

CYPRESS SPRINGS

MERCEDARIAN PRAYER CENTER

"OPENING THE DOOR TO CHRIST" *Sister Dulce Maria*



Mercedarian Sisters of
the Blessed Sacrament

17560 GEORGE O'NEAL ROAD • BATON ROUGE, LA 70817 • 225.752.8480 • WWW.CYPRESSSPRINGSPRAYERCENTER.ORG
SUPPORTED BY THE SISTER DULCE FOUNDATION, INC.
A 501(C)(3) CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

SPRING 2016

THE LORD IS KIND AND MERCIFUL

My Dear Friends,

The Lord put His hands around my face and looked into my eyes and said, "My love for mankind is greater than all his sin." Do you understand what Papa is saying to us? He loves each and every one of us with all of our imperfections, insecurities, and selfishness. He loves us unconditionally, even in our weakness. God created you in His image yet you are a unique human being. There is not one person in the world just like you!

God's infinite love for us, being greater than our sin, gave us Jesus Christ to save us from ourselves and to free us from Original Sin. Papa's death on the cross proved the depth of His love and His desire to spend eternity with each of His children. As a child of God, our first and foremost mission is to spread His love, mercy, and forgiveness and the good news of salvation to all whom Papa puts in our path. How do we do this? Papa has given us the road map to bring us home to Him. We must first have an intimate, personal relationship with Him. We must spend time in prayer getting to know Him and His will for our lives. We must read His map, the Bible, where He gave us the example of HOW to live without sin. Papa gave us a great gift in the 10 Commandments. He gave them to us to save us from ourselves and Original Sin. When we lie, steal, or break these commandments, we eventually get caught. Ask Papa to give you His strength to help you live the 10 Commandments. If you fall, go

to confession as soon as you can.

Almsgiving and fasting are two ways we can participate in our journey toward Christ, especially during Lent. Giving alms, however, does not always mean financial giving. You can give alms by lifting someone's spirit with a warm smile. Simple acts of human kindness among strangers, family, and friends are all forms of almsgiving. Never underestimate the power of a smile! Pray to the Blessed Mother and reflect on her agony as she witnessed the suffering and death of her only Son. Mary said "yes" to the Angel Gabriel. She said "yes" to be the Holy Mother and bring the Messiah into the world. Do we say "yes" to Jesus like Mary did when we are called? Use quiet time or time in nature to listen to God's call for you. Reflect on the blessings you have received and give thanks. When we fast during Lent, we are in control of our flesh. Papa wants us to look deep within ourselves and live from the heart, His heart. Focus on putting selfish needs aside and think about what is truly important in this life that will lead to eternal life. If you cannot fast from food, you can fast from TV, cell phones, computers, or your own personal vice.

The Sacrament of Confession is also a great gift to us. During Confession, the priest, led by the Holy Spirit, can give you absolution, which removes your sin and cleanses your soul. You must truly repent from your sinful desires and turn away from the situations that lead you

to sin. Papa wants us close to Him and never desires to be separated from us. It is our choice and our decision to sin, so ask Papa to give you His strength to avoid all occasions of sin. The Lord is kind and merciful; He just wants you to ask Him for His forgiveness. Look at the cross and thank Papa from the bottom of your heart for dying for you and only you. He would die on the cross even if you were the only human being on the earth.

During this Lenten season, commit to Papa to do your best to live for Him and His will for your life. During Lent, most of us are mindful of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting in honor of Jesus' suffering for us. Can you add two more gifts to give back to Papa? To say thanks? Include the 10 Commandments and confession to your Lenten tradition. I know you will be glad you did.

Think of the possibilities and blessings that will be afforded us if we accept His call. Are you ready? More importantly, are you willing?

In the Service of the Lord,

Sister Dulce Maria
Sister Dulce Maria



TESTIMONIES

I HAVE ALWAYS QUESTIONED.....WHY AM I HERE?

Mike's testimonial is a true example of Jesus's unwavering love for us. Mike first met Sister back in early 2001 and then again in 2014. His door is always open, sometimes we just need to knock.

In June of 2014, I began having pain behind my left eye. I was treated for sinus but the treatments did not help. In November, my vision became blurred and I started having eye flashes and then floaters. I had another appointment with my optometrist in December which led to the eye surgeon on the same day. The eye surgeon said I had a lesion that was in a difficult to reach location near the optic nerve. I was told that cancer of the eye could indicate that cancer could be present in another location and it would travel to the eye through the bloodstream. He ordered a PET scan to look for other cancer in my body.

My wife, Bernie, and I had attended daily Mass and had found a slip of paper left in one of the pews. It contained information for saying a nine-day novena to St. Jude, the Saint of hopeless causes. We immediately began praying the Novena to St. Jude.

