



Messengers from a loving God

The Angels

Angels teach us
how to live for others

The Miracle of St Michael

John Paul II reflections on the holy angels

Mary lead me to Jesus and into the
Catholic Church

Meeting Christ in Confession

Uriel – a non-biblical archangel



DEAR READERS

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the third quarterly edition of "The Angels" Messengers from a Loving God. Thank you for all your letters, emails and positive feedback. We are glad to hear that it gives you knowledge, spiritual input and inspiration for living a holy life.

Science tells us that our eyes can only see a small slice of the total reality that is around us. The proverbial phrase "there is more than meets the eye" is a truth about the fullness of reality.

Electromagnetic waves, such as gamma rays, x-rays and radio waves are no different from light, except that our eyes cannot detect them. Similarly, there are more sounds in the world than can be detected by the human ear.

By publishing this Catholic magazine on the Holy Angels we are trying to open our eyes to the richness of the Church and its spirituality. We are hoping that for those who believe, it will enrich and increase their faith and for people who do not believe, that they will at least begin to wonder. How often have we routinely recited, the prayer to Our Guardian Angel without realizing the importance of this mysterious companion, given to us by God to support us in our earthly pilgrimage.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart".

I will be on EWTN on the 22 September with a Father from the Canadian branch of my Congregation. We hope you will be able to learn more about our Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel and our work on spreading the devotion to Saint Michael and the Holy Angels

I kindly ask you to let others know about our magazine and distribute it all over the world. We look forward to any questions and feedback. I would be interested to hear by letter or email any testimonies on how the angels have helped you in your life. Please contact the office or the coordinator's whose details can be found on the right side of this page.

We pray for all the readers and helpers that this magazine helps us to be in touch with these spiritual beings, messengers from a loving God. They are in the presence of God singing all the time "Holy, Holy, Holy", as we are reminded at the Holy Mass, and are eager to help us on our way to holiness.

Father Piotr Prusakiewicz CSMA

The Angels

Messengers from a Loving God

A Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

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Saint Faustina's encounters with the heavenly spirits in the light of her diary

Part 2

Angels – messengers of God's plans

The entire life of man is an earthly trial, but it is also a period of grace during which the Creator constantly reveals himself (see **Isaiah 54.8**). The secret intentions of the Holy Trinity are revealed to the angels as well as to the saints. These celestial friends enkindled the faith of St Faustina to know God as Holiness, before whom all powers tremble.

In the course of St Faustina's life as a religious, there were several significant encounters with angels sent to fulfil particular missions from God. Following an eight day retreat during the renewal of her vows, she saw Jesus dressed in a white robe with a golden belt and holding a sword in his hand. She also saw a set of scales, which fell

to the ground when Jesus placed the sword on one balance. When the time came for the renewal of their vows she could see angels, who had placed something taken from each of the sisters in a gold censer placing it on the second of the balances. This gift proved heavier than the weight of the sword. At this point she heard a voice say *'Put the sword back in its place; the sacrifice is greater'* (**Diary, 394**).

Having the vision of Jesus and His angels gave St Faustina a deeper awareness of how great the debt is that the world, including consecrated souls, owes to His Justice.

When she considered the mystery of the Holy Trinity she experienced a mystical vision in which she saw an unattainable brightness, light emanating from three sources, from which words issued in the form of lightning encircling heaven and earth. The Saviour came out of the brightness, with opened wounds following the Passion and she heard a voice say, *'neither angelic nor human*



intelligence will be capable of fathoming the essence of God' (**Diary, 30**). So, if an angelic mind is unable to fathom the essence of the Blessed Trinity, how much less capable is the human mind of doing so.

In the vision concerning the dissemination of Divine Mercy, the presence of the Angel of God's anger ►

► played a crucial role, casting thunder and lightning onto the earth. She turned to him, asking him to wait for a time to allow the world to do penance. Unfortunately, her request was insignificant in the face of Divine Justice. At that moment Sister Faustina saw the most Holy Trinity and felt the grace Christ was granting her, which gave her the power of fervent prayer. She made use of words, which she

heard internally - '*Eternal Father I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.*' Praying in this way she became aware of the angel being rendered powerless to punish the world for its sins (**Diary, 474**). On the following day Jesus explained to the Saint that this is the Chaplet, which will quell God's anger and encouraged her to recite it frequently.

Saint Faustina contemplated the immensity of the Divine Mercy shown to mankind. She wondered at the fact that the angels who had been disobedient to the Creator had been punished immediately. She presented this perplexity to Christ and received the answer that the heavenly spirits were granted a deep intelligence possessed by no human, not even by the greatest saints.

Encouragement to intimate contact with angels, as understood by Sister Faustina

Saint Faustina passed on to humanity her experience with the celestial spirits, encouraging a deep faith in their presence with us. She echoes the words of Padre Pio, who had said in a prophetic vision that the hour of the angels has now arrived.

Saint Faustina knew how great humanity's debt is to God and that His anger is just. Following several visions in which she observed God's anger, as well as the angels whom God sends to human kind, she ever more trustingly begged for God's mercy. Her example impels mankind to an intimate

relationship with the heavenly spirits, the best of guardians whom we can experience as brothers and friends. Faustina teaches that love is what is most important and that an increase in understanding the truth about God and His angels is dependant in an increase in our capacity to love. The fact that Saint Faustina met and kept company with angels of various scales within the celestial hierarchy, also illustrates the sense of continuity in the history of salvation which is still happening here and now. We can say that the Bible is not only the revelation of Divine Mercy to sinners but also the loving hand of God extended in man's direction by means of the angels.

We are unlikely to see the angels whom God sends to us to warn us, to encourage us to conversion or to increase zeal – this is the role of our faith. We can be sure each day of our Guardian Angel's willingness to help, granted to us by the loving bounty of the Creator.

The Secretary of the Divine Mercy encourages us to go into the depths of our own hearts, where we can always be in the company of the heavens and the earth. This is beyond the capacity of our mind to grasp solely by means of our intellect, by which we define our goals in life. The heart, into which God comes as a guest, is the sphere of the action of the Holy Spirit, often occurring through the mediation of our celestial friend. The presence of our Guardian Angel in our lives can be compared to the presence of the spirit within our bodies. Although undetectable to the eye or to the touch and only perceptible by means of a living faith, it gives assurance of its presence, enlightenment and help in taking prudent action. It is an entirely invisible and spiritual presence.

Saint Faustina tells of many angelic interventions in her life. Her encounters with these celestial visitors

Prayer to St. Faustina

Dear St. Faustina, I have come to know you as a friend. I ask you to plead to the Lord for me the prayer I ask of you. In times of doubt, dear friend, implore the Lord's Mercy as you did so often here on earth, that I may remember who I am, and to what His mercy has called me.

In times of fear, implore His Mercy that I may ever remember to trust, and trust again, in joy, and in the knowledge that God is preparing me for a beautiful mission.

Please pray dear St. Faustina, that I may never forget that the abyss between my Lord and I has been bridged by His tender mercy. He will continue to be faithful and heal me of anything which stands in the way of His Will. My life is in His Hands.

Thank you dear friend. Pray with me the prayer Our Lord taught you to spread throughout the world; Jesus, I trust in You! Remind all pilgrims of life that if our trust is great, there is no limit to Jesus' generosity. Amen.



never obscured God, but led her to an ever-greater thankfulness for the unfathomable gifts expressed through the angels. If divine messengers were present in the history of Israel, in God's Divine Son and in those saints, including our contemporary Sister Faustina, we can have an unshakable assurance that the Creator also sends His angels into our paths in life. They have the right and the power to influence and

guide us. It is worthwhile for us to remember their presence to speak with them and call on their aid in every situation we encounter. By inviting them into our lives, we experience a friendship, which impacts in a positive way on our heart, our thoughts and desires. Christ promises us that He will acknowledge before God's angels those who acknowledge Him before men (see Luke 12:8-9).

In one of her visions, Sister Faustina was led by her Guardian Angel before the throne of God. She saw many saints and an unattainable brightness as well as the place prepared for her, close to God. Her Guardian Angel informed her that this most particular place was reserved for her due to her faithfulness in fulfilling God's will. However, two years prior to her death, Christ allowed his secretary a vision of hell. Her Guardian Angel accompanied her while she observed the different types of punishment there, which consists of the deprivation of God's presence, eternal reproaches of conscience, awareness of the inalterability of one's fate, a fire permeating the soul, as well as of despair, a hatred of the Creator and of cursing and blasphemy. *'I, Sister Faustina, have, by the command of God been in the abysses of hell in order to testify that hell does exist' (Diary, 741).*

While being in a state of grace, let us invite the angels to instruct us how to continue doing the kind of penance which has the power to atone for our own sins and those of others. Let us call upon the aid of God's messengers in sufferings of body and mind, in the struggles which we wage against our lusts and desires and with Satan. Let us entrust our concerns to our celestial friends, entrusting to them the hour of our death. In situations which you considered entirely hopeless from the human standpoint, you will experience their help, while they, who contemplate the face of God, will find ways of coping with all situations in accordance with His Will.

The choice of our future fate depends on us, so let us entrust ourselves to the spirits of goodness so that they can help us to safely and joyfully come through our earthly pilgrimage.

Sister **M. Wacława Siemienik** ZMBM

The shrine of St Michael the Archangel in Monte Sant Angelo

Interview with **Fr Władysław Suchy CSMA** – guardian of the Shrine of St Michael in Italy

In the hours Devotion to St Michael the Archangel we sing: 'Among its famous instances is the Gargano Hill which is acknowledged worthy of honour for its signs from heaven'. How is this devotion in honour of St Michael at the wonderful grotto of apparition made manifest?

Beginning with the very first apparitions of St Michael the Archangel in the 5th century, this place has played an important role in helping shape the history of Europe. It was the largest shrine in southern Italy, the oldest in Europe.

In the Middle Ages there was a custom of going on pilgrimage to three main sites – Christ's tomb in Jerusalem, the graves of the apostles in Rome and St. Michael's grotto. Pilgrims have journeyed to these Holy places for an unbroken period over fifteen centuries. It is incredible to consider the millions of people, often penitents, who travelled for months on foot to attain reconciliation with God on this holy mountain.

They had a need to have their sins forgiven in this particular place, so that 'Who is like God' would resound in their hearts. This particular aspect of reconciliation and the placing of God at the centre of our lives is what touches hearts and makes this devotion

a reality. The very existence and purpose of this grotto is made manifest because of the presence of St Michael and that Satan should be vanquished by means of conversion within the human heart.

So you can't complain of a lack of pilgrims...

