

The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



St Michael our shield
St Faustina: "I desire to suffer"
How to get through
the darkness of soul

100th anniversary
of the Michaelites

Their common goal, fighting for the salvation of souls

Due to St Faustina's special mission on the Divine Mercy for the salvation of souls, God ordered St Michael to take special care of her (Diary, 706).

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. God wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. "For the sake of His sorrowful



Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world" (recited 50 times in the chaplet). This a powerful reminder of who God is and has been from the very beginning. This truth that God is in His very nature Love and Mercy itself, is given to us by our Christian faith and God's self-revelation.

As in the prayers that form the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, there are three main themes to the Divine Mercy devotion, which is to ask for and obtain the mercy of God: 1) To trust in Christ's abundant mercy, and to show mercy to others and to act as a conduit for God's mercy towards them; 2) Promises – Oh, what great graces I will grant to souls who say this Chaplet; and, 3) At the hour of their death every soul that will say this Chaplet will receive great mercy (Diary 687).

I assure you of the constant daily prayers of the priests of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel for all our readers and their families.

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA
www.stmichaelthearchangel.info
www.stmichaelthearchangel.us
www.michaelites@dol.ca

The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

A Catholic Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

Publisher: The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel – Poland

Editor-In-Chief: Father Peter Prusakiewicz (CSMA)

Deputy Editor and Chief Co-ordinator: Noreen Bavister

Editorial Staff: Agata Pawłowska, Karol Wojteczek, Magdalena Świerczewska, Magdalena Szczecina, Karolina Szydłowska, Ewa Rygaliuk

English translations: Agata Pawłowska, Joanna Jabłońska

Graphics & Layout: Jacek Kawa

Website: www.stmichaelthearchangel.info • www.kjb.24pl

• www.stmichaelthearchangel.us • www.michaelites@dol.ca

Editorial Office: The Angels Magazine

ul. Piłsudskiego 248/252, 05-261 Marki. Poland

Email: redakcja.kjb@gmail.com

The editors reserve the right to modify and edit submitted articles with a view to brevity, clarity and style.

© 2021 CSMA – All rights reserved

Imprimatur: General Superior of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel

Circulation: 2 850

ISSN 2081-5077

Printed in Poland

- Page 3** We preach Christ to the far ends of the world
- Page 4** How it all began
- Page 5** The Michaelites today
- Page 6** St Michael; I have come to help you!
- Page 10** Gargano: place of the spiritual fight
- Page 12** St Michael our shield
- Page 13** Blessed Fr Markiewicz on St Michael and angels
- Page 16** Placing our complete trust in God
- Page 18** I desire to suffer
- Page 22** How can I make it through "The Dark Night of the Soul"?
- Page 26** The house in Nazareth
- Page 29** Scapular investiture
- Page 30** Angelic bookshop
- Page 31** Chaplet of St Michael

On the front cover:

Fr Bronisław Markiewicz with his co-operants and orphans (main picture).

Small pictures on the left:

1. First wooden building for orphans in Miejsce Piastowe, Poland
2. Shoe making workshops
3. The first Michaelites in the USA

Find us on
 Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
The Angels Magazine



We preach Christ to the far ends of the world

'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!' I am sent by Christ himself to do this. I am an apostle, I am a witness.

The more distant the goal, the more difficult my mission, the more pressing is the love that urges me to do it. I must bear witness to his name: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He reveals the invisible God, he is the first-born of all creation, the foundation of everything created. He is the teacher of mankind, and its redeemer. He was born, he died and he rose again for us.

He is the centre of history and of the world; he is the one who knows us and who loves us; he is the companion and friend of our life. He is the man of sorrows and of hope. It is he who will come and who one day will be our judge and – we hope – the everlasting fullness of our existence, our happiness.

I could never finish speaking about him: he is the light and the truth; indeed, he is the way, the truth and the life. He is the bread and the spring of living water to satisfy our hunger and

our thirst. He is our shepherd, our guide, our model, our comfort, our brother. Like us, and more than us, he has been made little, poor, humiliated: he has been a worker; he has known misfortune and been patient. For our sake he spoke, worked miracles and founded a new kingdom where the poor are happy, where peace is the principle for living together, where the pure of heart and those who mourn are raised up and comforted, where those who hunger and thirst after justice have their fill, where sinners can be forgiven, where all are brothers.

Jesus Christ: you have heard him spoken of; indeed the greater part of you are already his: you are Christians. So, to you Christians I repeat his name, to everyone I proclaim him: Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega; he is the king of the new world; he is the secret of history; he is the key to our destiny. He is the



■ Pope Paul VI in early 1969

mediator, the bridge, between heaven and earth. He is more perfectly than anyone else the Son of Man, because he is the Son of God, eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary, blessed among all women, his mother according to the flesh, and our mother through the sharing in the Spirit of his mystical body.

Jesus Christ is our constant preaching; it is his name that we proclaim to the ends of the earth and throughout all ages.

Pope St Paul VI

Homily preached at Manila,
29th November 1970

How it all began

This year the Michaelite Fathers celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of their congregation. Let us remind ourselves how God led and developed their history.



1842 / Bronisław Markiewicz is born in Pruchnik near Jarosław, Poland.

1867 / he is ordained a priest in the cathedral in Przemyśl.

1867-1885 / he studies philosophy at the University of Lviv and Krakow; then he serves as a vicar, a parish priest and a lecturer of pastoral theology at the seminary in Przemyśl.

1885-1892 / he goes to Turin to visit the Salesian priests. He works with St John Bosco.

1892 / Fr Markiewicz is 50. He comes back to Polish lands where he takes the office of the parish priest in the Miejsce parish (the name of the town was later changes into Miejsce Piastowe).

1897 / he asks the Episcopal Ordinate in Przemyśl and the Holy Father Leo XIII for permission to establish a new religious congregation.

1898 / Lay Temperance and Work Society established by Fr Markiewicz is approved by church authorities. The Society published the first issue of the monthly "Temperance and Work".

1899 / Pope Leo XIII gives a blessing for the Temperance and Work Society.

Jan 29, 1912 / Fr Markiewicz dies in the odour of sanctity.

1914-1918 / the First World War ravages Europe including Polish people

and lands. In 1918, after 123 years of occupation, Poland regains independence.

Sept 29, 1921 / **Foundation of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel.**

1928 / the Congregation of the Sisters of St Michael is founded.

1939-1945 / World War II breaks out. About 100 Michaelites take care of over 1,000 children under German Nazi occupation. Some of their buildings are closed or destroyed. Two Michaelite Fathers die at concentration camps. Pope John Paul II beatifies them in 1999.

1945-1989 / the Michaelites work under the communist regime. State authorities take over the orphanages, schools, printing houses and workshops run by the Congregation. They forbid the teaching of religion and impose education based strictly on the communist views. Communist teachers are sent to schools. Priests are intimidated, blackmailed and put under surveillance. Communist spies pretending to be priests get into the Church hierarchy for information that could be concocted and used against the Church. The Communists refuse to issue passports for the priests to prevent them from going abroad on missions.

1972 / the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. The main

Holy Mass celebrated by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) takes place in Miejsce Piastowe.

1989 / the Communist regime ends in Poland. The Michaelite Fathers make attempts to regain the school and seminary buildings, orphanages and lands nationalised by the Communists. They re-establish and develop their work among neglected children and the youth, go on missions and evangelise via the mass media.

1996 / Pope John Paul II appoints the Michaelite Fathers to take care of the Shrine of St Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo on Gargano, Italy.

2005 / beatification of Fr Bronisław Markiewicz, the founder of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel.

2010 / the first issue of The Angels magazine in English, on St Michael, the holy angels and the Divine Mercy. The quarterly magazine is now distributed throughout several countries around the world.

2021 / the 100th anniversary throughout the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel.

Agata Pawłowska, Poland

Source: *The Congregation of St Michael the Archangel in Poland between 1945-2004* by Fr Marcin Różański CSMA

The Michaelites today

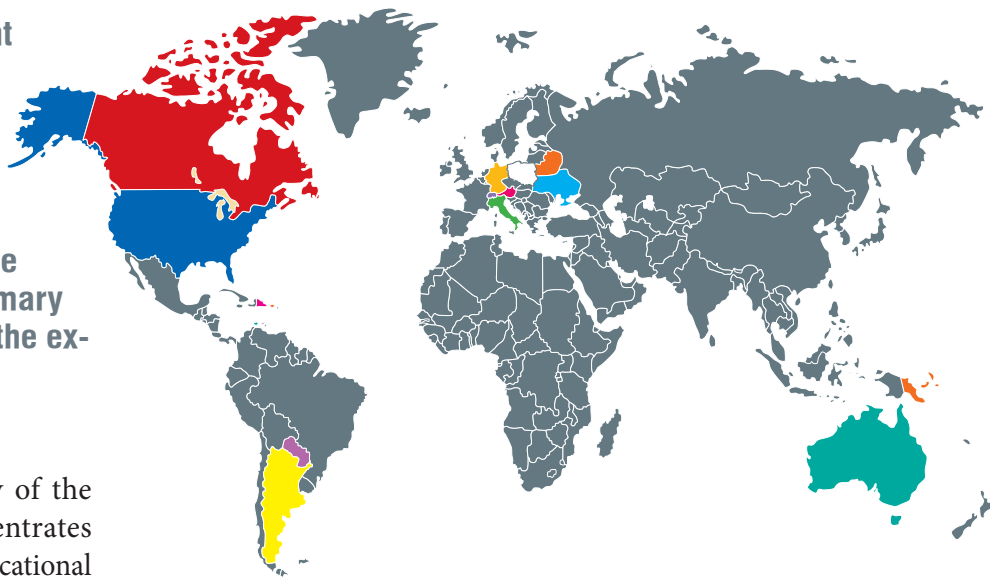
The Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel (C.S.M.A.), also known as the Michaelite Fathers, is a community of brothers and priests who choose Jesus Christ as the primary object of their love and the example to follow.

The apostolic activity of the Congregation concentrates on the ethical and educational teaching of children and the youth who are neglected both morally and materially.

