



LAY WITNESS

August 15, 2019

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Vol. 37, No. 4

*to unite the faithful from all walks of life in order to
support, defend and advance the efforts of the teaching Church*

A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

“Grace to you, and peace from Him Who is, Who was, and Who is to come” (Rev. 1:4).

If you are reading this, you probably have a vested interest in the future and success of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF). In 2017, we began a renewal of the apostolate with a clear intent to return to the original apostolic activities as pursued by our founders. During the 50th year of CUF—in 2018—we restored membership to having moral obligations other than merely financial. We restored an emphasis on the development and support of chapters. In January 2019, we began a membership drive intended to identify those who wished to embrace the obligations of membership, those who wished to support CUF as associates without the expectations of membership, and those who were not interested in CUF as a membership lay apostolate: perhaps on our mailing list because of a subscription to *Lay Witness* or having bought a book through Emmaus Road Publishing.

When CUF affiliated to The Saint Joseph Foundation (SJF) in February 2017, the clear intent was to preserve CUF from dissolution and failure. The majority of the directors remembered CUF’s apostolic zeal to enliven the faith of the laity and encourage them to engage the Church and World for conversion and renewal. During my own tenure with CUF at the turn of the Millennium, I remember the *millions* of pages of material distributed by Information Services and the dozens of speaking engagements annually that we made across the country. My own schedule included engagements in Alaska, Washington state, Arizona, Michigan, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, and I’m sure other states I do not remember. During that time, I was invited to the International Theological Institute when it was located in Gaming, Austria. I spoke in multiple locations in many of these places and was invited back regularly. I was not the only person on staff that made appearances at conferences and seminars. Our very active speaking schedule reflected a very active membership.

Times change. Sadly, after more than two years of inactivity followed by the re-organization of CUF, more than half the people on our mailing list remain unresponsive. Additionally, our database was not current. It seemed prudent to pursue the membership drive and allow us to identify who really wanted to be a member of CUF. It would also help us update and correct our database. We started the drive with about 2500 addresses

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Prayer of Catholics United for the Faith

O God our Father, who sent Your only-begotten Son to suffer and to give His life for the life of His Church, rule, protect, and nourish her continually, we beseech You. Teach us of Catholics United for the Faith to direct our zeal first of all to the renewal of our own hearts. Then, if it be Your holy will to allow us to be in any way Your instruments in the wider renewal of Your Church, give us the grace to know what services, small or great, You ask of us, and let the Holy Spirit teach us to perform them in obedience, patience, and charity, leaving entirely to You what fruits they may bear. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **AMEN.**

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, Mother of the Church,
intercede for us.

St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family
and Patron of the Universal Church,
pray for us.

Lay Witness is a publication of
Catholics United for the Faith
85882 Water Works Rd.
Hopedale, OH 43976, 740-283-2484
ISSN: 1541-602X.
Philip C. L. Gray, Publisher/Editor
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on the mailing list. We have one more push taking place right now. Currently we have over 600 people identified as members, almost 600 identified as associates, with just over 1,000 addresses on our mailing list. We hope to see a large increase after this big push.

I am grateful for each of you!

The membership drive has elicited increased interest in chapter development as well. About eighteen chapter packets have been mailed out with strong interest being shown by four groups. We have also had members contact us asking for information about the location of a close chapter. Hopefully, we have been able to boost chapter membership in locations that have a chapter.

This summer alone, I have had six speaking engagements sponsored by CUF with two more scheduled through the month of November. I also use my opportunities through the SJF to promote CUF and its essential mission. My appearance on EWTN last February is still a catalyst for people to contact our Information Services department [1-800-MY FAITH (693-2484)].

Recently, Mrs. Madeleine Stebbins, one of our founders, contacted us with a very encouraging note. If you remember, we published a letter from her in our 50th anniversary edition of *Lay Witness* (36-4). She recently expressed gratitude that the mission of CUF had been revived. I am grateful to all of you who revive it. I know that my efforts, and those of my staff, are not the heart of the apostolate. You are. You who have accepted the call to live out your baptismal promises by engaging your parish, diocese and community with a renewal of Faith;

you are the heart of CUF. It is you who we are here to serve.

