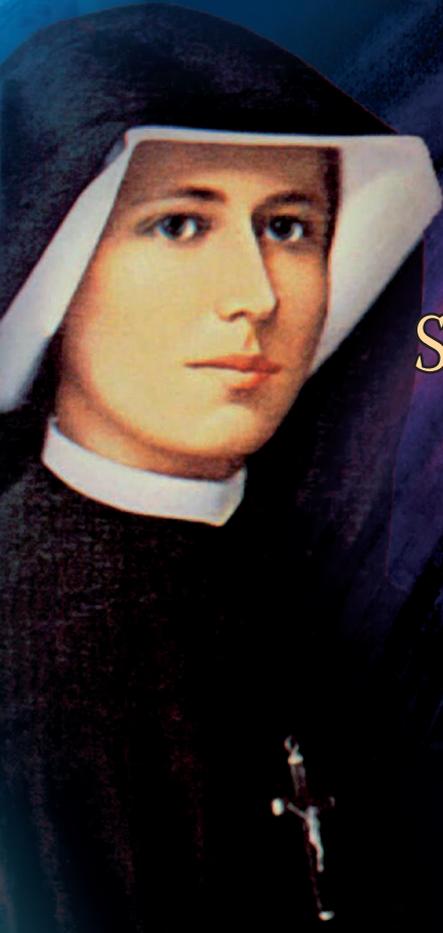
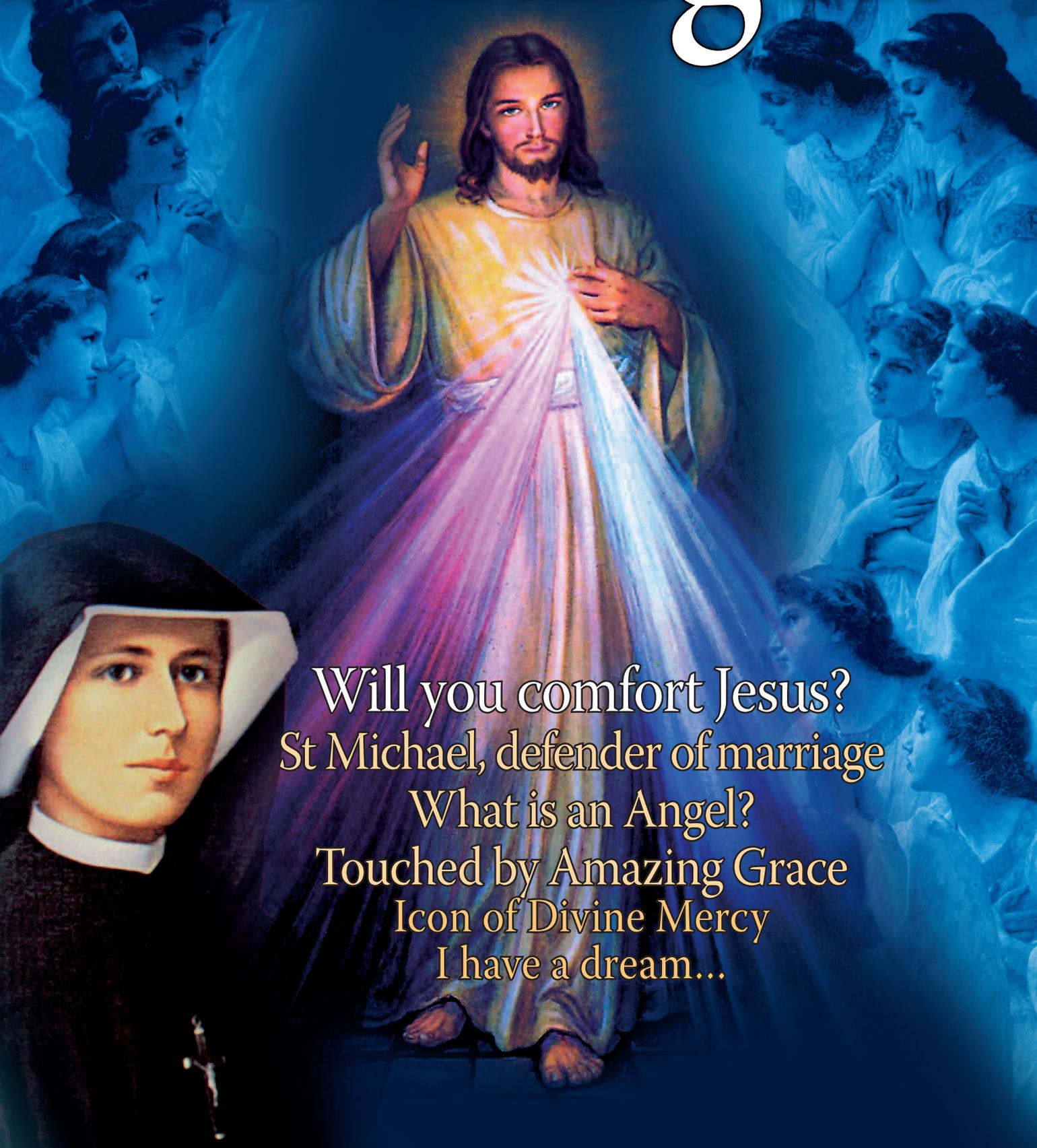




Messengers from a loving God

The Angels



Will you comfort Jesus?
St Michael, defender of marriage
What is an Angel?
Touched by Amazing Grace
Icon of Divine Mercy
I have a dream...



It is a pleasure to welcome you to the ninth quarterly edition of “The Angels. Messengers from a loving God”. Thank you for all your emails and letters. We are happy that the magazine helps you know God better as well as recognize angelic interventions in your daily life.

This year we are celebrating the third anniversary of our publication. We would like to thank God for His care of spreading the Good News via the magazine. We would also like to thank you, our dear readers, for your testimonies, which seem to touch others’ hearts to change their lives. Our magazine would not exist without your engagement and support.

This year we are also invited to praise God’s Mercy. Let me give voice to Jesus Himself: “*I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge*

and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. It is My desire that it [the Feast of Mercy] be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter.” (Diary 699)

May the Risen Lord bring Light into your life, Light which removes darkness and instead fulfils our hearts with love, peace and hope. May we come closer to Merciful Jesus who defeated death, evil and sin. Let us be obedient and humble and not afraid to be strong like St Michael the Archangel 'Who is like God'.

May the angels guide you on your way. God bless you, your families and friends.

Father **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA



The Angels

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A Catholic Quarterly Magazine on Holy Angels

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“You should be certain that angels are protecting you when you go to sleep. Yea, that they are protecting you also in all your business, whether you enter or leave your home.”

Martin Luther King



An angel is a pure spirit created by God. The Old Testament theology included the belief in angels: the name applied to certain spiritual beings or intelligences of heavenly residence, employed by God as the ministers of His will.

How we do know Angels exist?

The Scriptures give us no indication of the precise time of the creation of angels; their existence is assumed at the earliest times. In the New Testament seven orders are mentioned: Angels, Powers, Principalities, Dominions, Thrones and Archangels. The Old Testament specifically mentions the others the Seraph and Cherub. The New Testament and Old Testament refer also to the fallen angels. The Temptation of Adam and Eve presupposes the existence of bad spirits who were cast into hell from which they have no hope of redemption. Angels are purely spiritual or bodiless persons (Mt 11:30), some of whom behold the face of God and thus are in bliss (Mt 18:10). These spiritual beings comprise the celestial court and are called angels (from the Greek for “messenger”) because, according to the Bible, they carry out missions at God’s command. In order to complete these missions, they can at times assume bodily form. According

What is an Angel?

to the Bible, their missions are sometimes of great importance – eg, the Annunciation (Lk 1:26; 2:9-14).

The angels are the objects of God’s grace and love. But because, they are non-bodily creatures, their response to God’s love did not require time and reflection to grow and mature. As soon as they were created and received grace, they had the opportunity to respond to God’s love and be welcomed into bliss. While many did so, some did not.

Angelic Quotes

St Thomas Aquinas understood angelic duties towards people: “We are like children, who stand in need of masters to enlighten us and direct us; God has provided for this, by appointing his angels to be our teachers and guides.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta also realized great importance of friendship

with angels. She used to say: “Holy Angels, our advocates, our brothers, our counselors, our defenders, our enlighteners, our friends, our guides, our helpers, our intercessors – pray for us.”

Pope John XXIII often asked angels for prayer and protection: “An angel of Paradise, no less, is always beside me, wrapped in everlasting ecstasy on his Lord. So I am ever under the gaze of an angel who protects and prays for me.”

A more contemporary writer, Billy Graham, believed that an angel would help him in the hour of death: “When my time to die comes an angel will be there to comfort me. He will give me peace and joy even at that most critical hour, and usher me into the presence of God, and I will dwell with the Lord forever. Thank God for the ministry of His blessed angels.”

If saints and famous people called angels for help and intercession, why do we not?

Messenger from Heaven

Angels and Saints who helped in the most important assignment

Out of love for us, the Eternal Word was made flesh in the chaste womb of Mary. His plan was marvelously arranged. From all eternity, He chose a man after His heart who would be the virginal spouse of His divine Mother, His adopted father on earth, and the guardian of His childhood.

While not granting Joseph the same privileges He had granted our Blessed Mother, the Lord adorned his soul with the rarest virtues and raised him to great holiness.

When Our Lady had completed her education in the Temple, she was wed to this humble artisan. Like her, Saint Joseph belonged to the royal race of David, then fallen from its ancient splendour. Also like her, he had consecrated his virginity to God and ardently desired to see with his own eyes the promised Messiah, the salvation of Israel.

Humble and obedient souls

The Most High had prepared this excellent union by revealing His will to these humble and obedient souls. Mary accepted Joseph as the guarantor of Divine Providence, while

Joseph received Mary as a precious treasure entrusted to him by Heaven. Neither one nor the other suspected what blessings the Lord would lavish on their modest dwelling. The young spouses had lived but a short time in the little house of Nazareth when the scene of the Annunciation took place in all of its divine simplicity.

The last days of March had brought the return of spring to the Galilean countryside. The fig trees had begun to unfold their ample leaves and the doves to build their nests in the hollows of the rocks. Flowers dotted the rejuvenated fields. Soon another flower, infinitely more precious, would blossom from the root of Jesse.

In Heaven, the Holy Ghost acclaimed the spotless conception of the Immaculate Virgin with admiration and seemed impatient for the hour when the work of His infinite charity would be fulfilled. No longer did the Divine Spouse wish to delay. He resolved to send an extraordinary

messenger to her whom He called “My Spouse” – *Soror mea, sponsa.*

The most important assignment

God chose the Archangel Gabriel from among the princes of the celestial court who remained constantly before the throne of the Almighty. He entrusted to him the most important and glorious assignment ever confided to a creature, the mission of announcing to the Virgin the awesome mystery of the Incarnation.