The Michaelite Fathers run several orphanages and oratories, which provide children with professional help in learning, assistance as they grow up and, oftentimes, a simple meal. This help takes place at numerous summer and winter holiday camps and events and is supported by various groups and programs, which exist in our Michaelite parishes.

Our Congregation helps by teaching religion, the gospel and by our priestly service. In our work we strive to bring God's Word to people whose religious lives have been neglected and whose courage and self-denial need to be strengthened. We try to teach prudence, persistence and diligence in work. We do our best to show the value and the beauty of a life in which God is most important.

We also run a publishing house called "Wydawnictwo Michalineum".



■ Michaelites in the world

At present our Congregation has 317 members, comprised of one bishop, 265 priests, 14 brothers, 22 seminarians and 3 novices. Fourteen priests, nine seminarians, one brother and two novices come from other countries.

110 Michaelites work abroad in 17 countries; Argentina, Austria, Australia, Aruba, Belarus, Canada, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Germany, Italy, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Ukraine and the USA. The Congregation runs two orphanages, several oratories and youth centres, five schools and 101 parishes, of which 23 parishes are in Poland, 5 in Belarus, 3 in Ukraine, 7 in Paraguay and Argentina, 1 in USA, 7 throughout Canada, 8 in Australia, 16 in Germany and 18 in the Dominican Republic, Aruba, Curacao and Puerto Rico.

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA
www.stmichaelthearchangel.info

Prayer for Healing

In humility of heart and readiness to do Your will, Lord, I stand before You, asking You for the grace of healing.

I implore you for this request through Bl. Fr. Bronisław Markiewicz. If you wish, restore my body and soul to health.

And if your will is different, I accept my sufferings as a sacrifice for the canonization of Fr. Markiewicz.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

I have come to help you!

St Michael tells us, “Discover your greatness in God! I have come to help you.”

If you read these words, know that you are invited by the Lord Himself. He wants to speak to each of you individually.

You are reading the magazine and at the same time God speaks to your heart. Your faith, hope and love grow. It is a time of Divine grace.

Look at the picture of the statue of St Michael the Archangel, he is a pure vessel of God's presence and power. His battle cry, 'Who is like God!', is not, 'Who is like me!', which indicates that God is the primary object of his focus and attention. St Michael helps us each time we call on him, but at the same time he continually contemplates God. He looks so beautiful and young because he is close to God. In the presence of God no one grows old, loses life, neither is their energy diminished.

St Michael invites us to know our Father

In the presence of God we are all His children. St Michael wants to remind us of the very truth that we, human beings, are God's children. It means that God is our Father. St Michael invites us to know our Father. God is the Father who “loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to judge

the world, but so that through him the world might be saved” (John 3: 16-17).

Meet your Father! God is the Father who cares for the lily and the birds, let alone man. No hair from our head falls to the ground without the eternal will of the Father. We can trust Him.

Divine grace is sweet, full of power and peace

St Michael also says, 'Who is like the Son of God'. We know very well that the Lord Jesus is not virtual, but real. He is not electronic, but Eucharistic. The pandemic has not been able to block Divine grace from us. It will reach every heart, and the grace of Jesus is wonderful, sweet and full of power and peace; it reaches every heart. Jesus gave us everything He had: His Mother, His garments, the last drop of His blood. He gave his life for us. St Michael tells us; “Get to know Jesus - this is the way to happiness.”

Who is like God – the Holy Spirit

He also exclaims; “Who is like God - the Holy Spirit”. This is the Third Person of God, a wonderful gift from the Father to all of us. “How much

more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).

We should ask the Holy Spirit for His presence; he intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

The Holy Spirit always comes, we can experience this by way of consolation and love. If we experience spiritual consolation, sweetness and joy we can be sure these are the signs of His presence and acting within us.

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us” (2 Cor 1:4).

The Holy Spirit inspires us to worship God and to love him as our Father and to love our neighbour as ourselves. He comes and helps us in our desire to pray, to stay with the Lord in church or during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He helps us to know what to pray and how to pray: He helps us with “all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph. 6:18). The Spirit helps us thank God for what he gives for it is the Spirit who opens our eyes and enlightens us (1 Cor 2:12-13). The Holy Spirit helps us praise God for who He is.

However, there are also different ways of the coming of the Holy Spirit. He comes as power: “You are clothed with the power from on high” (Luke 24: 49). We particularly need the power of the Holy Spirit. We need



■ The statue of St Michael in the Shrine of the Black Madonna, Jasna Góra, Poland

that power to say no to our sinful desires and addictions, to turn away from everything that destroys us and our relationship with God the Father. The Holy Spirit gives power, we are not able to produce such power on our own. We need to ask for it with humility.

Light of truth and self-esteem

The Holy Spirit also comes as light. He allows us to understand what was incomprehensible. He introduces us to the mysteries of God and our own mystery as human beings and children of God because only truth sets us free (cf. John 8:32). The light of the Holy Spirit also exposes the intrigues of evil spirits and brightens up spiritual darkness. His light melts people's hearts and frees them from quarrels, forgiveness, hatred and jealousy: as

He promises, "I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead" (Ezekiel 36:26). Only by the Holy Spirit's power and light are people able say to one another, "I'm sorry, forgive me" and, "I forgive you".

The Holy Spirit brings self-esteem to human beings. There are many people living with insecurities. They feel less valuable than others because they are not famous enough, not rich enough, not slim enough, etc. The Holy Spirit helps them realise that in God's eyes we are all equal, we are all His children. God loves us all with all His heart, all His strength. The Holy Spirit helps us understand that it is pointless to build our self-esteem on values that perish, such as success or money, because we cannot take them to heaven with us. It is far wiser to build our self-esteem on values that last forever and can be easily taken to

heaven, such as brotherly love, compassion, gratitude, peace.

The Holy Spirit enables us to experience freedom from our bondage, addiction, wrongdoings – we do not have to be their slaves and succumb to them. If we really believe God is our Father and Jesus Christ has already triumphed over all evil, we have the power to overcome evil in our lives.

St Michael reminds us: "Discover your greatness in God! I have come to help you."

St Michael brings freedom

Why did God create angels? Because each of us is a VIP and VIPs have bodyguards. We are Very Important People as children of God, brothers of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. We have bodyguards in our guardian

angels and also in St Michael who takes special care of us, like he did with St Faustina.

If you are reading this text, it is not by chance. It means, that St Michael has entered your life, he wants you to stay with him. You are safe and victorious with him because he is a winner. He defeated the proud angel, Lucifer, in the battle and keeps him under his own foot.

St Michael liberates us from addictions. How easy is it to be enslaved, to be a slave of a glass of wine, cans of beer, cigarettes, medicines, impurity, gambling, greed, taking loans, etc. There are so many new kinds of addictions these days. In the case of an addiction, it is necessary to stay close to God because we often feel powerless.

Any abuse of people, things and substances is always an abuse of freedom and love and, therefore, God's will, for He wants us to live in freedom and love. Any abuse may lead to addiction – an obsession focussed on people, things or substances. An addiction is lack of freedom and love, it denies people in the prison of their obsessions. The only Person that has the power to free people from addiction is Jesus Christ, the only winner who triumphed over sin, death and hell.

Once upon a time an unbeliever talks to a believer. The believer tells him that he has turned to Christ. And the conversation goes something like this:

“Are you converted? Then tell me what His sermons were about?”

“I don't really remember.”

“And in what country did He live?”

“Well, I don't know.”

“What miracles did He do?”

“Well, I heard a little, but not much.”

“Little? And you say you turned to Christ?”

“Well, yes, I converted. You know, sometime ago I was addicted to alcohol; it was like a living hell in my house. The children had a terrible father and my wife had a cruel husband. Today is different - I don't need to drink! My wife has a good husband and my children have a loving father. Christ did all these things for me! This is what I know about him!”

What a wonderful testimony of God living and working miracles today in our life! If we crave for a positive change, we need to let Christ transform us with His loving grace. We need to open our hearts and accept His love, we need to let Him love us as we are.

St Michael is an invaluable help in this process. St Michael received supreme power from God, He is immortal and possesses super-strength, super-speed and invulnerability. Within the hierarchy of the angels, at the highest level, St Michael is a princely seraph, an angel of wonder and power, far more than the other angels and he is the chief commander and leader of God's army, because he disposes the power of the Right Hand of Almighty God,

We can always turn to him for help if we struggle with addictions or any harmful actions.

Man's heart is restless until it rests in God

We live on the frontline of the spiritual battle. The world is in the process of secularisation and that is no

surprise. The Gospel says that there was no place for Christ (cf. Luke 2:7). There was no place for Christ in Bethlehem, there was no place for Him in Jerusalem. Today there is no place for Him in many social and political programmes. There is no place for Him in many families. There are families divided by the name of Jesus: parents choose their faith whereas children live in sin. “For from now on, a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; father opposed to son, son to father, mother to daughter, daughter to mother, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law to mother-in-law” (Luke 12: 52-53). In these words Jesus reminds us that choosing Him is our own personal decision; no one can make us. It is our will to follow Jesus and accept His grace, salvation and forgiveness.

Let us not be worried by such a division in the world and in our families. God uses it to make things clear and to purify us. Look at the Gospel again: Herod managed to exile Christ from his country for a few years. But He came back. Religious leaders of Jerusalem managed to kill Christ in order to remove Him from the Jews. But He again came back after three days. It shows that there were and still are attempts to exile Christ from the culture and social life but one cannot exile Him from the human heart. It is the human heart where there is a place for Him. If there is a place for Christ in our heart, there is a place in His heart for us.

Those who choose Jesus regain the joy of heart and the peace of conscience that are more precious than all the goods of this world. They experience inner freedom no matter the circumstances in which they live.

Those who do not choose Christ, sooner or later they experience suffering resulting from bad decisions. But they can always come back to Him.

Christ knows that man's heart is restless until it rests in God. The faster we discover it, the greater our happiness. Christianity is not boring for Christ brings life in abundance. His Divine life is in us.

The role of sacramentals

The Lord gave us St Michael, the unique defender and a slayer of evil. He is not a fairy tale character but someone alive, real and tangible. If he comes, he always comes from God. The sight of St Michael and other angels is pointed in two directions. One direction is towards God, angels contemplate God's majesty continually. The second direction is towards human beings. They look at us with love, not with contempt. Morning, evening, day and night - they are there to help us. We just have to call out to them.

