

[Christ's three 'comings'](#) • [Mary Immaculate's 'star' power](#) • [Lest we forget our vets](#)

# Marian Helper

Winter 2019-20

*Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception*

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



**WE ARE OUR  
FATHERS' KEEPERS**



**B44-SC191** *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.



**B44-SC192** *ADORATION*

**GOLD FOIL**



**B44-SC193** *THE MAGI*

**GOLD FOIL**

## All Year Through:

### CHRISTMAS ENROLLMENT CARDS

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.



**B44-AX19** *SONG OF ANGELS*



**B44-AXC18**  
*THE HOLY FAMILY (CHILDREN'S)*



Fr. Joseph explains enrollments.

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

# 10 WE ARE OUR FATHERS' KEEPERS

Now more than ever, we need holy priests. And now more than ever, you have a critical role to play in the matter.

## 16 For a friend I barely knew

She arrived at her apartment, finally cried, and then began praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for Ed.

## 18 Behold, He comes!

Does Advent puzzle you? Maybe you should consider Christ's visit to us not in *two* comings, but in *three*.

## 20 Beyond Mount Doom

Many Catholics have at one time or another felt disconnected from the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In Mordor, it all becomes clear.

## 22 'Brethren all are we'

With the rise of new nationalist movements across the world, let's turn to Church teaching about humanity, race, dignity, and family.

## 26 Divine Mercy and the commandant of Auschwitz

Though the infamous commandant of Auschwitz oversaw the murder of millions, in the end, God had the final say.

## 28 Lest we forget

On this past Sept. 11, a veil was lifted on a 10-year dream of Fr. Donald Van Alstyne, MIC.

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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 © 2019 Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. All rights reserved. Send all correspondence to: Association of Marian Helpers, Editorial Dept., Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263. email: [editorial@marian.org](mailto:editorial@marian.org) website: [marian.org](http://marian.org)

## WHO WE ARE



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1-800-462-7426

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

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Learn about our  
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### Evangelization Team

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

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### Intercessory Prayerline

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### Websites

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

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

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



## 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.



You Tube



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

## OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT GOD'S MISSION THROUGH US

- **Deepen your commitment of prayer** and support by joining one of our three spiritually nourishing prayer clubs: [marian.org/clubs](http://marian.org/clubs)
- **Support a particular ministry** of need: [marian.org/give](http://marian.org/give)
- **Create a memorial or tribute:** [MemorialsOnEdenHill.org](http://MemorialsOnEdenHill.org)
- **Arrange a special gift** of stock, a gift through your will or trust, or a charitable gift annuity: [marian.org/PlannedGiving](http://marian.org/PlannedGiving)

Call 1-800-671-2020 to make a gift by phone or for assistance.

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. (Tax ID #20-8599030), Stockbridge, MA 01262, \_\_\_% of my adjusted gross estate (or \$\_\_\_\_\_, or a specific asset) to be used for its religious and educational purposes.*

Your gift makes  
a difference!  
Thank you!

## IN TRAGEDY, A GLIMPSE OF GOD

**A**s you may know, we at the Marian Helpers Center have been putting a great deal of emphasis recently on a particular ministry that God set before us, one that the world so desperately needs at this moment: ministering to those affected by suicide.

By the grace of God, in September Marian Press released my book *After Suicide: There's Hope for Them and for You*, written with co-author Jason Lewis, MIC. Laying bare the Church's real teaching about suicide, the book charts a path forward for those who've lost loved ones to suicide or any other cause of death. We've also revealed how our prayers can bring hope for the salvation of those who die by suicide, even those who died long ago.

News headlines continue to underscore the critical importance of this work. Just this October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the youth suicide rate has increased by 56 percent in the last decade. That dire statistic follows news of record high suicides among active military personnel. Worldwide, a person dies from suicide every 40 seconds.

As Br. Jason and I traveled the country this fall, we were greatly moved by the powerful and tragic stories people shared with us.

For instance, I'll never forget the woman I met in Illinois who'd lost her husband and both of her sons to suicide this past year. She looked so rattled, so forlorn. As she clutched the book and promised to read it, I prayed, "Please, God, may this book bring her hope."

I beg you to pray for this woman.

And please pray for the South Carolina woman I met who had also recently lost her husband to suicide. She told me that a friend of hers had sent her the book. Soon after, another friend invited her to a Divine Mercy conference. She had no idea that the author

of the book she was reading was the featured speaker. When she learned this, she said she just about fell out of her chair in amazement at God's mercy. She's certain God was speaking to her through this series of events.

And please pray for Maria Eby, a Marian Helper from Michigan, and her close friend, who lost a brother to suicide this fall. She's been reading the book to him. He's thankful to discover how the Church acknowledges that serious psychological disorders can play a factor in suicides — factors that can diminish the responsibility of those who take their own lives. Indeed, there's hope for the soul of his brother!

And please pray for the soul of the father of a woman in New Jersey whom I also met. "Father Chris," she said, "I came here today because 20 years ago my father killed himself, and for 20 years I thought he was in hell. I much better understand now there's hope for his salvation, and I trust now that there is hope for him to be in Heaven."

And please pray for a Michigan man who lost his brother to suicide. He told me his family has been rocked to its core. He bought books to give to each of his nine siblings.

And, please, pray for the woman I met in San Diego who approached me, joined by her two daughters. She had lost her husband to indirect suicide, through addiction. Together, we prayed for her husband's salvation, which brought them to tears.

These are just a few of so many stories. So many people are in need of prayer. There's so much pain out there. Yet how amazing it is to get such a first-hand glimpse of how God works. He clearly wishes to bring healing mercy to those who hunger for it. I humbly thank all of you who have been praying for us in this critical ministry.

I invite you to visit [SuicideAndHope.com](http://SuicideAndHope.com) to add a name of a loved one to our list of prayer intentions as I personally pray and celebrate Masses for all the names listed there.

*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](#).



Yes, a rather striking resemblance between two Stanleys, wouldn't you say? Eight-year-old Stanley Motley (pictured with his grandmother, Marilyn) found it fitting to dress as his patron, St. Stanislaus Papczynski (inset), this All Saints' Day.

## A child's costume, big faith, and no small coincidence

She didn't have money to buy a costume. She didn't know how to sew. What she did have was a grandson with a school assignment to dress up like his patron saint: St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701), the Founder of the Marian Fathers.

She also had determination and faith.

More than a year ago, Marilyn Motley of Columbus, Nebraska, got a request from her then 7-year-old grand-

son, Stanley.

"On All Saints' Day, the kids in his Catholic grade school dress up like their patron saints for the day," she explained. "Stanley came to me and said, 'Help me, Grandma!' And I started to think, what can I do here? I remembered that about two years earlier [June 5, 2016], when Stanislaus was proclaimed a saint, the Marian Fathers sent us a prayer card with a picture of St. Stan-

islaus on it. And I get the *Marian Helper* magazine in the mail. So I thought, ‘Hmm, I wonder if I could write to them to see if they could help out with the costume here.’”

Marilyn emailed Peter Markavage, executive assistant to Fr. Joseph, MIC, for help in finding a costume. It’s not the kind of request Peter usually receives, but he empathized and suggested websites that had cassocks or altar server robes. He also looked up blogs from others who have made saints costumes.

None of the ideas suited Marilyn’s situation.

But then, she got a reprieve. “The St. Bonaventure School in Columbus had been doing this costume thing for *years* upon *years*,” she said. “It used to be second grade [that dressed up]. That year, they moved it to the third grade.”

Nearly a year later, in July 2019, no workable costume option was in sight yet. Stanley and his grandmother still wanted him to be St. Stanislaus Papczynski for the All Saints’ Day Parade this year. Once again, Marilyn emailed the Marian Helpers Center for assistance.

This time, Peter offered a new spark of hope: The Center had a receptionist who had previously worked in a costume department, and she might be able to help. The receptionist, however, was on maternity leave.

In the meantime, Peter asked Marilyn to send Stanley’s measurements and age (now 8 years old).

Marilyn did so. She also sent a check to the Marians to help defray any cost incurred. “I know this isn’t very much money, but we are putting Stanley and his younger sister, Kimberly, through St. Bonaventure Elementary School. Our son and their mother are divorced, and the mom left the Church. So [the children] get to come over every other weekend. We pray with them and take them to Mass.”

Peter held off on cashing the check. “I’d rather find someone who will pro-bono give us suggestions and/or help us design something first,” he wrote.

Marilyn, meanwhile, was undeterred. “This will take divine intervention,” she wrote back. “We have to step up the prayers. Saint Stanislaus, please help us to make little Stanley look like you. Thanking you in advance, Stanley’s grandma. Thank you, Peter.”

Then, Peter found someone *else* with costume sewing experience, a friend in community theater who sewed. He explained to her that he was looking for a white cassock costume for a child. “I’d need someone who would do it inexpensively,” he added.

Peter’s friend smiled and said, “It’s funny you should

ask me because I actually have a white cassock costume!”

It turns out his friend’s son, Kyle, dressed as Pope St. John Paul II about 14 years ago when he was in fourth grade. The costume was still tucked away in a closet.

On Aug. 19, Peter emailed the good news to Marilyn. A cassock would be in the mail soon. An anonymous donor covered the expense for mailing the cassock costume and enough prayer cards for Stanley to give to classmates. The check Marilyn had sent wouldn’t have to be cashed.

“Peter has been so great trying to put this together,” Marilyn says. “I am so grateful. It is through St. Stanislaus’ intervention that my grandson Stanley is getting this help.”

When Stanley tried on the cassock for the first time, he lifted up both arms and said, “Look! Just like St. Stanislaus!”

When asked if he knew his grandmother prayed for help through St. Stanislaus’ intercession, Stanley was not surprised. “My grandmother’s prayers are good,” he said. “She says prayers all the time.”

Stanley said his grandmother has taught him a lot about the faith, including about St. Stanislaus Papczynski. “He started the Marians,” Stanley said. “And he did miracles.”

Stanley recounted the healing of a Polish boy named Sebastian. Before he was born in 2001, doctors had pronounced him dead. The mother’s godfather prayed a novena through the intercession of the Marian Founder. Before the novena was completed, the baby regained a heartbeat. It was accepted as the miracle that led to Stanislaus’ beatification in 2007. Stanley adds, “When St. Stanislaus was made a saint in 2016, that boy carried up the gifts.”

Miracles aren’t the only thing that impress Stanley about his patron. If any of his classmates don’t know about St. Stanislaus, he plans to tell them something that will impress them. “He was born in Poland!” Although he goes by the name Stanley, he is quick to emphasize, “My *real* name is Stanislaus.”

Stanley sends his thanks to Kyle for the costume, and to Peter, too.

Marilyn shares his gratitude. “It’s just a wonder how this all came together. And St. Stanislaus had his hand in everything, I think.”

