A PUBLICATION OF



The Miraculous Medal Shrine

EN ESS

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The Many White Culture her accompany of Mary

While Mary was thoroughly Jewish, different cultures and ethnicities have often portrayed her according to their own appearances.

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Saintly Visitors

The Miraculous Medal Shrine is a home for all the faithful, who are each "called to be saints" in his or her own lifetime. However, over the decades, the Shrine has also been home to some individuals who, after their deaths and a long process of investigation, have been give formal, ecclesial recognition as saints—or are on the official "path" to sainthood.

Philadelphia-native **St. Katherine** Drexel (1858-1955) was born a wealthy heiress, yet she gave herself and her inheritance to God by founding the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, which provided services to Native Americans and African Americans. St. Katherine also founded St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Germantown and asked the Vincentians to serve there as pastors and parochial vicars. (The parish has since merged with St. Vincent de Paul Parish.)

By the time of her death, St. Katherine's ministries had more than 500 sisters teaching in 63 schools throughout the country and 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 different states. She was canonized on October 1, 2000, by Pope John Paul II.

By all accounts, St. Katherine Drexel and students from her school were regular attendees of the Monday Perpetual Novena at the Shrine. She would sit in the thirdpew nearest the main shrine to Our Lady.

Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979) was an American archbishop known for preaching on his Emmy Award® winning television show, Life is Worth Living, which reached an audience of millions. Venerated in





HONORED GUEST SPEAKER AT SHRINE

Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was a welcome visitor to the Shrine (pictured second from left). Along with Archbishop Sheen are (left to right): Bishop John Graham; Archbishop Sheehan; Fr. Robert Cawley, CM, CAMM Director; Bishop Edward Hughes; and Fr. John Nugent, CM, Eastern Province Provincial.

2012 by Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis recently approved a miracle attributed to Archbishop Sheen, making possible the American television catechist's beatification at a yet-unannounced date.

Archbishop Sheen was a friend to the Vincentians of the Eastern Province, even having a Vincentian priest, Fr. Vincent Nugent, CM, as his secretary. While it is uncertain just how many times Archbishop Sheen visited the Shrine, we do know that he delivered the homily at the Shrine for the 1976 Feast Day Mass of the Solemn Novena.

Likewise, the Venerable Fr. Michael J. McGivney (1852-1890) founder of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic, fraternal men's organization, has been reported to have visited the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at St. Vincent's Seminary before it became the Shrine. Even more interesting, it is reported that Fr. McGivney formed the idea of the Knights of Columbus during two years of his seminary training at the College and Seminary of Our Lady of Angels, which became Niagara University, a Vincentian Institution. Like Archbishop Sheen, Fr. McGivney also had a Germantown-based Vincentian as his secretary.

Two well-known Germantown-based Vincentians, Fr. Thomas Judge, CM, and Fr. William Slattery, CM, whose causes for sainthood are being considered, have a natural connection to the Shrine. Fr. Judge (1868-1933) was an early promoter of layperson leadership in the Church, and Fr. Slattery (1895-1982) was the first American to serve as Superior General for the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity.

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Courtesy of Ducournau Archives



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To provide feedback or send a letter to the editor, email communications@ cammonline.org.



READ MORE ONLINE

Follow the web references for additional stories, videos, and photos. Visit the magazine website at MiraculousMedal.org/Message.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

We invite you to share your thoughts, stories, and photos from The Miraculous Medal Shrine and the Eastern Province ministries. Contact tshea@cammonline.org or follow us on social media.



Mary's Miraculous Medal Family



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MESSAGES

Dear Devotees of Mary Immaculate, May Mary, our mother, be our constant companion!

This edition of our magazine, The Miraculous Medal Message, focused on the many faces of Mary found in the shrines within the Shrine Church (page 14).

The Blessed Virgin Mary has made herself and her universal care and love present in many devotions throughout our world. All the nations of the world have been touched by her maternal care.

We have many of those manifestations represented throughout the Shrine and look forward to the imminent addition of the shrine of Our Lady, Queen of Ireland, to our grounds.

Being at the Shrine every day, I am blessed to see the many faces of devotees who come to pray and place their needs in Mary's hands.

Some of our visitors express their reverence by removing their shoes, others by bringing fresh flowers, and even more by lighting candles at the various shrines.

The Blessed Virgin Mary truly is mother to all peoples and all nations. Mary, Our Mother, intercedes for each of us, whatever the language of our prayer.

Yours in Mary Immaculate, Fr. Michael Carroll, CM Director, The Miraculous Medal Shrine *Spiritual Director,* Central Association of the Miraculous Medal

OTHER SHRINE NEWS SOURCES



GET SOCIAL

The Shrine's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms carry the most up-to-date prayers, news, events posts, and Marian reflections.



GET ONLINE

The Shrine has a new look to its website. Eniov more Marian-focused information, news, and devotional interaction.



GET UPDATES

Receive our monthly newsletter, InSPIRE, by signing up at miraculousmedal.org/ request-newsletter

Dear Miraculous Medal Family,

The world is having an extraordinary moment.

Every nation has been impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Countless devotees from across the globe have reached out to us to share stories about how the virus has impacted their families, friends, co-workers, and communities. Our online prayer community from around the world has asked that we pray with them to our Blessed Mother for guidance and grace during these unsettling times.

We have been asked to pray with them to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Vailankanni, Fiat, Fatima, Lourdes, and Knock, along with Our Lady of the Globe—the Miraculous Medal. Every culture prays to Mary in their own way, but regardless of the cultural nuances, we all agree that we are praying for the intercession of the Mother of Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

At the request of the various communities in our Shrine family, we are honored to share the many faces of Mary. In the coming pages, you will learn more about these shrines.

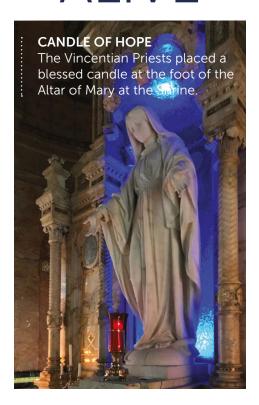
During this time of uncertainty, we invite you to pray with us to Our Lady each Monday as we livestream the 9:00 a.m. (EST) Mass and Novena. Join us daily as the Vincentian Priests lead us in prayers for Mary's protection.

Lastly, whatever trials, fears, and uncertainties come your way, never forget the message and promise Jesus and Mary gave to St. Catherine Labouré:

"... Those who wear the medal will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck. Those who repeat this prayer with devotion will be, in a special manner, under the protection of the Mother of God. Graces will be abundantly bestowed upon those who have confidence. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

Yours in our Blessed Mother, Mary Jo Timlin-Hoag Chief Executive Officer Central Association of the Miraculous Medal

Keep hope ALIVE



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every society, challenging people of faith throughout the world to adapt creatively during a time of confusion and uncertainty. It is a time when we instinctively seek comfort and support from one another. As a Catholic organization, The Miraculous Medal Shrine, offers spiritual support through our prayer request phone line and webpage, daily prayers by our Vincentian priests, and our virtual prayer family-all of us asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for her children.

The Shrine's flexibility is evidence of something we have always known to be true: The significance of the Shrine itself is in its community of the faithful, who the pray the Novena with us. Throughout this outbreak, we have been encouraged by the prevalence of virtual opportunities for prayer, offering our Novena online and crafting weekly emails with Marian-themed activities for children.

Adapting to these circumstances requires creativity, flexibility, and great trust in God. We urge you to pray to Our Lady and hold tight to your Miraculous Medal for comfort and peace. Clinging to our Blessed Mother will help us reach the other side of this pandemic with hope, and create a better world filled with Mary's message of love.

Know that the Vincentian Priests and Brothers at The Miraculous Medal Shrine are always with you in prayer.

Features



MANY FACES OF MARY

It is often said that God's wavs are mysterious. We could say the same thing about Mary.



VINCENTIAN PANAMA

CAMM staff member, Danielle Ferrari, travelled to Panama to document the Vincentian missions there.



CHINA & MARY

One Vincentian's mission to China established devotion to Mary and her Medal.



PRIESTLY PUPS

These canine confreres have become part of the fabric of the Eastern Province family.

Departments

NEWS & EVENTS

The Miraculous Medal Shrine and the Eastern Province are vibrant with activities, events, and news.

PEOPLE

People are the Shrine's and Vincentian community's greatest assets. Read the stories of how these special devotees inspire others to live a better life, while helping others along the way.

REMEMBER WHEN

The Shrine's history is best told through stories of devotion to Mary and her Medal.

PROMOTERS & RAYS Messages by and remembrances from the Miraculous Medal community, past and present.

NEWS & EVENTS



The Shrine now offers Sacramental Retreat programs for First Holy Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. Learn more at

miraculous medal.org/faith-communities/youth-ministry.



Sacramental Retreat

Second graders from St. Anthony of Padua Church, Camden, New Jersey, recently visited the Shrine for a daylong sacramental retreat. Working with Carolina Soares, the Shrine's Youth and Young Adults Program Coordinator, the teachers crafted a supplemental program for the students, who will be receiving their First Holy Communion this year. The students enjoyed fun activities and sacramental learning experiences, tailored specifically for their class.

SAINTLY INSPIRATION

St. Anthony of Padua second graders pictured with "St. Catherine Labouré" (Victoria Bonito).



"The Spirit of Christmas" Concert

During the 2019 Christmas holiday season, The Miraculous Medal Shrine hosted "The Spirit of Christmas" concert that displayed the sights and sounds of the season within the breathtaking interior of the Shrine.

All three performers, Andy Cooney, Daniel Rodriguez, and Christopher Macchio, are renowned for their performances to sold-out theaters and audiences in the United States and Europe.

The World's Big Sleepout

The grounds of The Miraculous Medal Shrine were the perfect spot for the World's Big Sleepout in December 2019. The Sleepout is an international event of solidarity, support, and awareness to the plight of the homeless and displaced. Donations raised by the Shrine's participants went to Depaul USA, a local charity supporting Philadelphia's homelessness, and the Sleepout's funding for children and families who are displaced internationally. Among those participating were seminarians, priests, CAMM staff members, the Eastern Province staff, and personnel from the Depaul House and Depaul USA.

Shrine Director Honored



At Niagara University's 2019 President's Dinner, Friday, November 15, 2019, Fr. Michael J. Carroll, CM, Director of The Miraculous Medal Shrine and Spiritual Director of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, was recognized for his years of dedication, support, and service to Niagara University and the Vincentian (Congregation of the Mission) community. The event, held at the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls, is held to support Niagara University's scholarship programs.

Fr. Carroll was among four recipients. As an alumnus of the Class of '73, '11 (Hon.), he received the St. Vincent de Paul Award.

Over the years, Fr. Carroll has held a number of assignments, including working in school ministry at Archbishop Wood High School, campus ministry at St. John's University in Queens, and as Executive Vice President for Student Services at the university's Rome campus. He was elected Provincial NIAGARA UNIVERSITY **HONOREES**

Left to right: Niagara University President's Dinner honorees Laura Zaepfel (Caritas Medal), Paul E. O'Leary Jr., '81 (Medal of Honor), Rev. Craig D. Pridgen (Legacy of Service Award), and Rev. Michael J. Carroll, CM, '73, '11 (Hon.), (St. Vincent de Paul Award) with the Rev. James J. Maher, CM, Niagara University president (center).

Superior for the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission in 2008 and served in that post until 2017. Today, Fr. Carroll promotes devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

Nearly 500 Niagara University alumni, students, and friends attended the event, the proceeds of which directly benefit Niagara University's scholarship programs. A total of \$272,000 was raised this year toward student scholarship assistance.

President's Letter to Fr. Skelly

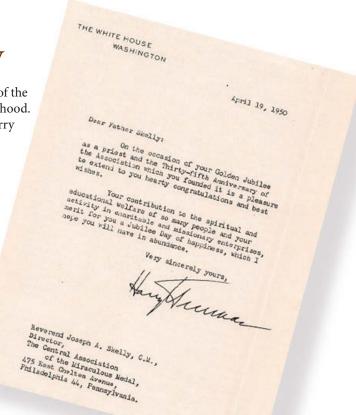
June 5, 2020, marks the anniversary of Fr. Joseph A. Skelly's (founder of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal) ordination to the priesthood. In commemoration of his Golden Jubilee (in 1950), U.S. President Harry Truman sent Fr. Skelly a letter to mark the occasion. The letter reads:

April 19, 1950 Dear Father Skelly:

On the occasion of your Golden Jubilee as a priest and the Thirty-fifth Anniversary of the Association, which you founded, it is a pleasure to extend to you hearty congratulations and best wishes.

Your contribution to the spiritual and educational welfare of so many people and your activity in charitable and missionary enterprises, merit for you a Jubilee Day of happiness, which I hope you will have in abundance.

Very sincerely yours, Harry Truman



NEWS & EVENTS



Halt Hate

Niagara University's Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, CM, Institute for Civic Engagement, in partnership with Leadership Niagara, united the community to "Halt Hate" on Thursday, April 2. Now in its second year, this annual initiative encourages participants to spend twenty-four hours choosing to respond compassionately to circumstances they encounter in their everyday lives. Students consciously seek to understand, practice tolerance, and gain perspective in each situation. The goal is for these actions to expand past twenty-four hours into a lifetime. In its first year, #HALTHATE content reached more than 28,000 social media users.

Participants followed Leadership Niagara and Niagara IMPACT on social media for thoughtful activities, "Hate Hacks," and updates. They used the hashtag #HALTHATE to share their stories about their efforts to impact positive change rather than react, and they challenged others through social media, as well.



Approximately 200 students from eight high schools throughout Western New York gathered on the Niagara University campus on March 3, 2020, to participate in "Sacred Conversations," the third annual youth, race, and equality conference hosted by the university's Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equality,

and Mission. The conference provided opportunities for students to address local and national issues of ethnicity; engage in dialogue about race and equity; and realize their potential in creating change through advocacy and collective action.

The students participated in workshops that addressed the role race plays in future goal-setting, how it sometimes creates an unequal playing field, and how justice movements can help overcome marginalization and oppression in communities. The workshops were led by Niagara University students.

Vincentian Universities Donate Much-needed Supplies

Early one morning at the Queens, New York, campus of St. John's University, staff loaded more than fifty boxes of classroom medical supplies into campus vehicles and transported them to nearby New York Presbyterian-Queens Hospital.

Inside the boxes were donations of critically needed personal protective equipment to assist local health workers on the front lines of fighting the global COVID-19 pandemic. The supplies included 186,000 medical gloves, 500 disposable lab coats, 100 surgical masks, and 20 protective face shields.