St Michael is very pleased when we ask him for help. He comes to our aid not only with great power but also with great pleasure. When St Michael comes he brings the experience of the Holy Spirit. It is the time of power and grace. Although St Michael is a creature and he cannot create anything on his own, he has the Holy Spirit – the Creator - and is able to help us by his power.

The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God's glory in the Third Divine Person. Angels reveal God's glory and bestow it on people. No wonder we feel good in the

company of our guardian angels and St Michael.

All that I write in this text refers to the spiritual world which cannot be observed by the human eye. But we are human beings and we need visible signs to strengthen our faith. God knows it and does not leave us without help. He gave us the Divine Mercy image, the figure of St Michael and stones from the miraculous grotto of St Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy. There are lots of sacramentals, like the water of Lourdes and St Charbel's oil. We need to accept them and let God be God because He is much wiser than our thoughts and plans.

God's thoughts rise above our often clumsy and erroneous human thoughts. God is a transcendent spirit. He alone is holy. He gives this holiness to both angels and to people.

Our founder; an example to follow

This year the Congregation of St Michael celebrates the 100th anniversary. We were founded by Bl. Father Bronisław Markiewicz, a modest priest. He was fifty when he came back from Italy to take care of the orphans in Miejsce Piastowe in

Poland, which at that time was under Austrian occupation.

Fr Markiewicz wrote that life was a spiritual battle in which we need the special care of St Michael. Only with his help can we successfully overcome all the snares and attacks of the evil one. Each time Fr Markiewicz had a problem he recited the novena to St Michael. Thanks to this practice Fr Markiewicz managed to get the money to finish building an educational institution where youths of different ages gained an education in a primary and elementary school. Fortunately he detected a thief, who pretended to have a priestly vocation, just to escape abroad under the pretext of serving at the mission. Fr Markiewicz prayed to St Michael every day asking for help and protection.

May his example help us to discover St Michael and to decide to go through life with him. May we overcome each temptation with St Michael and enjoy the freedom of God's children with his help and intercession. May we engage in saving souls with St Michael because it is our, and his, desire that no one would join the fallen angels but, instead, would participate in heavenly happiness. St Michael and his angels already enjoy this happiness and are waiting for us.

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA



■ Stones from the miraculous Grotto of St Michael, Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

Gargano: place of the spiritual fight



Jacek Kawa

■ Main entrance to the Shrine of St Michael the Archangel, Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

The Divine power of Jesus and St Michael in the heavenly shrine.

My name is Mateusz Szerszeń. I am a Michaelite priest. Some time ago I had the opportunity to minister as a confessor in Gargano at the Shrine of St Michael the Archangel in Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy.

Although I came to Italy as a young and inexperienced priest, I quickly found out that this shrine was truly exceptional and filled with the atmosphere of the spiritual fight in which failures are intertwined with successes.

In spite of an inner conviction that it was God's will for me to be there, I felt anxious about my duties due to the language barrier and the various problems people came to me with in confession.

Throughout the year, I was confessor to thousands of people from a large number of countries, with different cultures and languages. Each confession required my full attention and concentration. It seemed a few words of spiritual advice and a penance was often not enough; penitents needed a long talk and common prayers.

Knock on my door

One day, about a month into my ministry, one of the guardians of

the shrine knocked at my door. With horror in his eyes, he asked for help in bringing order inside the Confession Chapel.

A woman possessed by a demon was brought to the shrine. The moment she entered the threshold, the evil spirit manifested his presence in her body. Words of blasphemy and profanity came from her lips, and at the same time she acted with aggression and pain. It looked as if she wanted to hurt herself and those around her.

At first I was horrified but then I asked her carer and a guard to bring the woman into the confessional room and be present during the prayers. I felt fear and total confusion. I didn't know what to do. On the one hand, I was not an exorcist, on the other hand, I could not ignore her suffering.

I asked people standing next to me for a silent prayer. I myself also prayed all the prayers I knew.

Ask in the name of Jesus

After a few moments, I realised that there was no improvement. The woman looked at me with a mocking and hateful glare. In my helplessness, I asked St Michael the Archangel for help. At that moment an extraordinary thing happened – not in her heart but in my heart! I stopped trembling and the fear just faded away. I felt courage and Divine power pouring into my heart and mind. I heard the words: “Not with your own power. Ask in the Name of Jesus.”

At this point, I felt the tangible physical presence of other beings I

couldn't see. Although today their presence seems a lot more subtle and delicate, faith tells me that I am not alone in what I do. Without help from St Michael and the holy angels many situations in my life would be different.

Angels came to help me

Since then they have entered my life with extraordinary power and helped a young and inexperienced priest reciting the St Michael intercessory prayer. I dread to think of how it would all have ended if there were no holy angels. But God sent them at that moment. As it turned out later, the angels did not leave me alone and assisted in my priestly ministry in the heavenly shrine. Normally I would think something was wrong with me, but in that moment, I was deeply convinced that these were angels who came to help me. I felt they were holding my arms and hands. My legs were like jelly but the presence of these angels filled me with peace so that I could concentrate on prayer.

Jesus, come, help her

I stopped reciting known prayers and kept repeating in my soul: “Jesus, come. Help her.” The situation began to change. In the woman's eyes I saw fatigue and pain. She was in a state of being aware of and responsive to her surroundings. The guard said that in such situations priests often give a blessing and anoint penitents with St Charbel's oil. So I followed

his suggestion. Later, I advised the woman's carer to contact an exorcist.

This was my first meeting with a possessed person. It proved that the spiritual world and the fight I had read so much about, does exist.

Since this encounter, I take angels more seriously in my ministry. I read about the history of the shrine and read many testimonies of the helpful intervention of St Michael the Archangel. For me, the shrine is now a symbol of the spiritual fight taking place among us and within us.

Angels are a unique sign of God's care for man

Today I know for sure that the presence of angels is not just a legendary invention of pious people of the past, but a unique sign of God's care for man.

I call the angels in situations when I feel fear or have to deal with things that overwhelm me as a human being. I know I am not alone in what I do. Without their help I would probably not find a solution to many things, and in my life, more than once, Satan would mess it up in his own way. Being aware of their intercession, I live better. I am sure many things were resolved with their help. I also avoided many of Satan's traps.

In Monte Sant'Angelo the angels entered my life with extraordinary power and helped me, a young and inexperienced priest, in an intercessory prayer. God sent them at the right time.

Fr Mateusz Szerszeń CSMA

St Michael our shield



Thomas Tucker, www.unsplast.com

Each prayerful invocation addressed to St Michael the Archangel, as well as focussing our attention upon him, assists our human understanding in beginning to comprehend his true nature.

It is impossible to love someone whom we do not know. This is as true of our ordinary human relations as it is of our relationship with God and His messengers.

One of the invocations to the Archangel is: *Saint Michael the Archangel, our shield against temptation, pray for us.* We connect a shield with armour. This is particularly obvious in depictions of warriors in ancient times. Knights without their shields would not be fully prepared for battle or defence.

As is clear from the above invocation, St Michael acts as a shield for us, who are constantly vulnerable to temptation and failure. Left to ourselves, we are incapable of defending ourselves against the temptations of the Evil One. He sets so many and so wide a range of snares for us. As a consequence of original sin, we possess insufficient spiritual strength to faithfully take God's side in every

situation in which we find ourselves. Weakness and failure is part of our sinful nature. We therefore require assistance from heaven.

Our good and loving God grants us His help in the person, activity and protection of a holy patron – the Archangel Michael. Countless heartfelt testimonies bear witness to his assistance.

As I accompany those who wear the scapular of St Michael, I frequently meet people who have felt the support of the Archangel in a tangible manner: "My life has changed and acquired meaning since I befriended St Michael"; "He gives me courage in the battle against evil"; "He has saved my spiritual life".

I will long recall an event in a parish I visited. I was taking part in an 'Angelic Sunday' including Masses with a homily about St Michael. After one of the Masses, I was approached by a man who, very moved, said to me, "I have not been in church for a number of years. I came today, and to my great surprise – I hear of St Michael the Archangel. I have such great need of him!"

On the one hand, this is such an obvious assertion, but in this man's life the extent of this need had only just become clear. We are so thirsty for his presence and activity.

St Michael comes down from heaven to earth into our lives and

assists, protects and defends us. This is made possible when, by an act of will, we open ourselves to what he wishes to give us. And he gives us what he can give – God – for Who is like God!

It is therefore not surprising that many people invite the Archangel Michael into their daily battles. It is not surprising to see people with scapulars around their necks as signs of the presence of their spiritual security guard, who take up the battle with temptation anew each moment of their lives, and thanks to heavenly, archangelic assistance are able to unmask and be victorious against temptation.

I am no longer astonished at the emotion with which those who venerate St Michael recount their personal histories, in which he brought them help, altering that which until then had seemed unalterable.

We thank you, St Michael the Archangel, from the depths of our hearts, and bring our petitions frequently to God, with even greater perseverance than heretofore, invoking Your intercession: ***Our Holy Patron, Archangel Michael, our shield in temptation, pray for us.***

Remembering you in my prayers,

Fr Robert Ryndak CSMA

Moderator of the Fraternity of the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel
szkaplerz@michalici.pl

Blessed Fr Markiewicz on St Michael and angels

The Michaelite Fathers celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of their Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. On this occasion we would like to present some aspects of the spiritual life of its founder, Bl Fr Markiewicz.

The purpose of this book is to provide a glimpse into the life of our founding father Blessed Father Bronisław Markiewicz. Throughout his ministry he continually strove to understand and discern the will of God in his life, where it was God wanted him to be and what God wanted him to do.

The texts in the book were written in the 19th century and are taken from his personal journal and, as such, Blessed Bronisław probably never intended them to be made public. In a sense they are a reflection of his spiritual journey, personal prayers and conversations with the Lord seeking guidance and direction.

These personal notes that were found are being shared in order to give people a greater insight and understanding of who he was and of his spiritual journey as a priest.

The Michaelite Fathers of the North American Vice Province took on this project to share the passion for the founder, on this the 100th anniversary of the official recognition of their community by the Church.

