

Spring 2024

# Marian Helper

Inspiration and news from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

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



## HAND-OFF!

### A new 'Fr. Joseph' takes the field

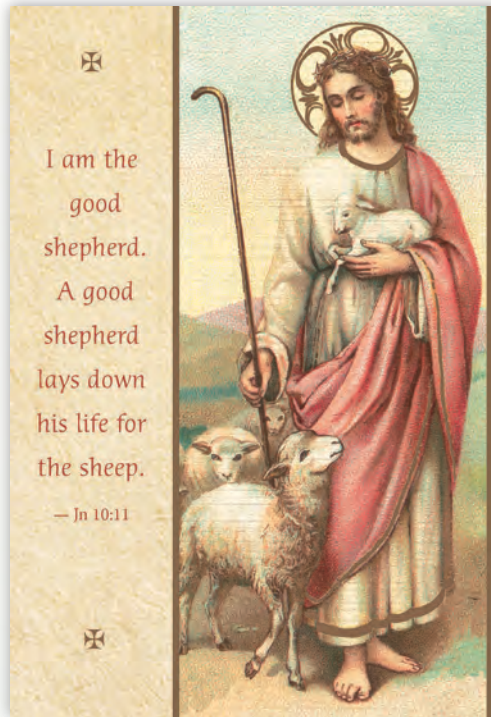


# SHARE THE GLORIOUS GIFT OF EASTER



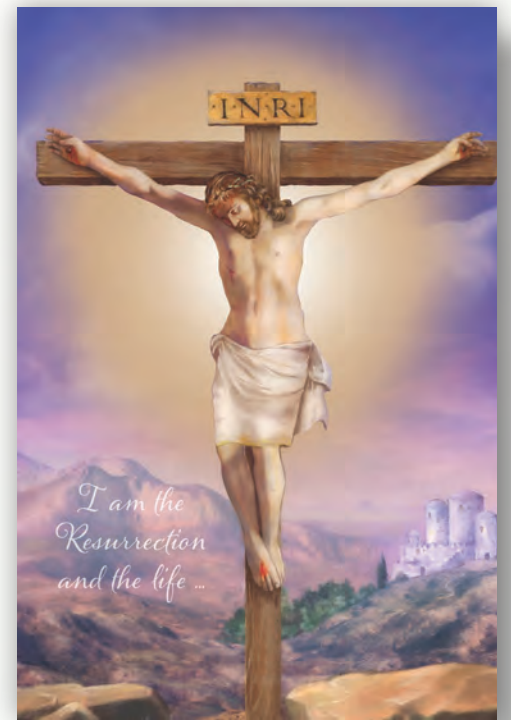
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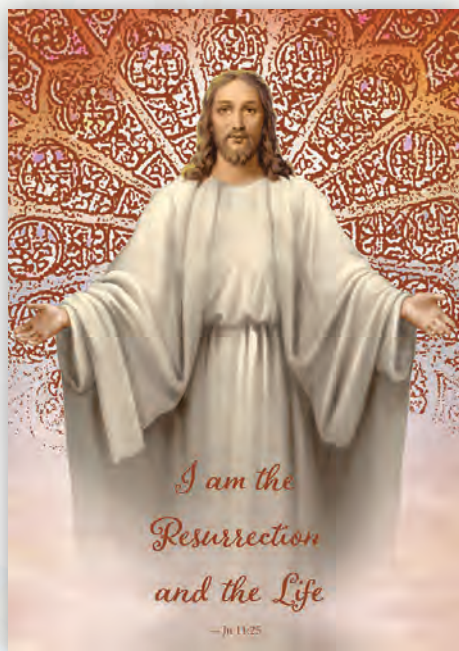
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**Three Masses on Easter:** Send your loved ones these exclusive cards to announce that they will be remembered in the three Holy Masses on Easter at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.



B61-AE24

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**All Year:** Have your loved ones remembered in prayer from this Easter to the next. They will share in the spiritual benefits of the Holy Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marian priests and brothers. Send one of these cards to announce your gift.

There is no charge for us to send you these cards. An offering is requested when you use the cards.

**Enroll a loved one today!**  
**1-800-462-7426 • [Marian.org/b61/eg](http://Marian.org/b61/eg)**

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



Since the founding of the Association of Marian Helpers in 1944, Marian priests and brothers have served as directors and held the honorary title of “Father Joseph, MIC.” The ball has now been passed for the 21<sup>st</sup> time from the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, to Fr. Mark Baron, MIC, as a busy pilgrimage season begins on Eden Hill.

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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 © 2024 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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Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
Headquarters and publishing  
center for the Association of  
Marian Helpers.  
1-800-462-7426

### National Shrine of The Divine Mercy

(413) 298-3931

For pilgrimages:

(413) 298-1119

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



### Mercy Apostolates

Learn about our lay ministries:

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#### Mother of Mercy Messengers

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

1-830-634-7765

### Evangelization Team

Invite the Marians

to speak at your parish.

(413) 298-1349

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

### Intercessory Prayerline

Send us prayer intentions.

1-800-804-3823

[Marian.org/prayer](http://Marian.org/prayer)

### Websites

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

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

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

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



## Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

The Marian Fathers are a Congregation of nearly 500 priests and brothers in 19 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 of Marian Helpers is a spiritual benefit society that prayerfully and financially supports the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Your enrollment means that, by a decree of the Holy See, you share in these graces:

- 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.



Sign-up is easy: Visit [MICPrayers.org](http://MICPrayers.org)



You Tube



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

## OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT GOD'S MISSION

- **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:** [Marian.org/give](http://Marian.org/give)
- **Create a memorial or tribute:** [MemorialsOnEdenHill.org](http://MemorialsOnEdenHill.org)
- **Arrange a special gift** of stock, a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, a grant from your donor-advised fund, a gift through your will or trust, or annuity: [Giving.Marian.org](http://Giving.Marian.org)

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

Free online help for your will, visit [Marian.org/will](http://Marian.org/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.*



# AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE

I'm so pleased to be writing to you, our Marian Helpers, in my first issue as publisher of this esteemed magazine. We Marian Fathers couldn't begin to live in service to Christ and His Church as consecrated religious without your prayers, encouragement, and support.

It's an honor and privilege to be the new, 21<sup>st</sup> "Father Joseph, MIC," the director of the Association of Marian Helpers. It's a blessing to be taking on the role after my Marian brother, the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, has had such a successful and productive time in office. Having known Fr. Chris, especially as his novice master and then as his seminarian director for one year, I am not surprised at the fruits God has brought forth through his priestly service as Fr. Joseph. The ability to be an effective leader and priest was always there, and it has been a joy to witness how the Lord has utilized his talents as the leader of the Association to help both the Church and the Marians.

## Parish service

I come to this office after serving for several years as administrator at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Darien, Illinois, founded by the Marians in the 1930s. My time with that community was a great blessing. I loved being able to walk with people in their daily lives and minister to their spiritual needs. I also enjoyed witnessing the great love that people had for Our Lady of Peace. Many parishioners had worked with Fr. Al Micka, MIC, the first pastor, to help build and grow it into a large parish.

Though I enjoyed serving in that community, and in many ways was content in doing so, God has now called me to a different labor in His vineyard through my

superiors. So here I am!

I look forward to meeting many of you and working alongside you in service to Christ and His Church.

The times are tough, it's true, but we're given such extraordinary gifts in our Marian charism. Serving the Church where the need is greatest, we practice and promote devotion to Mary Immaculate, spiritual assistance for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and preach in parishes and missions, especially the message and devotion of Divine Mercy.

## Be a dish rag

I really love the "dish-rag" mentality of our Marian Renovator, Bl. George Matulaitis (1871-1927). He wrote that he just wanted to be a dish rag in the hands of our Lord, wiping up the messes as needed in His House. That's central to being a Marian. I really believe that in order to be happy and fulfilled in life, you have to have that

dish-rag mentality. God can't work through you without this kind of humility.

Pray for me, that I may live this spirituality in my work in service to you all. May God bless you!

Fr. Joseph, MIC



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





# PAINFUL ENDURANCE, REDEEMPTIVE SUFFERING

By Marian Friedrichs

**A**s a competitive cyclist, Justin Koelbl knew that suffering can have meaning. During training, pain often told him when he was pushing himself hard enough, and in competition, he says, “Usually the one who won the race was the one who was willing to suffer the most.”

Justin enjoyed cycling, both competitively and recreationally with his family. And he was good at it. The pain was worth it.

But when an illness, which had been gradually progressing since he was a teenager, forced Justin to trade his bicycle for a cane and ankle braces as a young adult, the purpose of pain suddenly was no longer clear. Justin “was increasingly

agonized” by the question of why this suffering had come into his life.

The mental and physical anguish “led me away from God,” Justin, now 30, admits. As he wrestled with the apparent meaninglessness of this new trial, Justin “didn’t look to God” for a long time.



## Seek and find

But the endurance Justin had developed as a racer served him well. His persistent quest for answers led him to investigate what the Church has to say about the power of redemptive suffering. Jesus promised that those who seek will find (see Mt 7:7), and through reading Scripture and the lives of the saints, Justin found not only answers, but a treasury of wisdom that shone light at last on what he was going through.

“Pain used to mean I’m training well or I’m doing well in the race, but now it’s an indicator that I have a gift to give to God,” he says. “I have tremendous joy in all I’ve learned about suffering. I feel I’ve won the lottery in all I’ve learned.”

The value of suffering comes from God’s love transforming the trials of life into gifts that, when willingly offered to Him, can draw down grace to save souls. Without this love and grace, suffering would indeed be pointless.

“I couldn’t read many of the saints’ writings about suffering without having a crucifix in front of me to remind me of His love,” Justin says.

Through his reading and reflection, Justin discovered that the pain he bore was both less and more special than he had at first understood.

“I began to realize just how much we suffer without even knowing it,” he says.

People carry the burden of suffering daily, whether in their bodies or spirits or both. Pain is at once as common as dust and more precious than gold.

## Uniting with Jesus

Displaying enormous spiritual maturity, Justin began to unite his own suffering with Jesus’ sacrifice at every Mass. During the Offertory, he prays for his pain to be dropped into the chalice, mingling with the water and wine that will become Jesus’ Precious Blood, which the priest will lift up to Heaven as atonement for sin. Like the Eucharist itself, which God gives to us but which we offer back to Him through the hands of the priest, “suffering is a gift from God and a gift to God,” he says.

Outside of Mass, Justin gives his pain to God through prayers such as the Morning Offering and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. He learned from the writings of the Marian Fathers that “the Chaplet is an extension of the Mass. When

I pray ‘His Sorrowful Passion,’ that includes my own. With Jesus, I can implore God’s mercy on the whole world.”

Justin’s family also gave him a powerful example of the potency of suffering united with love. “My dad has always desired to take on suffering for me,” he says.

When Justin got sick, his father prayed that he could experience his son’s pain in his place. Astonishingly, in time, Justin’s father was afflicted by an illness with symptoms similar to Justin’s. Then, unexpectedly, and without any apparent connection with his existing condition, Justin’s father had a stroke. His right side was left paralyzed, but, surprisingly, the symptoms from the illness he shared with Justin were significantly reduced.

## Research

Justin and his brother have informal research experience, and they were able to work with professional medical researchers to try to discover why their dad’s illness had improved. Through this research, Justin learned ways to alleviate his own suffering.

While Justin’s dad did not actually take all of Justin’s pain onto himself, the stroke — the paralyzing effects of which he continues to endure — lit his son’s path to a more comfortable existence with his own illness.

“I don’t believe my dad suffered a stroke primarily to provide physical relief,” Justin says. “I believe it’s for saving souls.”

## Saving souls

Suffering is a profound mystery. “I once thought that a mystery meant I couldn’t learn more, but it means you can always learn more.” Justin still struggles with suffering, but when doubt and darkness attack, he says, the soul has to “just cling to Jesus in the Eucharist.”

When people do not look at pain through the lens of God’s love and within the setting of His redemptive plan, they can torment themselves with the question of why they should have to suffer. Those who understand that their suffering can help save souls, however, may instead wonder how they merited a role in the mission of Christ.

Justin marvels, “The King of the Universe desires us to do the same day-to-day work that He does. There’s nothing I did to deserve a share in His work. Suffering is incomprehensible only as much as God’s mercy is incomprehensible.”

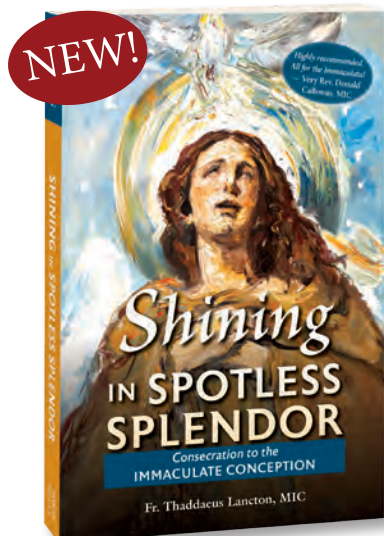
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Justin Koelbl visited the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy last summer.



Launching into Lent, heading toward Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, let's prepare ourselves with some great Catholic resources by four Marian priests.