All Heaven now looked upon that simple house of Nazareth, where a profound peace reigned. Joseph probably rested from his hard labour. In the adjoining room, his virgin spouse was praying. The angel appeared and respectfully bowed before his Queen. His countenance resplendent with supernatural joy, he



said to her, “Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.” Saint Gabriel uttered but the strictest truth.

At the moment of Mary’s conception, divine grace flooded her magnificent soul. Ever since then, this grace had grown ceaselessly in proportions far surpassing our feeble understanding. Now, at this moment, the adorable Trinity wanted this already extraordinary holiness to shine with even greater brilliance: Our Lady would shelter in her womb the very Author of grace.

The Archangel’s salutation

Yet, the Archangel’s salutation troubled the Immaculate Virgin. By divine enlightenment she had long understood the immensity of God and the nothingness of creatures. In her prodigious humility, she considered herself the lowliest of creatures and thus wondered at receiving such praise. She pondered what hidden meaning could be shrouded in such words.

Seeing this most incomparably perfect of all creatures with such a humble opinion of herself, the celestial ambassador exulted with admiration. “Mary,” he said to the trembling Virgin, “fear not, for thou hast found grace with God.”

Then slowly, majestically, in the name of the Eternal God, he communicated his sublime message: “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give ▶

▶ unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

She immediately understood

These words were far too clear to Our Lady for any hesitation in grasping them. She immediately understood the incomparable honour reserved for her. It seems that she experienced no hesitation on account of her virginity. Indeed, it would be a gratuitous insult to her intelligence to suspect her of such ignorance. She was aware of the prophecy of Isaiah that the Emmanuel would be born of a virgin.

Rather, she simply sought to know how God, so rich in miracles, would accomplish such a marvel. “How shall this be done,” she asked the angel, “for I know not man?” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Therefore, the child which shall be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who is called barren; for nothing shall be impossible with God.” Profound silence filled that small room in Nazareth, one of those dramatic silences wherein the world’s destiny hangs in the balance.

The angel had ceased speaking and Mary was quiet. How many thoughts crowded in upon her! In her mind’s eye, she saw the resplendent crown divine motherhood would place on her head, yet she remained too profoundly humble for any complacency about this singular grandeur. She saw the indescribable joys

that would surely fill her heart when holding her dear treasure against her bosom, her Jesus, both God and infant. Yet again, her self-mortification would not allow that she be guided by the allure of joy alone, even the most holy of joys.

She also saw the awful martyrdom that would rend her soul. Through Holy Scripture she knew that the Messiah would be delivered to His death like a tender lamb to the slaughter. She foresaw and heard the mournful cry: “I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.” Yet, such was her fortitude that she would not allow future sorrow to dishearten her. Above everything, she saw the extremely lofty, fatherly, and holy will of God. She owed obedience to Him; she did not hesitate.

The angel waited for consent

The Immaculate Virgin at last broke the solemn silence. The angel waited to receive her consent in the name of the Holy Ghost. In accepting, she pronounced one of those sublime expressions that only the genius of humility can find. It was the most simple and modest formula of a soul completely submissive to the will of God: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.” At that, the grandest of all miracles took place. From the very flesh of the Immaculate Virgin, the Holy Ghost formed a small human body. To this body He joined a human soul; to this body and soul He united the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Word of God.

Although it is necessary to explain these three facts separately to make

clear what took place, the three took place completely simultaneously as a single act. Not even for a second was this small body and soul separated from the Word. From that first instant the Child formed in the womb of Our Lady was the Word Incarnate. Without losing her virginity, Mary became the Mother of God, and in becoming the Mother of Christ, our Head, she also became the Mother of men – our Mother.

Through God’s infinite love for us, the Word utterly humbled Himself in the womb of the Virgin. At the same time, other events took place in her soul. When God entrusts a mission to one of His creatures, He also provides the grace to accomplish it fully. Thus, the Most High, having granted a double motherhood to the Blessed Virgin Mary (to be mother of God and of men), conferred upon her a love that was doubly maternal. Such was the splendour in this work of grace that we will never perfectly understand it. Never will we completely understand the ardour of Mary’s love for Jesus or the merciful goodness by which the Virgin loves each one of us in particular. Indeed, were we to further reflect upon this mystery, we would pray to her with greater fervour, and serve her with greater zeal. She, in turn, would lavish torrents of grace on us.

The Archangel Gabriel fulfilled his mission

The Incarnation had just been completed. Our Lady remained in ecstasy. Every theologian agrees that during this thrice-holy moment God raised her to the most sublime contemplation a pure creature can attain

Touched by Amazing Grace

(Part 1)

upon earth. Perhaps she was even granted a momentary glimpse of the beatific vision. The Archangel Gabriel had fulfilled his mission. Upon his arrival he had respectfully bowed before the Queen of Heaven. Before departing, he prostrated himself, for Mary was no longer alone. In true justice, the Child she bore in her womb merited the adoration of the archangel, who adored the God-made-man and then returned to Heaven.

From this mystery, we must draw a stronger and deeper devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The Church, which encourages us to pay special honour to the Immaculate Mother, does not wish to place her on the same level as the Most High. While Mary reigns over all the angels and saints in Heaven, she is still but a simple creature and, accordingly, an infinite distance stands between her and her adorable Son. Nevertheless, God has united Jesus and Mary so intimately that we cannot separate Them. By consenting to the work of the eternal God, Our Lady has become ipso facto the moral cause of our salvation. She is morally necessary for us to go to Jesus.

Souls today are powerfully attracted to the Heart of Jesus. To penetrate this adorable Heart, the sanctuary of the Divinity, more fully, we must go through Mary. Let us ask Our Lady for the sovereign grace of placing us confidently in the arms of Jesus and there, upon His heart, let us rest both in time and in eternity.

Written by
Father **Thomas de Saint-Laurent**

www.americanneedsfatima.org
14th July, 2011

Outside it is a wet and grey day here in Ballintubber, Co Mayo, Ireland on the far west coast of Europe. It is on a morning like this that I wonder what I am doing here in the hermitage, then I look towards the strong sacred stone walls of the Abbey, where the Mass has been celebrated for 800 years, and know from that still small voice in the depths of my heart that I was lead here.



The journey that I want to share with you, and the part the Angels and Saints have played in it is truly amazing, and shows how the Lord can work in your life once you say “Yes” to His plans, as our Mother Mary did, in complete faith and trust.

In the space of a few short years I have gone from Gucci bags to galoshes, from Burberry to Irish bogs, from upwardly mobile to living on Providence and by the work of my hands. I paint or as we say write Icons, using the same prayers and methods used by Orthodox monks for centuries. The beautiful house, sleek BMW and Armani suits are gone, as are the diamonds and all the material trappings that the media persuades us will give us happiness.

To the world it would seem I was a girl who had it all; fabulous lifestyle, power, money, great social life, but lasting happiness eluded me, like grains of sand slipping through my fingers. Of course, I believed in God then, said my prayers, but remained totally in control of my life. Deep down I had never totally surrendered myself into God’s Hands, and yet to my Church, I appeared to be a model Christian. When you have power and influence it is very easy to fool yourself and forget St Michael’s call “Who is like God!”

The mistake

In my wildest dreams I could not have imagined the joy I have found in ►

► the life that I am now living, a contemplative life of simplicity and prayer. I have a great thankfulness in my heart to St Michael, the protector of the unborn. My Catholic father and Anglican mother did not have a happy marriage. My mother did not want children, they married in the Anglican Church, she abhorred “papists”, and their “beads”. I was probably about five, a lonely, only child, when I was told I was “the mistake” that ruined my mother’s life, in fact she had done everything possible to get rid of me. Looking back, it was a miracle I was born at all and without any physical defect; St Michael clearly protected me. I know that God loved me into being, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” (Jer 1:5). This is true for everybody, God has a special purpose for each and every person He has created, that only they can fulfil. The saddest thing for me is that many of the people who seek me out in the hermitage are often carrying heavy burdens. They so often put themselves down, and do not realize how special and loved they are in the eyes of God.

Protection of angels

It was no coincidence that the Anglican Church of St Paulinus where I was baptised had over the high altar the most beautiful stained glass windows of St Michael, St Gabriel, St Raphael and Uriel. My parents took me to church there, and I would spend hours gazing at the figure of Michael and his powerful flaming sword, secure in a sense of his protection. Sometimes my father would secretly take me to a Catholic church on a Saturday, and I would

blissfully gaze up at the face of Mary who seemed to look down at me with her eyes full of love; it filled me with such joy lighting candles as I said my prayers to Her Son. Poor Dad would always say as we left “Don’t tell your mother where we’ve been!” By the time I was six I was avidly reading my Bible, about Jesus who was so full of love, I had a picture of Him beside my bed. It was Jesus I confided in, telling Him everything about my little life, and it was Jesus that I grew to love. I felt His love for me, and remember offering my whole life to Him, I just wanted to be His forever.

By the time I was in my teens, we did not go to church much, with all the tensions in the marriage, there was little security, only violent arguments. When I did need peace I secretly went off to the Catholic church to pray and sometimes to weep, in the quiet sacred space where I could feel Jesus’ presence in a special way. Despite the unhappy home life I did well at school, I became friends with a Baptist Minister’s daughter and the passion for Jesus reignited, but to her surprise, I started to go to church services at St Paulinus with the beautiful image of St Michael in its windows. When I walked into Mass there one Sunday morning, it was so beautiful, vestments, Latin chants, incense, just like the Catholic Church, indeed they regarded themselves as Anglican Catholics. At fifteen I was confirmed in Rochester Cathedral, in my white dress and veil. My mother freaked when she knew I was going to Confession and saying the Rosary; she said we were playing at being Catholic. The parish priest who became my spiritual director, soon put her straight, and worked hard to bring some peace into my troubled family. My Father loved that church and became an altar server there until his death. It

was then I got into spiritual reading, “The Imitation of Christ”, “The Little Flowers of St Francis”; I used to sneak into the Capuchin Franciscan Friary Church of Our Lady of the Angels, it was my favourite place of refuge. The friars seemed such kindly souls, and would always smile or nod to acknowledge the stray teenager praying in a corner of their chapel. I began to feel drawn to this humble St Francis who was so full of gentleness and joy, he was even kind to ferocious wolves!

Bewildered and lost

I read about St Therese and desired more than anything to follow in her footsteps and announced that I wanted to be a nun. The answer from my parents was a horrified “No”, I was to go to university, that was their plan for me!!!

So in due course I headed off to London University to read Divinity; it was the degree course that many young men undertook in their training to become Anglican priests. I was full of hope that this would lead me deeper into a relationship with Jesus and greater understanding of my faith. Alas, though I learnt Greek and Hebrew and Doctrine, Jesus seemed to become the subject of academic study, and there was no strong sense of Christian community for support either. In the meantime the other students were constantly suggesting I had a vocation but at this time I felt in danger but at this time I felt in danger of losing my faith. I felt bewildered and lost.

