



The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



Fresco in Reconciliation Chapel in the Shrine at Mont Sant' Angelo, Italy

Secret of St Michael's stones

Divine Mercy testimonies: peace, healing and money

Goodness vs. holiness

What is avarice?

Queen of heaven

Stations of the Cross: with Christ on Calvary



“If you do not give of yourself when you love, it is not real love, but when you do it is real love”.

St Teresa of Calcutta

To be merciful means to show compassion and to make a sacrifice of our time, money and so on. Mother Teresa would say “An institution is not able to love, even though it has the word ‘love’ in its name”.

An institution can give money but it cannot love. Why is this so? Because an institution has no heart. Only people who belong to it are able to love. Therefore, Mother Teresa organized help for the dying, they did not need money, they were in need of someone who loved them. By her service she helped them discover God’s mercy.

One of the dying said, “Sister, I am going to God, thanks to you I know that God exists and that He is love. I have lived in the street like an animal, but I am dying like an angel, being loved and under your care. Sister I am going to heaven.” He finished and went to God with a smile on his face.

We have no doubts that the heart of Saint Teresa of Calcutta reflected God’s mercy.

Practicing mercy is also the way in which we love God. He identifies himself with man. Jesus said, “In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me” (Mt 25:40).

The Bible says, “Anyone who says ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, is a liar, since no one who fails to love the brother, whom he can see, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20). This way of practicing acts of mercy was constantly present in the life of St Faustina. She wrote, “An ardent love of God sees all around itself constant opportunities to share itself through deed, word and prayer” (Diary 1313).

There are two kinds of needs which we can respond to by mercy.

The spiritual needs and the material needs. The Holy Spirit helps us to decide what to do. Sometimes people are in sorrow and they need a word of consolation. In another situation they need some financial support. But nearly always we may offer them our prayers. Prayers can help, especially to those who have lost their way in life, or gone astray from the path of salvation.

I assure you of the constant daily prayers of the priests of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel for all our readers and their families. Please let others know about this magazine and help us to distribute it all over the world. God bless you.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA
Marki, Poland

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Lent

Lent is the forty day period before Easter, excluding Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday.

This traditional enumeration, however, does not precisely coincide with the calendar according to the liturgical reform.

In order to give special prominence to the Sacred Triduum (Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday and Easter Vigil), the current calendar counts Lent as only from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday, up to the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Even so, Lenten practices are properly maintained up to the Easter Vigil, excluding Sundays as before.

Why are Sundays excluded from the reckoning of the forty days of Lent?

Because Sunday is the day on which Christ was raised from the dead, making it an inappropriate day to fast and mourn our sins.

Why are the forty days called Lent?

The word 'Lent' is the old English word for 'spring', the season of the year

during which they fall. This is something unique to English. In almost all other languages its name is a derivative of the Latin term 'Quadragesima', or 'the forty days'.

Why forty days long?

Because forty days is a traditional number associated with discipline, devotion and preparation in the Bible. Moses stayed on the Mountain of God for forty days (Exodus 24:18 and 34:28).

Elijah travelled forty days before he reached the cave where he had his vision (1 Kings 19:8).

The City of Nineveh was given forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4).

And prior to undertaking his ministry, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness praying and fasting (Matthew 4:2).

Christ used the forty day period of prayer and fasting to prepare for

his ministry, which culminated in his Death and Resurrection. Thus it is fitting for Christians to imitate Him with a forty day period of prayer and fasting to prepare for the celebration of his ministry's climax, Good Friday (the day of the crucifixion) and Easter Sunday (the day of the Resurrection).

"By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert" (Catechism of Catholic Church 540).

Wearing ash on your forehead does not mean showing others how holy and righteous you are. It means that you are a sinner, and you cannot save yourself, and you need God to save you through Christ's holy cross.

Source: "All about Lent"

James Akin

www.ewtn.com

The Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross on the Mountain of the Cross – Medjugorje
by Fr Tomislav Ivancic

Contemplate the suffering of Jesus and unite with Jesus in your life.

Each of us frequently finds himself fleeing from the cross of everyday life. Jesus makes us return into our town, into our village, into our house, to our families, to our working places, into our life so that in faith we do what we have to do and so that all that is transitory within us may die and all that is eternal may remain.

Preparatory Prayer

Jesus, I would like to meet you.

Guide me on my way. Mary, teach me to hold Jesus' word when I have to walk up the Calvary of my life. Help me to do what Jesus asks me to do.

Father, here I am. I would like to embrace the secret of your Son so that you may acknowledge me as your child who is returning to you. Amen.

FIRST STATION JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“The chief priests and the whole Sanherdrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death” (Mt 26:59).

Accepting one's condemnation

Listen to Jesus saying: I was judged and finally condemned to death. The people who had listened to my sermons were in agreement with the government and the religious authorities on condemning me to die. My friends and apostles had fled.

Only a short while ago they were full of praise and admiration for me and the miracles, they pushed their way to the front to touch me and assured me of their loyalty. Now they all are against me and force Pilate to have me crucified. Pilate, the foreigner, would like to set me free. But my fellow citizens force him to condemn me to death.

The people around you, even your very best friends, will judge you and condemn you. This does not mean that it is always you who are to blame. But it is always you who are condemned. Now you know that you cannot rely on men. God alone is your support and your security. This cross makes you independent of the men who you regard as your support and it invites you to seek support with me. If men condemn you, you can come over to my side. For I have been judged and condemned, too. Don't defend yourself if you are judged by others. Their judgement cannot annihilate you, it

does not leave you alone, it brings you closer to me and leads you into eternal glory. This sentence is your door to me, to a meeting with me. Now nobody can condemn you.

Dear children! Today I ask you to stop all malicious gossip.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

SECOND STATION JESUS RECEIVES THE CROSS

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4).

Accepting one's daily routine

I could have defended myself or wanted others to defend me.

I could have said: 'I am innocent, why shall I suffer?' But I accepted the cross without complaining. Every moment of your life is a burden. You can accept it with patience or shake it off. You can flee from it or face it.

I accepted it. So you know where to find me. Your strength does not lie in running away. At any moment you will have to decide if you want to follow me.

This is the second cross. Only few people recognize it. A lot of people look for extraordinary Crosses. But your cross is here – in accepting your daily routine. Your daily routine is your life and your cross.

If you accept it you will receive a lot of graces, and your faith will grow and develop quickly.

Dear children, pray that you may accept illnesses and sufferings with love and patience, just as Jesus accepted them.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

THIRD STATION JESUS FALL THE FIRST TIME BENEATH THE CROSS

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”. (Eph. 5:2).

Having the courage to fall down

It is difficult to fall down. Everyone wishes to remain standing, to withstand and prevail. I am God, nevertheless I fall beneath the cross, powerless. Everybody witnessed my miracles in amazement. But now they see me fall, beaten and despised.

Have courage to fall and to admit it, not to make it seem better. Here on earth you cannot become different. You are here to die. For it is written: “Whoever loses his life, will find it.”

Why are you afraid to fall? Why don't you dare to look up when you have suffered defeat, when other men are cleverer than you? Why are you afraid when your sins get you down? You would like to get through. But look – when you fall you can come to me. Don't be afraid, falling is not the end. Why do you take it to heart

so much, why are you so ashamed? You fall to come closer to me so that I can give you new strength.

If you understand that I also fell down, you will be able to see my face in your fall, and together we will defeat sin and failure. It is important not to remain isolated in falling, but to come close to me.

Whenever you suffer. Sacrifice your sufferings to God.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

FOURTH STATION JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“This child is destined to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul, too.” (Lk. 2:34-35).

Having to distress loved ones

It is impossible never to distress somebody you love. I could have avoided meeting my mother. Do you know what it means to meet somebody who you have disappointed?

I was rejected and despised like a heretic and a seducer. My mother knew all about it. She saw my outer and inner pain and looked me in the eyes. It is a cross to look a loved one in the eyes when all others mock you. It is impossible not to disappoint people who love you. But you cannot protect them against it. Do not reject this cross. You will find me when you see that you have distressed your friends.

You see how your troubles pain them. This worries you. My mother understood who I am even in my defeat. Her last wish that I should succeed died in her, but her belief developed to the full.

You recognize a true friend if he stands by you even if nobody else finds anything praiseworthy in you. Accept what is offensive about you. Accept the fact that you will disappoint others, and you will meet me and my mother.

I, the mother, love you all, I ask you not to allow my heart to cry bloody tears over those souls that are lost in sin.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

FIFTH STATION SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.



■ Christ with a cross on his back by Sebastiano del Piombo, c. 1516

People: Because by Thy holy cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.

“But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:13)

Allowing others to help you

Nobody respected me. So many people did I cure, but even they left me, just like those who I was close to. Full of wounds and full of blood, shaken after meeting my mother I needed loving hands to support me. The only one who came had to be forced. I longed for help given in compassion and love. Simon had to be forced to help me. It is a cross to find nobody willing to suffer with you in love. If you accept it you are no longer alone in suffering because I am with you.

