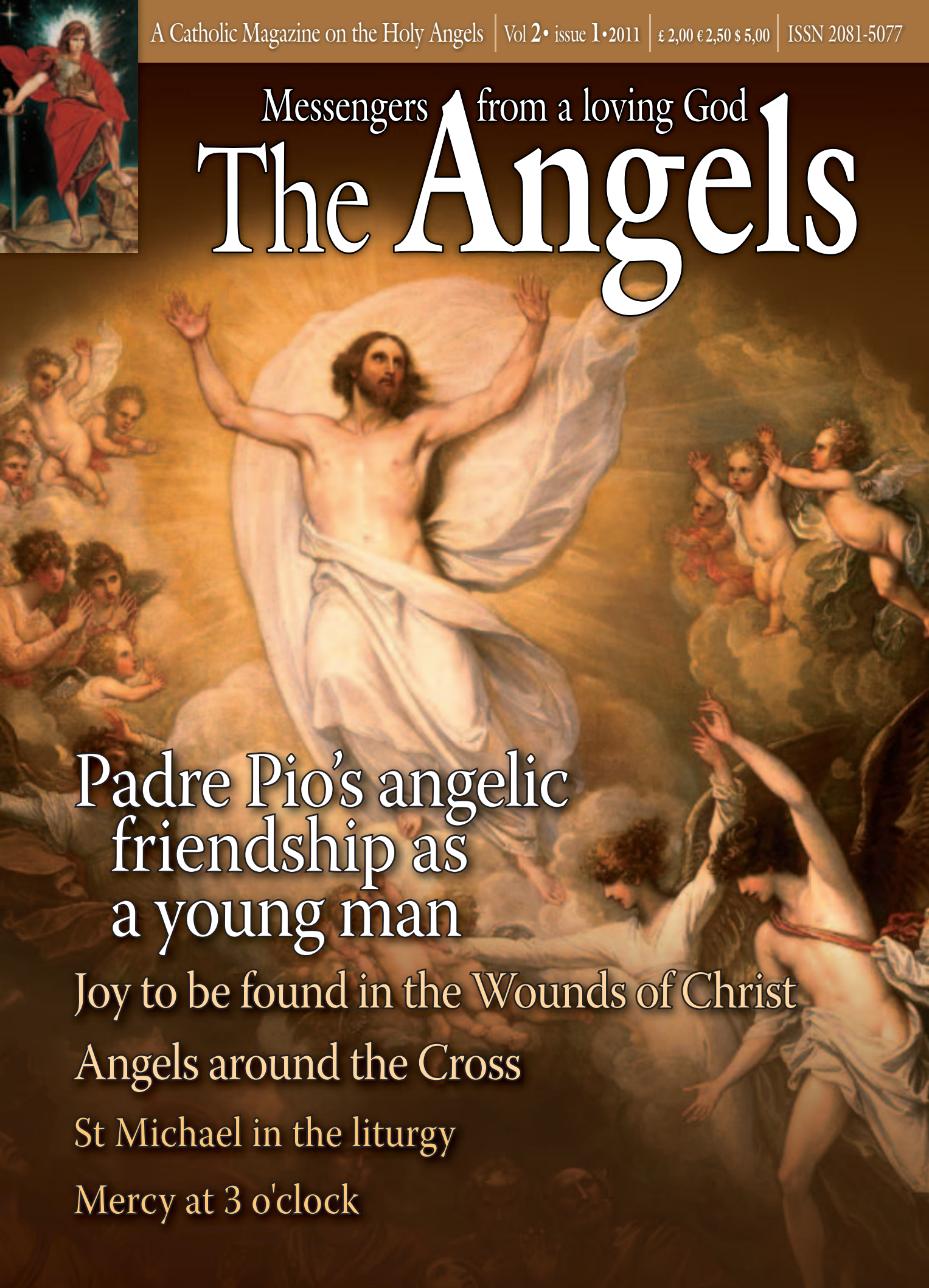




Messengers from a loving God

The Angels



Padre Pio's angelic
friendship as
a young man

Joy to be found in the Wounds of Christ

Angels around the Cross

St Michael in the liturgy

Mercy at 3 o'clock



It is a pleasure to welcome you to the fifth quarterly edition of 'The Angels Messengers from a loving God'. We have started the second year of publishing of our magazine. Thank you so much for all your prayers, letters and emails.

The power and the wisdom of God is not confined to the creation of man and the material world. Beyond man, millions of creatures exist in a higher state of perfection than man.

How do we know about that? We learn this from the Bible, Sacred Tradition, and the teachings of the Church. The Bible doesn't try to prove the existence of angels it just takes their existence for granted.

As Psalm 90 says; 'God will put his angels in charge of you to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands to keep you from hurting your feet on the stones.'

Saint Bernard referred to this passage from the Bible: 'How these words should inspire you with respect for the presence of your angel, with love for his goodness and with confidence in his care of you. Do you doubt his presence because you do not see him? Let us be filled with devotion and gratitude towards our guardian angels. Let us love them as much as we can, because they are faithful, they are prudent and they are powerful, so why fear? Let us follow them and let us cling to their footsteps. Should you foresee a grave temptation or fear a great

trial – invoke your guardian angel, your guide, your refuge in oppression and in distress. Call on him and say "Lord save us, we perish." He doesn't sleep, he doesn't slumber...May your guardian angel be your intimate friend.'

I kindly ask you to let others know about our magazine and distribute it all over the world. We pray for all the readers and helpers.

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 your regional coordinator. Contact information can be found on page 31 and online at the websites: www.holyangelsmagazine.com and www.kjb24.pl.

Be like an angel – look for the ways to serve God.

Be like an angel – be there when God needs you.

Be like an angel – tell others about His Divine Mercy.

Be like an angel – give directions.

Be like an angel – help and protect those in need.

Be like an angel – worship God.

Father Piotr Prusakiewicz CSMA

The Angels

Messengers from a Loving God

A Catholic Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

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Padre Pio's angelic friendship

The Lord commanded the Guardian Angel of Francesco Forgione (the original name of Padre Pio) to be the perpetual protector of his body and soul. A friendly relationship between Francesco and his Guardian Angel began when he was still a young child.

One day, when the young priest Padre Pio was leaving his house in Pietrelcina, his neighbours called out “Lock the door Padre Pio, robbers might steal from your house!” Padre Pio answered “Do not worry, my angel watches over my house!” He was accompanied by his heavenly friend at all times. Sometimes he could even see his angel in the form of a young man. The angel both protected and consoled him and when Padre Pio was dealing with important tasks in his life, he helped by leading him in the right direction.

Your guardian angel

To the people who were asking him for help the Padre appeared to communicate with them through their guardian angels: “Pray to your guardian angels and send them to me every time, you need help from me. Your guardian angel is faster than an airplane, he does not wear out his shoes and he does not need any train tickets.” Many people who listened to the Padre’s advice, confided in the monk about the fears, needs and concerns in their lives. He used to say “You can send your guardian angel any time of the day or night



– I am always happy to welcome him. Staying in the presence of the angels is a real happiness.” The ‘flying couriers’ reached him from the furthest parts of the world.

Often, when he was thoughtful, people asked him “What are you thinking about Padre?” he would answer “I am having a conversation with my guardian angel at the moment.”

I sent a message for you

One day a lady asked “Padre, did my guardian angel visit you? I sent him with a message for you. What did he tell you?” “Of course he was at my place – he is gentler than you are!” – laughed Padre Pio and repeated to her what her guardian angel had told him.

His guardian angel was also a translator. He helped with the confessions of foreigners and Italians who were speaking in other dialects. He supported the Padre with the translation of letters written in languages unknown to him. Padre Pio used to say: “(...) my guardian angel’s task is great since he is my teacher and translator of foreign languages”. The angel helped Padre Pio decipher letters written by spiritual directors. Often the devil made them illegible by covering the letters with ink blots or by removing the print from the pages. His guardian angel used to inform him about the tricks and evil intentions of Satan and advised him how to avoid falling into the devil’s trap. The angels passed on to him good wishes from his friends and from his spiritual children. Padre often spoke the word “angel”. When bidding farewell to the pilgrims leaving the monastery

he would say, “Let the Angel of God keep you company.”

Prophetic vision

As a young man Francesco had often thought about his vocation. One day he had a prophetic vision. Jesus brought him along a great plain. Along its two sides there were two rows of angels. One side was made up with devils dressed in black clothes and on the other there were angels clothed in an amazing glittering white colour. Thanks to the encouragement of Jesus and the presence of the angels Francesco was successful in fighting off an attack by the biggest devil. This was the portent of the monk’s future with Satan, who was always coming back to attack him. But, thanks to God’s help and the angels’ company, the modest Capuchin was always successful.

On 20th September 1918, as a monk, whilst praying in front of the cross, Padre Pio saw a mysterious angelic figure whose side, hands and legs were dripping with blood. It was a Seraphim, an angel with six wings who, on God’s order, completed the stigmatization of Padre Pio. After this meeting with the Seraphim, bleeding wounds appeared on his body, similar to the wounds of Jesus.

Padre Pio had a great devotion to Saint Michael the Archangel. He used to pray to him regularly and suggested that other people should pray to him if they were in any kind of need, especially those who were possessed or who were in a battle with Satan. He asked people to pray to Saint Michael for help in the case of any mental illness, depression or possession. The Merciful God allowed Padre Pio to spend his last years in the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo, not far from the Grotto of Saint Michael the

Archangel. He used to recommend pilgrimages to there any time he considered it necessary.