## SHINING IN SPOTLESS SPLENDOR: CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

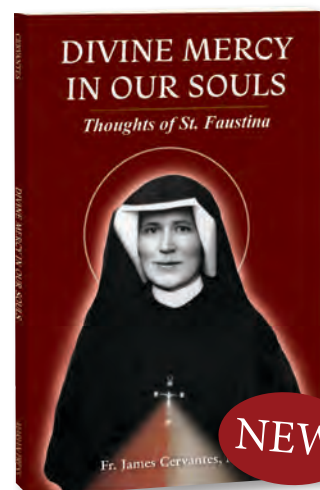
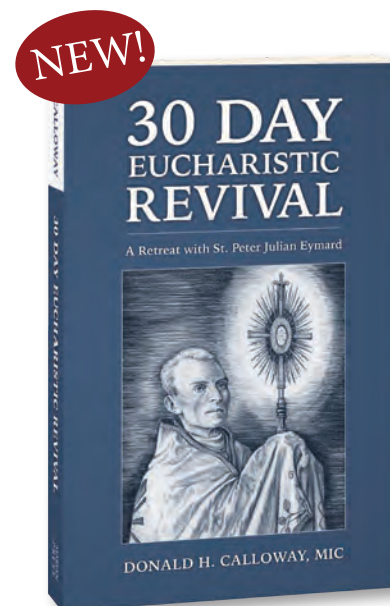
BY FR. THADDAEUS LANCTON, MIC

The Immaculate Conception describes the sinless conception of the Blessed Virgin in St. Anne's womb, explains Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC, in this new guide to consecration to the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Spirit continues to imprint this mystery on our hearts by purifying us of all sin and healing its effects, so that we, too, may be immaculate like the Virgin. Through these 40 days, we tap into the living reality of this mystery and allow the fire of the Holy Spirit to touch our hearts. A great way to take your Marian devotion to the next level. \$15.95. **B61-BELH**

## 30 DAY EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL: A RETREAT WITH ST. PETER JULIAN EYMARD

BY FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

Several popes have referred to St. Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868) as "the Apostle of the Eucharist." But when it comes to worldwide recognition of his extraordinary life, as well as the many amazing things he did to foster a greater love for the Blessed Sacrament, most Catholics are unfamiliar with him and have never heard his name. Join Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, on a *30 Day Eucharistic Revival* intended to help you, your children, your grandchildren, and all future generations rediscover and experience a renewal of belief in the Real Presence, especially during the period of National Eucharistic Revival in the United States. \$15.95. **B61-ECHR**



## DIVINE MERCY IN OUR SOULS: THOUGHTS OF ST. FAUSTINA

BY FR. JAMES CERVANTES, MIC

Marian Fr. James Cervantes, MIC, collected crucial passages from St. Faustina's *Diary* to share with friends and family, and now with you, our Marian Helpers. Spend each day with St. Faustina, the Secretary and Apostle of Divine Mercy. Read the *Diary* passages slowly. It's about quality, not quantity. Allow the words to touch your heart deeply. A great spiritual aid. \$9.95. **B61-FTSF**

## 33 DAYS TO MERCIFUL LOVE: GROUP RETREAT & STUDY GUIDE

Since its publication in 2016, *33 Days to Merciful Love* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, the sequel to the international bestseller *33 Days to Morning Glory*, has helped thousands grow in devotion and draw closer to our Lord through the spirituality of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. This new edition supplements the original text for each of the 33 days with thought-provoking questions to answer and discuss in a group setting. It also provides exclusive access to retreat videos posted on [DivineMercyPlus.org/consecrations](http://DivineMercyPlus.org/consecrations) to enrich your consecration to Divine Mercy and encourage group discussion. \$24.95. **B61-3MLRC3**







# FROM INDIA TO ROME

**O**ur Congregation's newest mission, begun in 2010, is in one of Christianity's oldest regions: the subcontinent of India. There, in a country of 1.3 billion people, only 2.3 percent are Catholic. Our Marian priests are following in the missionary footsteps of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Francis Xavier.

Father Jenö Stephen, MIC, was ordained to the priesthood in his native India five years ago. He arrived in Rome last summer to do some advanced studies. Let's get to know him in his own words.

"I was born on Oct. 20, 1993, in the Diocese of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu, India, in the village of Sebathiyar Puram, Pushpavanam Parish, as the third child of Arockiam and Arul Thainas Mary. Being a middle-class, traditional Catholic family, my parents had to work hard on the farm for our survival. My mother's unwavering, selfless love is one of her most remarkable characteristics, while my father is a quiet, hard worker who is constantly focused on his responsibilities. John Martin and Amutha, my two elder siblings, are blessed with lovely families.

"It's difficult to pinpoint the precise moment when the divine spark emerged, but I firmly believe that I was called from an early age, which inspired me to actively participate in community prayer and the Sacraments.

"After graduating from high school in 2010, I was unsure what to do next. My pastor encouraged me to join the Marian Fathers. On Oct. 28, 2010, I eagerly went to the Marian Formation House in Karumathur. I received a BSc in physics in 2013 and then completed my MA in philosophy.

"I had vocational struggles during my years of formation, but God was always there to support me through the darkest moments. Coming to know Fr. Jan Migacz, MIC, as a novice allowed me to learn more about our spirituality, identity, history, and charism, which strengthened my call. I made my first religious profession in 2016. Through my perpetual vows in 2019, I made my permanent commitment to follow



my Master's footsteps as a Marian.

"I did my diaconate ministry at St. Antony the Great's Shrine in the Diocese of Sivagangai. After my priestly ordination on Dec. 28, 2019, I worked at the same Shrine, but the pandemic made pastoral work impossible.

"I was then appointed assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Thiruvaramangam. I was very happy with the varied pastoral work that I

performed in that large parish. Then, I worked as the house superior and novice master at our seminary in Mysore from 2021 to 2023. This work was not easy for me because of the great demands and the sacrifices involved. I came to know my strengths and weaknesses as a new formator, and those two years really helped me in my own personal development.

"I had been eagerly looking forward to coming to our Generalate in Rome, which I had only ever seen in photographs. As one of the first Marian priests from India, I had only met a handful of Marians and had never been to any of our communities abroad, so coming to Rome provided a better opportunity to meet Marians from other countries. I have become more deeply acquainted with our community life and our spiritual path here.

"I am doing a licentiate in Mariology at the Marianum Institute. There is a great tradition of devotion to Mother Mary in India, which influenced my own personal devotion to her. My studies are deepening my understanding of Mary's participation in the work of salvation and of our charism of the Immaculate Conception."

**Please pray for Fr. Jenö and for all of our student priests here in Rome!**



The Most Rev. Joe Roesch, MIC, is the superior general of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He lives in Rome. Listen to his podcasts, including "Saint Faustina's *Diary* in a Year," on [TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts](https://TheDivineMercy.org/podcasts) and [DivineMercyPlus.org/podcasts](https://DivineMercyPlus.org/podcasts).





# COMPLETED PASS

Meet the new  
'Fr. Joseph'

By Dr. Joe McAleer

Every few years, there is a sea change at the Marian Helpers Center on the campus of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. A new “Fr. Joseph, MIC,” is appointed, the titular head of the Association of Marian Helpers. This January, Fr. Mark Baron, MIC, took the reins from the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, to become the 21<sup>st</sup> Fr. Joseph.

When Fr. Walter Pelczynski, MIC (1916-2000) established the Association in 1944, he got into the habit of thanking donors under the name of the provincial superior at the time, Fr. Jozef Luniewski, MIC. Before long, “Fr. Joseph, MIC,” became the assumed name of the director. Today, Fr. Joseph, MIC oversees a spiritual benefit society with nearly 2 million members that continues to prayerfully and financially support the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

Father Mark, 54, was born in Louisville, Kentucky. He attended Purdue University, and was ordained for the Marians in 2004. He has held a variety of positions over two decades, including novice master, superior of the Marian House of Formation in Washington, D.C., and, for the past six years, administrator of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Darien, Illinois.

*Marian Helper* sat down with Fr. Mark to discuss his new appointment.





Then-Brother Mark participated in a Eucharistic procession at the National Shrine.

**Congratulations on becoming Fr. Joseph, MIC. In your nearly 20 years as a Marian priest, did you ever expect this appointment?**

Honestly, I never once thought about or aspired to be in charge of the Marian Helpers Center. It's a big responsibility, and one that I just never saw myself fulfilling and thus never lobbied for. So the actual appointment definitely came out of the blue. But, growing up, I never thought about or aspired to become a priest, either. It wasn't until the priest chaplain at the high school I attended mentioned to me about becoming a priest that I actually began to consider and become attracted to the idea. So I guess there is a little parallel.

**How did your parishioners react when you told them the news?**

Initially, they were shocked that I was leaving. Some came up to me afterwards and said, "Congratulations on your promotion!" As a religious, it was funny for me to hear it put like that. Being in charge of the Marian Helpers Center is a big responsibility, for sure. However, I view my appointment as Fr. Joseph as just another way that God is calling me to serve Him.

**What are your plans as the new Fr. Joseph?**

In many ways, my overall goal is just to try and continue the good work that Fr. Chris has been doing over the past 10 years. To be able to do this, my immediate plan is simply to learn. I need to deepen my familiarity with how the Marian Helpers Center operates and supports the Association. So I am going to be leaning quite a bit on Fr. Chris and the good employees of the MHC to help me understand the inner workings of the Association and how it is managed. We will be having a strategic planning meeting coming up in March, so I am sure that I will get a greater sense of where we need to focus.

**Donations are vital to the Marian mission and yet it can be difficult to ask people for money. What is your perspective on fundraising?**

We have a very generous parish at Our Lady of Peace, so I didn't have to ask for funds too often. The only time I really did was for the Bishop's annual appeal. The inspiration I received in preparing for that homily was that the idea of fundraising isn't so much about asking people for money as it is about giving people an opportunity to be generous in fulfilling a role for the sake of building the Kingdom of Heaven in their hearts.



Father Mark often celebrated Mass at the Pentagon.

There is no greater activity on earth than the work of God in a soul. By God's design, however, He calls many different kinds of people to fulfill various kinds of spiritual and material roles so that this work of grace can take place. An important thing to note is that God calls and invites us to be generous. He never forces.

If you study the Bible, you will see how God always has



As Novice Master, Fr. Mark counseled two seminarians: future priests Chris Alar and Thaddaeus Lancton.



called and invited people to use their talents and resources to help support the work He wants to accomplish. We see this with Jesus, who also relied on the goodness of various supporters to supply for His mission/ministry while on earth (see Lk 8:1-3). The Gospel of John tells us that Judas was put in charge of the money box, which shows that Jesus and His disciples also took in donations for the sake of the ministry.

The bottom line is that the Church needs material resources to help her fulfill her mission of evangelizing and forming disciples. It is a great privilege to be able to participate in supporting this ministry.

### What is the value of being a Marian Helper?

I can answer this in two ways. First, the Association is a way that our Lord inspires and calls people to participate in His work of saving souls through our Marian charism and mission. I would like all of our Marian Helpers who give support to our mission, in any manner, to consider the great work God accomplishes in people's hearts through our tiny Congregation, and then realize this doesn't happen without you. I hope this brings you immense consolation and joy.

Secondly, I want our Marian Helpers to recognize that in your acts of generosity toward the Marian Fathers, God is blessing and changing your own heart, too. This is not only through the spiritual benefits that come to you by being a part of the Association. Your heart is also being transformed through the very works of mercy that God allows and calls you to perform for the sake of souls through your support of our mission. When you do good, you become good, and that reality brings us to the very heart of happiness. Happiness is of immense value because it is what we all desire.

### The National Eucharistic Revival is under way across the country. How did you encourage devotion to the Real Presence during your time at Our Lady of Peace?

I love this question. Many of us priests and lay evangelists recognize it is hard for people to really be set on fire for God without first personally encountering Him in some

way. I know this was the case for me, and the encounter I had took place via a special moment I had before the Eucharist when I was in my mid-20s.

For this reason, I had a passion while I served in the parish to create opportunities for people to experience Jesus through His Eucharistic Presence. I primarily did this by or-

ganizing a prayer event for the parish called "Eucharistic Encounter." This was held about six times a year, and involved utilizing song and short reflections to dispose hearts to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist.

I also made it a point to introduce children in our school and religious education to Eucharistic Adoration. It was always a special moment for me to bring the kids before Jesus and to hear them witness to how they were affected by His Presence.

### Who was a big influence on your priesthood?

Outside the Marians, I would say Catholic personalities such as Pope St. John Paul II; Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR; Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR; and Dr. Scott Hahn. I would also include my spiritual director and the teachers at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., who introduced me to the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and challenged me to become a more critical thinker.

Within the Marians, I would single out the late Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, insofar as he was such a pioneer in the promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion that would have a profound impact on the way I saw Jesus, myself, and the Church.

### Do you have any hobbies?

Growing up in Kentucky, I had a great passion for both playing and watching sports, especially college basketball and football. I still like to follow most sports, but the only sport that I really play right now is golf, which I enjoy quite a bit.

### Are you related to Bishop Robert Barron?

Ha! I get that question all the time. No, I am not. He has an extra "r" in his last name. Besides, I don't think I am smart enough to be related to him!

MH



Father Mark was a fixture at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.





White habits were on show in December as three Marian seminarians professed their perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, the final stage in joining a religious congregation.

Congratulations to **Br. Ryan Asensio, MIC**; **Br. Patrick Lynch, MIC**; and **Br. Alexander Pumphrey, MIC**. As part of the ceremony, each was clothed in the new white habit.

Brother Patrick, 27, professed his vows on Dec. 8, in Argentina, where he has been serving. “Jesus has been so merciful to me in my life,” he said, “and, come what may, I trust Him to bring to completion the good work He has begun in me.”