And something else. Have courage to allow others to help you. I did it too, although I am omnipotent. Let others surpass you, let them take care of you, admit it that you need them.

This is a cross and you cannot avoid it. Learn to understand that it is a door to me. Don't be astonished if all in you opposes this cross; “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature” (Gal:5,17). Receive your cross and follow me. So you are with me.

*Don't be afraid to carry the cross.
There is my Son to help you.*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

SIXTH STATION JESUS AND VERONICA

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ,
and we praise Thee.



■ St Veronica with the Holy Kerchief by Master of Saint Veronica, c. 1420

People: Because by Thy holy cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt.25:40)

Accepting a favour without being able to repay it

They took everything from me. And they all left me. I was alone,

without possessions, on my way to death. Then Veronica came up to me and wiped my face with a napkin. Do you know what one feels in such a situation? I was deeply moved and full of gratitude, but I had nothing to reward her with. I had nothing but my suffering and my pain.

So I gave her the impression of my bloody face. It is a cross to allow people to do you a favour without being able

to reward them. Have courage and do what you have seen me do. Do not hesitate to be indebted to others. You need not pay for everything. Give yourself in return. Learn to receive without immediately thinking of a reward. This is a door to me; suffering the shame if you cannot give in return.

So you will meet me, and you will recognize the Father because you cannot reward him for what he gives you. He is like a spring exuding water generously. If you are like that you are my Father's child. Also accept the cross that you cannot repay God for all his love. Be like a child that enjoys his father's and his mother's love.

I thank you for all your sacrifices and call upon you for the greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of love. Without love you cannot accept either me or my son. Without love you cannot bear witness of your experiences.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

SEVENTH STATION JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

"All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads; He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." (Ps 22:7-8).

Relapsing

I fell once. Everybody wanted to see me strong. But I fell a second time. I knew that my mother would

be shocked and my enemies would mock me. My friends would withdraw from me in disappointment. My weakness outraged everyone, and they asked themselves: Is this really God? I received this cross. My father wanted to show that in me he is stronger than any offence.

If you fall for the first time you will be able to make an excuse, but if you become weak a second time everyone will be able to prove that you are inferior. You will set yourself against this cross, you will want to put things right and to justify yourself. But in this case you become a stranger to me. By doing so you do not bear witness for me, but for yourself because you only want to show your own strength. Be aware that you will fall again and again, but I will raise you. Then they will say, "Look, somebody has risen him." Your seventh cross consists in admitting your weakness. Do not be afraid to fall, but turn to me. If you accept this cross you will find me in it, because it is only man who suffers defeat, will triumph.

He loves you, that is why he tests you. Sacrifice all your burdens to God, and don't worry.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

EIGHTH STATION JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

"Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me; weep for yourselves

and for your children. For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Lk 23:28 and 31)

Comforting others in one's grief

Women listened to me; they believed me and loved me. I blessed their children. They looked at me with their hearts, and they could not understand that somebody condemned me. They cried because they felt that by condemning me, life was condemned. In their sadness I comforted them. This is the cross of conquering one's own grief and seeing freedom behind it.

No grief is tragic in the end.

Hardheartedness and blindness are tragic. It is tragic not to recognize that there is resurrection behind each death, recovery behind illness, reunion behind each farewell. It is tragic to submit to self-pity. You win a victory where you see somebody else's grief and comfort him when you yourself need comforting. Then it is God who comforts you. Have courage to do without comfort and to ask God for strength. So you conquer the world. So you follow the stations of the cross, but it is a way into life. If you yourself are wounded and in pain, but comfort others, then you will find me, and I will support you.

Dear children, I ask you to mend your ways. It is time for you to do it.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

NINTH STATION JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.

“My strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours.” (Ps 31:10-11)

Suffering a total defeat

I fell a third time. The people believed that that would be my final breakdown. And just when they supposed that I would never make it I summoned up all my strength, took the cross and dragged it up to Golgotha.

A man can go on even if nobody thinks that it is possible. The moment will come when people tell you, “There’s nothing more to be expected from you. It’s the end!” You yourself will think, “I can’t go on.”

This is the moment of complete helplessness. It is the moment of your surrender, of the realization of your failure. Do you really want to abandon all hope then? – Don’t be afraid. There is another door, and you will meet me again behind it. If you cannot rely on yourself any longer, I will be there. You will cry from the bottom of your heart, and I will answer. It is a cross to lose and to be left alone, to have nobody who believes in you anymore, to be given up. But if you accept this cross, I will surprise you with my presence and my strength. You will be able to go to the ends of the earth in my name. Are you willing to accept this cross? Don’t worry, I am with you. I have conquered the world.

Promise that you will not offend or mock either Jesus or the cross.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

TENTH STATION JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.

“People stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” (Ps 22: 17-18)

Enduring being undressed

I endured being stripped of my clothes, being deprived of my most intimate things. I let it happen and they ignored my sense of shame and invaded my privacy.

You want to have at least some tiny sphere for yourself, some area that belongs to you only, that must not be invaded by anybody else. You must have something that nobody must see, otherwise your dignity would be offended. You are prepared to guard it and to hide it from anybody else’s eyes. You are convinced to have a right to it. You want to keep it at all costs as it is your most intimate possession and you are ready to fight for it. But there is a moment when there is no chance for you to save anything for yourself. There are situations when you must let everything go, there will be nothing left to you yourself. You are deprived of everything. You have to go through this cross. Give everything to God. We, my Father and I, will remain your most intimate and untouchable sphere. It is not only a cross when your body is violently stripped of clothes; it is much more painful when your soul is stripped.

Your sins removed the cover long ago and you are ashamed.

Accept this cross, and nobody will be able to degrade you. Allow your Father to give you new clothes. Sacrifice your privacy; he will transform it into perfect innocence. In vain you will strive for innocence. Admit being too weak to attain it.

This is the tenth cross – the cross of man’s disregard for a sense of shame, the cross of man’s longing for innocence, the cross of man’s fear that anybody might learn of his guilt.

Accept this cross and you will meet me. Your fear will dissolve. Admit being weak, admit being what you are; a man degraded by sin. If you admit that nobody will ever be able harm you.

Look around you, dear children, and you will see to what extent sin had already seized power on earth. Therefore, pray that Jesus may win.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

ELEVENTH STATION JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.

“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Being nailed to the cross

As long as you carry the cross you have the chance of throwing it off. But as soon as you are nailed to it

you cannot escape any more. Now you know that the cross is your destiny until death. It is hard to accept this. You would like to throw off your crosses but you are nailed to them. They are the place where you will die. Your fellowmen will nail you to the crosses. Are you afraid or do you rely entirely on me? There are crosses from which there is no escape. In vain you try to avoid them. Stop this futile fight and come to me.

Dying with me means winning. Don't be afraid! Don't delude yourself that there may be other ways. The crosses will remain till the end, and the sooner you accept dying the sooner you will rise again. Remember this eleventh cross. For you are not only nailed forever to it, but also to me. I look forward to it.

Pray especially before the cross, for great graces come from it.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

TWELFTH STATION JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” (John 19:34)

Dying on the cross

Death, I go from this world, but not into nothingness, but in order to love in a new way. By dying I did my Father's will. So in dying I said, “Father into your hands I commend my spirit!” And by so doing I fulfilled my Father's plan.



■ The Crucifixion by Léon Bonnat, c. 1874

You think death is the end, and so you live in fear and oppose the thought of death. But as long as you do not accept death you feel a heavy burden resting upon your shoulders. If you accept death you win the victory and you come to me. I am far from you as long as you reject death and ask me to spare you. Understand that the way to me leads only through death. Death destroys everything that is sinful and mortal in you. I, however, destroy death itself. Death frees you from various crosses, but I free you from death. Risk looking into death's eyes. Regard this cross as the Father's present, as fulfilment.

The Father has tolerated death. If you oppose dying you oppose the Father and me. The twelfth cross is the peak, a feast so to say, the moment of completion. It is the beginning of real life.

Dear children! Make amends for the wound my son's heart has received! This heart has been injured by all sorts of sins.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

THIRTEENTH STATION JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS AND LAID IN MARY'S BOSOM

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“All you who pass by, look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me?” (Lam. 1:12)

Not being able to enjoy the fruits of one's labours

Only when I was dead my friends came. You are the seed of times to come.

But you want to see the fruits of your labours at once. My disciples often die in hopelessness and shame, and not they themselves, but others harvest what they have sown. Others gain friends and life. This is the moment for you to serve as the seed of a new world. This is your cross. It is me who trusts you, for throughout your life you will hardly find recognition and success. Only after your death you will be taken from the cross and then you will be honoured. For all eternity no cross will ever again be a burden to you because you had the courage to bear the cross in your life on earth. To work, but not to be able to enjoy the fruits of one's labours, this is the thirteenth cross. It takes courage to sow the seed without being able to harvest the crop. But I am the fruit of your renunciation. I, however, take you to resurrection.

