



A Catholic Magazine on the Holy Angels | Vol 8 • issue 4 • 2017 | £ 2,00 € 2,50 \$ 5,00 | ISSN 2081-5077

# The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



**The Lamb  
will conquer**

**Angels of people  
with indestructible faith**

**The inestimable  
value of prayer**

**St Michael and St Faustina  
God wanted me**



## God is love and He is close to us and teaches us how to speak the language of love.

St Paul wrote, “The Lord is near” and this expression has a deliberate double meaning. First, the Lord is near in time and we should expect him at any moment. There is always great excitement when a famous person is expected to arrive, the crowds gather in anticipation when a star is due to appear. What great excitement there is at the thought that Jesus is about to come and we will see Him. God is near in the Blessed Sacrament and he comes to us each day during the Holy Mass.

Secondly, the Lord is near in the sense that He is already present in this world, in the sacraments and present in His spirit. He is present in the Eucharist in the tabernacle and in each priest's hands. A priest is a living sacrament, the hands of a priest are anointed by the Lord.

God being present in spirit, it means that we may sense His presence. We hear His voice in our hearts, we speak to Him and although we cannot see the Risen Jesus we abide in His presence.

He said, “I will be with you now and forever.” Jesus is indeed very near to us today, tomorrow and every day. He does not come alone but together with many saints who are close to the Lord.

We can rely on the intercession of St Faustina, St John Paul II, St Padre Pio, Blessed Father Michael Sopocko and many, many other saints. The Lord is near.

When we are close to the Lord, He is close to us when we are searching for Him, He will answer our desires. He will fill our hearts with a divine and merciful presence.

I assure you of the constant prayer of the priests of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel for all our readers and their families. Kindly let others know about this magazine and also our new Q&A booklet that answers many questions on the holy angels and St Michael.

We have a wealth of information including prayers, forthcoming missions and pilgrimages, the Knighthood of St Michael, back issues of the magazine and much more on our English CSMA website.

Ask your family and friends to view it [www.stmichaelthearchangel.info](http://www.stmichaelthearchangel.info).

For the USA and Canada only [www.stmichaelthearchangel.us](http://www.stmichaelthearchangel.us)

God bless you.

**Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA**  
Marki, Poland

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## The Angels

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# St Joseph, a model for men

**From the earliest times in the Church, the faithful has honoured Joseph, foster father of Jesus. It was not until December 8<sup>th</sup> 1870 that Blessed Pius IX declared St Joseph as Father of the Universal Church.**



■ St Joseph with Jesus the Child by Juan Sánchez Cotán, 17th cent.

**A**nd yet, there is no written record in the Gospels from St Joseph. Instead he stands alone as the silent saint, a just man who was obedient to God's instructions revealed to him by angels in dreams.

He was a compassionate caring man accepting Mary's pregnant condition, concerned for her suffering and acquiescent to the angel's message of Mary's Annunciation. Although St Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus, whose Father is God alone, he lived his fatherhood fully and completely. He was a man of total faith in God and at the behest of an angel he left everything he owned. Without knowing the outcome, he fled to a strange country. He was acting to preserve the safety of Mary and the baby Jesus, only returning when in a dream an angel told him it was safe to return.

Although descended from a royal lineage, Joseph was not a wealthy man being a humble carpenter. This was apparent when Jesus was presented for circumcision at the temple when

he could only afford two turtle doves for sacrifice instead of a lamb.

However, Joseph is revealed in his humanity as the "foster father" of Jesus, drawing attention to the truth about fatherhood which is much more than a biological connection. Again, his guidance is apparent both from the spiritual and moral formation of the growing Jesus. He taught him to pray, how to work and how to be a man, carrying out his duties in quiet gentleness. It is this style that exemplifies his whole existence by his acceptance of God's action in his spouse, but always conscious of the mystery of Mary's Annunciation.

He was a real father to Jesus and communicated a parent's strength and compassion, one who will suffer and risk all for their family.

His intercession was often sought by many of the saints. After several mystical experiences where St Teresa of Avila (Teresa of Jesus) received help from St Joseph, she maintained a real devotion to him for the rest of her life. She encouraged her sisters

to pray to St Joseph and named a number of her foundations after him. He is also one of the patrons of the Carmelite Order.

Nowadays St Joseph is recognised as the most important saint after our Holy Mother Mary. He is included in every Eucharistic Prayer during the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The faithful have a tradition of praying to St Joseph as the patron of workers. We can have no better example of a worker than St Joseph. He provided everything necessary for the family with his diligence, stability and serenity which were the virtues in his life and work. It is little wonder with all of these attributes that workers turn to him in their need during their working lives.

St Joseph the faithful, gentle and honourable foster father of Jesus and the chaste spouse of Our Blessed Mother Mary is still active in aiding souls on earth when they pray for his help.

**Bridget Ring, Scotland**



# Advent with St Faustina

**The holy season of Advent, which this year is the shortest it can be, serves not only as a time to look back to the first coming of Christ in the stable of Bethlehem, but also inspires us to look forward to his Second Coming at the end of time; when as we say in the Creed “He will come to judge the living and the dead.”**

**T**he liturgical season makes this division for us. The first part, until December 17<sup>th</sup>, has as its focus the Second Coming of the Lord. Then there is a change as we return to travelling to Bethlehem for the celebrations of the Lord’s nativity at Christmas.

Within Advent, on December 8<sup>th</sup> we also have the great feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady. This feast was of great importance to St Faustina. She would prepare for its celebration by a daily novena of 1000 Hail Marys. Through the Immaculate Virgin, Christ entered our world for the first time. As St John Paul said in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, “it will be through Mary that Christ will come again.”

In the history of the Image of Divine Mercy, we know that whilst St Faustina was at the convent in Vilnius (now in Lithuania) she was able to persuade her confessor, Blessed Fr Michael Sopocko to commission an artist who would help her to fulfil the Lord’s earlier command to “paint an image”. The finished image was displayed at the famous ‘Ostra Brama’ *Dawn Gate* in Villnius, which housed the great Marian silver icon of Our Lady of Mercy. The year 1935 was a jubilee year and Fr Sopocko had been asked to preach at the closing ceremonies. He agreed to do so only if the

recently painted image of the Divine Mercy could be displayed alongside that of the famous icon of Our Lady of Mercy, where he was to preach to the assembled faithful gathered for the closing jubilee celebrations. Fittingly the image of the Mother of Mercy would be united alongside the image of her Son of the Divine Mercy.

It is good for us to consider in detail both the theological and human factors in these events and to perceive the wonderful unfolding plan of Divine Providence in the advancement of the public veneration of the Divine Mercy image.

The Ostra Brama shrine, translated as ‘The Dawn Gate’, is one dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy. Her gentle image encased in silver, depicts her with hands folded in prayer and head bowed, perhaps in prayer or inclined so as to hear our petitions. It could well be a representation of the moment of the Annunciation when Mary prepares to say her ‘Yes’ and to give our fallen world a merciful saviour to lift it up.

The liturgy for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception greets Our Lady as the ‘Morning Star’. She is the “holy light on earth’s horizon, star of hope to fallen Man.” Mary’s Immaculate Conception banishes the darkness and empire of sin, and so ushers in a new age - that of mercy. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception

reminds us that this is a unique privilege in which our Lady participates in anticipation of her Son’s Passion. Christ the Son of the Immaculate Virgin, and in her presence, would give of Himself upon the cross and allow His pierced heart to be opened wide for all.

At Bethlehem Mary becomes the Mother of Mercy by bringing to birth the Lord of Mercy. At the cross she witnesses His heart being pierced and the fall of blood and water upon the world. She becomes the Mother of the Church represented by the blood and water of the sacraments. It is therefore most fitting that at Villnius, on the occasion of the jubilee of this act of Redemption, the image of the Divine Mercy, and a summary of the whole Easter message, should be solemnly venerated and exposed. A new age begins once again. Now it is the time for mercy, as the horrors of the early twentieth century unfold.

On many occasions our Lord told Sr Faustina that she would prepare the world for his Second Coming. This is referred to by St John Paul II in one of his seven visits to Lagiewniki, “from here must go forth the spark which will prepare the world for his final coming.”

With the desire of our Lord for the image to be painted and venerated, there is a new dawn, a dawn of the Day of Mercy breaking forth before the dawn of the “awful day,



■ Our Lady of Mercy at Dawn Gate, Vilnius, Lithuania

the day of my justice is near” (Diary 965). Divine Mercy and His image is a reminder that this is a “sign for the end times and after it will come the day of justice” (Diary 848).

As the Church celebrates Advent we are called to look forward in joyful hope to the coming of Christ again. We do so because we have come to know Him and trust Him as our merciful saviour. He will continue to be that until He comes to judge the living and the dead.

There is a great urgency therefore each passing Advent to make known the Merciful Christ and to bring him to birth in the lives and hearts of the many people we encounter. Why not consider a simple way to do this – giving an image of Divine Mercy as a

Christmas gift this year, or enclosing a prayer card with the Divine Mercy image with your Christmas greetings or to give a Divine Mercy Calendar for the next year with the image, so that it will be displayed in various homes. Your friends and families may experience the promise of the Lord where his image is venerated.

