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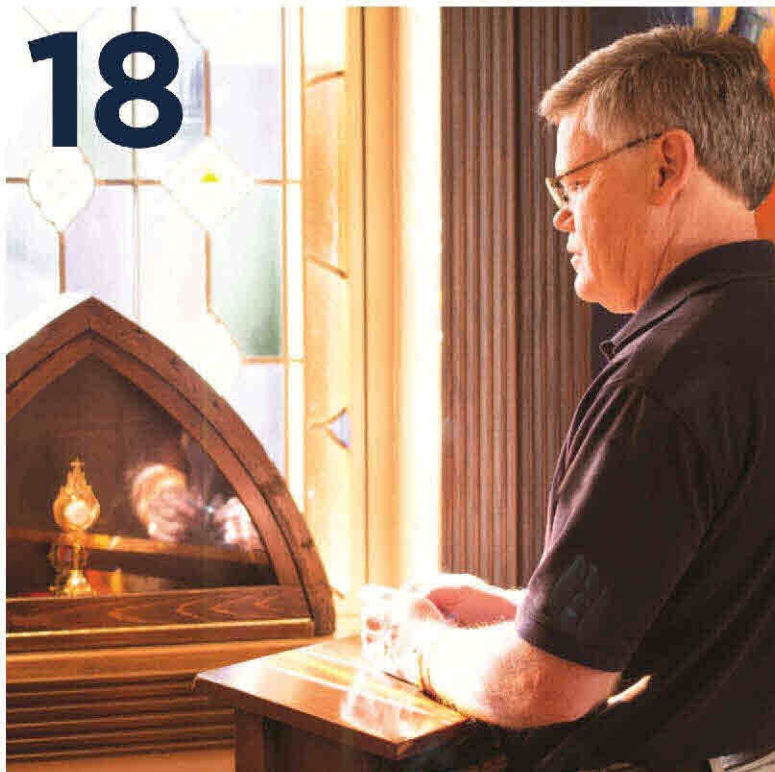
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COVER STORY

Divine Mercy

JAY HASTINGS TALKS ABOUT CHRIST, ST. FAUSTINA AND PRAYER

BY BETH SIMKANIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DR. JOHN TYLER

Jay Hastings understands the power of prayer.

He's seen prayer heal people, both physically and spiritually, and give others peace at the hour of death.

He knows it influences others. In fact, he's experienced the inspiration that prayer can bring. It inspired him to devote his life to prayer and establish the Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy in Bartlett, Tenn.

Hastings received a special message from God during the sacrament of the holy Eucharist in 2002, which has turned into a Divine Mercy ministry that encompasses more than 3,100 individuals in 76 countries who minister to people all over the world and pray every hour, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, for the suffering of souls everywhere.

"You don't have to go on a pilgrimage to change the world," Hastings said. "You can sit in your living room and do that by aiding souls through prayer and sacrifice."



"Literally, God sent me St. Faustina in the form of a relic and it changed my life. I didn't want to ignore God's inspiration. I learned to be open to it and take action. I do it because God asked it of me."

As of this writing, the Shrine and Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy is located in an alcove in the St. Joachim Chapel, which was the original St. Ann Catholic Church.

Along with continuous prayer on every hour, the ministry offers a Holy Hour of Mercy at 3 p.m. each day before the Blessed Sacrament at the shrine for souls. The society receives daily prayer requests by phone and through email, letters and social media. The prayer requests are responded to individually and are recorded in a Divine Mercy prayer journal. The society prays for these intentions every day during the Holy Hour of Mercy when individuals recite the Stations of the Cross, pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the rosary and venerate the relic of St. Faustina and the image of the Divine Mercy.

Additionally, the Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy ministers and visits the sick upon request with their first-class relic of St. Faustina. Individuals pray daily for the sick and dying and those about to commit mortal sin. Some pray a Divine Mercy conversion prayer daily for those in need of conversion or who have strayed from their faith.