Both the great and the lowly in the eyes of this world make the pilgrimage here. Each year about two million people come to this place. The chronicles of this shrine document the visits of emperors, kings, popes and many saints. It is sufficient to mention St Bernard, St Francis of Assisi, St Alphonsus Liguori, St Brigit of Sweden, Padre Pio, the Blessed Pope John XXIII and the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, who visited this place first as a cardinal and later as Pope. Many Italians maintain a link to the shrine over many years. People come here from all over Italy. In the past they often came on foot, sometimes taking two weeks to arrive. Not far from here, at a distance of 25 km, lies San Giovanni Rotondo and the grave of Padre Pio. He was noted for his great devotion to St Michael the Archangel. He considered St Michael to be the one who leads the battle with the spiritual enemy, Satan. He directed people coming to him to go first to St

Michael's grotto and request his intervention and help in the battle against sin. That is why many groups first visit our shrine before visiting the grave of Padre Pio.

How about pilgrims from beyond Italy?

This is a shrine of European and even worldwide significance. There is no lack of visitors from America, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Germany or Spain. For seven years there has been a large group of Polish pilgrims for the feast on the 29th September. This pilgrimage is organised by our congregation and has included up to 150 pilgrims. Many of these have a particular devotion to St Michael or are members of the Knights of St Michael the Archangel. There is a special Mass in Polish at the grotto of apparition, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Polish pilgrims take part in the afternoon procession with the statue through the town. They carry Polish banners and it is now difficult for the thousands of the town's inhabitants to imagine the celebrations without the presence of the Polish pilgrims.

What is the phenomenon that surrounds this holy grotto? Is it possible to say that it is a special place,



characterised by a particular activity of Divine Grace?

Every church is an extraordinary place because Christ lives in it. Nevertheless, there are places in which God grants particular favours. This is according to His plan. On entering a shrine even non-believers, experience a particular presence. Sometimes they do not even plan to visit the shrine. Some power exists which inspires this. There, people are mysteriously touched inwardly and inspired to search in their hearts for answers to many questions. A person coming here is led as if taken by the hand of St Michael himself and something breaks open in his/her heart. St Michael helps that person to decide to open their heart to God – sometimes following many wasted years.

How should we understand this opening of the soul to God?

Being here as priests, we daily witness to the experience of victories over sin in confession and in conversions. One of the most important aspects of this shrine is St Michael's victory over Satan. This victory is not material or physical. Artists depict the Archangel Michael with a sword, a shield and a lance. This is a human representation of this battle. However, St Michael's battle for humanity consists in leading man to triumph over sin, particularly over the sin of pride, which becomes

sinful when it relates to our relationship with God. Not acknowledging God as Creator means that we then put ourselves in the place of God. The victory over Satan occurs through conversion. In other words, by placing the Lord Jesus at the centre of our lives God has triumphed over evil.

I am sure that many people assist pilgrims in this spiritual experience. Who looks after the shrine?

The community working at the shrine consists of the nine priests, brothers and seminarians of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. We arrived here 10 years ago on 13 June 1996 when we became the official custodians taking over from the Benedictine fathers. This is a great privilege for us as Poles. I am sure that our founder the Blessed Fr. Bronislaw Markiewicz is rejoicing at this in heaven. Our work focuses on three elements – proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We run various groups which operate within the shrine, organising days of recollection for members of the St Michael prayer support groups and for all who wish to deepen angelic spirituality. We benefit from the facilities of our modern Pilgrims House, in which apart from overnight accommodation and meals, it is possible to deepen one's spirituality through talks, the opportunity to speak

personally to a priest or to take advantage of our extensive library. At busy times we benefit from the assistance of Italian and English speaking brother-priests from our congregation in Poland who help us in hearing confessions.

There are also 15 lay people working permanently at the shrine, helped by 60 volunteers.

I understand that the volunteers come from the nearby town of Monte San Angelo?

Certainly. They're mainly young people. They assist with a great deal of commitment and energy. They feel proud to live in this particular town and to serve St Michael. It is worthwhile adding that the shrine formed the foundation of the town. The town grew up around the shrine thanks to the visiting pilgrims. In the seventeenth century it was miraculously delivered from disease thanks to the intervention of St Michael. He appeared to the local bishop, recommending that all its inhabitants go to the shrine and each take a piece of the rock on which they should then carve a cross and the name Michael, meaning 'Who is like God'! These were symbolic elements on which you build the house of your life. The foundation is God and this World. Saint Michael wanted to tell the inhabitants - return to God, He is your salvation.

Thank you for this interview. I would like to recommend all the readers of 'The Angels-Messengers from a loving God' to your prayers and those of the whole community at the grotto.

Thank you also. I would like to invite you to visit Monte San Angelo. Our website details are:

www.santmariosanmichele.it

Interview by
Fr. Piotr Prusakiewicz CSMA

St Jean Vianney Part 2



In these short texts, St. Jean Vianney witnesses to his devotion to the holy angels and struggles with the devil.

O my God! I desire to love You more than all the angels and all the saints put together. I adore You with them, and unite my love with that which Your Blessed Mother had for You, when she was on earth.

We must take great care never to do anything before having said our Morning Prayers.... The devil once declared...that if he could have the first moment of the day, he was sure of all the rest. (*Sermon on the First Commandment*).

What a comfort to you it is to know that when we go out of the house, we are never alone en route. (*Sermon on the Feast of the Guardian Angels*).

When we are walking in the streets, let us fix our eyes on Our Lord bearing his Cross before us; on the Blessed Virgin who is looking at us; on our Guardian Angel who is by our side. (*Catechism on Self-Control*).

When you awake in the night, transport yourself quickly in spirit before the Tabernacle, saying: 'Behold me, my God, I come to adore You, to praise, thank and love You and to keep You company with all the angels'.

It is our angels who ask God to grant us a deep sorrow for our sins. (*Sermon on Feast of Guardian Angels*).

Offer your temptations for the conversion of sinners. When the devil sees you doing this, he is beside himself with rage and makes off, because then the temptation is turned against himself.

Blessed are they who are tempted! It is when the devil sees that a soul is tending towards union with God that he redoubles his efforts. (*Sermon on the Parable of the Tares*).

If we did like St. Remigius, we should never be angry. Being questioned by a Father of the desert as to how he managed to be always in an even temper, he replied: 'I often consider that my Guardian Angel is always by my side...'

If we could only see the JOY of our Guardian Angel when he sees us fighting our temptations! (*On temptation*).

In the Sacraments, it is God himself who comes to annihilate our enemy. The devil, seeing Him in our heart, throws himself despairingly into the bottomless pit; which explains why he does all he can to draw us away from them, or to make us receive them badly.

All the angels and saints are engaged in trying to prevent us from committing sins.

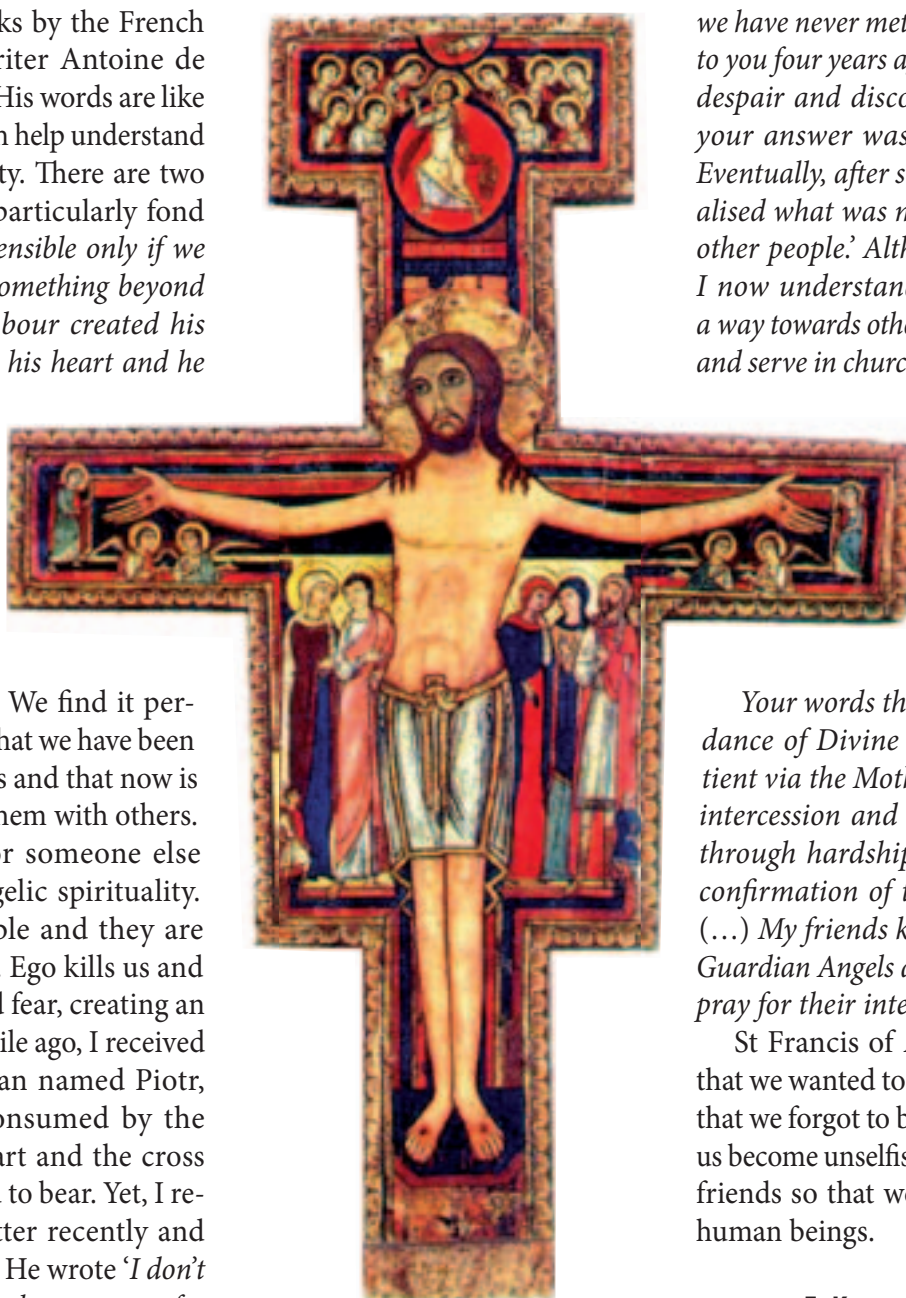
What happiness it is to a Guardian Angel to have the care of a pure soul. When the soul is pure, all the Court of Heaven looks upon it with joy.

