



Messengers from a loving God

The Angels



Adoration of the infant Jesus
St Joseph – Man of Trust
What is angelic chastity?
Phenomenon of Guadeloupe
Memories of St Faustina
A Divine Mercy pilgrimage



It is a pleasure to welcome you to the eighth quarterly edition of "The Angels Messengers from a loving God" magazine. Thank you for all your letters, emails and positive feedback. We are glad that it inspires you to live a holy life and become more aware of this wonderful gift from God. Be like an angel to one another and leave everything in God's hands.

We are preparing ourselves for two miraculous events in the liturgical calendar, namely Christmas and the Epiphany. May our hearts be purified and full of joy when adoring the Infant Jesus together with the poor shepherds and the three kings on that holy night. May we kindly ask God to remove all sorrow and lack of forgiveness from our hearts so that we can open up to the angels announcing the Nativity.

Throughout the scriptures, from Genesis to Apocalypse, angels are mentioned around 300 times; they always have the same mission – to adore the Lord, to carry out His will and to reveal His messages to people.

When we look at the Psalms we can see this wonder and awe expressed in many different verses, in many different Psalms as the psalmist calls on all of creation to give glory and praise to God and He calls upon the angels to participate in that praise. Their praise has

been offered from the very dawn of creation.

Today we are invited to join in their hymns, their lauds, their wonder and fascination, so our hearts also are quickened with the grace of God. Let us repeat after Psalm 148, "Praise the Lord from the Heavens, praise Him in the heights, praise Him all His angels, praise Him all His hosts, for He commanded and they were created."

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 helped you in your life. If you are interested in conferences or retreats on Divine Mercy and the angels, please contact the office or the co-ordinators whose details are found on page 31.

May the angels guide you on your way. God bless you, your families and friends.

Father **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

The Angels

Messengers from a Loving God

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- Page 3** Put your trust in Mary's Heart
- Page 5** St Joseph – Man of Trust
- Page 6** Praise and thanks for angelic help – a testimony
- Page 7** Christmas prayers
- Page 8** Standing round the Crib
- Page 10** Sculpturing angels for God – an interview
- Page 12** Memories of St Faustina
- Page 14** How do angels love?
- Page 15** Heavenly advice
- Page 16** Lesson of Divine Mercy – a testimony
- Page 19** Questions and answers
- Page 21** The Phenomenon of Guadeloupe (Part 1)
- Page 22** St Raphael, the patron saint of healing – a testimony
- Page 23** Readers' comments
- Page 24** Angels in Art: Rest during the Flight to Egypt
- Page 26** Angelic choirs: Thrones (Part 3)
- Page 28** The Divine Mercy Pilgrimage (Part 1)
- Page 30** Retreats lead by Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA)
- Page 31** Distribution Co-ordinators & Retreats
- Page 32** Chaplet of St Michael

Put your trust in Mary's Heart

On 1 January, the octave day of Christmas we celebrate the feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. It is also the very first day of a new year, which we enter with love and hope in. It seems a great occasion to entrust ourselves, our families and homeland to Her Heart.

Renewal of Act of Consecration of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland & the whole world to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary to plead special intercession for these times we live in.

Sorrowful & Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Lady of Walsingham, pray for us



Based on the form prayed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II before Our Lady of Fatima in St Peter's Square on March 25th 1984

Let us with great thanksgiving in our hearts to God and his Holy Mother as we pray the following and consecrate our nations and the whole world to Our Lady's Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart. (You are invited to pray this kneeling in an act of penance, reparation and intercession.)

O Mother of all men and women, and of all peoples, you who know all their sufferings and their hopes, you who have a mother's awareness of all the struggles between good and evil,

between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we, moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart. Embrace with the love of the Mother and Handmaid of the Lord, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of concern for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples. In a special way we entrust and consecrate to you the Church and those individuals and nations which particularly need to be thus entrusted and consecrated. In this moment we especially consecrate to you O Sorrowful mother our beloved isles and peoples of England, Wales,

Scotland and Ireland, along with the entire Middle East, Libya and Japan and every nation upon this Earth and its peoples.

We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God!

Despise not our petitions in our necessities.

Behold, as we stand before you, Mother of Christ, before your Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart, we desire, together with the whole Church, to unite ourselves with the consecration which, for love of us, your Son made of Himself to the Father: 'For their sake', He said, 'I consecrate Myself that they also may be consecrated in the truth' (Jn 17:19). ►

► We wish to unite ourselves with our Redeemer in this His consecration for the world and for the human race, which, in His divine Heart, has the power to obtain pardon and to secure reparation. The power of this consecration lasts for all time and embraces all individuals, peoples and nations. It overcomes every evil that the spirit of darkness is able to awaken, and has in fact awakened in our times, in the heart of man and in his history.

How deeply we feel the need for the consecration of humanity and the world – our modern world – in union with Christ Himself! For the redeeming work of Christ must be shared in by the world through the Church. Above all creatures, may you be blessed, you, the Handmaid of the Lord, who in the fullest way obeyed the divine call! Hail to you, who are wholly united to the redeeming consecration of your Son! Mother of the Church! Enlighten the People of God along the paths of faith, hope, and

love! Enlighten especially the peoples whose consecration and entrustment by us you are awaiting. Help us to live in the truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family of the modern world. In entrusting to you, O Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you this very consecration of the world, placing it in your Sorrowful and Immaculate motherly Heart.

O Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future!

From famine and war, deliver us.

From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us.

From sins against the life of man from its very beginning, deliver us.

From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God, deliver us.

From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and international, deliver us.

From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.

From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us.

From the loss of awareness of good and evil, deliver us.

From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us, deliver us.

O Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced by the sword of sorrow prophesized by Simeon, save us from degeneration, disaster and war. Protect us from all harm. O Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, you who bore the sufferings

of your Son in the depths of your heart, be our Advocate.

Pray for us, that acting always according to your will and the Will of your Divine Son, we may live and die pleasing to God. Accept, O Mother of Christ, this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings, laden with the sufferings of whole societies. Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer all sin: individual sin and the sin of the world, sin in all its manifestations. Let there be revealed, once more, in the history of the world the infinite saving power of the Redemption: the power of merciful Love! May it put a stop to evil! May it transform consciences!

May your Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of Hope!

Amen

Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

St Joseph, patron and protector of the Universal Church, pray for us.

Our Lord said to Belgian mystic Berthe Petit: "The title of 'Sorrowful' belongs therefore to the heart of My Mother, and more than any other, this title is dear to Her because it springs from the union of Her heart with Mine in the redemption of humanity. This title has been acquired by Her through Her full participation in my Calvary, and it precedes the gratuitous title 'Immaculate' which My love bestowed upon Her by a singular privilege. Recourse to My Mother under the title and invocation I wish for Her universally, 'Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us,' is the last help I shall give before the end of time."



St Joseph – Man of Trust

Many decisions concerning the Holy Family were made by St Joseph and were inspired by the angels. He was important to the angels because in the human hierarchy he was the Third Person.

The First Person was Jesus, incarnated Word of God, who became a human being for our salvation. The second was the Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother of Jesus. The third, St Joseph, was chosen to be the provider and protector of the Family.

There was no better man to fulfil that mission. Pope John XXIII recognised this when he gave St Joseph priority in the Canon of the Mass over the apostles and other saints.

There are examples of St Joseph's relationship with the angels in the Gospel of St Matthew. For example, when he found out that Mary was expecting a baby, his first thought was to divorce her quietly; as an upright and noble man he wished to spare Mary disgrace. According to St Bridget of Sweden, he did not feel worthy of taking care of the mother and child. Whilst St Joseph's reaction may have seemed appropriate from our human perspective, the angel reminded him in a dream that he was worthy of the task for he was a descendant of King David. Moreover, the angel told him that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and that he was chosen to help God conduct



■ The Dream of St Joseph by Georges De La Tour, 1640

His plans. St Joseph was comforted by the angelic words. He received answers to all the questions he carried in his heart.

In another example, he was supported by the angels when facing danger from King Herod and as directed he took the Holy Family to Egypt to protect them from death. After several years he was still obedient to angelic advice and returned to Galilee. No wonder he is called the Protector of the Holy Church – he

saved the first Church: Mary and Jesus. He is also called the Terror of demons because he did not let evil spirits harm the Holy Family.

Chastity was another trait that helped St Joseph fulfil God's mission for him. Being most chaste not only illustrated that he was in a close relationship with the angels but added splendour to the glory of the Virgin Mary as well.

Jakub Szymanski

On Friday 17th December 2010 my friends and I had our annual outing to a good restaurant followed by the Christmas Carol Concert at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Three of us travelled in by train on the line from Southport; Sue and I from Formby and another from Crosby.



Praise & thanks for angelic help

During the concert there was a snowstorm in Liverpool. We came out of the Hall to a fairyl-land, the Christmas trees outside the hall were dressed in real snow, and the lights of the two great cathedrals at either end of Hope Street were beacons of colour through the still falling snow. We were filled with joy as we walked to the station.