Thank you! You encourage my faith and give me hope for our Church.

In the last issue of *Lay Witness* (37-3), Jim Likoudis gave us an excellent explanation of ecclesial governance as a visible Bond of Unity for the Church. In this issue, I offer an explanation of the Bond of Common Worship and the Sacraments. The next issue will host an article on the Bond of Faith. In our final issue this year, the lead article will focus on the unity of Christ and His Church, and how the Church is a Sacrament of Unity. This focus on unity is intended to provide clarity to our identity as Catholics.

In my experiences as a canon lawyer, I encounter more people who stop attending Mass or who leave the Church because of the scandals caused by men than for any other reason. None of the Bonds of Unity originate in man. All have their origin and final end in God. If we can refocus those leaving the Church on a relationship with God, we will have planted seeds that can bear fruit in their return to the Catholic Faith. It is my hope that these articles will encourage you to understand how to live your life as a Catholic pursuing the unity of Christ and His Church. If you live that unity, others will notice, and we become living stones that build the Kingdom of God.

God bless you; St. Joseph keep you.

United in the Faith,
Philip C. L. Gray, President

Living a Sacramental Life: **The Visible Bond of Common Worship and the Sacraments¹**

By: Philip C. L. Gray

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth....Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:1, 26-28 RSVCE).

Unity is the First Mark, or characteristic, of the Church.² The source of her unity is God Himself. Being a Trinity of Persons in one God, His unity within Himself is the reality to which Man is intended to be a unity of persons (Jn. 17:21). This Trinity of Persons being One God is not something we can understand. Nor can we fully understand the mystery of the unity of Man.

When two people encounter one another, they see each other as individuals. All too often, those encounters involve conflict, or at least expressions of difference. In a greater context, our society celebrates diversity and often finds division. Within these conflicts and divisions, Man also seeks a balance to personal differences by pursuing common ideals or action. This impulse is expressed in the

development of groups driven by a common purpose, such as political parties or private membership organizations. Members within these groups are different, but they share a common purpose. In that common purpose, they find some form of unity. This happens simply because it is natural to us. We tend toward unity, even though its expression is distorted by sin.

In contrast, the Church is the Society of Grace as intended by God for Man. She possesses a unity that perfectly shares in the unity of God. As such, the diversity of the Church is intrinsic to her unity just as the diversity of the Persons in the Trinity is intrinsic to God's unity. Though we do not fully understand this reality, we do understand what unites us. The Church recognizes three visible Bonds of Unity that, when present, assure us of full communion with Christ and His Church. They are: the Profession of Faith received from the Apostles, the common worship of God especially through the sacraments, and apostolic succession (Catechism 815).

Our focus here is the bond of the common worship of God, especially as we celebrate the sacraments. Most active Catholics have a rudimentary understanding of common worship and the sacraments, at least as they encounter the Mass and the more commonly celebrated sacraments in their lives. They see the outward signs of the sacraments, like water, consecrated oil, laying on of hands, and the like. I would venture to say that most do not think about the deeper realities that contribute to sacramental actions. In this article, I will focus on the sacramentality of common worship and the sacraments. I will begin with an explanation of three essential realities that underpin a sacramental ideology. Within an understanding of those realities, I will explain the role of the sacramental system in creation. Finally, I will close with some practical ideas of how we can engage common worship of God in a more meaningful way.

Time, Space and Mystery

Sacred Scripture identifies three essential realities attributed to all creation that we often take for granted or ignore. We not only take them for granted, we almost never reflect on their interrelationship, or the effects they have on us and our relationship with God. Those elements are time, space, and mystery. These realities provide an essential foundation for our understanding of sacraments. In fact, these elements establish our existence and the existence of the created order as sacramental.

