

## Reflections with the Saints

Are you like the rest of us praying for a miracle? A miracle for an individual? For the world? What is a miracle? The word in Latin means “*a sight to behold*”; it requires divine intervention for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. No greater audience for a miracle than now!

Jesus, the human face of God, was a man of many miracles. But what was the first? His was through the intercession of his mother, Mary, at that wedding in Cana. Her directive to the servants was also her last words (not her last appearance) in the Gospels: “*Do whatever my Son tells you.*” Now that is important to remember: miracle can happen through Mary’s intercession and through our doing what Jesus tells us to do.

Mary’s first was not her last. Just ask Bernadette, Juan Diego, Jacinta, Lucia, Francisco, and others. It seems that every Catholic has a favorite image of the Blessed Mother. For a moment, ponder these three.



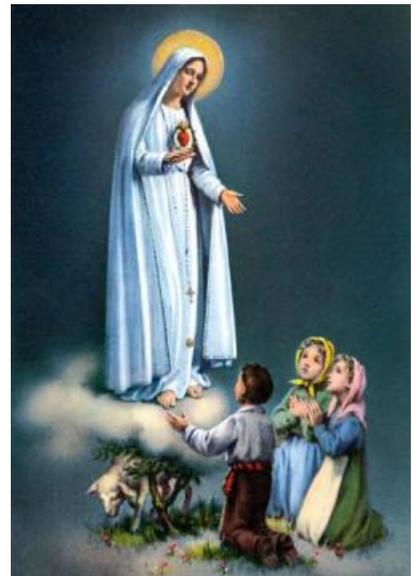
**Our Lady of Perpetual Help** depicts Mary holding the Child Jesus. The impression is the He leaped into her arms when He saw the instruments of His future Passion, running so quickly for her protection and comfort that his sandal is falling off. The Archangel Michael in the left corner holds the spear, wine-soaked sponge, and crowns of thorns; the Archangel Gabriel in the right corner holds the cross and nails. Mary would be there again with her Son when those instruments defined the closing hours of His life. The gold in the background represents resurrection, life after death; the star on Mary’s veil reminds us of the important role she plays in the story of our salvation.

Tradition tells us that this icon painted on wood originated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. About 200 years later, a merchant shipped it from Cypress to Rome. During the voyage, a terrible storm arose threatening the lives of all aboard. They sought Mary’s intercession, and all were saved. Honored over the years in several Roman churches since 1866, the icon has been entrusted to the care of the Redemptorist community in the Church of St. Alphonsus.

Remember: this is Our Lady of Perpetual Help; not occasional help or every-now-and-then help. Perpetually offered; is it perpetually sought? (In our pre-Stay-at-Home days, our

Cathedral Filipino Network would pray the rosary and novena honoring OLPH, every first Wednesday after 5:15pm Mass.)

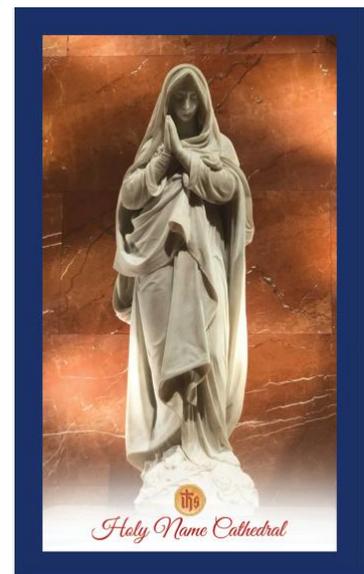
**Our Lady of Fatima:** Over one hundred years ago, Catholics were talking about the town in Portugal named Fatima, 110 miles north of Lisbon. Six times, Mary appeared to three shepherd children (ages 7, 9, and 10), urging them to pray the rosary daily for world peace, for the conversion of Russia, and for the souls of sinners. Her repeated messages were “*Penance, penance, penance.*” Mary entrusted to them three secrets. The final secret foretold that “*a bishop in white*” would be attacked. It was on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, 1981, that Pope John Paul II was shot in St. Peter’s Square. En route to the hospital, he repeatedly invoked the name of Mary. Undergoing five hours of surgery and losing much blood, he survived. And, the following year, he took the bullet removed from his side and placed it in the crown of Our Lady of Fatima statue at the shrine.



Mary’s final apparition was on October 13, 1917. Over 70,000 pilgrims gathered as the three children prayed. And what occurred was the famous *Miracle of the Sun*. You have not heard about it??!! Google it!

**Our Lady of Holy Name Cathedral:** This Cathedral we call home was dedicated on November 21, 1975, the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our interior worship site looked much different then. Closed on Easter Sunday, 1968, for the Vatican II liturgical changes, our doors reopened on Christmas Eve 1969. Familiar religious items were no longer in place, and new ones appeared.

Longtime parishioners recall the primary image of Mary on the north end of the sanctuary. Since 1968, the statue seemed to be lost in history, until last year. Polished and restored, this Mary returned home and was dedicated on December 8, 2019, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.



It is unique among images of Mary. In most, she is looking toward the pilgrim; in most, her hands if not holding her Son are reaching out toward the pilgrim. But Our Lady of the Cathedral has her hands folded in prayer and her head bowed. Her eyes are hidden. How

beautiful! She is waiting for you to come closer, so close as to see her face and her eyes. What a loving mother! She wants to spend some time with you alone; one on one time with her. Tell her your problems, your sins, your worries, your needs. Ask her to do for you what she did for the couple at Cana. There are candles before her, even now, for your prayer intention. [Just click here](#) to request a candle to be lit by one of our priests along with your prayer intention.

But let's not forget John 2:5 – *“Do whatever my Son tells you.”* This can well reinforce our miracle request. So, is there any enemy to love? A persecutor to be prayed for? A cheek to be turned? Someone to be forgiven yet again? The hungry to be fed? The stranger to be welcomed? The sick, homebound, isolated, prisoner to be visited?

So, Mary Our Mother, we love you. We know by your many inspiring titles. Listen attentively to our prayers and intercede for us, your children. We are in need of many miracles, as individuals and as a worldwide human family. Be by our side now as you were by the side of Jesus. Ask your Son to heal us, strengthen us, console us, and fill us with hope and joy. We desire to do His Will and await the day when we see Him, and you, face-to-face. Amen.

**Thank you to Fr. John Boivin for these beautiful stories and reflections with the Saints!**