



Saint Luke
PRODUCTIONS

Mother Angelica – Her Hidden Witness

NEWSLETTER
Vol. 26 No. 2

FALL 2016

What She Taught Leonardo from the Cloister

I had a long friendship with Mother Angelica, the legendary foundress of EWTN Global Catholic Network, who passed away on March 27th of this year. Saint Luke Productions got its start in 1980, the following year in 1981 she launched her television network, and through the years I had many inspiring encounters with this amazing nun.

Although she interviewed me a couple times on *Mother Angelica Live*, my most moving experiences occurred after she had retired from the public eye to her cloistered, hidden life as a Poor Clare nun in the Monastery of Our Lady of the Angels in Hanceville, AL.

In 2005, I had the honor of screening our feature film *Thérèse* inside the privacy of the cloister for Mother Angelica and her community of around 40 nuns. At the end of the film, when Saint Thérèse was dying, I looked over and saw tears streaming down Mother's face. When I knelt before her wheelchair afterwards, she thanked me, and told me she knew what I had gone through - how hard it had been to produce this movie. She, too, had lived a life of complete trust in God in order to do the impossible.

A few years later, in 2008, I performed *Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz* live for Mother Angelica and her community. This private performance took place in the monastery speak room, where an iron grill separates the nuns from the outside world. Mother was, by then, unable to speak. Yet there she sat in the front row on

the other side of the grill, with only 6 feet between us, as I acted the role of Saint Maximilian Kolbe. What an intimate, profound encounter for both of us! The Holy Spirit was in our midst.

Mother Angelica was an inspiration to me. Her humble leadership of EWTN taught me a lot about having the courage to take on the entertainment industry to evangelize. More than anything, I've tried to imitate her prayerfulness and trust. May she rest in peace, and may EWTN continue to spread the Gospel to all nations.

"I looked over and saw tears streaming down Mother's face."

New *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*

The classic story of conversion that remains relevant and gripping today.



Audio CD
\$15


Pre-order now
Ships November 18th

NOW BOOKING

Call (360) 687-8029 to reserve your date.


You Can Inspire Our Country

How? By bringing one of these powerful dramas to your community.
Want to see these shows? Give us a call and together we'll make it happen.



Thérèse

"There are no words, just tears – many, many tears as my beloved Thérèse came to life right before my eyes."
- E.J., MA



Faustina

"Wow! This is not a 'show' but a transformation experience that has the power to change hearts and lives!"
- Lynn Albanese



Vianney

"Defilippis has so embodied the spirit of the saint that the audience soon forgets they are watching a performance. Bravo! Maximum bravo!"
- Michael O'Brien, author and artist



Maximilian

"This drama positively glows as a powerful statement of hope."
- Fr. James McCurry, OFM

Look How Many Souls You've Touched

In the 2015-2016 touring season you helped us reach

50,000

People

in

23

States/Provinces

at

175

Live Shows

This season, let's do even more!



The Grace Your Gift Brings

“Thérèse taught me to love until it hurts, then keep loving always. Wonderful! Tear-provoking. God’s mercy and love came to life.”

~ T.E. Tulare, CA

“I couldn’t believe how Maximilian moved me - truly a work of grace. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Defilippis. Our Lady keep you!”

~ Rev. Mr. Matthew Schultz, Brighton, MA

“Faustina helped me enormously, to forgive both of my parents and to show mercy to someone else who has hurt me....Thank you!”

~ Joan Ripley, Victoria, BC



Family Reflections

A Blast of Light By Patti Defilippis

How I married Leonardo

When I was working at the Fort Worth Shakespeare Festival in the summer of 1982, I was a new Catholic, and I decided to visit a nearby Carmelite Monastery.

A light bulb suddenly turned on, and everything became clear.

calmly told me that disappointment in love was not a sign of a religious vocation. She promised that the sisters would pray for me.

I left with the determination to pursue my acting career, and set out on a 3,500-mile journey by myself,

auditioning at theaters throughout the Midwest, miserable much of the time.

When I returned, I had a powerful, instantaneous experience of conversion. A light bulb suddenly turned on, and everything became clear. In that moment, I was completely aware of God’s presence and His will for me. I was convicted that I had only one goal in life – to get to heaven, and Leonardo was the one to get me there. No matter what he decided, I made a commitment, and came back to Oregon.

Leonardo asked me to marry him on the first Sunday of Advent, 1982, we were married on the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1983, and 33 years later we have seven children, ages 31 – 17.