Fr **Andrzej Kowalczyk** CSMA, Superior



■ Bl. Fr Markiewicz with co-operants and orphans

Daily reflections

God created us so that we could know, love and serve Him and thus become worthy to connect with Him and adore Him forever with all the inhabitants of heaven.

After the Lord Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Michael the Archangel is the greatest benefactor of humanity and he is a guide for the erring, consolation and comfort for the fallen, protector and comforter of distressed souls, a brave slayer of hellish spirits and corrupters living on earth, he is a guardian and friend of people coming into this world and even after their leaving this earth.

When Lucifer began to blaspheme: 'I will go up to the clouds and become like the Almighty', St Michael burning with the immeasurable fire of God's love, called Mi-cha-el!, (meaning 'Who is like God!') zealously persuaded other angels that they should acknowledge the infinite attributes of their Creator and Lord, then honour Him and give him the highest honour for all ages.

St Michael knows only the Divine Motto, the motto of love, and he fights against those who raise the sceptre of hatred.

The holiness of St Michael during battle with proud Lucifer was unsurpassed and remained unsurpassed. Only the Queen of Angels, the Blessed Virgin Mary surpasses Him in holiness.

The Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church call St Michael 'wonderful' because he disposes the power of the right hand of Almighty God.

St Michael the Archangel is the chief commander in the battle for all times, which takes place on earth between the holy city of Jerusalem, or the Church of God, and the corrupt city of Babylon, or the world opposed to God, and His Holy Ones.

In heaven St Michael the Archangel is the prince and leader of all the angelic hosts, and the ruler and superior in the kingdom of heaven. On earth, he is the great protector and defender of the people of God and guardian of the Holy Church.

St Michael was the Guardian Angel of Jesus. Throughout Jesus's early life from the cradle to the Cross, St Michael looked after the holy humanity of the Lord Jesus. St Gregory the Great teaches that in every major matter in the life of the Saviour, St Michael the Archangel entered the stage of history.

Today too, Archangel Michael is the Guardian Angel of the Blessed

Sacrament of the Altar. The words placed in the canon of the Holy Mass refer to him (in the pre-Second Vatican Council version): "Most humbly we implore Thee, Almighty God, bid these offerings be brought by the hands of Thy holy angel unto Thine altar above; before the face of Thy Divine Majesty."

The solemn Mass of the Church begs that, "by the intercession of St Michael the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord deign to bless the incense and receive it as an odour of sweetness".

The Church makes reference to him in universal confession (Confiteor) at the very beginning of the Mass and during the sacrifice of the funeral Mass (in the pre-Second Vatican Council version). It is through these references in the text of the Mass that the Church teaches us that St Michael is the guardian angel of the Blessed Sacrament, and his intercession is of great importance.

St Michael will be given greater honour on earth with every day that passes, the closer we approach to the times of the Antichrist.

The best way to honour St Michael is by temperance and work, that is, restraining pride and sensual lusts, and working not only for your own salvation but also for the salvation of others.

Whoever does not overcome his own desires and does not work, not only does not honour St Michael, but will soon join Satan's side as far as deeds are concerned.

Our Patron Saints, all the saints of God, St Michael, my holy Guardian Angel – all the Heavenly Hosts, come to my assistance.

Oh my Jesus, You are my love, You are everything to me. Grant me the grace of perseverance in good. I count on Your intercession, the intercession of Mary the Mother of God and my Mother and the intercession of the entire Heavenly Court, all the Angels and Saints.

Why are angels so happy when one sinner converts? Because then they can see in the light of glory of the Mercy and goodness of God – the first attribute of God, because God is love.

Sometimes when our heart stays cold in the face of the Lord Jesus hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, let us ask our Guardian Angel, our patron Saints and then Our Lady to honour Him and to glorify Him for us.

God is the absolute Lord of all creatures who are in heaven, on earth and under the earth, His footstool. His courtiers and messengers are the angels.

From us who are the work of His hands, He deserves penitence, honour and worship forever and infinite thanksgiving. That for our faults He



■ The Shrine of St Michael the Archangel, Miejsce Piastowe, Poland (with the statue of Bl. Fr Markiewicz on the left)

has not doomed us like the fallen angels, but gave us the grace of penance, for which we will receive the Kingdom of Heaven forever and restoration of the lost dignity of God's son-ship.

Angels and Saints rejoice as they are filled with the wonder at the infinite mercy of God, shown to man who earlier was vile and a slave to Satan, the greatest enemy of heaven, and at once became a child of God modelled on the celestial beings and living not a sensual, animated life, but instead a supernatural life of grace, for the glory of God.

I have strengthened and nourished you with my grace in the Holy Sacraments. I have forgiven your sins so many times in the Sacrament of

Penance. I have long fed you with My Own Body and My Blood in Holy Communion, I have given you angels and I have waited for your conversion for so many years. Is there any more I can do for you?

What shall I do then when none of the people who have been my delight are to be found in Paradise? And yet, Lord God there are Seraphim in heaven who love You; there are also many other angels, and You still complain that people have become lost to You? After all, Your happiness is complete, You do not need angels or people to make it whole. You have always been, and You are, happiest in Yourself. You do not need anything for Your happiness, which is infinite. All that is true, and yet, having lost these people, I feel sorry for them because they were My love, and now they are divided from Me.

Let us therefore, stand by this Patron and His glorious people, as by the loving and unvanquished helpers, protectors and friends given by God. Let us stand by Him with fervent devotion, always remembering that He, as the ensign of salvation, most willingly protects and with His power, defends, those who, mindful of Our Saviour's reminders and prayers, are ready to leave everything, sacrifice everything to save themselves from the outrages of the world.

Everyone should choose St Michael the Archangel as a particular Patron and have daily devotion to him.

Fr Mateusz Sobierajski CSMA
Some quotes from Daily Reflections
with Blessed Bronislaw Markiewicz
ISBN 978-83-7019-696-7

Placing our complete trust in God

What is wrong in having a census? It might have been that David was acting as a prudent ruler but, in doing so, he offended God.

The king said to Joab and the senior army officers who were with him, ‘Now, go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and take a census of the people; I wish to know the size of the population.’ Joab gave the king the census results for the people; Israel had eight hundred thousand fighting men who could wield a sword, and Judah five hundred thousand. But afterwards David’s heart misgave him for having taken a census of the people. David then said to Yahweh, ‘I have committed a grave sin by doing this. But now, Yahweh, I beg you to forgive your servant for this fault, for I have acted very foolishly.’

When, however, David got up next morning, the following message had come from Yahweh to the prophet Gad, David’s seer, ‘Go and say to David, “Yahweh says this: I offer you three things; choose which one of them I am to inflict on you.” So Gad went to David and said, ‘Which do you prefer: to have three years of famine befall your country; to flee for three months before a pursuing army; or to have three days of epidemic in your country? Now think, and decide how I am



■ King David in prayer by Pieter de Grebber, circa 1635-1640

to answer him who sends me.’ David said to Gad, ‘I am very apprehensive . . . Better to fall into Yahweh’s hands, since his mercies are great, than to fall into the hands of men!’

So David chose the epidemic. It was the time of the wheat harvest. So Yahweh unleashed an epidemic

on Israel from that morning until the time determined; plague ravaged the people and, of the people from Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand died. But when the angel stretched his hand towards Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh felt sorry about the calamity and said to the angel who was

destroying the people, 'Enough now! Hold your hand!' The angel of Yahweh was standing by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

When David saw the angel who was ravaging the people, he said to Yahweh, 'I was the one who sinned. I was the one who acted wrongly. But these, the flock, what have they done? Let your hand lie heavy on me and on my family!'

2 Sam. 24:2, 9-17

A head count gave a king power over his subjects, a little like the power that tax records and driver's licences give modern governments. Census results could be milked for information about levying taxes, conscription for the army, or even finding able-bodied workers for forced labour.

David's census represented an attempt to increase his control. It meant the anointed king, hand-picked by God, was acting less like an agent of the Lord and more like an independent ruler who felt he could do whatever he liked with his possession. His census offended God and in punishment for numbering the people, the Lord sent a pestilence. He failed to trust that God would take care of him and his people.

David prayed that the Lord strike him, the shepherd who had done wrong, not the people who are the innocent sheep. His humble repentance won God's heart, both restoring his relationship with God and even ending the punishment Israel had to suffer. Our repentance, likewise, we must keep in mind, will do more than just make us right with God. It will unleash divine graces to help us overcome our weaknesses and tendencies to sin.

Trusting everyday

God wants us to trust Him today and every day, in good times and in bad, when we feel weak or when we feel strong. We must not let ambition, or the desire to have complete control over our lives, get the better of us. David was forgiven because of his desire to repent and to be reconciled to God, which is an example of faith that can teach us all how to trust God, even when faced with our sins.

Let us read another story:

Leaving that district, he went to his home town, and his disciples accompanied him.

With the coming of the Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him?'

This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us? And they would not accept him.

And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is despised only in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracle there, except that he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them.

He was amazed at their lack of faith. He made a tour round the villages, teaching.

Mk 6:1-6

You would have thought that the people who had known the young Jesus would have been proud of Him. But when He came back home to meet and speak to them they had

no time for Him! Why? Were they jealous? Or so short-sighted that they failed to see the spiritual giant who had grown up among them? Whatever the reason, the greatest teacher in the world stood before them - and they learnt nothing from Him! As a result of their lack of faith they failed to experience the power of His miracles. How true were the words of Jesus, "A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house" (Mark 6:4).

God is there before our very eyes

Those people were unable to grasp the greatness of Jesus. But let us not be too quick to judge them because we, too, could be blind like them. Do we fail to see God in the people we meet and in the everyday events of life? We tend to look for God in the unfamiliar and unexpected, and fail to realise that He is there before our very eyes in the sufferings and joys of the people with whom we live. All we need to do is to open our eyes to the people of our community and the events of our time. God is closer to us than we might think! Let us meet Him in the lives of all the people we meet.

Heavenly Father, may we who have sinned against You, trust in Your merciful love when we repent. And may we recognize Your Son Jesus Christ in the people we meet in our everyday lives.

