



RAYS OF MERCIFUL LOVE

Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy Newsletter

Winter 2011

www.thedivinemercy.org

‘Placed on my heart’

By Bryan Thatcher, MD

From a young age, my father used to tell me about the holiness of Padre Pio. He also would tell me how my uncle had a tremendous conversion during World War II after attending one of Padre Pio’s Masses. I remember as a young doctor reading with fascination about how Padre Pio also helped build a hospital for the needy in his area. It fascinated me how this holy priest who was so committed to saving souls also took time to do the corporal works of mercy by trying to address the medical needs of the local people. His focus was on ministering to the whole person, which includes the physical needs.

Being a medical doctor and one who has visited and seen the poor in many countries around the world, I have always had the desire to help assist in the building of a clinic for the poor. But where would it be, and how could I accomplish such a task?

In July, I visited the Divine Mercy Hills Shrine on the island of Mindanao, Philippines. I met with the Very Rev. Father General Andrzej Pakula, MIC, and Vice General Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC. Both were there on official Congregation business. The Marians have a house of formation on Mindanao with seven novices, and are also caretakers of the Shrine. We walked the grounds and saw an ideal spot for a clinic about one quarter of a mile from the Shrine.

We met with Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ, DD, of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental, Mindanao, Philippines. He went with us to a local hospital and suggested another one for us to visit. He was very supportive and excited about the possibility of the clinic being built near the beautiful Divine Mercy Hills Shrine and Church (which is currently under



COURTESY OF BRYAN THATCHER, MD

Here is one of the girls at the orphanage that takes care of abandoned street girls.

“I also visited an orphanage for abandoned street girls, ages 2 to 5 years old, and I saw ... a crib and playpen that our daughter Clare had outgrown ... and it was being used in the orphanage! It was so heartwarming to actually see something I donated personally being put to good use halfway around the world!”

— Bryan Thatcher, MD

construction). Current plans are to build a small medical and dental clinic with a conference room for basic teaching of nutrition, basic hygiene, and natural family planning.

We also visited several hospitals where our previously sent medical supplies were being used. The people were so appreciative of the sorely needed

supplies that we had shipped to them.

I also visited an orphanage for abandoned street girls, ages 2 to 5 years old, and I saw something I had never seen — something that my wife and I had personally shipped was being used. We had loaded a crib and playpen that our daughter Clare had outgrown on the

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“Mercy is Love that seeks to lessen the misery of others”

My painting of the rays

by Carolyn Seal

The inspiration to paint St. Faustina's vision in *Diary* entry 344 had been on my heart since 2003. In the vision, she saw the Blood of Christ passing from the Eucharist through the hands of her confessor and then out to an enormous crowd of people, and then back again to the Host.

I did not complete the "Painting of the Rays," as I called it, until the year of the priest from 2009-2010. It took eight and a half years to get to the point of actually putting this picture on paper and another seven months to paint it.

In 2003, I was in Eucharistic Adoration at my parish, and I felt that I was basking in the warmth of His rays of love and mercy. I thought about how this wonderful Sacrament really brought us the blood of Christ through our priests. I asked the Lord if I could draw His rays coming from the Eucharist through His priest and His Church to us. So, I drew the Monstrance with a pattern of circles containing little stick people and churches. I smiled at my little sketch and put it away.

Many times through the next several years, thoughts of my drawing came back to me. I wondered if it could be something better than a crude pencil sketch. On June 16, 2009, I went to my spiritual director. I told her of my sketch and that I wanted to do more with it. She immediately said that St. Faustina had recorded this vision of my idea in her *Diary*. I hurried home and found it easily — paragraph 344:

One evening as I entered my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus exposed in the monstrance under the open sky, as it seemed. At the feet of Jesus I saw my confessor, and behind him a great number of the highest ranking ecclesiastics, clothed in vestments the like of which I had never seen except in this vision; and behind them, groups of religious from various orders; and further still I saw enormous crowds of people, which extended far beyond my vision. I saw the two rays coming out from the Host, as in the image, closely united but not intermingled; and they passed through the hands of my confessor, and then through the hands of the clergy and from their hands to the people, and then they returned to the Host ... and at that moment I saw my self once again in my cell which I had just entered.