I have always believed the prayers of the Carmelites were responsible for the powerful experience of grace that I received. I also thank Saint Thérèse for being my friend through all these years, and allowing us to learn the little way, which has been the foundation of our ministry.



Mother Maria told me that disappointment in love is not a sign of a religious vocation.



Leonardo and Patti, 1983



Maria & Elizabeth

The audience cheered Elizabeth and Maria as if they were rockstars.

When Elizabeth Kracker read an article about *Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy*, the desire

to bring the show to her community pulled at her heartstrings. But the idea was way outside her comfort zone. She's the quiet reserved type. She isn't rich. She knew nothing about event planning or fundraising.

She said yes anyway.

"I just told the Lord that if He wanted it, He had to make it happen," she said. "He picks the most unlikely people so that it's obvious it's His work."

Although Elizabeth had no idea how to cover the cost of the show, she surmounted obstacle after obstacle.

She got local restaurants to participate in a fundraiser and donate a portion of their proceeds. Even people she didn't know gave money because it was the Lord's work.

Still it wasn't enough. She told the Lord she was out of



ideas. Then, miraculously, a woman called to donate a quilt. So Elizabeth learned how to run a quilt raffle, and finally she had exactly the right amount of money.

When the day came, people drove from hours away to see the show. They wept to hear the message of mercy, their hearts deeply moved within them. The curtain call drew a standing ovation as the audience cheered for Maria Vargo and then Elizabeth as if they were rock-stars.

Months later, Elizabeth said, "I'm still pinching myself. I can't believe it happened. It was all the Holy Spirit." She hopes that sharing her story will inspire others to listen to the Lord's

quiet voice within.

Do you hear the Lord's quiet voice calling you to bring one of our live dramas to your community? Go for it! If Elizabeth can step out in faith, so can you.

"I'm still pinching myself. I can't believe it happened."

A Miracle in Our Midst

Amber Baker is Saint Luke Productions' bookkeeper. Last January, this mother of five, who has been married to her high school sweetheart for 20 years, experienced a stroke that doctors informed her she shouldn't have survived. Her miraculous complete healing has opened her eyes to the adventure of walking with Christ day by day.

"Every breath I take is a gift," she says.

"God has each of us in the palm of His hand; you may not understand your suffering, but in all things lean on Him."

Amber prays for our donors as she processes their gifts. "I have seen the power of prayer first hand, and it is a privilege to present intentions to our Lord from those I have never met."



The Audience Prayed

A near disaster ends in triumph.

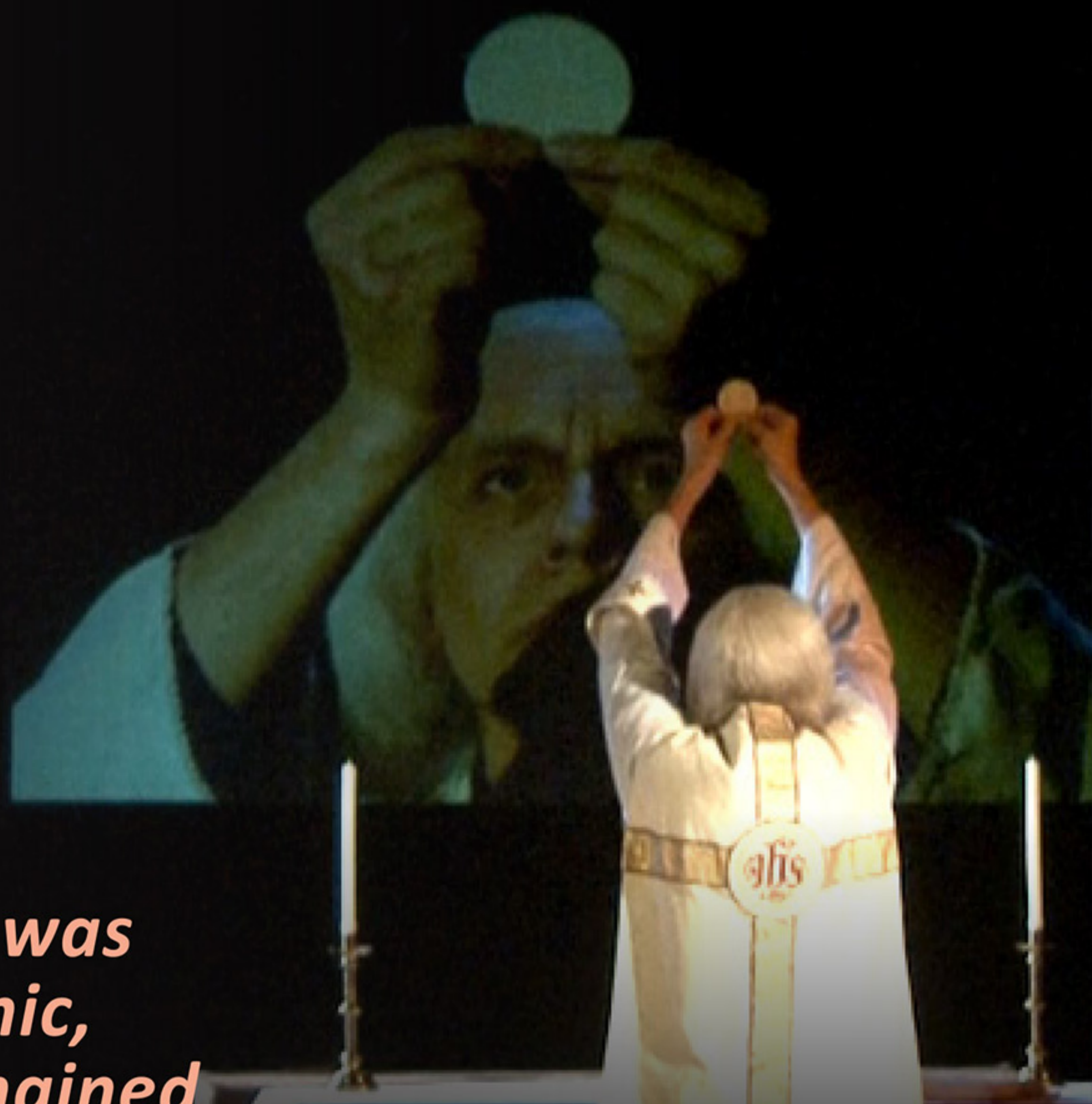
On August 6th, a performance of *Vianney* in California started with a bang. The audience was incredibly responsive – they laughed and cried right from the beginning of the show.

