

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

OUR LADY OF LAS LAJAS

By Bryan Thatcher, MD

I love to read about Marian apparitions and the saints. I am always fascinated by the miracles that have occurred over the years, and wonder why everyone is not a believer. I read about one recently and found it truly amazing; and in this one, like many, Our Lady has left a miracle that should dissuade all doubt of her love for all of us and the Church.

Our Lady of Las Lajas is the site of a miracle that can still be witnessed today on a mountainside cliff in Colombia.

It happened in 1754 when a woman named Maria was traveling from her home in the village of Potosi to the neighboring village of Ipiales, which was about six miles away. Because of a storm, she was forced to take refuge in an overgrown grotto that some locals felt was inhabited by the devil.

Invoking the aid of the Blessed Virgin, she advanced into the darkness and took her first steps into the cave. She began to move forward when she felt someone, or something, moving directly behind her. Then she felt a finger begin tapping her insistently on the shoulder. Certain it was the devil himself, she fled out into the terrible storm.

Maria had a young daughter named Rosa, a child who had been a deaf-mute since birth. On another occasion she had Rosa with her and, because of fatigue, she stopped for a rest near the grotto. Her deaf-mute daughter shouted for her to look at the mother with a little boy in her arms. Maria was shocked that her daughter had spoken! The child was crawling up the rocks to the entrance of the grotto. Maria caught

up with her and took Rosa home.

Even though Maria did not understand what had happened, she and Rosa would return occasionally to bring candle and flowers to the spot. One day Maria could not find her daughter and returned to the grotto to see if she was there. When she arrived, she saw Rosa playing with a handsome boy her

age, and watching over them was a beautiful woman. She knew it was Our Lady and Jesus!

She did not tell anyone of the experience, and soon after Rosa became ill and died. Maria returned to the grotto because of her grief, hoping that another miracle would occur, that her daughter would be brought back to life. She prayed to Our Lady for her intercession, reminding her how Rosa was faithful and used to bring her flowers.

It was not long before Maria's prayers were answered — Rosa woke up as if she had been asleep! Word of this miracle spread quickly, and the next day many of the local people joined in a procession with their priests to give



thanks at the site of the apparition.

When they arrived at the grotto they were all stunned to see a brilliant portrait (shown above) none had ever seen before. Imprinted on the face of the cliff was an image of the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus. Both were smiling sweetly. Our Lady's garments were beautiful, and to their right was an image of Saint Dominic and on their left was Saint Francis of Assisi. Mary was extending her hand toward Saint Dominic, holding a Rosary. The Baby Jesus was holding a cord and

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ALLEN, TEXAS

Ofer Calilung wrote and told us:

Our Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy Cenacle Study group formed at St. Jude Catholic Church in Allen, Texas. It is one of the Adult Study Programs that are available at St. Jude's, and is an integral component of The Divine Mercy Ministry of the parish.

It was in early 2022 when we first conducted the EADM cenacle group. I met Dr. Bryan Thatcher who happened to be in town conducting a Divine Mercy mission in neighboring parishes. The study is guided by Dr. Thatcher's Formation Cenacle Manual; inspired by the *Diary* of St. Faustina; and encouraged by the teachings of the Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We complement our study and discussions with videos and reflections from the Marian Fathers and other sources. We thank our pastor, Fr. Andrew Semler, for his gracious blessing and approval.

For many St. Jude parishioners, the *Diary* and St. Faustina's marvelous encounter with Jesus Christ were not unfamiliar. However, their excitement and spiritual hunger for deeper learning and understanding of The Divine Mercy message and devotion, and about St. Faustina, were phenomenal. Many have joined the study. We have inducted 38 members as Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy in our first year of the Cenacle Study. We continue to gather more new members every year.

Our group realizes that the message is to be shared, and part of our commitment is service to the Church. The EADM group has been involved in various activities, including pastoral and ministerial activities; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Pastoral Visitors (PV) for the homebound parishioners and hospitals, including telephone visits, Bible study, and Cenacle study extension to nursing home facilities; promotion to increase attendance in the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; a Spiritual Bouquet Prayer Group; and prayer offering and reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and dying. We

are committed to fostering the Lord's invitation and sharing the message of His Infinite Mercy to the world, by living out the sacramental life together and performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Every year, the Church celebrates the two main feasts for The Divine Mercy. The Divine Mercy Sunday Feast celebration includes the nine-day Novena leading to Mercy Sunday. We usually invite speakers to talk about Divine Mercy Sunday, its significance, and the relevance of Extraordinary Graces. The Eucharistic Holy Hour takes place on Mercy Sunday afternoon, and fellowship follows. In addition, we celebrate St. Faustina's liturgical feast every Oct. 5. The celebration includes Mass, Adoration, prayer, and fellowship.

