



# Fraternity of Fatherhood

## A Spiritual Fraternity for All Men

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### What is a Sacramental?

USCCB

The catechism teaches us that sacramentals are “holy things or actions of which the church makes use to obtain for us from God, through her intercession, spiritual and temporal favors.” A sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the church to excite good thoughts and to help devotion. It is through the prayers of the church offered for those who make use of these sacramentals, as well as through the devotion they inspire, that they convey and obtain God’s grace and blessings.

Sacramentals are not unlike the sacraments in that they are channels of grace and can obtain for us these benefits:

1. Actual graces
2. Forgiveness of venial sins
3. Remission of temporal punishment
4. Health of body and material blessings
5. Protection from evil spirits

One difference between sacraments and sacramentals is that the latter do not produce sanctifying grace, a power that belongs to sacraments alone. Another difference is that sacraments were instituted directly by Christ while sacramentals were instituted by Christ through His church. Sacramentals should never take the place of sacraments. The sacraments are necessary for salvation; sacramentals are not necessary. Nevertheless, the prayers, pious objects, sacred signs, ... continued on page 4

### Easter 2024

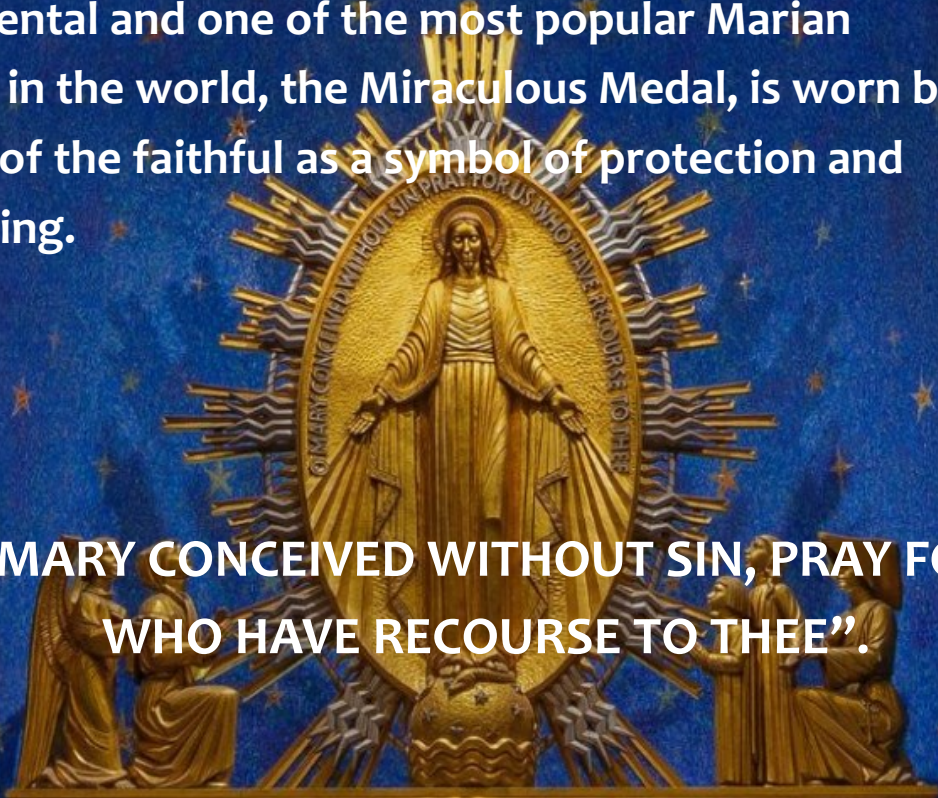
- 3/24 — Palm Sunday
- 3/28 — Holy Thursday
- 3/29 — Good Friday & Divine Mercy Novena Begins
- 3/30 — Holy Saturday
- 3/31 — Easter Sunday
- 4/7 — Divine Mercy Sunday

A Sacramental and one of the most popular Marian devotions in the world, the Miraculous Medal, is worn by countless of the faithful as a symbol of protection and safeguarding.

“O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE”.



THE BASIL



## Blessings are Sacramentals

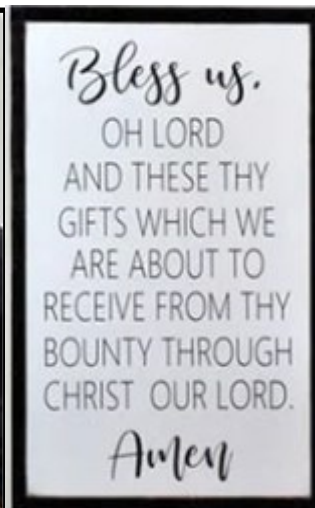
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Blessings are called "sacramentals" because they prepare us to receive the grace of the sacraments and help us to grow to be more like Christ (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1670).

