

**Getting to know you**

October - November - December 2025

# Saint Faustina Kowalska Saint Maximilian Kolbe

*Since we have a lot to share, this is once again an E-X-P-A-N-D-E-D issue. Enjoy!  
Please note that our next issue is planned for March 2026 due to scheduled commitments.*

## **Enshrinement Anniversary and Feast of Saint Faustina, Oct. 4 & 5**

It has been a year since we enshrined our Saints as residents into our parish. On this first anniversary, many people came to venerate our Relic Saints Faustina, Maximilian Kolbe, and Peter Claver. It is also with great joy and blessing that we celebrated the Feast of Saint Faustina on the same day. Cookies and lemonade were enjoyed at the Saturday 7 pm Mass and the Sunday 10 am Mass.

The Holy Relics were held for veneration by the youth of our parish. They share with us below how it felt to hold these Saints in their very hands:



*Mariel*

### **To Carry St. Maximilian's Relic** by Mariel Duran

I felt very honored to hold the relic of St. Maximilian Kolbe during the Enshrinement Anniversary Mass on October 5, 2025, as he is one of my favorite saints. My devotion to him grew when I received him as my saint of the year by "chance" (or God-incidence) in 2022. Over the course of that year, I prayed to him every day for 3 specific intentions: my conversion and a particular grace, the conversion of my family, and the reconciliation between one of my family members and their siblings who had been estranged for years. Fast forward to this year, when I was asked a few months prior to the Enshrinement Anniversary if I would be willing to hold the relic of St. Maximilian Kolbe - my heart said "yes" immediately, but my mind was slow to answer as eagerly because I had been



experiencing significant weakness in my arm due to an overuse injury that started over a year prior and a subsequent injury to my dominant hand in February of this year that compounded the situation.

I began to pray to "St. Max," as I call him, and his other two friends in the reliquary room (St. Faustina and St. Peter Claver) almost every day for healing in my arm and hand and to receive the proper medical care I needed. I told him, "If you want me to hold you, please give me the strength," ...literally. I received a lot of healing in my arm and hand through the providence of physical and occupational therapy, so much so that within a couple of months of therapy, I was able to start playing guitar again after several months of not being able to, make handmade crafts again, carry heavier grocery bags, and cook with little to no pain. It was a purifying time for me, being that I am a musician and artist, but through it I experienced God's mercy, learning how to abandon myself to God's Will, how to appreciate the little things He has given me the ability to do, and how to accept and ask for help. I think this was the biggest lesson for me because it opened my eyes to see how self-reliant I am and the deeper healing I am in need of that leaves me "crippled" when I try to fix it on my own apart from God.

The day of the veneration of the relics, I was so happy to hold St. Max that I could cry. It was beautiful to see the faith and devotion of so many parishioners,

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young and old alike. Many people whispered their prayers to St. Max, but I was privileged to be close enough to hear. The one that struck me the most was an older man who came and venerated the relic and said quietly, “For my sweetheart.” I could feel the sincerity of the prayers in people’s hearts by the way that they venerated and looked at the relic of St. Max. I saw parents teaching their young children the beauty of this devotion in our Catholic faith and the purity of the children’s hearts. It moved me to tears.

It was a great privilege and honor for me to get to hold St. Max’s relic and to pray together as a parish to invoke his intercession, as I knew and experienced firsthand how he intercedes for us. St. Maximilian Kolbe, thank you and pray for us!

### ***Hello St. Peter Claver Community!***

*by Kierstin Salvanera*

It’s a pleasure to share my reflections on the enshrinement anniversary and my experience on October 5th. Never in my life did I imagine being part of such a meaningful celebration — yet to explain why it touched me so deeply, I need to go back to Spring of last year.



*Kierstin*

My Lola Marie (Lola meaning grandmother in Tagalog) passed away shortly before Easter Sunday, 10 days before my Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). I made the difficult decision to cancel my test date to grieve her loss. It was the first time I questioned whether my vocation to medicine was sound, or whether I was straying from God’s path.

Lola was buried just days before Divine Mercy Sunday, and the timing was not lost on me. Losing her so close to Easter — the feast of Christ’s victory and our hope — and laying her to rest right before Divine Mercy Sunday — the feast that calls us to trust in God’s unfathomable mercy — felt deeply symbolic. Even after her passing, Lola was still teaching me. The nearness of those holy days became an invitation to hope in the Resurrection and to trust more fully in the Lord’s mercy. I didn’t realize it then, but I truly believe the Lord planted a seed in my heart through that timing — a quiet invitation to open myself to His mercy. In many ways, this grief journey became not



*Additional Relic Bearers were: Robyn, Diego, Carlos, Bianca.*

only a way to reconcile losing Lola, but also a way to stay connected with her and continue her legacy through our shared Catholic faith.