After reading St. Faustina's vision, I realized that my little sketch was God's way of asking me to paint St. Faustina's vision. Immediately, I began to see how to draw this vision, and over the next few weeks, I put it on an old piece of tracing



COURTESY OF CAROLYN SEAL

In 2003, Carolyn Seal first drew the Monstrance with a pattern of circles containing little stick people and churches. It took her more than nine years to complete the "Painting of the Rays."

paper — paper that was more than 40 years old from art class in high school. I had not drawn anything since then. I began to sketch the people. I was amazed that some of the little people I wanted to put in my painting seemed to fall off my pencil, almost sketching themselves. I drew them not using a picture or pattern. They all seemed like many different little people, each with their own different personalities. It went so well I began to share it with friends.

I then worked on part of the rays in pencil trying to make them look like a fountain, recalling the words Jesus taught St. Faustina — "blood ... that gushed forth as a fountain of mercy for us."

I enlarged the drawing on my copy machine and transferred the drawing to the canvas and began to paint in July 2009. I used an old canvas parallel to the new canvas, using it to practice and experiment. The sky was blue, of course, and the earth I made a red clay color, maybe because my late husband loved bulldozers. "Dozing" down ugly clay hills to make beautiful fields was always his dream and vision. The field is my place that I dream to be — the heavenly place of peace, joy, and love with God.

I began taking pictures of sunsets to help me work on the rays, the sky, and the cloud formations. When I found a cloud formation with

the light exactly as I needed it, I snapped a photo and began to paint.

I can mix colors pretty well, and I love the way oils can be blended right on the canvas and then changed or added to, even days later. But the long drying time of oils lengthened the project. Yet that seemed to be giving me time to be led to the right images and ideas as I researched, waiting for what to do next. I understood that I surely didn't know what I was doing and didn't know anything about different mediums. But things "fell into place." My friend told me about Pearl-Ex, which when mixed with any medium will be like glitter. I happened on a video of a painter who was showing how to paint sun rays using a product called Liquin. When it was time for the rays, these two mediums worked together to make the rays glow off the canvas.

Painting the little people that I had so enjoyed sketching took a long time, and it grew tedious. I even wished I had never started this project. The oil fumes made me sick a few of times, so I would wear a respirator when I painted. I knew by that point that it was not my project, but the Lord's. So I plugged on. Finally, they were finished! The little people were just something; each with their own personalities,

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CENACLES' UPDATE

ST. PAUL, MINN.

JoAnn Flores wrote and told us:



Members of the Divine Mercy cenacle at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Minn.

This is a glimpse into our Divine Mercy cenacle at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Minn. Just ask any member of our cenacle, and each will tell you of the graces and extraordinary help they have received from God. This particular group originated four years ago. At one point, the cenacle had as few as two members, but now we currently have 12 members. Each member has a story to share and many of are truly miraculous.

For example, Elizabeth Kaiser, facilitator for the group, has personally witnessed the peaceful passing of souls after The Divine Mercy Chaplet was sung to them. Elizabeth, a warm, soft-spoken woman, with a great sense of humor, started the cenacle four years ago with help from a co-facilitator, Maria Igbo, who passed away recently. She will tell you, though, that it is the talents and help of the entire cenacle that make it a success.

Love for God and each other are evident as the members come together each week. Each person is greeted with a hug and words of welcome as they enter the meeting room. Karen Brandl is most responsible for this as she has become the official “greeter.” After settling in, we begin with prayers of thanksgiving. Wonderful things are softly spoken such as “Thank You, Lord, I heard Your answer clearly.” “Thank You for sending a buyer for my brother’s house.” Even, “God, thanks for answering my prayer, it may not be what I wanted, but Your will be done.”

As the group’s involvement in the Divine Mercy Cenacle has become known to family and friends, requests for prayers have become more numerous, and many blessings have been received.

I received a request from a family friend to say prayers for her husband who was diagnosed with dementia and a tumor in his throat. A best-case scenario would have been for him to receive comfort due to the suffering he was enduring. After chemotherapy treatments, he was again checked, and the tumor was gone. He is also now walking with very little help and is feeding himself — very big strides for someone who was virtually bedridden and on a feeding tube. On another occasion, prayers were requested for a newborn who was displaying early

signs of physical distress. Within hours of saying the chaplet, the child was markedly improved.

Just recently our cenacle was able to send 100 Divine Mercy prayercards into the local prison through the prison chaplain.