Blessings consist of prayer, Scripture, and sometimes a special ritual sign (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1668).

People are accustomed to seeing bishops, priests, and deacons blessing objects or persons in the name of the Church. Indeed, "the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained ministry" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1669), often with the participation of the local parish community gathered in prayer. Whenever an ordained minister is present, he should be called upon to give the blessing.

However, there are other blessings, like the ones contained in Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, that can be prayed by anyone who has been baptized, "in virtue of the universal priesthood, a dignity they possess because of their baptism and confirmation" (Book of Blessings, no. 18). The blessings given by laypersons are exercised because of their special office, such as parents on behalf of their children.



Right after telling his disciples to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," Jesus instructs them to "bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Lk 6:28). St. Paul echoes the Lord's command when he exhorts the Romans to "bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them" (Rom 12:14). St. Peter urges that each time we are on the receiving end of evil, we should return "a blessing,

because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing" (1 Pt 3:9).

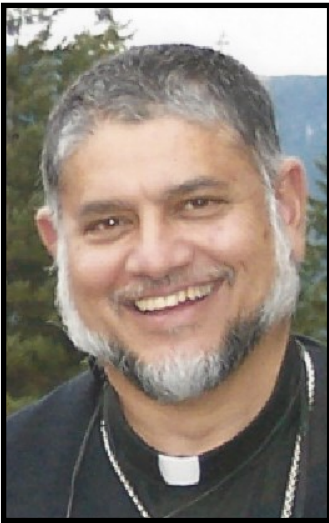
This is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "every baptized person is called to be a 'blessing,' and to bless" (no. 1669; see Gn 12:2; Lk 6:28; Rom 12:14; 1 Pt 3:9).

Like the Lord into whom they have been baptized, parents should bless and pray for their children. Each one of us should remember the sick and those who suffer. Each time we gather around the family table, we should bless God and the food he has given us. On special occasions, we will observe the traditions of the season, sanctifying by prayer and blessing all the seasons of grace that God has given to us.



## Fathers—"One Who Blesses"

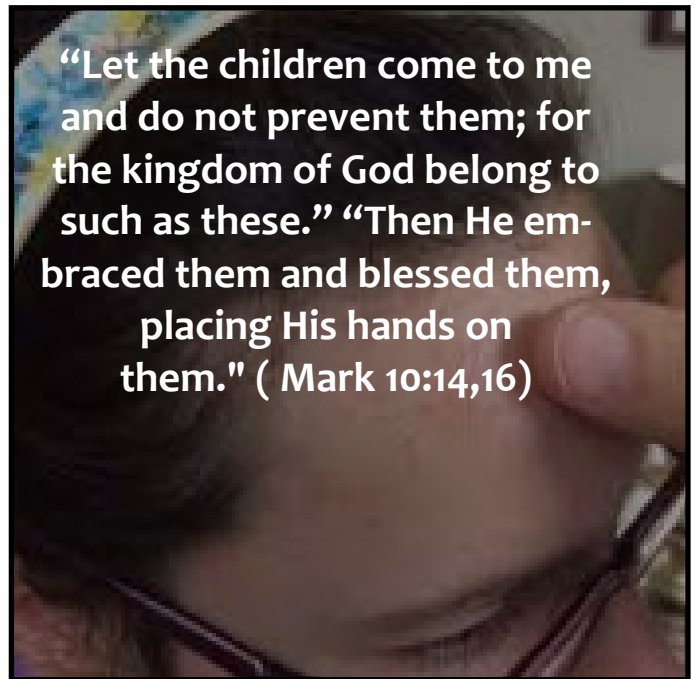
Fr. Santan Pinto SOLT



*Blessings are also "sacramentals". Below is Fr. Pinto's teaching to fathers that we are men who bless....*

As fathers, we must also be men who bless. We bless everything. We bless our wives, our children. Why? Because this shows that we care for them, that we love them. Make the sign of the cross on the foreheads of your wife, your children before they leave the house, when they return,

when they go to bed. For the older children in whom you have not done this since they were kids you can give the blessing silently in your heart. You don't even have to touch them. Although, it is not too late to start. As a man who blesses; you also protect and ask for God's protection on those you bless.



