

The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

I touch Your wounds

Our Lady of Angels in Costa Rica

The moment of greatest love
– an interview with
Sr Gaudia Skass ISMM

Angels unveiled



The people of today need Divine Mercy

God, who knows everything and is mercy itself, in a way prepares beforehand the remedy and the ways of salvation for people, because He desires the salvation of every human being. God also acted in this way in our time, communicating the message of mercy to a young, simple and uneducated sister, Sr Faustina Kowalska, in the silence of the monasteries of the congregation, and then sending her on a prophetic mission to the whole world. To this work, which He initiated in the life of Sr Faustina and through her in the Church. God's invitation is for everyone, for the whole world to gain knowledge and understanding through the witness of her life we can do this in deeds, words and prayer.

Jesus attached some promises to all five forms of devotion to the Divine Mercy. For the most important grace promised by Jesus on the Feast of the Divine Mercy, He said: "I want to grant a plenary indulgence to the souls that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy" (Diary 1109). "The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion shall



obtain complete remission of sins and punishment" (Diary 699).

In her short life, an ordinary and unassuming nun, hid the secret of an incredibly intimate relationship with Jesus and the prophetic mission with which she was sent out to the whole world. Throughout her religious life, she was deeply convinced that God had called her to a special mission of mercy, to guide others on the path to total trust in the Merciful God and to show the radiance and depth of Christian mercy. Sr Faustina felt very unworthy of this choice because she was aware of her weakness, and yet God needed just such a simple and humble nun to show the world the power of His mercy through her.

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.

God bless you.

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA
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The Angels

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■ La Negrita

Our Lady of the Angels

Located in the city of Cartago, in Costa Rica, is the basilica that is dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels, known by the name of “La Negrita”, patron saint of the country. At the top of the basilica is a dome and the statue of St Michael the Archangel.

On August 2nd, 1635, Juana Pereira, a young girl who lived in Los Pardos, a town in the province of Cartago in Costa Rica, was out looking for firewood. As she strolled through the wooded area she came upon a large boulder. Lying on top of the boulder was a smaller stone, almost black in colour. The black stone looked like a doll. The stone is a small statue of the Madonna holding a baby. Juana picked up the stone and carried it home where she placed it in a box for safe-keeping.

The next day Juana again went to the woods to look for firewood. She came across the big boulder she had

seen the day before and to her surprise there lying on top of the stone was another doll. She took the new doll home and opened her box only to find that the first doll was gone. She placed the new statue in her box and carefully locked it this time.

On the third day Juana returned to the boulder in the forest and there lying on top was the black stone doll. Then she went home and looked in the locked box and found it empty. Shocked, confused and not a little frightened, Juana went to talk with her village priest. Juana told the priest the whole story and left the stone Madonna with him. He was busy and

OUR LADY OF LA NEGRITA

did not think too much about it, but the following day Fr Baltazar de Grado went to examine it and it was gone.

Several priests went to the forest

Fr Baltazar went to the woods just where Juana described and found the statue on the stone. He retrieved the statuette and secured it inside the tabernacle. The following morning Fr Baltazar discovered that the stone had disappeared again. Fr Baltazar consulted other priests and several of them went together to the forest where they again found the statue atop the boulder. The priests came to the consensus that these happenings were unexplainable by natural law or phenomena and that the Holy Virgin wanted to stay there. They decided to build a small church in that place.

A church was built with the contribution of the residents, many of whom had cocoa farms. By 1777, the construction of the current altar began, which is why the carvings with stylized leaves are found surrounding a carving of a large cocoa pod and below it an incipient or growing one.

Our Lady with an image of St Michael defeating the Devil

On both sides are carved baskets of fruits that are an allegory of the abundance of favours, miracles and food for its parishioners. The dome is, in reality, a huge crown on which you can see the anagram of the Virgin Mary and whose final finish is the image of St Michael the Archangel, defeating the Devil.

On September 24th, 1824, La Virgen de Los Angeles, (in English, the Virgin of the Angels) was officially declared the patron saint of Costa Rica. She is called Our Lady of the Angels because she was found on the day the Franciscans celebrate the feast of Our Lady of the Angels. Thirty-eight years later, Pope Pius IX declared that all who visit the Madonna's sanctuary will receive a full pardon of their sins.

In 1912 the present basilica was built over the original boulder where the little black Madonna was originally found by Juana Pereira. It is an awe inspiring combination of colonial architecture and 19th century Byzantine style. Today the original statuette of La Virgen is situated on a gold and jewelled dais above the altar in the basilica

Archaeologists are fascinated with this composition

The statue is composed of three different kinds of minerals, volcanic rock, jade and graphite. Archaeologists are fascinated with this composition since it is uncommon and maybe impossible to combine these three types of stone. The scientists agree that the statuette does have all three of these types of stone. Studies indicate that there was no graphite in Costa Rica at the time of the discovery of the statue. Across the ocean, in the Old World, no jade or volcanic rock existed. The Costa Rican patron saint has characteristics of both continents. The statuette is twenty centimetres tall, just under eight inches. It's called the little black one although its true colour is a greenish-grey.

Costa Ricans affectionately refer to their patron saint as La Negrita (The Dear Little Black One). During the civil war of 1833 the Madonna was named Princess of Peace. Since then Costa Rica has been the most peaceful country in Latin-America. Costa Rica abolished its army and established a University for Peace. In 1956 she was crowned Queen of Workers because from the beginning she displayed a unity with the poor and those beset with difficulties.

Every year on 2nd August Costa Ricans celebrate one of their most important Catholic holidays, La Dia de la Virgen de Los Angeles, (in English, The Day of the Virgin of the Angels) with pilgrimages called *romeria*, to the basilica from all over the country. Visitors are welcome throughout the year but the most exciting time is on August 2nd, when nearly one million people make a pilgrimage to the shrine. The faithful walk for miles, some on their knees to visit the shrine. On the second day of celebrations La Negrita is carried in solemn procession to the parish church of Central Cartago, where she spends a few days before returning home to her basilica. The basilica is open daily with several opportunities to attend Mass and Confession. This was a time when strict racial segregation reigned in Latin America. People of colour not only lived in separate areas, but were not even allowed to enter the city of Cartago. Heaven made a clear announcement about this system through La Negrita.

Angela Taylor UK

With permission of Fr Miguel Adrian Rivera, Rector of the Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles National Shrine in Cartago, Costa Rica.

When Sr Gaudia Skass, preaches God's love and mercy she radiates light from her smiling face. Born and raised in Poland, Sr Gaudia studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw before entering the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. In 2015, she completed graduate studies in journalism and is the founder of the YouTube channel Blisko Rahamim. She now lives in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

What is the God you believe in?

Sr Gaudia: The God I believe in is a love that always surprises me, surpasses me, amazes me and constantly inspires me.

Sr Faustina's Diary is filled with passionate love for me and you. The phrase "I desire" appears approximately 70 times in her Diary. The message is that God gives himself to us fully; he offers us his own heart, first and foremost in the sacraments. In the Divine Mercy image, we see rays pouring forth from Jesus' heart. They symbolise the purifying and life-giving sacraments — most of all his merciful presence in the sacraments of baptism, confession and the Eucharist. He patiently waits for us, his hands overflowing with gifts.

In your recordings and writings, you repeatedly speak of God's desires to heal our hearts with his infinite love. How can people imagine God's sheer love?

Sr Gaudia: It not unusual for God, who is and has everything, to leave



■ Sr Gaudia Skass ISMM

The Moment of Greatest Love

his comfort zone in heaven. He leaves heaven with a desire and happiness to save us.

He does not look for new fascinating experiences, no. He doesn't need this because Our Lord God has an ever-filling newness of happiness that is creative. And this God comes out of His happiness into our swamp of sin when we turn away from God where He will not only get dirty but also wounded by our sins... to the point of death. His Heart will be cut into a thousand pieces by our rejection of His love... For me, this is the

unquestionable thirst of the Lord God. He undertakes the rescue of souls for all, which He does not have to carry out at all. The salvation of souls is for us alone and not for his own personal gain. Our Lord accepts all our suffering and pays a high price so that we can have eternal life and happiness and joy with Him in paradise.

Today many people are searching elsewhere or find spirituality outside the institution of the Church. Why did God become man, why is it so important?

Sr Gaudia: For me, the most important thing in these words 'Why did God become man' is to experience how much God loves me. He, who is perfect and infinite, entered into the limitations of human flesh, so meagre, so small, and so susceptible to suffering and all that is unpleasant.

Jesus entered into this to be closer to me, simple as that. No one has done more for me than the Lord God, who became man to be closer to me so that I could touch Him, so that I could look into His eyes.... And that I might believe in the great

dignity of being human, for God himself became man.

And yet this is only the beginning...

Sr Gaudia: This is such a shocking revelation that even if the Lord God had stopped the history of salvation at this point, it would be enough to marvel at for all eternity! And God goes even further. That is why I am not surprised by what St Faustina wrote in her diary, that there would not be enough eternity for her to praise God's unfathomable mercy and compassion for her in a worthy way (cf. Diary 1486).

What I already know of the Lord God, of His great love for me, is so incredible that I can no longer comprehend it. And what will happen when I understand and discover more on the other side of life... Surely for all eternity I will wonder, praise and give thanksgiving again and again and again.

Jesus says to Sr Faustina; "Speak of My mercy". For many people, however, the word "mercy" is a purely theological concept. What does it mean to "speak of mercy"? How do we interpret this message of the Lord Jesus?

Sr Gaudia: There are two ways. The first one is mercy, Jesus is mercy incarnate, so mercy is His name and we should talk about Jesus - And the second is to talk about the deeds of God. Mercy is the love of the Lord God in deeds. People like to relate to something tangible rather than theological words which could be difficult for most people because it does not touch their hearts. Their hearts are touched by particular stories, and these can be stories from the Holy Scripture, or from Sister Faustina's "Diary", or

perhaps testimonies from their own lives. For example, visiting the lonely, helping the sick or doing a good deed.

Ideally, for every truth in which I believe, I have confirmation from my own life experience. When I speak of God's mercy, I speak of my own real experiences of God's mercy. Then a general truth can be built up from that, even a theological truth.

