

The Immaculate Conception and Christmas • There are rooms at the Inn
A haunting scene on the tarmac • Beyond the shadow of a drought

Marian Helper

Winter 2018-19

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

marian.org



HOPE

IN THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH



B40-SC181 *THE HOLY FAMILY*

GOLD FOIL

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

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.



B40-SC182 *SHEPHERDS AFIELD*

GOLD FOIL

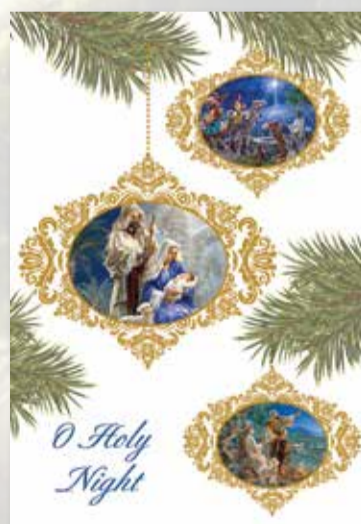


B40-SC183 *THE MAGI*

GOLD FOIL

CHRISTMAS ENROLLMENT CARDS

All Year Through:
Remember your friends and loved ones in the daily Mass at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Enroll them in the Association of Marian Helpers from this Christmas to the next.



B40-AX18 *O HOLY NIGHT*
GOLD FOIL



B40-AXC18 *THE HOLY FAMILY*
(CHILDREN'S)

Fr. Joseph explains enrollments.



Enroll a loved one today!
1-800-462-7426 • marian.org/b40/sc

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

Page **10** **REASONS
FOR HOPE**

The Holy Father said, “By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today’s world.” So that’s what we did: We went and spoke with young people. As we discern a way forward through the current Church crisis, we also spoke with a Marian pastor in Illinois and a Marian Helper in Pennsylvania. God is purging the Church. The Immaculate Heart of Mary will triumph. In the meantime, there are certain things to which we must commit ourselves.

22 There’s room at the Inn!

Visitors to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy now can receive holy hospitality while also supporting the Marian Fathers’ evangelization efforts.

24 A reunion, of sorts

An incident on an airport tarmac 30 years ago had a lasting impact on a future priest and a family man — both of whom were in great need of Divine Mercy.

26 Of music and mysteries

As we prepare ourselves for Christmas and the Nativity of our Lord, let’s consider a significant piece in the soundtrack of salvation.

28 When Mary comes calling

Even with her “type A” personality, Marian Helper Nermine Rubin was able to give it all up to Mary. She soon found herself in a foreign land with an excellent idea.

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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 © 2018 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 website: marian.org

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National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

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



Mercy Apostolates

Learn about our
lay ministries.
marian.org/ministries
1-866-895-3236

Evangelization Team

Invite the Marians
to speak at your parish.
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parishmissions@marian.org

Hearts Afire: Parish-based Programs (HAPP®)

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1-844-551-3755

Intercessory Prayerline

Send us your
prayer intentions.
1-800-804-3823
marian.org/prayerline

Websites

marian.org
TheDivineMercy.org
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Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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

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

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

Association of Marian Helpers — Join us!

Established in 1944, the Association began as a small group of friends who believed in and supported the work of the Marian Fathers. 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.



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

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT US GOD'S MISSION THROUGH US

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

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

Arrange a special gift:

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

- to support a particular ministry or need: marian.org/give
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- 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.



HERE'S WHERE WE STAND

This issue of *Marian Helper* is like none I would have imagined overseeing when I became director of the Association of Marian Helpers and publisher of this magazine five years ago. As you see, we dedicate 12 full pages addressing the way forward from a crisis that has shaken the worldwide Church.

With our cover story, we listen to young people in love with the God who so loves the world. They share their faith and their doubts, their joys and dismay. In doing so, they frame the future of the Church for all to see — a holy Church, an effective Church, one compelled to self-sacrifice and generosity. These are very difficult times, yet I've never felt more hopeful in my calling as a Marian priest than I do today. I thank all of the young people who agreed to be interviewed.

This issue also underscores something we Marian Fathers and Marian Helpers know to be true: At all times, and most especially in times of crisis, we must turn to Mary as our model — in our dealings with God and our dealings with the world.

While the current crisis may tempt the most faithful among us to flee the Church, consider this: Would Mary flee the Church founded by her Son? We know she *wouldn't* because we know she *didn't*. She witnessed a chosen apostle, Judas, hand her innocent Son over to His killers for the price of 30 pieces of silver — and she didn't flee. When all seemed lost, she witnessed His disciples

flee for seemingly safer havens, but she stayed put, with Christ.

Today, a small minority of clergy have also betrayed Christ.

They've wounded innocent victims. They've wounded themselves. They've wounded the Church.

We must pray for the victims. We must pray for the

perpetrators. And we must take stock of our own hearts and ask ourselves, "Will we flee?" I pray the answer is no.

As He was dying on the Cross, Christ called upon the members of the Church to fix our gaze upon Mary and her example. "Behold your Mother," He said (Jn 19:27). He gave us His Mother, the Mother of the Church — the one we fairly call most sorrowful, most faithful, and most merciful.

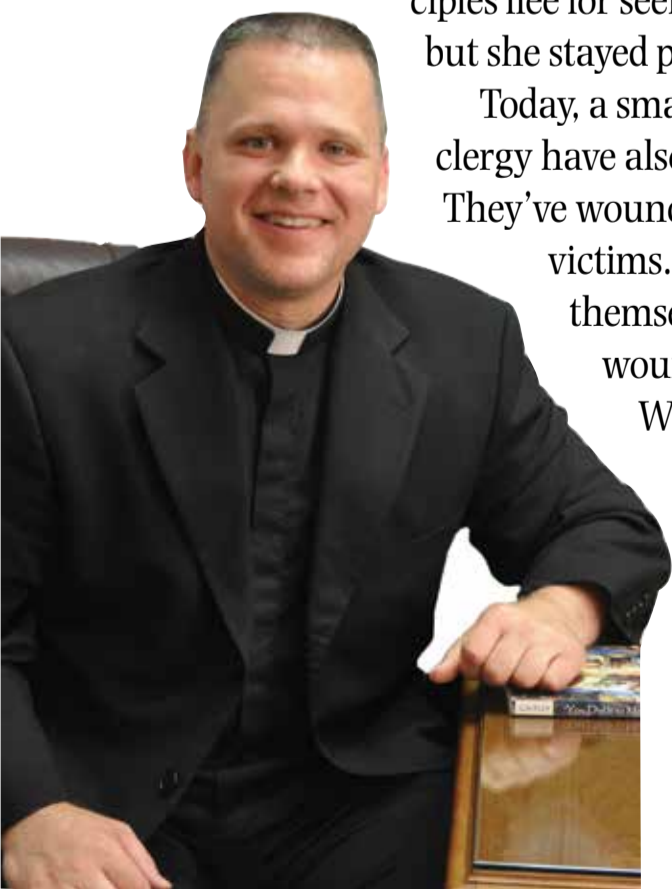
As the young people we interviewed in our cover story remind us, the Church doesn't survive from age to age because of the brilliance or the sanctity of her leaders, though we thank God whenever saints take the helm. The Church has not endured 2,000 years of civilizations collapsing about her, of scandal in the clergy, of sin and betrayal amongst her members, all because of the natural gifts of human beings.

All of lasting value, life, and strength in the Body of Christ comes through the greatness of the Lord — through the inspiration and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Cross of Christ, and the love and gift of the Father.

Like Mary, may our souls ever proclaim the greatness of the Lord (see Lk 1:46). May we love God and neighbor as Mary has loved. May we forgive as she, at the foot of the Cross, forgave. Now more than ever, may we speak with a still, small voice, manifesting the Gospel more with deeds than with words. May our lives, like the life of Mary, be rich with the truth lived in love.

We do not flee. We stand firmly with Mary.

Fr. Joseph, MIC



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



MEET FROILAN MORALES

Froilan Morales (second from left) stands with his wife, Marife, and their sons Francis (left) and Gabriel.

A physical therapist from St. James, New York, Froilan Morales and his wife, Marife Morales, were not inspired on their first pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. They would later become annual visitors, bringing along as many others as possible. He explains why.

When did you discover the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy?

Almost 23 years ago, my wife and I were invited by a group of Filipinos from Queens to join a pilgrimage to the Shrine. We didn't know anything about the Divine Mercy then. It was freezing that day, and the bus was parked far away. On the way back home, when everybody was talking, my friend who had invited us asked me, "Would you like to share your experience of anything that happened to you in the Shrine?" I told him, "It's just like an ordinary day, but it's a very tiring one." There I am, actually complaining!

Did you have a special reason to go to the Shrine?

My wife and I had been praying for four years for a baby. Friends said that going to the Shrine would help. But a year passed by, and we still didn't have a baby.

Did that affect your faith?

The next year, my friend invited me again. I told my wife, "Let's not go." But, at the last minute, my wife and I looked at one other and then we said, "Why don't we follow the bus."

How did it go?

A month later, my wife was pregnant. My son was actually born the next year on the [Divine Mercy Sunday] feast day, which was April 22.

I hear you have a way of giving thanks for this.

Since then I promised we will bring people to the Shrine. I bring as many people and as many friends as I can for Mass every Easter Sunday. We started with two cars, and now there are 18.

Were there other favors and miracles?

Yes. About 10 years ago, my father, Florentino Morales, was diagnosed with sarcoma stomach cancer. The doctors said two months was the most that he could live. My wife and I drove all the way to the Shrine the day we found out. It was a Tuesday. I asked the Lord, "Just make my father better ... I will bring him here the next time that he comes to visit me here in America."

What happened?

My dad got better, but he was not able to travel. In the sixth year he got worse. He was in ICU, and then he was in a coma for almost three months. Doctors had to remove the whole stomach. He suffered. He was unable to walk. Last year, he was in ICU again. Doctors thought it was the end. So, I went to see him in the Philippines. I thought it was goodbye. Then, Daddy started to get better and better. And the next thing you know, he told us last May that he would like to come to the United States and visit us. I told him, "Is this for real? Is the Divine Mercy really trying to test me?" When he got here, he says, "You have to bring me to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy."

And how did that go?

When Br. John Luth, MIC, saw us entering the Shrine in late September, he saw that Dad was trying to climb the stairs, so he scolded me, "Why did you take the stairs! Take the elevator! Don't let him suffer." And my dad says, "No. [God's] calling me. I'm going to be following Him."

How has your dad's faith developed?

After my dad was diagnosed, he told me, "I'm sorry I will not be able to give you an inheritance. I will just donate whatever money I have because I want to build a church." He's building a church in the Philippines, in Parian Calamba Laguna.

It's almost half way done. Now, the Mass is being held on the second floor. My dad is so happy. He's trying to sell more of his land to be able to finish the church.

It's really a blessing, all that is happening to my dad right now. MH

The church in the Philippines is named for St. Augustine. Florentino plans to enshrine a Divine Mercy Image in it. A portion of Froilan's physical therapy work is for charity. He said, "It's the best I can do for God helping me and my family."

— Terry Peloquin

REST IN PEACE, SUZANNE

We've asked you for prayers for Suzanne Florence-Zavatter, 49, one of the long-time employees at the Marian Helpers Center on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as she fought with breast cancer. Suzanne died peacefully, surrounded by family, on Sunday, Sept. 30. We ask for your prayers again, only now for the repose of her soul.

And we have to share with you some of the graces that surrounded her passing.