At the station the barriers were closed, we were told it was too dangerous to allow more people on to the platform. Trains to several areas had been delayed, many were cancelled. Crowds of us were waiting. We found that there were no buses to Formby; taxis were not to be found. Eventually those who were heading for Southport were called forward to go down to the platform. We three went through. We waited for the doors of the train to open. Eventually Sue said she had to visit the 'ladies room', upstairs in the concourse. While she was away the

train doors opened, a guard rushed down shouting to "get on quickly". It seemed obvious that my friend who was going to Crosby should get on the train. I would wait.

Of course the train was just leaving the platform as Sue came down the escalator! Shortly after that the announcement came that there would be no more trains to Southport that night. It was 11 pm. We returned to the concourse, by now many people were stranded, the police were controlling crowds, and the station staff were harassed. We stood in the middle of that concourse and did the only thing possible – we prayed. Sue prayed especially to Saint Raphael, I joined her and prayed also to my Guardian Angel. Naturally we put our trust in our Merciful Lord.

We were only 16 miles from home but with no means of getting there it could have been 160. We had the thought to find a hotel for the night. We telephoned the nearest but it was

full. We walked up anyway thinking they would know others close by. They mentioned one on the opposite side of the street, which we telephoned. It was a small place above some shops, I had never noticed it before. After initially saying 'no vacancies', he listened to me and said someone had not turned up and we could take that room. Alleluia! Out of the cold and snow which by this time was well over our shoes. It was basic, clean and warm. We praised God and thanked Saint Raphael for such an immediate response to our plea.

After a good breakfast next morning, Sue and I trudged back to the station. No trains, over to the bus station. No buses to Formby. There was a bus going a short distance in that general direction, we got on. While on the bus we tried to phone a taxi, we were told none were available unless we could hail one passing – that seemed highly unlikely given the circumstances. The bus could not travel

as far as expected. As we got off the bus, again in prayer to Saint Raphael, on the opposite side of the street was a black taxi with people getting out. We ran over and got in the other side. It was another immediate answer to our prayer. The taxi driver took us all the way home – at about 10 mph. As we travelled closer to home the snow became deeper. At my house it was 20 cm (8 inches); I thought it was more but I actually measured it!

Our taxi driver did not ask for one penny over the rate on the meter. We witnessed to him that he was an answer to prayer. His name is Kevin, he is only driving a taxi because lost his job and his wife has breast cancer. So he and his family need prayer. I was moved to tell him my next Mass would be for him. Were we also sent to him?

In all of this Sue and I were happy and peaceful. It was a great adventure full of confidence in God.

What would have happened had we got on that train with our friend? That train was stuck in a tunnel for over an hour. It was eventually shunted to the next station – over ground and very exposed. The passengers were asked to leave the train, there were going to be no more trains that night and there were no buses. No waiting room open! She stayed close to three others she had met on the train. After various attempts they finally got home after paying an exorbitant taxi fare at 3:40am, half frozen to death.

We were protected, we praise and thank God for the help he provided and acknowledge St Raphael and our Guardian Angels.

J. Hoard, Liverpool, England

Family Christmas Prayer

I think about my family, my relatives, the neighbours, people with whom we will spend this day. Dear Jesus, as I look at their faces and remember their stories, there are feelings of gratitude and also some fear and anxiety. Thank you for these loved ones and please forgive me for the ways I have been less than accepting and loving. Please heal the wounds, division and conflicts that stand between us and help me to remember how dearly you love them. I only want to remember that you have come to save us all.

Nativity Prayer of St Bernard of Clairvaux

Let Your goodness Lord appear to us, that we who are made in your image, conform ourselves to it. In our own strength we cannot imitate Your majesty, power, and wonder nor is it fitting for us to try. But Your mercy reaches from the heavens through the clouds to the earth below. You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with Your tiny hands, embrace us with Your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet cries.

St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Prayer before Christmas Dinner

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember

the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

Nativity Prayer St Augustine

*Let the just rejoice,
For their Justifier is born.
Let the sick and infirm rejoice,
For their Saviour is born.
Let the captives rejoice,
For their Redeemer is born.
Let slaves rejoice,
for their Master is born.
Let free men rejoice,
For their Liberator is born.
Let All Christians rejoice,
For Jesus Christ is born.
St Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-440)*



Standing round the Crib

On January 6th, we celebrate the arrival of the Three Kings to adore the Infant King and to offer Him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Through the centuries, others will also come to venerate Thy crib: from India, Ancient Nubia, Macedonia, Rome, Carthage and Spain; Gauls, Franks, Germans, Angles, Saxons and Normans.

Both pilgrims and crusaders will come from the West to kiss the ground of the cave where Thou were born. Your manger will be venerated all over the earth. In the great Gothic or Romanesque cathedrals, multitudes will gather around Thee, offering Thee presents of gold, silver, incense and above all the piety and sincerity of their hearts.

Then will come the period of the Western discoveries in which the benefits of Thy Redemption will reach new lands. Incas, Aztecs, natives of various tribes, blacks from African shores or further inland, bronze-skinned Indians, slender and pensive Chinese, short and agile Nipponese, all will gather around Thy crib and adore Thee.

Our only hope

The star of Bethlehem now shines over the whole world. The angelic promise has been heard by all peoples and all across the earth hearts of goodwill have found the inestimable treasure of Thy peace. Overcoming all obstacles, the gospel has finally spread to people all over the world. In the midst of contemporary

desolation, this great gathering of people from all nations and races around Thee is our only consolation, indeed our only hope.

Who are we?

We are among them, kneeling before Thee. See us, Lord, and have pity on us. There is something we would like to say.

Who are we? We are those who will not kneel before the modern Baal. We carry Thy law engraved upon the bronze of our hearts and we do not allow the errors of our times to become engraved upon this bronze sanctified by Thy Redemption.

We love the immaculate purity of orthodoxy above all else and reject any pact whatsoever with heresy, its wiles and infiltrations. We are merciful to the repentant sinner and since – due to our unworthiness and infidelity – we count ourselves among that number, we implore Thy mercy. We spare no criticism, either, of insolent and conceited impiety or of strutting vice that scorns virtue.

We pity all men, particularly the blessed who suffer persecution for

love of the Church, who are oppressed everywhere because they hunger and thirst for virtue, who are abandoned, ridiculed, betrayed and disdained because they remain faithful to Thy commandments.

You gather isolated people

Many are those whose suffering is not celebrated in contemporary literature: the Christian mother who will pray alone before Thy crib because her children no longer practice the Faith; the strong yet austere husband who is misunderstood or even loathed by his own due to his fidelity to Thy teachings; the faithful wife who bears the solitude of both heart and soul because frivolous habits have led to adultery he who should be her support, her “other half”; the pious son or daughter who – while Christian homes are celebrating – sense how in their own home, family life has been stifled by egotism, hedonism and secularism; the student who is shunned and mocked by his colleagues because of his fidelity to Thee; the professor



■ Adoration of the Three Magi by Jan Gossaert, 1505

who is eschewed by fellow staff because he will not condone their errors; the parish priest or bishop around whom a menacing wall of misunderstanding or indifference has been raised because he refuses to compromise the integrity of the doctrine entrusted to his care; the honest man made penniless for refusing to swindle.

All of these isolated people, scattered across the globe, ignorant of each other, now gather around Thee with the Three Kings to offer Thee a gift and a prayer.

Their gift exceeds the sun and the stars, the oceans with all its riches and the earth in all its splendour: they give themselves entirely and faithfully.

By preferring complete orthodoxy over approval, purity over

popularity among the impure, honesty over gold; by remaining faithful to Thy law even when this entails sacrificing career and fame, they attain perfection in their spiritual life by practicing love of God above all things, which is a sincere and lasting love.

Love enlightened by faith

Such love differs greatly from love as it is understood nowadays, which predominantly consists of gushy and illogical feelings, senseless and blurry affections, obscure self-condescension and trite justifications to appease one's conscience. Instead theirs is true love, enlightened by

faith, justified by reason, serious, chaste, upright and persevering – in a word, theirs is love of God.

They also offer a prayer. Before all else – because they love it above all else in this world – for Thy holy and immaculate Church: for both the pastors and the flock; foremost, for the pastor of the pastors of the flock, that is for Peter, whom today we call Benedict.

May the Church, which now moans as a captive in the dungeons of this anti-Christian “civilization”, finally triumph over this era of sin and implant a new civilization for Thy greater glory.

May the saints become ever holier, may the good be sanctified, may sinners become good and may the impious convert. May the impenitent who have rejected grace and are jeopardising souls be dispersed, humbled and their efforts frustrated. May the souls in purgatory rise to heaven straight away.

They also pray for themselves: may their orthodoxy be ever purer, their purity ever more rigorous.

May they be more faithful amidst adversity, stand ever taller amidst humiliations, be more energetic in their struggles.

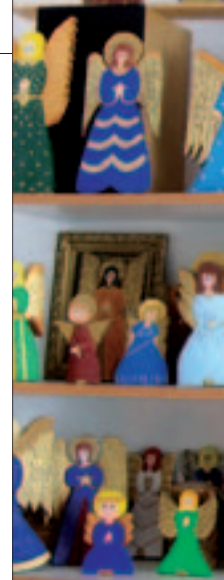
May they be more terrible to the impious, yet more compassionate towards those who are ashamed of their sins, seriously strive to overcome them and publicly acclaim virtue.