Brothers Alexander and Ryan professed their vows on Dec. 16 at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. “Making perpetual vows is a great gift from God,” Br. Ryan, 31, said. “It is a promise of fidelity, Him to me and me to Him. But He is the one who is going to have to help me be faithful. So really, it’s all Him!”

Added Br. Alexander, 30, “I’m not sure what Jesus has in store for me next, but my prayer is that I will always remain humble enough to listen to His voice, and courageous enough to answer His call.”

## Marian formation

For each man, perpetual profession marks a significant milestone in his vocational journey, which will proceed, God willing, on to ordination as a transitional deacon and then a priest.

“We are blessed as Marians to have fine young men such as Patrick, Alex, and Ryan coming forward to do God’s work,” said the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, provincial superior. “The Church needs good men like these men. Their demeanor, love of God, and love of brother are commendable and will at an even greater level be joined to our community.

“We remain grateful to our Marian Helpers for their prayers and financial support of our thriving vocations program,” Fr. Chris concluded. “As you can see, it’s working!”

MH



**Brother Patrick Lynch, MIC.**



**Brother Ryan Asensio, MIC.**



**Brother Alexander Pumphrey, MIC.**

## To bless or not to bless?

The declaration *Fiducia Supplicans* (“*On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings*”), issued on Dec. 18 by the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF), has caused much confusion and raised many questions in regard to offering blessings to same-sex couples. Here’s what you need to know.

**The nature of marriage between a man and a woman has not changed.** *Fiducia Supplicans* states clearly that “the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage” is unchanged. In fact, the March 15, 2021 *Responsum* issued by the DDF had already confirmed this: “The declaration of the unlawfulness of blessings of unions between persons of the same sex is ... a reminder of the truth of the liturgical rite and of the very nature of the sacramentals.”

**Can a priest or deacon offer a blessing to a same-sex couple?** The intention of any blessing is to invite God’s grace to turn away from sin and strive for greater holiness. The priest or deacon can bless each individual, but not validate their civil union or marriage.

On Jan. 4, Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, DDF prefect, clarified the declaration by offering a sample blessing: “*Lord, look at these children of yours, grant them health, work, peace, and mutual help. Free them from everything that contradicts your Gospel and allow them to live according to your will. Amen.*”

**What is the position of the Marian Fathers?** On Dec. 21, the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, provincial superior, issued a formal statement: “Marian clergy (ordained deacons and/or priests) are prohibited from blessing irregular relationships, unions, or same-sex couples in the United States and Argentina, or while traveling abroad. This applies to all Marian clergy regardless of diocesan policies. We see no situation in which such a blessing of a couple could be properly and adequately distinguished from some level of approval of the irregular relationship, leading to the scandal of the faithful.

“It needs to be emphasized, however, that blessing individual persons struggling with sin, but striving to do the will of God and conform their lives to Church teaching, are not only allowed, but strongly encouraged. Marian clergy will continue to bless the individual sinner, but we cannot in any way bestow blessings that may infer that we are condoning or blessing the sin of irregular unions.”

Learn more at [Marian.org/blessings](https://marian.org/blessings).

MH



# DIVINE MERCY WEEKEND 2024

Planning is in full swing for the celebration of Divine Mercy Weekend, April 6-7, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. More than 15,000 people are expected to attend the annual event hosted by the Marian Fathers, who have promoted the Divine Mercy message and devotion since 1941.

The principal celebrant for the liturgy on Divine Mercy Sunday will be the Most Rev. Timothy P. Broglio, JCD, Archbishop of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A. Mass will be broadcast live by EWTN and on [DivineMercyPlus.org](http://DivineMercyPlus.org) at 1 p.m. EST on April 7.

Preceding the Mass at 12 p.m. EST (and broadcast live on EWTN) will be our annual pre-show, hosted by the Most Rev. Joseph Roesch, MIC, superior general, and the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, provincial superior.

## Focus on Catholic men

“We are very excited about this year’s pre-show,” says Fr. Chris. “Our focus is on bringing men back to the faith. It’s about fatherhood and leadership. Men must step up and set a good faith example for their wives and children, and partner with their wives in the promotion of the ‘Domestic Church.’ We have a great line-up of guests with first-hand experience.”

Guests include two well-known actors and producers, Kevin Sorbo and James Wahlberg; and two stars from the National Football League: former Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Elvis Grbac, and Denver Broncos assistant coach



Ben Steele.

Throughout the weekend, the 350-acre Shrine grounds are transformed into a small tent city, providing opportunities for Confessions, Eucharistic Adoration, praying the Rosary, and perusing the Divine Mercy Gift Shop. Both the Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. on April 6, and the Sunday Liturgy on April 7, will be celebrated on Eden Hill at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

“We hope to see you on Eden Hill,” says Fr. Chris. “But if you are unable to join us, please help your pastor and parish celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. We have a host of useful resources available on our website, [TheDivineMercy.org/celebrate](http://TheDivineMercy.org/celebrate).”

*The Marian Fathers extend a warm invitation to come to Eden Hill to experience this annual celebration. Admission is free. Private vehicles do not need to register, but buses and groups larger than 15 people must register in advance. Pilgrims are advised to check the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Details and more information available now on [ShrineOfDivineMercy.org](http://ShrineOfDivineMercy.org).*

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By Dr. Joe McAleer

Every few years, there is a sea change at the Marian Helpers Center on the campus of the [National Shrine of The Divine Mercy](http://National Shrine of The Divine Mercy) in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. A new “Fr. Joseph, MIC,” is appointed, the titular head of the [Association of Marian Helpers](http://Association of Marian Helpers). This January, Fr. Mark Baron, MIC, took the reins from the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, to become the 21<sup>st</sup> Fr. Joseph.

## GO DEEPER! VISIT US ONLINE!

The online version of *Marian Helper* is a user-friendly flipbook with hundreds of links to helpful resources and additional information.

**[VisitMarian.org/magazine](http://VisitMarian.org/magazine)**



# TOGETHER WE CAN BUILD OUR NEW MONASTERY IN OUR FIELD OF DREAMS

GIVINGTUESDAY

## A Dream Realized

‘Giving Tuesday’ sets record

**O**n the Tuesday after Thanksgiving last year, we invited Marian Helpers to participate in something special — and you responded, setting an all-time fundraising record!

The theme for “Giving Tuesday” on Nov. 28 was “The Marian Field of Dreams” (a riff on the 1989 film), which featured Fr. Andy Davy, MIC (right), hearing a voice saying, “If you build it, they will come.” Fr. Andy is the director of postulants, guiding future seminarians in their discernment for religious life. Building the new monastery and chapel supports the current and future growth of the Marian community on Eden Hill and meets a critical need.

The goal for “Giving Tuesday” was to raise \$2 million more by year-end and push the “Together for Christ and His Church” campaign beyond 90 percent completion. Five early donors stepped forward with gifts totaling \$1 million, and challenged others to join the effort — and you certainly did! More than 3,300 donors gave an additional \$1.4 million, eclipsing prior Giving Tuesday appeals by more than six-fold.

### Vote of confidence

Tom and Ann are among the many Marian Helpers answering the call. “We are delighted to be able to help the Marians build a proper domicile for the priests and brothers and anxiously anticipate the start of construction,” says Tom.

“It’s truly a vote of confidence from our Marian Helpers on the importance of our capital campaign and how vital this building project is to the future growth of the Marian Fathers and to our Church,” states Ben Davis, director of mission advancement.

To date, \$31 million has been raised towards a campaign goal of \$33 million, or 94 percent.

“We have now reached a level of support that allows us to start construction this year,” Davis adds. “There is a lot of work to do to prepare the site, turn architectural drawings into construction documents, and stage materials before we break ground. But we can now confidently move forward with locking in contracts and planning the timeline for the approximately 18-month construction phase.”



We invite you to participate in the capital campaign to build a new monastery and chapel at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy.

Visit [TogetherForChrist.org](https://www.togetherforchrist.org).

### Additional needs

Davis emphasized that the capital campaign remains active. “We continue to have the need to raise additional funds for the last of the construction costs, furnishings, and groundwork to include driveways, parking, and landscaping,” he says.

“Almsgiving is one of the pillars of the holy season of Lent, along with prayer and fasting,” said the Very Rev. Chris Alar, MIC, provincial superior. “If you have not already done so, please prayerfully support our campaign and give what you can. God bless you!”

MH



# ‘THIS DOG CAN BARK BUT CANNOT BITE’

## Lenten wisdom from the Marian Founder

By Fr. Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC

*Editor’s note: Inspectio Cordis (A Gaze of the Heart) is the title given to the collection of meditations for Sundays by the Founder of the Marians, St. Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701).*

*These meditations, published weekly on Fridays online on Marian.org in preparation for Sunday Mass, allow Jesus to gaze into your heart and teach you self-examination, leading you to a more fruitful reception of Holy Communion, where there is a true encounter of our hearts with His Sacred Heart — especially fitting during this period of National Eucharistic Revival.*

*Here, Fr. Thaddaeus offers St. Stanislaus’ meditations on the holy season of Lent.*

**T**he Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent always recounts the temptations of Jesus in the desert. Depending on the year, we read the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, or Luke with some variations about the order or detail of the temptations. But they have in common that Jesus “was prompted, or rather stirred up or driven by the Divine Spirit to withdraw into the desert.”

It would seem “strange” that the Holy Spirit would bring Jesus into the desert, but Jesus “recapitulates” the history of Israel in His own life. Where they failed in the desert, He succeeds in standing firm against sin.

But we know that temptations are not a thing of the past. Saint Stanislaus, meditating upon this Gospel in his *Inspectio Cordis*, notes that there are “many people in the world who do not feel temptations.” But, ironically, that is not a good sign, for “the evil spirit believes them to be his own, and therefore he does not display his hostile force against them.” Rather, “he assaults with great intensity”



those who seek — like Jesus — to live a life pleasing to the Father.

Saint Stanislaus urges us to not be surprised at temptations as if they were “new and extraordinary.” We ought to expect the devil’s hatred, but we must remember, “His forces are weaker than can be imagined. This dog can bark but cannot bite.”

### Temptations

Saint Stanislaus continues, mentioning the various temptations Satan may throw at us, depending on whether we are hungry, exhausted, despairing, etc. By his crafty temptations,



“He tries to drive away and remove from the plough the laborers dedicated to the service of God.”

Can we name our temptations? It is opportune, this Lent, to ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to recognize the specific manners in which Satan tempts us to turn away from Jesus. Even more, St. Stanislaus teaches us that we ought to counter temptations with “contrary arguments.” He provides Scripture passages to respond to each form of seduction from the enemy, so that we always have the shield of truth against the subtlety of the devil’s lies.

Naming our temptations is a path to victory. Saint Stanislaus urges us, “Look, look at the happy outcome of the temptation.” Jesus conquers Satan, and so similarly, “This is what Divine Providence does with the tempted: He allows them to be attacked, ... permits them to be troubled and overwhelmed by various waves of temptations. But at the end He reserves for them all joy and consolation.”

Our heavenly Commander crowns us after our strong resistance with astonishing favors and the highest charisms and heavenly gifts. So, St. Stanislaus boldly encourages us: “Fight, fight heroically and persevere!”

But, even as we remain confident of victory through Jesus, we ought “not presume too much about” our strength, not promise ourselves security. “Instead, be always vigilant, always pray, lest you fall into an insurmountable temptation.” We need to employ the proper means to victory, realizing that “it is not by great knowledge, or experience, or mortification that the infernal tempter is conquered.” Rather, Satan is completely conquered by “custody of the senses, the sword of prayer,

great trust in God, patient humility, and humble patience.”

Our Founder continues, “For this reason, the Lord grants you frequent access to the sacred table, so that you grow stronger against the more frequent attacks of your enemies.”

## Powerful weapon

Saint Stanislaus emphasizes multiple times in his meditation how “the Eucharist is the most powerful weapon against every temptation,” for “as often as you are refreshed by the banquet of the Most Sacred Eucharist, you always acquire new strength and defensive armor.” Not only that,

but we need to be “mindful of the grace of this most gracious God and remember to give thanks, for thus you will overcome and ward off all the might and the strong attacks of the tempter and infernal warrior.”

## Perseverance

This Lent, to gain territory from the enemy, and not fall into temptation, we ought to heed these exhortations of St. Stanislaus. He himself faced many temptations and trials, yet persevered. One can perceive in his teaching the wisdom that he gained through personal suffering and experience.

Though centuries of years stand between him and us, his writings in *Inspectio Cordis* reveal timely advice for the human heart that faces the same struggles in every epoch of history.

Learn from him about Jesus and how to remain faithful to Him during your temptations.

“Fight, fight heroically and persevere!”

Prepare for Sunday Mass by reading *Inspectio Cordis*, posted Fridays on [Marian.org](http://Marian.org).

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**Saint Stanislaus emphasizes multiple times how “the Eucharist is the most powerful weapon against every temptation,” for “as often as you are refreshed by the banquet of the Most Sacred Eucharist, you always acquire new strength and defensive armor.”**





# BE 'TRANSFORMED' THIS LENT

*Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart (Heb 4:12).*

Every renewal in the history of the Church has had some connection to Sacred Scripture, the Word of God made text, or breath, or memory. During Lent, we are especially reminded that, here on earth, we are on pilgrimage toward our heavenly home, traveling through a vale of tears.