Dear children! I give you special graces from the cross. Accept them and live them.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

FOURTEENTH STATION THE BODY OF JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Celebrant: We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee.

People: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12: 24)

Living without hope – from a human point of view

My friends thought to have done me a great honour by putting my body in the tomb. They cared for my body and forgot what I had told them ... “on the third day I will rise.”

The tomb worries you. When the tomb is built you cease to exist.

When not even the smallest trace is left of you, what will you do? When you know that nobody will attend your funeral, when you end your life in misery, it is me who knows you.

It is a cross to bury one’s last wish, the wish to be respected here on earth. For this wish prevents you from being of real importance, from being a light for others. How can you be a light as long as you shrink back from burying your dark egoism with you, as long as you want to be near me but don’t want to burn your bridges behind you? Only then can I transform your life. Bury your wishes and accept the fourteenth cross. There is resurrection above it. Therefore, I derive pleasure from the tomb in which your arrogance is buried.

You don’t want to be in a tomb, you are shocked by the thought of letting go of this life. Therefore, you are dead. If you were willing to accept death you



■ Deposition of Christ by Bronzino, 1543-45

would be able to rise in my life. Only one who is dead can rise. Don’t be afraid! What you call “death” is a bridge from you to me. The death of sin means joy and union for you and me, the fulfilment of all wishes and longings. I have gone this way and I am waiting for you. Don’t you understand that by my death I did not leave the world, but that it has been given to me? Before that I was only a guest on earth. Now I am the master. You will be as I am.

Give to death what belongs to it. Don’t regard the tomb as a sad end, but as birth and a real beginning. Give up your pride and be ready to die, and the dawn of Easter will light up for you.

I wish that you may understand that life on earth is very short compared to eternal life. Therefore, dear children decide again in favour of God today.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

13th – 21th May 2019

Our pilgrimage is organised
by NOMADA Travel Agency
www.nomada.org.pl

NOMADA
BIURO PIELGRZYMKOWO-TURYSTYCZNE

Price £925 / €1,050 / \$1,275 + Flights
HB – Breakfast & evening meal

Spiritual director

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA

Our English speaking guide will be Agnieszka

DAY 1 – DAY 1 Arrival into Tel Aviv. Bus transfer to Tiberias an Israeli city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Evening meal.

DAY 2 – Nazareth and Nazareth village, the Basilica of the Annunciation, Church of St Joseph, Old Synagogue, Mt Tabor, visiting Cana. Basilica of the Transfigurations with breath taking views. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 3 – Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee –Mt Beatitudes, Capernaum, followed by the Church of the Primacy of St Peter located in Tabgha: it commemorates the spot of Jesus' reinstatement of Peter as chief among the Apostles, visiting the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 4 – Journey to Jaffa the oldest part of Tel Aviv – panoramic views, visiting Haifa: Israel's third largest city beautifully set on the slopes of the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 5 – Jerusalem – Mt of Olives – the Basilica of the Agony, the Ascension chapel and the churches of the Pater Noster and Dominus Flevit Chapel, Palm Sunday way. Wailing Wall. Mount Zion. The Cenacle, also known as the "Upper Room", is a room in the David's Tomb Compound in Jewish quarter, traditionally held to be the site of the Last Supper. Dormition Abbey, Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu located on the eastern slope of Mount Zion, just outside the Old (walled) City of Jerusalem. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 6 – Bethlehem – the Nativity Church, St Catherine Church, the Shepherds Fields. The Church of the



Visitation in Ein Karem, Jerusalem, built on the site believed to have been where Mary met her cousin Elizabeth and where Mary sung the song of gratitude, Magnificat. The Church of St John the Baptist is a Catholic church belonging to the Franciscan order. It was built at the site where St John the Baptist was believed to have been born. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 7 – The Jordan river: Christian tradition marks this site as the place of the "spiritual birth" of Jesus. Highlights of Mount of Temptation reached by cable car from the ancient town of Jericho, Church of the Good Shepherd followed by a short visit to a centuries-old sycamore tree: the oldest existing sycamore, and possibly even the one that Zacchaeus climbed, the Judean Desert, a desert in Israel and the West Bank that lies east of Jerusalem and descends to the Dead Sea, where group will have opportunity to float. Dinner, overnight stay.

DAY 8 – Jerusalem – Holy Sepulcher Basilica / Holy Tomb and Calvary / Via Dolorosa Stations of the Cross. The Bethesda Pool, where Jesus heals the paralytic man in the Gospel of John. St Anna's Church and St John Baptist Church. Free time in the Old City.

DAY 9 – Departure

For Further information

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■ Grotto of St Michael the Archangel, Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

Photo: Angelo Torre

Stones from the grotto of the Archangel

Among the devotional items available for sale during missions on St Michael the Archangel are white stones in special reliquaries. What is their significance and why are they necessary?



Stone is a common and naturally occurring material, utilised by mankind since the earliest times. Its characteristic properties are hardness, roughness and durability, which is why it was considered suitable for the writing of texts considered worthy to be preserved in perpetuity. The particular shapes and mysterious colours present within stone seem to indicate the existence of superhuman power, which filled primitive man with an almost religious awe and fear. The word 'stone' appears 337 times in the Bible as a noun and 30 times as an adjective.

Jacob set up a stone slab as a monument (Genesis 31:45). Moses hewed the words of the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone (Exodus 34:4). After crossing the Jordan, Jacob set

up twelve stones in the middle of the river, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel (Joshua 4:1-24), the foundations of the Temple were laid, using specially quarried and dressed stones (1 Kings 5:17). Elijah arranged twelve stones as an altar in honour of the Lord (1 Kings 18:31-32). A stone was used as a monument on the grave of Rachel (Genesis 35:20) and rolled against the entrance of Jesus' tomb (Mark 15:46).

Stone was particularly prized in the Ancient World. It was considered propitious. It indicated prosperity and a change in fortune for the better. In court proceedings, it meant that the accused was being set at liberty. It was also awarded as a prize to the victor of wrestling contests and was given to

the candidate chosen to hold high office. White stones were used to mark happy and festive occasions. In the Bible, we read of a white stone on only one occasion, and that in the Book of Revelation, where Jesus Himself will give a white stone: "to those who prove victorious I will give some hidden manna and a white stone, with a new name written on it, known only to the person who receives it" (Revelation 2:17). The victors will share a happy fate – they will inherit the Kingdom of God, in which each person will take up the place which has been reserved for them and will be called by their own name. God's creative love will express the true identity and essence of the beloved person by means of their name.

Great miracles, simple signs

Stone plays an integral part in the story of the revelation of St Michael at Gargano. When, in 1656, the plague was decimating the population of Italy, a worried Bishop Alfonso Puccinelli entreated the help of St Michael the Archangel. In order to prevail on the Archangel for his swift intervention with the Lord, he placed into the hands of his statue the words of a prayer composed on behalf of all the town's inhabitants. The reply received on 22nd September at the bishop's palace in Monte Sant'Angelo was swift in coming. During his morning prayer, Bishop Alfonso first heard what sounded like an earthquake, after which, in a flash of dazzling light, he saw St Michael the Archangel. He was also commanded to bless stones from the grotto, on which he was to inscribe the sign of the cross and the letters M.A. (Michael the Archangel). At the same time, St Michael assured him that whoever shall possess such a stone and keep it with devotion will be preserved from sickness. This promise proved true and all who possessed the stones were soon freed from the fatal disease. In the centuries since this took place, the monument erected on the square opposite the bishop's palace with its Latin inscription with the words: "This monument is erected in eternal gratitude to the Prince of Angels, Vanquisher of disease, our Patron and Protector, by Alfonso Puccinelli, 1656."

History shows that God makes use of simple signs even when performing great miracles. The Israelites who journeyed through the desert with Moses grumbled against God and experienced great sickness when Yahweh sent down

fiery serpents whose bite brought death to many in Israel. Conscious of their sin and helplessness, the people then begged Moses to intercede with God on their behalf to save them from the serpents. Moses began praying for the people and was told to "make a fiery serpent and raise it as a standard. Anyone who is bitten and looks at it will survive" (Numbers 21: 8).

St Michael behaved in a similar way to the people who asked the bishop to intercede for them in order to overcome the plague. He used a simple object, a stone, which the person needed to have in his or her possession. It is obvious that a stone cannot of itself have the power to heal. It is an inanimate object, moreover, one which is symbolic of a hard, unfeeling, cold and lifeless heart. But when a person has faith, then God has the power to refresh and change that person's heart and life. A belief in God and faith in the intercessory power of St Michael the Archangel can banish plague.