Finally, they pray for Thy Grace, without which no will can durably persevere in good and no soul can be saved; may it be more abundant in proportion to the number of their miseries and infidelities.

Taken from
www.americanneedsfatima.org
 on 14th July, 2011

Sculpturing angels for God

Interview with Zdzislawa Lapka, a Polish sculptor



Zdzislawa began sculpting angels following the death of her husband. She now carves many angels out of wood and sells them to people from all over the world.

When did your passion for sculpting angels begin?

My husband died 14 years ago. My daughter married and started her own family. I felt very lonely and I was afraid that my life would become meaningless. So I prayed, "God, You have given some talent to each person in the world. Please! Give me something too." And there they were – angels.

It is a beautiful gift from God.

Yes, it goes without saying. It was a surprise for me because I did not pray for a sculptural talent. I cannot even draw.

What kind of wood do you use in your work?

Mainly linden because it rarely cracks. I have always loved forests and wood. I carve with a small knife that I bought in a flea market a long time ago and foresters give me the logs. I used to drag them to my car and take them to the saw mill, where they were cut

into planks but now my grandson helps me with the carrying. I rub them down with sandpaper in my kitchen. Sometimes my eyes burn and run because of the dust. After that, I carve angels into the wood and paint their wings and robes with oil paints.

How did you come across the idea of sculpturing angels?

When I was looking at the world being hurt by evil and quarrelling people, I thought that angels could bring them pleasure, joy and peace. It may seem naive and childish but I decided to carve angels to bring people harmony and gentleness. I have about 300 angels at home and another 300 were sold to different parts of the world; Poland, Germany, Canada ... I truly believe that they bring peace and light into the places they live now.

How much time do you need to carve an angel?

The whole process, from cutting logs to painting, takes about a month. I sculpt for 2-3 hours a day. Each angel is unique and exceptional. I have love and respect for each of them and

I really do have difficulty in giving them away.

It could be said that your work is like a prayer.

Yes. I sculpt for God hoping that my angels might bring some goodness into the world. However, when

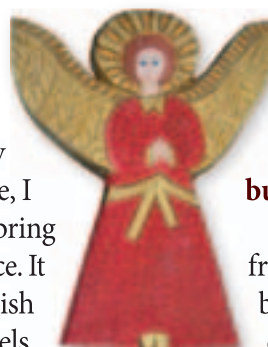
I look at the angels, I can hardly believe that I made them.

Are people interested in buying angels?

I guess so. Visitors come from various places to see or buy them. They are fascinated with angels. They enter my house, become silent; they look and sigh. They are so sated with peace that they do not want to leave. The angels seem alive and positively influence people. They are usually bought as presents for baptism or First Communion. Sometimes parents bring their children to choose the one they would like to have as their guardian angel. Boys are as delighted with the angels as girls. People's joy is the greatest payment for me.

Where does your strong faith in angels taking care of us come from?

I have deeply believed in my guardian angel since my childhood.





My parents were practising Roman Catholics. My mother never worked, she created such a wonderful atmosphere at home. We were rather poor but we did not complain. I was always a free woman; even during the period of communism I attended church whenever I wanted. In the early morning I entrusted my whole day at school to God. Angels have always accompanied me everywhere. Once, I sat down under a tree in the forest, closed my eyes and listened to the birds singing. I felt even then that the world is imbued with the presence of God and the angels.

So you discovered God in nature...

Oh, yes! On becoming an adult I often went for trips into the forests. I met various people there and although some situations were dangerous I was never afraid because I knew that my guardian angel would help me. Now, in my old age, I listen to the angels in silence. In the evening, just before I fall asleep I look at their faces.

Have you passed your faith onto your daughter and grandchildren?

Yes, I think so. I have recited the rosary since my daughter was born.

I like praying and I believe that the Virgin Mary is my friend. I also taught her the prayers to her guardian angel; we sometimes sing a song about angels, which she has known from her childhood. However, my grandchildren are quite a different generation. Once my grandson Michael rebelled against the Church and stopped attending mass. I told him, "Michael, you



cannot live without God. It is impossible to live a day without Him. People may leave you but God never abandons you." Now Michael is studying in a distant city but I know that he goes to church. It is my greatest concern for my family that they live with God every day.

Do angels help you bear the cross of loneliness?

When my husband died, I did not blame God. And I did not ask "Why me, how could you do this to me?" I tried to humbly accept reality as it was. Yes, solitude is a kind of cross but I do not want to complain. God gave me a talent so I try to forge the

cross into work and prayers. I do not want to waste my time, I make angels. Apart from that, I dream of the dead from my family almost each night; I have a deep and warm contact with them and I do not feel lonely very often. Sometimes, when I am fed up with everything God sends me good people who help me.

How does your guardian angel take care of you?

He protects me in each situation of the day. Once I sat down on Giewont [a mountain in the Tatra Mountains, Poland]; my legs were dangling over the edge of a precipice. I was completely unaware of the danger. However, my guardian angel reminded me of my acrophobia and I withdrew.



I went to my allotment which is situated out in the sticks. Suddenly I saw a man running in my direction. He had a sinister face. I came to a standstill looking at him with my eyes full of fear. He stopped and gazed at me. I realised that during those seconds he was making a decision. But then, out of the blue, he left me alone. Please tell me, was not my guardian angel with me then?

What would you like to say to the readers of "The Angels" magazine?

If you believe in God, you become free. Nothing limits you, only you can limit yourself. We should believe in angels too and spread knowledge about them. People should invite angels into their homes to feel their presence and care.

Thank you for the interview.

By Agata Pawlowska



Memories of St Faustina by Sister M. Justyna Golofit ZMBM

I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy. I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy.

Diary, 687

At three 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 whole world. In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion.

Diary, 1320

Souls who spread the honour of My mercy I shield through their entire lives as a tender mother her infant and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the Merciful Saviour. At that last hour, a soul has nothing with which to defend itself except My mercy. Happy is the soul that during its lifetime immersed itself in the Fountain of Mercy, because justice will have no hold on it.

Diary, 1075

Sister Faustina was full of childish simplicity and humility; she never considered herself better than others. One day she was working in the garden when a priest of a high rank visited us. Although her hair was disheveled and hands soiled with manure, she did not care. The priest was very touched by her modesty; and no wonder, she tried only to please God, who lived in her soul.

She was my guardian angel in novitiate. At the beginning I disliked her for she scolded and corrected me all the time. However, I adored her optimism and peace of heart even in times of distress.

Kitchen adventures

One day Sister Faustina was supervising the novice nuns in the kitchen and they mistakenly put salt into the tea instead of the potatoes and served it to the sisters, who lavished unpleasant remarks upon her.

Sister Faustina smiled and apologised for her carelessness. She rebuked the novice nuns but with love and gentleness. She was very patient and tolerant towards others, everyone could expect her help.

She always said that we should cook delicious meals for our wards because if they ate something tasty, they would not offend God so easily. Once it was late at night and I had lots of dishes to wash. Although Sister Faustina was exhausted from her work in the garden, she came and helped me in the kitchen. I could not take out the hot corn cobs from the pot but Sister Faustina just put her hand into the boiling water and took them out. I stood motionless and feared that she would burn herself but she calmly did it several times. There was not a spot of burning on her hand! I admired God's grace for her.

On another occasion Mother Superior sent me into town and ordered Sister Faustina to stand in for me in the kitchen. There was lots of work to do, so I was astonished

when I returned and saw her sitting comfortably on a bench. The kitchen was clean and gleaming. I asked her, "How did you do that so quickly?" She answered simply, "Angels helped me. I could not do it by myself."

Supernatural gifts

One day all the sisters were looking for her and entered her cell several times but they could not find her. Even Mother Superior engaged in the searching. Then Sister Faustina appeared and apologised to

Mother Superior for being in her cell for too long. Everybody was astonished because her cell was checked. She humbly replied, "Jesus made me invisible for His affairs were very important."

She had a supernatural gift to see the souls dying in mortal sin. She often asked me to pray with her or make some mortification for the souls. I asked, "How do you know that? Are you having a revelation?" She always asked me not to ask her about it but to pray for the poor souls. I was too afraid to refuse her.

Sister Faustina was extremely perspicacious. With her keen eyes she read my heart as to why I had not taken Holy Communion for a

few days. She told me that what hurt Jesus most was the fact that the soul did not want to purify itself in the sacrament of penance. Even if the soul committed the most horrible crimes, it cannot distrust God. On the contrary, it should throw itself into Divine Mercy.

Her confessor allowed her to wake up fifteen times at night to adore God for a short time. Standing spiritually in front of the Tabernacle she recompensed Him for people's insults and mortal sins. She practiced it for many years.

Translated from
"Oredzie Milosierdzia"
75-76/2010, p.18.



How do angels love?

Throughout the ages people have attempted to find an answer to the question of what love is and how to find true love. The question was rarely directed towards philosophers although they have tried to answer it from the beginnings of history. Greek thinkers claimed that understanding love meant understanding the man who loved.