"We are dispensers of God's grace and mercy," Hastings said. "We come closer to God through our suffering as we grow in holiness, as did St. Faustina, so as to be useful to Our Lord and the Church."

The St. Faustina Shrine now fills the whole chapel. The shrine has confessions that are being



held during the Holy Hour of Mercy on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The society will offer tours and the new shrine rector Father Ernie De Blasio and Jay welcome everyone to visit and participate in the ongoing prayer life of the Shrine/Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy.

What started out as God's message to one man has turned into a ministry that spread across the entire world 15 years later.

"This wasn't my plan," Hastings said. "I didn't expect this or desire it. God had other ideas. Fifteen year ago, I was living my life, raising four children and working. I trusted in the Lord, He sent me a message and I responded. Literally, God sent me St. Faustina in the form of a relic and it changed my life. I didn't want to ignore God's inspiration. I learned to be open to it and take action. I do it because God asked it of me." †

BETH SIMKANIN

is a local freelance writer. With more than 14 years of journalism and public relations experience, she has worked in the building materials, medical, publishing and utilities industries. She is a parishioner at The Church of the Holy Spirit.



CONTACT THE SHRINE/SOCIETY OF ST. FAUSTINA OF THE DIVINE MERCY

PRAYER REQUESTS:

■ To send a special prayer request to the Shrine/Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy, please call the 24-hour Divine Mercy prayer recorder line at 901.574.9797, access the society's prayer blog and website at www.stfaustinashrine.org or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/Stfaustinashrine, email Jay Hastings at sfshrine@msn.com or write to:

St. Faustina Shrine
PO Box 343288
Memphis, TN 38184

PRAYER PARTICIPATION:

■ If you are interested in praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy once per day with the Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy or would like to pray during the Hour of Mercy (3 p.m.) with the Blessed Sacrament during adoration at least once a week at the Shrine of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy, please access the society's website at www.stfaustinashrine.org, email the society at sfshrine@msn.com or call Jay Hastings directly at 901.438.7772.

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER AND DONATION:

■ If you would like to receive the Shrine and Society of St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy's monthly newsletter or would like to make a donation (all services are free), please access www.stfaustinashrine.org or send mail to:

St. Faustina Shrine
PO Box 343288
Memphis, TN 38184

SAINT OF THE MONTH



ST. NICHOLAS FEAST DAY: DEC. 6

Jolly Old St. Nicholas evokes a cheerful image of an elderly, bearded man, kindly handing out gifts to children. This St. Nick, or Santa Claus, is a model of generosity for those who see the celebration of our Savior's birth at Christmas as a time for performing acts of charity and goodwill. While the original St. Nicholas was known and honored for his concern for the poor, the Church also remembers him as a fierce defender of the faith against the Arian heresy at the first Church council in Nicaea.

Historically, little is known of Nicholas. Born in the third century, Nicholas became the Bishop of Myra, a small town in present-day Turkey. He was imprisoned and tortured for his refusal to denounce Christianity during the "Great Persecution." When Constantine ascended to the throne, Nicholas was released and responded to the emperor's call in 325 to attend the first Church council. He joined St. Athanasius and others in successfully arguing that Jesus was the true God, and was one of the Bishops to sign the Nicene Creed.

Stories and legends of Nicholas' generosity and concern for the poor grew throughout Europe. By the Middle Ages, thousands of churches were named for him. In one popular story, Nicholas, a Bishop at the time, saved three young girls from a life of prostitution when he secretly delivered three bags of gold to their father for their dowries. This secret and charitable gift-giving is the origin of the St. Nicholas tradition still observed in some countries today.

Beloved by so many, Nicholas is depicted in artwork more than any other saint except for the Blessed Mother. Nicholas was more than a kind gentleman who loved children. He loved the Lord, defended Him and served Him in the poor and lowly. He remains an example for Christians committed to bringing Christ to life in our world today. †