I would like to pay tribute to our late beloved Deacon Ron Fejeran who was our first mentor and spiritual guide in The Divine Mercy Ministry. He had a special devotion to The Divine Mercy and he so loved the story and *Diary* of St. Faustina. He was so instrumental in bringing and spreading the loving mercy of Jesus Christ to all people he encountered during his 32 years of Pastoral Care duties and responsibilities at St. Jude Parish. We all have learned from him and were all so blessed with his insights, prayers, and words of encouragement every time he was in class during the EADM Cenacle study. The St. Jude Parish community as well as the people of the community he lived in and nurtured spiritually lost a holy man of God. Deacon Ron died on the Feast of the Presentation, Feb. 2, 2024.

Today, we are so fortunate and equally blessed for having Fr. Ricardo Regalado as our new spiritual guide and adviser. He was assigned to the parish a year ago, and he happens to be a devotee of The Divine Mercy. We love to have Fr. Ricardo and he loves to be a Eucharistic Apostle of The Divine Mercy. Moreover, I am so grateful to the faithful and dedicated first members of our EADM Cenacle group for their untiring efforts, active participation in the Cenacle study, and support to The Divine Mercy Ministry. Their faithfulness and devotion to the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ is so admirable and I truly appreciate it.

Having The Divine Mercy Ministry at St. Jude, coupled with the EADM Cenacle study, has really brought more spiritual awareness in the parish community. Many are seeking deeper learning and understanding of trust in God and His unfathomable love and mercy. More and more parishioners are learning in the Cenacle study that helps them in their daily life, in prayer, devotion, and in spreading The Divine Mercy message. It is a reflection in their "Way of Life." The ABCs of The Divine Mercy are so true: Ask for His mercy that you **Be** merciful to others, and let God be in Charge.

When participants gather and learn in the Cenacle together, they tend to share a common interest which is usually mission oriented. They share their talents, time, and resources, and volunteerism is furthered.

OUR LADY

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offering it to St. Francis. These saints and their spiritual sons all played a role in the conversion of people throughout Central and South America.

A blind priest desired to build a church at the site, and in 1764 construction began. On the day when construction was completed, Fr. John de Santa Gertrudis realized that his sight had been restored!

The colors in the image, known as Our Lady of Las Lajas (Our Lady

of the Rocks), have not lost any of their brilliance over the centuries. Like the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the image is not paint or coloring. Samples collected have proven that the color goes into the rock, and is evenly distributed and reaches several feet into the face of the cliff. Scientists cannot explain how the image got into the rock.

In 1952, Ven. Pope Pius XII granted a canonical crowning of Our Lady of Las Lajas and her Divine Son.

Our Lady of Las Lajas, pray for us!

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Roman Pikula wrote and told us:

Our Cenacle recently moved from St. Margaret Mary Parish in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to St. Agnes Parish in Butler, Wisconsin. Our meetings are on the first and third Thursday of the month, in-person and on-line. St. Agnes is using the Microsoft Teams app for on-line meetings until we can afford Google Workspace.

We have finished preparing the Three Holy Hearts Chapel for Eucharistic Adoration. On Thursday we have started the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. At 3:45 p.m. and at 7 p.m. we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet with whomever is present in the chapel. After the Chaplet, we have a short procession with the Blessed Sacrament back to the tabernacle in the church next door (for now). The plan is to eventually have 24/7 adoration but ... small steps for now.

This year our Cenacle will have its 10th anniversary since it was established at St. Margaret Mary Parish. We were very happy to receive a first-class relic of St. Faustina from Kraków. There are five relics displayed in the chapel currently: St. Faustina, St. Agnes, St. Andrew Bobola, St. Joseph of Cupertino, and St. Michael. We are hoping for many more saints to join us at Adoration and in the function room of the St. Agnes Resource Center (Catholic books and gifts as well as Catholic programs for all ages). If you know of any relics available, please send them our way.