John Vianney was ordained as a priest in 1815 and three years later he became parish priest of Ars, a small hamlet near Lyons. He began visiting his parishioners, especially the sick and poor and spent days in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. His life was one of extreme mortification and he did penance for his parishioners. He had the gifts of discernment of spirits, prophecy, hidden knowledge and of working miracles. Although tormented by evil spirits, especially when he tried to get his 2-3 hours of sleep each night, his life was filled with works of charity and love.

Angels teach us how to live for others

I often read books by the French aviator and writer Antoine de Saint Exupery. His words are like pearls of light which help understand our everyday reality. There are two quotes that I am particularly fond of: 'Life becomes sensible only if we transform it into something beyond us' and 'My neighbour created his own world deep in his heart and he changed the surrounding people into a poem'. It is difficult to forget about oneself and be available for other people without prejudice or bitterness. We find it perplexing to believe that we have been given lots of talents and that now is the time to share them with others.

Being there for someone else is a feature of angelic spirituality. Angels are invisible and they are also free from ego. Ego kills us and causes sadness and fear, creating an inner prison. A while ago, I received a letter from a man named Piotr, who had been consumed by the wounds of his heart and the cross of an illness he had to bear. Yet, I received another letter recently and Piotr has changed. He wrote 'I don't think you will remember my name for



we have never met each other. I wrote to you four years ago. I was filled with despair and discouraged then. But, your answer was truly significant! Eventually, after several months I realised what was meant by 'being for other people.' Although I am still ill I now understand that my cross is a way towards others. I study theology and serve in church. I have organized a Voluntary Sufferers' Centre and attend meetings of religious formation in the Laic Institute. I am free...

Your words that 'there are abundance of Divine graces for the patient via the Mother of Good Hope's intercession and that God leads us through hardship to catharsis and confirmation of the spirit' are true (...) My friends know that I pray to Guardian Angels and often ask me to pray for their intentions too'.

St Francis of Assisi used to say that we wanted to be angels so much that we forgot to be good people. Let us become unselfish like our heavenly friends so that we become genuine human beings.

Fr Krzysztof Poświata CSMA



My conversion journey

I was brought up a Baptist and going to church every Sunday with my Mum and Nan was a family tradition. Afterwards we would go back to my grandparents' house and have a coffee and a biscuit with my Grandad and then head home to prepare the Sunday roast. When I look back I don't think I ever really understood what being a Christian meant. But I think I thought that by going to church I must be one. As I got older I began to find other things to do on a Sunday morning and then I left home for university. I didn't think for one moment that I should perhaps join a Christian group or find a church. After all, that was something I did with my Mum and my Nan when I was at home.

In 1998, following University I moved to London, got my own flat and found a boyfriend. Still I showed no inclination of finding a local church. But then one day in May 2006 my world changed. My Dad, who had been ill for a few weeks was diagnosed with an untreatable form of lung cancer. The doctors said that the longest a person had lived with the illness was five years but it was an aggressive cancer and most sufferers died much earlier.

God put a plan into action

God obviously knew that I would need Him for the times ahead and

had already put a plan into action. At the beginning of that year a lady had joined the same team as me at work. Noreen was full of fun and had done much in the way of charity work but she was also a very committed Christian and a Catholic. It was the first time I had ever talked to a Catholic regarding their beliefs. Through my interest in her charity work she managed to talk to me more and more about God. She is a great example of how witnessing your faith to others is a real encouragement. It certainly sparked something within me as I began to feel a strong desire to find a local church and get to know God. I think this was due to a combination of reasons, my father's illness, Noreen's intriguing stories of God's action in her life and also because I was single again (having split from my boyfriend the year before) and now had the time and space in my life to hear God calling.

In June 2006 I went on a short trip to Spain with a friend, unbeknown to me she was a Christian and was reading a book called the Purpose Driven Life. I asked if I could read it. I was hooked by the first page; questions I had about God were starting to be answered. I made a promise to myself that as soon as I got home I would find a church. I 'googled' and found that the nearest was called St Peter's Barge. It was as labeled a church on a barge in the middle of West India Quay in Canary Wharf, London. And

in perfect timing I turned up the day before they were about to start a five week course on what it meant to be a Christian. I attended and by the end of it I knew I wanted to be a Christian. I was a Christian. And so that's how my journey began. I can see now how God's plans for me were starting to take shape. As part of this story I must tell you that my Mum had been studying the book, the Purpose Driven Life as part of her church group. I didn't know at the time. Imagine how shocked she was when she found it on my bookshelf and said 'I can't believe you're reading the book. Only a couple of weeks ago we finished studying it and we all had to pray for two people we would like the book to help and I prayed for you and your Dad. Well, God had answered my Mum's prayers for me and so I gave the book to my Dad (not a religious man but far from being an atheist).

I was now fully committed to being a christian and loved attending church on a Sunday. God was taking care of me and thankfully had me in hand when the next bombshell was about to drop.

A knock on the door

On 12th September 2006, I was woken by a knock on the door at midnight. Mum and Dad's best friends were on the doorstep with news that



for him. The first time he had ever taken communion. God was so good. Through my Mum's death my Dad had come closer to God. It gave me a great deal of peace when he finally passed away on 7th May 2008 with the Image of The Divine Mercy Jesus at the foot of his bed.

God was drawing me closer

Following my Mum's death, God was drawing me closer all the time and by some miracle he managed to get me to Medjugorje in November 2006. Of course I didn't know anything about the visionaries and messages from Our Lady. Coming from a Protestant faith it all sounded very strange to me. Noreen had somehow managed to get me there thinking that I was seeing a charity that we might be able to help, she also asked if I would like to join an organized pilgrimage lead by Father Prusakiewicz (by this time myself and a group of colleagues had joined with Noreen, to officially set up a charity called the Global Children's Foundation). When I met everyone else on the pilgrimage it was apparent that I was the youngest one by quite some margin and on the pilgrimage from the airport to my horror everyone started to chant the rosary. Remember I was a Christian, but not a Catholic. It sounded so strange to me and to be honest at this point I was actually scared about what the week would have in store for me. I even cried on the first night because I was so concerned about what was going on and why I was there.

We had very basic accommodation, the weather was absolutely freezing and I was surrounded by very strong Catholics. I thought it would be a long

I least expected. At 10pm that evening my Mum had collapsed and died instantly, she was just getting ready for bed. We were later to learn that she had a massive brain hemorrhage. An aneurism in her brain, that she probably had from birth, had chosen that night to burst. I thank God with all my heart that at that point He had me firmly in his grip. Through my new found faith I was able to accept her death much easier than I would have been able to before. Always looking to be thankful for the life we had shared and the wonderful memories created. Of course it was also a devastating time, my Dad was still going through chemotherapy treatment. At the time we had all been concentrating on him, thinking he would go first but what did we know? As I look back now

I see this was all part of God's perfect plan. My Dad decided that he would go to church in place of my Mum. As time progressed he became more and more involved, going to small church groups and even hosting a Christmas party at the house for them. I remember my Dad with great admiration. Not only was he suffering from a horrendous illness but he never wanted to get down and was determined to live as long as possible for the sake of my brother and I. And he did have a very full 19 months after my Mum's death before his time was up. His good friends had a huge part to play and are a testament to how important loving friends are in a time of suffering. Just two days before he died he asked the Vicar to come round and we held a very informal communion service

▶ week but by the grace of God by the end of it I had definitely changed, my conversion had begun. I opened my heart fully to Medjugorje, I believed everything about it. I was amazed that I had never heard about it before. On the third day I asked Noreen for rosary beads and she also gave me a booklet on how I should pray the rosary. We attended Mass every morning and each time I cried when the others went up to receive Holy Communion and I couldn't. I knew then that one day I would receive. Although I was anxious to receive how would I ever make that jump? Apart from Noreen and my new pilgrim friends I didn't know any other Catholics. I don't think anyone in my family had ever been a Catholic, it seemed like a massive jump to make and besides there were still too many questions I had about the faith, for example; why would you confess to a Priest? Why do you pray to Mary and the saints? Why are the services so prescriptive? Thankfully Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA) was leading the pilgrimage and he patiently answered many of my questions and was to help me on my journey over the next three years.

I returned from Medjugorje feeling on top of the world. I told my Dad about the amazing people I had met, how each of them had suffered in some way but each loved and trusted God with a passion that I hadn't seen before. I hope that in some way I encouraged him to want to know God more.

Our Lady had an impact

In my heart my conversion had begun. Our Lady had definitely had an impact on me. But of course the devil didn't like where I was going.

After returning from Medjugorje on a high it didn't take long for him to get his claws in. He found my weak spot and he led me a merry dance into mortal sin. It amazes me even now to think how it is possible to consider yourself a Christian, to know right from wrong and yet still be so easily tempted. I wouldn't say I didn't put up a fight, but when you get worn down by temptation at some point you stop fighting it and worse still, you justify it. And I was young in my faith I didn't have all the

I still cried during the Mass. I felt like Jesus was saying, 'how much longer am I going to wait until you receive me (in the Eucharist)? What is stopping you?' We stayed at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy near Cracow and Sister Faustina was the first saint I had really heard about. I read her Diary with enthusiasm, eager to learn more. The Divine Mercy seemed so amazing that again I couldn't understand how I hadn't heard about it before. Surely, at least every Christian should know about it? Why was it



spiritual armour to protect myself. I felt like I was a rag doll in the jaws of a rottweiler, mauled and shaken until I didn't really know who I had become. It took me many months to say enough is enough, but finally through God's grace, good friends and a lot of prayers I got through it. And I have come back much stronger because of it.

By May 2007 I had come out from the 'darkness'. I took my Dad on pilgrimage to Poland and again my call to conversion felt stronger.

not celebrated in every church on the first Sunday after Easter?

My eyes had been opened

Just a few weeks later I was lucky enough to go back to Medjugorje. How I love that place! Noreen and I joined the Mary's Meal's conference there and heard so many great stories of how they have helped children

and families around the world. It really was mercy in action. I returned home refreshed and invigorated but going to my church was now becoming harder for me. I felt I had seen so much more. My eyes had been opened to the unseen spiritual world – the angels, the saints and the loving role of the Blessed Mother. Subjects so rarely talked about in the Protestant faith, or at least the churches I had gone to. It was a time where I did much questioning of both faiths, trying to understand where I fitted. Maybe I tried too hard, maybe I just needed to listen to my heart.