How do you understand Jesus saying to Sr Faustina: "I give great graces to souls who meditate devoutly on My Passion" (Diary 737). How can it help us? Some people say: "I meditate on the Passion, but it does not speak to me". What more can I do to believe in the unconditional love of God?

Sr Gaudia: It is a matter of grace. For our part we are willing and do what Jesus has commanded. He says; "Meditate" - and I do, but always with the awareness that it is God's grace, His decision, whether I feel something more deeply today, whether I understand or believe more deeply.

I hope, I ask, I humbly go to prayer and with confidence and I open the Sacred Scriptures to reflect, I pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet or I pause at 3:00 p.m. to reflect on the mercy of Jesus at the moment of his death. I do what I can and the rest is a matter of grace. I firmly believe that in every sincere prayer of the heart (no matter how short or long it is) I am drawing closer to God, to know Him and His mercy better.

But it is the Lord God who gives us a deeper understanding of His mercy; we do not always feel it and are not always fully aware of it. It is only after some time when you see that you are a different person

and your understanding is deeper. In other words, it is often only after some time that we see how grace has worked within us in secret.

So it is necessary to have not only a desire but also perseverance?

Sr Gaudia: I need to feed my desire to know God all the time. I need to feed it with time spent in prayer, meditation on the Word of God, reading mystics like St Faustina... I do it persistently, I do not get discouraged even if I do not see the results. I may not see the results for a long time, or even to the end. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for example, lived in complete spiritual darkness for many years, yet she entered into an ever deeper understanding of the mystery of God's mercy. And she herself was increasingly transformed into mercy, but she did not see it.

Perhaps, then, for the sake of our humility, God hides from our eyes the fruits of his grace but allows others to see them?

How can we understand the words of Jesus; "If My death has not convinced you of My love, what will?" (Diary 580).

Sr Gaudia: It is an expression of God's powerlessness. It is astonishing that the Almighty God is in a sense "impotent". He limits His omnipotence to the omnipotence of love. He is as omnipotent as love allows Him to be. Love does not allow certain limits to be crossed, for example, entering without invitation into the space where only man himself can say "Come in". God, although we are shown the depths of God's love for us to the point of death on the cross, He cannot force us to accept and reciprocate His love.

Sister, when the Lord Jesus says; "If you do not believe My words, at least believe My wounds" (Diary 379), what is He calling us to? How do we understand this?

Sr Gaudia: God's mercy is reflected in the cross of Christ, a direct reflection of His love for us. It has always been clear to us that God is love, but it is a matter of experiencing it in particular actions. The greatest act of God's love is that He died for us. And it is amazing that the One, over whom death has no power, dies.

He is without sin, death cannot touch Him, and yet He enters into a fragile human nature and accepts it completely.

He is fully God and fully man so that we can say these extraordinary words, that God, the almighty, eternal God, dies, and at the hands of men! He does it for us to pay our debt. His death is the strongest expression of how much He loves us.

This is most powerfully revealed in Jesus' passion, death and in His resurrection we see God's triumph over death, pointing toward the promise of eternal life in God's presence.

The Divine Mercy devotion leads us to greater trust, as we see in the prayer on the image: "Jesus, I trust in you." Jesus's Passion is the source of our hope, which leads us to invoke the Father for his mercy. The ultimate goal of our hope is our salvation, our eternal happiness with God. The chaplet should lead us to a greater trust in the reality that Jesus has redeemed us.

St Faustina wrote; "I desire to go throughout the whole world and speak to souls about the great mercy of God. Priests, help me

in this; use the strongest words [at your disposal] to proclaim His mercy, for every word falls short of how merciful He really is" (Diary 491). Could you give an instance from the Diary?

Sr Gaudia: "You are a corpse - yet you live." This is a paraphrase of a passage from "The Diary", where Jesus says that even if there were no hope of resurrection from a human perspective, even if a person were like a corpse, God's mercy can resurrect souls in their fullness (cf. Diary, 1448).

I believe that this image of death is the most fitting because death is always the definitive end of life here on earth. According to some, it is already the complete end of everything; they do not believe in life after death, and therefore, they live in constant fear of death.

On the other hand, interestingly, when Jesus speaks about death in the Holy Scriptures, He refers to sin. That is the real death! It is a gradual spiritual dying that can lead to choosing eternity without God, in incredible loneliness, as hell is such a total, cruel solitude. However, when Jesus talks about physical death (the death of the body), He calls it a sleep. They even laugh at Him when He goes to resurrect Jairus' daughter. But Jesus says: she is only sleeping. And that is the understanding that we should have: physical death is just a sleep.

In one sentence please provide an example if I met a person – and what, as a priest, can I say to them? What would be the most powerful words?

Sr Gaudia: Each person is unique therefore for each individual

something different is needed. However, there is something we all have in common – everyone first needs to experience that the priest or anyone addressing them actually sees them, values them as a human being, takes time for them and is fully present in the moment of conversation. Everyone needs to feel important to the other. If the fundamental experience, the sense that a priest or other interlocutor wants my good is assured, then the simplest words about God's mercy can touch a heart powerfully.

What words do you use when proclaiming the truth about God's mercy?

Sr Gaudia: There are no limits to the mercy of God. Through the message of Divine Mercy, our Lord is preparing us for His final coming.

The greatest attribute is love and mercy. It unites the creature with the Creator. This immense love and abyss of mercy are made known in the Incarnation of the Word and in the Redemption [of humanity], and it is here we read that St Faustina saw this as the greatest of all God's attributes.

For me, each time the truth about God's mercy is spoken is when I interact with people. I always try to get to know the group a little before preaching.

Through the grace of God, He really provides me with an insight into how to address this or that specific group, what words will resonate with them, what they need to hear.

Sr Gaudia Skass ISMM

was interviewed

by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA

I Touch Your Wounds...

In one of the contemporary Easter songs, we pray with the words: “You come to us despite a closed door, Jesus risen from the dead, with the wounds from the Passion...”

Our church today is like a Cenacle – the upper room where the Eucharist was celebrated for the first time. And we, like the apostles – afraid, seized with fear, are not sure what to do next... We confess: Lord, we have less faith than the apostle Thomas. Let us touch your wounds, so that we fall to our knees and confess: “You are my Lord! You are my God!”

The wounds of Your hands

I touch the wounds of Your hands, inflicted by the nails with which you were nailed to the cross. Show mercy to our hands and heal them. So often they are clenched and cold. Heal the hands of priests, so that they willingly and patiently absolve, so that they touch with trembling and respect the most sacred forms of Your Body and Blood. Heal the hands of the spouses and parents – let them be tender, ready to embrace and hug their wife, husband, child. Heal the hands of the wealthy to open their hearts with sharing with those who are poor.

The wounds of Your feet

I touch the **wounds of Your feet**, painfully pierced with nails. Show mercy to our legs and heal them – from laziness, thinking only about ourselves, lack of readiness to serve. Says the Psalmist: “I turn my feet to your admonitions. I hastened without

hesitation to keep your commandments” (Psalm 119:59-60). Our feet so often reluctantly follow the way of Your commandments. Lift us up, heal us from our spiritual paralysis.

The wounds of Your face

I touch the wounds of Your most holy face. “Then they began to spit in Jesus’ face and beat him with their fists. ... My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard” (Matthew 26:67). Jesus was inhumanly disfigured. Show mercy to our faces and heal them. The Word of God speaks with pain about people who have ‘insolent faces’ – they are arrogant, disdainful, haughty, lordly, overbearing, proud and supercilious, rebellious, stubborn people, with a hardened heart rejecting the love of a parent with contempt. A vessel that mocks the potter. No longer on Veronica’s veil, but on our faces, Merciful Lord, leave your face: compassionate, filial love, full of devotion, beautiful face of the Son of Man.

The wounds of Your eyes

I touch the wounds of Your eyes – black, that cried tears of blood. Show mercy to our eyes and heal them. Teach them to see Your presence in the beauty of the created world. The word of God says: “My eyes are weary from looking up” (cf. Is 38:13) and from

seeking Your help. And our eyes are tired, but not from “looking up”. Tear them, Lord, from the glass screens of smartphones, computers and television. Restore the innocence of seeing – without prejudice, condemnation or judgement. Teach us to see what is the most beautiful in another. Rip from our eyes the lustful cataract of impurity. So many addicted to pornography now have porn-eaten eyes, blinded by impure thoughts and passion. Merciful Lord, who restored sight to the blind, heal, above all, our soul, because the eyes are its mirror.

The wounds of Your head

I touch the wounds of Your head – made by the hard thorns of the crown. Through their excruciating pain, please, show mercy to our mind. We have taken off the “helmet of salvation”, therefore the poison of impiety has infected our thoughts. And yet here is the source of words spoken, decisions made and actions taken. Conversion, metanoia is a change of heart. Merciful Lord, strengthen in us a persistent desire to seek the truth, so that we do not die like complete fools in the land of falsehood, deceived by the cynical servants of the father of lies, which is Satan.

The wound on Your shoulder

I touch the painful wound on Your shoulder caused by carrying the



■ The Incredulity of St Thomas by Bernardo Strozzi, circa 1620

cross to Golgotha. To one of Your beloved disciples, You said: “I had a wound on my shoulder from carrying the cross, three fingers deep, with three exposed bones. It caused me more suffering and pain than all the others” [words of the Lord Jesus to St Bernard of Clairvaux]. The least known but at the same time the most painful. O, Lord, through the pain of this wound, show us mercy and free us from selfishness, self-absorption, thinking only about ourselves. Let us hear Your words again: “Bear one another’s burdens”. Be like the good Samaritan. Spread the mantle of Your mercy over our indifference and selfishness. Heal us, Lord.

The wound on Your tongue

I touch the bloody wound on Your tongue, inflicted by a thorn in the mockery of the night of Your capture, and I beg: Heal our tongue, heal our words. How much our curses must hurt You, our dirty jokes, our judgments, gossip, slander. The apostle St James wrote in his letter: “The tongue,

however, cannot be bridled by any human being, it is an unstable evil, full of deadly poison. With it we glorify God and with it we curse people, created in the image of God. Blessing and cursing come from the same mouth. It cannot be like that...” Mercy, Lord! Have mercy on us.