Intercession of St Michael

Once, thanks to the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel, a girl was freed from a spiritual possession. Her mother totally believed that the Capuchin would free her daughter from the devil. The girl was creating an uproar thrashing around suffering from convulsions. One day, Padre Pio was passing this girl who was screaming and writhing in the church. He stamped his feet, touched her head and said “Basta!” – which means “Enough!” After that the girl slid to the ground as if she was falling into a deep sleep. Then Padre Pio told her mother and the doctor who was with them to take the girl to the Mount of Saint Michael. When the mother, her possessed daughter, the doctor and the other people entered the grotto, they wanted to lead the girl to the altar by force but were unable to do this. In the ensuing confusion the monk took the girl’s hand making her touch the altar. The girl then fell to the ground with a sigh of relief. After a few minutes she stood up as if nothing had happened and she asked her mother: “Mum, will you buy me an ice-cream?”

Padre Pio asked Saint Michael the Archangel to help him overcome the devil and his own fears. Thanks to God’s unusual intervention, the angels helped Padre Pio to help other people. He had a secret relationship with them. He recognised that they were his guides, light, strength, consolation and help.

Grzegorz Rajchel

It is often difficult to detach ourselves from the realities of this world and to overcome a desire to be better than others where we live and work and to feel valued by them. But we read in the Gospel of Luke that it is those who listen to and obey the word of God that will be blessed.

Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it. (Lk 11, 28)



Real fruits of life

To really listen to Christ requires a change of priorities in life enabling us to receive peace, joy and love which are the real fruits of life. We no longer have fear, sadness and dissatisfaction.

Christ can see the hearts of those who are humble and open, those who do not matter to others, those who do not know the answers to all the questions but who just know how to be, to listen and to fulfill His will. He chooses the weak and “little ones”, with simple and sincere hearts who look at the world without envy or suspicion. Christ prays for them with joy: “I praise you, Father of Heaven and Earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to the little children. Yes, Father, because this was what you were pleased to do” (Lk 10, 21).

Fulfilling the Word of God

Only the humble and those who listen will be able to taste the exceptional peace coming from receiving the truth: “We are unworthy servants;

God chooses the weak

we have only done our duty” (Lk 17, 10b). They will be protected, healed and guided by the word of God and when they listen they will find fulfillment in their lives.

On this difficult path to becoming wise, listening and fulfilling the word of God we meet Mary. Blessed Father Markiewicz said that she was the first disciple of Her Son, the purest, most

humble and obedient; loving what is poor, happy in being innocent and keeping all the things of God in Her heart (Lk 2, 51b). In Mary we see the truth revealed, that man does not become exceptional himself but when he gives God his place, God reveals it in him.

Joanna Krzywonos

The fall of the rebellious angels

JOHN PAUL II GENERAL AUDIENCE: AUGUST 13, 1986

1 Continuing the theme of the previous catecheses, which were dedicated to the article of the faith that concerns the angels, God's creatures, we shall begin today to explore *the mystery of the freedom* which some of them have turned against God and his plan of salvation for mankind.

As the evangelist Luke testifies, when the disciples returned to the Master full of joy at the fruits they had gathered in their first missionary attempt, Jesus utters a sentence that is highly evocative: "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Lk 10:18). With these words, the Lord affirms that the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is always a victory over the devil, but at the same time he also reveals that the building up of the Kingdom is continuously exposed to the attacks of the spirit of evil. When we consider this, as we propose to do with today's catechesis, it means that *we prepare ourselves for the condition of struggle* which characterizes the life of the Church in this final time of the history of salvation (as the **Book of Revelation asserts: cf. 12:7**). Besides this, it will permit us to clarify *the true faith of the Church* against those who pervert it by exaggerating the importance of the devil, or by denying or minimizing his malevolent power.

The preceding catechesis on the angels have prepared us to understand the truth which Sacred Scripture has revealed and which the Tradition of the Church has handed on about Satan, that is, the fallen angel, the wicked spirit, who is also called the devil or demon.

2 This "fall", which has the character of rejection of God with the consequent state of "damnation", consists in the free choice of those created spirits who have radically and irrevocably *rejected God and his kingdom* usurping his sovereign rights and attempting to subvert the economy of salvation and the very order of the entire creation. We find a reflection of this attitude in the words addressed by the tempter to our first parents: "You will become like God" or "like gods" (cf. **Gen 3:5**). Thus the evil spirit tries to transplant into man the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God, which has, as it were, become the motivation of all his existence.

3 In the Old Testament, the narrative of the fall of man as related in the Book of Genesis, contains a reference to an attitude of antagonism which Satan wishes to communicate to man in order to lead him to sin (**Gen 3:5**). In the Book of

Job too, we read that Satan seeks to generate rebellion in the person who is suffering (cf. **Job 1:11; 2:5-7**). In the Book of Wisdom (cf. **Wis 2:24**), Satan is presented as the artisan of death, which has entered man's history along with sin.

4 In the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Church teaches that the devil (or Satan) and the other demons "*were created good by God but have become evil by their own will*". In fact, we read in the Letter of St. Jude: "... the angels who did not keep their dignity, but left their own dwelling, are kept by the Lord in eternal chains in the darkness, for the judgment of the great day" (**Jude 6**). Similarly, in the *second Letter of St. Peter*, we hear of "angels who have sinned" and whom God "did not spare, but... cast in the gloomy abysses of hell, reserving them for the judgment" (**2 Pet 2:4**). It is clear that if God "does not forgive" the sin of the angels, this is because they remain in their sin, because they are eternally "*in the chains*" of the choice that they made at the beginning, rejecting God, against the truth of the supreme and definitive Good that is God himself. It is in this sense that St John writes that "*the devil has been a sinner from the beginning...*" (**Jn 3:8**). And he has been a murderer



Photo: Grzegorz Gajdzka

“from the beginning” and “has not persevered in the truth, because *there is no truth in him*” (Jn 8:44).

Satan: cosmic liar and murderer

5. These texts help us to understand the nature and the dimension of the sin of Satan, which consists in the denial of the truth about God, as he is known by the light of the intellect and revelation as infinite Good, *subsistent Love and Holiness*. The sin was all the greater, in that the spiritual perfection and the epistemological acuteness of the angelic intellect, with his freedom and closeness to God, were greater. When, by an act of his own free will, he *rejected the truth* that he knew about God, Satan became the cosmic “liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44). For this reason, he lives in radical and irreversible denial of

God, and *seeks to impose* on creation - on the other beings created in the image of God, and in particular on people - his own tragic “lie about the good” that is God. In the Book of Genesis, we find a precise description of this lie and falsification of the truth about God, which Satan (under the form of a serpent) tries to transmit to the first representatives of the human race: God is jealous of his own prerogatives and therefore wants to impose limitations on man (cf. Gen 3:5), Satan invites the man to free himself from the impositions of this yoke, by making himself “like God”.

6. In this condition of existential falsehood, Satan - according to St John - also becomes a “murderer”, that is *one who destroys the supernatural life* which God had made to dwell from the beginning in him and in the creatures made “in the likeness of God”: the other pure spirits and men; Satan *wishes to destroy life lived in accordance*

with the truth, life in the fullness of good, the supernatural *life of grace and love*. The author of the Book of Wisdom writes: “...death has entered the world through the envy of the devil, and those who belong to him experience it” (Wis 2:24). And Jesus Christ warns in the Gospel: “...*fear rather him who has the power to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna*” (Mt 10:28).

7. As the result of the sin of our first parents, this fallen angel ♦ has acquired *dominion over man to a certain extent*. This is the doctrine that has been constantly professed and proclaimed by the Church, and which the *Council of Trent* confirmed in its treatise on original sin (cf. DS 1511): it finds a dramatic expression *in the liturgy of baptism*, when the catechumen is asked to renounce the devil and all his empty promises.

In Sacred Scripture we find various indications of this influence on man and on the dispositions of his spirit (and of his body). In the Bible, Satan is called “*the prince of the world*” (cf Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and even “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4). We find *many* other names that describe his nefarious relationship with man: “Beelzebul” or “Belial”, “*unclean spirit*”: “tempter”, “evil one” and even “Antichrist” (1 Jn 4:3). He is compared to a “lion” (1 Pet 5:8), to a “dragon” (in Revelation) and to a “serpent” (Gen 3). Very frequently, he is designated by the name “devil”: from the Greek *diaballein* (hence *diabolos*), which means: to “cause destruction, to divide, to calumniate, to deceive”. In truth, all this takes place from the beginning through the working of the evil spirit who is presented by Sacred Scripture as *a person*, while it is declared that *he is not alone*: “there are

many of us” as the devils cry out to Jesus in the region of the Gerasenes (Mk 5:9); and Jesus, speaking of the future judgment, speaks of “the devil and his angels” (cf. Mt 25:41).

8 According to Sacred Scripture, and especially the New Testament, the dominion and the influence of Satan and of the other evil spirits embraces *all the world*. We may think of Christ’s parable about the field (the world), about the good seed and the bad seed that the devil sows in the midst of the wheat, seeking to snatch away from hearts the good that has been “sown” in them (cf. Mt 13:38-39). We may think of the numerous exhortations to vigilance (cf. Mt 26:41; 1 Pet 5:8), to prayer and fasting (cf. Mt 17:21). We may think of the strong statement made by the Lord: “This kind of demon cannot be cast out by any other means than prayer” (Mk 9:29). The action of Satan consists primarily in tempting men to evil, by influencing their imaginations and higher faculties, to turn them away from the law of God. Satan *even tempts Jesus* (cf. Lk 4:3-13), in the extreme attempt to thwart what is demanded by the economy of salvation, as this has been pre-ordained by God.

It is possible that in certain cases the evil spirit goes so far as to exercise his influence not only on material things, but even *on man’s body* so that one can speak of “diabolical possession” (cf. Mk 5:2-9). It is not always easy to discern the preternatural factor operative in these cases, and the Church does not lightly support the tendency to attribute many things to the direct action of the devil; but in principle it cannot be denied that Satan can go to this extreme manifestation of his superiority, in his will to harm and lead to evil.