Fr **Francis Maple** O.F.M Cap.
Franciscan Friary, 15 Cuppin Street
Chester CH1 2BN, England

I desire to suffer

There is no holiness without suffering. St Faustina was convinced of this, as she wrote, “All sufferings and adversities serve but to reveal the soul’s holiness” (Diary 573).

From her earliest years St Faustina wanted to become a great saint (Diary 1372). That is why she consciously and willingly agreed to accept the suffering which touched the whole of her life. We can say without question that the later sufferings in the life St Faustina were an integral part of her vocation. Her later years showed that suffering was a characteristic of her religious life. Such was the will of God.

Although day by day, Faustina encountered at times horrifying suffering, she accepted and came to terms with it, and even came to love it. What is more, she came to imagine everyday sacrifices as wild flowers, which grow at the feet of her beloved Jesus (Diary 208). She quite candidly acknowledged, “I gathered all my sufferings and difficulties into a bouquet for Jesus for the day of our perpetual betrothal. Nothing was difficult for me, when I remembered it was for my Betrothed as proof of my love for Him” (Diary 184).

I am Yours, completely Yours

It is certain that none of the people around St Faustina understood the value of suffering as well as she did. She said, “I desire, O my Jesus,



■ The Kowalski sisters: Helena (St Faustina), Józefa and Genowefa, picture taken in the city of Łódź in 1923

to suffer and burn with the flame of Your love in all the circumstances of my life. I am Yours, completely Yours, and I wish to disappear in You, O Jesus, I wish to be lost in Your divine beauty” (Diary 507).

Another time she said, “Jesus, You know that I love suffering and want to drain the cup of suffering to the last drop;” (Diary 697). Faustina desired to suffer, and constantly pleaded, “My Master, I ask You with all my thirsting heart to give me, if this is according to Your holy will, any suffering and weakness that You like - I want to suffer all day and night” (Diary 876). How great a likeness there was between her and St Paul (cf. Philippians 1:23), when, consumed by illness and suffering, he wished to depart this life, but she persevered in her desire to suffer; “Jesus,

my spirit yearns for You, but Your works hold me back. The number of souls that I am to bring to You is not yet complete. I desire toil and suffering; let everything You have planned before the ages be fulfilled in me, O my Creator and Lord!” (Diary 761).

The Lord Jesus told His secretary that the works of God are exposed to great sufferings (Diary 1643), which is why she frequently was capable of heroic suffering; “O Christ, suffering for You is the delight of my heart and my soul. Prolong my sufferings to infinity, that I may give You a proof of my love. I accept everything that Your hand will hold out for me. Your love, Jesus, is enough for me. I will glorify You in abandonment and darkness, in agony and fear, in pain and bitterness, in anguish of spirit

and grief of heart. In all things may You be blessed" (Diary 1662).

After meeting Jesus, who held her to His Heart, Faustina acknowledges, "When I was alone, my soul was set afire with the desire to suffer until the moment when the Lord would say 'Enough'. And even if I were to live for thousands of years, I see in the light of God that that is but one moment" (Diary 853). She experiences the uniting of her human heart with the Heart of Christ and perceptively feels His love and can declare, "I am never so happy as when I suffer for Jesus, whom I love with every beat of my heart" (Diary 303). And later in this trustful and humble prayer, "O my God, how sweet it is to suffer for You, suffer in the most secret recesses of the heart, in the greatest hiddenness, to burn like a sacrifice noticed by no one, pure as crystal, with no consolation or compassion" (Diary 351).

Three categories of conscious endurance

As she herself acknowledged, suffering, in the religious life of St Faustina, "seemed to spring out of the ground" (Diary 138). She divided it into three categories. The first was physical, occurring in her own body; "First, the physical sufferings and all the circumstances that would increase them" (Diary 135). Jesus Himself permitted such sufferings for "reparation for sinners" (Diary 942), for the entreaty of "mercy for the whole world, which is running riot in its wickedness" (Diary 1619). These sufferings deprived St Faustina of her sleep (Diary 717), and ruined her constitution (Diary 1619, 1633). How telling is this short

sentence; "Almost all night I had such violent pains that it seemed that my intestines were torn to pieces" (Diary 1613). She wrote of intense physical suffering on 10th March 1938, "But the sufferings returned with great violence and lasted almost the whole night, and it seemed that it would be the end, then and there" (Diary 1634).

Another type of suffering is moral suffering, concerned with man's right behaviour in accordance with the Divine Will. Faustina cites only a few occurrences; "On that day, there arose some misunderstandings between the Superior and myself. Neither she nor I were to blame, but moral suffering remained, because I could not explain the matter in question, since it was a secret. This was the reason why I suffered, even though, by a single word, I could have revealed the truth" (Diary 1638). Moral sufferings frequently accompanied physical sufferings (Diary 1454, 1487).

The most intense and painful sufferings, however, were spiritual in nature. On 25th April 1936 Faustina wrote, "On that day, the suffering in my soul was more severe than ever before. From early morning, I felt as if my body and soul had separated. I felt that God's presence had penetrated my whole being; I felt all the justice of God within me; I felt I stood alone before God" (Diary 653). Another time, she noted, "Today, I entered into the bitterness of the Passion of the Lord Jesus. I suffered in a purely spiritual way. I learned how horrible sin was" (Diary 1016). This spiritual suffering was always hard and difficult for her; "The heaviest suffering for me was that it seemed to me that neither my prayers nor my good works were pleasing to God" (Diary 68). This suffering caused the most unbearable

pain, and all the "sufferings and tortures in the world are as nothing with this sensation into which it has been plunged" (Diary 98), "the soul is in agony" (Diary 101). This is perfectly illustrated by this recollection penned after her miraculous spiritual healing; "[A]lthough my soul was already in the rays of His love, traces of my past tortures remained on my body for two days: a deathly pale face and blood-shot eyes. Jesus alone knows what I suffered. What I have written is very poor compared to the reality. I cannot put it into words; it seemed to me that I had come back from the other world... I shudder at the recollection of this past torture. I would not have believed that one could suffer so, if I had not gone through it myself. This is a completely spiritual suffering" (Diary 104).

St Faustina understood spiritual suffering well, which is why she admitted, "I pray most of all for souls that are experiencing inner sufferings" (Diary 694).

She behaved as Jesus did

Given the tremendous suffering undergone by St Faustina, we are faced with the question of her attitude to suffering and what helped her to endure it? At the very beginning of the Diary we encounter a resolution which she commits herself to faithfully fulfil during the whole of her life as a religious: "I will suffer silently, like a dove, without complaining. I will not allow my heart even one single cry of sorrowful complaint" (Diary 25).

St Faustina maintained silence in her suffering. She behaved as Jesus

did, who, in agony “did not open his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). On the First Friday, 7th January 1938, she wrote, “This morning during Mass, for a brief time, I saw the suffering Saviour. What struck me was that Jesus was so peaceful amidst His great sufferings. I understood that this was a lesson for me on what my outward behaviour should be in the midst of my various sufferings” (Diary 1467).

She asserted quite adamantly that, “In the midst of all sufferings, both physical and spiritual, as well as in darkness and desolation, I will remain silent, like a dove, and not complain” (Diary 504). She put particular emphasis on the need for silence, which guarded her from sin: “At those times when I suffer much, I try to remain silent, as I do not trust my tongue which, at such times, is inclined to talk for itself” (Diary 92). It was also a lesson in the power of the spirit; “In the sufferings of soul or body, I try to keep silence, for them my spirit gains the strength that flows from the Passion of Jesus” (Diary 487); “My lips are silent, while my ears are satiated with derision. I strive for silence in my heart amidst the greatest sufferings, and I protect myself against all attacks with the shield of Your Name” (Diary 1040).

Faithfulness to silence led Faustina to bear suffering calmly: “I must maintain peace and equanimity during times of suffering” (Diary 226); “In suffering, I must be patient and quiet, knowing that everything passes in time” (Diary 253); “Sufferings in no way take away my peace. On the other hand, although I enjoy profound peace, that peace does not lessen my experience of suffering. Although my face is often bowed to the ground, and my tears flow profusely, at the same

time my soul is filled with profound peace and happiness...” (Diary 1394).

Seeking relief in prayer

In suffering, St Faustina also remained in prayer. She made a decision: “In suffering, I must seek relief in prayer” (Diary 792); “In sufferings and torments, to take refuge in the tabernacle and to be silent” (Diary 861). She perfectly understood that suffering of itself was nothing, but that suffering experienced in unity with Christ’s passion, was a marvellous gift. This was why she asked, “O my Jesus, do with me as You please. Only give me strength to suffer. Since Your strength supports me, I shall bear everything” (Diary 1613).

Faustina’s relationship with Jesus played a key role. She gazed at Him: “Today, during Mass, I saw the Lord Jesus in the midst of His sufferings, as though dying on the cross. He said to me, ‘My daughter, meditate frequently on the sufferings I have undergone for your sake, and then nothing of what you suffer for Me will seem great to you. You please Me most when you meditate on My Sorrowful Passion. Join your little sufferings to My Sorrowful Passion, so that they may have infinite value before My Majesty’” (Diary 1512). “The suffering does not diminish... All of a sudden, the Divine Presence invaded me, and I forgot everything else. Jesus gave me to understand how much He had suffered for me” (Diary 26).

She contemplated His words: “My daughter, do not be afraid of sufferings: I am with you” (Diary 151); “My daughter, your sufferings

will not last much longer” (Diary 152); “My child, you please Me most by suffering. In your physical as well as mental sufferings, My daughter, do not seek sympathy from creatures. I want the fragrance of your suffering to be pure and unadulterated” (Diary 279).

She united herself with Him through Holy Communion, “However, in all these sufferings and struggles, I was not omitting Holy Communion” (Diary 105) as well as through His Heart, “...drown my own sufferings in the Divine Heart so that they would not be noticed on the outside, in so far as possible” (Diary 792).

I fix the gaze of my soul upon Jesus Crucified

During the eight day retreat in preparation for her final vows, Faustina made a number of resolutions for the future, among them; “To suffer without complaining, to bring comfort to others and to drown my own sufferings in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus!” (Diary 224). She left a piece of practical sisterly advice to all who suffer; “Amid the greatest torments, I fix the gaze of my soul upon Jesus Crucified; I do not expect help from people but place my trust in God. In His unfathomable mercy lies all my hope” (Diary 681).

