

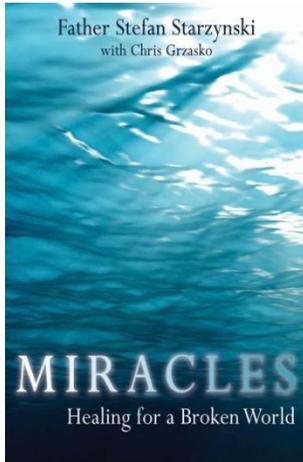
# Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

PUBLISHING DIVISION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Soon-to-be American-born male saint inspired modern priest in 2003 apparition**

HUNTINGTON, Indiana, January 24, 2011 – Fr. Nelson Baker (1842-1936), who was elevated to “Venerable” by Pope Benedict XVI last week, actually inspired a Virginia priest to continue his mission. Fr. Baker had been named a Servant of God – the first step toward sainthood – in 1987 by the late Pope John Paul II.

Fr. Baker not only built Our Lady of Victory Basilica in Lackawanna, NY, but founded multiple charities, including a home for infants, a home for unwed mothers, an orphanage, a nurses’ home, and elementary and high schools – literally creating “a city of charity” in that area. At his funeral in 1936, over a half-million people whose lives he had saved – or whose family members or friends he’d preserved physically or spiritually – flooded the streets of Lackawanna.

And a 41-year-old Catholic priest today in the Arlington diocese, Fr. Stefan Starzynski, attributes his opening three homes for expectant mothers there to a vision of Fr. Baker he had eight years ago. Fr. Starzynski describes the inspiration he got from this priest he’d never met – a champion for unwed mothers, their babies, orphans, and children – in his book, *Miracles: Healing for a Broken World* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2009).

“My devotion to Fr. Baker began in 2003 while I was priest at St. Mary Parish in Fredericksburg, VA. One night, in the twilight stage of sleep, I saw a man whose body had no substance ... with a bald head and very thin face. There were buttons going down the front of his cassock. He looked like a priest from a hundred years ago, and not at all frightening...

“I later learned that this man was Fr. Nelson Baker, and recognized him upon seeing his photo which someone gave me. When I made a retreat in 2008 at the Church where he is buried, Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna, I met a woman traveling who’d only had a few months to live, due to late-stage melanoma cancer. After I blessed her with a relic of Fr. Baker and prayed over her, asking Fr. Baker’s intercession for her healing, she was healed.”

“I believe Fr. Baker appeared to me years ago because he wanted me to continue his mission or aiding women in crisis pregnancies. He had a great love for mothers and their babies, and also for pregnant women who might be tempted to abandon their children. In 1906, Fr. Baker announced plans to construct the Our Lady of Victory Infant Home. In 2005, almost a century later, I founded the Paul Stefan Home for Expectant Mothers. The Paul Stefan Home for Expectant Mothers now has 3 homes in Virginia: 2 in Orange County and a third home in Falls Church. We have helped over 80 women and babies, and trust that God wants us to do much more.”

In *Miracles: Healing for a Broken World*, Fr. Starzynski details the apparition of Fr. Baker, his newfound devotion to him, and Fr. Baker’s inspiration to him to help women in crisis pregnancies.

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