9 To conclude, we must add that the impressive words of the Apostle John, “The whole world lies under the power of the evil one” (1 Jn 5:19), allude also to the presence of Satan in the history of humanity, a presence which becomes all the more acute when man and society depart from God. The influence of the evil spirit can *conceal itself* in a more profound and effective way: it is in his “interests” to make himself unknown. Satan has the skill in the world to induce people to deny his existence in the name of rationalism and of every other system of thought which seeks all possible means to avoid recognizing his activity. This, however, *does not signify the elimination of man’s free will and responsibility*, and even less the frustration of the saving action of Christ. It is, rather, a case of conflict between the dark powers of evil and the powers of redemption. The words that Jesus addressed to Peter at the beginning of the Passion are eloquent in this context: “... Simon, behold, Satan has sought to sift you like wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail” (Lk 22:31).

This helps us understand how Jesus, in the prayer that he taught us, the “Our Father”, that is, the prayer of the Kingdom of God, terminates almost brusquely, unlike so many other prayers of his era, by reminding us of our condition as people *exposed to the snares of evil and of the evil one*. The Christian, appealing to the Father with the Spirit of Jesus and invoking his Kingdom, cries with the power of faith: “Let us not succumb to temptation, free us from evil, from the evil one. O Lord, let us not fall into the infidelity to which we are seduced by the one who has been unfaithful from the beginning.”



On the road to Haran ‘When he reached a certain place, he passed the night there, since the sun had set. Taking one of the stones to be found at that place, he made it his pillow and lay down where he was. He had a dream: a ladder was there, standing on the ground, with its top reaching heaven; and there were angels of God going up it and coming down. And Yahweh was there, standing over him, saying ‘I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham, your father and the God of Isaac. I will give to you and your descendents the land on which you are lying(...) Be sure that I am with you, I will keep you safe wherever you go, and bring you back to this land for I will not desert you before I have done all that I have promised you.’ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said ‘Truly Yahweh is in this place and I never knew it!’ He was afraid and said, ‘How awe-inspiring this place is! This is nothing less than a house of God; this is the gate of heaven!’ (Genesis 28:10-13, 15-17)

Angels at the Gate of Heaven

Isaac had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Their father loved the first, because he was brave and their mother the second, as he was sensitive. When they grew up, Jacob obtained his father's blessing by stealth for which Esau hated him. The family conflict forced Jacob into exile. Nevertheless, God was with him. The biblical author noted the conversation of the Lord God with Jacob, immediately following his escape.



God spoke to Jacob in his sleep. He revealed himself at the top of the ladder which reached right up to heaven. It is the symbol of the bridge which exists between heaven and earth. In Old Testament times it was used by the angels. In the New Testament, the Son of God comes down upon it to earth while at the same time opening this road to human beings. The ladder therefore foretells that which is to happen. This is why Jesus refers to the ladder of Jacob's dream in his conversations with Nathaniel.

Until that time Jacob had lived in his family home but then began distancing himself from his father and mother entering on the road to independence and maturity. The believer, on attaining maturity, must enter into a personal relationship with God. It is not possible to wisely navigate the paths of the world without a reliable guide. In his sleep, God assures Jacob of his protection. This is the prayer of a young man who wishes to win life. God stands on his path and assures him of His blessing. It is notable that God introduces himself to Jacob as the God of his father Isaac and of his

grandfather Abraham. It is also a sign that Jacob has not yet become aware that He is also his God.

The dream made Jacob realise the importance of the holy nature of the place. He named it the House of God and the Gate of Heaven. From the point of view of improving the quality of our prayer, this awareness is a very basic and essential one. God looked down upon Jacob from the heights of heaven. And, because the ladder had touched earth, Jacob had considered it to be a holy place. He also knew that the angels whom he had seen on the ladder mediate between people and God, and are able to pass on the prayers which people send up to God. Therefore, the gate of heaven was open.

This deep experience at a young age placed Jacob in a close relationship with God for the whole of his life. He knew that his prayers would reach God if he prayed. This certainty is important and decisive for the quality of our prayer. It removes all doubts.

The existence of this tall ladder reaching to heaven, with God standing at the top of it, should have filled Jacob with joy, particularly so, given

that the words which God addressed to him were a confirmation of the promise given to Abraham. And yet, this meeting filled Jacob with fear. The holy place and the consciousness of the presence of God filled him with foreboding. Therefore, he presented an offering. He knew that such places are chosen by God himself and particularly radiate His grace.

Jacob made this vow 'If God goes with me and keeps me safe on this journey I am making, if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I return home safely to my father, then Yahweh shall be my God.' (**Genesis 28:20-21**)

This vow, which Jacob made after awakening from his dream, is a confirmation of the intensity of his experience. In it, he decides to acknowledge the God Yahweh, as his God, if He grants him His protection and allows him to return to his father's house. Many years after his petition was granted Jacob went back to this place with his entire family and built an altar to His God there.

Father **Edward Staniek** CSMA

Encountering the Risen Lord

The Joy of Beholding the Wounds of Christ

Some people struggle to understand why the Church celebrates the feast of Mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter. It seems strange to them to be dwelling on the events of the Passion of the Lord, which we celebrated on Good Friday, especially when the Church is celebrating the joy of the Risen Christ.

The two events of the Passion and the Resurrection are present in the gospel reading at Mass on Divine Mercy (Jn 20:19-31). John, in his Gospel, brings us back to the Passion as he tells us that the Risen Lord appeared to his disciples “and showed them his hands and his side” (Jn 20:20) the wounds of Christ are the proof that it really is Jesus, proof that he who was dead is now alive. The wounds of Christ are the sign that John records so that we “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God.” (Jn 20:31) These marks on his body are central to our understanding of the gospel of the Second Sunday of Easter.

John tells us that, “In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room for fear of the Jews.” (Jn 20:19) Fear gripped the disciples. It was a fear of what lay outside,

beyond the supposed safety of the room. What the disciples were afraid of is unseen – the Jewish authorities, as John describes them – yet it was as real for them as if they were facing a ferocious animal in the room with them.

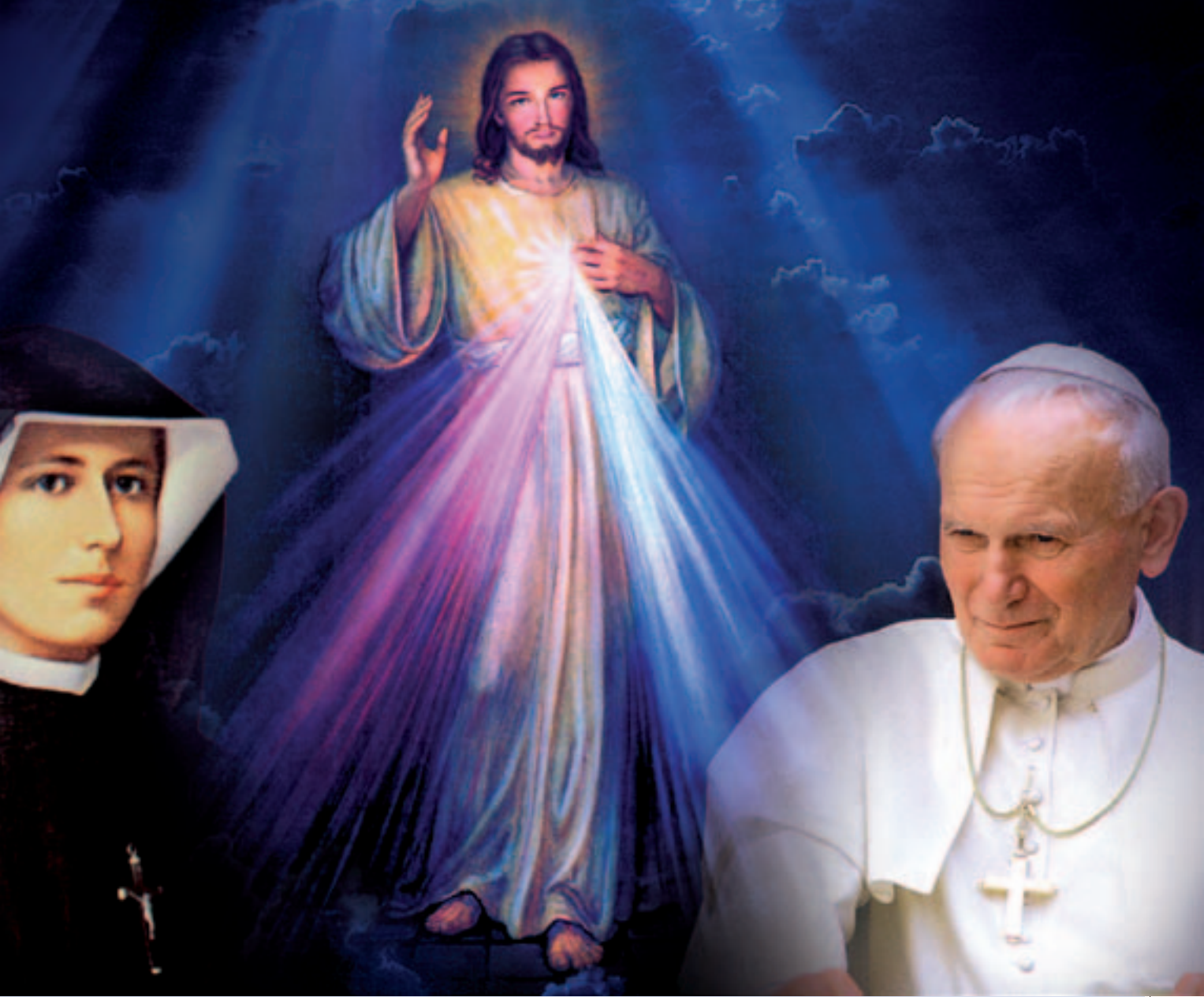
It is into this atmosphere of fear and tension that Jesus appears among the disciples, greeting them with a blessing of peace and showing them his wounded body. It is at this point that the disciples are overcome with joy. The atmosphere has changed in an instant. Fear turns to joy in the presence of the wounded Risen Lord.

