

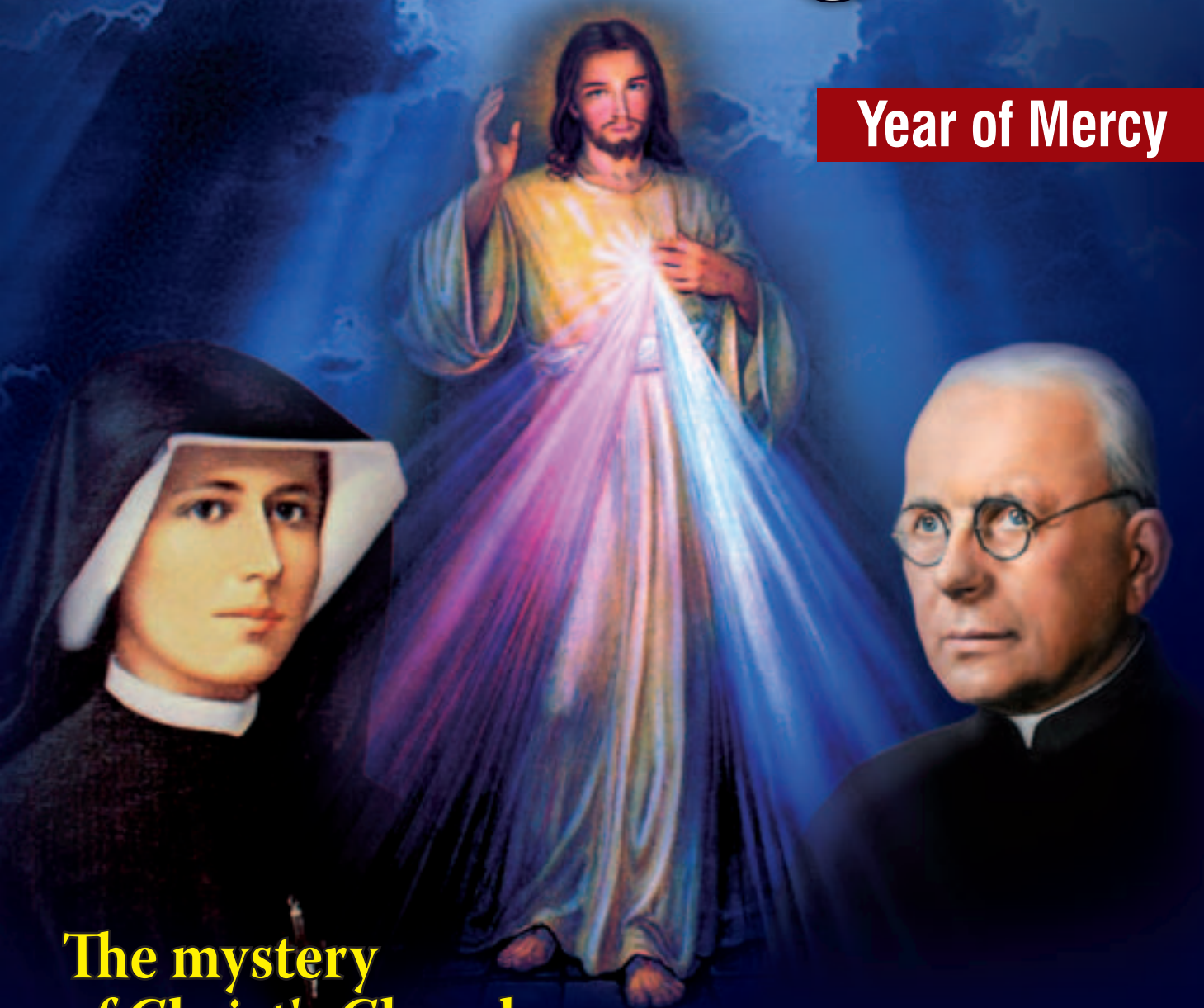


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The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

Year of Mercy



**The mystery
of Christ's Church**

**Holy Communion
through prison bars**

Angelic friends of St Faustina

Holy Land Pilgrimage

Divine Mercy in the West Indies

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



The mystery of the wickedness of sin is partially unveiled in the passion and death of the Lord Jesus. How horrible sin must be if the Son of God Himself suffered so cruelly to undo it! His love and mercy obliges us to fight with all temptations to avoid committing sin. We can't ignore sin.

Sister Faustina was aware of the need for confession, Jesus said in her Diary: "Come close to My wounds and draw from the fountain of life whatever your heart desires. Drink copiously from the fountain of life and you will not weary on your journey. Glorify My mercy" (Diary 1485).

According to the Diary, by making confession we dwell in the shelter of the two rays, the pale one and the red one. (Diary 1588).

The Holy Father John Paul II wrote that in this sacrament each person could experience mercy in a unique way, that is, love which was more powerful than sin. Many times in my priesthood I have seen people who, through making confession, experienced a power which enabled them not to repeat habitual sins. Beforehand they tried hard not to give in to temptations. Despite great efforts they felt helpless and were still addicted.

But Jesus, present in the sacrament of reconciliation, set them free. Of course we have to deal with many moral illnesses and weaknesses over a long period of time. It takes time to heal them. Changes do not occur overnight. But when we cooperate with God's grace and do our best, over a period of time we will notice these changes. The fruit takes time to grow.

Having confession multiplies the grace of healing, we deepen our relationship with Jesus. It is so in human relationships. When we go to the doctor frequently we build a kind of relationship with him. When we meet Jesus present in the confessional we develop our friendship with the Son of God. One day Jesus said to Sister Faustina: "If it were not for this imperfection you wouldn't have come to me".

I assure you of the constant prayer of the priests of the Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel for all the readers and their families. We also pray that this magazine helps us all to be in touch with these spiritual beings, messengers from a loving God.

God bless you.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

A Catholic Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

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Divine Mercy in the West Indies

It was truly an honour and a blessing for us in Trinidad to have welcomed Fr Peter Prusakiewicz for his first visit to lead the Divine Mercy Celebration on 3rd April 2016 with over 350 people in attendance.

He was warmly received by all present and especially Fr David Khan, the Missionaries of the Divine Mercy and myself.

Many were touched by the humility, fire and devotion in Fr Peter's sermons on the Divine Mercy and especially the life of Saint Faustina. He inspired respect with his great knowledge on this subject and this in turn made all those present really understand the value of the Divine Mercy devotion. We had a vibrant, young adult music band creating a prayerful spirit-filled atmosphere in song and praise before, during and after the Holy Mass.

Added to the Divine Mercy Celebration, Fr Peter gave talks at the



Sanctuary of the Holy Family Centre on three consecutive days. These sessions were well attended and Fr Peter inspired us tremendously by his teachings. After each talk, Fr Peter prayed a prayer of healing and blessed all who were present with a first class relic of St Faustina.

Fr Peter also spoke extensively on the angels and the archangels and their role in our lives which have inspired us

to call on the angels for assistance in our daily lives. I have found The Angels magazines to be a blessing to us all as they are awesome reading. There is a renewal in Trinidad on the devotion to St Michael the Archangel and families want to pray the Chaplet to St Michael and are learning more with each issue.

For me it is an honour to help Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA to promote the Divine Mercy in Trinidad and Tobago.

With my deepest appreciation, I thank Fr Peter for saying yes to visit our island in spite of the very long and tiresome journey. We pray for God's ongoing blessing and anointing upon his life and on all his undertakings.

Mona Rahael, Co-ordinator
Missionaries of the Divine Mercy
An Apostolate commissioned by
the Sanctuary of the Holy Family
Trinidad and Tobago



Angels in the Diary of St Faustina

When we read the Diary we encounter the angels.

St Faustina mentioned the angels in more than 70 places in her writings. The reason why the fallen angels whose names we do not know are present and mentioned in the Diary is because they were disturbing, interrupting, discouraging and it was their intention that St Faustina would give up writing the Diary. St Michael said “You are hated by evil and the devil”. Sometimes Satan himself would come to her.

A knight

Jesus wanted St Faustina to become a knight and fight for the salvation of souls. If you become more advanced in the Divine Mercy spirit, it makes you more courageous and you know then this is a spiritual fight and it is not easy. Initially, it is pleasing for our hearts to be in the fight for souls but afterwards we realise that this is a spiritual battle. One of the most beautiful sentences in the diary, she said “Every day I begin a day with a battle and I finish it with a battle.”

St Faustina was a mystic and had supernatural gifts like Padre Pio, those of bilocation, prophecy and reading human souls, but even so she had to contend with spiritual conflict. Daily life was a battle for her, for us

this is our way forward to grow in the Divine Mercy devotion.

The name Michael

To be fighters for God we have to call and ask for assistance, we can never fight with our own strength alone. It is impossible and we will be defeated.

St Paul wrote “when I am weak I am strong”. When we are weak we receive the strength from God and the Holy Spirit. The poverty of the heart and then the Holy Spirit will come.

St Faustina said “I look with one eye into the abyss of my own misery and the other eye at the ocean of God’s mercy.” We have two eyes, one eye is to discover our own misery and the other eye is to see God. He is full of love and mercy and He loves us as we are and He comes to help us.

That is why we have St Michael the Archangel. The name of St Faustina’s confessor was Michael, the name of the Church in Vilnius where the Divine Mercy image was displayed is called St Michael; the name the Mother Superior who accepted St Faustina into the convent of The Sister’s of Our Lady of Mercy was called Michaela, which comes from the name Michael. St Michael the Archangel appeared

to St Faustina only once on his feast day 29th September. On this feast day St Michael is closer to us and we will receive graces.

St Michael the Archangel was sent to us by God for him to be closer to us and offer us graces. St Michael said to St Faustina “Do not fear, the Lord has ordered me to take special care of you,” and then disappeared.