The rapid call to action began with a weekend email from Philip S. Lukeman, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Chemistry, which quickly generated immediate participation from the university's administration and faculty. The faculty remotely provided inventory information and the location of available supplies.

More than 400 miles away, Niagara University was answering the same call to action. What initially appeared to be an unexpected delivery might actually have been a happy coincidence, as an order of personal protective equipment, initially intended to be used by Niagara University's nursing students, was donated to the places that need them most—local hospitals and nursing homes.

Margarita Coyne, interim Dean of Niagara University's School of Nursing, spearheaded the effort, with the help of Dr. Maria Frosini Gadawski, a faculty member in the school, and Dr. Mary McCourt, a professor of chemistry, whose daughter works at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Thanks to their coordinated efforts, 22,000 pairs gloves, 500 masks, and 100 gowns



THE VINCENTIAN DIFFERENCE Volunteers from Niagara University packed supplies donated to area hospitals to help frontline healthcare workers deal with the COVID-19 outbreak.

arrived at Roswell Park, as well as Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center and Our Lady of Peace/Ascension group.

What happened is a classic St. John's answer to the Vincentian question, 'What *must be done?*'

> **BRIAN BROWNE** AVP, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

R.I.S.E. ABOVE

The students at St. John's University are required to enroll in experiential, sitebased learning programs, which involve community service. The service activities meet course objectives, and through reflection, students examine issues such as hunger, homelessness, education, civic engagement, and community youth services.

One such programs is R.I.S.E. (Reach, Inspire, Succeed, Empower), a scholar's empowerment network that provides first-year Black and Latino students with support, skill-based development, and opportunities to enhance their overall academic career.

The Freshmen mentors are former R.I.S.E. scholars. who benefitted from the program, and are trained to help others. The results have been outstanding: Retention rates for first-year R.I.S.E. scholars have outpaced those of the general student population, and their fouryear graduation rate has also increased.

The Middle States Accreditation Program commended St. John's, stating, "While most colleges have instituted or maintained service programs, St. John's is particularly well-organized and integrated into academic life."

St. John's University 150 years: Faithful to the Mission

In 1870, when the Congregation of the Mission (the Vincentians) first opened the doors of what was then known as St. John's College—located in a one-room farmhouse in Brooklyn, New York—those pioneering educators opened a world of opportunity to students and began an enduring mission to transform lives.

What began with forty-seven students and six faculty on Lewis Avenue in Brooklyn has evolved over the last century and a half into a truly metropolitan and global university.

As the university prepares for its 150thanniversary celebration beginning in September, they are ever mindful to always be faithful to their founding and enduring mission. So much so, that the theme selected for the year-long sesquicentennial celebration is "150 Years: Faithful to the Mission."

At St. John's, the dedicated university community works to create a path of mobility and open doors of opportunity for students who want to make a difference in the world. As a private, Catholic, and Vincentian university, St. John's prepares students for personal and professional success in today's global society while never wavering from their founding Catholic and Vincentian mission.

With its main campus located in Queens, New York, St. John's University also has campuses and locations in Staten Island, Manhattan, and Hauppauge, New York; Rome, Italy; Paris, France; and Limerick, Ireland.

St. John's University is comprised of six colleges, including the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; The Lesley H. and William L. Collins College of Professional Studies; St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; The Peter J. Tobin College of Business; The School of Education; and the School of Law. As of Fall 2019, the university has 1,561 full-time and part-time faculty, 17,088 undergraduate students, and 4,633 graduate students who come from 46 states and 119 countries.



All good happens because of you.

Help us continue our missions of providing the world with a place of hope to Our Lady and supporting the services and charity of the Vincentians of the Eastern Province for the poor, marginalized, and abandoned in society.





To watch the full interview, visit

vincentiansusa.org/news-and-events/vincentianscelebrate-170-years-in-philadelphia-ewtn-news-nightly/

EWTN Interviews Eastern Province Vincentians

In recognition of last year's 170th anniversary celebration of the Vincentians' arrival in Philadelphia, Frs. Michael Carroll, CM, and Timothy Lyons, CM (pictured right), were recently interviewed by EWTN contributor, Colm Flynn, on the rich history, influence, and experiences of the Vincentians of the Eastern Province. The interview focused on the Congregation's myriad ministries, and the longevity and significance of the Perpetual Novena and the Miraculous Medal.

Flynn referenced how 2019 marked a pivotal anniversary for the Vincentians and the profound impact they've had on thousands of lives. Fr. Carroll agreed.

"The problems of the Philadelphians back then are no different than those experienced today," noted Fr. Carroll. "There are a lot of people struggling, and we [the Vincentians] continue to be here and walk with this population to share the faith with them and offer them hope. We are right where we belong."

Homelessness and prison ministry were discussed as primary missions in



Philadelphia, given their significance and relevance both 170 years ago and today. Fr. Lyons cited how this was what St. Vincent de Paul, the Congregation's founder, instructed his followers to do.

"We have a continuous mission to live out the mission of [our] founder, St. Vincent." He added, "I feel the mission of the [Vincentian] community has only deepened."

Flynn also addressed how promoting devotion to Mary through the Miraculous Medal was—and will always be—rooted in the Vincentian ministries. "The Miraculous Medal is a symbol of devotion and a relationship with God." Fr. Lyons stated.

Vincentian Seminarians Internal Seminary



THE JOURNEY IS JUST BEGINNING

Pictured are (left to right) Rogelio Pineda, Fr. Teodoro Justavino, CM (Regional Superior), and Juan Carlos Guerra leaving for St. Juan Gabriel Perboyre, Vincentian Internal Seminary in Guatemala. Eastern and Western Provinces.

In January, seminarians Rogelio Pineda and Juan Carlos Guerra from Concepcion, Chiriqui, Panama, began Internal Seminary in the Congregation of the Mission. This experience involves a year of prayer, reflection, and discernment to discover the depth of their vocation and make their first commitment to the Vincentians by the end of the first year.

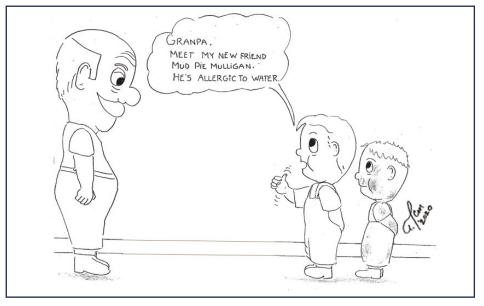
After a three-day retreat, Pineda and Guerra, along with other seminarians from neighboring Provinces (Central America, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Mexico), were formally received as beginning members of the Congregation. They have completed their philosophy studies in the San Jose Major Seminary in Panama City, Panama, and are now stationed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for their one-year Internal Seminary experience. This part of formation is a joint collaboration between the

Alma Mater Honors Fr. Rock



Fr. Richard J. Rock, CM, a Vincentian of the Eastern Province, was recently honored by his alma mater, Immaculate Conception Catholic Academy (formerly Immaculate Conception School), at its 95th Anniversary Ĉelebration. Fr. Rock and his siblings attended Immaculate Conception School where they were taught by the Sisters of the Holy Union of the Sacred Hearts.

After graduation from the school in 1959, Fr. Rock attended St. John's Preparatory School in Brooklyn, and it was there that he met the Vincentian Priests. The Vincentians, who served as administrators and faculty at St. John's Prep, had a major impact on Fr. Rock's life, which led to him entering the seminary to discern his priestly vocation. Fr. Rock was honored for his forty-six years of parish ministry, community service, and campus ministry.



Cartoon by Fr. Al Pehrsson, CM, a resident of St. Catherine's Infirmary, Philadelphia

NEW ARCHBISHOP WELCOMED

The installation of Archbishop Nelson J. Perez in Philadelphia was a joyous occasion for everyone, including the Vincentians. Having collaborated with the Hispanic Evangelization Team in Philadelphia, and later as an auxiliary bishop in Rockville Centre with the confreres in Southampton, the Archbishop has been a friend of the Vincentians for many years. Several Vincentian priests and brothers attended the ceremony at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral to greet the Archbishop and welcome him home.

THREE NIGHTS, THREE APPARITIONS

For three consecutive nights in early March, Fr. Michael Shea, CM, provided parishioners at St. Eleanor's Parish in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, with a Lenten reflection on the Marian apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré. Fr. Shea's presentation was part of the parish's Lenten Triduum honoring the Miraculous Medal, titled, "A Lenten Journey with Our Lady."

Focusing in chronological order on one apparition during each of the three nights, Fr. Shea, who serves as Associate Director of The Miraculous Medal Shrine, illuminated the three apparitions received by St. Catherine, and how Mary's words are relevant today. Almost 200 people attended the first night alone, with one parishioner commenting, "What a gift to have Fr. Shea here."

IN MEMORIAM

Fr. Joseph A. Elzi, CM: Oct. 27, 2019

Fr. William J. Sheldon, CM: Nov. 7, 2019

Fr. Harold G. Skidmore, CM: Nov. 28, 2019

The Many Faces of MARY

AS A FIRST-CENTURY JEWISH WOMAN, HER FEATURES AND CLOTHING WERE INDICATIVE OF THAT ERA.

Yet, in her numerous appearances to us, the ways in which she communicates with us, and how she presents herself to us, differ from country to country and region to region. In a sense, she transcends time and culture, immersing herself in our world, while helping us to become immersed in hers. What is it about Mary that is so attractive and surpasses the distinctiveness of each culture? Does she bring something to the places in which she appears?

Or do the places bring something to her?

SHRINE OF NOSSA SENHORA
DO SAMEIRO
Braga, Portugal
The statue of Mary depicted
in clothing appropriate for the
period in which she lived, and,
according to Jacinta (Fatima
apparition), the image that most
closely resembles Mary.
Credit: Vitor Laerte Pinto Junior/
CC BY-SA



MARIAN SHRINES AROUND THE WORLD

Shown is a small sampling of the thousands of Marian shrines throughout the world and their unique cultural distinctions.

OUR LADY OF JAPAN IN THE **BASILICA OF THE** ANNUNCIATION Japan

Credit: Creative Commons Zero



SHAPING AND BFING SHAPED

Fr. Robert Maloney, CM, has lived in the United States, Italy, and Panama, and is captivated by Mary's portrayal in art, literature, and music. He explains that throughout history, Biblical revelation and the traditions of our faith have helped shape our knowledge of Mary of Nazareth—as a mother, disciple, and role model. Illustrating his point, he notes that many renowned artists have painted at least one Madonna. Countless books have been written about her. And the songs about and prayers to her create an unending tide of veneration. In every century since Christ's earthly life, these facets of culture have shaped how people practically apply Marian devotion to their lives. "The wonderful thing is that everyone is so attracted to her. Every country has an image of the Madonna that's part of its culture," he states.

Fr. Patrick Griffin, CM, who also lived in Europe, concurs. "Mary brings her values, shows us things in a way we understand, and we give her a flavor to the specifics of our culture." In this loving exchange, we collectively shape the way she is portrayed, and she spiritually shapes us in the things that truly matter.

ONE OF US

Our Blessed Mother lived fully the human experience. Fr. Maloney notes, "Mary suffered from cold and hunger, from uncertainty about her future, from the death of her husband, and from the torture and death of her Son. When we're suffering, she understands and identifies with us-and us with her." Through the circumstances of daily life, "she shows us a way of relating to God, to one another, to suffering and death, and to resurrection. We're attracted to her because she's one of us."

When Fr. Griffin describes his experience as the Director General of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, he paints a picture that, like our Blessed Mother's life, is both tender and sorrowful. "A lot of lonely people go to the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal in Paris," he observes. "They're going through emotional matters that make waking up in the mornings difficult." So they turn to Mary, who consoles and strengthens them.

IT'S A MOTHER THING

In Scripture, Mary is presented as a mother and intercessor, and her maternal love is clearly one facet of our devotion and attraction. Fr. Griffin explains that throughout the New Testament, Mary shows what it is to be a mother: She gave her humanity to Jesus, nurtured Him, left her home to protect Him, and even forgave Him when He got lost in the temple. "The focus is on her motherhood," he reflects. "There is no culture where mothers are not valued." He pauses and then says, "It's a mother thing."

Chuck Levesque, Executive Director at Depaul USA, agrees. "Everyone has a biological mother, and mothers have a special role. Wherever you go, moms do the same thing: They look different and speak different languages, but they share commonalities." Having worked in Albania and now in Chicago within the homeless sector, he's seen motherhood through the lens of different religions and cultures. It's shown him the effects that losing a mother can have. "For someone on the verge of homelessness," he comments, "losing a mother can create a chain reaction that spirals quickly to losing work and losing hope."

While some people have neither positive nor strong relationships with their mothers, they can have one with Mary. "We can all agree that a mother should love her child," Fr. Griffin states. "For the person who has not had that experience, Mary offers it. She does love you. You can speak to her; she will listen. Mary is that kind of a mother."

SHE BRINGS JESUS

Mary is also presented in Scripture as an intercessor—one who, like Queen Esther, presents us and our needs before the throne of God. Of course, this implies that she listens to us. Fr. Maloney describes Mary as the perfect disciple, and discipleship is primarily listening and acting on what is heard. Mary spent most of her life listening—to God and to those around her—and she continues to do that. She listens to us, presents our needs to her Son, and then acts on His response. Through her hands, we receive God's graces. As Fr. Griffin points out, "Mary doesn't give us anything; she intercedes for us." Through her intercession, she brings us to Jesus. And through her hands, she brings Jesus and His blessings to us.



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

ENSHRINED IN OUR HEARTS

Throughout the centuries, Mary has indeed, blessed us, her children, by coming to our world in times of trial. There are copious reports of her apparitions, and while many share similar characteristics, there are a few that are quite distinctive. In the lower level of The Miraculous Medal Shrine are three smaller shrines, each of which is wonderfully unique among Marian apparitions—and a fourth is in development.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

The Latino community has always had a special devotion to our Blessed Mother. This devotion dates back to 1531, when Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a 57-yearold indigenous farmer, as he was walking to Mass. Our Blessed Mother told him to build a church on that spot, so, as she directed, he went to the bishop. But the bishop didn't believe him and asked for proof of his story. The next day, Juan returned to the hill and found Castilian roses in bloom—unusual for December.