When most people think of time, they really think of the measure of time. We often hear or ask the question, "What time is it?" The answer usually identifies a moment in the measure of time, like "nine o'clock" or "noon." Sometimes, we hear an answer that is not a measure of time but an event in time, like, "It's time for bed" or "It's time for ice cream." It is this latter use of the word "time" that more closely identifies the nature and purpose of time.

If you examine when and how the word "time" is used in Sacred Scripture, you will find that almost all—if not all—occurrences of the word designate an event. Put another way, the event becomes a moment in time. For example, one of the first uses of the word "time" is found in Genesis 4:3: "*In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground.*" In the New Testament, the first use of the word is found in the Gospel of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus: "...*at the time of the deportation to Babylon*" (Mt. 1:11). The Book of Ecclesiastes sums it up well with the words, "*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven*" (Eccl. 3:1).



In St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, the Birth of Jesus is described in these words, "*When the designated time had come...*" (Gal. 4:4). The clarity of this passage, as well as so many others in the Bible, helps us understand time as an *intangible unfolding of God's will* in creation. When we think of time in this way, it puts life in a different perspective. As an aside, the virtue of Patient Endurance becomes a little more understandable.

Space, though very different from time, has a similar purpose in the carrying out of God's will. Space *is the tangible ordering of God's will*. Beginning with Genesis 1:1, we read how God created the world and its creatures as tangible realities. If we carefully read Genesis 1, we see a progression of creation that occurs as God divides things already created to make new things. For example, God first creates light, but in a different moment of time He separates the light from darkness to make night and day (Gen. 1:3-5). As separations and distinctions are made, creation unfolds in space and time.

For creatures bound in space and time, the two realities exist in a dependent manner. Only when we are no longer bound by space and time will the two realities exist for us in a way that is simultaneous but not dependent. That's another article, but for a glimpse of that idea, read our FAITH FACT: "*Who Art in Heaven: The Dwelling Place of God*. For purposes of this article, I focus on the interdependence of these two creatures for those of us bound by them both.

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On earth, space and time are intended to be experienced together as the tangible (space) unfolding (time) of God's will. The tangible realities identify an event in time; but they become more than just an identifier, they become the event itself; an event that points to God.

These events of time and space identify changes driving toward one final event: the consummation of time and the fulfillment of the created order in the return of Jesus Christ. When that happens, a new heaven and a new earth will emerge (Rev. 21:1). We don't know what that will look like or how we will experience it. We only know it will be a beautiful and wonderful event to be part of for those living in grace (c.f. 1 Jn. 3:1-3). This sense of a mysterious consummation of time and space identifies the third element in our sacramental ideology that is often ignored—the mystery.

In common use, the term “mystery” needs no explanation. The unknown often conjures up feelings of curiosity, fear, uncertainty, wonderment or joy. Much of a mystery's power is caught up in the human urge to know and understand the unknown. If circumstances provide clues to understanding a mystery, the mystique of mystery can be diminished, and our curiosity is no longer captivated. For example, before we open a present, we have a joyful anticipation in the mystery of what's under the wrappings, but if the gift is wrapped in a form-fitting manner that betrays the contents, the sense of mystery is lost. Even if we still appreciate the gift, receiving it is much more ordinary without the mystery. When we open the door to a darkened room that is unknown to us, there is a sense of uncertainty or fear, but if we stand before a darkened room and can hear giggling inside, any sense of fear or trepidation is lost and mystery is revealed.