Our Lady appeared to St Faustina in August 1934 telling her that she would have to suffer because of the coming into existence of this image. The next day she fell seriously ill (Diary 321). St Faustina, when leaving the home of the artist after viewing the image for the final time, was surrounded by darkness. She realised it was the ‘enemy’. She simply stated, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt

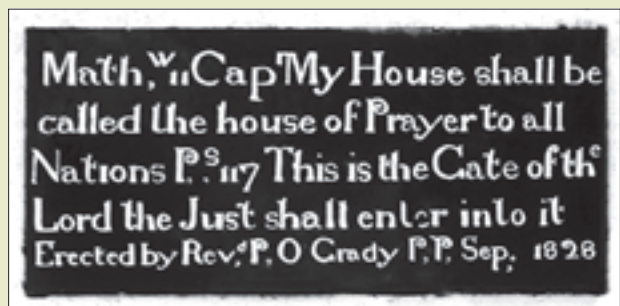
among us”, and suddenly everything vanished. How wonderful for us in this Advent season as we think of Our Lady preparing to bring to birth the Saviour of the world that her motherly merciful protection should now extend to St Faustina. She was ‘to bring to birth’ as it were, the image of the merciful Lord whose gaze would awaken trust and hope in sinful Man. The Devil would strike and wage a battle against the image on numerous occasions, and of course against us because he hates Divine Mercy (Diary 1659); “this work will snatch a great number of souls from him”. When the image was first displayed it came alive and the Lord blessed the crowds. Similarly on returning from the jubilee celebrations and the first public showing of the image, St Faustina had a vision in which she saw the same image covered in mesh and nets but Christ comes alive again, made the sign of the cross and cut through the nets and disappeared.

Mercy is always victorious over sin and misery. The Advent season is a great time for us to make a good confession and to venerate the image of Divine Mercy. Maybe if we have to put up our Christmas decorations early, we can place a small prayer card of the image in the stable until Christmas day. In the image, Our Lord’s foot is portrayed ‘in movement’ coming towards us, and one day he will come again. If we Trust in him now, be merciful to others, he will take our hand and lead us into eternity to join with St Faustina and with Our Lady to sing of His mercy, which endures from age to age and through all eternity.

**Fr Jason Jones**

Diocesan Shrine of Divine Mercy  
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# The Lamb will conquer



■ Inscription placed on a west outer wall of the Knock Shrine

**Father Nigel Woollen offers a thoughtful and inspiring meditation on the 1879 apparition at Knock, with particular emphasis on the tableau of statues, depicting the vision, that are located within the Shrine Chapel.**

With recourse to apt scripture passages, as well as personal reflections, this recently published 120 page book offers fresh, consoling insights into the apparition – a joyful ‘revelation of heaven’ and explores its enduring symbolism both for our Christian forebears and for pilgrims today. What follows are some sections taken from “The Lamb will Conquer”.

One of the most moving prayers in the Old Testament is found near the end of the book of the prophet Isaiah: “Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down – your presence the mountain would melt – to make the nations tremble at your presence, working unexpected miracles, such as no one have ever heard of before” (Isaiah 64:1-3).

This prayer, expressing in the strongest terms the prophet’s yearning for the Lord to reveal his presence, is radical and bold; for the people of Israel, the Lord is all holy, utterly beyond the grasp of human beings; no one can see him and live. To ask God to reveal himself is a risk! He always answers our prayers – yet not always in the way we think; “the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are

above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). God will indeed reply to this ardent prayer of the prophet, in a way beyond all human logic or expectations; by the incarnation of his only Son, Jesus, born on this earth to redeem his people and to open the gates of the kingdom to the whole human race. Jesus willed to be baptised by John in the river Jordan. Mark’s Gospel tells us that no sooner had Jesus come up out of the water than ‘he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice from heaven, “You are my Son, the beloved; my favour rests on you”’. (Mark 1:10-11). God truly has torn open the heavens to send his Spirit upon his beloved Son Jesus, who will proclaim the Good News of the kingdom and perform saving works to show the Father’s power. Yet his ultimate goal is to give his own life for us on the Cross; he is the sacrificial Lamb who offers his life in order to save us from sin and death, and enable us to gain access to Paradise! At the death of Jesus on the Cross, “the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Mark 15:38), a sign which seems to signify the end of the Temple worship. It also reminds us that the way has been

opened to heaven; the veil of the Holy of Holies – representing the place of God’s presence, that none of us can reach by our own efforts – is torn apart; we are now invited to heaven, through the sacred humanity of God’s own Son. He came down to earth in order to bring us to heaven, and he himself is the Way, this is the Good News! When we think of our poor world, in which countless innocent people suffer, and where so many of God’s children do not yet know his love for them – often making destructive decisions that lead them further away from the loving Father who waits to show mercy to them – we may often be tempted to pray Isaiah’s prayer once more; “Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down!” Yet God continues to answer this prayer every day; whenever good people pray with faith, the heavens open to bring grace to our world, for ‘the heartfelt prayer of a good man works very powerfully’ (James 5:16). Each time a Baptism takes place, the heavens are torn open, the Spirit comes to rest on the new Christian, and the Father’s voice whispers, ‘you are my beloved child!’ It is above all, at every Mass, that the heavens are truly torn open; Christ himself comes down to



us. At the word of the priest, who obeys the Lord's mandate entrusted to his Church, the bread and wine are transformed into the very Body and Blood of Jesus, renewing his saving sacrifice of the Cross. He wants to give us the best food for our journey, for he is the Lamb of God who takes away our sins, by feeding us with his own self, until the day when the veil will be lifted and we will see him as he really is, in the joy of the saints in heaven.

In the sacraments, and especially in the Eucharist, we have everything! At every Mass, we first of all express sorrow for our sins, as a community of weak, vulnerable sinners who want to grow in mercy. Then we hear the word of God, who speaks to his children of his love and finally we receive the Word made flesh, for he doesn't merely want to speak to us but to live in us, sharing the mess of our lives in order to redeem them and turn us into something beautiful, transforming us into his very self; we are what we eat! We are then sent out to bear witness to his goodness and mercy; like the Lamb we are blessed, broken and given, in order that the world may discover his love and return to him in hope.

However, the Lord knows we need 'extras'. We need signs of his love that kindle in us this yearning for the kingdom, the desire that the heavens be torn open anew. Throughout Church history particular manifestations of God's presence, approved by Church authorities, have helped his pilgrim people on their journey, renewing their faith and enabling them to grow in his love. The 'unexpected miracle' (Isaiah 64:2) that took place in Knock, a small village in the west of Ireland, in August 1879, when several people saw a vision of the Lamb of God, accompanied by Our Lady, St Joseph and St John the Evangelist, on the gable wall of their

parish church, is not strictly necessary for salvation; it doesn't add any new revelation to all that the Church hands down to us through Scripture and Tradition. And yet, if we believe that God always wants to speak to us, that he can tear open the heavens to shine his kindly light upon us, then we can be grateful for such an 'extra' to confirm us in our faith and help us to know something more of his wonderful love. The Knock apparition is unparalleled in Church history, although authorities have not as of yet confirmed its supernatural character, stating merely that the testimony of the fifteen witnesses was 'trustworthy and satisfactory' (in two commissions of enquiry, in 1936 and 1979) and certainly no one is obliged to believe in any particular private revelation. However, its nature is of such depth, and to this day its manifest fruits have endured so powerfully, that we cannot simply cast it aside as an irrelevance. The more we mediate on the apparition and its message, the less credible it seems that the whole scene was invented! It must be stressed that our Christian faith rests on the word of God, not on private revelations; at the same time authentic private revelations echo God's Word entrusted to the Church. For example, Our Blessed Mother's words to Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858, "I am the Immaculate Conception" came four years after her Immaculate Conception was dogmatically defined by Blessed Pius IX in 1854. We can recall, too, the pilgrimage to Knock in 1979 of St John Paul II (who also mediated at length on the message of the apparition in an Angelus address during the Marian year on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1988) which is a strong affirmation of the coherence between the silent vision a century earlier and the perennial message of the Gospel.

## John the Baptist

A good place for a visiting pilgrim to start a tour of Knock shrine is the dedication stone of the original parish church in 1828, found on the outer wall where it now joins onto the Apparition Chapel. The then pastor, Fr P O'Grady chose two biblical citations for this dedication stone 'My House shall be called the House of Prayer to all Nations' (Mark 11:17) and 'This is a prophecy in action!' Surely no one could have imagined, at a time of great poverty and persecution that pilgrims would come from all nations to this obscure village in a remote corner of Ireland, in order to pray, so that this house could truly be a house of prayer. And the 'gate' of Psalm 117, which joyfully sings the Lord's praises as pilgrims enter solemnly into the Temple, can be understood as our 'gateway' to heaven, won for us by the Passion of Christ, who fulfils the Psalms and every part of the Old Covenant (Luke 24:44). There's more; the same pastor, over fifty years before the apparition, was inspired to dedicate the new church to St John the Baptist! Why not, you might ask? Any saint will do... Well, think about who the Baptist is; Jesus' older cousin, who leaps for joy in his mother's womb at the coming of the Lord coming towards him, "Look, there is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) He baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, when the heavens are torn open, the Lord praises John saying, "of all the children born to women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen" and also call him the new Elijah (Matthew 11:11,14), the prophet called down the fire of the Lord on the sacrifice at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20 – 40) and who was to return, as the Jews believed in the Messianic era.

Finally, the Baptist is imprisoned and put to death by Herod for defending the sanctity of marriage (Mark 6:17 – 29), he is not any old saint!

