



Friends of Mercy

Marians of the Immaculate Conception
Association of Marian Helpers • Eden Hill • Stockbridge, MA 01263

Joint effort

Marians partner with Knights of Columbus to encourage Divine Mercy Sunday at parishes.

Robert Allard tells how a partnership between the Marians of the Immaculate Conception and the Knights of Columbus reaped untold benefits for souls this Divine Mercy Sunday. Robert is the Director of the "Knights of Mercy" program and the Apostles of Divine Mercy in Port St. Lucie, FL.

The story in Spring 2004 *Marian Helper* magazine on how our "Knights of Mercy" program supplies parishes with Divine Mercy images for Mercy Sunday generated an overwhelming response.

Our phone lines here at the Apostles of Divine Mercy office were flooded with calls from devotees calling from all over North America. The response was so great and immediate that we could actually follow the distribution path of the magazine from where the calls were coming from on a daily basis.

Knights of Mercy is a Divine Mercy



The above Divine Mercy image was purchased and framed thanks to the drive of a young member of the Knights of Columbus, Joseph Q. Wolf of Harker Heights, TX. The event took place at Holy Family Parish in Copperas Cove, TX, with Fr. Barry Cabell, CSC.

ministry developed by the Knights of Columbus, a lay fraternal organization in the Catholic Church.

The first and foremost response that we noticed was an "overwhelming joy and thankfulness." Many faithful Marian Helpers who have been working hard to help promote the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday called to express their happiness that someone was finally going to help them get the Divine Mercy image in their parish in time for Mercy Sunday. You could sense their relief to hear that the 1.7 million members of the Knights of Columbus organization was coming to help them spread this urgent message of mercy.

The story on our Knights of Mercy program and the Spring issue's cover story on the Knights' Divine Mercy hour of prayer for parishes did more than stir

the Divine Mercy devotees. It also greatly stirred the Knights of Columbus. For two months, you could sense a frenzy of activity. Parish clergy, lay leaders, and representatives of the Knights of Columbus availed themselves to help prepare parishes for Divine Mercy Sunday.

Florida KofC State Deputy Stan Zgurzynski sent a letter to all the state leaders, district deputies, and grand knights encouraging them to participate in promoting Divine Mercy Sunday in all their parishes by incorporating the Knights of Mercy program.

Everyone fell in love with the Divine Mercy image by Adolf Hyla that the Knights used in their prayer hour. (The same image was featured on the front cover of *Marian Helper* magazine.) We had to move quickly to fill the

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Prayer Intention for the 3 o'clock Chaplet

Please join in praying for the Lord to bless and multiply the efforts of the Knights of Mercy program to bring the Divine Mercy message and devotion to parishes.



'Ushers' to God's mercy

An interview with Fr. David Lord, MIC, Rector of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy. Father David is pictured here, welcoming pilgrims to Eden Hill on Mercy Sunday 2004.

“I send warm greetings to you,” says Fr. David Lord, MIC, to the Friends of Mercy Club.

As Rector of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Fr. David also extends an invitation to all to make a pilgrimage to the Shrine — particularly for the Shrine's special liturgy.

Saint Faustina Day /Pope Day

The feast day of St. Faustina (Oct. 5) will be observed at the Shrine on Saturday, Oct. 9. According to Fr. David, the day will be “rich in reflections on the mercy of God” with a special liturgy.

The event may be held outdoors or in the National Shrine, depending on the number of buses and the weather conditions. Last year, despite inclement weather, about 600 people attended the St. Faustina Day Celebration.

On the following weekend, the Shrine will honor the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. “Last year, we celebrated the Holy Father's 25th anniversary of election,” says Fr. David. “People responded to it very well, so we decided that Oct. 16 is going to be Pope Day.”

Special days at the Shrine begin with a welcoming talk and an informal address in the morning. Pilgrims are then invited to follow the National Shrine's daily schedule:

- 1:00 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- 1:30 Rosary
- 1-2:00 Sacrament of Reconciliation
- 2:00 Holy Mass
- 3:00 The Hour of Great Mercy: Exposition, Divine Mercy Chaplet & Novena, Benediction
- 3:30-4:30 Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Greetings

When buses arrive, pilgrims are greeted by a

Marian. “We'll welcome them and tell them about the Shrine,” says Fr. David. “It's very much akin to when you are at home, *you* greet and welcome the people at the front door. And this is our front door. So we want to welcome pilgrims.”

A program of tours of the Shrine and Eden Hill begins this summer. Called a “Pilgrimage of Faith,” the tour covers the grounds, a brief history of Eden Hill, a look at the Marian Helpers Center, and a visit to the historic house adjoining the National Shrine. It culminates in the Shrine itself, which is the jewel of Eden Hill.