When I read God's Word, I find the term “mystery” has a deeper meaning than just something unknown. In the Bible, “mystery” means the hidden works of God. In the Book of Daniel, the Prophet reveals the “mystery” of the king's dream (Dan. 2). That mystery was the role of four kingdoms that would unfold in time as the work of God. Daniel would later interpret another dream to reveal the mystery of God to the King (Dan. 4) and interpret the mystery of the hand-writing on the wall (Dan. 5). Both of these latter mysteries involved God's judgment of the Babylonian Kings. In 1 Timothy 3:14-16, God's Word identifies the Incarnation as the great mystery of our Faith. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the word “mystery” is used six

times. Interestingly, in Ephesians 5:21, the term is translated interchangeably with the word “sacrament.” This is no surprise. In that passage, St. Paul is writing about the Sacrament of Marriage and how it is a sign (mystery or sacrament) of the union of Christ and His Church (c.f. Catechism 774).

Mystery as the hidden work of God occurs only in time and space. Outside time and space, there is no mystery; there is nothing to obscure His works. In time and space, each event possesses a spiritual reality that is not fully known by us. It is discerned in time and space until the unfolding event occurs and the mystery is revealed. If we are indifferent to the spiritual realities that exist around us, the mystery of an event is lost to our senses and we miss opportunities to experience God. If we “wrap” daily events *only* in a form-fitting way with scientific explanations or theological correctness, we often lose our sense of the “qualities” that accompany the mystery.

Even more sinister, sin distorts these realities. Time and space unfold God's will in a conceivable way, but because of sin, they also unfold man's will as it is opposed to God. These distortions by sin make discernment of God's activity difficult. One way sin distorts realities is through familiarity of the event. Because sin distorts our ability to see God's work in natural events we experience, those events often become so familiar that we lose any sense of the mystery occurring. Yet, it is important to remember that God's work in creation, the mystery of time and space, is not dependent on our believing or recognizing it. Because God is the Creator of all things and the Author of all that is good, the existence of an event is proof of the mystery in the event, whether we believe or recognize God's work occurring.



Signs and Symbols in the Created Order³

As creatures, especially creatures distorted by sin, we cannot comprehend the mystery of God. We are limited in our understanding by space and time. We come to know through experience, but no matter how much we experience on this earth, no matter how much we read and learn, we will never be able to fully grasp the infinite reality of God. In our earthly existence mediated by space and time, we must rely on symbols that reflect and are expressions of larger realities. Personal experience and catechesis broaden our ability to understand and use symbols to speak about and approach the mystery of God.

The realities of time, space and mystery are most commonly understood with signs and symbols. As creatures of time and space, we learn through interactive experiences. Those experiences happen continually from the moment of our conception. We translate those experiences into signs and symbols that are understandable to us. When a symbol is used commonly between various people, the symbol takes on a societal or cultural meaning. The wider a symbol is used in a common manner, the more powerful it can be in communicating ideas and experiences. One of the most powerful symbols is also the most common: language.

Turning back to time, space and mystery, an understanding of signs and symbols allows us to understand how life is sacramental. Space provides tangible realities that occur as events unfolding in fulfillment of God's will. What His will is within the specific event is often mysterious, but the event itself gives us clues as to what is happening. For example, considering the passage from 1 Timothy 3:14-16 in which the Incarnation is identified as the great mystery of our Faith, let us look at the event and see what tangible, perceptible realities occurred at the time of the Incarnation.

The Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and revealed that she would be the Mother of God. No one else was present, but an interaction took place and Jesus was conceived in her womb. The natural development of a child in a mother's womb began within the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it began in a way that was imperceptible to any human being on earth except her. As the Divine Child grew in her womb, she began to show. To most, there was no perceptible proof that her child was the Word of God made flesh. There was a mystery within the reality of experience.

At Jesus' birth, angels appeared to the shepherds and announced His coming. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem and found Him as the angels had said but wondered at what this meant. They entered the mystery and experienced it without being able to express its meaning. There was no experience they had had that allowed them to explain it. Aside from the angels appearing, there wasn't much different that night for them. I would guess they were pretty used to babies being born. That's the point; the angels' appearance was a circumstance that allowed the shepherds to experience the event as a mystery.

Living Life Sacramentally

Life is sacramental. Sin distorts this reality and blinds us to the mystery.

