

# The Mission of Divine Mercy

*"The Mother of God  
has taught me  
how to prepare  
for the Feast of Christmas...."*

*Cont. pg. 2*



*Advent 2012 A.D.*

*Continued from page 1:*

*"She said to me:*

*'My daughter, strive after silence and humility, so that Jesus, Who dwells in your heart continuously, may be able to rest. Adore Him in your heart; do not go out from your inmost being....*

*'I shall obtain for you the grace of an interior life which will be such that, without ever leaving that interior life, you will be able to carry out all your external duties with even greater care. Dwell with Him continuously in your heart. He will be your strength.... Try to act in this way until Christmas Day, and then He Himself will make known to you in what way you will be communing and uniting yourself with Him.' "*

*(From the Diary of St. Faustina)*

Ever since a friend of ours came upon this passage a few years ago during her own preparation for living Advent, we've tried to find a place for it in our December Newsletter. It's hard to improve on.

## ***Betwixt and Between***

**T**his is a betwixt and between newsletter. Because we are moving, we are caught between writing it too early to actually report on certain events and sending it a little too late to announce some of them. Nonetheless, here it goes....

**On Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>,** at our 10:30 Mass, we will have celebrated **our Eleventh Anniversary as a Community.** Brother Mikael will have been instituted as an Acolyte; the Mass will have been followed by a solemn Benediction; then at a brief program in St. Michael's Hall we will have debuted the new two-and-a-half minute trailer about MDM and the message of Mercy, available on our website. Fr. John Mary will then have announced the generous financial grants that we have been awarded this fall; and finally, thoroughly hungry, we will have gathered for a reception at the tent. ♦

***"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His Mercy endures forever."*** (Psalm 136)

## ***Contents:***

♦ From Fr. John Mary	3
♦ Finally!	4
♦ A Double Thanksgiving	5
♦ Mercy Story	6
♦ The Bethany Association	9
♦ MDM Goes Viral...Maybe	9
♦ The Ministry of Acolyte	10
♦ Advent Retreats	10
♦ Calendar	11
♦ Our Novembers	11

FROM FR. JOHN MARY:

## *A New Advent of Hope*

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those who dwelt in a land of gloom, a light has shown. (Is 9:2)*

There is certainly much darkness and gloom, suffering and sadness today. Yet Pope John Paul said we are living today a "new Advent". And Advent is a time of **HOPE**. Hope based on faith in the merciful love of our God and Father. This majestic passage from Isaiah that we read at the Midnight Mass of Christmas is a prophecy of hope.

*For the yoke of his burden, ... the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken.... (vs. 4)*

The hope of Advent is a hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and dominion will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called  
"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (vs. 6)*

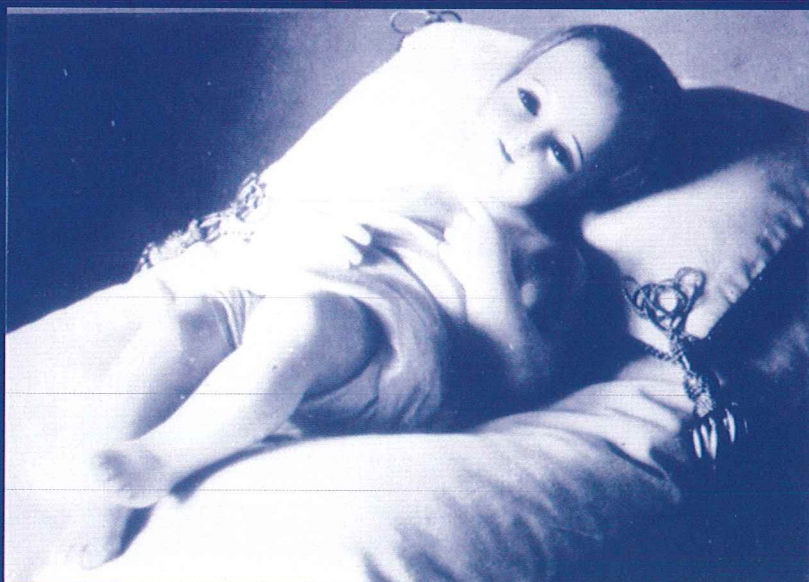
I sense so strongly that **today** the Lord wants to give us hope. We are living "a new Advent". Yes, there is much sin and evil. Yet "*where sin abounded, grace has over abounded*" (Ro 5, 20).