The wound of Your side

And finally, Lord, I touch the wound in Your side, the wound of Your heart. As Your beloved disciple wrote in the Gospel: “One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John, 19:34). You said to Sr Faustina: “From all my wounds, mercy for souls flows like streams, but the wound of my heart is a source of unfathomable mercy, from this source all graces for souls flow. I am burning with the flames of pity, I want to pour them over the souls of men. Tell the whole world about my mercy” (Diary 1190).

Heal our disbelief, the coldness of our hearts, the distance with which

we treat You. How much it hurts Your heart. You complained: “There are souls who do not trust my goodness and never want to know the sweet familiarity in their own hearts (...) This disbelief in my goodness hurts me the most. If my death has not convinced you of my love, what will convince you? A soul often wounds me mortally, no one will comfort me here” (Diary 580).

Lord, in a short time we will receive You in Holy Communion. Say to us the same words as to the Secretary of Mercy, St Faustina: “Now, lay your head on my breast, on my heart, and draw from it strength and power for all your sufferings, because you will not find relief, help or consolation anywhere else. Know that you will suffer much, but do not be afraid, I am with you”.

* * *

We come to You, Merciful Lord, for to whom shall we go? You are our hope. We trust in You.

Your wounds are for us the Gate of Mercy. We want to go through it, because if not, one day we will have to go through the Gate of Your Justice.

We give You our fears, our wounds, our sick guilt, our infirmities. We give You our disbelief, our disappointment and resentment, our aggression and our jealousy. We give all our misery to You, Lord.

We throw the anchor of trust in the sea of Your Mercy and ask: Stand among us, in our heart, in our homes, families, religious communities. Heal our wounds, breathe the Spirit of love in our hearts, let us experience that we are loved. Show us, Lord, Your Mercy.

Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

Fr Christopher Poświata CSMA

The Sacred Heart and the Divine Mercy

In December 2023 the Church celebrated 350 years from the first apparition received by St Margaret Mary Alacoque in her convent in the French town of Paray-le-Monial. Jesus revealed to her the secrets of His Heart and from these events began the devotion that have spread throughout the world.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a rich and profound aspect of Catholic spirituality, rooted in a series of reported apparitions and promises that have inspired believers for centuries. These apparitions have occurred to various saints from the Middle Ages, most notably St Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 17th century, and they emphasise the boundless love and mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Apparitions to St Margaret Mary Alacoque

St Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun, reported a series of visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus between 1673 and 1675. In these mystical encounters, Jesus revealed His burning heart, surrounded by thorns and radiating divine love. It was pierced by the lance-wound, encircled by the crown of thorns, surmounted by a cross, and tenderly bleeding. In some depictions, this sacred image rests within the bosom of Christ, His wounded hands pointing toward the heart, symbolising His ardent love.

Jesus expressed his desire for a devotion to His Sacred Heart and made

a series of promises to those who practiced and spread this devotion.

Promises of the Sacred Heart:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state in life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place where a picture of My Heart shall be set up and honoured.

Later, in the 19th century, another Catholic nun, Mary of the Divine Heart, urged Pope Leo XIII to consecrate the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, further igniting the flame of devotion.

Another century later, Jesus appeared again to a nun, this time in Poland. It was Sister Faustina

Kowalska who was entrusted with painting the image of the Divine Mercy.

Now questions may be asked: why both cults in the Church? Aren't they essentially the same? In both apparitions, Jesus points to his heart. And why is the heart of Jesus not painted in Divine Mercy?

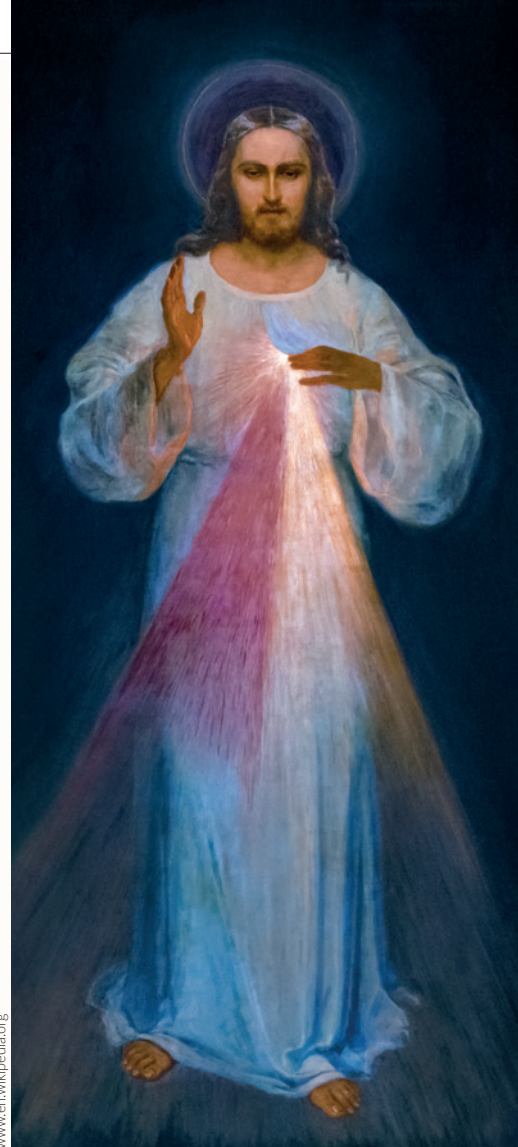
1. Sr Faustina's description of her revelation of 22 February 1931, (Diary 47) which she had in Płock, she does not mention the heart, but rather the rays emerging from "a fold in the robe" (Diary 47).

2. The worship of the Heart of Jesus and the worship of the Divine Mercy are two completely separate devotions because there are fundamental differences between them.

Rev. Dr. Ignacy Rozycki, the Polish theologian who examined the *Diary of St Faustina* in depth for the formal investigation of her writings undertaken by the Vatican as part of the process for her canonization. Fr Rozycki explains: "Concerning His Sacred Heart, Jesus speaks to Sister Faustina: "My Heart is Mercy Itself" (Diary, 1777). But He also states the same thing about



■ Sacred Heart of Jesus, 19th century Portuguese school, artist unknown



■ Divine Mercy by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, 1934

Himself [Diary, 1074]. Therefore, Jesus, as the incarnation of Divine Mercy is also the proper object of the devotion. It follows that this devotion may equally well be called Devotion to The Divine Mercy and Devotion to The Merciful Jesus, with both names expressing exactly the essence of the devotion in reference to its object.

Jesus, The Divine Mercy Incarnate, occupies, however, a privileged place in this devotion. He is not only the proper object of it, but He is the main object, in the sense that all acts of this devotion actually have Jesus as their proper aim, even those acts which are directed to the other Persons of

God. For instance, the Chaplet of The Divine Mercy is clearly directed to the Mercy of God the Father. However, the 31st and 49th revelations (Diary, 687 and 848) represent Jesus as the one who bestows all graces associated with this chaplet.

Furthermore, He is presented as the object of trust in [Divine] Mercy which we express by reciting the chaplet. This exceptional place of Jesus within the framework of the devotion has its doctrinal basis in the words of the Gospel: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one goes to the Father except through Me" [Jn 14:6]. Since Jesus is the main object of

this devotion, it may rightly be called in a shortened form The Devotion to the Merciful Lord Jesus (Rev. Ignacy Rozycki, STD, "Essential Features of Devotion to The Divine Mercy," in Robert Stackpole, STD, Ed., *Pillars of Fire in My Soul: The Spirituality of St Faustina*. Stockbridge: Marian Press, 2003; pp. 98-99).

3. Therefore, neither in the practice nor in the popularisation of the Divine Mercy devotion should these devotions be confused, nor it should not be thought - as some want - that Divine Mercy devotion is a newer version of Divine Heart devotion.

	Devotion to the Heart of Jesus	Devotion to the Divine Mercy
Proper object of the devotion	The Divine-Human Heart of Jesus Christ	The mercy of the entire Holy Trinity
Subject matter of the devotion	Image of the human heart of Jesus	Image of the Merciful Jesus with distinctive rays and signature: Jesus, I trust in You
The essence of the devotion	Reparation to God for sins	Trust in God
Privileged time of the devotion	First Fridays of the month and the Feast of the Heart of Jesus	Three o'clock in the afternoon (the moment of Jesus' dying on the cross) and Divine Mercy Sunday

Jesus also made certain promises to devotees of the Divine Mercy:

For the devotees of the Divine Mercy Image:

"I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory" (Diary 48);

"By means of this Image I shall be granting many graces to souls; so, let every soul have access to it" (Diary 570).

For those who trust in Divine Mercy:

"The soul that trusts in My mercy is most fortunate, because I Myself take care of it" (Diary 1273);

"Whoever places his trust in My mercy will be filled with My divine peace at the hour of death" (Diary 1520);

"He who trusts in My mercy will not perish, for all his affairs are mine, and his enemies will be shattered at the base of My footstool" (Diary 723).

For those who spread the Divine Mercy:

"With souls that have recourse to My mercy and with those that glorify and proclaim My great mercy to others, I

will deal according to My infinite mercy at the hour of their death" (Diary 379);

"Souls who spread the honour of My mercy I shield through their entire lives as a tender mother her infant, and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the merciful Saviour. At that last hour, a soul has nothing with which to defend itself except My mercy. Happy is the soul that during its lifetime immersed itself in the Fountain of Mercy, because justice will have no hold on it" (Diary 1075);

"All those souls who will glorify My mercy and spread its worship, encouraging others to trust in My mercy, will not experience terror at the hour of death. My mercy will shield them in that final battle" (Diary 1540).

For those who say the Divine Mercy Chaplet:

"At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the indulgence is the same. When this chaplet is said by the bedside of a dying person, God's anger is placated, unfathomable mercy envelops the soul, and the very depths of My tender mercy are moved for the sake of the sorrowful Passion of My Son" (Diary 811);

"Say unceasingly the chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite

it will receive great mercy at the hour of death" (Diary 687);

"Through the chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will" (Diary 1731).

For sinners:

"Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer: *O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You* (Diary 186).

"I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet" (Diary 699).

Agnes Paul

Taken from

www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/what-does-devotion-divine-mercy-signify

Proof of Purgatory?

Look No Further (part 1)

This four-part series was prompted not so much by a question as by a challenge. A Protestant student in one of my theology classes recently asked me to defend the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, since his Biblical Studies professor once told him that there was “no way” that this doctrine could be found in the Scripture.

First of all, we who are Divine Mercy devotees probably have been moved by the powerful vision of purgatory that St Faustina recorded in her Diary (see entry 20), and her subsequent concern for the souls there who are in need of our prayers.

But the Diary aside, is there a Biblical basis for the belief in the doctrine of purgatory? The answer: emphatically “Yes!” Scripture, tradition, the Magisterium and rational common sense all come together in support of this doctrine.

On the other hand, we need to bear in mind that purgatory is one of the “mysteries” of divine revelation. That does not mean we are completely “in the dark” about it; it simply means that there is more to this mystery than we can possibly fathom in this life.

What does the Scripture say?

There is no doubt that both Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians (e.g., Greek and Russian Orthodox) have much in common regarding the whole matter of purgatory and prayers for the departed. For example,

both see a foundation for such prayers in Holy Scripture. In 2 Maccabees 12:42-46, for example, the Jewish hero Judas Maccabeus ordered sacrifices to be offered in the Temple for the souls of his soldiers killed in battle, that their sins might be forgiven: “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins” (verse 46). Obviously, if they could be “loosed” from their sins after their death by the prayers of the living, they must be in some kind of post-mortem state in which cleansing from sin is possible. This seems to have been a common Jewish belief in the century before Christ. [Note: The common Protestant contention that the Catholic Church only added the two books of Maccabees to the Scriptures in 1546, at the Council of Trent, to counter Martin Luther’s claim that prayers for the departed were not scriptural, is demonstrably false. The Maccabean corpus was accepted at Rome as canonical Scripture as early as AD 496, in the Decree of Pope Gelasius. The books were also listed as canonical Scripture by the ecumenical Council of Florence (1439-1443) long before the Reformation.

The decree on the scriptural canon at the Council of Trent only clarified the uncertainties about the Old Testament books because a few other books in the so-called Apocrypha were still in dispute.]

Scripture contains other allusions to prayer for the departed as well. St Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:29 an ancient practice in which Christians were baptized on behalf of the dead. This may have been an early and somewhat extravagant form of liturgical prayer for the departed, or St Paul may be using the word “baptism” in this passage metaphorically (as in Mk 10:38), to refer to the baptism of earthly trials, mortifications and afflictions accepted and offered up on behalf of the departed by the early Christians. St Paul, in Colossians 1:24, mentions his own practice of offering up his sufferings for the good of the Church. In any case, he does not criticize prayer for the departed in 1 Corinthians 15, and implicitly his argument in that chapter approves of it. In 2 Timothy 1:16-18, St Paul wrote of his friend Onesiphorous: “May the Lord grant unto him to find the mercy of the Lord on that day” (that is, the Day of Judgment). The

context of St Paul's remarks suggests that Onesiphorous was already dead (see 2 Tm. 1:18 and 4:19).

Further evidence that prayer for the departed was apostolic teaching and practice comes from the early church Fathers. St Polycarp, for example, who was martyred in AD 156, had learned the faith in his boyhood from St John the Apostle himself, and in the 2nd century account of his martyrdom we learn that just before his death, he prayed "for all those whom he had ever known." Given that Polycarp was 86 at the time of his martyrdom, most of those whom he had ever known must have been dead. In fact, the most ancient liturgical texts for the Eucharist that we possess, from both the eastern and the western Mediterranean, also contain prayers for the departed. In the mid-third century, St Cyprian of Carthage tells us that prayers for the departed had been said in all the churches since the time of the apostles. In fact, there are no known opponents of prayers for the departed among orthodox Christian believers in the ancient Church.

The cumulative force of the evidence, therefore, suggest that prayer for the departed was very likely an apostolic teaching and practice, and implicit in that practice and belief is another one: that we can help the departed in some way by our prayers, the faithful departed at least. If they are in hell, of course, they are beyond any help. If they are in heaven, they do not need our help. Only if some of them are in a kind of intermediate state of cleansing and purification does the practice of praying for the departed make any sense.

Thus far, I think, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians are of a common mind.



■ An Angel Freeing Souls from Purgatory by Ludovico Carracci, circa 1610

How do the faithful departed actually benefit by our prayers for them?

Some Protestants fear that if we pray for the dead, then that implies that people have "second chances" beyond the grave to repent and come to saving faith, and if that is true - that we all get second, third, and more chances beyond this life - then why should missionaries and evangelists bother to expend their energies? Why should they so often risk their lives spreading the gospel among the living? After all, if people do not turn their hearts to Christ in this present

life, they can always do so in the next. The doctrine of purgatory, so understood, would undermine the urgency and importance of Christian evangelism (an urgency and importance on full display in the lives of the apostles themselves in the New Testament!).

However, this represents a misunderstanding of the Catholic and Orthodox doctrine of purgatory. We do not intend to pray for all the departed, including those who died in unrepented mortal sin, but only for the faithful departed. That is, for those who died in faith, in a state of grace, yet who were not fully sanctified in faith, hope and love at the time

of their passing. If some Catholic prayers for the departed seem indiscriminate, that is because the Church on earth generally does not presume to judge which persons did not die in a state of grace, and were thereby eternally lost (for whom such prayers would be useless). The state of the heart at the time of death is usually known only to God. All mainstream Christian traditions accept that the underlying decision for or against Christ must be made in this present life. By praying for the departed, Catholics simply ask our Lord to complete the work that he began in those who clung to Him in faith, but whose hearts were not fully sanctified at the hour of their death. For those who died with at least a tiny spark in their hearts of faith in the God of mercy (faith the size of a mustard seed, so to speak), our prayer is that the Lord in His tender mercy will fan that spark into flame in the next life, as swiftly as possible burning away the imperfections of their souls and making them ever more fully united to Christ, “for He is like a refiner’s fire, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord, an offering in righteousness” (Mal 3:2). I am reminded here of some words written by C.S. Lewis in his book *A Grief Observed* at the death of his beloved wife Joy: “She was a splendid thing, a soul straight, bright and tempered like a sword. But not a perfected saint. A sinful woman married to a sinful man; two of God’s patients not yet cured. I know there are not only tears to be dried but stains to be scoured. The sword will be made even brighter... but oh God, tenderly, tenderly.”

Again, as I understand it, in all this the Catholics and the Eastern

Orthodox are in full accord. We continue to pray for the departed, entrusting their souls into the hands of our heavenly Father, that they might find continual growth in His love and service, until they attain what the Book of Hebrews calls “that holiness without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). Our Lord Jesus Himself stated that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 3:20). Since even with the help of divine grace, few of us have attained that righteousness in its fullness by the time of our death, our Lord provides for us a time of healing and purification, to complete the work of sanctification in us that He started. Father Aidan Nichols, OP, put it this way in his book *Rome and the Eastern Churches*:

“At its most fundamental, the doctrine of purgatory affirms that for those who die with their wills set towards charity, further transformation is possible beyond death as a preparation for heaven. And stated thus, the doctrine is an ecumenical doctrine, which belongs to the Greek and Latin churches, no matter what terminology is used.”

However, there is one aspect of the doctrine of purgatory on which, historically, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox have never really been in accord. What is it? (To be continued in the next part.)

Dr Robert Stackpole, STD
The director of the John Paul II
Institute of Divine Mercy.

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Prayer to St Joseph for a Happy Death

O Blessed Joseph, you gave your last breath in the loving embrace of Jesus and Mary. When the seal of death shall close my life, come with Jesus and Mary to aid me. Obtain for me this solace for that hour - to die with their holy arms around me. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I commend my soul, living and dying, into your sacred arms. Amen.

For Assistance at the Hour of Death

Glorious Archangel St Michael, by thy protection, enable my soul to be so enriched by grace as to be worthy to be presented by thee to Jesus Christ, my Judge, at the hour of my death. As thou hast conquered Satan and expelled him from Heaven, conquer him again, and drive him far away from me at the hour of my death. O Mary, Queen of Heaven, procure for me the assistance of St Michael at the hour of my death!

Prayer of St Gertrude for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners within the universal Church, those in my own home, and within my family. Amen.

www.catholic.org



The Divine Design of the Human Body

Yahweh, you examine me and know me, you know when I sit, when I rise, you understand my thoughts from afar. You watch when I walk or lie down, you know every detail of my conduct. You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders. You knew me through and through, my being held no secrets from you, when I was being formed in secret, textured in the depths of the earth. Your eyes could see my embryo. In your book all my days were inscribed, every one that was fixed is there. Psalm 139: 1-3, 13-16

The concept of the human body in the teaching of the Catholic Church is deeply rooted in its theological and moral tradition. Catholic teaching on the human body is influenced by various theological and philosophical perspectives, including those of St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas and other theologians and scholars. Here are some key aspects of the Catholic Church's teaching on the human body.

Created in the Image of God

Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God; "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26-27). Man occupies a unique place in creation: he is in the image of God; in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; he is created male and female; God established him in his friendship.

Of all visible creatures, only man is able to know and love his creator. He is the only creature on earth that God has willed for himself, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. This is the fundamental

reason for his dignity. Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons and he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead (cf. CCC, 355-357).

This belief forms the foundation for the Church's teaching on the inherent dignity and worth of every human person, regardless of their physical characteristics or abilities.

Unity of Body and Soul

Catholic theology emphasizes the unity of the human person, who is composed of both a material body and an immaterial soul. The Bible expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that "then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7).

Man, whole and entire, is therefore willed by God. The body is not

seen as separate or inferior to the soul but as an integral part of the person; "Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator" (Gaudium et Spes, 14).

Respect for the Body

The Church teaches that the human body is a gift from God and should be treated with respect and dignity. This includes caring for one's physical health, avoiding actions that harm the body and promoting the well-being of others; "Man is not allowed to despise his bodily life, rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and honourable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day" (Gaudium et Spes, 14).