He gathered the roses in his tilma (a cloak made of cactus fiber) and held them close to his chest, exactly as Mary instructed. When he reached the bishop and opened his cloak, the beautiful roses fell out. To the astonishment of everyone present, the tilma bore a beautiful image of the Blessed Mother. Like the Miraculous Medal, the image was given directly from heaven, and it was uniquely filled with symbols familiar to the Aztec people. Over the centuries, it has formed the identity of millions of Latinos, and the miracles around it continue to flourish. Just ask Guadalupe Da Costa Montesinos.

"My mom named me after Our Lady of Guadalupe as a way of saying 'thank you' for protecting me during her pregnancy," Guadalupe says. "When she was pregnant, she not only developed a kidney infection, but the umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck at birth. My mom told me I was blue when I was born." Although she lost a fair amount of oxygen from that complication, she was born a perfectly healthy baby.

Guadalupe, too, has received miraculous help from Mary. "I had great difficulty becoming pregnant," she says. "The doctors told me that I would never be able to conceive. So, my husband and I prayed to Our Lady of Guadalupe,

asking for her intercession. After waiting and praying for ten years, I finally got pregnant." Guadalupe's daughter is also named Guadalupe, in honor of our Blessed Mother's miraculous help.

In 2019, the Shrine honored Our Lady of Guadalupe with an original oil painting by Jose Gerardo Rico, which was commissioned and paid for by the Latino community and placed in the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Lower Shrine. For the past twenty years, the community has felt at home in the Shrine now that they have a special place to pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe, a symbol of their identity and faith.

"The Latino culture is collectivist," Guadalupe says. "We like to do things together as a group." Once a month, morning and evening Spanish Masses are celebrated. "This makes a huge difference in our lives, because we are able to understand the homily, the readings, and the Mass itself," explains Guadalupe, "and we can interact with other Spanishspeaking people. The homilies always revolve around Mary and her example and encourage us to go to Jesus through her." After Mass, the community gathers in the Lower Shrine "to share our testimonies and a light lunch." The entire day is a visible witness of their love for Mary.

OUR LADY OF VAILANKANNI

South India has an impressive Catholic history. It dates back to the communities that St. Thomas the Apostle founded when he reached the present state of Kerala in 52 AD. Steeped in their faith for generations, Catholics lived their beliefs visibly with statues, images, and shrines of the Blessed Mother, Infant Jesus, and Sacred Heart dotting the landscape.

Our Blessed Mother rewarded their faith, appearing first in spring of 335 AD and twice in the 16th century. In her two latter appearances, Mary was carrying her Son, and both times she came to a young boy and asked him for milk for her Child. In her second appearance, Mary also asked a young, crippled boy to tell one of the men to build a shrine on that spot in her honor. Surprisingly, the boy miraculously jumped up and delivered her message. Recognizing the miracle, the man built a small wooden structure as she requested.

Approximately fifty years later, a Portuguese ship was in the Bay of Bengal when a fierce storm hit. The sailors prayed to the Blessed Mother for protection and promised they would build a chapel if she saved them. The storm ceased, and the ship landed at a shore near Vailankanni. When the sailors disembarked, they found the wooden structure, and constructed



OUR LADY OF FIAT the Blessed Virgin to help bring that ancient Indian devotion to American soil.

a beautiful stone chapel in its place. The people in Kerala have flocked to Mary's shrine in Vailankanni, Our Lady of Good Health, ever since.

Interestingly, Vailankanni is the only known apparition where Mary requested milk for her Child. As the young boys eagerly responded by giving her their buckets of milk, Mary returned God's divine graces to that spot and to everyone who humbly prays for her assistance. Jose Thomascan attest to that.

Jose and his family began coming to the Shrine eight years ago when their newborn son, Immanuel, was admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. While in the hospital, one of the nurses blessed the baby with a Miraculous Medal. That simple act prompted the family to visit the Shrine. Raised in deeply religious homes, Jose and his wife knew the power of the Blessed Mother, so they began attending the Monday Novenas regularly and pleading for Mary's intercession. One afternoon, Jose saw a sign in the Lower Shrine asking for financial assistance in completing the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Health Vailankanni. He immediately promised

He contacted the Shrine to see how much money was needed to finish the project, and then reached out to his friends, family, and fellow parishioners. Each and every one of them responded—with

> greater contributions than Jose had requested. There were minor setbacks, but he persevered in his mission and invoked the assistance of Fr. John Melepuram, a great Marian devotee and then Vicar of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church in Northeast Philadelphia. Through the tremendous

contributions of the entire Indian community, a statue was made in India and shipped to the Shrine in Philadelphia; a special niche was built to house it; and a Solemn Mass of Inauguration and Rosary Procession were held. Approximately 800 people from the tri-state area attended. And within two years, Immanuel, who had severe heart issues and needed a transplant, had been miraculously healed. The doctors were stunned and called it an "act of God." But Jose and his wife weren't surprised. "Our devotion to the Blessed Mother has only become stronger," he states. He is not alone in that sentiment.

OUR LADY OF FIAT

A priest from the Philippines once said that if you want to understand Filipino Catholics, you need to understand their love for Mary. Part of that can be attributed to their strong sense of family, where affection toward their own mothers is so important. It's natural to consider "Mama Mary" (as Filipinos lovingly address her) as their spiritual mother. Mary's faith in God and her "Fiat"—her humble obedience to God's will—is another source of devotion and inspiration.

A group of Filipino-Americans in Philadelphia took Mary's "Fiat" to be their association's name: Filipinos in America Today (FIAT). FIAT's inception was the outgrowth of a Life in the Spirit Seminar that began in the parish of St. John Chrysostom in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, in 1993. To "keep the fire burning," they held weekly Bible Studies, annual retreats, and monthly Healing Masses with Adoration every First Friday. Their spirituality is decidedly Marian humble obedience to God's will and caring for those in need.

Along with outreach to a poor urban community in Malabon, Philippines, FIAT banded together under Fr. Efren Esmilla, current pastor at Our Lady of Hope in Philadelphia, to build the Shrine of Our Lady of FIAT. This shrine is a sacred space of prayer where "our Blessed Mother keeps all these things in her heart."

Ruby Kirkup has experienced Mary's love first-hand. Her mother had a great devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Miraculous Medal, and that love was

There is no culture where mothers are not valued. It's a mother thing.

embedded in Ruby, as well. When Ruby's daughter was pregnant, she discovered she had a disease of the placenta, and the twin boys she was carrying might not live. Ruby visited various shrines in Philadelphia, and when she came to the Shrine, she prayed to Mary to intercede for her grandsons. Both boys were premature, but, defying the negative prognosis, they were alive and had no irreparable health conditions. Since then, Ruby has been a regular at the Shrine, and when she learned about the new shrine to Our Lady of FIAT, she felt compelled to act. "We're drawn to our devotions," she says, "I totally believe that."

OUR LADY OF KNOCK

OUR LADY

OF KNOCK

The Irish first arrived in Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War. William Penn, himself, had ties to Ireland; Benjamin Franklin had visited the country in 1771; and eight of the Declaration of Independence signatories were of Irish descent. Almost a century later, the Great Hunger ushered tens of thousands to the City of Brotherly Love. They brought with them a steadfast faith, for which they had

been persecuted for more than 300 years, and a deep devotion to Mary. When they settled in Germantown, they helped build the chapel now known as The Miraculous Medal Shrine. The Shrine was a gathering place for this community, a place where people could come and hear news about home. A place where they found comfort in the Blessed Mother's presence.

Her presence was not a metaphorical one to the Catholics who were still in Ireland in 1879. In her apparition at Knock, Mary appeared next to a small, stone church in an impoverished area of County Mayo. With her were St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, and the Lamb of God, standing on an altar surrounded by adoring angels. It was a rainy night, yet the water didn't touch the heavenly visitors or the ground beneath them—even though the visions stood a few feet above the earth. Not a word was spoken, making this apparition exceptional. Words weren't needed. Comfort was. And that's what flowed from the apparition: peace, consolation, and hope. In the two hours that passed, more than twenty people witnessed this event.

Jim Dowling, a second generation Irish Philadelphian, laments that while there have been more than 300 miraculous cures recorded at Knock, it isn't as wellknown as Fatima and Lourdes. But in the tri-state area, many of the Irish are once again coming together at the Shrine to share their love for their homeland, their faith, and their devotion to Mary. As she appeared tangibly to their forefathers to comfort them, they're creating something tangible to honor her, who continues to comfort her children. Now, a shrine to Our Lady of Knock is in development at the Shrine.

MARY'S SYMBOL

When Mary visited St. Catherine Labouré, she brought with her a gift from heaven: the Miraculous Medal. Much like in Mexico of 1531, Mary left a physical remembrance of God's love for us. Fr. Griffin reminds us that the period in which Mary appeared to St. Catherine was the second wave of the revolution. Not only were people dying due to war and hunger, plagues were devastating the population, as well. People started attaching this newly created Medal to the pillows of people who were suffering from the plague—and many of them were healed. It was from experiences like this that the Medal became known as the Miraculous Medal.

Our world still needs the peace and love that God offers. He doesn't withdraw His graces, so the Miraculous Medal is just as powerful today as it was then. It's not a lucky charm that can be worn without faith; it's a reminder of His tender love for each us individually and Mary's gentle care and guidance. Whether we turn to Mary as Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Our Lady of FIAT, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Knock, or Our Lady of Vailankanni, if we turn to her in deep prayer, wear her Miraculous Medal with confidence, and live a sacramental and selfless life.

For event information for Spanish Masses, Our Lady of FIAT celebrations, and Vailankanni celebrations contact Colleen Buckley, cbuckley@cammonline. org. For information on Our Lady of Knock, contact Sheila O'Hagan McGirl at 800.523.3674.



Visit miraculousmedal.org/ support-knock to learn more about Our Lady of Knock Shrine.

Recording the Vincentian

PANAMA

DANIELLE FERRARI, CAMM'S VIDEO MANAGER, travelled to Panama to capture the work of the Vincentians in that area. What she came back with was more than she had ever expected.





The Vincentian Priests and Brothers have served the Panama region since 1914. Originally sent to Panama to minister to the English-speaking individuals around the Canal Zone, the Vincentian's ministry has changed drastically over the past century.

The goal of this trip was to capture the story of Panama and share the ministerial work with our Miraculous Medal Family. For me, what came out this trip was a greater understanding and appreciation for the impact these missionary Priests and Brothers have on individuals and the importance of sharing our faith and beliefs with younger generations.

As I sat on the airplane ready to take off, I had butterflies in my stomach. While I enjoy travelling, I am someone who likes to plan everything, and on this trip, my agenda was in the hands of the Vincentian Priests we were visiting: Frs. John Carney, CM, and Joseph Fitzgerald, CM.

Upon landing in Panama City, we were greeted by Fr. Carney, a soft-spoken man. Donning a safari hat, Fr. Carney warmly embraced and welcomed us to his adopted country. Our first stop was for a lunch of chicken and rice, a staple Panamanian meal.

Fr. Carney has been serving in Panama for thirty-eight years. Even though we only spent two days with him, it was obvious he had a deep passion for the people of Panama and his work with them.

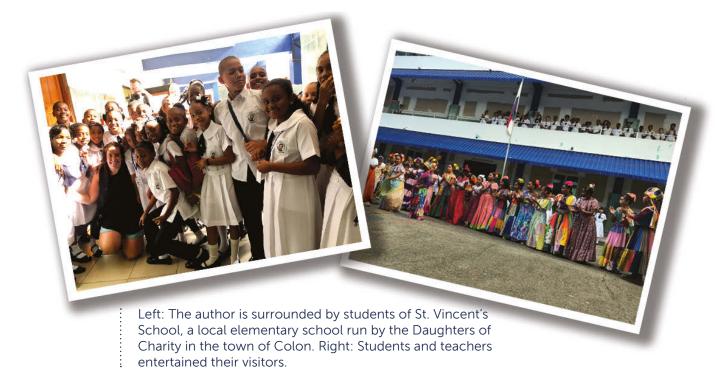
Travelling through the towns was an evolving journey. From Escobal, a small town of 2,400 people in the Colon Province metropolis to Panama City, we watched the scenery transform from greenery and forests to city. Rain came down in torrents then quickly cleared up, a typical seasonal forecast. By dinner, we arrived in a quaint little village lined with colorful huts, laundry hanging on clothes lines, dogs running throughout the streets, and a sky brilliant with colors as the sun set. The town had an authenticity to it that made me sigh, "Ah, this is Panama."

We were invited to attend Mass in a small clay church where ten wooden pews were filled with locals celebrating their faith. Fr. Norberto Ábrego Bonilla, CM, celebrated the Mass and encouraged the congregants to stay after the celebration and talk to us. Fr. Carney served as our translator throughout the trip and assisted us in getting acquainted with the parishioners.

The locals expressed their gratitude in having Fr. Norberto celebrate Mass in the community. I was struck that something as common as the Mass was such a luxury to these people.

That evening, we enjoyed dinner with Frs. Bonilla and Eliseo Troetsch, CM, who shared laughs and stories about the Vincentian Priests and their roles in the community. It was the perfect start to our trip, and a beautiful way to become immersed into the culture.

After dinner, we embarked on the long journey back to Colon, where we would be spending the night. As we made our way to the city, I noticed the scenery changing once again. We were now entering a



much more urban setting lined with varying levels of poverty. This poverty was familiar to me having experienced it in my hometown of Philadelphia: people sleeping on the streets, trash cluttering the sidewalks, abandoned buildings, windows covered with boards, and graffiti and barbed wire on door frames. It is an unfortunate reminder that while we were in a land vibrant with scenery and culture, poverty exists.

DAY 2

I woke up bright and early, eager to shower before we started the day. With only cold water available, it was a quick, "cowboy shower" as my Gram used to call it. We began with a visit to St. Vincent's School, a local elementary school run by the Daughters of Charity. The students and teachers had prepared songs, dances, and stories for our visit. I was overwhelmed by these children, who greeted us with hugs and smiles. The first half of the day was spent learning about the good works the Daughters of Charity do for the community. Not only do they manage an elementary school, they also oversee a boarding school for young teenage girls, who wouldn't ordinarily receive an education.

Later that morning, we made our way to the local soup kitchen, also managed by the Daughters. There were people of all ages gathering for a midday meal. I helped out in the kitchen preparing a meal that consisted of a bowl of rice, broth, and chicken. As we finished serving the guests, I was invited to the back room to have

lunch with the staff. As I was handed my bowl, I realized I was getting the same meal I had distributed to the guests at the soup kitchen. In that moment, I caught myself thinking, "How can I eat the same meal I just handed out to the homeless?" It was a humbling experience, and provided a lesson I will never forget.