As the Lord revealed to St Faustina, He has great designs, of Justice yes, but especially of Mercy for His children today. And what are these designs of Divine Mercy? "*What eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.*" (1Cor 2,9)

His designs are wrapped in mystery. We don't know the details. He calls us, like little children, to trust in Him, Who is "*rich in Mercy*" (Eph. 2,4).

*"Of the increase of his government  
and of peace there will be no end...  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts  
will do this." (vs. 7)*

Coming out of an ecstasy in which she was holding the Baby Jesus, a French nun and mystic, Sr. Yvonne Aimeé found herself holding in her arms this miraculous likeness of the Infant.



# Finally!

**W**e've moved. God willing, by the time you receive this, we will have moved to our new quarters at the Mission. Hallelujah! We've been working towards this for eleven years, and learning to wait for the Lord's time.

First of all, we want to thank our good friends, Dr. Larry and Joann Aniol. They received our little pilgrim community over ten years ago in their "Angel Oaks" property and provided our community, which was just starting and practically homeless, with an oasis. Even as we look forward to our new quarters, we already feel nostalgic about leaving "Angel Oaks". It has been a true blessing for us.

This move has a deeper meaning for us than just changing locations. It's a new beginning. We will be in two houses that we purchased near the Mission and that we have tried to adapt for our situation. It is not yet the monasteries that we hope to build one day, but it is a *big* step in that direction.

Finally MDM will have a home. This

will help our contemplative life in many ways, as we will no longer be commuting to the Mission. And as Dave Sommers says, "Having a praying community living here is like the Mission finally having its *soul*."

This move will make it easier for us to offer our ministries at the Mission. And will permit something we have been eager to do for a long time: to open our daily Mass and prayer times to all of you.

Also we will be able to begin receiving vocations. Due to the costs, we had to scale back on how many persons these houses could accommodate. But even so, it is a big step forward.

So we wanted to share this very good news with all of you, who by your friendship and support in one way or another have made this possible: That in a corner of Comal County, in the Hill Country of Texas, the Lord will be holding out His arms and saying, "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy-burdened, and I will give you rest.*" **May the Lord of Mercies bless you.** ♦



*MDM's good friends, Larry and Joann Aniol*



*Through Michael LeCocke the Knights of Columbus from St. Joseph's, Honey Creek, make a generous donation to the Mission.*

# A Double Thanksgiving!

**T**his newsletter is filled with good news...and here comes some more. In recent weeks we have received two very important gifts.

From the Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation, whose past gifts helped us to purchase our new properties at the Mission, has come a gift of \$300,000! This gift, combined with their previous gifts, will allow us to pay off the mortgages on the properties and also pay off the renovations to date. The Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation has been a good friend to us for several years. Without their help we probably could not be taking up residence at the Mission this soon. May God bless them for their support!

+ + +

**T**hat would normally be more than enough good news, but amazingly we have more exciting news to share with you. As many of you know, we have been planning for the construction of the **Msgr. O'Callaghan Center** for the last few years. It has been our dream to replace our tent and camp house with a real kitchen and dining room where we can feed many people, no matter what the weather, along with a conference room that would permit us to begin having overnight retreats again. But our limited resources have prevented us from making this happen. It is a struggle for us to keep body & soul together --- or in our case the grounds and retreat

activities at the Mission---and there are always more bills left over at the end of the month. New retreat facilities have always been out of reach.