St Faustina had the special protection of St Michael because of her mission, and this protection was also given to her confessor Bl Fr Michael Sopocko who received the Divine Mercy in his soul first. He was a bright intelligent man, a professor of theology and the right man to find out if it was true what was going on in St Faustina’s heart.

Bl Fr Michael had a special grace from God to be the confessor of St Faustina. Today you can walk in the footsteps of St Faustina. In Vilnius she walked along the same streets many times, attending the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy in Ostra Brama, going every first Saturday to the appointment with the painter. Her confessor and Mother Superior sent her for consultations with a psychologist so the doctors could observe her behaviour to determine if she was mentally of sound mind. Bl Fr Michael Sopocko was a great



■ Fr Michael Sopocko

help for St Faustina she wrote "There are lots of things done in this case, that when I think of it, I am amazed Father that you managed to do so. Many things, although it seemed impossible due to accumulated difficulties, I hope that you Father will lead the rest of things and no one else."

Supporting priests

She prayed for Bl Fr Michael Sopocko often doing mortifications for his intentions. For example, she wrote in one of her letters "I put all my soul to help you Father with this great work to establish the Feast of Divine Mercy, with my prayers and burnt sacrifice I will ask for the Lord's blessing for you my dear Father in this whole matter." St Faustina was supporting Bl Sopocko by her prayers.

It is a great teaching that we should support our priests by prayers. Thanks to the prayers of St Faustina, Bl Fr Michael Sopocko was very able to carry on with this mission and then hand it over to St John Paul II.

In one of her letters she wrote "I wonder what is new, how about

your health my beloved Father, it is His will I ask God for your good health." St Faustina had a very deep care for her confessor, she was aware that so many things depended upon Bl Fr Michael.

Encountering angels

St Faustina received a great help from St Michael, her confessor and also her guardian angel. I was actually surprised to find there are more than 70 places in the Diary where the angels are mentioned. Consequently it means a lot, because when we read the Diary we encounter the angels. They introduce themselves to us.

In the Diary 1200, she wrote "I thank God for his goodness that He gives angels for our companions. How little people reflect on the fact that they have always beside them a guest and at the same time a witness to everything. I thank God for the angels."

St Padre Pio had a great devotion to the angels; he was a great teacher in advising us on how to take the opportunity of using the angels. He said to one of his spiritual daughters "Remember you are supposed to call and invoke your guardian angel a few times each day, so it becomes routine." Sometimes we forget about calling on our guardian angel.

St Faustina prayed to her guardian angel and the prayer to St Michael each day - the exorcism prayer by Pope Leo XIII. She often experienced the protection of her guardian angel. Once, when she was on a train, she saw an angel present above each of the churches that she passed. Another time when she was acting as a doorkeeper she was worried about the convent and the sisters because of an uprising in the town and

asked the Lord to help, instantly she saw an angel. In a vision Jesus said "Immediately I sent my angel to take care of the sisters." Jesus sends the angels to help us like he did towards St Faustina.

An angel brought Holy Communion to St Faustina for 13 consecutive days when she was ill. It was an amazing mystical experience. We have to go to Church to receive Holy Communion at the Mass by a priest or a Eucharistic minister.

Suffering is sweet

St Faustina wrote "If the angels were capable of envy they would envy of us two things, Holy Communion and suffering."

The angels can only adore Jesus. We can receive Jesus, He is inside us; in our souls by giving us His body and blood.

We do not understand the mystery of suffering. When I suffer I usually take a painkiller. Initially when St Faustina was ill she took tablets from the doctor but when St Faustina was dying she did not take painkillers as she wanted to offer her suffering for the salvation of souls because she knew it was powerful.

To understand suffering is a tremendous grace, pleasure and privilege given only to some people. Saints treat suffering as something sweet. This is a great mystery. Suffering is mentioned in the Diary of St Faustina many times, she had this grace and looked forward to the suffering and also for the conversion of sinners. We believe this because it was said by Jesus.

Saints treat suffering as something sweet.

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA, Poland

Holy Communion through prison bars

An interview with Fr Stan Stanowicki CSMA, a life-long prison chaplain.

Do you remember the first day when you went 'behind bars'? How did it feel?

It was certainly not a pleasant experience, when you enter a prison and a series of barred gates are locked behind you. I had to go through six or seven such gates each time I entered the prison. But, as they say, you can get used to anything, so I had to get used to that.

Did you not feel a sense of resentment to your superiors for assigning you to this particular ministry?

As God had decided to direct me to this place and my superiors had confirmed that decision, when then should I question the will of God? Who should be on the front line of the battle against evil if not a Michaelite, a soldier of St Michael?

How did the prisoners react to you?

They initially tried to test me out, to find out what they could or could not get away with, to check out whether I would be afraid of them. They would, for instance, try to pass



me messages to smuggle out of prison during confession, but they soon worked out that I was the type of person who was not easily frightened and who would not give in easily. (Laughter).

Not ever?

You can never show the prisoners that you are afraid or else you would be defeated before you start. I do remember a particular situation when I was a bit frightened. I had been called out to visit a prisoner who was a carrier of HIV. I admit that I was afraid, as you can never predict what prisoners might do. One prisoner had stabbed a nurse with a syringe, which had all sorts of consequences for her. Fortunately, she did not become infected. Obviously, prisoners rated as

being in the particularly dangerous category, receive the sacraments behind bars, in the presence of a prisoner officer. However, I did not actually have much to fear in my day to day contacts with prisoners. It was actually the case that some prisoners were initially afraid, for instance, to make their confessions, as they were convinced that I would immediately pass information back to the relevant authorities. Over time, however, the majority developed a friendly attitude towards me.

How do you begin to gain the goodwill and trust of a prisoner?

You need to gain the trust of each individual, so that they feel able to open up to you. These people had not had contact with a priest earlier,

as I was one of the first ever prison chaplains. In Communist times, a priest would only be allowed to enter a prison under very particular circumstances, for instance, to administer the last rites, and then only with the specific permission of the authorities. For many convicts, I was just another prison official and it took some time for them to realise that they did not need to view me as an enemy. When they saw that I was ready to help them maintain contact with their families, they began to trust me.

What qualities do you need in order to prove yourself in this kind of work?

Above all else, you need a sense of inner peace and patience. Also, you need to have a happy disposition and goodness. You have to learn to speak a language that the prisoners will understand, to know how to speak to people and to listen to them. In fact, above all else, you must be able to listen.

Did you spend a lot of time in such conversations?

They formed the major part of my work. I saw the prisoners three times a week. I had my own 'office' to which prisoners would come, escorted by a prison officer, although obviously, such conversations were confidential. The very fact that a prisoner could find someone who would finally take time to listen to what they had to say, lifted a load from their shoulders. Obviously, there were times when they would tell me things that I found shocking, but I could not allow this to show.

Did these conversations bear fruit in terms of the spiritual growth of the prisoners?

Once I had been able to gain their trust, I was able to persuade many of them to make their confessions. Between thirty to forty prisoners, out of a total of seven hundred inmates, would come to Mass. That is a good result. You know that, just as in the outside world, there are those who believe in God and practice their faith weekly and there are those who attend church only on major feast days or not at all, despite declaring themselves to be believers. This was particularly evident when I went round the cells, making my Christmas pastoral visit. Some of them welcomed me into their cells, where we broke *oplatek* (traditional Polish wafer bread, used at Christmas) together, sang carols, and I gave them pictures with prayers to St Michael. There were also obviously those who would say: "What have you come here for? Get out!" Fortunately, there weren't very many who reacted so aggressively.

Were there instances of spectacular conversions?

Oh yes! I even managed to convert one Jehovah's Witness! There was also a Muslim prisoner who would come to services with a copy of the Koran and a prayer mat. It was not possible to convert him to Christianity, but he prayed with us and was a person of deep faith.

Do the prisoners have their conscience pricked as a result of their crimes?

This varies greatly from person to person. There were many who laid the blame for their actions at the door of everyone else but themselves. I had one particularly hardened criminal who constantly repeated that he would have done

exactly the same over and over and showed not the slightest remorse. This was, however, a man with a very warped personality, who had also fought in the Foreign Legion.

So, how can you explain anything to such a person?

You can't. People have free will and must want to convert and lay themselves open to the action of Divine Grace. Even the Lord Jesus himself was rendered helpless in the face of those who did not wish to become converted. After all, He did say "If you WANT to enter the Kingdom of Heaven". As in Luke's Gospel "Whoever WISHES to follow me, let him deny himself". So, if a prisoner started from the standpoint that I would inform on him, how could I then talk to him?

Did such attitudes not discourage you?

On the contrary, they made me more determined to work harder, to devote more time to the prisoners, both while in the chapel and while speaking with them. If I had stopped believing in the effectiveness of my mission, why else would I have gone back to the prison over some many years?

Did such 'rehabilitation' prove effective?

Much the same is true of rehabilitation as of conversion. If a person really wants to work on their character, they will find the means of doing so. They could take advantage of my help or that of a psychologist, and those not convicted of serious crimes could undertake work. The prison officers in 'my' jail were, on the whole very good and believing individuals.

What would you say, based on your experience and on the conversations with prisoners, is the source of a persons' moral decline?

It is often linked to dysfunctional families and often quite simply, to poverty. It had many such boys, who were 'latch-key kids', as their parents drank or else were at work, while their children fell into bad company, started to experiment with drugs and wanted to impress their peers by appearing tough and aggressive. It came down to youthful stupidity and the feeling that they could do anything with impunity. The young cannot see the consequences of their actions. One of the main 'offenders' in this regard continues to be alcohol. People do very silly things under its influence. The basic cause of these moral failures is loss of contact with God, which is the source of all else that follows. A lack of love of God, results in the lack of love for our fellow human beings.

Maybe there was just a lack of grace in the lives of these people? How else were they able to silence their consciences?

It is very easy to ignore or fail to notice Divine inspiration, for then your conscience truly hardens and the heart grows cold. This was where my work came in, in order to awaken this silenced conscience, so that the person would begin to be aware of the touch of Divine Grace in their life. But, as I have said already, he has to want to do this and you can't force him. The action of Divine Grace, was, in my opinion, already evident in the fact that these prisoners were able to endure what were frequently long prison sentences. Living in such isolation from the world, it is very easy to fall prey to total depression or simply to go crazy.



In that case, how should a Christian behave towards prisoners, who are, in the majority of cases, criminals?

The Gospel clearly states, that "You will love your neighbour as yourself". Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus adds "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you". And, if God Himself demands this of us, how can we argue with it?

Pope Francis went to wash the feet of prisoners.

That sends a major signal to prisoners throughout the world, that the Church does not reject them and continues to treat them as members of the Church. It serves also as a signal to us, as Christians, that we cannot wholly reject anybody. We cannot consider any human being as a 'nobody'. A prisoner is also a person in need of spiritual support and encouragement.

So, we should 'console' prisoners?

That principle is based on the commandment to love, in the same

way as the injunction to visit the sick in hospital. There is of course the obvious difference that not just anybody can visit someone in prison whenever it happens to suit them. There are legal restrictions which limit a prisoner's contact with the outside world.

We need to bear in mind that both prisoners and their crimes vary. There are also those who have been unjustly convicted and who have been released again many months or years later. Following the experience of being isolated and divided from one's family, it is easy to sink into depression, which is why we need to remind each prisoner, that, regardless of their situation, they are loved by God, even in spite of their actions. God does not wish us to be condemned. He wants us to become converted and to live with Him in eternity. Each of us has been created in the image and likeness of God. We need to be able to see God within every human being.

What can you do for a prisoner once he leaves prison? How do you avoid losing him?

As the prisoners originated from all over Poland, it was best to refer them to their local parish priest. In so far as possible, I tried to arrange a meeting with prisoners before they left prison. If a prisoner did not have a home or anything to live on, I directed them to one of the local St Brother Albert homes for the homeless.

Did you not feel like changing to a more pleasant posting at times?

I served in the prison in Bydgoszcz for almost twenty years. I always did this joyfully and was satisfied that God had directed me there. During the whole of my ministry, I had the feeling that I was surrounded by people who needed my help and who I was able to help. I can tell you quite honestly, that, when I retired, I missed my visits to the prison, and continued to pay 'social' visits. When I left, the prisoners' farewells seemed sincere and heartfelt. Some even gave me small leaving gifts which they themselves had made for me. I felt that I had grown close to them. Some of them invited me to celebrate their release from prison. Even now, seven years since I left my prison service, I find that ex-prisoners come up and talk to me when we meet in the street.

What should I wish you on the 50th jubilee of your ordination?

I am a happy and satisfied person. I consider that God has been good to me and that I have no right to complain. I would wish that God continues to grant me this abundance of graces to the end of my days.

Fr Stan was interviewed
by Karol Wojteczek

Proclaiming Divine Mercy

The mercy of God in the mission of the Church



In connection with this picture of our generation, a picture which cannot fail to cause profound anxiety, there come to mind once more those words which, by reason of the Incarnation of the Son of God, resounded in Mary's Magnificat, and which sing of "mercy from generation to generation." The Church of our time, constantly pondering the eloquence of these inspired words, and applying them to the sufferings of the great human family, must become more particularly and profoundly conscious of the need to bear witness in her whole mission to God's mercy, following in the footsteps of the tradition of the Old and the New Covenant, and above all of Jesus Christ Himself and His Apostles. The Church must bear witness to the mercy of God revealed in Christ, in the whole of His mission as Messiah, professing it in the first place as a salvific truth of faith and as necessary for a life in harmony with

faith, and then seeking to introduce it and to make it incarnate in the lives both of her faithful and as far as possible in the lives of all people of good will. Finally, the Church - professing mercy and remaining always faithful to it - has the right and the duty to call upon the mercy of God, imploring it in the face of all the manifestations of physical and moral evil, before all the threats that cloud the whole horizon of the life of humanity today.

The Church professes the mercy of God and proclaims it

The Church must profess and proclaim God's mercy in all its truth, as it has been handed down

to us by revelation. We have sought, in the foregoing pages of the present document, to give at least an outline of this truth, which finds such rich expression in the whole of Sacred Scripture and in Sacred Tradition. In the daily life of the Church the truth about the mercy of God, expressed in the Bible, resounds as a perennial echo through the many readings of the Sacred Liturgy. The authentic sense of faith of the People of God perceives this truth, as is shown by various expressions of personal and community piety. It would of course be difficult to give a list or summary of them all, since most of them are vividly inscribed in the depths of people's hearts and minds. Some theologians affirm that mercy is the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God, and the Bible, Tradition and the whole faith life of the People of God provide particular proofs of this. It is not a question here of the perfection of the inscrutable essence of God in the mystery of the divinity itself, but of the perfection and attribute whereby man, in the intimate truth of his existence, encounters the living God particularly closely and particularly often. In harmony with Christ's words to Philip, the "vision of the Father" - a vision of God through faith finds precisely in the encounter with His mercy a unique moment of interior simplicity and truth, similar to that which we discover in the parable of the prodigal son.

"He who has seen me has seen the Father." The Church professes the mercy of God, the Church lives by it in her wide experience of faith and also in her teaching, constantly contemplating Christ, concentrating on Him, on His life

and on His Gospel, on His cross and resurrection, on His whole mystery. Everything that forms the "vision" of Christ in the Church's living faith and teaching brings us nearer to the "vision of the Father" in the holiness of His mercy. The Church seems in a particular way to profess the mercy of God and to venerate it when she directs herself to the Heart of Christ. In fact, it is precisely this drawing close to Christ in the mystery of His Heart which enables us to dwell on this point - a point in a sense central and also most accessible on the human level - of the revelation of the merciful love of the Father, a revelation which constituted the central content of the messianic mission of the Son of Man.

The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy - the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer - and when she brings people close to the sources of the Saviour's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser. Of great significance in this area is constant meditation on the Word of God, and above all conscious and mature participation in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. The Eucharist brings us ever nearer to that love which is more powerful than death: "For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup," we proclaim not only the death of the Redeemer but also His resurrection, "until he comes" in glory. The same Eucharistic rite, celebrated in memory of Him who in His messianic mission revealed the Father to us by means of His words and His cross, attests to the inexhaustible love by virtue of which He desires always to be united with us and present in our

midst, coming to meet every human heart. It is the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation that prepares the way for each individual, even those weighed down with great faults. In this sacrament each person can experience mercy in a unique way, that is, the love which is more powerful than sin. This has already been spoken of in the encyclical 'Redemptor Hominis'; but it will be fitting to return once more to this fundamental theme.

It is precisely because sin exists in the world, which "God so loved...that he gave his only Son," that God, who "is love", cannot reveal Himself otherwise than as mercy. This corresponds not only to the most profound truth of that love which God is, but also to the whole interior truth of man and of the world which is man's temporary homeland.

Mercy in itself, as a perfection of the infinite God, is also infinite. Also infinite therefore and inexhaustible is the Father's readiness to receive the prodigal children who return to His home. Infinite are the readiness and power of forgiveness which flow continually from the marvelous value of the sacrifice of the Son. No human sin can prevail over this power or even limit it. On the part of man only a lack of good will can limit it, a lack of readiness to be converted and to repent, in other words persistence in obstinacy, opposing grace and truth, especially in the face of the witness of the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Therefore, the Church professes and proclaims conversion. Conversion to God always consists in discovering His mercy, that is, in discovering that love which is patient and kind as only the Creator



and Father can be; the love to which the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is faithful to the uttermost consequences in the history of His covenant with man; even to the cross and to the death and resurrection of the Son. Conversion to God is always the fruit of the rediscovery of this Father, who is rich in mercy.

Authentic knowledge of the God of mercy, the God of tender love, is a constant and inexhaustible source of conversion, not only as a momentary interior act but also as a permanent attitude, as a state of mind. Those who come to know God in this way, who ‘see’ Him in this way, can live only in a state of being continually converted to Him. They live, therefore, in *statu conversionis* (in

need of conversion); and it is this state of conversion which marks out the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every man and woman on earth in *statu viatoris*. It is obvious that the Church professes the mercy of God, revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, not only by the word of her teaching but above all through the deepest pulsation of the life of the whole People of God. By means of this testimony of life, the Church fulfills the mission proper to the People of God, the mission which is a sharing in and, in a sense, a continuation of the messianic mission of Christ Himself.

The contemporary Church is profoundly conscious that only on the basis of the mercy of God will

she be able to carry out the tasks that derive from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and, in the first place, the ecumenical task which aims at uniting all those who confess Christ. As she makes many efforts in this direction, the Church confesses with humility that only that love which is more powerful than the weakness of human divisions can definitively bring about that unity which Christ implored from the Father and which the Spirit never ceases to beseech for us “with sighs too deep for words”.

Taken from **www.vatican.va**
Encyclical Dives In Misericordia
Pope John Paul II
13th November 1980

In the footsteps of St Faustina

Delay in her mission

On Saint Faustina's journey through life there are many important places in villages, towns and cities where the Apostle of the Divine Mercy stayed.

When Helenka Kowalska finished her one-year job as a servant in Aleksandrow, she returned to Głogowiec in order to ask her parents to allow her to enter a convent. The Kowalskis did not agree and used the excuse that they could not afford a dowry. Although Helenka explained that the money was not needed because the Lord Jesus Himself would find a way, her father persevered in his resolution and did not want to listen even to the parish priest, who advised the Kowalskis to sell their cow and allow the girl to enter a convent because the Lord God was calling her. Helenka did not want to enter a convent without her parents' consent, therefore, she started working as a servant again, this time in Lodz.

In service in Lodz

Lodz was an industrial textile centre developing very rapidly. At the beginning of the 20th century it had over 500,000 inhabitants: Poles, Germans, Jews and Russians. In the city there were big workshops and plants. Banks were flourishing, impressive palaces



■ St Stanislaus Kostka's Cathedral in Lodz, where St Faustina and her sisters attended Sunday Masses

of industrialists were being built and parks as well as gardens were being created. Many people were flocking to the city in search of work. In 1922 Helenka Kowalska came to Lodz in order to be in service to wealthy families; she wanted to earn her living and help her parents. First she stayed at the house of her uncle, Michal Rapacki and worked for three Tertiaries of St Francis. When she took up the job she laid down three conditions, which were quite unusual given the fact that she was a young girl: she asked to have time to attend Mass every day, to visit the sick and dying, and to be ministered by the priest who took care of the Third Order of St Francis.

On 2 February 1923 Helenka was sent by an employment agency to the house of Marcjanna Sadowska, who had a grocery store at 29 Abramowskiego Street and needed a child-minder for her three children. When she saw an elegantly dressed girl standing in the doorway she thought that she was not cut out to be a servant and she lowered the salary in order not to employ her. Helenka did not become discouraged by that, she accepted the conditions laid down by her new employer and stayed at her place.

Marcjanna Sadowska recalled that her children liked Helenka a lot because she told them fairytales and that she ran the household excellently. In

her memoirs she wrote: "Whenever I left the house I could rest assured. She was better at keeping the house than I was. She was kind, courteous, and hard-working. I've absolutely nothing to hold against her, she was just too good. Words cannot describe how good she was." Helenka did not only run Mrs Sadowska's household and took care of her children but she also looked after those in need, and there were many of them at that time. In the same tenement house, in a lumber room under the stairs, a lonely, old man lived. Helenka cared for him not only by bringing food and consoling him but

she also looked after his salvation. One day she brought a priest along to him in order that he could make his confession and receive Holy Communion. As it turned out, the man died soon afterwards, however, he was reconciled with God and prepared to meet Him. One day Helenka's eldest sister, Jozefa, came to pay her a visit. Mrs Sadowska told Faustina to be very hospitable to her sister and to bring everything that was needed from the shop. However, Helenka brought only some rolls. The employer was surprised and asked her why she was giving so little to her sister. Helenka replied that it was Lent and that her entire family was used to

observing rigorous fasts during that time.

These episodes as well as the employers' opinions of Helenka show that she was very sensitive to other people's needs and that she carried out her duties conscientiously. They also show that she was very friendly to others, that she was cheerful and pious. She did not impose her piety on anyone but she was not ashamed of it either. The way she lived every day faithfully reflected what she believed in.

Sr M. Elizabeth Siepak O.L.M

Taken from the book
"In the footsteps of St Faustina"

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■ Statue of St Michael in the Divine Mercy Shrine, Cracow, Poland

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Angels, God's helpers and ours

I received incredible care from everyone including my guardian angel... and Michael, the driver who stopped at my miraculous escape. I prayed the St Michael prayer many times and remember asking the Archangel for his protection.

It was a cold afternoon – unusually so, as the weather had been unseasonably mild, though very wet for winter. It had been a busy week with many activities and calls on my energy and time... But I was finished with that and looking forward to a few hours out with ‘friends’ and a little time for reflection and prayer at Minsteracres, a Passionist Monastery. The next day the 12th December was to be my birthday. All the timings were right and I was singing away in the car travelling northward taking my usual short cut along a narrow road as the Northumberland scenery was so stunning, even in winter. Snow had been forecast but so far had not arrived. There is a difficult bend in the road, with adverse camber, so I approached it with caution – thinking I was going to be a few minutes late but it didn’t matter.

That morning I had cleaned the car and noticed my ‘Miraculous Medal’ under one of my mats and as ever my icon of Jesus and Mary above my head, a reminder that we are in God’s hands every moment of our lives and that He takes care of us. So I approached the bend with its incline when my car

seemed to veer to the right. I tried to correct the turn but to no avail. The car was out of control. I was heading for a dry-stone wall (customary in the North of England – heavy pieces of stone laid loosely one on top of the other, with no cement).

The car hit the wall with some force, sending the stone boulders all over the place. I thought that this would stop the car, but I found myself going through the wall while still trying to correct the now inevitable accident but as I went through the wall I realised I was on a slope and that my hopes of being stopped opened up a fresh problem. The car was going to go down the hill. Still trying to hold it straight I realised it was impossible. Then a sudden jolt gave me hope that the car would stop. Instead the car tipped over and rolled... I saw the glass break and scatter; the side of the car was smashing.

I prayed... “Well Lord, if this is my time, forgive me. I am in your hands.” I felt incredibly calm, realising I could do nothing. Then another roll, I was upside down hanging from my seat belt, which blessedly held secure.

Lord I need your help now

My first thoughts were that I needed to get out and I needed help. Would the car catch fire? I needed help quickly. Was I injured, and where? I saw blood on my arms. I reached out for my bag but everything was upside down and all over the place. I did not realise that my radio was still on but I reached for my handbag and my mobile, which I had to locate in the rubble. I needed to straighten up to get it. I released the seat belt with some difficulty. I was getting cold, very cold, quickly. I felt my head hit the floor, or rather the roof. With great difficulty I managed to move into another position and straighten up, letting my legs stretch. I found my bag and mobile and rang 999 (emergency). I realised that while I could hear them, they could not hear me – a bad connection. It was only then that I realised how acute was my need of help, mostly because I was going into shock and getting colder.

I prayed out loud – “Lord, I need your help now, this minute - not at



■ The Miraculous Medal

www.wikipedia.org

sometime, but now! Lord, nobody passes this way often" (indeed I often pass no-one on this road myself). I tried the door but it would not move – it was smashed and crushed. I saw a boulder in my car and by the grace of God I did not hit my head on it when I released the seat belt. I continued to pray that someone would pass by – I could do nothing to help myself.

In the now failing light I saw headlights coming from an adjoining lane. Yes, lights. I put my elbow on the horn and held it. It was then I realised that the lights were still on and the key was in the ignition. I called out loudly, I saw a little blue car pass by, oh no – I called out again. Then the car seemed to disappear. The next thing I saw was a pair of feet and someone was calling, "Is there anyone in there? Is anyone hurt?" The driver of the little car was a young man who said his name was Michael and he looked shocked but not distressed. I answered him "I think I'm OK, I don't

think there are bones broken, but I am very, very cold."

Ten or fifteen minutes must have passed Michael tried the doors and somehow managed to knock it down, getting me to move a little. He helped me out and I lay on the soaking grass, shaking and cold. Michael later told me that he thought that my car was a tractor in a field until he heard the radio and saw the lights, which alerted him. On hearing the sound of the horn he called for an ambulance. By this time, others had stopped, including a lady from the farm below who came up the hill with blankets. Four men then carried me up the hill. I felt shaken, but my thoughts were of gratitude and surprise that I was still here. Michael said "Someone is looking after you, obviously," he was amazed that I was able to speak, and also clearly. My thoughts turned to letting my friends at Minsteracres know, also my parish priest and my son: all were unavailable, but it was all I could manage. By providence I pressed another button and someone

said they would tell the community at Minsteracres. I did not recognise the person I was speaking to but later I found out he contacted Minsteracres, and he was a priest I did not know. The helper Michael prayed with me and asked if there was anything I needed from the car. The only thing I could think of was my Office book, partly because it contained many memories and cards. He managed to retrieve it; somehow I had not been parted from my bag which had my medical history.

God sent an army of people

The ambulance took thirty minutes to arrive, as well as the police. They were incredulous at seeing me so seemingly collected. They could not believe that I was able to speak and tell them what had happened. They were convinced that I must have major injuries and were determined

to immobilise me to prevent further injury. Everyone was very kind and totally and utterly shocked at both the accident and that I was in one piece. At first they wanted to air lift me to a major hospital. I asked could I be taken to the nearest hospital to me, which was Durham, and they could decide if I needed to be transferred. They agreed.

As the ambulance sped towards Durham the paramedics did some essential cleaning up of my cuts, but would not allow me to move. The major problem was keeping me warm. All they kept saying was "What an amazing escape, what a lucky lady" and "It's extraordinary". The same tale was told at the hospital while in intensive care. I was put on a drip, had scans, x-rays, indeed everything was tried, but all that was found was a pre-existing condition – no major injuries. I was kept in overnight for observation and because I was still in shock.

There is no doubt in my mind of the incredible care I received from everyone including my guardian angel... and Michael, the driver who stopped. The people on the road above who might not have seen my car in the dip and how I sustained the extreme cold which was the most immediate danger. I have little doubt that the Lord sent an army of people to take care of me and that the Lord held things in suspension so that I was not seriously injured. I remember that I prayed the 'Saint Michael Prayer' a good many times and I still ponder why I came off the road. It was suggested a skid, or a car fault. It seems strange. I remember asking St Michel the Archangel for his protection.

The following day was my birthday and I was determined to



celebrate it with my dear friends, for no other reason than thanksgiving and joy. As it happened, it was a very snowy day and I thought that if it had snowed like that the day before, the end might have been different. All were astonished, to say the least, at the tale. All seemed to be sorted out, even a replacement vehicle was available from that day. The insurers were helpful and understanding. Yes, my things still in the car would be returned to me in a few days, once the car, or more properly 'wreck', had been picked up. There was nothing left of my car.

My St Michael medal

Within a few days I was driving again, though very cautiously, and it took a week or so for the deep bruising to become apparent. A short while after, my things from the car arrived, and as I unpacked them one single medal fell out. They had carefully put it in an envelope: it shone brightly. I was astonished at seeing it as I do not remember putting it there. But there it was – a Saint Michael medal,

shining and new. What can I say except that if you saw the state of my car you would not believe that I came out of the crash in one piece. The Lord provides, and He provided helpers: helpers of this world and supernatural help. We often pray in the Creed that we believe in the Communion of Saints, but it is at times like these that this Communion becomes a reality. Our guardian angels do their best to protect us. There are so many ways that this was true for me that day. My abundant joy was overwhelming. His mercy is boundless.

