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# The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

The Hardest  
Prayer to Pray  
The Gift of Faith

Spreading the Devotion  
of Divine Mercy  
First Australian Saint  
Mystery of Purgatory

Front cover beaded tapestry handmade by Teresa Smith, U.K.





## Dear Readers,

It has been my great privilege to help with the first issue of The Angels magazine in 2010 with the support of volunteer proof readers mainly from the United Kingdom.

I hope through The Angels magazine you have gained more knowledge on the spirituality of the holy angels and the power and majestic splendour of St Michael the Archangel.

I will be retiring after the June 2024 issue. I wish to thank you for supporting the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel over the years, joining our English speaking pilgrimages, subscribing to the magazine, attending retreats, missions or conferences in your parishes led by the Chief Editor, Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA.

**Noreen Bavister**  
Deputy Editor

## The Angels

Messengers from a loving God  
A Catholic Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

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■ The Annunciation by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1655-1660

# The Hardest Prayer to Pray

**Through Isaiah we have that wonderful prophecy of Mary and the coming of our Messiah, “The Maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means ‘God-is-with-us’ (Is. 7:10-14).**

I am sure you will agree with me that Mary’s response, “I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me”, is the hardest prayer for any person to pray. It involves total and unconditional commitment. It is the submission of self to God. Mary prayed that prayer

with such grace and poise that she made it seem easy. But we know it was not; it never is. When Jesus prayed in the garden, “Not my will but thine be done”, so intense was the struggle that His sweat became as drops of blood.

Could we be as generous as Mary and make a total submission of our

lives to God? If we do, what it means is that we are giving God a blank cheque of our life. We sign it at the bottom and He is free to fill in whatever amount He chooses. That is not easy to do, never has been and never will be. Yet, how desperately we need to learn that prayer, for within it lies the true test of our faith in God. It is one thing to trust Him for our daily bread. But the real test comes at the point of trusting Him with our very self, of laying our lives on the line for Him to do with it as He will.

I read the story of an acrobat who walked the high wire without a safety net. On one occasion he stretched the wire across a deep gorge and he walked to the other side and back again. The people applauded. “Now” he announced, “I will push this wheelbarrow across.” Then he turned to a man nearby and said, “Do you believe I can do it?” “Yes,” said the man, “I am certain.” At that the acrobat said, “Then get in the wheelbarrow and go with me.” The man declined, and I don’t blame him. So would I.

But the story makes a valid point. The ultimate test of faith is laying our life on the line. It would be foolish to do that to entertain a crowd. But when it comes to putting our trust in God it is the only safe thing to do with our lives. Mary said, “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me.” Could we pray that prayer along with Our Blessed Lady?

Heavenly Father, we thank You for choosing Mary to be the mother of Your Son and our Mother too. May we live our lives to be worthy of her.

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# Spreading the Devotion of Divine Mercy

**“I shall endow those priests who preach and glorify My mercy with a singular power, I shall invest their words with special authority, and I shall move the hearts of those to whom they preach” (Diary 1521).**

“I protect souls that spread the worship of My Mercy throughout their lives, as a loving mother protects her baby; and at the hour of their death I shall not be a Judge unto them, but their merciful Saviour” (Diary 1075).

This is what the Lord Jesus promised to everyone who will proclaim His Mercy, spread its honour in any way. Priests can rejoice at His additional promise: “Hardened sinners will experience contrition and repent at their words when they preach on My infinite mercy, on the compassion I have in My heart for sinners.

“I shall endow those priests who preach and glorify My mercy with a singular power, I shall invest their words with special authority, and I shall move the hearts of those to whom they preach” (Diary 1521). These promises show how important it is to spread the honour of the Divine Mercy since Jesus promises His maternal care, during the lifetime and at the hour of death, to everyone who will undertake this task. Therefore, apart from the Image, Feast, Chaplet and Hour of Mercy, spreading honour of the Divine Mercy is also a form of the Devotion, because Jesus also attached promises to Devotion and the promises applies to all people.

## To serve the work of salvation and sanctification of the world

Spreading honour of the Mercy, that is, proclaiming the mystery of the Divine Mercy, most fully revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, by the testimony of life, deeds, words and prayer is not only to show the road to a beautiful and happy life on earth but also, and maybe first of all, it is to serve the work of salvation and sanctification of the world as well as it is to prepare humanity for Christ’s second coming to earth:

The Lord Jesus said to Sister Faustina: “Secretary of My mercy, write of this, and tell souls about My great mercy, for the terrible day, the day of My justice is close at hand” (Diary 965). “Do not stop preaching My mercy” (Diary 1521). “Tell the whole world of My unfathomable mercy” (Diary 699). “Let all mankind learn of My unfathomable mercy. It is the sign for the end times; after that will come the day of justice” (Diary 848). “Write this down: Before I come as the just Judge, I shall first fling wide open the door of My mercy. Whoever does not want to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice...” (Diary 1146). Therefore, the Lord Jesus’

urgent call directed to Sister Faustina and, through her, to the entire Church and the whole world, can be found so many times in the ‘Diary’.

## First, it is necessary to understand this mystery

The task of preaching the message of Mercy arises from the gift received as early as during the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is also a right and duty of the Church and, thus, of all the faithful. In 2002 Pope John Paul II said in Błonia Park in Cracow: “The hour has come when the message of Divine Mercy is able to fill hearts with hope and to become the spark of a new civilisation: the civilisation of love”.

In order to preach God’s merciful love and make it present in the world in various manners (by the way we live, by deed, word and prayer), first of all, it is necessary to be acquainted with this most beautiful mystery of our faith – by reading the Bible – and it is essential to search for signs of this love in our life and in the world continuously. This is what Sister Faustina did. Obeying the monastic rule, first she pondered on God’s goodness in the work of creation, salvation, in the Holy Church, in the word of God and





■ The Divine Mercy Shrine in Kraków, Poland

in the sacraments, in man's vocation to union with God already on earth and throughout eternity...

Each day, in everything that happened, she tried to see the loving hand of God. Coming to know the mystery of the Divine Mercy in this way led her to the conclusion that in man's life everything that is good comes from God and is a gift of His merciful love. In the 'Diary' she wrote: "Your mercy is like a golden thread that passes through the whole of our lives and keeps our very existence in contact with God in the right way, for God does not need anything to be happy; so it's all just thanks to His mercy. My senses are numbed with joy whenever God gives me a deeper insight into that great attribute of His, His unfathomable mercy" (Diary 1466). She came to know the Divine Mercy by means of her natural powers of intellect and will, which God strengthened by the gift of contemplation. Thanks to this, she was able to penetrate the

mystery extremely deeply – in order to proclaim it to the world successfully.

### To imitate God's merciful attitude towards people

Obedient to Jesus' words, she wanted to be completely transformed into Mercy and be its living reflection. "Each of Your saints reflects one of Your virtues in himself – she wrote – I want to reflect Your Heart, full of compassion and mercy, I want to sing Its praise. Let Your mercy be impressed like a seal on my heart and soul, O Jesus, and that shall be my badge in this life and in the life to come. To sing the praise of Your mercy is the exclusive task of my life" (Diary 1242).

### Become a living image of the Divine Mercy

Above all, Sister Faustina spread the honour of the Mercy by the testimony of her life in the spirit of

trust in God and mercy towards her neighbour. Solicitude for growing in this spirit every day requires that we work on ourselves properly, nurture our spiritual life, make efforts to fulfil the will of God faithfully and do good to one's neighbour at every opportunity. A person who trusts God (fulfils His will) and performs acts of mercy is a living image of the Divine Mercy because everyone who looks at this sign knows that God is good, that it is worth trusting Him and imitating His merciful love for people. Being merciful towards one's neighbour, whether a matter is of little or great importance, is a sign that is especially powerful. This is the strongest argument by means of which the honour of the Divine Mercy is preached successfully. The testimony of one's life in this spirit is the first, fundamental way of spreading honour of the Divine Mercy.

However, the testimony of one's life only does not suffice. What is



necessary is also to proclaim the Divine Mercy by word. Sister Faustina took every opportunity to speak about God's goodness and to encourage people to trust Him whenever she was with them. She preached the Divine Mercy message not only by the spoken word but also by writing. At the Lord Jesus' command she kept her diary in which she wrote down mighty works of God which He had done in her life and in the world. By means of her 'Diary' she has been telling the world about the Divine Mercy mystery: how good God is, how much He cares about man, his earthly and eternal happiness; she has been calling us to trust God's mercy and to live in the spirit of mercy.

The task of proclaiming the Divine Mercy by word is usually associated with 'public' works: it is associated with a sermon, religious instruction at school, radio or TV broadcasts, books, press articles etc. However, most frequently we have opportunities to do that in daily life, when we meet and speak with a person. We proclaim the Divine Mercy whenever, like Sister Faustina, we try to discern God's goodness when we converse with someone or interpret facts and events. We do that whenever we can see everyday situations in the light of faith – when we can discern God's loving hand in them, even in painful trials and great suffering. Such an apostolate – in the daily life – bears great fruit.