Back to the good news. **We have received a challenge grant for the construction of the O'Callaghan Center from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. This donor has pledged to give us \$300,000 each year for three years, as long as we match the funds!** So, as we see it, we already have half the cost of the O'Callaghan Center pledged! Now we just have to raise the remaining \$900,000 over the next three years...or sooner.

This is wonderful news for us and for anyone who has shivered under the tent, on a Saturday or Sunday morning, holding a hot cup of coffee just to keep their hands warm. Or conversely, has headed for the tent to get out of the hot Texas sun, only to find that it is sweltering there because the heat can't escape, despite all the holes in it.

The O'Callaghan Center will not make MDM a better community, but it will make it possible for us to minister to more people more frequently.

You will hear more about this project in the next few months. Please keep it in your prayers, and if you feel that God is asking you to help us meet this challenge...then thank you.

Above all, we give thanks to God for once again manifesting His Fatherly care for this little Mission of His Mercy. He is truly the "Father of Mercies" (2Cor 1:3). ♦



Preliminary Front Elevation O'Callaghan Center

MORKOVSKY + ASSOCIATES, INC.  
ARCHITECT  
SAN ANTONIO, TX  
09/28/11-C

## MERCY STORY:

# "God, *why* God, *why* did You..."

*By George Gonzales*

Even now after several years, I can clearly remember it. When I recall what happened, I feel a terrible and painful feeling, but at the same time, I also feel a joyful jubilation deep down inside of me. As I start remembering a flood of very strong and opposite emotions become aroused in me. I can't control my tears from rolling down my cheeks.

It all started out like any other day, but I will never be the same or ever forget it. I was getting home from work and pulling into my driveway when my neighbor met me. Marie told me my ten-year-old son, Georgie Junior, had been hit by a truck. She said Georgie had been taken by an ambulance to the hospital and that my wife, Gracie, was also there.

I raced to the hospital. Praying all the way, I pleaded with God that his injuries would be minor. After several hours that felt like an eternity, the doctors came out. They advised my wife and me our son was in critical condition and in a deep coma. They said only time would tell if he was going to make it, but they had done all they could for him.

I had never prayed so hard in all my life as I did during the next several days. I asked God to spare him and take me instead. I promised God that I would be a better Christian. I prayed, "Please, God just help my son and I will become a devout Believer." Over and over, I pleaded, "God please just help my son."

My greatest fear became a reality when the doctors advised us our son was brain dead. They added that keeping him on life support any longer would not change the inevitable. My wife and I begged the doctors not to stop his life support. We were told they would keep trying for two more days; however, if he did not respond in two days

the life support would have to be stopped.

I refused to acknowledge what was unfolding. I started to think back and remembered being in bed next to Georgie, my first son and namesake, when he was a newborn. I would look and look at him; finding it hard to believe that I was his father. I recalled when he took his first steps and oh how proud I felt when he first called out "dada".

My son died! My whole universe became very ugly and I became hostile and very, very bitter. My bitter disposition declared war on everyone and everything. I asked: Why wasn't I there when it happened? Why did my wife let him ride his bicycle to the store? Why did my mother-in-law give him that stupid bicycle? Why hadn't that truck driver looked where he was going? Why couldn't those so called doctors save my son? Why? Why? Why...? Yes, God, why did you let my son die?

My bitterness and hate drove me into a deep depression. I could not eat, sleep or reason properly and nothing – absolutely nothing – pleased me or brought me any peace. I so much wanted to strike out and hit someone or something. Some people say that time heals everything, but for me time was not passing. I was stuck in this deep, dark and Godless space. I was a wounded animal, hurting and grieving; ready and willing to attack and hurt everyone and everything. I told God, "I'm not the best Christian, but I'm not the worst one, either. I don't go to Mass every Sunday, but I do go on Christmas, Easter and even on other Sundays." I said with anger, "Why me? I dare you God, to tell me why my son."

I told God that I would never pray again and I would never attend Mass nor believe that there was a God. Yet even with my hate and in my restlessness, I was still looking for the answer.

