



Congregatio Presbyterorum a Misericordia  
**THE FATHERS OF MERCY**

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**Misericordia motus est.**

*"He was moved with mercy."  
(Luke 15:20)*

*Preaching Roman Catholic Parish Missions Since 1808*

*A Novena in Honor of the Immaculate Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary,*

*will be offered for you and your intentions November 30-December 8, 2013*



**Br. Adrian Duran, CPM, Professes  
Perpetual Vows**

*"For the honor of God, and moved by firm resolve to consecrate myself more fully to Him, and to follow Christ more closely in my whole life, here and now in the presence of the Very Reverend David Wilton, Superior General, I, Adrian Duran, vow perpetually obedience, poverty and chastity, according to the Constitutions of the Fathers of Mercy. I give myself with a whole heart to this religious Community so that by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception, I may seek perfect charity in the service of God and the Church."* These are the words of the Vow Formula that each Father of Mercy says when he freely offers himself to the Church as a consecrated religious. They were the words recited by Br. Adrian Duran, CPM, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, as he professed Perpetual Vows as a member of the Fathers of Mercy. It was a great day for our religious community, and it was certainly a happy day for Br. Adrian. He joined the Fathers of Mercy in July of 2009 as a postulant, and entered the novitiate in August of 2009. After Br. Adrian professed First Vows in August of 2010, he then began his studies for the priesthood at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT. As he continues his

studies for the priesthood, he is currently on track to be ordained a deacon in 2015, and to the priesthood in 2016.

Br. Adrian offered the following reflection on his joy at professing Perpetual Vows: "The ultimate joy of being in final vows, to quote Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity, is that 'I have found my heaven on earth.' Immediately after perpetual profession peace flooded my soul knowing that this is the will of God, to be a Father of Mercy for life! Therefore, living as a Father of Mercy and fulfilling the charism is going to bring me ultimate happiness here on earth."



*Br. Adrian pictured here with his mother, Consuelo Gonzalez, and his younger sister, Cassandra, on the day of his Perpetual Vows.*

## Victim and Vocation

By Rev. Br. John Broussard, CPM

[The medical information contained in this article is not intended to give a detailed description and explanation of the technicalities surrounding Lia's medical history, but rather to provide context and appreciation for the incredible chain of events that has been her life and story.]

Every vocation requires a superabundance of grace to survive. This is especially true of the vocation and calling to the priesthood; a life that by its very nature cannot be sustained without special and specific cooperation with the help of God. This supernatural calling is distinguished by the life of suffering needed for the imitation of Christ the High Priest and spotless victim. Thus this unique vocation is often times supported by chosen victim souls called to love and to suffer for priests (and future priests) while winning graces to soften even the hardest of hearts.

*“Love wants to suffer for the Beloved... Love wants to expiate the sins that have so deeply penetrated mankind. Love wants to make up for the lack of love among those who sin. Love wants to relieve the debt of suffering that sinners owe to God. Love wants to give God what sinners are depriving Him of by their sins.” - Servant of God, Fr. John Hardon S.J*

These victim souls are often very much unknown to society, silently suffering while sanctifying all around them. Such is the case, I believe, in my vocation and the miraculous life of suffering endured by my sister Lia. God has given me a gift, a gift that I did not realize until I was well established in my path to the priesthood. Everyone is called to play a part in the salvation of souls and Lia was given a special role in the sanctification of those around her through her sufferings. Lia's entire life has been a prayer; and dare I say a life engaged in powerful spiritual combat in a vicious battle for souls. I have never known anyone that prays more for others, and priests make the top of her prayer list.

