

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



## A HEARTFELT NEW FOCUS

By Bryan Thatcher, MD

I visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1991 while attending a medical conference, and after Mass I walked outside on the basilica grounds. There I saw something that I never forgot. There were all these poor people wearing tattered clothing and laughing and eating their bag lunches, and parents were playing with their children and all were so joy-filled. Everyone was so happy! And here I was — a rich American, crying my eyes out because God was not the focus of my life and I needed direction.

I said to myself, “Something is wrong with this picture!” I asked Our Lady to help me get my life in order, and six months later a friend gave me the *Diary* of St. Faustina. Things were never the same after that.

Father Dan Papineau told me years ago that once you are filled with the love of God, you will feel compelled to share it with others. My parents were always giving people and I finally realized why; they were filled with God’s love!

At my father’s wake service the night before his funeral, several men in our small town in Ohio came up to me and told me how my father had helped them in difficult times and they were forever grateful. None of the siblings ever realized the extent of how dad had helped those who were down-and-out.

As some of you may know, for the last 25 years I have been blessed to be able to ship containers of medical supplies to the poor in developing countries. Our group in Tampa

shipped more than 150 containers of incredible supplies to many countries including Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Poland, Ukraine, the Philippines, India, Peru, Ecuador, and more. COVID-19 shut all that down. However, I never lost my hunger to help the less fortunate.

When I see videos or photos of people without fresh water, children with bloated bellies due to malnutrition and struggling to get one meal a day, or am told stories of infants dying because of infections easily treated with antibiotics, my heart pains as I have so much and have been so blessed. The pantry in our home is always full, and the two refrigerators always provide ample choices if my kids or grandkids come over and are hungry.

Most people in this country, including my own children, have little idea how the rest of the world lives. They are not aware that one measure of wealth is whether or not one will eat today.

I have added a new dimension to my current efforts in spreading the message of Divine Mercy, and I will be assisting the Marians in raising funds for the Marian Missions. For me, it is the culmination of our work that fulfills a dream in my life. I know doors will open if it is God’s Will. Besides, if it is not God’s Will, I don’t want to be doing it anyway.

An EADM statement on our letterhead reads, “Mercy is love that seeks to lessen the misery of others.” But I cannot do it alone, and I ask for your help and prayers. I would love





# CENACLES UPDATE



## PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA

*Jeannette Bajalia wrote and told us:*

It all started when COVID-19 caused our parishes to close their doors and parishioners were left searching for spiritual food. Many individuals and families were left searching for any opportunity to make sense out of the horrific pandemic.

By God's Divine Mercy and graces, I, like many others, discovered the online content published by the Marian Fathers and discovered a spirituality that I had not heard about but was totally captivated by.

I continued digging deeper and taking advantage of the enormous content produced by the Marian Fathers. So, let the journey begin!

Hunger led me to participate in a Divine Mercy pilgrimage in June 2023 (totally discovered accidentally) with Deacon Mark Taylor and Dr. Bryan Thatcher. I had the opportunity to experience the purity and conviction of the Marian Fathers and had time with Bryan to learn about the Eucharistic Apostles of the Divine Mercy. That's it! I knew this was God calling me to be an Apostle of Mercy.

In order to clearly discern, I had to go back to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts because I felt God calling me to do something in our local parish and truly to GO DEEPER with the message of mercy. So, in Oct. 2023, I went back with passion and conviction.

Divine Mercy spirituality wasn't really anything new to our parish. The Divine Mercy devotion has been an operational ministry at Our Lady Star of the Sea since 1990 when Jim and Barbara Conway organized the Divine Mercy Novena and Chaplet and the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration. During 2014, there was an initiative to organize a group to have bi-weekly meetings but that lasted for a year; however, the ministry continued under the ministry leadership of the Conways in the form of reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Novena every Friday after 8:30 a.m. Mass.