**Visit [StanislawPapczynski.org](http://StanislawPapczynski.org) to learn more about the Marian Fathers’ Founder.**

MH

— Terry Peloquin

# FACES OF MERCY



## Gabriel Zowam

Elugu, Nigeria

I first read about Divine Mercy many years ago in the Marians' booklet [*The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion*], which continues to be my guide. I can't remember the number of copies I have given out over the years. I always have at least one copy with me. I think everybody, especially Divine Mercy devotees, should make that booklet a constant companion.

Divine Mercy has taught me a new way of trusting God. I wish more people would know about trusting God and, as the Marians' book puts it, allowing God to be God in our lives, instead of trying to [do it all] ourselves.

I hardly miss going to church every day for the 3 o'clock prayer. I believe that, whenever my situation can allow it, the best place to be at 3 p.m. is before the Blessed Sacrament, saying the 3 o'clock prayer. Though I personally became aware of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy years ago, my confidence in it has multiplied from the numerous times I've used it to pray myself out of situations!

## Sharon and Vinnie Ciccone

Frankfort, New York

**Sharon:** We've always been accustomed to seeing a crucifix, the Suffering Jesus, the Sorrowful Jesus, the Passion. That's our faith. And I don't want to diminish it. But then there's this image of Jesus [the Divine Mercy], and it's just a different perspective. "Jesus, I trust in You." Trust in Jesus is something so hard to do because life is not always easy. We try to fix our own problems. Nowadays, you really need to trust.

During the [extraordinary Jubilee] Year of Mercy, I was so on fire for Divine Mercy that I told [my pastor], "We've got to do something! We've got to make this an event!"

So, I formed my own "Year of Mercy" committee. We had Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, come to give a talk. We planned a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. We got to walk through the Holy Doors. It was a beautiful day. Little by little, my committee taught everyone in the parish how to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

I receive "Divine Mercy Daily" [via email from the Marian Fathers]. I choose whichever one passage from the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska during the week strikes me and have it put in my parish bulletin every Sunday. I just think that some people aren't the best Catholics because they don't know about God's mercy. If they only knew about Divine Mercy and accepted it. They don't understand the graces they can receive.



**Vinnie:** For any Catholic who is not practicing or who is lukewarm, there's got to be someone in your life you know close to you who can guide you. Going to Mass once a week, some people say, "What do I get out of it?" Well, it's not the priest's job to teach you the complete faith. He only has 10 minutes in a homily on Sundays. *You* have to take the extra steps to learn. My wife helped me with my faith. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be as devout as I am.

## Pat Polachek

### Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In the late 1980s, I had a herniated disc condition. I couldn't get out of bed some mornings. I was in excruciating pain. Doctors told me not to have surgery. I tried chiropractic, but that would only work for a few days.



Then in 1992, my mother was going to have her knees replaced. She heard about a priest, Fr. Ralph Diorio, who was coming to Pittsburgh to celebrate a healing Mass.

Now, I spent 12 years in Catholic schools. I had heard many times "Jesus loves you." I thought, "OK, Jesus loves me." But that day when Fr. Diorio spoke about the love and mercy of Jesus, for the first time I really felt in my heart and understood that Jesus did, in fact, love me.

Father said God doesn't want us sick and suffering all the time. He wants to heal us. When Father prayed over me that day, he asked what I wanted prayer for. I said, "Father, just bless me." I wasn't even thinking about being healed. I was thinking about my mother. But resting in the Spirit, I started to feel the heat from the top of my head to the tip of my toes. I felt the love of God. And so, He healed me. Praise God for that.

MH

— Marc Massery

## IN BRIEF

### Faustina hits the theaters!

Did you get a chance to see it? The remarkable true story of St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy was told in more than 700 movie theaters across the United States on Oct. 28. The film "Love and Mercy: Faustina" follows the incredible call of St. Faustina to religious life and the healing effects of Divine Mercy on people around the world. The Marian Fathers served as consultants for this 120-minute docudrama written and directed by Michal Kondrat.

If you missed it in the theaters, there's a second showing on Dec. 2, and the Marian Fathers will be putting the film onto DVD. Sign up at [TheDivineMercy.org/LoveAndMercy](http://TheDivineMercy.org/LoveAndMercy) to be notified when the DVD is released.

### Rest in peace, Fr. Martin

We ask for your prayers for the repose of the soul of Fr. Martin Rzeszutek, MIC, who died Aug. 19. Remembered as a gentle shepherd of souls, a polyglot, and an avid gardener and birder, he was 93. A farm boy from Easthampton, Massachusetts, he was ordained to the priesthood in Rome in 1951. He served many roles in the Congregation and at many locations, including Washington, D.C., the Midwest, New Mexico, Stockbridge, and Portugal.

He was known as a great confessor. He was a gifted proofreader and contributed to many of the Marian's publishing projects. His meticulously painted Easter eggs were little masterpieces. He took illustration lessons from Norman Rockwell, who lived down the hill in Stockbridge. A farmer at heart, Fr. Martin kept a vegetable garden on Eden Hill. Through fall 2018, he could be found in the orchard picking apples. He would give homemade bluebird boxes to anyone who had land conducive to a bluebird habitat. He maintained dozens of boxes throughout Eden Hill.

He was a man of the land and a man of the Church, humble, shy, practical, filled with earthly and heavenly wisdom. He would often visit us here in the editorial offices to say hello and sit awhile. For years, we begrudgingly honored his wish that we not write about him in our publications — until now, and we hope he'll understand.

Thank you, God, for Fr. Martin.

MH

## FATHER JOSEPH'S PICKS

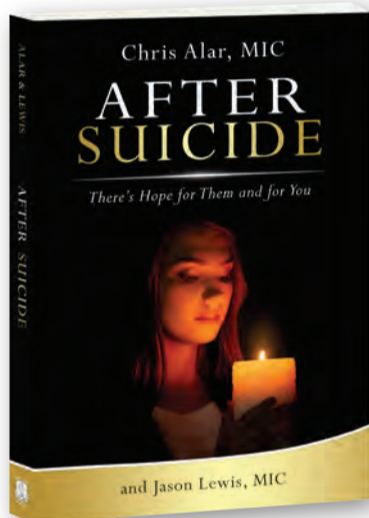
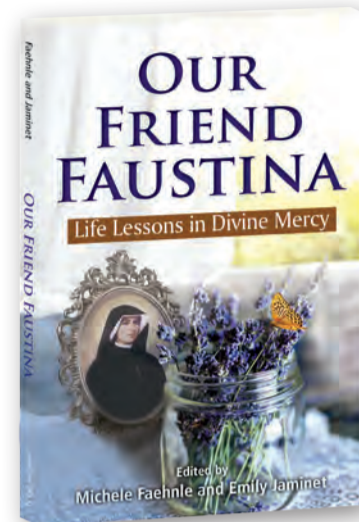
Visit [ShopMercy.org/b44](http://ShopMercy.org/b44) or call 1-800-462-7426.

Women sharing how St. Faustina has touched their lives; a response to a contemporary crisis; and two deep dives into the mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here's a grab bag of great reading for you this winter.

### OUR FRIEND FAUSTINA

EDITED BY MICHELE FAEHNLE AND EMILY JAMINET

Friends, for Heaven's sake! Michele Faehnle and Emily Jaminet, the writing team behind *Divine Mercy for Moms*, have assembled a powerful collection of essays by modern women, all joined by their common friendship with one extraordinary person: St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), the Secretary and Apostle of the Divine Mercy. Sharing tales of ordinary and extraordinary graces with wit and wisdom, these faith-filled women explain how St. Faustina has loved them, mentored them, and inspired them to live with mercy toward all. With a foreword by acclaimed author Susan Tassone, this collection will help introduce you to a friend for life (and afterlife!) in extraordinary, ordinary St. Faustina. \$14.95. **B44-FFRD**



### AFTER SUICIDE: THERE'S HOPE FOR THEM AND FOR YOU

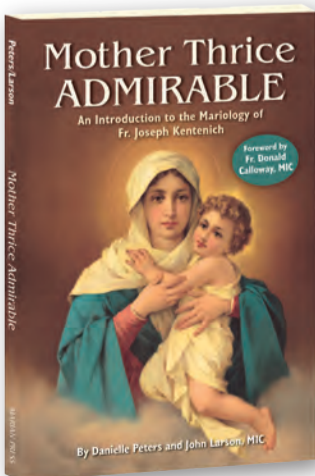
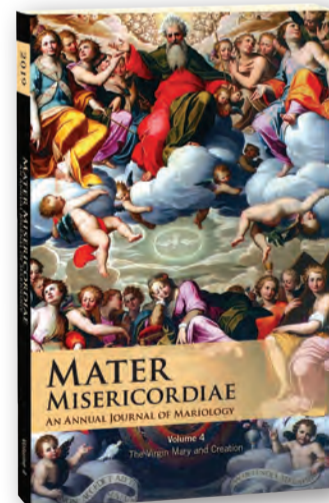
BY FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC, AND JASON LEWIS, MIC

Addressing the hard issue of grieving suicide simply and pastorally, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, and Jason Lewis, MIC, draw from the teaching of the Church, the message of Divine Mercy, and their own experience of losing loved ones. They offer readers two key forms of hope: hope for the salvation of those who've died by their own hand and for the healing of those left behind. This book is a must-read for all those trying to make sense out of such a difficult subject. Remarkably, the spiritual principles of healing and redemption apply not only to a loss from suicide, but by any means of death. \$14.95. **B44-ASTH**

### MATER MISERICORDIAE VOL. IV

EDITED BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

Father Donald Calloway, MIC, author of *Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon*, has gathered an array of excellent and erudite pieces by a range of Mariologists, all addressing "The Virgin Mary and Creation" — in other words, how Our Lady, first among creatures in both God's intention and in her excellence, is in some sense the blueprint and model for all of creation. 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. **B44-MMV4**



### MOTHER THRICE ADMIRABLE

BY DANIELLE PETERS AND JOHN LARSON, MIC

To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Servant of God Fr. Joseph Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement and survivor of the Dachau concentration camp, Danielle Peters and John Larson, MIC, offer an overview of the Mariology of this influential priest. Drawing together and introducing key texts by Fr. Kentenich, this book will be indispensable for students, scholars, and children of Our Lady all seeking to understand the Mariology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. \$14.95. **B44-ADMIR**



## LET'S MEET IN POLAND!

I recently participated in a committee meeting at our Marian House here in Rome with Marians from Poland, the United States, Brazil, Cameroon, and Ukraine. We gathered to plan how we will celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the Marian Congregation, founded in 1670 by St. Stanislaus Papczynski (1631-1701).

Our plans include you — either in person or in prayer.