We ended our visit at St. Joseph's Parish by meeting with the youth of Colon. They shared their stories and explained how they incorporated the Vincentian charism into their daily lives. These twelve young teenagers talked about how Fr. Carney and the other Vincentians have impacted their lives and faith. It was a reminder of how youth are proud to live out their faith by serving others. When our meeting ended, we headed to our next destination, the Balboa district of Panama City.

DAY 3

By day three, our team needed a recharge, figuratively and literally. At this point, we were visiting the seminarians and other Vincentian Priests at St. Mary's Parish. Our gracious hosts warmly greeted us, and we were pleasantly surprised to receive homecooked meals prepared by Formation Director Fr. José Delgado Flores, CM.

The day began with interviews of the current seminarians in the process of discerning their vocation. We captured their personal faith journeys and how they each felt called to be a Vincentian. What impressed me most was how the seminarians spoke of their love for serving the poor and their personal connection

and inspiration with Vincentian priests, who follow in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul. A young seminarian in his fourth year of theology, shared, "I want to be a Vincentian Priest, because I want to share my life with the people, the poor, and the hungry." This sentiment echoed across all the seminarians we interviewed.

Fr. Teodoro Rîos, CM, the pastor at St. Mary's Parish, and Fr. José Pio Jiménez, CM, a retired Vincentian, both live with Fr. Flores and the seminarians. Both priests welcomed us and cordially engaged with our crew. Fr. Rîos expressed the underlying Vincentian calling in Panama. "Every place that is poor is special to the Vincentians. The Vincentians came to Panama because of the poor, and that is what makes the Vincentian's mission so special. We are here to defend the dignity of the human person, whether they are poor or not, and that is what we do. To me, that is what makes being a Vincentian so special."

Later that day, we gathered for evening Mass with Fr. Rîos, and then enjoyed pizza and beer. It was fun to see the seminarians and Priests truly enjoy one another's company and to be part of their small close-knit family.

DAY 4

Day 4 began with an early departure to David to meet up with Fr. Joseph Fitzgerald, CM, for the final leg of our journey. Fr. Fitzgerald and a family of the indigenous Ngäbe greeted us. The family was ceremoniously dressed in their traditional, native garments.

We headed to the mountains of Soloy, where Fr. Fitzgerald lives with and serves the native Ngäbe population. We travelled up the mountains and through the jungle. It was a majestic site and was noticeably similar to scenes in the film, Jurassic Park. Before I left for the trip, The Miraculous Medal Shrine Director, Fr. Michael Carroll, CM, instructed me to, "make sure Fr. Fitzgerald stops at the spot [similar to where Jurassic Park was filmed], so you can get a picture. He will know the spot if you ask him." Luckily, we were able to stop and take a photo of the mountains and jungle with our guides.

During our ride to David, we asked our hosts what we could expect. "Will I see any big cats?" I joked. Fr. Fitzgerald responded, "They're here, but if we see them during the day then something is wrong." I laughed saying, "You're joking, right?" He replied, "Nope, not at all." We also had concerns about other potential dangers. "Do I need to worry about anything? Snake bites?" "Well, snake bites are a reality here. But hopefully they won't impact our trip." Needless to say, our crew was nervous and the sound technician summed up what we were all thinking: "Wait a minute, I didn't sign up for this!" We all laughed, but Fr. Fitzgerald told us that Theresa, one of the Ngäbe who accompanied us, was a snake bite survivor. While it is uncommon, it is a still a potential reality. This spurred a deeper conversation concerning hospitals and medical treatment available for those living in the mountains. The Vincentians have

been instrumental in setting up healthcare centers to care for pregnant women and those who are ill, so that people would not have to travel long distances to seek medical assistance.

When we arrived in Soloy, we were greeted by nearly fifty or more adults, teenagers, and children. Fr. Fitzgerald gave us a tour of his residence, a small hut with a kitchen, reading area, bathroom, and bedroom. To say the accommodations were modest would be an understatement. We visited with the youth group, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the teachers of the catechetic programs.

Fr. Fitzgerald serves the entire Soloy region. He travels for days by horse, foot, or truck, to get to some of the most remote areas in the jungle in order to celebrate the Eucharist with the communities. He explained that catechists are important because they allow the laity to celebrate the Word together even if the priests are unavailable.

The next part of our visit included lunch, where we enjoyed the vibrancy of the native culture. Toward the afternoon, we set off for Concepción in the Chiriqui Province of Panama, where we met more active laity and Vincentian followers. We visited Fr. Alcibiades Guerra Gonazález, CM, and once again were moved by the laity's commitment to not only the Vincentian mission and principles, but following in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul and Jesus Christ.

DAY 5

The final day of our trip brought us to Volcán, a mountain parish in the Chirqui Province of Panama. It was a beautiful day, with a light breeze, which was a welcome break from the hot days spent in Colon. We met Fr. Edison Famanîa, CM, who served many of the communities throughout Volcán. We celebrated Mass in a beautiful openwindow church, which the community built and personally funded. Catechetic programs were held after Mass, and we met with the laity, who were inspired by the work of the Vincentians and wanted to follow their example. One woman, Elena Diaz Morales, commented, "I began to work with the Vincentians in 1975 in the formation center. It was the only formation center in the area. People came to learn the history of the Church. When the program began, only men entered. I was the second woman to go through the formation process, and the Vincentians supported me. For me, the center was like a university. Now, with more lay leadership, we are able to assist the priests and visit communities to celebrate the Word together."

That night, we had our final dinner with Fr. Fitzgerald. While our visit was brief, we bonded like close friends. As I packed up my belongings that night, I felt a ton of emotions as I reflected on the experiences and people I had met that week. Each person, place, and experience had an impact on me, which I will forever remember and hold close to my heart.







The Holy REMEDY

BY THE 16TH CENTURY, A STRONG MARIAN CULTURE WAS EMERGING IN CHINA. One Vincentian travelled to East Asia with a dream and a vision to build on this devotion by introducing the Miraculous Medal.

The landscape is vast, uniting coastal plains with verdant mountains, open steppes with crammed cities, spotless streets with impenetrable air pollution. This is China, the land of contradictions, and its relationship with Christianity is complex.

The first Catholics to arrive in China were the Franciscans, who ventured the rugged trip across the Black Sea and Crimea in the late 13th century. Upon arrival, they found a land and people who were intriguing, and markets that held fascinating goods, like silk, cinnamon, and porcelain. The Franciscans brought their love for the Church and our Blessed Mother, frequently using popular Marian images from their Italian homeland to explain the faith. The one they used most often was known as "the Madonna of Humility, where Mary is painted holding Jesus in her lap." In 1299, they built the first Catholic Church in current-day Beijing, and by the time the Jesuits came to China in the 16th century, they discovered "there was already a strong culture of Chinese Marian imagery, or at least of Marian imagery produced in China."2 Thus, the groundwork for a strong devotion to Mary had been laid.

VINCENTIANS IN CHINA

Fast forward to St. Vincent de Paul, whose Congregation of the Mission became international during his lifetime.3 While he had read about China and desired to send missionaries there, St. Vincent didn't live to see that dream realized. In 1697, thirty-seven years after his death, the first Vincentian missionary, accompanied by a diocesan priest, who later joined the Congregation, made the two-and-a-halfyear journey to China. They established a seminary in Chongquing and ordained priests, but by 1760, the mission had dwindled. Twenty-four years later, the Vincentians were asked to return to China.

It's been estimated that by the 1830s, approximately 200,000 Chinese had become Christians. And while some of the Catholic priests and lay people had been martyred (like St. Francis Regis Clet, CM, who was tortured and killed in 1820 at Wuchang, modern-day Wuhan), missionaries continued to arrive in China.

Enter St. John Gabriel Perboyre, CM, who, like St. Vincent, had a dream to serve in China. Born in France in 1802, he joined

the Congregation of the Mission at the age of sixteen and was ordained a priest at twetny-three. In 1835, he arrived in Macau and remained there for six months before spending another six months traveling to Hunan, where he had been assigned. He remained in Hunan for a year and a half, after which he was asked to go to the province of Hubei in January 1838.

Much like the Franciscans before him, he brought a familiar and loved remembrance of his homeland throughout his ventures in China: the Miraculous Medal. According to Fr. Robert Maloney, CM, St. Perboyre knew Fr. Jean Marie Aladel, CM, who was the spiritual director of St. Catherine Labouré. "A reading of Perboyre's letters makes it evident that he and others brought the [Miraculous Medal] to China soon after the apparitions in Paris and, through it, fostered devotion to Mary."4

Even prior to leaving for China, St. Perboyre was already distributing the Miraculous Medal. While still in Paris, he wrote to his uncle, telling him about it and promising to send some to him. "His letters to his brother, Antoine, and to his uncle ... make frequent references to the medals and to miracles. He often encloses medals for others to distribute and promises to send them a printed account of the miracles," notes Fr. Maloney.

But he didn't just write about medals, he lived the message. While travelling to Indonesia, he and his fellow missionaries were hit by a severe storm with waves that billowed like mountains around their boat. The missionaries raised their hands



Left: Madonna Enthroned with the Christ Child (circa 1250-1260). Courtesy wikimedia.org Pictured above: Our Lady of China at the main altar in the Shrine of Our Lady of China, Dong lu, Hebei, China. Courtesy wikimedia.org



St. John Gabriel Perboyre, CM, missionary in China. Courtesy of GrandBout / CC BY-SA

in prayer and invoked the Blessed Mother, using the words on the back of the medal, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Instantly, the storm abated.

When St. Perboyre arrived in China, he discovered that the Catholics already had a deep love for, and devotion to, Mary. For 500 years, they had been experiencing her protection and maternal care. It was a prime moment to talk about the

Fr. John Gabriel Perboyre, CM, brought a familiar and loved remembrance of his homeland throughout his ventures in China: the Miraculous Medal.

Miraculous Medal. What could be more natural than giving the faithful a tangible medal to wear around their necks? What better way to remind them to turn to Mary in their need? What other heavenly gift could strengthen their Catholic identity as strongly as the Medal?

As soon as St. Perboyre began giving the Medals away, people started experiencing their powerful effects. Writing to his confreres in France, St. Perboyre mentioned a young woman who was cured through the intercession of the Miraculous Medal after suffering from a mental disorder for eight months. She wanted to go to confession, and while St. Perboyre knew that suffering from disabilities is not a sin, out of compassion for her, he acquiesced.

"I placed her under the especial protection of the Blessed Virgin—that is, I gave her a medal of the Immaculate Conception"6 St. Perboyre wrote. "She did not then understand the value of the holy remedy

she received; but, from that moment, she began to experience its beneficial effects ... improving so rapidly that, at the end of four or five days, she was entirely changed. To a complete confusion of ideas, to fears that kept her ever in mortal agony ... succeeded good sense, peace of mind, and happiness. She made her confession again and received Holy Communion, with the most lively sentiments of joy and fervor."7

Other Vincentian priests related similar healings through the Medal:

"In the province of the Hou-Kouang, a Christian had been racked by a terrible fever for two months, accompanied by constant delirium. Three physicians had attended him, but in vain. Finding himself on the verge of death, he sent for me to administer the Last Sacraments. I gave him the Holy Viaticum, but deferred Extreme *Unction, seeing that my duties would retain* me in that locality some time longer. I made him a present of the medal, and advised a novena, assuring him, that if it were for the benefit of his soul, he would be restored to health. He began the novena; on the seventh day, the fever left him, and on the eighth he had recovered his usual strength. On the ninth day of the novena, he came to see me, and assured me that he was perfectly well. I reminded him of thanking the Blessed Virgin for so great a favor, and he promised to recite with his friends the Rosary in her honor." 8

"In Tien-Men ... the Christians, numbering about two hundred, are distinguished for their piety and a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. For eight years, successive inundations had reduced these Christians to extreme poverty; but this year, at the first sign of an overflow, they had recourse to Mary Immaculate by means of the medal, and soon the waters retired without doing the slightest harm to the Christian territory ... And our Christians now return most grateful thanks to their good Mother for the abundant harvest they have just gathered." 9

St. Perboyre and other Christians suffered the same fate as St. Francis Regis Cletand in the same spot—Wuhan. Who better to ask for an end to the pandemic than those who died for the Faith? Through them, the Faith remained strong.

During the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), more than 10,000 soldiers attacked Donglu, a small, destitute village where the Vincentians had founded a mission.

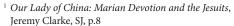
The Catholics were clearly outnumbered, and they huddled together praying to our Blessed Mother. Suddenly, there appeared a beautiful woman in the sky, dressed in white and surrounded by light. The soldiers aimed their weapons at her and fired. She didn't disappear. Instead, a "fiery horseman" appeared and charged toward them. Frightened, they retreated and fled the village.

To thank Mary for her powerful protection, a church was built and a painting was commissioned. The painting, which depicts Mary and her Child dressed in golden imperial robes, was declared the official image of Our Lady of China by Pope Pius XI (the same pope who beatified St. Catherine Labouré). The painting was placed above the altar, and the church became a Marian shrine and place of pilgrimage.

On May 23, 1995, at the vigil of Our Lady Help of Christians, more than 30,000 Catholics from the unofficial Chinese Church gathered for Mass at the shrine. During the opening prayer, Our Lady of China and her Son appeared, surrounded by rays of light. The apparition lasted approximately 20 minutes. The next day, the government banned pilgrims from the shrine, but almost 100,000 of them secretly crept to the grounds and celebrated the Feast Day.

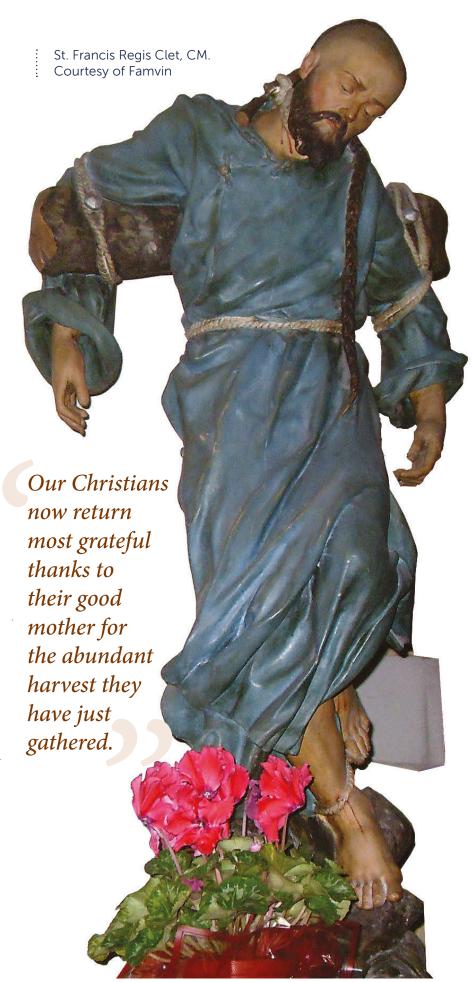
The next year, the Communists demolished the church, arrested many priests, and stole the statue of the Blessed Mother. However, searching through the rubble, the faithful found the painting—intact.