I remember clearly the day my life changed forever. I was home sitting on the living room sofa and there was a Bible across the room on a coffee table located next to the front door. I felt a very gentle breeze coming in the front door and saw the pages in the open Bible begin to flip. I felt an uncontrollable, yet gentle urge come over me to go see and to read the last page flipped open in the Bible. I got up and walked over to the table.

I read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." That was as far as I could read. I broke down. I began shaking and I

could not stop crying loudly for a long time. For the first time in my life, I began to imagine and think about the pain and suffering God the Father experienced in losing His only Son. I could identify with the agony God must have felt when He handed Jesus over to die such a horrific and painful death to redeem me from my sins.

Yes, I had heard this a hundred thousand times before, but it was only a story. I had never felt the Father's pain until now. I asked myself why God loved me so much that He gave me this ultimate sacrifice. I thought if He gave me this, then there is nothing else He will refuse me if it is for my own good.

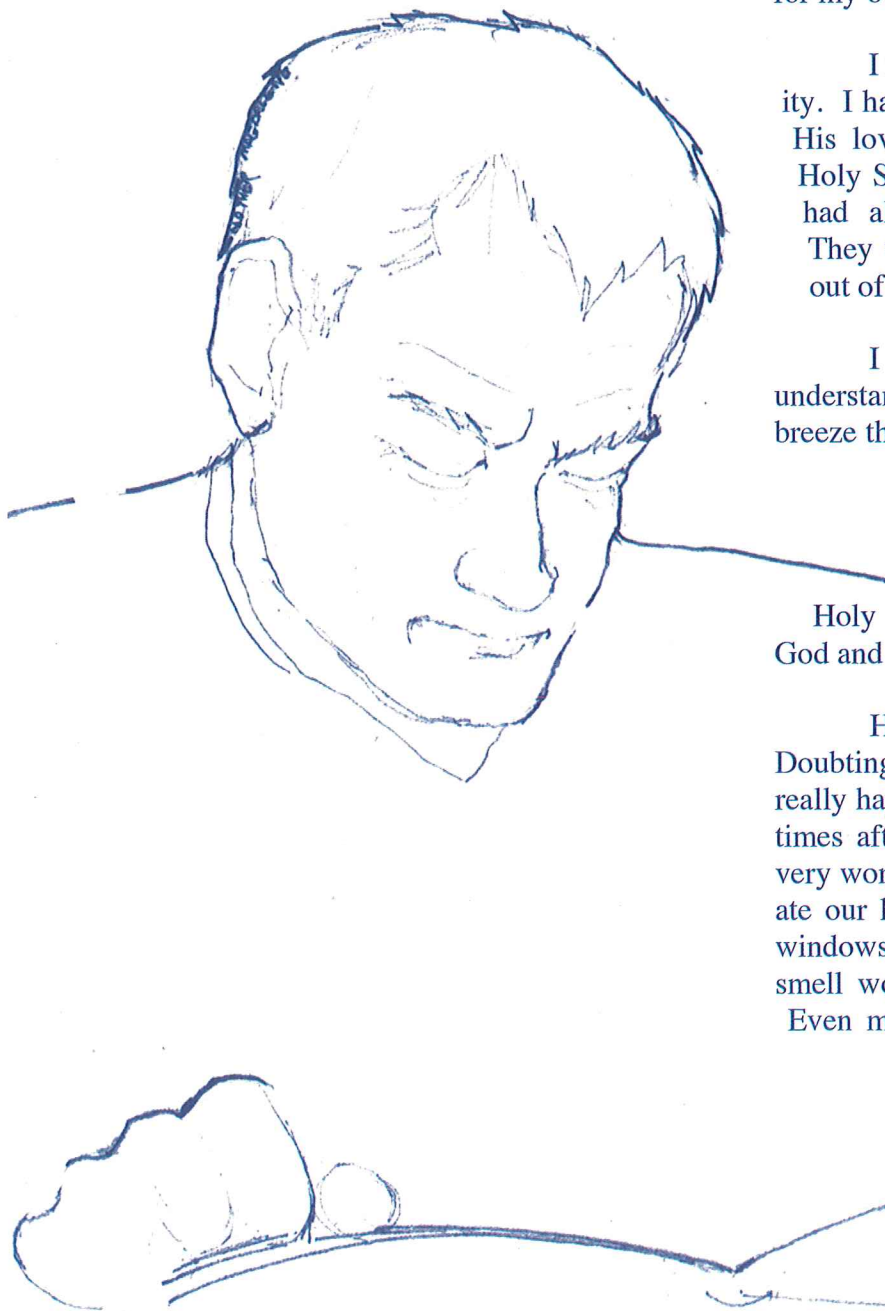
I felt so ashamed of my arrogance and vanity. I had no right to have dared God to show me His love once again. God the Father and the Holy Spirit had always been there for me, but I had always placed them in the background. They were on a holy pedestal but nevertheless, out of the way.

I had never really taken the time to try and understand the Holy Trinity. I know that gentle breeze that came through the front door turning the pages of the Holy Bible, as well as that uncontrollable urge to get up to walk to the open Bible, was the Holy Spirit ministering to me. The Holy Spirit came to me when I most needed God and at one of the darkest times in my life.

However, after a few days, and being a Doubting Thomas, I began wondering if it all really happened or if I had just imagined it. A few times afterward I started getting depressed, but a very wonderful and delightful aroma would permeate our home even with all the doors and all the windows closed. This aromatic and beautiful smell would only come when we were troubled.

Even more amazing was the peace and serenity that I felt deep down inside my very core when it manifested itself. This super state of tranquility made me feel a quiet and heavenly bliss and I did not want or need anything else.

*(Continued on page 8)*



# MDM GOES VIRAL... ...*Maybe*

**M**DM has put together a brief video trailer to introduce people to our Community and to the Mission. The video is less than three minutes long. Narrated by Fr. John Mary, the video briefly explains the ministry to which the Community is called: spreading the message of Divine Mercy. Using footage from Divine Mercy Sunday, the Way of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration, along with other special events and activities, the video acquaints people with Mission La Divina Misericordia, and with each of our Community members.

You can view the video by going to our website:

[www.missionofdivinemeracy.com](http://www.missionofdivinemeracy.com) and clicking on "MDM Video Trailer" on our home page. You can also copy the link and share it with your friends. ♦

## *Mercy Story* (Continued from page 7)

Gracie also smelled that delicate and indescribable aroma. A new healing had begun in our marriage which had also suffered during this period. But still there were doubts that all this was really happening until during one of these occurrences when our nine-year-old son Geoffrey, came into the room with a huge smile on his face for the first time since the accident. He asked Gracie and me, "What is that smell you guys?" When he spoke, I finally knew that it was not just me or us, and that others we loved also experienced it.

My trust in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is very real because the Holy Trinity is and always will be real. Many other positive things and thoughts have come out of all this and changes have taken place.

One change is that I no longer take my family and children for granted because I now know we may not be around tomorrow. So why am I telling what happened to me and our family? I hope our story will encourage you to believe in God's infinite love and mercy and to pray often: **JESUS: I TRUST IN YOU.** ♦

---

*George and Gracie Gonzales are members of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Schertz, TX. They can be contacted at 210-445-1512.*



*On November 1st Catholic Homeschooling families from the San Antonio TORCH group dressed as different Saints for their Feast Day Mass and picnic at the Mission.*



*Pope Leo was also in attendance....*

# BETHANY: The Place that *did* have room for Jesus

## MDM'S BETHANY ASSOCIATION

**A**t this time of year, we hear again the story of the journey to Bethlehem, with its familiar line "and there was no room for them in the inn." Bethlehem did not really welcome the arrival of Jesus. But Bethany did.