**"Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belong to such as these." "Then He embraced them and blessed them, placing His hands on them." ( Mark 10:14,16)**

These little signs say, "I Love You!" Make it a habit. Incorporate this into your daily program. At night bless your children with holy water and have them bless each other. God's protection is with them. Also, bless whatever endeavor you undertake – projects at work, at home, your travels; everything. If you know you are going into a tough meeting, silently bless each member as they walk in the door. You'll be amazed at the results.

**"As a man who blesses; you also protect and ask for God's protection on those you bless. These little signs say, I Love You!"**

A man, who blesses, is also a man who builds. If at work, someone curses God's name, silently offer a blessing for God's name. If someone tears down, then you build up. If some destroys, then you should create.

"Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belong to such as these." "Then He embraced them and blessed them, placing His hands on them." ( Mark 10:14,16) Fathers-to-be, daily, lay your hands upon your unborn child (or children) and pray that the Holy Spirit fill your child (or children) with light, love and wholeness.

### TOUCH MY UNBORN CHILD

Heavenly Father, I praise You and thank You for deeming this life to be and for forming this child in your image and likeness. Send forth Your Holy Spirit and illuminate her womb. Fill it with Your light, power, majesty, and glory. Lord Jesus Christ, come with Your love, and in Your infinite mercy pour forth Your healing into this child. Remove any negativity that may have been conveyed knowingly or unknowingly. Bathe this child in Your Precious Blood and fill it with Your Light and Truth. Dear sweet Mother Mary, come and be with this child. Come with your angels and saints and intercede on this tiny child's behalf before each person of the Holy Trinity. Thank You, Father for this beautiful child. Thank You, Holy Spirit for filling this child with grace. Thank You, Jesus for healing this child. Thank You, Mary, the angels and the saints for interceding on this child's behalf. To all of you this child is given. May all honor and glory be given to God by this Child in time and in eternity. Amen. Alleluia. Amen. *Author Unknown*

## ... continued **What is a Sacramental?**

and ceremonies of Mother Church are means to salvation.

Since they are blessed objects, sacramentals should always be treated with reverence and devotion. It is a custom of Catholics to kiss a rosary or scapular that they have accidentally dropped on the ground. The sign of the cross or a genuflection should be made deliberately and prayerfully.

### **How do they work?**

"Sacramentals obtain favors from God through the prayers of the Church offered for those who make use of them, and through the devotion they inspire."

Sacramentals should not be thought of as contracts, investments, or good luck charms. To wear the scapular does not give us free reign to commit mortal sin and still be assured of heaven. The scapular is a symbol of Marian devotion and a silent prayer to Our Blessed Mother in heaven for salvation that she most certainly will not ignore. Using holy water is not an infallible wiping away of our venial sins unless we have contrition for our sins when we use it. The power of sacramentals, then, depends greatly on the devotion of both the priest who gives the blessing and the person who is receiving the sacramental. They depend on the prayers of the church, the prayers of the blessings that are imposed on them, and the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Mother, and the Saints. Of themselves they do not save souls, but they are the means for securing heavenly help for those who use them properly.

Regarding blessed objects of devotion, it is good to remember that it is the blessing the priest gives an object that makes it a sacramental. The blessing gives God ownership over the object and dedicates it to Him, and He then works through it. This is why it is very important to have sacramentals blessed; without the blessing they do not hold any of the graces or benefits promised by the Church. To believe otherwise is to degrade the sacramental to the level of a good luck charm. It is superstition to hold that the grace and spiritual benefit one may receive comes from the sacramental itself; all grace comes from God. A sacramental is merely a channel through which He has chosen to work.

### **Types of Sacramentals**

We are surrounded by sacramentals. The Church has placed them in every aspect of our day-to-day life. They may more or less be divided into categories, though some sacramentals may fall under more than one. For instance, a rosary is both a prayer and a blessed object of devotion.

- 1) Blessings of priests and bishops -- All blessings are considered sacramentals. The blessings of priests and bishops, such as the consecration of churches, the absolution contained in the Confiteor at Mass, the Asperges, and the blessings bestowed on palms, candles, or ashes are all sacramental actions.

Lay Catholics are free to bless objects, and we do so often in blessing our children, blessing meals, blessing Advent wreaths or Mary Gardens, etc. However our blessings act as 'mere' plea to God. Priests alone have been given the power to bless with a guarantee, as it were, and it is they and they alone who can take a new crucifix or rosary and turn them into sacramentals with the power and prayers of the entire church behind them. ...continued on Page 5



# Fraternity of Fatherhood

## ... continued **What is a Sacramental?**

2) Exorcisms -- One of the most remarkable effects of sacramentals is their ability to drive away evil spirits. Exorcisms constitute the second category of sacramentals. They can be found in prayers or even placed upon other sacramentals such as the St. Benedict medal.