The next six months were challenging. I paused my MCAT studies and worked as a medical scribe, hoping to rediscover the “spark” of my vocation. Unexpectedly, I also began attending daily Mass — something Lola did so faithfully. I would bring her picture in my journal and imagine we were attending Mass together. Slowly, daily prayer began to heal places in my heart I didn’t know were hurting.

Lola Marie also had a deep devotion to Our Lady. When I was younger, I never understood how the rosary could feel like “talking with a friend.” But as I prayed for my Lola’s soul, I found myself turning to Mother Mary with childlike trust. I remembered reading in St. Faustina’s Diary how Our Lady visits souls in Purgatory to bring them refreshment until they enter Heaven. That image comforted me — it felt like she was still caring for my Lola even after death.

I had seen announcements about the parish pilgrimage to Poland that summer, but I didn’t pay much attention until June 15, 2024, when our parish received the first-class relics of St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Faustina. You can imagine my delight! In preparation for the celebration of their enshrinement on October 5, 2024, I frantically searched for my copy of St. Faustina’s Diary that I purchased during college. I had barely made it a quarter of the way through back then, but this time I opened it with renewed purpose and hunger.

That was the beginning of my friendship with St. Faustina.

What started as a search for comfort in grief slowly became the pathway that led me back to my vocation. After daily Mass, I began spending time reading her Diary and praying before the Blessed Sacrament. That consistency — those small daily yeses — bred a friendship that helped me confront my shortcomings, grow in humility, and fall in love with the sacrament of confession.

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As a young adult in today's culture, it's easy to believe the lies that we are "not enough" for God or that His mercy is meant for "holier" people. But walking with St. Faustina taught me three things:

1. **No one is ever too far from God's mercy.** Confession is a gift meant for all of us. Sainthood is not instant. It's a daily yes to Jesus.
2. **God longs to walk with us in our suffering.** No sin or struggle is too great or too small for Him.
3. **We can entrust everything to the Lord.** Every joy, complaint, fear, and hope — He wants to hear all of it! Not as a distant judge, but as a Father and a friend.

Through her Diary, I felt understood for the first time in a long time. Her words touched the places where my grief, confusion, and longing for direction lived. It reminded me of something our former associate pastor Fr. Mike often said: instead of praying for specific outcomes, pray *first* for a conversion of heart. That's exactly what the Lord began to do to me in the months that followed. As my heart transformed, everything else quietly began to fall into place. My MCAT score improved, and I finally applied to medical school earlier this summer. God has graciously opened doors throughout my application cycle, and I now stand one step closer to beginning medical school next summer — one step closer to becoming the compassionate Catholic physician I hope to be, and the one my Lola always believed I would become.

With all this in mind, you can imagine how meaningful it was for me to carry St. Faustina's relic during the anniversary of her enshrinement. It felt like a culmination of a year-and-a-half-long journey of conversion, healing, and rediscovering God's mercy. It was humbling (and surprisingly heavy!) to present her to our community. As each person stepped forward to touch their rosaries, prayer cards, or simply behold, bow before, or kiss her relic, I silently



prayed for God's mercy to overflow in their lives just as it had in mine.

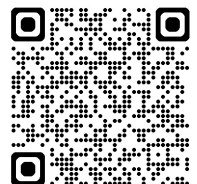
Last October, I approached St. Faustina with her Diary in hand and asked her to walk with me. This year, I had the privilege of presenting her to all of you. It was a full-circle moment that reminded me of the richness of our Catholic faith and the incredible communion of saints who accompany us in our pursuit of holiness. Through the intercession of St. Faustina, may we as a parish continue to trust in the Lord, open our hearts to His mercy, and allow His grace to flow through us and into the world.

### **Saint Faustina is Ready to Travel . . .**

We have now received the official guidelines for Saint Faustina's relic to travel; issued by the Office of Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. It was approved and signed by Reverend Father Juan Ochoa. This document will provide us with the path to move forward and the ability to invite other parishes to host the relic of Saint Faustina. On our SPC parish website, we have the registration form and calendar. Just a little trivia, Father Juan Ochoa was with our Simi Valley pilgrims when we received the Holy Relics in Poland. He also concelebrated the Holy Mass with

Bishop Szkredka and Father George Bobowski when the Holy Relics were enshrined at our parish on October 5, 2024. Father Juan also served as a temporary Deacon at our Parish before he was ordained a priest. God has always provided our parish with new milestones bearing the names of Holy Priests from our Diocese.

For more information about requesting to host the Holy Relic of Saint Faustina, scan the QR code or send an email to [tdonnelly@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:tdonnelly@la-archdiocese.org).