Prayer, especially the forms of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy, which Jesus conveyed by Sister Faustina, is another manner of spreading honour of the Divine Mercy. Every day we can worship God in the mystery of His mercy, spread His honour and entreat mercy for the world by taking part

in the Liturgy of the Church, by personal veneration of the Image of the Merciful Jesus, by saying the Chaplet or praying at the Hour of Mercy.

The Lord Jesus also says how this task can be carried out in the daily life. He told Sister Faustina: "You shall unite your prayers, fasts, mortifications, works, and all your sufferings with My prayer, fasting, mortifications, work, and suffering; then they will be powerful in the eyes of My Father" (Diary 531). Suffering plays a special role in entreating God's mercy. The Lord Jesus told her: "There is one price to pay for souls – and that is suffering united with My suffering on the cross" (Diary 324). "Every conversion of a sinful soul calls for a sacrifice" (Diary 961). He asked: "I need your suffering for the salvation of souls" (Diary 1612). "O My daughter, help Me save souls. Unite your suffering with My Passion and offer it up to the Heavenly Father for sinners" (Diary 1032). He told her that she would save more souls through prayer and suffering than would a missionary through his teachings and sermons alone (cf. Diary 1767).

### **The loss of every soul fills me with mortal sadness**

Sister Faustina and everyone who accepts the Divine Mercy message should entreat for graces first of all for sinners, since they are the poorest and need God's mercy most. Therefore, the Lord Jesus frequently asked her to pray for them. He said: "Pray for such people as well, that they too might worship My mercy" (Diary 1160) and, some other time: "The loss of every soul fills Me with mortal sadness. You always bring Me comfort whenever you pray for

sinners. The prayers I find most pleasing are prayers for the conversion of sinful souls; know, O My daughter, that such prayers are always heard" (Diary 1397), because it is compatible with God's will. What the Lord God desires most is the salvation of all people because He has created everyone out of love, Jesus laid down His life for all people and He wants to be with everyone in the Father's house for ever.

The second group of those privileged as regards the prayer of apostles of the Divine Mercy comprises priests and religious, thus those who lead the People of God along the roads of salvation and who are in the first front line of the battle for souls. They also need to be helped by prayer a lot. The Lord Jesus said to Sister Faustina: "I entrust to your care two pearls that are precious to my Heart that is the souls of priests and the souls of religious; you shall pray especially for them; their strength will come from your immolation" (Diary 531).

In St Faustina's 'Diary' the Lord Jesus asks to pray for the dying. "Pray that they may put their trust in My mercy – He said – for they are the ones most in need of trustfulness, but have it least of all. Know that for some souls the grace of eternal salvation will depend at their last moment on your prayers" (Diary 1777). He also told Sister Faustina to enter often into purgatory, because she was needed there (cf. Diary 1738), thus, He ordered her to pray for the dead, to be merciful towards them – by means of prayer and sacrifice. Although the Lord Jesus does not mention other groups of people, He commands her to pray for everyone because He speaks about entreating God's mercy for the whole world.





■ Return of the Prodigal Son by Mattia Preti, 1658

“At no time” – wrote Pope John Paul II – “and in no historical period – especially at a moment as critical as our own – can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it. Precisely this is the fundamental right and duty of the Church in Christ Jesus” (Dives in Misericordia 15).

## Proclaim the Divine Mercy correctly

What is essential for spreading honour of the Mercy is to preach the message correctly, which also requires solicitude for the purity of the Divine Mercy devotion in the forms conveyed by Sister Faustina. It is known that nowadays the Divine Mercy devotion is very popular. Therefore, many publications that have appeared on the shelves spread the Divine Mercy devotion in a way

that is oversimplified and often incorrect, which, as a result, leads to an incorrect practice of the devotion.

In his treatise on Sister Faustina’s writings which was prepared for the needs of her beatification process, the Rev. Professor Ignacy Różycki laid the theological foundations for this devotion. An abridged version of the treatise has been published in the booklet entitled: ‘The Divine Mercy. Essential Features of The Devotion to The Divine Mercy’ whereas the whole text – in the book: ‘The Devotion to the Divine Mercy’ (‘Misericordia’ Publishing House, Cracow 1999, second edition – 2008). In the light of the treatise, the attitude of trust in the Lord God (that is, the biblical attitude of trust) and the attitude of mercy towards neighbours are the essence of the Divine Mercy devotion. Only this foundation is the basis of the forms of the devotion: the Image of the Merciful Jesus, the Feast

of the Divine Mercy, the Chaplet to the Divine Mercy, the Hour of Mercy and spreading honour of the Divine Mercy. The Lord Jesus attached promises to these forms of the devotion to the Divine Mercy which pertain to everyone (not only to Sister Faustina; for example, as regards the act ‘O Blood and Water’ or the ‘Novena to the Divine Mercy’ He attached some promises only to her).

If there is no foundation, that is, if one’s Christian life is not shaped in the spirit of trust in God and mercy towards one’s neighbour, none of the forms will be a true act of the Devotion and no desired results will be obtained by means of it. “Therefore – writes Rev. I. Różycki – for instance, if someone says the Chaplet to the Divine Mercy, however, he does it without trust, he will not receive anything that Jesus has attached to the Chaplet said with trust”.



As regards spreading and practising the Devotion to the Divine Mercy, the most frequent mistakes result from the fact that only excerpts from the 'Diary', analysed out of context, are disseminated and also from the fact that the devotion is practised incorrectly.

Certain sentences are taken out of the 'Diary' and disseminated, however, the entire work is not analysed and a sentence (statement) is considered an axiom or the entire truth about something. Examples:

"I desire that there be a congregation which will proclaim God's mercy and, by its prayers, obtain it for the world." Someone who has read this sentence thinks that the Lord Jesus wants a concrete religious congregation to be founded, a congregation which will undertake certain tasks. However, the analysis of the entire 'Diary' shows that the Lord Jesus does not mean one congregation but a great work in the Church which today we call the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy (cf. Diary 1155).

## Trust in the Lord

"The soul that will venerate this image will not perish" (or other promises quoted without the conditions). This promise as well as other promises of the Lord Jesus will be fulfilled if man meets certain conditions and, as regards the Devotion to the Divine Mercy, the conditions are the following: trust in the Lord God and the attitude of an active love towards neighbours. "The soul that will venerate this image" ... that is, the soul who prays with trust before it and also performs acts of mercy; it is not a person who, for instance, has the image in the wallet.

What is a frequent mistake is that the forms of the Devotion to

the Divine Mercy, for instance the Chaplet, Novena or Litany, are propagated, however the essence of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy is not explained and the privileged forms of the Devotion are not differentiated from other prayers noted down in Sister Faustina's 'Diary'. The other group of mistakes has its origins in the incorrect practice of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy. Most frequently:

- The faithful are not inculcated with the Christian attitude of trust in God and mercy towards neighbours but they are taught devotions only, for instance – to say the Chaplet,
- Some of the words are added or omitted when the Chaplet to the Divine Mercy is said,
- Private revelations and devotions are combined,
- Sister Faustina's mission is analysed without taking the Holy Scripture into consideration.

## A precise message for our times

The message of Mercy, on which we are to live and which we are to share with others, is God's great gift for our times. This gift is a sign of hope, pledge of salvation and light on human paths. Therefore, those who spread this message need to do this very humbly and in accordance with Jesus' plan. As Pope Benedict XVI said: "This message really is a central message precisely for our time: Mercy as God's power, as a divine barrier against the evil of the world". Therefore, there is a great need to share this gift as well as possible and very generously.

Sr M. Elisabeth Siepak ISMM

Translated by Iwona Franceschini  
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■ St Michael Weighing Souls by Juan de la Abadía, around 1480-1495

*All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve that holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.*

## Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1030

Stated in its simplest form, as the *Catechism* does in entry 1030 above, the doctrine of purgatory is "common ground" between the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy. The trouble begins, however, when we unpack what each side means by the nature of the "purification" that happens in this intermediate state between earth and heaven.