I found myself running away from that university, and my parents’ plan that I should go on to do a Masters degree. Wondering what to do next,



the bright lights of the media beckoned, and I thought I would capitalise on my good speaking voice and very soon was caught up in the heady world of broadcasting. In the space of a few years I met all the actors and celebrities of film and theatre. It was a time of glamorous premieres and parties, but hard work, heartache and emptiness. The superficiality of life in the fast lane started to have its effect on me, I was becoming out of touch with the reality of life and out of touch with God, I started to think I should take up Transcendental Meditation or Buddhism.

Glamorous Lifestyle

By chance one day I found myself in the City of London, an agency was advertising for “interviewers”, I laughed thinking of my media background, but maybe an ordinary job

would make me feel grounded again. Within less than a month, I was managing a branch of this recruitment agency, and making serious money. I became a consultant on training and management. Money and status had always been of paramount importance in my family, it meant power!!! It was not long before I was head-hunted to start up a new agency, soon after that with the help of a large bank loan started my own company in the centre of London. Plush offices, a great PA, teams of people working for me! I had made it!!!! But as time went by the “good life” seemed to turn sour, just as Jesus said, “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul” (Mt 16:26).

On my way to yet another business lunch in a champagne bar in the City of London, I saw a poster outside a City Church “Holy Communion, 1.00”, it was Lent and a sense of guilt

crept over me. Maybe if I went to Mass it would go away, I dashed inside clutching the designer briefcase, my high heels seeming to make a horrendous noise on the marble floor. I dashed out at the end, but the priest got to the door first. He asked my name, I said it did not matter it, was just a flying visit. He persisted saying even if I had only come the once I was still part of that community and he would like to pray for me. That meeting changed my life. In the porch of the church I noticed some postcards of St Michael and the Angels! I did not realize it, but that day was the first step on my journey to Rome and Assisi and that fullness of life that my soul longed for...

To be continued in the next issue.

Susie Smith

Ballintubber Hermitage, Ballintubber,
Claremorris, Co Mayo, Ireland

Fence of hostility smashed by St Michael



John and Stasia from Poland have been married for 20 years. In this interview they talk about how their faith has brought them through the difficult times...

contact with the sisters from the female Congregation of St Michael became less frequent, but the Archangel still took care of us.

Stasia: While I was in secondary school I wanted to become a nun in the Congregation of St Michael. However, God had a completely different plan for me and introduced John into my life. Although I knew something about St Michael, I did not realise that the Archangel would become so significant in my life.

John: We lived with Stasia's parents and farmed their land. We asked the Holy Mother to help us when we decided to start a family and God blessed us with several children. We also started to build a house. We thought we had the happiest marriage in the world.

Stasia: I loved my parents very much but living together under one roof caused problems in our marriage. When my father died all the decisions concerning the farm were made by my mother and me. That had an effect on my husband mentally and spiritually. I used to say to him, 'Listen, John! My mum will not live forever! This is her land, she loves it so much she should be in charge.'

John: After 14 years of marriage a wall of hostility and marital misunderstandings grew between us. We lived next to each other, but not together.

Stasia: I have always loved my husband but I wanted to be loyal to my mother too. I realised that I was caught between a rock and a hard place yet everything was OK, so long as I could manage to lead a double life. However, at a critical moment my mental stability failed.

John: Stasia tried to commit suicide. After the attempt she began therapy with a psychiatrist but the effect was disastrous. When my wife was taking the pills, she slept all day and when she woke up she was even more depressed than before. So I decided to move out, resulting in a difficult situation for all of us. However, Sister Emanuela from the female St Michael Congregation visited us and invited my wife for a two-week holiday at their monastery. Whilst Stasia and our children relaxed there, I made our new flat ready. I thought that in a new home our life together would improve. I was wrong, we realised that we had nothing in common with each other apart from our children and thought we should divorce. Yet, God really took care of us because He sent priests on three

John: My wife and I have been married for 20 years and during that time we have received many graces from God, but we have also suffered from numerous trials. However, these trials have given us an awareness of God's will in our lives. When we were planning our future together, my wife said that she had heard God's voice in her heart, which called, "Follow Me". I reassured her that I would not fight with God for her. As a young man I did not fully understand but I suggested that we could follow God's will together in marriage. Stasia agreed to this and accepted my proposal. After that, her

occasions with invitations for a retreat. We attended one in our town, during which we decided to go for another two-week retreat. And a miracle happened there. Jesus filled our hearts with His love and our marital relationship was healed. We entrusted ourselves to the Holy Mother's care and resolved to withdraw from all those things that God did not approve of. We went on many retreats and during one of them we committed our lives into St Michael's hands.

Stasia: From that moment we realised that the Archangel had been helping us all the time. We did not have any doubts when answering our friends' questions, for example, "How could you move out from your newly-built house?" and "Where do you take your inner strength from when dealing with so many problems?"

John: I knew about God's graces in our lives and of St Michael who took care of us. I realised that Satan had tried to destroy our love and marriage through our weak marital relationship. All the spiritual victories were made possible thanks to St Michael and Mary Immaculate. We still feel Her concern for us.

Stasia: After 20 years of marriage we can now say that we are happy. Looking back at our life we know that God has always loved us. Nowadays, we've got many more temptations than before, yet we not only manage to solve our problems but also see signs of St Michael's care. For example, once whilst on the road we heard 'Slow down!', 'Be careful!' and as a result we avoided a car accident. We pray every day and ask for Our Holy Mother and St Michael's help; we trust that nothing bad can happen to us.

St Michael the Archangel – the protector of married couples



expelled from Paradise. This was recognized when an angelic light appeared in the sky announcing God's forgiveness and redemption. It was St Michael the Archangel together with the hosts of angels who were intuitive to the act of Incarnation and Salvation. Unlike Lucifer, St Michael was always obedient to God and never stopped loving people. Therefore, the more Satan tries to draw us away from the way to heaven, the more St Michael attempts to bring us back to the right path. According to liturgy and tradition, his main task is to protect the Church as well as to direct mankind to heaven.

Invite him into your life

However, do not think that St Michael is going to wait for the right moment to reveal his power. If you would only ask and invite him into your life you can enjoy his care particularly when you would like to have children. St Michael the Archangel is the best protector of you and your family.

Pius XII, 8th May 1940

On their way to heaven the faithful have many saints on whom they may model themselves. Each person also has their own guardian, a patron saint and an angel.

Trust and hope

On that tragic day in the history of mankind, trust and hope prevailed over fear when the First Parents engrossed in darkness were

Existence of angels is the truth of faith

What are things we can call unseen? Angels and men's souls.

Forty years ago the Christian catechism was published in the Netherlands. There was nothing mentioned about angels, Satan or any other evil spirits. Some Dutch theologians somehow did not see the point in dealing with these matters.

How is it today? It is interesting that there is no direct mention of angels in the sacramental Credo. 'I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.' We confess that God is the Creator of all things seen and unseen. What are the things we can call unseen? Angels' and men's souls can be considered unseen or invisible.' The definition of angels may be derived from it: an angel is an unseen being, a pure spirit. However, whatever the definition, it is not sufficient for us. Let us turn to Scripture which in an older text for our profession of faith.

Angels belong to Christ

Reading through the Word of God and persevering in the faith of the Church, we remember that the word 'angel' means actually a function rather than nature. Angels are God's messengers, executing the orders of the Highest.

They are spirits by nature and therefore immortal. They are reflections of God's glory, their excellence surpasses all creatures. As angels belong to Christ, created for Him and by Him, they serve those who shall be heirs of salvation. Therefore, presenting angels as delightful, plump, laughing children makes shallow the concept and perception of these very important, powerful creatures of God. It is likewise with the evil spirits, depicted as playful devils.

Let us now consider the Bible passages where angels are mentioned. In the Old Testament angels guard Paradise, lost by original sin; they protect Lot fleeing Sodom; save the maid Hagar in the desert; refrain Abraham from killing Isaac as a sacrifice; lead God's people through the wilderness to the Promised Land; herald the birth of Samson and Samuel and then John the Baptist; help to heal sick people (St Raphael the Archangel); and are present at the appointment of prophets, such as Isaiah.

Angels herald the birth of Jesus

In the New Testament, St Gabriel the Archangel takes part in the most important event in the world – the Incarnation of the Saviour in the womb

of the Virgin Mary. Angels herald the birth of Jesus to the shepherds; they serve Christ in the desert; strengthen Him in agony and proclaim the Resurrection. The Book of Revelation is full of angels emphasising their great role at the end of the world.

Angels worship God in the Liturgy. Their singing of "Holy, Holy, Holy" is heard in each Mass. They carry the bloodless sacrifice to the altar in Heaven, before the Father's face. During funerals angels accompany the deceased person on their last journey, which is expressed in a song: "Let the angels lead you into paradise."

The existence of angels is the truth of faith. Although it was often questioned or even forgotten, the concept of angels has revived recently. There are wonderful poems written and exhibitions and festivals organized. Children try to draw, paint and sculpt angels. And that is right. If God created them, they should not be forgotten or treated as a folk addition to religious beliefs of various traditions. There is still the custom of giving children the names of the Archangels: Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. One of the first prayers that parents teach their children is the prayer to their guardian angel. There are many churches dedicated to the holy Archangels. Of course the most famous shrine of St Michael, the mighty conqueror of Satan, is in the great Italian



grotto at the top of Mountain Gargano, where the Archangel appeared in the fifth century.

An angel comforted Jesus

Our lives are still connected to the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

His Passion, Death and Resurrection, made present in each Mass, live in the sufferings and joys of every man.

In Gethsemane an angel appeared to comfort Jesus. There was no consolation in an earthly aspect. Instead, heavenly consolation was needed. God did not directly support the human nature of His Son but sent the angel, the creature superior to man. He talked with the Saviour about the meaning of

His Passion. Such a fruitful conversation brought Christ peace and comfort. Angels constantly praise God in heaven but one of them – on Christ's request – gave up his rejoicing, came down to earth and cried over the fate of their Creator together with Jesus. However, angels realise the sense of the Saviour's suffering; therefore, the earthly episode did not rend their joy.

Angels heralded the Good News by Christ's tomb: by declaring the resurrection of Our Lord. While the angels merely witnessed His triumph over death; they comforted the lamenting women and ordered them to bring the Good news to the apostles.

Be confident with angels

Regardless of whether our lives reflect Good Friday or Easter Sunday, angels are always ready to support us in spirit, and to share their joy. May we always remember that angels do not come uninvited. We call them to share both our joys and sorrows with them. Let us be confident with angels, let us remember about them particularly when it is difficult for us to persevere in God because of satanic temptations. May we pay full trust to St Michael the Archangel and say the prayer of exorcism recited more and more commonly in the Catholic Church:

Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humble pray; and do thou, Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust down into hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Father **Leon Knabit** OSB

Blessed Pope John Paul II: Icon of Divine Mercy

On Sunday May 1, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Pope John Paul II. This is the second last stage required by the Church of a candidate for Sainthood. According to the definition provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Beatification is an administrative act by which the Pope allows a candidate for sainthood to be venerated publicly in places closely associated with his or her life and ministry; the place may be as small as one city, although usually it is the diocese where the person lived or died. In the case of Pope John Paul II, his Oct. 22 feast day is entered automatically into the calendars of the Diocese of Rome and all the dioceses of his native Poland."