Jesus Christ casts stones

In the porch of the church of Our Lady of the Martyrs of Poland in Przysiek, Poland, hangs a great plaque, placed there to commemorate the visit of the statue of St Michael the Archangel to this Michaelite parish. People passing it can read the words: "Who is like to God! St Michael the Archangel protect us from the snares and deceits of Satan, so that at the end of our earthly lives we may be welcomed into the Kingdom of Light." Below the text there is a cross, together with the letters M.A. Below the cross has been placed a reliquary with stone from the grotto and below

that a further inscription: "Stone from the grotto – the heavenly basilica in Gargano, Italy. In memory of the visit of the pilgrim statue of St Michael the Archangel from the shrine in Gargano, 3-6 May 2013 A.D."

One family has placed one of these stones in the door of their house. They frequently look at it, touch it and point it out to visitors to their home. Most importantly – in accordance with the promise given by St Michael the Archangel – they ask for and experience his protection. A door is very important in every home. Through it, we go out into the world and through it we come back home, where the Father is present (Matthew 6:6). Before the door Jesus stands and knocks, entreating us to open (Revelation 3:20), but we must not forget that Satan, and with him, all that is evil, is also trying his hardest to enter (Matthew 12:43-45).

Many priests and faithful feel and understand this danger and therefore invite the statue from Gargano into their parishes and communities. And so, St Michael the Archangel comes, and leaves us small stones from the heavenly grotto. This white stone is today our weapon and a stone as a weapon against evil signifies Christ.

César of Arles said: "When Christ – the true David – throws a stone, he does so accurately. The stone thrown by Him is symbolic of Himself and it strikes the spiritual Goliath, the enemy of our souls, right in the forehead, a forehead not marked by the sign of the cross."

The Apostle Peter goes deeper and teaches us that Jesus is the living stone, chosen by God and precious to Him, so that, "as living stones making a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:4-5), with the assistance of St Michael the Archangel.

Fr Karol Dąbrowski CSMA

An Archangel with a slow-burning fuse

I don't feel well! There seems to be excessive turbulence on this flight. Casting a surreptitious glance at my fellow passengers showed their faces to be as green as mine - as if all of us were likely to be sick at any moment. The landing followed not a moment too soon.

Without knowing a single word of Italian it is certainly no mean feat to purchase a ticket from Bologna airport to the railway station and find the train to Foggia and it is surely little short of miraculous to then find the correct bus stop, hidden in the corner of the vast square and catch the very LAST bus to San Giovanni Rotondo just as it is about to leave.

Looking somewhat deranged and having availed ourselves of the good offices of St Anthony to their full extent, we finally reached our destination just before midnight. This was the pilgrims' hostel in the small town sanctified by the

presence of the relics of Saint Padre Pio. Ania and I had decided that, in view of the shortness of the distance between it and Monte Sant'Angelo, we would set out to visit St Michael the Archangel at first light the next day.

We gradually accustomed ourselves to the unique driving style of the local bus drivers, whereby they frequently exceeded the speed limit. As the road wound its way ever more steeply upward, we passed cows, calves and sheep grazing in the meadows. The road seemed never-ending until the shrine of St Michael the Archangel finally came into view in the fading rays of sunlight.

I find it hard to believe that I had arrived at the very place where the inscription on the entrance to the grotto proclaims: "Here we have the most celebrated crypt in the world dedicated to the person of St Michael the Archangel, where he himself appeared to men. Pilgrim falling to your knees: Honour this rock. You stand on holy ground!"

We therefore pass the entrance to the church in eager anticipation of great spiritual experiences. We make our way down the many stairs, reaching further into the depths of the mountain. It feels as if we are being led into the centre of the earth. We are finally in the grotto itself. We stand beneath a vast stone vault. There are, as yet, no other pilgrims and so we are left undisturbed to present all the intentions which we have brought with us before St Michael.

I have read much of the miracles and graces obtained through the intercession of St Michael the Archangel and therefore had high expectations of what I might receive: some deep spiritual experience or inspiration, a feeling of religious ecstasy or powerful sense that my prayers and petitions were being answered.



Photo: Jacek Kawa

■ Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy



■ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Grotto of St Michael the Archangel

However, I experienced ABSOLUTELY nothing. And so, I reasoned, perhaps I was unworthy, perhaps I had not prayed properly, or perhaps St Michael was pre-occupied with other more urgent matters. All these possible explanations as to why my prayers remained unheard accompanied me on my return to Poland, particularly when any of my acquaintances talked of their own amazing experiences at Monte Sant' Angelo.

As for me, I simply failed to experience the same ecstasy. On the contrary, I found myself incapable

of igniting the slightest spark which would fire my listeners with enthusiasm for this singular and miraculous place.

However... after being home a few months, to my surprise, I began to perceive discreet signs of St Michael's protection. These took the form of minor everyday miracles through his intercession. Inexplicable happenings occurred whereby I came out unscathed from potentially dangerous situations to which, as a novice driver, I should, by rights have succumbed.

It is only now that I know that the Prince of the Heavenly Hosts had not only noted my presence that day at Monte Sant' Angelo but had also heeded my petitions. He then chose the most opportune moment to make me aware of the fact that God had indeed reserved a corner of His heart for me, as indeed he does for each one of us. We will come to this knowledge by virtue of the many holy intercessors we encounter upon life's path and despite the fact that some seem to act as a bomb with a slow burning fuse.

These days it takes very little to remind me of my time at Monte Sant' Angelo. In order to touch the love of God it is sufficient to immerse myself in the silence and wait... because God loves to speak to us in silence.

There are as many differing shades of faith as there are people. For some, faith makes their lives easier, others consider faith an entirely private matter, yet others believe in nothing, while there are those whose faith is their lifeblood, the source of their life and joy.

The little that is left for us to do (or, seen otherwise, the magnitude of the task before us) is to find it in our hearts to perceive God's love for each of us, to see God smiling at us in the small miracles of everyday life, in the multitude of saints, the many places particularly touched by His grace, as well as in simple human friendship.

There are different shades of faith leading to different signs of God's presence: each sign is different because each of us has a different road to the Father's house. I pray that our faith may permit each of us to someday discover and travel along that road.

Małgorzata Dybeł, Poland

Give me strength to do Your holy will

On Saint Faustina's road of life there are villages, towns, cities, the most important places where the Apostle of the Divine Mercy stayed.

They are frequented by pilgrims who go there in order to touch the places marked by her presence as well as to meet the saint, learn about her experience of God and about the example of her life.

In Grochow

In 1929 Sister Faustina was sent to the second house of the Congregation in Warsaw, which was being created at that time. It was in the Grochow district, at 44 Hetmanska Street. At first, only a few sisters lived in the house in Grochow permanently, while other sisters as well, as girls, stayed there temporarily. In June, 1929, Sister Faustina was assigned to work there. She had just finished substituting for a sister working in the kitchen in the house of the Congregation in Vilnius. However, she was not in Grochow for a long time because as early as 7th July that year she was sent to a house of the Congregation in Kiekrz in order to substitute for an ailing sister in the kitchen. Although her stay in the house was so short, she had enough time to win the wards' hearts, who promised that they would follow her to the next house she would live in.

Now in Grochow the sisters run a big social welfare home for women who are lonely and elderly. In the monastic chapel there is an image of the Merciful Jesus painted by Ludomir Sledzinski in 1954 for a contest organized by Rev. Michal Sopocko.

In the chapel of the Sisters of the Family of Mary

In the vicinity of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy at Zytnia Street there is a property of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Family of Mary along with a chapel entered from Zytnia Street. St Faustina prayed in the chapel at least once. It was in 1932 when she came to Warsaw for her third probation before her perpetual vows. For a year and a half Jesus had been conveying the great mission of mercy to her. He had been telling her to have the image painted and the Feast of Mercy instituted in the whole Church. Sister Faustina, who had been carrying out duties of a cook in the convent so far, felt that she was incapable of fulfilling the tasks; therefore, she wanted to

shrink from them. In the "Diary" she related her stay in the chapel of the Sisters of the Family of Mary: "Once, when there was adoration at the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family, I went there in the evening with one of our sisters. As soon as I entered the chapel, the presence of God filled my soul. I prayed as I do at certain times, without saying a word. Suddenly, I saw the Lord, who said to me, 'Know that if you neglect the matter of the painting of the image and the whole work of mercy, you will have to answer for a multitude of souls on the day of judgment.' After these words of Our Lord, a certain fear filled my soul, and alarm took hold of me. Try as I would, I could not calm myself. These words kept resounding in my ears: So, I will not only have to answer for myself on the day of judgment, but also for the souls of others. These words cut deep into my heart. When I returned home, I went to the little Jesus and fell on my face before the Blessed Sacrament and said to the Lord, "I will do everything in my power, but I beg You to be always with me and to give me strength to do Your holy will; for You can do everything, while I can do nothing of myself.'" (Diary 154).