Over the next two years I would attend the Polish pilgrimage twice more and go to the first Worldwide Divine Mercy Congress in Rome. I attended Divine Mercy services and talks on St Faustina and the angels given by Father Peter when he was in the UK.

In May 2007, God had also brought my future husband into my life. Not a Catholic, or a Christian, but my soul mate. There are few men that would stay with a girl, who on their first date announced, “Jesus is the most important man in life”. He has supported me in everything I have done, including my conversion (I’m pleased to say he still attends church with me every Sunday).

We married in September 2008 and seven months later we moved out of London to a smaller town in Surrey and I made a promise to myself that I would find a Catholic church and give it a go. I didn’t know that the closest one would celebrate Mass at 9am on a Sunday! Still, we persevered. Although after a few attempts I was almost ready to give up. I found it difficult to settle there, it didn’t seem as welcoming as my old church had been. We didn’t know the words to most of the service or when to sit or when to stand. I felt like an outsider.

It’s not easy being a convert. It was in fact my husband who encouraged me to stay and to try to talk to the Priest. Thank God I did. I learned that there was an RCIA course just starting and so I joined. I went along enthusiastically each week, eager to learn more about the faith. I can honestly say I loved everything I learned.

At the Easter vigil this year I was finally accepted into the Catholic church, baptised, confirmed and received my First Holy communion. Noreen was my sponsor (or Godmother as I like to call her) and it seemed perfectly natural to take St Faustina as my confirmation name, after all I had learned so much from her.

I am finally at home

I now feel like I am finally at home, right where I am suppose to be. I love the Church and the Catholic faith. I am so thankful that God called me to be here. I don’t mean that in any disrespectful way to the Protestant faith. We all have our own ways to praise God. But for me it’s all about the Mass, the tradition and the completeness of the faith – all that is seen and unseen.

As I look back I know without a doubt that my conversion happened in my first visit to Medjugorje. Our Lady had definitely reached out to me there but it would take three years for me to make my journey. Age 33 years, I finally arrived. All thanks to faithful witnessing friends, patient spiritual direction, good pilgrimages, a desire to learn, an open heart, a very good husband and above all the Divine Mercy of God.

Alison, from England

The soul

*Oh, You are the Creator
of mountains and oceans
You – the Painter of the world,
the perfect Craftsman
The Artist of sunrises and sunsets
I stand before Your wonders
And my soul flies up
to the mountain peaks
How will I pull her down
if she loves their secrets?
I call her, shout,
the echo reaches her ...
She comes back to my body
I know that you feel cramped,
sinful in here
I whisper to her gently, explain
How can it be
– Man without a soul?
I admire the talent
of the Creator at the sea
The humming of water,
the clouds running
beyond the horizon
My soul rushes out again
She jumps over the whitened,
foamy waves
I send a seagull after her
Come back – I cry
You know that I can’t stay
without you, my soul
We kneel down before You, Lord
Both of us, I and my soul
– the escapee
We are together
I will take care of her
For You, my Lord.*

Barbara Kacperska

The Turning Point

It is said that once Padre Pio places his hand on you, you are his and he is yours for always. How true this has proved to be, from my own experience, and that of the many Padre Pio devotees I have met and talked to.

Having dedicated my life to my family, I suddenly realised, when my children had grown up and become independent, that my life had become a vacuum and the more I thought about this, the more it became apparent that it was a spiritual vacuum too.

Going back to the first years of my marriage, a friend, who worked in the local library, thrust a book at me saying, "You are a Catholic so this should interest you". It was an old book, written about the life of a Capuchin Friar living in Italy, named Padre Pio, who bore the stigmata. It must have been one of the first books written about him and I am still puzzled as to how it got there.

Tremendous graces

Although an avid reader, I had never read anything like it before; once started, I could not put the book down. It was early morning when I finally reached the end and lay in bed feeling emotionally assaulted and besieged by questions. How could Jesus give one man so much suffering and pain? The unbelievable happiness with which this suffering was accepted and borne, for fifty years! The tremendous gifts he possessed. The guilty feeling this man gave me was not acceptable. I just could not cope

with such goodness and so I pushed him into the furthest recesses of my mind.

Life was full, busy and demanding. In 1986 on holiday in Italy, we were close to San Giovanni Rotondo and my husband asked if I would like to visit Padre Pio (his tomb is there) but I made the excuse that it was hot and the children were cross, travelling in the back of the car. Once again I was to reject my friend. To meet such a holy man, who would probably greet me with a frown and tell me to change my life! Although my excuse seemed reasonable, I did feel a stab of guilt, but promptly pushed the issue once more to the back of my mind.

Some years later, when my two eldest children were married and my youngest son was about to enter university we decided to take a holiday in southern Italy for three weeks and rented a villa for all the family. At the time I was working part-time, in the Students' Union at the university close by, and on this particular day I'd arrived home feeling tired and despondent. One of the students had locked himself in his room and was found later to have taken a drug overdose. I picked up the Catholic newspaper and opened it at random, and there, looking straight at me was the face of Padre Pio. I do not remember how the caption read, I just said

"Right" and went immediately to the phone to book my pilgrimage. I didn't stop to think that, having already arranged a three-week holiday I was being rather extravagant but nobody else wanted to go, so it wasn't a problem.

During the second week of our family holiday we roamed around visiting famous beauty spots and one day, quite by chance, we found ourselves in Pietrelcina, the birthplace of Padre Pio. But our meeting with Brother Lawrence in Pietrelcina was not by chance as he said he was never in the village at mid-day, but that day he'd an appointment with an overseas visitor. He was more than pleased to show us around and it was here I was to receive a tremendous grace.

Padre Pio's place

My pilgrimage, arranged earlier with so little thought, turned out to be a humble journey of thanksgiving and I sat in the bus drinking in the beauty and smells of my beloved Italy, completely relaxed.

I was bemused by Stella and Tony Lilley. Here were two obvious academics, cultured, gifted, who were devoting their lives to spreading the life and works of Padre Pio. So dedicated in fact, that they had opened a centre in Kent to cope with the



more about Padre Pio, especially that he was not to be feared as his heart was full of love and concern for everyone. Stella, in the magical way she had, had drawn us out of our shells and we were like one big happy family. Pilgrimage being a new experience for most of us, we at first appeared to be suffering from British reserve.

What can I say about San Giovanni? I can only put it as I did to a friar, that after about 15 visits I still feel as if I am on a “high”. When I am there my step seems lighter and I feel a new confidence where my problems and worries are concerned. Walking

numerous letters and enquiries. They had obviously answered his call. I had not told some of my friends I was going on a pilgrimage, I’m ashamed to say, but here were two people who were not afraid to stand up and be counted.

Little did I know then what a big part they would play in my life and indeed, in many lives. How Stella would later draw me into the life of the centre and make me feel a useful part of it. How, in a spiritual crisis, my first thought was to phone Tony, day after day glued to his desk, for long hours answering every letter, pleas for prayers and telephone calls personally. He had never been allowed to stay in the background, as he constantly sought to do.

By the time we had reached San Giovanni Rotondo, we all knew a lot

up the hill to the beautiful church of Our Lady of Grace I had a feeling of anticipation, of going to a feast. I stopped briefly to admire the Home for the *Relief of Suffering*, a hospital. It was built by donations and in return it gives its services and skills for everyone. It stands, large and imposing, a true monument to the love Padre Pio had for his neighbour. We did so much on that short visit. The masses we felt so privileged to participate in, in Padre Pio’s little old church; visiting his cell where I was permitted to see his chair and hug his cushion; the choir loft and the beautiful crucifix from which he received the stigmata; Holy Hour, Rosary, etc. I was able to purchase several books about Padre Pio in an effort to increase my knowledge of this great man.

All this time I had not told Stella and Tony I was fluent in Italian; they seemed to be quite capable of making themselves understood. Remembering also Padre Pio’s words to always be humble, I did not wish to promote myself. However, towards the end of my pilgrimage, I noticed Stella was having some difficulty with the hotel management, and so offered my help. Her pleasure and relief will always remind me that we all have gifts and we should not be afraid to use them.

Turning point

On my last morning, it being my birthday, I arose very early and climbed the hill to the church. I wanted to re-visit the tomb in the crypt and say good-bye to Padre Pio. I wanted to tell him how sorry I was for the times I’d denied him when I’d felt his call. I was alone and so I gave way to my tears and begged his forgiveness. I stayed for quite some time and I felt that he had always known the true reason for my denial. He had never given up on me and in his abounding love and generosity, I knew I was forgiven. We left early in the morning. Monte Garano was shrouded in mist and I could barely discern the friary or the hospital, but as we all shouted good-bye from the bus I felt so much at peace and heard an inner voice say “This was not the end, but the beginning”.

Since then I have learnt so much from the life of Padre Pio and how important his guardian angel was to him. He taught me to make much use of my guardian angel, whom I had previously just taken for granted.

Dorina Emanuelli
from Gloucester, England

Pope John Paul II views on the angels

JOHN PAUL II GENERAL AUDIENCE: JULY 9, 1986

1. Today we continue our catechesis on the angels whose existence, willed by an act of God's eternal love, we profess in the words of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen".

In the perfection of their spiritual nature the angels are called from the beginning, by virtue of their intelligence, to know the truth and to love the good which they know in truth in a more full and perfect way than is possible to man. This love is an act of a free will, and therefore for the angels also freedom implies a possibility of choice for or against the Good which they know, that is, God himself. It must be repeated here what we already mentioned earlier in regard to man: by creating free beings, God willed that there should be realized in the world *true love* which is *possible only on the basis of freedom*. He willed therefore that the creature, constituted in the image and likeness of his Creator, should be able in the greatest degree possible to render himself similar to God who "is love" (1 Jn 4:16). By creating the pure spirits as free beings, God in his Providence could not but foresee also *the possibility of the angels' sin*. But precisely because Providence is eternal wisdom which loves, God

would have been able to draw from the history of this sin, incomparably more radical inasmuch as it was the sin of a pure spirit, *the definitive good of the whole created cosmos*.

2. In fact, as Revelation clearly states, *the world of the pure spirits appears divided into good angels and bad ones*. This division is not the work of God's creation, but is based on the freedom proper to the spiritual nature of each one of them. It is the *result of choice* which for purely spiritual beings possesses an incomparably *more radical* character than that of man, and it is *irreversible* given the degree of intuitiveness and penetration of the good where with their intelligence is endowed. In this regard it must also be said that the pure spirits *were subjected to a test of a moral character*. It was a decisive test regarding first of all God himself, a God known in a more essential and direct way than is possible to man, a God who granted to these spiritual beings the gift of participating in his divine nature, before doing so to man.