The Sunday on which she died was the Vigil of the Feast of St. Therese of Lisieux, whose writings and spirituality helped form the Hearts Afire: Parish-based Programs (HAPP) created by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC. Suzanne led HAPP groups at the Center for employees and local Marian Helpers. In fact, her own total consecration to Jesus through Mary using 33 Days to Morning Glory marked a visible turning point in her own life and spirituality, remarked on by friends, family, and colleagues.

And more: She died of breast cancer just ahead of October, which is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

And even more: She was in charge of the Marian Fathers' clubs — Friends of Mercy; Thirteenth of the Month; and Holy Souls Sodality. Her wake was held on Oct. 5, the Feast of St. Faustina Kowalska, Secretary and Apostle of Divine Mercy, as well as the First Friday of October, the month of the Holy Rosary and the month of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima. Suzanne's funeral took place Oct. 6, a First Saturday.

That's about as intensely Marian and Divine Mercy focused a series of days as you can imagine.

So pray for Suzanne, please, and for her family: her husband, Dale (also an employee here at the Center); her three children; two grandchildren; parents; and sister.

Also, thank God for a life lived well, a life lived in love, in self-gift. Suzanne, who started and maintained a weekly food drive in which Center employees donate non-perishable items for the poor, is remembered here as a peacemaker, a trusted confidante, and as one who lived the Beatitudes.

We'd all do well to do as she did. Remain devoted to Jesus, to Mary, and to the souls in Purgatory. Regularly receive the Sacraments. Live a life of trust and surrender to the Divine Mercy, letting His mercy flow through your heart to others, and then you can count on being ready to spend eternity in the embrace of His merciful love.

"Thank you, Suzanne," said Dale in his beautiful eulogy to his wife.

Yes, from all of us: Thank you, Suzanne. MH



FACES OF MERCY

Mary T. Schult

Greenwood, Maine

I was the prodigal child. My story is pretty much the Prodigal Son story, except I'm a girl. I left the faith when I was 19, but my dad drew me back that same year.

I was at Mass and the priest elevated the Host, and the devil whispered to me, "That's not really Him." And that was the beginning of a nasty spiral. And then, eventually, He let me know that was a lie — because my dad was the father of the prodigal child. My father and mother, Bill and Lucile, prayed a lot. *A lot.* We're very blessed.



Sharon Cifarelli

East Haven, Connecticut

My father is 93 years old now and very religious. As a child, he was very forgiving. He never struck us, always talked to us, and always showed us the right way. He guided us.

And then came the world. It's very hard to accept the world in these days. We were very protected as children, and we didn't really know the world as we see it now because my parents were so giving. Anyone could go to their house at any time and knock on the door and just come in. They always believed in God and always showed us the right way.

Father David Aufiero

Revere, Massachusetts

When I was a kid, my family lived with my grandmother. We moved in with her after my father suffered from a ruptured brain aneurysm. When she died, my uncle was given power of attorney for my grandmother's affairs. He gave my family a year to get out of the house before he would evict us. A year went by. My mother did not have a plan, so we were evicted. I was homeless for about 10 hours that day. I was thinking about sleeping on the beach, but thankfully some friends took me in. After about two weeks, I was put in foster care.

During this hard time, I was talking to a priest about what was happening in my life. At one point in the conversation, he just paused, looked at me, and asked me if I had ever thought about becoming a priest. I said, "No, I haven't."

His question always stayed in the back of my head.

I remained in foster care up until I went to college. Thanks to [the Department of Social Services], I received generous scholarships and grants to go to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst to study civil engineering. They paid for my medical insurance and gave me a stipend every month while I pursued my degree. All I



had to do was keep out of jail and go to school. That seems easy enough, however, many others in a similar situation to mine found this difficult.

I went to college thinking that I would either come out ready to discern marriage or go to seminary.

After I graduated, I found myself excited to go to seminary. I was so attracted to the life of a priest, what it's meant to be. It's just amazing how God revealed His mercy to me — my vocation — during some of my greatest suffering. He took a very difficult situation I was in and used it for my advantage.

Nancy Wilcox Brattleboro, Vermont

Definitely, God and His Son [have shown me mercy], very much so. I've lived a beautiful, beautiful life. I have so very many people who have given so many blessings to me my entire 62 years.



I recently lost my sister. We were like twin sisters, though she was younger than I am. It's just a beautiful life, and she showed me that, even in her passing. She was a very loving person. She took care of developmentally disabled young men. Before that, she worked with families for [decades] of her life and loved it. She showed them a lot of love, and they gave her love back, and she shared that love with everyone in her family and everyone around her. MH

IN BRIEFS

Visit marian.org/alar

By popular demand, we have now made talks and homilies of Fr. Chris Alar, MIC (aka “Fr. Joseph, MIC”), available for free online. Father Chris, the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, travels tens of thousands of miles a year giving parish missions and speaking at conferences. Now, no matter where you are, you need not miss out.

Visit marian.org/alar to listen in. We've already uploaded dozens of his talks on topics such as Divine Mercy, Mary, the Sacraments, Fatima, the 10 Commandments, Scripture, feast days of the Church, the Holy Trinity, and the saints.

A gathering of like minds

Representatives of the Association of Marian Helpers from throughout the world gathered for the 18th International Conference of the Association of Marian Helpers and the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in September. The four-day conference was held at the Marian Fathers' Basilica of Our Lady of Lichen, in Poland. Marian priests and brothers as well as lay associates from the United States, Argentina, Portugal, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Italy, and the Philippines, shared current work and news from their respective branches of the Association.

The conference theme was “Promoting the Spiritual Legacy of St. Stanislaus Papczynski, Founder of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers.”

Guest speakers included Professor Monica Przybysz of the Cardinal Stefan Wysznski University in Warsaw, Poland, and Fr. Przemyslaw Sliwinski, spokesman of the Archdiocese of Warsaw. They gave presentations entitled “Holiness as Reflected in Social Media” and “Using Mass Media as an Instrument for Promoting the Legacy of St. Stanislaus Papczynski: Their Opportunities and Risks,” respectively.

As we at the Association of Marian Helpers in the United States continue to expand our efforts of evangelization and promotion of the Marian charisms through mass media, we hope to help our Marian Helpers grow in holiness and in their relationship, not only with the Marian Fathers, but with their founding father as well, St. Stanislaus.

Guest speaker Rodrigo Ayude Puga of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, Italy, shared that in promoting the person and work of St. Stanislaus, we must “gaze at the saint and learn from his life.” We sincerely hope to aid your devotion to St. Stanislaus and your relationship with the Marians particularly through our social media outlets. If you don't do so already, be sure to follow us on our various social media platforms. MH

FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

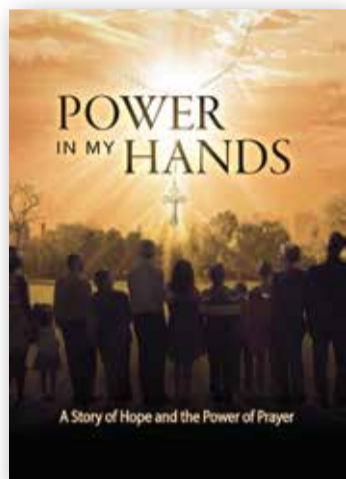
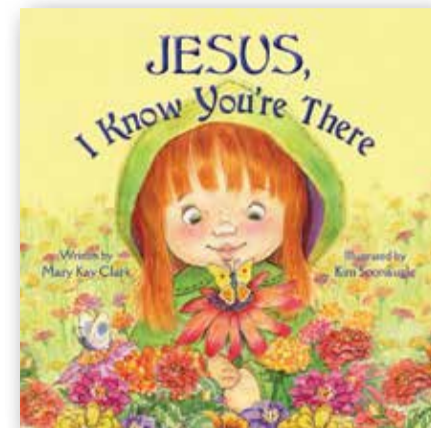
Visit ShopMercy.org/b40 or call 1-800-462-7426.

'Tis the season for family, and for the giving of gifts, in imitation of God, who gave the greatest gift of all to the world that first Christmas: His Son, Jesus Christ. Share the gift of faith with your family and friends this holiday season with one of these great works.

JESUS, I KNOW YOU'RE THERE

BY MARY KAY CLARK

Beautifully rendered illustrations bring to life a luminous world for children to explore — a world made all the brighter by the presence of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Drawing on a traditional Catholic understanding of divine revelation, author Mary Kay Clark and illustrator Kim Sponaugle have created a welcoming introduction for children to all the ways that God transmits His love and mercy to us in our everyday lives. Encouraging and joyful, this book is a perfect gift for early readers. \$8.95. **B40-JIKB**



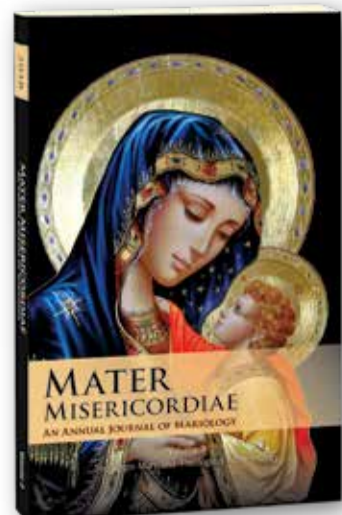
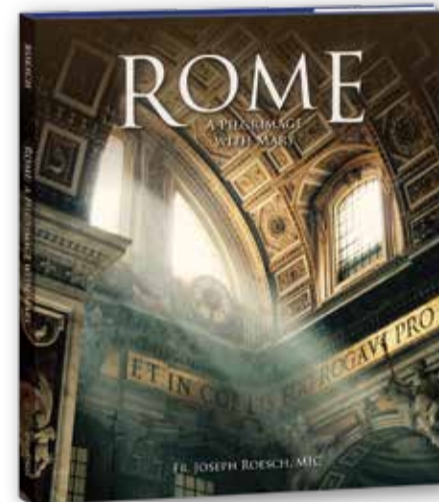
POWER IN MY HANDS: A STORY OF HOPE AND THE POWER OF PRAYER DVD

Vicar Provincial Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, joins a host of other Catholic authors, speakers, and clergy to bear witness to the power of the traditional Dominican Rosary. Beautifully produced, this DVD is a great means of sharing the history and the extraordinary graces of the Holy Rosary with your family, friends, and parishioners. Watch it and pass it on. More than ever, we need as many people as possible praying the holy Rosary! \$19.95. **B40-POWDVD**

ROME: A PILGRIMAGE WITH MARY

BY FR. JOSEPH ROESCH, MIC

In this second entry in his “A Pilgrimage with Mary” series, the Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, vicar general of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, invites the reader on a photographic tour of some of the many holy sites in Rome honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary. Gorgeously illustrated and enriched by Fr. Joe’s spiritual reflections, this book will welcome you on a pilgrimage deep into the heart of Our Lady’s presence in the Eternal City. Perfect for gift-giving this holiday season. \$24.95. **B40-ROME**



MATER MISERICORDIAE, VOL. III

EDITED BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

Father Donald Calloway, MIC, has gathered an array of excellent and erudite pieces by a range of Mariologists, all addressing “The Virgin Mary and Theological Anthropology” — in other words, how Our Lady reveals to us vital truths about human nature, as well as the relationship between God and humanity. Orthodox and richly informative, these pieces will open up new vistas for students, both amateur and expert, of Catholic theology and of the Blessed Virgin Mary in particular. \$14.95. **B40-MMV3**

WE TURN TO MARY, AS A 'RULE'

In February 2017, around 35 members of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception from around the world met at our general house in Rome for what we call a General Chapter meeting, something we do every six years. This time around, we got to the very heart of why God called our spiritual Congregation into existence.