Sr M. Elizabeth Siepak O.L.M

Taken from the book "In the footsteps of St Faustina"

Peace and healing in the family

I was born into a Catholic family. However, as a teenager growing up, my day to day living lacked church attendance, prayer and other Catholic practices.

As I started working, I realised I needed to know more about my faith that my grandparents had given to me and so I enrolled myself into a 3-month fully residential 'ICPE School of Evangelisation' in India.

It was there that I learned about the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We prayed it daily at 3pm with an additional half hour of intercession. It was there I learnt to implore the mercy of God for the lives of His children, and also to see myself as needing His mercy more and more each day.

It was also during this time, that I was awakened every night at 3am! It was only about the third day when I realised that I was woken by the Holy Spirit to pray for the people around me, for world leaders, for the poor, for my own family, and even for myself.

I would even pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, walking around the roof deck in the middle of the night, praying one bead for each person that the Lord has brought to my mind. I never really needed to think who to pray for, the Lord always brings to mind a face, an event, a situation. Though I may not see the effects of my praying at that moment, slowly, over the years, I could see how tangibly it has changed my own family. There is now more love, acceptance, caring and loving. And I could still see changes on a daily basis. Our



relationships have become very close-knit and it is something I never imagined would happen in my family.

Through the years, I have also learned other forms of prayer, deepened my faith and through His compassionate love and mercy enabled me to be where I am today, a full-time lay missionary. Through those humble beginnings, God continues to grow me for His kingdom. Praise and glory to our Lord!

Therese C Perera
Wellington, New Zealand

Healing

For the last couple of years, I experienced pins and needles in my left hand. Sometimes it was numb or painful and most often stiff. The doctor whom I consulted said he would have to arrange for further tests to find out more.

When I arrived for my usual daily Divine Mercy prayers at the Wellington Hospital in early September 2011, I mentioned this to two others, and they offered to pray over me.

During the prayer, I felt some sensation going through my arm. It felt like an electric shock. Something was happening. Immediately my hand felt loose, no longer tight, and it feels fine till this day. God is good!

Ewa Zajkowski
Newtown, New Zealand

Financial providence

We had a situation where we needed around \$10,000 to pay for a Government expense and other related expenses. We kept praying to God, and was led to pray a prayer of surrender, not to pray with desperation but with complete trust and abandonment. It wasn't easy to pray without worry, but we put in our best effort. Through a series of events, we now have the monies. We are very grateful to God and his mercy.

Lee, New Zealand

Taken from www.centrefordivinemercy.org

Why is it not worth our while to sin?

There is actually only one reason to do so. It is because Jesus said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8), and I, for one, very much want to see Jesus. How can I have a pure heart? The answer to this question is that I should not sin because it is simply not worth it!

I have discovered three secrets, thanks to which I know that sin, with all its enticing colours, smells and tastes, prevents me from seeing God. These three secrets act as a magnifying glass.

Do you enjoy paddling in stinking filth?

The first of these secrets is aesthetic in nature. Sin simply stinks, and who except the Devil himself can enjoy that which stinks?

I like the commentary by that great Father of the Church, St Caesarius of Arles (AD 470-543) on the parable of the woman who found her lost drachma: “What woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And, when she found it, call together her friends and neighbours ‘Rejoice with me’ she would say, ‘I have found the drachma I lost’. In the same way, I tell you, there is much rejoicing

among the angels of God over one repentant sinner” (Luke 15:8-10).

St Caesarius writes: “The drachma indicates a coin, on which we recognise the face of Caesar. When the house has been swept, we can clearly see the face of Caesar on the coin. Similarly, when the soul has been thoroughly cleansed through fruitful penitence, and freed from the dirt of our faults, we can then clearly discern it in the face of our Creator.

In the same way as we sweep our house to make it pleasant for our friends to visit, with divine assistance, we cleanse our souls of all stain of sin, in order not to repulse the angels. Not only the angels, but the Lord Himself wishes to enter our roof, as He said: “Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal, side by side with him” (Revelation 3:20), and also “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father shall love him and we shall come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23).

O, how happy the soul which has desired to clean the dwelling which is his heart, from the stain of sin and to fill it with holy and

just deeds instead, so that the Lord has desired to make His home in him! Let us not refrain from doing that which we enjoin others to do in our stables. If it is right and necessary to clean our stables for the sake of the welfare of our horses, it would indeed be a terrible thing not to show the same concern for the welfare of our own souls, as we do for our animals. Stables which have not been cleaned thoroughly for a long time reach a point when the reek of the manure becomes so strong that not only people cannot abide the stink but it also becomes uninhabitable to animals. The very same is true of the neglectful person who allows his evil deeds to soil his soul, failing to daily cleanse it with good deeds, with the result that not only God would not wish to visit, but that he would also be unable to live with himself.

Defend the class victim

The second secret is a matter of the heart and of sympathy for



■ Confessional of Padre Pio, San Giovanni Rotundo, Italy

others. It involves a particular consequence of sin which is not generally perceptible – that of separation from God. St Paul, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, writes the following: “As for people who were once brought into the light and tasted the gift from heaven, and received a share of the Holy Spirit, and appreciated the good message of God and the powers of the world to come and yet in spite of this have fallen away, ... they have wilfully crucified the Son of God and openly mocked him” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

I find it difficult to imagine the pain of crucifixion and have never witnessed such torture. On the other hand, I have experienced the pain of being mocked. While I was at primary school there was a boy, who, I don't quite know why, became the object of a campaign of constant mockery by a group of older, bigger boys, who had been kept back to repeat the class. The bullying of Stasio was never-ending. The other pupils were too afraid to stand up for Stasio, and so, practically every break time would end with him in tears, powerless against the mockery

he was being subjected to. I would also sometimes cry, in secret, out of anger and frustration at my own inability to do anything about it. Despite the many years that have since passed, I still cannot forget the tears and pain which he had to endure. I regret that God had not then given me sufficient physical strength and moral courage to have been able to positively influence Stasio's situation. When I read in the Letter to the Hebrews that my sin does the same to the Lord Jesus, I would so wish to defend Him from the soulless terrorisation to which he was subjected by my sins, as I am now aware of His innocence and of His suffering, as well as of His boundless love for me.

A thorn in my memory

The third of these secrets was divulged to me by the Servant of God, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. This is the secret of the baseness of sin, whose favourite dwelling place, quite

regardless of our own will in the matter, lies within our memory. The sin which resides there is capable of a particularly acute degree of spite, even after a period of many years. In his “Prison Notebooks”, in the entry dated 20-30 April 1954, Cardinal Wyszyński wrote:

“Today I cannot find there to be any sin (which I have committed) the outcome of which would give me satisfaction. I would prefer none of these sins to have occurred at all. Sin is, therefore, an illusion which appears attractive only before it has taken place, but fails to bring us joy or satisfaction as soon as it is committed. There is no illusory joy which one would desire today – each has proved to be a lie. Were I to have foreseen the consequences of even the most ineffectual of my sins, within the context of my entire life, I would have turned against it and attained victory (over my sin).

“Were I to know how even a sin which has since been forgiven me in confession, has the capacity to affect me and be brought to life in my memory and adversely affect my imagination, how it continues to live in the memory... Were I to know the capacity of all my forgiven sins to mount a frontal attack against me, I would seem to be powerless. If one sin is capable of causing great damage, how much more do the sins committed over the whole of my lifetime... I would conclude that we should avoid sin, as it is capable of adding ammunition to the direct frontal attack being launched against us (by the Evil One)”.

As a penitent, and as a priest with over thirty years' experience as a confessor, I fully understand what Cardinal Wyszyński is referring to.

Be generous in sharing my mercy

It is fortunate that we have an Almighty God who has loved us madly, crazily unto death. A God who, to this day, remains faithful to the words: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Each time I approach the sacrament of reconciliation, I experience His faithfulness. What joy!

Each time I absolve a penitent, so each time I experience what has been wonderfully described by a Jesuit father, Professor Piotr Lenartowicz. Questioned as to the reasons why he is most grateful for his priesthood, he answered: "I am not filled with gratitude that I have known the existence of God, as priesthood is not necessary to do so. Neither am I filled with joy that, thanks to the workings of Divine Grace, I can joyfully share the faith of the Universal Church. I am also not particularly grateful for having participated in the Spiritual exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, as I could have done so as a Jesuit brother. I am not even grateful that I can tell people about God, as I could do this, not being a priest. I celebrate Holy Mass with a sense that it is a mystery that surpasses my understanding. I can guess at some wonderful mysteries, but I perceive them as if through a mist. However, I am grateful for the confessional. Sitting there, I feel that I am present at the making of newly-minted coins and feel that God is telling me: "Be generous with my mercy!" This I would be unable to do, had I not received my priestly ordination."

So I too, as a priest, also joyfully share God's mercy.