When I completed the PET scan, the last words the doctor performing the test were "Good luck Mr. Dellucci". I took that to mean I would not be getting any good news from the scan. At home on a Friday afternoon, I received a call from my doctor that there was no sign of cancer elsewhere in my body. While on the phone, I gave my wife the thumbs up sign and she immediately began crying. I had forgotten that it was the ninth day of the Novena to St. Jude.

We met with the surgeon and he referred us to Memphis to see a specialist for this type of rare eye disease. He said the tumor was in a difficult location and would require a unique treatment that was only done in Houston or Memphis. We scheduled the appointment for January 20th.

I had not visited Cypress Springs Mercedarian Prayer Center since the open house several years ago. When I received an invitation to Sister Dulce's Christmas open house get together to thank all of her wonderful volunteers, I was humbled. "How did I get this invitation", I asked? It had to be a mistake or maybe Sister had something to tell me? Bernie and I attended the open house and visited with Sister She was beautiful as ever and so cordial to us. She did not mention my condition nor did I want to burden her on such a joyful occasion. However, I did decide to make an appointment with her since my treatment was to start in a couple of weeks.

My meeting with Sister started with, "Sister, I am not afraid of dying." She said "you are not dying." She touched my eye and prayed to Papa that he would guide the surgeon's hands. Then she asked me "what is that pain around my eye?" I told her that she was the only one to acknowledge that I really had pain there. She said it was from swollen vessels probably caused by inflammation. She placed her hand over my eye and prayed. From a scale of 0 to 10, I told her the pain was now a zero. She told me whenever I feel that pain again, to place my hand over my eye and ask her for help. The next morning, the

pain awakened me and I remembered Sister's instructions. I placed my hand on my eye and thought of Sister, asking for her help. The pain immediately diminished.

The meeting with the eye specialist was long and stressful with many tests. The doctor finally came in and told us good news that the cancer was small and in an easy to reach location. The prognosis was that it was treatable and with an aggressive treatment, I could soon be cured with little or no side effects. Years ago the eye would have been removed.

We immediately went to the Tennessee Medical Center to meet with the oncologist. More test were performed. When the doctor came in and while reviewing the test results, I asked him how this cancer could progress so quickly? Moments later, he turned to me and said "I do not see any cancer in your eye". Thank you Papa! Thank you Sister Dulce!

Since Sister Dulce has accepted and uses her gifts from Papa, she has shown me how close God is to us today. She has helped my son and also a dear friend through her prayers to Papa. I have always questioned why I'm here. What am I supposed to do for God? This chapter in my life has made me aware that God has a purpose for me and I need to be attentive to His calling. I am also much more aware of the presence of the Saints and the assistance they are giving us in our daily struggles.

Mike Dellucci

Gift Shop



On behalf of Sister Dulce and all of us at "Shepherd's Staff Gift Shop", we thank you for your support in 2015. Because of you, Sister Dulce is able to continue her mission to minister to the sick and dying at Cypress Springs Mercedarian Prayer Center. We pray that every gift purchase brought you blessings of joy, peace and a reminder of God's presence in our lives.

Please know that Sister Dulce, the Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and all of the Prayer Partners have you in their prayers.

"Shepherd's Staff Gift Shop" wishes you a blessed and prosperous 2016!

HOURS: Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

(Open before and after Women's Spirituality Class)

The Jubilee Medal of St. Benedict

The power of St. Benedict is revealed in this small object that has been fostered by his spiritual sons many years. Marvelous is the aid which the St. Benedict Medal affords to its devout wearers in the manifold necessities of soul and body. On this account the Medal is well known and widely used throughout the Christian world; everywhere it is regarded as a highly favored object of devotion.

Origin and Explanation of the Medal:

St. Benedict (born at Nursia, Italy, in 480) had a profound veneration for the holy Cross and for our Saviour Crucified. In virtue of the Sign of the Cross, he wrought many miracles and exercised great power over the spirits of darkness. In consequence of the great veneration in which St. Benedict was held from the early Middle Ages, it followed that a Medal was struck, one side of which represents St. Benedict holding the Cross in one hand and the Holy Rule in the other. Around the image of St. Benedict are these words in Latin "May his presence protect us in the hour of death." St. Benedict has ever been the patron of the dying, because of the circumstances attending his own most glorious death, for he breathed forth his soul while standing in prayer before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The reverse of the Medal shows the image of the Cross. Around the margin are the initials of Latin words which form verses supposed to have originated with the holy Father Benedict himself. The English translation is: "Be gone Satan! Suggest not to me thy vain things. The cup thou profferest me is evil; drink thou thy poison." In the angles formed by the arms of the Cross are the letters C.S.P.B., signifying "Cross of the holy Father Benedict." The letters on the Cross itself have this meaning: "May the holy Cross be my light; let not the dragon be my guide."