If we asked this question of St Thomas Aquinas, he would think of it for a while and then give us one of his definitions. He would distinguish between Divine, angelic and human love. Many of us would probably consider that his answer was not really to the point. After much thought, however, it will transpire that while St Thomas' answer may be difficult it is still up-to-date.

Love gives happiness

Sentimental love, which seems closest to the human notion of love, is called by St Thomas "a rule aiming at a beloved goal". That beloved goal is something good; so if we love something, love pushes us to gain such a goal because it makes us happy. So we can say that love is a basic motive of our activity and thanks to love we not only wish to gain something good but also it causes us to make attempts to reach it. If there is desire for good in our hearts, then we become more satisfied and happier.

has a hidden wish for God, who is infinitely good. That is why only God can make us happy in a complete way. The problem is that such a desire seems blurred in our hearts: we want to be infinitely happy but we do not recognize that the source of such happiness is God. Therefore, we start loving material things thinking that they will make us happy.

St Thomas Aquinas emphasises that angels experience similar desires for they are imperfect too. However, angels have to recognize the object of their love in order to satisfy that wish. But let us remember that angels cannot love sensually because they do not possess bodies. We do and can love material things, which seems a most tragic fruition of the desire for love.

Complete union

According to St Thomas types of love depend on how much we want something. The most essential type of love is our craving for complete union with that which is perfect. This is a result of our imperfect and sinful nature which demands that we are constantly in a state of Complete Happiness. The Angelic Doctor informs us that each of us

What choice do angels have if they cannot love material objects? What or who can they choose to love? Well, they can choose themselves instead of God: such a situation took place when the fallen angels rebelled against God. Angels have free will and have to decide who or what would satisfy their deepest desire for love.



Does my guardian angel love me?

That question may seem silly but we have to ask it. If God's Divine Will requires angels to take care of us, we may think that they just fulfil their duties because they are obedient to the Lord. There are movies which depict angelic roles merely as a job and God as an employer, but this is a false image. St Thomas claims that 'similarity' is the key word to understand angelic love toward us. As love increases, the more similar to each other we are. Angels love us and want us to share in the happiness they already experience. Angels love us not because God commands them to do this but because we are in community with them. We are part of a huge family of creatures who adore God.

Do I love my guardian angel?

It is not easy to reciprocate angelic love; we cannot love them sensually like other people for they are bodiless. But we can become familiar with them and choose them as our assistants in fulfilling God's will on earth. When we co-operate with Divine Grace and join with the angels in their adoration of God, we resemble them more and more.

The heavenly spirits teach us what genuine love is. If we love only sensually our love is short-lived and perishes, whereas our free decision to love someone makes our love eternal. Only then can we understand St Paul's words, "Love never comes to an end." (1 Cor 13:8)

Father **Tomasz Stepien**

Heavenly advice

No one said that the world would be just. No one said that our life would be pleasant and peaceful. No matter what occurs to us, it is love we put into our actions that counts for God.

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.





*Oh Angels dear who surround us here
And come from heaven above,
May we grow to understand you
Tho' we cannot see you love.
We cannot hear your voices
But we feel that you are there,
For the Lord God gives us Angels
To dispel us from despair.*

*So connect yourself to Angels
And the one who is your guide,
He's there to keep protecting you
Be forever by your side.
Do not ignore his presence
For he really is your friend.
God Our Father heavenly spirit
Stays with you to the end.*

Hilary Barton,
Birkdale, Southport

Lesson of Divine Mercy

I want to tell you about an experience I shared with one of my patients. I will call her Martha. Please bear with me, as I know this message is a little long.

Martha is a 28-year-old mother of two little girls. When compared to the majority of patients that I operate upon, she is relatively healthy and carries a lower weight. Because of this, on the Monday of her operation, I let my colleague do the majority of her surgery. The case went very well, but over the next few days Martha complained of having pain. For this reason, she was not sent home two days after her operation, as is usually the case. Her symptoms were vague and her vital signs were stable, but because she failed to get better, a CAT scan was done that Friday. The scan showed that, even though the site had been closed, a small part of her intestine had become trapped in one of the small incision sites that had been used for her surgery. This had caused a blockage of her intestine, which subsequently became grossly distended upstream from that site.

I was an hour and a half away when the result of her scan was read. However, there was an operating room available immediately and so one of the other bariatric surgeons carried out the operation. This is usually very easy to do and resolves the problem right away. Therefore

I agreed to let the other surgeon, Dr. Robin, proceed. Later, when I spoke with Dr. Robin, she told me that they were able to reduce and repair the hernia without problem, but encountered excessive fluid in the abdomen. She said they went to great lengths to look for a leak throughout, especially at the areas involved in her bariatric surgery earlier that week. She was pleased to report that even though the intestine had distended greatly, none of the areas from the previous surgery showed evidence of leaking. They were never able to explain the fluid.

The patient went to the intensive care unit after surgery, where her heart rate became dangerously rapid throughout the evening. The medical team tried to get it to slow down, but all of their efforts failed. By that night all of the doctors caring for her agreed that she should go back to surgery. Interestingly, the patient was in her room, sitting up in bed and talking to her mother and husband as if nothing were wrong.

After explaining to Martha and her family that we thought it best to take her back to surgery and re-evaluate her abdomen to see if a leak actually existed or if there were some other issue that needed



to be addressed, we prepared to go back to the operating room at about midnight.

Brain damage

Martha was brought into the room and the anaesthetist proceeded to put a breathing tube down her throat and begin general anaesthesia. Just as that was done, without warning, her heart stopped. After a few seconds, we started chest compressions while the anaesthetist gave several intravenous medications. It was not until about three minutes later that her heart started to work again – although her pulse was weak. In this condition, she would not have tolerated the planned procedure. However, since we felt that a thorough evaluation of her abdomen was now required more than ever, we made a long incision to look inside. I remember noting as I made the incision that she seemed not to bleed at all. Later, as I proceeded,

the anaesthetist told me that even though the patient was getting 100% oxygen to breathe, her blood saturation would not go above 40% (our saturation is at least in the upper 90% breathing room air). Everyone in the room knew that this was not enough to maintain her brain function. After a while, it is incompatible with life. Martha's intestines were a very dark purple rather than the normal healthy pink, confirming the reading on the anaesthetist's monitor. Furthermore, they were barely getting a blood pressure reading.

Ominous signs

Needless to say, I was completely devastated. My heart was on the floor. I continued working with one of my colleagues, to at least learn the cause of this tragedy. Then, without warning, Martha's heart stopped again, and so once more, we initiated mechanical and pharmacological CPR until it started again – very weakly. Dr. Robin had

come in that night, naturally concerned that she had missed something earlier in the day. We agreed that she should go out and prepare the family for the worst. I was taught early in my training by one of my instructors that, when at all possible, you should not suddenly tell a family their loved one has died, but rather prepare them by first letting them know things looked bleak.

For whatever reason, and I honestly do not know the reason, I persisted in looking for the cause, which I am not sure I ever found, and then placed drains and a feeding tube in Martha before packing (not closing) her abdomen. We then got her back to her room in the intensive care unit. Throughout the case her saturation had never come up to an acceptable level. We wondered if she had sent a massive amount of clot up to her lung.

The intensive care doctors and a cardiologist saw her right away. I overheard her nurse tell them that she had no gag reflex and no corneal reflex, which are ominous signs. I ►

▶ guess she saw the look on my face, because she then walked over to me and told me that sometimes it takes a long time for the anaesthetic to wear off of some of these really sick patients. However, the anaesthetist was there and told me that Martha had stopped getting anaesthesia soon after we started the case.

I then went out with Dr. Robin to speak to the family. Never had I been the primary surgeon on a bariatric patient where the outcome was death. I was completely crushed. My expectations were that the family would be in complete hysteria. After all, just a couple of hours before, Martha had been sitting up in bed talking to them as they watched TV. But instead, they were rather quiet, and after I recounted all that had occurred, they just wanted to see her again. In my mind I knew that even if we could somehow keep Martha's body alive, she would be a "vegetable" until such time as the family decided they had had enough.

After a short visit, the family returned to the waiting room and one of our surgical residents came in to perform his routine evaluation of the patient. Part of his evaluation, which he did in front of me, was to perform a "sternal rub", which involves driving a knuckle of your fist into the patient's sternum to cause pain and create a response. This resident is six foot six and put a lot of muscle into this manoeuvre without getting the slightest reaction from Martha.

Oddly enough, Martha's heart rate had once again started racing, but her pulse was so weak that she needed a myriad of intravenous medication just to maintain a very low blood pressure. By now it was probably three or four o'clock in the morning and we had just about "maxed out" on the medication we

could give her. The cardiologist decided to put a special monitoring catheter through one of the veins in her shoulder, which he would then advance into her heart.

Sudden turnaround

As he started to do this, I walked over to the foot of the bed and put my hand on Martha's right foot. Many years ago, Amy left me a copy of Sister Faustina's booklet on the Divine Mercy. In it, Sister Faustina encourages us to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet when placed before those who are sick and dying. It has been my custom since then, whether in the trauma room or at a hospital bedside, to put my hand on the very injured or very sick patients I have encountered and secretly pray part of the chaplet. With Martha I was aware that my shortcomings prevented me from helping her physical being, perhaps I could at least help her soul.

I started the prayer while pretending to look interested in what the cardiologist was doing at the head of the bed. No sooner had I finished the prayer, I felt her right big toe was moving just under my hand. I announced this movement to those in the room, but the cardiologist told me this was probably an insignificant muscle fasciculation or inconsequential twitch. Deep down, I knew that he was right. However, the more I felt this movement with my fingers, the more deliberate I thought it was. Finally, I spoke up again and asked Martha to stop moving her toe. To my complete surprise, the movement stopped. After a few seconds I asked her to move her toe again, and she did. Of course, I then flooded her

with commands to move this or that, and she proved able to move all her extremities. As she remained intubated from surgery, she could not talk; however, she nodded her head appropriately in answer to questions. And, as amazing as it seems, within the hour, I had called back her family into her room and she was writing them messages in a very clear handwriting.

Now I would love to end this by saying that Martha quickly returned to 100% and was discharged from the hospital within a few days – but this is not the case. In fact, she spent over two months in the hospital; most of that in the intensive care as we addressed the issues of her racing heart, wound infections and intestinal breakdown. Naturally, being bedridden during most of that time she lost a lot of muscle tone and is in need of extensive physical therapy. She was discharged from the hospital this past week and is now in a physical rehabilitation facility. She will need additional surgery in the future. Nevertheless, it sure beats the outcome I fully expected for her. Honestly, I have no physiological explanation for her sudden turnaround. It is curious that the first thing Martha voluntarily moved was the toe under my hand as I finished my little prayer for her and how her mind was not there at all and then it just was.

Thanks for reading!

"Eternal Father, I offer you the body and blood, soul and divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on and on the whole world."

R.O.

How can we imitate angelic chastity?

Angels are spirits and we are people burdened with consequences of original sin.

What is angelic chastity? Not only is it freedom from sensual temptations but also the ability to see God face to face as well. It is the fruit of chastity and happiness of each soul, which is called “visio beatifica” in theology.

God is the spirit; angels as spiritual beings “are continually in the presence of My Father in heaven”, Jesus teaches. (Mt 18:10) According to the Bible seeing God face to face is reserved for angels, saved souls in heaven and for those of chaste heart. Christ promises it in His Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God.” (Mt 5:8) Also those who have chosen celibacy “for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven” (Mt 19:12) can see God for they may resemble angels and saved souls. Heaven differs from earth with the fact that no one marries, God becomes the only happiness of a soul. (Mt 22:30)

St John Vianney realised that truth perfectly; he used to say, “If I met an angel and a priest, firstly I would greet the priest. The angel is God’s friend but it is the priest who represents Him.” Jesus said to St Faustina, “You are My spouse forever; your chastity should be greater than that of the angels, for I call no angel to such intimacy as I do you. The smallest act of My spouse is of infinite value. A pure soul has inconceivable power before God.” (Diary 534)



Jesus instructed St Faustina how to gain chastity. Apart from supernatural means such as sacraments and prayer, there are two other things, which make people as chaste as angels are, namely suffering and patience. However, we often reject those treasures although they can help us gain the angelic virtue.

“When a soul has come out of these tribulations, it is deeply humble. Its purity of soul is great. It knows better without need of reflecting, as it were, what it ought to do at a given moment and what to forbear. It feels the lightest touch of grace and is very faithful to God. It recognizes God from afar and continuously rejoices in Him. It discovers God very quickly in other souls and its environment in general. The soul has been purified by God Himself. God, as Pure Spirit, introduces the soul to a life which is purely spiritual. God Himself has first prepared and purified the soul; that is, he has made it capable of close communion with Himself. The soul, in a state of loving repose, communes spiritually with the Lord. It speaks to

God without the need of expressing itself through the senses. God fills it with His light. The enlightened mind sees clearly and distinguishes the various degrees of the spiritual life. It recognizes [that state] when its union with God was imperfect: where the senses were involved, and the spirit was linked with the senses in a manner – exalted and special, to be sure – but not yet perfect. There is a higher and more perfect union with God; namely, intellectual union. Here, the soul is safer from illusions; its spirituality is purer and more profound. In a life where the senses are involved, there is more danger of illusion. Both for the soul and for its confessor, prudence must play a greater part. There are moments when God introduces the soul to a purely spiritual state. The senses dim and are seemingly dead. The soul is most closely united with God; it is immersed in the Deity; its knowledge is complete and perfect, not sporadic as before, but total and absolute. It rejoices in this. But I want to say more about those moments of trial: at those times the confessor must have patience with such a soul. But the soul

► *must have even greater patience with itself” (Diary 115)*

Blessed Father Bronislaw Markiewicz gives another way of gaining angelic chastity, that is via St Michael the Archangel. The founder of the Congregation of St Michael wrote, “It is strange that St Michael is little worshipped although he is just after the Virgin Mary in the liturgy. His virtues are humility, chastity, zeal for God’s glory and the good of people’s souls.”

Fatherr **Ryszard Andrzejewski**

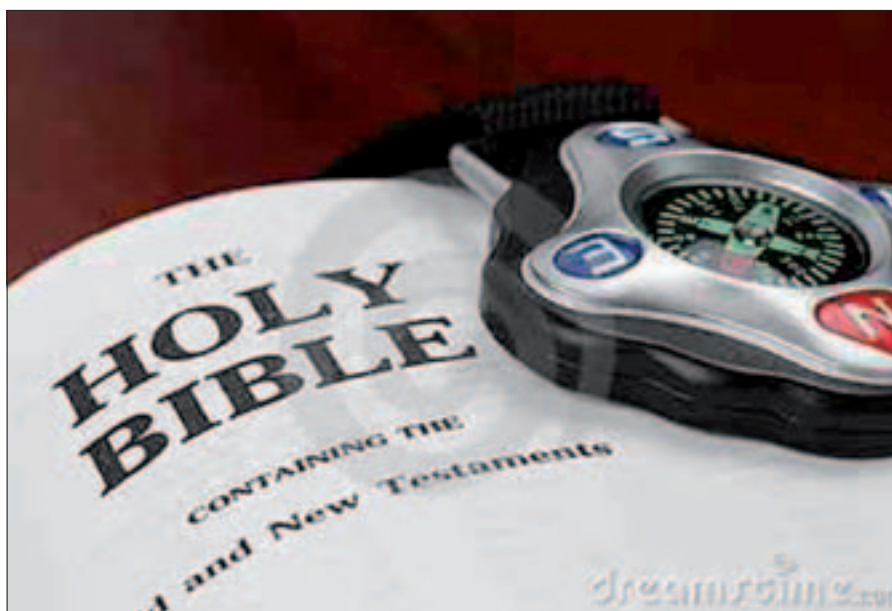
Shall we seek spiritual guidance?

Neither the Holy Scriptures nor the teachings of the Church directly mandate spiritual guidance, but they strongly recommend it, especially to those who, inspired by faith, want to respond without reservation to the universal call to sainthood. Christ’s own stance towards

individuals (see John 3:1-13, 4:7-26, Luke 10:38-42) or towards the small brotherhood of apostles (see Matthew 11:25-30, John 13:33) testifies to the righteousness and fruitfulness of guidance. Also numerous statements from the Church’s teachings recommend this means for spiritual advancement (see *Menti nostrae*, Pius XII’s encyclical of 23/IX/1950, John Paul II’s exhortation *Reconciliatio en Paenitentia*, 2/XII, 1984).

This practice of seeking spiritual guidance is also recommended by the experience of many outstanding people, even from pre-Christian times. At this moment it is difficult to identify saints who did not in some way profit from a spiritual guide’s help. Therefore there is no formal directive to seek this help, but it is the indirect result of being responsible for one’s own sanctification. For this reason those who have been called to the path of evangelical perfection (for example the religious) should seek help from a spiritual guide as a means towards sanctification. This is therefore the fundamental basis for asceticism.

Father **Marek Chmielewski**



The picture of the Mother of God of Guadeloupe, exhibited in the heart of Mexico’s capital is amazing not only because of its origin but also for its rich symbolism. Scientists are still discovering more about the mysteries of this wonderful picture.

A few years after the Spanish conquest of the territories now recognised as Mexico, evangelisation developed. At that time a remarkable event took place, which helped the local Indian population to know and love Jesus Christ. On 9th December, 1531, Juan Diego, a poor peasant was going to church but upon hearing many birds singing so beautifully he stopped immediately and noticed a woman of indescribable beauty on a hill in the desert of Tepeyac. She was shrouded in dazzling brightness; even her robe shone like the sun. The stones she stood

The Phenomenon of Guadeloupe

(Part 1)

on gleamed like genuine jewels and the rays falling on nearby fig trees and cacti made them sparkle like gold and emeralds. The ground glittered with the colours of the rainbow. Juan Diego bowed when he heard the lady's voice. She looked like an Indian woman and spoke in Nahuatl, Diego's language. Her words were full of love.