On that same day, The Universal Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday which was promulgated by Pope John Paul II in the Jubilee Year 2000. This Sunday after Easter remembers in a very particular way God's mercy and forgiveness. The Gospel text for that Sunday is John 20:19-31. The reading gives us an image of the risen Jesus, who offers his peace and breaths the Spirit upon disciples that were hidden behind locked doors, alienated and afraid. Jesus imparts the gift of merciful love with the hope that his disciples will believe and receive the reconciling peace that comes when one embraces his healing and forgiveness.

Pope Benedict, in his 2008 address at Castel Gandolfo, recalled the special

devotion his predecessor had to Sr. Faustina Kowalska, the Polish woman religious and zealous messenger of divine mercy. "Like Sister Faustina, Pope John Paul II became in turn an apostle of divine mercy. His long and multifaceted pontificate finds here its central nucleus: ... apart from the mercy of God there is no other source of hope for mankind."

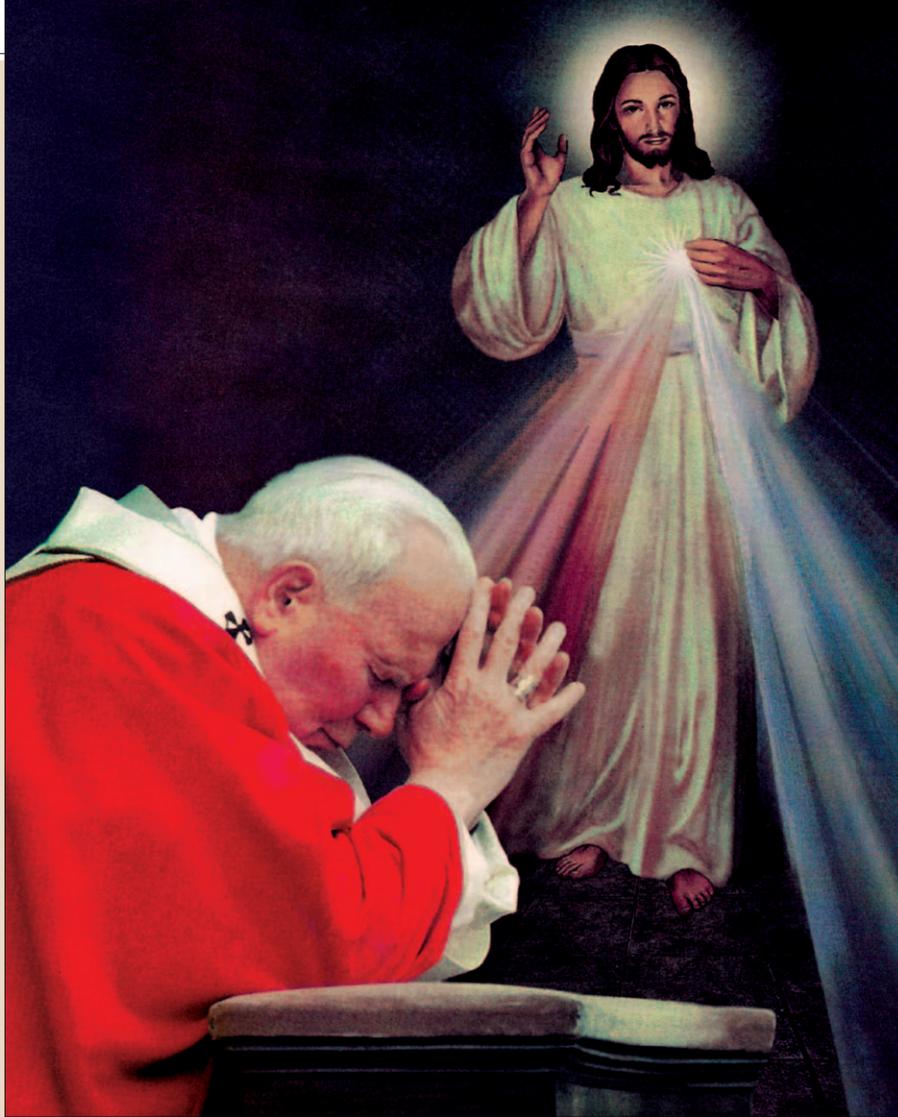
God's divine mercy has certainly been a central nucleus in Pope John Paul II's pastoral writings and journeys. Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, who served as the pope's secretary for forty years, remembers Pope John Paul II speaking at least one hundred times or more about Christians asking for forgiveness. Speaking in the shoes of the fisherman, Pope John Paul II was able to be the "ambassador of reconciliation" to the world. He initiated a gesture of forgiveness to groups who had often felt persecuted by the Church. Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (25 May 1995) recalls Jesus' prayer for unity among his disciples.

The Pope writes, "The unity of divided humanity is the will of God. For this reason God sent his Son, so that by dying and rising for us, he might bestow on us the Spirit of love. On the eve of his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus himself prayed to the Father for his disciples and for all those who believe in him, that they might be one, a living communion. This is the basis not only of the duty, but also a responsibility before God and his plan, which falls to those

who through baptism become members of the body of Christ, a body in which the fullness of reconciliation and communion must be made present. How is it possible to remain divided, if we have been "buried" through baptism in the Lord's death, in the very act by which God, through the death of his Son, has broken down the walls of division?"

The Pope asked all Christians to allow God's forgiveness to heal the divisions that have occurred in our common history raged by persecutions of Christians by Christians. In one of the most moving lines in the encyclical, Pope John Paul II states rather with humility "To the extent that we (the Church) are responsible ..., I join my Predecessor Paul VI in asking forgiveness." As pastor of the Universal Church, who continues the ministry of Saint Peter, Pope John Paul II's gesture of asking for forgiveness of sisters and brothers in other Christian denominations reminds all of us that need to accept this challenge of peace that is obtained by forgiveness.

Pope John Paul II's trip to Jerusalem in the year 2000 fulfilled his dream of many years to pray at holy Christian places as well as at the Wall. His message placed in the Wall reflected the Pontiff's recognition of and remorse for Jewish suffering at the hands of Christians. When he visited the Wall of the ancient temple, he left a note with this message shoved into stones broken by time: "God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring Your Name to



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the Nations: we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of Yours to suffer, and asking Your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.” (Jerusalem, 26 March 2000)

God’s mercy is extended when we personally ask for forgiveness as well as receive it from others. But what happens when we offer forgiveness to another and they reject it?

Pope John Paul II met Ali Agca, the man who shot him in Saint Peter’s Square on 13 May 1981 in his prison cell. Cardinal Dziwisz writes, “The Holy Father preferred to perform an act of forgiveness and to shake his would-be-assassin’s hand ... but from Ali Agca himself- nothing.”

Mercy shown toward another is a gift. When a person rejects our

forgiveness or doesn’t open their heart to it, it is not given in vain. Even when forgiveness is rejected by another, one still must allow God’s love to reach out to them. There lies the source of hope the world needs.

Blessed Pope John Paul II still needs one more official miracle to be recognized by the Church for his final step to sainthood. Perhaps, one might consider the Pope’s personal embodiment of God’s mercy and forgiveness as his legacy. In the last years of his pontificate, faced with debilitating Parkinson’s Disease, his quiet presence was a witness that human dignity and life in all stages is held by God’s loving mercy.

Rev. Mark A. Latcovich, Ph.D.
 Vice-President / Vice Rector
 and Academic Dean Saint Mary Seminary
 and Graduate School of Theology



I have a dream

Dear Readers, in February 2011 while I was the rector of the major seminary in Krakow I wrote in the Polish Issue of “Who is like God” about a parish in Gatowo, Belarus, that I had visited. My dream for some time now has been that one day our Congregation would be given the opportunity to help these poor people to develop great skills and to flourish.

I have a dream... Do you remember one of the most famous speeches of the 20th century by Martin Luther King? It was the 28th August 1963. On the steps of Lincoln Memorial in Washington, USA, for seventeen minutes he spoke about the need for racial equality and the end of discrimination against black people. Martin Luther King expressed a dream of a new, more beautiful world, which would become an oasis of freedom where people

would sit at the table of brotherhood. That day in August his dream seemed a distant future; his words filled with romantic courage. But... We all have dreams, don't we? What would life be without great dreams? Where would we be today if there was not the great dream of God the Father finding a concrete shape in the person of Jesus of Nazareth? A dream so great that even human ingratitude could not shatter it on Calvary.

The dream

I also have a dream and hope it will become a reality with your help. I dream that one day the tiny parish of Gatowo in Belarus will be a flourishing garden of God.

Most of the youth in Gatowo are not catholic. They seem lost with little or no faith wandering around aimlessly day and night. I dream that hundreds

of children and young adults will have a building where they find peace, joy and love of God. They could learn how all men can be good and support one another.

I have a dream that this new, colourful house would pulsate with life, happiness and music. In another part of this new building alcoholics, both relatively young women and men, would find the way to inner peace and freedom. I have a dream that behind the building there is a beautiful church in honour of St Michael the Archangel. I have a dream that this temple will bring many people from Minsk, Belarus and all over to find the way towards a new life, freedom from sin and addictions and find God. My dream may seem daring and, to some, even ridiculous.

Greater the struggle the more glorious the triumph

A few days ago I received a link to the movie "The Butterfly Circus" (www.thebutterflycircus.com). It was a story of a limbless man shown in the circus as a "victim of fate" from whom even God had turned away. Viewers mocked him and threw rotten apples towards the poor fellow. One day the man had a dream in which he was achieving something great and people accepted him.

He spoke with the circus owner about his fate. The latter gave him an example of other performers – they had arms and legs, looked professionally and gracefully but each of them had their cross in life. However, they accepted their lives when given a chance to flourish. The limbless man answered: "But they are different from me..." The owner replied: "Yes... the greater the

struggle the more glorious the triumph," and then turned and walked slowly away.

From reject to hero

In the next scene all the performers were relaxing near a river. The limbless man was anxious about crossing the water and shouted "I need help to cross the river" but no one heard him among noise and laughter. He slipped and fell onto the rocks with a thud. He managed with his stump to get up and hobble onto a long a piece of wood. He was determined to get up and did, but soon fell again. This time he fell into the river and only air bubbles could be seen. Having noticed he was missing the performers shouted frantically and dived below the surface searching for him.

Then his head appeared above water. He was flapping his little stubs and shouted "I can swim!" This was a great achievement for the limbless man! The owner let him dive into a container full of water from 50 foot above the ground. The audience was breathless in anticipation for the trick. The limbless man jumped down and he made it. The performance was so amazing that people came to congratulate the man his success.

Giving hope to others

A young boy without a leg witnessed the act. Leaning on crutches he approached the man and hugged him. The boy's mother was in tears; she thanked the limbless man because he made her son realize that nothing was impossible for the physically handicapped. The boy no longer felt sorry for himself, he believed that he also could

achieve great things in future. With your help my dream could also become a reality for the youth of Gatowo to also achieve great things in life.

Divine Mercy in action

Gatowo is located 4 miles from Minsk with a population of approximately 12,000. In Belarus the average monthly wage for a man in the city is £107.00 or \$170 US dollars. In the village they sometimes receive about £50.00 or \$79 US dollars each month. They hardly have anything to spare.

By God's providence I moved in October 2011 to this small parish in Gatowo as the parish priest. The chapel is an old 1950's caravan. The local parishioners painted it white and added a new tiled roof. The people attending the mass stand outside in all weathers without any complaints. In the near future I would like to buy paving slabs for my parishioners to prevent them from getting stuck into mud. I would ▶



▶ like you to help me turn my dream into reality. The youth are our future and by God's grace you and I together can make a difference.

Bring alive the youth

My dream is to see God's mercy turned into action by bringing the youth alive and give them the opportunity to have joy and hope in their lives and build a pastoral centre where they could spend their free time. They would play games, football, dance and play music, read books there. They would also find extra help in their education. These young people desperately need help and it would be wonderful for others in a better position to give the poor a chance in life. There is no greater joy than sharing love and caring for others. There are many alcoholics and drug addicts in my catchment area. I am not going to forget about them. They will be welcome to come and receive help and counseling. Jesus never judged anyone by their

addictions, their looks or status in life. Giving a little to others can make such a difference and change lives.

Live with awareness

I repeat the words of our founder Bl. Bronislaw Markiewicz: *"Jesus, You are my everything. I give to you the fullest ministry. The greater the poverty and scarcity, the better for me."* Let us live with the awareness that we are never alone in the midst of our seemingly hopeless situations, human concerns and problems, diseases and deficiencies. God, who became Man is with us.

"Wind from the East"

The project is called "Wind from the East". The wind is a sign of the Holy Spirit blowing from the East (from Belarus). I hope it may touch

and open many people's hearts to the benevolent support of this work. We are hoping a great many people may help the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. To make this happen a one off payment whatever you can afford or a monthly donation of as little as £5.00 per month via bank transfer or Direct Debit would kick start my project and would make a difference to the lives of the youth. Donations for this small amount would hardly be noticed by many people but could collectively help to make this dream come true.

Michaelites Mission in Belarus

Father General has recently opened a new bank account for the Michaelites Mission in Belarus.

Father General. Congregation of St Michael the Archangel
Al. Piłsudskiego 248/252, 05-261 Marki
Bank name:
Danske BANK A/SA O. w Polsce
Bank address:
ul. Emilii Plater 28, 00-688 Warszawa
Bank accounts:
USD PL 52 2360 0005 0000 0045 5025 6305
Euro PL 30 2360 0005 0000 0045 5025 631
SWIFT: DABAPLPW

I have fulfilled my promise to celebrate Mass every Tuesday for all helpers and benefactors.

Please help me make a difference and turn Mercy into action.

Let us take the hand which he stretches out to us: It is a hand which seeks to take nothing from us, but only give. (pp. Benedict XVI)

Father **Christopher Poświata** CSMA
Belarus c/o Piłsudskiego 248/252
05-261 Marki, Warsaw, Poland



Open Tomb, open heart

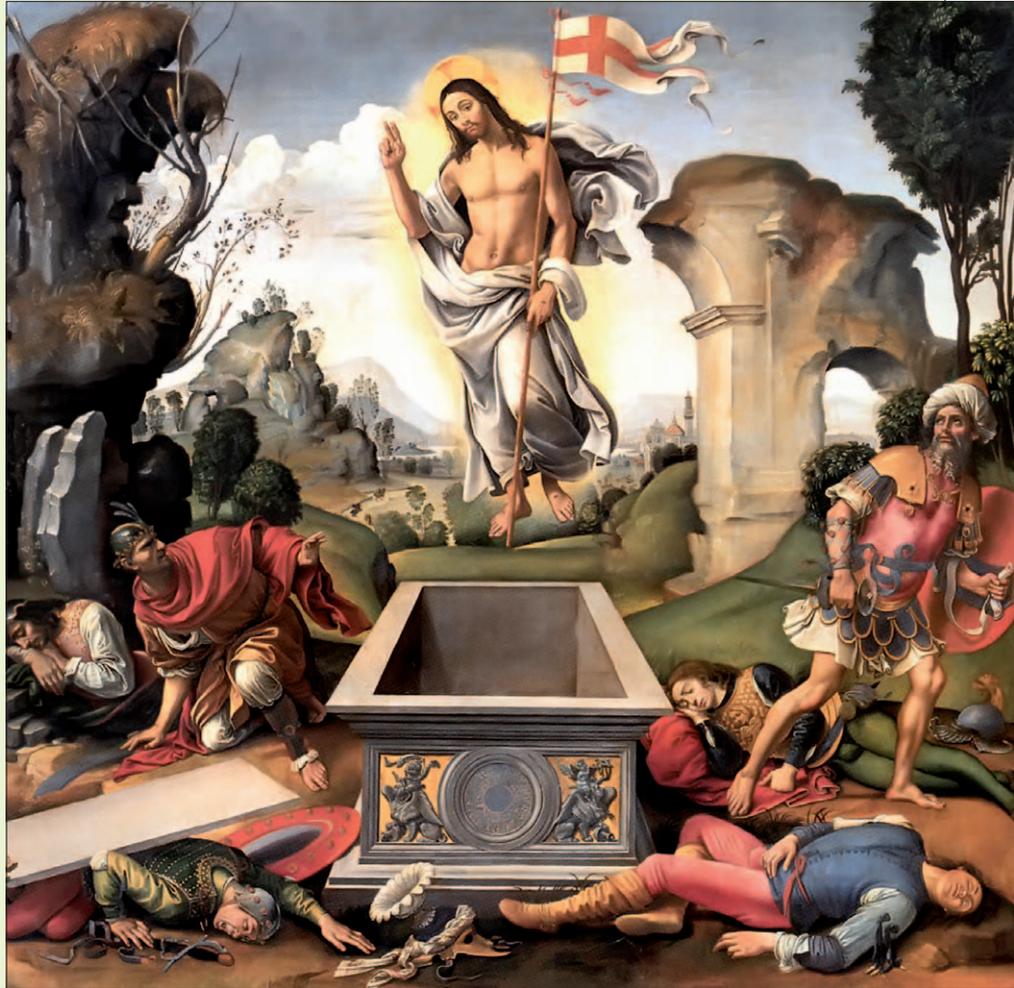
Although the guards were ordered to oversee Christ's body being put into the grave, they failed. They had witnessed the grave's opening and reported it to the chief priests, although they should have informed Pilate first.

They had been bribed to keep silent and to lie. Matthew, an ex-tax collector, knew about the case of dirty money and announced their deed, "and to this day that is the story among the Jews." (Mt 28:15)

They were accidental witnesses of the empty tomb and we have no knowledge of their life after that event. They must have talked to Pilate later. And yet, the first person who told him about Jesus' resurrection was Pilate's wife. She belonged to His supporters – let us see how God uses His enemies to document His works. God is the Lord of each situation; He can use an attack on Him to reveal His wisdom and love.

When Christ lived, He had supporters and opponents. When He was resurrected, they were again divided into two groups: those who believed in Him and met Him personally, and those who did not believe in Him. If they believed, they could not fight Him, for who would want to fight with the Risen Lord?

What does it mean to believe in the Risen Lord? Jesus prevails over the living on earth and I think it means 'He is my friend, my most important friend above all others'. No one can have access to my heart except through Him. Christ is more important to me than my parents, my siblings, my friends, my family, children and grandchildren. He is



more important than my bosses and my enemies. My love for Him puts Him in control of each relationship in my life. Jesus' resurrection changes my life constantly; he teaches me how to truly love my relatives and friends. His love is a thousand times more beautiful and deep than any human love, which can only blossom when immersed in His love. Not only is Easter a reminder of the

events from the 1st century; it is also a personal meeting with the Risen Lord. It is a time of thanksgiving for His love, which He gives us and through which He enables us. May we thank Him that He has come into our lives and opened the gate of eternity.

A sermon by
Father **Edward Staniek**

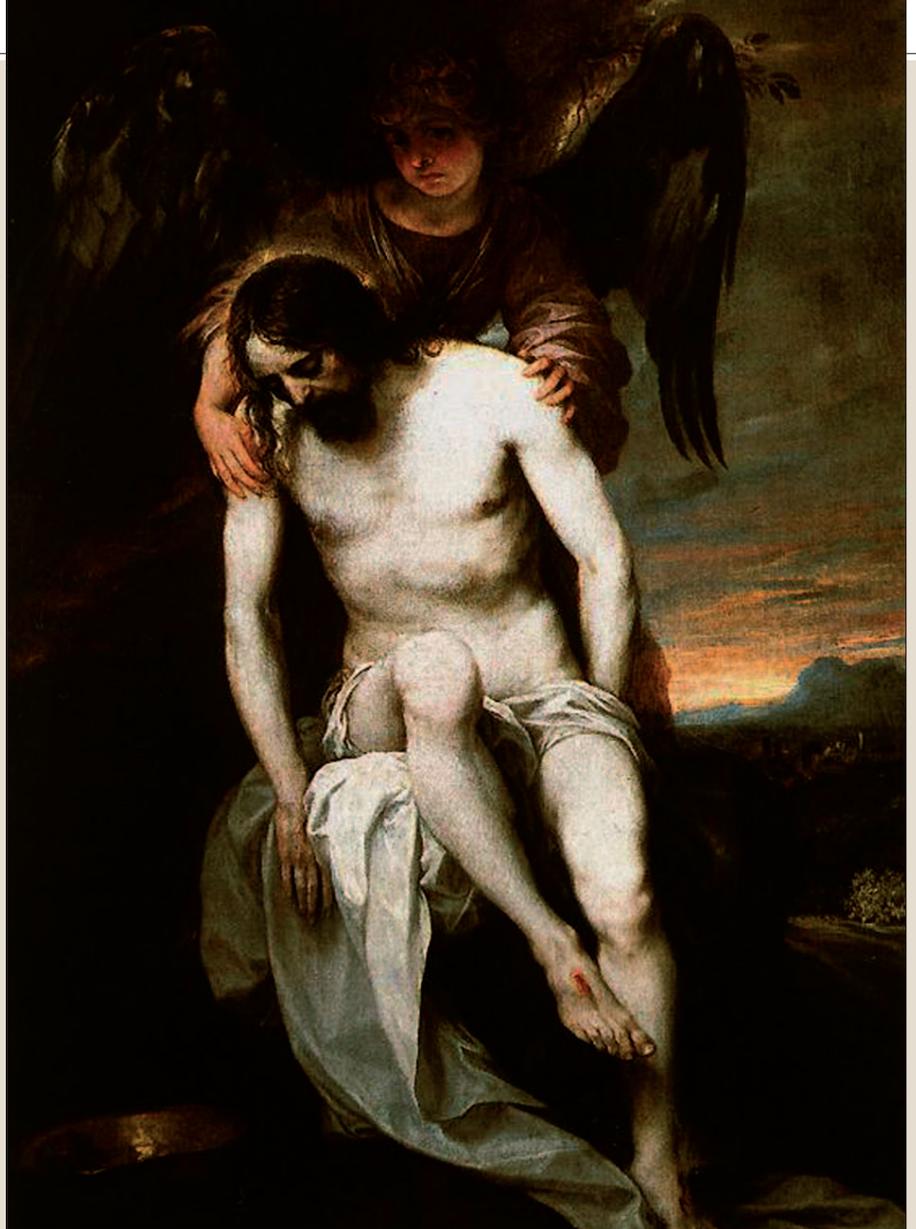
My friend recently told me of a profound experience, which led to a deepening faith in God's love. The experience was the result of a young girl's testimony.

I was working in Italy and at that time I lived in a convent. Every day we went to church where a charismatic priest was resident. On Sunday the church was filled to capacity because people gathered to listen to his sermons. I had expected lots of people on Maundy Thursday because of the importance of the day and the beauty of the liturgy. I went to the church very early to secure a seat. To my surprise very few of the faithful were there. My first thought was that I had mistaken the hour of the liturgy; however, someone noticed my confusion and explained to me: 'Today the priest is absent ... so many people have gone to the mountains.' The voice was indifferent as if this was to be expected.

I heard in my heart: 'I have ardently longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer ...' The liturgy lasted 20 minutes and I experienced pain and loneliness, I wanted to scream: 'Lord, where are your disciples? What has happened to them? Who will comfort you?' I cried as I had never before, and then I heard in my heart again: 'Comfort Me.' I did not want to leave the church, which led the nuns to think that I must be homesick. Couldn't I cry over Christ? I begged Jesus to always have me by His side to watch with Him.

But, why did my friend cry on hearing this testimony? Well, he discovered that the girl had fulfilled her promise. After her return she entered the congregation of Carmel.

Comforting Jesus may seem like an angelic job, as proved by the angel in Gethsemane. But can man be like that angel for the Lord? In 1899 Jesus



Will you comfort Jesus?

said to Blessed Elisabeth: 'Following Me you will meet the cross, you will suffer much (...) Do you love Me enough to accept it? Will you comfort Me? I am abandoned ... My daughter, don't leave Me.'

St Paul encouraged the Corinthians to comfort other people in their trouble because they were comforted by

God. We see despair, hopelessness and emptiness in the eyes of those who long for genuine consolation and if one provides it, they may say: 'S/he is like an angel.' Maybe God will say the same if we do not leave Him now.

Father **Christopher Poświata** CSMA

Mont Saint Michel, Normandy, France

One of the worlds wonders

On an isolated tidal rock in the gulf of Saint-Malo on the Normandy coast of France sits one of the world's wonders, a religious site that is steeped in history. Mont Saint Michael is a monastery built at the top of a three-acre rocky islet topped by a famous Gothic abbey dedicated to St Michael the Archangel.

The Abbey of St Michael was once part of the French mainland and the highest point in the forest of Scissy until a huge tidal wave engulfed the forest, turning the hillock into an island. Although the island was located five kilometers from the shore during the Middle Ages, it is now more accessible due to a causeway which was built at the end of the 19th century. However, it is still surrounded by water twice a month because of the range in tides, which is one of the greatest in Europe, and acts as a natural defense.

A statue of Saint Michael the Archangel towers 560 feet above the English Channel and the lower towers and medieval sea wall protect a small village. The village's lone cobblestone street climbs in three spirals from a great granite base to the towering Benedictine abbey of Mont Saint-Michel, an architectural masterpiece built in the 13th century. It replaced the original abbey founded in 708 AD by Saint Aubert, Bishop of Avranches.

According to Catholic lore, it was in the 8th century that Saint Michael the Archangel instructed the Bishop of Avranches to build the monastery. He had a sanctuary built on Mont-Tombe and dedicated it to the Archangel. From the year 1000 AD and for six consecutive centuries thereafter, the Dukes of Normandy and the pilgrims financed the construction of additional structures despite the difficulty of building in such an inaccessible place. The Mont soon became a major focus of pilgrimage. In the 10th century, the Benedictines settled in the

abbey, while a village grew up below its walls. This was destroyed by King Phillip of France in 1203.

Following the dissolution of the religious community during the revolution and until 1863, the abbey was used as a prison. It was classified as a historic monument in 1874 and underwent major restoration work. Mont Saint-Michel has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO since 1979. It is one of France's great tourist attractions.

Noreen Bavister, UK



The Phenomenon of Guadeloupe

(Part 2)

Symbolism of the miraculous image

The Picture of the Mother of God of Guadeloupe is unusual because each person may find something special in it. Whilst it joins the symbolism of Europe and Central America, the message remains the same for all people of different cultures.

Research has shown that the picture appeared easily 'readable' to both Indians and Spanish invaders. In the mid-sixteen century only a few Indians knew the Latin alphabet; instead they used pictographic writing. Moreover, "communication between a deity and a person was made by means of a picture."¹ The Roman-Catholic faith is also full of symbols, therefore the Mother of God chose the form of revelation that was comprehensive for both cultures. Let us look through the symbolism of the miraculous image.

Indian symbolism:

- **Mary's face is uncovered** – She is not a deity
- **Folded hands** – She worships Someone Else
- **Blue robe** – the symbol of power
- **Black ribbon at the waist** – the symbol of virginity
- **Rays behind Mary's back** – She is sent by the God of the Sun
- **Heaven covers the earth and the plants** – Heaven is friendly towards the earth
- **"Flower of Sun"** – the symbol of new life

- **"Flower of Heart"** – human sacrifice is not required anymore; the sacrifice of the Lady and Her Son's heart is enough
- **Flexed knee** – She worships God by dancing
- **Flowers are rooted in Heaven** – Heaven is a genuine home for people
- **She is standing on the sun** – the deities of the sun, moon and stars are dethroned
- **Nephrite angels at Her feet** – Indians become God's children
- **Leaf of "our body"** – She is a human being
- **Her name in the Nahuatl language** means "She, who tramples the serpent's head" – Indians are no longer under the control of any deity. Jesus Christ, Mary's Son, is their King

Spanish symbolism:

- **Her eyes are turned inwards** – the symbol of contemplation
- **Mary's smile** – the joy of union with God
- **The brooch** – the symbol of Mary's sanctity protected against profanation



- **Folded hands** – the symbol of Her intercession
- **Eight-pointed stars on Her robe** – the symbol of grace for people She asks for her Son
- **Remaining stars** – the symbol of her power in Heaven
- **Ribbon at Her waist** – the symbol of Mary's virginity
- **Blue and red colours on Her robes** – the symbol of virginity and motherhood
- **Golden edges of Her robe** – the symbol of royalty
- **Pink tunic** – the symbol of love and martyrdom
- **Forest flowers** – the symbol of Paradise

- Halo and rays – the symbol of Mary’s sanctity
- Clouds – the symbol of perfect union with God
- Flexed knee – She is ready to help people
- An angel – the symbol of Mary, the Queen of Heaven
- Reference to the Book of Revelation 12:1 “A woman robed with the sun, standing on the moon.”

Mary’s message directed to both nations brought wonderful fruit: eight million Indians were baptised. That was why the mother of God of Guadeloupe was called the patron of the first and new evangelism of the whole world by blessed Pope John Paul II.

“Franciscan missionaries understood that they should not reject folk rites and traditions; instead, they should interpret them in the light of the Gospels. Local customs may lead to them meeting God. Then, the Good News would not become something familiar and close to a given culture. It can be noticed nowadays: in the liturgy Mexicans use in their traditional Indian clothes, Indian music and dancing as well as Indian incense and decoration of churches.”² The Indians and Spanish found their Mother in the Virgin Mary, and in Jesus – their Saviour. The Mother of God of Guadeloupe defeated and still defeats cultural barriers in carrying the Messiah to people all over the world.

Ewelina Szcześniak

¹ Z. Treppa, *Meksykańska Symfonia. Ikona z Guadelupe*, Warsaw, 2006, p. 95.

² Fr Ryszard Ukleja SDB, *Uniwersalne przesłanie Matki Bożej z Guadelupe*, <http://voxdomini.com.pl/roz/guadelupe/guadelupe2.htm>

ANGELIC INTERVENTION ON THE ROAD

A friend gave me a copy of *The Angels*, issue 4. I read with interest the reports of angelic activity in the lives of some of your readers. You may be interested in knowing of three wonderful incidents that happened to my sister, Patricia who died in 2004.

She was always a little apprehensive when driving her car, and constantly invoked the protection of her Guardian Angel. He certainly took great care of her. On one occasion when driving up a steep hill she heard his voice say to her “slow right down”, doing so she then reached the top of the hill, and just a few yards ahead a cyclist had fallen off his bike and lay in the road. By driving slowly she avoided running over him.

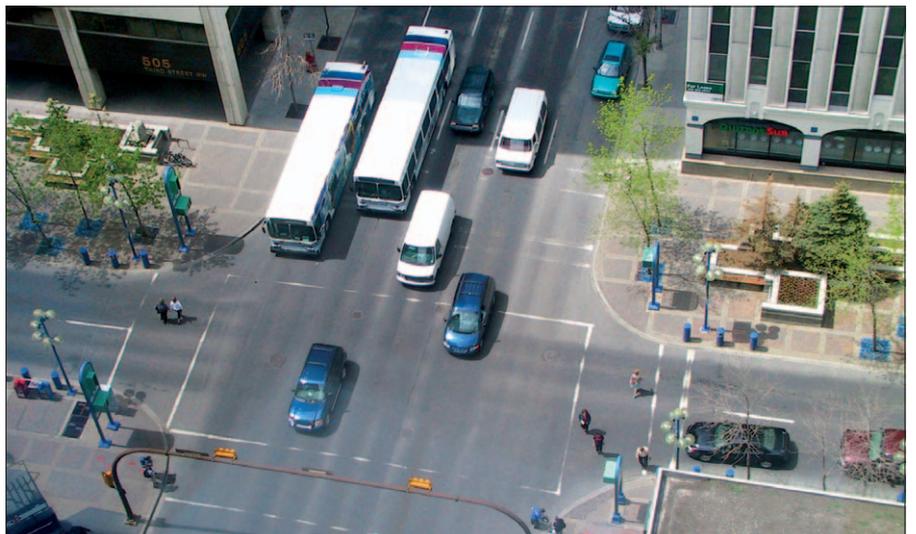
On another occasion she was turning right and his voice again said “Stop”. Just then another car going at great speed overtook her on her right. Had she not stopped the other car would have ploughed into her, with possible great injury or death for one or both of them.

