

IN THE CAMP WITH MAXIMILIAN

HE WAS THERE. HE SAW IT ALL.

I noticed him right away.

The dark eyes of a very old man gazed at me intensely from the second row, as I performed the story of *Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz* in Chicago.

After the show, he pulled me aside, rolled up his sleeve and showed me the number tattooed on his arm.

“I was in the Auschwitz concentration camp with Maximilian Kolbe. I knew him, for we were in the same block,” he told me.

“When a prisoner escaped, the Nazi commandant made us all stand for hours in the scorching summer sun. He made his way through the ranks, choosing 10 victims at random to die in the starvation bunker.

“He stopped and looked directly at me and I froze in terror. But the man right behind me thought the commandant had looked at him, and he stepped out. My life was spared.

“Finally, he pointed to Francis Gajowniczek. My wife, my children – I will never see them again,’ I heard him sob. We were all stunned at what happened next.

“Father Maximilian stepped forward. ‘I will take his place,’ he told the shocked commandant, ‘I am old and useless.’

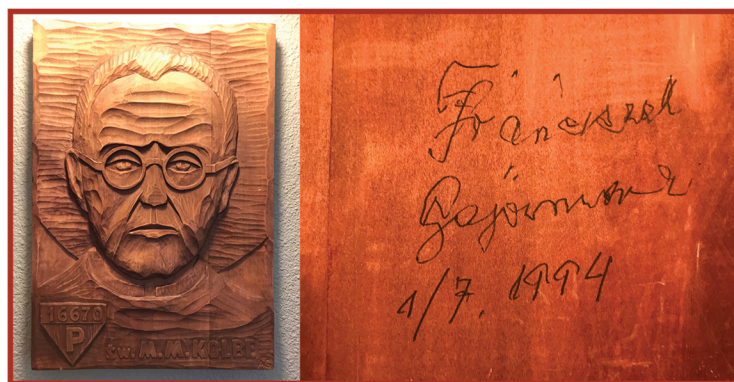
“Then he was taken away with the rest of the victims to die. For the next four years, all of us in the camp shielded Francis, so that Father Max’s sacrifice might not be in vain.”

**“HE LOOKED DIRECTLY AT ME
AND I FROZE IN TERROR.”**

As he spoke to me, tears were rolling down the old man’s face.

“The performance I just saw, it’s all true. I was there. I saw it all. Thank you,” he whispered to me before he slipped away into the crowd.

In my living room hangs a wooden carving of Saint Maximilian. Who do you think signed the back of it? Francis Gajowniczek, the very man whose life he saved.



This image of Saint Max hangs in Leonardo’s living room, signed by the man he saved.

Saint Luke
PRODUCTIONS

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*I treasure your friendship.
Thanks for being there for us.*

THE THOUGHT OF YOU FILLS ME WITH HOPE.

Dear Friends,

When I think of you, I'm filled with amazement and gratitude. Even though you have so much going on in your life – so many pressures, demands and worries – **you still take the time to open this newsletter**, read these words, maybe say a prayer for us, and even send a donation.

Thanks for believing in what we're doing – producing films and theater that really make a difference in people's lives, on a deep spiritual level.

We're working so hard to finish the films *Heart of Mercy* and *Tolton: From Slave to Priest*. Because we're such a small group, it's taking a long time. Thanks for sticking with us. **It'll be worth the wait** – you're going to love these two inspiring movies.

I need you very much. Please send what you can (\$100 would make a huge difference) so that I can finish these films! The post-production editing process is complicated and expensive.

You know how much I count on your friendship and support. When you see one of our films on TV, or experience a live show, just remember that it was your generosity and prayers that made it possible. May God reward your kindness.

God bless you and yours,

Leonardo Defilippis



LET US KNOW WHAT'S ON YOUR HEART. WE WANT TO PRAY FOR YOU!

Send us your prayer intentions so we can remember them in our morning prayer.

