

Xavier Society for the Blind helps visually impaired Catholics experience the faith

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

Paula Seiter is a parishioner and lector at Holy Cross Parish, Covington. To help her in her in this ministry, Ms. Seiter receives braille materials, in particular Mass Propers, which she uses to lector at Holy Cross, from the New York-based Xavier Society for the Blind.



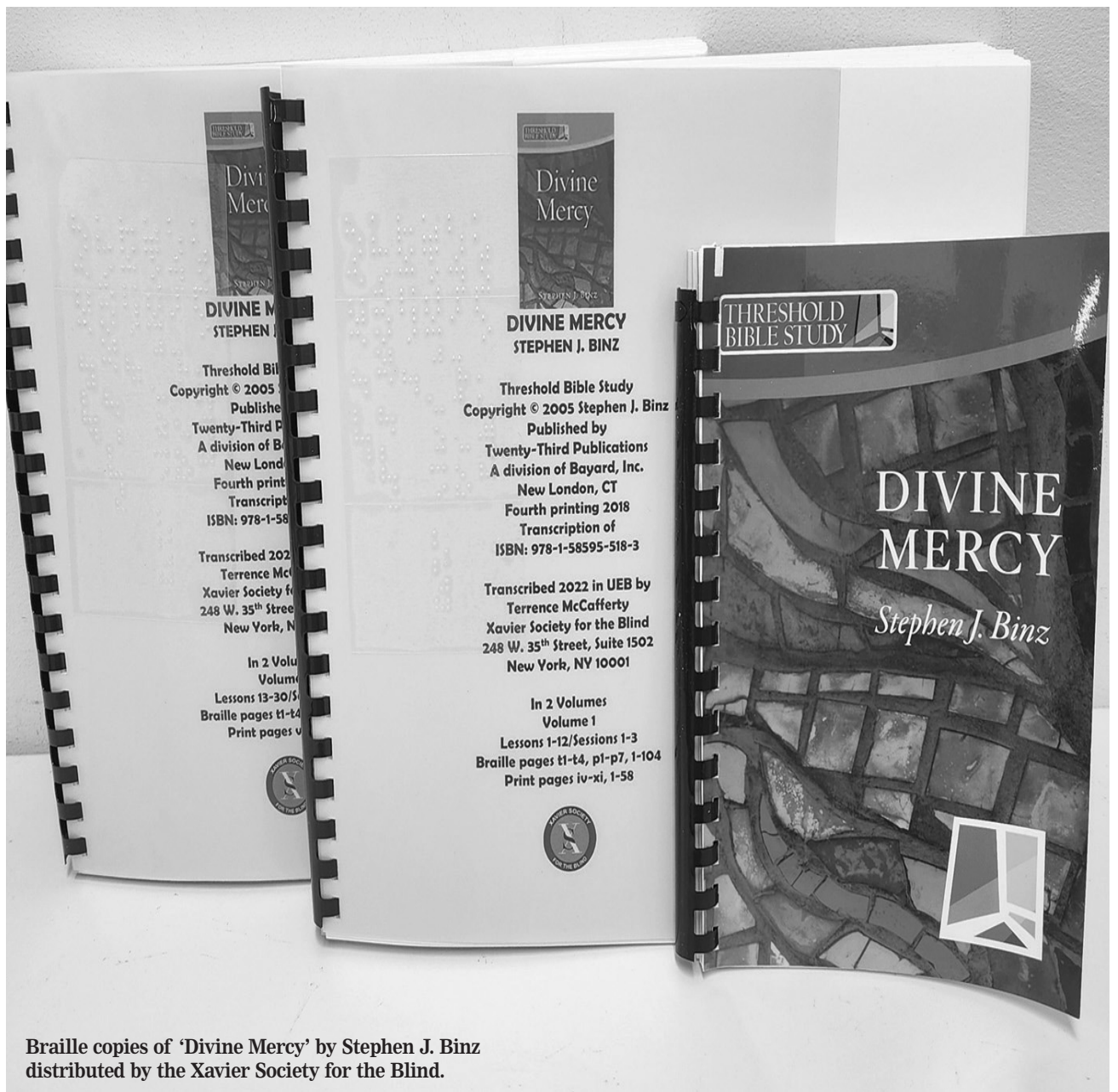
Founded in the year 1900, the Xavier Society for the Blind was started when blind educator for blind children, Margaret Coffey, and Father Joseph Stadelman recognized a need for religious books and worship materials for individuals with sight-related disabilities. In a single room at the College of St. Francis Xavier, the Society became the first Catholic publishing house to make these publications available, free of charge, to the blind.

“We say in our mission statement to provide the Word of God and the best in Catholic spiritual writing and materials to people who are blind or visually impaired,” said the Society’s executive director, Malachy Fallon. From that small mission in New York, the Xavier Society for the Blind now provides materials in braille and audio formats to visually impaired individuals in 22 nations and across the United States, including in the Diocese of Covington.

In the 1980s, Paula Seiter came across an advert for the Xavier Society for the Blind in the now out of publication “Matilda Ziegler” braille magazine. From that first moment she sent a letter requesting materials from the Society, Ms. Seiter has continued to make use of the Society’s offerings both for personal reading and spiritual growth, as well as for lectoring. She receives materials in braille, as well as audiobooks, and uses them in her daily life.

“I’m really thankful to be able to receive all this information,” said Ms. Seiter, “because it’s another tool to be able to do it like sighted people do... if I didn’t have Xavier, I would feel lost because there’s nothing else around that publishes the Mass or other books or periodicals, so they’re an important part of my life.”

“A lot of what we take for granted,” such as daily missals and Mass propers, says Mr. Fallon, “is readily made available to people with disabilities,” thanks to the efforts of the Xavier Society.



Braille copies of ‘Divine Mercy’ by Stephen J. Binz distributed by the Xavier Society for the Blind.

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