Lia Marie Broussard was born October 14, 1975 in Houston, Texas. From the very onset of her life she was faced with great struggle. At three days old Lia was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect known as Transposition of the Great Vessels (a condition involving the reversal of the aorta and pulmonary artery that results in an inability to circulate oxygenated blood to the body and un-oxygenated blood to the lungs). This condition would have killed her had she not also been born with holes in the walls dividing the chambers of the heart allowing for enough oxygenated blood to keep

her alive. Although there was a corrective surgery available at the time for this heart defect, it could not be done until the patient weighed twenty pounds; so the solution was to enlarge the holes in her heart to help to facilitate greater oxygenation of the blood. Lia was sent home to wait until she weighed twenty pounds which would be about one year of age. God, however, had greater plans. Unknown to all, Lia was also born with a genetic blood disorder that caused her to over produce blood clots (a condition that remained undiagnosed until much later in Lia's life). With the blood flow of a normal heart the clots caused by the blood mutation would have most likely been filtered by the lungs. Due to the nature of Lia's heart conditions, however, some blood clots were circulated to her legs and brain causing a stroke when she was five months old. Lia's incredible life was barely underway and she was already a powerhouse of redemptive suffering.

*“The more we are afflicted in this world, the greater is our assurance in the next; the more we sorrow in the present, the greater will be our joy in the future.” - Saint Isidore of Seville*

The incredible beginning to the journey of life with Lia was far from over. The blood clots sent to her brain that caused her stroke and mental disability weakened the right side of her body, left her aphasic, and left her with a seizure disorder. The stroke also made chewing and swallowing food very difficult. Almost unbelievably, the blood clots in her legs caused several more challenges. The doctors attempted a surgery to remove the blood clots in her legs though this procedure had its own complications. After the surgery, Lia suffered weeks of physical pain from very poor to non-existent blood circulation in her lower extremities. This surgery also removed many of the blood vessels carrying blood to her legs; this resulted in very poor circulation in her right leg (which has lasted her entire life) and the amputation of her left leg just below the knee. With the right side of her body weakened by the stroke, and the loss of her left leg, Lia's balance and stability was greatly compromised and has led to a whole host of other issues and medical procedures throughout her life. God was literally shaping Lia into a perfect instrument for the salvation of souls.

At this point, when Lia was seven months old, it was decided that she needed to have the heart surgery, despite its risks, to prevent a fatal stroke. A world renowned heart surgeon performed the surgery and successfully corrected Lia's heart

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condition (though Lia still suffers from a weak heart and poor blood circulation to this day). At less than a year old, Lia was sent home with a list of prescriptions and Doctors to accompany her for the rest of her life. The hand of providence saw to it that Lia remained an unflinching instrument of grace and love through a life of meaningful suffering.

Lia's life cannot be understood apart from the profound life of faith that our parents have provided for her. A Catholic life has always been the major aspect of the Broussard household. Though most in the family did not understand Lia's role in our strong faith, Lia was and still remains a powerful bond between us and God. The testimony of our parents to the incredible experience of Lia's life demonstrates an aspect of her impact on the faith of the family. They said: "She believes that Jesus is truly in the Eucharist and when (we) ask her if she wants Jesus to come into her soul, she always says yes. At Communion time we pray together and we run down our list (of people and prayer intentions). And especially she offers up all her physical defects to save souls for Jesus. She mostly prays for priests."



***Br. John with his sister Lia on the day of his diaconate ordination, May 25, 2013.***

Lia's impact is not limited to our family. Everyone with whom she comes in contact with is affected by the joy she radiates. "Whenever she gets sick she tells us that she offers it up to Jesus." My parents have witnessed: "When she sees a wreck, she makes the sign of the cross and prays for the victims. She has been praying for her friend who died recently. When she wakes in the morning and (we) go in her room, she is praying her morning prayers and she prays every evening when she goes to bed. When she sees some one in a cast or in a wheelchair she prays for them. As you can imagine her whole life is a prayer, a constant prayer." God has truly taken what appears to be the weakest of all possible instruments

and has used Lia for great and powerful works through her intimate participation in the sufferings of Christ.

Early on in my pursuit of a vocation to the priesthood Lia has always assured me of her prayers. Though I never appreciated her life and prayers as I do now, I slowly began to see the effect that Lia has on the lives of others. My entire life Lia has been in and out of doctors' offices, operating tables and pharmacies; and whenever she is asked whether she would like God to fix her arm, legs and voice, she shakes her head no and just points up to Heaven knowing that God will take care of all that later. Despite having what the doctors have assured us is nothing more than the mind of a six year old girl; she truly understands the gift that God has given her. With just a smile Lia can change the hearts of complete strangers. It is often times the gift we take for granted that is the one with the most benefit.