3) Blessed objects of devotion -- The Church blesses an untold variety of objects which the faithful use to inspire devotion. It would be impossible to list them all, but some of the main ones are holy water, candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints. Some of these blessed objects, namely candles, ashes, and palms, are given to us directly through the liturgy. Others, such as the scapular, rosary and Miraculous Medal have been instituted or directly propagated by Our Blessed Mother. Sacramentals such as these play a pivotal role in the devotion and spiritual life of any Catholic and should be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

4) Rubrics and prayers -- It is easy to forget that rubrics and prayers are all sacramentals, such as the bowing of the head at the holy name of Jesus or the sign of the cross. Many of these actions are used so often that they are performed flippantly and without thought. How easy it is to forget that a sincere recitation of the Confiteor before communion and the absolution of the priest afterwards can remit venial sin and be used as a way of purifying one's soul before receiving Holy Communion. How often in a day do we make the sign of the cross, forgetting that it is a testimony of faith in the Trinity to Whom we belong and in the act of Redemption. All these things should be done deliberately and devoutly, since they were deliberately instituted by the church to aid us in attaining a deep love of God.

### Disposing of Sacramentals

When a material sacramental becomes so worn that it can no longer be used as a sacramental, one should not casually toss it into the trash. To prevent desecration, the sacramental should be returned to the earthly elements. Holy water, for example, should be poured into a hole dug in the earth, in a spot no one would walk over. Combustible sacramentals, such as scapulars and holy books, should be burned and then buried. Larger sacramentals that do not burn should be altered so that their form no longer appears to be a sacramental (for example, a statue should be broken up into small pieces) and then buried. Objects made of metals can be melted down and used for another purpose.

Items lose their blessing or consecration if they are desecrated, if they are substantially broken such that they can no longer be used for their sacred purpose, or if they are publicly sold. If an item is sold by one individual to another for only the price of the material itself, that is, if no profit is made, the blessing remains. For example, if you were to give someone a blessed rosary or sell it to him at cost, he would not have to have it re-blessed. If you were to sell a blessed rosary to someone for profit, he would need to take it to a priest to be blessed.





## What is Divine Mercy Sunday?

thedivinemeracy.org

In a series of revelations to St. Maria Faustina Kowalska in the 1930s, our Lord called for a special feast day to be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. Today, we know that feast as Divine Mercy Sunday, named by Pope St. John Paul II at the canonization of St. Faustina on April 30, 2000.

The Lord expressed His will with regard to this feast in His very first revelation to St. Faustina. The most comprehensive revelation can be found in her Diary entry 699:

*My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are opened all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My mercy.*

In all, St. Faustina recorded 14 revelations from Jesus concerning His desire for this feast. Nevertheless, Divine Mercy Sunday is NOT a feast based solely on St. Faustina's revelations. Indeed, it is not primarily about St. Faustina — nor is it altogether a new feast. The Second Sunday of Easter was already a solemnity as the Octave Day of Easter[1]. The title "Divine Mercy Sunday" does, however, highlight the meaning of the day.

### EXTRAORDINARY GRACES

In her Diary, St. Faustina records a special promise given to her by Jesus. He told her to communicate it to the whole world:

*My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy (699).*

In three places in her Diary, St. Faustina records our Lord's promises of specific, extraordinary graces:

**I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My mercy (1109).**

**Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment (300).**

**The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment (699).**  
(...continued on page 7)



## ...continued **What is Divine Mercy Sunday?**

To receive these graces, the only condition is to receive Holy Communion worthily on Divine Mercy Sunday (or the Vigil celebration) by making a good confession beforehand and staying in the state of grace and trusting in His Divine Mercy.

By these conditions, our Lord is emphasizing the value of confession and Holy Communion as miracles of mercy. The Eucharist is Jesus, Himself, the Living God, longing to pour Himself as Mercy into our hearts. In addition, our Lord says through St. Faustina that we are to perform acts of mercy:

**"Yes, the first Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Mercy, but there must also be acts of mercy" (742).**

**"The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive" (1578).**

The worthy reception of the Eucharist on Divine Mercy Sunday is sufficient to obtain the extraordinary graces promised by Jesus. A plenary indulgence<sup>[1]</sup>, obtained by fulfilling the usual conditions, also is available.





