

“Mercy is love that seeks to lessen the misery of others”  
 — Bryan Thatcher, MD

By Bryan Thatcher, MD

It seems everywhere I go, people are facing one form of adversity or another. That includes health issues of a physical or mental nature, marital problems, death of a loved one, financial woes, difficulty with children such as divorce or loss of faith, and more.

As I am writing this article, my brother-in-law Leo is dying, and by the time this newsletter goes to print, he will have surely died and seen Jesus face to face. Leo had many complications from long-standing diabetes, and he suffered much. Even so, in advancing years he would help the ministry by picking up medical supplies for the poor overseas.

We will all face death one day. At that time, as well as in times of struggle, we must trust in the Lord. Trust comes easy when things are going well. It is at the hour of death that trust in the Lord and His mercy is most critical. Jesus told St. Faustina, “Pray as much as you can for the dying. By your entreaties, obtain for them trust in My mercy, because they have the most need of trust, and they have it the least. Be assured that the grace of eternal salvation for certain souls in their final moment depends on your prayer. You know the whole abyss of My mercy, so draw upon it for yourself and especially for poor sinners. Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul” (*Diary*, 1777).

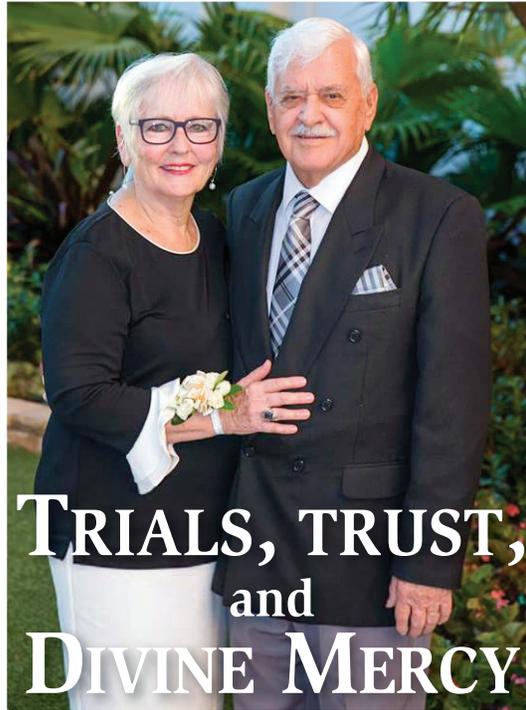
People often ask, “Why is there suffering? Why did my wife get cancer? Why did I have a stroke? Why did my son get killed in an auto accident? Why? Why? Why?”

Let us see what we can learn from the life of St. Maria Faustina, the apostle of mercy. Like many of the saints before her, she suffered greatly. She had advanced tuberculosis that went undiagnosed for a long period of time, and she died at the young age of 33 years. She also suffered humiliation and rejection from fellow nuns, as well as deep interior suffering.

Her physical suffering at times was overwhelming. “Today my suffering increased somewhat; I not only feel greater pain all through my lungs, but also some strange pains in my intestines. I am suffering as much as my weak nature can bear” (*Diary*, 953).

Yet, she maintained her trust in God in spite of all her trials and tribulations. She wrote, “Oh, how pleasing are the hymns flowing from a suffering soul! All heaven delights in such a soul, especially when it is tested by God. It mournfully sings out its longing for Him. Great is its beauty, because it comes from God. The soul walks through the jungle of life, wounded by God’s love. With one foot only it touches the ground” (*Diary*, 114).

She suffered much, but she suffered with joy. “I fixed my



My sister Diane and her husband Leo.

gaze upon His sacred wounds and felt happy to suffer with Him. I suffered, and yet I did not suffer, because I felt happy to know the depths of His love, and the hour passed like a minute” (*Diary*, 252).

She understood the power of salvific suffering. She wrote, “Suffering is a great grace; through suffering the soul becomes like the Savior; in suffering love becomes crystallized; the greater the suffering, the purer the love” (*Diary*, 57).

Any discussion on God’s love, mercy, and suffering must include His Passion. Our Lord asked that we meditate on His Passion. He told her:

There is more merit to one hour of meditation on My sorrowful Passion than there is to a whole year of flagellation that draws blood: the contemplation of My

painful wounds is of great profit to you, and it brings Me great joy (*Diary*, 369). Remember My Passion, and if you do not believe My words, at least believe My wounds (*Diary*, 379).