Angela Schmall, Linda Ficcadenti, Mary Ann Hinderman, Laura Nelson, Kimberly Wetteland, Soni Jerspath, Rita Adom, and Mary Hobbs are integral parts of the cenacle. Insightful thoughts and understanding come from these members, and their contributions are immeasurable. All told, every person brings her own unique talents, and God works wonderfully through each one.

ST. LOUIS, Mo.

Elizabeth Kalb wrote and told us:

Our group has been meeting and following the cenacle format for several years. We did the induction ceremony a few years ago, and since then members have split off and formed new groups.

Since the splitting we have persevered and added a few new members so we decided to start over with *Cenacle Formation Manual No. 1*. We meet on the first and third Mondays of the month, and enjoy the spirit-filled discussions. We also purchased EWTN Cenacle Series One and two. Occasionally, we watch one of the DVD shows if we are following a particular theme. We have found this to be an excellent teaching and learning resource.

Members are involved in several ministries, including prison visitation, pro-life causes, family support, nursing home visitation, and more. One of our members has been a suffering soul member, so please keep Neosho in your prayers.

Thank you for coordinating all of the cenacles, and providing such rich resources and supplies for us. We love being Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy! May God bless you abundantly!



Members of the Divine Mercy cenacle in St. Louis, Mo.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Ralph Sullivan wrote and told us:

We now have seven active cenacles of The Divine Mercy at St. Matthew Catholic Church. We followed your recommendation to use the EWTN Series One and its Companion Guide in a 13-week introductory phase before going on to the *Cenacle Formation Manual No. 1*. Five of the Cenacles are in the introductory phase and two are in what we call phase

Painting

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so many different people making up the world.

Then it was time for the rays. I finished my sketch of the rays on clear paper and placed it on the canvas that now contained the earth, the sky, and the people. I was amazed. The rays fell into place. Most of them went right through the hands of the people just as St. Faustina described in her vision. I could never, ever, have placed these little people in the right places for the rays to fall as they did without God's direction. The rays made the fountain from the confessor, to the clergy, to the religious, to the first row of the little people, and then out and around to the others, and finally came back and around returning to the Host and forming a pattern that resembled angels' wings.

Next, I mixed the Pearl-Ex, the Liquin, and the red color to make the red rays. I purchased a rigger brush, the one that holds more paint and is used when painting the rigging on sailing ships. It worked perfectly, and the red rays flowed onto the painting, and then the white rays. On Nov. 16, 2009, I thought I was finished.

But two artist friends and my spiritual director thought that the horizon was too pronounced. The sharp line between the blue of the sky and the earth color was too straight and clearly defined. They wanted me "to blend the horizon." I was scared to touch the painting again, afraid I would mess it up. After a week or so of trying not to think about it, I looked at a digital photo that I had taken of the painting. They were right! The horizon drew the eye to the horizon and away from the Host and the people.

That week I watched a movie to relax. The words spoken by the actor grabbed my heart.

"If you could be anywhere right now, where would you want to be?" I lifted my hands and envisioned myself in that heavenly field of mine full of peace, joy, love — no cold, no hot, no pain — with the blue sky, the clayish color field, and mountains between the two, the sky and the field. Then I had an idea — the mountains were blending the sky and the field!

Finally, I was ready to paint the mountains. In my thoughts were the words, "Even though I pass through the valley of death." The mountains will surround the circles of people as if they were in a valley! And they did. The mountains came out pretty well and blended the horizon.

Let us all pray that that we may all bask in the rays of the Lord, and then share that love and mercy with others.

Carolyn Seal is a Secular Franciscan who lives in Bogalusa, La. She helps coordinate Eucharistic Adoration and projects at her parish church.

CENACLES' UPDATE



Members of the Divine Mercy cenacle at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Charlotte, N.C.

two. In all, 83 members are now participating within our first year.

I have received permission from Monsignor McSweeney for us to have three major events annually in addition to the cenacle meetings, and to have sign-ups for new cenacles after each event. He has also supported our desire to have a cenacles' network within the Carolinas to assist other parishes to begin cenacles, to be supportive of each other, and in the future host regional events. This is a real blessing!

Last Divine Mercy Sunday, May 1, we honored the beatification of Pope John Paul II. On October 8th, we had a program under the theme of Healing Bread. (We also had a booth at the Diocese of Charlotte's Eucharistic Congress in September). Thank you for your support at home and for your outreach abroad. May God bless us all!

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga.