During this three-week meeting, which included our major superiors, some elected delegates, and translators, we reviewed the years long work to update our Constitutions — also known as the Rule of Life — for our Congregation. We especially concentrated on how our Rule expresses our charism.

Founders of religious communities are known to receive a “founding charism,” which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. One way to think of it is that God raises up new religious communities in different parts of the world throughout history for special purposes. The Marian Fathers have three particular purposes.

God imprinted the following charism into the heart of the Founder of our Congregation, St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701): to profess, proclaim, and honor the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary; to assist the dying and the souls suffering in Purgatory; and to spread the Kingdom of God on Earth, serving Christ and the Church.

Saint Stanislaus founded the Marian Fathers in Poland in 1670, during a time of wars and plagues. People were dying spiritually unprepared. Sin and rebellion against God’s law marked this difficult time in history. To a great extent, the world today is in similar disorder — even more so — which makes our Marian charism so critical.

Our new rule states: “The mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary is the essence of the charism of the Congregation and has been, from the very beginning, a particular sign, strength, and joy of the Marian vocation. From this mystery flow the identity and mission of the Congregation.”

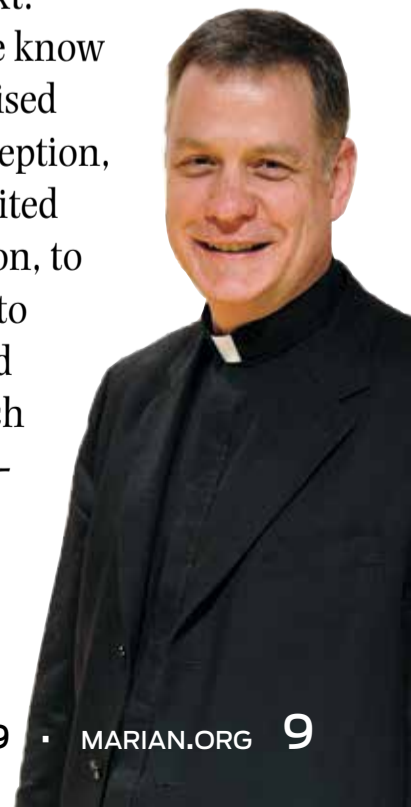
Indeed, this mystery expresses who we are. God saved Mary in an extraordinary way, and she serves as our model for how to live and grow in union with the Lord. Through Mary’s Immaculate Conception, St. Stanislaus knew that broken humanity could find solace that Christ had conquered sin and that we are called to eternal life in Heaven.

We have sought to express our charism more clearly in our Rule so that future generations of Marians can live it more deeply and more authentically wherever they live in the world.

The Vatican has since approved the changes that we made. In fact, we had a private audience with Pope Francis during the Chapter, and he urged us to carry out our reflection on our laws and regulations “with fidelity to the Founder’s charism and to the spiritual heritage of your Congregation and, at the same time, with a heart and mind open to the new needs, the new challenges”

He said that we could do so only by remembering our past, our history, even mistakes made in the past. Indeed, it’s important to know where we have come from as we discover where God is sending us next.

Whatever the future may hold, we know Our Lady will be with us. As our revised Rule states, in her Immaculate Conception, Mary urges us “to trust in the unlimited fruitfulness of the work of redemption, to avoid all sin, to love purity of heart, to imbue life fully with divine grace and charity, and to so build up the Church in unity ‘that it be holy and immaculate’ (Eph 5:27).”



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



Students pray during daily Mass on campus at Northeast Catholic College (NCC) in Warner, New Hampshire. Despite the current crisis, many at NCC understand that the Church is more than the sins of its leaders.

REASONS FOR **HOPE**

By Marc Massery



MARC MASSERY

Every morning before class, if only for a few minutes, Anja Renkes, an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, steals away to an empty, dimly lit chapel to kneel before a tabernacle, which rests beneath a stained-glass window that depicts the Crucified Christ. In prayer, she tells Jesus what's on her mind, everything she knows she can't bear on her own. She trusts that He's listening, that He can — and will — help.

She's seen the news: about the former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick; about the Pennsylvania grand jury report; about the scandals in Chile; about former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano calling for Pope Francis' resignation for allegedly being

CHURCH IN CRISIS

complicit in the cover-up; about ... the list goes on. Grieved and confused, she says she doesn't really know what to think about the mounting crises plaguing the Church hierarchy. But she does know what to think about her faith and the Church she loves, founded by Christ 2,000

years ago.

“I’m absolutely not going to leave the Church or even thinking about it,” says Anja, 20.

Why they persevere

To be sure, even before the scandals surfaced last spring and summer, many were already leaving the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

A Pew Research Center study released in October says Catholicism has experienced a greater net loss due to people switching religions than any other religious tradition in the U.S. A separate Pew study concluded that while roughly 51 million people in the U.S. self-identify as Catholic, the share of the population who

is Catholic declined from 24 percent in 2007 to 21 percent in 2014. The number of those received into full communion in the Church in the U.S. declined from 95,003 in 1999 to 63,951 in 2015. Moreover, approximately 12.8 percent of young adults in the U.S. between 18 and 25 are *former* Catholics.

While the oldest generation of Catholics remembers the days when dioceses were building churches, not closing them, and when the public respected the Roman collar instead of holding it in contempt, many wonder: What will the Church look like in the next 20, 40, or 60 years?

As the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment gathered this October in

FOR A ‘WOUNDED CHURCH’

By the time he stepped up to deliver his Sunday homily on Sept. 2, Fr. Andy Davy, MIC, felt as if he’d been punched in the gut. He, like most Catholics around the world, had followed the news over the spring and summer of Church scandals in the United States and around the world. He, too, felt equal parts anger and alarm.

Unlike many Catholics in this time of turmoil, Fr. Andy knew exactly what needed to happen next. He titled his homily “Authenticity.” It was as much a rallying cry for his parish — St. Mary Church in Plano, Illinois — as it was a reaffirmation of his own priestly vows.



Addressing the crisis head-on, Fr. Andy said clergy who have abused people “exchanged the glory of God for a lie. They were called to this beautiful vocation of laying down their lives so that others may live, just as Jesus Christ did for us. But instead, they had others [those they abused] lay down their lives so that ‘I’ may live. It’s twisted. It’s actually anti-Christ.”

Trust in the Church’s hierarchy “has been severely wounded,” he told his flock. “It’s going to take many, many years to heal that trust.”

But in the meantime, three things need to happen, he told his parishioners.

First, the Church must allow the light of truth to shine down on itself so that justice may be served and true healing can occur. Secondly, even at the risk of ridicule and scorn by those with newfound distrust of clergy, holy priests must continue to show Christ to the modern world, to instill hope among the brokenhearted, and to be poor among the poor.

And thirdly, there’s this: Father Andy told his flock that now is the precise time for the laity “to step into your rightful place” as disciples and evangelizers through whom others encounter Christ. To that end, parishes themselves should hereby be viewed as “basecamps” for training and forming missionary disciples that go out into society on a scale never before seen in laity.

“My pledge to you is to help equip you, help you bring God’s message to the larger community,” he said, citing St. Mary’s many spiritual formation programs and outreach ministries. “God is going to use this tragic situation that He didn’t cause and didn’t desire. His grace will take even this and bring about His glory one way or another.”

In an interview, Fr. Davy further explained how Vatican II called for the laity especially to witness the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the world. “Sadly,” he said, “in the wake of Vatican II, different currents worked to pit the vocation of the priesthood against the laity. People would either attempt to diminish the role of the priesthood to be an interchangeable job, or they would attempt to reduce the mission of the laity to menial tasks, while the priest does all the evangelization work. With the ministerial priesthood’s witness wounded by the current terrible scandal, a

In the Parish

Anja Renkes (back, second from the left) and Greg Perenich (top center), with members of the Divine Mercy prayer group that they started at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Despite the current climate in the Church, both Anja and Greg have expressed hope for the future Church.



Rome, words of the Holy Father succinctly framed the task at hand for the Church.

In his preparatory document for the synod, Pope Francis wrote, “By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today’s world.”

Indeed, if we judge the future of the Church based not on the sins of its leaders, but on the faith of those who will lead it in time, we have reason to hope.

Most young adults like Anja

vacuum has been created, where the laity are being called to go into the breach.”

In his homily, Fr. Andy told his parishioners that God “wants to open your heart to be radical, not merely mediocre. He wants to open your heart so that you will say, ‘I am a Christian, and I’m willing to share that message with the world.’”

Father Andy, like his fellow Marian priests who serve in parishes around the world, never imagined he’d have to step before a Sunday assembly to address how lives have been wrecked by men called to the same vocation as himself.

On May 30, 2009, at his childhood parish of St. John Neumann in Gaithersburg, Maryland, Fr. Andy professed his priestly vows during a Mass that had his own imprint upon it. He chose the readings, which emphasized then — and emphasize today — how he views his priestly call.

For instance, from the second reading, 1 Timothy 4:12-16, came the sobering words of responsibility — of not squandering “the gift you have” and of the need to set an example “in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.”

And from the Gospel reading, John 10:11-16, Christ calls Himself the “good shepherd” who “lays down His life for the sheep.”

“That’s my model,” Fr. Andy said in an interview. “The Good Shepherd leads with a strong gentleness, and with a self-sacrificial love that teaches me that my life must be led in service of others.”

Amidst the current Church crisis, Fr. Andy has no intention of giving in to despair. For one thing, he’s a beloved spiritual father for St. Mary’s 400 active families, including the hundreds of children who attend the parish’s school and religious education program.

“We priests who are committed to serving Christ and His Church cannot retreat into our ivory towers or have this ‘fortress mentality,’” he said. “Really, I’m being called as a spiritual father to enter more deeply into the priesthood, as Christ intends it — as a ministry of presence and accompaniment. This has all awoken my heart more to say, ‘I have to be that bridge of trust for people who have lost their trust in the Church.’”

To that end, he evokes the famous words of Blessed George Matulaitis (1871-1927), known as the Renovator of the Marian Fathers, who wrote:

If I may ask, grant O Lord, that in Your Church I may be like that common dust cloth which, when worn out, is tossed into a dark corner somewhere. May I be used and worn out in the same way as long as some tiny corner in Your Church is cleaned, as long as Your house is a little tidier and brighter.

“The Marians, we see ourselves as dust cloths — called to give glory to God by our lives,” Fr. Andy said. “The whole idea of the dust cloth is being willing to go where the need is greatest, and the greatest need the world has is to know of Jesus’ Divine Mercy — that the greatest of sinners have the greatest right to His mercy” (see *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 723).

And with that, Fr. Andy — this dust cloth incarnate — has parish work to tend to.

MH

— Felix Carroll

persevere, not because it's convenient or socially acceptable, but rather because they see the merit of striving for virtue; desire the peace that prayer promises; and want the victory that Christ has won over sin and death. They endure because of the liturgical life of the Church. They endure because of the "actions of the Holy Spirit" experienced through the Sacraments (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 116).

Grieving the present

Marian Helper Bridget Beck, a freshman at Northeast

Catholic College (NCC) in Warner, New Hampshire, has felt the horror of scandal more deeply than most Catholics.

In January 2018, her associate pastor at Holy Childhood of Jesus Catholic Church in Mascoutah, Illinois, was arrested and charged with 16 counts of child pornography and one count of possession of methamphetamine.

"It was horrific, and it felt like real life was 'SVU Law and Order,'" Bridget said. "We're the Body of Christ, we're supposed to be looking out for one another. ... It's



THE WAY FORWARD

The conflagration that erupted in June surrounding the former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick had gasoline tossed on it by the Pennsylvania grand jury report. Further fires have broken out in the Church in Honduras, Chile, India, and elsewhere.