So the saint who was proclaiming the Lamb of God, who baptized our Lord, thus causing the heavens to be torn open, was chosen as patron saint of the parish church in front of which, fifty-one years later, the Lamb appeared. There's another aspect to consider; Mark in his Gospel prefaces the appearance of John the Baptist by quoting the Lord, "make his paths straight" (Isaiah 40:3), before announcing "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:3-4). The wilderness, or desert, is a key place in God's revelation. The Hebrew word for wilderness is *midbar*, literally, a 'place without words' a place of silence. In the wonderful irony of salvation history, it was during the Israelites' forty years in the wilderness, the place without words, that God gave the Decalogue, the Ten Words or Commandments to Moses (Exodus 20). Now, in the silence of the desert, the voice of the prophet resounds powerfully, calling his people to repent, to change their way of thinking, in order that their hearts be ready to welcome the one who is to come. Finally, it is to the wilderness that Jesus, the very Word of God, goes immediately after his baptism by John, for forty days, to prepare himself for his mission of spreading the good word of God's love for his people. For through baptism, *all of us* are missionaries of the Good News, since the Church is missionary by her very nature.

## Silence is golden

"The Lord is in his holy Temple; let the whole earth be silent before him"



■ Altar sculpture at Knock, based on accounts of the apparition

(Habakkuk 2:20). In order to hear God speaking to us we need silence. A key element of the Knock apparition was its silent nature; neither the Lamb, nor Mary, nor Joseph, nor John the Apostle say one word (even though the Evangelist appears to be preaching), yet this silence speaks volumes! Silence, not just an absence of words, but a loving desire to adore the Lamb, begets a joyful expectancy that God will speak to us. Within the silence, we encounter the presence of the one who is Love, we can experience a glimpse of heaven; "there was silence in the heaven for about half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

The terrible poverty of much of nineteenth century Ireland, particularly in the West and the great famine of the late 1840's, which left its mark on the land and its people for decades, is the inescapable backdrop to the event of 1879 in Knock. Certainly, if the Lord chose this quiet spot in the West of Ireland to reveal his loving Word in the silence of the heavenly vision, it was principally to bring a glimmer of hope to a broken people, and to stir up their faith in him. Today, however, there is another kind of hunger; "See what days are coming, it is the Lord who speaks, days when I will bring famine on the country, a famine not of bread,

a drought not of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). In our world today, while many suffer material poverty, how many more are starving for the Word of the Lord, since his Word has been drowned out by the noise that surrounds us.

## An invitation

We could describe the Knock phenomenon as a *divine secret*. In the biblical sense, a secret (or mystery) is something that is incomprehensible to us human beings without a special light from God. The secret of the Knock apparition, this vision without words, is awesome in its depth and radiance, as we'll discover, it reveals the Trinity, the mysteries of our redemption, the sacraments and, above all, the beauty and splendour of Jesus the Lamb of God, our Bread from heaven, the one who gives Himself completely to us, and invites us to give ourselves to Him, in a covenant relationship of mutual sacrificial love.

So whether or not you are already one of the many friends of Knock, whether you live near or far, or are simply curious, let's go in spirit to the Apparition Chapel to contemplate



the beautiful sculptures that represent what those witnesses saw on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879, to learn something of what the Lord is telling us today, on our own path to the kingdom.

## It's a long way to Tipperary

There are still a few old timers living in Knock village today who knew the last of the witnesses to the 1879 apparition (who died in the 1930's and 1940's). This reminds us of the importance of oral history, of treasuring our links with generations past – as I realise whenever I meet someone from Tipperary who remember the clothes store of my late grandmother's family in Thurles. When we read the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1 and Luke 3) we savour God's plan unfolding slowly but inexorably through the human generations. In addition to Joseph, the parents of Mary are also honoured in Knock; the church of Shanvaghera (the other church of Knock parish) built in 1936 is dedicated to St Anne, Our Lady's own mother, reminding us of the importance of grandparents and their place in society, in handling on faith and tradition. We see this 'handing on' of faith and tradition. We see this 'handing on' throughout the history of the Church.

## Heart of the vision

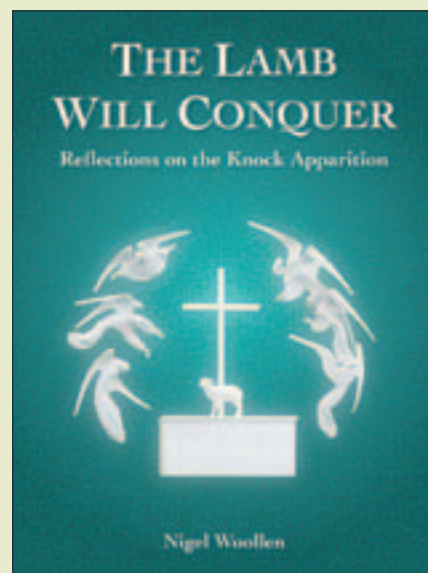
We now come to the heart of the Knock vision, the Lamb, standing on a plain altar, with a large Cross behind it, and angels circling overhead. The witness said the light shining from the Lamb was greater than that emanating from Mary and the other figures,

showing that the Lamb was the focal point of the apparition. What would have gone through the minds of those villagers in 1879 as they gazed upon the Lamb? First of all, for most of these parishioners of a rural farming community, the lamb stood for their livelihood! It is a detail I am conscious of when I am preaching on the Good Shepherd, knowing many in the congregation know a lot more about shepherding than I do. Nevertheless, some of those nineteenth century witnesses would have also been familiar, at least to some degree, with the theme of the lamb in the Bible, culminating in John the Baptist's exclamation when encountering his cousin Jesus, "There is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:39).

We recall Abraham's aforementioned trial of faith, and his prophetic words to his son Isaac, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering (Genesis 22:7-8). We also think of the Passover event of Exodus 12, when the lamb was eaten by the Israelites, and its blood was spread on their doors to protect them from the punishment meted out to the Egyptians. Every Good Friday, the only day in the year where no Mass is celebrated, anywhere in the world; we hear, during the celebration of the Lord's Passion, the fourth Servant Song from Isaiah (52:13 – 53:12), describing the mysterious servant of the Lord who suffers for his people. "Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house. (...) By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults on himself" (Isaiah 53:7, 11). The Church, re-reading the First Covenant anew in the light of the Resurrection, understands these passages as all pointing to Jesus, the Messiah (or Anointed One) awaited by

his people. Although he was not a great military leader who would deliver his nation by force as in the days of old, he is the conquering hero, but in death, by being the willing sacrifice to atone for his friends, he delivers and saves, yet in a hidden, mysterious manner that only faith can see.

Readers are encouraged to engage deeply with the message of Knock and to see in a call to journey compassionately and lovingly with our neighbour in Christ.



The author - Father Nigel Woollen - originally from London, was ordained a Catholic priest in Ars, France, at the Shrine of St John Vianney, in 1996. He studied biblical theology in Rome and worked for some years in retreat centers in France and Italy. He came to Ireland as a chaplain in Knock in 2003 and is currently curate (associate pastor) at Knock Shrine. To order copies of 'The Lamb will Conquer' a well written 120 page book on the reflections of the Knock apparition by Fr Woollen.

Go to: [www.veritas.ie](http://www.veritas.ie)

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Adapted from the text by  
**Noreen Bavister**, Deputy Editor

# Welcome St Michael in Italy

**The group of fifty two people from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Kenya, Cameroon, India and Mauritius attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Angelic Pilgrimage to Italy between 4<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> September 2017.**

**R**efreshed after an overnight stay in Rome, the pilgrims travelled by coach bound for Monte Sant' Angelo. On the way the group visited the Shrine of the Holy Face in Manopello and Father Peter Pruskiewicz CSMA, who was the spiritual director of the pilgrimage, offered up Holy Mass.

For the next four days the pilgrims stayed at the Pilgrims' House in Monte Sant' Angelo, which is situated next to the Shrine of St Michael the

Archangel. Each day the group visited Holy Shrines beginning with St Michael the Archangel, the nearby Shrine of St Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of St Matthew in San Marco in Lamis. When visiting the Shrine of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin in Pulsano the pilgrims had an opportunity to understand the techniques of icon writing during a talk given by one of the resident monks.

While all these visits to the holy places were interesting, each day was



■ Monk explaining techniques of icon writing in Pulsano

also filled with Holy Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, prayers, singing hymns and deeply spiritual talks by Father Peter. During a spiritually uplifting Holy Hour at the Grotto of St Michael the Archangel, ten people became Knights of St Michael.

While travelling back to Rome there was a visit with Holy Mass at the Shrine of Lanciano, the place of the Eucharistic miracle.

Unfortunately the pilgrims were unable to attend the Angelus blessing of Pope Francis because the Holy Father was on pilgrimage to South America at that time. Instead prayers were said at the tomb of St John Paul II, followed by an arranged tour around Rome.

"Arrivederci Italia!" – With these words the pilgrims said their good-byes on the last day, hoping that they will return to Italy.



■ Pilgrims in San Giovanni Rotondo

**Lily Lister, Scotland**



# Angelic pilgrimage

**5-12 May 2018**

**Anniversary pilgrimage  
of the first apparition  
of St Michael on 8<sup>th</sup> May 492**

Spiritual Director

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA

**Price £585 / €663 / \$756**

**plus flights to and from Rome**

Single room supplement £140 / €164 / \$183

- **Rome:** The Angelus with Pope Francis
- **Shrine of St Michael the Archangel in Monte San Angelo:** 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
our group will take part in the ceremony of the statue of St Michael.
- **Shrine of Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo**
- **San Marco in Lamis and shrine of St Matthew**
- **Monastery of the famous Icons in Pulsano**
- **Monte Cassino:** about 80 miles south of Rome, is the home of the sacred relics and monastery of St Benedict (480-543), the patron saint of Europe and founder of western monasticism.
- **The Pontifical Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii**

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■ Rome



■ Monte San Angelo



■ Monte San Angelo



■ The miraculous  
image of Our Lady  
of the Rosary of Pompeii



■ Pompeii



# The inestimable value of prayer

**“Pray constantly, and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).**

**I**t seems easy for the Apostle Paul to enjoin us to “pray constantly”, while it generally leads us to ask at least two questions: 1. How should we do so? We frequently struggle in prayer. What is the essence of prayer? 2. Why should we pray? What do we gain by it? Does God need our prayer? There can be no aspect of our lives of which He is unaware, so why do we have to tell Him? Jesus did after all say: “Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8).