When I was dying on the cross, I was not thinking about Myself, but about poor sinners, and I prayed for them to My Father. I want your last moments to be completely similar to Mine on the cross. There is but one price at which souls are bought, and that is suffering united to My suffering on the Cross. Pure love understands these words, carnal love will never understand them (*Diary*, 324).

You may feel alone. You may ask yourself, “Where is God? Why me? What have I done to deserve this?”

You must remember that even though you may feel abandoned by God, you are not alone! This beautiful passage from the *Diary* gives me great comfort. “After the adoration, half way to my cell, I was surrounded by a pack of huge black dogs who were jumping and howling and trying to tear me to pieces. I realized that they were not dogs, but demons. One of them spoke up in a rage, ‘Because you have snatched so many souls away from us this night, we will tear you to pieces.’ I answered, ‘If that is the will of the most merciful God, tear me to pieces, for I have justly deserved it, because I am the most miserable of all sinners, and God is ever holy, just, and infinitely merciful.’ To these words all the demons answered as one, ‘Let us flee, for she is not alone; the Almighty is with her.’ And they vanished like dust, like the noise of the road, while I continued on my way to my cell undisturbed, finishing my *Te Deum* and pondering the infinite and unfathomable mercy of God” (*Diary*, 320).

So remember, let trust in God be your anchor in life, and you are not alone!

# CENACLES UPDATE



## VENICE, FLORIDA

*Mary Nowe wrote and told us:*

Twenty-eight years ago, I found a holy card in the pew of a church. It had a picture of a nun named Sr. Faustina and the Image of Divine Mercy on the other side. That little card led me to learn how to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. I love the Chaplet of Divine Mercy!

The Lord, through my devotion to praying the Chaplet, eventually led me to live five miles from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. My devotion began to grow more deeply. Then I heard about Divine Mercy cenacles, but there was not one near me. In 2006, I contacted Dr. Bryan Thatcher's office on how to start one. It began in my home with just a few people. Over time, it continued to grow until we outgrew my house. We were blessed to have the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception welcome us to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy on Eden Hill. They gave us a location for our cenacle meetings.

Our group began to attend Mass together at the Marian Helpers Center and pray for intentions sent to the Marians' Divine Mercy Intercessory Prayerline. We also lit many candles in the candle shrine, then our cenacle meeting followed. After several years of formation through the cenacle meetings, that is, studying the *Diary* of St. Faustina with Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, our devotion continues to grow even deeper. The cenacle Formation Program is all laid out for you. It becomes a lifestyle. The Holy Spirit is present. The living faith is inexhaustible.

After 15 years in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, I moved to South Carolina, then to Florida. I was without a cenacle for three years. At my new parish in Venice, Florida, I began welcoming new parishioners. One of them, Deb Scott, noticed the Divine Mercy Image on my phone cover. She said to me, "Oh, I love the Divine Mercy." I shared how I volunteered and worked at the Shrine. She shared that she has a friend who works there. It turns out our mutual friend is Mary Kay Volpone [the Marians' coordinator of Donor Services]. I also shared how homesick I was away from my beloved Berkshires, the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, and my dear Visitation Sisters in Tyringham.

Deb said to me, "You have to share that love in your heart with us. Start a cenacle here." I prayed about it for a few months. Then, I brought it to my pastor, Fr. Jay. He gave his blessing for a Divine Mercy cenacle at our parish, Our Lady of Lourdes. We began our cenacle in November 2017. We have since grown to 10 members. After one and a half years of study, six members were inducted as Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday, 2019. We are beginning our second Formation Manual. We pray for the sick and dying, most especially at the Hospice House located only a couple miles from our church.

Many people feel hopeless or helpless when someone else is suffering in some way, whether entrenched in sin, addiction, or other sickness, or even dying. We might ask if there is anything that we can do. There

is so much power in praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for others. It is a prayer for the whole world. We know God is doing something through our Chaplets of Divine Mercy

I have so many favorite *Diary* quotes, but here are a couple. Our Lord told St. Faustina:

At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the pardon is the same (*Diary*, 811).

My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls, and especially for poor sinners. If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy (*Diary*, 367).