Faustina accepted suffering by means of submissiveness to the will of God. First, she attempted to understand it, but later came to love it as Jesus’ particular gift to her; “From the moment I came to love suffering,



JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU

■ St Faustina and Merciful Jesus

it ceased to be a suffering for me” (Diary 276). She was heroic in her suffering; “When suffering afflicts me, it no longer causes me any bitterness” (Diary 455). She told Jesus of this, “Jesus, You know that I love suffering and want to drain the cup of suffering to the last drop” (Diary 697). After Low Sunday, which fell on 28th April 1935, St Faustina wrote, “I was happy to suffer for God and for the souls that have been granted His mercy during these days. Seeing that so many souls to have been granted divine mercy these days, I regard as nothing even the greatest suffering and toil, even if they were to last till the end of the world; for they will come to an end, while these souls have been saved from torments that are without end. It was a great joy for me to see others returning to the source of happiness, the bosom of the Divine Mercy” (Diary 421).

As Jesus’ beloved, Faustina recalled her vows and the particular offer of herself; “In times of struggle and suffering, of darkness and storm, of yearning and sorrow, in

times of difficult trials, in times when nobody will understand me, when I will even be condemned and scorned by everyone, I will remember the day of my perpetual vows, the day of God’s incomprehensible grace” (Diary 240).

A prayer of thanksgiving

Finally, Faustina thanked God for a variety of sufferings. A prayer, which she had written in her very first notebook, can serve as a beautiful and moving prayer of thanksgiving for all of us, for all our everyday small thorns of suffering, difficulties and adversities: “Jesus I thank You for the little daily crosses, for opposition to my endeavours, for the hardships of communal life, for the misinterpretation of my intentions, for humiliations at the hands of others, for the harsh way in which we are treated, for false suspicions, for poor health and loss of strength, for

self-denial, for dying to myself, for lack of recognition in everything, for the upsetting of all my plans. Thank You, Jesus, for interior sufferings, for dryness of spirit, for terrors, fears and incertitudes, for the darkness and the deep interior night, for temptations and various ordeals, for torments too difficult to describe, especially for those which no one will understand, for the hour of death with its fierce struggle and all its bitterness.

I thank You, Jesus, You who first drank the cup of bitterness before You gave it to me, in a much milder form. I put my lips to this cup of Your holy will. Let all be done according to Your good pleasure; let that which Your wisdom ordained before the ages be done to me. I want to drink the cup to the last drop, and not to seek the reason why. In bitterness is my joy, in hopelessness is my trust. In You, O Lord, all is good, all is a gift of Your paternal Heart. I do not prefer consolations over bitterness or bitterness over consolations, but thank You, O Jesus, for everything! It is my delight to fix my gaze upon You, O incomprehensible God!” (Diary 343).

The fruits of suffering

Given that suffering has its value, what were its fruits in the life of St Faustina? There were certainly many and they are worth noting, as suffering also touches us and should also bring fruit in our lives:

1. The graces which the suffering person obtains: “These divine graces became a great suffering for me” (Diary 122).

2. A growing love of God: "Sufferings, adversities, humiliations, failures and suspicions that come my way are splinters that keep alive the fire of my love for You, O Jesus" (Diary 57).
3. Authentic love for neighbour: "The Lord gave me strength of spirit and love towards those through whom these sufferings came" (Diary 1454).
4. Holiness of the soul: "After such sufferings the soul finds itself in a state of great purity of spirit and very close to God" (Diary 109); "...all sufferings and adversities serve but to reveal the soul's holiness" (Diary 573); "I understood that these two years of interior suffering which I have undergone in submission to God's will in order to know it better have advanced me further in perfection than the previous ten years" (Diary 981).
5. Benefits for souls – the greatest fruit, as Jesus had said, "I have need of your sufferings to rescue souls" (Diary 1612); "You are not living for yourself but for souls, and other souls will profit from your sufferings. Your prolonged suffering will give them light and strength to accept My will" (Diary 67). Tribulations are not senseless, but become tools in God's hands, to which Jesus drew Faustina's attention, "My daughter, your sufferings in the night obtained the grace of mercy for an immense number of souls" (Diary 1459). She herself was aware of this benefit; "For quite a long while, I felt pain in my

hands, feet and side. Then I saw a certain sinner who, profiting from my sufferings, drew near to the Lord" (Diary 1468).

6. Becoming like Jesus – the most beautiful fruit; "...through suffering the soul becomes like the Saviour" (Diary 57); "...by suffering, persecution, abuse, disgrace. It is through all this that my soul becomes like unto Jesus. And the greater the sufferings, the more I see I am becoming like Jesus. This is the surest way. If some other way were better, Jesus would have shown it to me" (Diary 1394). "If some other way were better" – these words are worth remembering, when we experience an excess of suffering.

Here on earth, love is tied to suffering. It is a kind of paradox. Why the one who loves undergoes suffering, all the more so, the more he or she loves? St Faustina's diary is the story of her love and her suffering, like warp and weft. Their weaving formed the carpet of her life: "Love and suffering are united in my heart" (Diary 1050); "...as I looked at the One whom my heart has loved with all its might and saw that He was suffering, ...my heart dissolved in love and bitterness, ...my love grew immeasurably" (Diary 1054). Love demands suffering as "[t]he quintessence of love is sacrifice and suffering" (Diary 1103). But as St Mother Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta) assures us, "If we love until it hurts, God will grant us His love and joy." This truth was confirmed in the life of St Faustina – the missionary of mercy.

Fr Karol Dąbrowski, Poland

Toward the end of the classic movie, "The Wizard of Oz," when Dorothy is saying goodbye to her friends before returning to Kansas, she gives the Tin Man a kiss, and he responds: "Now I know that I have a heart: because it is breaking!"

A couple of weeks ago, I completed a two-part series on the meaning of the word "soul" and on the created dignity and supernatural destiny of the marvellous body-soul persons that God created us to be. Shortly thereafter, I received an e-mail from a regular reader of this column, a letter that sounded very much like the Tin Man's sincere lament.

This reader is someone who, as a child, suffered sexual abuse at the hands of a relative. He kept the secret locked away in his heart for decades. He wrote:

"I thought I could go to my grave with it, protecting everyone... But life stopped, by God's will not mine... I broke down... Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder hit hard. I became so NUMB; I even had amnesia for a while, not recognizing my spouse and my home. Through these events the ugly secret was forced out ... To my shock, the maturity was not there in my siblings and parents, and I was rejected again; PTSD symptoms came back again, also with the question of LOVE? Where is their LOVE? Numb again on top of everything. (1) Is this a sickness of my SOUL? Doctors say it is part of the PTSD. (2) But my other question is that I am

How can I make it through ‘The Dark Night of the Soul’?

so afraid that I will be punished by God because I CAN'T FEEL LOVE OR RECOGNIZE MY SIBLINGS OR PARENTS BECAUSE I SHUT THEM DOWN... I have gone to a couple of healing Masses, but to no avail. Is there something I am doing wrong? Should I ask for healing, or suffer like some of the old saints say is a gift? I am serious: this numbness scares me. I have prayed and gave my will to God... not much else to give..."

First, let me respond to my brother in Christ here, and his particular questions. He is definitely experiencing what the saints have called "The Dark Night of the Soul". We shall talk about that in general in a minute.

But first, to my friend: Be at peace. From what you have written, I am sure that you are not at all apart from God or His grace. I know you do not 'feel' love for God or even for your relatives right now, and that must feel pretty bad at the moment. But remember, feelings of love and affection are not actually of central importance to the health of your soul. That's because 'love' is not primarily a 'feeling'. Rather, it's primarily a commitment of the will to the good of others (and even to your own

good, as a child of God). It's clear that you are not seeking revenge on your relatives or wishing them ill. And it seems clear that you have entrusted your will to the one who can take good care of it: God Himself. All these are good signs that you are in a state of grace.

Actually, I know someone who has been through exactly the same feelings that you are experiencing now: Jesus of Nazareth, Our Lord. When He was nailed to a cross, misunderstood by his countrymen, and even abandoned by most of his friends and relatives (from whom he had every right to expect both love and solace in his time of need), He was emotionally "numbed" by it all, too. He felt as if God, His Father, was far away. That is why he cried out in His agony, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). But even though in His agony He did not 'feel' love and affection (when He experienced any feelings at all in His agony, they were surely feelings of overwhelming grief and sorrow), He was expressing His commitment of love for us and for His heavenly Father more deeply at that moment than at any other time of His earthly life.

So, my brother in Christ, you are truly on the cross beside Jesus. Just remember that this does not mean that you are apart from Him at all (no matter how numb or grief-stricken you may feel at times), for your will is united to His, and you are loving your persecutors as He did from the cross by praying for them and seeking them no harm. The true centre of your soul, your will, is safely enfolded in the arms of your heavenly Father, right where you left it! He will take good care of it.

And remember how the Gospel story ends: Easter morning is coming. Just wait for it in trust. Psalm 130 says it best:

"Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice! Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication! ...

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word is my hope; My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning."

The journey through the Dark Night of the Soul is something that every disciple of Jesus Christ will need to take, at some point in life. This Dark Night can come upon us for any of three reasons:

1 Because we are holding onto mortal sin or deliberate venial sins. The Holy Spirit gives the comforting sense of His presence to us in our hearts in the early stages of our walk with Christ. He does so in order to show us that He is our heart's desire and to refresh us along the way. But if we stubbornly refuse to let go of one or more of our besetting sins along the way, then these lingering sins can dam up the waters of His grace and prevent Him from refreshing our parched spirits. As a result, we can feel rejected by God, or feel that He has gone far away, when, in actual fact, it is *we* who have (at least partially) rejected Him.

Remember that He loves us so much that He does not want to have only *half* of our hearts, but *all* of our hearts as His own! If we stubbornly resist His loving advances and His sanctifying grace, He may allow us to lose a sense of His presence. He will do so in order to wake us up to the need for honesty with ourselves and true repentance.

