

# Mission of Divine Mercy

December, 2003 AD

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

At Christmas we celebrate the Gift of God Who has come to be with us, becoming one of us, by becoming the Child of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He continues to be our Hidden Companion, present in the ups and downs of our daily life.

The purpose of our Mission of Divine Mercy is to help all of us, with the example of our Blessed Mother, to become more aware of His presence. So this Christmas we want to share with you a meditation on the Lord's desire to talk with us daily. Found in the middle section, it presents a simple and accessible way to begin to do exactly this in the midst of our hectic, complicated lives. ♦

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and his name shall be called

Emmanuel

which means

God with us

(Mt 1:23)



distinct in some ways. One of these differences was that we felt called to a communal rather than a semi-eremitical way of life.

Because of this distinction **Bishop Edmond Carmody**, (Bishop of Corpus Christi and of Catholic Solitudes) felt that we should become **independent from Catholic Solitudes**. He determined that by the end of October, 2003, our Mission of Divine Mercy would cease to be officially affiliated with Catholic Solitudes. As of that date we are now a separate *private association of the faithful*.

This official change does not alter the **fraternal bonds** we naturally feel for the Community where the seeds of our MDM began. We give thanks to God for the many, many blessings we received at Rancho Maria, and for all of our friends at Catholic Solitudes. But we especially want to express our gratitude to and for **Fr. Patrick Meaney**, the founder of Catholic Solitudes and a personal friend of many years. His spirituality, magnanimity and generosity played a very important role in the birth of the MDM. May Our Lord reward him.

SO A NEW HABIT...

We were informed that this change in our canonical situation would also necessitate a change in our habit since the one we currently wear is that of Catholic Solitudes. So we are working on new habits now and we hope by late winter, God willing, that you will see us in white and navy blue.

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## UPDATE

We also would like to keep you in on some of our news since the October newsletter:

### A NEW CANONICAL SITUATION

This Mission of Divine Mercy began as a part of Catholic Solitudes, a semi-eremitical community near Hebronville, Texas. We had begun to feel that the Lord was calling us to something which shared many of the spiritual elements of Catholic Solitudes, but was also

# “LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY”

*Would you like to learn a simple way to begin praying to God? You can read this little reflection as if it were Jesus Himself Who was speaking to your soul. Don't read it when you are in a hurry. Wait until you have a few peaceful minutes.*



I am going to speak to you about prayer.

“Pray, that you may not fall into temptation,” I said in My Gospel. There is a saying among the saints: “Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned<sup>[1]</sup>.” But what importance do **you** give to prayer?



To pray was not a suggestion but a command, given its importance. But this should not seem like an obligation imposed on you. Rather, you should remember Who it was that said that; that it was God Himself, Jesus, your Messiah. And being the Man-God, as God He cannot be

wrong. I want you to be praying, **praying always**. How is that possible in the midst of your thousands of pre-occupations and activities? I will explain.

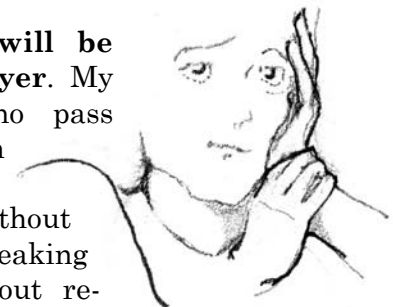
Praying is speaking with God. Reflect a little: when two people engage in deep and friendly conversation they compare their experiences; they share their thoughts, their feelings, their reactions. Their interior selves “dove-tail”. The same thing happens when you speak with your God; You let yourself be filled with God, with His thought, His feelings. And I not only come into you, but I give My very Self to the person who speaks and has this exchange with Me. I give Myself wholly and I give My Holy Spirit to whomever

prays, thinks of Me, remembers Me.

But how many people pray? How much do they pray, and how do My children pray? No one has taught them to pray. Poor children. Without prayer, you are deprived of one of the greatest things possible in this life, after sanctifying grace, (which is the life of God in a soul in the state of grace, the grace of God, in friendship with God).