First Fridays/First Saturdays

The Shrine invites all to attend their Eucharistic “Festival of Praise” on the First Friday of every month. “We expose the Blessed Sacrament,” explains Fr. David, “and there's some preaching. Then there's the singing of worship songs — some of them new, some from ancient times.”

The First Friday celebrations are a way to honor the Lord. First Saturdays at the Shrine give special honor Our Lady.

This year, the Church is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Marians, a congregation dedicated to Our Lady under this special title, began a monthly speaker series in January. “Each of us Marians has had a turn speaking,” says Fr. David. “In May, I spoke on the motherhood of Mary.”

A Personal Lesson

In considering the shrine's emphasis on hospitality, Fr. David referred to a document by Pope John Paul II. “It was beautiful,”

says Fr. David. “He wrote something like, ‘People with sympathetic natures, priests especially, should be present, who make themselves available to the pilgrims, especially through the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Because shrines are crossroads where people from all over the place come.’ ”

Father David learned this lesson for himself, soon after moving to Eden Hill.

After Mass one day, Fr. David met a woman who had traveled from Baghdad, Iraq, after hearing about the Shrine.

“Later, in my prayer time,” Fr. David continues, “I kept asking, ‘Lord, why do people come here?’ It's not very big. We can't offer people very much. ... And although people say the Shrine is a masterpiece of architecture, the preaching is exceptional, the piety is present, and the music is inspiring — there must be some places *more* beautiful, where the preaching is *more* exceptional, and where the liturgies are just as beautiful or more. Why do they come here?”

Father David sensed the Lord's answer: “They come here because they're looking for Me.”

People come to the Shrine, he says, needing to experience mercy, kindness, and hospitality. “He's the One who dries their tears,” says Fr. David. “We just get to stand at the door like ushers, welcoming people into His presence.” □

Group tours

Pre-registration is requested.

Shrine Office
(413) 298-1118

Fax
(413) 298-1398

e-mail
pilgrims@marian.org

For more about special events at the National Shrine call (413) 298-3931.

St. Faustina clearly demonstrates in the *Diary*, that one of the greatest privileges we have in life is a desire for prayer. God calls each of us into a relationship that only He can satisfy. Our Lord knows that only inviting Him in can assuage the deep longing within each heart. Fortunate are those who have the awareness that this void is waiting to be filled with His love, presence, and grace. In fact, we can be thankful that we are even aware of the grace that calls us to daily prayer.



Jesus made known to me how very pleasing to Him were prayers of atonement. He said to me, **The prayer of a humble and loving soul disarms the anger of My Father and draws down an ocean of blessings** (*Diary*, 320).

Jesus reveals the secret of what pleases His Father. We are given an opportunity to become irresistible to God in these prayers of atonement. (Also see 1036.) Furthermore, if we do not have a ministry in which we serve others, our prayers of intercession for them can now become a very effective and approved ministry. We have a great opportunity for saving souls by simply praying for the conversion of the world. Our Lord said, “The prayer most pleasing to Me is prayer for the conversion of sinners. Know, My daughter, that this prayer is always answered” (1397).



The Lord let me know that everything can be obtained by means of this prayer (1128).

Our Lord gives overwhelming encouragement for praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet. He specifically said that the dying would be assisted by our saying the Chaplet, so that they would have trust in His mercy (687, 834, 835, 1797). What a great comfort this is, for those who are reading this may actually be fearful of their own demise. We see His Mercy reaching out with hope to those who are fearful of passing through the door to eternal life and to His eternal embrace.

Reflections on the Diary of St. Faustina:

Divine Mercy in **PRAYER**

A thematic series
by **Br. Leonard Konopka, MIC**

We need not fear any longer since He always keeps His promises.



My daughter, consider these words: “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly.” When I started to think about them more deeply, much light streamed into my soul. I learned how much we need perseverance in prayer and that our salvation often depends on such difficult prayer (157).

This passage gives us the necessary ingredient to help us to persevere in prayer.

Our Lord continues to instill in us directives on our journey to Him. Many of us struggle in bearing our crosses, overwhelmed with responsibilities with little light at the end of the tunnel, yet in spite of these anxious concerns, Jesus does not remove them but says, “When it seems to you that your suffering exceeds your strength, contemplate My wounds” (1184).

This has been tried by countless individuals and always proves quite beneficial. Our individual plight in life or mundane experiences can actually lend themselves to focus on Him. In a certain way, we can become grateful to God for sending us those specific setbacks, anguishes, and multiple frustrations as His perfect method of moving us to surrender to Him. He knows how we are made and supplies the graces for us to hopefully see our utter vulnerability.