While driving on a cold wintery day her car slid on black-ice, and was heading out of control towards a brick wall, when suddenly the steering wheel, apparently guided by her angel, spun, righted the car, and she was able to continue her journey safely.

I remember reading in a national Sunday newspaper of a coach full of pilgrims on the motorway returning from Fatima. With alarm one of the pilgrims saw that the driver was unconscious, when they all heard a voice say to them “Be not afraid. This is your Brother, Michael, the Archangel. God has sent me to see you safely along.” The coach was driven perfectly; giving signals, overtaking, slowing and speeding up, all while the driver was unconscious until it reached its destination.

My own dear angel once saved me from a serious accident. I was driving in a thick fog, when someone blew a whistle and immediately I drove in the direction of the whistle and at that moment a bus coming in the opposite direction loomed out of the fog. I had been driving on the wrong side due to the fog. Had I continued the bus would have smashed head-on into me.

Edward
Liverpool, England



EASTER PROCLAMATION: THE EXULTET

The “Exultet” is an ancient hymn of the church, an Easter proclamation which recounts the saving acts of God in the Old and New Testaments. Historically, the Exultet was sung only once each year at the beginning of the Paschal (Easter) Vigil Service. That service began on Saturday night in darkness and ended on Easter Sunday morning in the light.

Rejoice, heavenly choirs of angels. Rejoice, all creation around God’s throne. Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation.

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King. Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes forever.

This is our Passover feast when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night when you, Lord our God, first saved our ancestors in

the faith; you delivered the people of Israel from their slavery and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave. This is the night truly blessed, when heaven is wedded to earth, and all creation is reconciled with God.

Therefore, Father, in the joy of this night, receive our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Let us sing with joy, joining the mighty chorus of all God’s people!

Hymn: Alleluia! Alleluia!

1. Alleluia, alleluia!
Hearts to heaven and voices raise.
Sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise.
He who on the cross a victim
for the world’s salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the king of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

2. Alleluia, Christ is risen! Death at last has met defeat. See the ancient powers of evil in confusion and retreat. Once he died and once was buried; now he lives forevermore—Jesus Christ, the world’s Redeemer, whom we worship and adore.

3. Christ is risen, Christ and first fruits of the holy harvest field, which will all its full abundance at his second coming yield. Then the golden ears of harvest will their heads before him wave, ripened by his glorious sunshine from the furrows of the grave.

4. Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to God on high;
alleluia! to the Savior,
who has won the victory;
alleluia! to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity:
alleluia, alleluia!
to the triune Majesty.



A Mother's prayer to the guardian angels of her children

I humbly salute you, O you faithful heavenly friends of my children!

I give you heartfelt thanks for all the love and goodness you show them. On day I shall, with thanks more worthy than I can now give, repay your care for them, and before the whole heavenly court acknowledge their indebtedness to your guidance and protection. Continue to watch over them. Provide for all their needs of body and soul. Pray, likewise, for me and my whole family, that we may all one day rejoice in your blessed company. Amen.

Prayer to St Michael the Archangel for help against spiritual enemies

Glorious St Michael, Prince of the heavenly hosts, who stands always ready to give assistance to the people of God; who did fight with the dragon, the old serpent, and did cast him out of heaven, and now valiantly defends the Church of God that the gates of hell may never prevail against her, I earnestly entreat thee to assist me also, in the painful and dangerous conflict which I have to sustain against the same formidable foe. Be with me, O mighty Prince! that I may

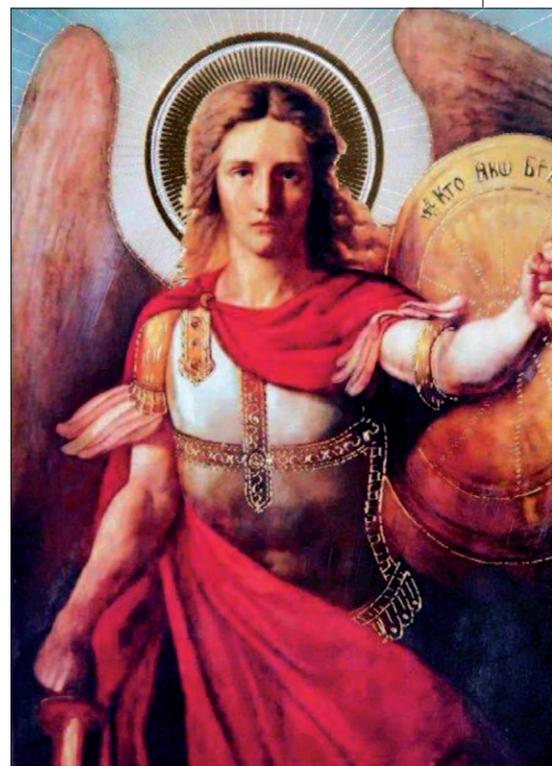


courageously fight and wholly vanquish that proud spirit, whom thou hast by the Divine Power, so gloriously overthrown, and whom our powerful King, Jesus Christ, has, in our nature, so completely overcome; to the end that having triumphed over the enemy of my salvation, I may with thee and the holy angels, praise the clemency of God who, having refused mercy to the rebellious angels after their fall, has granted repentance and forgiveness to fallen man. Amen.

Thank God for our guardian angel

Heavenly Father, Your infinite love for us has chosen a blessed angel in heaven and appointed him our guide during this earthly pilgrimage. Accept our thanks for so great a blessing. Grant that we may experience the assistance of our holy protector in all our necessities. And you, holy, loving angel and guide, watch over us with all the tenderness of your angelic heart. Keep us always on the way that leads to heaven, and cease not to pray for us until we have attained our final destiny, eternal salvation. Then we shall love you for all eternity. We shall

praise and glorify you unceasingly for all the good you have done for us while here on earth. Especially be a faithful and watchful protector of our children. Take our place, and supply what may be wanting to us through human frailty, short-sightedness, or sinful neglect. Lighten, O you perfect servants of God, our heavy task. Guide our children, that they may become like unto Jesus, may imitate Him faithfully, and persevere till they attain eternal life. Amen.



DOMINATIONS

Dominations, Lords, and Lordships

The “Dominions” (Latin *dominatio*, plural *dominationes*, also translated from the Greek term *kyriotites* as “Lordships”) are presented as the hierarchy of celestial beings “Lordships” in the *De Coelesti Hierarchia*.



The name Dominions is derived from St Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. These angels are also known as the Lords and it is through them that God’s majesty is revealed.

Leadership

Powers, Virtues and Dominations are known as the “angels of creation” because they concern themselves with the ordering of the universe and a plurality of causes.

Dominations are angels of leadership and hold the highest place among the angels of the second hierarchy. They resemble the principalities in this, they not only hold the highest place in the lowest hierarchy, but have precedence over angels and archangels, with authority to direct and regulate them, making known the commands of God.

Their names reflect the mystery which surrounds their nature and their functions. Their job is to assign duties and missions to the angels of the lower spheres and to maintain the cosmic order. They are occupied by their concern for the interests of God and with any functions having for their end the government of the world or of the human race; they exercise a high control over the ministry of the lower angels,

directing them in the discharge of their offices to do the will of God.

Bless the Lord, all ye his angels: you that are mighty in strength, and execute his word, hearkening to the voice of his behests. Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts: you ministers of his that do his will. (Psalms 102:20-21)

Serve God

Dominions also teach us that only those who serve God are fit to rule others. Obedience is a necessary qualification; we must learn to obey before we can rule others. *For in Him [that is, in Christ] were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and in him. (Colossians 1:16)*

Dominions are believed to look like divinely beautiful humans with a pair of feathered wings, much like the common representation of angels, but they may be distinguished from other groups by wielding orbs of light fastened to the heads of their scepters or on the pommel of their swords.

Before we were formed in the womb and held in the palm of His hand God knew us and named us. *Raising Him up from the dead, and setting him on his right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. (Ephesians 1:20-21)*

Great zeal

Being supreme angels over all the lower choirs of angels, they have a great zeal for the Divine glory that distinguishes them. Dominions also serve as channels of mercy and are ever ready to fly to the ends of the world to execute God's orders.

The Chaplet of St Michael is a wonderful way to honour this great Archangel along with the Dominions and the other eight Choirs of Angels:

By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominations may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and overcome any unruly passions. Amen.

St Michael promised that whoever would practice this devotion in his honour would have, when approaching Holy Communion, an escort of nine angels chosen from each of the nine Choirs. In addition, for those who would recite the Chaplet daily, he promised his

continual assistance and that of all the holy angels during life.

Dominions are mentioned many times in the Bible and they show us they truly are leaders and messengers of the Lord.

These angels stand before God, eager to catch the sound of His voice, and at the least expression of His will, they hasten to fulfill it. Let us be like angels: to do good and serve God.

Noreen Bavister, UK

Brief introduction to the Nine Choirs of Angels

1. Seraphim

The Seraphim is said to be the highest order of angels who guard God's throne. They are often depicted as 'burning angels' to represent them on fire with love for God. In the Bible Isaiah saw them as six winged beings. These heavenly creatures praise God.

2. Cherubim

The word Cherubim is said to mean 'fullness of knowledge'. The Cherubim have the honour of observing and keeping the records of God's creative powers. Cherubims are said to have four wings and four faces. The Cherubims also act as heavenly counselors and are the seekers of the eternal truth.

3. Thrones

Throne Angels represent the divine majesty and are associated with the power of judgement. They carry out God's justice according to spiritual and universal laws. The Thrones also act as angels who are friends of all the planets. It is the Thrones who will drive forward God's chariot, often they are portrayed as angels who carry the scales of justice.

4. Dominions

The Dominions are angels of leadership and are said to ensure that God's will is carried out by other angels. They help balance the force of creation of the material and spiritual worlds. The Dominions represent the superiority of wisdom over intellect and govern the natural world and the elements.

5. Virtues

Virtues are known as angels who watch over the heavenly bodies and nature. The Virtues are often associated with miracles performed on earth. Shining bright and often depicted with swords, shields or sceptres, these wonderful angels will assist you in your darkest hour.

6. Powers

Powers are warrior angels who maintain order around planet earth and protect it from being overthrown by Satan, defending the cosmos and human souls. They fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings.

7. Principalities

The Principalities are a realm of angels who keep a watchful eye of the nations

of planet earth and its leaders. They are protectors of religion, giving strength in times of hardship.

8. Archangels

The Archangels are the most frequently mentioned throughout the Bible. They are the leaders of the angelic armies and are Holy messengers of God. There are only three archangels acknowledged by the Catholic Faith, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. They also command God's armies and act as guardian angels to leaders of world movements. They may be of this or other hierarchies like St Michael the Archangel.