The Theology of the Body

God created man and woman in original unity, intending them to be a communion of persons who image the

divine Trinity. Together, they are called to love and be fruitful. Original sin of Adam and Eve distorted the original unity and harmony between man and woman, leading to shame, lust and the objectification of the body.

However, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, plays a key role in redeeming humanity and restoring God's original plan for human relationships. Christ's self-sacrificial love on the Cross is seen as the model for marital love and the antidote to the effects of sin.

The Theology of the Body highlights marriage as a sacrament, a visible sign of God's love for His people. Spousal relationship between a husband and wife reflects the union of Christ and the Church.

The Sacramentality of Marriage

Marital love is meant to be free, total, faithful and fruitful, mirroring Christ's love for the Church. The human body within marriage, male and female, is designed to communicate love, self-gift and a call to communion. It is through our bodies that we express our vocation to love. Our bodies have a language of their own, and sexual desire should be integrated into the context of a loving, committed relationship, rather than being reduced to mere physical pleasure. This understanding elevates the marital act to a sacred expression of love.

St John Paul II stresses the importance of human freedom and personal responsibility in the context of sexual morality. He calls for a responsible exercise of freedom that respects the dignity of the person and God's moral law (cf. General Audiences on Wednesdays by St John Paul II between 1979-1984).

Respect for Human Life

The Church condemns actions that violate the sanctity of human life, such as abortion, euthanasia and unethical forms of assisted reproductive technologies. The body is seen as a temple of the Holy Spirit and the deliberate taking of innocent life is morally unacceptable.

The fifth commandment forbids direct and intentional killing as gravely sinful. Infanticide, fratricide, parricide and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority (cf. CCC, 2268).

Care for the Vulnerable

We are called for special care and advocacy for vulnerable and marginalized individuals, including those with disabilities. The Church emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and solidarity within society; "Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that everyone should look upon his neighbour (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity. The duty of making oneself a neighbour to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). This same duty extends to those who think or act differently from us (cf. CCC, 1930-1933).

The Communion of Saints

The deceased continue to exist in a spiritual form and are connected to

the living members of the Church. This belief reflects the idea of an after-life and the resurrection of the body; "The communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always attentive to our prayers" (cf. CCC, 962).

The Resurrection of the Body

Eschatological hope of the resurrection of the dead, including the resurrection of the body is based on the belief that God will raise the dead to new life, reuniting the soul with a transformed and glorified body; "In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus' Resurrection" (cf. CCC, 997).

Catholic Church's teaching on the human body underscores the importance of recognising the dignity of every person, respecting the sanctity of human life, and living in accordance with God's plan for the human person, which includes the proper use of the body in accordance with moral principles.

Noreen Bavister and Angela Taylor

Sources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church,
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Audiences by Pope John Paul II,
www.vatican.va

Only love counts (part 1)



■ St Therese of Lisieux

Pope Francis started the document with the quote by St Therese; “It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love”. He explained that those words say it all; “They sum up the genius of her spirituality and would suffice to justify the fact that she has been named a Doctor of the Church. Confidence, ‘nothing but confidence’, is the sole path that leads us to the Love that grants everything. With confidence, the wellspring of grace overflows into our lives, the Gospel takes flesh within us and makes us channels of mercy for our brothers and sisters.

“It is confidence that sustains us daily and will enable us to stand before the Lord on the day when he calls us to himself: ‘In the evening of this life, I shall appear before you with empty hands, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All

our justice is stained in your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in your own *Justice* and to receive from your *Love* the eternal possession of *yourself*.”

our justice is stained in your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in your own *Justice* and to receive from your *Love* the eternal possession of *yourself*.”

St Therese is one of the world-famous saints loved not only by Christians but non-Christians and nonbelievers as well. UNESCO has recognised her as one of the most prominent figures for modern humanity.

Popes and St Therese

Her life was short and ordinary, both in her family and later in the Carmel of Lisieux, but “the extraordinary burst of light and love that she radiated came to be known soon after her death, with the publication of her writings and thanks to the countless graces bestowed on the faithful who invoked her intercession.”

“The Church quickly recognised her great significance and the distinctiveness of her evangelical spirituality. Therese met Pope Leo XIII during a pilgrimage to Rome in 1887 and asked his permission to enter the Carmel at the age of fifteen. Not long after her death, St Pius X, sensing her spiritual grandeur, stated that she would become the greatest saint of modern times. Therese was declared Venerable in 1921 by Pope Benedict

XV, who, in praising her virtues, saw them embodied in her “little way” of spiritual childhood. She was beatified a century ago and then canonized on 17 May 1925 by Pope Pius XI, who thanked the Lord for granting that she be the first Blessed whom he raised to the honour of the altars and the first saint whom he canonized. In 1927, the same Pope declared her the Patroness of the Missions. Therese was proclaimed one of the patron saints of France in 1944 by Venerable Pius XII, who on several occasions developed the theme of spiritual childhood. St Paul VI liked to recall that he was baptised on 30th September 1897, the day of her death, and on the centenary of her birth he wrote a letter on her teaching to the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux. On 2nd June 1980, during his first Apostolic Journey to France, St John Paul II visited the Basilica dedicated to her, and in 1997 declared her a Doctor of the Church. He also referred to Therese as “an expert in the *scientia amoris*”. Pope Benedict XVI returned to the subject of her “science of love” and proposed it as “a guide for all, especially those in the people of God who carry out their ministry as theologians”. Finally, in 2015, I had the joy of canonising her parents, Louis and Zélie, during the Synod on the Family.”

A missionary soul

St Therese wrote that Jesus was her one love. His name was always with her even at the hour of her death. Her love for God was not separated from the seeking the good of her brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis wrote; “As with every authentic encounter with Christ, this experience of faith summoned her to mission. Therese could define her mission in these words: ‘I shall desire in heaven the same thing as I do now on earth: to love Jesus and to make him loved’. She wrote that she entered Carmel ‘to save souls’. She shared the merciful love of the Father for his sinful son and the love of the Good Shepherd for the sheep who were lost, astray and wounded. For this reason, Therese is the Patroness of the missions and a model of evangelisation.”

“The final pages of her *Story of a Soul* are a missionary testament. They express her appreciation of the fact that evangelisation takes place by attraction, not by pressure or proselytism. It is worthwhile reading her own words in this regard: *Draw me, we shall run after you in the odour of your ointments*. O Jesus! It is not even necessary to say: *When drawing me, draw the souls whom I love!* This simple statement, ‘Draw me’ suffices. I understand, Lord, that when a soul allows herself to be captivated by *the odour of your ointments*, she cannot run alone; all the souls whom she loves follow in her train; this is done without constraint, without effort, it is a natural consequence of her attraction for you. Just as a torrent, throwing itself with impetuosity into the ocean, drags after it everything it encounters in its passage, in the same way, O Jesus, the soul who plunges



■ *Les Buissonnets*, the Martin family house in Lisieux to which they moved in November 1877 following the death of Madame Martin. Therese lived here from 16th Nov 1877 to 9th April 1888, the day she entered Carmel.

into the shoreless ocean of your Love, draws with her all the treasures she possesses. Lord, you know it, I have no other treasures than the souls it has pleased you to unite to mine”.

It is God’s grace that sets us free from self-absorption and St Therese definitely showed her concern for salvation of souls; “In the heart of Therese, the grace of baptism became this impetuous torrent flowing into the ocean of Christ’s love and dragging in its wake a multitude of brothers and sisters. This is what happened, especially after her death. It was her promised *shower of roses*”.

The little way of trust and love

St Therese is widely known for her “little way”, a way attainable for ordinary people, “the path of trust and love, also known as *the way of spiritual childhood*. Everyone can follow this

way, whatever their age or state in life. It is the way that the heavenly Father reveals to the little ones.”

St Therese wrote: “I can, then, in spite of my littleness, aspire to holiness. It is impossible for me to grow up, and so I must bear with myself such as I am, with all my imperfections. But I want to seek out a means of going to heaven by a little way, a way that is very straight, very short, and totally new.”

“To describe that way, she uses the image of an elevator: ‘the elevator which must raise me to heaven is your arms, O Jesus! And for this, I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain *little* and become this more and more’. Little, incapable of being confident in herself, and yet firmly secure in the loving power of the Lord’s arms.”

St Therese emphasised a grace as a gift, as God’s primal work; “I always feel, however, the same bold

confidence of becoming a great saint, because I don't count on my merits, since I have *none*, but I trust in him who is Virtue and Holiness. God alone, content with my weak efforts, will raise me to himself and make me a *saint*, clothing me in his infinite merits”.

“She encourages us to have complete confidence as we contemplate the love of Christ poured out to the end. At the heart of her teaching is the realisation that, since we are incapable of being certain about ourselves, we cannot be sure of our merits. Hence, it is not possible to trust in our own efforts or achievements. This conviction gives rise to a joyful and tender gratitude.”

Pope Francis stressed that “her boundless confidence encourages all who feel frail, limited and sinful to let themselves be elevated and transformed in order to reach greater heights; ‘If all weak and imperfect souls felt what the least of souls feels, that is, the soul of your little Therese, not one would despair of reaching the summit of the mount of love. Jesus does not demand great actions from us, but simply *surrender* and *gratitude*.’”

Daily abandonment

The confidence that Therese proposes has to do with more than our individual sanctification and salvation. It has an integral meaning that embraces the totality of concrete existence and finds application in our daily lives, where we are often assailed by our “fears, the desire for human security, the need to have everything under control”. Here we see the importance of her invitation to a holy “abandonment”.



■ Zélie and Louis Martin, parents of St Therese, canonised by Pope Francis in 2015

The complete confidence that becomes an abandonment in Love sets us free from obsessive calculations, constant worry about the future and fears that take away our peace. In her final days, Therese insisted on this: “We who run in the way of love shouldn't be thinking of suffering that can take place in the future; it's a lack of confidence”. If we are in the hands of a Father who loves us without limits, this will be the case come what may; we will be able to move beyond whatever may happen to us and, in one way or another, his plan of love and fullness will come to fulfilment in our lives.

