worst outbreak of polio in the history of the U.S. was occurring. (Of the 57,628 reported cases, there were 3,145 deaths.)*

*Our wish from 65 years ago is the same wish and prayer we make for you today:*



There is something about the Christmas season that warms the heart of man. Snow may be falling heavily to the ground, the air may bite the cheek with its stinging frost, snow may impede the way as it packs crisply under the foot, but there can be noted a twinkle in the eye of the passerby, the warmth and peacefulness in his heart, jubilation in his voice, and a spring to his step. There is much good will prevalent among men and a spirit of generosity and peacefulness appears to reign everywhere. All are inclined to think forgivingly of past wrongs received and feel that should one disturb peace and give way to uncharitableness, there would be no blessing and happiness the entire New Year. Christmas, indeed, gives a man a foretaste of Heaven.

The reason for this holiness of the Christmas atmosphere is the Birth of Our Lord. In coming down upon this earth, He brought us a bit of Peace and Love that reigns in Heaven. The peace that the Infant Jesus brought is not exclusively reserved to the time of His Birth, but it is to become man's heritage, if he shall only be of good will. It may reign in his heart and mind if he practices charity and mercy to all. This the angels proclaimed, as they announced the coming of Christ to the Shepherds: "Glory in the Highest and Peace on earth to men of good will." Peace and Happiness is unthinkable without Christ for He is Happiness and Love.

Dear Associate, it is our Christmas wish and prayer that you share more fully in the Peace and Love of God this Christmas and the entire New Year. May you realize the fullness of the sweetness that comes from possessing God now amid the confusion, darkness, and fear in this vale of tears, and everlastingly in Heaven.

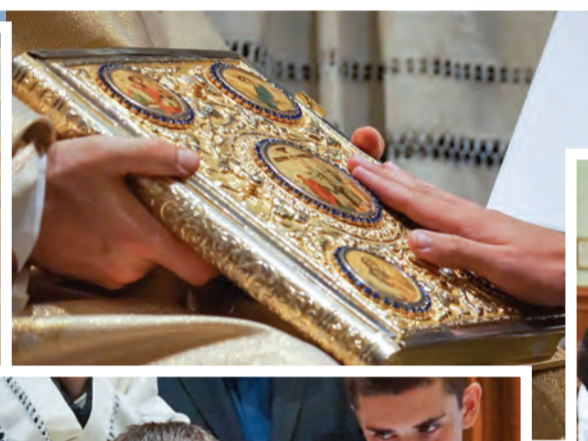


PHOTOS BY FELIX CARROLL



2017 vows ceremony

# Live the call!



Come join our mission to spread the message of Divine Mercy, devotion to Mary Immaculate, and prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

## Attend a retreat

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

The next retreats will be:  
Dec. 1-3, Jan. 12-14,  
Feb. 2-4, March 16-18,  
April 13-15.



## Learn more

Email: [vocations@marian.org](mailto:vocations@marian.org)  
Call toll free: 1-877-261-8806  
Visit: [marian.org/vocations](http://marian.org/vocations)

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

## Support

### Want to help the seminarians?

We have more than 30 men preparing for religious life and the priesthood.

To donate, visit [marian.org/give/seminarians](http://marian.org/give/seminarians) or call (413) 298-1384.



**“I chose the Marian Fathers for my gift annuity because I am very close to Our Blessed Mother. I pray the Rosary every day, and I turn to Mary in prayer constantly.**

**“My gift will help the Marians lead others to a closer relationship with Mary.**

**“My gift annuity also will help me. I am very grateful for the gift annuity payments that I will always be able to count on.”**

— Maureen, a Marian Helper



Ellen Miller explains gifts annuities.

**You can help the Marian Fathers spread devotion to Mary and receive secure gift annuity payments for your lifetime.**

Sample of gift annuity rates for one life:

<b>Age 60 .... 4.4%</b>	<b>Age 75 .... 5.8%</b>
<b>Age 65 .... 4.7%</b>	<b>Age 80 .... 6.8%</b>
<b>Age 70 .... 5.1%</b>	<b>Age 85 .... 7.8%</b>

For a personalized illustration of gift annuity benefits, contact Ellen Miller at

**(413) 298-1380 or helpers@marian.org**