Fr Ryszard Andrzejewski CSMA

Goodness and holiness

The attitude and philosophy of life that it is unnecessary to battle to attain holiness is increasingly current and being voiced even with regard to the person of Jesus Christ Himself. In this view, it is enough to be a good person. How should we understand the "goodness" being referred to, and who decides what defines it?

Is there a difference between goodness and holiness?

There most certainly is a big difference, a difference of quality. Goodness is accessible to all in rather natural ways whereas holiness is only for those who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and allow Him to change their life.

What is goodness?

True goodness enriches everybody around: the one who does good as well as the one who experiences it.

Most people only see that which enriches them as good. Why is it that few understand goodness in the terms you have just outlined?



As you said, lots of people think that good is only what serves them without considering others around. One cannot achieve goodness and happiness at the cost of other people. Sometimes we are so focused on our own good that we tend to forget about others' needs or sufferings. This is not genuine good.

I repeat: true goodness enriches everybody. We can compare it to the sun, energy and warmth of which brings joy to all living in its light.

And what is holiness?

It is the life of God, a close relationship with God we all are invited to. It is mutual friendship: our participation in God's life and God's participation in our life. If we say yes to this friendship, we allow God to fill us with His supernatural life and help, gifts and graces. Each single day or activity of our life becomes holy because we let God sanctify it within us and around us.

When does a person become filled with this holiness?

At baptism. He or she is then immersed in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit and therefore obtains a new kind of life, the life of the Holy Trinity.

Is this why baptism is referred to as 'birth'?

Precisely. It is in baptism that the person being baptised becomes a child of God and participates in the life of God.

So why did God not incorporate holiness into the work of creation?

God wishes people to become His children by their own volition. He wants people to love Him and search for Him on their own free will.

God does not want to have slaves but children.

Do we, as people, know how to love?

We know how to love in a human way and this brings us natural happiness. But divine love gives us a share in the divine happiness, a million times greater than that which we ourselves are capable of attaining.

Is heaven for the good, or for the holy?

With regard to heaven we need to see people as divided into two groups. One group came to know Jesus while they lived on earth, and were granted the grace of faith in Him. They were trying to deepen their friendship with God during their earthly life (meaning: they became more and more mature to be filled with God's life and graces). Billions of people have not met and will not meet Him, but, if they are good, this will be evidenced through their corporal works of mercy, which God will reward. Such people may also reach heaven.

Does this mean that a person who does not know Jesus can obtain the grace of holiness and with it, the grace of salvation?

That is true. A person who knows Jesus needs to respond to His grace, and therefore, for him or her, goodness is not sufficient because they thirst for holiness: God's life. Christians should bear witness to his holiness by their life. They cannot do it on their own but by the process of conversion, which occurs through God's grace.

People who do not know Jesus but seek for God, whatever they call

Him: truth, peace, love, good, will also obtain salvation. God knows our cultural and moral background and human limitations. But these are not obstacles for Him to save us. What counts for God most is our personal effort to search for Him.

Salvation is for everyone. Only one's conscious and voluntary decision to reject salvation closes heaven.

Is it equally important to differentiate between "goodness" and "holiness" in the life of the Church?

It is very important. Nobody doubts that the Church is good and it is not necessary to have faith in order to hold such a belief. Some of its members are not good, but, on the whole, the Church is one of the best institutions on earth. When reciting the Creed, we do not say "I believe in the Good Catholic Church" but in "the Holy Catholic Church". The Church on earth is a holy environment and it is in this environment that the saints live and attain maturity. Without it, holiness on this earth is impossible. That is how Jesus ordained it.

What 'vessels' does the Church use in order to 'hold' and 'preserve' holiness?

It uses the sacraments – they are holy and their purpose is to sanctify. Sacraments are visible signs of invisible and effective graces. If we make use of the sacraments regularly: confession, Holy Mass, Holy Communion (and others), God, through them, pours His graces on us and fills us with His life as well.

Fr **Edward Staniek** was speaking to Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

Sin is an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law. It is an offense against God. It rises up against God in disobedience, contrary to the obedience of Christ. Sin is an act contrary to reason. It wounds man's nature and injures human solidarity. The root of all sins lies in man's heart.

Sin creates a proclivity to sin; it engenders vice by repetition of the same acts. This results in perverse inclinations which cloud conscience and corrupt the concrete judgment of good and evil. Thus sin tends to reproduce itself and reinforce itself, but it cannot destroy the moral sense at its root. Capital sins are: pride, avarice, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth or acedia (CCC,1849-1876).

“Though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

I will give you all this power and their splendour, for it has been handed over to me, for me to give it to anyone I choose. Do homage, then, to me, and it shall all be yours.” (Luke 4:6-7). Thus says the Evil One, and he makes use of human greed for his own ends. Greed/avarice is caused by the evil spirits of greed and of gain by dishonest means. Greed would not, of itself, be such a serious moral lapse, but, seeing as it is built upon vanity and is linked to many other sins it is easy to see how it has become the root of all evil (cf. 1 Timothy 6:10).



■ Virgin and angels imploring Christ not to punish Lust, Avarice, and Pride by Scarsellino, 2nd half of the 16th century

What is avarice?

Uncontrolled desire and ingratitude

Avarice is evil because it is not so much a desire to possess something, but because it is the constant desire to have more. It is the excessive and insatiable desire to possess, the endless accumulation of desire.

A greedy person, even if he/she is very wealthy, thinks that they need something more. They want to always have the latest thing: they buy expensive clothes which they wear for one season or even one occasion, paying large sums for a trendy label.

They look for ways to earn or acquire more, continually comparing themselves to others, wishing to show that they are better off than them.

Such people cannot be thankful, cannot value or enjoy what they have.

They are likely to be dissatisfied with small presents given with genuine goodwill, considering them worthless. They are incapable of feeling gratitude, either to God or to other people.

They are generally extravagant and irresponsible, wasting money on expensive designer items, buying them in order to show-off. People with a lot of money spend it in a quite ridiculous and absurd manner, although not only the rich are acquisitive.

A person can have very little and be the same. This is because avarice is not measured by what a person actually possesses, but by how much they wish to possess. There are many people earning low incomes who take out loans in order to waste money on travel or expensive gadgets or other ways of living beyond their means, spending way beyond what they earn or can actually afford. They frequently get deeply into debt (which they are

totally incapable of paying off and so risk losing everything) in order to keep up appearances before their friends or acquaintances.

Less frequently, some people are miserly and do not want to spend money, loving money for its own sake, simply to watch it accumulate. This is the other face of avarice.

Greed corrupts society

Avarice destroys healthy relations within family, at school and work as well, causing improper unjust relationships within the whole society.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). Greed is sometimes the reason why parents want their children to live out their own unfulfilled ambitions and dreams, planning their lives around these, sometimes to the extent that they will attempt to dissuade them from fulfilling their own vocation, as they want their children to be rich and famous. Other parents, who have “made their fortune” give their children expensive items, which their children fail to value and grow up egocentric. Greed also leads people to judge and value others (and often themselves as well) according to what they own rather than who they are. Valuing the material over the spiritual, they judge and relate to others solely on the basis of their bank balance.

Vanity and avarice come together. Some social groups, such as teenagers, or even work colleagues who ridicule friends wearing cheap or unfashionable clothes, are ruled by vanity and desire. Because of their own vanity

and desire to avoid ridicule, avarice can also be linked with immorality, for instance leading teenagers to tout for sex in shopping malls, students to find themselves ‘patrons’ or women to enter into a life of prostitution.

Greed impels people to many dishonest ways of making money and increasing their profits. Money often becomes tainted because the greedy person strives for gain at any price. This is why people steal, cheat, blackmail, bribe, do dishonest deals and sometimes even kill. Some even turn directly to evil spirits to make their business prosper. People also turn indirectly to demons for help, such as dishonest journalists who blacken peoples’ names for the sake of a “good story”, dishonest lawyers who advance their careers and increase their earnings by defending the guilty or by bribing witnesses. The soldiers bribed by the elders and chief priests to say that the body of Jesus was stolen away in the night – are a prime example (Matthew 28:11-15).

Contrary to the Commandments

“There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, ‘What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops’. Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time’. But God said to him, ‘Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul;

and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?’ So it is when someone stores up treasure for himself instead of becoming rich in the sight of God” (Luke 12:16-21). Greed or avarice is based on an inability to share (also not supporting the Church, when you have the means to do so), wishing to keep more for oneself.

Such excessive love for material goods turns them into false gods, according them the same, or even a higher priority in our lives than God Himself. This in turn, harms our spiritual lives, for instance, working on Sundays and not having the time to attend Holy Mass or putting work first and grudging the time for prayer. Such avarice often distances us from God, causing us to break the first and third commandments.

Divine remedy

Our Lord tells us directly: “Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for life does not consist in possessions, even when someone has more than he needs” (Luke 12:15).