Thank you Lord, my Mother, angels and saints.

A few days after the accident I received a letter from a Michaelite priest, enclosed there was a rather good image of Michael the Archangel. Coincidence? I think not. A week later I was returning from a catechetical session with some children. As I was about to get in the car, in the dark, I noticed a medal at my feet, outside. How it got there I will never know. Guess who?

Halina Holman
County Durham, England

The turning point

Sometimes we experience a moment in our lives or an uncommon meeting that changes us forever. We write this turning point deep in our hearts and thanks to it, God can enter our lives, giving it meaning and direction.

For St John Calabria, such a turning point was his meeting with a small Gypsy who was begging in the street. The boy had to gain an appropriate sum each day to avoid abuse and beating.

The shocked cleric looked at this poor swarthy child extending his hand to passersby, totally unaware of his vulnerable situation. Begging, violence and roaming Verona's streets were his daily routine; he knew no other way of life. Thinking no more about it, John took the boy's hand and brought the bewildered youngster home.

Having prepared a hot meal earlier for her son's return home his mother sat by the window. Her fingers rotated the beads of the Rosary as she prayed silently, then stopped in astonishment. John was gently leading a small boy by the hand into the house. She sighed deeply and took an extra plate from the credenza. Her son would never have admitted aloud that he had a kind and compassionate heart.

Later John could not sleep. Tossing restlessly in the bed of his attic room he thought of how earlier he had heard downstairs his mother's soft song mixed with a child's voice, the sound of water being poured into the tub for bathing and then later a soft lullaby. The cleric could easily imagine the boy falling asleep in

the warm bed and his mother's hand softly stroking the youngster's thick hair. "She put us all to sleep this way, with her hand on our heads, whispering the Rosary. And how our father fixed shoes, sitting at the table till late" thought John.

He felt that through this child, God wanted to tell him something. He was seething at the obvious injustice and exploitation of children. He wished to immediately rise out of bed and fix the world. Instead, he dropped to his knees and immersed himself in impassioned prayer. That night his vocation was born. It matured and acquired real shape so that, after a few years' service as a priest, it bore fruit with the foundation of the Order of the Poor Servants of God's Providence (1907).

Based on Fr John Bosco's work methods, this institute helped orphans, poor children and old and sick people. Winning people's hearts with kindness and wisdom, Fr John Calabria included lay people in his work, founding the Family of External Brothers (1944). The order obtained official approval in April 1949 from Pope Pius XII, for whom Calabria had offered his life to God.

One day, in the first year of its operation, when material needs and poverty seemed to be larger and more acute, Fr John went several times



■ Fr John Calabria

to the letterbox. He was checking if God's providence did not leave something for his charges. The letterbox was empty at nine o'clock, then at eleven. Rather impatient, Fr Calabria gathered the children in the church, where they prayed together the prayer to God's Providence. After the prayer the priest again visited the familiar letterbox in the corridor. This time he found a food voucher worth five or six thousand lire.

Fr John Calabria and his friends understood that there is nothing that so moves God's heart like trusting prayer.

Thanks to prayer, God sends to us angels prepared to fulfil all our life's needs.

Are you unemployed? Do you worry about your job? You do not have money for medicines? Brother and sister, follow the example of St John Calabria: PRAY! And you yourself will experience miracles!

Agata Pawlowska, Poland

God never gave up on me (part 2)

A Jewish man is brought to his knees three times by our Blessed Mother.

By Bernard Ellis

A year later, in August 1987, Father Slavko was attending a Catholic charismatic renewal service at the Catholic Shrine of Walsingham in Norfolk, England and Sue and I attended. It was on the night of the reconciliation service after which Father Slavko was going to celebrate Eucharistic adoration. The assembled had gone forward to the priests who were standing in the front of the tent and they had confessed their sins. After which they had lit a candle and had gone out into the darkness in a symbolic gesture. They were elated at the thought that God's love had forgiven their sin and they were celebrating, singing and dancing with joy at having been set free. Eventually this procession of singing, dancing, noisy people entered into the reconciliation chapel in Walsingham, where Eucharistic adoration was going to be celebrated by Father Slavko.

Father Slavko came onto the altar and looked down at this bustling, noisy, excited crowd. He just stood there, he didn't move, he just stared at them. Obviously waiting for them to place themselves in the right frame of mind

for adoration. He waited a long time, it was quite a few minutes. Normally I would have left for fear that I would be breaking the Commandment that I had learnt in my youth. "You shall not worship a graven image, you shall not bow down yourself to them" but on this occasion I stayed. I was fascinated by what was happening, Father Slavko waiting and the crowd becoming quieter and quieter and still, they became motionless, silent, calm. There was not a sound in the room. It reminded me of the silence in the room of the apparition all those years ago. Father Slavko slowly placed the monstrance on the altar and presented the Blessed Sacrament to the assembled. There was a perfect peacefulness, a sublime stillness. Everybody fell to their knees. Again I was the last person left standing but on that occasion I felt an inward conviction that I should also kneel but on this third occasion it was because I wanted to. So I knelt. As I did so in that all embracing moment in time I looked at the faces of the people around me who were staring at the Blessed Sacrament. Then I looked at the Blessed Sacrament and in some way I felt that there was a presence there that was looking back at the people kneeling before it's very being. At that moment I was given a gift, one which can never be explained because it is a pure gift. I knew that God was truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. At that same moment Jesus called me to accept him as my Saviour and I did.



■ Bernard, Medjugorje visionary Marija Pavlovic Lunetti and Suzzanne Ellis

I returned home and asked my parish priest to instruct me in the Catholic faith. Coming from a Jewish culture I had not been baptised and during my instruction I was taught about the Sacrament of Baptism and I realised that I was being given a wonderful opportunity to make a new start and through baptism I would be washed pure as a new born child. I would be born again and everything that had happened to me and everything that I had ever done in the past would be as though it had never happened. There were many things that were difficult for me to understand but which I accepted because I was overwhelmed by this wonderful opportunity that God was giving me. I looked forward to the day when I would be received into the Church and baptised. I learnt about the real presence in the Eucharist, something that I had recognised and I learnt that God comes to us each day through Holy Mass to nourish us physically and spiritually. Then when we

will make the inevitable mistakes that we all do through our human frailty I could go to the priest in the Sacrament of Confession and if I was truly repentant, the sins that I had committed would be forgiven. Being a convert and having had a Jewish education I realised that everything that was present in the Catholic faith was routed deeply in the Jewish faith. So I was not becoming a Catholic so much as a completed Jew and I am truly thankful that God in his infinite Mercy has given me this wonderful opportunity.

I was received into the Catholic Church, confirmed and baptised and received my first Holy Communion on Thursday 13th April 1987. Coincidentally, it was also the first night of the Jewish Passover. The first night of the Jewish Passover and Holy Thursday do not always fall on the same day, but on this year it did. For Jewish people the Messiah will come on the first night of the Passover, it's a tradition and they wait for the Messiah to come on that night. For me the Messiah did come on that night when I was baptised, confirmed and received my first Holy Communion.

There was one extra little gift which I'm sure was a present from our Blessed Mother. This momentous day for me, the 13th April 1987 also happened to be my birthday and I'm sure it was a gift from my Blessed Mother who had been calling me and persuading me to kneel on those three occasions that had arranged for this day to coincide with my birthday. Born again on my birthday. What a wonderful grace for this Jewish man.

During the years that followed, I visited Medjugorje on many occasions and I became very friendly with all the Franciscans, Fr Ivan, Fr Oric, Fr Pervan, Fr Svet and Fr Slavko who were always welcoming to me, accepting me

as a Jewish man who had become a Catholic through his Medjugorje experience. I had the privilege of getting to know Fr Slavko closely, who had a great love for the Jewish people and was always interested in their culture. When the war broke out in 1990 I formed a charity in England which through the generosity of the people of this country delivered over ten million pounds worth of aid to the whole of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. We wanted to help those people who had

helped us so much by their examples of faith, hospitality and friendship. Apart from food and medical supplies we delivered one hundred and sixty vehicles which were left in the region so that the local people could assist themselves by delivering aid and medical supplies to remote areas where it was most needed, to places which were in the midst of hostile fighting.

My efforts were greatly praised but I only represented the many people who joined in to help, the convoy



■ Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk, England

drivers, the people who donated money, the people who donated food and medical supplies. I had the strongest feeling and the knowledge of the reality which was that we who helped were those who were privileged and rather than the people of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina thanking us, we should thank them. The people who were suffering in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during this horrendous war were the victims and became Christ-like in their suffering. Through their hardship and suffering they gave us the opportunity to help them and to prove we loved one another as God loves us. We were the privileged who were given the gift of being able to help them and this was a grace for us.

During the years of the war I worked very closely with all the Franciscans and it was then that I became very close to Fr Slavko. We spent a great deal of time together. It must have been a strange thing for many people that Fr Slavko and I could have formed such a friendship because our personalities and backgrounds were so different. Fr Slavko once said to me “Bernard you are a true friend” and these are words which I treasure. He said that “When I asked you to help, you always said yes straight away, you never asked ‘What do you want me to do, how can I do it or why do you want my help?’ You just said ‘yes I will help.’ You knew instinctively that I would not ask you to do anything that you could not do. You trusted me. This was a real measure of true trust and friendship and that is why I consider you a true friend.”

Fr Slavko is undoubtedly a saint and with our Lord in Heaven now. For me, a Jewish convert, to be counted as a friend of a saint is a privilege which goes beyond any words.

Bernard Ellis, Surrey, England

The mystery of Christ's Church

Fr Edward Staniek attempts to answer questions many Catholics ask about the Church.

In your publications, you set out six steps on the ladder of faith:

- 1) Belief in the existence of God,**
- 2) Faith (that is, trust) in God,**
- 3) Belief in Christ,**
- 4) Trust in Christ,**
- 5) Belief in the Church,**
- 6) Trust in the Church.**

Why is each of these steps essential to attaining the last of these steps?