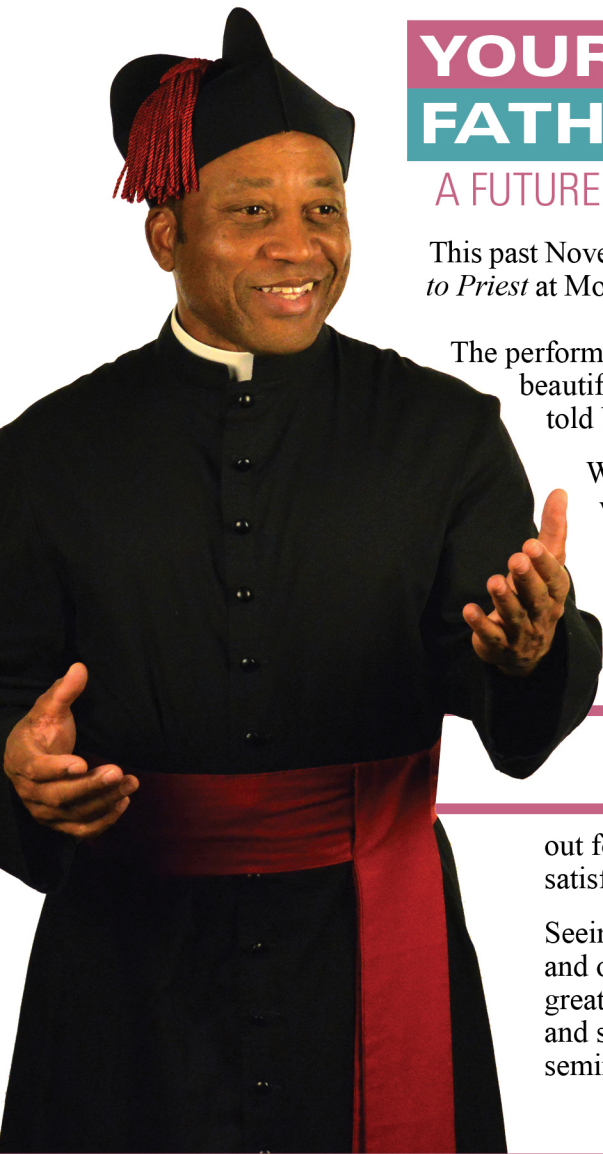


Thanks, Craig! You've been with us for so many years!

WHY I GIVE

The personal connection – that's what makes Saint Luke Productions stand out from all the other donation requests I receive. Leonardo and Patti send me handwritten notes of thanks. I love watching their family grow. When I see staff photos in their newsletter, I witness God's love shining through all of them. What a gift, to know that my contributions are valued and spread Christ's love through theater and film!

Craig Galik, West Mifflin, PA



YOUR VOCATION: FATHER TOLTON CAN HELP.

A FUTURE PRIEST REFLECTS ON THE LIVE *TOLTON* SHOW.

This past November, I saw *Tolton: From Slave to Priest* at Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon.

The performance, the music, and the beautiful way in which the story was told blew me away.

When Mama Tolton sang Christ's words, "Feed my sheep," it was powerful and reminded me of my mission as a future priest. As a millennial, I see a spiritual hunger in our current generation. They are reaching

young men discerning the priesthood are told it isn't for them.

Despite ridicule and discouragement, Fr. Tolton persisted, strengthened by Mass and time with the Blessed Sacrament.

Young people searching for direction: See this production! Follow Father Tolton's example. Allow God's love to envelop you. Allow Him to give you the strength to persevere. Ask Father Tolton's help, so that you might fulfill Christ's command to feed His sheep.

**"YOUNG PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR DIRECTION:
SEE THIS PRODUCTION!"**

out for anything, but only God can satisfy them.

Seeing Fr. Tolton fulfill that mission and overcome many obstacles with great love gave me renewed courage and strength in my struggles as a seminarian. Like Fr. Tolton, many



**Deacon
Marc Gandolfo
will be ordained
a priest in June.
Pray for him!**



LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE! AUDIENCES GIVE YOU A STANDING OVATION.

"Looking forward to seeing the projects you are working on now, the *Heart of Mercy* movie and *Tolton* film. They fill me with great hope for the future of our country and the world!"

- James and Dolores Schellenberg, Farmington Hills, MI

"I wanted to say that I absolutely love the recording of the *Gospel of John*. I listened to it every day during this past lent. The whole Gospel each day! What a gift. Thanks so much."

- Allie Pennie, Miami, FL

"Your work gives me hope for the future, and I pray each day that God continues to bring more people to see your heart-touching productions."

- Sr. M.G., Beaverton, OR





SAINT FAUSTINA'S DEATH JONATHAN ROUMIE'S JESUS

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
RANDY SELLARS REFLECTS
ON FILMING THESE
POWERFUL MOMENTS.

When I first signed on to *Heart of Mercy*, I was looking forward to collaborating on a period narrative. It turned out to be so much more.

Take for example, the filming of Faustina's death. We were shooting from a high angle, right over the hospital bed, with the camera on some tracks so that we could move. It took us a long time to rig that up.

Maria Vargo, the actress playing Faustina, was emotionally ready to shoot this death scene, but things kept going wrong, forcing us to start over. This took its toll on Maria, but she was a consummate professional and entered into the intense moment again and again. She delivered an incredible, powerful performance that literally brought tears to my eyes. That doesn't happen often on set.

**"THE SCENES WHERE
JESUS WAS BEING
SCOURGED HAD A
PROFOUND EFFECT
ON ME PERSONALLY."**

It was a pleasure to work with actor Jonathan Roumie, known famously for *The Chosen*, who plays Jesus in *Heart of Mercy* as well. He is riveting in the role, capturing the emotional, spiritual and physical intensity of the Passion of Christ.

When we were filming the Crucifixion, we tried to work very quickly so that he wouldn't have to stay on the cross for too long. When delays couldn't be avoided, it was physically excruciating for him. You could see he was experiencing Christ's suffering.

Watching the scenes where Jesus was being scourged had a profound effect on me personally, as well as on the rest of the crew.