It's bewildering to discover that so much had been wrong for so long. It's appalling that so many people have been hurt.

The night of the present age, characterized also by the dictatorship of relativism, the culture of death, social injustice, and abandonment of the faith, is deepening more comprehensively and swiftly than any of us had expected. But there is a well-lit, safe road through the encroaching night. That road leads *to* Calvary, but also *through* Calvary, to the tomb as well as the Resurrection. That way has been laid down by the Mystical Body of Christ, following in the footsteps of Jesus the Head, working under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

That road is the path of the Gospel, the path of the Christian spiritual life, made possible by the Sacraments and prayer, walked by the saints and Doctors of the Church and mapped for our present age by ecumenical councils and the Holy Fathers, who've taught us how to proclaim the New Evangelization, building a culture of life, leading to a civilization of love.

The Church is guaranteed to survive till the end and to hand on the true faith, no matter how dire the sins of her leaders. Going by the Gospel, 100 percent of the clergy will at some point run from Christ and

The path
of the Gospel

hard to put into words, you just feel betrayed.”

Though some in her parish couldn't stomach the revelations and left, she and her family have remained faithful. She stays because she knows that the Church is more than the sins of its leaders. “[It's also] the parishioners, the people, and, of course, the Eucharist,” she said.

Still, she's healing from the wounds of having had a confessor who lived such a double life. “It's hard to see that Christ was working through [him] when you have that experience,” she said.

Though she's one of six from a devout Catholic family,

she's not afraid to admit that she has questioned her faith. “But ultimately, I think the greater good is there in the Church,” she said.

Understandably, she'd like to see institutional reform, and especially for the Church hierarchy to hold abusers accountable — to confront evil rather than cower in its wake. Though Bridget wonders about the future, no matter what, she'll never lose her Catholic identity. “I'll always be Catholic,” she said. “I feel like that's a part of my identity that I can't escape, [because] it forms my values, all my relationships, and my family.”

avoid sharing His suffering. At least one in 12 will flatly deny knowing Him, like Peter. At least one in 12 will be filled with the devil and betray Him, like Judas. And only one in 12 will be there at the foot of His Cross, like John.

Our leaders, called by Jesus, have included weak, sinful men from the beginning. But remember that with the coming of the Holy Spirit, those 11 remaining original apostles were transformed into bold, tireless witnesses to the Gospel of Christ, even to the point of martyrdom.

The Holy Spirit makes all the difference in the world. He abides with us, ready to act powerfully through the gifts and charisms He entrusts to the members of the Body of Christ. So let Him act.

Let's commit ourselves first to prayer and fasting for the Church and the world, interceding especially for the clergy and consecrated religious.

And then let's be sure we keep our eyes fixed on Christ by the renewal of our minds in the truth.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Church gives us sure teaching to guide us today, which can be found in:

- Divine Revelation (particularly as given in Scripture and Tradition);
- the pontificates of the Holy Fathers (particularly those of Leo XIII [1810-1903] and his successors);
- the teachings of the ecumenical councils (especially Vatican Councils I and II);
- the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine” (St. John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum* [On the Publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church], IV); and
- the lives and the writings of the saints and Doctors of the Church, especially the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul*.

As we live through God purging the Church and the Blessed Mother's Immaculate Heart triumphing over evil, “be not afraid.” Let us resolve not to stay silent in the face of evil, and to ensure as best we can that abuse of the vulnerable will not happen again in Christ's Church.

So we need to take up the tools of our spiritual combat; hold on to the sure and certain teaching given by Christ through His Mystical Body; live that teaching, faithfully fulfilling the duties of our state in life; and, carefully discerning and obeying the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, speak out to our spiritual fathers, doing our part to reform the Church in response to the crisis.

MH

— Chris Sparks



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Even as her associate pastor was arraigned, even while Archbishop Vigano accused Pope Francis of being complicit in the cover-up of McCarrick's sins, Bridget chose to start her freshman year at NCC, a profoundly Catholic institution where most students attend daily Mass. They also receive spiritual formation from Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, the Marian Fathers' director of evangelization.

That formation will come in handy for Bridget. She realizes that during crisis, prayer is paramount. "[We have to] pray a lot. I don't think there's an easy solution," she said.

A smaller but stronger Church?

Marian Helper Greg Perenich, a recent graduate of Notre Dame and one of Anja's best friends, hasn't been as personally impacted as Bridget. He's grieved the news of recent months, but he hasn't worried about his own faith.

"It worries me for the Catholics who are on the fringe

of their faith, who are going to Mass and find themselves one foot in, one foot out," he said. In response, he started praying the Litany of Reparation, interceding for the sins of those who have caused the Church the most heartache.

Indeed, Greg has not let the media's prognostications of doom for the Church discourage him. As the news peaked in August, he traveled to Durham, North Carolina, to dedicate a year of service to the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry where he serves the youth, the elderly — the marginalized.

Living the Beatitudes — that's the life to which many young Catholics feel called.

Greg, for one, doesn't fear the possibility of a smaller Church to come.

"I have so much hope because it's Pope Benedict [XVI] who talks about this: Though [Christ] is going to lose so much blood, so many members, so many souls, for the time being, those that are so rooted in His Heart



Annie Schlueter (second from the right) grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania, one of the six dioceses mentioned in the infamous Pennsylvania grand jury report. She stands above with her parents, who work full-time in Catholic ministry, and her five brothers and sisters.

A 'LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS'

Whether it was an invitation to a birthday party, movie night, game night, or to enjoy a home-cooked meal, the Schlueters always made their priests at St. George Church in Erie, Pennsylvania, part of their family.

"That was always normal to me," said Annie Schlueter, a Marian Helper who is currently a junior at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Florida. "[My parents] have always been passionate about allowing priests to come and experience our family. They were always providing a place for priests to just rest,"

So Annie said that the news that broke this summer about the Pennsylvania grand jury report hit close to home. The 1,400-page report investigated six dioceses in the commonwealth, including the Diocese of Erie where Annie grew up. It named 300 priests who allegedly abused more than 1,000 victims. Nearly all of those allegations stem from the decades preceding 2002. That's when the U.S. bishops adopted a zero-tolerance approach in the wake of allegations of widespread sexual abuse by priests in Boston and elsewhere.

In Pennsylvania



MARC MASSERY

A student attends daily Mass on campus at Northeast Catholic College. Though grieved by the current crisis, many young Catholics say that nothing could get them to leave the Catholic faith.

and in His Body are going to become stronger to carry the rest of us through. That's the hope," he said.

So he sees the crisis as an opportunity to rely even more upon Christ. "It's a call to greater action and greater love — to be the face of the newer Church of renewal," he said.

And Greg has already seen some of the signs. "I think the renewal is starting within, and I think it's going to be a Church of so much love and mercy," he said. "It's going to be a more orthodox Church, holding truer to the ancient traditions ... especially the Mass [and] the Eucharist."

Despite the current climate, Greg has continued to start every morning steeped in prayer, consecrating himself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit.

"I am familiar with a lot of the names that were [in the report]. I didn't know any of them, but I know people who know them," Annie said.

The report stated that many crimes committed by priests had been swept under the rug by Church leadership. Some of the names caught parishioners by surprise.

"[Since my family is] involved in ministry, this is not something we [could] just turn a blind eye to," Annie said. Her parents, who have since moved to Toledo, Ohio, work full-time running their own Catholic non-profit called Mass Impact, which provides resources to help form families to talk about the faith and pray with their children. Annie also serves in a leadership role for the campus ministry at her school.

Just before the news broke nationwide, Annie was visiting her extended family in Erie. "Everyone [in the diocese] knew it was coming," she said. "But the priests were handling it so beautifully [in their homilies]. Bishop Lawrence Persico of Erie, his whole big thing had been [that] we need to give victims a voice. That's what I was hearing from these priests when I was back home. They said we're going to get through this together and that we need to be praying and supporting our priests. ... I think a lot more people had a reason to stay because of that."

Annie's been trying to balance remaining informed about the news with grieving and staying rooted in her faith. "I definitely wrestled with it a lot this summer," she said. "I am just so saddened, and I feel like I can't trust people I should be able to trust."

But instead of letting her grief get the best of her, Annie helped organize a "reparation week" on campus, which encouraged students to pray for the victims of sexual abuse in the Church, the perpetrators, and the people who covered it up. "It was so beautiful because we had this full chapel of young adults who were just crying out to the Lord and just begging for the Lord's mercy," she said. "Seeing young adults around me step up and become leaders in the face of all this and choose to stay and choose to lead, choose to worship in so much darkness — it's already bringing so much light, and it's just really beautiful.

"I have been so impressed by the people who are down here who are willing to talk about it," she said. "I'm seeing so much revival because there's just a light that's being brought into the darkness." MH

— Marc Massery



RACHEL MOORE

Witnessing to love

It was Greg’s witness that helped renew his friend Anja’s faith — the faith she made her own in high school when she encountered Divine Mercy.

“[The message of Divine Mercy] is so powerful and beautiful and so necessary for the world right now,” she said.

When Anja was in 10th grade, a nun from St. Faustina’s congregation, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland, brought a relic of St. Faustina to a local parish. “The sister loved me with every fiber of her being. With

her eyes, her words, and the way she carried herself. It was truly something unforgettable — and now I realize why: Christ was loving me through her. There is nothing more lovable than that,” she said.

At Notre Dame together, Anja and Greg started a Divine Mercy prayer group to spread devotion to the Chaplet and make the Divine Mercy Image more visible on campus. Amid the churchwide crisis, Anja continues to lead that prayer group every Thursday evening. She also continues studying Catholic theology, her major of choice, which has helped fortify her faith.

‘TRUTH IS TRUTH.’

Students at Northeast Catholic College in Warner, New Hampshire, share their thoughts on the current crisis in the Church:



Anna Hock
Norwalk, Wisconsin

Students speak out

The scandals are from a wound in the Church that’s been festering for a while that needs to be cleaned out. I think Divine Mercy is going to come in and heal all the wounds. Trust in Divine Mercy.

When you look past the surface of what’s going on in the Church right now, you see the true beauty of the Church. You have the Eucharist. You have the saints. You have the Blessed Mother. You have our Lord Himself. I believe that Mary’s Immaculate Heart is going to triumph. She’s

going to make things right, and also our Lord is going to take care of us.

We need to be going out into the world and being that light for the faith and showing people what a faithful Catholic is actually like. Sure, we’re not perfect, but the light we have from the faith is going to be an example to others.



Sean Haeffner
Alstead, New Hampshire

My faith has only ever rested in one person, Jesus Christ — not in all of the other persons who, like myself, are sinners. And the more I’ve lived my faith and studied it, the more I’m convinced of the truth in it and the importance it has for me and everyone. There’s no meaning to life without it. Christ is my goal. My faith means that this world makes sense, that love wins out, that there is happiness for man, there are morals, and there are truths that God has revealed — there is a God

who cares. There’s Divine Mercy and healing and forgiveness, and this has been entrusted to the Church to give to the world. Tapping into that grace is what changes things.



“The Church’s deepest identity is to be in communion with Christ,” Anja said. “If that is what it means to be part of the Body of Christ in the Church, regardless of what any other members of the Body of Christ — even our leaders — choose with their free will, it cannot impact our identity.”

So, like Greg, Anja doesn’t fear the future.

“Jesus tells us, ‘Do not be afraid,’” Anja said. “There is no need to fear that our identity is rooted in something tainted, something unstable. Our identity is rooted in being in communion with Christ. This is still

possible, and will always be possible.”