If you want to know what some of these faults may be that are getting in the way, try making an in-depth general confession (your priest can help you here), and try asking your loved ones, some friend or relative whom you can trust to tell you the truth about yourself. But don't get defensive about what you hear!

By the way, this reason for the dark nights and desert times in our relationship with God - lack of repentance for sin - is certainly NOT what my friend who wrote to me (above) is experiencing!

2 A second reason for the soul's Dark Night may be physical or emotional exhaustion or illness. Remember that the human soul and

body are very closely related. They affect each other deeply. The fact is, we are vulnerable, breakable creatures. When our bodies and emotions are broken, this can act like a dark cloud that envelops the soul, preventing it from feeling normal and healthy affections of love, either for God or for our neighbours, and often preventing us even from feeling the presence of God in prayer and worship.

If we are used to feeling such affections and such consolations, this can cause the soul great distress and even make us feel as if we have been rejected by God or have lost Him altogether. But, again, our love relationship with Him is not primarily a feeling; it's a commitment of the will. And that commitment can even be strengthened in the midst of the Dark Night. God gives us the grace to cling to Him in love and trust even when we are pummelled by doubts and fears and emotional numbness or distress.

This is the kind of Dark Night that Jesus experienced on the cross. This is the kind of Dark Night that my friend is experiencing now. Let's face it: It feels awful! And it may last longer than we think we can stand. Actually, for us, this is the kind of Dark Night for which we can and *should* seek healing, as it arises from natural causes.

When I was a college student, I went through a terrible time of this, and along the way, with the help of a Christian counsellor, I developed something that I called my 'Dark Night Emergency Kit'. I hope that some of my readers will find it helpful. It goes like this:

- *Trust in the objective truth of the Gospel. No matter what you may feel at the moment, the following*

statements from the Bible are infallibly true and trustworthy: "You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14), "the salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13), "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear that we shall be ... but we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn 3:2), "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Dt 33:27).

- *Take good care of yourself, as you know Jesus Christ would want you to do: get plenty of rest, wholesome food, proper medical attention, time for recreation, and time with friends. Nature has remarkable power to heal, set there by God, our Creator.*
- *Keep doing something useful for someone else, however small it may be, with the little strength you have, and wait patiently for God. He will, very gradually, increase your strength.*
- *If these three things are not enough to bring relief and healing, then open your heart to an experienced and wise Christian counsellor or spiritual director. There may be deeper wounds that need to be faced, in the light of Christ. A counsellor or spiritual director may be able to help you locate the festering wound and bring it into the daylight for healing. But continue with numbers 1-3 of this 'Emergency Kit' - they always help!*

3 The Dark Night of the Soul can be supernaturally induced by God Himself. This does not appear to be the kind that my friend is experiencing, and it may or may not be the kind that our Lord experienced on the cross (theologians differ on that point). It is not necessarily different than number 2 above: it just has a different cause. Sometimes, as a result of no unrepented sin (indeed, when



Amne Nygård, www.unsplash.com

a soul is walking faithfully in the way of God's commandments!) and for no discernible physical or emotional reason, our Lord simply withdraws from His chosen ones the sense of His loving presence.

Again, the primary reason He does this is to strengthen our loving commitment to Him so that we learn to rely totally on His will and His invisible (even unfelt) grace. There is no point seeking 'healing' for this condition, because its cause is supernatural, not natural. My little 'Dark Night Emergency Kit' will help. It always helps! But this Dark Night will fully end only when - and as - the Lord wills. He is performing surgery in the very depths of the soul. All we can do is let Him work and trust Him for everything.

St Faustina is a clear example of someone who experienced this. It was during her novitiate, primarily, that the darkness descended. While she was going through it, she believed it might never end: "Towards the end of the first year of my novitiate, darkness began to cast its shadow over my soul. I felt no

consolation in prayer; I had to make a great effort to meditate; fear began to sweep over me. Going deeper into myself, I could find nothing but misery. I could also see the great holiness of God. I did not dare to raise my eyes to Him, but reduced myself to dust under His feet and begged for mercy. My soul was in this state for almost six months.

"At a certain point, there came to me the very powerful impression that I am rejected by God. This terrible thought pierced my soul right through; in the midst of the suffering my soul began to experience the agony of death. I wanted to die, but could not.

"The soul is drawn to God but feels repulsed. All other sufferings and tortures in the world are as nothing compared with this sensation into which it has been plunged; namely, that of being rejected by God. No one can bring it any relief ... It finds itself completely alone; there is no one to defend it. It raises its eyes to heaven, but is convinced that this is not for her - for her all is lost. It falls deeper and deeper from darkness to darkness, and it seems that it has

lost forever the God it used to love so dearly" (Diary 23 and 98).

St John of the Cross wrote in depth about this kind of Dark Night, but the feelings that St Faustina expresses here could just as well be experienced at times by someone suffering from a Dark Night induced by natural causes (as in No. 2 above). The feelings of rejection and abandonment by God, of finding no consolation in prayer at all, of having "lost forever the God whom it once loved so dearly" - all this is characteristic of any deep, Dark Night.

And the fundamental remedy is always the same. Trust Him, even in the darkness. The darkness is not dark to Him; the night is as bright as the day; to Him darkness and light are both alike, for He can work in the depths of our souls, and work out His loving plan, even when all seems dark to us (see Psalm 139:7-12). If your feelings tell you anything different, then don't trust your feelings. Trust the Bible. Trust the Church. Trust the saints. And remember that Easter morning is on the way. He promised!

Saint Faustina said it best: "Jesus, do not leave me alone in my suffering. You know, Lord, how weak I am. I am an abyss of wretchedness. I am nothingness itself; so what will be so strange if You leave me alone and I fall? I am an infant, Lord, so I cannot get along by myself. However, beyond all abandonment I trust, and in spite of my own feelings I trust, and I am being completely transformed into trust - often in spite of what I feel" (Diary, 1489).

Dr Robert Stackpole, STD,
Director of the John Paul II Institute
of Divine Mercy, Massachusetts, USA

The house in Nazareth

There were two houses in Nazareth. One of them belonged to Anne and Joachim, where Mary was born and raised and probably visited by Gabriel the Archangel. The second one was St Joseph's who married Mary.

Jesus and His parents needed to flee straight from Bethlehem to Egypt to avoid Herod's influences. Otherwise, the baby Jesus would be killed as well as other boys in the town.

The Holy Family's exile lasted about five or six years before they could come back to their homeland and settle down in Nazareth.

The topic of emigration and/or exile is very current in today's world. People emigrate in search of better living conditions or to avoid wars, hunger and poverty. There is nothing wrong with that unless emigration separates families. A happy home is far more important than money. A true home can be built by united hearts in daily routine. This is impossible when the mother or father or both work abroad leaving their children with relatives.

The Holy Family as travellers, refugees and exiles

Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem for a census before the birth of Jesus. The family moved to Egypt after Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream to flee and escape the command of Herod who initiated the Massacre of

the Innocents in hopes of killing the child Jesus. (Matthew 2:16–18). They came back after Herod's death. This means that Herod was hunting for Him till the end.

Nazareth was Jesus' permanent residence. Pilate wrote this address on the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

We know little about Nazareth. There is one event that is recorded in the gospel related to the town, namely, the annual festival of the Passover pilgrimage of the Holy Family with 12-year-old Jesus from Nazareth to Jerusalem (Lk. 2:41–42). When the festival ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents were not aware. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's

house?" They both remembered the event, but neither Joseph nor Mary understood what Jesus meant (Lk. 2:43–50). Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:51).

The Gospel records that Jesus returned to Nazareth and was subject to His parents and that He progressed in wisdom and age with God and men (Lk. 2:52).

Growing is a process. Jesus spent almost thirty years in Nazareth, going to the local school, living and studying to the level Joseph could afford. He took part in sowing, harvesting, fishing and working in a vineyard. He was a carpenter, like Joseph, but could also be a shepherd. All that is written in the Gospel came from Jesus' own experience. Most importantly, He did it all in secret. None of the neighbours knew that He was the Son of God. Only when He started teaching publicly did the people of Nazareth realise that Jesus was someone extraordinary.

For thirty years Jesus prepared Himself for His public mission, bringing people love, forgiveness and healing and testifying that he was the Son of God and that God loves all His children.

It is a lesson for us. Growing is a process. If it took Jesus thirty years to grow up and be mature enough to work for God the Father we also need



■ The Holy Family with the bird by Bartolome Esteban Murillo, circa 1650

to submit to the process of growing with patience and to trust God. This is one of the tasks of a family: to raise children so that they are mature enough to be witnesses of God's love. The place and time of a testimony is chosen by God Himself, as in Jesus' life: it happened during the baptism in the River of Jordan. We had better not act on our own; otherwise we could give a counter-testimony and lack courage and strength to defend our faith.

The majority of people are called to lead ordinary, everyday lives like the Holy Family in Nazareth. Mary ran the house. She was a good wife, a good mother and a good neighbour. Joseph, too, was a good husband, a good father and a good worker. There was seemingly nothing interesting in their normal life; yet, love, happiness and wisdom filled their hearts. They were well thought of among

neighbours, people trusted them. It is also important that people around us can trust us.

Church is our home

The house of Nazareth is the image or type of the Church that Jesus established on earth. The same spirit of love, happiness and wisdom should fill the Church and relations among Her members should be family-like. As brothers and sisters we need to be open, friendly and eager to help one another because we are all children of One God, our Father. Within the Church, our house, there is God the father and Mary, our Mother.

Within this home we always find food, rest and forgiveness of our wrongdoings. Within this house we are always welcome and accepted as we are, no matter what we did. Within

this house we are cleansed from our sins, become pure again to get closer to God, the true Love.

There is another event in the Gospel related to the home in Nazareth. One day, during public ministry, people came to Jesus with the news that His mother and brothers (of Nazareth) were looking for him. Jesus pointed to those gathered around Him and replied: here is my mother, here are my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father is my mother, brother and sister (cf. Mk3: 31-35). In this way, Jesus declared that the house in Nazareth is exactly the type or image of the house or church that He wanted to establish with His disciples.