## Fraternity of Fatherhood—Group locations & Area Coordinators

Fr. Pinto has encouraged us to grow and expand the Fraternity of Fatherhood all over the world. He has granted us his permission, his blessing and he guides us spiritually. It is with this confidence that we now move forward with humility, obedience and docile hearts. If you are interested in joining a Fraternity of Fatherhood group or if you would like to start a group in your city contact Dcn. Ray Emnace, Mike Allison, Stacey Hill or Brendan McVicker.

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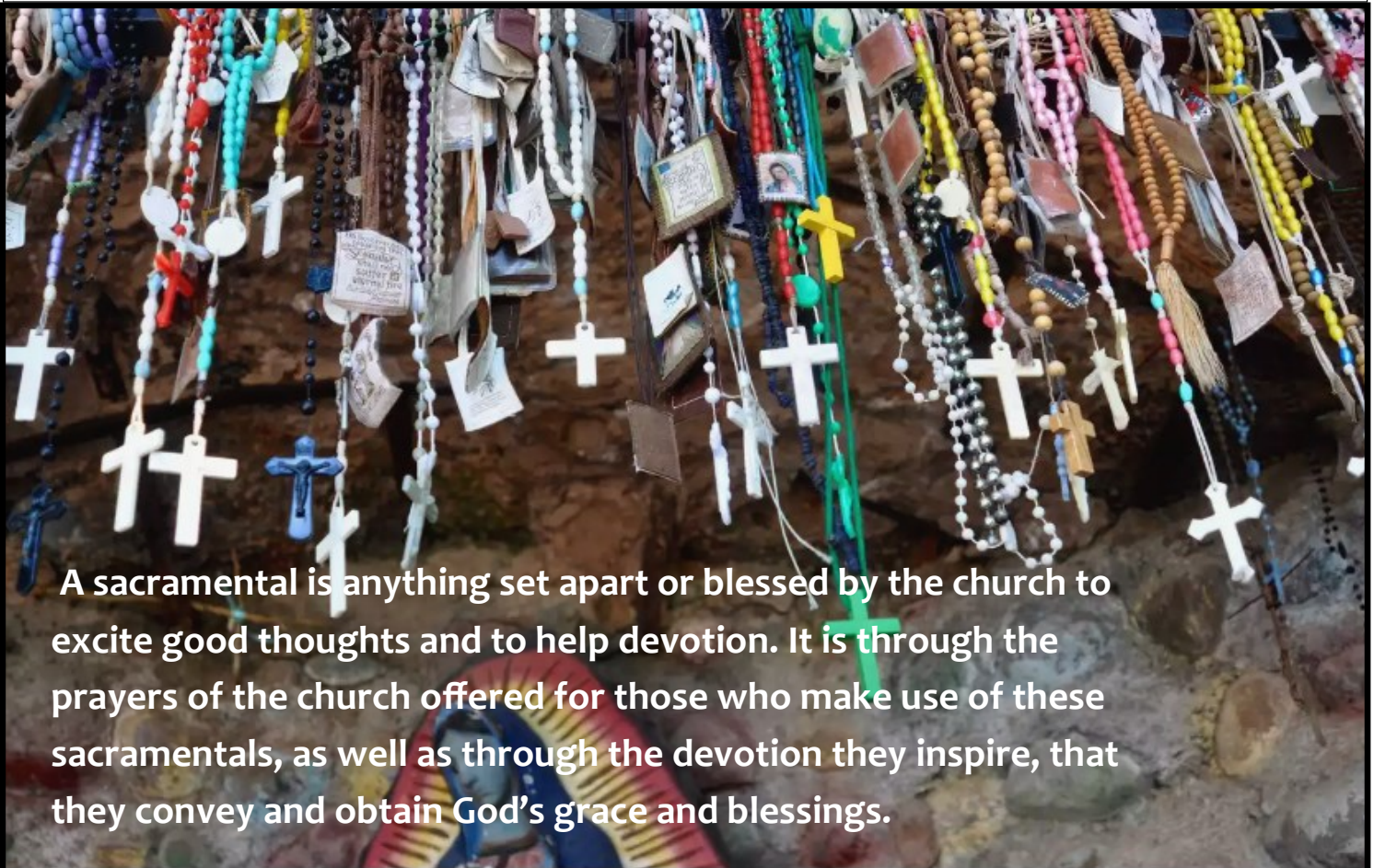
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POSTAGE

Fraternity of Fatherhood

**We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage  
of St. Joseph.**



**St. Joseph ...Pray For Us.  
Feast Day March 19th**



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This Fraternity of Fatherhood Newsletter is published every 90 days. Next edition: June 2024  
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