One event we're planning will be an International Congress for our lay associates. It will take place at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lichen, in Lichen, Poland, Sept. 25-27, 2020. A weeklong pilgrimage will take place immediately following the Congress. We'll visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa; Krakow (the Shrines of the Divine Mercy and of St. John Paul II); Wadowice (the birthplace of St. John Paul II); Podegrodzie (the birthplace of St. Stanislaus); Warsaw; Gora Kalwaria (the Shrine of St. Stanislaus Papczynski); the Marian Forest, where the Marians began their religious life; and Gozlin (one of the oldest Marian churches in the Community's history).

The Congress will provide an opportunity to give thanks to God, look back, and look ahead. It's intended for members of the Marian Helpers Association; Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception; Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy; Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy; members of our parishes; and friends and benefactors from all over the world.

During the weekend, Marians will give talks focused on 350 years of the Marian charism. (I will give one.) We'll speak about our call to profess, proclaim, and honor the mystery of the Immaculate Conception; assist the dying and the souls suffering in Purgatory; and spread the Kingdom of God on earth, serving Christ and the Church.

The title of the Congress is "The Immaculate Conception of Mary, a Beautiful Fruit of the Divine Mercy." Various lay apostolates will give presentations and have booths. The weekend will include time for prayer, discussions, and opportunities to appreciate and learn about the rich mosaic of ministries around the world that flow from our charism.

The Marian Shrine in Lichen will provide a beautiful, prayerful setting. The stunning Shrine, blessed by St. John Paul II in 1999, is one of the largest in Europe.



His Excellency Gregory Rys, archbishop of Lodz, Poland, will celebrate the concluding Mass. He often speaks about the mission of the laity and the New Evangelization. Translations will be provided in different languages for the many participants.

Each evening during the Congress, a traditional prayer gathering called an "appeal" will be held. We'll pray and ask Our Lady's intercession for our work and for our families.

It'll be an exciting gathering. Not all of the details have been ironed out yet. We'll have more information in the Spring issue of *Marian Helper* and on [marian.org](http://marian.org). Please keep our efforts in prayer.

A Jubilee is a wonderful opportunity to receive graces and to be renewed. A plenary indulgence will be attached to the gathering.

God wants to renew each of us and to strengthen us in our faith. We need to pray in anticipation. May we prepare our hearts to be open to the graces God wants to pour out on us.

Our Lady of Lichen, pray for us!

---

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





Praying for  
Priests

# We are our

# Fathers'

# Brothers' keepers

Why our prayers are *expected*  
for the Church and its leaders

By Terry Peloquin

**I**f you're angry with the Church, good. If the clergy abuse scandal and its aftermath has you fed up, good. If you're distraught by divisions within the Church, good. You should be.

Pope Benedict XVI once said that “nothing makes the Church, the Body of Christ, suffer more than the sins of her pastors.”

Indeed, your anger can be your great motivator to do what needs to be done: to pray for holy priests and to pray priests into holiness.

We need men who will assist the faithful in coming to know, love, serve, and bear witness to Jesus, the Divine Mercy. We need our ministers of the great Sacraments of mercy — the Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation — to be credible and authentic men who themselves have recourse to the Divine Mercy and heed the call to daily conversion.

This was a matter near and dear to St. Faustina (see page 15). This is a matter that's near and dear to many Marian Helpers (see page 14). It needs to be something near and dear to us all. We must pray for the clergy, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, that they do the will of God always and everywhere.

We must pray that God do for the entire Church what He's surely doing for the Marian Fathers these days: raising up faithful men who answer the call to save souls (see page 12). The Church needs them. The world needs them.

“Last year, when the news about Cardinal McCarrick was breaking and people were feeling terribly angry — has that anger abated?” Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, spiritual director of the Marians' Holy Souls Sodality, asked at a recent conference. “Certainly not. Have more bishops,

cardinals, and archbishops come forward to demonstrate the absolute [fallen] humanity of the clergy, the hierarchy? Shamefully, yes. They have demonstrated it in their ... willingness to compromise with Satan in order to achieve some earthly end.”

Father Dan continued, “Does that mean that the Church is in dire straits? It certainly does. Does it mean that we should abandon the Church? Certainly not! This is *not* the Church of Cardinal McCarrick or *any* other cleric or hierarch you would care to name. This, the Roman Catholic Church, is, of course, the Church of Jesus Christ.”

## ‘You must pray for me’

You may wonder: Is this crisis of the clergy beyond the help of prayer?

Let's take a look at a different Church crisis, one that happened a century ago. In 1918, a Marian priest, now known as Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, saw governments ban religious orders or forbid them to receive candidates. Undeterred, he began the work of rebuilding the Marian Congregation after this political persecution had caused Marian numbers to dwindle to a single priest (hence his title “Marian Renovator”).

He had expected that the revival of the Marian Congregation would be his sole mission. Then he learned that — against his wishes — Pope Benedict XV had appointed

him bishop of Vilnius. With a pastor's heart, he addressed his unexpected flock by stating what should be the goals of *every* priest. At his installation as bishop on Dec. 8, 1918, he said:

As I go to the altar to offer holy Mass to our heavenly Father, I shall offer the spotless Lamb of God not only for myself, but for the whole diocese — that the good may be strengthened, that sinners return to God, that the sick and the afflicted be at peace, that the departed

receive mercy and be saved. I shall be your teacher. ...  
I shall bring you God's grace in the holy sacraments. ...  
I am prepared to lay down my life for the truth.

Bishop Matulaitis knew that "momentous duties" awaited him, and he knew he'd need help to fulfill them. So he then asked:

What can I expect of you? If from now on we are to be one large family, then we must work together. I shall

## 'We need men willing to go in'



The following homily was delivered June 2, by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, the Marians' vocations director, at the first Mass of Fr. Michael Baker, MIC, who was ordained to the priesthood the day before.

Probably no matter where you were on April 15, you got a phone call or a text message, or a coworker said to you, "You've got to turn on the TV. Are you seeing this?" And what did you see? The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris in flames.

It looked *horrible*, like it was going to burn to the ground. Those flames were huge. And as the cameras panned the crowd, you saw people crying, praying, some on their knees with a Rosary, some singing songs in French, some singing to Our Lady in Latin. But they were all a great distance from the fire. What we didn't see [was] that, initially, many people were inside. They ran out to get away from the fire, and they sought refuge in a nearby park.

But did you know one man was on the sidelines with everyone else who decided to go inside? He was a Catholic priest, Fr. Jean-Marc Fornier, the chaplain for the Paris fire department. He turned to two firemen and said, "I'm going in. Come with me." And they did. They ran in. Father took the lead. And as they ran in the main corridor, he said to them, "There is the Crown of Thorns. Break the glass and take it. There is the cloak that King Louis used. Take it. There are the relics of St. Helena. Take them. There are the relics of St. Catherine. Take them."

And do you know what he did? He went into the heart of the fire, into the sanctuary, where all around him pieces of the wooden ceiling were falling. And if they hit him, he'd be dead in an instant.

Why did he do that? To save the greatest treasure in the Cathedral, the Blessed Sacrament. He took out the consecrated Host. And when he turned around, two firemen

were holding the relics, looking at him like, "Let's get out of here!" You know what he did? He raised the Host and blessed the firemen so they could get out — even if he didn't make it. And then he raised the Host higher and blessed the entire Cathedral with the Eucharistic Presence of our Lord. And the Cathedral didn't fall. It burned. The ceiling is gone, but the structure remains. The roof can be rebuilt.

What gave that priest the courage? His love for our Eucharistic Lord, primarily. And he was simply imitating Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Remember what Jesus did for us? When it seemed like the whole world was in ruins, that the flames of sin had destroyed everything, the Son of God left the comfort of

**"We need *holy* priests.  
We need *Marian* priests."**

Paradise to become one of us and step into the fire, to give His life as a sacrifice for us so that we could be spared the eternal flames of hell. And today,

we celebrate His Ascension, when He returned to the side of His Father in the Heavenly Kingdom. And yet His mind was still thinking about *us*. He said that He goes to prepare a place for us, that we can have a mansion in the Kingdom of Heaven, if we remain faithful to Him.

After that fire at Notre Dame, many social commentators — both Catholic and not Catholic — said that it was almost as though that fire were symbolic of something happening now in the world of Christianity, Catholicism in particular. It would seem that it's on "fire": the persecutions, the divisions, the confusion. It's everywhere. People are leaving the Church in droves.

If you look at the studies, Mass attendance over the last few generations has radically plummeted. If I were to ask you, "Do you have someone in your family who no longer goes to church, who no longer believes?" I guarantee you, all of you would raise your hands. These are seriously confusing times. We live in an age with a generation of young people who are called the "None Generation" because they believe

pray for you, and you must pray for me. This I ask of you most fervently (George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, *Journal*, Appendix I, page 341-342).

## ‘One large family’

It’s telling that Blessed George referred to this partnership in God’s work as “one large family.” Remember, it was Blessed George who envisioned the Association of Marian Helpers. He realized that a priest cannot reach everyone.

in nothing — 55 percent of them believe in no organized religion whatsoever. They particularly have a disdain for Christianity, Catholicism especially. They want nothing to do with it.

You know this. And even for the people who remain and call themselves Catholic, many of them believe it’s OK to have an abortion; OK for two men or two women to get married; and OK to practice contraception. These are the times we live in. The flames seem to be consuming the Church. Is it going to fall?

When I was looking at the footage of those flames over Notre Dame, I was convinced it was going to burn to the ground. But it didn’t fall.

Is our Church going to be overcome by the darkness of our

time? No. Jesus promises that the gates of hell will never prevail against the Church — *never* — even though the times are horrible (see Mt 16:17-19). What does God send to us in times of crisis, when it looks like everything is going to be destroyed? Priests. Zealous priests. Men who desire to save souls, to step off the safety of the sidelines and rush into the fire. That’s what God does time and time again.

[Pointing to newly ordained Fr. Michael.] There is one. No more than 24 hours ago, that man was ordained to the sacred priesthood. He could’ve had everything the world offers. As a matter of fact, he kind of did. He had a home. He could’ve gotten married, enjoyed all of the *good* things in life, but he gave it all up. To do what? To be a celibate social worker? No. To be a warrior, a fighter. More than a firefighter. To be a soldier, a knight. To save the sacred.

“The laity must come to the aid of the clergy,” he said, “so that both could work together in this most important task of spreading true Catholic teaching.”

Herein lies the purpose of the Association of Marian Helpers — our “Marian family.” Our ultimate common goal, simply put, is helping souls to Heaven.

Why is praying for priests so important to this mission?

Remember that without our priests, we do not have anyone to administer the Sacraments — sources of the



Was the April 15 fire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame a symbol for the universal Church?

We need holy priests today. We need them more than ever. We need men willing to go into the fire — when everybody is leaving.

This man was ordained so that your children could be baptized, so that they could receive sanctifying grace in their souls. This man was ordained so that he could transform bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to feed you with the Bread of Everlasting Life. This man was ordained so that God could use him as an instrument to absolve you from your sins. This man was ordained so that, through his preaching and his teaching, you could know the truth and have the Light in your mind and in your soul, so that you can avoid the flames of hell and go to that mansion that is

being prepared for you.