## The essence of prayer

“Prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy” (St Thérèse of Lisieux).

“Prayer is a raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God” (St John Damascene).

“Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves,

wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2559).

While these statements are undeniably theologically correct, we should not be discouraged, as these wise definitions of masters of the spiritual life are intended to assist us. In sharing their experiences of prayer it is they who discovered the truth behind the watchword: *Oratio est fides in actu* (prayer is faith in action). This led them to conclude that: *Lex orandi – lex credenda est* (the rule of prayer is the rule of faith, i.e. the measure of our prayer is the measure of our faith).

A person experiences and testifies to their faith most perfectly in their prayer. Why? It is because the essence of prayer does not lie in the extent of our concentration, lack of distractions, or even in any exaltation we may experience but in above all in two basic constituents: time and intention.

If we give our time to God, we then give ourselves. Giving our time to another is the greatest gift we can give, for, in giving our time, we give them our presence. When we decide to give our time to prayer, we then dedicate it to nobody else but to God alone. When we come to pray, we then put aside all other activities and give

ourselves entirely to God. This is precisely why the Devil puts so much effort into convincing us that everything else is more important, that we should make time for everything else and put our prayer off until later. This is why there are times that we go to bed at night and discover that we’ve run out of time to spend with God. The amount of time we devote to God is a measure of the extent to which we believe!

The second constituent of prayer is intention. This is why, regardless of whether our prayer is one of petition or thanksgiving, its main intention is to glorify God, our Creator. This intention is the most important, the most beautiful and the most essential part of our relationship with God, as we are created “in God’s image and likeness”. In turning to God, we tell Him that He is our Father and that we are His children. This is why the greatest dryness and distraction is incapable of reducing the significance of our prayer, because the Father loves His children just as they are. This is why we should always begin even the shortest of prayers by praising and glorifying God. We do this when we kneel down in church and begin our prayer by adoring the Blessed Sacrament. Exorcists tell us



www.wikipedia.org

■ The Angelus by Jean-François Millet, between 1857-59

that what the Devil most fears is the praise and glory of God, as doing so is the antithesis of all that he embodies. Praise given to God is therefore always a form of exorcism.

## The purpose and fruit of prayer

The purpose of prayer is best defined in the Letter to the Hebrews: “Now it is impossible to please God without faith; since anyone who comes to him must believe he exists and rewards those who try to find him” (Hebrews 11:16). If prayer is an act of faith *oratio est fides in actu* and we are incapable of pleasing God without faith, then how much less likely we are to please God without prayer,

which is the highest act of faith. It is through our prayer that we are pleasing to God. It is through prayer that we are capable of finding God in every circumstance of our life. How poor are they who do not pray!

In order to motivate us to pray more, we should examine the prayer of Our Lord Jesus in more detail. When does Jesus pray and what does He pray about?

Firstly, Jesus generally spoke to His Father to praise and glorify Him. Giving glory and praise is an act of unity of the Son with the Father. Our Saviour frequently glorified His Father. For instance, when He expressed His grief at the refusal of the towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida to repent, He sighed in prayer to the Father: “I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these

things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, that is what it has pleased You to do” (Matthew 11:26).

Praise given to God always brings happiness to man. It is a small piece of heaven on earth.

Secondly, the Saviour prayed with the intention of discovering and recognising the will of the Father, when He was faced with a choice: “Now it was about this time that he went out into the hills to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When the day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them ‘apostles’; Simon, whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son

of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor” (Luke 6: 12-16).

This is why we run severe risks when making major life decisions (choice of marriage partner, calling or other difficult choices) without first praying about them.

Thirdly, Jesus prayed when He was faced with suffering: “They came to a small estate called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Stay here while I pray’. Then he took Peter and James and John with him. And a sudden fear came over him, and great distress. And he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake’. And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. ‘Abba (Father)!’ He said. ‘Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it’. He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to keep awake one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak’. Again, he went away and prayed, saying the same words” (Mark 14:32-39).

We will be incapable of making sense of our difficulties and sufferings without prayer.

Fourthly, Jesus prayed to His Father when He wished to help others, particularly those He most loved: “Directly after this he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of

the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It is a ghost’, they said and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, ‘Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid’. It was Peter who answered. ‘Lord’, he said, ‘if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water’. ‘Come’ said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus on the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. ‘Lord! Save me!’ he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. ‘Men of little faith’ he said. ‘Why did you doubt?’ And as he got into the boat, the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, ‘Truly, you are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14: 22-33).

The greatest gift we can give those we love is intercessory prayer. Even if they are “immersed” in sin, they will not drown, thanks to our prayers. God will rescue them.

Above all else, let us turn to God with the very question which the Apostles asked their Master, in reply to which Jesus taught them the prayer which is most perfect and most pleasing to Him. Let us then make this prayer our own: “Now once he was in a certain place, praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples’. He said to them, ‘Say this when you pray: Father, may your name be held holy, Your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test’” (Matthew 6,9:13).

Fr Ryszard Andrzejewski CSMA

God willed that I be conceived and born because **He wanted me** no matter what any parent or any other person says to the contrary. I am wanted and I am not an accident – God wanted me because He has a mission for me which is special. He willed my existence. I am not an afterthought, born by mistake or accident or even because of a sin by my parents outside of marriage. God permitted the sin because He has given us freedom to choose but in His foreknowledge He intended to bring out of it a far greater good which would have eternal consequences for good and I am chosen by Him to accomplish it.

If I was born because my mother forgot to take a pill then know that God did not will that any pill be taken to prevent my birth.

If I was conceived because my mother was at an age when it was not thought she could conceive then I was directly willed by God. All those born in Holy Scripture of a mother either barren or too old were given a very special call by God to do special work for Him.

God created me at the moment of conception – I did not evolve: an immortal soul cannot evolve but my spirit, my soul comes directly from His hands at the moment of my conception. This real me was in the mind of God from all eternity to be created out of love, for love, to recognise my Father’s true love and to respond and enter that life stream of love in heaven for all eternity.

We will utter one great call at our moment of death as our spirit leaves our body and we enter heaven: “Father, I’m home!”

Jesus, the Eternal Word, we will be filled with the Holy Spirit



# God wanted me

in a single eternal breath of escalating love, joy and purest ecstasy and adoration.

## The theology for believing the above

Nothing happens in the universe without God willing and allowing it. This statement must be taken absolutely of everything with the exception of sin. “Nothing occurs by chance in the whole course of our lives and God intervenes everywhere” is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

St Augustine says: “All that happens to us in this world against our will (whether due to men or the other

causes) happens to us only by the will of God, by the disposal of Providence, by His orders and under His guidance; and if from the frailty of our understanding we cannot grasp the reason for some event, let us attribute it to Divine Providence, show Him respect by accepting it from His hand, believe firmly that He does not send it to us without cause.”

But let us be careful to attribute everything to the will of God and believe that all is guided by His paternal hand.

## How can God will or allow evil?

However, you will perhaps now say of bad things that happen to me,

there is sinfulness in all these actions. How then can God will them and take part in them if He is all-holy and can have nothing in common with sin?

God indeed is not and cannot be the author of sin. But it must be remembered that in every sin **there are two parts** to be distinguished, one *natural* and the other *moral*.

Thus, in the action of the man you think you have a grievance against, there is, for example, the movement of the arm that strikes you or the tongue that offends you, and the movement of the will that turns aside from right reason and the law of God. The physical action of the arm or the tongue, like all natural things is quite good in itself and there is nothing to prevent its being produced with and by God's cooperation. What is evil, what God could not cooperate with, is the *sinful intention* which the will of man contributes to the act.

When a man walks with a crippled leg the movement he makes comes both from the soul and the leg, but the defect which causes him to walk badly is only in the leg. In the same way all evil actions must be attributed to God and to man in so far as they are natural, physical acts, but they can be attributed only to the will of man in so far as they are sinful and blameworthy.

Conclusion: God wills every natural act including my conception and birth irrespective and separately of any sinful intention within those who are its cause.



■ Mel Elias

Sr Ann Wood, UK

# Angels of people with indestructible faith

**Soon after the funeral of Benedetta Bianchi Porro (1936-1964) her mother admitted: “When Benedetta died, I was feeling deprived of her guidance, her help, her hand. I was feeling like someone during a raging sea storm, deprived of a ray of light and of any support whatever. She was for us all an example of humility, simplicity and above all trust and indestructible hope.”**

**W**ho was and is Benedetta Bianchi Porro? She was born on 8 August 1936 in Dovadola, Italy and already her birth was marked by suffering: a haemorrhage appeared. Her mother asked for baptism immediately after birth. Soon symptoms of the Heine-Medin disease also appeared which caused one leg to grow shorter and during her school years contributed many humiliations by her peers.

Immediately after World War II she moved to Forlì with her parents, then Sirmione, where she spent the last years of her life. While attending high school she experienced the first symptoms of deafness, which were in fact the first manifestations of a serious illness that led to her death at the age of 28.

## Humility is the key to heaven

She had lots of friends who were attracted to her like bees to honey. In her inner life she made giant steps. In 1951 15-year-old Benedetta wrote to

her friend Anna Laura Conti: “You are my first friend. In my understanding, a friend is more than what people on the whole understand. Our friend has to be part of us and you are for me half of my soul, water in which I can see myself like in a mirror”.