The ecumenical Council of Lyons of 1274, for example, defined that purification process as



# The Mystery of Purgatory (part 2)

**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.**

*follows: If those who are truly penitent die in charity before they have done sufficient penance for their sins of omission and commission, their souls are cleansed after death in purgatorial or cleansing punishments.*

So purgatory is not only for the further healing and sanctification of the soul, but also for the completion of “penance” and cleansing “punishments”. The ecumenical Council of Florence of 1439 was equally clear: *And if they are truly penitent and die in God’s love before having satisfied by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are cleansed after death by purgatorial penalties. In order that they be relieved from such penalties, the acts of intercession of the living benefit them, namely the sacrifices of the Mass, prayers, alms, and other works of piety which the faithful are wont to do for the other faithful, according to the Church’s practice.*

## Purgatory Roots in Scripture

It is this “penal” or “judicial” side of the purification process in purgatory that seems to be absent from

Eastern Orthodox teaching - and, indeed, from most Catholic teaching on purgatory today as well! But as we shall see, this aspect of purgatorial purification also has its roots in Scripture, and in the ancient Fathers, and as we have just seen, it is also the solemn teaching of two ecumenical councils of the Church. Thus, we are duty bound to accept and try to understand this much neglected aspect of the mystery of purgatory, even if we think that the emphasis should be placed elsewhere (that is, on purgatory as a place of spiritual healing and sanctification, which is certainly what the *Catechism* stresses). In fact, ecumenical councils of the Church can sometimes truly express the Church’s teachings in ways that are somewhat imbalanced, needing further clarification and “rounding out” so to speak, by future authoritative magisterial documents. But that is not to say that they were wrong: their definitions of doctrine are at least “true as far as they go” and need to be taken seriously.

First, let us look at what is implied in Scripture. In II Maccabees 12:42-46, Judas Maccabeus ordered prayers and sacrifices to be offered

to the Lord for His slain soldiers to make “atonement” for them, “that they may be delivered from their sin”, biblical phrases surely implying that they still needed to find a measure of divine pardon for those sins. Jesus once said, “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get” (Mt. 7:2). In other words, what goes around comes around. But where is this supposed to take place? Surely Jesus knew that in this life the merciless often go unpunished for their crimes. Perhaps He was referring then only to those who will suffer eternal loss in hell? But what about those who were merciless to others at times, and who attained imperfect and half-hearted repentance for their sins? Will they receive a blanket divine pardon after death? Do they not still have some measure of moral debt owing to God?

## What About the State of Imperfect Contrition?

Quite often Protestant theologians will object to this judicial aspect of the doctrine of purgatory on



the grounds that Jesus died on the Cross to completely take away our sins, and all penalty and punishment due to them. To be clear, the Catholic Church certainly does not deny this, but in the New Testament, the merits of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross are promised to those who repent in faith. The real question is, what about those whose repentance was weak and half-hearted, those who died in what the Church calls a state of "imperfect contrition", for example, contrite more out of fear of hell or disgust with oneself, than out of love for God and sorrow at having let Him down? Are these souls fully united to Jesus Christ and to the merits of His redeeming sacrifice? Do they, too, receive a blanket pardon for their moral debts to God at the time of their death?

Let's continue with Scripture. Our Lord said, "And whoever says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come" (Mt. 12:32). In his book *Charity for the Holy Souls*, Fr Nagaleisen tells us: *From these words St Augustine (De Civ. Dei, lib. 21, c.13), St. Gregory the Great (dialogue 4, c. 39) St Bernard, St Bede and others conclude as follows... this passage proves convincingly that certain sins are forgiven in the next world. Now this forgiveness is not obtainable in heaven, because sin does not gain admittance there (Rev. 21:27), nor in hell, whence there is no redemption. There is only one possibility: These sins are forgiven in purgatory. [Note: by "forgiveness" he means pardon for sin here]. (pp. 28-29)*

Jesus exhorts his hearers to settle their accounts in this life, lest we be delivered to the Judge, who will cast

us in prison: "Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny" (Mt. 5:25-26). This is repeated in his parable in Matthew chapter 18: 32-35, where he adds, "So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." On this Nagaleisen writes (pp.29):

*Many holy Fathers, among them Origen, St Jerome, St Ambrose, and others, declare that this passage is to be understood not only as referring to a place of eternal punishment [hell], but also to one of temporal punishment in the next world, because deliverance is promised to those who repay the last farthing" [there is no deliverance at all from hell, and none needed from heaven: purgatory must be what Jesus is referring to here, by process of elimination! Jesus seems to be referring to a cleansing from one's remaining moral debt to God beyond death].*

### Saved by Fire

The most intriguing passage in the New Testament in this regard, however, comes from St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, 3:11-15:

*For no one can lay another foundation but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work will be manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abides, which he hath built upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.*

This is a difficult passage to interpret, but it seems to have been

the unanimous testimony of the ancient Fathers of the Latin-speaking churches - for example, St Cyprian, St Ambrose, St Jerome, St Augustine and St Gregory the Great - that the metaphorical "flames" referred to here are the flames suffered by souls at their particular judgment immediately following death. Some people build their lives upon the right "foundation" - faith in Christ, according to verse 11 - yet they live out that faith only in very imperfect ways. Their good works are mixed with many lesser sins, which is why St Paul says their works consist merely of "wood, hay or stubble". After their death, these deeds are tried and burned up (so to speak) in the fires of God's judgment (verse 13).

The works, therefore, "burn" up in that fire. In other words, they are condemned. But of course, works cannot actually burn. That is why St Paul clarifies in verse 15 that if any man's works "burn" he shall "suffer loss". This is not the loss of eternal damnation, however, for St Paul goes on to say "but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

Most Protestant Bible scholars say that this phrase merely means "he shall be saved out of the midst of fire", which is certainly a possible reading of the text here on grammatical grounds. That would imply that this passage is talking about the final judgment day, as the soul escapes the judgment of his works on the Last Day without being scorched by the flames of judgment himself. But such is not the probable meaning of the passage, given the unanimous testimony of the western Fathers of the Church (along with some of the eastern Fathers, as we shall see).



## Purifying Suffering

Moreover, it is hard for the Protestant reading of this passage to make sense of verse 15: “he shall suffer loss”. What can this suffering and loss be? Are souls on the final judgment day to go weeping into heaven, suffering loss in the sense of penitential sorrow because of their imperfect works and imperfect repentance during their time on earth? There is no hint of such a spectacle on the Last Day in Scripture! It seems more likely that the traditional reading of the western Fathers is the correct one here: The passage refers not to the final judgment day, but to the particular judgment that each soul faces at the moment of death, as a preparation for the final judgment. The “loss” that such imperfect Christian souls will “suffer” at their particular judgment is therefore their penitential sorrow at that time, mixed with ardent longing for God, as the soul is made to realize, in the light of God’s particular judgment, that its earthly service of God, and its love for Him, was weak, partial and compromised. Such are the purifying sufferings of souls in purgatory.

Notice again, however, that these purgatorial sufferings are mentioned by St Paul as a matter of divine judgment and justice, as well as a matter of purifying and salvation. There is a mystery here, indeed. There seems to be an intermediate state after death where souls receive cleansing, purifying punishment after death, to make up their moral debt to God for their imperfect service and half-hearted repentance while on earth (on the order of divine justice). And yet at the same time (on the order of God’s merciful love) this state also heals

and purifies the soul of its remaining spiritual defects, in order to prepare the soul for the joys of heaven!

## Penal and remedial aspects

And lest you think that this teaching is merely a peculiarity of the Latin-speaking Fathers of the Church, let me close this instalment with some quotes from some of the ancient Fathers of the Greek-speaking east, who state or imply the same teaching.

Take, for example, St Cyril of Jerusalem (4<sup>th</sup> century): “By offering God our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, if they have sinned, we... offer Christ sacrificed for the sins of all, and so render favourable for them and for us the God who loves man” (*Catechetical Lectures* 23.10, *Myst.* 5). Notice that we are said by St Cyril to offer Christ (in the Eucharist) for the sins of the faithful departed, to render God “favourable” to them, in other words, to obtain the completion of their divine pardon.

St John Chrysostom (5<sup>th</sup> century) wrote in his *Third Homily*: “The apostles did not ordain, without good reason, a commemoration of the departed to be made during the celebration of the mysteries; for from it the deceased draw great gain and help. Why should our prayers for them not placate God, when besides the priest, the whole people stand with uplifted hands while the august Victim [that is, Jesus Christ in the Eucharist] is presented on the altar? True, it is offered only for such as departed hence in faith.”

Notice that according to this saint and Father of the Church, we are to “placate” divine justice by

offering prayers at Mass for the faithful departed.

Finally, St Maximus the Confessor (7<sup>th</sup> century) wrote in his work *Questions and Doubts* (page 90, 792-793): “Those departing this life not fully perfect must expiate that which is bad in their balance of good and bad as if by fire” (the Greek here literally says, “as if they were being burned”).

All this should be evidence enough, from both Scripture and Sacred Tradition, that the teaching of the Church concerning purgatory includes both a “penal” and a “remedial” dimension. In other words, it involves both the clearing of our remaining moral debt to God and the final healing and sanctification of the soul on its journey into the Heart of Divine Love.

How can both of these things be true at once? In the old days, Catholic catechists sometimes so heavily emphasized the “penal” aspect of purgatory that it seemed a matter of divine justice alone, and not of God’s merciful love (I have even heard elderly friends tell me how their Catholic schoolteachers would threaten unruly schoolboys with lurid descriptions of the fires of purgatory!). On the other hand, many contemporary presentations of the doctrine do not mention its “judicial” aspect at all. They view purgatory as just a happy place for getting cleaned up on the way to heaven!

The mystery of purgatory is deeper than either of these caricatures.