News of scandal hasn’t stolen her peace because she understands sin. “I feel like a lot of darkness is causing people to turn inward and to each other, and not to Christ,” she said.

Young as she is, she said she doesn’t “have it all figured out.”

She said, “I just believe it is of paramount importance to love Christ in ourselves and in other people.

“Instead of turning inward, we can turn to Christ,” she said. “We can choose to say, ‘I love you’ to every soul



Chance Herbert Webster, New Hampshire

Nothing could get me to leave the Church. Truth is truth. No matter what someone says, you can’t negate the truth. The Church isn’t only the Magisterium. It isn’t just the pope. It isn’t just the people who are in charge of it. If you let the sins of men get in the way of you receiving the Sacraments, you let the devil win, because that’s how he operates, through sin.

The scandal hurts. It makes me sick. But it doesn’t taint my view of the Church. When you realize the Sacraments aren’t dependent on the holiness of the men who minister them, then it’s easy to continue to have faith, but especially easy when you have a good priest. I encourage anyone struggling with their faith right now to wait and see what happens. You might find that the joy that the Sacraments bring you is a lot greater than the persecution you might get because of what people might have to say about what’s going on at the Vatican.

Pray for [priests], pray for the Church. Pray for prudent decisions to be made by the Holy Father. Also, it’s important for young people to go out and evangelize. Have families and raise good families because one of the big things that ties this all together is the attack on the family. That’s what we can do.



Rebecca Stolarski St. Louis, Missouri

Obviously the news of the scandals makes me very, very sad. But I have faith because I’ve seen and studied the other scandals and the other tribulations that the Church has gone through and that she’s made it through. She usually comes out even stronger because this is a sort of test of faith for a lot of people, and a lot of people can’t handle it. So the people who are left in the Church are the people who really, really want to be here. It’s the people who are very committed to truth and committed to being Catholic.

You don’t leave your family if something [bad] happens. You don’t say, “OK, I’m going to find a new family.” You’re committed to being there, and you really believe that the Holy Spirit is still guiding the Church and the Holy Spirit is still present in the Church.

we meet, with every small interaction. I believe this is the point of everything.”

In striving for this radical commitment to love, Anja makes it her goal, beginning as soon as she awakes, to communicate with Christ in her heart throughout the day. “Even though I’m so incredibly far from perfect at it, the fact that I’m trying, it just makes my life completely different and increases joy exponentially,” she said.

The future

So what does the future of the Church look like? It

looks like Anja, Bridget, Greg, and countless young Catholics who refuse to compromise when it comes to their faith. Pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in their body the dying of Jesus, so that they may manifest the life of Christ (see 2 Cor 4:8-10).

Though the Body of Christ may become smaller in numbers in the years to come, expect a stronger Church, far holier, and as long as persecution persists, ever more an image of the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. MH



Allyson Anderson Greencoast Springs, Florida

The Church has had scandals before. We’ve had before people in authority in the Church who were not acting according to their office and were leading people astray. You look at the proper responses of the saints that rose up during those time periods, and what did they do? They kept holding on, they kept praying, they were fasting, they were trying to make reparation for the sins that were occurring.

But like what Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, was saying in a retreat we had recently, he was talking about Divine Mercy and quoted the Bible saying, “Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more” [Rom 5:20]. That’s something I try to hold onto. You have to hold onto those things and keep trying and be part of the positive change. I’m just asking God to use me as an instrument to rectify this as much as I can.

The Catholic Church is made up of good and bad people like anywhere else, but the difference is that we have God’s grace and that He will work through these bad things to bring something good. It’s an example of how your dependence can’t be on the human person, it has to be on God. The biggest thing right now for the laity and for myself is that we need to be praying for the people who have been negatively impacted. We need to be willing to make small sacrifices for them.



Thomas Hogan Newport, New Hampshire

Look through the history of the Church and how the Church has gone through so much suffering even from the beginning. The Church has always withstood it and has always survived, and I think that speaks to the trueness of the Church. Granted, I don’t think there’s ever been a scandal like this before, but you know that Satan is going to try to do whatever he can to derail the faithful and the Church. He’s exhausted a lot of options throughout the course of time.

Recognize God’s love in your life and His mercy. Stay close to Our Lady. The Blessed Mother’s intercession, protection, and guidance cannot be overstated. She is a perfect mother, and Jesus is the Divine Mercy, but He’s also going to be our judge. She’s pure mercy.



Evelin Jimenez Redondo Beach, California

I know it can seem like such a textbook answer, but I find that when I have my doubts, I remember that we’re the only Church that was founded by Jesus Christ Himself. He gave us the Eucharist. And it wasn’t something established by mere men.

Also, I think that Mary is doing great things, and I feel there is going to be a calm in the eye of the storm. I feel like problems are always going to arise, but I feel that we’re due for peace. MH

IN A CRISIS, CALL YOUR MOTHER

In this time of sexual abuse scandals in the Church, revelations of coverup and corruption amongst the clergy, and general loss of faith, we need to go to the people we can trust to sort this whole thing out.

We need to turn to the saints in Heaven.

They, after all, are incorruptible, wise with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and strong with the full might of the Lord's arm. But they, like the Lord who is Love Itself, wait on the permission of their brethren on earth before they get involved in earthly affairs. They wait on our prayers and petitions.

And then they can move with power.

Chief among them, of course, is Our Lady, Mary Immaculate, Queen of Heaven and earth. Thanks to the Lord's gift of the Immaculate Conception, she is the only human person in whom the devil never had his claws. She was never touched at any point in her existence by the stain of original sin.

In an age of corruption and scandal, it's time to turn to the incorruptible, to the Immaculate Conception.

In a time where you don't know whom to trust on earth, trust in Mary and her Son; trust in the saints; trust in Heaven.

In a time when it's easy to feel powerless, overwhelmed by the drumbeat of scandal, come to her in whom God Himself trusted. Come to Mary, who carried God in her arms, who fed God, to whom God was obedient. Come to Mary, the victorious warrior, the woman whom no evil shall ever overcome.

Come to Mary, and invite her back with you into the life of the Church, your home, and your family. Come to Mary, asking her help by attending Mass on her feast days, especially on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

Come to Mary by wearing her scapulars and the Miraculous Medal. Come to Mary by praying the traditional Dominican Rosary, the Seven Sorrows Rosary, or the Chaplet of the Ten Evangelical Virtues.

'I AM THE IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION'

Come to Mary by placing images of her in your home and parish, lighting candles before her images, or performing whatever other devotions are available to you. Come

to Mary by making a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine or holy place such as the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, or go to your parish for special times of devotion before her statue or by accompanying her through walking the Stations of the Cross.

Come to Mary. Let her lead you to Jesus through the Five First Saturdays devotion or through total consecration, using guides such as Marian Fr.

Michael Gaitley's 33 Days to Morning Glory.

Come to Mary, learning more about her and her powerful protection through books such as Marian Fr. Donald Calloway's Champions of the Rosary and Under the Mantle, or Dr.

Robert Stackpole's Mary: Who She Is and Why She Matters.

Come to Mary! We stand here in a time of crisis. Do as God did when the world was falling away from Him, and place yourself in her hands. Entrust yourself, the Church, and the world to her through prayer, interceding for everything you've been asked to pray for, meant to pray for, or that God wants you to pray for.

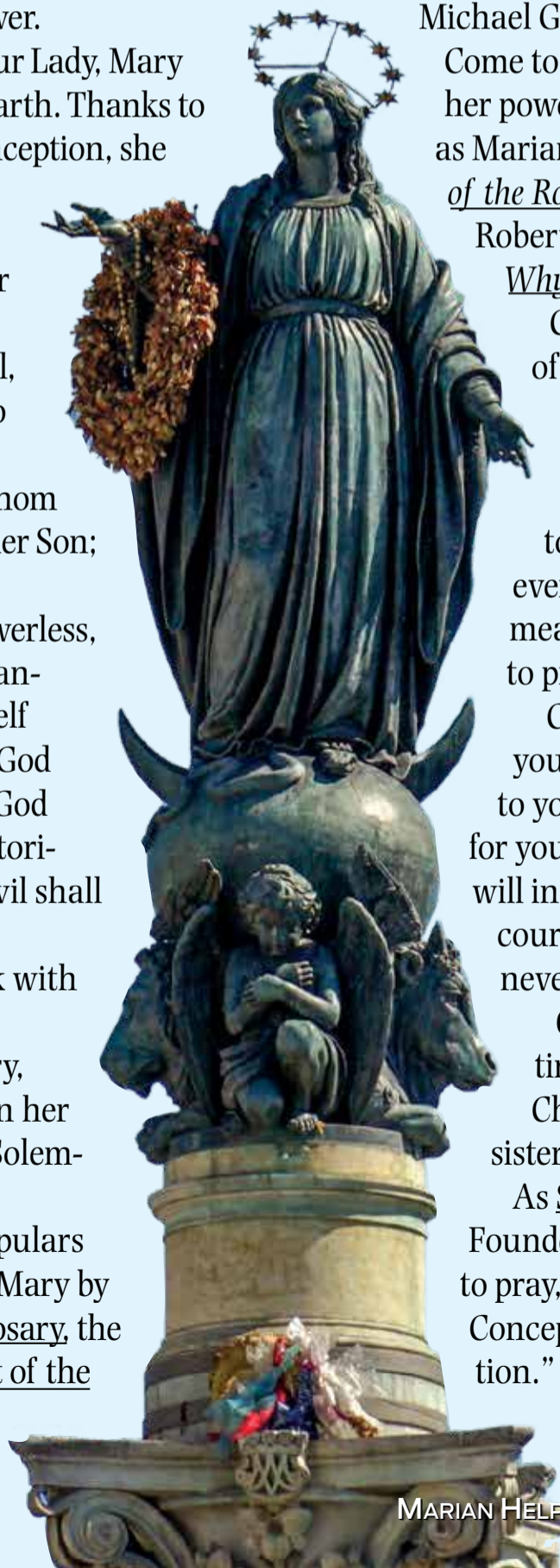
Come to Mary. She will not abandon you, even if she must accompany you to your cross on Calvary. She will be there for you, and help you in all your needs. She will intercede for your salvation before the court of Heaven, and her requests are never denied.

Our Catholic family is in crisis. It's time to go back to the Mother of the Church, and to bring our brothers and sisters to her, as well.

As St. Stanislaus Papczynski, Founder of the Marian Fathers, taught us to pray, "May the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection." Amen.

MH

— Chris Sparks





THERE'S ROOM AT THE INN!

NEW PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS MARIAN EVANGELIZATION

It's all about holy hospitality at the historic Federal House Inn in South Lee, Massachusetts. Father Michael Gaitley, MIC (center), the Marian Fathers' director of evangelization, stands outside the Inn, along with Gayle Misner (fifth from the left), the Inn's director, and several members of the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy.

By Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC

If you've ever come to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, you might have noticed it. In fact, you may have even stayed there.

Just a five-minute drive from the Shrine, the Federal House Inn is one of the most popular and beloved places to stay among Shrine pilgrims — and for good reason. It's ranked as the number one best bed and breakfast in the Berkshires (the county where the Shrine is located) and is also among the top 3 percent of hospitality operations in the world.

And now, *all proceeds from the prestigious Federal House Inn go to support Marian Evangelization*. In other words,

anyone who comes to the Shrine on pilgrimage and stays at the Federal House Inn can know that his or her patronage helps spread Divine Mercy, devotion to Mary, and care for the poor.

Here's how it works.

