

PRESS RELEASE

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Thousands expected for Shrine's Spring Celebrations

Where: The National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, Mass.

What: News and feature story opportunities for two *big events* this spring – Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend and the 50th Anniversary of the dedication of the Shrine.

When: April 10-11 (Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend)
Saturday, May 29 (Golden Jubilee Celebration)

WE WELCOME ALL REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO MAY WISH TO ATTEND THESE EVENTS.

MEDIA CAN FIND PHOTOS, THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO AND RELATED INFORMATION AT <http://thedivinemercy.org/media/>

Divine Mercy Weekend

More than 15,000 people are expected to attend the annual Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on the grounds of the Marians Fathers of the Immaculate Conception in Stockbridge, Mass. This isn't just good news for the Catholic community, it is also good news for the businesses in the Berkshires. A number of area hotels expect to sell out and other business also will reap the benefits of the increased number of visitors for the weekend.

“Mercy Weekend is a weekend we sell out,” said Brian Butterworth, director of sales for the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Mass. “We would not be enjoying that kind of business on Saturday and Sunday if Mercy Weekend was not taking place. It's a nice benefit for us.”

This year, the weekend will take place on April 10-11. Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend will be just one of many events in which the 50th Anniversary of the Shrine's dedication will be celebrated (see below).

“Groups don't just come to the Shrine,” Butterworth added. “It's the reason they come here, but it's certainly an economic advantage to us. They come and shop and take in

places such as the Norman Rockwell Museum.”

The Shrine’s celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday is the biggest Divine Mercy Sunday in the Northeast and one of the largest in the world. The Holy Mass is broadcast around the world on EWTN, the Catholic global cable network.

“It’s wonderful,” said Tracie Barry, director of group sales at the Crowne Plaza in Pittsfield, Mass. “I definitely think it brings revenue into the area. It’s a wonderful event, and we’re happy to be a part of it.”

The principal celebrant scheduled for this year’s Divine Mercy Sunday Mass is the Most Rev. Timothy McDonnell, Bishop of Springfield, Mass. The homilist will be the Very Rev. Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC, provincial superior of the Mother of Mercy Province headquartered in Stockbridge.

Two outdoor Masses will be celebrated: the 4 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday and Sunday’s 1 p.m. solemn liturgy. Both will be at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine.

For the most up-to-date information, visit thedivinemercy.org/shrine. You can also call 413-298-3931 or e-mail mercysunday@marian.org. If you plan to cover Mercy Sunday Weekend and you need to show your credentials to park on the Marians’ Eden Hill property, we ask you to come to the information tent in front of the Shrine for your access pass.

What’s the Golden Jubilee All About?

It was a community undertaking. It was a spiritual undertaking. It came about through sweat, artistry, sacrifice, and *many* prayers. It was the construction of the National Shrine to Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass.

This year, the National Shrine observes its Golden Jubilee!

On Saturday, May 29, 2010, the Golden Jubilee will be cause for a large celebration hosted by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, who began building the Shrine 60 years ago. The Bishop of Springfield, the Most Rev. Timothy McDonnell, will rededicate the National Shrine, nearly 50 years to the day the Shrine doors officially opened to the public.

“The Golden Jubilee will serve as a joyous occasion not only for the Marians but also for their many benefactors, friends, and supporters,” says Carol Scott, events director. “This holy place, dedicated to the mercy of God, has been a spiritual oasis for generations. We welcome pilgrims from all over as we step into the first day of our second 50 years.”

The day will begin at 9 a.m., when pilgrims are encouraged to visit the Shrine or walk the adjacent grounds on Eden Hill. They can also enjoy a pictorial history of the Shrine, which will be on display in a tent on the grounds. From 11 a.m. to noon, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, Marian vocation director and prominent speaker and author, will give a personal testimony of mercy and then sign copies of his books, including his new book, *No Turning Back: A Witness to Mercy*.

At 12:30 p.m., a Rosary for Life will be prayed at the Mother of Mercy Outdoor Shrine, located on the south lawn of the National Shrine. Following the Rosary, pilgrims will be invited to proceed to the front of the Shrine for Bishop McDonnell's rededication.

The bishop will celebrate Mass at 1:30 p.m. at the outdoor shrine. Preceding the Mass, Fr. Anthony Gramlich, MIC, shrine rector, will welcome pilgrims and introduce Br. Leonard Konopka, MIC, who will share how he assisted in the building of the Shrine in the 1950s, when he was a young Marian in formation.

Following the Mass, pilgrims will be invited to participate in the singing of the Chaplet of The Divine Mercy and Benediction. Confessions will be available throughout the day.

For the entire year, pilgrims visiting the National Shrine can gain a plenary indulgence granted by the Vatican. To gain it, pilgrims must be completely detached from sin, go to confession, attend Mass and receive Holy Communion, and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father shortly before, during, or after their visit. Learn more about the plenary indulgence at thedivinemeracy.org/shrine.