There are three very simple remedies against avarice:

1. Thankfulness and gratitude to God, but also to others for what we have;
2. Moderation, that is, being thrifty on the one hand, and sensibly generous on the other;
3. Most importantly, putting God first in our lives, because then, we can make use of earthly things and strive prudently to obtain them, while remembering to “store up treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20).

Sister **Anna M Novorol** OV, Poland

Queen of Heaven

From the earliest ages of the Catholic Church, a Christian people, whether in time of triumph or more especially in time of crisis, has addressed prayers of petition and hymns of praise and veneration to the Queen of Heaven.

Never has that hope wavered which they placed in the Mother of the Divine King, Jesus Christ; nor has that faith ever failed by which we are taught that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, reigns with a mother's solicitude over the entire world, just as she is crowned in heavenly blessedness with the glory of a Queen.

From early times Christians have believed, and not without reason, that she of whom was born the Son of the Most High received privileges of grace above all other beings created by God. He "will reign in the house of Jacob forever,"[5], "the Prince of Peace,"[6], the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"[7]. And when Christians reflected upon the intimate connection that exists between a mother and a son, they readily acknowledged the supreme royal dignity of the Mother of God.

Hence it is not surprising that the early writers of the Church called Mary "the Mother of the King" and "the Mother of the Lord," basing their stand on the words of St Gabriel the Archangel, who foretold that the Son of Mary would reign forever[8], and on the words of Elizabeth who greeted her with reverence and called her "the Mother of my Lord"[9]. Thereby they clearly signified that she derived a certain eminence and exalted station from the royal dignity of her Son. So it is that St Ephrem, burning with poetic

inspiration, represents her as speaking in this way: "Let Heaven sustain me in its embrace, because I am honoured above it. For heaven was not Thy mother, but Thou hast made it Thy throne. How much more honourable and venerable than the throne of a king is his mother"[10]. In another place he thus prays to her: "Majestic and Heavenly Maid, Lady, Queen, protect and keep me under your wing lest Satan the sower of destruction glory over me, lest my wicked foe be victorious against me"[11]. She is called by St John Damascene: "Queen, ruler, and lady"[23], and also "the Queen of every creature"[24]. Another ancient writer of the Eastern Church calls her "favoured Queen," "the perpetual Queen beside the King, her Son," whose "snow-white brow is crowned with a golden diadem"[25]. As we have already mentioned, Venerable Brothers, according to ancient tradition and the sacred liturgy the main principle on which the royal dignity of Mary rests is without doubt her Divine Motherhood. But the Blessed Virgin Mary should be called Queen, not only because of her Divine Motherhood, but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of our eternal salvation. "What more joyful, what sweeter thought can we have"--as Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI wrote --"than that Christ is our King not only by natural

right, but also by an acquired right: that which He won by the redemption? Would that all men, now forgetful of how much we cost Our Saviour, might recall to mind the words, 'You were redeemed, not with gold or silver which perishes, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb spotless and undefiled'[43]. We belong not to ourselves now, since Christ has bought us 'at a great price.'[44, 45]

Now, in the accomplishing of this work of redemption, the Blessed Virgin Mary was most closely associated with Christ; and so it is fitting to sing in the sacred liturgy: "Near the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ there stood, sorrowful, the Blessed Mary, Queen of Heaven and Queen of the World"[46]. Hence, as the devout disciple of St Anselm (Eadmer, ed.) wrote in the Middle Ages: "just as... God, by making all through His power, is Father and Lord of all, so the blessed Mary, by repairing all through her merits, is Mother and Queen of all; for God is the Lord of all things, because by His command He establishes each of them in its own nature, and Mary is the Queen of all things, because she restores each to its original dignity through the grace which she merited"[47]. From these considerations, the proof develops on these lines: if Mary, in taking an active part in the work of salvation, was, by God's design, associated with Jesus



■ Coronation of the Virgin by Raphael, 1502-1504

Christ, the source of salvation itself, in a manner comparable to that in which Eve was associated with Adam, the source of death, so that it may be stated that the work of our salvation was accomplished by a kind of ‘recapitulation’[49] in which a virgin was instrumental in the salvation of the human race, just as a virgin had been closely associated with its death. If, moreover, it can likewise be stated that this glorious Lady had been chosen as Mother of Christ “in order that

she might become a partner in the redemption of the human race”[50] and if, in truth, “it was she who, free of the stain of actual and original sin, and ever most closely bound to her Son, on Golgotha offered that Son to the Eternal Father together with the complete sacrifice of her maternal rights and maternal love, like a new Eve, for all the sons of Adam, stained as they were by his lamentable fall”[51]; then it may be legitimately concluded that as Christ, the new Adam, must

be called a King not merely because He is Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer, so, analogously, the Most Blessed Virgin is queen not only because she is Mother of God, but also because, as the new Eve, she was associated with the new Adam.

Certainly, in the full and strict meaning of the term, only Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is King; but Mary, too, as Mother of the divine Christ, as His associate in the redemption, in his struggle with His enemies and His final victory over them, has a share, though in a limited and analogous way, in His royal dignity. For from her union with Christ she attains a radiant eminence transcending that of any other creature; from her union with Christ she receives the royal right to dispose of the treasures of the Divine Redeemer’s Kingdom; from her union with Christ finally is derived the inexhaustible efficacy of her maternal intercession before the Son and His Father. Hence it cannot be doubted that Mary most Holy is far above all other creatures in dignity, and after her Son possesses primacy over all. “You have surpassed every creature,” sings St Sophronius. “What can be more sublime than your joy, O Virgin Mother? What more noble than this grace, which you alone have received from God?”[52] To this St Germanus adds: “Your honour and dignity surpass the whole of creation; your greatness places you above the angels”[53]; and St John Damascene goes so far as to say: “Limitless is the difference between God’s servants and His Mother”[54].

Taken from the Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on proclaiming the Queenship Of Mary, 11th October 1954. Numbers in brackets refer to clauses in the Encyclical.

Misericordias Domini, in aeternum cantabo

I will sing for ever of the Mercy of the Lord.

I wrote the following hymn in the Jubilee Year 2000 when I became a parish priest and we started a weekly Divine Mercy Prayer group. I was mindful that there was no specific hymn to the Divine Mercy and I wanted to recall the significance of the image and its meaning and also awaken the attitude of trust. Verses 4 and 5 were only recently written in light of the Jubilee Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis and incorporate the works of Mercy.

I am happy to make it available for use for the Glory and Honour of Divine Mercy and just ask for a prayer for myself and my parish when it is being used. The words go to the familiar tune of "God of Mercy and Compassion".

*See our Saviour coming to us
robed in white as the High Priest.
See His hand raised up to bless us
granting mercy on His feast*

*Jesus Lord we ask for Mercy let us
not implore in vain, all our sins we now
detest them never will we sin again.*

*Precious Blood and cleansing wa-
ter, Gushing from the Saviour's side
Cleanse and sanctify the sinful In
this wondrous Mercy – tide.*

*Let us trust in Christ completely,
for this day he will cleanse anew. All
the faithful who will always pray Je-
sus I trust in You.*

*In our moments of anxiety in
our sickness and in despair, when*

*the cross and dark clouds shadow us,
He will keep us in His care.*

*May we help the sick and home-
less, Quench the thirsty - bury the
dead, clothe the naked, offer shelter,
give the hungry –the'r daily bread.*

*Pray for us O Saint Faustina Saint
of trust and of Charity. Let us follow
your example doing works of Mercy.*

During the Divine Mercy celebrations I have used other familiar hymns such as "Vaster far than any ocean" which reminds us of the limitless depths of Divine Mercy. St Faustina writes "O my Jesus, Your goodness surpasses all understanding, and no one will exhaust Your mercy. Damnation is for the soul who wants to be damned; but for the one who desires salvation, there is the inexhaustible ocean of the Lord's mercy to draw from." (Diary, 631)

Also in the parish we use the Taize chant "Misericordia Domini in aeternum Cantabo", and also the Polish arrangement during the veneration of the Image and of the relic if available. I have used the hymn "What so-ever you do to the least of my brothers that you do unto me". This hymn reminds us of the importance of the deeds of Mercy which Our Lord demands from us.

Let each one of us add to the praises of Divine Mercy by our Trust and fulfilling the spiritual and corporal

works of mercy so that "others in seeing your good works may give the Glory to Our Father in heaven".

First Diocesan Shrine of Divine Mercy established in the UK at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Morriston, Swansea. Each Friday at 3pm the Hour of Mercy is observed, petitions and requests for prayers can be sent to Fr Jason Jones, Shrine Rector corjesutreforys@yahoo.com Also names of the dying to be included in the parish SOS Divine Mercy Chaplet Association can be submitted by email.

There are also devotions each third Friday of the month - Holy Hour 6:30pm followed at 7:30pm with Holy Mass and veneration of the first class relic of St Faustina and 8:00pm Divine Mercy study group. Church and Shrine open each day for private prayer. Devotional celebrations at the shrine through the year also include: Feb 15th the Feast of Blessed Sopocho, Feb 22nd Anniversary of the Image Public Novena for Feast of Divine Mercy, Sunday of Divine Mercy celebration, Aug 24th Birthday of St Faustina, Oct 5th Feast of St Faustina.