John contrasts this scene with Thomas, who he tells us was not with them when Jesus came (Jn 20:24). It is Thomas, who when he is told that the Lord had appeared states that the proof he needs before believing is to “see the holes that the nails

made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.” (Jn 20:25) For Thomas, the physical wounds of Christ are the sign he is looking for in order to begin to believe what the other disciples have told him.

One week later, Jesus appears again to the disciples and Thomas is present. Jesus again greets the disciples with a blessing of peace and then invites Thomas to put his fingers into the holes in his hands and his hand into his side. Thomas’ response is immediate and clear, “My Lord and my God.” (Jn 20:28)





The gospel of John tells us that our joy comes from encountering the Risen Lord, who stands among us in spite of our fears. He transforms us and fills us with joy as we contemplate his sacred wounds which he shows us without any sense of regret or shame, but rather invites us to touch them. It is these wounds that Thomas seeks in his doubt and obstinacy, and yet it is in beholding them that he utters the most definitive declaration of faith found anywhere in the New Testament. The Five Wounds of Christ link the Second Sunday of Easter with the Passion of Our Lord on Good Friday and so become the thread that runs through a novena of prayer

which is centred on the Mercy of God. This then is the link that makes the Feast of Mercy wholly appropriate and heightens our Easter joy.

On Divine Mercy Sunday this year, Pope Benedict XVI will beatify the Servant of God John Paul II, who died on the eve of another Divine Mercy Sunday, 2 April 2005. Before his death Pope John Paul II gave instructions for the text of the *Regina Caeli* he had prepared, to be read to the crowds gathered below in St Peter's Square.

"As a gift to humanity, which sometimes seems bewildered and

overwhelmed by the power of evil, selfishness and fear, the Risen Lord offers his love that pardons, reconciles and reopens hearts to love. It is a love that converts hearts and gives peace. How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy!

Lord, you who reveal the Father's love by your death and Resurrection, we believe in you and confidently repeat to you today: Jesus, I trust in you, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world." (John Paul II, *Regina Caeli*, 3 April 2005)

Father **Andrew Kingham**
St Andrews, Scotland



Heavenly inspiration

Interview with **Noreen Bavister**, the first coordinator of The Angels Magazine

How did you come across the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel (CSMA)?

I met Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA) about 10 years ago when he was invited to give a talk in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Following on from that visit I was one of many who helped Father organise day retreats on the holy angels and The Divine Mercy in England. In October 2004, my husband and I were invited to Poland by the CSMA. We went to several Shrines including Czestochowa, The Divine Mercy Shrine in Lagiewniki, Krakow and the Polish National Shrine of St. Michael the Archangel in Miejsce Piastowe.

What was the result of your visit?

When I arrived at the Shrine of St. Michael the Archangel in Miejsce Piastowe I felt a deep peace within me and could picture people coming from all over the world to this most holy place. I visited the tomb of Bl Bronislaw Markiewicz, the founder of the CSMA and was moved and inspired by his dedication, hard work and the sanctity of his life. My heart was touched and I heard the words inside of me "Help the children".

How did it affect your life?

During that same visit to Czestochowa we went to an orphanage run by Our Lady Sisters of Mercy and we were impressed by the dedication and love of the sisters looking after children with special needs. They needed a new toilet block to help the children in wheelchairs. When I returned to work at BP I mentioned to colleagues that I would like to help these children but up to that moment in my life I had never even sold a raffle ticket. By God's grace people wanted to help me and we sold many raffle tickets, held auctions and cake sales, etc. We raised twice the amount as expected. Happily, I returned with a cheque in February 2005 and not only was the toilet block built, but the whole orphanage was refurbished. On that visit I asked to go to an orphanage run by the CSMA and was taken to Pralkowce, near the Ukraine boarder and saw the needs of the young boys there. I made a mental note of this but said nothing.

And what happened next?

On my return to work I sent a private email to a colleague with my thoughts, stating that I would like to take a lorry full of clothes, toys, bedding, books, new shoes,

etc to Poland. To my total surprise, within 48 hours, 200 bags of children's items arrived at my desk, everything seemed to snowball from there. In June 2005 a 45 foot lorry arrived outside the St Michael the Archangel Church in Miejsce Piastowe. Dorota Adamska from BP Poland arranged for three smaller lorries to distribute the children's items to different orphanages.

As a direct result of going to the tomb of Bl Bronislaw Markiewicz and all that I had learned about him I felt inspired to do good works and set up a charity. This was the springboard for my BP colleagues and I to set up The Global Children's Foundation (www.globalchildrensfoundation.org). Through the grace of God people are coming back to God via this charity, because I talk about St Faustina and my role model for the youth, Bl Father Bronislaw whom are both patron saints of the charity. We are unique because the trustees pay all the expenses of the charity so that 100% of the money donated goes towards our chosen projects in over 10 countries. We recently raised the funds and project managed the building of a new medical centre in Uganda, including solar powered electricity, a water pump and accommodation for the staff. The centre has been called The Saint Faustina

Medical Centre and it will benefit over 20,000 mothers and children.

As contributors wanted to see the refurbished orphanage in Poland, I arranged a Divine Mercy pilgrimage in 2006 including a visit to the orphanage in Czestochowa and this was the catalyst for an annual Divine Mercy Pilgrimage lead by CSMA. People have joined us from Europe and as far away as Australia, America, Africa and Madeira. The first Saturday candlelight Fatima procession in Miejsce Piastowe is always a highlight. For more information, please go to: <http://ktozjakbog.religia.net/pilgrimage.html>

What has been the reaction (the feedback) from people that have read The Angels magazine?

The feedback I have received has been very positive. People enjoy reading the testimonies, because they are true stories and touch hearts. Recently my friend Alison wrote her testimony in issue 3 (2010). A lady called Dawn read the magazine for the first time and because of that article she is now taking RCIA instructions and will be coming into the Catholic Church this Easter. People are interested in these quality quarterly magazines because so little is known about the good and bad angels and people are keen to know more.

Why do you think this magazine is needed in Church?

People are searching for something and are not sure where to go or what to do. Young people are getting involved in New Age and are following a very wrong path. Not many priests speak about angels other than reading an occasional passage from scripture. Many of us do not understand their

immense value and how our guardian angel and St Michael the Archangel can help and protect us from evil and danger. They are our protectors and also messengers from God. If popes and saints such as St. Faustina and St. Padre Pio asked angels for help and protection, so should we. Angels are pure spirits and move with the speed of light and they are waiting for us to ask them for help.

What does it mean in practice to be a coordinator of this magazine?

In practice it means to be organized, dedicated, and have good communication skills but above all, for me, spreading the word of God and the angels is the most important.

You live in Western Europe which seems to be very secular. How can we talk about God to people who live there, how do we bring them to Christ?

It is true, it is secular but when you build a relationship with God it is like no other. Firstly one needs to know and love God personally, and then we can love and be a witness to others. To love and trust God totally takes time of course. Having devotion to the Divine Mercy has helped me very much. It has given me the courage I lacked and I am less fearful. Jesus Himself said "The more you trust Me the more I will honour that trust."

I used to separate my social and spiritual life but as time has gone by I have become braver and I try to use every opportunity to talk about God. Being imperfect I make mistakes but always try and learn from them. I am still in contact with the BP Christian prayer group in Canary Wharf where I once worked, each day

we receive a "thought for the day" scripture reading by email. When appropriate I forward the reading if I feel it may be of help and support to someone I know. I moved offices and my colleague Matthew Amend and I started a fortnightly prayer meeting during the lunch hour. We can witness and pray to God's mercy and for the power of His angels to assist us in times of great need such as unemployment, bankruptcy, sickness, death of a loved one, caring for a family member who has cancer or who has highly dependant special needs. And what is paramount is to pray for their spiritual growth.

To be a coordinator is hard work. How can the readers from the whole Catholic Church help to spread the message of the magazine?

It is helpful that I only work three days a week and can devote some of my spare time as a volunteer to this magazine. Readers can help by talking about the magazine and by introducing it to local parishes and bookshops. Others are ordering subscriptions as gifts for family or friends for either one or two years. I am delighted to say more and more Catholic Churches are ordering copies. These magazines are a real treasure and everyone should take advantage of each issue. People who are unwell can benefit much and be lifted up by reading something of great importance which can be extremely beneficial to them. Anyone who is interested in helping to promote the magazine in their country as a coordinator should email Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA) directly: redakcja.kjb@gmail.com

Thank you for the interview.

Agnieszka Kosińska

In the Arms of Divine Mercy

Last year our daughter Basia was so unwell that she was admitted into hospital and her condition became so serious that at one point the doctors lost hope of saving her life. Thankfully, through the intercession of many people and God's immeasurable Divine Mercy she is still with us today as a smiling, healthy child.

Living out our everyday lives it is easy to become indifferent to what is so obviously true; of how much of a gift it is to be members of the community of the Church, from which we all benefit and where each one of us plays a unique and individual part. 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.' (Mt 11, 28-30)

This call of Christ is not a promise of release from suffering, which we all experience. It is a great promise of the peace, which will fill the hearts of men who trust in the Lord, a God full of mercy (Ep. 2, 4-3).

We experienced in a special way the power of the Church community's prayer and the depth of God's love during the recent events involving Basia, whose life and health were covered by the intercession of the Church community.