After submitting a ministry application to "go deeper with the Divine Mercy devotion" in July 2023, we got the approval to pilot for one year the Cenacle Group. Upon completion, we would evaluate the progress to formalize the ministry. And so, after a few weeks with low-key promotion in our bulletin, we held an information meeting attended by Sr. Lucy Clynes, DW, pastoral associate; Fr. Christopher Knight, parochial Vicar; Dr. Bryan Thatcher through Zoom; and 24 inquiring souls to see who wanted to GO DEEPER.

So, our cenacle formation process and journey officially began on Nov. 11, 2023 with our first meeting, when the Holy Spirit brought 20 women with hearts on fire to deepen their faith and grow in the spirituality of

Divine Mercy. The group photo at left (missing a few members) speaks a thousand words, and we present ourselves at this stage as "Apostles of Mercy In Training." While we are just beginning our journey meeting every second and fourth Saturday of each month, the Holy Spirit shows up and enlightens our minds and our hearts.

When asked what has the Cenacle group meant to you, here are some comments that demonstrate the depth of growth we are all experiencing:

"The Holy Spirit is very much alive and our hearts are softening to the needs of those around us and helping us to feel worthy to receive the fount of endless mercy and spread this glorious message to others."

"We are learning what Jesus said to St. Faustina about His Divine Mercy and how to share the message with everyone we know. I feel so blessed to be a part of the cenacle. What a wonderful way to evangelize."

"Being with the group has increased my prayer life. I am edified being around faith-filled women."

"I've become more disciplined in remembering to pray; the more I do, the easier it is and the more fulfilled I become. Community makes it all better."

With hunger in our hearts to go deeper and mature through the formation manuals, we look forward to the opportunity to serve our parish and our community in meeting whatever is needed. Through these works, we spread the message of mercy, and we will have graduated from "Apostles of Mercy in Training" to "Apostles of Mercy On Fire."



## CIALES, PUERTO RICO

*Maria Virella wrote and told us:*

The group at Our Lady of Rosary in Ciales, Puerto Rico, started in 2015 learning and deepening our understanding of the Divine Mercy Message, and also helping others to consecrate their lives to Jesus.

Our main goal is to spread the message of merciful love, changing and having a new lifestyle conducive to the Gospel, and motivating our brothers to live a Christ-filled life and filling it with happiness and merciful love.

We remain rooted to the cenacle manuals, St. Faustina's *Diary* and the Bible, and are thankful for the formation in the Apostolate of EADM.

Weekly we offered community cenacles to families as our evangelization in our Catholic faith and the Divine Mercy message. Every home received a home consecration prayer to Divine Mercy and the Image.

As a community of faith, we work with our parish and spiritual director and visit the sick and helping people in their needs.



## MZUZU, MALAWI, AFRICA

*Elias Lazarus wrote and told us:*

Malawi is a small Southern African country with a population of around 17.6 million, and 17 percent are Catholics. There are two Archdioceses, Blantyre and Lilongwe, and five dioceses: Mzuzu, Karonga, Dedza, Zomba, and Chikhwawa.

There are several Church associations that help Christians to deepen their faith, one of which is the Divine Mercy (DM) Apostolate. This apostolate is well established in the Archdiocese of Lilongwe. It is also growing and has spread to other dioceses.

In Mzuzu Diocese, Divine Mercy started with a few members of St. Peter Cathedral in 2020. There are currently more than 15 members that are actively involved in the devotions that are core in the association. The photo above is of Fr. Paul Chirwa, curate at St. Peter Cathedral.

Divine Mercy Prayers are conducted every Saturday after morning Mass. Divine Mercy Apostolates participate also in the Adoration of the Eucharist which takes place every Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

Divine Mercy Apostolates do charity works as this is one of the pillars of Divine Mercy devotion. They have so far visited the elderly sisters of the Rosarian congregation residing close to their headquarters. They also donate groceries to the St. Vincent de Paul Association.

Our association is not yet recognized at the diocesan level but the bishop is aware of it and processes are in progress to have an appointed chaplain. At the parish level, our priest, Fr. John Moyo, has been very supportive and our source of guidance. Sister Angella Sikazwe also assists in the group guidance from time to time.