For about the last five years, the Evangelization Office of the Marian Fathers has partnered with a service organization called the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy.

The Marian Missionaries, who are headquartered just across the street from the Federal House Inn, includes about 20 young men and women who generously give a year of their time to serve



The Federal House Inn is just a five-minute drive to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

the poor and the homeless in the Northeast. They also organize popular “Mercy and Mary Retreats” across the country, which effectively spread the message of Divine Mercy and Marian Consecration.

Now, thanks to the generosity of a benefactor, the Marian Missionaries own and operate the Federal House Inn. Therefore, proceeds from the Inn go toward helping to feed, house, and support the young men and women volunteers who spread the Marian charism as Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy.

And with the new ownership comes even better service for Shrine Pilgrims. Gayle Misner, director of the Federal House Inn, explains, “While we are maintaining the Inn’s high standards, we see the Inn as another way to reach out and bring God’s love and mercy to both the region and those who stay with us.”

Misner hopes to draw Marian Helpers to the Inn by offering special “Pilgrim Packages” during the slower months of January to March. Such Pilgrim Packages during those months often include Mass, meals, and fellowship with the Marian Missionaries, tours of the grounds of the National Shrine and of the houses of the Marian Missionaries.

Mark Shoemaker, who recently stayed at the Federal House Inn and enjoyed the perks of the Pilgrim Packages, shares his experience:

The Federal House Inn is elegant, clean, and takes you back to the colonial period of the beautiful Berkshires. The hospitality from Gayle and the Missionaries was off the charts. My favorite time was not only visiting the National Shrine but sharing meals with the Missionaries across the street from the Inn. Prior to our visit, my wife and I planned on going to local restaurants for our meals, but we actually ended up having all our evening meals with those inspiring, joy-filled young men and women. Being with them really deepened my faith and hope for the Church, and knowing that my stay at the Inn supports them financially made it even more meaningful.

Many of the people who stay at the Federal House Inn, such as Mark and his wife, comment on the peace and tranquility they find there. The former owners, Ken and Marsha Andersen, share that many of their clientele were famous people from New York City and Boston, who easily

could have afforded to stay at \$1,000-a-night resorts and spas in the area, but who kept coming back to the Federal House Inn. Why? Because of the peace they found there.

Marsha and Ken believe they know where that peace comes from. “There’s no question that it comes from the Shrine and those Missionaries across the street!”

Those Missionaries across the street not only have an inviting dining hall and community space where they and those who enjoy the Pilgrim Packages are welcome to eat, but their house next door includes a beautiful Divine Mercy chapel, where pilgrims are welcome to pray.

One such pilgrim, Kristin Meyer, shares that her



favorite experience during her visit to the Berkshires was spending time in Adoration with the Marian Missionaries. “There was so much peace in their chapel,” she said. “You could tell that it was a place where Jesus is deeply loved, and that love radiates to all who visit. The Missionaries truly have a gift for hospitality that goes back to their love for Jesus. I can’t wait to go back and experience it again.”

For more information and to book a room at the best rates, email info@federalhouseinn.com or call (413) 243-1824.

Now, there’s still room at the Inn, especially from January to March, but with only nine bedrooms and word getting out, those rooms are quickly filling up. So you might want to act fast and know that you’re not only going to have a great pilgrimage, but you’ll also be supporting a worthy cause.

MH



A REUNION, OF SORTS

30 YEARS AFTER 'HAUNTING' INCIDENT, TWO MEN FINALLY MEET

Father Donald Calloway, MIC, and David Reintjes meet in person — finally.

By Felix Carroll

When David Reintjes turned back toward the tarmac, what he saw would haunt him. Two military policemen, accompanied by a naval officer in white full dress uniform, were escorting a prisoner off a military cargo plane. David zeroed in on the prisoner. Black hair down to his waist, young, scrawny, an expression drenched in dark rage, he looked like a wild beast, “like something they just dragged out of the jungle,” recalls David.

In the days to come, he would tell people about what he saw. In the years to come, he would wonder about that kid: What was his story, anyway? Why was a naval officer escorting him? Whatever became of him?

David recognized a semblance of his own troubled childhood in him. He prayed for him.

This past April, a full 30 years after that incident on the tarmac, David and the prisoner finally met face to face — under vastly different circumstances.

The boy has since become a man — his long black hair trimmed to a clean cut and the prison-orange jumpsuit replaced by all-black attire. The shackles on his ankles and wrists are long gone, too, swapped out for two distinctive symbols of servitude: a metal bracelet around his wrist and a stiff, white Roman collar.

He looked like a wild beast, ‘like something they just dragged out of the jungle.’

— David Reintjes

That boy is now Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, a Catholic priest, author, popular speaker, and slave to Jesus and Mary.

About a decade ago, David of Jacksonville, North Carolina, received a CD in the mail on the life story of Fr. Donald, a man he had never heard of. He listened

— to how Fr. Donald converted from a life of sin, crime, selfishness, and substance abuse to become one of the Catholic world’s great evangelizers of Divine Mercy and devotion to Mary Immaculate. That testimony included details of a certain day at a Honolulu airport. The proverbial bells clanged in David’s head.

“That’s got to be that kid I saw!” David said to himself.

David would wonder about it for years, until this past spring when he learned Fr. Donald was to speak at a Catholic conference in nearby Raleigh. That prompted him to finally reach out, via email, and then to meet him in person. David explained to Fr. Donald how, 30 years ago, when he served as a lieutenant colonel in the United States Marine Corps, he was in Hawaii for a meeting with the commanding officer there. That’s when he saw this young prisoner in chains.

“We confirmed the location and date,” Fr. Donald said. “I am that young boy he saw — and I am that priest! His prayers had power in my life! It’s incredible.”

Father Donald’s testimony has since become the bestselling Marian Press book *No Turning Back: A Witness to Mercy*. In December, the Marian Fathers will celebrate 10 years since its publication by releasing a special anniversary edition.

The book — like the CD testimony David first listened to — sheds light on that moment in Honolulu. The 15-year-old Donald Calloway had recently been captured by Japanese authorities following a crime spree. Joined by his mortified step-father, the naval officer in white, he arrived in Honolulu en route to Pennsylvania, where he was to be institutionalized.

“I was still so angry and defiant that they literally handcuffed me to the plane,” Fr. Donald writes. “We were transported on one of those C-130 cargo planes where there’s cargo in the center and webbed seating on the sides. They strapped me in to a webbed seat and positioned an MP on both my left and right. Then they chained one of my legs to an MP and one of my arms to the fuselage.”

Father Donald continued, “My handlers knew I had

absolutely no regard for life — not theirs, not even my own. They were convinced I would do something stupid to put everyone in harm’s way. In a certain sense they were right because I was, quite simply, out of my mind.”

He writes that, once inside the terminal in Hawaii, “I screamed and shouted the most vile obscenities at any passerby who made eye contact.”

Though the young Donald was on his way to an institution, he also was on his way toward a powerful conversion through the intercession of Mary Immaculate. *No Turning Back* has since inspired thousands of people around the world, including David, who has much in common with Fr. Donald.

He, too, had a naval officer for a father and grew up on military bases. He, too, had an independent streak that got him into trouble with the law as a teen. He, too, caused a lot of pain for his parents and other loved ones.

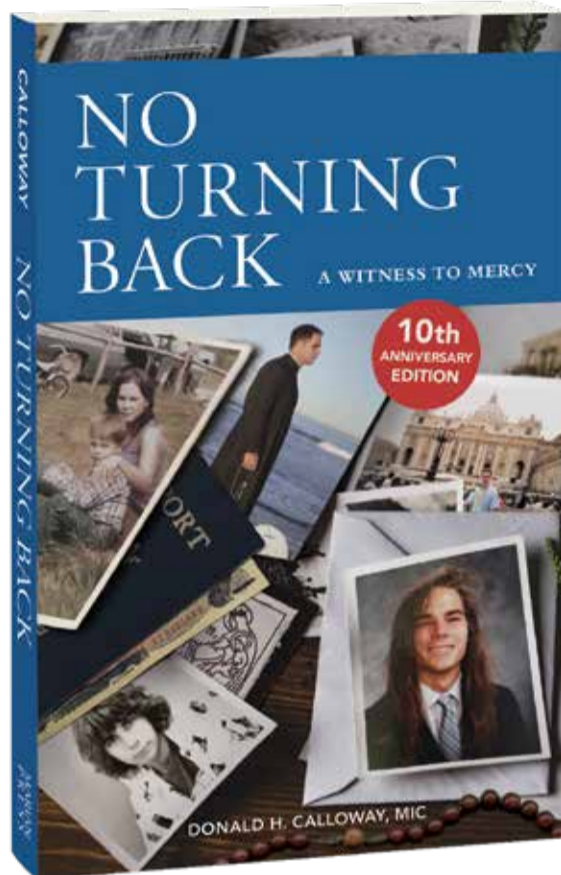
As he grew older, he abused alcohol. He was an unfaithful husband. All of this, until he found himself at the end of his rope begging for God’s mercy. His prayers led to a powerful conversion. He hasn’t had a drop of alcohol for 38 years. Jesus and Mary also eventually removed his struggles with sexual sins.

Retired, David, 67, and his wife, Shawna, have four grown children. David volunteers as a counselor for men in recovery from substance abuse, pornography, and other sexual sins. One of the tools he uses with these men is Fr. Donald’s testimony.

“That is so powerful for these guys in recovery,” he said, “because they don’t feel much hope. They’ve been beat down, beat up, and some are still involved with their drugs, pornography, or prostitution, or whatever their deadly sins are. They think, ‘If God could do that to this guy, Fr. Donald, there’s hope for me.’”

“It’s just a blessing to know that the gifts of the Church can restore us,” David continued. “The life you were living can change — just like Fr. Donald’s changed and mine changed.”

He added, “It was amazing to finally meet him.” MH



Beginning in December, the Marian Fathers will celebrate 10 years since the publication of *No Turning Back: A Witness to Mercy* by releasing a special anniversary edition. To pre-order, visit ShopMercy.org/b40 or call 1-800-462-7426. (Product code: B40-ANTBK)



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OF MUSIC AND MYSTERIES

A G-SHARP PUTS THE SEASON IN FOCUS

By Melanie Williams

Nothing quite distinguishes this time of the year like the music that surrounds us day and night. In the stores, in the streets, and on the radio, countless Christmas jingles and carols emanate around us.

When we enter our churches, the atmosphere has an added air of sanctity, the music distinctly different. Our liturgies and music aid our contemplative waiting during the season of Advent, a time of prayer and penance. Then we rejoice in wonderment and awe at the sight of our newborn King at Christmas. A great mystery is at hand — the true “reason for the season.” And all with its own astonishing soundtrack!

Ancient traditions, ever timely

For centuries, the Church has turned to the same prayers and antiphons during the seasons of Advent

and Christmas. This tradition leads us into the deep mystery of the Incarnation — of how our Heavenly Father, for the sake of our salvation, sent us His Only Begotten Son, born of an Immaculate Virgin in the most humble of manners.

Then, on that holy night, Christmas Eve, we wait with baited breath to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

O magnum mysterium. O great mystery.

This phrase comes from an ancient antiphon for the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord. It has been sung throughout the centuries and set to music by various

composers. The Latin text, translated to English, reads:

O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear
Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!

In 1994, the American composer Morten Johannes Lauridsen wrote a new musical setting for *O magnum mysterium*. The result received a Grammy nomination. I highly recommend you add this piece of music to your Advent and Christmas soundtrack.