Throughout her appearances in China, Mary has shown herself as a regal queen, tender mother, and powerful protector. Much like her apparition at Knock (see "The Many Faces of Mary" on page 14), her presence in Donglu strengthened her persecuted children, who have remained steadfast in the Faith for decades, intent on honoring Our Lady. 🖓



² Ibid, p.10

- ⁴ Four Themes in the Spirituality of St. John Gabriel Perboyre, Fr. Robert Maloney, CM
- ⁶ This was the original name of the medal; only after countless miracles had occurred from wearing it did it become known as the Miraculous Medal
- ⁷ The Miraculous Medal: Its Origin, History, Circulation, Results, Fr. Jean Marie Aladels
- 8 Ibid
- ⁹ Ibid



³ Our Vincentian Mission in China: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Fr. Robert Maloney, CM, famvin.org/wiki/ Vincentians_in_China

The New Evangelization SAINTALIVE

On November 15, 125 high school sophomores from St. Hubert Catholic High School for Girls in Philadelphia visited The Miraculous Medal Shrine. The students expected to hear the story of how Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Labouré to entrust her with the creation of the Miraculous Medal.

What they didn't expect was to hear the story from St. Catherine herself—or rather, from Victoria Rose Bonito, a professional actress who portrays St. Catherine for Shrine visitors. These students were the first to witness the performance of St. Catherine Labouré, what the Shrine calls, "Saint ALIVE!"

WHY A LIVE ACTION SAINT?

As part of the New Evangelization, recent popes have asked all Catholics to enliven the faith in new ways-to cut through the noise of modern life and energize the faithful in their love of God and the Church.

Pope Francis recently acknowledged the power of the saints, saying to an audience on the Feast of All Saints, November 1, 2019: "The memory of the saints leads us to raise our eyes to Heaven, not to forget the realities of the earth, but to face them with more courage and with more hope."

The Miraculous Medal's very-own St. Catherine Labouré had been on the mind of Mary Jo Timlin-Hoag, Chief Executive Officer of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal (CAMM), since joining CAMM in January 2018.

Through a unique experience at the Shrine, people can interact with the saint who brought us the Miraculous Medal.

> MARY JO TIMLIN-HOAG CEO, CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

GROUPS OF ALL AGES ARE LEARNING THE STORY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL in a fresh and exciting way, which brings a miraculous piece of Catholic history to life.



"We were having conversations about how we could bring the message of Our Lady and the promise of the Miraculous Medal to a younger generation. We discussed how young adults communicate today and discovered that two things resonate with them: short videos and first-person storytelling."

The Shrine already creates popular videos for evangelization, and while effective, videos have become status quo. "Videos are everywhere and have been done many times over," she says. "We'll continue to produce lively, instructional videos, but we also want to break through with something new and far reaching."

Consulting with Shrine Director Fr. Michael Carroll, CM, they looked to first-person storytelling. "From spending time at historical sites like Gettysburg and Independence Hall, where live actors recreate historical scenes, I know how inspirational a story is when told in first-person," Timlin-Hoag says, without masking her excitement. "It becomes an interactive experience. We decided to do that at the Shrine—to let people interact with the saint who brought us the Miraculous Medal."

Would it be possible, Timlin-Hoag and Fr. Carroll wondered?

During the Miraculous Medal Feast Day Mass at the Shrine in November, the pews were filled with Miraculous Medal devotees and Vincentian Priests and Brothers. At the pulpit, Fr. Carroll welcomed a special guest, and from the right vestibule at the Shrine, St. Catherine Labouré appeared. Standing below the altar, the saint began speaking in her native French, transitioning into a Frenchaccented English. With passion, she shared her experience of meeting Our Lady.

Bonito—embodying St. Catherine recognized that most people at that Mass knew the Miraculous Medal story well. She wondered if this new approach to telling the story would even leave an impression.

The response was universal:

"You made me cry," one attendee told her. "I won't forget you."

"You know Catherine," another attendee told her. "You have her in your heart."

This didn't surprise Timlin-Hoag; rather, it reinforced the power of a first-person narrative. "The Vincentians know quitewell the story of St. Catherine and the Miraculous Medal, yet they reported afterward that hearing it from the saint herself put the story in a new perspective. They were mesmerized," Timlin-Hoag says, "and that is exactly what we want."

WHAT DOES A "SAINT ALIVE" DO?

Each weekday, Bonito arrives at the Shrine as her normal self: a professional actress, talented writer, wife, mother, and a valued member of the Shrine team. However, moments later, donning an 18th century Daughter of Charity seminary habit and adding a Parisian-peasant accent to her voice, she is no longer Victoria Rose Bonito, but St. Catherine Labouré (for more on Bonito, see the article, "God Winks," on pages 30-31).

St. Catherine greets and welcomes Shrine visitors, introducing herself and offering to share her experience with Our Lady and the Miraculous Medal. She's always busy escorting Shrine visitors, discussing important features of the sacred landmark, and answering questions.

The Shrine is a popular destination for pre-arranged group tours, pilgrimages, and retreats, and St. Catherine can act as each group's tour guide. Adding depth to their experience, guests don't just learn about the Shrine and the saint; they encounter St. Catherine and her simple, yet profound devotion to Our Lady.

What's more, St. Catherine Labouré is on the move, traveling to parishes, schools, retreat centers, and retirement communities, to share her story far and wide. In this spirit, a one-woman play, called The Secret Saint: Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal, is in development, relating the story of her childhood, youth, time in seminary (when she was visited by Our Lady), life as a Daughter of Charity, and the creation of the Miraculous Medal.

The versatility in how Victoria tells St. Catherine's story is one of her greatest assets. "Victoria [Rose Bonito] can alter her performance to speak to any audience," Timlin-Hoag notes, "whether it is kids, young adults, adults, or seniors."

FAITH ALIVE. ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Timlin-Hoag is more than pleased at how St. Catherine Labouré has been received. "The reaction to St. Catherine has been tremendous," she says. "Victoria [Rose Bonito] has a way of portraying the saint that is realistic and pulls people into the story. People are drawn to the performance."

Perhaps the greatest thrill for Timlin-Hoag is seeing the success of St. Catherine in engaging young people. "Today's gradeschool and high-school students aren't known for having long attention spans, but they remain captivated by St. Catherine for her entire performance. They also jump at the chance to take 'A Selfie with the Saint,' which we didn't plan; the young people asked for it."

The "very little ones" (as Timlin-Hoag calls K-3rd grade children) are, of course, wide-eyed at seeing the saint in her habit and hearing her French accent. "The very little ones ask St. Catherine the funniest questions," Timlin-Hoag recalls, "like 'Did you have a dog growing up?' or 'How many brothers and sisters did you have?' It is very cute."

Seniors, too, enjoy St. Catherine's story and are sometimes surprised at her connection with the elderly. "Many people don't know," says Bonito, "that St. Catherine's life as a Daughter of Charity was spent working in facilities that took care of impoverished and sick seniors, who were forgotten by society."

Young, old or in-between, Timlin-Hoag knows that spreading devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is about reaching hearts, one person at a time. "St. Catherine may tell her story to groups at the Shrine, but each person in that group connects to the story for a different reason," she says. "St. Catherine is reaching one person at a time, and that is the best way to share the Faith—heart-to-heart." 🕍

GODWINKS

ACTRESS AND WRITER VICTORIA ROSE BONITO on portraying St. Catherine Labouré

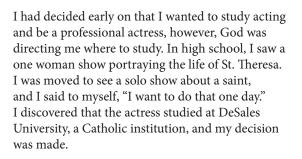
As told by Victoria Rose Bonito



People often ask me what led me to take on the role of St. Catherine Labouré. I can only smile, and reply, "God Winks."

God winks because in His wisdom, He knows where He is leading us, even if we don't recognize where the road is headed. I never imagined I'd be portraying St. Catherine Labouré, but now that I am, it is clear to me that I was being led to this role, at this time, and at this amazing Shrine.

The clues were everywhere. In eighth grade, I decided to take St. Joan of Arc as my personal patron saint. Since St. Joan was French, I decided to study French as my foreign language in school. Family and friends were dubious about my choice of foreign language, saying that I'd never use it in my life. I can only laugh now because St. Catherine Labouré spoke French, and knowing the language has been invaluable in researching the saint.



After years of study, I graduated from DeSales University with a bachelor's degree in both theater and English (interestingly, St. Francis DeSales influenced St. Vincent de Paul, who founded the Daughters of Charity). After working as an actress in mostly Shakespearean productions, I earned a master's degree in theater from Villanova University, an Augustinian university. Next, I taught undergraduates in DeSales's and Villanova's theater departments, while continuing to earn professional acting roles.

My life seemed set. I was married with two beautiful children and a solid acting and teaching career. However, God had different plans. My acting mentor heard that The Miraculous Medal Shrine was having auditions to hire a full-time actress to portray St. Catherine Labouré. I'll admit,







I knew of the Miraculous Medal, but I had never heard of St. Catherine Labouré. I was surprised to find that she was the vessel that Mary chose to give the world the Miraculous Medal, and I was instantly intrigued. Still, I had reservations, but my mentor encouraged me to audition, reminding me that I had nothing to lose.

As it turned out, I had everything to gain. I was among many actresses who auditioned, and when I was offered the role, I felt immense joy. Soon, I learned that there was no script for the role, and in addition to acting I was also expected to write the saint's first-person narrative. It seems that my degree in English would be coming in handy. God winked again.

With passion, I dug into studying the saint's life and soon realized that I was dealing with an inherent contradiction. You see, St. Catherine would have protested at having her own story told from her perspective. She was a humble French peasant, who never sought fame or notoriety. In fact, St. Catherine kept quiet about her apparitions of the Blessed Mother for forty-six years, telling only her confessor.

Yet, telling her story from her perspective is an effective tool in spreading devotion to the Miraculous Medal and its power. While St. Catherine was shy about calling attention to herself, we can be assured she would not mind hearts being enlivened with faith through her story.

What impresses me most about the Miraculous Medal story is that Mary chose St. Catherine, a lowly peasant girl who, at the time, could barely read (she did learn later in life), and entrusted her with a sacred mission. It reminds me that we are all called to be saints in our own lives, and that what God values in each of us is not what the world values. Our Lady saw something in St. Catherine that human eyes could not perceive, and she trusted her to carry out her mission..

That is one of the many things I love about St. Catherine Labouré—that even after being gifted these visits by Our Lady, she remained humble, kind, and devoted to her charitable work. In fact, she spent most of her life ministering to impoverished elderly men who the world had abandoned. She could have become an instant celebrity because of her apparitions; rather, she spent her life tending to the physical and spiritual wounds of the "least of these."

When she was caring for these sick older men, it is recorded that she always asked them, "Do you have enough?" I think of that often because portraying St. Catherine Labouré is a great responsibility, and there are times when I've asked myself, "Do I have enough to do St. Catherine justice?"

Then I ask her in intercessory prayer to rid me of my doubt and share with me some of her strength and resolve.

I remind myself that I'm supposed to be here...that God winks...and we need to trust He's leading us where He wants us to



To learn more about St. Catherine Labouré, visit

miraculousmedal.org/saintcatherine

To learn more about the Saint ALIVE program, visit miraculousmedal.org/saint-alive

Vincentian DOGMA

THEY'RE LOVING. FUNNY. COMFORTING. AND GOOD COMPANY. They help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression; ease loneliness; encourage exercise and playfulness; and even improve cardiovascular health. And, they've been loyal companions to the Vincentians of the Eastern Province for decades.

He walks around St. Vincent's Seminary grounds in Germantown like he owns the place (which no one denies he does). Head held high, he fluidly navigates the seminary grounds in search of treats, belly rubs, and a friendly word. He is Hudson, a black Labrador-German Shephard-Chow mix and the "campus" dog, who has been a loyal companion to the Vincentians at the Eastern Province Seminary for fourteen years.

Hudson is just one of a long line of priestly pooches, who have graced the halls of the motherhouse since its founding more than

170 years ago. So, what is the attraction ergo connection—behind canines and confreres?

CANINE CONFRERES

Since Vincentians live in a communal environment, adopting a dog requires house approval and a confirmed allocation of caregiver responsibilities. Fortunately, the Eastern Province's canine companions are welcome companions for the Priests and Brothers, who are actively engaged in ministries or retired at the infirmary residence.

Today, Hudson is the Eastern Province Seminary gatekeeper and confrere companion.

"Hudson has become more than a house pet," states Fr. Bernard Tracey, CM, former Superior of St. Vincent's Seminary and current Executive Vice President for Mission at St. John's University. "Hudson has befriended many people who live, work, and visit the Seminary and St. Catherine's. Since the day we got him, he has been a blessing in all our lives."







THE MANY FACES OF HUDSON

Beloved and devoted Hudson takes time to pray to Our Lady (actually scoping out a squirrel) and dresses to watch an Eagles game with the Priests. Below, he stands guard as the Eastern Province's latest confrere canine.

Liz Wilson, Director of Residential Services at St. Vincent's Seminary, who has a background in gerontology, notes the benefits of having a house dog. "Pet therapy is important to mental and physical health for seniors," she confirms, "and Hudson has become a therapy dog for infirm priests; an honorary member of the maintenance crew; a squirrel control master; and house entertainment."

Fr. Timothy Lyons, CM, recalls his canine housemates during his tenure at St. Vincent de Paul's Parish and the Eastern Province Seminary: Aubie, Casey and Reuben. Each of the these dogs has added a unique quality that has enriched the Vincentians' households.

"Aubie was big, lovable, and dumb; Casey was soulful, faithful, protective; and Reuben was full of life," Fr. Lyons notes.

EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

Instinctually, dogs are bred to protect their humans. As Fr. John Timlin, CM, recalls how some dogs are better—or worse—than others. Velvet was proof of that.

In 1979, while stationed at Archbishop Wood High School, Fr. Timlin inherited Velvet, a black Labrador Retriever.