It was her time at high school and of the first symptoms of hearing loss. The illness progressed and Benedetta felt terrified of the circumstances. In 1953 she wrote to her friend: “My dear Anna Laura, my boat is very fragile, the sails have been burnt by a thunderbolt, the oars have been broken and the water current draws me away from the shore; I wish to study, enter life with enthusiasm and to get to know that people are good and that there is so much beauty in the world, but my lake is so grey and the sky cloudy”. In spring 1954, she wrote to her: “I fear my spiritual darkness. Anna, you don’t even know how much I need your help”.

It seemed as if the girl found herself in a blind alley, from which she did not know how to get out. However, the exit was found very simply. Benedetta met each day with different indignities as a result of her

health. She was ambitious, extremely hard working, but different obstacles blocked her way. She had to overcome herself. She decided not to be angry at her life, not to rebel, but to take advantage of humiliations and to grow in humility.

## I want to live and sacrifice myself for the good of people

After high school Benedetta started studies at university, initially physics to fulfil her father’s wishes, but soon moved to medical studies in Milan, which she undertook with a willing heart and great eagerness because since she was a child she had dreamed to become a doctor. She would say that she wanted to live and to sacrifice herself for the good of people. But her illness progressed and Benedetta lost her hearing. She continued her studies, however, passing exams in writing.

At Christmas 1956 she was able to give herself the real diagnosis of



■ Benedetta Bianchi Porro

her illness, of which deafness was just a symptom: extensive neurofibromatosis type 2. In June 1958 the girl underwent her first head operation, as a result of which the left side of her face was paralysed. In spite of this she did not give up on her medical studies, continuing to pass exams till June 1959.

Her hair was cut in preparation for her head operation. She felt very humiliated, but she disarmingly confided in her mother: "While my hair was being cut, I felt like a lamb being sheared and I prayed to the Lord to make me strong and small. Mother, the Lord expects great things from us. I suffered a lot and I asked the Lord to make me a small lamb in his arms".

She discovered that humility is the key to heaven.

In August that year her spinal cord was operated on. She was paralysed from her waist down as a result and she was forced first to remain in a wheelchair and later in bed. Dependent on the help of others at every step, the girl went through a peculiar school of humility. Slowly she lost her sense of taste, touch and smell. In February 1963

she underwent another head operation. Then she lost her sight.

Everything had been taken from her, but she found everything again in God. This was the true miracle of Benedetta: joy found again and sung in the midst of suffering.

## The Lord expects great things from us

Looking at her life only with the eyes of a non-believer, you could describe it in the words of Francois Mauriac that it was a person who from early childhood 'dragged behind her a heavy chain'. She, on the other hand, appraised her life completely differently. When she was a little girl she was enchanted by R. Tagore's fairy tale "The King and the Beggar". She would often return to it in conversation. Clearly this fairy tale carried a persuasive message for her. This is the main plot: A beggar confides what happened to him: "I would go to the edge of the village and beg there. One day I saw a gold carriage approaching. I wondered who could it be? It is some powerful king for sure, a King of kings. I was very happy and I thought to myself: 'Now my beggar's fate will end, because I will receive alms fit for a king'. And indeed the carriage stopped. The King looked at me, smiled and came out of the carriage. I felt that it was the most important moment of my life. But something strange happened. Instead of giving me alms, the King holds his hand out to me and says: 'What do you have to give me?' Oh! What a moment! The surprising gesture of an extended arm from him and the request for something directed to a pauper. I felt ashamed, but slowly lifted my beggar's

bag and I took out a grain of wheat that I gave to the King. What was my surprise when in the evening while searching my bag I found there a grain of gold! I sat beside the road and cried bitterly that I did not give the King all that I had."

This fairy tale educated Benedetta for years. She therefore did not cry on her deathbed. On the contrary, she was filled with deep peace and joy because she was aware that she had given everything to God and that she had testified about the Gospel that it is God's truth from the first syllable to the last. She felt deep gratitude in her heart.

A year before her death Benedetta wrote in her diary: "God sends us suffering as copious rain onto dried out earth. Suffering throws us into God's arms. We should trust God implicitly."

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1964 on the vigil of her death she asked her mother: "Mum, please kneel beside me and thank the Lord for all the gifts that he has given me." Her mother kneeled and very slowly recited the Magnificat according to her daughter's wishes. Her last word alive was the word "Thank you!"

Benedetta left letters to relatives and friends, diaries, collections of words of wisdom - a real spiritual inheritance. Together with her biography they are all being translated into many languages and published by the Benedetta's Friends Society. Her beatification process started in 1970.

## Christianity is humanity's hope

"What strikes us above all about many religious minds?" writes Francois Mauriac. "Their balance and conquering activity, even in the



most extreme mystics. Their conquest is twofold: one internal, over instincts, the second external. We see this in St Catherine of Siena, St Ignatius Loyola, St Therese of Avila. Immersed in the life of their epoch, they surface above it, they shape its face and stamp it with their spirit. They are masters of themselves and masters of the world to a very high degree. 'Because the Son of Man came to save what was lost' (Mt 18,11). And yet we need to ask, do we not all belong, even those apparently strongest, to 'what was lost'? What is Christian life if not the conquest of normality? For some it is in marriage, for other in celibacy, according to their vocation. Only Christian spouses do not transgress against nature. In Christianity, there is no abnormality. Because every man, even if deeply wretched, can become a masterpiece of balance and harmony in Christ. Even acute suffering, illness or disability will be useful to shape him."

It is not kings and politicians who improve the world, but saints, who like Servant of God Benedetta Bianchi Porro, take on their daily cross and trustingly follow Jesus.

Holy angels, keep watch over human hearts, so that when facing enormous suffering and difficulties, they do not sink in lethargy and hopelessness, but allow themselves to be enlightened by the light of the Word of God, that teaches us that "all that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the glory which is destined to be disclosed for us" (Romans 8, 18). Amen.

Fr **Henryk Skoczylas** CSMA,  
Poland

# The Rosary Magnificat Meditations

## The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, "Rejoice, O highly favoured daughter! You shall conceive and bear a son and call Him Jesus. He will be called Son of the Most High and His reign will be without end." And Mary responded, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done unto me as you say."

We too are highly favoured, and are called to be vessels of the Lord. How can we say "yes" and accept such a lofty role? Our Mother can teach us. She acknowledged her lowliness and gave all glory back to God, saying, "He has looked upon His servant in her lowliness; All ages to come shall call me blessed."

Thank You, Lord, for loving me in my unlovableness and for valuing me in my unworthiness. Thank You for raising me from the ashes and restoring me to life. I am the beloved child of the King of Kings. Help me, Lord, to fulfill the role you have for me. Be it done unto me according to your word.

## The Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation

Mary did not sit around overwhelmed or dumbfounded by the calling she had received. She immediately continued to serve the Lord, not by great deeds, but by humbly serving those around her in her quiet way, letting the light of the Lord shine through her. Elizabeth's child leapt for joy when he recognized the presence of the Lord within Mary, and Elizabeth declared, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Mary immediately acknowledged the cause of her greatness, giving the glory back to God:

"My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord."

Lord, let my being proclaim Your greatness to all the world. May Your light shine out from me in all directions, for everyone to see. May all who meet me be blessed by Your presence, and grow ever closer to Your love. Make me an empty vessel to pour Your grace out onto the world, and serve those around me like Mary did. Let me diminish so that people see not me, but only You.

## The Third Joyful Mystery: The Nativity

The stable was dirty, cold, and crowded with animals. Mary did not have a warm bed in which to lay her infant Son. Far from family and friends, the only visitors that first night were humble shepherds from a nearby field. But Mary had eyes that were open to see, and rejoiced in the beauty of her Child. She had ears that were open to hear, and listened to the song of the angel choirs celebrating the arrival of her Son. She had a heart that treasured the presence of the Lord:

“My spirit finds joy in God my Saviour.”

Lord, be my joy, my all, my everything. Take away my desire for anything that is not You. Let me see Your glory reflected in all good things of the world. Take away all desire for worldly vanities and help me grow in appreciation and gratitude for the goodness and love that is You. Help me to yield to Your love, the way You surrendered to Mary’s care as an infant in Bethlehem.

## The Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Purification of Mary and the Presentation in the Temple

Mary was pure after the birth of her holy Child. But she was faithful to the law of Moses and so went to the temple for purification, according to the practice of her faith. She and Joseph acknowledged immediately

that all gifts come from God, and presented their Child back to the Lord. Let us follow their example, and hasten to be faithful to the laws of our Church. May we seek to be healed and purified by the Sacrament of Penance. May we receive the Eucharist in joy and immediately present our lives back to the Lord in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, saying with Mary,

“God who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is His name.”

Lord, You have healed my wounds, washed away my failures, and created me anew. When I am weak, I am strong, because my strength comes from You. You are holy. You are good. You are beautiful. Therefore so am I, because You live within me. Help me to be worthy of Your calling and to give my life to You. Be with me always, so I can live within You and fulfill Your holy will in all things.

## The Fifth Joyful Mystery: The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple

Mary and Joseph show us where to find the Lord when we lose Him. We lose Him when we seek peace among worldly things. Mother, help us persevere in our search and return to prayer. We will find Him waiting in the Temple, in the Sacraments and Scripture. He dwells in our hearts in peace. When we find Him, He will ask, “Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know I would be in my Father’s house?” Lord, sometimes we do not fully understand your word.



■ Annunciation by Cristóbal de Villalpando, early 18<sup>th</sup> cent.

Help us to ponder it in our hearts like Mary did. Guide us when we lose our way. Mary reminds us,

“The hungry He has given every good thing, while the rich He has sent empty away.”

Lord, give me a hunger to find You, a hunger only You can fill. You meet my every need and fill my every desire. I want for nothing when I have You. Help me to love You more. Do not let me take the Eucharist for granted. Increase my devotion. Inflame my heart with desire to receive You. Vain pursuits leave me empty and dry. I cannot be whole apart from You. Let me feel the ache of emptiness that only You can fill. Let me never forget where true riches lie.

J.S., USA

# St Faustina and St Michael the Archangel

**Although angels are pure and incorporeal and, therefore, invisible spirits, they nevertheless sometimes assume bodies. The Angelic Doctor, St Thomas Aquinas, has this to say on the subject: “By Divine power sensible bodies are so fashioned by angels as fittingly to represent the intelligible properties of an angel assuming a body” (Summa 1 51,2).**

**V**isions of angels are mentioned in many sections of the Bible. The very first book of the Bible shows an angel with Hagar (Genesis 16:7-14 and 21:17), the Angels in Sodom (Genesis 19) and the Angel with Abraham at the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:11-18). Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending (Genesis 28:12). An extensive description of the appearance of the Angel of the Lord to Gideon ends with his fearful confession: “Alas my Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:11-22).

## The importance of Angels in Scripture

The history of the New Testament begins with encounters with angels. Zachariah saw an angel of the Lord (Luke 1:11), Mary speaks to the angel Gabriel (Luke 1: 26-38), a throng of angels appeared to the

shepherds (Luke 2:9 and 2:13). After the Resurrection, the guards and the women see an angel at the tomb (Matthew 28:2-7), Mary Magdalene saw two angels (John 20:11-13). An angel appeared and released the apostles (Acts 5:19) and then Peter (Acts 12:5-7) from prison.

In more recent Christian history, we know of the happenings at Fatima, which began in 1916 with the children's encounter with an angel. The shrine at Monte Sant'Angelo came about as a result of apparitions of St Michael the Archangel, which first occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> May in the year 492, the last apparition being on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1656, which was commemorated by a statue of St Michael the Archangel and a plaque with an inscription in Latin. These are only a few instances of happenings which indicate that physical apparitions of angels to human beings are all part of the Divine Plan. It is therefore unsurprising that St Faustina writes that she saw St Michael the Archangel on his feast day.

An angel never does his own will and never speaks of his own accord. He is always sent (from the Latin *angelus* – messenger, intermediary) by God to reveal God's will. The most beautiful examples of this are two happenings noted by St Luke: the prophecy of the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 5-20, verse 19 in particular) and the Annunciation, which clearly illustrates the angel's role in fulfilling a specific mission: “The angel Gabriel was sent by God...He went in and said to her... Mary said to the angel...And the angel left her” (Luke 1:26-38). This latter occurrence has also been immortalised within the daily prayer of the whole of the Church in the Angelus, a prayer which St John Paul II particularly encouraged us to say.

## Special mission

St Bernard of Sienna notes that: “Whenever Divine Providence chooses someone for a special mission or to some extraordinary state, He grants





■ St Michael conquering Satan by Gabriel Davioud, Place Saint-Michel, Paris, France

them all the necessary charisms required to fulfil the task and increase their spiritual beauty.” From the Diary we learn that the personal mission of St Faustina was assigned to her by Jesus himself and that it was He who chose her for a special mission or to some extraordinary state. To live and to suffer for others was her particular purpose and vocation in life: “You are not living for yourself but for souls, and other souls will profit from your sufferings. Your prolonged suffering will give them the light and strength to accept My will” (Diary 67). The sacrifice which St Faustina was called to make would serve to rescue souls. The continual sacrifice would wrest souls from Satan’s grasp. She is aware of this when she says:

“Daily I make great efforts to take part in community life, thereby gaining graces for the salvation of souls, shielding them by my sacrifice from the fire of hell.

“For the salvation of even a single soul is worth the sacrifice of a lifetime and the bearing of the greatest sacrifices and torments, seeing how great the glory it gives God” (Diary 1435).

## Offering oneself for others

Will Satan allow such activity? Will he give up without a fight? Never! Jesus said that: “A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Offering oneself for others, the ultimate act of love, always encounters opposition from Satan, whether directly or indirectly. St Padre Pio is an excellent example, as, above all, is Jesus himself. First of all during his temptation in the desert, before his call to conversion and announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God

(Mark 1:14), “being tempted there by the Devil” (Luke 4:1-13); and later in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-53) before being arrested and condemned to death, as so graphically portrayed in Mel Gibson’s film “The Passion of the Christ”.

During a General Audience on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1986 St John Paul II said: “Thus, the evil spirit tries to transplant into man the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God, which has, as it were, become the motivation of all his existence.”

## Battle for souls

Insubordination and opposition to God! It is the defining characteristic of Satan, which he managed to transmit to some of the angels, who shared his attitude of radical insubordination to God. It is a continual, never-ending struggle. At the beginning of the world the first war broke out in the heavens, between St Michael and his angels and the great dragon, the primeval serpent, and his angels. It was a war for a place in the heavens (Revelation 12:7-9). Since that time until the present day, that same battle for souls as well as for their place in the heavens, goes on. St Faustina also does battle, as this is what Jesus wants: “Do not fear, My little child, you are not alone. Fight bravely, because My arm is supporting you; fight for the salvation of souls, exhorting them to trust in My mercy, as that is your task in this life and in the life to come” (Diary 1452). The Lord knows that St Faustina needs someone to support her who is His right arm, that is, St Michael. Jesus Himself did not take advantage of his assistance, although he did say: “... do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly

send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence?" (Matthew 26:53). However, Jesus did commission St Michael the Archangel to take particular care of his chosen one (Diary 400). He commissioned St Michael to be with St Faustina in her battle against Satan and in her daily efforts to save souls from destruction in hell.

## The first fragment St Faustina Diary No 667

In this very short fragment, consisting of only one sentence, St Faustina testifies to the reverence in which she held St Michael the Archangel and to the devotion which she had for him. In order to gain greater insight into the text, it has been divided into three fragments with No 2 and No 3 insights in the next issue of *The Angels* magazine in March 2018.

- 1) I have great reverence for Saint Michael the Archangel
- 2) He had no example to follow in doing the will of God
- 3) Yet he fulfilled God's will faithfully.

## Great reverence

I have great reverence for St Michael the Archangel. The first fragment is a short and honest testimony. Through it we perceive the sincere and deep attachment that existed between St Faustina and St Michael the Archangel. It is natural to have favourite saints, to whom we turn and whose help and intercession we experience in our lives. These do not necessarily have to be the best-known saints, such as St Jude, generally acknowledged

as an intercessor in hopeless cases, or St Anthony of Padua, who so efficaciously assists us in finding lost objects. From the biography of St John Vianney, we learn that it was a lesser-known saint, St Philomena (who died AD 303-304) to whose intercession he effectively turned in all matters, and to whom he constructed an altar in the parish church in Ars.

St Faustina's testimony, however, immediately inclines us to look for the reason behind such a great devotion to St Michael the Archangel. Who is he and what is it about him which inspires and deserves such reverence?

We must begin by saying that the cause of this reverence does not lie in any personal qualities possessed by St Michael – neither the dignity of his nature, his pure and perfect spirit, his beauty, magnificence, mind or will – that is, in none of the attributes with which the angelic nature was endowed from the beginning of creation. It is entirely perfect and flawless, as God does not create anything sub-standard or imperfect: "God saw all he had made and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31), which the Church emphasises, teaching that angels are spiritual and incorporeal beings. "As purely spiritual creatures, angels have intelligence and will; they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendour of their glory bears witness" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 330).

The very perfection of their nature may incline us to the kind of veneration and worship owed strictly to God, as the highest Good, and to no other creature (Luke 4:7-8). When St John knelt at the feet of the angel, who had showed him extraordinary things, to worship him, the angel said, "Don't do that: I am a servant just like you

and like your brothers the prophets and like those who treasure what you have written in this book. It is God that you must worship" (Revelation 22:8-9). The Church teaches us that we should worship God alone and, if we venerate angels and saints, we do so only on His account.



St Faustina is full of wonder, respect, reverence and admiration for St Michael the Archangel. The fundamental and only reason behind such an attitude is, as she is at pains to stress, the fact that he did the will of God. He is for her the angel resplendent in his wonder and boundless humility towards the Creator. He is the angel who gazes at God with love, who learns the will of God and courageously carries it out.

This is part of an extended booklet, further details of which can be obtained on Page 29.

**'St Faustina and St Michael'** personal contemplation and reflections by **Fr Karol Dabrowski** CSMA, Poland

Adapted from the text by **Noreen Bavister**, Deputy Editor



# Great masters of the youth

**The two heroes for youth Bl Bronislaw Markiewicz and St Don Bosco honoured together in Horsley Park, NSW Australia.**

In the fall of 1885, Blessed Bronislaw Markiewicz left Poland to travel to Italy. When he arrived in Turin, he met John Bosco, who welcomed him with open arms and said to him: "I've been waiting a long time for you." So, Don Bosco (as he is commonly known), introduced Bronislaw Markiewicz to the Salesian Rule, the mission being the education of the poor and abandoned youth. Bronislaw entered the Salesians and on the day of his profession, at the holy founder's (John Bosco) request, committed himself with an additional vow, to remain faithful to the Rule. Bronislaw became a Salesian in 1887 and Don Bosco continued to direct him spiritually.