## VERONA, WISCONSIN

*Lisa Keen wrote and told us:*

The five members of the Divine Mercy cenacle of St. Christopher Parish in Verona, Wisconsin, participated in an induction ceremony on April 30, 2019, which was led by Fr. John Sasse. The ceremony had been talked about for months, but we had a hard time setting a date. That morning we were all attending daily Mass and asked Fr. John if he was available and he said yes! For such short notice it went very well as one of the members knew where the small candles were kept. One member wrote that her best memory of the induction ceremony is the peace she felt as we professed the induction and the closeness she felt to all of us as we celebrated.

The group's favorite lessons revolve around Jesus' promises and messages regarding His Divine Mercy. Our favorite quotes are: "Jesus, I trust in You;" when Jesus says He is always in our hearts, not only when we receive Him after Communion; everything from passage 699 of St. Faustina's *Diary* where our Lord speaks of the great Feast Day; and from *Diary* passage 1541, in which the Lord says, "Write that when they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the merciful Savior." One member was able to do that for her mother on Oct. 30, 2018, and it gave her great consolation.

The group helps plan for Divine Mercy Sunday and leads the praying of the Chaplet during the Novena. When someone from the parish passes away we pray the Chaplet as well. We also serve by leading weekly prayer sessions and small connection groups, volunteering with St. Vincent de Paul, church decorating, RCIA, and a ministry that helps mothers who choose to have and keep their babies. We also serve the parish as Eucharistic Ministers including to the homebound and nursing home residents. One member said, "I value the wisdom I receive from the women in the cenacle at each of our meetings."

# CENACLES UPDATE



## LOMBARD, ILLINOIS

*Bill and Mary Jones wrote and told us:*

We each have a story that is uniquely all our own. However, when each of us responded “yes” to His call, our stories changed. Our ministry story began when we four members, each with different talents and skill sets, approached our pastor, Fr. Jeff Stoneberg, about our desire to start a Divine Mercy ministry at Christ the King Parish in Lombard, Illinois, in the Diocese of Joliet.

Two common sparks for us were the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul* and the inspiring Divine Mercy mission we attended in October 2017 at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Batavia, Illinois, given by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC. We are also grateful to Kathy Wabick, founder and director of the Disciples of Divine Mercy in the Holy Face of Jesus, for her direction and Bryan Thatcher, MD, founder and director of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy for his support, guidance, and prayers.

At Fr. Jeff’s direction, we developed a plan, which included our main mission to save souls. When the time was right, after many prayers, the Divine Mercy Ministry for the Sick, Suffering & Dying was established under the patronage of Mary, Mother of Mercy, and St. Joseph, patron of the dying. Father Jeff became our sponsor, and he gave us the direction to start to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet out loud, hourly on Thursdays in the church, during Eucharistic Adoration.

To pray the Chaplet for the sick, suffering, and dying within the Hour of Mercy and for the Holy Souls in Purgatory is a spiritual work of mercy — a perfect way to live the message! The Divine Mercy Chaplet is a very powerful prayer. To pray it out loud with others, in front of the Holy Eucharist, is a profoundly moving experience.

We did encounter speed bumps along the first steps of our journey but overcame them through prayer and the continued guidance of Fr. Jeff. Within a few weeks, we were joined in prayer by several of the scheduled adorers and by others who specifically came to pray the Chaplet. That included some of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation students, along with friends or family, who joyfully embrace the devotion.

With Fr. Jeff’s approval and blessing, we requested a copy of the Apostolic Blessing from the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy given by St. Pope John Paul II in the year 2000 that’s applicable to anyone “who during Adoration of Our Most Merciful

Savior in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar will be praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and for those throughout the world who will be dying in that hour.” Once we received it, we framed it, and Fr. Jeff blessed it during Sunday Mass. It now hangs in the church near the Divine Mercy Image.

Over time, we transitioned from an 8- by 10-inch Divine Mercy Image to a life-size portable one, which we place near the altar each Thursday morning after Mass, during Eucharistic Adoration.

We utilize a Divine Mercy Chaplet request form, which can be filled out with a person’s first name, so that the graces of the Divine Mercy Chaplets we pray each hour can be shared. Hourly, the intention requests are placed in a large basket in front of the Holy Eucharist next to the Divine Mercy Image. When we receive verbal requests for a Chaplet, we call on our Divine Mercy Chaplet prayer warriors who pray a Chaplet at home. We have all experienced very touching outcomes.