The fact that Lia has taken on a special apostolate to pray for priests and vocations to the priesthood is evidenced, I believe, in my own vocation. My entire life I have felt, to some degree or another, a calling to the priestly life. It is only now, within months of my ordination to the priesthood, that I begin to realize the work that God has performed through my sister. Looking back one can see the hand of providence guiding and directing all of our lives through the existence of Lia. Especially as the first born in the family, Lia plays a special part as a role model for her younger siblings (even if we do not always recognize her as such). In a unique way I can look to Lia as an example of truly holy suffering as I pursue a vocation that is conformed to Christ, *the High Priest and Victim*. God has provided me with not only a powerful intercessor; he has given me a glimpse into the very nature of priesthood. Lia's power can be found in the witness of her life as imitation of Christ; thus making Lia a gift to all priests.

We must understand then, that even though God doesn't always give us what we want, He always gives us what we need for our salvation. - *Saint Augustine*

The story is not over and Lia continues to pray for so many every day. She continues to labor in the Lord's vineyard as God has not deemed her work yet complete. The purity and innocence that supports her prayer life makes her all the more an effective tool in the hand of the Craftsman. So Lia perseveres in her mission; would that all Christians have the same zeal and passion for a world centered on Christ.



## From the Sixteenth Apparition of Our Lady to St. Bernadette at Lourdes

The 14-year-old peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous from the Pyrenees mountain town of Lourdes, France, received eighteen apparitions from the Blessed Virgin Mary from February 11 to July 16, 1858. Four years following the solemn papal definition of the Immaculate Conception, the essential message of the “Immaculate Conception” at Lourdes was one of reparation and coredeemption: reparation to God for the sins of mankind, and coredeemptive prayer and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners and their eternal salvation.

*“When I was on my knees before the Lady,” Bernadette continued, “I asked her pardon for arriving late. Always good and gracious, she made a sign to me with her head that I need not excuse myself. Then I spoke to her of all my affection, all my respect and the happiness I had in seeing her again. After having poured out my heart to her I took up my rosary. While I was praying the thought of asking her name came before my mind with such persistence that I could think of nothing else. I feared to be presumptuous in repeating a question she had always refused to answer. And yet something compelled me to speak. At last,*



*under an irresistible impulse, the words fell from my mouth, and I begged the Lady to tell me who she was. The Lady did as she had always done before; she bowed her head and smiled but she did not reply. I cannot say why, but I felt myself bolder and asked her again to graciously tell me her name; however she only bowed and smiled as before, still remaining silent. Then once more, for a third time, clasping my hands and confessing myself unworthy of the favor I was asking of her, I again made my request. ... Then once more, for a third time, clasping my hands and confessing myself unworthy of the favor I was asking of her, I again made my request. ... The Lady was standing above the rose-bush, in a position very similar to that shown in the Miraculous Medal. At the third request her face became very serious and she seemed to bow down in an attitude of humility. Then she joined her hands and raised them to her breast. ... She looked up to heaven... then slowly opening her hands and leaning forward towards me, she said to me in a voice vibrating with emotion: “I am the Immaculate Conception!”* (Text from Dr. Mark Miravalle, S.T.D. [editor], *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, Seat of Wisdom Books [a division of Queenship Publishing], 2007, p. 856).



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### ***Novena Prayer to Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception***

*Please pray with us from*

***November 30 through December 8, 2013***

**MOST HOLY VIRGIN**, who was pleasing to the Lord and became His Mother, Immaculate in body and spirit, in faith and in love, look kindly on us who implore thy powerful patronage. The wicked serpent, against whom the primal curse was hurled, continues fiercely to attack and ensnare the unhappy children of Eve. Do thou, Mary our Blessed Mother, our Queen and Advocate, who from the first instant of thy conception did crush the head of our enemy, receive these special prayers (***mention your requests here***) that we unite single-heartedly to thine and beg thee to offer at the throne of God. Help us, that we may never fall into the snares that are laid for us, and may all arrive at the port of salvation; and in the midst of so many dangers, may holy Church and the fellowship of Christians everywhere sing once more the hymn of deliverance, victory and peace. **AMEN.**