**Dr Robert Stackpole, STD**

The director of the John Paul II Institute  
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of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.



# Angels Unveiled: Divine Encounters in the Bible (part 2)

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

**J**oin 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 Moses in the Burning Bush

(Exodus 3):

In this story, Moses, who had fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian taskmaster, encounters a miraculous sight while tending to his father-in-law's flock in the wilderness. He comes across a bush that is on fire but not consumed by the flames. As he approaches the burning bush, an angel of the Lord appears to him from within the fire.

The angel identifies God's presence and instructs Moses to remove his sandals, for he is standing on holy ground. God then reveals His divine name as "I AM WHO I AM"



■ Gideon and Angel by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, woodcut for "Die Bibel in Bildern", 1860

and commissions Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelite slaves from Egypt. God assures Moses that He will be with him throughout this mission.

This encounter at the burning bush marks the beginning of Moses' journey as the leader of the Israelites and their liberation from Egyptian slavery. It highlights themes of divine revelation, obedience and the transformative power of God's presence.

This story is a crucial moment in biblical history, symbolising God's

call to leadership and His covenant with the Israelites. It serves as a foundational narrative in both Judaism and Christianity, demonstrating God's ability to choose and empower individuals for His divine purposes.

## Angels Announcing the Birth of Samson

(Judges 13):

The narrative begins with the Israelites once again doing evil in the sight of the Lord, leading to their oppression

by the Philistines for forty years. In the midst of this turmoil, an angel of the Lord appears to a childless Israelite woman and informs her that she will conceive and give birth to a son who will be a Nazirite from birth, dedicated to God, and will begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines; “The Angel of Yahweh appeared to this woman and said to her, ‘You are barren and have had no child, but you are going to conceive and give birth to a son. From now on, take great care. Drink no wine or fermented liquor, and eat nothing unclean. For you are going to conceive and give birth to a son. No razor is to touch his head, for the boy is to be God’s Nazirite from his mother’s womb; and he will start rescuing Israel from the power of the Philistines.’” (Judges 13:3-5).

The woman, named Manoah’s wife, excitedly shares this revelation with her husband, Manoah, who prays for the angel to return and provide further guidance. The angel reappears and instructs Manoah on how to raise the child and that the child should abstain from wine and unclean food.

Manoah offers a sacrifice to God, and the angel ascends in the flames of the offering. Both Manoah and his wife recognize the divine nature of this encounter and are filled with awe.

The birth of Samson, as foretold by the angel, comes to pass. He grows up to become a mighty warrior and a leader among the Israelites, known for his incredible strength and the exploits recounted in the subsequent chapters of the Book of Judges.

The story of the angels announcing the birth of Samson is significant not only because it marks the miraculous birth of a pivotal figure in Israelite history but also because it illustrates the concept of divine intervention



■ The Sacrifice of Manoah by Salomon de Bray, 1650s

and God’s ability to use ordinary individuals for extraordinary purposes. Samson’s life and exploits, guided by his Nazirite vow and God’s divine plan, play a crucial role in the ongoing struggle of the Israelites against their oppressors, the Philistines.

### Angel Visiting Gideon (Judges 6):

The Israelites had a period of hardship, as they were oppressed and impoverished by the Midianites. In their distress, the Israelites cry out to the Lord for help. In response, God sends an angel to visit Gideon, who is threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

The angel appears to Gideon and addresses him as a “mighty warrior”, despite Gideon’s initial confusion and self-doubt. The angel then delivers a message from God, telling Gideon that he has been chosen to lead the Israelites in delivering them from the oppression of the Midianites; “Gideon replied, ‘Forgive me, my lord, but how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in

Manasseh and I am the least important of my father’s family.’ Yahweh replied, ‘I shall be with you and you will crush Midian as though it were one man’” (Judges 6:15-16). Gideon is filled with scepticism and asks for a sign to confirm the angel’s message.

In response to Gideon’s request for a sign, he prepares an offering, and the angel consumes it miraculously with fire. Witnessing this miraculous sign, Gideon recognizes the divine nature of the encounter and fears for his life, believing that he has seen God face to face. The angel reassures Gideon, saying, “Peace be with you; have no fear; you will not die” (Judges 6: 23). Gideon then builds an altar to the Lord and calls it “The Lord Is Peace” as a symbol of his encounter with the divine.

This visitation by the angel marks the beginning of Gideon’s journey as a judge and leader of Israel. He is eventually tasked with assembling an army to confront the Midianites and deliver the Israelites from their oppression.

Let us now go to the New Testament.

Charles Armstrong, U.K.



# The Need of Prayer

**Prayer is a particular task given and entrusted to the laity and consecrated individuals whose lives are wholly dedicated to God.**

**W**hen praying we have the opportunity to personally grow in faith and bear witness before others to show them where to find hope. We are called to prayer not only for our own intentions but for the entire Church and the whole world; thus we become clear signs of hope. In his encyclical *Spe salvi* Pope Benedict XVI defines a prayer as a place to seek hope and practise it.

Pope Benedict XVI says: “By your prayer and intercession, you are the advocates of all who seek God, who are journeying towards God. You bear witness to a hope which, against every form of hopelessness, silent or spoken, points to the fidelity and the loving concern of God. Hence you are on the side of those who are crushed by misfortune and cannot break free of their burdens. You bear witness to that Love which gives itself for humanity and thus conquered death” (Vespers with priests, religious, deacons and seminarians; Shrine of Mariazell, 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007).

During his Apostolic Journey to Brazil in 2007 Pope Benedict XVI visited the Farm of Hope, a rehabilitation centre of alcohol, drugs and chemical substances addicts run by the Poor Clares. He said that “Through the strength of silent prayer, through fasting and penance, the daughters of Saint Clare live out

the commandment of love for God and neighbour in its supreme form, loving to the end. Your silent prayerful self-offering, an eloquent silence that the Father hears, proclaims the message of love that conquers sorrow, drugs and death.”

Our prayer is to express the total offering of life they present to God. Pope Benedict XVI teaches: “You yourselves will become living altars, where Christ’s sacrificial love is made present as an inspiration and a source of spiritual nourishment to everyone you meet” (Homily during Holy Mass with bishops, seminarians and novices, St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, Australia, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008).

Our prayer is also a unique expression of the desire for God and the hope placed in Him. Christian hope is not merely a longing for heaven; it is a living and active desire for God in this world – a desire for God that makes a person an unwavering pilgrim. Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes that the faithful are a prophetic sign of the heavenly kingdom for everyone, and their lives hold prophetic value for the contemporary world. We live in our times, but our hearts transcend time. Our complete dedication to Christ is a powerful and clear proclamation of God’s presence in a language understandable to modern people. Bearing a prophetic witness to the world is not without struggles and

hardships. Therefore, we are called to be faithful in prayer, trust in the truth of the Gospel, and place constant hope in God’s promises.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, the privileged space of hope is the liturgy, which reflects eternity. The Pope convinces that perceiving in the liturgy, in rituals and songs totally God-oriented – an image of eternity is not an exaggeration or audacity but rather an expression of the essence of the liturgy. Theocentric orientation of the liturgy is a necessary condition to be clear sign of great hope that we ground in God. Well-conceived and prepared plans to make the liturgy more interesting are not only unnecessary but also detract from what is most important. God is to be the subject of the liturgy because it is the “opus Dei” (work of God). Only the liturgy performed with a focus on God and concentration on Him, in communion with the saints, has the power to strengthen true hope.

Giving glory to God in prayer and the liturgy is the fundamental and irreplaceable service of both lay Catholics and the religious to the world. It is also a service of reviving hope. If we want to be faithful to God, we cannot deviate from the words of St Benedict found in his Rule: “Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God” (St Benedict of Nursia 43,3). Pope Benedict XVI



emphasizes that worship, praise, and glorification of the Lord make “a little bit of heaven present on earth”.

Our prayer can inspire hope in all those who seek and need it; moreover, it shows who the source of unwavering hope is, in reality. Our houses as well as all monasteries and religious houses are to be places of ‘God’s preference’, and this will be possible only through faithfulness to prayer and the care of giving glory to the Most High.

Pope Benedict XVI recommends the prayer composed by St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, which expresses an attitude of trust and surrender to God and encompasses the essence of obedience to the will of God, obedience of love. He does not conceal that this prayer may seem too grand – that one might not measure up to it. However, the grace of God enables us to seek, find, and then fulfil the will of the loving God, in whom we place our entire hope. The Pope encourages us to continue reciting it, attempting

to shape our lives according to the prayer, saying:

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.*

*You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.*

*Everything is yours;  
do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.*

In summary, the contemplation of divine things and the constant union with God is the fundamental purpose of the existence of the believers including every Michaelite. Looking at the example of our patron, St Michael, we have no doubt that we are to imitate him in constant adoration of God. The strength of St Michael the Archangel lays in his faithfulness to God; he never lost trust in His omnipotence and

magnificence. He did not succumb to Lucifer, who turned away from contemplation and disobeyed God. Is this not also a sign for us that where contemplation begins to diminish, rebellion and complaints about one’s own fate arise?