Man is created in the image and likeness of God. We do not really understand what that looked like or what that meant before the Original Sin. The Fathers of the Church and thinkers far more learned than me have speculated on it. The reality is, we don't have that full knowledge. And, though we know we are in God's image and likeness, that He calls us His children, we do not know what it will be like at the consummation of time when we are perfected in Christ (1 Jn. 3:1-3).

We do know that the Incarnation of God is a mystery wrapped up in the mystery of our being in the image and likeness of God. We know that God created us for Himself. We know that because of sin, each individual person can reject God. We know that when we sin, we act outside God's will and influence events contrary to God's Will. We know that God did not leave us to our own devices, and by the death and resurrection of His Incarnate Person, He restored us to grace. And, we know that despite His death and resurrection, we still sin and need Him to sustain us in grace continually.



Enter the Sacraments, the First of Whom is the Incarnate Word Who is the visible expression of the Father (c.f. Jn 14:7) and flowing from Him is His Immaculate Church (c.f. Catechism 774-776). He gives us the Seven Sacraments so we can experience Him as Adam and Eve experienced God in the Garden. As God was present with them in the Garden of Eden each day at a particular time, "*the cool time of day*" (Gen.3:8), so the Incarnate Word of God is present

with us during particular times – the Sacraments.

The Seven Sacraments, as identified and defined by the Church, provide a universal and commonly understood experience of God. No matter what culture one belongs to, no matter what language one speaks, the Seven Sacraments are a commonly known and understood experience that unities all who engage them. They occur within liturgical acts as given by the Church. These liturgical actions, though not a sacrament, are also understood across cultural bounds. What a powerful experience to attend Mass with people who do not speak your language. Even though some may not receive Holy Communion, the common worship of God unifies the congregation in a purpose that is common to all.

Each of these Seven Sacraments are events that reveal the mystery of His Incarnation in particular ways. They are encounters with Christ. A lot of people passed Joseph and Mary during their travel to Bethlehem. She was swollen

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with Jesus in her womb. I would guess that some may have noticed and shown care, concern and joy for the happy couple. I also think many simply passed them on the road. They missed the mystery despite the natural, visible signs. How often do we do that within our common worship of God, particularly in our reception of the sacraments?

Baptism washes us free from all sin and provides continual, sanctifying grace—provided we do not commit a mortal sin. How often do you think of your Baptism and the baptismal promises you renew every Easter? How often do you enter the mystery of your Baptism and claim the grace that will give you patient endurance in trial? Confession restores us to our baptismal purity. How often do you reflect on the purity of your soul after receiving the sacrament? Confirmation completes Baptism and enlivens the grace of all other sacraments. How often do you call upon the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in you, and claim those special graces that are present to you 24/7? Marriage is a sign of the union of Christ and His Church. As a sacrament, Marriage is what it symbolizes. How often have you thought of your marriage as bringing about the union of Christ and His Church? A consecrated church represents both the individual believer and the Church herself. The sacred space also contains signs pointing to realities not easily understood. When you enter a church for Mass, do you recognize the signs and symbols of your Faith? Do you enliven your prayer with a reflection on the mystery those symbols point to? Do you know what they are?

As practicing Catholics distorted by sin, our familiarity with the signs and symbols of our Faith encourage an indifference to the mystery within those symbols. We must be actively engaged with the events of time and space to encourage a personal perception of the mystery. Using the Seven Sacraments as our model, we should develop an understanding of the created order as sacramental; as realities that reveal the mystery of God. Here are some tips to do that.

1. Our personal relationship with God is essential to living a sacramental life in the unity of the Church. If we do not give daily opportunities for God to visit us, we will become indifferent to the events of grace we encounter regularly. In Genesis 3:8, the words used by various translations to identify when God visited Adam and Eve imply a relaxing moment; a time not filled with distractions, but itself an anticipated moment of grace.