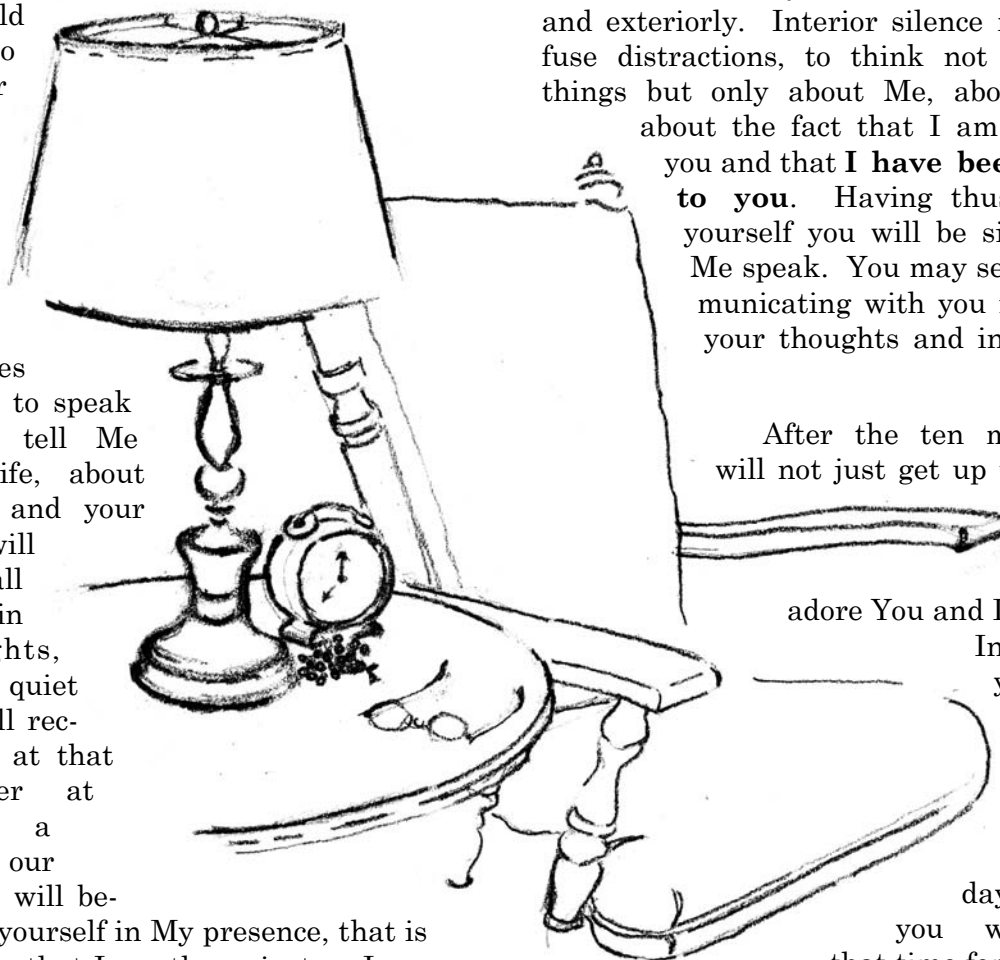
Little children, **to pray is to talk with Me, your God**. You can begin by telling Me about the things that you are involved in, your projects, your work. Not because I don't know those things already, but because this is the simplest and easiest way for you to begin a dialogue. Yes, My children, it is a dialogue. Because when you start telling Me about what is going on in your life, you will see that if you then keep silence and meditate a little about Me, and think a little about Me, you will begin to perceive My thought and My feelings with regard to what you have told Me and commented on. If you would only give yourself the time to begin to speak to Me about your concerns how very many graces would you receive!

**I, I Myself, will be your teacher of prayer.** My poor little ones, who pass through this life which is so difficult as a consequence of sin, but without communicating or speaking with your God; without receiving the consolations that God wants to share with you. You are human and you need to feel loved. But how can you



feel loved if you do not give Me any of your time so that We might speak together? I Myself will teach you about prayer.

I would like you to pause after reading this text. Choose a time of prayer for tomorrow. It should be a definite time, just ten minutes long, in which to speak with Me; to tell Me about your life, about your projects and your hopes. You will tell Me about all this either in your thoughts, slowly, or in a quiet voice. You will recollect yourself at that time, whether at home or in a church, for our dialogue. You will begin by placing yourself in My presence, that is to say, thinking that I am there, just as I am in all places as God. **I am in your spirit at the center of your soul**, and I am in the tabernacle, in My Real Presence, as the Man-God among you. You will choose the place for your dialogue, making sure that it is peaceful and distant from noise, from worldly noise. And wait until you are conscious of My presence, conscious that you are in My presence; only then will you begin your dialogue.



When you have finished telling Me your concerns of the day, your longings, hopes, and trials, then try to be silent, both interiorly and exteriorly. Interior silence means to refuse distractions, to think not about other things but only about Me, about My love, about the fact that I am listening to you and that **I have been listening to you**. Having thus recollected yourself you will be silent and let Me speak. You may sense Me communicating with you interiorly, in your thoughts and in your heart.

After the ten minutes, you will not just get up to leave, but you will say: "My God, I adore You and I thank You."

In that way you may take your leave.

And from that day forward, you will reserve that time for Me, only for Me. That is to say, we will speak together every day, if possible at the same time. Do you agree to that?

**I am waiting for you**

<sup>[1]</sup> St. Alphonsus Ligouri, *"Del gran mezo della preghiera"*. Quoted in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2744.