At this moment our hands are still full with organizing the great



Adoration experience and the Resource Center in the old convent building to provide Catholic faith resources for all ages. With so many private businesses (Catholic books and gifts stores) closing, we are trying very hard to make this parish ministry available to the area and eventually to offer on-line purchase options. We need an army of people praying with the intercessions of our saints as well as an army of people getting involved with donating their talents, efforts, and resources. We've come a long way, and have seen and expect more amazing results.

CIALIS, PUERTO RICO

Maria Virella wrote and told us:

Today, as I write this summary, I have the opportunity to start a new Spanish EADM Cenacle group in Puerto Rico with 12 new members to deepen the EADM mission. I am very happy to receive and guide four married couples and eight more members. Cenacles are continuing to grow in number and spiritually growing for the glory of God.

I have been working in the formation of Cenacles and in the preparation of members for consecration as EADM since 2009, beginning in Hartford, Connecticut and extending the mission to Lima, Peru, and now Puerto Rico. In Ciales, the mission arrived in 2015 and currently we have five consecrated cenacles. Two more have begun training with manuals in the towns of Manatí and Vega Baja.

We have begun to prepare for the Feast of Divine Mercy by spreading the merciful message to families and the great blessing that we will obtain by properly preparing ourselves to obtain the graces promised by our Lord for each one of us. The Novena takes place for nine days at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, and we seek to bring people closer to Confession, Eucharist, and doing works of mercy. Our motto is: "For Christ and His Church."



WANT TO START A CENACLE?

Visit TheDivineMercy.org/cenacle for details. After reviewing, please call 1-877-380-0727 for more information and materials.

Tune into 'Mercy Unbound'

The internet series called "Mercy Unbound" is going strong and has posted more than 150 wonderful interviews from a plethora of guests. You can watch the video or listen to it as a podcast at DrBryanThatcher.com. Click on "Watch" at the top and you will see a variety of speakers and topics. The shows are all free. Please subscribe and share as that will help the series grow and get more exposure on YouTube. Help us spread the word about the truth and beauty of our faith!



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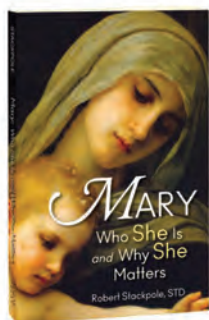
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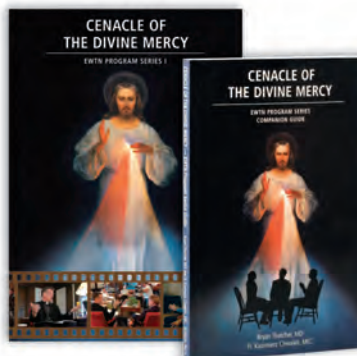
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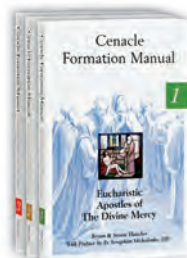


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PRAYING FOR THE SICK AND DYING

The Divine Mercy Chaplet originated from a vision that St. Faustina had of an Angel, the executor of divine wrath, on the evening of September 13, 1935. She wrote:

He was clothed in a dazzling robe, his face gloriously bright, a cloud beneath his feet. From the cloud, bolts of thunder and flashes of lightning were springing into his hands; and from his hand they were going forth, and only then were they striking the earth. When I saw this sign of divine wrath which was about to strike the earth, and in particular a certain place, which for good reasons I cannot name, I began to implore the angel to hold off for a few moments, and the world would do penance. But my plea was a mere nothing in the face of the divine anger. Just then I saw the Most Holy Trinity. The greatness of Its majesty pierced me deeply, and I did not dare to repeat my entreaties. At that very moment I felt in my soul the power of Jesus' grace, which dwells in my soul. When I became conscious of this grace, I was instantly snatched up before the Throne of God. ...

Never before had I prayed with such inner power as I did then. The words with which I entreated God are these: Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world; for the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us.