According to Fr. Timlin, Velvet was a loving companion. True to her breed, Velvet was famously friendly, bonded well with the Priests, and generally socialized genially with others. She enjoyed exercising, chasing animals, playing marathon games of fetch, and cuddling. But don't come knocking on the door; her bark scared even the toughest of souls. That is, until the Priests opened the door.

"Ironically, while ferocious when visitors came to the door, she did a hasty retreat upon their entry," explains Fr. Timlin. On one occasion, the Priests' residence had an intruder, and Velvet was nowhere to be found. "She only came around after all the commotion died down," laughs Fr. Timlin.



Dogs have some amusing characteristics, too, and the Vincentian dogs were no exceptions.

According to Fr. Timlin, giving Velvet a bath was like entering a water-themed amusement park. On one occasion, after Velvet had a close encounter with a skunk, Fr. Timlin was delegated to the unpleasant task of de-skunking her. Bathing her was usually an ordeal, and removing the pungent musk just made it that much more unpleasant, yet entertaining.





REST & RELAXATION Reuben enjoyed propping his head on the porch railing after a fun day as the parish mascot.

Pup and priest battled it out, but in the long run, Velvet won. While Fr. Timlin was able to give her a bath, Velvet made sure he emerged totally drenched.

Fr. Lyons recalls his first experience with dogs while serving in the Eastern Province novitiate. Mabel, the novice director's dog, considered herself part of the novitiate pack, who made sure she was always in the midst of her pack's discussions. Aubie, a Golden Retriever (named after Auburn University, Alabama) was an excessive shedder who left her hair-laden mark on every priest. Wearing black garments didn't help, but it eventually became a badge of their dogged devotion.

Fr. Greg Cozzubbo, CM, proved to be a mutt matchmaker after he arrived at St. Vincent Parish. Aubie, official dog-inresidence, quickly bonded with him, and the two were inseparable. Father would do anything for Aubie, even serve as a matchmaker. Enter Casey, a female Golden Retriever, who Fr. Cozzubbo named after a turnpike exit while traveling to Nags Head,

North Carolina. Before long, the priests welcomed a litter of eleven pups, creating a scene of nonstop chaos and caregiving. Once old enough, the Priests knew they had to find homes for the puppies.

"Fr. Greg put the puppies in a basket, which we brought out after Mass one Sunday," Fr. Lyons remembers. "Some of the parents were furious, because they knew their kids couldn't resist them." Needless to say, all the pups found homes.

And then there was Meme. Meme was unlike any of the other Vincentian dogs. A pedigree show dog, whose stage name was "It's All About Me," she was well-loved at St. Vincent's Parish. Sunday mornings became her showtime as the parishioners held a hospitality gathering where Meme was the star attraction. She brought church and churchgoers together in a unique bond.

"[Meme] was elegant, queenly, and had a motherly energy," Fr. Lyons recalls. "Everyone loved her."

Hudson has befriended many people who live, work, and visit the Seminary and St. Catherine's. Since the day we got him, he has been a blessing in all our lives.

Today's Seminary gatekeeper, Hudson, has provided his fair share of entertainment. It all started the moment Fr. Tracey and Wilson met Hudson, who clearly chose them, not vice versa.

"Fr. Tracey opens the back car door, yet the dog climbs into the front seat, sits down and puts his paw out the open window," recalls Wilson. "Fr. Tracey responds, 'Oh, this dog is never coming back here." Needless to say, at thirteen months of age, Hudson, found his "furever" home.

While Hudson is a gentle dog today, that wasn't always the case. As a puppy, he enjoyed running freely on the Seminary grounds. Kevin Mosley (Seminary maintenance and Hudson's caregiver in Fr. Tracey's absence) and Fr. Tracey would chase him in an effort to corral him from running into traffic. Hudson saw this as a game and playfully gave them quite a workout.

To gain some control over the rambunctious pup, Fr. Tracey brought in a professional dog trainer. Hudson's behavioral assessment by the dog trainer indicated that Fr. Tracey needed more training than Hudson. Father laughs at this. "I am not sure how much we trained him, but he certainly trained us. When he wants a cold drink, he goes to a water fountain, and then hits the fountain with his paw. Whoever is with him takes a cup and fills it until his thirst is satisfied."

All our dogs are love machines: They love getting affection, they love giving affection.

Years later, Hudson has definitely slowed down. Wilson reminisces about how, as a young dog, he would run up and down four flights of stairs. Not so much today. "As Hudson ages, he prefers taking the elevator," Wilson smiles as she recounts Hudson's antics. "So now he waits outside the elevator until someone comes along to give him a ride to whatever floor he wants."

Hudson was with Fr. Tracey as he was straightening up the chairs for the funeral service. As Fr. Tracey turned to see where Hudson was, he noticed him at Fr. Wright's casket, where he stood on his hind legs with his two front paws resting on the casket and his nose at Fr. Wright's ear. "It looked like he was whispering something to Joe," Fr. Tracey notes. "I am certain Joe was thrilled."

To view more pictures of the Province pups

miraculousmedal.org/ news-and-events/themessage

PAWFSOMF

"All our dogs are love machines: They love getting affection, they love giving affection," says Fr. Cozzubbo.

Hudson has been more to the Priests than a companion. Fr. Tracey tells of the bond between Fr. Joseph Wright, CM, and Hudson. Everyone could see how their relationship was sincere and affectionate. Sadly, Fr. Wright died and after his wake,

GOD BACKWARDS

The Vincentian dogs have been devoted, faithful, loving creatures, who became part of the social fabric for the Eastern Province. These tail-wagging, face-licking, cozycuddling companions created a bond and formed affectionate relationships with many of the Priests and Brothers. Maybe it's no accident that God spelled backwards is dog.

BLESSINGS FOR FURRY FRIENDS

Keep heavenly protection for your cat or dog with a St. Francis of Assisi Pet Medal, available in the Shrine Gift Shop.

Visit MiraculousMedal.org/gift-shop



SAY "CHEESE."

When the priests at St. Vincent's Parish commissioned a photographer to take photos of the parishioners, Aubie and Casey were also photographed. To the parish family, they were part of the "pack."



A Passing THOUGHT

HER CALLING TO BE A DAUGHTER OF CHARITY WASN'T A PRIORITY AT FIRST. But for Sr. Clarisse Correia, DC, it was just a matter of time before she felt the need to be part of something bigger, more universal.

While in high school, Sr. Clarisse Correia, DC, had only a "passing thought" about entering religious life. She wrote letters of inquiry to two religious orders for women, and only one order wrote back: The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. "When I received the Daughters' [of Charity] letter in reply, I just put it aside. I didn't think much about it because entering religious life just wasn't my

priority at that time," recalls Sr. Correia. "Yet, the Daughters kept writing me and writing me. Still, I put it aside."

In the early 1960s, and Sr. Correia decided to forgo religious life and enrolled in St. Luke's School of Nursing in New Bedford, Massachusetts, her hometown. During her clinical rotations in nursing school, she became reacquainted with the Daughters, those same women "who kept writing me

letters." She graduated nursing school as a Registered Nurse in 1963, and joined the Daughters in 1965. "I wanted to be part of something bigger, something universal,"

About her decision to commit herself to religious life, Sr. Correia says. "To live in a community and to serve those in need was, and remains, appealing."

Today, The Miraculous Medal Shrine is the beneficiary of Sr. Correia's decision to join the Daughters. Being a member of the Vincentian family, she was asked by Shrine Director Fr. Michael J. Carroll, CM, to join the Shrine team in late-2019 to create a Philadelphia chapter of the Ladies of Charity.

The Ladies of Charity is a worldwide lay apostolate of women that was founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1617 in eastern France. Their mission is to serve Christ in the poor, and, as the Ladies' national website states, "...respond with compassion to every human misery."

In fact, the Ladies of Charity was the first organization founded by St. Vincent, before both the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) and the Daughters of Charity. With the leadership of both St. Vincent and St. Louise de Marillac, what

I wanted to be part of something bigger, something universal.



THE DAUGHTERS

Sr. Correia, third from the left, is surrounded by her new housemates, fellow Daughters of Charity: Left to right are Sr. Sharon Horace, Sr. Mary Ann Woodward, Sr. Clarisse, Sr. Mary Gilbart, Sr. Jean Maher, and Sr. Marge Clifford.



For more information on the Ladies of Charity in the Philadelphia-region, contact Sr. Correia at scorreia@cammonline.org.

started more than 400 years ago in the French countryside spread throughout the world and still thrives today.

The "association," or chapter, that Sr. Correia is forming in the Philadelphia region will be its own nonprofit group, while being recognized as a member of the Ladies of Charity of the United States of America, a national organization that strengthens the bonds between local associations. The Philadelphia Ladies will work in many of the same ministries that the Ladies work in other communities across the nations. The Ladies embrace their motto, "To serve rather than be served," and thus they are wherever there is a need: working in soup kitchens,

education, becoming President of Labouré College, a nursing and healthcare college operated by the Daughters, in Milton, Massachusetts. During her ten years of leadership, Labouré College saw an almost 200 percent increase in graduates, many who were older men and women who wanted to become nurses.

Leaving Labouré College in 1998, Sr. Correia served as a board chair of a health system and coordinator of a Daughters' community campus, among other positions. She came to the Shrine after six years as Administrator of Villa St. Michael, a Daughters' retirement community in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

To live in community and to serve those in need was, and remains, appealing.

visiting women in prison, creating job training programs for adult women, or advocating for legislation that assists the marginalized.

To accomplish her mission at the Shrine, Sr. Correia has moved in with four other Daughters of Charity in what was once the rectory of now-closed Immaculate Conception Church in the Germantown section of Philadelphia—a city that she has never lived in during her many years of service with the Daughters.

However, Sr. Correia is no stranger to new ministries in new locales.

Beginning her career as a nurse and while earning a bachelor's and master's degree, she steadily assumed greater leadership roles in health care, soon earning a sixyear stint as President and CEO of St. John of God Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. From there, she transitioned to higher

Even after fifty-five years as a Daughter (she jokes, "...you can guess my age from my time as a Daughter, but please don't!"), Sr. Correia has no plans to slow down. "I loved my years of service, and I continue to love them."

Speaking on her new mission to form a Ladies of Charity chapter in the Philadelphia region, she looks to St. Vincent de Paul, saying: "St. Vincent knew that vowed religious men and women could not serve the poor alone. He knew that more was needed, and that there was a desire in the laity to answer the needs of the poor. The Ladies of Charity was his first answer."

For those Ladies of Charity who will serve in the Philadelphia area, Sr. Correia's seasoned leadership may just be the answer.

PID ? KNOW



The Ladies of Charity USA is part of the International Association of Charities.



There are more than 150,000 volunteers in 53 associations in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, and North America.



The seeds of the Ladies of Charity were planted by St. Vincent de Paul in 1617 at Chatillon-les-Dombes in eastern France.

Taken from the Ladies of Charity website: aic.ladiesofcharity.us



Maximizing the IMPACT

HIS LIFE WAS IMPACTED BY BOTH THE VINCENTIANS AND THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL SHRINE. Tom McGonigle believes in the power of both and made bold efforts to show his appreciation.

Tom and Monica McGonigle of Fairfax, Virginia, believe in what both the Vincentians and The Miraculous Medal Shrine are doing. To show just how much they believe, they pledged a \$30,000 gift over the next few years.

"They are really doing two major and important things," Tom McGonigle believes. "First, the Vincentian charism of service to the poor is fundamental to our Faith and should be cherished. Next, the Shrine is at the forefront of evangelization efforts to make sure our Faith remains vibrant and is passed on to the next generation."

McGonigle, who is a founding partner of McGonigle and Murphy, a law firm with almost 60 lawyers, first learned of the Shrine through a direct mail campaign. He decided to give a donation, and has been a steady contributor whose donations have increased over the years.

The Vincentians, however, he has known since his youth. "In grade school, we'd make trips to Mary Immaculate Seminary and St. Joe's in Princeton. They were both run by Vincentians," he said, before rattling off a number of Vincentian Priests and Brothers who made a lasting impact on the young McGonigle.

Fast forward to 2019, and a representative from the Shrine reached out to McGonigle about increasing his charitable giving. "My wife and I were in a position to make a major gift, so I asked the Shrine to identify what they'd like me to support. After all, the people doing the work know where the gift can best be used."

As it turned out, the Shrine was seeking support for a project that McGonigle was more than happy to support.

The Vincentian charism of service to the poor is fundamental to our faith and should be cherished. The Shrine is at the forefront of evangelization efforts to make sure our faith remains vibrant and is passed on to the next generation.

TOM McGONIGLE

"They told me about their Saint ALIVE project, where a professional actress portrays St. Catherine Labouré and tells the story of the Miraculous Medal (see article on page 28). As supporters of Colonial Williamsburg and Mount Vernon, we knew firsthand the impact an actor can have in bringing a story to life. This was an evangelization project we could get behind."

The Shrine is immensely grateful for both the major gift, and for what it symbolizes. "The \$30,000 will allow us to maximize the impact of Saint ALIVE," says Shrine Director Fr. Michael Carroll, CM. "It will also serve as the foundational gift that will attract other donors. A major gift like that increases confidence in the project's success, and that is attractive to others."

What matters most to McGonigle is that the Shrine is connecting with people. "The Miraculous Medal is important. The Shrine's publications are important. The Saint ALIVE project is important. This is about reaching out to people who are the future of the Faith. These evangelization efforts are very important."



The Institutional Advancement team at The Miraculous Medal Shrine serves Our Lady, the Vincentians, and you. Whatever your questions, comments, or needs, we are here to help. Learn more by emailing Sheila O'Hagan McGirl, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement at smcgirl@cammonline.org.



BROOKLYN Calling

Fr. Astor Rodriguez. CM. has done a 360 IN LIFE. He realizes what he has always known: The greatest treasure are the people.

From Brooklyn to Central America to Spain and locations in between, Fr. Astor Rodriguez, CM, has lived, ministered, and studied in a variety of places as a Vincentian. Brooklyn, though, is home, and where he often finds himself returning to serve.

Today, it takes a while for Fr. Rodriguez to walk through the buildings of St. John the Baptist Parish in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. As the pastor, he greets and talks to everyone he encounters. But unless you are like him and are fluent in English, Spanish, and slang-variations of both, you'd have trouble following the conversations.

"As a pastor or just a priest serving in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, you realize that the greatest treasure we have are our people," Fr. Rodriguez says. "They are so caring and supportive. And they truly help mold you as you minister to them, and as you are ministered by them."