*Transformed by the Word*, the 2024 Lenten devotional from the Marian Fathers, will equip you to make your Lenten pilgrimage a truly transformative experience. Be strengthened and encouraged for your Lenten pilgrimage with these easy-to-read, brief meditations for each day from Ash Wednesday through to Divine Mercy Sunday.

## Steeped in Scripture

We all stand in the light of Our Lady, who pondered in her Heart the Mysteries she lived through, and the Scriptures of her people. We know she was deep in Scripture by her Magnificat, the sort of prayer that could only have been created by someone who'd been steeped in the psalms, the prophets, and the prayers of the Jewish people.

We are a people who ponder, who read the Word of God again and again in our Liturgies and our prayer, who meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary, drawn from the lives of Jesus and Mary, and depend on the faithful transmission of the inspired, inerrant Word of God to hand on our faith to future generations.

Our saints include many whose lives were redirected by the Word of God.

Saint Anthony of Egypt, for example, walked into a church and heard Matthew 19:21 being read: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." That passage changed his life. He did exactly what he heard, and became the father of monasticism.

Saint Augustine of Hippo heard a voice calling out, "*Tolle! Lege!*" ("Take up and read!") He took up the Scriptures near to hand and read: "[N]ot in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh" (Rom 13:13-14). That marked the great conversion of his life.

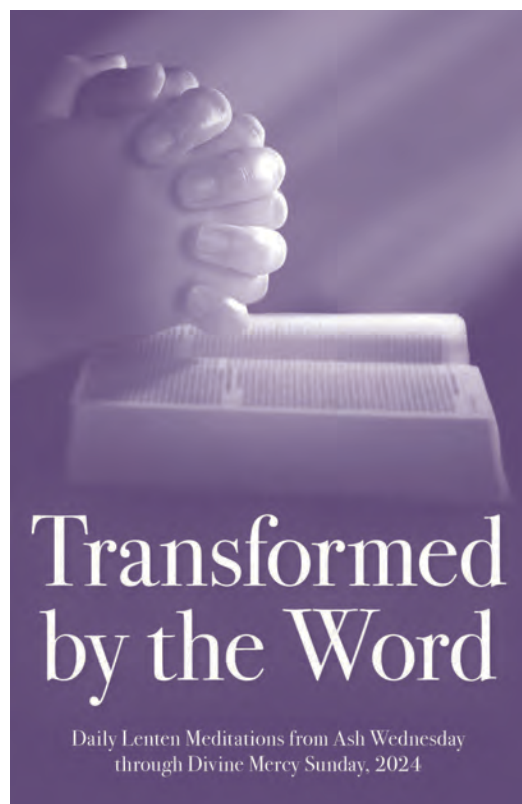
## Treasure in Heaven

Saint Francis of Assisi, when other men came to him to join his way of life, turned to the Scriptures for guidance on how they should live. Saint Francis went to the Church of St. Nicholas with Brother Bernard, and opened the Bible three times, first to Matthew 19:21, then Luke 9:3 ("He said to them, 'Take nothing for the jour-

ney, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic'"), and then Matthew 16:24 ("Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me'"). That became the basis for the Franciscan way of following Jesus.

This is a mere sampling of the saints sanctified by the Scriptures. Why not join their number during the holy season of Lent?

MH



To order *Transformed by the Word* (Product code: B61-LD24), visit [ShopMercy.org](https://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426.

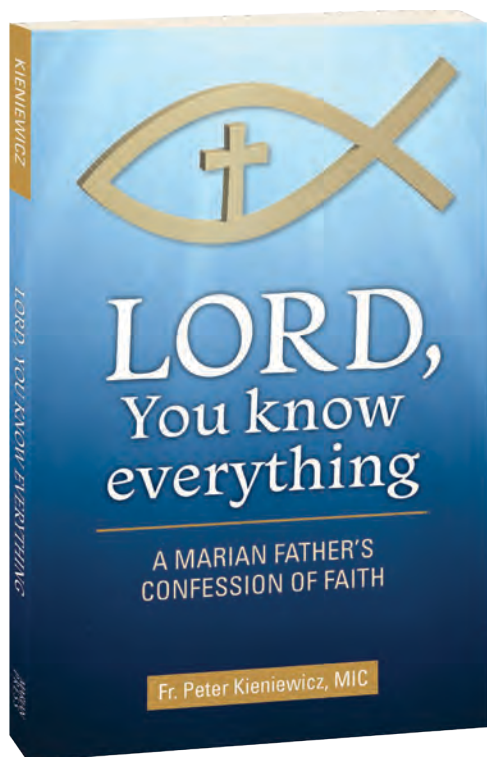
## Walk Lent Faithfully

Visit our life-sized Stations of the Cross at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

Learn more at  
[ShrineOfDivineMercy.org](https://ShrineOfDivineMercy.org)







# Watching with Jesus

By Fr. Peter Kieniewicz, MIC

**T**he Garden of Olives is a special place for me. It is a place of prayer for the fulfillment of the Father's will — not only for Jesus, but also for me, especially since the Lord Himself asks me to accompany Him in this hour of darkness.

It is the place of His struggle for the fidelity of love to the Father, a struggle in which His freedom in the face of the prospect of terrifying death is also revealed.

In my own struggle in the Garden of Olives, I am losing. I don't know how to endure that one hour. I would excuse myself with fatigue, if it weren't for the fact that it's simply embarrassing. I remain silent and burn with shame.

I also have my moment of struggle, like Peter, when I reach for violence in defense of my Lord. This, too, is my defeat, even though, after all, I meant well. Violence is not the solution. Those who reach for the sword die by the sword.

The Garden of Olives is also a place of His immense solitude, although I am — sleeping with others — right next to Him. He is praying, flowing with bloody sweat, entrusting Himself to the Father ... But He is alone. ...

## Make the time

When sometime later, already after the Resurrection, Jesus will ask Peter about love, He will refer not only to the fact of the thrice-spoken "I do not know Him." He will also recall the threefold invitation to wakefulness and the sad comment accompanying it at the end: "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? ... So you could not keep watch with me for one hour?" (Mt 26:45, 40).

Peter and the Sons of Zebedee were then ashamed. Perhaps we should be too? Because how much time are we ready to measure to God? How much time are we ready to give Him among our very important things?

There is no denying that today time is the most valuable currency in relations between people. Sometimes we manage to save a little of it, but we do not know how to create it, multiply it. As a result, we throw in — as if into a treasury — from what we have been saving, and yet we are not able to fill it anyway. Indeed, the gift of time can really only be

made by one who, like a poor widow, gives all that he has for himself.

Time off is not set aside for important matters, because they will never be taken care of. For building relationships, for love and friendship, and for prayer — time has to be carved out so that thousands of "very important things" don't destroy what is really important. Otherwise, instead of conversation, there will be shopping or cleaning, or a movie on TV, or whatever. Instead of wakefulness there will be sleep.

## Gift of love

So if someone says he has no time for prayer, it is because he has not chosen any moment for God. Twenty-four hours a day: 1,440 minutes, 86,400 seconds. For one Hail Mary it takes, if recited calmly, about 20 seconds. If I still don't have time to pray, it's because I haven't set aside any moment for prayer.

Time offered is perhaps the strongest sign with which I can show that I care. But also, asking for time, being in essence a request for the gift of love, must be marked by responsibility. It is not good when I first ask for time and then, having received it, do not value the gift offered to me and waste it. I must not forget that I was not given free time. The one who gave me his time snatched it away at the expense of other activities, because I was more important to him than they were.

Jesus invited the three to watch by Him as He watches by the Father. He wanted them to love Him as He loves the Father. To follow Him as He followed the Father's will. They were not ready. Not yet ...

*Excerpted from Lord, You know everything by Fr. Peter Kieniewicz, MIC, provincial secretary of the Polish Province of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. To order, visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426 (Product code: B61-EVRY).*



"The Holy Family with Saints Anne and Catherine of Alexandria"  
by Lo Spagnoletto, 1648.



# FOLLOW JOSEPH!

By Maria V. Gallagher

**I**t was one of those homilies that has stayed with me throughout the years — a message that I carry within my heart. The priest who spoke the comforting words was a caring, compassionate soul who had accompanied me during a difficult time in my life.

He spoke with eloquence of the role that St. Joseph had played in salvation history, and that all mothers should have a St. Joseph beside them to weather the trials of pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting.

In our modern society, St. Joseph (feast day: March 19) is often overlooked — relegated to the shadows of the Nativity story. He is the ultimate supporting player, a man of few words. Yet he was a man of action, courage, and stamina, who led his family with a quiet dignity.

He was a role model for Jesus, teaching the Christ Child not only the craft of carpentry, but showing his foster Son

what a man should be: hard-working, dedicated, and loving. In Joseph, boys can find an example of faithfulness — to God, to family, and to duty.

In an era in which the importance of fatherhood is frequently downplayed, St. Joseph stands as a testament to the critical role fathers need to play, not only in our families, but in our communities and our country as a whole.

## Exemplary character

In Matthew 1:18-25 we catch a glimpse of the exemplary character of Joseph:



Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.

Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,  
And they shall name Him Emmanuel,”  
which means “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. ... she bore a son, and he named Him Jesus.

In this passage, it is apparent that Joseph was a man attuned to the whispers of God that came to him through a dream. He was willing to turn his life upside down to follow the Lord’s command. He humbly put into action the Father’s desires, forming the foundation of a loving earthly family for Jesus.

## Culture of life

In a time of great confusion and opposition to the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage and family, Joseph stands tall as the epitome of loyalty to the Lord and the lessons He provides. As a result, St. Joseph is a fitting patron for the pro-life movement, which strives to rebuild a culture of life and a civilization of love.

Here are just some of the ways that St. Joseph can aid us in renewing society:

● **As an intercessor.** Joseph has been a powerful interces-



“The Dream of Joseph,” Jacques Goullons, ca. 1645–50.

sor in the life of my family, which has often turned to him in moments of difficulty and strife. By praying for the intercession of St. Joseph in the lives of pregnant women, preborn children, fathers, and the frail elderly, we can discover a spiritual lifeline that can help to rescue our world from the abyss of the culture of death.

● **As a motivator.** Joseph can motivate us to strive to do the best for our families and our communities. With Joseph as our guide, we may be surprised at the goals we can reach and the hearts we can touch.

● **As a pillar of strength.** True masculine strength does not resemble the stereotypes we find in society. It begins with self-mastery, not bluster or bullying. The gentle Joseph, a man of silence, is a model of the infinite strength of God the Father, who sustains the cosmos from moment to moment, often in silence.

A pregnant woman looks to the father of her preborn child for support and comfort during a challenging time in her life. When a father models St. Joseph, the woman can draw the strength necessary to give birth to her child. The fatherhood initiatives at many pregnancy resource centers around the country demonstrate the important role fathers play — even before a child’s birth.

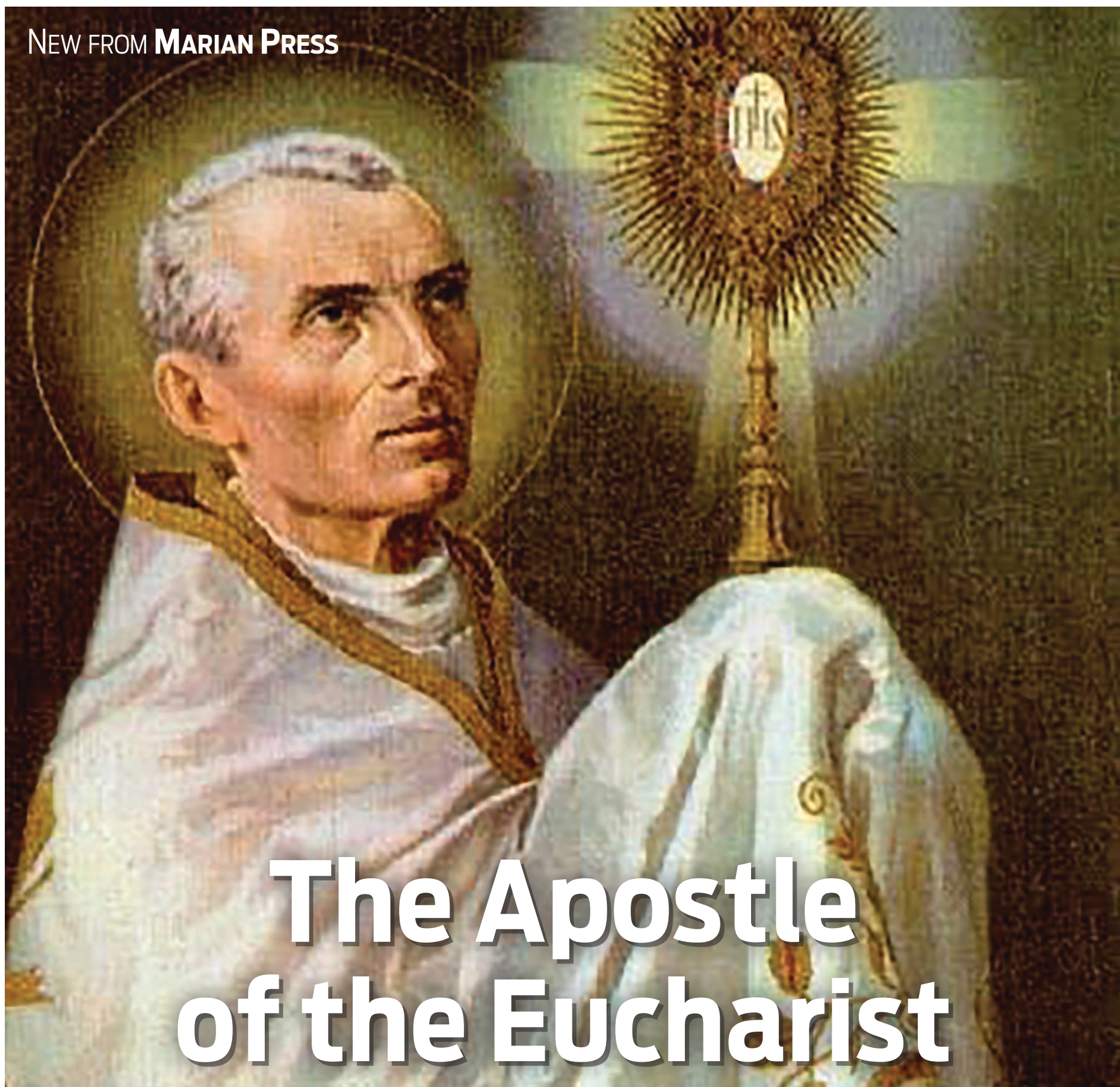
When my own mother reflected on her marriage, she often spoke of how she decided to marry because she believed she had found a man who would be a good father to her children. In my father, I discovered someone who lived out many of St. Joseph’s virtues. He gave me a firm foundation for pursuing my interests — including my involvement in the pro-life movement.

It is my fervent prayer that fathers will follow in the footsteps of St. Joseph in pursuing their vocations with love and dedication. When fathers live up to the responsibilities of their sacred calling, true miracles can happen!

*Maria Gallagher is the author of Mercy’s Power: Inspiration to Serve the Gospel of Life. To order, visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426 (Product code: B61-MPOW).*

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# The Apostle of the Eucharist

Getting to know St. Peter Julian Eymard

By Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

**I**n my book *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, St. Peter Julian Eymard is the first saint I reference. His wisdom and insights on St. Joseph are tremendous and almost without parallel. More importantly, St. Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868) loved the Holy Eucharist. His zeal for preaching on the Eucharist and promoting Eucharistic Adoration is the reason several popes have referred to St. Peter Julian Eymard as “the Apostle of the Eucharist.”



Nonetheless, St. Peter Julian Eymard is not that well known in the universal Church. France and several other countries in Europe promote his works, but when it comes to worldwide recognition of his extraordinary life, as well as the many amazing things he did to foster a greater love for the Blessed Sacrament, most Catholics are unfamiliar with him and have never heard his name.

That is about to change, thanks to my new Marian Press book, *30 Day Eucharistic Revival: A Retreat with St. Peter Julian Eymard*, written with the assistance of Patrick O'Hearn, a Catholic author and lover of the saints.

## Urgent need

Catholics in the United States are currently undergoing a severe crisis of belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Several years ago, a survey revealed that 69 percent of Catholics no longer believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament (Holy Communion). Looking at it from another perspective, this means that only 31 percent of Catholics in the United States believe in the *source and summit* of the Christian faith.

This is a tragedy!

In response to this crisis, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) initiated a "Eucharistic Revival." It involves several years of teaching, preaching, and events that are intended to help turn things around.

The Eucharistic Revival concludes on Pentecost Sunday in 2025. It's a noble initiative, and one that I pray bears good fruit.

Returning to belief in the Real Presence is an urgent matter and of the utmost importance in the life of the Church. My desire is to offer the Church a book on the Eucharist grounded in the wisdom and insights of the Apostle of the Eucharist. Publishing such a book is an urgent matter. I think St. Peter Julian Eymard would agree, because he dealt with similar crises of belief in the Real Presence in his time.

## Act quickly

Saint Peter Julian Eymard lived in an era that was plagued by lack of belief in the Real Presence and outright

indifference to this core teaching of Christianity. His response was to act quickly. He wrote,

Now we must quickly get to work to save souls by the divine Eucharist, to awaken France and Europe numbed in dormant apathy because they don't know the gift of God, Jesus, the Eucharistic Emmanuel. This is the torch of love which we must carry to tepid souls who think they are devout, and are not, because they haven't made Jesus in the holy tabernacle their center and their life. Any devotion which doesn't set up one tent on Calvary, and one near the tabernacle, is not a solid piety and will never do anything great. I fear that people are wandering too far from the Holy Eucharist, that this mystery of love *par excellence* is not sufficiently proclaimed. So souls are suffering, becoming more sensual and materialistic in their devotional life and inordinately attached to human beings. It is because they don't know how to find their consolation and strength in our Lord.

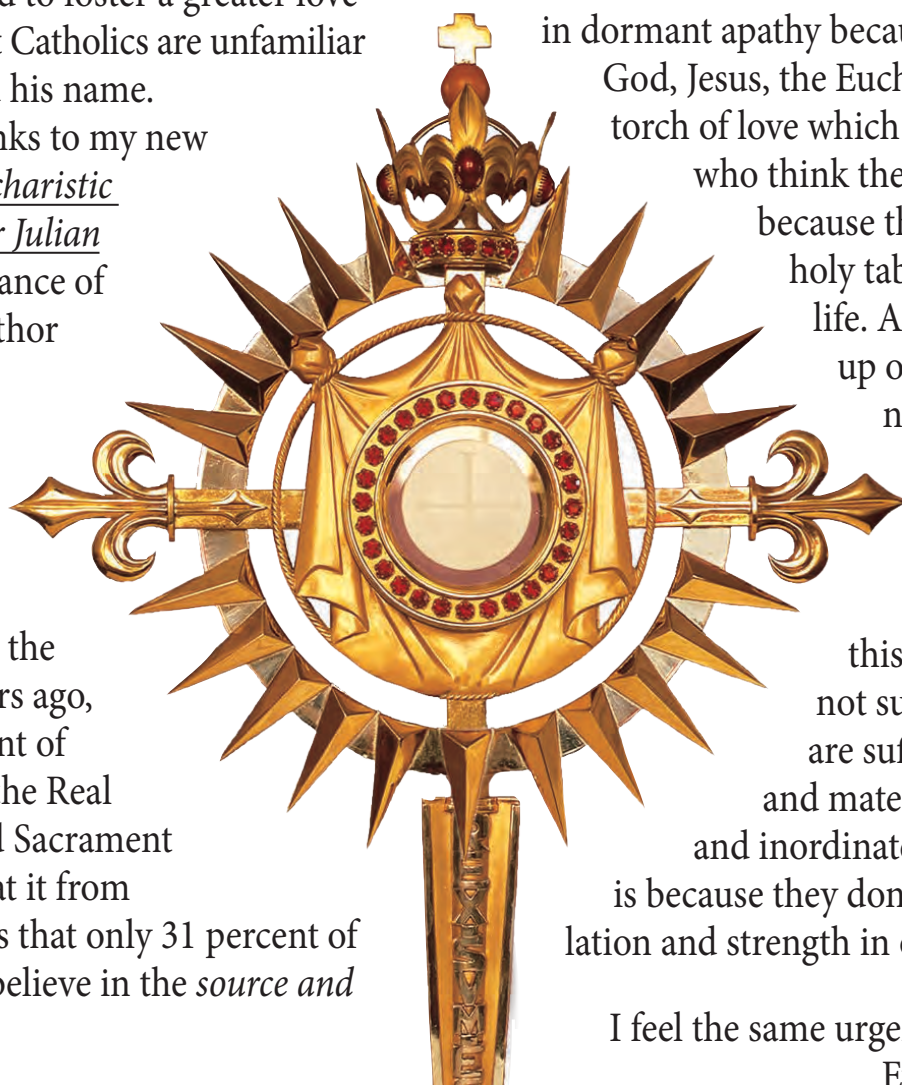
I feel the same urgency today as St. Peter Julian Eymard did in his day. God's people need a greater love for the Eucharist. If people center their lives on the Eucharist, it will prove to be a remedy for the problems of our time.

The Eucharistic Revival of the USCCB will come and go, but a book that offers God's people wisdom on the Eucharist from the Apostle of the Eucharist will be timeless. Sprinkle in other saints and what they said about the Eucharist, and it will be a book to be used for generations to come.

*30 Day Eucharistic Revival* is intended to help you, your children, your grandchildren, and all future generations rediscover and experience a revival of belief in the Real Presence.

May the Eucharistic Revival never end!

To order *30 Day Eucharistic Revival: A Retreat with St. Peter Julian Eymard* (Product code: B61-ECHR), visit [ShopMercy.org](http://ShopMercy.org) or call 1-800-462-7426.



**"I have often reflected upon the remedies for the universal indifference which is taking hold of so many Catholics in a frightening way. I can find only one: the Eucharist, love for Jesus Eucharistic. "**

**— St. Peter Julian Eymard**



# A FAMILY OF MARTYRS

By Veronica Szczygiel

**I**n their family Bible, Józef and Wiktoria Ulma underlined Jesus' words: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34-35).

Love is the ultimate mark of being Christian. In the Gospel of John, Jesus goes on to say, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). Józef and Wiktoria, like many other heroes, martyrs, and saints, followed Jesus' commandments and chose to love — to the point of ultimate sacrifice.

The beatification of Józef, Wiktoria, and their seven children on Sept. 10, 2023, was an unprecedented event in the history of the Catholic Church. For the first time, an entire family was beatified, including the child born as his mother Wiktoria was murdered.

## Test of faith

The Ulmas were a young, growing family living in Markowa, Poland, a rural village of approximately 4,500 inhabitants. Wiktoria and Józef married in 1935, and by 1944 had six children: Stanisława, 8; Barbara, 7; Władysław, 6; Franciszek, 4; Antoni, 3; and Maria, 2. Wiktoria was also expecting her seventh child.

Józef was a farmer and beekeeper, and Wiktoria raised the children while lending her acting skills to the local community theater. They led full, faith-filled lives, and had



an entire future of love and hope to look forward to.

Unfortunately, their young lives were cut tragically short, but not before the Ulmas endured an incredibly challenging test of faith.

In 1941, the Nazis implemented the "Final Solution," a plan to exterminate all Jews in Europe. They subsequently declared a death penalty for any Pole who hid or sheltered a Jew. These policies directly endangered the lives of the 120 Jews in Markowa who had previously lived in harmony with their fellow villagers.

Despite the clear risk to themselves and their young children, Wiktoria and Józef decided to provide shelter, food, and comfort to eight Jews from three families.

## Secret of their heroism

What made these young parents decide to risk it all — their own lives and the lives of their children — to help fellow human beings? What gave them the courage to make



such a difficult choice?

The answer to this question lies in the state of the Ulmas' family Bible. It was paged through, marked up, and underlined in many places. It had been read and prayed over, probably many times. For the Ulmas, the Word of God in Scripture was a foundation for how to comport themselves and build up their family. Fittingly, the passage that was emphasized with red underlining and a resounding "yes" written next to it was the story of the Good Samaritan (see Lk 10:25-37).

The Word of God gave the Ulmas the strength to live their faith through corporal and spiritual works of mercy. They fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, and sheltered the homeless (corporal works). They comforted the sorrowful, bore wrongs patiently, and prayed (spiritual works). Józef and Wiktoria took the opportunity to teach their children how to truly live out their Christian faith, even in the most dire and dangerous circumstances.

## Martyrs like Christ

Ultimately, the Ulmas experienced these radical demands of love. In the early morning of March 24, 1944, having been tipped off by a local, the Nazis entered the Ulmas' home and executed the Jews, Józef, all their children, and Wiktoria, who was seven months pregnant at the time. During her execution, she began giving birth to her baby. Then the Nazis set fire to their home.

In the 1990s, the Ulmas were recognized among 7,200 Poles as "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem, Israel's World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

The beatification of the Ulmas underscores the incredible graces we attain when we fully trust in and totally respond to God's will for our lives. The family mimicked Mary's own *fiat* when they said "yes" to hiding their Jewish brethren in their house, knowing the deadly cost. Saying yes to God's will and trusting fully in its unfolding is one of the founda-

tional principles of Divine Mercy.

In St. Faustina's mystical experiences of Jesus, He reminded her time and time again to trust in Him completely. When we trust in God and His plan for our lives, He uses us as instruments for the good of others. Jesus said to Faustina: **"I am Love and Mercy itself. When a soul approaches Me with trust, I fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls"** (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1074).

There are many extraordinary stories of righteousness from Poland and all over the globe. From a Christian viewpoint,

courage blossoms from the seeds of faith and trust in God that we plant in our hearts. In order for our faith to radiate to others, we must be beacons of God's love and Divine Mercy.

## The Domestic Church

Pope St. John Paul is often quoted as saying, "As the family goes, so goes the nation, so goes the world in which we live." God's kingdom of love, peace, and mercy begins in our very own homes and families. If we can make good choices in our daily lives and love one another, that

means we are already making a difference in our world.

The feast day of a Catholic martyr is usually the day of their death. In the case of the Ulma family, the day chosen is July 7, Józef and Wiktoria's wedding anniversary. The couple "lived their 'domestic church' with the Sacrament of Marriage at the center: openness to life of others in need and of their children," noted the Dicastery for Laity, the Family, and Life.

Pope Francis added that the Ulmas "opposed the hatred and violence that characterized that time with evangelical love. May this Polish family, which represents a ray of light in the darkness of the Second World War, be for all of us a model to imitate in the zeal for goodness and service to those in need."

MH



**For the first time in the history of the Catholic Church, an entire family was beatified, including the child born as his mother Wiktoria was murdered.**



# CALLING ALL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS!

In a world increasingly impacted by the culture of death, the work of Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy is more vital than ever. The apostolate, officially affiliated with the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, will be holding its 19<sup>th</sup> annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference June 5-6, followed by a half-day retreat on June 7, on the grounds of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

"It is a wonderful privilege to be able to have daily Mass at the Shrine, and the opportunity to meet both other healthcare professionals from around the country and the Marian Fathers," said apostolate founder Marie Romagnano, MSN, RN, CCM-R.

The conference will focus on the role of compassion and mercy in healthcare.

A deep commitment to compassion is the pathway to acts of mercy and love. "Our world is calling for compassion as a powerful force behind health care delivery," explained Nurse Marie. "The necessity of compassion in healthcare has become increasingly more evident with the pandemic and compounded by many social issues healthcare professionals face today."

## A Catholic healthcare pioneer

One of the featured keynote speakers at the conference will be Dr. Robin Goldsmith, president and chief medical officer of the St. Gianna Molla Clinic in De Pere, Wisconsin, speaking on "The Need for Courage and Compassion in Catholic Primary Care" and "The Gospel of Life at the End of Life."

Dr. Goldsmith co-founded the St. Gianna Clinic in 2014. It was given a formal decree as the first "Catholic Teaching Clinic" in the country by Bishop David Ricken. The clinic continues to grow and serves as a sustainable, replicable model for the entire country, providing truly excellent, truly faithful medical care for all people while evangelizing to patients and families throughout the Diocese of Green Bay and beyond.

## Highlights

Other highlights of the conference, which offers Continuing Education Credit for healthcare professionals, will include:

- Most Rev. Joe Roesch, MIC, MA, STL, superior general of the Marian Fathers, speaking on "Practicing Faith-Based Virtues as the Key to Compassionate and Merciful Care in the Healthcare Setting."
- Dr. Christopher Klofft, STD, speaking on "Just War



## SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 5-7

### 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference

Healthcare professionals desiring to learn how to integrate their faith in their practice: Join us at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy!

Visit [TheDivineMercy.org/bioethics](https://TheDivineMercy.org/bioethics)  
or call 413-298-1303.

Theory and the Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conflict."

- Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, BA, STB, speaking on "Patient Care of the Dying with the Divine Mercy Message and Devotion: Approach of Pastoral Care."
  - Nurse Marie Romagnano, speaking on "The Five-Minute Spiritual Assessment for Any Healthcare Professional and Joint Commission Guidelines" and "Adoption viewed from Medical, Ethical and Family Perspective."
- Visit [TheDivineMercy.org/healthcare](https://TheDivineMercy.org/healthcare) for more information about the apostolate and to register for the conference.





Hospital workers display the Ukrainian flag beside boxes of supplies obtained thanks to Marian Helpers' donations.

# UKRAINE, TWO YEARS LATER

By Chris Sparks

*Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, to obtain the peace of the world and the end of the war, because only she can obtain it.*

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

**T**wo years ago, on Feb. 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The war drags on, and ordinary folks continue to suffer.

But your prayers and financial support have given hope to those caught in the crossfire.

“Once again, I want to thank our donors, on behalf of my confrères in Ukraine, for their support and prayers for peace in Ukraine,” said Fr. Wojciech “Wojtek” Jasinski, MIC, general treasurer for the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, based in Rome.

## Not forgotten

Since the start of the war, the Marian Fathers and the Association of Marian Helpers, especially through the Marian apostolates Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy and Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM), have raised more than \$1.5 million for humanitarian aid and medical supplies.

“It is very important that people in Ukraine know that others still help them and that they are not forgotten,” said Fr. Wojtek. “People in Ukraine are trying to sustain hope, and they still rely on our help and prayers.”

Last September, Fr. Wojtek met with the Marian superior and pastor in Gorodok in western Ukraine, the place of the Shrine of St. Anthony of Padua and the Marians’ Mercy House for disabled and elderly people.

“He told me that the most challenging matter they deal

with now is to sustain hope and not despair,” Fr. Wojtek explained. “It has been a long war. It is almost impossible to imagine how it might end up. In Gorodok and our other parishes, they provide daily support, material and spiritual, for the parishioners, mostly elderly and women, because most of the men are fighting. They are trying to extend Mercy House’s capacity to accept more people who need shelter.”

## Pray, pray, pray!

While your financial contributions are life-saving, your prayers for peace are even more important. Remember what Jesus told St. Faustina:

**[W]rite this for the many souls who are often worried because they do not have the material means with which to carry out an act of mercy. Yet spiritual mercy, which requires neither permissions nor storehouses, is much more meritorious and is within the grasp of every soul (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1317).**

It can be tempting to feel like our prayers are useless, or too small, or not a real response to the evils confronting the Ukrainian people. Yet salvation history proves otherwise. Prayer has redirected the course of battle in many instances across Jewish and Christian history.

Let us, with prayers, words, and deeds (see *Diary*, 742) put a limit on evil. Let us continue to help the poor suffering people in Ukraine in any way we can.

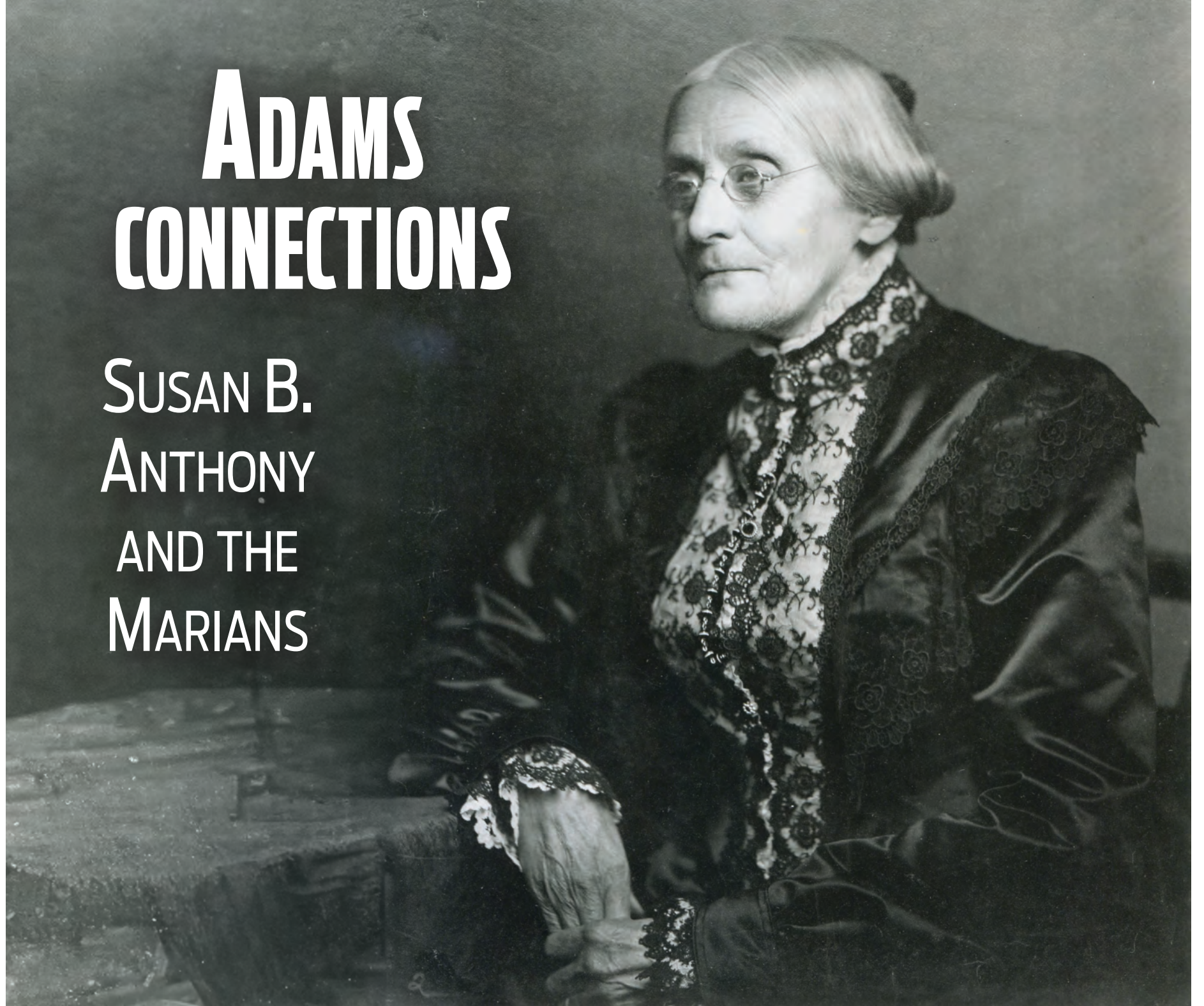
*Please visit [Marian.org/Ukraine](https://marian.org/Ukraine) or call 1-800-462-7426 to make a donation for Ukraine relief. One hundred percent of funds received are sent directly to Ukraine and used to purchase humanitarian aid and medical supplies.*

MH



# ADAMS CONNECTIONS

## SUSAN B. ANTHONY AND THE MARIANS



By Chris Sparks

**T**he next time you visit the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, plan to make a side-trip some 30 miles north to the town of Adams to experience the surprising connection between the history of the Divine Mercy message and devotion and the pro-life, pro-woman cause.

Recently, I visited the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in Adams. Anthony (1820-1906) was one of the staunchest of suffragettes, defending women's right to vote in the face of arrest, a court-imposed fine, heavy financial difficulties, and all sorts of opposition. She firmly and fervently supported the abolition of slavery and the enfranchisement of black men and women, expanding the right to vote to all Americans.

### Opposing Restellism

She was also staunchly opposed to what was then called "Restellism," after one of the wealthiest abortionists of the day.

"Anne Trow Lohman, a.k.a. Madame Restell (1812-1878), was a notorious abortion provider who practiced without formal medical training in 19<sup>th</sup>-century New York City; the term 'Restellism' became synonymous with abortion by the late 1830s," according to Feminists for Life of America ([FeministsForLife.org](https://FeministsForLife.org)).

Anthony was staunchly pro-life, according to the displays and website of the museum in Adams situated in her family's home ([SusanBAnthonyBirthplace.com](https://SusanBAnthonyBirthplace.com)). The great social activist and reformer published a number of articles opposed to "Restellism" in her newspaper, *The Revolution*.



## Divine Mercy cradle

Amazingly enough, Anthony was born a couple blocks from what would become St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, home parish of the Pelczynski and Michalenko families. Father Ladislaus “Walter” Pelczynski, MIC, would go on to oversee the Marian Fathers’ purchase of Eden Hill, eventual home of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, and found the Association of Marian Helpers in 1944.

Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, was the great teacher and promoter of Divine Mercy, secretly bringing the microfilm copy of the Diary of St. Faustina out of Communist Poland so it could be translated and published around the world. He documented both the beatification and canonization miracles for St. Faustina’s cause for canonization, and produced best-selling materials such as the Divine Mercy Message and Devotion booklet to spread Divine Mercy around the world.

In other words, these Marian Fathers, members of a religious congregation of men dedicated to the service of the Woman, the Blessed Virgin Mary, played unique roles in ensuring the voice of St. Faustina Kowalska, one of the most unlikely and yet influential women of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was heard by the whole world. And St. Faustina, like Susan B. Anthony, was staunchly pro-life. For example, she wrote, “I saw this sign of divine wrath which was about to strike the earth, and in particular a certain place” (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 474). According to St. Faustina’s spiritual director, Bl. Michael Sopoćko, the reason for this chastisement was “especially for the killing of infants not yet born, the most grievous crime of all.”

## Culture of death

Contrast this with the historical origins of the culture of death. There are direct connections between some of the founding figures of the modern pro-abortion movement and the eugenics movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s. After all, the culture of death grows out of the

American heritage of race-based slavery, the same myths of inferiority. Without the eugenics movement, there may well never have been Margaret Sanger and her *Birth Control Review* (Sanger used the phrase “Birth Control: To Create a Race of Thoroughbreds” as a banner on the November 1921 issue), or her notorious organization, Planned Parenthood.

Don’t believe me? Planned Parenthood itself acknowledged that connection between racism and their founder in 2021, when they announced plans to remove Margaret Sanger’s name from the Manhattan Health Center in New York City.

“Margaret Sanger’s concerns and advocacy for reproductive health have been clearly documented, but so too has her racist legacy,” said Karen Seltzer, Planned Parenthood board chair. “There is overwhelming evidence for Sanger’s deep belief in eugenic ideology, which runs completely counter to our values.”

Around the same time, Jesuit Fr. Michael Maher, a former professor of mine at Gonzaga University, responded: “There are some who have nourished themselves on the poisonous idea that the human person is a living

creature but differs only in degree and not in kind from other living creatures. This mistaken view of human nature, the killing and removing of what Margaret Sanger considered to be to ‘human weeds,’ established a foundational idea that serves as a first premise to a deadly logic, and this logic is used as a faulty response to the world’s problems.”

## Human dignity

Supporting women and the pro-life struggle in defense of human life and human dignity are all part of the same project. Great servants of the natural law and the God who created that law like Susan B. Anthony, Frs. Pelczynski and Michalenko, St. Faustina, and Pope St. John Paul II show us the way.

*A campaign is under way to save and restore the historic St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Adams, Massachusetts. Visit [SSKPreservation.org](http://SSKPreservation.org) for more information.*

MH



**Susan B. Anthony, who hailed from the same small Massachusetts town as a number of Marian priests, was staunchly pro-life. She campaigned strongly against the leading abortionist of her time, Madame Restell.**





A Divine Mercy Image beside the road in the Philippines, a common sight throughout the country.