David Slasinski wrote and told us:

Thank you for all the help you have given us in starting our cenacle. Our group formed at St. Gabriel Catholic Church eight months ago. As you can see, we have a large group and meet weekly; we enjoy the meetings and sharing. We are trying to learn more about Divine Mercy and then live it in our own lives.

I am the facilitator of the group, and we meet every Tuesday after Mass. Once again, thanks for all your help, and please pray for us!



Members of the Divine Mercy cenacle in Fayetteville, Ga.

Want a Spanish Divine Mercy Mission in Your Parish?

Father Diego Maximino, MIC, can come to your parish and speak about Divine Mercy in Spanish. To set up a mission, call (413) 298-1143 or e-mail misionesenspanol@marian.org.



Father Diego Maximino, MIC

Questions about starting a cenacle? Call the EADM office toll-free at 1-877-380-0727, and we'll send you a free informational packet with a DVD on the ministry and how to start a Divine Mercy cenacle.

Eye has not seen

Editor's note: Susan Fox first shared this story with thedivinemeracy.org editor Felix Carroll in 2010. It is a timeless story that everyone needs to hear.

by Susan Fox

Today I emptied the dishwasher. No doubt my accomplishment does not impress you. But two weeks ago, I was facing open heart surgery or certain death.

Such an experience is certainly frightening but beneficial. I had to face the fact that the timing of my potential death was disconcerting because I felt I was not “good enough” to go — yet. I guess I thought I had some benchmark to reach and that I’d failed to get there. I was conscious of all my sins of omission.

What one has failed to do is very important when facing a deadline — like death. It was a very sudden and unexpected deadline. I had struggled with illness for 15 years, but I thought it was merely stomach troubles. I never realized that it was really a silent killer — my heart. Thankfully, I poured out my fears to the Lord, and He reassured me. Though my sins were indeed like scarlet, He Himself would make up what I lacked.

I could trust Him.

So I went into surgery in that frame of mind after receiving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

And here I am recovering my health, with the sole desire to just live and experience life in whatever form it takes, spending time with my family and friends, doing dishes, taking daily walks, eating, and resting.

But don’t imagine that grace of trust came out of the blue without years of preparation.

Eight years ago, I joined the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy prayer cenacle at St. George, in Apache Junction, Ariz. We study the *Diary of St. Faustina*, the *Catechism*, and Scripture. Saint Faustina was the first saint canonized in this millennium, and our Lord called her the secretary of His mercy. Our Lord told her that His mercy was His greatest attribute and that the greater the sinner the more he had the right to

God’s mercy. Now I can attest to that. But until the trial of my heart surgery, these things were just untried intellectual knowledge.

I remember when I first joined the group, I was not much attracted to the concept of God’s mercy, St. Faustina, her *Diary*, or the image that was painted based on her visions. The image shows the resurrected Christ coming out of the dark with two rays of light coming from His side, one red and one pale, representing the waters of Baptism and the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance.

I just wanted to leave the job of suffering entirely to Jesus Christ. I liked staying at the bottom of the hill when Christ climbed Golgotha. I wanted to be comfortable. But two week ago, that state definitely eluded me. The cross has a way of sneaking up on you. And so it was with Divine Mercy. Eight years ago, I was not attracted to it. But I joined the Eucharistic Apostles anyway because when I looked at my daily experiences and asked God, “What are You teaching me?” the word “mercy” came up repeatedly.

In fact, it seemed like His plan of mercy would play a big role in my life, whether I liked it or not.

So for eight years, I went to a weekly meeting to discuss God’s mercy. I read St. Faustina’s *Diary* multiple times, all the Scripture passages about God’s mercy, and the Pope’s encyclical on Divine Mercy. Like Jacob



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MARIAN ARCHIVES

wrestling with God all night long, I struggled with His mercy until I found I couldn't stay at the bottom of the hill anymore.

Suddenly, facing death, I understood His mercy. Yes, I wasn't ready. In fact, nothing I could ever do could prepare me for death or suffering. But He would take care of everything. He'd already paid the price of my peace.

I stood at the foot of the cross as the soldier pierced His side and blood and water came out. And I caught the grace of that blessed moment. “*Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him*” (1 Cor 2:9).

Susan Fox is the facilitator of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy cenacle of St. George Catholic Church, Apache Junction, Ariz.