St. John the Baptist is a diverse parish in a low-income neighborhood that is beginning to see the signs of gentrification, which threatens to dislocate its longtime residents. "The ongoing gentrification of our neighborhood brings good and bad changes to the lives of many who are living in city housing and fixed incomes," Fr. Rodriguez says. "That affects all concerned, and our parish feels what our people feel. We try to respond as best as we can. Plus, St. John the Baptist has always been a Vincentian parish. The Vincentian charism has been engrained in the community."

For the time being, the economic hardships remain, and being a Vincentian Priest working in that neighborhood is exactly where Fr. Rodriguez wants to be.

And, it isn't far from where he started in

Born in Park Slope and raised in the Cobble Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn in the mid-1960s, Fr. Rodriguez's childhood parish, St. Peter, St. Paul, and Our Lady of Pilar, was staffed by Vincentian Priests from the Barcelona Province of Spain. It was through his interaction with these Spanish Vincentians that Fr. Rodriguez discerned his vocation to the priesthood and to religious life.









They [Vincentians] nourished a life in Christ and being there for each other.

"I was truly moved by the Vincentians, who were so immersed in the community they served," he recalls. "Being in our Vincentian parish was like being at home. They were available at all times. They lived in a community and shared their lives. They were also willing to go to wherever needed. That really spoke to my spirit."

Since he was fifteen years old, Fr. Rodriguez participated in youth retreats run by the Vincentians in Brooklyn, and of those times he remembers: "They [Vincentians] nourished a life in Christ and being there for each other." At the inauguration of a new extension to a retreat house, the Provincial of the Barcelona Province asked him if he'd like to enter seminary. "The answer just flowed from my heart in thanksgiving. I said 'yes' to try out life in the seminary."

Having decided to pursue his formation through the Barcelona Province, there was one glaring hiccup—he wasn't fluent in Spanish.

"We're part Puerto Rican," he says of his family, "and we spoke some slang Puerto Rican Spanish, but I was not a fluent Spanish speaker. We spoke English at home, at school, and in the streets. I needed to learn Spanish."

Before pursuing his formation and academic studies in earnest, the Province sent him to the Dominican Republic to learn Spanish and serve in apostolates. Once fluent, he moved to Barcelona and completed his academic and formation requirements. With his family and friends to bear witness, he was ordained in Brooklyn and his first assignment as a newly minted priest was as Parochial Vicar at his childhood parish, which he calls St. Paul's.

Soon, he returned to Barcelona to pursue an advanced degree in moral theology and assist in the seminary. What seems to be a common theme for Fr. Rodriguez, Brooklyn was calling, and he returned once again to the Cobble Hill neighborhood, this time to be the pastor at St. Paul's.

Four years later, Fr. Rodriguez was transferred to the community in Alicante, Spain, to serve at a youth retreat house. It was here that he first started being involved in FamVin, a multi-lingual network that unites and supports the many branches of the Vincentian family. He remains involved with FamVin today, currently serving as a translator.

Fr. Rodriguez is fond of saying, "You can be a missionary anywhere." In this spirit, and with the blessings of his superiors, he decided to transfer from the Province of Barcelona to the Eastern Province of the United States in 2004. During this transition period, he became part of the Philadelphia Hispanic Ministry Team situated at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in the Germantown section of Philadelphia.

His transfer was completed in 2005, and in 2006, he was Brooklyn-bound again, this time to St. John the Baptist Parish, serving as Assistant Pastor for five years.

Fr. Rodriguez is proud that he challenges people to examine their lives, which makes him a natural fit to lead vocations. In 2011, he was assigned to St. John's University (a Vincentian institution) in Queens, New York, to serve as the Vocation Director and work with men considering religious life.

However, Fr. Rodriguez sees promoting vocations as a lifelong pursuit, and one that doesn't have to focus solely on promoting consecrated life. "I know how to stir the pot to remind people that God is calling you to something," he says. "God is calling everyone to something, and that is your vocation."

He is proud of the men who he mentored who chose to enter formation with the Vincentians, and he is equally proud of those who discerned that religious life was not for them. Many of those men still connect with him about their life decisions. "I hear from them all," he says. "The guys in formation, the guys who went another way. You form a bond with them when they are discerning their life's path."

Returning to St. John the Baptist Parish in 2015 as Pastor, Fr. Rodriguez, the Assistant Pastor, Fr. Steve Cantwell, CM, and his lay staff tend to the pastoral needs of this vibrant parish, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2019. The sacramental life is celebrated in both English and Spanish, and the parish has a thrift shop and an emergency food pantry.

Fr. Rodriguez is always looking for ways to best serve the needs of the parishioners. But the important thing for him is quality over quantity. "We can't do everything for the neighborhood," Fr. Rodriguez says, "but what we can do, we do well."



A Circuitous ROUTE

FR. AIDAN ROONEY, CM TELLS THE VINCENTIAN NARRATIVE to current and new audiences using modern-days tools and messaging.

On a cold, blustery day in March at Niagara University (a Vincentian institution) in Niagara Falls, New York, Fr. Aidan Rooney, CM, cannot help but poke fun at himself. "I was born in Staten Island a long time ago. I'm older than the Verrazano Bridge that gets you to Brooklyn."

While he is technically older than that famed bridge, at only 63, he scoffs at the idea of retirement. "Vincentians don't retire. We keep going in ministry, until we physically can't anymore." If Fr. Rooney's youthful vigor is any indication (he is a proponent of physical fitness), he's got many years of ministry left in him.

Serving as Vice President for Mission Integration at Niagara University, Fr. Rooney is tasked with ensuring that the university's educational, Catholic, and Vincentian mission is seamlessly infused throughout the entirety of the institution—no small task. He collaborates with numerous departments and committees in this role, while also serving on the President's Cabinet.

In addition, Fr. Rooney creates two weekly videos on VincentiansUSA.org: "The Vincentian Minute," a quick reflection on living a Vincentian life, and "The Word: A Journey from Outside In," a reflection on each Sunday's scripture from the lectionary. As if video wasn't enough, he is a frequent contributor to "The God Minute," a daily Catholic podcast with a number of notable contributors. He also celebrates Sunday Mass at parishes in Niagara Falls and serves as the Superior of the Vincentian Community at Niagara University.

Fr. Rooney believes his many ministries give him strength, rather than take it.





Left: While in Bolivia, Fr. Rooney lead physical exercise training with kids from the soccer team in the village. "I dared them to outdo me. The 'old man' left them gasping for air." Right: Fr. Rooney with one of the children from the village.

Yet, the fact that he is ministering at all, let alone serving for forty years as a Vincentian and thirty-five years as a Vincentian Priest, would be a big surprise to the young kid on Staten Island. "My vocation to the Vincentians and the priesthood took a circuitous route," Fr. Rooney says. "I didn't even meet a Vincentian until I was an adult."

For his early education he attended parochial and Christian Brothers (C.F.C.) schools, and after high school, he enrolled in Cornell University. The Ivy League culture did not appeal to him, and he was back home in Staten Island without even completing his first semester. "I figured I'd go home, get a job to learn a trade, make good money," Rooney recalls. "God had other plans."

A friend, who was taking classes at St. John's Staten Island campus, encouraged Fr. Rooney to join him there. Within months, he was enrolled and discovered the Vincentians for the first time.

The Vincentian calling wasn't immediate, and his career plans were uncertain. He was active in the robust Catholic campus community and had a deep faith, but he envisioned a life in the theater. "To my own amazement," he says, "after graduation and a summer internship at New York University's (NYU) Educational Theater program, I became that theater's Technical Director."

It wasn't until he attended NYU that he began to fully discern his call to become a priest, specifically a Vincentian Priest. Fr.

Rooney says, "I was in grad school and still in touch with the Vincentians at St. John's. My discernment had the encouragement of friends and Fr. Jim Smith, CM, who said, 'You'll never know unless you go and see if the life fits.' Off I went. It fit!"

Instead of entering into a formal preparatory program as he would today, he began in the theology program at Mary Immaculate Seminary in September 1979. There, the curriculum was being redesigned and in flux, so Fr. Rooney took some upper-level theology courses during his first year. Fr. Peter Albano, CM, taught him a course that forever changed his life. "Fr. Albano's course had me. I was sold," Fr. Rooney recalls.

From there, his seminary formation began in earnest, and after Internal Seminary in 1980, followed by the completion of Major Seminary, he was ordained a priest. His first assignment was at the same campus he calls home today, Niagara University. He spent his first ten years there as a priest in campus ministry, teaching religious studies and eventually graduate-level research methods and statistical analysis.

His assignments over the decades have been varied: a young adult retreat center director in New Jersey, a parish pastor in Philadelphia, and the International Coordinator of FamVin (a multilingual network that unites branches of the Vincentian family), among other ministries.

In 2007, Fr. Rooney read a request by the Superior General of the Congregation

of the Mission looking for priests and brothers to work in foreign missions. Two years later, he found himself in a rural sector of Bolivia, collaborating with two other Vincentians and local laity in the leadership of two parishes and eighty-three Catholic communities, while becoming fluent in Spanish and learning to live in the high altitude of Bolivia's Andes Mountains. "I visited upward of fifty communities twice a year," Fr. Aidan recalls, "to oversee the formation of catechists and to celebrate the sacraments."

One of his most poignant memories of his service in Bolivia was also heartbreaking. "A woman had given birth to twins," Fr. Rooney says, "and we knew one of them would probably die. So I administered the Anointing of the Sick to a two-week-old baby."

However, most of his experiences in Bolivia were joyous. "I designed and supervised the building of three small village churches. To see the happiness of the people when we dedicated those churches was pretty awesome."

By 2018, Fr. Rooney was back at Niagara University where his priestly ministry began. When asked if he is growing long-term roots at Niagara, he smiles and says, "I'm good for seven years in an assignment, and then I feel the need to move to another. That seems to be my way." He pauses before adding, "I've only been back here for two years, so I've got plenty of time to accomplish what needs to be accomplished. And I'm a young guythere is plenty more I plan to do."



Mary at Our Side

In the March 1945 issue of the Miraculous *Medal Digest* – Volume 17, there is an article titled, "Under Mary's Protection." It is filled with favors received by service men and women.

One person shares, "Please enroll the 14 men who were killed when their P. T. boat was hit the morning of the invasion. My oldest son received a bad head wound; A shell pierced the engine room where he was and split the engine in half. He was wearing a Miraculous Medal on a chain around his neck, and he prays often to Mary for protection. His life belt would not work; it would not blow up. He managed to get aboard a life raft and found an extra life belt in it. It's good he did, because they had to abandon the life raft later and swim for a while when it looked as if the ship would capsize and settle on them. We felt sure that Our Blessed Mother saved his life, for it was an extraordinary thing that he wasn't killed, as his companions were, when the shell struck the engine room. Some time ago, I asked you to place his name at Mary's Central Shrine. Mary certainly kept him in her care, and we are

more grateful than we can say." This is one of many similar accounts shared with the Miraculous Medal Family.

About a year ago, Eleanor Farzetta visited The Miraculous Medal Shrine and wrote to us about her father's faith and devotion to Mary. During the war, the Miraculous Medal Digest featured an article and photo about him and his fellow shipmates. Her father, Albert William Chesnavage, was serving in the Coast Guard during WWII. He would gather with other men to pray the Rosary and the Miraculous Medal Novena. Chesnavage shared stories with his family about this time in his life saying, "The men on the ship were very intent and took very seriously the praying of the Rosary and the Miraculous Medal Novena. The guys and I, who organized the gathering, were surprised by the turnout of men who wanted to join our prayer group. This is why we were asking for more booklets. The guys did not want to give them back, as they wanted to keep these prayers with them when they went off to battle. It was a source of comfort for us all. One of the most remarkable events aboard

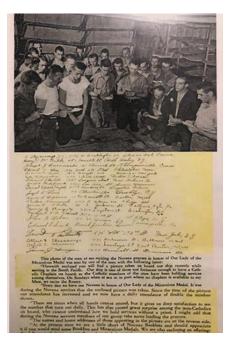


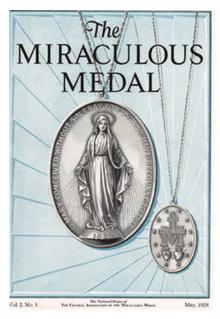
ship was when we were hit by a kamikaze plane and though there was much damage done to the ship, the log book reported, 'Miraculously, there was no loss of life!"

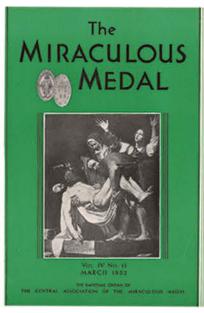
Farzetta recollects her father's strong faith, stating, "His faith never left him. He retired from the Coast Guard after twenty years, married, raised twelve children, and prayed the Rosary every evening around the statue of Mary. He became one of the first deacons in the Diocese of Baltimore, serving at Masses, visiting the sick in hospitals and nursing homes, and attending at funerals. At 99, he attributed his calling from God and His Mother Mary, leading and directing him to do whatever was needed. He kept true to his Coast Guard motto, Semper Paratus, 'always prepared' and to do God's Will."

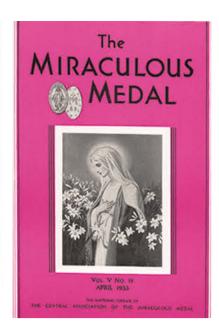


Albert William Chesnavage, age 99, holds a photo of the article (left) about him and his fellow shipmates, who regularly prayed the Rosary and the Miraculous Medal Novena. "It was a source of comfort for us all."