Wanting to relate his setting to history and religiosity (echoing the atmosphere of the Latin Mass and Gregorian chant) while not complicating the message, Lauridsen worked on the piece for six months. He noted in an interview with the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music that the antiphon primarily speaks to "God's grace to the meek and veneration of the Virgin Mary."

Lauridsen's composition sounds like chant while having the feeling of floating on air. He said composing the work proved easy enough, but the part he lost sleep over was the line "Blessed is the Virgin."

"How can I, in a very direct piece, indicate her sorrow — her profound sorrow — of seeing her Son murdered?" Lauridsen contemplated. He used one note to do it: a G-sharp, far afield from the key of D in which the rest of the piece is set. The G-sharp falls on the word *Virgo* (Virgin) to highlight the great mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

I love that detail.

'Gift of the merciful God'

Truly, when contemplating the mysteries of the Immaculate Conception and the Nativity of our Lord in this sacred season, we confront two things: God's Divine Mercy and our own response to it. Like the Mother of God, we, too, are called to become humble, holy, and immaculate (see Eph 5:27).

Marian theologian Fr. Janusz Kumala, MIC, in his

recently published article, "The Immaculate Conception as the Icon of the Mercy of the Triune God: Inspiration for the Spiritual Life and Apostolate," put it succinctly. He wrote, "The truth of the Immaculate Conception requires of us an attitude of wonder and contemplation."

So, too, does the great mystery, the *magnum mysterium*, of our God-become-Man, which we celebrate every Christmas.

Father Kumala added, "For the contemporary Christian, God often appears as a strict Father, acting in accord with the logic of human justice, in which there is no place for mercy. ... The gift of the Immaculate Conception convinces us, that every- thing in our human life is a disinterested gift of the merciful God."

We are reminded of this as we celebrate each Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8 — and on each Christmas Day.

These powerful mysteries tear down our misconceptions of an angry, vengeful God and remind us of the truth — that we have a Heavenly Father who is "Love and Mercy itself" (see *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina*, 1273).

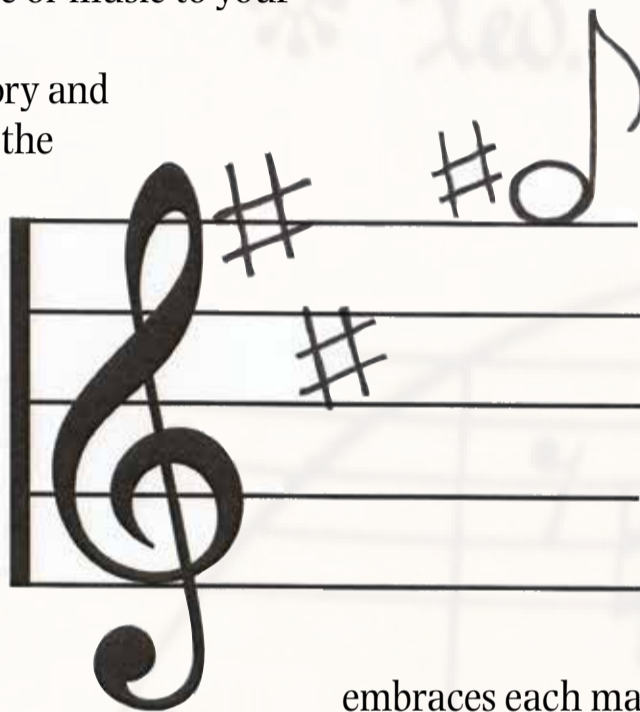
As Fr. Kumala further noted, "The message about God, who

embraces each man with His love, becomes the balm for broken hearts and prevents them from succumbing to the temptation of despair, which so easily appears in the context of manifold forms of evil."

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the first one to allow herself to be fully transformed by God's love. And we are called to this as well. As Fr. Kumala writes, "Our growth in immaculacy of heart, though marked by sin, as well as the experience of mercy, occurs through the ceaseless reception of the gift of God's love,"

As you enter into this Advent and Christmas season, take time to quiet your heart and mind, perhaps aided by sacred music such as Lauridsen's astonishing soundtrack of salvation, *O Magnum Mysterium*. Enter into these sacred mysteries and allow the reality of God's love and mercy, manifested in our Immaculate Mother and the sacred birth of our Savior, to wash over you. May the love of God be music to your ears. MH

Visit marian.org/b40 to be remembered at the three Christmas Day Masses at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.



WHEN MARY COMES CALLING

Beyond the shadow of a drought



By Marc Massery

Marian Helper Nermine Rubin, a native of Egypt now living in Clearwater, Florida, did not feel comfortable sending her teen daughter, Samantha, to a faraway, underdeveloped country. So, every time Samantha would ask if she could visit Tanzania, Africa, Nermine said “no.”

But in 2014, early into reading the do-it-yourself retreat *33 Days to Morning Glory*, by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, Nermine’s “no” became a “yes.”

“I had an issue with day four of the retreat because that’s when you give it all up to Mary,” Nermine said. “That was a very hard thing for me as a ‘type A’ personality.”

As she was thinking about this, Samantha came into her room and, as usual, asked her mother if she could go to Africa.

Nermine, as usual, intended to reply “no.”
But the word that came out was “yes.”

She tried to correct herself, but yet another “yes” fell from her mouth.

So she and Samantha soon headed to the village of Moshi, Tanzania, to volunteer at the Upendo Orphanage.

Though they spent much of their time ministering to orphans lacking the most basic necessities, Nermine and Samantha experienced Tanzania much like tourists. They stayed in a town that Nermine said “caters to Kilimanjaro climbers and safari goers.”

“Mary was being gentle with me because she gave me enough to see what I needed to see at that time,” Nermine said.

Ever since that trip — and ever since her consecration — her faith has intensified. She started sponsoring several girls at the orphanage. Then she took her newfound fervor back to the United States, where she volunteered for *Divine Mercy Sunday* at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

She also arranged for Fr. Michael and the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy to host a retreat at her parish in Florida.

“I noticed that the more I sacrificed, the more graces abounded,” she said.

In the summer of 2016, she went on a pilgrimage to Poland, led by Fr. Michael.

“I went alone, and I felt so small,” she said. “I remember talking to Fr. Mike, saying ‘I’m here with all these well-known Catholics, and I’m feeling so little.’ Father Mike looked at me and said, ‘That’s OK. Remember St. Faustina. The smaller you are, the more graces will follow.’”

“That pilgrimage,” she continued, “is what really changed my heart.”

She believed Mary and the Holy Spirit had been preparing her to return to Africa.

For her second trip to Tanzania, she traveled to Dodoma, a more remote area than Moshi. She went hoping to encourage the archbishop to have a diocese-wide Marian consecration. She was also helping the Marians facilitate a translation of *33 Days to Morning Glory* into Swahili.

During this visit, though, she witnessed a side of Tanzania she hadn’t seen before.

“What I saw broke my heart,” she said. “A lot of men sitting around doing nothing and many people with no sense of responsibility. I kept asking myself, ‘Why?’”

Instead of seeing the fruits of her financial support, she felt that she might be enabling the impoverished rather than empowering them. Bothered, she went back home and prayed every day in front of the Blessed Sacrament, asking God for answers. One morning in prayer, she remembered a book she had heard about at least twice before but had never read: *Let There be Water* by Seth M. Seigel.

She had randomly met the author of this New York Times best-selling book a year earlier and had even received the book as a gift at a function she attended.

“But I had no desire to learn anything about water,” she said. She admits to having given the book away without reading a word.

At the prompting of grace, she found a copy and finally read it. In it, she discovered the answers for which she was looking. She read about “innovation: Africa” (iA), an Israeli Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that builds advanced, solar-power water wells to solve drought, which so often lies at the root of poverty in underdeveloped countries.

“There is water in Africa,” she said. “We just have to drill to it.”

She realized that, though she had had good intentions, her financial support for the orphanage had made no lasting change. “Ultimately, they’re in the same situation year after year, always having to ask for more money,” she said.

But she found in iA a permanent, sustainable solution to poverty that empowers poor countries to overcome their difficult circumstances. With access to clean water, farmers can sustain their crops and feed their livestock. With these resources, villagers can start to take advantage of a local economy.



Die-hard Marian Helpers, Nermine and Samantha Rubin hold a copy of *Marian Helper* atop Mount Kilimanjaro.

Nermine has since worked tirelessly to start her own non-profit “Water4Mercy” and has partnered with iA in the hopes of bringing water — and jobs — to Dodoma.

Currently, iA has more than 200 projects in eight African countries, helping to provide 20,000 liters of clean water per day to each village.

“What I love about this technology is everything is monitored remotely,” she said. “iA has an application that can monitor their water levels anywhere in the world so that they make sure everything’s in working order.”

Nermine spent \$50,000 she had initially saved for a new vehicle to help fund the project in Tanzania instead, and she continues to raise money for this cause.

“I’m doing this because I feel I *need* to do this, and now I *want* to do this,” she said. “At my age, I thought I would be relaxing on the beach eating bon-bons. ... This was not me.”

It was the Blessed Virgin Mary. She transformed Nermine’s “no” into a “yes.”

MH

Visit Water4Mercy.org for more information.



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A LIFE OF LOVE IN ACTION

What would you do if a complete stranger greeted you, not with a smile and cheery “Hello,” but a smile and “I love you”? Would you be put off, or would you respond in kind?

This is how Jean Pagel greeted *everyone*: friends, family, strangers on an elevator, people on the street. “Her core was love,” said her husband, Dr. Paul Pagel. Like-minded souls would respond with love in return. “I love you” was the last thing she said to Paul before she died. This past Sept. 7 would have been their 50th wedding anniversary.

Jean Lukazewski Pagel was of Polish heritage, as were St. John Paul II and the Founder of the Marian Fathers, St. Stanislaus Papczynski. This connection first drew the Pagels to the Marian Fathers 25 years ago. The relationship with the Marians further deepened as the Pagels discovered the Marians’ devotion to Our Blessed Mother and the Congregation’s role in spreading the Divine Mercy message and devotion around the world.

Paul and Joan began to regularly pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. They read St. Faustina’s Diary. They saw a Divine Mercy Image in a bookstore and promptly bought one, and then another, and another. Soon they were giving these images to people living in nursing homes. A trip to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, deepened their devotion and zeal to evangelize.

The couple dedicated themselves to doing deeds of mercy — not just giving financially to those in need, but also putting their love of Our Blessed Mother and Divine Mercy into action, every day. Including the Marian Fathers in their wills became an easy decision.

As you can tell, Jean and Paul not only had a strong devotion to their faith, but to each other, as well. Jean

was a native New Yorker. Education played an important role in her life. She became an assistant professor and taught nursing for 40 years, specializing in child health. Paul earned a doctorate in social welfare and taught for 20 years. “We complimented each other,” he said. “We’d team teach — teaching together and even alternating in each other’s classes.”

Their faith was tested mightily when Jean became ill with dementia in 2003, the year she retired. Over the next 16 years, Paul watched helplessly as his cherished wife slipped away. Paul will never forget her last day on earth. They prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, as they had done together so many times before, and it was a great consolation for both of them. “It was just the two of us and the Holy Spirit. What better memory can I have?”

Another trip to the National Shrine provided Paul with a unique opportunity to create a different kind of memory — a lasting memory on Eden Hill for Jean. After careful consideration and prayer, Paul chose a stained-glass window in the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine to memorialize Jean. Using funds from her Individual Retirement Account (IRA) that he had inherited, Paul’s beautiful tribute to Jean proved to be a wise tax decision.

Spreading Divine Mercy and living a life of love in action are not only healing for Paul, but perhaps the sweetest tribute to his dearly beloved Jean.