## Oct 25 Santa Barbara Regional Congress

This day marked the first time Saint Faustina's Holy Relic traveled outside our parish. It was a successful event considering the Holy Relic Team was invited just a few weeks before. The organizers provided a space at the lobby of the Saint Bonaventure High School Gym and were supported by volunteers from our parish. On the day of the event, Saint Faustina's Holy

Relic was processed with the clergy to participate in the Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Slawomir Szkredka. After mass, about 200 people took advantage of their short breaks from workshops to visit and venerate the Holy Relic of St. Faustina. Approximately 40 invitation cards were hand delivered to 'key-parish' participants so they can deliver this invitation to host Saint Faustina to their respective pastors.



*Kristine carried the relic of Saint Faustina. Bishop Slawomir Szkredka presided at Mass. Cole and Cash from St. Peter Claver served during the mass. They were the Bishop's Miter and Crozier Bearers. A Congress participant takes a quiet moment to venerate.*



*Saint Peter Claver Traveling Relic Team: Vangie, Merle, Vianney, Jamie, Richard, Helen, Fe, John, Bless, Salome, Carina, & Albert. Not shown are Joe Delatorre, Kristine, Cole, and Cash Hellinger, & Laura Diaz who was the Liturgical Coordinator for the event.*

## A Sign of Mercy Given to Save Souls

by Loretta Blake

My brother, Frank, had been fighting cancer for approximately 2 1/2 years. It was a rollercoaster of treatments and side effects. He suffered greatly, especially when it spread to his bone and no pain medicine would give him relief.

During the time of his illness he became closer to Jesus. I sent him pamphlets and images of Jesus as the Divine Mercy. Frank would tell me whenever he had a cancer scan that Jesus' name was always on his lips. He would say "Jesus, I Trust In You" frequently.

In the end, he was told that all treatments had been exhausted and there was nothing more which could be done.

I had the opportunity to fly to New York and be with my brother, Frank, for his 75th Birthday. I stayed with him and cared for him as much as I was able, based on his condition. I was mindful of being present with Frank, per the advice of Fr. Paolo, prior to my leaving. Frank enjoyed having me sleep over in his room, he

told me stories of his family memories, we watched his favorite baseball team on TV and most importantly, we prayed together. One afternoon I was sitting next to him and I said it is 3:00 p.m., the hour of Great Mercy. I told him that I was going to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. When I made the sign of the cross aloud, he proceeded to do the same. As I started praying the prayers, he said them with me. He proceeded to pray the entire chaplet with me, not just the responses! Even though he was starting to get very winded from speaking so much, he persevered.

In St. Faustina's Diary Entry #1541, Jesus tells her: **"...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."**

Also, in her diary, Entry #811, Jesus tells St. Faustina: **"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 pardon is the same. When this chaplet is said by the bedside of a dying person, God's anger is placated,**

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**unfathomable mercy envelopes the soul, and the very depths of My tender mercy are moved for the sake of the sorrowful Passion of My Son.”**

My brother, Frank, passed away nine days later and Jesus gave me a sign. At the gravesite, I took a picture. It was not until I came home and was looking at the pictures that I noticed rays of light above his coffin. At first, I thought about his Guardian Angel, since he was buried on the Feast of the Guardian Angels (10/2/25). I showed a friend and she thought it was that Perpetual light which we pray for in the prayer for departed souls. However, when I showed it to Fr. Paolo, he immediately said Divine Mercy!

A day or 2 later, I found another picture, from the same day, after Frank's funeral Mass. Outside of the church, to the left above, I saw Jesus' rays again, except this time, I could see the colors of red and white distinctly.

I showed this to Fr. Paolo and he said: "What a blessing. It's God's way of reminding all of us of his presence - Divine Mercy!"

I am grateful to God for allowing me to see the fruits of His Divine Mercy. While thanking Jesus in the



Adoration chapel, I began to feel this inner pull, that this message needs to be shared with as many people as possible. What better way to share, than in our Saint Faustina and Saint Maximillian Kolbe Newsletter?

This experience has brought me so much peace. Thank you all for praying for my brother, Frank, when he was ill with cancer, when he was dying and after, for his soul. Thank you to Fr. Riz, Fr. Paolo and Fr. Henry for all your Masses, prayers, rosaries, novenas and Divine Mercy chaplets. I am truly grateful. When my brother, Frank, was alive and I told him about all of you at St. Peter Claver parish and your prayers for him, he expressed to me that he could truly feel all of your prayers and he was very appreciative for them.

After you have read this, Jesus wants you to share it with as many people as possible. I did, when I went to the store to have copies of these pictures made, I shared this story with the cashier and although she was not Catholic, she listened and was amazed and thanked me for sharing. St. Faustina was called

to save souls and so are we. Jesus wants all of us to save souls. Divine Mercy is truth. Jesus is Divine Mercy. Jesus, I Trust In You!