On 2nd February 2010, the Feast of Our Lady of Candlemas, we were aware that our five-year-old daughter Basia had a cold which had developed into an upper respiratory tract infection. After x-ray examinations

she was treated with antibiotics and soon got better. But, when the x-ray examinations were repeated again in April, changes that had been previously observed were confirmed. A further series of specialised examinations pointed to a pathological mass located in the immediate environs of her heart. Surgery was needed. In May we entrusted Basia, her health and the surgery to the intercession of John Paul II while we prayed at his grave. We also prayed in Cascia, to St Rita, the patron saint of hopeless cases and difficulties, whose feast we celebrate on our wedding anniversary.

We also entrusted Basia to the Divine Mercy during the Mass celebrated for her intentions. The Polish community in Edinburgh prayed for her too, by saying the Novena to Our Lady of Czestochowa and by interceding to John Paul II, they prayed earnestly for the success of the surgery, which was already fixed for July 14th.

The surgery took at least two hours. The pathological mass (6 cm x 4 cm) was removed, but it was also necessary to remove part of the aorta two centimeters long. The wound was secured by a specialist dressing. Basia was left under observation for a few hours in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and

then she was awakened, but unfortunately this was only for a short while. There was internal bleeding seeping from the drain which was in the chest during the surgery. A moment later a hemorrhage occurred from the aorta. Her pulse began fading.

Because Basia had lost so much blood the heart could not work by itself, so her heart was sustained artificially. A second operation began immediately. After ten minutes of the hemorrhage Basia lost half of the blood volume, including her own and that of the donor. Fortunately, the natural heart rate came back in 15 minutes, when the hemorrhage was located and stopped. Basia was put on a respirator and into a deep sleep. Some time later her condition was considered stable.

As the members of the clinical team witnessed later, they had lost hope in saving Basia and even afterwards when her condition was stable they could not foresee the condition of her inner organs, including her brain because of the sudden and prolonged bleeding from the main artery of the body.

In this critical time we called on a special intercession of John Paul II and Saint Rita. That night a Mass was celebrated for Basia's intentions; the



■ The photo is of Basia leaving the hospital on 26th July, 2010.

same the next day and the following days, in many parishes in Poland and elsewhere. We know well about the many sacrifices which were made for Basia's intentions by the members of religious congregations as well as lay people, about the 24 hours of spontaneous prayers and the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. Many people were fasting, some friends were praying during their pilgrimage to Taizé, Lourdes and other places especially marked by God's presence.

On the second day of Basia's medically induced-coma, she received the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and we repeated the Novena to Saint Rita.

On Saturday, July 17th, Basia was gradually awakened and in the late afternoon she came back to full awareness. On Thursday, July 22nd she was discharged from the ICU. And, we received the good news that there were no changes in the excised mass.

On Monday, July 26th we all came back home, Basia was almost the

same child as she was before she went to hospital.

In a spirit of humility and thanksgiving we come back to the words of Christ: 'I say to you: ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.' (Lk 11, 9-10)

God bless everyone for the sacrifices, for the prayers and this massive assault on heaven in the battle for Basia, which kept her here in the arms of the Divine Mercy.

'Anything that is needed for a man to be like Divine Mercy, this kind of love and compassion, lifting man above his weakness up to the infinite holiness of God.' (John Paul II, Lagiewniki, 7th June 1997)

Mrs Izabela Wachowiak,
Edinburgh, Scotland

Prayer to St Michael the Archangel for personal protection

St Michael, the Archangel!
Glorious Prince, chief and
champion of the heavenly
hosts; guardian of the souls
of men; conqueror of the rebel
angels! How beautiful art thou,
in thy heaven-made armour.
We love thee, dear Prince of
Heaven!

We, thy happy clients,
yearn to enjoy thy special
protection. Obtain for us from
God a share of thy sturdy
courage; pray that we may
have a strong and tender love
for our Redeemer and, in
every danger or temptation, be
invincible against the enemy of
our souls. O standard-bearer
of our salvation! Be with us in
our last moments and when
our souls quit this earthly
exile, carry them safely to the
judgement seat of Christ, and
may Our Lord and Master
bid thee bear us speedily to
the kingdom of eternal bliss.
Teach us ever to repeat the
sublime cry: "Who is like unto
God?" Amen.



Mercy at 3 o'clock

The Bible is full of promises. We find them in both the Old and New Testaments. They were given to groups of people and to individuals and some of them were fulfilled under certain conditions. God has always been trustworthy. Those lacking trust have not received the benefits of these promises.

Many biblical promises relate to our eternal life after death. But there are also many others which relate to our present, earthly life. For example, Jesus said

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink! From his heart shall flow streams of living water” (J 7,37-38); “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much, and also inherit eternal life” (Mt 19, 29); “Set your hearts on God’s kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well.” (Lk 12,31)

Jesus linked some of these promises to new forms of devotion. For example, the Divine Mercy to the Feast of Divine Mercy, the image of the Merciful Jesus, the chaplet of Divine Mercy, the hour of mercy and spreading the devotion of the Divine Mercy. Our Lord guaranteed to fulfil them on two conditions. The first condition is one’s trust in God’s goodness. The second calls for mercy towards one’s neighbour. Some promises are attached to praying at the hour of mercy at 3 o’clock in the afternoon.

Hours in the Bible

There are some events in the Gospel where the time of day is mentioned. Saint John wrote in his Gospel that it was about 10 o’clock when he decided to follow Jesus. He also knows the hour at which he stood under the cross and took Our Lady to his home. In Cana in Galilee Mary asked Jesus to help the hosts of the wedding feast. He answered: “My hour has not yet come.”

Jesus mentioned His hour, the hour of sacrifice on the cross and passing from this world to His Father many times. “In all truth I tell you the hour is coming, indeed it is already here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God” (J 5, 25); “Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (J 12,23); “Father the hour has come; glorify your Son, so that your Son may glorify you.” (J 17,1) Before His ascension into heaven He said to the apostles “It is not for you to know the hour or date that the Father has decided by his own authority.” (Acts 1,7)



Mercy triumphed over justice

We know from the Diary of Saint Faustina that an hour favoured by the Heavenly Father is 3 o’clock in the afternoon. God is beyond time. He is independent. But he can do what he wills. In favoured places and at favoured times he can act more powerfully. This is why we pray at shrines and sanctuaries all over the world. It was His choice and His decision to make these places very special, to fill them with extraordinary power and grace.

Jesus is the Lord of history and of time. There were some periods of history when He acted in a special way, with overwhelming spiritual power. Let us recall the beginnings of the Church at Pentecost, with the descending of the Holy Spirit. Despite many obstacles associated with the descent multitudes of people came to Christ and became Christians. The



Church developed and grew. Such a time is called “Karios” in Greek.

Similarly, he can choose special hours for us to obtain particular graces. Such an hour of grace is 3 o'clock in the afternoon. At this time some television channels in the Philippines stop broadcasting and instead display the Image of the Divine Mercy on the screen. Viewers have a chance to be reminded of the hour of mercy and are encouraged to pray.

Where does the hour of mercy come from?

It comes from Jesus and was given to Saint Faustina in a special revelation in October 1937 in Cracow.

Jesus said to her “At 3 o'clock implore My mercy especially for sinners; and if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion particularly in

My abandonment at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great mercy for the world.” (**Diary 1320**)

A few months later He repeated His demand specifying the promise attached to it. Jesus called this hour ‘the hour of great mercy for the world’. At this hour when he was dying on the cross, mercy triumphed over injustice.

We read in the Diary “As often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world, and particularly for poor sinners. (...) Try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it. But when you aren't able to, then at least step into the chapel and adore my heart full of mercy present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. But if you are unable to step into the chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a brief instant.” (**Diary 1572**)

What is the promise which is connected with the hour of mercy?

Jesus promises “In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion.” (**Diary 1320**) “You can obtain everything for yourself and for others.” (**Diary 1572**)

Our Lord laid down three conditions in relation to this prayer. Firstly, the prayer has to be directed to Jesus. Secondly, it must be said at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And thirdly, it has to call on the value and merits of the Lord's Passion.

Father **Piotr Prusakiewicz** CSMA

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the Divine Power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



Friends are like silent angels

One day a priest friend, said to me: *This year during Lent, I was happy to have more free time. Distant nostalgic images and memories of old friends filled my heart reminding me of my age and our long friendships, bringing tears to my eyes.*

I sent the same Easter wishes to all of my friends. But, at the same time it felt different as if I was sending personal letters to each of them.

*I wrote.... 'You are not alone, that in the most difficult times the Risen Jesus Christ keeps **hands** strong – like in the Oriental icons.' There were also many other words...*

I noticed deep within me, words began to reveal their true significance,

meaning and depth. Well considered and heartfelt thoughts exposed their true deeper meaning. I found that the sincere words of my heart just began to flow with ease.

To my surprise and amazement their replies revealed that each recipient had received some consolation from certain problems and anxieties in their lives from these words. For one, my Easter letter was like a short retreat. Another, a married friend who had accompanied his son to the psychiatric hospital with his wife; cried, "these words gave me more strength and trust." Another friend quoted Antoine de Saint-Exupery's words and wrote: "Friends are like the silent angels who raise us when our wings forget how to fly. Thank you for remembering us in your busy everyday life."

I was listening and looking at my priest friend who appeared to me an equivalent of C.S. Lewis's title 'Surprised by Joy'.

Happiness is the little things we do in everyday life...

The widow who gave her last penny away.

Bread and fishes of an unknown boy.

Gentle goodness on the wings of an angel.

Sometimes, a little is enough to become an angel to others...