Bethany was the home of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary Magdalene. The Bible tells us that they were friends of Jesus, that they opened their home and hearts to Him. Jesus felt welcomed and supported there. We felt that "Bethany" is the name the Lord wanted when we were forming an association for all those who want to be a friend of the Mission.

Ever since our little Community arrived in the Texas Hill Country we have felt befriended and supported by many, many good people. It has been surprising to us that so many people would open their hearts to us...and we have been grateful. We also felt it was a sign from God that we were where He wanted us to be.

He gave us friends that fed and sheltered us, that prayed with us and for us, that offered sacrifices for the Mission, that worked alongside us and that laughed with us, offered legal and professional advice, looked after our medical and dental needs, that provided us with vehicles and repaired them, that supported the Mission financially and in so many other ways. But these friends are not just in Texas. You are spread throughout our country: Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Oregon, to name a few. Together you all form our Bethany, the place where we feel welcomed and supported.

Because MDM is new and small, the help and support of so many lay people has been essential to our growth and to our ability to spread the message of God's mercy. And we think this importance will only increase in the future. For this reason, we want to promote the Bethany Association, and invite all our friends to be part of it. To this end, the following newsletters will carry an article about the Bethany Association to help you

better understand its purpose.

The purpose of Bethany is very simple... and very important to us: to strengthen the bonds between you, all of you who consider yourselves friends of MDM, and us.

And we want to make clear: belonging to the Bethany Association comes with no obligation except that you consider yourself a friend of the Mission.

However, Bethany members benefit from their participation in a variety of ways:

By helping MDM grow and spread God's message of Mercy you are participating in its graces.

Your names are inscribed in the Bethany Book, kept in our Community Chapel, as a sign of our union in prayer with you and for you.

Each Sunday our Mass is offered especially for you and your intentions.

And we have some other plans for Bethany that we'll be announcing.

So we invite you to let us know if you consider yourself to be a friend of MDM by joining the Bethany Association, if you don't already belong. A simple way of doing this is by marking and returning the postcard that is included in this newsletter.

If MDM has been able to grow and develop and serve, it is in large part due to you, our friends. Through Bethany, we want to strengthen that friendship.

*Jesus, we trust in You. ♦*



# The Ministry of Acolyte

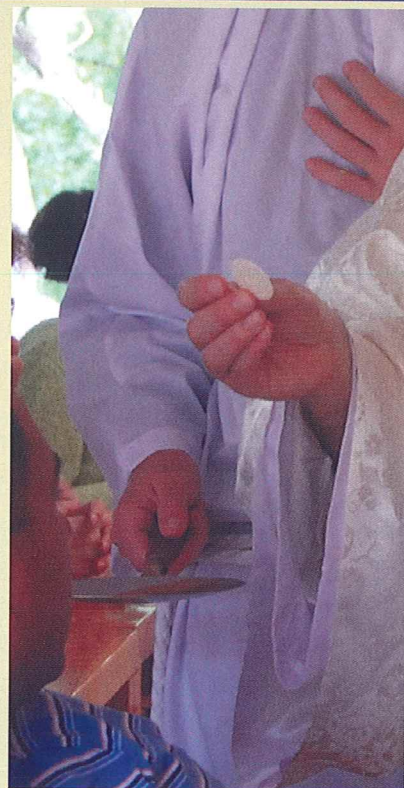
**A**t our Eleventh Anniversary celebration on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> Brother Mikáel of Mary was instituted as an Acolyte.