On stage as the Curé of Ars, Leonardo interacts with characters on a big video screen throughout the show. That night, during the scene where John Vianney figures out that it is the devil who is attacking him, the frightening image of the devil on the screen suddenly froze. The show stopped. Leonardo ran behind the statue of Mary on the stage and waited.

Johnny, the stage manager, was in a panic, but he remained outwardly calm. “Ladies and gentlemen,” he announced, “we’re having technical difficulties. Let’s all pray a Hail Mary.”

The audience didn’t say just one Hail Mary – they kept praying while Johnny and the parish music director went into action. After 20 minutes of scrambling and praying, Johnny hit a button, and a frozen image of Saint Philomena appeared on the screen. The pastor in the front row whispered, “Please move, please move.” In answer to his prayer, her image came to life, and the story took off again.

Johnny was in a panic, but remained outwardly calm.



As *Vianney* ended, the audience erupted in joy and thanksgiving. They wanted to see this play, and the devil wasn’t going to stop them. It was truly a miraculous night, despite many challenges.

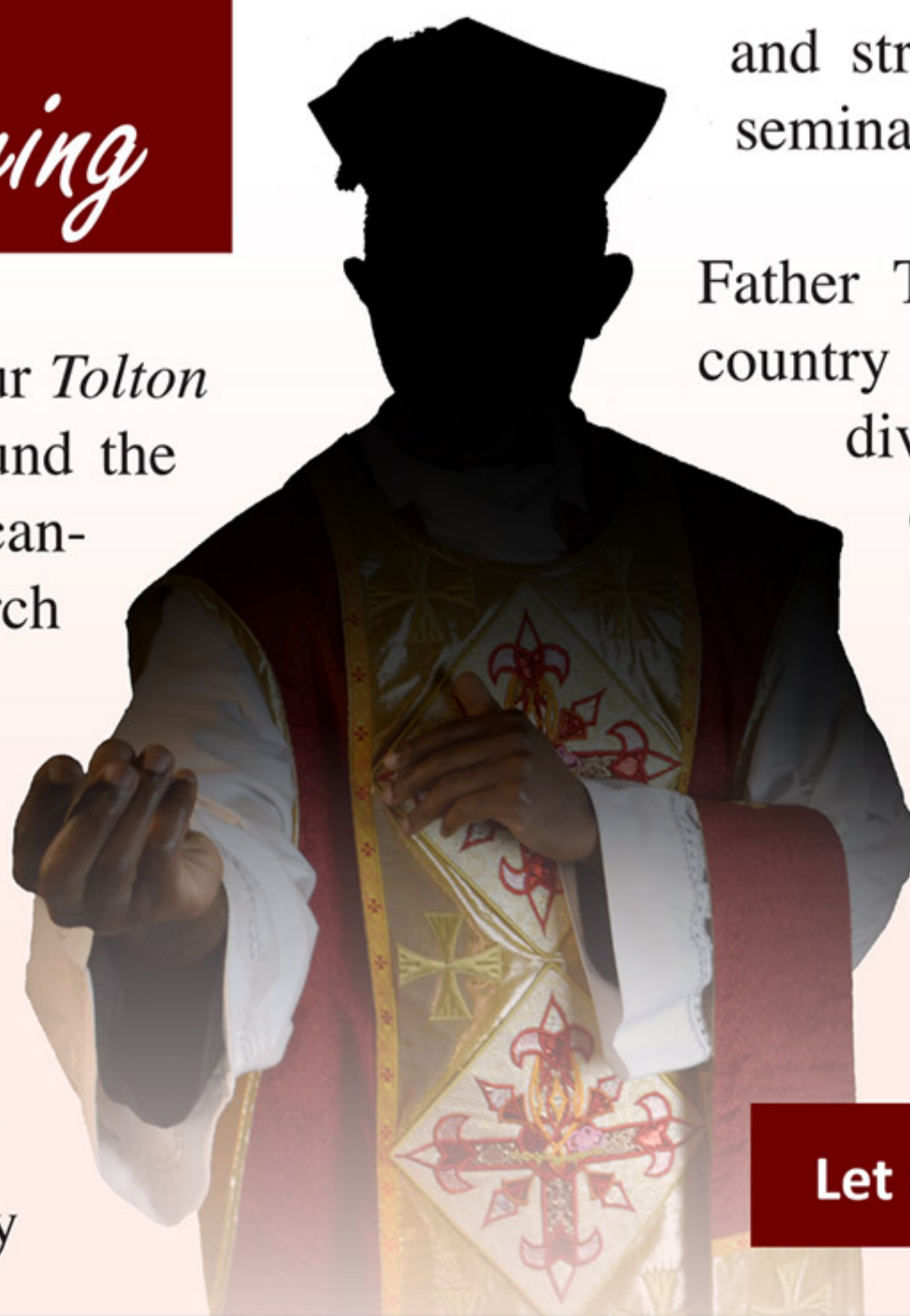
The faith of the people we meet on tour is truly extraordinary. Praise God for their examples of trust – what a gift!

Tolton *Keep Praying*

Many of you have asked about the progress of our *Tolton* production. We had high hopes that we had found the actor to play Father Augustus Tolton, the first African-American priest, but it didn’t work out. So the search continues.

Father Tolton didn’t give up. So neither will we.

From a young age, Augustus Tolton knew he was called to the priesthood, but no seminary in the United States would take him because of the color of his skin. Finally, after years of delay



and struggle, he was accepted into the seminary – not in the U.S., but in Rome.