A national evangelization team from the National Divine Mercy Apostolate visited St. Peter Divine Mercy Apostolate with an aim of training members on the Divine Mercy Apostolate. The team was invited through the parish priest with an approval from Bishop John Ryan. This was a milestone for it was the first of its kind for the apostolates of St. Peter. The training focused on the history of the Divine Mercy Apostolate and St. Faustina; important devotions; characteristics of an apostolate; and duties that apostolates are to perform.

Our association is struggling to have all its members possess necessary books for use during prayers. This is due to the unavailability of such books but also the financial challenges of individual members. Important books include the devotional of the Divine Mercy Apostolate, the *Diary* of St. Faustina, and the Seven Sorrows of Mary. Some members have all these books purchased from their personal resources.

The apostolates are thankful to Fr. Hemes Paononga who provided copies of the *Diary*, and also for connecting us with Dr. Bryan Thatcher who sent us diaries, Rosaries, and formation booklets 1, 2 and 3.

## JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

*Sister Sarah Justin wrote and told us:*

The St. Faustina Divine Mercy members are Catholic Christians in the Archdiocese of Juba in South Sudan who desire to emulate the life of St. Faustina. They implore the mercy of God especially for sinners, and for peace to reign in our country through praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet daily at three o'clock.

The group is committed to reach out to every soul in this country with the mercy of God through the following activities in English and the local dialects ("Juba Arabic" and "Bari"):

- Recollections: every First Saturday of the month, the group invites all Christians from all parishes and chapels to attend and participate. A priest teaches the Christians on the topic selected for the day, such as "Sin and Forgiveness."
- Broadcasting the Divine Mercy Chaplet on Radio Bakita at 3 o'clock daily, for to people immerse themselves in the mercy of God. On talk shows, listeners can understand the Divine Mercy of God and ask questions and request for prayers on various intentions.
- We have a program to visit monthly a hospital, orphanage, and prison to share what little we have with the needy but, most importantly, to pray for the mercy of God with them.

This group is committed to reaching every soul through prayers and deeds of mercy amidst challenges of supporting the needy with basic items such as sugar, soap for washing, etc. However, we continue to pray that the Lord opens up doors for the members of the devotion.

On Oct. 30, 2023, thousands of South Sudanese walked amid the strong heat in Juba to welcome their newly enthroned Cardinal, His Eminence Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla, from the airport. This was an historic day, a sign of maturity of the Church and a hope for peace to prevail in our country. The Cardinal's first words encouraged every one to forgive and work towards a lasting peace in the country.

Cardinal Stephen has been instrumental in the development of the Divine Mercy devotion through his words of encouragement and support towards existing Christian communities and devotions as a way of strengthening faith. The Divine Mercy Prayer Group had its constitution approved by His Eminence on March 30, 2024.

May this apostolate continue to serve as an instrument of evangelization and spiritual growth, and bring the message of redemption and salvation through the Divine Mercy devotion to all entrusted to its care.







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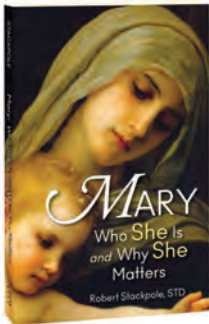
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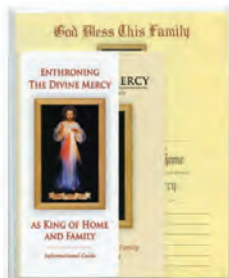
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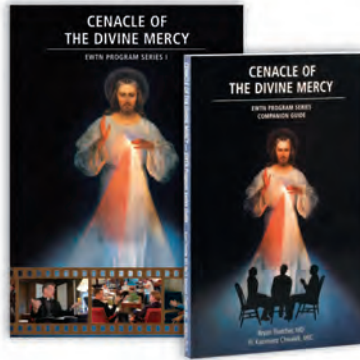
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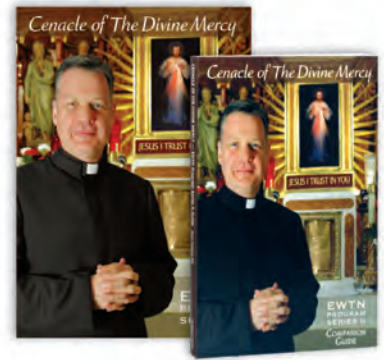
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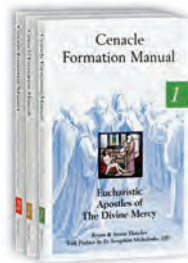
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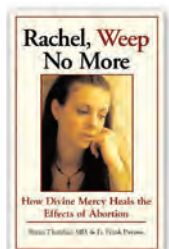