And this man was ordained on the First Saturday, devoted to Our Lady. There is nothing more powerful on this planet than a Marian priest. A Marian priest will have the power to convict souls quickly and easily, because *Our Lady* will be with him.

This is what we need today. We need *holy* priests. We need *Marian* priests.

My brother, thank you. Your ordination is a sign of God’s love for us. Many people today have given up hope. They’ve abandoned God. They think God has left us, that He’s left the Church. This ordination is a sign for us that God will never abandon us. In times of difficulty, He will raise up men to respond to the call. It’s a sign of great hope for us, that God loves us. He will never leave us. MH

grace that Jesus offers us through the Church. The devil relishes attacks on the priesthood because the Sacraments help us reach Heaven. He doesn't want us in Heaven!

In a homily on Sept. 8, Fr. Dan considered a word from St. Paul's Letter to Philemon. "Saint Paul and all of the other apostles were always called 'Father' because they were the ones who baptized everyone, and they were the ones who became the spiritual fathers to their faith community." The practice of calling a priest "father" continues to this day.

"If *you* know a priest whom *you* do not think is living the life that he's supposed to be living as a holy man of God, *you* have been given the task to pray for him," Fr. Dan said.

### Prescribed prayer

"We *all* have a responsibility for one another," Fr. Dan explained. "In the guidelines for celebrating the Liturgy,

there's the Prayers of the Faithful. And there are guidelines even in the Prayers of the Faithful that say, first of all, you need to pray for the Holy Father. No one is in more need of prayer than the Holy Father" because he is the main target for the adversary, the evil one.

"You need to pray for your bishop every time you celebrate Mass. You name your bishop by name because he needs prayers more than anyone else in the diocese. And you need to pray for priests and religious."

Now more than ever, our Church needs us to pray for holy priests, men who will teach and preach the truth, men who will be the visible presence of Christ in the world, men who will act in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the Church's prayer (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1552).

If you're angry, that's understandable. But in the name of Jesus Christ and out of love for His holy Roman Catholic Church, let's get to work. MH

## A ministry that 'never stops'

Parishioners at a Midwest Marian parish have a rejoinder to the lurid headlines generated by the small percentage of clergy whose grave sins have rocked the Church and shaken the faith of many.

These parishioners have no intention of wallowing in disillusionment, no intention of leaving the Church. Instead, they gather weekly specifically to pray for priests.

"I just feel so strongly about it — that it's a ministry that should be in every parish," says Sue Kramer of St. Mary Church in Plano, Illinois. "The priests need strength. They need prayers. They need support — people backing them up — and prayer is the most powerful thing you can do for them as a lay person. It should be a ministry that starts and never stops."

"I can tell it's really supporting our priests," says parishioner Teresa Stawiarski. "Whenever we pray, they know it, they feel it, and they say, 'Thank you for the prayers.'"

Parishioners meet each Friday from 9 to 11 a.m. in St. Mary's Adoration chapel. They pray for the Marian priests



A recent meeting of St. Mary Church parishioners who pray for priests included (from left) John Saeli, Tammy Hanna, Maria Saeli, Lydia Krantz, Sue Kramer, and Teresa Stawiarski.

who serve St. Mary and nearby St. Patrick's Parish in Yorkville.

Their prayers include the Rosary and the Chaplet of the 10 Evangelical Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They specifically ask Mary to intercede on behalf of their priests — that they model themselves on Mary and remain humble, holy, wise, and joyful instruments of God's divine grace.

Think about the objects of their prayers. These are men who said "yes" to God and "yes" to a life of continual self-

sacrifice. Faithful and devoted to the Church, fervently loving our Lord and the Blessed Mother, they became Catholic priests.

And not just Catholic priests, but *Marian* priests modeled on Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz who led the renewal and reform of the Marian Fathers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Blessed George articulated the self-sacrificial dimension of Marian spirituality that has served as a rallying cry for Marians around the world:

Lord, give us the courage and strength to forget and

# St. Faustina's prayer for holy priests



In her *Diary*, St. Faustina frequently wrote how important priests were to her for spiritual direction, and she often prayed and offered sacrifices on their behalf. Below is St. Faustina's prayer for holy priests as recorded in her *Diary*, 1052:

O my Jesus, I beg You on behalf of the whole Church: Grant it love and the light of Your Spirit, and give power to the words of priests so that hardened hearts might be brought to repentance and return to You, O Lord. Lord, give us holy priests; You yourself maintain them in holiness. O Divine and Great High Priest, may the power of Your mercy accompany them everywhere and protect them from the devil's traps and snares which are continually being set for the souls of priests. May the power of Your mercy, O Lord, shatter and bring to naught all that might tarnish the sanctity of priests, for You can do all things.

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deny ourselves; to die to ourselves so that we may not be afraid to lose ourselves in the Community for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church; to shine forth like a candle on the altar; to be consumed for the glory of God like grains of incense which give off a sweet fragrance; let us not be afraid to be worn out, used up, diminished for the greater glory of God (*Journal*, 88).

Our prayers help ensure that our priests, through the truth they preach and the truth they live, remain faithful to Christ, faithful to their vocation, and faithful guides of God's people.

The ministry at St. Mary began more than a decade ago in the home of Lydia Krantz. She was inspired to draw parishioners together after she came upon a quote that said something along the lines of: "There is no such thing as a bad priest — only one who hasn't been prayed for enough."

"It was like an arrow to my heart," she says.

The ministry eventually moved to the church, before the Blessed Sacrament, at the suggestion of Fr. Matthew Lamoureux, MIC, pastor of St. Patrick's.

The prayer gatherings serve as a weekly act of love and thanksgiving for priests as well as an acknowledgment that priests are targets of the evil one and are in need of divine assistance.

"It's just the most important thing we can do right now — praying for priests," says Teresa. "We need priests. We need holy priests. We need the Eucharist. We need all the

Sacraments. There's so much negativity about priests. But if some priests are weak, it's because people aren't praying for them."

Father Andy Davy, MIC, pastor of St. Mary Church, says he and his fellow Marians are deeply indebted to parishioners who pray for them. He's specifically touched that they turn to the Blessed Mother for her intercession.

"In watching 'The Passion of The Christ,' remember the scene where Jesus is being scourged by the Roman soldiers?" he says. "He gains new strength by gazing into the eyes of His Mother Mary and is able to stand up, even to the amazement of the soldiers.

"The special call of praying for priests is being like Mary in this moment of 'The Passion.' Priests are called to be *alter Christus* (another Christ), bringing His presence more deeply into the world. At all times, the priesthood has been under attack. But especially in our times, we have experienced both the brokenness of priests who have fallen in their vocation, as well as the suffering heroic priests who are persecuted as white and red martyrs.

"Praying for priests," said Fr. Andy, "is the call to gaze into the wounded, scourged Christ, so that the priesthood might rise in strength against the temptations that seek to destroy it, as well as receive the strength to offer themselves more completely to the Heart of Christ.

"Priests need prayer intercessors more than ever, or they will be swept away by the malicious will of the enemy. Please pray for us priests that we might rise amidst the scourging, and become more conformed to the Divine Mercy, Jesus Christ."

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# For a friend I barely knew

By Samantha Reynolds

I sat in Fr. Tom's office in Immaculate Conception Church in Fairbanks, Alaska. The room was bright and simply decorated, which, under the circumstances, was enough to be comforting.

"You'd like to request a Mass?" Fr. Tom asked.

"Yes, for Ed Bermudez," I said. "For repose."

"He was the director of the soup kitchen, wasn't he?"

I nodded.

"How'd you know him?"

In truth, I didn't know Ed well. He was a colleague I saw sporadically at committee meetings. There are some people, though, who are so genuine and kind, the fact you don't know when their birthday is or what their hobbies are seems irrelevant. Your brain automatically files them under "Friend." That was Ed, a friend I barely knew.

Two days earlier I had attended a meeting at the local

food bank to discuss the problem of food accessibility. I was the voice for economic development, and Ed (who hadn't arrived yet) represented the soup kitchen.

"Did he say if he would be here?" I asked the food bank's CEO.

She met the gazes of the handful of people gathered. "Ed passed away last night. He — took his own life."

When I returned to my office, I pulled up Ed's Facebook page. Already there were posts eulogizing him and sending condolences to his fiancée. But below those notes were twice as many visitor posts from the day before, all wishing Ed a happy birthday.

The date was Nov. 13.

## No such thing as 'unlucky'?

His birth date — on the 13<sup>th</sup> — got me thinking. What

is it we in the West find so threatening about this number? Googling the question spawns hundreds of articles ruminating on our fear of 13. Many highlight the fact that Judas was the 13<sup>th</sup> person at the Last Supper. Medieval mathematician Petrus Bungus noted the negative prevalence of 13 in the Bible, including that Psalm 13 was a heartrending lament. And 600 members of the monastic military order the Knights Templar were captured and tortured by King Philip IV's men on Friday, Oct. 13, 1307.

For centuries, Western cultures have assigned the devil to 13, and now it would be easier to wrest a slab of meat from a wolf's jaws than redeem the number from Satan's grip. At least, that would be true if not for God's mercy. For if fear is a famished wolf, hope is a well-fed lion.

In answer to our triskaidekaphobia, God sends the Theotokos — the Mother of God. Indeed, wherever there is danger for God's people, He gives us Our Lady, through whose intercession our defeats may be transformed to victories.

While the culture built a case against 13, Mary adopted the number as an emblem of her motherly care.

Judas may have been the 13<sup>th</sup> guest at the Last Supper, but Mary was the 13<sup>th</sup> person in the Upper Room at Pentecost.

And yes, Psalm 13 is a lament, but the 13<sup>th</sup> verse of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter in the 13<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible (1 Chr 13:13-14) concerns the Ark of the Covenant, which Catholics consider a foreshadowing of Mary. If Mary is the New Ark of the Covenant, then this passage prefigures her three-month stay in the house of Zechariah (Lk 1:56).

Finally, 610 years to the day the Templars were arrested, one of the greatest Marian apparitions occurred on Oct. 13, 1917. On that day, as one eyewitness recounted, the sun "spun round on itself in a mad whirl." This was one of the final signs given by Our Lady of Fatima, who for the previous five months had appeared to three shepherd children — on the 13<sup>th</sup> day (except for the August apparition, because the children had been imprisoned). She instructed the children to pray the Rosary daily and offered a message of hope: "The war will end soon, and the soldiers will return to their homes."

The Blessed Mother's promise reaches beyond the

trenches of World War I and into our embattled 21<sup>st</sup>-century homes, offices, and soup kitchens. Because when all is said and done, we're just war-torn soldiers fighting to get home.

## Masses for my friend

I arrived at my apartment and finally cried, and then began praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for Ed.