Our Lord seems to be saying that He knows we are curious about “why” things happen in our life. Who would not want to know why certain things occur, especially “when bad things happen to good people?” Saint Faustina gives us a clue, which may reveal to us God’s purpose for

these occurrences or so-called “accidents.”



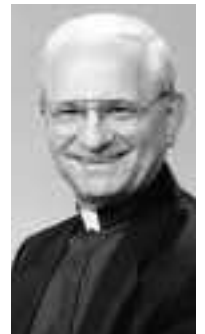
Divine light can do more in one moment than I, fatiguing myself for several days (1250).

Note that, in this and the previous instances, St. Faustina had to persevere in her prayers. Only then does she receive “light.” In other words it may likewise take our perseverance in prayer before Our Lord reveals to us His will in permitting certain events that will lead us to Him. Without His light on the subject, we may not be as open to accept all “these things,” which come from His loving concern.

After spending three hours in what St. Faustina considered fruitless prayer and increased discomfort, she persisted, after which Jesus said, “I often wait with great graces until towards the end of prayer” (268).

We are encouraged to continue our effort in prayer until we become so united with Jesus, that even doubting God is unthinkable.

Brother Leonard Konopka, MIC, resides in Washington, DC, and is on the staff of the Marian Community Seminary. He provides spiritual direction, and retreats and talks on Divine Mercy. This article is part of a book on Divine Mercy meditations that he is completing.



Joint effort

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demand for these images in time for the celebration of Mercy Sunday. We were able to duplicate an image similar to the original "Hyla" painting.

Grand Knight Joe Brady from St. John of the Cross Parish in Vero Beach, FL, was elated to see the tremendous turnout of his fellow Knights who came to take part in the procession with the Divine Mercy image on Mercy Sunday. He commented to his brother Knights, "Our council outdid themselves today! I dare say that Our Lord was delighted today. The participation was outstanding!"

Joseph Q. Wolf, a KofC field agent from Harker Heights, TX, one of the most energetic young members of the Knights of Columbus, purchased an image of The Divine Mercy on his own and had it framed. It was used at two parishes on Divine Mercy Sunday in his area. Like many others, he used every possible means to get the word out, sending enthusiastic messages by the internet, telling everyone about the benefits of celebrating Mercy Sunday.

I wish that everyone could have witnessed the joy that was springing forth from the hearts of all the callers that responded to *Marian Helper* magazine. The effect of the Spring issue may well be felt for many years. *Columbia* magazine, which goes out to all 1.7 million members of the KofC, followed *Marian Helper's* lead and put together a special issue on Divine Mercy for their April 2004 edition.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson was asked by our Holy Father Pope John Paul II to spread the message of Divine Mercy vigorously. The Supreme Knight stated, "The KofC prides itself on our fidelity to the successor of Peter. It is crucial that we make the Divine Mercy message and devotion available to all."

Only Our Lord Himself knows how many souls were



A former Director of the Association of Marian Helpers, Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Knight Robert Allard at his parish in Port St. Lucie, FL, pay a visit to its newly enshrined Divine Mercy image.

touched on Divine Mercy Sunday 2004 through the efforts of the Marians and the Knights of Columbus. One can definitely see the "workings of Heaven" in this spiritual merger between the KofC and the Marians. There must be at least a few Marian Helpers and members of the KofC in every parish in North America.

Surely this must be the "Great Catch" that Our Lord was referring to when He told the Apostles to cast their nets out into the deep. I believe that Our Lord is asking us right now to cast our Church's nets out, and He is telling us exactly when and where to let them down to get the greatest catch. The when is on the "Feast of Mercy" when He has promised us complete pardon and remission of sin, according to the *Diary of St. Faustina*. (See *Diary*, 699.) And the exact location is in the Church where we can go to Confession and receive Jesus in Holy Communion to be able to complete the requirements to receive the total forgiveness of sins and punishment promised by Jesus on that day. □

For more information on the Knights of Mercy program, go online to www.mercy-sunday.com.

To order prints of the Divine Mercy image like the one used by the Knights

of Mercy and for other versions of the image, call the Marian Helpers Center toll free at 1-800-462-7426.

The Friends of Mercy Club is a group of friends of the Marians who want to honor God's mercy in a special way.

- They help support the Marians' works of mercy, and receive regular news about the Divine Mercy message;
- Every day the intentions of members are included in our 3 o'clock prayers at the Marian Helpers Center and in the Chaplet at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy; and
- Members pledge a bimonthly gift and receive the Club newsletter published by the Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263. 1-800-462-7426. e-mail: friendsofmercy@marian.org