Pick a time each day that is just for God. Be consistent with that time. Build your schedule around it. Devote that time to God only. Don't fill it with your words, fill it with His. Read the Bible. Reflect on the mysteries of our Catholic Faith. If you must speak, do so with humility and gratitude. Start with fifteen minutes and be patient. God will use this time to make you more aware of the mysteries you will encounter throughout the day.

2. Think about the symbols used in the Seven Sacraments, and when you encounter that symbol during your day, remind yourself of the sacrament that uses it. For example, anytime you see or hear water running, think of your Baptism and claim the graces from it. Remind yourself of your baptismal promises and use the moment as a quick examination of conscience to see how you are doing. When you use bread, remind yourself of the Bread of Life, and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the grace of Holy Communion.



3. Recognize the mystery in daily events that are common. When you see a sunset, let it remind you of the death and burial of Jesus Christ. The colors help. The same is true of a sunrise. Let it remind you of His resurrection, and all the events that occur in between the two will contain reminders of our Hope in Heaven. Look for those reminders and foster the Hope.

4. When you enter a church and dip your hand in the holy water, bless yourself with the words, *“By this holy water and Your Most Precious Blood, free me from all my sins in the name of the Father...”* This traditional Catholic prayer, when prayed intentionally, has the effect of remitting venial sins. It also reminds us of our Baptism and our need for Confession.

5. Study the signs and symbols of our Faith as they are found in your church. Even the most common and austere church is filled with them. For example, the consecrated church is itself a symbol of both the baptized Christian and the Church as a whole. The doors represent the moment of conversion, as we leave the world to enter grace. The nave—where the people sit—represents our place on Earth, while the sanctuary represents Heaven. The Body and Blood of Jesus is given from Heaven to us on Earth. Altar rails are not as common as they should be, but iconostases are still present in Eastern Catholic churches. Both represent the division of Heaven and Earth in time and space, but the

gates that open to the sanctuary represent the opening of grace to us through the Church. As you “journey” through the church to find your pew and take part in the worship of God, remind yourself that you are on a journey to Heaven. Other signs and symbols are found in sacred art, stained glass, and even the architectural style of your church. Study these and let your prayer in church be inspired by that study.

6. While in church, consider that you are part of a congregation engaged in common worship of God. That worship was carried out in that church before you and will take place after you. This event of time occurs around the world continually and unites us to the Church Militant on Earth, the Church Suffering in Purgatory, and the Church Triumphant in Heaven. Understand that you are never alone on this journey, even if you can't see or physically experience the Church with you.
7. Finally, study the Catechism and explore how it explains the realities of sacrament and common worship. And, study the Missal used by your church and the liturgical signs found in the celebrations you are part of.

If you need help with implementing any of these ideas, call CUF's Information Services. We have FAITH FACTS and research that explains certain liturgical symbolism and I have given talks in parishes to explain the sacred symbols found in their consecrated church.

In closing, please remember that the words “sacrament” and “sacramental” imply that an event has a meaning deeper than the realities perceived. The words imply that a mystery is present. That's why the term in Ephesians 5:21 is translated both as “mystery” and “sacrament.” They are interchangeable (Catechism 774). In our common worship of God, we enter those mysteries in a way that brings about heavenly realities on earth. That which is familiar to us is intended for a deeper meaning. Make every effort to develop a way of life that is sacramental as intended by God. If you do that, you will enter into a mysterious and wonderful unity with the Church and yourself become a living witness of the Incarnation.

Endnotes

- 1 The immense material on what I am presenting here cannot be fully cited without taking up all the available space for the article itself. I urge Lay Witness readers and CUF members to begin study on this topic by reading through the various Catechism sections identified in the Catechism Index under the terms “Sacrament” and “Signs.”
- 2 The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses this topic of unity in articles 811-822. Readers are encouraged to review these articles and the sources cited for further explanation on the Mark of Unity.
- 3 For more information on signs and symbols, and their importance in our faith life, call Information Services (800-MY FAITH) and ask for the FAITH FACT on signs and symbols.