"I am a perfect Virgin, Saint Mary, Mother of The True God, by Whom everything is alive, Mother of the Lord of heaven and earth. I wish that a small house of mine is built here. I will reveal God to people. I will give Him to people in all my love, my compassion, my help and protection because I am your Merciful Mother. I am a Mother of yours and all those who love me and look for me, all those who live in this country and trust me. I will listen to their complaints and heal them from their sufferings and sadness. Go to the bishop of Mexico and tell him that I send you to pass him my wish of building a church in this place. Tell him everything you have seen and heard here."

Bishop's doubts

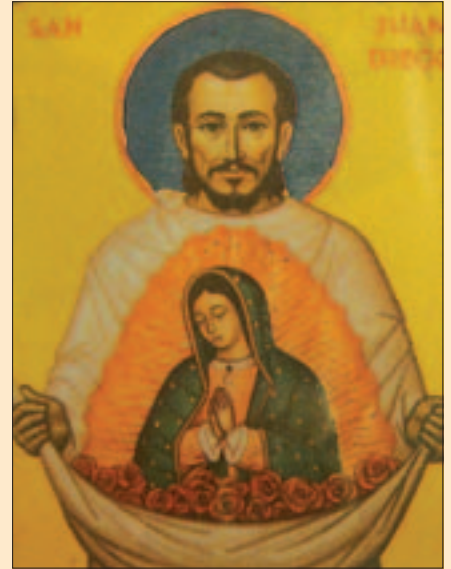
Juan Diego went to see Bishop Juan de Zumárraga, but he did not believe him. The following day Diego met the Virgin Mary again on his way to the church. When she repeated her request, he tried to persuade her to choose another person, a rich and powerful one, for the task. However, the Mother of

God expressed her pleasure at his humility and he could not refuse. He visited the bishop once again; he responded by demanding some proof of Mary's apparition.

When on 12th December Diego rushed to visit his sick uncle, he purposely went a different way rather than over the hill so that he did not have to meet the beautiful Lady. But she appeared to him again asking to go to the top of the hill where he would find the proof the bishop asked for. Diego refused saying that he had to visit his sick relative. The Mother of God replied, *"Do not worry about your uncle's illness. Do not be afraid of any illness or anything that may cause you pain. I am your Mother and I am here for you. You are under my protection. I am the source of your joy and you are shrouded in my robe and in my hands. Do you need anything more? Do not worry about anything else. Your uncle will not die now. You can be sure that he has recovered."*

Establishment of the sanctuary

Diego climbed the Tepeyac hill where despite it being winter he found lovely flowers. Wondering how it was possible for them to bloom in winter he gathered them up into his tilma (cloak) and carried them to the bishop. When he unfolded the tilma the flowers spilled



out over the floor and everyone saw the image of the Mother of God reflected on the tilma. The Bishop ordered a chapel to be built for the Virgin Mary on the Tepeyac hill. Diego lost his tilma which became a miraculous picture. The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadeloupe has been drawing millions of pilgrims for over five hundred years.

Why is the picture so unusual? Why does it still attract not only Christians but also believers of other religions? Well, there are at least two reasons for such an interest in the phenomenon of Guadeloupe. The first is the symbolism hidden within the image; the second is because of new discoveries being made by the scientists examining it. These will be described in more detail in the next issue.

Ewelina Szczesniak



Angel saved me when crossing the street

I was waiting at a pedestrian crossing for the green light so that I could cross the road. The traffic was really heavy. When the lights changed I wanted to walk across but an invisible power stopped me and pushed me backwards. Just at that moment a car hurtled through the crossing although the driver had the red light. I was saved from that accident thanks to the holy angels who restrained me from going onto the street.

Magdalena, Poland

Angelic help on the road

Whilst I was driving I braked on approaching a set of crossroads, although I had the right of way. My cousin, who was in the car with me asked, "Why are you braking?" I was unable to say why I was being so careful. However, when I reached the crossroads, a car passed us at high speed. My cousin shouted and sat breathless for a while. Then he said, "Krysia, if you had not braked, we would have died." Guess who kept his foot on the brake? I am sure it was my guardian angel. I would like to thank him and ask him to continue to care for me.

Krystyna Stolarczyk, Poland

St Raphael – the patron saint of healing

Anointing of the sick

I was in labour with our ninth child and all was going well when Fr. Dan came up to see me. He said a man in the elevator had told him that a woman was in labour in the delivery room and needed him. I thought that was strange since only two of my friends and my mother knew I was there. He gave me Communion and asked if I wanted anointing of the sick. I got a little worried since I was just about to deliver and thought that God was preparing me for something or that maybe one of us would die. After all, I was 44 and my grandma almost died in childbirth when she was 45. Little did I know what the Sacraments would do for me and the suffering I was about to endure. Anyhow, Eva Rose was born healthy. We went home and all was well except for a horrible headache I had developed. A week later, I started feeling numb on my right side. The numbness spread resulting in my loss of speech. I could understand what people were saying, but I was confused and I

could not talk to them to get them to understand me. My mum said I was having a stroke and for Mike to get me to hospital. While they observed me, I had another stroke. They airlifted me to St Anthony's Hospital in Denver. I can remember thinking that the helicopter ride was scary and fun at the same time. When we landed the hospital staff came and got me out. They were all young and fun to be around, making it much easier for me. It reminded me of the hospital shows that are on TV.

I did not understand

I was there (and in another hospital) for a total of nine days. I cried a lot because I wanted to be with my baby and all my children. Thankfully Mike was there. He stayed with me and slept in a chair the whole time! He went home for only one or two nights. I told him to go home to get some rest. He was so good to me. Both God and Mike were my strength. I cried and prayed. I did not understand and I did not know from one minute to



the next whether I would live or die. I did not know how my children would deal with my death. The doctors did numerous MRIs and found two blood clots in my brain and put me on blood thinner. At the hospital I wanted to go to the Palm Sunday Mass. Of course I thought mass at the hospital meant everyone there wore hospital gowns. Surprise! I was the only one there in a hospital gown. How embarrassing. While the Passion was being read, I had another attack. I do not think I ever identified with Jesus' suffering as much as I did at that time. They said that the attacks might be seizures. When strokes happen there is brain damage and they could find no brain damage. They did more tests and found nothing so they sent me home even though I continued having seizures. Two days later, I was at St Francis Hospital in Colorado Springs. The neurologist there confirmed they were seizures, put me on medication and eventually they went away

and are now controlled by medication. A few months later, the blood clots were gone.

St Raphael

During my time in both hospitals, I thought a lot about all the things that happened and about the man in the elevator. I tried to think of who he could be. How would a stranger know that I needed help. Besides, I did not ask for help. I was not in any distress or having any problems. Priests do not go into labour and delivery suites unless they are asked. When I was in the hospital the second time, I saw Fr. Dan again. I asked him about the man in the elevator. I wondered about him since a friend of mine gave me a relic of St Gerard (the patron saint of pregnant mothers) and we had been praying to him before I had Eva. Fr. Dan said the man in the elevator was big and very tall with red hair. I thought, "Well it could not be St Gerard, he is usually portrayed as being small". A few days later, I was talking to a friend at the Respect Life meeting telling her my story. She just said "St Raphael". She did not know why she had said St Raphael, it just came out. St Raphael means "God heals" and St Raphael is the patron saint of healing among other things. When she said St Raphael and that he was the patron saint of healing, it all made sense to me. Another 'coincidence' was that while I was in the hospital the second time, a friend gave me St Raphael healing oil. She did not know about the man in the elevator. I believe that St Raphael had taken on a human form and that his intercession saved my life.

Michele Mason, Colorado Springs

READERS' COMMENTS

The articles are poignant, pithy and perceptive. There is a plethora of perspectives. Something for every reader. You did not leave a stone unturned. This type of magazine is needed and is unique. Catholics need to know the Truth about angels. I know my Guardian Angel has saved me from harm on several occasions throughout my life. I am 63 years old and had more than a few close calls interspersed throughout those years. I think your magazine will be a 'big hit'. This is an area of interest for Christians. Angels are a spiritual reality and they need to be recognized. I think your magazine is well worth the read and attention from subscribers. I rate this magazine as excellent.

Deacon Douglas Oltsher

Sacred Heart parish, Ingersoll,
Ontario, Canada

Barely a month after the earthquake and tsunami in Tohoku, we visited Fukushima. We met Filipinos living near the nuclear reactor. Here in the photo, they are holding the Angel magazine that I distributed to them for reading to uplift their spirits. Many people in Japan need spiritual inspiration during this crises of severe natural devastation.

Maria Socorro Latoja-Kawasaki,

Japan



Lucas Cranach the Older

Rest during the Flight to Egypt

“(...) the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him’. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead’. (...) After Herod’s death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said: ‘Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead’. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel.” (Mt 2, 13:15, 19:21)

The Gospel of St Matthew briefly mentions the escape of Joseph, Mary and little Jesus to Egypt. Details were added by the apocryphal authors and illustrated by wonderful, informative stories. Single scenes connected with the escape appear in paintings from the 5th and 6th centuries. In the late Middle Ages *The Escape to Egypt* was included as part of Mary and Joseph’s lives, with a tendency to combine themes drawn from various apocryphal texts into one painting.