Fr **Jason Jones**

Diocesan Shrine of Divine Mercy
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Contemplation and reflections by Fr **Karol Dąbrowski** CSMA

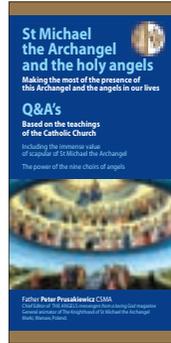
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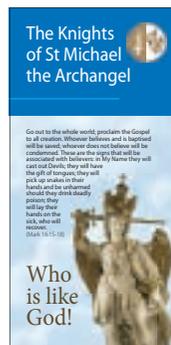
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St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church,
12 Jarratt Street, Hull,
East Yorkshire, HU1 3HB
Contact: Fr Paul Dowling
Phone: +44(0)1482-329-100
Email: stcharleshull@
stcharleshull.karoo.co.uk

7th April 2018**6.00pm Holy Mass****Talk: Divine Mercy**

St Austin & English Martyrs Church
Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield
West Yorkshire, WF1 3QN
Contact: Mgr David Cannon Smith
Phone: +44(0)1924-372-08

Divine Mercy Sunday 8th April 2018**9:00am Sunday Parish Mass**

Holy Family Parish,

Hall Lane, Cronton, Widnes WA8 5DP
Contact: Fr Michael McCormack
Phone: +44 (0)1514-242-129
Email: stleo@rcaolp.co.uk

Divine Mercy Sunday 8th April 2018**10:30am Sunday Parish Mass****and 2.00pm Divine Mercy service****with Prayers and Devotions****3:00pm Divine Mercy Chaplet****3:30pm Holy Mass****Talks: Divine Mercy****and St Michael the Archangel**

St Leo's RC Church
Lickers Lane, Wiston
Liverpool, L35 9PN

Contact: Fr Michael McCormack
Phone: +44(0)1514-242-129
Email: stleo@rcaolp.co.uk

21st – 23rd September 2018**Talks: Holy Angels and Divine Mercy
St Michael of All Angels**

Belmont Abbey

Ruckhall Lane, Hereford HR2 9RZ
Contact: Geraldine Downing
Phone: +44 (0)1978-357-367
Email: dgdown@dgdown.plus.com

9th – 11th November 2018**Holy Angels and Knighthood
of St Michael with Eucharistic
Healing Hour**

Sandymount House of Prayer

16 Burbo Bank Road

Liverpool, L23 6TH

Contact: Stuart

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

Email: sandymount@mountford.org.uk

www.sandymountcrosby.co.uk

SCOTLAND 2018**5th National Divine****Mercy Conference****20th October 2018****Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm**

St Augustine's Church,

12 Dundyvan Road, Langloan,

Coatbridge, ML5 1DQ

Contact: Helen Border

Email: Helen.Border@glasgow.ac.uk

Theme of conference: TBC

SCOTLAND 2019**6th National Divine****Mercy Conference****26th October 2019****Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm**

St Augustine's Church,

12 Dundyvan Road, Langloan,

Coatbridge, ML5 1DQ

Contact: Helen Border

Email: Helen.Border@glasgow.ac.uk

Theme of conference: TBC

IRELAND 2018**6th September 2018****7:30pm Holy Mass****Talk: The Knighthood****of Michael the Archangel**

Church of Immaculate Conception

Convent Hill, Mitchelstown,

Co. Cork

Contact: Fr Michael Fitzgerald

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

Email: michaelstownparishoffice@
eircom.net**7th September 2018****7:00 pm Holy Mass****Talks: St Michael the Archangel
and St Faustina**

Pallottine Retreat Centre,

Kickham Street (Opposite Topaz),

Thurles, Co. Tipperary

Contact: Fr George and Br Stephen

Email: pallthurles@gmail.com

8th September 2018**5:00 pm Teaching on St Michael****and The Knighthood including****private devotion and prayers****7:30 pm Holy Mass and homily fol-****lowed by Holy Hour**

St Eunan's Cathedral

Sentry Hill, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Contact: Fr Eamonn Kelly

Email: eamonnkellys@eircom.net

9th September 2018**Noon: Holy Hour followed by****Talk: St Michael the Archangel**

St Cloumba's Church,

Knocknabollan, Termon,

Co. Donegal, F92 X4D6

Contact: Fr Pat McHugh PP

Phone: +353-74-913-9016

email: frpatmchugh@ircom.net

www.gartantermonparish.ie

9th September 2018**5:00pm Holy Mass****Talk: St Michael the Archangel**

Ards Friary, Creeslough,

County Donegal, F92 P2E1

Contact: Frances Ford

Email: francesjford@yahoo.ie

11th September 2018

Co. Sligo

12th September 2018

Derry, Northern Ireland

13th September 2018**Talks: St Faustina and St Michael****7:30pm Holy Mass**

St Patrick's Chapel

6 Tullinval Road, Cullyhanna, Newry,

Co. Down, BT35 0PZ

Contact: Fr Gerard Tremer

Phone: +44(0)28-3086-1235

14th September 2018
8:00pm Holy Mass
Talks: Knighthood of St Michael
Corpus Christi Prayer Group
Killadoon Louisburgh,
Westport. Co. Mayo.
Contact: Jim Brown
Phone: +353-87-258-2154

USA 2018

24th May 2018
5:45pm Holy Mass
Our Lady of the Greenwood Queen
of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church
335 South Meridian
St. Greenwood,
Indianapolis, IN 46143
Followed by talk on St Michael
and the holy angels in Madonna Hall
Contact: Kathy Denny
Email: mariancntr@aol.com

25th May 2018
7:30am Holy Mass
Holy Rosary Parish
520 Stevens Street,
Indianapolis, IN 46203
Followed by talk on St Michael
and the holy angels
Pastor: Fr Ryan McCarthy
Contact: Kathy Denny
Email: mariancntr@aol.com

26th – 27th May 2018
Divine Mercy
The Holy Cross Catholic Church
2300 Main Street
Batavia, Illinois 60510 – 7625
Contact: Fr James Parker
Phone: +1-630-879-4750
Email: frparker@holycross-batavia.org

1st – 3rd June 2018
**Walking in the Spirit of Mercy
and the Holy Angels retreat**
St Clare's Retreat Centre,
2381 Laurel Glen Road, 95073
Soquel, California
Phone: +1-831-423-8093
Email: stclaresretreatcenter@
gmail.com
www.stclaresretreatcenter.com



■ Mosaic of Padre Pio, San Giovanni Rotundo, Italy

Photo: Jacek Kawa

SAINTS

Advice of Padre Pio

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of Padre Pio of Pietrelcina receiving the stigmata, as well as the 50th anniversary of his death.

Always humble yourself lovingly before God and man, because God speaks to those who are truly humble of heart, and enriches them with His gifts.

Whoever does not meditate, is like someone who never looks in the mirror before going out, doesn't bother to see if he's tidy, and may go out dirty without knowing it. The person who meditates and turns his mind to God, who is the mirror of his soul, seeks to know his faults, tries to correct them, moderates his impulses, and puts his conscience in order.

You complain because the same trials are constantly returning. But look here, what have you to fear? Are you afraid of the divine craftsman who wants to perfect His masterpiece in this way? Would you like to come from the hands of such a magnificent Artist as a mere sketch and no more?

In order to attract us, the Lord grants us many graces that we believe can easily obtain Heaven for us. We do not know, however, that in order to grow, we need hard bread: the cross, humiliation, trials and denials.

Africa

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PRAYER OF POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR PRIESTS

Our Father, raise up among Christians abundant and holy vocation to the priesthood who keep the faith alive and guard the blessed memory of your son Jesus through the preaching of his Word and the administration of the Sacraments, with which you continually renew your faithful.

Grant us holy ministers of your altar, who are careful and fervent guardians of the Eucharist of the Sacrament of the supreme gift of Christ for the redemption of the world.

Call ministers of your mercy, who, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, spread the joy of your forgiveness.

Grant, O Father, that the Church may welcome with joy the numerous inspirations of the Spirit of your Son and, docile to His teachings, may she care for vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life.

Sustain the bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated men and women, and all the baptised in Christ, all to the service of the Gospel.

This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Queen of the Apostles, pray for us.

Chaplet of St Michael

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

A. *Amen*

Say the following prayer on the medal:

O God, come to my assistance.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

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

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

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

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

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

9. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels, may the Lord grant us to be



protected by them in this mortal life and conducted hereafter to eternal glory. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys)

Recite on the next four beads:

1 Our Father in honour of St Michael

1 Our Father in honour of St Gabriel

1 Our Father in honour of St Raphael

1 Our Father in honour of our Guardian Angel

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

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

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