# PILGRIMAGE OF A LIFETIME

By Marian Friedrichs

**W**hen Anthony Loyola left Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in March 2023 for a six-month pilgrimage to holy places around the world, he did not plan to do what modern travelers typically do: post photos and commentary on social media about his experiences abroad. Anthony's spiritual director, however, urged him to reconsider, telling him, "People need to see that these sites exist."

It is one thing to know that God led His people out of slavery into the Promised Land. It is another to stand, as Anthony did, on the spot where Moses stood, and to see what Moses saw when God gave him the promised glimpse of Israel's future home after 40 years of wandering (see Dt 34:1-12).

It is one thing to know that, centuries later, 12 descendants of those wanderers would set out from Jerusalem and proclaim a Gospel that would eventually reach all the corners and peoples of the earth. It is another to read a Mass schedule for a church in Dubai and discover that the Holy Sacrifice — the



Anthony Loyola atop Mount Nebo, where Moses saw the Promised Land.

same one offered back home in the United States — is offered there in no fewer than 16 different languages every month.

"I saw salvation history," Anthony says, "and the universal Catholic Church."

## An open book

Most people will never be able to visit sacred sites far from home. Of those who do, very few will be able to do what Anthony did: commit months of their lives to seeing and

praying in scores of sacred locations around the world.

"Pilgrimages aren't just kept for yourself," Anthony came to understand. "There's sharing that happens."

Anthony decided to open the book of his wanderings to





A view of Mount Ararat in Turkey, where Noah's Ark landed after the Flood (see Gen 8:4).

anyone interested in reading it, hoping it might prove beneficial to them, “however God wants to use it.”

As he made his way around the globe — including the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy last fall — Anthony posted photos to his Facebook page; when possible, he paired the images with links to videos related to the pilgrimage sites. When Anthony posted pictures from his visit to Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark is thought to have landed (see Gen 8:4), he included a link to Marian Fr. Chris Alar's YouTube video about the ark.

After visiting several sites in Poland related to St. Faustina, Anthony shared those photos, accompanied by links to a few of Fr. Chris' talks about the saint and her *Diary*. Anthony hopes people's faith might be strengthened by what he shared, as his own faith was strengthened, sometimes in ways he did not expect.

## Subtle sanctification

At his journey's beginning, Anthony thought that his time at the holy sites would produce “a ‘Eureka!’ moment” in his spiritual life. But that moment never came.

“You can't force God to do something,” Anthony acknowledges, and God did not choose to send him sudden flashes of spiritual illumination as he walked the Camino de Santiago or visited the cave where the prophet Elijah had listened for God in the wind and the earthquake, but heard His voice in the stillness (see 1 Kgs 19:8-18).

Rather, Anthony found that much of his progress in sanctity came simply through learning to endure the grind and grime of travel. He was often tired or stressed.

“There were times when I wouldn't be the most pleasant person to be around,” he admits.

But as the weeks and months went by, Anthony noticed himself growing in patience and self-control. He was also repeatedly reminded to entrust himself and his travels to God, not only by the large *Divine Mercy Images* — with their gentle, insistent message, “Jesus, I trust in You” — that

seemed to be displayed on the land of every farm he passed in the Philippines, but also in the challenges and adventures he met on the road.

On a long trip like Anthony's, “You learn to trust God, that He will take care of you.” Anthony did not get to see everything he wanted to see, but he came to have confidence that he would get to see everything God wanted him to see. And there were many times when Anthony could clearly tell how God had stepped in to help him.

When Anthony arrived on the island of Patmos, he had only 10 minutes to visit the place where St. John had written the Book of Revelation. As he ran, a car pulled up beside him and the driver asked where he was going. The people in the car turned out to be fellow pilgrims trying to reach the same site, but they were lost. Anthony had the map on his phone, and they offered him a ride. With Anthony navigating, the pilgrims were able to visit the holy site and get back to the ferry in time.

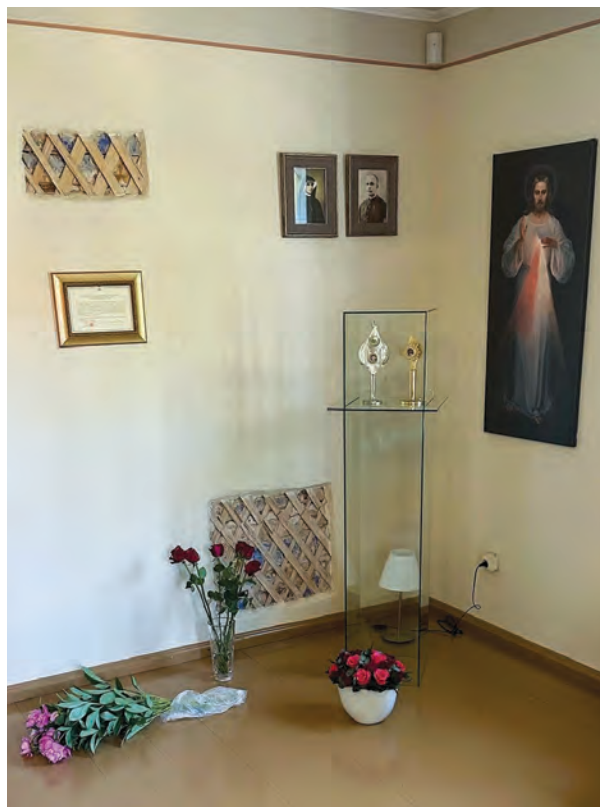
## The Mystical Body of Christ

Christians throughout the ages have compared the spiritual life with a journey, from Dante's sobering odyssey through the afterlife to Sam

and Frodo's perilous quest to Mordor and back again. “Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven,” Holy Mother Church teaches (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2691). Perhaps no one reading this will experience something quite like Anthony Loyola's “life-changing pilgrimage.” Still, every soldier in the Lord's army has a long march to make.

The lessons Anthony brought back with him — that salvation history is real, and the good news of that reality is to be shared; that God is trustworthy; that no member of Christ's Body is ever truly alone; and that daily perseverance is the path to ultimate sanctification — are ones that every traveler to the heavenly homeland would do well to carry with him on the way.

MH



The room in Vilnius, Lithuania, where St. Faustina saw Jesus.



# *Living Divine Mercy*

WITH FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC

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# MINDS (AND HEARTS) THINK ALIKE

**E**velyn Fischer, born and raised in the Philippines, migrated to the United States in 1983. With such a popular passion for the Divine Mercy message in her home country, it may come as a surprise that she first learned of the devotion when she joined a Rosary group at her previous parish, St. Michael's in Poway, California.

Her devotion to the Divine Mercy intensified during the pandemic, thanks to the livestream Masses from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and watching the Saturday "Explaining the Faith" talks by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC. Then her cousin, Rolie Natividad, gave her an audio-book of St. Faustina's *Diary*.

"I couldn't get enough," Evelyn recalls. "I stayed up through the night reading and absorbing the spiritual content of the *Diary*."

## Pilgrimage

Before long, Evelyn and Rolie decided in June 2021 to make a cross-country pilgrimage to Stockbridge, Massachusetts. They didn't realize that not only would it be a faith-strengthening journey, but also one where they felt called to become Marian Helpers and support the mission of the Marian Fathers. Their pilgrimage is now an annual affair, and family members and friends take part.

"Eden Hill is so serene," Evelyn says. "We all have the same special feeling. Everyone we encounter are so welcoming and accommodating. We even met Fr. Chris!"

While on Eden Hill, Evelyn heard about the "Together for Christ and His Church" campaign to build a much-needed monastery and chapel. The Marians now live in five dilapidated old buildings, instead of in community as religious life dictates.

"The first thing I could think of was, 'I want to help!'" Evelyn recalls. And she has, not only making a pledge but

volunteering her time to spread the news of the campaign.

"Rolie and I have shared information with our immediate family relatives and friends, who pass it on," she says.

She recently held a garage sale and gave the proceeds to the Marians, and her granddaughters have redeemed bottles and cans.

"In our own small way, I think every cent counts," Evelyn says.

## Supporting the future

Evelyn and Rolie understand the Marian community is growing fast, and believe supporting the campaign is one way to ensure the Marians thrive as a religious order and continue spreading the Divine Mercy message for years to come. "The Marians definitely need a place that's very conducive to fulfilling their obligations and duties," says Evelyn.

Since their initial pilgrimage together, Evelyn and Rolie have returned to the National Shrine four times. They pray the Chaplet daily, practice the First Friday and First Saturday devotions, and distribute Divine Mercy prayer cards to friends, family, and colleagues.

"We are enthusiastic and strongly motivated to participate in our own small ways to help the Marians achieve their goals," Evelyn says.

Please join Evelyn and Rolie and support our "Together for Christ and His Church" campaign! For more information and to make a gift, please visit TogetherForChrist.org.




Evelyn Fischer and her cousin, Rolie Natividad, plan to share information at parishes on the Marians' capital campaign to build a new monastery and chapel.



Kevin Walto is a donor relations officer for the Marian Fathers. Contact him at (413) 298-1381; [helpers@Marian.org](mailto:helpers@Marian.org); or Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Visit [giving.Marian.org](http://giving.Marian.org) to learn more.





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Runs Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, through Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7.

**Visit TheDivineMercy.org/ptpsignup to sign up now!**





### Sons overcome legal issues

I am writing to inform you of not one, but two graces I attribute to the intercession of Blessed George Matulaitis, Renovator of the Marian Fathers.

First, my youngest son was involved in a legal issue that took several months to resolve. The outcome was the best that could be expected.

The second grace involved my eldest son. He was also involved in a long legal battle. It seemed the battle would never end. He was destined to struggle for years to come.

Finally, the long court battle came to a conclusion. Our son received the most wonderful news: Everything he had asked for was granted him. The judge ruled in his favor.

Never did I stop praying to Blessed George for both these cases.

Thank you for sharing the Blessed George Prayer in *Marian Helper*. His intercession is powerful!

— M, St. Paul, Minnesota

### Blessed George intercedes twice

I wanted to share my testimony of Blessed George's interventions.

I started to pray to Blessed George to find me a good tenant. We have been looking for eight months. The next day, I heard from my realtor that there was a good prospect on the horizon; a lease would be signed in a few days. That is what happened. Furthermore, it turns out that the new tenant is the grandson of a former owner of another unit in the building, someone I knew 30 years ago! Thank you, Blessed George!

For the second time, Blessed George came through

for me. I was planning a complicated week of high-level meetings for foreign VIPs and, despite my team's all-out efforts and experience, we weren't getting the responses I needed.

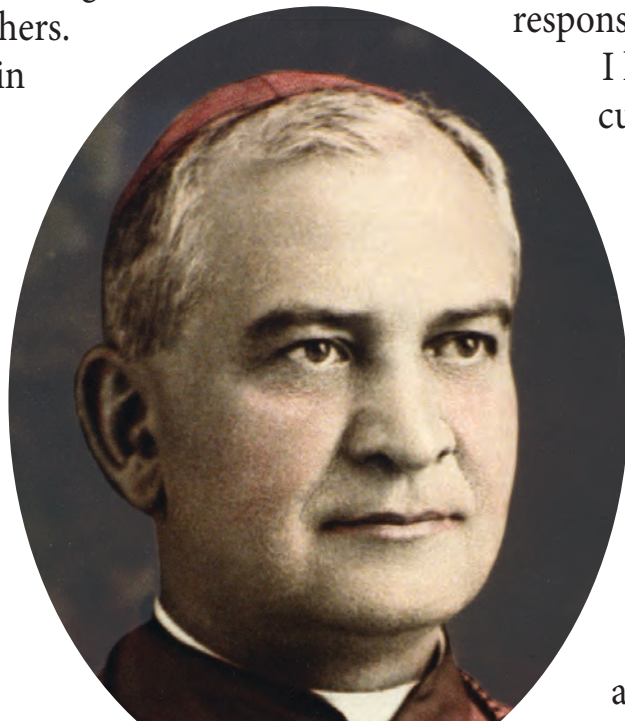
I had a lot riding on this — basically the culmination of my decades-long career.

Three weeks before the meetings, I started praying to Blessed George to open doors and minds.

The very next day, a long-awaited appointment came through. Almost every day, we got some good news. The week turned out to be 98 percent successful!

I know we owe it all to Blessed George. I feel so at peace knowing I can rely on him. I am continuing to ask for his intercession.

— EL, New York



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

### Job offer received

I am writing about a grace received through the intercession of Blessed George. My daughter-in-law had been looking for a job for a long time. It was

hard for her because she is legally blind in one eye and deaf in one of her ears. She is a smart girl and earned a master's degree in English.

I started praying to Blessed George to intercede. After three months, she got a job offer that she liked very much.

— TF, email

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For a Blessed George prayer card (B61-CBGP), call toll free 1-800-462-7426. If you have received graces through his intercession, please write: Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, Vice Postulator of the Marian Causes of Canonization, 2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA, 01263. Email: [graces@Marian.org](mailto:graces@Marian.org).