The Rest during their flight to Egypt often appears as a separate theme and sometimes *Miracle with a Palm* and *Miracle with a Spring* are added to it. According to the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (20,1:2) water from the miraculous spring and fruits of the palm satisfied their hunger and thirst.

Lucas Cranach the Older (1472-1553), a German Renaissance artist, goes between Gothic aesthetics

and the new trends. Unlike Durer, he omits Italian innovations – geometric perspective and the fascination of ideal proportion. Cranach’s painting (oil on wood, 69x51 cm, Staatliche Museum, Berlin), which was painted in Vienna in 1504, is full of the lyrical atmosphere of the Madonna by Stefan Lochner, sitting on flowery grass and surrounded by infantile angels. Each plant is a hidden symbol. It is an innovative approach to nature, in which landscape is no longer just background but an area for characters.

The Holy Family and the lively angels stop by a stream on the edge of a forest on their way to Egypt. Cranach dresses the land in flora from the Danube region. Apocryphal palm is replaced with old fir, an ever-green tree of life, like in the Garden of Eden. There is a slender birch with a plume of leaves – a symbol of chastity,

innocence and purification. The vegetation and mysterious forest attracts as much attention as the characters. There is St Joseph in a red robe, Mary in a folded red dress, with a naked baby on her knees and colourful angels. The bold red evoking love, life, motherhood, blood and sacrifice is balanced by the motionless green trees, jagged rocks in the distance and the expanse of blue. St Joseph in a travel coat, with a hat and stick in his hands is looking at the spectator suggestively and invites him into the mystery of the forest. He is like an attentive security guard watching over those entrusted to him. Three musicians sit at Mary’s feet on the grass. They are angelic boys with ordinary faces, wearing fashionable gowns. Two of them are holding flutes, the third one is singing. They have just stopped, lost in thought, listening intently. Cranach gives bird-like wings



to two of them; the red-haired boy with the flute lacks them.

Small, naked winged boys are busy around the Holy Family. One is scooping water out of the spring with a shell, another is falling asleep on the mossy boulder, the third is listening to a singing colleague, the fourth is holding a bird and the fifth is handing red fruit to the Child. They resemble ancient cupids from Roman paintings, which were adapted as little angels in religious paintings in the Renaissance. They became even more popular in the Baroque and Rococo era.

They provide a graceful environment for the Child, but also perform

important tasks. The red fruit heralds the blood that Christ shed on the cross, flowers with five petals are like the five wounds of Christ, triple leaves symbolize the Holy Trinity, and stalks leaning toward the ground mean humility and modesty. The bird with blood-coloured feathers announces the future Passion of Christ or perhaps is a symbol of the soul redeemed by His suffering.

Water bursting from the spring quenches the travellers' thirst. However, it also symbolises life and grace, salvation and the inexhaustible power of the Holy Spirit as well as the fountain of living water that will burst from the side of the Crucified

Christ. By considering the references to the sacrifice of the Cross we look differently at the vigilant faces of Mary and Joseph. They are aware that the cloth, which Jesus is standing on, is the would-be grave shroud.

On the flowery meadow there are plenty of symbolic plants connected with salvation and with Mary. There is a primrose (from German: Himmelschlusses – the key to heaven) – a symbol of the Mother of Christ who opens the gates to heaven. There is a thistle – a symbol of sin defeated by Christ and an allusion to the crown of thorns. There is also an eagle – a symbol of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer. At the bottom of the painting, there is fish in the stream with the date of the work's origin: 1504, and Cranach's signature next to it. The fish is an early Christian symbol of Jesus Christ, Son of God, who gives food to hungry humanity, He feeds and nourishes it. Fish (from the Greek *Ichthys*) is an acronym composed from the first letters of Jesus' name. It is also a symbol of the Eucharist.

St Joseph is fascinating; usually treated as a sideline in medieval art, he is placed in the middle of the painting, standing directly under the tree of life. He is guided by the angels and listens carefully to his dreams to fulfil God's will.

The Rest during the Flight to Egypt as a theme reached its apogee during the Renaissance and Baroque periods and remained in the 19th century. In this painting Cranach's imagination is combined with Marian symbolism, to represent Christ's sacrifice and salvation. The mystery of Christ is incorporated into the mystery of nature, protected by the wisdom of the forest and intertwined with the earth.

Zaneta Groborz-Mazanek

Thrones

(Part 3)

Humble peaceful carriers of the throne of God

St Thomas Aquinas divides the angels into three hierarchies each of which contains three orders. Their proximity to the Supreme Being serves as the basis of this division. In the first hierarchy he places the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

The Thrones are a class of celestial beings mentioned by Paul of Tarsus. (Colossians 1:16) These heavenly creatures are directly connected to the throne of God. They are holy living symbols of God's justice and embody God's supreme authority. According to the New Testament, these high angels are among those Orders in Christ's service. This position makes them some of the most powerful angels in service to the Lord. According to St Thomas, the Thrones have the task of pondering the disposition of divine judgments.

Thousands of thousands

Thrones are one of the ranks of the company of angels spoken of

in Hebrews 12:22, which have an indefinite number. St Gregory, expresses it: *angelus est nomen officii* that of attendants upon God's throne in that court of heaven of which Daniel has left us a vivid picture: "I behold till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat: His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like clean wool: His throne like flames of fire: the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before Him: thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him: the judgment sat and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:9-10; cf. also Psalm 96:7; Psalm 102:20; Isaiah 6)

In the New Testament, Thrones are high ranking angels and are under the direct control of Jesus Christ Himself. Thrones also appear within the Book of Revelation (chapter 11, verse 16), where it states that twenty four elders, all of whom are firmly seated high and exalted on their thrones before the Lord, all fell on their faces

at once and worshiped God. In the Old Testament (Ezekiel I) they are described as having four faces and four wings.

Pure humility, peace and submission

These angels are always in the presence of God and are the angels of pure humility, peace and submission. Being intensely humble, an attribute that allows them to dispense justice with perfect objectivity and without fear of pride or ambition. Thrones represent Divine Majesty, are living symbols of the Divine Justice of the Lord and His authority; they are called Thrones and have as one of their symbols the throne. They are the closest of all angels to spiritual perfection and emanate the light of God with mirror-like goodness.

Thrones also act as angels who are friends of all the planets;



■ Pietro Cavallini, Last Judgment, fresco, Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome, ca. 1290



they reside in the area of the cosmos where material form begins to take shape. They are associated with the power of judgment and act as counsellors to the angels in the realm below them, to help aid them in their duties.

Wisdom of God

Ezekiel claimed they looked like wheels with eyes. The wheels are said to belong to the throne of God, it is these angelic spirits who will drive forward God's chariot. In Daniel 7:9 they are the carriers of the throne of God, thus the name. They are depicted to be great wheels covered in eyes. The eyes represent the all-knowing and all-seeing wisdom of God. The Thrones are again mentioned in Revelation 11:16.

Pray to these pure humble angelic spirits and ask the Thrones for peace in our own heart, soul, our families and the whole of mankind.

Noreen Bavister, England

Brief introduction to the Nine Choirs of Angels

1. Seraphim

The Seraphim is said to be the highest order of angels who guard God's throne. They are often depicted as 'burning angels' to represent them on fire with love for God. In the Bible Isaiah saw them as six winged beings. These heavenly creatures praise God.

2. Cherubim

The word Cherubim is said to mean 'fullness of knowledge'. The Cherubim have the honour of observing and keeping the records of God's creative powers. Cherubims are said to have four wings and four faces. The Cherubims also act as heavenly counsellors and are the seekers of the eternal truth.

3. Thrones

Throne Angels represent the divine majesty and are associated with the power of judgement. They carry out God's justice according to spiritual and universal laws. The Thrones also act as angels who are friends of all the planets. It is the Thrones who will drive forward God's chariot, often they are portrayed as angels who carry the scales of justice.

4. Dominions

The Dominions are angels of leadership and are said to ensure that God's will is carried out by other angels. They help balance the force of creation of the material and spiritual worlds. The Dominions represent the superiority of wisdom over intellect and govern the natural world and the elements.

5. Virtues

Virtues are known as angels who watch over the heavenly bodies and nature. The Virtues are often associated with miracles performed on earth. Shining

bright and often depicted with swords, shields or sceptres, these wonderful angels will assist you in your darkest hour.

6. Powers

Powers are warrior angels who maintain order around planet earth and protect it from being overthrown by Satan, defending the cosmos and human souls. They fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings.

7. Principalities

The Principalities are a realm of angels who keep a watchful eye of the nations of planet earth and its leaders. They are protectors of religion, giving strength in times of hardship.

8. Archangels

The Archangels are the most frequently mentioned throughout the Bible. They are the leaders of the angelic armies and are Holy messengers of God. There are only three archangels acknowledged by the Catholic Faith, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. They also command God's armies and act as guardian angels to leaders of world movements. They may be of this or other hierarchies like St Michael the Archangel.