Father Krzysztof Poświata CSMA



Giovanni Bellini

Angels support Christ in His death

‘Like a sapling he grew up in front of us, like a root in arid ground. Without beauty, without majesty (we saw him), no looks to attract our eyes; a thing despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, a man to make people screen their faces; he was despised and we took no account of him. And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried.’ (Isaiah 53,2-4)

This is the shocking picture of the rejected Man of Sorrows evoked by the alto aria from Handel’s ‘Messiah’, as well as by many medieval depictions of Christ. Giovanni Bellini (c.1433-1516), the most eminent Venetian painter of the second half of the 15th century, presages an explosion in the use of colour by the renaissance Venetian School of Painting in ‘The Dead Christ supported by two Angels’. Found at present in Berlin, it gives us an entirely different view of the Saviour. The painting depicts the beauty of the human form, filled with a classical harmony and balance. Durer, living at that time in Italy, expressed himself with enthusiasm and attention when he noted on Bellini - ‘He is very old but is still the best painter’.

Man of Sorrows

The representation of the Man of Sorrows, the suffering Messiah whose coming is foretold by Isaiah, has been captured in paintings since the 17th

century. It is probable that this depiction was influenced by certain representations of the Crucifixion; depictions of Christ in the tomb; of the Risen Christ; or, of Christ laid in the grave. Christ as the Man of Sorrows (‘Vir Dolorum’ in Latin) is an image not strictly set in an evangelical-historical context. It is a type of devotional picture, helpful not only for personal meditation on the Saviour’s Passion but also in an emotional (understanding) of His pain, and sometimes allowing for an empathetic identification with His suffering.

The dissemination of various kinds of devotional representation was also conducive to the revival of the spirituality of medieval Europe in the 14th century. It tied in with the activity of the mendicant and preaching orders, inflaming the emotions by means of sermons and religious theatrical performances. The Christian of that era looked for a more individual and direct contact with God, often without the more official and traditional liturgical context, and longed for a more evangelical simplicity. Many different religious

movements became active, directed particularly at ordinary people. They were condemned by popes as heretical, as well as the mystical tendencies within the Catholic Church itself. These gave rise to the many representations, both in painting and sculpture, that were intended for private devotional use; and which acquired a particularly expressive character in the second half of the 14th century by touching and intensifying the imagination rather than the intellect. By these means, Christ as God-Incarnate comes closer to man, and, man draws nearer to Christ.

Christ’s sacrifice

The subject of the Man of Sorrows is spread further and became differentiated in the 14th century into many different forms. The ‘Vir Dolorum’ is shown alone; with the Blessed Mother; set between the Blessed Mother and St. John, or, in the context of other depictions (for example, of the Holy Trinity or the Gregorian Mass). He can also occur shown in life or death; showing



the whole body or visible only partly in the tomb ('Misericordia Domini'); with the chalice into which the blood runs from wounds, which he is clearly indicating (the 'ostentatio vulnerum' gesture); and, finally, with the chalice and host surrounded by the instruments of his Passion ('arma Christi').

These last types are tied-in with the symbolism of the Eucharist. They associate Christ's sacrifice on the Cross with the sacrifice of the Mass, stressing the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist in opposition to the then increasingly popular opinions of John Wycliffe, who was

condemned in 1382. In Burgundy, France, at around 1380 the depiction of the Man of Sorrows in miniature painting becomes developed, supported by an angel of large dimensions known as the 'Angelic Pieta'. The angel stands in for Mary, known as the classical Pieta, or for God the Father.

With time the number of angels increases. They adore, weep over Christ, and hold the 'arma Christi'. Angels have also been depicted in Western art since the Trecenta era by Giotto as exhibiting human emotions. This type occurs very often in the 15th century in Venetian art, painted by Vittore Carpaccio and Carlo Crivelli as well as by Giovanni Bellini.

Attended by angels

The 'Vir Dolorum', together with other devotional representations, such as the 'Bewailing' or Pieta or likeness of the Madonna, constitute some of the favourite themes of Giovanni Bellini's paintings. The artist shows the Man of Sorrows as a single figure, accompanied by the Blessed Mother and Saint John, or, attended by angels. He painted the Angelic Pieta many times in many variations, inspired by the reliefs of Donatello; creatively transforming them into individual, more peaceful and lyrical images. Five of his works on this theme are known, created in the years c.1460-80. One of these is the picture to be found in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (tempera on board 82 by 26cm), made probably around 1470. The childish angelic (putta) figures of his earlier picture (in the Museo Correr in Venice) have been replaced by representations of young men, who do not so much attend Christ as clearly support his lifeless body. Making close and sincere contact with God the Redeemer, they also present his wounds to us humans, meditating and contemplating his Passion. The monumental half-figure of Christ wearing the Crown of Thorns with the 'perizonium' covering his hips, stands in the centre of the picture. The individualised faces of the angels dressed in

antique brown-red tunics, bring their heads close to that of Christ, supporting him with their hands, a peaceful sadness and quietude without dramatic accents. Christ's death has already been accomplished but we are aware that our redemption has also been accomplished.

The face of the Redeemer

Death is shown as a peaceful sleep. There is a representation of the beautiful, regular-featured face of the Redeemer, clearly-defined lips, shapely nose, the peaceful arched eyebrows and short facial hair, a wonderful representation of a young, lifeless body. The harmonious silhouette of Jesus is a flowing S-shape, a natural, unrestrained representation. At the sides of the picture, like arches in an arcade, the composition is completed by the fluffy angelic wings. It is a compact whole without unnecessary detail. We are not shown what Jesus is sitting-on, or who is holding-up the shroud, stretched-out like a curtain behind him. The figures take up almost the entirety of the picture. Above their heads is visible a small area of dark, undefined background. The angels' movements towards the centre of the picture, subsumed to the main subject – presenting the wounds visible in the Redeemer's side and hands, make the composition and main idea of the picture, unusually clear and concentrated. The body of Christ almost melts in terms of tone with the pinkish-red of the shroud, evoking the Passion and blood of the recent sacrifice of the Cross. The light falling on Jesus from the left of the picture, evens-out the tone of the colours, somewhat softening the contours, entirely abandoning the dry and graphic style of the artist's

earlier works under the influence of Andrea Mantegna. The light begins to penetrate the forms, modifying the localised, usually clearly-differentiated colours. The shroud and body shine with reflected colour. Patches of blood are transformed into light and colour. Bellini's sensitivity to the effects of light prefigure the experiments in the colour of his pupils. Titian and Giorgione, who developed their master's accomplishments later, further inspired their master, now of a venerable age, but still open to new inspiration and to further creativity. Henceforth Venetian painting will be associated primarily with colour, standing at the beginning of all later experiments in colour and light in the history of European painting. The harmony in composition depending on delicate arched shapes, a harmony also in form and content, restraint of expression prefiguring the classicism of the following century, the Italian 'Cinquecento'.

Christ with the angels

The dead Christ with the angels in the Berlin museum no longer reminds us of the late medieval Man of Sorrows. The use of light is responsible for this change. The supernatural, divine light, falling, according to tradition, onto the right hand side of the figure, showing it to be chosen by God, becomes also a natural light, which acts on colour in the same way as it does in nature. The world as represented by Bellini is as much a divine reality in which the angels exist, as the human reality of God-Made-Man, flooded by earthly light. The angels, endowed with human feelings, link both worlds.

Zaneta Groborz-Mazanek

From the treasure of the Church

St Michael the Archangel in the liturgy (part I)

The liturgy is the faith and dogma of the Church expressed by means of songs, prayer, gesture, attitude, signs, music, architecture, painting or in the smell of incense.

It is that which bequeaths and transmits the treasure of God's revealed truth. It is the appropriate environment in which the Bible resounds with power becoming God's living word. The liturgy – as the father of the liturgical movement, Don Prosper Gueranger, frequently stressed – is the ideal instrument by which the Church transmits dogmatic and moral truths, it is 'a representation of the faith of the Church', the liturgy being 'the living tradition of the fundamental truths of our faith' being 'the most solemn and widespread form of teaching'. Since antiquity it has been understood that the liturgy, the 'lex orandi', constitutes an authentic transmission of the 'lex credendi', the faith of the Church.

The world of the Angels

In and by means of the liturgy, the Church proclaims its faith that God

is the Creator 'of heaven and earth of all things seen and unseen' (the Creed) and therefore not just of the whole world of the cosmos, not just of mankind but also of the spiritual world. As the Bible from Genesis to Revelation testifies about angels so also is their presence felt within the liturgy. We recall their role in celebrating the significant events of our redemption, for instance in the solemnity of the Annunciation, at Christmas, Easter and at the Ascension. We celebrate the Gloria in the presence of the angels, we entrust the prayer of the faithful to the good offices of the angels as also sufferings of the penitent and the defence of the innocent from the snares of the Enemy. In the prayer before sleep as we ask their assistance to defend us from temptation, we are also asking the heavenly spirits to come to the help of the dying and in the funeral liturgy we ask the angels to accompany the souls of the departed and prepare them to meet the Risen Christ. Therefore from the

beginning the liturgy is the bridge linking the visible, contemporary world with the invisible world of the angles and saints. That earthly liturgy celebrated in our churches forms a unity with that celebrated in heaven. That is why the Church unites itself with the heavenly song of the angles in each preface 'God's glory which radiates in the angles and archangels glorifying God in the holy Trinity saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts'. There are days in the liturgical calendar that the Church dedicates to particularly honour the angels.

What the Church teaches by means of the liturgy is as described by the Catechism of the Catholic Church – 'The existence of creatures consisting of pure spirit, which the Bible refers to generally as angels, is a truth of our faith. Biblical testimony is as obvious as the infallibility of Tradition'. From among the angels, the liturgy particularly honours the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael as well as the Guardian Angels.