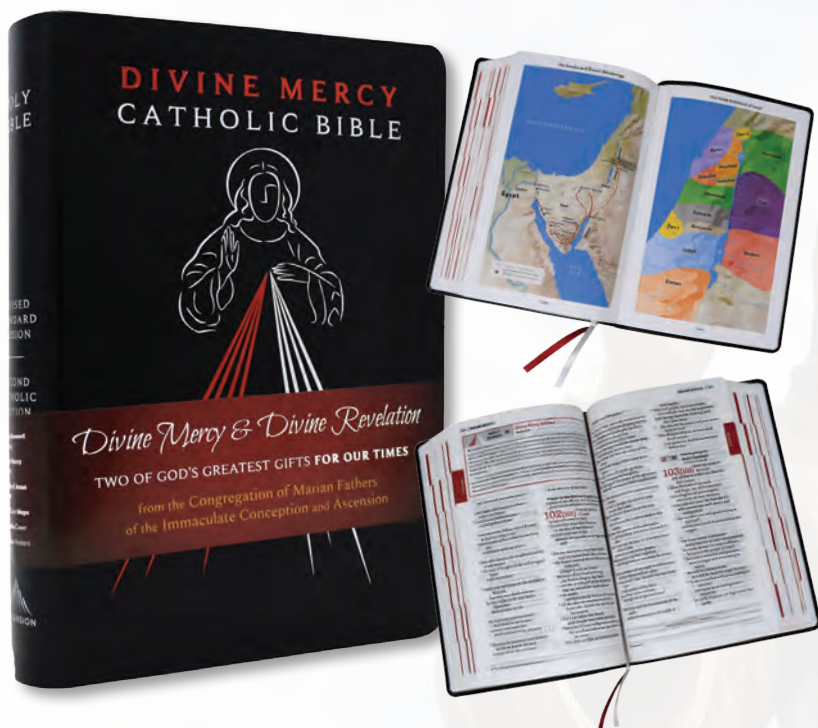
## Prayer for a Special Grace Through the Intercession of Blessed George

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

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



# Prepare for Divine Mercy Sunday



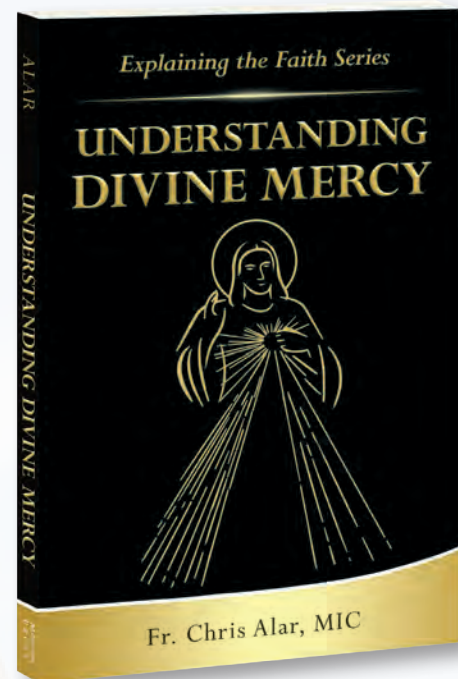
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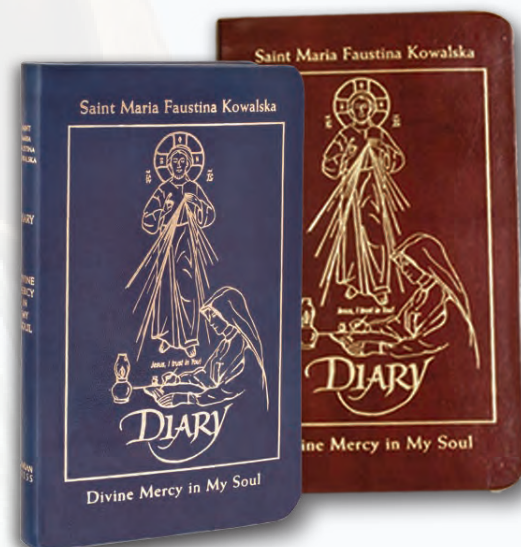
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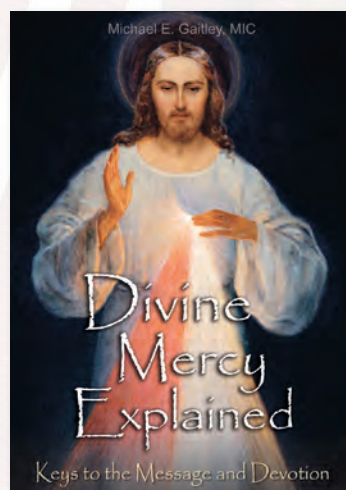
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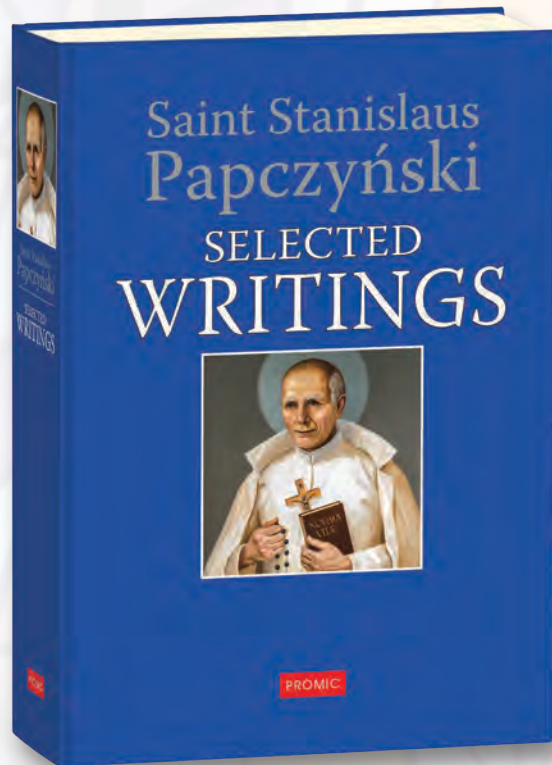


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# From the VAULTS



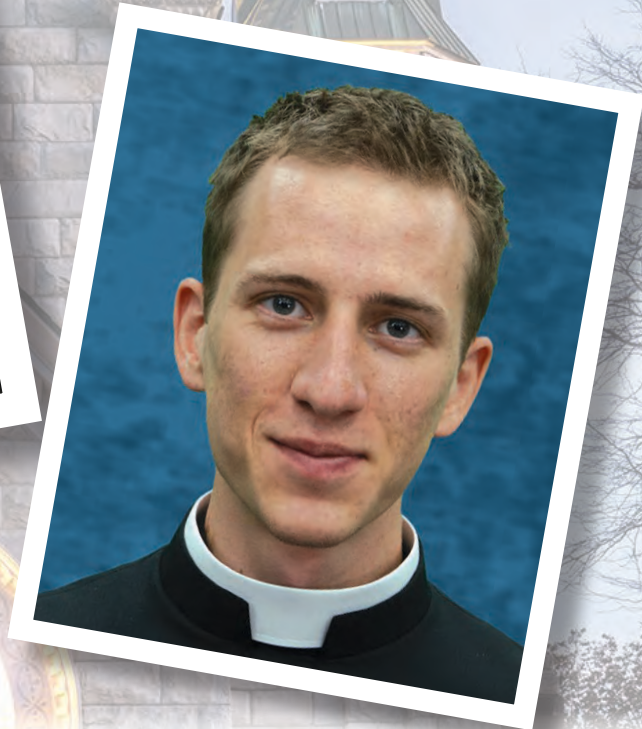
A half-century before Pope St. John Paul II declared a universal feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter, the Marian Fathers on Eden Hill celebrated “Low Sunday” in their new (but not yet fully decorated) chapel, and pilgrims were invited.

Even then, Mother Nature did not always cooperate. On April 8, 1956, pilgrims (including a busload from Rahway, New Jersey [top]), braved a freak snow storm. The following year, on April 28, 1957, skies were clear, and, reported *Marian Helpers Bulletin*, an estimated 1,000 visitors arrived “to help us to celebrate privately the Feast of the Mercy of God. Mass, sermons, blessing of [a] new Mercy painting and solemn benediction constituted the program of the day.” The provincial superior, Fr. Joseph Sielski, MIC, celebrated the Mass.

*Divine Mercy Weekend celebrations on Eden Hill take place April 6-7 this year. All are invited! For details, visit [ShrineOfDivineMercy.org](http://ShrineOfDivineMercy.org).*



# Live the call!



## Rose and Mike Procanik:

Supporting the Marians' vocations is our way of saying "thank you!" to God for bringing us back to the Truth. Receiving an enrollment from a neighbor for our handicapped son started the journey home many years ago, along with Mike's conversion at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy after Rose prayed for a year through St. Faustina's intercession. We need priests with a solid formation. We can't think of any better way to save souls and evangelize than by supporting a Marian seminarian. The fruits are exceptional!

## Brother Harrison, MIC:

While discerning my call, it was clear that God was asking me to embrace my sonship and consider joining this community that so lovingly bears His mother's name. Praying for the Holy Souls in Purgatory has been a lifelong devotion, but, above all, the deep devotion we Marians have for our Blessed Mother is what drew me to this community. Living alongside men who so lovingly embody their consecration to Mary, placing all their merits and cares in her hands, has made me into a better man and brought me closer to the heart of our Father. Without our benefactors' financial and spiritual support, none of us would be here. Thank you all. Please continue to support and pray for us as we seek the Lord under the mantle of His Immaculate Mother!

## Attend a retreat

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

The next retreat will be:  
March 1-3  
Visit  
[Marian.org/vocations](http://Marian.org/vocations)  
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## Learn more

Email: [vocations@Marian.org](mailto:vocations@Marian.org)

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Write: Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC  
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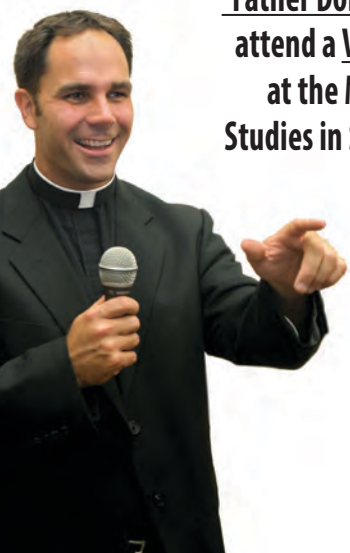
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## Support

### Want to help our seminarians?

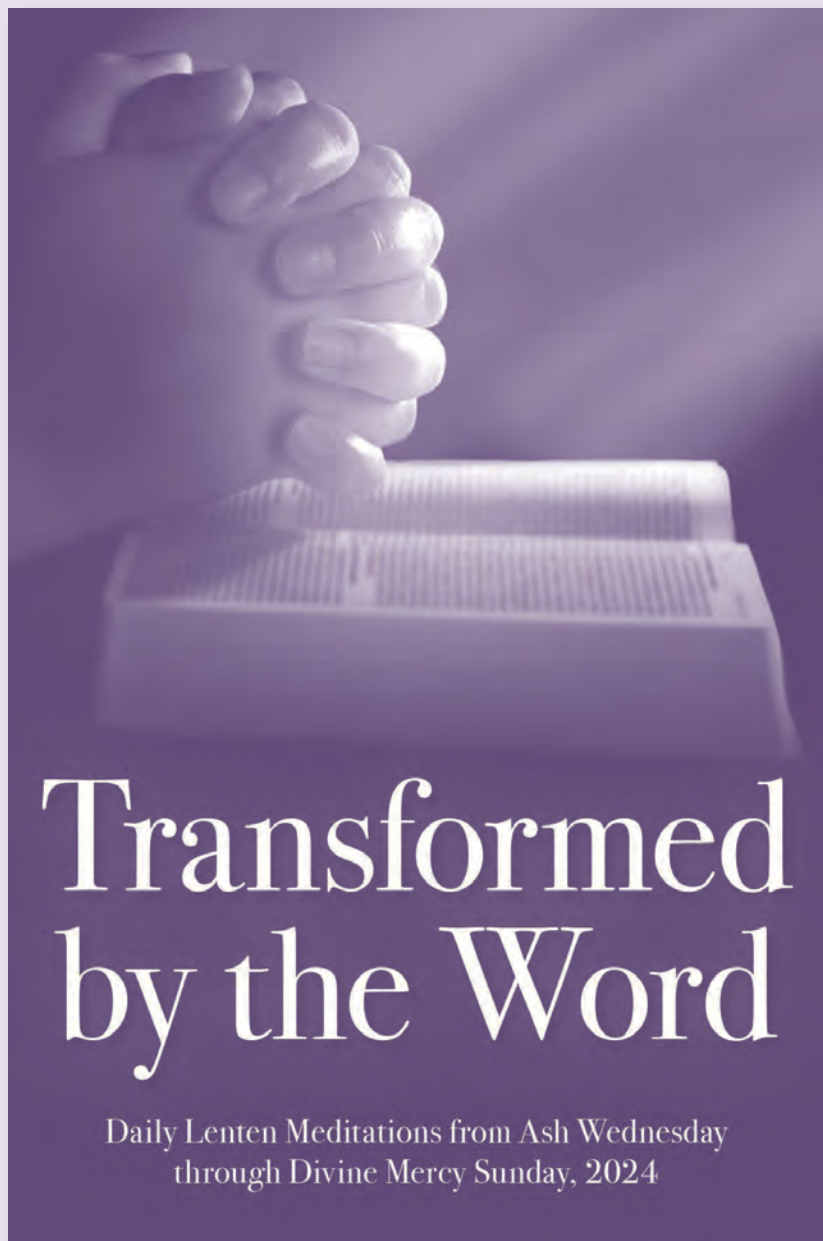
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