

## 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).

As you can see, this issue of Lay Witness has a slightly different layout and length than usual. We have received a number of inquiries concerning the SSPX. Our original FAITH FACT on the topic needed updating. There is also a growing interest in the SSPX due to certain bishops placing restrictions on the use of the 1962 Missal. The SSPX is not the solution; it is part of the problem. The article explains why, and the updated FAITH FACT goes a bit deeper in explaining the issues. We hope our efforts keep Catholics in the Church and encourage an authentic dialogue that will eventually lead the SSPX to return to the fold of the Church. As it stands, the slippery slope it is on will lead it to heresy and a break with the Traditions of the Church, not unlike the Old Catholics or the Polish National Catholic Church.

Can you imagine what it was like for Our Blessed Mother to know the Incarnation had occurred in her womb; that He was being knit together in her womb within the final moments of “*the fullness of time*”? As her pregnancy progressed, she anticipated the signs of His development—a growing bump, stretched skin, increased weight, movement within her, a desire for pickles and ice cream (ok, maybe not). If you have never imagined these things, maybe you should try. We should be anticipating the signs of His return. As the Body of Christ and leaven within our dark world, are we growing and rising? Are we stretching this World, transforming it from the inside, with our apostolic actions? Or do we satisfy ourselves with pickles and ice cream and call it a day?

The wise Catholic learns to read the signs of the time (Mt. 16:3; Luke 21). The wisest anticipate them.

God bless you with a holy Advent and Christmastide filled with Light and Peace!

Peace,  
Philip C. L. Gray

## CUF LINKS

### Chapter News

Members of CUF’s Our Lady of Peace Chapter in Wilmington, Delaware serve as witnesses to life as they protest outside of two abortion mills in their area. One of these facilities commits surgical abortions, while the other, newer facility proscribes two-step abortion pills to mothers up to 12 weeks pregnant. CUF members donate their time at both facilities to pray and provide information and support to mothers, allowing God to change hearts and minds through them. These women are referred to the Sussex Pregnancy Care Center for

assistance with housing, food, education, and health-care. God bless their efforts.

If you would like to foster a thriving Catholic culture in your parish and diocese, contact our office to learn more about how you can charter a CUF chapter or visit [cuf.org](http://cuf.org) to find the chapter nearest you!

Do you want us to feature your chapter’s activities and pictures? Keep us up to date by emailing [administrativeassistant@cuf.org](mailto:administrativeassistant@cuf.org)

### Information Services

Thanks to several trips by our President, Information Services distributed several hundred FAITH FACTS in the last two months. The most frequently taken were *Following Our Bishops, Should I Obey, The Complete Bible, Making Sense Out of Scripture*, and

*Catholics United for the Faith*. This suggests that a lot of people encounter CUF for the first time when Mr. Gray comes to speak. If he has not spoken at your parish yet, you should invite him.

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Research inquiries were varied, as always. Some of my favorites: *What does the Church actually teach about suicide, and has this teaching changed in modern times? What reasons are there to put the Tabernacle in the center of the Sanctuary? What is the primary*

*mission of the Church? What do we do to heal/repair the spiritual damage of tubal ligation?* Contact us with your questions at 1-800 MY FAITH (693-2484) or visit CUF.org.

*Come, Lord Jesus!* – Greg Downs

## Saint Joseph Foundation Update

The clients of the Foundation often pursue recourse against acts of the hierarchical Church, viz. the local bishop or those equivalent to him in law. Before a bishop places an act, he is to observe certain formalities and requirements so that the particular act may have legal effect. Depending on the act, formalities and requirements can involve the Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar, or Chancellor; or the counsel or consent of the Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, or the Diocesan Finance Council. The persons, typically priests, who fill these offices or constitute these organs must have certain qualifications and levels of expertise (e.g.: Theology, Canon Law, Civil Law, Accounting, etc.) to adequately provide counsel for the Bishop's governance (cf. c. 478).

Of course, expertise in Canon Law is indispensable to the governance of life in the Church. The legal system of the Church translates 'what we believe' (doctrine) into the prescribed manner of 'how we are to live and to act' (discipline). Therefore, it is no surprise that when a controversy arises for a client, such as the suppression of a parish or the imposition of a penalty, 'what the diocesan curia says' and 'what the Foundation says' can be diametrically opposed. The client is then faced with the choice: *who am I to believe, the bishop and his curia or my counsel?* Both claim expertise. Both use juridic language and cite the same canons. Both reference Church documents and jurisprudence of the Holy See. It can be difficult for private, lay persons who also practice Canon Law to "compete" with the authority of a bishop or the canonical expertise of any curial member, cleric or layperson.

In reality, there is no need to compete. There is only need for careful consideration of roles to

understand not only what each side says but also why each side is saying what it is saying. We all have a common dignity as members of the Christian Faithful with rights and obligations proper to Christians. However, the role of a canonist in a lay apostolate, like the Foundation, is different from the role of a curial member, especially a curial member who is both cleric and canonist. Additionally, a cleric has rights and obligations specific to Sacred Orders; he is bound by a special obligation to show reverence and obedience to his bishop (cf. c. 273). Further, a cleric who holds an ecclesiastical office with the vicarious power of the Bishop (such as the Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar, or Judicial Vicar) acquires additional rights and obligations to reflect his doctrinal and disciplinary relationship to the Bishop. For example, c. 480 states, *a vicar general and an episcopal vicar are never to act contrary to the intention and mind of the diocesan bishop.* The synchronicity of intention and mind can introduce a hermeneutic to canonical *praxis* in an effort "to justify" the intention and mind of the bishop and to fulfill specific obligations to him. It is a tremendous task for the curial member.

The Foundation operates independent of this relationship and the additional obligations. Therefore, it affords a different yet equally weighty opportunity to practice Canon Law in a context that need not 'justify' acts of a bishop that are unjust or to explain the just acts of a bishop when there is a perceived injustice. The ultimate objective is to reconcile a person with his bishop; and the supreme law is *salus animarum*.

In the next *Lay Witness* article, I will provide the Foundation's statistical data from 2022. -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](mailto:administrativeassistant@cuf.org). Thank you for sharing!

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