9. Angels

These include guardian angels who are assigned by God to every human being at the moment of conception. Angels are closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver our prayers to God and return with God's answers. Guardian angels have the capacity to access all other angels at any time, their role is to watch over us during our lives. They are also the most caring and social of beings who assist those who ask for help.

The Divine Mercy Pilgrimage

(Part 2)

Lead by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA, 30 May – 5 June 2011

Day 4; Czestochowa Fanfare of trumpets

Our coach left in bright sunshine to take us to Czestochowa to visit the Black Madonna. You never quite know what the day will hold on this pilgrimage and today was no exception. The Shrine of the Black Madonna was a beautiful building and there were hundreds of people milling around the grounds.

Our group had the privilege of having our pre-booked Mass said English in the Chapel of the Black Madonna. Pilgrims from around the world flock here to this very special place. You approach the small Black Madonna Chapel through a very large, marble-clad hall; it is very grand. We all felt very privileged to be the small minority to attend our own private English Mass. The Black Madonna Chapel is decorated with what looks like black ebony and silver. Hundreds of antique necklaces adorn the altar and the outer walls. A gold rose gifted by Pope John Paul II stood next to a silver screen which we soon discovered was to rise and reveal the Black Madonna. As we sat there long queues of pilgrims all on their knees filed up one side of the chapel, behind the altar and down the other side, old people, young people, priests and new first communicants.

Then suddenly in a fanfare of trumpets and drum rolls the silver screen started to rise and the Black Madonna and Child were revealed as almost a three dimensional image. On the side of her face were two wounds. During the communist regime the image was slashed by the sword of a soldier and despite numerous renovation attempts, the wounds always reappear.

The whole experience was so moving, I shed a tear or two as did many others and Patrick was visibly sobbing at the sheer awesomeness of the whole experience. It was probably a trick of the light and the candles flickering and the ruby stones that made up part of the image, but I would swear that just for a moment in time, I saw a trickle of blood shed from those wounds on her face.

Orphanage for the young

Our organiser has been helping the orphanage since 2005 this was the reason for the visit. Following Mass we went to an orphanage for young, handicapped children run

by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy; it was an afternoon of joy. We took gifts for the children and they were totally delighted and before we left they gave us each a framed photo of Pope John Paul II with a heart shaped message on the back. We had a look around the dormitories which were lovely, bright and colourful but it was still a communal sleeping place and my heart went out to them. Many of the girls were approaching teenage years and it was humbling to think how happy they were with so little in comparison to what we have.

Day 5; Kalwaria Zebrzydowska

We did not wake up to sunshine today but we did wake up to the lovely smell of freshly baked bread, which must have been rising from the lodge's kitchen. After breakfast we made our way to the Shrine of Sorrow in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. What an interesting place, many chapels, around 33 of them, spread around the lush green estate.

We made our way to our little private chapel where Father gave us a talk on the history of this place which was built over 400 years ago

with the idea that it should allow people to worship in a similar setting to the Holy Land. He was obviously proud of the Shrine and his estate and this showed through.

This is your Mother

After Mass in English for our group we went to see where Pope John Paul II had dined when he was here and to see his vestments and sleeping quarters. Father Peter told us about Pope John Paul II's father bringing him here after his mother died; he was only nine years old. He showed him Our Lady of Sorrow and said "From now on this is your Mother and she will look after your Heart."

When he returned as Pope he brought a gold rose with him and laid it at Our Lady of Sorrow and said "This is a gesture for looking after my heart for all of my life." We were encouraged to look after the hearts of our children and grandchildren. I found this so moving and wanted to bottle it all up and take it home!

Wadowice and Krakow

We then travelled to Wadowice to visit the town of Pope John Paul II's birth and to visit the church where he was baptised and attended Mass. It was amazing to be able to touch the font where he was baptised as a baby.

In the evening we went into Krakow Old Town. We walked along the cobbled streets to reach our restaurant. It was perfect. It looked like an old medieval banqueting hall with lots of tapestries on the walls and three musicians played traditional music to us as we ate fine food.

Day 6; Wieliczka

Today started with no sun but that did not really matter as we were spending some time down a salt mine, that is after 8am Mass in the Relic Chapel. If you had told me one week ago that I would be up, showered and dressed for 8am

Mass, well, I would not have believed you. As it happens, it has been no problem.

After breakfast we made our way to the coach for a short 15 minute drive to the salt mines. It was maybe short but there was still time for hymns, prayers and of course, the Chaplet. I have never been on a pilgrimage before but I must say these pilgrims have been so joyous and genuinely so every single day. It has been such a pleasure to spend time with them.

The trip with a professional guide in the salt mine in Wieliczka was amazing, the sculptures carved out of salt are wonderful and my favourite place was the grand hall. Before we reached it I heard gasps and the moment you set eyes on it you could understand why. You looked down upon an enormous hall full of carvings. There are many chapels carved out of the mine too and we saw a couple of them. What an insight into a working way of life, which only ended a few years ago.

Day 7; Miejsce Piastowe

Today the sun shone again and after 8am Mass in the Relic Chapel we left for a three hour journey to Miejsce Piastowe the national shrine of St Michael the Archangel. A place in the south east of Poland and only 15 miles from Slovenia and 50 miles from the Ukraine. The journey passed quickly thanks to Father Peter's good humour, Terry's fabulous singing and guitar playing and Noreen's commentaries on what was going to happen when we got there and other interesting snippets of information.



■ Blessing by the hands of newly ordained priests of Congregation of St Michael the Archangel

▶ We arrived at our first stop in no time. This was at the Sisters of St Michael, a convent and orphanage set in beautiful gardens where we said the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We left the convent to cross the road to the junior seminary and the church of the founder of Father Peter's order, the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. The church was stunning with magnificent statues and it was obvious that everybody had a great depth of feeling just by being there.

Museum

We visited the museum of Bl. Bronislaw Markiewicz the founder of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel; it was very humbling to hear about his heroic life and how he cared for the poor orphans. We then entered the minor-seminary for our lunch, which was laid on by the young seminarians and what a feast it was. These young men, dressed immaculately with perfect waiting skills took care of our every want. Father Peter explained that this was a boarding school, many of their parents were working overseas as unemployment in this area is very high and there is a lot of poverty. The boys were taught discipline but in a caring environment.

As other pilgrims began to arrive from all around Poland I realised that the many wooden chairs dotted around the grounds with purple sashes hanging from them where there for confession to take place in the open air and as the afternoon went on long queues started to form at them all.

The large outside altar was now set and we took our VIP seats at the front and as time passed coach loads

of pilgrims arrived and the seats and areas beyond became jam-packed. Many brought their own folding chairs and one elderly Polish gentleman even had some on sale!

At around 7pm we began to experience a most awesome celebration of Mass. There were around 15 priests and dozens of nuns. We were made to feel very much involved. A decade of the rosary was said in English, Ukrainian, Slovakian, Ugandan and Spanish. We sang Ave Maria and Terry played on the alter to the thousands who were gathered.

Fatima Procession

Then it came to the time for the statue of Fatima to be carried through a torch-lit procession led by the young seminarians, then priests all carrying lit torches and then us. The large Scottish, Irish and English flags being held high. It was a moving spectacle.

Then as if by magic we were on the coach again and carried home, maybe by angel's wings, because the three hour journey just did not seem to exist!! Patrick reflected on his week saying he thought it was the best week of his life. He thought that his Catholic faith could not get any stronger, but this week it has and it has been a revelation for him. For both of us, we have made lots of new Irish and English friends, friendships which you know will last and friends you know you will meet on futures pilgrimages..

Living the Faith

I have been inspired by three ways in which we could capture the amazing ways of 'Living the Faith' which

exists here in happy and joyful ways, including ideas for young people to be involved. I don't know how to go about taking such thoughts forward but at least I have them firmly in my mind.

On a local level we already have a plan of action. We had a Pilgrimage Reunion Garden Party, with a House Mass led by Father Andrew Kingham, who was inspired by the pilgrimage last year. We shared photos and the late Helen Gaughan's film. Hopefully by doing so we might encourage new pilgrims for next year. We have raised funds to send to Noreen's Charity, the Global Children's Foundation, which built the St Faustina Medical Centre in Uganda (100% of all donations goes directly to their sponsored projects). For this same project we aim to get groups of people or individuals to take one month and fundraise so a midwife's salary can be covered for a year. It is amazing, just £95 per month can provide a woman in labour with the care to have their babies delivered safely and without having to walk miles to receive treatment. This fundraising is being done in memory of Susan Cooper, the daughter of one of our pilgrims who died only a short time ago from ovarian cancer. A subject close to many of our hearts.

I am so glad I have recorded the events of this wonderful week in Poland with Father Peter and Noreen who obviously put mountains of work into this pilgrimage to make it the extraordinary event that it is.

Isobel Dolan
Fife, Scotland

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UK Mission

TALKS ON THE DIVINE MERCY & HOLY ANGELS

Sunday 15th April 2012 2.00pm

Elmore Abbey
Church Lane, Speen
Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1SA
Contact: Pauline Mason
Phone: +44 (0)776 707 8642
+44 (0)1635 230883

Monday 16th April 2012, 2.00pm

St Philip & St James Church
2 Severn Way
Bedford MK41 7BX
Contact: Marcel & Sylvia
Phone: + 44 (0) 1234 343 682
Mobile: + 44 (0) 797 951 7215
Mobile: +44 (0) 778 679 1592

Monday 16th April 2012, 7.00pm

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church
82 Knox Road, Wellingborough Northants
Contact: Fr Edmund Worthy
Phone: +44 (0) 1933 222780
Email: edmundworthy@yahoo.co.uk

Tuesday 17th April 2012, 7.00pm

St Charles Borromeo Church
Jarratt Street
HULL HU1 3HB
Contact: V.R. Canon Michael Loughlin
Phone: 01482 329100
Contact: John Carroll
Phone: + 44 (0) 1759 380415
B&B Available

Wednesday 18th April 2012, 2.15pm

Manchester Universities Catholic Chaplaincy
337 Oxford Road,
Manchester. M13 9PG
Contact: Fr Ian Kelly
Phone: + 44 (0) 161 273 1456
Email: fr.ian@rc-chaplaincy-um.org.uk

Thursday 19th April 2012, 7.30pm

Our Lady Star of the Sea Church
1 Crescent Road, Seaforth, Merseyside,
Liverpool L21 LJL
Contact: Fr Thomas Woods
Phone: + 44 (0)151 928 2338
Peter McPhillips: + 44 (0) 7931 748354

Friday 20th April 2012

Holy Ghost Catholic Church
Off The High Street,
Mid Summer Norton Near Bath,
Avon BA3 2DR
Contact: Denise Valancy
Phone: + 44 (0)7714 285 456
Phone : + 44 (0)174 9345 423

Saturday 21th & Sunday 22nd April 2012

Talks at all Masses
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour
Cheltenham Road East, Churchdown
Gloucester GL3 1HU
Contact: Fr Kevin Hennessey
Phone: + 44 (0)1452 713254

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 Mary 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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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 Mary)

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.