This project has a special place in my heart. *Heart of Mercy* is about a person undergoing an extreme spiritual crisis, who experiences God's infinite compassion and forgiveness. I am grateful that I've played a part in telling this story.

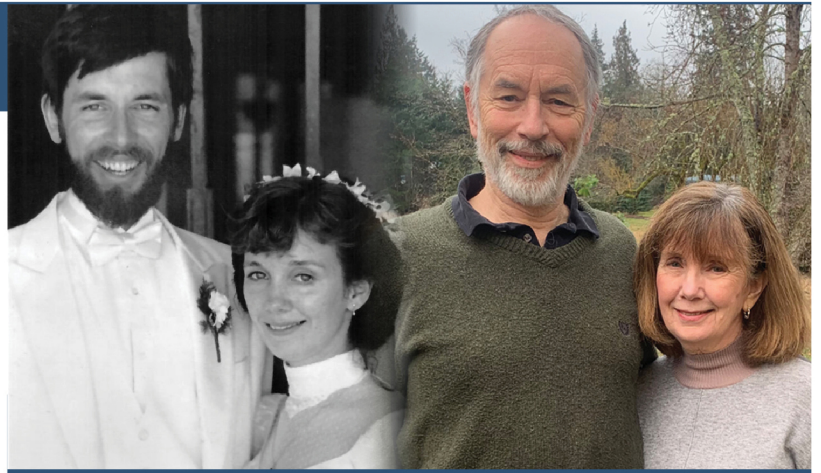
Every Fault a Glorious Gift

By Patti Defilippis

“You are like the stone that must be chiseled and fashioned before being set in the building....those who are in the monastery are craftsmen placed there by God to mortify you by working and chiseling at you.”

- Saint John of the Cross

Marriage, it seems to me, is like a monastery. After nearly 40 years married, Leonardo and I know every one of each other’s faults. And most of the time, I act as if it’s my responsibility to perfect him!



Patti and Leonardo: 40 years married this August.

It has struck me, however, that every fault I endure is actually a glorious gift. If he were perfect, I would not grow in patience, in compassion, or in the ability to keep my mouth shut – especially in front of others.

Lord, thank you for my husband, not just for our shared goals and dreams, but for all the ways that we chisel away at each other. Carve me into the person you want me to be.



Touring with the Tolton show has taught me so much.

YOU WANT TO KNOW

FAITHFUL YOUNG PEOPLE?

HERE’S ONE FOR YOU - MEET NICHOLAS PAPE!

When I joined Saint Luke Productions in February 2020, the pandemic was turning the world upside down. There were lockdowns and riots happening all over the country.

In the past, I worked with many people who embraced our culture's biggest lies about faith, family, and morality. Here, I’m part of a community whose shared beliefs and daily morning prayer kept me grounded and connected in the midst of isolation and chaos.

As stage manager and film editor for *Tolton*, I’ve sharpened my knowledge of stage and film. On tour, *Tolton* actor Jim Coleman has taught me how to maintain Christian integrity in the very secular entertainment industry.

I love being in the business of storytelling for a Catholic company. When I see tears in people's eyes or hear them cheer at the end of the show, I know we’ve made an impact.

I never forget that it’s your generosity that has given me this opportunity. Thanks for supporting me in this rewarding work.

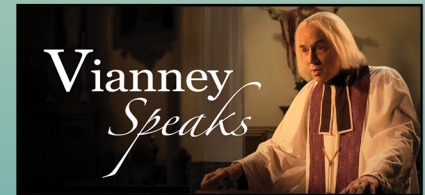
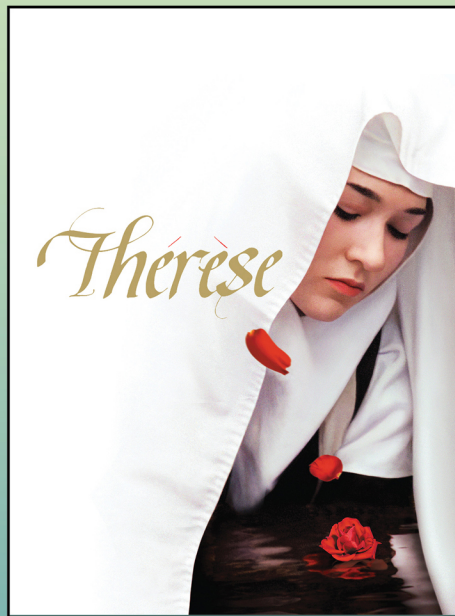


NOW STREAMING!

Watch all our films on these streaming channels!



More are being added all the time. Ask your favorite streaming channel to add our films!



WANT TO WATCH THE MOVIES ON DVD?

Order them at our online store!

50% off all DVD orders with the discount code: ***SPRING23***

Visit: store.stlukeproductions.com



You Did it!
YOU MADE ALL THIS POSSIBLE!

SINCE 1980 YOU'VE HELPED US REACH:

- 1,001,256** People in
- 76** States/Provinces at
- 3,747** Live Shows

TOGETHER LET'S REACH EVEN MORE SOULS THIS YEAR!