I was barely through the first decade when the advice from one of my childhood priests came flooding back to me. In a homily, he said the most powerful, effective thing you can do for someone is have a Mass said for him. I decided to have a series of 30 Gregorian Masses offered for Ed, and so pulled up the Marian Fathers' website.

A couple weeks later, a vinyl-bound card arrived in the mail. A depiction of the Blessed Mother graced the inside cover, and next to her image a certificate with the Marians' official seal read: "A series of Gregorian Masses for the soul of Ed Bermudez

**Heaven seemed intent to send reassurances that Ed hadn't died out of God's reach, but rather wrapped in His Blessed Mother's mantle. He had been born and died under one of her emblems, the number 13, and now his soul would find comfort in 30 Masses said for him in May — the month of Mary.**

will begin on May 1."

Heaven seemed intent to send reassurances that Ed hadn't died out of God's reach, but rather wrapped in His Blessed Mother's mantle. He had been born and died under one of her emblems, the number 13, and now his soul would find comfort in 30 Masses said for him in May — the month of Mary. Like Jesus' body in the Thirteenth Station on the Way of the Cross, Ed was placed in Mary's arms and held close to her broken, but hopeful, heart.

Despite the Marians saying the 30 Masses for Ed, those Masses would be celebrated far from Fairbanks, and May was still six months away. I wanted to be present at a Mass celebrated for Ed, and as soon as possible. I wanted to hear his name spoken in the presence of the Eucharist. Which is why I found myself in Fr. Tom's office watching as he scrolled through the spreadsheet, trying to find an available Mass.

"The earliest day I have is Dec. 13. Is that OK?" he asked, turning to me.

"Perfect."

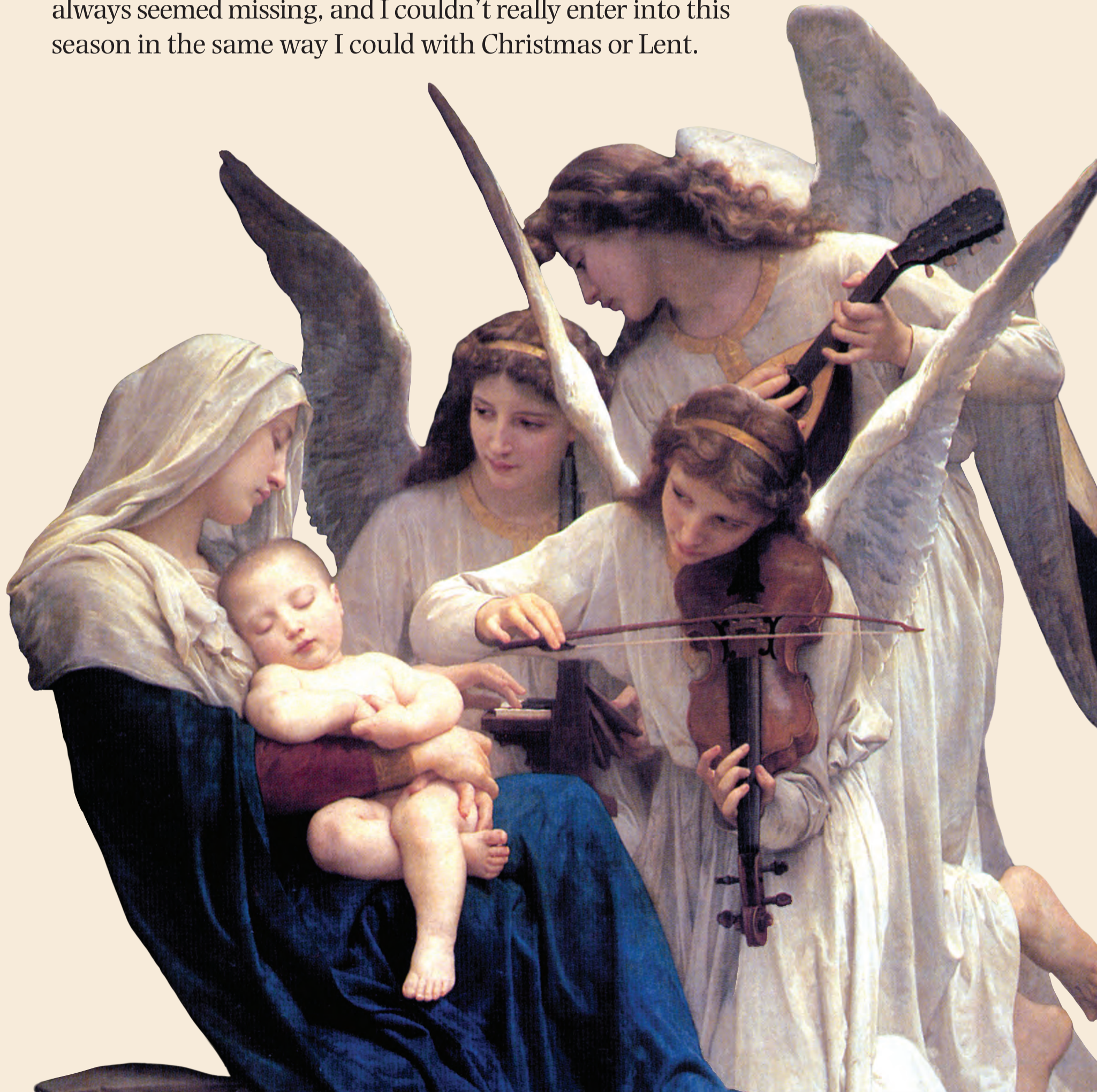
**Samantha Reynolds is a Marian Helper living in Fairbanks, Alaska. Visit [marian.org/mass](http://marian.org/mass) or call 1-800-462-7426 to request Masses.**

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# Behold, He comes!

By Vinny Flynn

I never really “got” Advent. In the readings at Mass there was a strong focus on the “comings” of Christ, looking back at the historical period of waiting for the promised Messiah (the First Coming); and looking ahead in expectation of His return in glory (the Second Coming). I understood it on some level, but something always seemed missing, and I couldn’t really enter into this season in the same way I could with Christmas or Lent.



Then I finally became aware of what was bothering me, an unspoken question. Yes, I believe that Christ came as Lord and Savior at that first, wonderful moment in history; and yes, I believe that, at some point in the future, He will come again. But what about the rest of the time? What about all the time “in between” those two comings? What does Advent mean for me right now?

As we recite or sing Hosanna at each Mass, we proclaim, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Not “he who *came*” ... Not “he who *will come*” ... but “he who *comes*.” Christ is the God of beginnings that never end. His First Coming was not a single event in history that happened once and is now over. It was the forever entry of “Emmanuel” — God with us. His Second Coming will be His final reappearance in the fullness of His glory, not the return of someone who has left us alone until then. He is forever “Emmanuel”: God with us. He’s here right now, wanting to come more completely into your life and mine, to renew us, heal us, fill us with joy, and prepare us for union with Him at that final coming.

“And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. ... Behold I make all things new” (Mt 28:20; Rev 21:5).

To Pope Francis, Advent is about Christ’s visit to us, not in two comings, but in three:

The first visit — we all know — occurred with the Incarnation, Jesus’ birth in the cave of Bethlehem; the second takes place in the present: the Lord visits us constantly, each day, walking alongside us and being a consoling presence; in the end, there will be the third, the last visit, which we proclaim each time that we recite the Creed: “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead” (*Angelus*, Nov. 27, 2016).

Saint Pope John Paul II emphasized that, in order to prepare ourselves to welcome Christ in His final coming, “we must learn to recognize him as present in the events of daily life. Therefore, Advent ... directs us decisively toward him who already came, who will come, and who comes continuously” (*General Audience*, Dec. 18, 2002).

If you’ll pardon the pun, the problem with Advent for many of us is that we’re waiting for *presents* under the tree at Christmas instead of celebrating the *presence* of Christ at each moment of our lives.

For me, the lyrics of a popular song reflect a basic misunderstanding of our relationship with God: It announces that “God is watching us from a distance.” But, in reality, God is *loving* us from a *nearness*. As St. John of the Cross explains, He is always “pressing in,” always drawing closer, always seeking spaces within us that He can fill.

One of the things I love most about the well-known Image of Divine Mercy is that it shows us endless mercy in motion. Christ is not standing still; He’s walking toward us, with His right hand endlessly raised in blessing, His left endlessly inviting us into His Heart, and the fountain of mercy endlessly pouring out upon us. He wants to come as close to you as you allow, but He won’t force it. He’s waiting for something: “Jesus, I trust in You.”

The First Coming, the Incarnation, was preceded by a *fiat*. The Father, through His messenger angel, waited for Mary’s yes — a full, free yes of complete trust, complete abandonment to the will of God, complete openness to

the living presence of Christ within her.

He’s waiting for my yes, too, and for yours. The reality of Advent is that Christ is *coming* — now, and at every moment — knocking at the door of your heart, asking you to open it more completely, so that He can enter in more fully, sharing His life with you. “I have come that you might have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10).

There is never an instant when God is not loving you, not moving toward you, not calling and inviting you to respond. Are you aware, moment to moment, of His coming closer?

God forgive me for all the times I have missed Your coming, failed to see You in every event, to recognize You in the people around me, to respond to You with trust, to invite You to be with me in everything I do, to celebrate with joy Your presence in my life. God forgive me that I have not yet said a full yes to You.

That to me is what Advent is all about: saying a fuller yes to Christ’s presence in our lives, learning to be present to the one who is always present to us.

As the Lord said, “When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart ...” (Jer 29:13).

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**Former editor of the *Marian Helper*, Vinny Flynn is a popular speaker and best-selling author of 7 Secrets of Divine Mercy, 21 Ways to Worship, and Mercy’s Gaze.**

## Christ is the God of beginnings that never end.

# Beyond Mount Doom

## A tale that has a 'ring' to it

By Fr. Andy Davy, MIC

**H**ave you ever found yourself in prayer sheepishly wondering: “Hey God, that’s wonderful that you gave Mary that amazing gift of never having any spot of sin, but, uh ... what does that have to do with *my* life?”

You wouldn’t be alone. Many Catholics have at one time or another felt disconnected from the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. As in, “Great for you, Mary, but what about us?”

Yet the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, the core charism of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, is a gift for all of us. It is the beautiful story of how God’s mercy is stronger than the darkness of the evil one. That mercy, while in full flower within Mary, is the same mercy, in seed form, within us.

With the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception coming upon us on Dec. 8, let’s take a moment and break this down.

The author and theologian Robert Stackpole, STD, describes our relationship with the Immaculate Conception quite nicely:

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the great divine act of grace that lay at the foundation of God’s whole work of salvation through Christ. ... And in the fullness of time, this special grace enabled her to receive our Savior into the world. In short, the whole world’s salvation began with a foundational act of unmerited, unprompted, freely given Divine Mercy. That act of mercy was Mary’s Immaculate Conception.