It would be better to refer to them as levels, rather than steps. It would be impossible to live on the sixth floor if you were unsure if the lower floors were safe. A person who does not know the different levels does not know what the Church is and why they should put their trust in it.

So what is the Church?

There are two possible ways of looking at the Church. One is available to anyone, regardless of religious, political or ideological affiliation, that is, an awareness of the existence of the Church purely as an institution. Faith is not necessary here. The other view of the Church is accessible by means of Divine Revelation to those

who believe and trust in Christ, as it is He who forms the Church.

What is meant by looking at the Church on a purely institutional level?

The Church is an institution, and as such, can be compared to other institutions which we encounter in the world, from that of marriage to that of an empire ruling the world. The Church has searched for appropriate institutional forms, of which there are many, throughout its history. Wherever the Church enters an existing culture, it looks to assume an appropriate institutional structure.

That is the way in which many contemporary Catholics view the Church. Is this therefore not enough for us to attain salvation?

The Roman Catholic Church is a well-organised institution, based upon the organisation of the temple in Jerusalem as well as upon the institutions of state of ancient Greece and Rome. These are the two models upon which the structure of



the Roman Catholic Church is based. But they are only its visible structures. Acknowledging the authority of, and belonging to, the Church, is still not enough to obtain salvation.

What therefore do we need in order to obtain salvation?

We need to believe in that which lies at its very essence, which is in its other dimension. The Church is the environment in which we have access to the Divine life which the Divine Son gave us through His Incarnation. Life, in this sense, is not created, but born. God is the fullness of Life and all forms of life with which we come in contact, derive from Him. The most perfect of these is His life in the Holy Trinity. This life was poured into human hearts, in which it grows and bears fruit. As life requires an environment, Jesus has organised such an environment for us on earth, in the form of the Church.

What, then, is the purpose of the institutional forms of the Church?

They serve as boundaries, gates and keys, governing the right to enter and exit, as (spiritual) guards, over

that which the Bible calls “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” and “the tree of life”. The Church is the paradise which Jesus instituted on earth, regardless of any political boundaries, into which he invites those who thirst for truth and life to draw near to these trees.

Today this institution is an empire of mercy. It respects all existing boundaries, retaining the minimum institution necessary, that is, the baptism granted to believers “In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

Is there a biblical image to illustrate this environmental dimension of the Church?

Yes. St Paul puts this most succinctly when he refers to Christ as the Head and the Church as His Body. The body is the environment created by many limbs, tissues, trillions of cells. I am one of these cells. I live within this body and I also form a necessary part of it.

Have the faithful ever been more clearly aware of this reality?

Yes. Pope Pius XII wrote about it in his encyclical, published during the Second World War. As a seminarian, I studied this text for four years. I was surprised when the Second Vatican Council replaced this view of the Church with one corresponding to the Jewish view of the People of God. Anyone wishing to know what the Church is, must find a place within Its Body.

Do any of the saints speak of this more clearly?

Yes. St Teresa of Lisieux. She searched for a place within the Body of Christ and found it. God revealed to her that she constituted one of the cells of His heart. She needed to look

no further to understand her calling and purpose in life.

So we now touch on the matter of belief and faith (i.e. trust) in the Church?

Yes. Only such a view of the Church makes this possible. Few however, possess such a faith, which is why they so often clash with and bang their heads against its institutional forms.

What do we gain from a belief in the Church?

We make sense of our own existence and discover our own role in the environment God has created for us among the community of people living in justice and love. We make sense of our own existence within the essentially pagan world which surrounds us. This is made possible by finding the “tree of knowledge of good and evil”, which is the Tradition of the Church and the Bible as well as “the tree of life”, which is the Eucharist.

Following this explanation, I ask once again – what is the Church?

It is the home of God’s adopted children, aware that he is the Father and that they are His children.

Why do many people today say: “YES to Christ, but No to the Church”?

Because they do not recognise the face of Christ within the Church and because they consider the demands of the Gospel as difficult and unrealistic. They are unaware that these are the demands of a love which is capable of giving itself for those whom it loves. That, however, is the subject for another conversation.

Fr Edward Staniek

Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril of Alexandria (c.375 – 444) should not be confused by another great father of the early Church, Cyril of Jerusalem.

He had received an extensive education in theology and rhetoric. He had grown up at the side of his uncle, Theophilus, the Bishop of Alexandria. He had participated with him in all the important events in which the former had been involved, and also inherited his uncle's prejudices, for instance against John Chrysostom. Three days following the death of his uncle (in 412), he was himself appointed to the same bishopric. He began a radical rule in the diocese, closing the churches of the Novatians and expelling Jews from Alexandria. He soon came into conflict with Orestes, the regional governor and imperial representative. Historians remain divided to this day on the question of the extent to which he contributed to the lynching of the popular Neo-Platonist philosopher, Hypatia, although this disturbing incident lies outside the subject of this article.

As a bishop and theologian, he was clever, hard-working and well-organised. In the years 428-431, he was involved in the notorious dispute against Nestorianism as the main adversary on behalf of the true Church in opposition to the heretical beliefs of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who undermined the indivisibility of Christ's nature as well as devotion to Mary as the Mother of God (Theotokos). Cyril emerged victorious from this

complicated and dramatic conflict while Nestorius had been deposed as Patriarch of Constantinople, following which Cyril enjoyed nine years of peace as bishop, devoting himself to his writings. These involved polemics as well as Biblical exegesis (Commentaries on the Septuaginta, Isaiah, the Book of Psalms as well as the Gospels and a number of Paul's letters). These works are both diffuse and monotonous, in the spirit of Alexandrian allegory but also making use of knowledge acquired from the Antioch school. They are of less value to theologians than his works on Christological, Marian and Trinitarian dogma.

“God is unfathomable...”

...declares Cyril frequently, “His power and wisdom exceeds all others, which is why all creation bows down and worships Him.” There is therefore not the slightest doubt as to the secondary and serving function of spiritual beings, whether good angels or evil spirits. The angels desire the fulfilment of the will of God and entreat the necessary strength on behalf of human beings, to enable them to fulfil what God expects of them (Commentary on the Gospel of St Luke).

Angelic knowledge yields to that of God, and the angels do not possess a perfect understanding of the mysteries of the Creator. However, they are more often accorded the grace, seldom accorded to humans, of seeing the face of God: “God has revealed Himself to the angels, He was visible to the angels when He ascended to heaven.” “For He will come and enter as Judge, no longer with the abasement proper to our (human) nature, but in the glory due to God, surrounded by the angels” (Commentary to the Gospel of St Luke). Cyril argues logically that there is nothing odd in the fact that the angels saw Christ in human form: “Given that the angels can see human beings, why should they also not see Christ?”

Jesus lower than the angels?

This is how the Bishop of Alexandria explains the well-known words of St Paul: “We do see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels” (Heb 2:9). This does, on the surface, seem absurd, as God has said of Christ “Let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb 1:6). Christ is quite obviously higher than the angels, as He sits at the right hand of the Father “So he is now as far above the angels as the title he has inherited is higher than their



own name” as “God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father” (Heb 1:4-5). Cyril goes on to explain that the word ‘angel’ comprises the concept of mission and indicates that the angels’ role is one of service: “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:14). It would therefore seem all the more absurd that he who is called the Son of God would count as being lower than those who serve. Cyril came to the final logical conclusion that: “His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave” (Phil 2:6).

By His Incarnation, Jesus assumed a human, mortal nature, which was lower than the angels. Jesus humbled Himself in relation to the immortal and incorporeal nature of the angels: “The greatness of the Holy Angels consists in their freedom from (the constraints of) a mortal body, to which corporeality and mortality, the Son, by His Own Will, had allowed Himself to be subject.”

Overcoming death by means of the Resurrection and Redemption, Christ left the human condition behind and returned to His higher nature. At the same time (during the

period of His Incarnation), Christ had remained God and had continually received the homage and veneration of the holy angels: “And he sits on the throne, surrounded eternally by the angels, praising the Son and calling Him by the name of “Lord of Hosts”. Christ needed to liken Himself to human beings, as this was part of God’s Plan: “For it was not the angels that he took to himself; he took to himself descent from Abraham” (Heb 2:16).

Cyril was not an enthusiast for teachings about the choirs of angels, being opposed to the systematisation of the heavenly beings and attempts at a stricter definition of angelic society (*Dialogues sur la Trinité*, vol.2). He did, however, acknowledge traditional concepts of the angels such as the cherubim and seraphim, but did not wish to incorporate these into a structured order of angelic society.

Cyril then comments on the Gospel parable on the date and time of the Last Judgement: “But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son; no one but the Father” (Mark 13:32). It is no shame or shortcoming for creatures to be ignorant of the mysteries of God – explains Cyril – it only testifies all the more to the unfathomable greatness of God.

He had frequently criticised the Platonic and Neo-Platonic detailed description of the hierarchy of the Demiurges (see *Contre Julien*), which was perhaps one reason behind his reluctance to making a deeper study of the angels.

Theologian or dictator?

Cyril was disliked by his contemporaries on account of his dictatorial

tendencies, his uncompromising nature, intolerance, vehemence and disinclination to agreement. “His death brings delight to the living” wrote Cyril’s contemporary, the church historian, Theodoret of Cyr. Centuries later, however, the despotic Cyril has nevertheless proved himself to be one of the outstanding theologians of the Early Church, being the author and defender of devotion to Mary and her proclamation as Mother of God (Theotokos). He achieved well-deserved honour as the author of fundamental and important Christological tracts on the indivisibility of the nature of Jesus.