Prayer occupies an irreplaceable place in our lives. It is a space of constant purification and expansion of the heart, making more room for God, and renewing hope amid various human problems and adversities. We are called to look to the future with hope, to inspire hope, to attract towards good, and to comfort. With the strength derived from individual and community prayer, we can go where hope is particularly needed and reach out to those who are rejected, lost, discouraged and in despair. This ministry will be fruitful to the extent that it remains in God’s love, being faithful to prayer, forgetting oneself and placing the living Christ at the centre.

A true Christian cares about their own salvation and respects all paths of spiritual development. They are focused, patient and demanding from themselves. They leave no room for compromise that would question their mission. They live in the truth about themselves and their sinfulness. They know they are not God and need help because contemplation itself is not their own achievement; it is a gift bestowed by God. It is a pure gift of grace that enables them to repeat with St Paul: “What I am now, I am through the grace of God, and the grace which was given to me has not been wasted. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others - not I, but the grace of God which is with me” (1 Cor 15:10).

Fr Matthew Szerszeń CSMA



# The Gift of Faith

**“Faith is to believe what you do not see. The reward of faith is to see what you believe.” St Augustine of Hippo**

**W**hen St Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared to him that this revelation did not come from flesh and blood, but from “my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17).

## Faith is a grace

Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him. Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.

## Faith is a human act

Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason.

Even in human relations it is not contrary to our dignity to believe what other persons tell us about themselves and their intentions, or to trust their promises (for example, when a man and a woman marry) to share a communion of life with one another. If this is so, still less is it contrary to our dignity to yield by faith the full

submission of intellect and will to God who reveals, and to share in an interior communion with him.

In faith, the human intellect and will co-operate with divine grace: Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace.

## Faith and understanding

What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. So that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit. Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church’s growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all; they are motives of credibility (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is by no means a blind impulse of the mind.

## Faith is certain

It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on

the very word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives. Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.

## Faith seeks understanding

It is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens the eyes of your hearts to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God’s plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery. The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood. In the words of St Augustine, “I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe” (St Augustine, Sermo 43, 7, 9: PL 38, 257-258).

## Faith and science

Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the

same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth. Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conservator of all things, who made them what they are.

## The freedom of faith

To be human, man's response to God by faith must be free, and therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act. God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently, they are bound to him in conscience, but not coerced. This fact received its fullest manifestation in Christ Jesus. Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom... grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself (cf. Jn 18:37; 12:32).

## The necessity of faith

Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. Since "without faith it is impossible to please (God) and to attain to



the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life 'But he who endures to the end'" (cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:36).

## Perseverance in faith

Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St Paul indicated to St Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim 1:18-19). To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be working through charity, abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.

## Faith – the beginning of eternal life

Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God "face to face", "as he is" (1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2). So faith is already the beginning of eternal life: When we contemplate the blessings of faith even now, as if gazing at a reflection

in a mirror, it is as if we already possessed the wonderful things which our faith assures us we shall one day enjoy.

Now, however, "we walk by faith, not by sight"; we perceive God as "in a mirror, dimly" and only "in part" (1 Cor 13:12). Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

It is then we must turn to the witnesses of faith: to Abraham, who "in hope... believed against hope" (Rom 4:18); to the Virgin Mary, who, in her pilgrimage of faith, walked into the night of faith in sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death; and to so many others: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:1-2).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 153-165



# Only love counts (part 2)

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Pope Francis published *C'est la confiance*, an Apostolic Exhortation for the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face.

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.

## A most firm hope

Before entering the Carmel, Therese had felt a remarkable spiritual closeness to one of the most unfortunate of men, the criminal Henri Pranzini, sentenced to death for a triple murder for which he was unrepentant. By having Masses offered for him and praying with complete confidence for his salvation, she was convinced that she was drawing him ever closer to the blood of Jesus, and she told God that she was sure that at the last moment he would pardon him “even if he went to his death without *any signs of repentance*”. As the reason for her certainty, she stated: “I was absolutely confident in the mercy of Jesus”. How great was her emotion when she learned that Pranzini, after mounting the scaffold, “suddenly, seized by an inspiration, turned, took hold of the crucifix the priest was holding out to him and kissed the sacred wounds three times!” This intense experience of hoping against all hope proved fundamental for her: “After this unique grace, my desire to save souls grows each day”.

Therese was conscious of the tragic reality of sin, yet she remained constantly immersed in the mystery of Christ, certain that “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom 5:20). The sin of the world is great but not infinite, whereas the merciful love of the Redeemer is indeed infinite. Therese testifies to the definitive victory of Jesus, through his passion, death and resurrection, over all the powers of evil. Filled with confidence, she dared to explain: “Jesus, allow me to save very many souls; let no soul be lost today... Jesus, pardon me if I say anything I should not say. I only want to give you joy and to console you”. This now leads us to consider another aspect of the breath of fresh air that is the message of St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face.

## I will be love

As “greater” than faith and hope, charity will never pass away (cf. 1 Cor 13:8-13). It is the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit and “the mother and the root of all the virtues”.

## Charity as a personal attitude of love

The *Story of a Soul* is a testimonial to charity, in which Therese offers us a commentary on Jesus’ new

commandment: “that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12). Jesus thirsts for this response to his love. Indeed, he “did not fear to *beg* for a little water from the Samaritan woman. He was thirsty. But when he said ‘Give me to drink’, it was the *love* of his poor creature that the Creator of the universe was seeking. He was thirsty for love”. Therese wished to respond to the love of Jesus, to offer him love in return for love.

The symbolism of spousal love emphasizes the mutual self-gift of the bridegroom and the bride. Thus, inspired by the Song of Songs (2:16), Therese writes, “I think that the Heart of my Spouse is mine alone, just as mine is his alone, and I speak to him then in the solitude of this delightful heart to heart, while waiting to contemplate him one day face to face”. Although the Lord loves us together as a people, at the same time charity works in a most personal way: “heart to heart”.

Therese possessed complete certainty that Jesus loved her and knew her personally at the time of his Passion: “He loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). As she contemplated Jesus in his agony, she told him: “You saw me”. In the same way, she said to the Child Jesus in the arms of his Mother: “With your little hand that caressed Mary, you upheld the world and gave it life, and you thought

of me". So too, at the beginning of the *Story of a Soul*, she contemplated the love of Jesus for all humanity and for each individual, as if he or she were the only one in the world.

The act of love – repeating the words, "Jesus I love you" – which became as natural to Therese as breathing, is the key to her understanding of the Gospel. With that love, she immersed herself in all the mysteries of the life of Christ, making herself his contemporary and placing herself within the Gospel together with Mary and Joseph, Mary Magdalene and the apostles. Together with them, she penetrated to the depths of the love of the Heart of Jesus. Let us take one example: "When I see Magdalene walking up before the many guests, washing with her tears the feet of her adored Master, whom she is touching for the first time, I feel that *her heart* has understood the abysses of love and mercy of the *Heart of Jesus*, and, sinner though she is, this Heart of love was not only disposed to pardon her, but to lavish on her the blessings

of divine intimacy, to lift her to the highest summits of contemplation".

### The greatest love in supreme simplicity

At the end of the *Story of a Soul*, Therese presents us with her *Act of Oblation to Merciful Love*. Once she surrendered completely to the working of the Spirit, she received, quietly and unobtrusively, an abundant outpouring of living water: "rivers, or better, the oceans of graces that flooded my soul". This is the mystical life that, apart from any extraordinary phenomena, offers itself to all the faithful as a daily experience of love.

Therese practised charity in littleness, in the simplest things of daily life, and she did so in the company of the Virgin Mary, from whom she learned that "to love is to give everything. It's to give oneself". While preachers in those days often celebrated Mary's grandeur in ways that made her seem far removed from us, Therese showed, starting with the

Gospel, that Mary is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven because she is the least (cf. Mt 18:4), the one closest to Jesus in his abasement. She saw that, if the apocrypha are full of striking and amazing feats, the Gospels show us a lowly and poor life lived in the simplicity of faith. Jesus himself wanted Mary to be the example of a soul that seeks him with a simple faith. Mary was the first to experience the "little way" in pure faith and humility. Consequently, Therese did not hesitate to write:

"Mother full of grace, I know that in Nazareth You live in poverty, wanting no thing more. No rapture, miracle or ecstasy embellish your life, O Queen of the Elect!... The number of little ones on earth is truly great. They can raise their eyes to you without trembling. It's by the ordinary way, incomparable Mother, that you like to walk to guide them to heaven".