Fire burning in the night

Therese experienced faith most powerfully and surely in the midst of the dark night and especially amid the darkness of Calvary. Her witness culminated in the final months of her life, in the great “trial against the faith” that began at Easter of 1896. In her account, she directly relates

this period of testing to the painful reality of the atheism of her time. The last years of the nineteenth century were the “golden age” of modern atheism as a philosophical and ideological system. When she wrote that Jesus allowed her soul “to be invaded by the thickest darkness”, she was evoking the darkness of atheism and the rejection of the Christian faith. In union with Jesus, who took upon himself all the darkness of the sin of the world when he willed to drink from the cup of the Passion, Therese came to appreciate its underlying sense of despair and sheer emptiness.

Yet darkness cannot overcome the light: Therese had been conquered by the One who came as light into the world (cf. Jn 12:46). Her account reveals the heroic nature of her faith, her triumph in spiritual combat with the most powerful temptations. She felt herself a sister to atheists, seated with them at table, like Jesus who sat with sinners (cf. Mt 9:10-13). She interceded for them, ever renewing

her own act of faith, in constant loving communion with the Lord: “I run toward my Jesus. I tell him I am ready to shed my blood to the last drop to profess faith in the existence of *heaven*. I tell him, too, that I am happy not to enjoy this beautiful heaven on this earth so that he will open it for all eternity to poor unbelievers”.

Together with faith, Therese experienced a deep and boundless trust in God’s infinite mercy: “confidence that must lead us to Love”. Even in her darkness, she experienced the complete trust of a child that finds refuge, unafraid, in the embrace of its father and mother. For Therese, the one God is revealed above all else in his mercy, which is the key to understanding everything else that can be said of him: “To me he has granted his *infinite mercy* and *through it* I contemplate and adore the other divine perfections! All of these perfections appear to be resplendent *with love*, even his Justice (and perhaps this even more so than the others) seems to me clothed in *love*”. This is one of the loftiest insights of Therese, one of her major contributions to the entire People of God. In an extraordinary way, she probed the depths of divine mercy, and drew from them the light of her limitless hope.

Given in Rome, in the Basilica of St John Lateran, on 15th October, the Memorial of St Teresa of Avila, in the year 2023, the eleventh of my Pontificate.

Pope Francis
www.vatican.va

Poem *Abandonment* by St Therese

“Abandonment is the delicious fruit of love.” – St Augustine

I saw upon this earth
A marvelous tree arise;
Its vigorous root had birth,
O wonder! in the skies.
Never, beneath its shade,
Can aught disturb or wound;
There tempests are allayed,
There perfect rest is found
And love men call this tree,
From heaven’s high portals sent;
Its fruit, how fair to see!
Is named abandonment.

What banquet here doth greet
Each reverent, hungry guest!
How, by its odors sweet,
The spirit is refreshed!
If we its fruit but touch,
Joy seems on us to pour.
Oh, taste, — for never such
A feast was yours before.
In this tumultuous world
It brings us perfect peace;
Though storms be round us hurled,
Its quiet shall not cease.

Abandonment gives rest
In Thee, O Jesus Christ!
Here is the food most blest
That has Thy saints sufficed.
Spouse of my soul, draw nigher!
I give my all to Thee.
What more can I desire
Than Thy sweet Face to see?
Naught can I do but smile,
Safe folded to Thy breast.
They who have known no guile
Find there most perfect rest.

As looks the floweret small
Up to the glorious sun,
So I, though least of all,

Seek my Beloved One.
King Whom I love the most!
The star I always see
Is Thy White Sacred Host,
Little and low like me;
And its celestial power,
Down from Thy altar sent,
Wakes in my heart that flower, —
Perfect abandonment.

All creatures here below,
At times, they weary me;
And willingly I go,
With God alone to be.
And if, sometimes, dear Lord,
Of me Thou weariest,
I wait upon Thy word;
Thy holy will is best.
Smiling, I wait in peace,
Till Thou return to me;
And never shall they cease, —
My songs of love for Thee.

All pain I now despise,
Naught can disquiet me;
Swifter than eagle flies,
My spirit flies to Thee.
Beyond the gloomy cloud,
Ever the skies are fair,
And angels sing aloud,
And God is reigning there.
And yet without a tear
I wait that bliss above,
Who in the Host have here
The perfect fruit of love.

May, 1897

Source: *Poems by St Therese of the Child Jesus known as The Little Flower of Jesus*
translated by S. L. Emery, Christian
Classics Ethereal Library

Angels Unveiled: Divine Encounters in the Bible (part 1)

Angelic presence is woven into the very fabric of the Bible, where their appearances range from awe-inspiring to comforting, mysterious to life-altering.

Join us on a celestial journey as we unveil the captivating encounters with angels that have left an indelible mark on the pages of the Holy Scriptures, bridging the mystical realm with our earthly existence.

Here are some notable appearances of angels in the Bible:

Angel Appearing to Hagar (Genesis 16):

In the Book of Genesis lies a remarkable encounter between Hagar, an Egyptian maidservant, and an angel of the Lord. Hagar's story unfolds against the backdrop of patriarchal struggles, longing for motherhood and divine intervention.

Cast out into the wilderness by her mistress Sarah, who was barren and desperate for a child, Hagar found herself lost and desolate. It was in this vulnerable moment that the angel of the Lord appeared to her, promising her descendants too numerous to count; "The angel of Yahweh found her by a spring in the desert, the spring on the road to Shur. He said, 'Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where



■ The Angel Appearing to Hagar and Ishmael in the Desert by Giuseppe Ghezzi

have you come from, and where are you going?' 'I am running away from my mistress Sarai,' she replied. The angel of Yahweh said to her, 'Go back to your mistress and submit to her.' The angel of Yahweh further said to her, 'I shall make your descendants

too numerous to be counted.' Then the angel of Yahweh said to her: 'Now, you have conceived and will bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael, for Yahweh has heard your cries of distress. A wild donkey of a man he will be, his hand against every man,

and every man's hand against him, living his life in defiance of all his kinsmen" (Gen 16:7-12).

This heavenly messenger, bearing a message of hope and reassurance, provided Hagar not only with a glimpse into the future but also with a profound revelation of God's compassion and attentiveness to the plight of the marginalized.

Hagar's encounter with the angel serves as a testament to the inclusivity of divine grace, breaking through the boundaries of social status and ethnicity. Her story reminds us that even in the wilderness of life's challenges, we may find unexpected encounters with the divine, transforming our journeys into remarkable tales of faith, resilience and the enduring promise of a compassionate God.

Angels Visiting Abraham (Genesis 18):

As Abraham sat by the entrance of his tent, he suddenly beheld three strangers approaching. Moved by an ingrained custom of hospitality, he rushed to welcome them, offering water to cleanse their feet and preparing a sumptuous meal. Little did he know that these strangers were celestial messengers sent by the Lord.

During their visit, the angels delivered astonishing news: Sarah, Abraham's elderly wife, would bear a son within the year; "Then his guest said, 'I shall come back to you next year, and then your wife Sarah will have a son.'" (Gen 18: 10).

Sarah, overhearing this divine proclamation from inside the tent, couldn't help but laugh in disbelief. Yet, the angels' message bore truth, affirming the miraculous power of

God and reminding us that nothing is impossible in the divine plan.

This encounter at Abraham's tent symbolises the divine's intimate connection with humanity, highlighting the sacredness of hospitality and demonstrating how our lives can be forever altered by unexpected encounters with the divine. It reminds us about the power of faith and the power of God's promise that can bloom like an oasis among a desert, bringing forth new life and hope.

Angels Rescuing Lot (Genesis 19):

Lot, the nephew of the righteous Abraham, had chosen to dwell in the city of Sodom, known for its depravity and wickedness. When God decided to destroy the city due to its sinfulness, He sent two angels in the guise of men to rescue Lot and his family.

As the angels entered Sodom, Lot, demonstrating the virtue of hospitality deeply ingrained in his family, insisted on offering them shelter for the night. He welcomed them into his home, unaware of their divine nature and their presence soon became the talk of the town.

The wicked inhabitants of Sodom, driven by their sinful desires, surrounded Lot's house, demanding that he release his guests to satisfy their unholy intentions. In a desperate attempt to protect the angels, Lot offered his own daughters instead, an illustration of the moral confusion that had enveloped Sodom.

But the angels, recognizing Lot's righteousness and faith, intervened to shield him and his family. They struck the wicked crowd with blindness, preventing them from harming Lot or the angels. Then, the angels revealed their true identity and delivered a dire warning to Lot: he and his family must



■ The Flight of Lot and His Family from Sodom by Jacob Jordaens, c. 1618-20

flee the city before its impending destruction. Lot and his family hastily departed from Sodom, with the angels urging them not to look back; “When dawn broke the angels urged Lot on, ‘To your feet! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.’ And as he hesitated, the men seized his hand and the hands of his wife and his two daughters -- Yahweh being merciful to him -- and led him out and left him outside the city. When they had brought him outside, he was told, ‘Flee for your life. Do not look behind you or stop anywhere on the plain. Flee to the hills or you will be swept away’” (Gen 19: 15-17).

Tragically, Lot’s wife succumbed to temptation and cast a longing glance behind her, transforming into a pillar of salt as a consequence.

The angels led Lot and his daughters to safety just moments before God rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom, obliterating the sinful city. Lot and his daughters found refuge in a cave.

This story from the Book of Genesis is a powerful reminder of the consequences of sin, the importance of unwavering faith and the mercy of God in the face of impending destruction. It underscores the significance of making righteous choices, even in the midst of a corrupt world, and serves as an inspiring testament to God’s grace and protection in times of peril.

Angel Wrestling with Jacob (Genesis 32):

Jacob, the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, was on a journey back to his homeland when he found himself alone by the Jabbok River. It was there, in the solitude of the night,

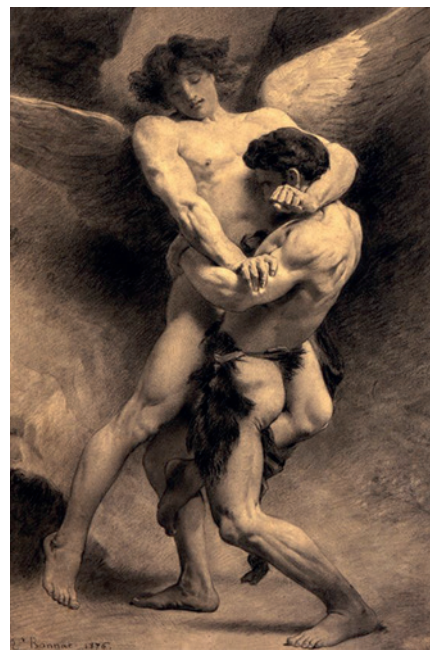
that a mysterious figure appeared and engaged him in an intense, all-night struggle.