3. In the case of the pure spirits, the decisive choice regarded first of all *God himself*, the first and supreme Good, accepted or rejected in a more essential and direct way, than could happen

within the scope of action of human free will. The pure spirits have a *knowledge of God incomparably more perfect* than that of man, because by the power of their intellect, not conditioned nor limited by the mediation of sense knowledge, they see to the depths the greatness of infinite Being, of the first Truth, of the supreme Good. To this sublime capacity of knowledge of the pure spirits God offered the mystery of his divinity, making them thus *partakers*, through grace, of his infinite glory. Precisely as beings of a spiritual nature they had in their intellect the capacity, the desire of this supernatural elevation to which God had called them, to make of them, long before man, "partakers of the divine nature" (cf. 2 Pt 1:4), partakers of the intimate life of him who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of him who in the communion of the three Divine Persons, "is Love" (1 Jn 4:16). God had admitted all the pure spirits, before and to the eternal communion of love.

4. The choice made on the basis of the truth about God, known in a higher way because of the clarity of their intellects, has divided also the world of pure spirits into the good and the bad. *The good chose God* as the supreme and definitive Good, known to the intellect enlightened by Revelation. To have chosen God means that they



turned to him with all the interior force of their freedom, a force which is love. God became the total and definitive scope of their spiritual existence. *The others instead turned their backs on God* contrary to the truth of the knowledge which indicated him as the total and definitive good. Their choice ran counter to the revelation of the mystery of God, to his grace which made them partakers of the Trinity and of the eternal friendship with God in communion with him through love. On the basis of their created freedom they made a radical and irreversible *choice* on a parity with that of the good angels, but *diametrically opposed*. Instead of accepting a God full of love they rejected him, inspired by a false sense of self-sufficiency, of aversion and even of hatred which is changed into rebellion.

5. How are we to understand such opposition and rebellion against God in beings endowed with such profound and enlightened intelligence? What

can be the *motive for such a radical and irreversible choice* against God? Of a hatred so profound as to appear solely the fruit of folly? The Fathers of the Church and theologians do not hesitate to speak of a “blindness” produced by the overrating of the perfection of their own being, driven to the point of ignoring God’s supremacy, which requires instead an act of docile and obedient subjection. All this summed up concisely in the words: “I will not serve” **Jer 2:20**), which manifest the radical and irreversible refusal to take part in the building up of the kingdom of God in the created world. Satan, the rebellious spirit, wishes to have his own kingdom, not that of God, and he rises up as the first “adversary” of the Creator, the opponent of Providence, and antagonist of God’s loving wisdom. From Satan’s rebellion and sin, and likewise from that of man, we must conclude by accepting the wise experience of Scripture which states: “In pride there is ruin” (**Tob 4:13**).

Prayer for Healing to Saint Raphael

Glorious Archangel St. Raphael, great prince of the heavenly court, you are illustrious for your gifts of wisdom and grace. You are a guide of those who journey by land or sea or air, consoler of the afflicted, and refuge of sinners.

I beg you, assist me in all my needs and in all the sufferings of this life, as once you helped the young Tobias on his travels. Because you are the “medicine of God” I humbly pray you to heal the many infirmities of my soul and the ills that afflict my body. I especially ask of you the favor (here mention your special intention), and the great grace of purity to prepare me to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To Saint Gabriel, for Others

O loving messenger of the Incarnation, descend upon all those for whom I wish peace and happiness. Spread your wings over the cradles of the new-born babes, O thou who didst announce the coming of the Infant Jesus. Give to the young a lily petal from the virginal scepter in your hand. Cause the Ave Maria to re-echo in all hearts that they may find grace and joy through Mary. Finally, recall the sublime words spoken on the day of the Annunciation – “Nothing is impossible with God”, and repeat them in hours of trial – to all I love – that their confidence in Our Lord may be reanimated, when all human help fails. Amen

Meeting Christ in Confession

When I entered my religious order I was surprised to learn that all the members should go to confession once a fortnight. It took me time to understand why it was necessary and why I was obliged to make confession having only committed venial sins. But I now understand that I have experienced a great spiritual benefit from receiving the sacrament so frequently. We should discover this sacrament as a rich source of God's mercy. Although for most people this act of confession is not very pleasant, it is in fact a wonderful gift of God.

When we read Saint Faustina's Diary we realise that she confessed often. It was very beneficial and fruitful for her. She remembered that by making confession she honoured the Divine Mercy. Jesus told her: *'When you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul and ennobles it. Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. When you approach the confessional, know that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy. Tell souls that from this fount of mercy, souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust'* (Diary 1602).

The confession is called by Jesus – *the Tribunal of Mercy*. He said to Sister Faustina: *'Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy. There the greatest miracles take place and are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one's misery. And the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated. Were a soul like a decaying corpse, so that from the human standpoint, there would be no hope of restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. Oh, how miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy! You will call out in vain, but it will be too late'* (Diary 1448).

Visible sign of the invisible graces

According to theology the sacraments are visible signs of invisible graces. Jesus transforms us into Himself by the power of all sacraments. The goal and result of approaching the sacrament of the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation is that we gradually

become what we eat and what we receive, that is mercy. Sister Faustina particularly pointed out two kinds of profit from Holy Confession. Firstly we come to confession to be forgiven and healed. Secondly, we come to be educated like a small child.

Before the Holy Communion we say: *'Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed'*. This healing power comes to us also through the Sacrament of Confession. As we know, Jesus by his death on the cross, set us free from the power of sin. Saint John says: *'If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed'* (John 8,36). It is not that we never sin again, but that sin's hold over us is broken. He made freedom from the power of sin possible. Only the blood of Christ can take away our sins. It purifies us from all sins and removes the pollution of sin. This event takes place during confession. Jesus said in the Diary, *'Come close to My wounds and draw from the Fountain of Life whatever your heart desires. Drink copiously from the Fountain of Life and you will not weary on your journey. Glorify My mercy'* (Diary 1485).

According to the Diary by making confession we dwell in the shelter of two rays, the pale one and the red one (Diary 1588). The Holy Father John Paul II wrote that in this sacrament each person could experience mercy in a unique way, that is, love which was more powerful than sin.



Sin is a spiritual poison

To realise how great is the grace of forgiveness given during the confession we have to be aware of the meaning of sin and its consequences.

Sin is a kind of spiritual poison. It destroys people. It always destroys. It doesn't matter if they are believers or unbelievers. I don't know anybody who by committing sins developed themselves spiritually. Sins stop our spiritual growth. When we commit sins we always lose something. Sin is connected with an initial pleasure, otherwise nobody would sin. But afterwards when the pleasure is gone, our conscience bothers us, we feel remorse. Sometimes we even hate ourselves. Sins leave bitterness and emptiness in our hearts. Of course it is very easy to silence our conscience, to get used to living in a state of sin, like having to live in a dark basement. After some time we will be able to move in darkness, because the shapes of things located there will become more visible. But it still will be the same basement and the same darkness.

Sin destroys human beings and relations between people. It ruins our souls. It is a great ingratitude to God and a great harm to man. Mortal sin breaks the life-giving bond with God. It condemns man to the loss of eternal salvation.

Crucifying Christ

But above all my sin somehow touches God, it wounds Christ. It is very mysterious. My sin committed today has a connection with Christ's ►

Many times in my priesthood I have seen people who through making confession experienced power which enabled them not to repeat habitual sins. Beforehand they tried hard not to give in to temptations. Despite great efforts they felt helpless and still were addicted. But Jesus present in the sacrament of reconciliation sets them free. Of course we have to deal with many moral illnesses and weaknesses over a long time. It takes time to heal them. The changes do not occur overnight. But when we cooperate with God's grace and do our best, over a period of time, we will notice these changes. The fruit takes time to grow.

Making confession multiplies the grace of healing. What's more when we meet Jesus present in the confession we develop our friendship with the Son of God. One day Jesus said to Sister Faustina *'If it were not for this imperfection you wouldn't have come to me'*. If we really want to drink the life-giving spiritual water and be filled with divine life, we should frequent and make the best use of the sacrament of reconciliation. Jesus said: *'Let anyone who believes in me come and drink! As scripture says, "from His heart shall flow streams of living water"' (John 7,38)*. We approach Jesus in the sacrament of confession, the masterwork of God.

▶ death. It hurts his heart and causes Him pain. Likewise, when a child does wrong, its father suffers. This link between our current sins and Christ's suffering and death is the mystery of faith. It's beyond our understanding.

We read in the Bible that after the descending of the Holy Spirit, Saint Peter went out of the upper room and courageously told people gathered in front of the building about the death of Jesus, *'This man,... you took and had crucified and killed by men outside the Law'* (Acts 2,23). But actually they didn't do it personally or physically. Maybe only a few of them were standing in the crowd which shouted: *'Crucify him, crucify him!'*. Why did Peter accuse them? Because they and each one of us, starting from myself, do it by committing sins. In this way we crucify Him. We have our own places in this crowd. It is indeed a mysterious connection.

Fighting with temptations

Unfortunately sins are often advertised in the media. But the mystery of the wickedness of sin is partially unveiled in the passion and death of the Lord Jesus. How horrible sin must be if the Son of God Himself suffered so cruelly to undo it! His love and mercy obliges us to fight all temptations to avoid committing sins. We can't ignore sins. We read in the letter to Hebrews *'In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of bloodshed'* (Heb 12,4).

Jesus complains in the Diary, *'Many souls have thrown Me out of their hearts today. I have experienced sorrow unto death'* (Diary 866); *'Your sins have wounded my heart painfully'*

(Diary 1485); *'The sinners fed my heart with bitterness'* (Diary 1728); *'The great sins of the world are superficial wounds on My heart, but the sins of a chosen soul pierce My Heart through and through.'* (Diary 1702).

Sister Faustina confesses: *'I understood that what I was suffering was nothing to compare to the Saviour's Passion, and that even the smallest imperfection was the cause of this terrible suffering'* (Diary 654). *'I learned in the depths of my soul how horrible sin was, even the smallest one, and how much it tormented the soul of Jesus. I would rather suffer a thousand hells than commit even the smallest venial sin'* (Diary 1016). *'The Lord said to me: "I suffer even greater pain than that which you see." And Jesus gave me to know for what sins He subjected himself to the scourging: these are sins of impurity'* (Diary 445).

Jesus gave her visions of people being tempted. Realising how painful sin is for Jesus she prayed and eventually prevented them from committing the sin. She protected Jesus from receiving a new wound in his heart and soul.

How do we get rid of our sins?

The recognition of our sinfulness ought to awaken a healthy feeling of guilt within us.

What can I do when I realise the presence of sin in my soul? I can either hide them inside myself or forget about them. But neither is the solution. They will still be within me. I can go to a therapist and confess them but this won't bring results because they aren't able to give me absolution. The only real hope and solution is called Jesus Christ. He

paid the ransom for the sins which I have committed and I will go on committing till the end of my life. He is the only Saviour. We can't be saved from our sins by any doctors, psychologists or therapists. The Acts say, *'for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved'* (Acts 4,12). The name is Jesus. The only Saviour is called Jesus Christ - incarnate mercy.

When we go to confession we are granted this kind of salvation. In this sacrament we can touch Christ's wounds. In them there is our spiritual health. The prophet Isaiah wrote: *'We have been healed by his bruises, his wounds'* (Is 53 5b). We have been, we are and we will be until doomsday. We can purge our hearts from dirt by washing them in Christ's blood which is flowing from the cross, from his wounds. His blood is so powerful, it cleanses us from every wrongdoing. Jesus says: *'The wound of my heart is the fountain of unfathomable mercy. From this spring all graces for souls'* (Diary 1190).

Our Lord encourages us in the Diary: *'When a soul sees and realises the gravity of its sins, when the whole abyss of the misery into which it immersed itself is displayed before its eyes. Let it not despair, but with trust let it throw itself into the arms of My mercy, as a child into the arms of its beloved mother. These souls have a right of priority to My compassionate Heart. They have first access to My mercy'* (Diary par. 1541).

Mercy greater than sins

The Lord knows that it is not easy to make confession. After committing sins we are tempted like Adam and Eve by the devil. We have the tendency to

hide ourselves away from God's sight. But He seeks us and asks, as He did toward Adam: 'Adam where are you?' Today He calls me and you and all sinners: 'Where are you my child, my friend, my beloved? Don't hide from me. Come to my merciful heart, to the fountain of my Mercy'. This calling is always present. That is why Jesus insisted on



for you I allowed Myself to be nailed to the cross. For you I let my Sacred Heart of Jesus be pierced with a lance, thus opening a wide source of mercy for you. Come then, with trust to draw graces from this fountain. I never reject a contrite heart. Your misery has disappeared in the depths of My mercy. Do not argue with me about your wretchedness. You will give Me pleasure if you hand over to Me all your troubles and grievances. I shall heap upon you the treasures of My grace' (Diary 1485).

Trust in the Divine Mercy

It is not an easy thing to believe, to trust in God's mercy after committing mortal sins. It is difficult to go to confession. In such circumstances people often hate themselves and aren't able to forgive themselves. Therefore they find it difficult to understand that God may forgive them all their sins and set them free from the sense of guilt.

I remember when a woman came to me wanting to make confession after a very long break. She was trying to find real happiness in many experiences but she felt empty inside. Her sins made her depressed. Finally she decided to come back to Christ and to His Church. I helped her to make confession and after receiving absolution she was overwhelmed. But after a few days she returned to me and said, 'Father is it possible that God forgave me all these sins. Is it possible? I can't believe it'. I opened the Holy Scripture and read her some passages. Such as: 'What god can compare with you for pardoning guilt and for overlooking crime? He does not harbour anger forever since he delights in showing faithful love. Once more have pity on us, tread down our faults; throw all our sins to the bottom

of the sea' (Mi 7,18-19). 'I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind' (Jr 31,34). 'However much sin increased, grace was always greater' (Rom 5,21). Finally I said, "these words aren't mine. These words are the words of God. Trust in Him, trust in his mercy".

We can add additional quotations from the Diary which relate to these biblical words. This is what Jesus is saying to us through Sister Faustina: 'Even though the sins of the soul are as dark as night, when the sinner turns to my mercy he gives me the greatest praise and is the glory of my passion'. 'Do not be afraid of Your Saviour, o sinful soul. I make the first move to come to you...My child, do you fear the God of mercy?...You can come to me at any moment, at any time'.

'Lord, I doubt that You will pardon my numerous sins; my misery fills me with fright'. 'My child, all your sins have not wounded My heart as painfully as your present lack of trust does - that after so many efforts of My love and mercy, you should still doubt My goodness' (Diary 1485,1486). 'Let the weak sinful soul have no fear to approach Me, for even if it had more sins than there are grains of sand in the world, all would be drowned in the immeasurable depths of my mercy' (Diary 1059).

To decorate the confessionals with bunches of flowers

As priests we know that so many wonderful things happen in the confessionals that they ought to be decorated with flowers as a sign of thanksgiving to God's Mercy. ►

Sister Faustina: 'Pray for souls that they are not afraid to approach the tribunal of My mercy' (Diary 975).

Through Saint Faustina's Diary, Christ encourages people to come to confession. He says, 'My child do not fear the God of mercy. My holiness does not prevent Me from being merciful. My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world. Who can measure the extent of my goodness? For you I descended from heaven to earth;

It is good to remember that the forgiveness of sins is not always a matter of feeling. It is a matter of faith. Jesus through the mouth of a priest says to us: *'I absolve you from all your sins. They are forgiven. Go in peace'*. We have to trust these words more than our feelings.

Doubt is an effect of original sin. It is of crucial importance not to give into doubts. Even Sister Faustina was tempted here. During one episode, Jesus intervened to strengthen her in the truth she was to proclaim, namely, *'that mercy is the greatest attribute of God'* (**Diary 301**). She describes her experience, in these words: *'In the evening during benediction, such thoughts as these began to distress me: Is not perhaps all this I am saying about God's mercy just a lie or an illusion...? And I wanted to think about this for a while, when I heard a strong and clear inner voice saying 'Everything that you say about My goodness is true; language has no adequate expression to extol My goodness' (Diary 359).*

Benefits of going to confession

Saint Faustina writes how confession was helpful to her. *'When I entered the confessional, I began by disclosing my difficulties. The priest replied that the best thing I could have done was to disclose these temptations from the outset. However, after the confession they took flight, and my soul is enjoying peace'* (**Diary 1715**).

Jesus helped her to overcome the difficulty of the presence of the priest as God's instrument. Christ said to her: *'You make your confession before me. The person of the priest is, for Me only a screen. Never*

analyse what sort of a priest it is that I am making use of; open Your soul in confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light'.

How to make a good confession

What kind of attitude do we need to make our confession the most fruitful? What conditions should we fulfil?

First of all we ought to be very truthful to ourselves in order to realise what our sins are. This condition is called an honest examination of conscience. Jesus said: *'you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free'* (**John 8,32**).

Secondly, we should have a contrite heart and the firm resolve not to sin any more. The contrition of heart is called "the pain of soul". In fact it's only partly our personal act. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. It is faith that enables us to realise our own guilt and to accept responsibility for it. It is disgust over our sins together with a firm resolve to do better. Thirdly, when we approach the sacrament of confession we are obliged to confess all mortal sins and their number. There is no strict necessity to confess venial sins. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge them and it is good to say them during confession especially when we strive for perfection and need spiritual direction.

A mortal sin is connected with full awareness, free will and a grave matter. The examples of grave matters are: faith, honouring God, our own life and the life of a neighbour, marital fidelity, sexual purity, personal and public possessions of great value and so on. The last condition of good confession is to say the penance

and make up for all the harm done to our neighbour. Full conversion is expressed in such action.

Fulfilling all the above mentioned conditions must go along with trust and humility. Sister Faustina would prepare herself for confession in the following way, *'I will call to mind the Passion of Jesus at each confession, to arouse my heart to contrition. Before I approach the confessional, I shall first enter the open and most merciful heart of the Saviour. When I leave the confessional, I shall rouse in my soul great gratitude for the Holy Trinity for this wonderful and inconceivable miracle of mercy that is wrought in my soul'* (**Diary 225**).

Prayer for hardened sinners

Saint Faustina was asked by Jesus to pray for hardened sinners with the following words: *'You always console Me when you pray for sinners. The prayer most pleasing to Me is prayer for the conversion of sinners'* (**Diary 1397**). *'Do not grow weary of praying for sinners. You know what a burden their souls are to My Heart. Relieve My deathly sorrow, dispense My mercy'* (**Diary 975**). This is also the request given to us by God. Let it be our frequent prayer: *'O Jesus, how sorry I feel for poor sinners. Jesus, grant them contrition and repentance. Remember Your own sorrowful passion. Do not reject sinners; Father of great mercy, I desire that all hearts turn with confidence to Your infinite mercy. No one will be justified before you if he is not accompanied by Your unfathomable mercy'* (**Diary 908.1122**).

Father Piotr Prusakiewicz CSMA

Uriel – a non-biblical archangel

Are there any Books in the Bible in which the name of Uriel is mentioned? If so, why is there no feast in the liturgical calendar?

Apart from Satan, whose name implies his heavenly function, there are only three names of angels in the Bible who are thought to be Archangels. Firstly, Raphael who introduced himself to Tobit: *'I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One'* (Tb 12, 15). Then, Gabriel, who when visiting Zechariah stated *'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news'* (Luke 1, 19). And, Michael who was known by Daniel: *'Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia'* (Daniel 10,13).

The word 'Archangel' appears only twice in the Bible, and to be more precise – only in the New Testament: *'Even Michael the Archangel didn't dare to insult the devil, when the two of them were arguing about the body of Moses'* (Jude 9); and in the Letter to the Thessalonians: *'For the Lord Himself will come, with a loud command, with the voice of the Archangel and*

with the trumpet call of God' (1 Thes 4,16). Some people are of the opinion that the prefix 'arch', which means 'main' or 'superior', suggests that there is only one Archangel, the head of all angels. It is true that the word 'archangel' does not appear in the plural form in the Bible and only St Michael is named the Archangel. It is on that basis that Jehovah's Witnesses claim that St Michael, who is identified with Jesus Christ, rules over heavenly beings.

And yet, according to Raphael's testimony, there are seven archangels. If so, what are their names? Apart from Raphael, Gabriel and Michael other names that have been suggested are: Uriel, Sariel, Raguel and Remiel. Uriel seems one of the superior angels in the extra-canonical Book of Enoch as well as the 4th Book of Ezra; he is called 'God is my light', angel of the Presence, 'Flame of God'.



However, the Roman-Catholic Church does not accept such literature. Pope Zechariah rejected four other angels in 745 and later in 789. St Paul warns believers from an exaggerated cult of angels. (Col 2, 18). We should remember that although Uriel is mentioned in apocryphal books, his name does not appear in the Bible. And the Bible is the basic criterion of truth.

Roman Zajac

Dierick Bouts

The Prophet Elijah and an angel in the desert on the Eucharistic Altar

Being afraid of persecutions from Queen Jezebel's hands, the Prophet Elijah went on a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord' he said. 'Take my life, I am no better than my ancestors'. Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat'. He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread over hot coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by the food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19, 3:8).

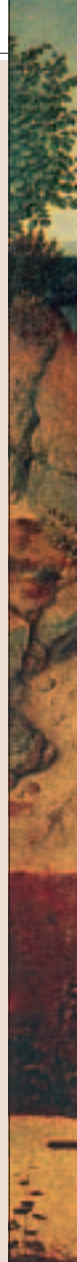
Elijah, who was a fervent protector of the Lord, a messenger between God and Israel, and who appeared next to Jesus on Mount Tabor together with Moses has been of interest to many artists throughout the centuries. His life has often been illustrated in the arts; particularly, the mysterious moment of his ascending into heaven in a blazing chariot. Elijah's life is believed to be a harbinger of John the Baptist and Jesus' coming.

The medieval painting of this scene in the desert used to refer to Elijah only. However, during the 15th and 16th centuries it began to be identified with the Holy Eucharist.

The artist Diedrick Bouts (1415-1475) of the Netherlands painted The Eucharistic Altar in co-operation with Johannes Varenacker and Egidius Bailluvel, two theologians of the Leuven University. Although their names have been forgotten, the painting (1464-68) can be seen in St Peter's Church in Leuven. In the centre of the triptych the Last Supper is depicted and on the wings are painted the scenes of Abraham and Melchizedek Meeting, the Jewish Passover, picking manna and Elijah with an angel. The latter one covers the lower part of the altar's right wing.

In the foreground we can see two large figures. Elijah is sleeping on

the rock covered with a red coat, wearing a long robe and a crimson cap. The angel is wearing an alb and is waking the prophet up. On the rock, there is bread and a chalice and a little lower down a walking stick. The angel looks like a delicate girl, which was a common image in modern paintings at that time. The impression of silence and peace on both faces emphasises the gesture of an angelic touch. It seems that Bouts attempted to provoke us: has the angel come down from heaven, or is it just a dream? Divine and human order intermingle with each other as colours are contrasted. The angelic white robe symbolizes purity of





the spiritual world whereas Elijah's red coat reminds us about human emotions as well as God's love and care. An exhausted man would not have felt the angelic touch. Yet, we see Elijah regaining his energy and going upward in the background. The composition of vertical, horizontal and arched lines illustrate the prophet's psychic suspension. It is a crucial moment in his life; the only thing he wishes for is death. The infertile desert seems the best place for dying, but it is also a place of mystical experiences. The divine messenger is waking Elijah up and bringing supplies of bread and water, he does not want the prophet to fall

into despair and die. The miraculous food revives Elijah. Now, not only is he saved but he is changed. He is able to walk for 40 days to meet God at Mount Horeb and accept and fulfil the Lord's order.

Jesus via the sacrament of the Eucharist feeds us and frees us. Communion is visible evidence of divine love towards people, which transforms human hearts, reinforces us and gives us eternal life. Christ is angelic bread, who satisfies all the hungers of man's heart. Then man can entrust himself to God like Elijah did.

Żaneta Groborz-Mazanek



St. Therese of Lisieux Eucharistic Quotes:

Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you - for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart... don't listen to the demon, laugh at him, and go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love...

* * *

Receive Communion often, very often... there you have the sole remedy, if you want to be cured. Jesus has not put this attraction in your heart for nothing...

* * *

The guest of our soul knows our misery; He comes to find an empty tent within us - that is all He asks.

To the Heart of the Divine Mercy

Reflections by a pilgrim

On 14 June 2010 a group of 30 from all parts of the British Isles arrived in Krakow for the Divine Mercy pilgrimage led by Polish Priest Fr Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA), who was to be our spiritual director for the week, the Divine Mercy Shrine in Łagiewniki, near Krakow was our base. A beautiful, prayerful place in which to relax and enter more deeply into the mystery of the Divine Mercy.



On the evening of our arrival we were able to celebrate the Holy Mass in the Chapel of the Lord's Passion. We were blessed to have two other priests on the pilgrimage. Fr Andrew Kingham from Scotland and Fr Silvester Kewaza Bukunya from Masaka, Uganda, who took part in the Masses throughout the week.

As was the case each evening, we enjoyed a delicious three-course meal and had time to visit the Adoration Chapel and Chapel of the Divine Mercy as we wished. What a grace to be in the Chapel which represents the heart of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy.

On the second day our group had the privilege of hearing the Holy Mass in English in the Chapel of the Divine Mercy where the famous Divine Mercy image sits magnificently above the relics of St. Faustina. The remainder of the day was spent within the Shrine complex. We had a talk from one of the Sisters about the mystical life of St Faustina and were taken to a replica of the room where this great saint died. In the beautiful afternoon sunshine we took part in the St Faustina Stations of the Cross,

slowly meditating at each station. This was followed at 3.00pm with The Divine Mercy Chaplet in the Basilica of the Divine Mercy. The Basilica was consecrated by Pope John Paul II on August 17th 2002 during a solemn Mass. At the same time he consecrated the World and the plight of mankind to the Divine Mercy. He said: "I do so with the burning desire that the message of God's merciful love, proclaimed here through Saint Faustina, may be made known to all the peoples of the earth and fill their hearts with hope..." We returned to the Chapel of the Lord's Passion for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Later that evening Fr Silvester Kewaza Bukunya gave a talk in thanksgiving for a new medical centre recently built in Lwoyo village, Uganda, which was named after St Faustina. A picture of the Divine Mercy Image hangs in the entrance hallway. This new fully equipped medical centre in a very rural area serves a population of 20,000. The children have already learnt to sing "Jesu Ufam Tobie" – "Jesus I Trust in You". Fr Silvester is in the process of translating the Divine Mercy Chaplet



■ The Divine Mercy Shrine in Łagiewniki



into his local dialect for his whole community. It was an uplifting end to the day. All the talks were a great help and inspiration to us all.

On day three we visited Auschwitz/Birkenau. This was the most memorable and in some ways devastating visit of the entire pilgrimage. We prepared in prayer with Mass in the morning but no one could have been fully prepared for what we were about to experience.

At Auschwitz we entered through the dreaded gate, which heralded the death of so many victims.

We saw the rooms full of spectacles, the rooms full of shoes, the rooms full of suitcases, the rooms full of toothbrushes, the rooms full of children's clothes and shoes and the rooms full of human hair. We were moved to the depths of compassion for the victims and to the depths of fury towards those who had carried out these unspeakable crimes. What was clear was that these victims were very ordinary men and women. There were the pictures of many thousands men, women and children – their eyes peering out strongly from each picture, each with a personal story of agony and tragedy to convey.

The mark of sorrow was upon them. All dressed in the recognizable pin stripped uniform. There were thousands upon thousands of them. We went into the cell of St. Maximillian Kolbe and remembered his heroic sacrifice and those of countless unknown others who gave their all for their fellow inmates and in St. Kolbe's case his life in exchange for saving another. We passed by the chimneys of the incinerators, which burnt the bodies of so many millions. Ashes from some were used as fertiliser. In Block 25 women and children who were sick or who had become sick were incarcerated and starved until there was space to send them to the gas chambers.

We saw the wall of death where tens of thousands of people were shot – we stopped and prayed. Horror on top of unspeakable horror! We saw horrific images of the children, twins and adults that Dr. Joseph Mengele and his fellow Nazi doctors unleashed hideous experiments upon. The scenes were unbearable and we found ourselves numb thinking of those children who had suffered and died due to these experiments. A programme of Euthanasia was also part of this.

A phenol injection was given direct into the heart. Many perished through this medium.

Then it was to the gas chambers – the sight of the so called showers in the rooms where the Nazis unleashed Cyclon B which caused the death of millions. Nearby were the huge ovens where the bodies were then burnt. Silence prevailed

here in an even deeper way. This was something unfathomable – that people like you and me in their hundreds and thousands were marched in here, gassed in the most brutal way and then burnt with no trace left of them.

We took the short trip to Birkenau and arrived at the very place where the trains full of Jews used to arrive. The camps are a symbol of the Holocaust, genocide, and terror. Never before in human history were so many people murdered in a planned way, in such a short time, and in such a small place. Between 1940 and 1945 the Nazis deported over a million Jews, nearly 150,000 Poles, 23,000 Roma Gypsies, 15,000 Soviet POWs and more than 10,000 prisoners of other nationalities in these camps. The overwhelming ma-



■ Auschwitz - the gate of the concentration camp

jority of them perished in the camp. We all wandered shell-shocked through the prisoner blocks of Birkenau. The inhuman conditions clearly evident – the atmosphere held within it the suffering – we all could imagine piercing screams of the victims as they were tortured and brutalised, the sobs and the endless tears of misery and agony.

► Auschwitz and Birkenau are an experience we would not have wanted to miss.

On the fourth day we visited the Jasna Gora Sanctuary in Czestochowa. The Sanctuary is the holiest place in Poland and one of the world's most important destinations for pilgrims. *Jasna Gora* means Bright Mount in Polish.

The small 15th-century gothic chapel with Our Lady of Czestochowa's holy picture, also known as 'The Black Madonna' is the heart of the sanctuary. Our group was privileged to celebrate our daily Holy Mass in the chapel, led by Fr Andrew and Fr Peter. On bended knees we heard the trumpets herald the moment the veil is lifted from the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa. We sang a special hymn to Our Lady of Czestochowa, it was an incredible, humbling and moving moment for all of us.

During our time there we also walked around the impressive contemporary pictures of the stations of the cross by Jerzy Druda Gracz and spent a short while in the Adoration Chapel.

In the afternoon we visited an orphanage where we were served lunch by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Czestochowa. This was in thanksgiving for money raised by the Global Children's Foundation, who have helped the orphanage and children in many parts of the world. Before lunch was served the children (many with learning disabilities) sang and danced and some of us even managed to join in for the encore. They had practiced three weeks ahead of our arrival and were a total joy to be with. In the dining room was a picture of the Divine Mercy, St Faustina and The Holy

Spirit, without realising it we were witnessing Divine Mercy in action. What a contrast this day had been to the previous. The horror of human nature at its worst as displayed by the visit to Auschwitz was in stark contrast to the beautiful care and loving atmosphere the nuns at the orphanage so clearly gave to the young in their care.

On the fifth day we headed east to Miejsce Piastowe and the National Shrine of St Michael the Archangel, where we were able to celebrate the Holy Mass. We received a beautiful welcome from a group of young seminarians at the minor seminary and were generously served with a delicious lunch and evening supper.

During the afternoon we were given a tour of the Church where Blessed Bronislaus Markiewicz (1842-1912), the founder of the Community of St. Michael the Archangel has his tomb and shrine. At 3.00pm we said the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the chapel convent at The Sisters of St Michael The Archangel.

It was a joy for us to be in this spiritual heart of Blessed Fr. Bronislaus and for most of us to discover a new saint we had not before had knowledge of. It was clear that this was a man of deep spirituality and vision far beyond his time. When we viewed the museum of the story of his life and of the foundation of the orphanages what struck was the visionary outlook he had of ensuring the boys and girls were given an all round homely, spiritual, physical, emotional, social, educational, loving and compassionate holding home to live in – as much as



■ Picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa

a family atmosphere as it was possible to provide. The beautiful photos adorning the walls were a historical testament to this. The greatest testament to his life of faith and sacrifice is his Community as it is today - two very vibrant communities of priests, brothers and also sisters – with many young members along with representatives of all the generations above. This was such an encouragement.

The minor Seminary was a special statement in itself. However, in the context of Poland and through the witness of meeting young priests in their late twenties on fire for the Lord and the mission of Evangelisation, who had been through this minor seminary, we could not help but be inspired and encouraged. Both the priests and sisters have as part of their apostolate the care of orphans and children whose families are unable for whatever reason to look after them. They care for the most abandoned, rejected and hence often emotionally scarred children of Poland.

On day six we headed to the sanctuary at Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. It is Poland's second most important pilgrim destination and is home to the miraculous image of Our Lady of Kalwaria. As a group we had our final English Holy Mass in the side chapel of St. Anthony of Padova.

In the afternoon we visited 7 Koscielna Street, Wadowice the birthplace of Karol Wojtyla, the future John Paul II. Since May 18th 1984 this home has been used as a little museum. We also visited the church opposite where Karol Wojtyla went often as a little boy. On the nearby John Paul II square, the central point of Wadowice we sat in the sunshine and ate the famous 'Pope's cake' (kremowki) and listened to a music festival.

That evening we went out for a meal in Krakow town centre, to sample the local cuisine and hear live Polish music.

On our penultimate day we travelled the short distance to the deep underground salt mine at Wieliczka. The salt mine consists of nearly 300 km of underground footpaths and about 3000 caverns. There are three levels, 64 to 135 meters below ground level with 19 chambers bearing visible signs of the working miners, chapels and many pieces of sculpture. The underground lakes were beautiful as were the crystal grottos. It was simply breathtaking and we had never seen anything like it before. We attended The Holy Mass, in Polish in the chapel at the bottom of the salt mine, followed by an organised tour with professional guide.



■ Salt mine at Wieliczka

Our last morning! Before we departed to the airport we attended the 6.30am Holy Mass in the relic chapel. It was a joy to see the Sisters at prayer and to join them was so special. Many of us were particularly moved to share their praying of the Chaplet of Mercy. They pray it with their arms outstretched in supplication to the Merciful Saviour for the needs of the Church and world.

Only in Poland will you find such faith in Europe! In the Basilica is the image of the Merciful Jesus below which is a gold Tabernacle in the shape of a sphere, symbolizing the earth – surrounded by a sculpture of a wind swept bush – a metaphor of man struggling with his own weakness and sinfulness; of man who can only find peace with the Merciful Jesus. Try to discover the Devotion to the Divine Mercy in its depths and visit the Shrine if you can - you will not be disappointed.

During the last five years, pilgrims have joined us from all over the world including, America, Africa, Australia as well as Europe.

A Pilgrim from England

■ Blessed
Bronislaw,
Founder
of the
Congregation



The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel (CSMA), in Latin *Congregatio Sancti Michaelis Archangeli* and also known as the *Michaelite Fathers*, is a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church founded in 1897 by the Blessed Father Bronislaw Markiewicz, a Polish priest from Miejsce Piastowe, Poland. The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel is one of the 23 officially recognised groups of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco.

The Congregation now operates in a number of places and parishes around the world. According to the survey in 2010 they work in 52 houses and have nearly 400 members.

They run orphanages, schools and youth centres and work with unprivileged, handicapped, abandoned and poor children including missionary work in 15 countries

Michalites Fathers spread the devotion to Saint Michael and the Holy Angels. They are the guardians of the shrine of Saint Michael the Archangel in Monte Sant'Angelo in Italy. The priests and brothers also run a publishing house so-called "Michalineum" and publish a bi-monthly magazine on Saint Michael and the Angels in Polish and quarterly issue in English.

www.michaelites.ca

The miracle of a place called St Michael

There are many towns and villages in South America that are named after saints. When searching an Argentine index of postcodes, it is noticeable that lots of places are named St Theresa, St Helen, St Francisco and others. Road signs with an inscription 'St Rapahel', 'St Gabriel' or 'St Michael' are also common.

St Michael is the patron of one of the villages situated 800 km south-west of Buenos Aires. It is the only settlement called by the full name of the Prince of the Heavenly Army; St Michael the Archangel. It is literally sunk in The Pampas because heavy downpours often cause floods. Consequently, the village appears to be cut off from the world. It was established by several families of German origin, who arrived in 1903. They were overjoyed when a priest reached their homes a year later to celebrate Midnight Mass at Christmas.

In 1930 a local politician changed the name of the town to the Colony of St Marianna not only to make his wife happy but also because parcels and letters were often misdirected to one of the other 37 towns known as St Michael. The inhabitants opposed the new name for 15 years until the government restored the original name of 'St Michael' on 29th Sept 1945. The phrase 'the Archangel' was added making it easier for the

postal service to deliver mail to the correct people.

It is believed that the Archangel's intercession worked the miracle of calling vocations to the Church

because the small village has boasted about 5 bishops, 30 priests, 38 nuns and a number of monks.

Fr Zdzisław Urbanik CSMA



Letters Received

I really enjoyed reading the very first issue of your magazine! Especially reading so much about St Michael Archangel and our guardians angels. It reminded me of my prayers before we went to sleep when we were kids. My mum taught us the 'Guardian Angel' prayer.

Amazing work! Congratulations and I will look forward getting the next issue!

I shared it with my fiancé Michael in the USA and my friend Renata in London. I hope the good news about your magazine will spread!

Agnieszka. Scottsdale. AZ. USA

Reading the story of Lisa Burns brought tears to my eyes, she has a great testimony for young people. She reminded me of myself because I too fell into atheism and felt very depressed asking myself: 'Is this it? Am I going nowhere when I die?' but the 12th promise of the Sacred Heart saved me. This magazine is needed and will help the young. God bless your work.

Padraic. Dublin. Ireland

It is a wonderful to have the combination of both the Holy Angels and The Divine Mercy in this new magazine. Very interesting and inspiring, I found the testimonies very moving.

LML Glasgow. Scotland

How does one respond to such goodness? It is a long time since I have read something so lovely. My eyes filled with tears on reading Lisa Burns' wonderful story. A friend of

mine is taking a copy of this magazine to Lourdes next week.

Gerard. Kent. England

It's such good news! I have had a good read of this new magazine and I think it is a necessary informative resource at the age when the New Age ideas creep in and lead to so much misunderstanding of the spiritual reality. I will definitely spread the news around about this magazine.

Sr G. Brentwood. Essex. England

The explanation on the different explanations on the hierarchy of angels was great, some I already knew but many more I did not know. I may use it when we come to do our workshops and RCIA groups. I also liked the section on St Faustina and her experience of the angels which was all new to me so that was exciting as I love to learn new things about my faith. It is all things that we can share with others in our parishes... great stuff.

Wanda. Northampton. England

I find this a wonderful inspiring magazine, just what we all need to read.

Winifred. Tyne & Wear. England

We read "The Angels" and found it very interesting, with lovely illustrations and very professionally edited.

Isabel. North Ryde NSW. Australia

To know that someone is promoting the Devotion to the Holy Angels is a grace and gift from God. My friends and I are delighted and looking forward to the next issue.

Bro M J S. Co. Durham. England

Act of Consecration

Saint Michael the Archangel, invincible prince of the angelic hosts and glorious protector of the universal Church, I greet you and praise you for that splendour with which God has adorned you so richly. I stand before you in the company of my Guardian Angel, Blessed Father Markiewicz and all the Blessed and Saints. I take them as witnesses of my dedication and devotion to you.

Saint Michael the Archangel, I consecrate to you my soul and body. I choose you as my patron and protector. Be my strength and the guardian in my life. Assist me by your powerful intercession so that I may imitate your courage and loyalty to God, that trusting in your kind help and protection, I may be victorious over the enemies of my soul and be united with God in heaven forever and ever. Amen.



Chaplet of St Michael

L. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen

L. O God, come to my assistance

A. O Lord, make haste to help me

Glory be to the Father, etc..

L. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Seraphim, may the Lord make us worthy to burn with the fire of perfect charity. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

2. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Cherubim, may the Lord vouchsafe to grant us grace to leave the ways of wickedness to run in the paths of Christian perfection. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

3. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Thrones, may the Lord infuse into our hearts a true and sincere spirit of humility. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

4. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominions, may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and subdue our unruly passions. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

5. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Powers, may the Lord vouchsafe to protect our souls against the snares and temptations of the devil. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

6. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Virtues, may the Lord deliver us from evil and suffer us not to fall into temptation. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

7. By the intercession of St Michael and the Celestial Choir of Principalities, may God fill our souls with a true spirit of obedience. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

8. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Archangels, may the Lord give us perseverance in faith and in all good works, in order that we gain the glory of Paradise. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

9. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels, may the Lord grant us to be protected by them in this mortal life and conducted hereafter to eternal glory. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

1 Our Father
in honour of St Michael

1 Our Father
in honour of St Gabriel

1 Our Father
in honour of St Raphael

1 Our Father
in honour of our Guardian Angel

O glorious prince, St Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the Divine King, and our admirable



conductor, who shines with excellence and superhuman virtue, vouchsafe to deliver us from evil, who turn to you with confidence, and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day. Amen.

V. Pray for us O glorious St Michael, Prince of the Church of Jesus Christ.

A. That we may be made worthy of His promises.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by a prodigy of goodness and a merciful desire for the salvation of all men, has appointed the most glorious Archangel, St Michael, Prince of the Church, make us worthy, we beseech you, to be delivered from all our enemies that none of them may harass us at the hour of our death, but that we may be conducted by him into the august presence of your Divine Majesty. This we beg through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.