To spread knowledge of Divine Mercy, we created a series of bulletin articles on the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Divine Mercy Image and most recently on the 3 o’clock hour, Feast of Divine Mercy, Novena of Chaplets, promise and indulgences, and more. We ushered in Lent at our parish by posting signs near the entrances that consisted of a Divine Mercy Image and a quote of our Lord, which says, “Come to Me, all of you” (*Diary*, 1485).

We responded as a core group of four to St. Pope John Paul II when he said the following to the entire Church at the conclusion of his homily at the first [universal] Feast of Divine Mercy on April 30, 2000: “Trust in the Lord, be apostles of Divine Mercy and follow the invitation of Sister Faustina.”

We appreciate this opportunity to share our ministry story with you.



## SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

*Augie and Rosemary Melchor wrote and told us:*

Our cenacle has been together about five years. We meet every Monday. During the holidays we share complete Thanksgiving dinners with at least three families, and some of our members work at the food pantry. Our cenacle donated heaters to be given out there. We also donated to victims of Hurricane Harvey. Our team is involved with visiting the elderly at the nursing home in our area; we pray the Holy Rosary at funerals; we visit the sick at home or in the hospital; and some members of our team host a bereavement group. We were there to pray for the victims of human trafficking who perished in a locked 18-wheel tractor-trailer at the parking lot of a local Walmart.

We pray a novena at the prayer garden leading up to Divine Mercy Sunday. We pray the Chaplet at every Mass and then gather for a potluck dinner at the end of the day. We have special guest speakers who encourage us on our journey of faith.

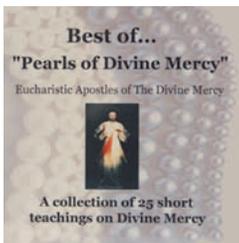
We have been so blessed, and we have been touched tremendously through the Divine Mercy and the Chaplet.

Jesus, we trust in You!



**THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY IN SONG**

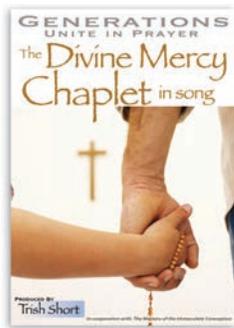
This contemporary rendition of *The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song* seeks to bring together Christians of every denomination to implore God's mercy for families and the world. If you loved the original, get this second edition that calls on our Lord's mercy, leading you to an even more powerful and prayerful experience!  
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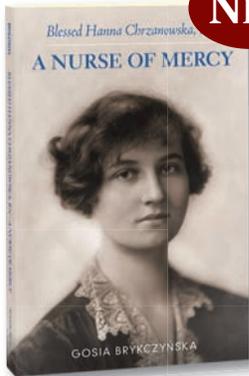
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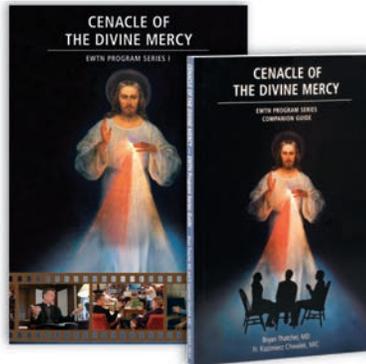
**NEW**

**Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska, RN: A Nurse of Mercy**  
By Gosia Brykczynska  
*Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska, RN: A Nurse of Mercy*, the first lay registered nurse to be beatified, recounts the extraordinary life of a holy, 20<sup>th</sup>-century woman whose tireless efforts to serve her patients both medically and spiritually changed Polish healthcare and the worldwide Catholic Church.  
EV22-HANBK \$12.95

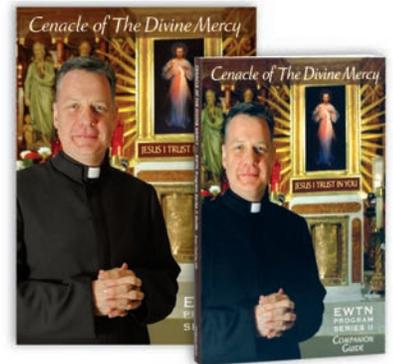


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**At the Bedside of the Sick and Dying: A Guide for Parish Ministry, Family, and Friends**  
Mixing Divine Mercy spirituality with practical guidance, Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy founder Bryan Thatcher, MD, and Disciple of Divine Mercy in the Holy Face of Jesus founder Kathleen Wabick inform, encourage, and inspire you to take up this great work of mercy. A handy introduction to the grace-filled apostolate of praying for (and with) the sick and dying.  
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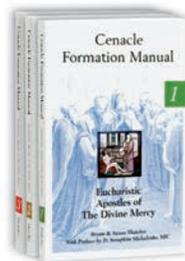