The unusual history of the devotion of St Michael the Archangel

What does the liturgy tell us about St Michael the Archangel?

What does the Church say of his role in the Divine Plan?

We find the beginning of this devotion in antiquity. Symeon Metafrast, living in the 10th century, wrote that there had already been a Shrine in Frigia in the 2nd century. The devotion to St Michael the Archangel was very popular in ancient Constantinople and Egypt. In the Roman liturgy this devotion dates from the beginning of the 5th century. Devotion to St Michael was and is expressed by the building of churches in his honour, the painting of pictures, by the presence of Shrines in various countries and dating from different eras. St Michael

is very popular saint in Poland as in the past there have been over 300 churches dedicated to him. The oldest Greek Catholic churches are also dedicated to St Michael. There are also 222 place names in Poland which come from the name Michael. St Michael also has a shrine on the hill near Blizne by Brzozow. The devotion of St Michael there dates from the 13th century.

St Michael has two feast days, namely the 8th of May (in Poland this was only a solemnity as it fell on the feast of St Stanislaw) and the 29th of September. In France there was an additional feast in his honour, celebrated on the 16th of October. It was known as 'Saint Michel au peril de la Mer'.

Father **Stefan Koperek** CR

A guardian angel prayer for friends

Guardian Angel, watch over those whose names you can read in my heart. Guard over them with every care and make their way easy and their labours fruitful. Dry their tears if they weep; sanctify their joys; raise their courage if they weaken; restore their hope if they lose heart, their health if they be ill, truth if they err, repentance if they fail.



The power of the Divine Mercy

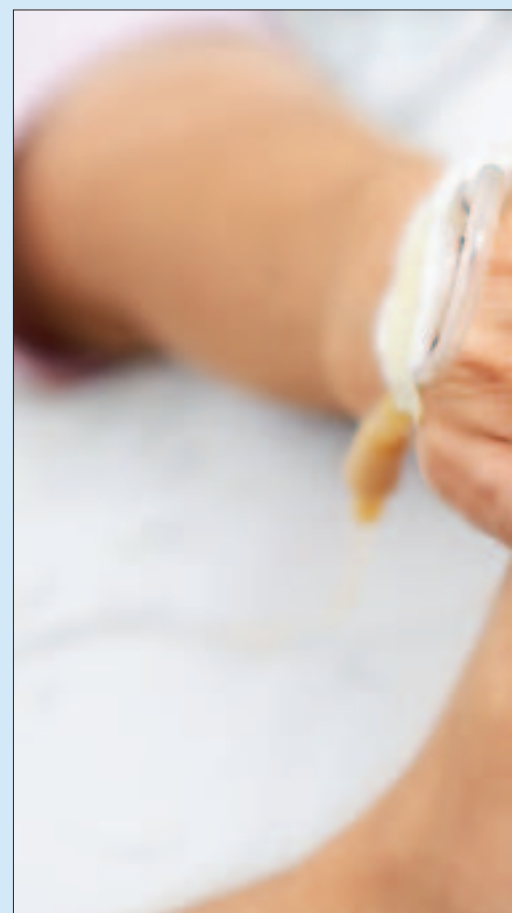
At the age of 69 my mother was diagnosed with terminal liver failure. As I visited her in Brighton General Hospital, the days drew quickly near when God would take back her soul and the memories of the past came flooding back to me. Now she looked frail with the yellow tinges of liver cancer invading her drawn and now harrowed features, a far cry from the beautiful Miss England my mother was crowned in 1937. Later she married my father who was a famous and much loved British Lightweight boxing champion in the late 30's and winner of the coveted Lonsdale Belt.

My mother had a most difficult life starting in her early marriage just before the Second World War. Everyone loved my father and he was everybody's friend. A typical Irish good fellow who was sociability epitomised, always with his countless friends but sadly not the one to stay at home and be a husband and father. He was a most wonderful man who never said a bad word about anybody and just wanted to have fun and make all his friends happy.

I had been born in 1939 and my brother followed five years later. My father was never there and my

mother struggled hard with two young children, trying to keep a job and with no help from my father. Being unable to cope, she put me in a children's home at the age of just 14 months where I stayed, off and on, until I was 16 and the close ties between my mother and I were broken. My mother did not have the money to pay for me to stay in what was a home for privileged children; and so the day came when I was either going to have to be removed or the lady of the home, Miss Bowler, would allow me to stay there for free. In the early years Miss Bowler had grown very fond of me, so there I stayed as an unofficial adopted child of my dear Auntie Bowler, and we found great love in one another. My mother had stayed in touch with me but we had a very difficult relationship because she felt guilty at having left me in a home, and I resented having been abandoned. Life for my mother turned from bad to worse and she became an alcoholic, and a rather sad and lonely person who could only escape from her misery by getting drunk and blotting everything out. My mother had been born a Protestant but now had no faith and was even aggressively anti-Catholic, probably due to her bad experience with my Catholic father, who, in

spite of his wanderings, had always kept in touch with the faith. I, on the other hand, had been brought up as a Catholic and went to a convent school and had always practiced my faith. My mother had tried to love me, but love cannot exist alongside bitterness and resentment, which was always fuelled by guilt and the terrible effect of severe alcoholism.



So there I sat at the end of the bed watching my mother dying; trying desperately to find some happy memories to hold on to and amidst it all there were some.

Choking back the tears I tried to pray; I could not find the words even to say a rosary, but as I gazed into the sad eyes of my dying mother I found myself reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet. So easy to say and with such powerful and meaningful words. Soon I was proclaiming the last of the "Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world" and as I did I found myself standing up and going to the nurses' station and asking the duty nurse to call a Catholic priest as I wanted my mother to be anointed. In what seemed to be no time at all I saw a young priest running breathlessly towards me carrying a missal.

He stopped by the bed, greeted me, smiled at my mother then opened the missal. There, to my concern, I saw he was carrying a gold pix in which he had a communion host. As he opened the pix and I realised what he intended to do I said "Father my Mother is not a Catholic." Then to my utter amazement I heard my mother's weak voice say "No, but I have always wanted to be one and I brought my children up as Catholics." These were words that I never thought I would ever hear coming from my mother who had always been so very anti-Catholic. I was speechless and before I could even utter a word the young priest turned and rushed off, calling back "I will go and I will return very quickly and receive you into the Church and you will be confirmed, be given general absolution and receive your first Holy Communion."

I held my mother's hand as we waited for the priest to return and whilst we were waiting I read my mother some passages from the Bible about the healings Jesus performed. I can remember how nervous I was when I started to read as I was still not sure that my mother would not turn against me; instead she said it reminded her of the time she was at school and she thought the readings were beautiful. Again I could hardly believe my ears. The priest returned even more breathless than before, he must have run all the way to the church and back. This time he lit a candle and gently guided my mother through a repentance prayer, the profession of faith, the Our Father, and then after granting her a general absolution, he broke the Host he was carrying into two, gave one half to my mother and the other half to me. As my mother put out her tongue to receive the Lord I saw she was bleeding from the mouth and in the last stages of liver failure; her blood was being mixed with the blood of the Saviour and the blood of eternal life. I saw in my lifetime the reality of those wonderful words 'For the sake of His sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world'. My mother died peacefully the next day in what could only have been a state of complete grace having been reconciled with me, but more importantly having been reconciled and having accepted God on her death bed as her Lord and Saviour.

This was a very moving and powerful experience for me and I now recite the Divine Mercy Chaplet every day and always say the novena before the feast day after Easter and never fail to attend the Feast Day Celebration.

Suzanne Ellis, Betchingley,
Surrey, England



A letter from a friend

A priest friend of mine has many children – spiritual children, some older and yet others adolescents. He is always surprised that they continue to be born. Their birthplace is most often in the confessional, but not always. Some were conceived thanks to... letters, simple letters.

As I was closing the door to his room behind me, he called to me: "Write letters!" He had sat at a desk covered by cards. "Do you remember Rilke's story, when he gave a rose instead of money to a woman begging in Vienna? She did not show up at her usual place for a week. 'How was she able to survive during those days?' asked the poet's friend incredulously. He answered: 'Thanks to the rose'. Do you see these letters? They are like roses to me, they allow me to live."

He read to me a few words written by a school teacher, who is today an old woman.

I am a very happy person. I give thanks to the Lord for the possibility of spiritual closeness with you. Probably with my simple and humble life bearing the fruit of good deeds (quote from your letter) I have earned this from the Lord. How truly humble am I?

Then she wrote with pride and joy about her growing grandchildren, about Justyna's marriage, Matthew's completed Masters Degree... He smiled, remembering this wise

woman, who many years ago had taught them how to live.

"And this one is from one of my last spiritual children. A dear daughter..." He became lost in thought, holding in his palm the card, made by hand and heart. In it a short text, just four lines:

*When I call you Father,
I think that every meeting
Not only carries with
it the shared moments
But a seed of the same eternity.*

It was signed, "With love, your child".

"Remember to write", he said on my departure.

I remembered a song by Tomek Kaminski: *Send me angels, may they play me wonderful music...* Angels – are good letters from God. Full of questions and of friendly concern. They build bridges between heaven and earth, or rather between hearts. Straight as Jacob's ladder. And as necessary to life. And every meeting with them carries in itself not only 'shared moments, but a seed of the same eternity'. I have memorised those beautiful words.

Father **Krzysztof Poswiata** CSMA



Is contact with angels and saints necessary in our spiritual life? Isn't prayer to Jesus Christ and following His teaching in everyday life enough?

Contact, with the angels and saints is not necessary, but extremely useful. While we can only be saved by God through His Son Jesus Christ, a spiritual life leads to salvation. However, we should look at how God made use of angels in crucial moments in the life of the Holy Family of Jesus, His Mother and St Joseph.