Philippines

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last container, and it was being used in the orphanage! It was so heartwarming to actually see something I donated personally being put to good use halfway around the world!

Although exact numbers are not in, estimates are that the facility and equipment will cost from \$200,000 to \$225,000. We are working to get the land donated and are in discussion to determine maintenance costs and who will be responsible for them.

I would love to come and speak to your prayer group or parish on how you can assist EADM in this endeavor. Feel free to call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727 for more information. If you are making a donation to the clinic, use the code YU.



"I visited several hospitals. ... The people were so appreciative of the sorely needed supplies that we had shipped to them," Dr. Bryan Thatcher said.

COURTESY OF BRYAN THATCHER, MD

UPCOMING EADM EVENTS

Jan. 7, 2012

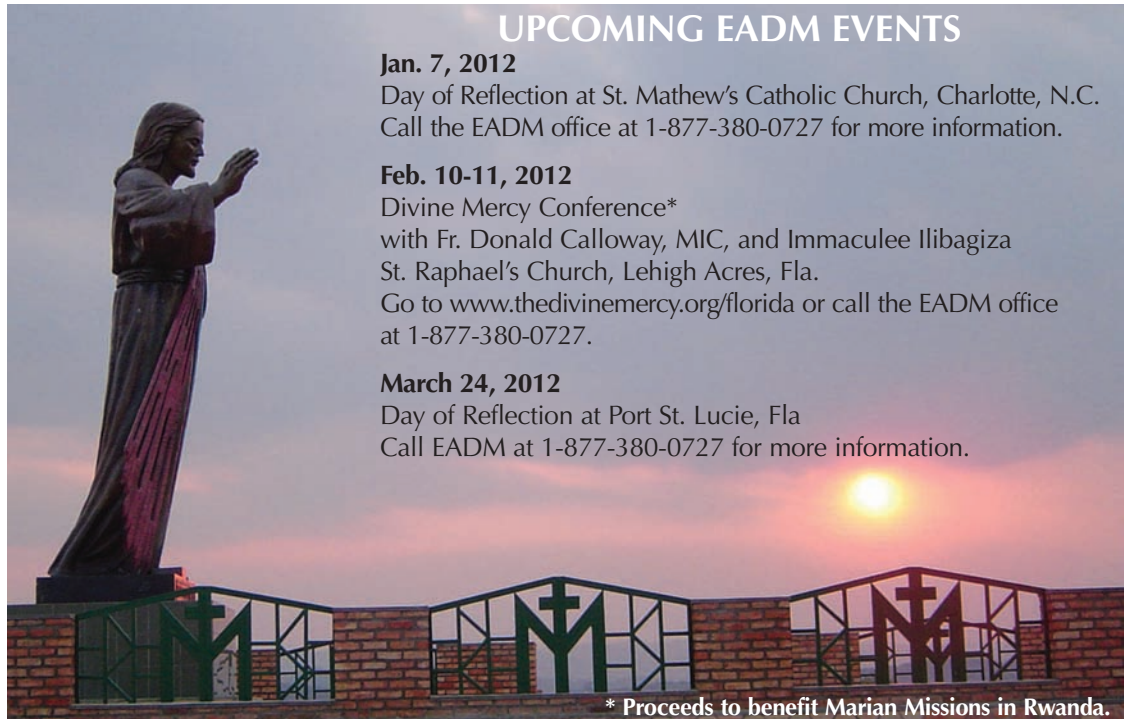
Day of Reflection at St. Mathew's Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.
Call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727 for more information.

Feb. 10-11, 2012

Divine Mercy Conference*
with Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, and Immaculee Ilibagiza
St. Raphael's Church, Lehigh Acres, Fla.
Go to www.thedivinemercy.org/florida or call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727.

March 24, 2012

Day of Reflection at Port St. Lucie, Fla
Call EADM at 1-877-380-0727 for more information.



* Proceeds to benefit Marian Missions in Rwanda.



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DIVINE MERCY APOSTOLATES WANT TO COME TO YOUR PARISH!



Consider having Mother of Mercy Messengers, Nurse Marie Romagnano, Dr. Robert Stackpole, or Dr. Bryan Thatcher come to your parish to speak and talk on Divine Mercy. To contact Dr. Stackpole or Nurse Marie, call the Marians Divine Mercy office at 866-895-3236. To discuss bringing MOMM or Dr. Thatcher to your parish, call 1-877-380-0727.