## Pastoral services

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 1888, Don Bosco rendered his soul to God. Bronislaw Markiewicz's task was to perform pastoral services in Turin, but he was soon struck down by tuberculosis. He returned to Poland in 1892 as a Salesian and dedicated himself to the poor and abandoned Polish youth.

Ten years ago, my General Superior at the time, Fr Kazimierz Radzik, sent me to Australia to support our Michaelite Fathers in their pastoral work. Four years ago, we asked Cardinal George

Pell to give to our care another parish in the Archdiocese of Sydney. He offered us several parishes to consider, and one of them was Our Lady of Victories, Horsley Park, a suburb of Sydney in the state of New South Wales, Australia.

## I felt at home

I remember that it was the feast of St John Bosco. When we came into the church, I was amazed at the architecture and immediately I saw the statue of John Bosco with St Dominic Savio. I felt quite at home at that moment. When our Local Superior, Fr Janusz Bieniek asked me later: "Do you want to stay here and begin the pastoral work as a Michaelite?" I felt sure that God was sending me to this parish. Today, I am very proud to work with this community and share the Michaelite charism.

## Spiritual son of Don Bosco

Two years ago, Mr Mark Caruana, the president of the Pupils of Don Bosco in Sydney, asked me to organise the feast for Don Bosco during our parish Mass. I told him that we would

celebrate the feast of Bl Markiewicz on that day. I suggested that we join these two feasts together, because Bronislaw Markiewicz was the spiritual son of Don Bosco. He was the first Salesian who came from Italy to Poland. So, the two heroes of youth were celebrated together, in Australia, at Horsley Park. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016, we honoured, for the first time, both saints as Michaelite Fathers who belong to the Greater Salesian Family, one of 30 officially recognised groups of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco. We joined with the members and friends of the Maltese Past Pupils & Friends and the Don Bosco Association.

The statue of Don Bosco was placed to the side of the altar, in a more prominent position together with a framed picture of Blessed Bronislaw Markiewicz.

Fr Carmelo Sciberras, who is the chaplain of the pupils, preached and emphasised during his homily that even today the education system of Don Bosco is still relevant for our youth. Also, Fr Claude Borg, former Parish Priest, prayed with us on this important occasion.

A procession with the statue took place on the parish grounds followed by refreshments at Marion Hall. Thanks be to God and to all those who assisted in making this celebration a unique historic occasion, which we hope augurs well for the future.

Fr **Dominik Karnas** CSMA NSW,  
Australia





# The cross as a symbol of the Christian faith

**The cross, as the symbol of the redemption of humanity, occupies first place in order of importance among the sacramentals of the Catholic Church. It lies at the very essence of Christianity, of faith in the Son of God, who came down from heaven and gave his life in order to save us and to atone for our sins.**

Reminding us of the sacrifice offered for our sins, the cross has, from earliest Christian times until the present day, been a sign of recognition, and, being rooted in Christ's teaching, is visible in every Catholic church and in the churches of most Christian denominations.

The significance of this symbol to Christianity can be demonstrated by the fact that those who actively proclaim its antithesis, that is, Satanists and believers in the occult, who reject and deride the sacrifice of Christ, use as their basic symbol, the inverted 'Southern' cross.

## In heaven and in the bathhouse

In the early Christian centuries, the sign of the cross was frequently made to form part of other symbols, such as the anchor, or was used in monograms, so as not to be immediately identifiable to potential persecutors of the Church. The ending of the era of persecution was itself linked to the sign of the cross, viewed in the sky by Constantine on the day

before battle. It was this particular Roman ruler who (in AD 313), later issued the Edict of Milan, which ended the era of persecution of Christians within the empire, allowing complete religious toleration.

Over time, the cross as the symbol of the redemption, began to appear ever more openly in the public domain, in the decoration of liturgical vestments and on other sacramentals, on graves, churches and in church interiors, particularly upon altars.

At this same period there was an increase in the veneration of alleged relics of the true cross, sent out throughout the Christian world by the 7<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine emperor, Heraclius. It was only on the cusp of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries that crosses, which had hitherto simply represented two crossed planks of wood, began to include figures of the crucified Jesus, therefore becoming crucifixes.

Quite apart from the increased significance of the representation of the cross in material form in the development of the Christian Rite, the practice of making the Sign of the Cross with the right hand as a sign of witness to one's faith had also been accepted from the earliest Christian

centuries. It was originally made, with three fingers upon the forehead, relating to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. Similarly, the present-day practice of making the Sign of the Cross, using all five fingers, relates to the five wounds of Christ.

It is worth citing the words of Tertullian, who wrote of the Sign of the Cross, as follows: "In all our endeavours – when we go in or out, before we enter the bathhouse, dress, when we eat our meals, when we light the lamps in the evening, when we lie down to rest, when we sit down to read, before we begin to carry-out any new activity, we should make the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads."

## A road already travelled and laid-out for us by Mary

The devotional practice of making the Way of the Cross is indissolubly linked with the Sign of the Cross. As is the case with the majority of elements within the Christian tradition, the Way of the Cross has its beginnings



Photo: Simon Matzinger, www.unsplash.com

in the Holy Land and the devotional practices of the Crusaders and pilgrims from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

According to revelations made to St Brigid, the practice of making the Way of the Cross was started by Our Blessed Mother, who daily walked the way of the passion, praying at points along the road particularly linked to the sufferings of Her Son. There are also narratives which claim that the Apostles did the same.

The devotional practice of the Way of the Cross was, however, not popularised in Europe until the end of the medieval era, particularly due to the effort of the Franciscan Order. It was at this time that Stations of the Cross began to be constructed in European towns and villages, the number of which, curiously, was not always the same. A great effort in propagating the devotion of the Way of the Cross was made by St Leonard of Porto Maurizio. It was also at this time that Pope Innocent XI granted indulgences to those making the Way of the Cross. The Franciscan Apostolate of the Way of the Cross continues to be active to this day, encouraging people, and in

particular, the elderly, sick and lonely, to daily make this devotion. The apostolate takes as its basis the words of Jesus himself: “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

## No cross is too heavy

“The Eternal God, in his wisdom, had anticipated the cross which He now gives to you as a gift from the very depths of His heart. This cross, which he sends you, was encompassed by His all-seeing eyes, conceived by his divine intelligence, tested by his wise justice, warmed by his loving arms, weighed in his own hands, so that it would be neither a centimetre too long or a gram too heavy. He has blessed it by His Holy Name, anointed it by His grace, filled it with the fragrance of His consolation. He has then taken a last look at you, weighed-up your courage, and has, at last, sent it down from heaven especially for

you, as God’s particular gift, in His ever-merciful love”.

These were the words of St Francis de Sales on the subject of the cross carried by each of us in imitation of the cross of Christ. Apart from the fact that the cross, as a symbol, reminds us of the of Christ’s Passion and death, endured by Our Saviour for our redemption, it is also a metaphor for the pain and suffering which God sometimes permits in order for us, in our limited way, to bear a small part in that redemptive suffering.

Let us then remember this when this sign, which brings together and unites millions of the faithful, becomes the object of mockery or of vulgar, pseudo-artistic profanation. May it remain for us a sign of recognition, identifying us as a community of those who have entrusted themselves to Christ, and, filled with gratitude for His Sacrifice, are prepared to have a share in it.

Prepared by **Karol Wojteczek**, based upon “**Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals**” by **Ann Ball** and “**Signs of Life**” by **Scott Hahn**

# Do we know our constant companion?



■ For Fame by Jacek Malczewski, 1903

**The truth that we have a guardian angel is one of the loveliest of our Catholic faith. But perhaps parents do not talk to their children enough about it. Sadly, some people even doubt their existence, but we have the evidence in scripture and tradition.**

**I**n the book of Exodus the Lord says, “I myself will send an angel before you to guard you as you go and to bring you to the place I have prepared for you”; and the psalmist wrote, “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent” (Ps 91:11-14).

In the time of Jesus the Jews had a firm belief in the part angels played in their daily lives. Every nation had its angel. Every natural force, such as the wind, thunder, lightning and rain had its angel. Each person had an angel who informed and guided him or her. So when Jesus spoke about children having guardian angels this was nothing new.

Every single human being, Christian or non-Christian, whether in grace or in sin, remains during their entire life under the care of a guardian angel. And it is generally believed that each human being has his or her distinct guardian angel not assigned to anyone else. It is the words of Our Lord that point to this conclusion, “See that you never despise

any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of My Father in heaven.”

Angels come in many guises. When Saint Peter was imprisoned in Jerusalem the jail door was suddenly opened for him and he was led to freedom. Surely, that must have been his guardian angel? I think we have all had similar experiences in our lives. We have been in difficulties, unable to see a way out and having almost given up hope, when someone suddenly arrives with just the help we need. We may even have said, ‘Oh, you are an angel!’ So often when we feel desperate God sends that special messenger at the right moment.

It is comforting to remember that we have our own personal ally throughout life. We can hold conversations with our guardian angel, asking for his help at the beginning of each day or at the start of a journey. He can guide us through our daily problems and he can give us the strength to fight temptations and keep Satan at bay. We can beg for his guidance when we need counselling over important decisions we have to make. He can help us to prepare well for Holy Communion and Confession, and

of course we thank him at the end of the day for being our constant companion.

You can be sure that our guardian angel helps us when we come to die. He is the one who conducts our soul to the Judgement Seat of God and will console us in purgatory. They see in their charges souls of priceless value since they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

We shall never know from how many dangers our guardian angels have saved us, nor how much of our salvation is actually due to him. His work is a work of love. How can we ever be able to repay him for the love that he has shown us? Loving God and our neighbour is the only reward he desires.