Her Immaculate Conception foreshadows what's in store for us. We're all called to holiness, to be freed from sin through the Sacraments, especially Baptism and Reconciliation. After all, God has a unique role for each of us to play in His plan of salvation.

This is the reason that St. Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians, would cry out that God's greatest dream for His children was that they would be "holy and immaculate" (1:4).

Mary's gift is our future, if we allow the seed of Christian baptismal grace to grow and flower within us. The same power of God that kept Mary away from the grasp of Satan is found hidden within us.

When we look to Mary — when we pray to her, consecrate ourselves to her, and model our lives on her virtues — we are brought closer to her and to her Spouse, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit that filled the Immaculate Virgin in the first moment of her conception starts to stir within us, and that same power of baptismal grace awakens and grows within us with a powerful strength.

In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, J.R.R. Tolkien provides a valuable literary image for this great mystery of the Immaculate Conception. During their final journey to Mount Doom (where they must cast the Ring into the fire to destroy it) the two hobbits, Frodo and Sam, are quite discouraged. They are in the land of Mordor: a lifeless, dark, and gloomy place. Sam, unable to sleep, gets up and stares into the night sky. Tolkien writes:

There, peeping among the cloud-wrack about a dark tor high up in the mountains, Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that *in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach.* ... He crawled back into the brambles and laid himself by Frodo's side, and putting away all fear he cast himself into a deep untroubled sleep. [Italics mine.]

The white star smote the heart of Sam precisely because it was untouched, beautifully shining high above the sulfurous clouds. It seemed like the one thing in all of creation that could not be touched by the evil of Mordor. By encountering unstained beauty, Sam understood that the created order contained something preserved against corruption. No matter how all-consuming the force of evil seemed, darkness has its limit,

and another power of greater strength could push back and ultimately defeat it.

When Sam sees the white star, he recognizes the ultimate powerlessness of the Shadow. Fear is cast out. He receives the grace of peace and hope. So, too, with us: By gazing upon the Immaculate Conception, the Christ light begins to grow brighter, pushing back the chains of sin. In the Immaculate Conception, we see mankind's original design.

Another way to look upon this mystery is through the unlikely lens of dystopian stories such as "The Matrix" or "The Hunger Games." Typically in such stories, humanity is imprisoned in some way — and it's the only life they've ever known. Until one day, someone comes along who doesn't fit into the system, and the system seems powerless to control this person. Terrified, the controllers of the system try to snuff out this individual who is preserved from the corruption of the prison.

What usually happens in these tales? When the imprisoned people start to see someone like them walk unscathed, pushing away the guards like they were straw, they are stirred with courage and they rise up to overthrow the system. Their affinity with that "chosen one" enables them to realize that the absolute power of the system was a mere façade.

Mary is blessed of all women (see Lk 1:42), chosen from all humanity to be given the full flowering of Christian grace. She walked among humanity as the only human person preserved from the prison system of original sin. (Remember, her Son is a Divine Person!)

When we encounter this white star, she says to us: "My dear one, you don't have to live forever under the yoke of sin and death. There is another power stronger than the power of the Dark Lord. Behold my Immaculate Conception, and see within it that same power of God wanting to break you free from living under the shadow."

As we look toward the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, remember that Mary's Immaculate Conception was not just for herself. It's the gift of strength available for us all!

May Mary's Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection!

MH

**Father Andy Davy, MIC, is pastor of St. Mary Parish in Plano, Illinois.**



Joseph Pearce  
discusses *Race  
with the Devil*

# ‘Brethren all are we’

Catholic Social Teaching on our common humanity

*Catholic social teaching is one of the great treasures of the Church, and yet all too often, it’s neglected or overlooked entirely. In this issue of Marian Helper, we continue our exploration of the Church’s social teaching, this time focusing on race, nationality, and our common humanity.*

By Chris Sparks

Joseph Pearce is one of the best-known Catholic converts writing today. A noted literary biographer, Pearce may seem like he must have always been dedicated to peaceful scholarship.

But in his youth, Pearce was a leading racist, nationalist activist in England.

Primarily, he says, his mind and heart were changed by discovering great Christian writers like G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis while he was in prison. Their living faith allowed the truth to shine transparently through their work, ultimately helping draw Pearce into

Holy Mother Church.

The story of his conversion from racism to Catholicism is told in his memoir, *Race With the Devil: My Journey from Racial Hatred to Rational Love*. Given the upsurge of extremist and new nationalist movements across the world, his testimony is more timely than ever.

Why? Because it vividly highlights that Catholicism and racism are utterly incompatible.

From the time of the founding of the Church, a key Christian tenet has been that there is no essential difference between the peoples of the earth. All are called to

enter into the Church as brothers and sisters (see Mt 28:19; Acts 2:5-12, 8:28-39; Rom 10:12-13; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:38-29; Col 3:11).

The *Catechism* expands on that teaching, saying:

Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity.

The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it:

Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1934-1935; see also *Nostra aetate*, n. 5).

Ultimately, the Church tells us, the children of Adam and Eve are all called to become adopted children of God and Our Lady in Christ, brethren by grace and Sacrament (see *Catechism*, 360-361).

And we are to love our family.

From that love of family also arises the just love of one's homeland and one's nation (or "ethnic and cultural group"), as St. John Paul II says in his Oct. 5, 1995 address to the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations. The Holy Father goes on to explain that there truly are "rights of nations," extensions of human rights applying to a community, beginning with the right of a nation to exist.

"[T]herefore no one — neither a State nor another nation, nor an international organization — is ever justified in asserting that *an individual nation is not worthy of existence*," said St. John Paul II, though that right to exist doesn't necessarily mean every nation must also be a "state."

"[E]very nation also enjoys the right to its own language and culture," the Polish Pope continued. "History shows that in extreme circumstances (such as those which occurred in the land where I was born) it is precisely its culture that enables a nation to survive the loss of political and economic independence."

But every nation also has "duties" to other nations and

to humanity as a whole, said St. John Paul II, including "living in *a spirit of peace, respect and solidarity* with other nations."

Saint John Paul II draws a sharp distinction between justified patriotism (proper love of one's *patria* or homeland) and unjustified nationalism, "which teaches contempt for other nations or cultures."

True patriotism never seeks to advance the well-being of one's own nation at the expense of others. For in the end this would harm one's own nation as well: doing wrong damages both aggressor and victim.

Nationalism, particularly in its most radical forms, is thus the antithesis of true patriotism, and today we must ensure that extreme nationalism does not continue to give rise to new forms of the aberrations of totalitarianism.

So what are we called to do?

**Always lead with prayer.** Pray the daily Rosary for peace in the world faithfully, and persistently make the First Saturdays of reparation to the Immaculate Heart. At Mass, include peace and unity among your intentions. Ask for the intercession of the great saints of other peoples, places, and times for the human family today.

**Think globally; act locally.** Welcome your neighbors into your home for meals, especially those outside of your friends and family. Listen to your neighbors, especially if they are a different ethnicity, political stance, or faith from you. Serve as a host for foreign exchange students. Volunteer as an English as a second language (ESL) tutor. Read history, especially of the Church and our country's treatment of different races, nations, and foreign affairs.

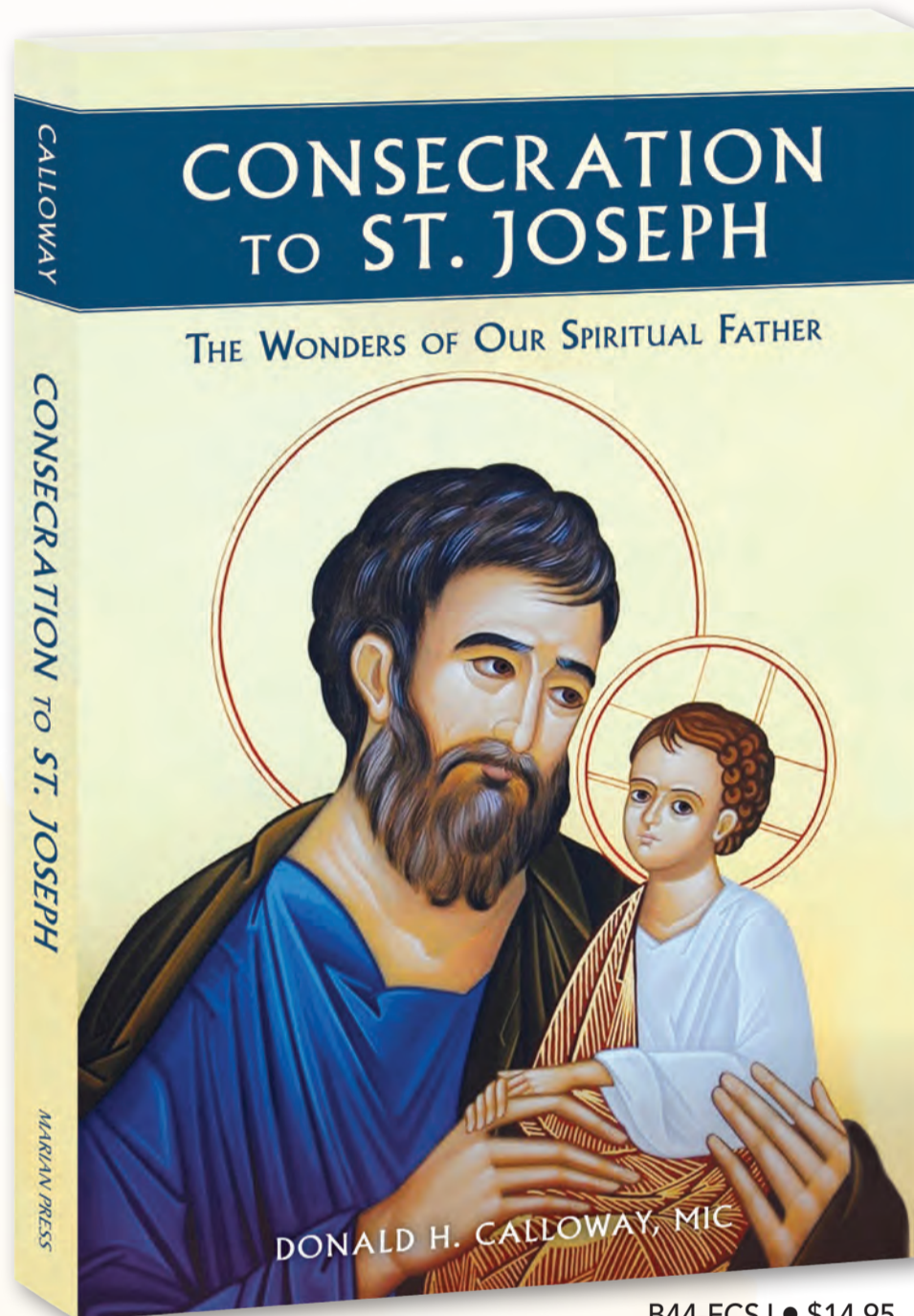
**Oppose racism.** Speak out against anti-Semitism, white supremacy, or other forms of bigotry. Make sure your elected representatives are fighting for "liberty and justice for all." Support and defend universal human rights as you live your vocation and the duties of your state in life.