Therese does tell us of certain moments of grace experienced amid the simplicity of daily life, like the sudden insight she had when accompanying a sick and somewhat irascible sister. Even so, those experiences of a more intense charity came about in the most ordinary ways. "One winter night I was carrying out my little duty as usual; it was cold, it was night. Suddenly I heard off in the distance the harmonious sound of a musical instrument. I then pictured a well-lighted drawing room, brilliantly gilded, filled with elegantly dressed young ladies conversing together and conferring upon each other all sorts of compliments and other worldly remarks. Then my glance fell upon the poor invalid whom I was supporting. Instead of the beautiful strains of music I heard only her occasional



■ Basilica of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, Lisieux, France



complaints, and instead of the rich gildings I saw only the bricks of our austere cloister, hardly visible in the glimmering light. I cannot express in words what happened in my soul; what I know is that the Lord illumined it with rays of truth, which so far surpassed the dark brilliance of earthly feasts that I could not believe my happiness. Ah! I would not have exchanged the ten minutes employed in carrying out my humble office of charity to enjoy a thousand years of worldly feasts”.

## In the heart of the Church

From St Teresa of Avila, Therese inherited a great love for the Church and was able to plumb the depths of this mystery. We see this in her discovery of the “heart of the Church”. In a lengthy prayer to Jesus, written on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1896, the sixth anniversary of her religious profession, the saint confided to the Lord that she felt driven by an immense desire, a passion for the Gospel that no vocation, by itself, could satisfy. And so, in seeking her “place” in the Church, she turned to chapters 12 and 13 of the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

There, in chapter 12, the apostle employs the metaphor of the body and its members to explain that the Church embraces a great variety of hierarchically ordered charisms. Yet this description was not enough for Therese. She continued her search and read the “hymn to charity” in chapter 13. There she came upon the eminent answer to her question, and wrote this memorable page: “Considering the mystical body of the Church I had not recognized myself in any of

the members described by St Paul, or rather I desired to see myself in them all. Charity gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that if the Church had a body composed of different members, the most necessary and most noble of all could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that the Church had a Heart, and that this Heart was burning with love. I understood it was love alone that made the Church’s members act, that if Love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the Gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood. I understood that Love comprised all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and places... in a word: that it was eternal! Then, in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my Love... my vocation, at last I have found it... my vocation is Love! Yes, I have found my place in the Church, and it is you, O my God, who have given me this place; in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love. Thus I shall be everything, and thus my dream will be realized”.

This heart was not that of a triumphalistic Church, but of a loving, humble and merciful Church. Therese never set herself above others, but took the lowest place together with the Son of God, who for our sake became a slave and humbled himself, becoming obedient, even to death on a cross (cf. Phil 2:7-8).

This discovery of the heart of the Church is also a great source of light for us today. It preserves us from being scandalized by the limitations and weaknesses of the ecclesiastical institution with its shadows and sins, and enables us to enter into the Church’s “heart burning with love”,



■ Statue of St Therese

which burst into flame at Pentecost thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is that heart whose fire is rekindled with each of our acts of charity. “I shall be love”. This was the radical option of Therese, her definitive synthesis and her deepest spiritual identity.

**Pope Francis**  
www.vatican.va

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

## To My Guardian Angel

*Glorious guardian of my soul,  
Shining in thy light supernal  
As the ardent flames, that roll  
Near the throne of the Eternal.  
Thou art come to earth for me  
Here to light me with thy splendour.*

Angel blest, my brother be,  
Comforter and friend most tender.

To thee is my weakness known,  
By the hand each day thou'lt guide me,  
Casting from my way the stone,  
Watching, guarding close beside me.  
Ever doth thy voice invite  
To uplift my gaze to Heaven  
When most lowly in thy sight  
Radiance new to thee is given.

Thou who canst traverse all space  
Fleeter than the swiftest lightning,  
Fly full often in my place  
To my own, their sorrows brightening.  
With thy wings dry every tear,  
Goodness of my Jesus singing,  
Breathe my name to hearts so dear,  
Whisper charms from anguish springing.

Short my life, through fleeting hours,  
I would save my sinning brother.  
Angel mine, bestow thy powers;  
Take my gift, I have no other.  
Save my poverty, my pain,  
But if to thy bliss united  
God will not the gift disdain,  
But will deem His love requited.

Ever is the vision thine  
Of the King of Kings, most holy,  
Ever is the Bread Divine  
And the cross, my treasure lowly;  
With the Cross, the Host and thee  
To uphold and guide me ever,  
I shall linger peacefully  
For the life that faileth never.

St Therese, Feb, 1897

Source: Poems by St Therese of the Child Jesus known as The Little Flower of Jesus translated by The Carmelites of Santa Clara, California, U.S.A., 1925, found on [www.us.archive.org](http://www.us.archive.org)



# First Australian Saint

**St Mary MacKillop is remembered for her humility, compassion and tireless work in improving the lives of others, particularly through education and social services. She is venerated as a symbol of faith and service in Australia and beyond.**

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, commonly known as St Mary MacKillop, lived a remarkable life dedicated to education, social service and the well-being of the marginalised in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Australia.

She co-founded the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, a religious congregation dedicated to providing education and social services to the poor and disadvantaged. The congregation focused on serving remote and underserved areas of Australia.

St Mary MacKillop faced numerous challenges and controversies during her lifetime, including conflicts with ecclesiastical authorities. However, her dedication to serving those in need and her commitment to providing quality education remained central to her mission.

She was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (feast day August 8<sup>th</sup>). Her canonization was a significant moment for the Catholic Church in Australia, as she became the first Australian to be officially recognized as a saint.

## Family Background

Mary Helen MacKillop was born on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1842, in Fitzroy,

Melbourne, Australia. She was the eldest of eight children in a devoutly Catholic Scottish immigrant family. Mary received her early education from her father, who had a strong commitment to education. This laid the foundation for her own passion for learning and teaching. She started working at the age of 14 and was often the family's main breadwinner.

When she was 18, she moved to a rural town of Penola to teach her aunt and uncle's children. Soon other children from the neighbourhood were coming for classes of basic education. There in Penola Mary met Fr Julian Tenison Woods, a priest with a vision of providing education to the poor and remote areas of Australia. In 1866 they established a school in Penola, South Australia, which marked the beginning of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

## The New Convent and Educational Mission

Mary and a few young girls, the Sisters of St Joseph, focused on providing education to rural and disadvantaged children, particularly in areas where formal education was lacking. They aimed to empower





www.commonswiki.org

■ St Mary MacKillop, 1890

individuals through education and promote the dignity of every person.

Mary was known for her innovative teaching methods. She encouraged hands-on learning and believed in tailoring education to the individual needs of each student.

She also refused government funding for her charity work trusting in Divine Providence. Moreover, her schools provided not only religious education but a secular one as well. Education was for free to every child unless parents had money to pay tuition. This was such a revolutionary way of thinking that it faced challenges and even conflicts from Church authorities. MacKillop was even excommunicated for a year in 1871. However, her excommunication was later lifted, and she continued her mission with humility and dedication.

### Expansion and Official Approval

Despite challenges, the Sisters of St Joseph expanded rapidly, establishing

schools, orphanages and other charitable institutions across Australia and New Zealand.

Their work extended beyond education, providing assistance to those in need, including homeless individuals, prisoners and women in difficult situations.

In 1873 Mary met Pope Pius IX to ask for his approval for the Josephite rule. The Sisters got an official approval of their congregation two years later by Pope Leo XIII. By the year of 1877, the Josephites ran more than 40 schools in and around Adelaide and many others in Queensland and New South Wales. Later on, branches of the congregation were established in the Australian state of Victoria as well as in New Zealand.

In 1902 Mary had a stroke and from then on she had to move in a wheelchair. In spite of numerous health problems, she continued to work for the new congregation and underprivileged people. She passed away seven years later, in 1909.

### Beatification miracle

After her death, the sisters made efforts to elevate her to the altar. The first miracle through the intercession of Mary MacKillop occurred in 1961 to a young woman, then 23, from Sydney, was miraculously cured of incurable leukaemia. The doctors said that even if she miraculously recovered, she would not be able to have children. At the time, the sisters prayed to their foundress for that young lady. Not only was she cured but later on she delivered six children. The Vatican recognised this miracle and Mary MacKillop was beatified on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1995 in Sydney, in a Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II.

In his homily the Pope said, “In the vastness of the Australian continent, Blessed Mary MacKillop was not daunted by the great desert, the immense expanses of the outback, nor by the spiritual wilderness which affected so many of her fellow citizens. Rather she boldly prepared the way of the Lord in the most trying situations. With gentleness, courage and compassion, she was a herald of the Good News among the isolated battlers and the urban slum-dwellers. Mother Mary of the Cross knew that behind the ignorance, misery and suffering which she encountered there were people, men and women, young and old, yearning for God and his righteousness. She knew, because she was a true child of her time and place: the daughter of immigrants who had to struggle at all times to build a life for themselves in their new surroundings. Her story reminds us of the need to welcome people, to reach out to the lonely, the bereft, the disadvantaged. To strive for the kingdom of God and his righteousness means to strive to see Christ in the stranger, to meet him in them and to help them to meet him in each one of us!”