Morsels of Mirth

Brandon's Last Words!

Brandon served as one of our summer interns. As a final task, Philip Gray asked him to edit the lead article. At the time of the edit, there was no title for the article, and Mr. Gray asked Brandon to suggest a few. They are all worthy of publication. Readers are invited to rank them. Which title would you have chosen for the lead article? You may want to read the article first. Brandon is a seminarian entering his fourth year of Philosophy.

“Symbols, Symbols Everywhere, but They're all Mysteries”

“To See or Not to See, That is the Mystery”

“Earthly Symbols, Heavenly Mysteries; the Sacraments”

“Divine Art or Earthly Canvas?”

“There's Mystery, and then there's MYSTERY”

“Mysterious Symbols and Sacramental Worship”

“Sacraments: God in Disguise”

“Mysteries Unsolved”

“One Man's Wine is another Man's Sacrament”

“Sacramentally, My Dear Catholic, Sacramentally”

CUF LINKS

Chapter News

Wish there was a vibrant Catholic community in your area? That desire is a call to action! Contact our office to learn more about how you can charter a CUF chapter or visit cuf.org to find the chapter nearest you!

Want us to feature your chapter's activities and pictures? Keep us up to date by emailing administrativeassistant@cuf.org

Information Services

After a busy summer, I am pleased to say we are now caught up with our research letters! Many of our questions this summer seemed to be related to various aspects of Marriage. Questions we received included everything from the Church's teaching on pre-nuptial agreements to requests for resources for troubled marriages and everything in between. (*From the timing of these questions I've learned that peak wedding season seems to be late summer to early fall...*)

In addition to our eight FAITH FACTS related to married life (for a list please visit <https://cuf.org/resources/faith-facts/> and click on *Family Issues*) we are also pleased to announce that Philip Gray's talk titled: *Marriage: The Primordial Sacrament*, is now available in video format

to CUF members. In this talk, Philip walks us through Sacred Scripture, unpacking Genesis 1-3, Tobit 6, Matthew 19, John 2, Ephesians 5, and 1 Peter 3. In just over an hour, viewers can explore God's plan for marriage from the beginning, how Christ restored the Sacrament in His public ministry, and what it means for your marriage. *Marriage: The Primordial Sacrament* was presented at all five the Apostolate for Family Consecration's 2019 Holy Family Fests in Bloomingdale, Ohio. For more information on obtaining a copy of Philip's talk, please give us a call.

As always, if you are interested in any of the above topics, or have your own questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at 1-800 MY FAITH (693-2484). - Brian

St. Joseph Foundation

In 2019, I have focused my SJF updates in *Lay Witness* on the Foundation's church closure cases. Throughout the summer SJF produced 23 acts of recourse for clients; fifteen of the twenty-three communications were petitions, *remonstratios* or appeals for church closure cases! The Roman curia often slows for summer holiday

which means decisions have quieted. I anticipate that the start of September will be the occasion for many letters from the Congregation for Clergy (the dicastery competent to review church closures). Until then, I have little to update you on the gray area within Canon Law. But I am hopeful. Stay tuned. Best regards, Natasha

Yakin' About

We want to showcase the spiritual life of our members in *Lay Witness*! Submit your original prayers, meditations, and articles with your reply card or email administrativeassistant@cuf.org. Thank you for sharing!

If you haven't yet seen CUF president Philip Gray's appearance on *EWTN Live* with Fr. Mitch Pacwa, find the link to the complete interview at Cuf.org.

Visit cuf.org or stjosephcanonlaw.com to see our latest position paper on censuring pro-choice Catholic politicians.

Philip Gray gave a presentation entitled *Marriage: The Primordial Sacrament* to attendees of five Family Fun Fests hosted by the Apostolate for Family Consecration this summer. Please call 1-800 MY FAITH or visit cuf.org to request a DVD or USB copy of the talk.

Got an announcement? If your event is CUF friendly, and we have space to spare, we will gladly post it here!