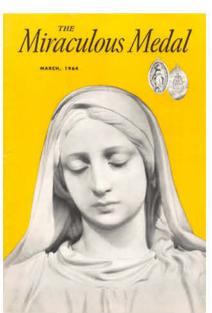


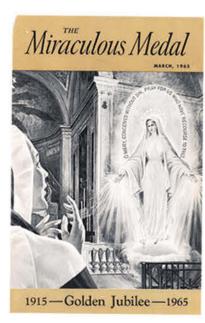








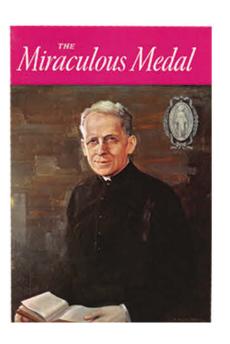








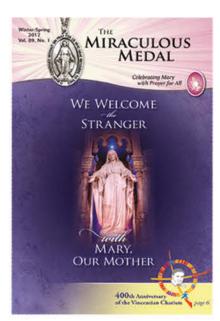




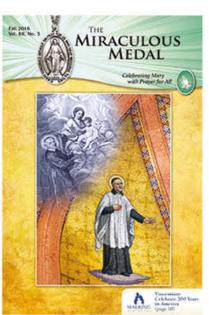


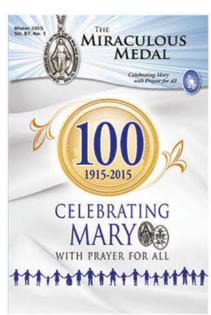


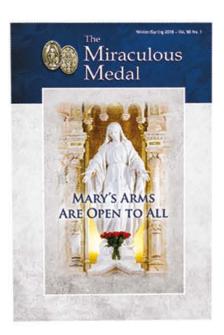












The Many Faces of Mary's Magazine

In May 1928, the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal (CAMM) launched the first edition of the Miraculous Medal Magazine. Fr. Joseph A. Skelly, CM, CAMM founder and magazine editor, said, "Not long after the establishment of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, we saw the benefit, if not the necessity, of publishing a magazine which would be the Organ of our Association, in order to bind by closer ties all workers for the cause of Mary Immaculate."

Fr. Skelly knew that developing a viable communication vehicle for the growing population of Vincentian supporters and Shrine devotees was a top priority.

Today, we share this same vision of telling a better story of the impact and influence of the Vincentians and their missions dedicated to perpetuating devotion to the Blessed Mother through the Miraculous Medal, and service to the poor and underserved.

But what has not changed over the nine decades of publication is what made the magazine great—stories that showcase the good works and spirit of the Shrine and Vincentian community.

Like Fr. Skelly, "We hope to make the Magazine steadily larger, constantly worthier... creating a magazine bit by bit, as many a poor man has built his house—first four bare walls, a floor and a roof, then gradually those small conveniences which transform a shelter into a home."

PROMOTERS

Sister Mary Andre, Beaverton, OR Dominic A. Acinapuro, Havertown, PA Joan Albers, Kansas City, MO Mrs. Mary S. Anthony, Pittsburgh, PA Normand Arsenault, Berlin, NH Cecile Atkinson, Fall River, MA Mrs. Louis Baca, Mosquero, NM Bonnie Bauman, Pittsburgh, PA Charles A. Bottinelli, Deer Park, WA Mrs. Louise Branch, Winslow, AZ Genevieve Brungard, Reading, PA Mrs. Betty J. Buddenhagen, Milwaukee, WI Mrs. Rita M. Canuel, Belchertown, MA Virgil Casemore, Baton Rouge, LA Natalie Certo, Pittsburgh, PA Ruth Cord, Hanover Park, IL Mrs. Irene Demkowski, Fredericksburg, VA Katherine DiCello, Pottsville, PA Mrs. Roy J. Doiron, Jeanerette, LA Georgiann Donovan, St Louis, MO Mrs. Ruth Dupuy, Maurepas, LA Jean C. Eckert, Aspinwall, PA Mrs. Helen Elias, Broomall, PA Mrs. Anne Elphick, Nanaimo, BC Canada Rose Euman, New Lexington, OH Mrs. Anna Ferrie, Portugal Cove St. Philips, NL Canada Zelda Fromenthal, Berwick, LA Mrs. Mary Furman, Wilmington, DE Marie Ganiel, Mays Landing, NJ Mrs. Joseph Garron, Toronto, ON Canada Betty Garzelloni, Spring Lake, Mi Doris Gignac, Waterville, ME

Mrs. Jo Gray, Temple, TX Mrs. Edward F. Grega, Weatherly, PA Mary Gross, Philadelphia, PA Louis K. Habina, Secane, PA Mrs. Lillian Hooks, Opelousas, LA Mrs. Richard Houdek, Watertown, WI Mrs. Barbara Jarolimek, Pisek, ND John Klebon, Coal Township, PA Christian Kulczytzky, Newtown, PA Rita Lockhead, New Smyrna Beach, FL Albert Maholick, Great Bend, PA Agnes Marek, St Johns, MI Mrs. Virginia McCarty, Berwyn, PA Mrs. Rita McCrea, Toronto, ON Canada Mrs. Mary McCrorie, Scarborough, ON Canada Patricia McGrath, Inverloch Victoria, Australia Mrs. Dorothy Morris, Glenshaw, PA Pauline Mudrinich, Hermitage, PA Mrs. Betsy Murphy, Royersford, PA Anna Nemetz, Toms River, NJ Josephine D. Okulewicz, Voorhees, NJ Betty Osmus, Okeene, OK Oswald Oster, East Dubuque, IL Mrs. Claudia Palmieri, Philadelphia, PA Mrs. Carmela Pauline, Northumberland, Joan Peipher, Philadelphia, PA Mrs. Stella Petipas, Edmundton, NB Canada Mrs. Theresa Pettit, Philadelphia, PA Mrs. Marie Rankin, Woonsocket, SD Betty Raska, New Baltimore, MI Norman Samuel Jr, Edgard, LA Mrs. Rose Marie Scalzo, Danbury, CT Joseph Schmitz, Elkhart Lake, WI Mrs. Mary E. Schutte, Batesville, IN Evelyn Scopacasa, Oakley, CA John Shields, Philadelphia, PA

Helen M. Shon, Elmira, NY Mrs. Iona Siegrist, Niota, IL Gloria Silzer, Somerset, NJ Mrs. Mildred Skowera, Wheaton, IL Antonia Stefan, Scranton, PA Jean A. Stellitano, South Park, PA Anna Stun, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ Mrs. Alice Summa, Whitestone, NY Dorothy J. Walkowski, Stow, OH Mrs. Theresa Wallace, Cobalt, CT Mary Ward, El Paso, TX Mrs. Gloria Wilson, Brevard, NC Esther Wolff, Mead, WA Mary Young-Lai, Nepean, ON Canada Mrs. Carol Yskes, Zeeland, MI



Mrs. Helen Gilka, Nottingham, MD

Doris Godman, Plymouth Meeting, PA

Gregory P. Gorski, Frankfort, IL

Mrs. Angie Giurintano, Covington, LA

A Legacy for MARY

HONORING THE BLESSED MOTHER THROUGH THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL SHRINE was the primary mission of CAMM founder Fr. Joseph A. Skelly, CM.

Margaret K. from Summerfield, Florida, has never been to The Miraculous Medal Shrine in Philadelphia and had never heard of Fr. Joseph A. Skelly, CM, who founded the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal (CAMM) in 1915. Yet, Margaret informed the Shrine that she named CAMM as one of many beneficiaries in her will, which automatically enrolled her in the Fr. Skelly Society at the Shrine. We recently contacted Margaret (who only wants her first name mentioned) to ask her why she included CAMM in her estate planning.

"I have great love for the Blessed Mother," Margaret says. "She's been helpful and instrumental in my life, and to remember her when I'm gone seems like a nice gesture. That's why I did it."

When asked why she's donating to a Shrine she's never visited, Margaret said she learned of our mission through our mailings, publications, and website, and wanted to help spread devotion to Our Lady and her Miraculous Medal.

Margaret's planned giving honors Our Lady, and in appreciation, the Shrine honors Margaret's generosity by enrolling her in the Fr. Skelly Society, which is reserved for those who include CAMM in their estate planning. As a member of the Fr. Skelly Society, Margaret receives:

- A Perpetual Membership in the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal
- A personalized Membership Certificate
- A remembrance in 2,500 Masses per year for the rest of her life, and forever after her death
- A plaque, with her name engraved on it, placed on the Fr. Skelly Wall in the Shrine
- The Miraculous Medal Message magazine two times a year
- The joy of promoting devotion to Mary for future generations, and knowing her cherished values live on at The Miraculous Medal Shrine



Margaret appreciates the many blessings that come with being in the Fr. Skelly Society. "The Shrine is dedicated to Mary, and anytime I asked for anything in my life, Our Lady answered. It has been that way my whole life. She's looked after me, so I will look after her Shrine in the small way that I can."



If you have questions about setting up your estate to include any size gift to CAMM, contact Shelia McGirl at SMcGirl@cammonline.org or 215.848.1010, x.212.

RAYS Old & New

Our Blessed Mother is not only the Theotokos (God-Bearer), she is also our mother. Her life was spent listening to God and others (see "The Many Faces of Mary" on page 14), and now in heaven, she continues to listen. She hears each of our pleas and eagerly intercedes for us, because she wants to do everything she can to help us join her. That doesn't mean we always get what we ask for. Sometimes God has something better in mind for us. But always, when we pray to our Blessed Mother, our prayers are answered through her.

Throughout the years, we have shared some of the amazing graces people have received through Mary's hands. In this issue, we're sharing some graces that date back to another difficult period in our country: the post-economic crisis of 1929. Mary was with us then—she's with us now—and she'll never leave our side.

"A young man, a Mormon, was not expected to pull through an attack of pneumonia. I gave him one of the Medals which you sent me and he recovered. When he was leaving the hospital, he asked me if he might keep the Medal. I gave it to him and a short while ago I heard from him, saying that he had had another attack of pneumonia and that he felt sure the little Medal of Our Lady had helped him once more." March 1930

"A few weeks ago I wrote asking you to please make a Novena that my husband might get a steady job. He received his appointment a short time afterwards, the first appointment of its kind in years. I realize we have been highly favored through the loving care of Our Mother, and so I am enclosing a small donation to help along the work in her honor." March 1930

"Twelve years ago, my daughter, at that time eight years old, developed tuberculosis of the bone of her left arm. She entered a hospital where she underwent two operations in which the bone was scraped, but these proved of no avail. After six months, she was pronounced incurable by a specialist and sent home. After this, her arm was drained for two more years. Finally, one of the Sisters at the hospital told me that if our daughter wished to be cured we must have her arm amputated. I refused to hear of this, and Sister suggested that we start a Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary. We began at once, and in two weeks' time my daughter's arm was perfectly healed. It has never been opened or bothered her since. Now, after eight years, she can use her arm as well as anyone. The bone has developed and her left arm is now as big as her right. I promised that if she were cured through the Blessed Virgin Mary, I would have the cure published in order to spread devotion to our good Mother." April 1933

"The enclosed money covers the cost of new members. I am doing this work out of gratitude to Our Lady for a favor which she obtained for me some time ago. I had suffered for twenty-one years with open sores on my legs. I had several doctors but none of them could help me. One day, I heard of the Miraculous Medal and sent to you for one. I wore the Medal but a short time when my legs entirely healed and have never bothered me since." March 1931

"On a day in February, I went to see a sick woman, the mother of ten small children, who did not seem to have much more time to live. Her family, gathered around her bed, were expecting her to pass away any minute. My heart went out to her, and I noticed she did not have on a badge or a medal. I thought of the Promoter's Medal I was wearing, and remembering that this day was the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, I pinned the Medal on the woman's night dress and told her about it. She kissed it tenderly, and at once the family began to pray. Less than a month from that time the woman was up and around. Although not completely cured as I write this note, she tells all that she owes her life to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal." March 1931

"I had an operation and lost so much blood that a transfusion was necessary. Four weeks after the operation diabetes set in and I was very sick and weak. One day my husband's aunt came to see me and she had a Miraculous Medal with her. She told me to wear it, and to pray. The next week I was able to leave the hospital, thanks to Mary Immaculate." April 1933

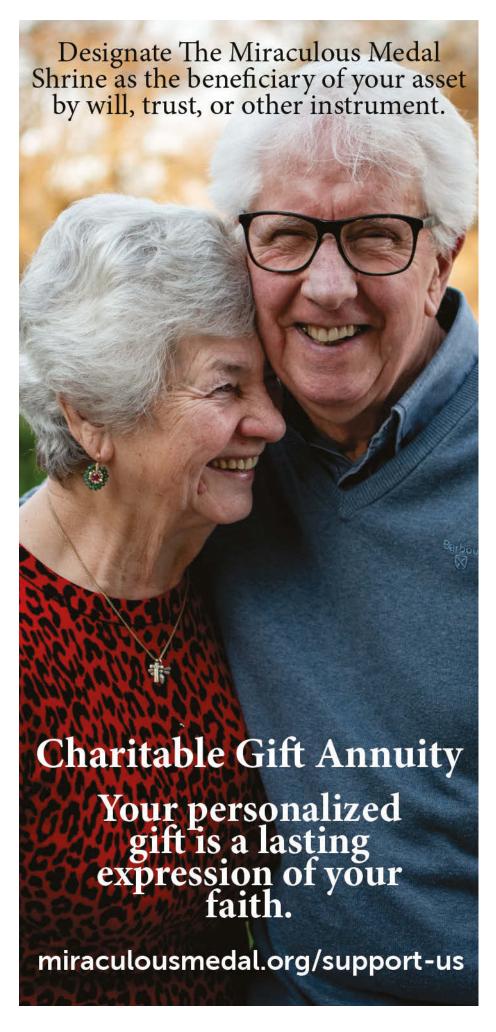
And more recent graces received:

"Thank you Lord Jesus and Mother Mary and all our brothers and sisters who prayed when my sister was between life and death due to septicemia. She has fully recovered now and is back to work. We will never get tired thanking you for all the many blessings you continuously bestow on us. Thank you once again. We love you Lord Jesus, we love you, Mama Mary."

"On almost every car journey, I pray a decade of the rosary (after one decade I've usually reached a series of very busy roads that require my full and undivided attention). Just a few days ago, I was driving along when a driver in a large truck came right at me, at 75 mph, because he'd realized he was about to miss his turn off the road. I must have been invisible to him because he quite literally forced me off the road and on to the grassy bank. I was within a nanosecond of being killed instantly. I wear my Miraculous Medal most of the time and when not, have my car keys on a Miraculous Medal key chain. Our most wonderful Lady saved me. There's no other way I could possibly have survived without her intervention. (Mercifully, there wasn't so much as a scratch on the car either, much to my husband's delight!). Praised be Mary!"

"I have prayed for a child since the day I married my husband. We now have a oneyear-old child, after not being able to have a child and being told we never would. He was born early and we were told he'd be sick. However, he was born healthy and has reached all his milestones, despite being 6 weeks early."

"I needed a job and was calling different companies for work, but none offered me a job. I prayed to Mary, and the next morning a company offered me work! Thank you, Mary!"







Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Through the intercession of Mary, God will see us through this pandemic, and we will grow in love, hope, and understanding. We urge everyone to pray to Our Lady and hold tight to your