### Canonisation miracle

Another miracle leading to canonisation happened in the 1990's. A mother of five and a grandmother of twenty was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Doctors gave her a few weeks of life and sent her home to die. But she didn't give up hope. She had something special – a piece of clothing that belonged to Mary MacKillop. She wore it on her nightie and prayed through her intercession together with her family and friends. Ten months later doctors couldn't find any cancer

in her body. Instead, they saw some scars in places where the cancer used to be. The lady was able to dance at her daughter's wedding within a few months and she lived on for another 23 years. The miracle was verified by the Holy See. Mary MacKillop was canonised on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI.

He said, "For many years countless young people throughout Australia have been blessed with teachers who were inspired by the courageous and saintly example of zeal, perseverance and prayer of Mother Mary MacKillop. She dedicated herself as a young woman to the education of the poor in the difficult and demanding terrain of rural Australia, inspiring other women to join her in the first women's community of religious sisters of that country. She attended to the needs of each young person entrusted to her, without regard for station or wealth, providing both intellectual and spiritual formation. Despite many challenges, her prayers to St Joseph and her unflagging devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whom she dedicated her new congregation, gave this holy woman the graces needed to remain faithful to God and to the Church. Through her intercession, may her followers today continue to serve God and the Church with faith and humility!"

## Legacy in Present Times

St Mary MacKillop's legacy continues to inspire individuals around the world. Her emphasis on education, care for the disadvantaged, and unwavering faith serve as an example of living out Catholic values in practical ways. She is venerated as a model of humility, service and compassion,

and her influence can be seen in the numerous schools, hospitals and charitable organizations that bear her name and continue her mission of helping those in need.

The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, driven by their unwavering commitment to God's mission, actively embed themselves in the fabric of everyday life to uplift and inspire others, igniting a sense of hope in the hearts they touch.

Presently, the congregation boasts a formidable presence with over 600 dedicated Sisters of St Joseph residing in vibrant communities spanning across Australia, New Zealand (Aotearoa), Ireland, Peru, Timor-Leste and Brazil. These remarkable women of faith are deeply involved in a broad spectrum of endeavours, from pastoral work to highly specialized professional roles.

Their diverse roles encompass teaching, administration, social services, law, psychology, nursing, care for the aged, community development, adult education and aiding newcomers to find their footing in the welcoming shores of Australia and New Zealand. Through their tireless efforts, these Sisters not only serve as pillars of their communities but also as beacons of compassion, actively contributing to the well-being and growth of the societies they are part of.

Michael Sheridan

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[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

# Quotes by St Mary MacKillop

- Be of good heart and let no false fear of God disturb the loving trust and confidence you have in God's mercy and love. No matter what, God is merciful and wants you to trust in this sweet mercy.
- To me, the will of God is a dear book which I am never tired of reading and which has always some new charm for me. Nothing is too little to be noticed.
- Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully, remembering whom you are trying to follow.
- Always try to have success in your work but remember God is often glorified in your failure.
- When I want something very much, I thank God beforehand for I feel God will certainly grant what He has been thanked for.
- Take fresh courage. Lean more on God and less on ourselves.
- Remember, there is, even on this earth, a day of bright reward for all your prayers and faithful perseverance.
- Cheer up then and take comfort in the thought that nothing happens but by the Will or permission of God.

Sisters of St Joseph  
 website – [www.sosj.org.au](http://www.sosj.org.au)

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# Say “Yes!” to God, I accept your invitation

**Attending retreats, we want to renew, collect and put in order everything that has been placed in our hearts by the power of the sacraments, and that we have lost in the course of life. This time is an invitation, but also a great opportunity to return to the sources of life in God and to renew our relationship with Him.**

## Who is a retreat for?

- In your heart you experience a longing for God
- You want to get to know it more and more deeply
- You have lost your way in life or lost its meaning
- You are going through a crisis of faith
- You want to get closer to God and feel His love

## What is the purpose of a retreat?

The purpose of a retreat or seminar is to meet and experience God in person and to live with our hearts what we intellectually acknowledge – that God gave His Son out of love for us, so that everyone who believes in Him should not die, but have eternal life.

Jesus wants to heal us, he wants to give us the whole „package” of gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit so that we can be his witnesses in the world.

For many of us, this time can be a time of joy, enthusiasm and delight in God's love and immersion in it. Others can become even more deeply rooted in God, loving His Word, adoration and the Eucharist.

The natural consequence of these experiences will be the decision to dedicate one's life to Jesus Christ as Lord and to take up a new life in the Holy Spirit. Accepting Jesus as Lord means being ready to do His will, which is expressed in the decision: “Lord, I want to walk in life in Your ways, doing Your will, not mine.”

## What will be the course of the retreat?

A retreat or seminar can last anywhere from 1 day or between 2 to 9 days with a chosen topic / theme. Each participant of the retreat/ seminar is usually required to make time for daily 15-minute personal prayer based on meditation on the Word of God, which will be given in advance. You would be encouraged as much as possible, to participate in Holy Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We also recommend that you receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, an in-depth confession, or even a lifelong confession with a priest of your choice.

Understood in this way, the time of a retreat or seminar is a time of grace and can help us experience the

presence and love of God in our lives. This is done by listening to conferences, sharing one's own life, listening to the testimony of others, participating in the life of the parish community, the communities of the Renewal, prayer groups and personal prayer.

**If you would like to deepen your faith in God, renew your relationship with Jesus Christ, do not hesitate – accept an invitation. Say to God, “Yes!”**

**Let Jesus guide you through life. Open your heart to God and He will lift you up from every fall and help you to do what is humanly impossible.**

Each participant of the retreat should find a suitable time and make time for a personal brief encounter with God and listening to His Word every day.

## Daily Personal Prayer

Daily personal prayer is a very important element of the retreat – a time of God's special action in our hearts, the most important moment of the day.



■ Miraculous Grotto of St Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

The effectiveness of a retreat depends to a large extent on faithfulness to daily prayer.

### How to meditate on the Word of God? – some practical tips:

Adopt a body position that suits you and relax. Put away the thoughts, the worries that distract you and give them to the Lord. Try to focus your thoughts and heart on Jesus.

1. Realise that you are in the presence of Jesus. It can help you to close your eyes and imagine Him. Be at peace, and by faith be assured that He is with you and you are with Him.
2. Ask Jesus to guide you in prayer and fill you with the Holy Spirit so that you can understand His word: “Holy Spirit, please open my heart to all the words that the Lord will speak to me in this prayer. Make them sink deep into my heart and change my life.”
3. Read slowly the Word of Scripture for the day. You can

read them several times if necessary – by pronouncing them out loud. Allow these words to penetrate your heart and mind. Accept them as if God Himself were telling them to you personally. Meditate on these words in your heart.

4. Think about what truth they express and how that truth applies to you, to your life, to your problems, to your relationship to God, to people, to yourself.
5. Notice how this Word reacts in you (it brings hope, joy, peace, love, gratitude, resistance, rebellion, discouragement, apprehension, fear).
6. Stand before Jesus, try to hear what He is saying to you, to you personally. If the text is taken from the Gospels, imagine that you are in the scene, e.g. with the apostles at the feet of Jesus, listening to his instructions. Stay before Jesus, embracing the peace and power that radiates from His presence. Let Jesus embrace you and open your heart to Him.

7. Try to respond to God's Word. Tell Jesus what you have understood and thank Him for it. Share with Him what you feel, what you are experiencing. Your prayer can be in the form of thanksgiving, praise, apology, a request. Speak to Jesus as a friend, giving thanks, entrusting yourself and giving yourself completely to him.

8. You can pray for others: family, relatives, friends, people in need, people who are suffering, for the Church, for your community, for the retreat leaders and for the other seminar participants.

9. You can end with the “Our Father”, “Hail Mary”, etc.

10. If you find it useful, you may want to write in your notebook about the reflections and experiences you have had in your personal prayer. You may want to underline the words and sentences that were most valuable to you.

May your will be the essence of my life, Merciful Lord. May Your grace fill me and strengthen me in fulfilling what You invite me to do. Let Your Love become my love and Your Life my life. Let Your Word name my world and create me anew every day.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, teacher of doing God's will, teach me to receive God in His Word, so that His Spirit may dwell in me and bear the fruits of God's Love in my heart and in my life every day.

Prepared by **Noreen Bavister**





■ Worship in Brazil

# A Global Journey of Faith

In the heart of the Catholic Church missions around the world is to spread the kingdom of God.

His calling has taken Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA across continents to the diverse lands of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Brazil and the Philippines. Far from his homeland, he has embraced the challenges and joys of serving in a lands rich in cultural diversity and spiritual depth. He embodied God's mercy and the universal message of love and hope that transcends borders and languages.

## Spiritual Landscape

Brazil is home to the largest Roman Catholic population in the world. However, it also hosts a significant number of evangelical believers (25%). The nation's rich multi-ethnic heritage and diverse culture celebrate unity in diversity.