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Mary showed us how to be merciful in everyday decisions such as at the wedding Feast in Cana when she noticed the bride and groom were running out of wine. She knew this would cause great humiliation for them so she asked Jesus to help (see Jn 2:1-12).

Then, she showed us how to be merciful in making major decisions. Think about what went through Mary’s heart and what she did when she heard from the angel Gabriel the great news that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was pregnant with child.

Scripture tells us, “And behold, your kinsman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. . . . In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth” (Lk 1:36-40).

Mercy is love that seeks to forgive, console, assist, and care for others in time of need. Mercy is an act of love done without expecting anything in return. It is done for love itself.

Jesus made it clear in Sacred Scripture that love of God and neighbor is the greatest commandment. “But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, to test Him. ‘Teacher, what is the



great commandment in the law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with



all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets” (Mt 22:34-40).

Like Our Lady with her cousin Elizabeth, we should be quick to serve those in need. Like her at Cana, we should be attentive to the needs of others. We should understand that forgiveness is an act of mercy, and we should forgive others their offenses as we want to be forgiven by God. Out of humility, we should focus on our own sins and not the sins of others. We should be kind to others and always watch our tongue, for many have suffered from the ravages of an untrained tongue.

As Eucharistic Apostles, we believe that mercy is love that seeks to lessen the misery of others. Let us strive to be more like Mary, who always saw the need in others and acted to meet those needs.

## NEW FOCUS

*From page 1*

to speak to you personally on the work I am embarking on, and future newsletters will provide a detailed explanation. I still hope to speak to parishes on Divine Mercy and the Eucharist and Our Lady, so please keep me in mind. I will merely do what I can do and leave the rest in God’s hands.

Our Superior General, Fr. Joe Roesch, has been my spiritual mentor for 20 years and has given me permission to help the Marians overseas. The first project will start in the Philippines and has several facets. The Marians have a presence In Cagayan de Oro on the island of Mindanao. They have several priests living in their residence that lies adjacent to a large Divine Mercy Shrine.

Plans are to start with construction of a chapel with additional rooms for several purposes, and under consideration will be to use the rooms for teaching people skills so they can get a job. We also hope to provide

necessary medicine for the sick and needy at a daytime medical unit. Down the road we hope to provide scholarships for students so they can get an education and help provide for their families.

I will be going to the Philippines in July to speak to Fr. Darek and get a better and more complete picture of the goals. I will be taking photographs and using them in future newsletters and talks.

The work and progress will be in future newsletters, and will also be an intermittent topic on my podcasts series at [DrBryanThatcher.com](http://DrBryanThatcher.com).

If you or your group have any questions on this work, please email me at [drbryanthatcher@gmail.com](mailto:drbryanthatcher@gmail.com). If you send a gift to the Marians, please make sure you note it is for the Philippines project.

Please keep me in your prayers that the rays of God’s love and mercy may radiate from my heart in a greater way, and may all Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy be a reflection of the Divine Mercy Image.

Jesus I Trust in You!



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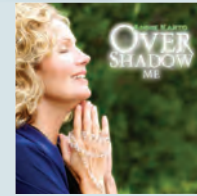


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If your cenacle would like to have Dr. Thatcher speak at your parish, call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727.



## WANT TO START A CENACLE?

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## Tune into 'Mercy Unbound'

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Our address is: Dr. Bryan Thatcher, EADM, 12452 Horseshoe Bend Drive, Lithia, FL 33547.