Father Tolton’s story is crucial for our country at this time of racial and moral division. Please pray for his canonization (his cause has been sent to Rome) and for our search for the faith-filled actor to play the role of Father Augustus Tolton in our upcoming live production.

Let us know if you find our Tolton!

Is This a Hopeless Situation?

In this contentious political climate, it seems like goodness and truth cannot prevail. But whatever the outcome of the election, we are called to a hope that is greater than anything politics can offer.

I'm depending on you. Please send whatever you can.

That's why I'm driven to bring a miracle of God's Mercy to our country and world, with the DVD of *Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy*. I'm depending on you, because miracles happen through you.

When we produced the *Thérèse* movie, people like you sent whatever they could. *Thérèse* was a miraculous hit, and the DVD is still touching souls. You and I can make the *Faustina* DVD happen, too!

Can you manage \$100 right now? Many of you have already given. But if you haven't yet, or if you can send a little more, we'll be able to film the DVD next summer.

Thank you for sharing in this hope with me. Together you and I will bring God's Mercy to our world.

God bless you,



Leonardo Defilippis

P.S. I'll be so grateful for whatever you can send. Most of all, for your prayers.



Thanks, dear friends!

“Touch hearts that otherwise might remain asleep.”

“20+ years ago, my husband and I were watching EWTN, and Mother Angelica’s guest was Leonardo. We’ve enjoyed watching your family and ministry grow over the years. We support this ministry because we believe it can and does touch hearts that otherwise might remain asleep. Thank you for dedicating your lives to others.”

- Rosalie & Bob Dalton

Why we Give

Donate securely online at: stlukeproductions.com/donate