Fr Peter recently went to Brazil at the invitation of the Hesed Institute to take part in the National Catholic Conference. Father preached on St Michael the Archangel and Divine Mercy. Many people received the scapular of St Michael.

Today there are more than 120 people, including religious sisters and brothers, distributed in female



and male houses, who make up this community. In addition, it has spaces that are used by the nearby community to attend various religious meetings.

At its core, the mission of the Hesed Institute is to address the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice through a multifaceted approach that combines education, advocacy and grassroots initiatives.

Recently they organised a national Catholic conference with mutual worship, prayers, Holy Masses, healing and deliverance services and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Yet, despite the struggles, Fr Peter also witnessed the resilience of the human spirit and the power of faith to uplift communities.

## Vibrant Faith

The *nations* with the *most* number of *Catholics* behind Brazil are

Mexico, the Philippines, the United States, Italy, France, Colombia, Poland and Spain.

The Philippines proudly boasts to be the only Christian nation in Asia. More than 86% of the population is Roman Catholic.

The people have a strong devotion to their faith, evident in their religious practices, festivals and traditions.

Fr Peter was greeted by the warm embrace of a deeply devout nation. It was a sheer joy to preach Divine Mercy and St Michael homilies in churches there organised by Anton and Mia Gonzalez. Fr Peter met people whose faith transcends the trials of everyday life. Typhoons may ravage their homes, poverty may loom



■ Healing service in the Philippines



over their futures, yet their unwavering trust in God remains unshaken.

Crowds gathered in the churches to hear about the power of St Michael and the unfathomable mercy of the loving God. Like in Brazil, lots of people accepted the Scapular of St Michael. Through engaging talks, reflections and spiritual exercises, they were equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools to live out their faith more fully in their daily lives.

## Oases of Spiritual Nourishment

In the diverse landscape of Australian Catholicism, a visit of Fr Peter in the parishes of North Ryde, Hurstville, Horsley Park and Eastwood near Sydney stood as vital opportunities for spiritual renewal, reflection and community bonding.

It was a time dedicated to deepening the participants' prayer life, encountering God in a new way, and experience spiritual growth and transformation. Parishioners



■ Filipinos receiving blessing and the Scapular of St Michael



came together in fellowship, shared their faith journeys and strengthened bonds of friendship and solidarity within the parish community.

The healing service and the Sacrament of Reconciliation offered participants a safe and supportive environment to address wounds, seek forgiveness and experience God's healing grace.

## Sacred Space

Fr Peter was also invited by the Michaelite missionary Fr Bogdan Świerczewski working in a parish

nestled in the rugged and remote lands of Papua New Guinea, amidst the lush forests and towering mountains.

He found a tapestry of cultures and traditions waiting to be embraced. They all celebrated the rich cultural heritage of the country, incorporating traditional music, dance and rituals into the retreat experience, fostering a sense of pride and identity among participants.

People there love St Michael and they are devoted to the Divine Mercy. The message of God's love preached by Fr Peter has inspired hope and faith.

Across continents and cultures, Fr Peter's mission exemplifies the universal values of compassion, solidarity and faith that lie at the heart of Catholicism.

From the remote reaches of Australia to the bustling streets of Brazil and the resilient communities of the Philippines and welcoming people of Papua New Guinea, his journey served as a testament to the transformative power of love and service in the world today.

In a world marked by busyness, noise and distractions, his mission remind us of the importance of carving out sacred spaces and times for encounter, reflection and renewal in our journey of faith.



Agata Pawłowska, Poland

## ENGLAND 2024

**14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Divine Mercy and St Michael  
Parish Mission**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 7:00 p.m.**

**Evening Mass and Talk**

**15<sup>th</sup> June 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Day Retreat**

**16<sup>th</sup> June 10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday Mass**

**St Peter's Church**

Shoreham by Sea

West Sussex BN43 5D

**16<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass**

**Christ the King Church**

Bramber Road, Steyning, BN44 3PB

Parish Priest: Fr Graham Ricketts

Contact: Pasty Daniels

Email: patsydaniels@gmail.com

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

**17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**12:10 p.m. and 1:10 p.m.**

**ALL Parish Masses + homily**

**2:00 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet,**

**Eucharistic Healing Hour,**

**Veneration 1<sup>st</sup> class relic**

**of St Faustina**

**Blessed Sacrament**

**Shrine Merseyside**

4 Dawson Street

**Liverpool L1 1LE**

Contact: Mr Melville Wright, SSS

Phone: +44 (0) 151-709-5528

Email: liverpoolshrine@rcaol.org.uk

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Time: TBC**

**St Anne's Church**

26 Highfield Road, Birkenhead,

Wirral, Merseyside, CH42 2BY

Contact: Mr Mario Ashuikaka

Email: stjohntehevangelist@gmail.com

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

**21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> 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) 7856-388-840

## CEBU AND BOHOL ISLANDS 2024

**12<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024**

**Theme: Divine Mercy**

**and St Michael the Archangel**

Main Contacts: Anton Gonzalez

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## ENGLAND 2024

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**6:00 p.m. Vigil Mass**

**29<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

**St Mary of the Angels**

**RC Parish Church**

Moorhouse Road, Bayswater,

London. W2 5DJ England

Contact: Mgr. Keith Barltrop PP

Phone: +44 (0) 207-229-0487

## CANADA 2024

**23<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Theme:**

**Advent Parish mission with**

**St Faustina, holy angels**

**and St Michael**

**Immaculate Conception Parish**

8842-119 Street Delta BC.

B4C 6M4

Contact: Ethelyn David

Email: ethelyn.david@gmail.com

## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO 2025

**15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Divine Mercy Conference**

**Trinidad and Tobago West Indies**

Contact: Mona Rahael

Phone: +1 (868) 678-2636

Email: monarachael@mac.com

## USA 2025

**18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Ascension RC Church**

802 Pine Street, Bastrop, Texas, 78602

Pastor: Fr Luis Caceres

Contact: Tessa Dorantes

Email: tmdorantes@hotmail.com

Phone +1 (512) 321-3552

**25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Divine Mercy Weekend Conference**

**Santiago de Compostela**

**Catholic Church**

21682 Lake Forest Drive

Lake Forest, California 92630

Pastor: Fr Thomas Naval

Phone: +1(949) 951-8599

Parish Co-ordinator:

jovinna.kruki@gmail.com

Contact: Lourdes

Email: loudy4homes@gmail.com

Website: www.sdccatholic.org

**29<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

**Divine Mercy Mission**

**DAY 1 Delving deeper into**

**the Divine Mercy**

**DAY 2 The Spirituality of St Faustina**

**and her encounters with the angels**

**DAY 3 The mystery of St Michael**

**and the secrets of St Faustina**

**St Patrick's Catholic Church**

Arroyo Grande

San Luis Obispo, California

Pastor: Fr Beto

Contact: Margy Moynihan

Email: surfmargy@att.net



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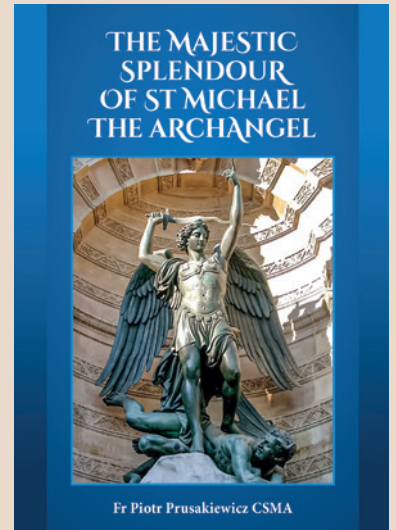
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## The Majestic Splendour of St Michael the Archangel



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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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www.wikipedia.org

## Petition prayer to my guardian angel

Angel of God, my Guardian, come to me, help me never to stray from the path of salvation. Defend me against all the snares and dangers that may come upon me during the day and at night.

Support me with your prayer, while I am in my weakness so I will not forget about you. Take care of those who stand in my way and give me the grace to show love in everything and gentleness.

Watch over me when temptation comes and don't let me stop trusting in your presence and God's love.

Thank you for every grace that I receive from God through you, our Lord and King. Amen

## Morning Prayer

Saint Michael the Archangel, who in the dawn of your existence chose God and gave yourself completely to the fulfilment of his holy will, intercede for me with the Creator, so that today, following your example, at the beginning of a new day, opening myself to the action of the Holy Spirit, I may give myself to God at every moment, lovingly fulfilling his holy will.

May I cry out with you without ceasing: Who is like God? Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(With the consent of the Curia of the Diocese of Warsaw-Praga of 08.02.1993 No. 184/K/93)*

Prepared by **Noreen Bavister**



# Chaplet of St Michael

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

A. *Amen*

*Say the following prayer on the medal:*

*O God, come to my assistance.*

*O Lord, make haste to help me.*

*Glory be to the Father, etc.*

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

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

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

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*

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

*(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)*



■ The miraculous statue of St Michael, Shrine of St Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

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.