The next morning, when I entered chapel, I heard these words interiorly: **Every time you enter the chapel, immediately recite the prayer which I taught you yesterday.** When I had said the prayer, in my soul I heard these words: **This prayer will serve to appease My wrath. You will recite it for nine days, on the beads of the rosary, in the following manner: First of all, you will say one OUR FATHER and HAIL MARY and the I BELIEVE IN GOD. Then on the OUR FATHER beads you will say the following words: Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. On the HAIL MARY beads you will say the following words: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world. In conclusion, three times you will recite these words: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world** (*Diary*, 474-476).

GOD AND SOULS was the motto of St. Faustina. Our ministry aim, as was hers, is in saving souls. Our Lord asked her to pray and offer the Chaplet for sinners and the dying, saying: **"Pray as much as you can for the dying. By your entreaties [that is, insistent prayers] obtain for them trust in My mercy, because they have most need of trust, and have it the least. Be assured that the grace of eternal salvation for certain souls in their final moment depends on your prayer. You know the whole abyss of My mercy, so draw upon it for yourself and especially for**

poor sinners. Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul" (*Diary*, 1777).

Saint Faustina was often given the grace to know when a certain dying person desired or needed prayer; she would be alerted to the moment, by her Guardian Angel or by Our Lord Himself. At those times she would pray until she no longer felt the need to pray, or a sense of peace came upon her, or she learned that the person had died, or heard the soul say, "Thank You!"

One of the best means of assisting the dying is the one that Jesus

revealed to St. Faustina and insisted that she use often — even continuously: The Divine Mercy Chaplet. Jesus said: **"My daughter, encourage souls to say the chaplet which I have given to you. It pleases Me to grant everything they ask of Me by saying the chaplet. ... Write that when they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the merciful Savior"** (*Diary*, 1541). Earlier, Our Lord said to her, **"At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the indulgence is the same"** (*Diary*, 811).

What if the person prays from a distance? Saint Faustina had a love for the sick and dying, and prayed for them with great fervor. The following experiences recorded in her *Diary* make it clear that one does not have to be at the bedside physically. She wrote: "It sometimes happens that the dying person is in the second or third building away, yet for the spirit, space does not exist. It sometimes happens that I know about a death occurring several hundred kilometers away. This has happened several times with regard to my family and relatives and also sisters in religion, and even souls whom I have not known during their lifetime" (*Diary*, 835). She also wrote,

"My daughter, help Me to save a certain dying sinner. Say the chaplet that I have taught you for him. When I began to say the chaplet, I saw the man dying in the midst of terrible torment and struggle. His Guardian Angel was defending him, but he was, as it were, powerless against the enormity of the soul's misery. A multitude of devils was waiting for the soul. But while I was saying the chaplet, I saw Jesus just as He is depicted in the image. The rays which issued from Jesus' Heart enveloped the sick man, and the powers of darkness fled in panic. The sick man peacefully breathed his last. When I came to myself, I understood how very important the chaplet was for the dying. It appeases the anger of God" (*Diary*, 1565).

These words are particularly relevant for members of the ministry and all Eucharistic Adorers. In chapels throughout the world, they are reciting or praying the Chaplet for the sick and dying. Moreover, on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, the Holy Father, Pope St. John Paul II, by a personally-signed parchment, imparted a Special Apostolic Blessing "to all the faithful, who during Adoration of Our Most Merciful Savior in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar will be praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and for those throughout the world who will be dying in that hour."



Ralph Sheldon kindly sent us this photo of the framed Apostolic blessing in the Adoration Chapel at Holy Spirit Church in Tempe, Arizona. If your pastor agrees to displaying the blessing in your church or chapel, please reach out for more information by emailing Dr. Bryan Thatcher at DrBryanThatcher@gmail.com.

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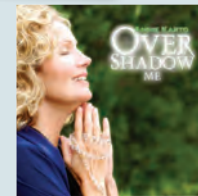
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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

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

- June 4, 2025: "The Severity of the Human Trafficking Problem and How to Recognize." Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy Conference, The National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, Massachusetts.
- September 5-7, 2025: Men's Resurrection Retreat, Tampa, Florida.

Call EADM at 1-877-380-0727 for more information.

Consider a Day of Reflection. Dr. Bryan Thatcher, director of Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, gives talks that focus on Divine Mercy; St. Faustina and Praying the Chaplet for the Sick and Dying; and Mary, Mother of Mercy.

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



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