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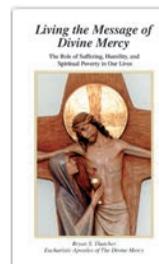


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MANUAL 3: EV22-CFM3

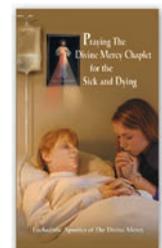
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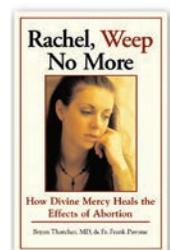
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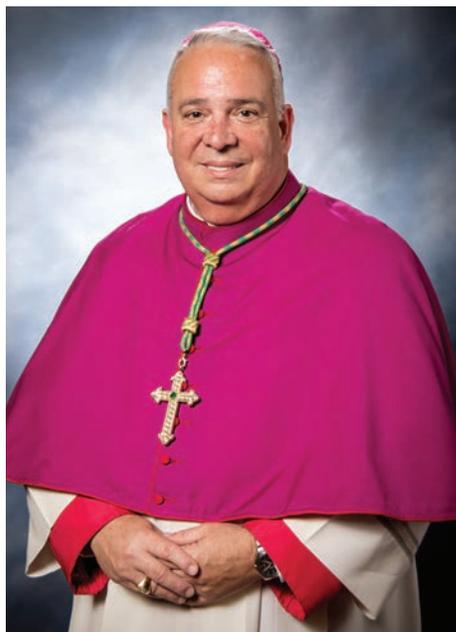
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## Container sent to the Philippines

A shipment of medical supplies was recently sent to hospitals for the indigent in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. It contained 250 boxes of medical supplies, hospital beds, walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, Hoyer lifts, and more. Thanks to all who contributed toward the over \$5,000 in shipping costs. The work continues as donations keep coming in.

## Healthcare conference in Cleveland



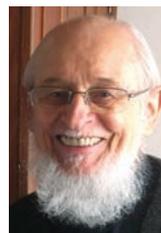
Most Reverend Nelson Perez, Bishop of Cleveland

A Divine Mercy Healthcare conference titled “Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality” will be held Nov. 6-7 at St. Albert the Great Church in North Royalton, Ohio. Most Reverend Nelson Perez, Bishop of Cleveland, will be the main celebrant for the opening Mass on Nov. 6.

Just a few of the selected speakers include Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC; Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC; Fr. Joseph Koopman, STD; Ashley Fernandes, MD; Dr. Ron Sobecks; and Marie Romagnano, RN, BSN.

Continuing education credits for physicians, nurses, pastoral care, and social work can be obtained. Those caring for the sick and injured and who are interested in healthcare and the role of spirituality as well as bioethical principles that help us understand and open the door to authentic healing for the infirm and suffering should attend this conference.

For information and to register, go to [TheDivineMercy.org/Cleveland](http://TheDivineMercy.org/Cleveland) or call 1-800-462-7426. Please register early as a sellout crowd is expected.



Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC



Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC



Marie Romagnano, RN

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## COME HEAR BRYAN SPEAK ON MERCY

Dr. Bryan Thatcher, director of Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, will be speaking:

- Sept. 12, Legatus meeting, Green Bay, Wisconsin
- Sept. 14, Day of Reflection at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Seneca, Kansas (contact Susan at 785-336-1124)
- Oct. 5 at St. Cecelia Church, Dallas, Texas (contact Tina at 214-664-7026)
- Nov. 6-7 Cleveland Healthcare Conference (see article on page 5)
- Nov. 22-23 at Old St. Patrick Catholic Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan (contact Sean at 734-644-4321)
- Jan. 20 at Croatian Cultural Center, Vancouver, Canada, (contact EADM at 1-877-380-0727 for more details)

If your cenacle would like to have Dr. Thatcher speak at your parish, call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727 and ask for a free packet on a Day of Reflection.