As He hung dying on the cross Jesus left us a mother, His Mother, to accept each child and give them spiritual food, rest and clothing (cf. Jn 19: 26-27). Mary is ready to accept all who Christ has redeemed. You can

come to the church-home as to the home of Nazareth. You can be hungry and dirty. Mary will accept you. She knows you are sick and need help. She will always be there for you and loves you as you are.

The Church is our home that we can all create. Anyone can come in here. Mary, as our Mother, welcomes each of us. There are no orphans in such a home, because there is Mary the Mother, there is Jesus, the Son of God and our Brother. There is also a Heavenly Father who loves us. And no matter how unwise we behave, we can always come back.

Setting a good example

What is in the house is ours, not mine. Voluntary poverty means that I want to share what I have to make others happy. There is selflessness in the house. We only discover how much serving others can benefit us.

There is also the process of imitation in the house. Imitation is the principle that works within the Church and our homes. Children imitate their parents – they observe and learn by it. Even in the womb they imitate by listening to and participating in the mother's experiences.

If a child observes that mother is angry with dad and dad is angry with mother, they will behave in the same way. However, if they see love between parents, they will wish to love, too.

From our family homes we took hundreds and thousands of skills that we have learned through imitation. These are both good and bad skills. Let us be grateful to God for those setting a good example. On the other hand, we

need to know that whoever sets a bad example consolidates dysfunctional patterns from the very beginning.

It is the same in the Church. The Church is a house where the saints set a good example for us. We need to remember that those are ordinary people like us. In their earthly life they did not walk in a halo, they had their weaknesses and flaws. I knew John Paul II personally; he was a man to converse with. This is a real saint. If we get to know the saints, we can imitate them.

We are particularly asked to be imitators of Jesus, our Brother, to follow His example. He said, 'If you wish to be a follower of mine, deny yourself and take up your cross each day, and follow me.' (Lk 9:23).

The house also teaches service. Once I complained to the Lord Jesus; I wanted to do so many good things and nothing came of it. And the Lord Jesus replied to me, 'I had a better will than you and a stronger one, I also wanted something good, and father wanted something else. You know how hard it is to switch to what father wants? I showed it to you in Gethsemane. I was sweating blood. And I kept repeating one thing, Father, not mine, but your will' (cf. Lk 22: 39-42).

Living according to God's will

When I discovered that God needed me, my life became incredibly easy. Nothing interests me more than the hour I am to live now according to God's will. I may have plans for the future but I'm not sure how long I am going to live. So in this hour to be lived, I can do God's will. God's will is written in time. We have everyday to do

God's will. St Faustina said that it is not important what I want but it is important what God wants me to do. If God wants you to go to sleep, go to sleep, and do not sit over something that feels so important to you. If God wants you to talk to someone for an hour, talk to that person because it is a hundred times more important than your lectures, your writing or reading a book, your game or computer. If God wants you to clean your apartment, do it.

Simple family attitude

The house of Nazareth shows us a very simple family attitude: this is my brother, this is my sister, this is my mother, this is my father, this is my child. Where there is family love, there is God who is the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son, and the most Holy Mother. Then the house becomes a church and the church becomes home. And since some bad things happen at home, sometimes bad things also happen in the church. Tensions and conflicts have always happened, they still happen and will be happening. If people love each other, they overcome internal tensions or external trials.

Let us thank God for our family homes as they are. If something is missing in our families and it hurts us, let us decide not to make the mistakes that were made against us. We all grow up to build a happy home.

The Church is also home. May we devote an hour on Sunday to receive strength from Christ to build our homes and our Church home for the whole week. Amen.

Fr Edwards, Poland

SCAPULAR INVESTITURE

Rite of blessing and investiture of the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel.

Any priest or deacon can conduct the ceremony of blessing and bestowing of the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel according to the following ritual.

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Almighty, everlasting God, who dost graciously defend thy Church from the wiles of the devil through St Michael the Archangel, we humbly implore thee to bless + and sanctify + this scapular introduced for arousing and fostering devotion among thy

faithful toward this great protector. And do thou grant that all who wear it may be strengthened by the same Holy Archangel, so as to vanquish the enemies of body and soul, both in this life and at the hour of death. Through Christ our Lord.

P. Let us pray.

Lord, look upon us praying and kindly hear the supplication of your servant dedicated to the special protection of St Michael the Archangel that through his intercession s/he may avoid any offence against you and may reach holiness in this life and after death the prize of eternal life. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen



Prayer for help in times of despair

Dear St Michael,

Sometimes it seems that the enemy knows only too well my weaknesses and how best to exploit them for his evil purpose. And so, with the utmost confidence, I humbly call upon you, most loving helper of those in agony, to defend me when you see I have so little stamina and wherewithal to fight against such cunning attacks. Give me strength, especially to withstand the enemy's most malevolent use of despair and darkness that threatens me.

And not only me, dear sweet angel, but all those who at this very moment, are struggling against overwhelming feelings of trouble, depression and hopelessness. Come swiftly to our aid and, by the power of God, banish the enemy far from us. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen.

Carol Puschaver,
New York, USA
cfp/ 9-21-2020

Culture of Care as a Path to Peace

Is peace to be found in conflict?
Is love to be found in hate?
Can we dismiss other faiths, others'
values?
Has love thy neighbour just come
too late?

Is the path that we choose
constructive?
Would care start to open some
doors?
Or will we just all be destructive?
Closed minds and resentment
galore?

Could a Pandemic bring us
together?
A focus for all to agree.
A time to share our resources?
Set aside all the hate that we see!
Respect for all is essential!
An open mind, now that is the key.
Don't look to others to show us the
way,
The change that we need starts
with ME.

Is there a time on this earth for love?
Can our cultures reconcile?
If we try hard can we do it?
It's possible, but might take a while!

Could our faith in God be the clue?
With angels and saints on our side,
we have hope and confidence.
We call on St Michael for help and
assistance.
The all-powerful protector and ally
against all evil.

Great St Michael, help and protect us!

© John P McGrory

Under the protection of St Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael the Archangel reveals himself today as a gift of the Merciful Father for the salvation of the whole of mankind. While evil gathers strength, lost and directionless human beings, indifferent to eternal values, retreat into egoism and live for the day, and while false prophets offer a world without God, the Creator once again shows His boundless love for His children, sending them the protection of the Great Archangel. His uncompromising stand for God holds back and disables the powers of evil, restoring order to creation, is a source of strength and enthusiasm for the faithful, enabling them to shape the world according to the Will of the Creator.

His love of and awareness of the significance of his mission to the whole of humanity has caused St Michael the Archangel, in the form of the copy of the figure from the miraculous grotto in Monte Sant' Angelo in Italy, using the Michaelites as his agents, to set out on a journey to meet people. Poland, where he has hitherto visited over 800 parishes, has been particularly marked out in his mission. By means of his presence in particular places in our country, he stands close to each person and intercedes for them: grounding them in the faith, making them aware of the good, supports them in prioritising right values in their lives, convinces the doubtful, strengthens the weak, brings unity to married couples and families, extricates souls mired in sin, restoring the purity of their hearts, frees people from captivity. Over 375,000 people, convinced of the effectiveness of

**GREAT
READ!**



heavenly intervention and the constant protection of the archangel, have been invested with the scapular of St Michael. The number of those with a devotion to the archangel, as well as Knights of St Michael the Archangel, is constantly growing.

The book which we now present for your attention answers the need for reliable knowledge about St Michael the Archangel among the faithful, and also serves as a useful resource for use in preparing homilies and catechesis on the subject.

Part of the foreword by Fr **Dariusz Wilk**
Superior General of the Congregation of
St Michael the Archangel

*To order the new
128 page book priced at*

£9.00 / €9.00

**See sub form inside
for PRICE
for USA & CANADA**

*You can write, phone or email;
details are provided for Canada,
USA or the U.K. Co-ordinator
who covers the rest of the world.*

ANGELIC BOOKSHOP RECOMMENDS

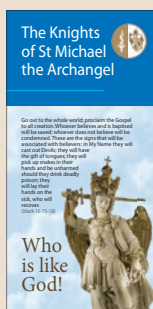
An Act of Consecration to St Michael

A deeper understanding of St Michael the Archangel



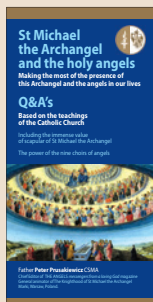
Knighthood booklet

With angelic chaplet, Litany and many prayers to St Michael.



Q&A Booklet St Michael the Archangel and holy angels

Many questions answered on your guardian angel, St Michael and a descriptive representation of the nine choirs of angels



Each item sold separately
Book / Booklets

£5.00 / €5.00

See sub form inside for PRICE for USA and CANADA

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.



Reliquaries from the grotto

Handle with care, fragile



DONATION of £8.00 / €8.00 plus postage
See sub form inside for PRICE for USA and CANADA



Singular scapular
£3.00 / €3.00 each
plus postage outside of UK

PLEASE NOTE:
NO POSTAL ORDERS

ALL CHEQUES OUTSIDE OF CANADA AND USA SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO PIOTR PRUSAKIEWICZ

Main Contacts

Chief Editor

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA
The Angel Magazine – Head Office
The Congregation of St Michael the Archangel
ul. Pilsudskiego 248/252
05-261 Marki, Warsaw, Poland
Email: redakcja.kjb@gmail.com

Deputy Editor & Chief co-ordinator Ireland, UK & all countries except USA and Canada

Noreen Bavister
P.O. Box 4332, Harlington
Dunstable, Beds LU6 9DG. England
Email: holyangelsinfo@gmail.com
Phone: +44 (0)7795-318-605
www.stmichaelthearchangel.info

CANADA CSMA Office

Fr **Matthew Sobierajski** CSMA
2751 Sunningdale Rd. W.
London, ON, N6H 5L2, Canada
Email: theangels@stmichael.com
www.stmichael.com/shop

USA CSMA Office

Colleen Keelan
The Angel Magazine
1401 Whittier Road,
Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230, USA
Phone: +1-313-647-5072
Email: theangelsmagazine.usa@gmail.com
www.stmichaelthearchangel.us

Details of Churches / shops and distributors – see subscription form inside middle of magazine

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)



■ The Archangel Michael defeating Satan by Antonio Palomino, 1692

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.