The identity of this enigmatic opponent is shrouded in ambiguity, many interpreters believe this man to be an angel sent by God.

The wrestling match between Jacob and this angel was no ordinary physical contest. It symbolised a profound spiritual struggle within Jacob’s soul. Jacob was a man who had deceived his father to obtain a blessing, and he had lived a life marked by cunning and manipulation. Now, as he faced this divine messenger, he was forced to confront his past and wrestle with his own inner turmoil. Throughout the night, Jacob and the angel grappled, neither one prevailing over the other. It was a struggle that went beyond mere physical strength; it was a battle of wills, of character, and of faith. Jacob clung to his opponent, refusing to let go until he received a blessing.

As dawn approached, the angel touched Jacob’s hip, wounding him, but still, Jacob persisted. Recognizing Jacob’s unwavering determination and acknowledgment of his need for divine favour, the angel pronounced a blessing upon him. He also gave Jacob a new name: *Israel*, signifying that he had struggled with both God and humans and had prevailed; “He said, ‘Let me go, for day is breaking.’ Jacob replied, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ The other said, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Jacob,’ he replied. He said, ‘No longer are you to be called Jacob, but Israel since you have shown your strength against God and men and have prevailed’” (Gen 32: 27-29).

This encounter left Jacob forever changed. Not only did he receive a



■ Jacob Wrestling with the Angel
by Léon Bonnat, 1876

new name and a blessing, but he also walked away with a permanent limp from the hip injury. More importantly, he emerged from this struggle a transformed man - a man who had wrestled with his past, his flaws and his relationship with God and emerged with a deeper understanding of himself and a newfound faith.

The story of Jacob wrestling with the angel serves as a metaphor for the spiritual struggles that each person faces on their journey of faith. It reminds us that confronting our inner demons, acknowledging our shortcomings and seeking God’s blessing can lead to profound personal transformation. Jacob’s persistence in wrestling with the divine messenger inspires us to persevere in our own spiritual battles, knowing that through faith and determination, we too can emerge with a deeper connection to God and a renewed sense of purpose.

Charles Armstrong, UK

Evangeliser of America

Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the conference on the Venerable María de Jesús de Ágreda promoted by the Pontifical International Marian Academy.

Mother Ágreda was an exceptional woman, whom you wished to define as “in love with Scripture”, “Marian mystic” and “evangelizer of America”. These titles made me reflect on three lessons that the contemplative woman can give to the Church. The first lesson relates to silence, the attitude of listening, to welcome the voice of the Beloved, the eternal Word of the Father, in the heart. It is an attitude for everyone, but it is especially feminine: women know how to listen and have a special vocation for listening. It is surprising how, despite being without a specific formation, some religious sisters have attained a noteworthy knowledge of Scripture and, in the school of prayer, have drunk from it as though it were a living fountain. Therefore, to describe them as “in love with” Scripture is an expression that goes beyond praising its use in their writings; it is seeing Christ Himself who speaks to them and speaks to us through His Word, asking that, following Mary’s example, we keep everything in our hearts (cf. Lk 2:51).

The second lesson is the mystic, that is, a relationship with God that is born from this attitude of listening, from this incarnate reading of the Sacred Scripture. An experience, we might say, ecstatic, but by “ecstasy” we mean coming out of ourselves, coming out of our comforts, out of the selfish ego that always tries to dominate us. It is a matter of making room for

God, so that, docile to the Holy Spirit, the King’s “overseer”, we can welcome Him into our home. This is the example of Mary, who welcomed Him into her Immaculate Heart before she welcomed Him into her virginal womb. In this sense, contemplatives teach us, through a path of asceticism, abandonment and fidelity, the joy of living only for Him. And sometimes contemplation is done in silence, before the Lord, in silence. And in this world that is always full – of things, words, news, a whole industry of exterior communication – interior communication, in silence, is so necessary.

The third lesson is mission. Mother Ágreda and the Conceptionist religious sisters, who were the first cloistered nuns to arrive in America – I don’t know if they arrived with Christopher Columbus, but not long after – give us the proof of this missionary spirit in contemplative life, which Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus would later highlight. It is not a coincidence that another great mystic, Saint Rose of Lima, is the first saint of the continent.

It is understandable that Mother Ágreda heard the call of the Lord to pray for those souls who did not yet know Him, and that this prayer was fruitful in the soul of those who, as the missionaries said, were well disposed to receive baptism. We are not usually aware of the power of intercessory prayer in our lives, as the Indians are said to have been by Mother Ágreda’s intervention. But,



■ Apparition of the Virgin
by Sister María de Jesús de Ágreda,
Mexican School, 18th century

as Mary teaches us at the wedding in Cana, we too can recognize where the new wine comes from through those who support us with their prayer and edify us by their example. Do not forget Mary’s great gesture, revealed to us at the wedding in Cana. Mary never points to herself, Mary indicates her Son: “Do whatever He tells you!”. She leads us to Jesus, she generates Him in us. And we must imitate this beautiful attitude, pointing to the Lord in our turn.

Pope Francis,
16th November 2023
www.vatican.va

From a lifelong career with Air Canada to driving a hearse

My journey with St Michael and the holy angels.

Like many children, I was taught the Guardian Angel prayer at a very young age - a prayer I always said devoutly even until today. Looking back and knowing more about my heavenly companions, I feel somewhat guilty that I have taken them for granted and not thanked them as much as I should have. I can recall umpteen times throughout my life when little miracles occurred and protection given to me when I invoked my heavenly companions and for those times as well as all others which I have forgotten, I give the Lord a big Thank You!

Fast forward from my childhood to my teenage years and young adulthood, where I was not just helped and protected from physical dangers during activities, but also shielded from companions and situations from which I did realise now were not the best for me, to my reversion back to the faith which occurred slowly about 14 years ago.

I felt my guardian angel was by my side

After graduating from university, I landed a job – which ended up being a lifelong career with Air Canada. This gave



■ Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA with the SDS (Salvatorian) priests: Fr Peter Lapinski (Assistant Pastor St Patrick parish), Fr Jozef Figiel, Provincial (Poland), Fr Leszek Kopiec, Treasurer (Poland), Fr Jarek Dziuba (Pastor St Patrick parish), Fr Tomasz Staruzyk (Assistant Pastor at Holy Cross parish)

me many opportunities to broaden my horizons as I toured around the world. I know that my guardian angel was with me in all the adventures and situations that I experienced - although at times I knew I was trying him and more than likely had him groan in frustration when I did not make use of my better judgement or made bad decisions. But he was always there, guiding and protecting me like the words in the prayer.

I was eager to gain more knowledge on the angels

When I reverted and decided to be more serious about my faith, I did a lot of

reading - which I have always enjoyed as I loved knowledge and learning.

Working for the airlines also gave me the opportunity to travel to many holy places around the world (unknowingly I even went to many of the places where St Michael appeared) and to attend many retreats and conferences. This is where I met many holy priests who would guide me to learn more about the angels. At home in Vancouver, Canada, I was blessed to have met and spent much time with, as well as get involved in many spiritual programs with my late spiritual advisor, the late Fr John Horgan. Fr John, originally from Boston, was a

very holy, kind and learned person. He was much respected and loved by all whose lives he touched - not just in his ministries in the Archdiocese of Vancouver through his talks and homilies, but also worldwide through his show "Saints Among Us" on EWTN and his book "His Angels Among Us". He was very knowledgeable about many subjects and shared his wisdom to all with a loving spirit and a wonderful sense of humour.

Consecrated to my guardian angel and all the angels

In 2018, I organized a Marian conference where Fr John spoke about the angels and was able to promote his book. Fr John was also involved in Opus Sanctorum Angelorum, a movement which promotes devotion to the angels. With his blessing and support, I became a member and now am consecrated to my guardian angel and all the angels after my studies. And through that I met and studied under Fr Wolfgang Seitz, Fr Ludwig Oppl and Fr Matthew Hioks.

In 2018, I attended a conference in Colorado Springs, USA, where I met Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA. He made a big impact on me with all he shared about St Michael and the holy angels that I invited him to be a keynote speaker at the Marian conference I was organizing in January 2020 in Canada.

It was important to me that everyone should know more about St Michael and the guardian angels. Fr Peter was very well received, and I was asked to bring him back. Fr Peter came back for two Parish Missions in Vancouver in October 2023. He was warmly welcomed by Fr Jarek Dziuba, SDS (Pastor) and Fr Peter

Lapinski, SDS (Assistant Pastor) two Polish expats from the St Patrick parish, and by Fr Alfred Grzempa, OMI, another Polish expat and Pastor of St Casimir parish. It was a treat for the parishioners to have Fr Peter celebrate Masses, deliver the homilies and pray with them. He promised to come back.

In the meantime, Noreen Bavister and I were liaising and she sent details of a Divine Mercy pilgrimage to Poland. She invited me to contact my friends from Canada and beyond to join Fr Peter on the pilgrimage in July 2024. A handful have already signed up and I am looking forward to this special event.

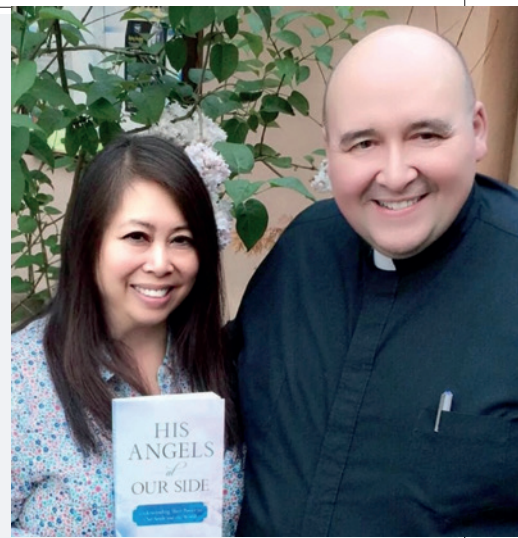
A new career

As for me, after retiring in 2022, I embarked on a new career. It is not so much as work for me, but a ministry where I can share my faith and pray with clients.