So let us love our guardian angel with sincere affection, and try to be more aware of his presence in our lives. Let us often say the well-known prayer to our guardian angel: *Angel of God, my guardian dear, / To whom God's love commits me here. / Ever this day be at my side / To light, to guard, to rule and guide.*

**Fr Francis Maple**

The Franciscan Friary, Pantasaph,  
Holywell, Flintshire, Wales  
[www.fatherfrancismaple.co.uk](http://www.fatherfrancismaple.co.uk)



# It is As it Is

True story of a shared friendship and the process of dying

Behind the gaily-patterned soft cover of *It is As it Is* hides a rich banquet of thoughts and feelings, plus a critically important message for our times.

The book covers a three-year period during which the author has regular contact with an old friend. They create a strong bond out of shared faith and a love of pastries. When they were girls at school together in Poland they had jokingly called each other Sr Prudentia and Sr Sapientia, of the 'Congregation of Cake-Eating Sisters'. Their lives have diverged and they find many years later that they are both living in Sweden. Each is now married and has a grown-up child. By the time they reconnect, Prudentia is dying of cancer.

The author, Malina Stahre-Godycka was born and brought up in Communist Poland. She studied law there and left the country to travel extensively. She settled in Sweden where she married. Here she began her writing career, with a translation into Polish of a work by the famous American-Swiss psychiatrist, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. Kübler-Ross was famous for her classic description of the stages of grieving and mourning.

As the author puts it: "The source of many of our troubles surely lies in the fact that we are afraid when life does not go as we would wish and real life begins to diverge from the vision of reality we have created for ourselves."

On the surface, this book is a true story about a friendship between two women, Prudentia and Malina, one of

whom has terminal cancer. However, the real value of the memoir lies in its unflinching look at the process of dying. So much about death is segregated or sanitized in society today that we are in danger of losing all perspective on the subject. *It is As it Is* reminds us that dying is not a failure to live. Rather, it is another stage of life to be navigated to the best of our ability, with the assistance of family and friends.

Told in a series of journal entries, we get Malina's view of the next few years culminating in Prudentia's death. It is a testament to Stahre-Godycka's skill that we are able to follow both women's points of view. This is particularly useful because dying is as curious a process for the person dying as for someone observing. Prudentia is matter-of-fact about sharing her journey. "It's a very good thing I can be of such use to you and possibly even other people," she says to her friend, "everyone wants to be useful."

Repeatedly we see that death, like life, varies from one day to the next, from one person to another. Sometimes it brings humour, courage, even joy. Other times it brings depression, anger and guilt. As death approaches, it seems to distil the essence of a person making them more "themselves" than ever before. Malina struggles to accept her friend when filters of politeness and political correctness are scoured by pain. Prudentia, in turn, is frustrated by Malina's endless questions about experiences that are not best processed with intellect.



„It is as it is”, becomes Prudentia's default answer when she does not want to speculate on the reasons that accompany end-of-life issues.

Malina thinks this response is a cop-out but she eventually finds contentment simply sitting in silence by Prudentia's bedside. The “otherness” of Malina and Prudentia's lives never distracts from the story, though. Here they are simply two people with a shared history who choose to accompany each other through a major life event. Prudentia's acceptance of Malina's presence is as generous as Malina's offer of it.

Their willingness to share this most personal of encounters with us is even more generous. I would recommend *It is As it Is* to anyone who has experienced serious illness themselves or with someone they love. And perhaps even more to anyone who fears that.

This article is a compilation  
by two authors  
**Kevin Martin** for Veritas  
and by **Alice Matisz**  
Lethbridge Herald Dec 2016

Title: **“It Is As It Is: A True Story of Hope, Loss and Friendship”**  
By **Malina Stahre-Godycka**.  
Published and available from  
Veritas bookshops and online at  
[www.veritasbooksonline.com](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com)

## ENGLAND 2018

**10<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**Talks St Michael**

**/ Dangers of New Age**

**with Eucharistic Healing Hour**

**8.00 am – 4.00 pm**

**Holy Mass 9:15 am**

West Bromwich Bethel Centre,  
Birmingham. B70 7JW

Contact: Fr Soji Olikkal

Phone: +44-(0)-121-747-7390

Email: frsojiolikkal@gmail.com

www.sehion.org

**11<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**10:00 am Sunday Mass**

St Gerard's Catholic Church

2 Renfrew Square

Yatesbury Avenue, Castle Vale,  
Birmingham B35 6JT

Contact: Fr Soji Olikkal

Phone: +44-(0)-121-747-7390

Email: frsojiolikkal@gmail.com

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

**(Mass time to be confirmed)**

**Divine Mercy**

**and St Michael the Archangel**

St Leo's RC Church

Lickers Lane, Wiston,

Liverpool L35 9PN

Contact: Fr Michael McCormack

Phone: +44-(0)-151-424-2129

Email: stleo@rcclp.co.uk

**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

**2.00 pm Holy Mass**

St Charles Borromeo

Catholic Church,

12 Jarratt Street, Hull,

East Yorkshire, HU1 3HB

Contact: Fr Paul Dowling

Phone: +44-(0)-1482-329-100

Email: stcharleshull@stcharleshull.

karoo.co.uk

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Holy Angels**

**and Knighthood of St Michael**

**with Eucharistic Healing Hour**

Sandymount House of Prayer

16 Burbo Bank Road

Liverpool L23 6 TH

Contact: Stuart

Phone: +44-(0)-756-488-2006

Email:

sandymount@mountford.org.uk

www.sandymountcrosby.co.uk

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**5.00 pm Teaching on St Michael  
and The Knighthood incl. private  
devotion and prayers**

**7:30 pm Holy Mass and homily  
followed by Holy Hour**

**Saint Eunan's Cathedral**

Sentry Hill, Letterkenny

Co. Donegal.

Contact: Fr Eamonn Kelly

Email: eamonnkellys@eircom.net

## USA 2018

**24<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

Indianapolis

Contact: Kathy Denny

Email: mariancntr@aol.com

**26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**Divine Mercy**

The Holy Cross Catholic Church

2300 Main Street

Batavia, Illinois 60510 – 7625

Contact: Fr James Parker

Phone: +1-630-879-4750

Email: frparker@holycross-batavia.org

**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018**

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and the Holy Angels retreat**

St Clare's Retreat Centre,

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Soquel, California

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Email: stclaresretreatcenter@gmail.com

www.stclaresretreatcenter.com

**8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Abba Father Institute

San Diego, California

Contact: Filip Ponulak

Email:

f.ponulak@abbafatherinstitute.org

www.abbafatherinstitute.org

## SCOTLAND 2018

**5<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL**

**DIVINE MERCY CONFERENCE**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

**Theme of conference: TBC**

St Augustine's Church,

12 Dundyvan Road,

Langloan, Coatbridge,

ML5 1DQ

Contact: Helen Border

Email:

Helen.Border@glasgow.ac.uk

## IRELAND 2018

**6<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**7:30 pm Holy Mass**

**Talk: The Knighthood**

**of Michael the Archangel**

**Church of Immaculate**

**Conception**

Convent Hill,

Mitchelstown, Co. Cork

Contact: Fr Michael Fitzgerald

Phone: +353-(0)-86-258-4062

Email: michaelstownparishoffice@

eircom.net

# NEW BOOK!

## St Faustina and St Michael



St Faustina is full of wonder, respect, reverence and admiration for St Michael the Archangel. The fundamental and only reason behind such an attitude is, as she is at pains to stress, the fact that he did the will of God. He is for her the angel resplendent in his wonder and boundless humility towards the Creator. He is the angel who gazes at God with love, who learns the will of God and courageously carries it out.

Contemplation and reflections by Fr **Karol Dąbrowski** CSMA

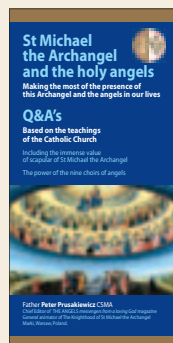
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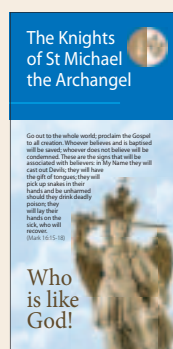
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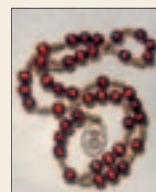
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## PRAYERS

# The prayer of St Gertrude for holy souls

Eternal Father, I offer Thee  
the Most Precious Blood of Thy  
Divine Son, Jesus, in union with  
the Masses said throughout the  
world today, for all the holy souls  
in purgatory, for sinners every-  
where, for sinners in the universal  
church, those in my own home  
and within my family. Amen.



■ St Gertrude by Miguel Cabrera, 1763

# St Joseph novena prayer

Almighty God, You have chosen  
Saint Joseph to be the mainstay of  
Jesus and Mary, the wise and faithful  
servant in whom they could trust.  
We pray that he may truly be the  
guardian of Your Church; that he  
may inspire with confidence those  
who are devoted to him; that he may  
give security to those who work in  
the vineyard of Your Son and, finally,  
that he may be a source of strength  
to us who wish, like him, to dedicate  
ourselves to Christ's service, now  
and in times to come. Amen.

# Chaplet of St Michael

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

A. *Amen*

*Say the following prayer on the medal:*

*O God, come to my assistance.*

*O Lord, make haste to help me.*

*Glory be to the Father, etc.*

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

*(1 Our Father on the first large bead, 3 Hail Marys on the next three small beads)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail 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 govern our senses and subdue our unruly 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 temptation. 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 obedience. 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

protected 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.