*"...It is therefore his duty to attend to the service of the Altar and to assist the Deacon and the Priest in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of the Mass; he is also to distribute Holy Communion as an auxiliary minister ...."*

(Apostolic Letter of Paul VI by which the Discipline of First Tonsure, Minor Orders, and Subdiaconate in the Latin Church is Reformed; section 6)

*"Because you are specially called to this ministry, you should strive to live more fully by the Lord's Sacrifice and to be molded more perfectly in Its likeness.... seek to understand the deep spiritual meaning of what you do, so that you may offer yourself daily to God as a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ."*

(From the INSTITUTION OF ACOLYTES)



## MINI-RETIRO DE ADVIENTO

Diciembre 1 *en Español*

**"Que no estoy Yo aquí,  
que soy tu Madre?"**

*Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,  
Nuestra Madre de Fé*

- ♦ 8:00 a.m. Misa
- ♦ Desayuno
- ♦ Plática
- ♦ Hora Santa con Confesiones
- ♦ Oportunidad para venerar la Imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
- ♦ Tiempo libre opcional

INSCRIPCIÓN NECESARIA. Favor de registrarse antes del Martes 27 de Noviembre. Cupo limitado.

Llamar al (830) 905-4515 ó e-mail: [mdm@missionofdivinemeracy.org](mailto:mdm@missionofdivinemeracy.org)

## ADVENT MINI-RETREAT

December 8 *in English*

**"Am I not here,  
I who am your Mother?"**

*Our Lady of Guadalupe,  
Our Mother of Faith*

- ♦ 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ♦ Breakfast
- ♦ Talk
- ♦ Holy Hour with Confessions
- ♦ Opportunity to venerate the Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- ♦ Optional free time

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Please register before Tuesday, December 4th. Limited space.

Please call (830) 905-4515 or e-mail: [mdm@missionofdivinemeracy.org](mailto:mdm@missionofdivinemeracy.org)

# Calendar of Upcoming Activities

*Events are subject to change. Please check our website for updates and details.*

<b>November 18</b>	<b>MDM Anniversary Celebration</b> <i>10:30 a.m. Mass and Benediction</i> <i>Special announcement</i> <i>Lunch</i>
<b>November 22</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Mass</b> <b>at the Mission 9:00 a.m.</b>
<b>December 1</b>	<b>Mini-retiro de Adviento</b>
<b>December 8</b>	<b>Advent Mini-retreat</b> <i>Feast of the Immaculate Conception</i> <i>Holy Day of Obligation</i>
<b>December 11</b>	<b>Misa de Vigilia de la Fiesta</b> <b>de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe</b> <b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>December 17-21</b>	<b>Community on Retreat</b>
<b>December 24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Mass 9:00 p.m.</b> <i>(No reception afterwards)</i>
<b>December 31</b>	<b>Mass for the Solemnity of</b> <b>Mary Mother of God 9:00 p.m.</b>

## 2013

<b>January 15</b>	<b>MDM daily Mass and prayer times are now open to all.</b> <i>(Schedule to be announced.)</i>
<b>February 13</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>
<b>March 2</b>	<b>Lenten Retreat</b> <i>(in English)</i>
<b>March 9</b>	<b>Retiro de Cuaresma</b> <i>(en Español)</i>
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>
<b>March 28 - 31</b>	<b>Paschal Triduum Retreat</b>
<b>March 31</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b>
<b>April 7</b>	<b>Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration</b>

## Our Novembers...

**N**ovembers have a pattern of being important for us. Among other things, our arrival here in 2001 was in November during Thanksgiving week. Three years later in November of 2004 we signed the mortgage on our land. Now, in 2012, November has marked the beginning of our taking up residence at the Mission.

No doubt these graces and events are due to the intercession of **the Holy Souls in Purgatory**. We do have a devotion to them; and we do remember them in our prayers; and we frequently offer Mass for them.

But how much more, I wonder, are **they** devoted to us because of the mission of our Community? Because, no matter their attitude or ignorance on earth, this we know: That they realize as no one on earth can what the Mercy of God means. They know; they know; they know. **And I think that they are eager to help us obtain the graces that will jump-start a much larger apostolate for this Mission.** I think that they are eager to help obtain for all of us *poor banished children of Eve* an unprecedented outpouring of the Divine Mercy for our world. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus. For us and for the whole world. ♦ MM



Mission of Divine Mercy  
P.O. Box 1759  
Canyon Lake, TX 78133