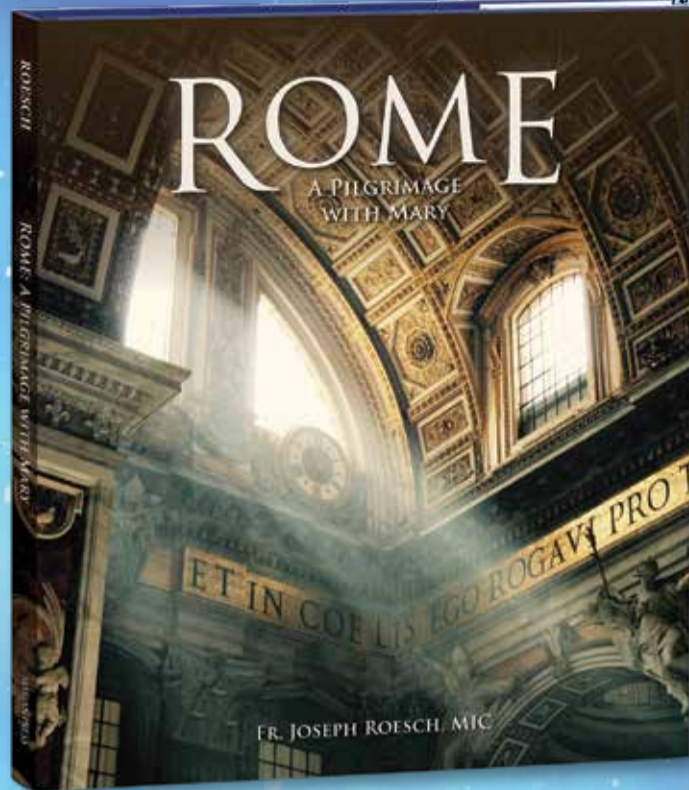


Hope Ponsart Hansen is a donor relations officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact her at (413) 298-1387; helpers@marian.org; or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit marian.org/PlannedGiving to learn more.

Great gifts from Marian Press

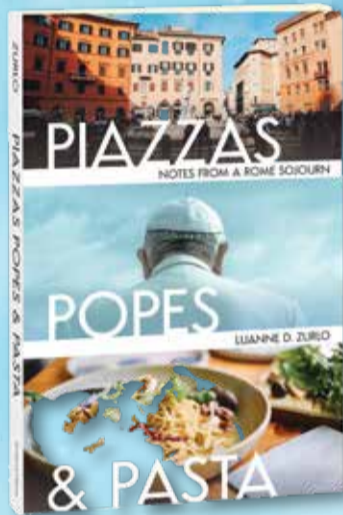


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Our son was healed

In January, our teenage son was diagnosed with sphenoid sinus polyps, possibly due to cystic fibrosis-related metabolic syndrome (CRMS). We took him into Boston where the polyps were surgically removed. However, at his three-month follow-up, it was discovered that his polyps had grown back. We were beside ourselves, especially when the surgeon said he and his colleagues had never seen polyps return so quickly.

A family member sent us a Blessed George prayercard and suggested we pray to him to intercede for our son's health. He also arranged several Masses, including a healing Mass at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. During the healing Mass, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, asked everyone attending to pray to Blessed George that he may intercede for our son and others who were in need of healing.

About a week later, we returned to the surgeon to discuss the next steps. He was amazed to report the polyps had disappeared. We thank Blessed George and everyone who brought our son's problems to the attention of our Lord, through whose grace our son is well again.

— LL, North Attleboro, Massachusetts

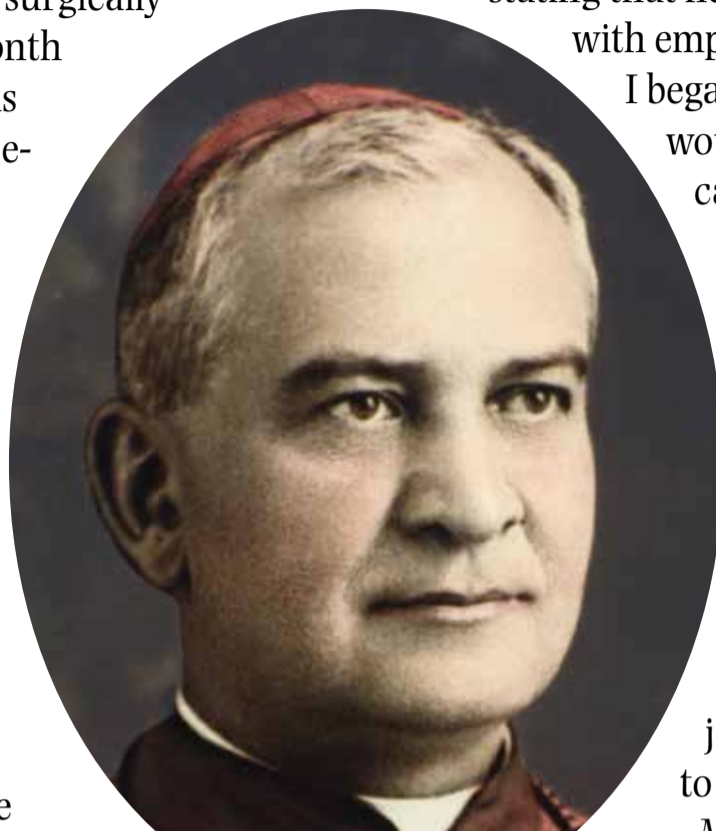
Success at job after tough times

I am writing to inform you of the special graces I have received through Blessed George's intercession. I have been in the same industry for 20 years, recruiting clinicians for hospitals, and I have always been success-

ful. For one of the first times in 20 years, I went four months without hiring one provider and was concerned for my job security. I had requested prayers from my parents. My mom saw an article on Blessed George

stating that he was an intercessor for struggles with employment. Along with my parents, I began praying to Blessed George that I would be able to locate physicians to care for patients. I ordered a Blessed George prayercard, and within a month I began hiring providers. I am on my way to having a successful year, and it's with certainty that this is because of the intercession of Blessed George!

— JBM, Traverse City, Michigan



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

Son gets job

My son has been without a job for a long time after moving to a new city. I picked up a copy of *Marian Helper* (Winter 2017) and read about Blessed George. Then, I went online to your web page [Matulaitis-Matulewicz.org], found a prayer for his intercession, and prayed to Blessed George to intercede for my son. A minute later, I received a text from my son that he

got the job he had interviewed for weeks ago. Blessed George works fast!

— JK, email

For a [Blessed George prayercard](#) (B40-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.

Prayer for a Special Grace through the intercession of Blessed George

O God, our Lord and Father, You surround us always by Your care; receive our humble petition, and through the intercession of Blessed George, who suffered so much for Your glory and for the increase of Your Kingdom here on earth, grant me the grace (*your intention*) for which I ask You with confidence, promising to live from now on with greater fidelity to Your commandments. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...

Prayerful Gifts for Christmas Giving



Divine Mercy Nativity Olive Wood Ornament

Made with olive wood from the Holy Land, this beautiful, laser-cut, Nativity scene ornament beautifully depicts both the birth and promise of Jesus, the Divine Mercy. Gift-boxed. Ornament measures 2 3/8" x 3 1/8" x 1 1/4".

B40-NDMO \$7.95



Christmas Blessing Bracelet

7" Christmas stretch bracelet with enameled Nativity medal. 8mm imitation round pearl beads with 6mm red and green multi-faceted aurora borealis finished crystal beads. Gold-foiled prayercard included. One size fits most.

B40-BRAMC \$7.99

Exclusive Collectible Ornaments



Madonna and Child Snowflake Ornament

This snowflake-shaped ornament features a full-color image and hand-polished, bright finished metal. Ornament measures 3" x 3 1/2".

B40-MHCO \$9.95



Madonna and Child Wreath Ornament

Add grace to your family tree with this Shop Mercy exclusive Madonna and Child Wreath ornament inspired by William Bouguereau's painting "Song of Angels." Ornament measures 3" x 3 1/2".

B40-WRO \$9.95

Great Stocking Stuffers

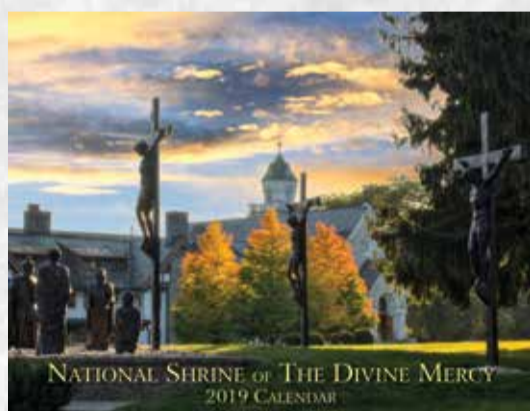
Divine Mercy Triangle Lantern Flashlight

Measures a compact 3" x 3/16" x 3/16" and extends to 3 3/8" to become a mini lantern. Features an LED bulb and a split ring for attaching to key ring, bag, or purse. LR41 batteries are included and installed.

B40-TLFL \$4.95



2019 Calendars



2019 Calendar

This exclusive 2019 Calendar features monthly prayers and stunning pictures from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Measures 8 5/8" x 10 3/4".

B40-CAL18 \$12.95

2019 Pocket Planner

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B. 'Christmas Begins with Christ'

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Blessed George Matulaitis at Bielany near Warsaw, Poland, in 1917, a year before he was appointed bishop of Vilnius.

One hundred years ago, on Dec. 8, 1918, Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz (1871-1927), known affectionately to the Marian Congregation as “Father Renovator,” was installed as bishop of Vilnius, in present-day Lithuania.

Through his spiritual Journal, Blessed George provided the blueprints his Marian successors would draw upon to form the Association of Marian Helpers here in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Specifically, he spelled out the need to cultivate the laity as partners in evangelization. This was long before the reforms of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation *The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People*.

For instance, on Jan. 17, 1911, in one of his more widely quoted *Journal* entries, Blessed George wrote:

We need to gather together people of good will, those who love God and the Church, and organize them to combat the spirit of immorality and godlessness. We must preach Christ not only to them, but also through and with them. We must make an effort to form groups and societies of good, devout people — gather small groups of pious people, centers of intense Catholic life. However, our work should not end there. We must never stop being concerned with those who are steeped in sin, those who have lost their faith or, never having known it, are wandering about in darkness, far away from Christ and His Church. We must never forget them, but try to do everything possible to bring them into Christ’s fold.

Naturally, it is much more pleasant to work among and for the devout and much more difficult to reach those who are prejudiced against the Church, who hate it, and even rise up in hostility against it. We need to bring the teaching of Christ to these people and to try to save their souls. The good laborer in Christ’s vineyard cannot afford to leave a large portion of his field unattended to. He must be willing to sprinkle it with his sweat and even with his blood, if need be, so that the Kingdom of Christ would grow and prosper.

Let us be like that good and compassionate father in the Gospel who stands in the doorway waiting for the return of his prodigal son. He catches sight of him while he is still a long way off and runs out to meet him, embraces and kisses him, brings him home, dresses him in the finest garments and spreads out a feast for him (cf. Lk 15: 20 ff.). Even more fervently let us imitate the Good Shepherd of the Gospel (cf. Lk 15:3-7) who quietly leaves his ninety-nine sheep grazing and goes out into the forests, the valleys, and hills in search of the one lost sheep. Having found it, he carries it on his shoulders back to the other good sheep. May our zeal always be directed to those who do not know Christ or who do not know Him sufficiently. MH



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