**Stand with the Church.** All races, all peoples, and all nations are welcome in this great communion of saints. All loved, all neighbors, all brethren — let us welcome the stranger as Christ Himself, as St. Faustina did (see *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1312-1313). MH

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**CORRECTION:** In "The big picture: Catholic social teaching on environmental stewardship" (Fall *Marian Helper*), I erroneously identified the "founder" of the national park system. The National Parks Service was established in 1916 under President Woodrow Wilson.

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Rudolf Höss tested and implemented various methods to accelerate Hitler's "Final Solution."

# DIVINE MERCY AND THE COMMANDANT OF AUSCHWITZ

By Marc Massery

*This Jan. 27 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz. With that in mind, we have a powerful story to share.*

**T**hough the infamous commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Rudolf Höss, oversaw the murder of millions of innocent people during World War II, in the end, even his horrific sins weren't bigger than the mercy of God.

Höss was born in 1900 in Baden-Baden, Germany, to strict Catholic parents. His father wanted him to become a priest, but after his father's death, Rudolf decided to join the German military instead.

## 'The Final Solution'

In the early 1920s, after hearing Adolf Hitler speak in Munich, Germany, Höss renounced his Catholic faith and became one of the earliest members of the Nazi Party. First, he served a few years at the Dachau concentration camp. Having proved himself, in 1940 he was named the

first commandant of Auschwitz, which he converted into what would become one of the largest death camps in world history. SS leader Heinrich Himmler put Höss in charge of carrying out in Auschwitz the "Final Solution," the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe.

Though Höss denied ever killing anyone by his own hand, he was responsible for streamlining the execution process by introducing the lethal poison Zyklon B, which enabled the murder of as many as 2,000 people per hour.

## A calm killer

Despite overseeing the execution of millions, eyewitness accounts identified Höss as someone who always seemed calm and collected. He lived in a house with his family mere yards from the Auschwitz crematorium, kissing his wife each morning before work and tucking his five children into bed at night.

After the war, Höss wrote:

The gassing was carried out in the detention cells of

Block 11. Protected by a gas mask, I watched the killing myself. In the crowded cells, death came instantaneously the moment the Zyklon B was thrown in. A short, almost smothered cry, and it was all over. ... I must even admit that this gassing set my mind at rest, for the mass extermination of the Jews was to start soon.

Also under Höss' watch, in the basement of block 11, prisoner number 16770 was committed to a starvation cell before dying by lethal injection. That prisoner was the priest and martyr St. Maximilian Kolbe.

Any sense of sanctity, though, was far from Höss' mind at this point.

During these same years, however, Höss met a priest who would prove to have an impact on him. The Gestapo had arrested several Jesuits living in Krakow, Poland, and sent them to Auschwitz.

The community's superior, Fr. Władysław Lohn, SJ, happened to be absent at the time of the arrest. When he found out what happened to his religious brothers, he snuck into Auschwitz to find them. When the guards noticed Fr. Lohn, they took him to Höss to decide his fate. Impressed by the bravery of Fr. Lohn, Höss released the priest unharmed.

## The end and a new beginning

After the war came to an end and Höss was captured, he was arraigned at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg and sentenced to death. Following his sentencing, Höss accepted his fate and did not appeal for leniency. Having spent time in a Polish prison, Höss experienced something that would lead to a conversion of heart. He wrote:

In Polish prisons I experienced for the first time what human kindness is. Despite all that has happened I have experienced humane treatment which I could never have expected, and which has deeply shamed me.

In prison, Höss came to realize that everything he had

lived, worked, and killed for was based on a flawed ideology, and he repented. He said:

I have inflicted terrible wounds on humanity. I have caused unspeakable suffering for the Polish people in particular. I am to pay for this with my life. May the Lord God forgive one day what I have done.



Rudolf Höss walking to the gallows next to the crematorium in the Nazi German death camp Auschwitz in Poland.

On Good Friday, April 4, 1947, awaiting execution, Höss asked to see a Catholic priest. The authorities had trouble finding a priest who spoke German, but Höss happened to remember the name of one: Fr. Władysław Lohn, the Jesuit he had once spared.

Though it took many days, Höss' captors finally found Fr. Lohn located in nearby Krakow. He happened to be praying at the Shrine of Divine Mercy, where St. Faustina, the Polish religious sister and mystic responsible for spreading devotion to the Divine Mercy, was laid to rest.

So, on April 10, 1947, the Thursday after Easter, three days before Divine Mercy Sunday, Fr. Lohn heard Höss' Confession. The next day, Friday, Höss received Holy Communion. Afterward, he knelt in his cell and wept.

On April 16, Höss was hanged on a one-person gallows right outside of the gas chambers he had built in Auschwitz. The official report of his death said that Höss remained "completely calm right up to the end and expressed no final wishes."

"It was a hard struggle," Höss had written toward the end. "But I have again found my faith in my God." MH



**THE GUARDIAN OF DEFENDERS MEMORIAL**  
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 of the  
**Men and Women of the United States Armed Forces**  
 who gave the  
 Last Full Measure of Devotion for their Nation  
 in the Global War on Terrorism  
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**OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**



The memorial is located on the grounds of Holy Rosary Parish, also the site of the historic Grubb-Worth Mansion, in Claymont, Delaware.

# Lest we forget

The dream of mercy realized

By Fr. Donald Van Alstyne, MIC

With war veterans, dignitaries, and members of many faiths gathered together this past Sept. 11, a veil was lifted on a 10-year dream of mine.

Gasps and applause resounded at the sight of it — a more than 20-foot-tall bronze statue. The Guardian of Defenders Memorial — that’s “G.O.D.” for short — is the nation’s first memorial honoring those who’ve given their lives in the global war on terrorism. I also pray it will help bring healing to those veterans struggling physically, emotionally, and spiritually following active service.

I happen to know them and their situations well.

As a United States Army chaplain with multiple deployments to Afghanistan, I’ve often administered Last Rites to fellow service members whom I’ve known. I’ve also seen firsthand how trauma and the tragedy of war affect our surviving service members. Many have been exposed to roadside bombs, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and suicide bombers. Many have witnessed the killing of comrades or have had to handle human remains. And, yes, for the first time in their young lives, many have killed other human beings to protect themselves and their buddies from being killed by the enemy.

For many service members, such trauma marks their first experience with the realities of death. In addition to physical pain, many incur mental wounds in the form of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and wounds in the soul, which I call “post spiritual stress disorder.” These venerable warriors deserve proper physical, psychological, and spiritual care — and a proper memorial marking their enormous sacrifice for our nation.

By the grace of God, they’ve got one.

With the help of a fellow military chaplain, Fr. John J.

Gayton, the Guardian of Defenders Memorial was installed at Holy Rosary Church in Claymont, Delaware.

The solid bronze statue, designed by me and sculpted by Julio Sanchez De Alba, sits atop a black granite base. It features the Battlefield Cross (inverted rifle, dog tags, helmet, and boots) and an angel carrying a service member to Heaven. And by the way, those combat boots incorporated into the memorial were mine, worn while I served in Afghanistan. They’ve been bronzed!

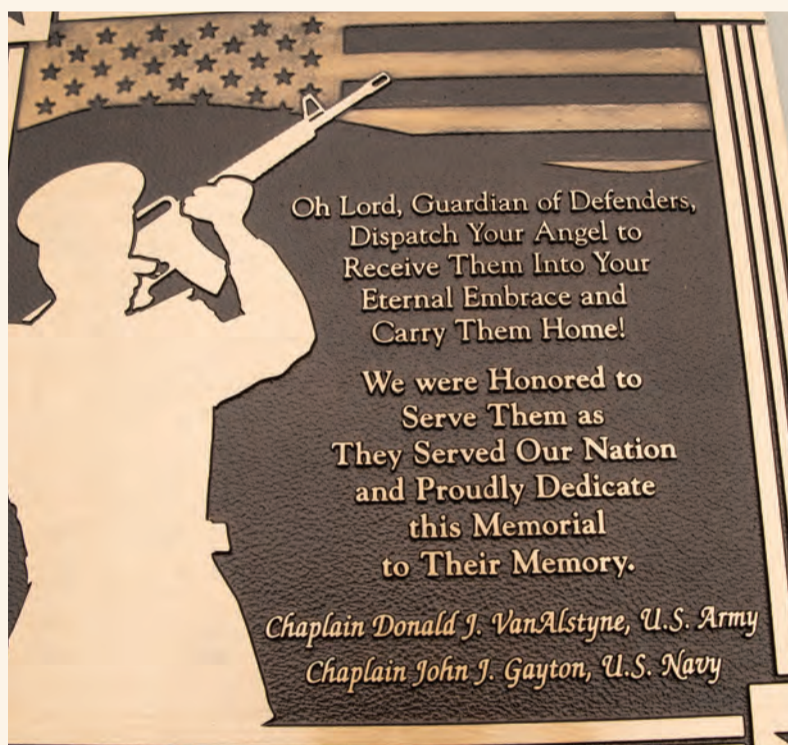
The dedication ceremony at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Interfaith 9/11 Prayer Service drew all branches of the military, Delaware’s political representatives, many Catholics, a Hindu monk, an Iman, and a rabbi. Seven Gold Star family members surrounded the memorial as it was unveiled. A military color guard then played “Taps.”

Father Gayton and I pray much good will come from this memorial. In serving our nation’s military in combat zones, both of us have witnessed death, despair, and evil, but we’ve also witnessed sacrifice, courage, and transcendence. Together, such experiences can either bring confusion or make things crystal clear. For me, what became crystal clear was that God is real, that He cherishes us, and that He will never

allow evil to have the last word. But for many service members, the trauma of war can damage their sacred beliefs, values, and the very foundation upon which they had previously defined themselves and the world. They need reminders of who we all *really* are in the eyes of God. As I began thinking about a memorial, the question arose in my heart: “How can this message of mercy be seen in sign and symbol?” I immediately thought of the



Father Donald Van Alstyne, MIC, (right) with Fr. John J. Gayton, the pastor of Holy Rosary Parish and a retired U.S. Navy Commander.



Scripture passage from Numbers 21:5-9 about the serpent of bronze, a story about a devastated people who turn to God for healing.

Since angels are messengers from God, I figured why not facilitate the message of Divine Mercy by means of an angel lifting a dead service member from the battlefield to Heaven? By elevating the service member, the angel directs the thoughts of those who've experienced the trauma of war to the mercy of God. That's how healing can begin.

Not that long ago, through the Providence of God, I received a startling confirmation of my vision. It came from the mouth of a young veteran at the Veterans Administration hospital where I work. He was clearly agitated about a lot of things. He showed signs of suffering from PTSD.

After I spoke with him about his deployment in Afghanistan, he shared with me how he had lost some close buddies to an IED. He paused. Struggling to get hold of his emotions, he finally burst into angry expletives. He lamented that there is no memorial that gives tribute to those who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I've searched parks, libraries, museums, and even went online," he said. "There is nothing for us!"

I couldn't believe what he was saying. I got so excited.

"Stay right here," I told him. "Don't go anywhere. I want to show you something."

I raced to my office to get my iPhone and returned to him



## Please consider making a donation

The cost of the Guardian of Defenders Memorial, including funding for upkeep in perpetuity, comes to \$600,000. Only 5 percent of the funds have been raised so far. Please visit [GuardianOfDefenders.com](http://GuardianOfDefenders.com) to make a contribution to the memorial fund.

to show him the pictures of the Guardian of Defenders Memorial that was being created at that moment. The veteran was absolutely awed. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. His agitation disappeared, and he became peaceful.

My vision was confirmed! It became clear to me that we must bless the souls of these venerable warriors now, not years and decades from now!

We pray that these great warriors find rest and reward for their sacrifice, ever reminded that we who are left behind cherish their spirit, honor their commitment, and value their heroic virtues.

This memorial, I pray, will be a source of healing through the mercy of God, for those loved ones left behind, all of us chaplains who served with them, and most especially the Gold Star families who continue to grieve.

May Divine Mercy wash over these families, friends, and comrades in arms and give them strength to continue their lives with steadfastness, courage, and hope, knowing well

the bond that can never be broken.

Jesus, I trust in You! May this memorial always be a reminder so that we will never forget. MH

**Major Donald Van Alstyne, MIC, has served as a U.S. Army chaplain in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and South Korea. He serves at Holy Rosary Parish and the Wilmington VA Medical Center in Wilmington, Delaware.**



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## GRACES RECEIVED

### Offered dream position

I am writing to inform you of graces received through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski. On Dec. 7, 2018, I prayed to Fr. Casimir for assistance in finding a new job. On Dec. 8, 2018, I received an email out of the blue inquiring if I would be interested in speaking with a search firm regarding an executive position with a large company. I proceeded through the interview process, and with every interview, I asked Fr. Casimir for help. After 13 interviews, I was offered the position and I accepted it. This was my dream for the better part of the last 30 years. It is truly a miracle that I am experiencing because of the intercession of Venerable Servant Casimir. I am confident that it was through his intercession that I have been awarded this opportunity to serve the employees and customers of this incredible company.

— JR, email

### Son-in-law gets job with university

I prayed to Venerable Casimir for two months for my son-in-law to either find a university to do his post-doctorate work or a job in his field. He was applying all over Canada. This was very stressful for both him and his wife (my daughter). It could have meant an expensive move and my daughter having to start from scratch in another job.

He had no hope of getting anything at all from his university. The funds or the opportunities were not available. But then the impossible happened. Out of nowhere, a professor from another faculty offered him post-doctorate work in a field that is closely related to his own field. The

money isn't as much as they would have liked, but it will lead to something better. They can stay right where they are without any disruption to their lives. This is nothing short of a miracle.

I am so grateful for Venerable Servant of God Casimir's intercession. What a powerful answer to prayer.

— LK, email



Acknowledgements of graces received through the intercession of Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski (1700-1755).

### Clean bill of health

I was having trouble with my teeth and was very afraid that I would have to have some pulled. I am elderly and was very afraid of having complications. I prayed to Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski that when

I went to the dentist I would get a clean bill of health. I was nervous and postponed my visit to the dentist for about two weeks, praying faithfully, meanwhile. When I finally went to the dentist, he said there was no sign of infection or cavities! I promised to give public testimony of this grace, so here it is. Thank you, Venerable Servant of God Casimir

Wyszynski! I will continue my devotion to him and also pray for his beatification.

— MR,  
Peñuelas, Puerto Rico

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For a Venerable Casimir prayer card (B44-BCWP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Maczynski, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Email: [graces@marian.org](mailto:graces@marian.org)

## Prayer for a Special Grace through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszynski

O God, Merciful Father, in the heart of Your Servant Casimir, You aroused such a great zeal for accomplishing corporal and spiritual deeds of mercy; deign to grant to me (to us) through his intercession the grace ... for which I (we) implore You. Amen.

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



Graciela DiLullo (second from right) with her seven children.

## MAKE, MODEL, AND MERCY!

Shortly after attending our annual Mercy for Souls Conference at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in September, Graciela DiLullo called and asked me if she could give us her car. Yes, her car.

She had been considering trading it in or selling it, but she was inspired to give it to the Marian Fathers to support their ministry.

Fortunately, we have a partnership with an organization that handles all the logistics of picking up a vehicle, selling it, and sending the proceeds to the Marian Fathers. We then provide a gift receipt to the donor. After completing the process, Graciela said, “It was all very easy.”

Graciela very generously agreed to share her story.

“What I donated is very little,” she says, “but when you give, you experience such peace in your heart and mind.”

When she was 36 years old, Graciela suffered a huge loss. Her beloved husband, Adrian, was tragically killed, leaving behind her and their seven children, who were then ages 5 to 15. Graciela returned to work, but it was very difficult to make ends meet, and her debts mounted. She was in dire need. She tried selling her apartment to pay off the debts. It was on the market for more than a year, but there were no offers.

Then, Graciela remembered a friend's advice: “Pray for the souls in Purgatory because they cannot pray for themselves. They will be so grateful they will intercede for your intentions.”

Graciela prayed specifically for the souls whose sins were related to their financial problems. A few hours later, her real estate agent called to tell her someone was interested in the apartment. Three days later, it was sold. “In gratitude,” Graciela recalls, “I arranged to have three Masses offered for those poor souls [in Purgatory].”

Last spring, Graciela made her first visit to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. She came with the intention

of remembering the souls in Purgatory who had helped her. Inside the Shrine, she noticed the icon on the wall of our Merciful Lord, Our Blessed Mother, and St. Faustina interceding for the souls in Purgatory.

She soon learned that praying for the souls in Purgatory was a special calling of the Marian Fathers since the Congregation's founding in 1670.

At the Mercy for Souls Conference, Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, spiritual director of the Marians' Holy Souls Sodality, reinforced what Graciela knew about Purgatory. He also provided new insights for her into how we can come to the aid of souls in Purgatory through our prayers and good works. These efforts on our behalf can help speed the purification of souls in Purgatory so that they are more quickly united with God in Heaven.

“Our sufferings here on earth are so much easier than even one minute of the suffering a soul experiences in Purgatory,” she says. “They really need us.”

Graciela also knows how important this work of mercy is to Our Blessed Mother.

“My husband was a faith-filled man and an amazing father,” she says. “He taught me everything I know about the faith. He taught me how to pray the Rosary and what a powerful intercessor Our Blessed Mother is for us. In all my prayers for the Holy Souls, I ask for Mary's help.”

If you would like to donate a car (or an RV, boat, or plane) to the Marian Fathers, please visit [marian.org/give/cars.php](http://marian.org/give/cars.php) or call 1-844-387-4483. If you have questions, please call me at the number below.

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Ellen Miller is director for Special Gifts. Contact her at (413) 298-1380; [helpers@marian.org](mailto:helpers@marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit [marian.org/PlannedGiving](http://marian.org/PlannedGiving) to learn more.



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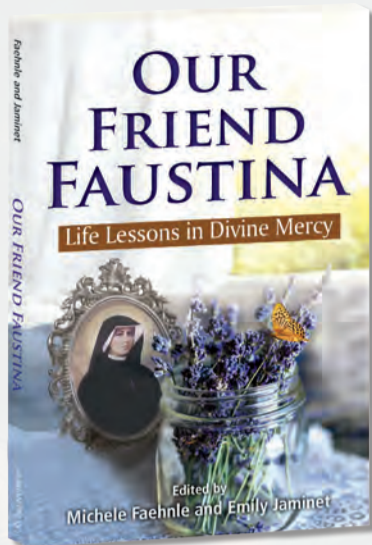
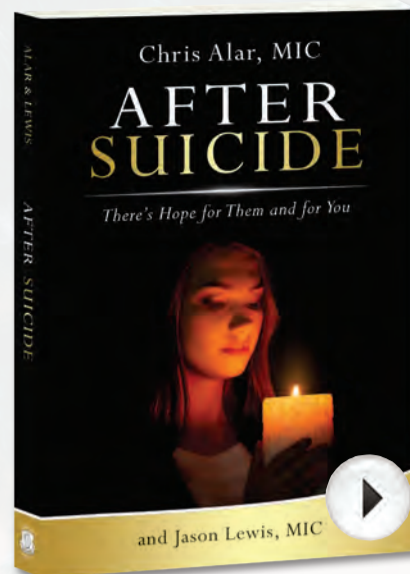
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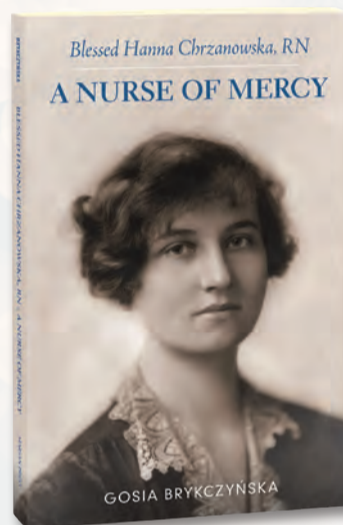


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From the  
VAULTS



*In light of our cover story, we share the following — a photo of Pope St. Paul VI greeting a group of Marians at the Vatican on July 16, 1969, and his words that day to the Marian Fathers during his General Audience. He said:*

We would like to convey our best wishes in one single word ... that sums up everything that we hold in our hearts for you. That word is FIDELITY.

How our times need fidelity! What profound changes and reversals are affecting the external order, as well as the spiritual domain! We have the impression that everything is changing before our eyes. As Christians and believers, we have a basic fidelity in our way of life that is becoming the central point upon which we depend.

The primary fidelity that we recommend to you is fidelity to Jesus Christ, our Lord, in faith and charity. As religious, you have responded generously to His call; you desire to live His example of authentic poverty, chastity, and obedience. Our present world — and the entire Church — expects this witness of stability, constancy, and fidelity from you.

Secondly, we recommend fidelity to the Church. We are so much in need of this! Presently it is no longer said: We want to leave the Church. What is often heard is: In the Church, we want to do as we please! Such a position does not fit in with the notion of the Church. We must rather remain faithful to her discipline, her rules, and above all her spirit. We must feel deeply incorporated in the Church, strongly united within the Mystical Body of Christ.

And finally, we also recommend fidelity to your respective Institutes, your religious families. Hold your religious confreres in great esteem; love them as your spiritual family. Serve this family well; contribute to its greatness by your virtues and holiness.

MH



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he is for you.”

— St. John Vianney,  
*Catechism on  
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