

**O Happy Day!**  
**By Michael W. Hovey**

Heaven was abuzz with excitement. "He's coming!" "He'll be here soon!" The word spread quickly.

St. Peter was supervising Michael and Gabriel, along with a few cherubim and seraphim, as they prepared the Pearly Gates for his arrival. "Get rid of the Book and the podium," Peter told Michael. "We won't need that for him." Raphael pointed to the sides of the Gates, telling the cherubim where to put the flowers. "We'll leave the Gates wide open for him," he told the seraphim, as they began to unroll the long red carpet.

The crowds gathered along the walkway. The excitement was palpable. Moses chatted with Abraham and Martin Luther King, Jr. on one side. Monica, Agatha, Mary Magdalen, and Dorothy Day were having an animated conversation a few feet away, while Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Karl Rahner looked very serious, deep in thought. Francis of Assisi, Clare, and Rachel Carson sat on a garden bench, next to a burbling brook, with birds and stars and bright sun and moonlight all around them. Stephen, Thomas a Becket, and Oscar Romero swapped stories of their last moments on earth, while Teresa of Calcutta and Damien of Molokai chatted about their memories of the "distressing disguise of Jesus."

Suddenly, a cry arose from the Gates, and harps and trumpets began to play. Escorted by Angelo Roncalli (John XXIII), Giovanni Batista Montini (Paul VI) and Alberto Luciani (John Paul I), he began to walk toward the throne. The throngs pressed near the passageway, as they struggled to catch a glimpse of him.

The Martyrs of Uganda joined the Martyrs of Japan, cheering as he walked past them. Maximillian Kolbe and Edith Stein stood at the front of a grouping of millions of souls, with tears of joy in their eyes. Thousands upon thousands of souls of children who died of hunger joined the thousands upon thousands of souls of unborn children, all shouting, "Thank you!" Abraham and Sarah, Issac and Jacob, Adam and Eve, Cyril and Methodius, Jonathan and David, Ignatius, Dominic, Benedict, Katharine Drexel, Ursula, and John Dearden all waved, with beatific smiles on their faces. Maimonides and the Baal Shem Tov stood next to Mohammed and nodded appreciatively as he passed. The Buddha rose from his lotus sitting position and pressed his hands together in reverent salute, receiving the same gesture in return from the newcomer.

As he passed by Mary's Room, he noticed suitcases packed and ready to go, with stickers covering the luggage marked "Lourdes," Fatima, Czestochowa, Guadalupe, Knock, Manila, Detroit and many others. Mary greeted him with a warm hug. Falling on his knees, the newcomer stuttered, "I am all yours (Totus Tuus)."

As he neared the throne, with the Holy Spirit hovering over him, Jesus leaped down the steps and gave him a big hug and affectionately kissed both cheeks. "Karol, it's wonderful to see you in person," Jesus blurted out. "Come, meet Our Father. It's so nice to have you home at last!"

Michael Hovey is the director of the [Office of Catholic Social Teaching](#) for the Archdiocese of Detroit.