The Annunciation was announced to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. An angel persuaded St Joseph not to abandon Mary when she was found to be with child. While angels sang the 'Gloria' over the Child's crib, yet another angel awoke the shepherds. Also an angel told Joseph to take Mary and the Child and flee to Egypt from Herod's hatred. When Jesus was tempted in the desert by the devil, angels came to serve Him. On the night before His death, an angel comforted Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. When Peter cut off one of the soldier's ears, Christ told him that God could send Him heavenly hosts for protection. Eventually, angels told the women about the Saviour's resurrection.

Angels fulfill a great role in our spiritual life. They announce God's will and 'instruct' us how to live according to the graces present in the holy sacraments.

Blessed Father Bronisław Markiewicz, the founder of the St Michael Congregation, wrote to one young priest, who was worried about his lack of singing talent: 'Sing as you can and tell Jesus that you wish to sing like the Choir of Powers, Dominions, Archangels, Cherubs, Seraphs and



the Queen of Angels. Thousands of angels are usually by the altar.'

Let us not miss the discreet presence of angels in our spiritual life!

I took part in many retreats organized by various congregations and I met different schools of spirituality. I found something interesting in each of them. However, someone told me that I should focus on just one school, otherwise I would concentrate on myself rather than on God. What is the proper attitude?

Do not be afraid of focusing on yourself. God like a good shepherd leads a soul to various pastures; and the soul distinguishes between different kinds of food. The

aim of retreats is to understand God's Will more fully and the fruit of retreats is eventual faithfulness towards God. Faithfulness leads to unification with God thanks to spiritual exercises. This is called the spiritual maturity of man, which has got nothing in common with perfectionism and concentration on oneself.

I guess a parable of the dragnet fits the question: 'Again the kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet that is cast in the sea and brings in a haul of all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen bring it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in baskets and throw away those that are no use.' 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out of his storeroom new things as well as old.' (Matthew 13: 47-52)

Father **Ryszard Andrzejewski** CSMA

My guardian angel tipped me off ...

S ometime ago an issue of your magazine on the Angels came my way. It brought to mind an experience I had back in the 80s. You might find the details worth printing.

I was driving one morning on a familiar road. A long stretch of it has a series of dips followed quickly by ascents to the usual ground level. On this morning, as I approached a dip, I saw in the distance about four cars, close-up one behind another, coming on the other side of the road. Nothing noteworthy about that. But as I began my descent – I was travelling at sixty mph – it came into my mind, ‘One of those cars is going to overtake.’ Just that. It was an extraordinary notion. I was not told to slow down; no order; just the ‘information’. I braked and slowed. And, as I (slowly) began the

ascent, a car came over the brow – doing perhaps seventy mph – on my side of the road.

The notion of someone overtaking under the circumstances was utterly groundless. Only a lunatic would overtake as the driver did, and people who are not silly do not expect to meet lunatics on the road or slow down as I did. But that driver was not normal, and my silliness saved two lives – or more.

If my Guardian Angel had not tipped me off, I should not be writing this letter.

God bless you and your work,
Yours sincerely.

Father **M. Phillip Scott** OCSO,
Bethlehem Abbey, Co Antrim,
Northern Ireland



■ Mother House of CSMA at Miejsce Piastowe, where blessed Fr Bronislaw Markiewicz lived

The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel is a religious order founded by Polish priest Blessed Father Bronislaw Markiewicz in Miejsce Piastowe in the southeast part of Poland in 1921. The female branch of the congregation is called Sisters of Saint Michael. Brothers and sisters of the congregation have chosen Christ as the primary object of their love and the example to follow. They put into practice their founder's idea of temperance and work among those whose religious life has been neglected, particularly among poor and abandoned children and the youth.

The Michaelites spread the Good News, teach religion and help by their priestly service; they work on values such as prudence, persistence and diligence at work. They run several orphanages and oratories that provide children with professional assistance in education, spiritual life and their growing up. The Michaelites also



www.michaelites.ca
www.michalici.pl

The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel (C.S.M.A.)

organize numerous summer and winter holiday camps and events, which are supported by various parishes' groups and programs.

At present the Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel has nearly 400 members: priests, brothers, deacons, seminarians and novices. They serve in different parts of the world including the Shrine of Saint Michael the Archangel in Monte Sant' Angelo in Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Ukraine, Canada, Puerto Rico, Republic of Dominicana, Aruba, Paraguay, Argentina, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The priests and brothers also run a publishing house and publish a bi-monthly magazine on Saint Michael and the Angels in Polish as well as in English.



■ General superiors of the Congregations Father Kazimierz Radzik and Mother Natanaela Bednarczyk

I attended the first Canadian retreat in London, Ontario with Fr. Peter. It was the best retreat I was ever on. Although it was on Divine Mercy, Fr. Peter gave us a talk on the angels and we were able to get the third issue of The Angels magazine. With faithful priests who speak the Truth with love, God's Kingdom will go forward with courage and strength. May St. Michael protect us.

C. MacKinlay, Canada

Fantastic magazine! Thank you for telling us the real truth about our holy friends the angels. EVERYONE should read this brilliant magazine, its sorely needed today. THANK YOU.

Gerard, USA

Thank you for telling us about this magazine. I am a convert to the Church and have never known where to go for information on the angels. I have known of the guardian angels

for many years having seen the results of their intervention in my life. One time it was in a very spectacular manner. I will definitely subscribe.

Mary Calanche, USA

Thank you for publishing this in English. It's been way too long since angels have been spoken about even in church at Mass or in CCD classes. Kids don't know about angels. When I tell my grandchildren about angels they think I'm nuts.

Kathy, USA

I have just been reading issue 3 of The Angels magazine and loved the article written by Alison about her conversion. In fact I love all the articles and love the whole publication.

Lady **Deidre McNair-Wilson,**
Berkshire, England

We received our copy of The Angels magazine issue 3 and I was

reading Alison's testimony with total exhilaration and delight (and even a tear or two of joy). What a wonderful story, praise the Lord.

Mrs Turner, Hampshire, England

The testimony from R. Fenlon – 'Holy angels in my life', was most touching and had a big impact on me. How blessed we are to have guardian angels. I now ask my guardian angel to go ahead and prepare the way for me before I go to a meeting.

Mrs Lock, Liverpool, England

I REALLY LOVE THIS MAGAZINE. Alison's testimony is so inspiring - an amazing conversion!

Sue Barley, Bedfordshire, England

I read the article by Father Krzysiek Poswiata in defence of the unborn in issue 4 and totally agree that the St Michael prayer should be reinstated at the end of the Mass. Myself, my mother and son all say it at the end of every Mass.

Mrs S.P. Powys, Wales, UK

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading The Angels magazine during 2010. They are worth reading during this age, please thank Father Piotr Prusakiewicz on my behalf. I have now passed my copy onto a Cistercian monk who required a picture of an angel.

Mrs Solomon, Swansea, Wales

Thank you for being so faithful in sending the Holy Angels Magazine. I truly love them and many of my friends, particularly the members of the core group of our Lipa Archdiocesan Divine Mercy Apostolate (LADMA), are very pleased to have them too.

Divina M. Padill, Philippines

The community of Pope Paul VI Community center in Ndeeba, Kampala, Uganda, were very delighted to receive copies of the Angel magazine. The community center is run by the Catholic Archdiocese of

Kampala for social and religious activities. It employs over 200 workers, they are looking forward to the next issue.

Rev. Fr. **Silvester Kewaza Bukenya,**
Catholic Diocese of Masaka



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Retreats lead by Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA)**29th March 2011**

Life And Spirituality
Of The Servant Of God, John Paul II,
St Paul's Church, Glenrothes, Scotland
Mgr. Hand Tel: +44 (0) 1592-756-758

30th March 2011

St Andrews Cathedral in Dundee.
Father Martin Plett
Phone 01382 225228
Email Fr.MartinPletts@googlemail.com

14 – 15 May 2011

Holy Angels Retreat
St Dominic's, Stone,
Staffordshire, England
Phone: Sheila Wagg
+44 (0) 7850-744-327

29 May – 5th June 2011

UK Pilgrimage to Divine Mercy
Shrine in Poland
www.ktozjakbog.religia.net/pilgrimage

08 – 10 July 2011

Life And Spirituality Of The Servant
Of God, John Paul II,

Pantasaph, Holywell, North Wales
Phone: +44 (0)1352 700153
www.pantasaph.org.uk.

5 – 7 November 2011

Divine Mercy Retreat
Craig Lodge Family House
of Prayer Dalmally,
Argyll, Scotland
Phone: +44 (0)1838 200216
Email: mail@craiglodge.org

8th November 2011

Divine Mercy Retreat
St James' Church in St Andrews, Fife.
Scotland. KY16 9AR
Phone: Fr Andrew Kingham
+44 (0) 1334 472856
Email: andrew.j.kingham@btinternet.com

12 – 14th November 2011

Retreat on the Holy Angels
Craig Lodge Family House
of Prayer Dalmally,
Argyll, Scotland
Phone: +44 (0)1838 200216
Email: mail@craiglodge.org

USA

For further info on retreats
Email: Dede@holyangelsmagazine.com
Website: www.holyangelsmagazine.com

27th April – 1st May 2011

Divine Mercy Parish Mission
Santa Maria California

2 – 4th May 2011

Divine Mercy Retreat
San Lorenzo, California

7 – 8th May 2011

Divine Mercy Conference
Miami, Florida

Canada**09 – 11 September 2011**

Divine Mercy Retreat in London, Ontario
Phone: 519-471-3180
Email: micheelites@dol.ca
2751 Sunningdale Road West, London,
Ontario, Canada, N6H 5L2

21 – 24 September 2011

Parish Mission at St Michael's Church,
London, Ontario

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.