I transitioned from working at Air Canada to be a Pre-Need Counsellor for those looking to make their future funeral arrangements, and as a Funeral Attendant for Kearney Funeral Services, a Catholic funeral provider. Never did I imagine that I would



■ Yes, I drive that funeral hearse



■ Me and Fr John Horgan in 2018

be driving a hearse! I intercede to St Michael and the angels to guard me as I drive the deceased to the church and cemetery, and to join me as I pray the Rosary for their souls.

Interceding to St Michael, the angels and my heavenly friends

I also intercede to my heavenly friends when I need them to speak to the guardian angel of a particular individual should I have a conflict with them or need a favour - something I learned from Padre Pio. I invoke them to incessantly guard, guide and protect me - and should I lose something, I turn to them first before I do to St Anthony (because he has millions of requests). They work very fast!

I thank God that he has given guardian angels to every person born. If only we all knew and loved them the way they know and love us, this would certainly help us in our daily lives. I look forward to the day when I finally get to see my angels and thank them for their faithfulness to me throughout my life.

Ethelyn David
Vancouver, Canada

Divine Mercy Message across the Continents

For the last three months, December, January and February, Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA proclaimed Divine Mercy devotion, St Faustina and her encounters with the angels and the power and love of St Michael the Archangel in Manila, Philippines, the U.S.A., Brazil, Australia and Papua New Guinea.

People were thirsty for spiritual nourishment, they found peace and

consolation during the missions in different countries. Participants renewed their faith at the Holy Masses, conferences, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and healing services. Retreats were an opportunity to pray together, to be away from the hustle of daily life, people had time for meditation and to share and talk. It was truly the time of divine grace, an opportunity for reflection, healing and spiritual growth.



USA 2024**5th – 7th April 2024****Divine Mercy Weekend****St Margaret Mary Church**

1101 W New Hope Drive

Cedar Park, Texas 78613

Contact: Claudia Eshelman

Email: claudia@stmargaretmary.com

9th – 10th April 2024**DAY 1 The power and love****of St Michael the Archangel****DAY 2 Angels, Divine Mercy****and St Faustina****St John Vianney RC Church**

3201 Sunrise Road

Round Rock, Texas 78665

Contact: Deacon Rudy Villareal

Email: dcnrudy@sjvroundrock.org

Phone: +1 (512)-218-1183

15th – 16th April 2024**New York****St Daniel Catholic Church**

3004 Court Street

Syracuse, New York 13208

Pastor: Fr Ward

Contact: Carol Puschaver

Email: stmichael597@gmail.com

18th – 24th April 2024**Houston, Texas, Mission****Theme: Divine Mercy****and St Michael the Archangel****Christ the Good Shepherd Church**

18511 Klein Church Rd.

Spring, Texas 77379

Pastor: Fr James Burkart

Contact: Stephen Kramer

Email: captainsteve96@hotmail.com

Saint Ignatius of Loyola Church

7810 Cypresswood Drive

Spring, Texas 77379

Pastor: Very Rev. Norbert Maduzia Jr.
E.V.D. Min.

Contact: Stephen Kramer

Email: captainsteve96@hotmail.com

24th April 2024**Prince of Peace Church**

19222 Texas 249, Tomball Parkway,

Houston, Texas 77070

Contact: Stephen Kramer

Email: captainsteve96@hotmail.com

17th – 19th May 2024**Start time: 12:30 p.m. / 17th May****25th Anniversary St Louis****Marian Conference****Theme: Divine Mercy****and St Michael the Archangel**

9801 Natural Bridge Road,

St Louis, MO 63134

Contact: Romona Rosales

Phone: +1 (314)-850-7718

Email: rosales1854@gmail.com

25th – 26th May 2024**St John Paul II Polish Center**

3999 Rose Drive,

Yorba Linda, CA 92886

Contact: Fr Zibi / Lourdes Carroll

*Bishop Kevin W. Vann.**Diocese of Orange.***UK 2024****14th – 16th June 2024****Parish Mission:****Divine Mercy and St Michael****14th June / 7:00 p.m. Mass and talk****15th June / 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.****16th June / 9:00 a.m. Sunday Mass****St Peter's Church**

Shoreham by Sea,

West Sussex BN43 5D

16th June / 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass**Christ the King Church**

Bramber Road,

Steyning, BN44 3PB

Parish Priest: Fr Graham Ricketts

Contact: Patsy Daniels

Email: patsydaniels@gmail.com

Phone: +44 (0) 790-567-3555

*Diocese of Arundel and Brighton***18th – 20th June 2024**

Birmingham, England

Contact Noreen Bavister

Phone: +44 (0) 779-531-8605

21st – 23rd June 2024**(Polish and English mission)****St Hugh's Parish Church**

34 Broadgate, Lincoln LN2 5AQ

Parish Priest: Canon Edward Jarosz

Contact: Agnieszka Zieba for program

Email: agnieszkazieba152@gmail.com

Text: + 44 (0) 785-638-8840

POLAND 2024**15th – 22nd July 2024****15th English speaking****Divine Mercy pilgrimage****led by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA**[www.stmichaeltthearchangel.info/](http://www.stmichaeltthearchangel.info/pilgrimage)**pilgrimage****UK 2024****28th September 2024****6:00 p.m. Vigil Mass****29th September 2024****Sunday Masses****St Mary of the Angels****RC Parish Church**

Moorhouse Road, Bayswater,

London W2 5DJ

Contact: Mgr. Keith Barltrop PP

Phone: +44(20)-7229-0487

30th September – 6th October**Mission dates to be set****Blessed Sacrament Shrine / Date TBC**

4 Dawson Street,

Liverpool, England L1 1LE

St John's Catholic Church / Date TBC

128 Bebington Road,

New Ferry, Wirral, CH62 5BJ

Contact: Fr Mario – Benedict Uche

Email: stjohntheevangelist@gmail.com

Phone: +44 (0)151-645-3314

St Clare's R.C. Church / Date TBC

186 Victoria Avenue

Manchester M9 ORR

Phone: +44-(0)161-740-4161

Fr Colin Edwards (Guardian)

Fr Jeremiah Budau Parish priest

CEBU AND BOHOL ISLANDS 2024**13th – 21st September****Theme: Divine Mercy****and St Michael the Archangel**

Main Contacts:

Anton Gonzalez

Phone: +63-917- 812-1228

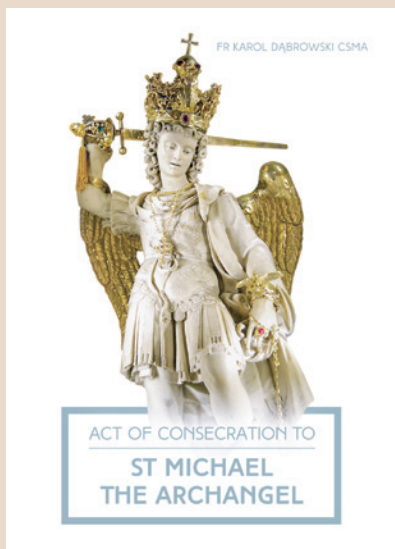
Mia Gonzalez

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Email: antongonzalez@gmail.com

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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.



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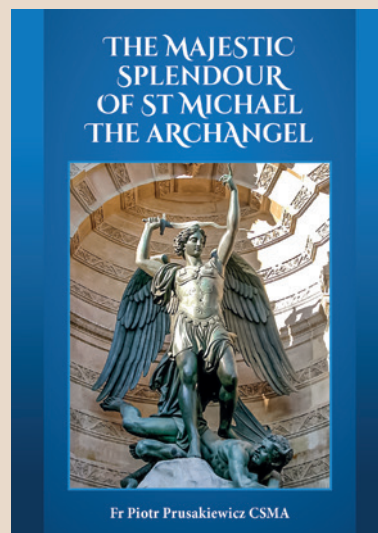
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People have often asked me about St Michael, the patron saint of my congregation. Due to the great interest in St Michael, I looked into the scientific and systematic study of many English, Italian and Polish authors throughout the ages internationally. My information also came from Holy Scripture and the traditions and teachings of the Doctors of the Roman Catholic Church whose works are true and timeless. I express my deep appreciation and gratitude to those who have spoken and written about Saint Michael the Archangel and helped me to discover and understand his greatness and splendour. This has enabled me to write articles and this new booklet about the Prince of the Heavenly Host. I hope that you discover St Michael the Archangel and hear his strong call from the bottom of his heart: Who is like God?

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA

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Chaplet of St Michael

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

A. *Amen*

Say the following prayer on the medal:

O God, come to my assistance.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

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

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

2. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Cherubim, may the Lord vouchsafe to grant us grace to leave the ways

of wickedness, to run in the paths of Christian perfection. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

3. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Thrones, may the Lord infuse into our hearts a true and sincere spirit of humility. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

4. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominions, may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and subdue our unruly passions. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

5. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Powers, may the Lord vouchsafe to protect our souls against the snares and temptations of the Devil. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

6. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Virtues, may the Lord deliver us from evil and suffer us not to fall into temptation. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

7. By the intercession of St Michael and the Celestial Choir of Principalities, may God fill our souls with a true spirit of obedience. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

8. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Archangels, may the Lord give us perseverance in faith and in all good works, in order that we gain the glory of Paradise. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)



9. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels, may the Lord grant us to be protected by them in this mortal life and conducted hereafter to eternal glory. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

Recite on the next four beads:

1 Our Father in honour of St Michael

1 Our Father in honour of St Gabriel

1 Our Father in honour of St Raphael

1 Our Father in honour of our Guardian Angel

O glorious prince, St Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the Divine King, and our admirable conductor, who shines with excellence and superhuman virtue, vouchsafe to deliver us from evil, who turn to you with confidence, and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day. Amen.

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

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