### **Divine Mercy Congress** by Laura Hernandez

On Saturday and Sunday 11/8 & 11/9 some parish members attended the Divine Mercy Congress at Christ the King Church in Hollywood. The days were full of speakers, meditation, singing, and prayer. The day started with uplifting hymns and a warm welcome by Fathers Ochoa and Oh. The main focus of this Congress was to remind us that we are in a Jubilee year which gives us a special opportunity to receive God's Mercy. This only happens every 25 years.

Father Joseph Choi spoke about **the Love for the Church**. He reminded us that St. Faustina's mystical experiences deepened her love for the Church. The Church is a gift which we should see with gratitude because it contains our Lord. In the Church God speaks to us, enlightens us, guides and transforms us. Faustina understood that God invites us just as we are, to come to church and transform our lives. The Church is a gift that speaks to us and teaches us through scripture. When St. Faustina had times of

difficulty, and doubt, she hung on to the Church's teachings. We need to pray for the Church, the pope, priests, vocations, and sinners. Love for the Church is essential and a path to holiness. We are connected to one another through the Church.

Father Justin Oh spoke about **the Pilgrim Church**. People go on pilgrimages for different reasons. A pilgrimage teaches us about ourselves. It is a journey that allows us to encounter our Lord and to learn. Life is a pilgrimage where we are called to journey with our Lord to His kingdom. On a pilgrimage there is movement towards someone or towards someplace. Jesus says, "Come follow me." The purpose of this pilgrimage is to become better disciples to our Lord. We need the sacraments to help us with renewal and to persevere on our journey. Mass is a movement toward heaven. It encourages us to keep going in our desire to reach Heaven.

Father Leo Ortega spoke about **The Church is Open for Everyone**. The Church is a home for everyone.

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The Church is not just a building, it is Christ. When we see a church we think of Christ. It is a living organism. St. Paul says that the Church is a body. Jesus is the head and we are the body. The head feeds the body. The gospel and beatitudes help to guide us. God created us not out of need, but out of love so He could share His goodness and fullness. We are called to be Catholics by grace and are chosen by the Lord.

Bishop Szkredka spoke of **the Holy Year of Jubilee**. He told us that the Divine Mercy is an unfathomable and inexhaustible gift. We work with God so at the end we can rest with Him, contemplate Him and praise Him. This year of Jubilee is a year of celebration.



*Bishop Szkredka and Priests who spoke at the Divine Mercy Congress.*

He brings us liberation to go forward to love, have patience, sacrifice, freedom for living His kind of life of forgiveness, patience, purity, and mercy. We need to choose God's will completely because it is the wisest, most powerful, and most merciful. St. Faustina asked our Lord, "Be with me in every moment of my life." This brought her extreme happiness. We give God our "yes" and He gives us Himself. He gives us courage.

Thank you to all who contributed to this Newsletter. We invite you to share your story of an answered prayer or religious experience through the intercession of our Saints. Please contact Joe and Merle Delatorre at 858-566-0777 & 858-776-0481. You can also send us an email to [stfaustinarelic@gmail.com](mailto:stfaustinarelic@gmail.com).

### **Let us Pray to Our Lord**

- ✝ For our Pope Leo XIV, may he bring peace and love to all of us.
- ✝ For Bishops, Priests and Clergy, may they be guided by the Holy Spirit and lead us closer to You.
- ✝ For all the sick, we pray for their healing and comfort.
- ✝ For all young people, we pray that they may experience your love for all.
- ✝ For all families, we ask you to bring them together as one in love and faith.
- ✝ For this Advent, Lord, help us prepare our hearts to be filled with hope, love, peace and joy.
- ✝ For our community and the whole world, we pray for God and our Blessed Mother Mary's merciful love.



*Jesus, I Trust in You.  
Please hear our prayers. Amen.*

### **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

- **Every First Wednesday** of the month at 7:00 pm – Holy Mass (this month Mass will be on Dec. 2 at 7 pm).
- **Every Wednesday** at 7:00 pm – Our Mother of Perpetual Help Novena, Divine Mercy Chaplet & Prayer to St. Faustina at the church.
- **First Friday, Dec. 5** at 7:30 am – First Friday Mass, at 7:00 pm – Mass and Adoration with Divine Mercy, & Chaplet in Song. Confession available until 9:00 pm.
- **Every Friday** at 3:00 pm – Hour of Great Mercy: Divine Mercy Chaplet at the reliquary.
- **First Saturday, Dec. 6** at 7:30 am – First Saturday Mass, Consecration renewal, Holy Rosary, & meditation.
- **Dec. 3 - 11**, 2025 Nuestra Señora De Guadalupe Nine Day Novena Masses.
- **Dec. 12** - Nuestra Señora De Guadalupe Celebration.
- **Dec. 15-23** Simbang Gabi.
- Check our Saint Peter Claver church website or bulletin for details and other events at our parish.

*We invite you to attend any or all the events our parish offers and encourage you to bring a friend.*