The essence of Cyril’s theological reflections had been formed as a result of the need to defend the truths of the Faith from attack by heretics (although the aforementioned Nestorius, a Syrian monk and Bishop of Constantinople who had battled against heresy, was later himself arraigned by history as a heretic), whose heresies touched on the person of the Son of God and His Mother. A third important subject for Cyril had been the Holy Trinity (here he based his reflections on the works of his famous predecessors from Alexandria, Athanasius and Blind Didymus). These had been strategic subjects around which the arguments and polemics of contemporary theologians had centred. The subject of the angels did not inspire as much emotion as it had earlier and so therefore the need to reflect on them in more detail was not quite so pressing. As I have shown, the subject of the angels does come up in the works of the last great bishop of Alexandria, but it takes a minor place.

Herbert Oleschko, Poland

Only Divine Mercy can save us

Recently one of the well-known theologians has said: “It’s been said that the beauty will save the world (F. Dostoevsky). But we all know that beauty can also lead to ruin. There is only one thing that can save the world – it is mercy.”

Why? Why can mercy save the world? Why did Christ, in his revelations to St Faustina, call His mercy the last resort, “the last hope for salvation?” And why did He say that if we do not adore His mercy, we will perish for all eternity? (Diary 965).

What is Divine Mercy? St John Paul II wrote that mercy is love’s middle name. We are given a good hint of what mercy is, it can be found in the catechesis of Fr Raniero Cantalamessa spoken previously on Good Friday in the Vatican:

“God is the one who not only has mercy but is mercy. This bold assertion is based on the fact that ‘God is love’, as written in St John’s Gospel. However, it is only in the Trinity, that God is love without being mercy. The Father’s loving of the Son is not a grace or a concession, it is a necessity; the Father needs to love in order to exist as Father. The Son loving the Father is not a mercy or grace; it is a necessity even though it occurs with the utmost freedom; the Son needs to be loved and to love in order to be the Son. The same can be said about the Holy Spirit who is love as a person.

It is when God creates the world and frees human beings in it, that love ceases for God to be nature and

becomes a grace. This love is a free concession; it is both grace and mercy. The sin of human beings does not change the nature of this love but causes it to make a qualitative leap: mercy as a *gift* now becomes mercy as *forgiveness*. Love goes from being a simple gift to become a suffering love because God suffers when his love is rejected. ‘The LORD has spoken: “Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me” (Is 1:2). Just ask the many fathers and mothers who have experienced their children’s rejection if it does not cause suffering – and one of the most intense sufferings in life.”¹

So mercy is the love of God, which created man. Mercy is a gift and after our sin it becomes forgiveness. God, when revealed to Moses, proclaimed of Himself; “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Ex 34, 6).

Christ, the incarnation of God’s mercy, showed it in two parables: about the merciful Father and the Good Samaritan. The first one is well-known to us all whereas we have certain difficulties with the second one. We often compare ourselves to the Good Samaritan, asking ourselves:

“Could I be as good as he was? What would I do in a similar situation? Would I stop to help a naked injured person?” But the problem is that we identify with the wrong character! I’m not the Good Samaritan. It is me who was assaulted, beaten, robbed and abandoned half-dead on the road. The Good Samaritan is Jesus! I am the one who lies on the road...

The parable says that the robbed man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, this information has a deeply symbolic meaning for us. Jerusalem was a religious centre, the city of God’s presence, the holy city. The man was going away from Jerusalem, it means he was going away from God, he was beginning to sink into a sin. He was going to Jericho. The way from Jerusalem to Jericho leads steeply down. In his sin the man goes lower and lower and eventually he falls into depression (Jericho is one of the lowest-lying cities in the world, 270 metres below the sea level).

A sin seems attractive and alluring only at the beginning. The lower the man descends into his sin, he deprives himself of his dignity. The man from the parable lies on the road completely naked – it symbolizes that a sin deprives us freedom and makes us slaves. For the ancient people this scene was

quite clear: merely slaves were naked, whereas free people wore clothes. In this context we understand why the merciful Father ordered his servants to bring the best robe to put on his prodigal son in the second parable.

The tragedy of the prodigal son's sin was expressed in his life made similar to a pig's life. He even wanted to eat what pigs ate. Blessed Charles de Foucauld recalling his life in his youth before his conversion confessed: "At the age of 17 I was all selfishness, all wickedness with evil desires, I was like a complete madman, throwing parties and making use of women. But when all the guests went out that night, I remained alone: the ultimate selfishness in the darkness and mud. People did not respect me, I filled them with disgust... I was more a pig than a man. It is what a sin makes of a man."

Both parables show us several attributes of Divine Mercy: deep emotions (until the viscera), close bending, activity, no judgment or calculation, a willingness to help.

My relatives may turn away from me. So-called specialists in good (priests) may pass me with indifference. But God is always "moved with compassion" (Luke 15, 20). It is interesting that exactly the same expression is found in both parables; moved with compassion.

Mercy doesn't wait, it runs towards us and gets involved in our life. Aren't the same attributes in the Divine Mercy Image painted according to St Faustina's revelations? The same open heart, the same gentle gaze without gaze without judgment, the same engagement in meeting us halfway seen in His feet.

Let us come back for a moment to our parable. The Samaritan showing mercy to a Jew seems the hardest thing to accept. The Samaritans and



the Jews hated one another. We cannot say "They just didn't like one another or didn't respect one another", no – they truly hated one another. This hatred had grown to such an extent that when the Samaritan drank water from a cup, a Jew couldn't even touch the very cup, such was the disgust!

St John and his brother, perhaps the gentlest of all the Apostles, once asked Jesus "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy these people?" Such 'sympathy' showed Christ's disciples to the Samaritans.

Who is that man lying on the road? It's me and you – wounded by sins. It's me who through sin became an enemy of God. My sins crucified Christ.

The Son of God, says Paul, became sin for us. What a shocking statement! In the Middle Ages some people found it difficult to believe that God would require the death of his Son in order to reconcile the world to himself. St. Bernard responded to this by saying, "What pleased God was not Christ's death

but his will in dying of his own accord: *Non mors placuit sed voluntas sponte morientis*". It was not death, then, but love that saved us!

The love of God reached human beings at the farthest point to which they were driven in their flight from him, death itself. The death of Christ needed to demonstrate to everyone the supreme proof of God's mercy toward sinners. That is why his death does not even have the dignity of a certain privacy but is framed between the death of two thieves. He wants to remain a friend to sinners right up to the end, so he dies like them and with them.

Let us come back to the question posted at the beginning: why is Divine Mercy our last resort? Why can only Divine Mercy save us? Let me tell you a story:

A few years ago in Krakow, there was a Lenten retreat for students led by a lay person, a married man from France. He was telling them about his conversion: "I come from a good Catholic family. As a young boy I was

even an alter server. But in adolescence I fell into the sin of impurity, the sin of masturbation. I couldn't get rid of it. I felt ashamed to go to confession and completely stopped altogether. Then I stopped attending the Mass thinking that it's pointless if I can't receive Holy Communion. I also stopped praying. This way I 'divorced' God and the Church. I played a role of a liberated man who laughed at religious superstition. After a few years I met a beautiful girl. I wanted to marry her but, as a deeply religious woman, she gave a condition: if we were to get married, it could be only in the church. Because I loved her, I agreed. So I went to a confession, told a priest for several years I no longer attended confession, I confessed two or three sins and waited for absolution. But this very old priest said to me: "OK, but listen – what about God? What about God in your heart?" I was a little annoyed, but eventually he gave me absolution.

Later it turned out that the very priest celebrated our wedding Mass. And when the moment of the Lord's Prayer came, he said: "Listen everybody, and particularly you, the newlyweds. In the Book of Hosea there is a passage, in which God says 'I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them' (Hosea 11:4). Now I ask you, just try to say the Lord's Prayer with a feeling that God is lifting you to His cheek. He really loves you and wants to lead you through life". And then something strange happened to my heart, I became aware that it was me who was far from God, neglecting Him, mocking faith but He never abandoned me, He was always close... I started to cry. After the Mass, I approached the priest

and asked for confession. This time it was a completely different confession than the previous one because I met God the Father, my Father, a merciful and forgiving Father who wishes to make me happy.

Why is there such an alienation from religion and faith of a modern man? The problem is always in the image of God we carry in our hearts. If you want to check it, you need to ask a simple question "What are the very first and spontaneous ideas, words and feelings do I experience when I say these words from the Lord's Prayer "Thy will be done"?"

So many people generally say these words with their heads bent down in resignation inwardly, preparing themselves for the worst. People unconsciously link God's will to everything that is unpleasant and painful, to what can be seen as somehow destroying an individual's freedom and development. It is somewhat as though God were the enemy of every celebration, joy and pleasure – a severe inquisitor-God.

Man has his lusts, he desires pleasures, power, money, women and what other people have. In this context God appears to him as the one who bothers, disturbs, who still repeats "You do this and you should not do that". Certainly it is not a love that wants happiness of man. The will of God appears rather as something hostile, unfriendly – and this idea of God as a rival to man was instilled into the hearts of Adam and Eve by the snake. Some contemporary thinkers keep the idea alive, for example Satan, who said: "Where God is born, man dies".

There is one criteria which helps to recognize if we truly believed that God is forgiving Mercy. Let us think of the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. He

didn't accept, he didn't believe deeply in his heart the gift of forgiveness offered to him by his master. He went out in the street and began to choke his debtor.

We cannot justify ourselves in front of God. Christ did that for us. If we do not accept His gift and grace, we will always judge others, criticize them, oppress them and demand some kind of compensation. We'll never gain peace and joy.

Pope Francis said: "If we do not enter into the space of mercy, we will never escape from the spiral of evil. The evil one is clever, and deludes us into thinking that with our human justice we can save ourselves and save the world! In reality, only the justice of God can save us!"

A woman, who confessed her heavy sins after a several years, said: "It doesn't even come to my mind to speak badly of others because I know what The Lord has brought me out from."

Let us approach near to the throne of mercy. Let us open our wounds before Him and allow Him to heal them, to flood them with the oil of His forgiveness. Let us allow Him to robe us with new clothes – let us allow Him to give us new eyes, new tongues, new ears.