9. Angels

These include guardian angels who are assigned by God to every human being at the moment of conception. Angels are closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver our prayers to God and return with God's answers. Guardian angels have the capacity to access all other angels at any time, their role is to watch over us during our lives. They are also the most caring and social of beings who assist those who ask for help.

The Divine Mercy Pilgrimage

30 May – 5 June 2011

A personal diary by Isobel Dolan

(Part 1)

As soon as my husband and I committed to join the pilgrimage we agreed to put away some money each week. I did not know what to expect. Neither of us had been on a pilgrimage before and feeling in need of a holiday. What could it be? What would it be? The day arrived, the alarm called us to rise at 3am and before we knew it we were in a taxi on our way to the airport with the hurriedly packed suitcases and a mind that wondered if all angles had been covered in our small bed & breakfast business. Would it tick over without us, had wages been left, had instructions been left to check the central heating pressures, post the letters, bring in the milk each day and so the thoughts went on. Was this REALLY a good idea?!

Day 1

It seemed like no time before we were seated with hundreds of others in the Divine Mercy Shrine for the 3pm Divine Mercy Chaplet. The nuns singing was heaven-like and almost in a flash it was time to go to our own private Mass in English for our pilgrim group. The Mass was said by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz and as at each daily mass during the week every pilgrim was given the opportunity to take part in the bidding prayers or readings. We sang hymns including Ave Maria;

the singing was loud and meaningful. Very joyous, very spiritual.

I am writing this in front of my open window and can see the setting sun. Somehow the tiredness and weariness I felt a 3.00am has gone. It is now 8.30pm and I fear I will not sleep through sheer excitement and anticipation of what tomorrow holds.

Day 2

When the time came to get ready for the 8.00am Mass, we made our way to the Relic Chapel for Mass with our own little group. I really enjoyed Father Peter's talk about St Faustina, taking from it a few interesting points to which, I personally, could relate and which rekindled childhood memories, long filed in the depths of my mind until today.

We then went on to meet Sister Gaudia. This young, strong, thought-provoking, modern sister captured our hearts. Her eloquent presentation and love for St Faustina shone through and you could not help but be moved by it. We moved along to see a replica of St Faustina's room and to listen to stories of the life St Faustina led. Her encounters with Jesus and everyday miracles that have happened in this wondrous place.

At the beginning of our journey with her she stressed from the outset that Jesus' message was 'Do not be afraid'. I loved the modern anecdotes she used

to get her points across and I especially related to her explanation of the difference between Love and Mercy: 'Love is the flower and Mercy is the fruit emerging from it, there to sustain us.'

We went to the Divine Mercy Basilica at 3pm. Prior to this event our group of 50 pilgrims, in glorious sunshine and clear blue sky, had all taken part in an outside Stations of the Cross with participation, even in the simplest of ways, being encouraged. It made me feel quite proud to be part of this lovely community.

My Reflections

Over the past two days I have mentioned that childhood memories have sprung to mind, feelings that were dormant arising as a result of having time to meditate and reflect.

I must have been around 5 years old, I fell off my tricycle and broke my arm. That turned out to be a multiple fracture and in the early 1950's that was something very complicated... After an initial operation my hand started turning black and my mother was told I had to have an amputation above the elbow. Fortunately, those early days they did a bone graft from a very generous deceased person who donated to me their arm bone. The prognosis was that I would keep my arm with no or little movement and it would just hang by



my side. I was operated on a few times and regained the use of my left arm. So what does this situation reveal, a miracle, maybe? My mother thought so, or was it a result of her absolute belief and faith that her little girl would keep her arm. Perhaps there is a little bit of everything going on and as an adult I just realised how blessed I was to have a mother with such faith and hope and belief that it would all become right.

The next memory is very sad. At the age of 10 years and my sister Alison aged only 4, my handsome, hardworking father was totally blinded in an accident. His beautiful eyes were burned out by acid so the optic nerve was severed and no chance of repair. He never gave in to his disability.

My father died 25 years later in the same hospital following a massive stroke. When we entered his room, I witnessed a miracle. His face was line free, his blinded, burned eyes were filled out. God had shown me that all was now well and my mother wept as she confessed she had prayed on the day of his accident to ask God to allow him to stay with us despite hearing that it was his time. She felt he had now gone to

his rest and all his suffering had been done on this earth. It was an emotional, profound and miraculous experience and I have never felt the need to record it until now, until my pilgrimage to the Divine Mercy Shrine in Poland.

Day 3

Awaking to yet another beautiful bright day, our first step was to return to the Relic Chapel with our group where Fr Peter concelebrated Mass with three other priests. The chapel was beautiful, ornate yet very welcoming. For the first time on this trip I experienced my unexplainable 'wind twirls'. That is the name I give to what happens to me sometimes in chapels or at Mass. It was gentle, faint even and it happened at the Consecration.

We then started our journey to Auschwitz. I did not know what I was expecting to see or feel at Auschwitz, should I be there at all? I need not have worried. Not to go and show respect and face up to what these innocent millions suffered and went through would have been a sin.

As for the location of Auschwitz, the buildings and physical aspects, it was pretty much as I had expected, imagined, read about or seen on TV. However, any personal visit there can only bring to the forefront of your mind the unbelievable humiliation, suffering, cruelty, torture, hopelessness, starvation, desperation and fear that our fellow human beings had to endure; I cannot explain it. I realise that I never really thought about it deeply enough, but the vision is there of those millions who were taken innocently and in hope of a better life. We saw where the train stopped to drop off its load, the gas chambers and where the executions took place.

I am glad I went there, I think it is something that is important to do if you can. To see a museum of the most unspeakable acts which took place in the 20th century and to remind ourselves of how fortunate we are and our children and grandchildren.

On our return to Krakow our organiser Noreen Bavister had arranged with Fr Christopher Poświata (CSMA) a surprise, prayerful visit to the major seminary. Fr Christopher gave a talk on the life of the founder of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. Three young seminarians had been ordained there three days earlier and we were to receive hands on blessings, their first, a very special occasion for all of us. Then we had the laying of hands for healing lead by Fr Peter, then Fr Sylvester from Uganda, Fr Christopher and then by the newly ordained priests.

What a special moment for us all to take part in. We were all given cards with their names on to keep and pray for them. We left to return to our hotel at the basilica after another very special day.

Isobel's diary, days 4-7 and her concluding reflections on the week will be continued in the next issue.

Isobel Dolan, Fife, Scotland

For grandmothers

*Nanny I wonder,
where you keep your wings.
Are they hung in your closet,
with the rest of your things.*

*Do you put them away,
and just use them at night.
Or give them to granddad,
To polish up bright.*

*I know you have wings,
For this must be true.
because God always gives them,
To angels just like you.*

K. Dolan, England



RETREATS lead by Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA)

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Sunday 15th April 2012

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Monday 16th April 2012, 2.00pm

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Contact: Marcel & Sylvia
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Mobile: + 44 (0) 797 951 7215
Mobile: +44 (0) 778 679 1592

Monday 16th April 2012, 7.00pm

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church
82 Knox Road, Wellingborough Northants
Contact: Fr Edmund Worthy
Phone: +44 (0) 1933 222780
Email: edmundworthy@yahoo.co.uk

Tuesday 17th April 2012, 7.00pm

The Endsleigh Mercy Centre
481 Beverley Road
Kingston Upon Hull HU6 7LJ
Contact: Sr Katherine Ryan
Phone: + 44 (0)1482 342779
Contact: John Carroll
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Wednesday 18th April 2012

Afternoon
Manchester Universities Catholic
Chaplaincy
337 Oxford Road,
Manchester. M13 9PG
Contact: Fr Ian Kelly
Phone: + 44 (0) 161 273 1456
Email: fr.ian@rc-chaplaincy-um.org.uk

Thursday 19th April 2012, 7.30pm

Our Lady Star of the Sea
1 Crescent Road, Seaforth, Merseyside,
Liverpool L21 LJL
Contact: Fr Thomas Woods
Phone: + 44 (0)151 928 2338
Peter McPhillips: + 44 (0) 7931 748354

Friday 20th April 2012

Holy Ghost Catholic Church
Off The High Street,
Mid Summer Norton Near Bath,
Avon BA3 2DR
Contact: Denise Valancy
Phone: + 44 (0)7714 285 456
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Talks at all Masses
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A Mother's prayer to the guardian angels of her children

I humbly salute you, O you faithful heavenly friends of my children!

I give you heartfelt thanks for all the love and goodness you show them. At some future day I shall, with thanks more worthy than I can now give, repay your care for them, and before the whole heavenly court acknowledge their indebtedness to your guidance and protection. Continue to watch over them. Provide for all their needs of body and soul. Pray, likewise, for me and my whole family, that we may all one day rejoice in your blessed company. Amen.

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Chaplet of St Michael

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

A. Amen

Say the following prayer on the medal:

O God, come to my assistance.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

1. 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 on the first large bead, 3 Hail Mary on the next three small beads)

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)

Recite on the next four beads:

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.

July 29, 2011
125th Anniversary

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.