**B**EHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK: IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, AND WILL EAT WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME." (REV. 3:20)

## THE ST. MICHAEL SQUADRON

People often comment on how difficult is the spiritual situation of **today's young people**. Yet our Holy Father **Pope John Paul II** has repeatedly shown us that the Lord is calling them to greatness in their Christian witness. As part of that effort to mobilize the tremendous spiritual potential of youth in our society we are beginning, with the help of some dedicated laymen, a new group called **The Saint Michael Squadron**. It is for young men aged 15-18 who take seriously their Christian responsibilities.

For our first retreat on Dec. 5-7 we had a very generous team, coordinated by Mr. Bill Barry and Mr. Mark Margritz. Some good friends of ours had let us use a house of theirs which is situated on a beautiful site overlooking the Guadalupe River. They had worked **hard** to transform it into a rustic mini-retreat house for the occasion and it served us very well. Also noteworthy was the hidden crew of chefs that quietly provided delicious hot meals throughout the weekend.

But we especially want to congratulate the 10 young men themselves, who were willing to take the risk and brave this new experience. Most of them returned alive...(In fact their level of response impressed and encouraged us.)

One little detail: someone had had the great idea that we take a break to have a quick dip in the Guadalupe River. Sure, why not...? Br. Moses and I learned the hard way how long is *too* long to stay in the Guadalupe in the month of December! The young men were more intelligent. ☺

We confide this new endeavor to your prayers.

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION CONFERENCES

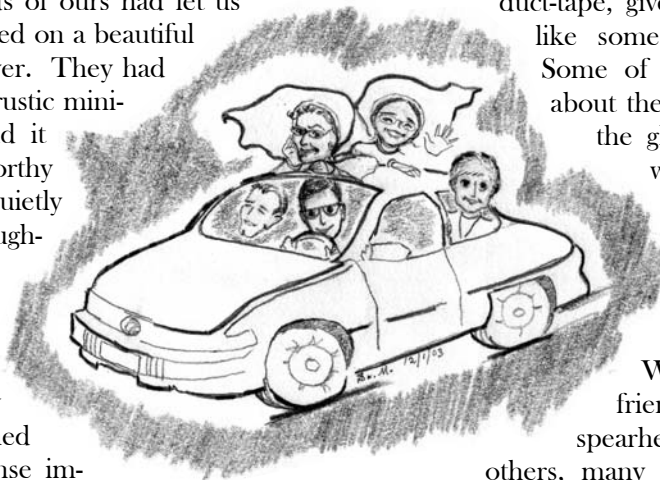
Many persons have asked us for help with spiritual direction. Unfortunately there is not enough time to dedicate individually the necessary attention to all those who request it. But many of the questions that arise individually in spiritual direction are questions that are common to most of us. So we have begun a series of simple conferences once a month to address some basic questions about the spiritual life. So far the topics have included "A Simple Introduction to Prayer", "Dealing with Distractions and Dryness in Prayer", and "An Introduction to Meditative Prayer." These gatherings occur on the second Thursday of each month and are held at 8:00 pm after our Holy Hour in the Family Room at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish. **All are welcome.**

## AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

Our next *Encounter with Jesus* Retreats will be held on January 9-11 (men only), February 27-29 (men and women), and May 14-16 (men and women). Places are limited so we suggest that you register as soon as possible if you are interested. Please contact Kathryn Lamke at (830) 627-0117, Pat Fox at (830) 625-4254 or Rusty Brandt at (830) 625-4531 ext. 220.

## GOOD-BYE TO THE "GREY GHOST"

The "Grey Ghost" is a nickname referring to our 1990 Ford Crown Victoria that has given so many years of faithful service. (Its front head-light, held on by duct-tape, gives it a distinctive look rather like someone with a bandaged eye.) Some of our friends were concerned about the Grey Ghost finally giving up the ghost so to speak. So a few weeks ago we were called outside after the Saturday Mass and presented with a beautiful 1995 Mercury Sable. WOW! That was quite a surprise. Left us speechless. We want to thank our good friend **Dennis Clarkson**, who spearheaded this effort, and all the others, many of whom wanted to remain anonymous, who contributed to this great gift.



## THANKS BE TO GOD

In November our little community—a **micrommunity**—celebrated our second anniversary of arriving here in New Braunfels. These two years, if not always easy, have certainly been full of a thousand and one blessings from the Lord. And you, our family and friends, are a great part of the blessings that make this Mission possible. With our gratitude and prayers in this Christmas season.

*Fr. John Mary  
and the members of  
the Mission of Divine Mercy.*

## E-mail List

Occasionally we have announcements or information that we would like to make available to our friends. E-mail is a quick, cheap way to do that. If you would like to be on our e-mail list, please send your e-mail address to us at:

[MDM@missionofdivinemeracy.org](mailto:MDM@missionofdivinemeracy.org)