Immerse in the ocean of God's mercy ourselves, but also our families and the whole world because it seems it plunges more and more into the abyss of evil and hatred.

Fr Krzysztof Poswiata CSMA

Homily at Elmore Abbey, Speen, Newbury, Berkshire and at the Holy Child & St Joseph Church, Midland Road, Bedford, England

¹ Taken from: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/03/25/cantalamessa_homily_for_good_friday/1218007

Our group set out on 5th March 2016 from four different continents and time zones many a little apprehensive not knowing each other but returning full of joy and hope. To be there in the holy land and follow the life of Jesus was a truly moving experience and really brought the Bible readings to life; so well timed, just prior to Easter.



Pilgrimage of a Life Time

We were privileged to ponder the Life of Jesus in the places, where the events actually happened on our “Pilgrimage of a Life Time”, presenting to us the life of Jesus, the Good News of the Life of Jesus that Christians are called to. The events of the earthly life of Jesus were proclaimed anew to us. Their life giving power to Christians was made known to in the pondering of the Word of God, read by us in the places where the events actually happened, in the preaching and celebration of the liturgy. No words can express every pilgrims gratitude to our spiritual director Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA, Shepherds Tours & Travel Ltd in Jerusalem, Agni from Nomada Travel in Poland and our local guide Peter Sabella for the way in which they served, nourished and shepherded our large flock in the community celebrations of the Holy Mysteries. As for our skilful, courteous coach driver Karim we can only give thanks for the way he drove and transported us on our journeys.

The places we visited

We visited the following places. Day 1 - Arrival. Day 2 - Group Mass at the Basilica in the garden of Gethsemane, followed by visit into Jerusalem, Mount Olives and nearby sanctuaries, Pater Noster, Dominus Flevit, Mount Zion, the wailing wall, Gallicantum. Day 3 - Holy Mass at Saint Catherine in Bethlehem, church of the Nativity, Shepherd Fields visit to East Jerusalem. Day 4 - Holy Mass at St Peter the Apostle Church in Jaffa; then visiting the oldest part of the city of Jaffa followed by stop off at Cezarea on our way to Tiberius. Day 5 - Boat trip on the Sea of Galilee, visiting Kafarnaum, Tabgha, the Jordan, the Multiplication Church, Holy Mass at Mount Beatitudes. Day 6 - Group Mass at the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, visiting Cana in Galilee, Mount Tabor. Day 7 - Group Mass at Church of The Good Shepherd in Jericho - then visiting the

Mount of Temptation and the Dead Sea. Day 8 - Stations of the Cross (Via Dolorosa) at 4.00am - Group Mass at the Holy Sepulchre Basilica.

Peter Sabella a Palestinian Christian from Jerusalem who went to university in Bethlehem, was an extraordinary local guide, extremely knowledgeable of both the Catholic Bible and Middle East history. He was also very amiable and engaging. Everything was handled without delay or hassle. Transfers from the airport, baggage transport, hotels and meals were managed flawlessly, leaving time for the spiritual aspect of the tour. They also handled the pilgrimage in a dynamic manner to maximize our visits with sites being added or scheduled to alternative times because of crowd sizes. We could not have had a better experience or services from this conscientious family company. Peter has written a remarkable book that is basically the narrative of our journey through the Holy Land. Peter's commentaries on the places of our

itinerary were so well informed, interesting, thought provoking passages which he read from, to us each day on the bus and for many of us pilgrims it was a valuable souvenir of the tour (email: sabellap2@013net).

Refection from a pilgrim

“Incredible, this is the only word that comes close to describing our recent Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If I were to go again I would constantly be comparing the second trip to the first and the first was, Perfection’. Would I encourage others to go? Yes, in a heartbeat! It would take all of the space in this magazine to begin to describe the wonderful places people and blessings we have encountered in just seven days. We were always safe and never felt vulnerable. No fear did we feel at any time, only a devout and prayerful atmosphere with over fifty fellow pilgrims, strangers who became friends. The additional bonus of Fr Kevin Dow and Fr Andrew Kingham travelling as pilgrims also added so much to the dynamic of the group. Through time we may understand or experience the full fruits of this wonderful trip but for now I thank God for inviting me (even though I was very apprehensive beforehand), our leaders for keeping us safe and fellow pilgrims for enhancing the experience. Incredible!” said John McGrory.

The week exceed all expectations.

Noreen Bavister, England

NORTHERN IRELAND DIVINE MERCY MISSION

10th June 2016

8.00 p.m. Holy Mass

Church of St Colmcille
Carrickmore BT79 7DW
Fr Sean O'Neill PP
Contact: Marie Martin
Phone: 0044-7799-112-24
email: mgmartin204@gmail

11th June 2016

6.30 p.m. Holy Mass

Christ the King RC Church
Strathroy, Omagh, Co BT79 7DW
Fr Keivin Mc Elhennon PP
Contact: Marie Martin
Phone: 0044-7799-112-224
Email: mgmartin204@gmail

12th June 2016

Start 2.30 p.m.

Drummond Hotel
2 Main St, Ballykelly,
County Londonderry BT49 9HP
Contact: Marie Martin
Phone: 0044-7799-112-224
Email: mgmartin204@gmail.com

USA

4th- 7th August 2016

**Divine Mercy Conference:
Jesus King of All Nations**

Pikes Peak Center
190 S. Cascade Ave,
Colorado Springs, CO. 80903
Contact Name: Therese Lorentz
Phone: + 001-719-598-7385
Email: thereselorentz@aol.com
www.stthomasaquinassociety.org

28th – 30th October 2016

Divine Mercy Conference

331 North 7th Street
Vandalia, Illinois 62471
Contact: Debbie Pryor
Phone: +001-(618)-292-9852
Email: d.pryor@yahoo.com

SCOTLAND

4th – 8th July 2016

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Pilgrimage Conference**

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Kilrymont Road
Contact New Dawn in Scotland
Office: 0131-447-6153
Email: info@newdawninscotland.com
www.newdawninscotland.com

15th – 18th September 2016

Parish Mission

St Vincent de Paul Church
Scotland East Kilbride
Contact: Margaret Lochrie
Email: lennielane21@gmail.com

1st October 2016

Divine Mercy Conference

St Mary's RC Cathedral
61 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3JD
Further details to follow

22nd October 2016

Divine Mercy Conference

St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley
Contact: Helen Border
Phone: +44 (0) 778-6097-147
Email: Helen.Border@glasgow.ac.uk

4th – 6th November 2016

Divine Mercy Retreat

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Argyll. PA33 1AR
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Email: mail@craiglodge.org
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WALES

14th – 16th October 2016

**Talk: The Angels
– invisible or visible companions**

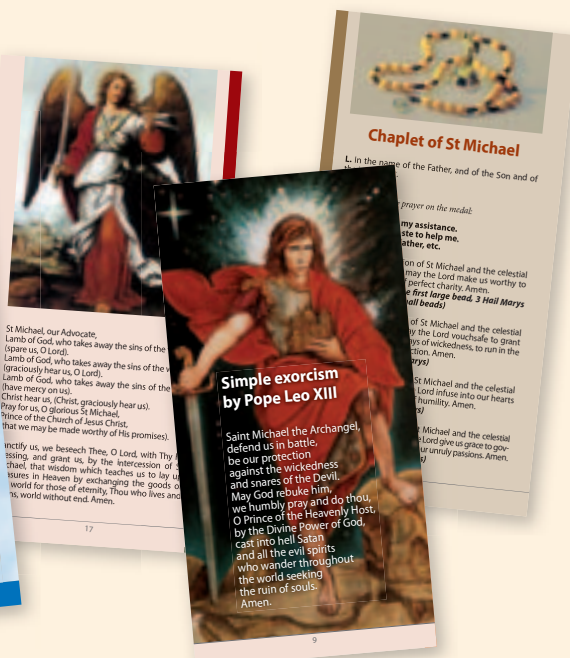
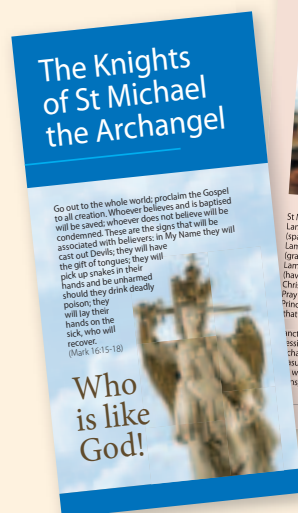
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Mercy

Mercy! What is it?

Can we feel it?

How can we get it?

Mercy! Is it forgiveness?

Is it Love?

Is it a Grace from Heaven above?

I want to know

So tell me please!

Could Mercy be all of these?

Mercy! Can we feel this special gift?

Can we smell touch or taste it?

Or do we for granted take it?

Can we share it?

Can we pass on Mercy to others?

Strangers, sisters or brothers?

Is it free?

Can we get it all of the time?

From God is the Mercy Divine?

Now I clearly see!

Divine Mercy showered on me

And from my sins makes me free!

It's never too late for His Mercy!

Right up to the very last.

We only have to ask!

Allison Black, Scotland



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 per-
fect charity. Amen.
*(1 Our Father on the first large
bead, 3 Hail Marys on the next
three small beads)*

PRAYERS

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

4. By the intercession of St Michael and
the celestial Choir of Dominions,
may the Lord give us grace to gov-
ern our senses and subdue our un-
ruly passions. Amen.
(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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 Marys)

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 temp-
tation. Amen.
(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

7. By the intercession of St Michael
and the Celestial Choir of
Principalities, may God fill our
souls with a true spirit of obedi-
ence. Amen.
(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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 Marys)

9. By the intercession of St Michael
and the celestial Choir of Angels,
may the Lord grant us to be pro-
tected by them in this mortal life
and conducted hereafter to eternal
glory. Amen.
(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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.

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.