Use:

No special way of carrying or applying the Medal is prescribed. It may be worn about the neck, attached to the scapular or the Rosary, or otherwise carried about one's person.

Often it is placed in the fields, the foundations of buildings or attached to automobiles to call down God's blessing and the protection of St. Benedict. No particular prayer is prescribed, as the devout wearing itself is a continual silent prayer.

The Medal of St. Benedict is one of the Sacramentals of the Church, and as such it must be used. The value and power of the Medal must be ascribed to the merits of Christ Crucified, to the efficacious prayers of St. Benedict, to the blessing of the Church, and especially to the faith and holy disposition of the person using the Medal.

Prayer to St. Benedict:

O glorious St. Benedict, sublime model of all virtues, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me, humbly kneeling at thy feet. I implore thy loving heart to pray for me before the throne of God. To thee I have recourse in all the dangers which daily surround me. Shield me against my enemies, inspire me to imitate thee in all things. May thy blessing be with me always, so that I may shun whatever God forbids and avoid the occasions of sin.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces of which I stand so much in need, in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Thy heart was always so full of love, compassion, and mercy towards those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. Thou didst never dismiss without consolation and assistance anyone who had re-course to thee. I therefore invoke thy powerful intercession, in the confident hope that thou wilt hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I so earnestly implore (mention it), if it be for the greater glory of God and the welfare of my soul.

Help me, O great St. Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to be ever submissive to His holy will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.



SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 2016

THE SISTER DULCE FOUNDATION, INC. *presents the eighth annual*

DINING BY DESIGN

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 2016

RECEPTION
4:30pm

DINNER
5:45pm

Silent Auction (with mobile bidding-viewing begins August 8th)

CROWNE PLAZA
4728 Constitution Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA

(per seat)



\$5.00

Wine & Dine Raffle Tickets

Three (3) winners will receive a gift basket containing a variety of gift cards and wine from our generous sponsors.

DRAWING ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 2016 (need not be present to win)

To reserve Dining by Design tickets call (225) 752-8480 or email ministry@csmnpc.org

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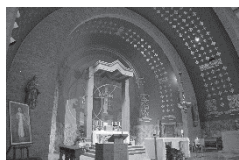
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REFLECTIONS ON MERCY SERIES AT ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

Wednesday, February 17 – Wednesday, March 23

Session 5: Wednesday March 16th Sr. Dulce will present: **Identifying and Addressing the Psychological Barriers to Trust.** Steps to Self-Awareness. Seeking the right help.



THE PASSION WALK...THROUGH THE EYES OF MARY

A Living Way of the Cross

Friday, February 19, 2016, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Dinner served from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Walk begins at 7 p.m. Relate the Stations of the Cross to your personal life as you listen to others who have visited the Prayer Center share their faith journey. This is an outdoor event (weather permitting.) Donation: \$15



ST. JOSEPH'S ALTAR

Sunday, March 13, 2016, 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we commemorate the Feast of St. Joseph. All are welcome to view the altar which is dedicated to Our Lord's sick and dying. Enjoy a bountiful meal which is fully shared by very generous donors.



DR. BRANT PITRE SPRING RETREAT

"The Bible and the Spiritual Life"

Saturday, April 16, 2016, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Brant Pitre, Professor of Sacred Scripture at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans will offer three presentations for your spiritual growth. Registration fee is \$55 and includes outlines for Dr. Pitre's three talks, a Continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks. To register please call Cypress Springs at 225-752-8480. Seating is limited.



DINING BY DESIGN 2016

Sunday, August 21, 2016

Join us for The Sister Dulce Foundation annual fund raiser and silent auction. A feast for the palate and the eyes. Tickets available soon. Seating limited. Call Cypress Springs Mercedarian Prayer Center for more information.

SPIRITUALITY CLASSES

Chapel of Divine Providence

Men – 3-2, 4-6, 5-4, 6-6, 8-3, 9-7, 10-5, 12-7 – 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Women – 3-9, 4-13, 6-8, 8-10, 10-12, 12-14 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

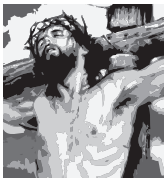
Both adult groups gather in the Chapel of Divine Providence at the Prayer Center for one hour as Sister Dulce shares and teaches about our spiritual growth. Come and join us for these enlightening sessions.

Classes are held most months, ask to be added to our email reminder list.

PRAY THE ROSARY

Chapel of Divine Providence

Tuesdays – 7:30 a.m.



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THE MEANING OF MERCY



Pope Francis has called on Catholics to use the upcoming Lenten season to tackle what he has called a "globalization of indifference" by practicing acts of charity and becoming "islands of mercy" for brothers and sisters in need.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

"Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians," states the pope. "Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience."