

GENUFLECTOR CATHOLIC

The Magazine

OCTOBER | 2023
DEVOTION TO CHRIST
& HIS CHURCH



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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to the Genuflector Magazine! We are very excited to be back with another issue. We have been revamping our magazine, ministries, and website so that we are producing the best Catholic content. Please make sure to read all articles and definitely check out the magazine updates (page 10) to get some information on what we have been up to over these past few months.

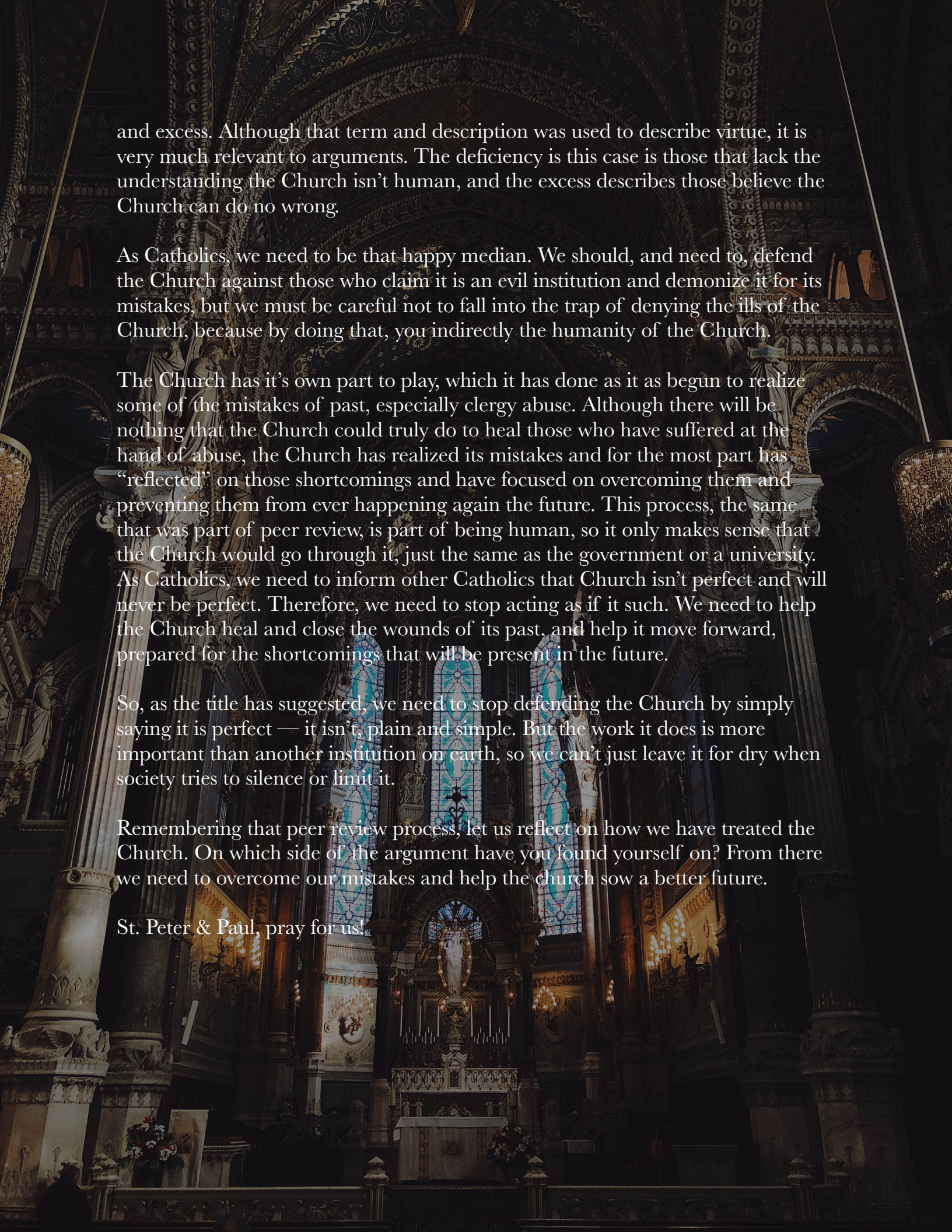
We are excited for everything to come and hope you will join us on our spiritual adventure.

- Jack (Editor-in-Chief)

Stop Idealizing the Church

One of the most interesting classes I have taken in college is that of “Fandom Ethnography,” which served as my first year writing class requirement. The idea was a little weird to me at first, but since I was pre-enrolled in the class and was too lazy to research alternatives, I stuck with it. The class mainly focused on the term paper/project, which consisted of choosing a fandom of a TV show, movie, video game, or if you really wanted to a sports team (that was somewhat discouraged). The professor was really great and knew a lot about researching fandoms, their patterns, controversies, and activities. One of the most interesting things from the class, however, was the peer review process that accompanied each draft for the different sections of the essay. After submitting our draft, our essay would be assigned to about three other students to read and make comments, using digital annotations. After reading the annotations and reviewing their merit, we would write a reflection post thinking about how useful the comments and we can incorporate the comments into our upcoming draft. It was essentially this process: write → receive annotations → review annotations → reflect. Essentially, we would have someone point out our mistakes and then reflect on how to overcome those mistakes and prevent them in the future. Isn't that kind of any human or human institution needs to do?

By definition, we are not perfect beings, and people, religious or not, will often agree that we will always have flaws, we will never be truly satisfied, and that there will always be a piece that doesn't necessarily fit. So anyone analyzing an institution that is human involved must keep that mind. And the same goes for Church. The Church was founded by Christ, received its teachings from Christ, and is guided by Christ, but the Church as an institution is human involved, as it should be. By definition, its purpose is to save souls, so by its very definition it is very much connected to humanity. So the Church like any institution will make mistakes, whether it be from its clergy, its financial decisions, or other human matters, it will not however, make mistakes regarding teaching, doctrine, etc.. So why do we judge the Church as if it isn't human, and similarly, why do we defend the Church as if it doesn't make mistakes at all. These are the two extremes of the argument regarding the mistakes of the Church that are both wrong. As Aristotle said, we must analyze the “golden mean,” the happy median between deficiency

A photograph of the interior of St. Peter's Basilica, showing the vast nave with its high vaulted ceiling, ornate columns, and distant altar. The lighting is dramatic, with light streaming in from the windows and the altar area.

and excess. Although that term and description was used to describe virtue, it is very much relevant to arguments. The deficiency in this case is those that lack the understanding the Church isn't human, and the excess describes those who believe the Church can do no wrong.

As Catholics, we need to be that happy median. We should, and need to, defend the Church against those who claim it is an evil institution and demonize it for its mistakes, but we must be careful not to fall into the trap of denying the ills of the Church, because by doing that, you indirectly deny the humanity of the Church.

The Church has its own part to play, which it has done as it has begun to realize some of the mistakes of the past, especially clergy abuse. Although there will be nothing that the Church could truly do to heal those who have suffered at the hand of abuse, the Church has realized its mistakes and for the most part has "reflected" on those shortcomings and has focused on overcoming them and preventing them from ever happening again in the future. This process, the same that was part of peer review, is part of being human, so it only makes sense that the Church would go through it, just the same as the government or a university. As Catholics, we need to inform other Catholics that the Church isn't perfect and will never be perfect. Therefore, we need to stop acting as if it is. We need to help the Church heal and close the wounds of its past, and help it move forward, prepared for the shortcomings that will be present in the future.

So, as the title has suggested, we need to stop defending the Church by simply saying it is perfect — it isn't, plain and simple. But the work it does is more important than any other institution on earth, so we can't just leave it for dry when society tries to silence or limit it.

Remembering that peer review process, let us reflect on how we have treated the Church. On which side of the argument have you found yourself on? From there we need to overcome our mistakes and help the Church sow a better future.

St. Peter & Paul, pray for us!

Devote Yourself to Christ

We all see those ads: “Stop and Pray with me for 20 seconds,” or something along those lines. And let us be honest to ourselves that most of us, including myself, skip right along to the next instagram reel, thinking “oh they just want me to pray for something.” And that might be true, but there is a deeper point of reflection here.

How many times have we been confronted about going to adoration, weekday mass, or doing a Bible study? I’m just plenty of times, especially if you go to Sunday mass where it is advertised in the bulletin and often in the parish announcements at the end of mass. And I say we purposely — I am definitely guilty of this, and I assume most of the world is as well. We find excuses to push aside the *word made flesh* (both in flesh and in scripture). We deny God. We deny the person that died on the cross for us to save us from our own sins. When I phrase it like that sounds crazy, but we still do it. The question then becomes, how can overcome this? How can we combat our own indifference towards the other activities of our parishes and faith, beyond just mass?

Recently, my local parish held a 24 hour exposition of the Eucharist to celebrate the three year dedication since they rebuilt it. And at first, although I had been to adoration before and found it very enlightening, I didn’t foresee myself going. But after some thought and a little impulse, I told my friend I was going to leave dinner a little early and head to the church. I ended up staying for about 2 hours and I just sat there, looking, staring at Jesus, and watching him stare back at me. It was in these moments that Jesus literally spoke to me, I could feel his presence before me. It is in this moments that Jesus conveys to us our vocations, or purposes, and our missions. And after going to that session that night, I realized I had missed out so much on not attending adoration before that.

As a result, Genuflector Catholic is launching our “Series Campaign,” in which each month (on the third of each month) we will be releasing a day-by-day guide on how to keep your relationship with Jesus alive. It includes prayers, videos, songs, and activities, such as attend adoration for 30 minutes. Our hope is that it is in these moments that you will discover the fire inside you that is your heart’s love for Jesus Christ. More information on the series can be found on the last page of this issue.

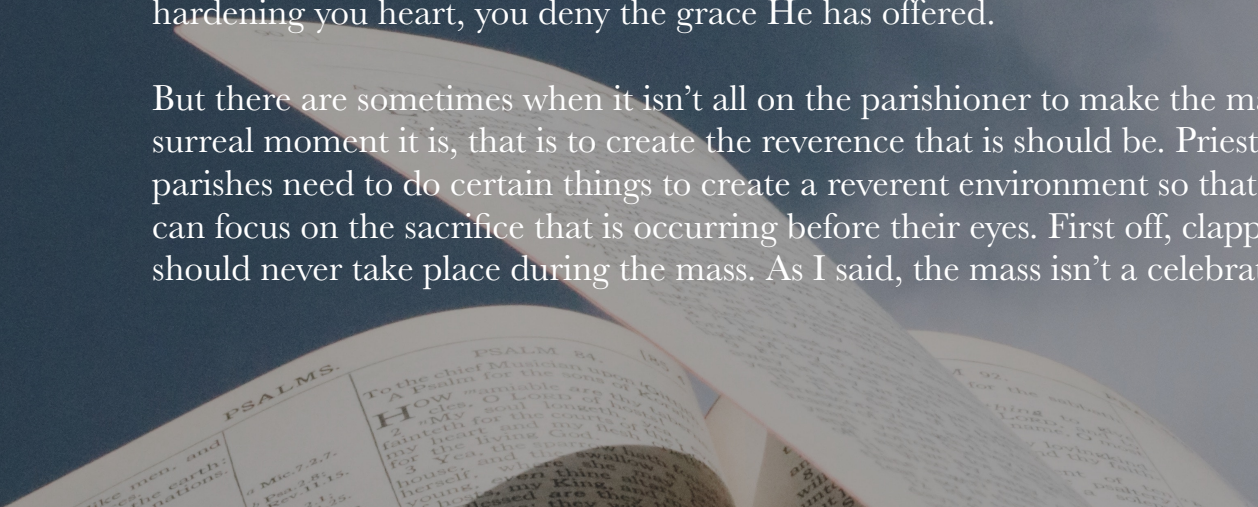
Go Into Mass with the Right Attitude

So often I hear people say “I feel like I don’t get anything out of mass,” or that “mass just doesn’t make me feel anything.” And often these are people who *are* trying to be serious about their faith. So what are they doing wrong? What is their parish doing wrong?

Firstly, this is the most important principle to remember: the mass isn’t a show or entrainment. Every time the priest raises the host above the altar and says the words of consecration, Jesus literally dies again right in front of us, breaks the barrier of time, and ends the bonds of sin and death. This is called anamnesis — Jesus’ passion is literally present again in front of us. So if you aren’t going into mass with the attitude that you are watching Jesus die and save you, you have the wrong attitude. And we are *all* guilty of that. I sometimes find myself thinking about how I am going to have enough time to watch the Sunday night football game if I have to do X and Y by Sunday night. But when we go into mass with a good attitude and place our full presence with Jesus, we actually feel the transubstantiation, we feel the sacrifice. Even reading this now, if you are in the right attitude, you might get goosebumps thinking about what *actually* happens at mass. Now, add the fact that when you are at mass you are face-to-face with Jesus, it should make it even more surreal.

This brings up a second point — you get out of the mass what you put into it. If you go into the mass “praying” for it to end or with an obstinate heart, you will not feel anything. You will feel the same way you left. It is the same as an discussion — if you go into a discussion with your mind already made up, not allowing for any counterpoints or nuances, you will leave with nothing gained. God’s grace is a gift, and like all gifts, we can choose to accept or deny it, and by hardening your heart, you deny the grace He has offered.

But there are sometimes when it isn’t all on the parishioner to make the mass the surreal moment it is, that is to create the reverence that it should be. Priests and parishes need to do certain things to create a reverent environment so that people can focus on the sacrifice that is occurring before their eyes. First off, clapping should never take place during the mass. As I said, the mass isn’t a celebration,

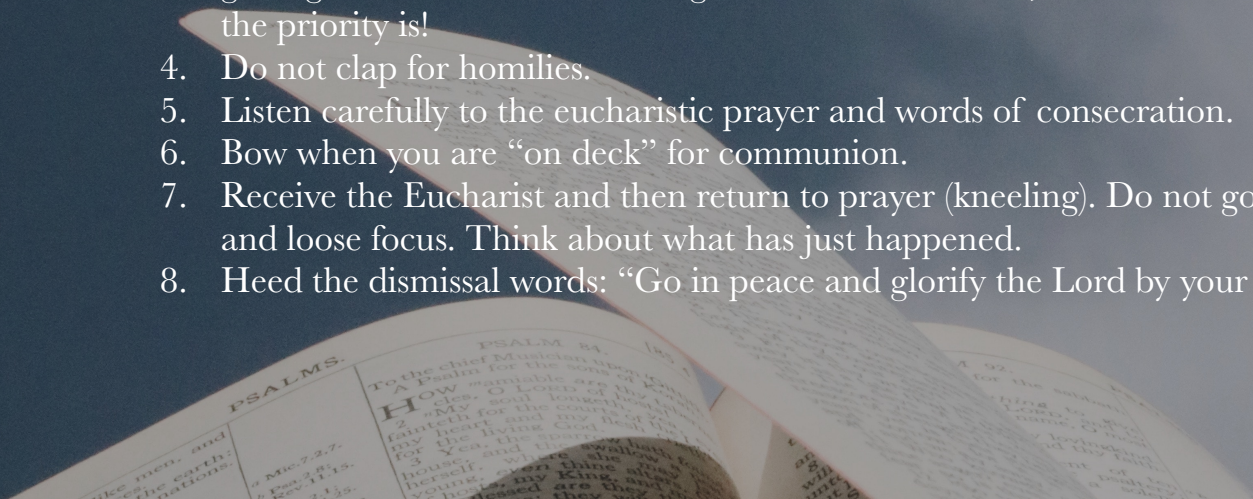


and the priest is a mere servant. His homily isn't meant to be the next platonic dialogue, it is meant to reflect on the message of the gospel and prepare you to receive the greatest thing in the universe, Jesus Christ. So, nothing bothers me more when people clap after priest's homilies, which not only is inappropriate but also irreverent. It creates a casual environment for the greatest sacrifice in the history of creation. Secondly, the way the moment of consecration is pretend is extremely important. The Roman Missal, the book that contains the prayers of the mass, give the following instructions to priests at the moment of consecration: "In the formulas that follow, the words of the Lord should be pronounced clearly and distinctly, as the nature of these words requires." This means that it shouldn't be a quick read over and then move onto the mystery of faith. No, it should be slow, clear, and precise so that the Church can see and understand the gravity of what is happening. Most priests are extremely reverent when they say the words, but just like us, priests have bad days and have times when they aren't fully focused. But it is in these rushed prayers that sometimes people feel like the consecration is just like any other part of the mass, which it isn't!

To conclude, although there are things that the priest and parish can do to make the mass and consecration more reverent, the responsibility is on the parishioner. To be open to change, specifically the change that will occur in their heart becomes Jesus truly present at mass.

I have created the following guidelines that I encourage all parishioner and families to follow for mass:

1. Say a prayer of preparation for mass before going into mass. You can find some [here](#).
2. Leave your phone in the car or at home (if you live close). You don't need it in Church. All you need is your heart, your presence, and Jesus Christ (who is always there).
3. Don't sit next to people you are going to be tempted to talk to. For example, we always visit my grandparents for Christmas and I find myself sitting next to my very funny and chatty grandma, and we always both find ourselves getting distracted. A little talking here and there is fine, but remember what the priority is!
4. Do not clap for homilies.
5. Listen carefully to the eucharistic prayer and words of consecration.
6. Bow when you are "on deck" for communion.
7. Receive the Eucharist and then return to prayer (kneeling). Do not go back and loose focus. Think about what has just happened.
8. Heed the dismissal words: "Go in peace and glorify the Lord by your life."



APOLOGETICS

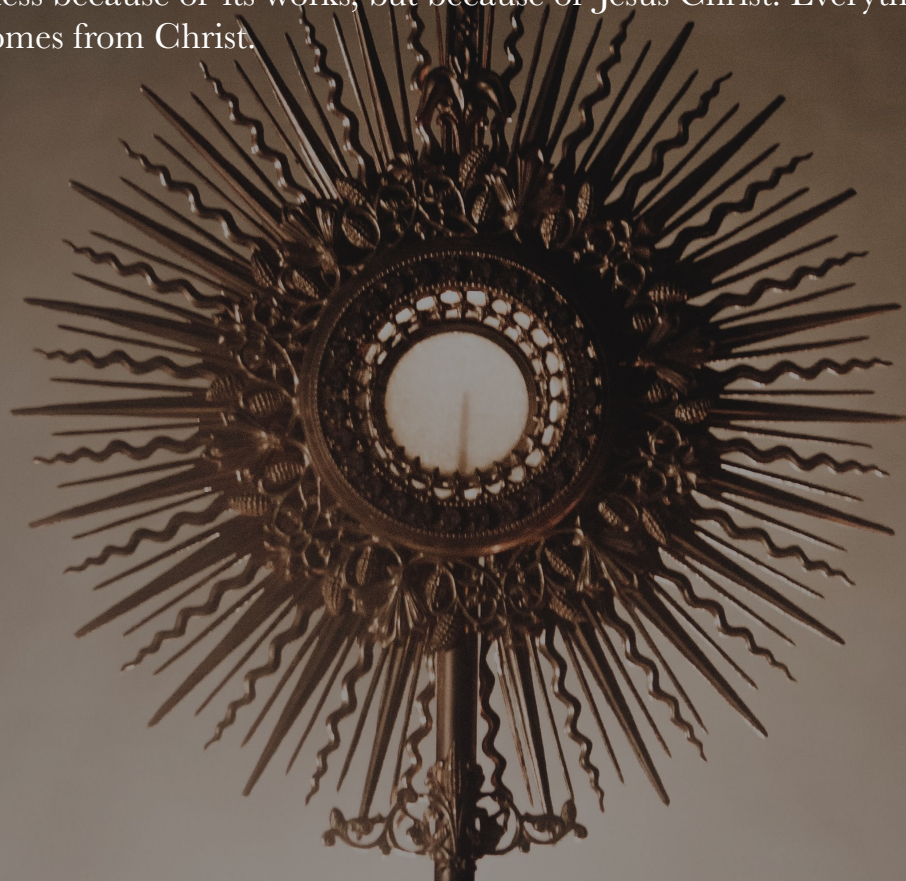
The Truth, Beauty, & Goodness

The Catholic Church: the home for truth, beauty, and goodness. This is often a line that is taught to many Catholic students and used by priests in their homilies, or even included when people outside the Church describe how Catholics perceive Her. But what do those three words mean and how does it relate to the Catholic Church?

Jesus Christ is the light of the world and he has enlightened the world with many things, including knowledge of the Father, faith, trust, and more. All of his teachings can be summarized into three words: truth, beauty, and goodness. These three words describe not only the teachings of Jesus Christ but also the Catholic Church. The Church, founded by Christ, received and kept the fullness of his teachings — the true presence in the eucharist, priesthood, reconciliation, heaven, salvation, and more. It is true in that it came from the word of Christ's mouth, conveyed to us through scripture. It is beautiful in that it is good in its nature (i.e. it is good to be forgiving or good to receive the true presence of Christ - nothing the Church teaches is wrong, since that would mean Christ himself was wrong). Lastly, it is good because it leads us to our natural end. Our natural end as human beings is to be truly and completely happy, the only place that this occurs is in the true presence of God in everlasting life. Therefore, it is only in doing what God made us to do (i.e. *following Jesus' teachings*) that we can be truly happy (that is a whole other conversation that will be included in the next issue).

But you may be questioning now, but some religions have principles that Jesus taught. So don't they also have truth, beauty, and goodness? The answer is absolutely correct in that some religions share teachings of the Catholic Church. For instance, both Catholics and Protestants (for the most part) believe in the blessed Trinity. Therefore, they too share in *some* of the truth, beauty, and goodness of Christ. Similarly, Muslims and Catholics both believe in one God, therefore they too have some of the truth, beauty, and goodness of Jesus Christ. Anyone that has correct teachings about the Father or Christ have them because Christ enlightened them with such teachings, just as he did the Church. As I said in the beginning, Christ is the light of the world. Therefore, in his light he revealed information about his teachings. It is important to note something about

this topic. This is not some sort of exclusionary principle like “oh the Church only has the fullness of Christ, and no other religion has that so they are wrong and the Church is better....” No, this is simply about the fact that Christ founded the Church and therefore we have the fullness of his teachings. It is okay to say someone is wrong about something (i.e. protestants claiming the eucharist is a mere symbol), but isn’t okay to say that someone is wrong about everything (i.e. all of Protestantism is wrong — this is just not true). So we need to be careful when conveying our positions. Similarly, the Church doesn’t have such truth, beauty, and goodness because of its works, but because of Jesus Christ. Everything good we have comes from Christ.



Question: Did Jesus Really Say That He Was Truly Present?

The answer is a resounding yes! In John’s Gospel, after he had told them that he was “the bread of life” and that whoever eats this bread will not die, but live, the Jewish people were outraged and starstruck, as expected, because the message was clear — when we receive the eucharist we actually receive him. How did he respond to this? Did he say, well its just a symbol, and not actually my body? No! He double downed and said “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.”

He is present, go visit him!

Magazine Updates

NEW: Genuflector Classes

We will be launching new Genuflector Classes that will be through Canvas, which is completely free. Our first class will be our 2024 Bible Study. Our classes are completely free. To join, go to www.genuflectorcatholic.com to sign up.

UPCOMING: Book on Catholic Doctrine

We are developing a book/textbook on all things Catholic beliefs and doctrines. It is so often that Catholics just don't know enough about the faith they profess, so we hope to help with that! This book is for anyone looking to increase and better understand their faith, from teachers to students in the classroom.

Updates on the books progress can be found on our website and in the next issue of the magazine!

UPDATE: Magazine Issue Schedule

We have been in the process of revamping our ministries, the magazine, website, and more so we have decided to increase our magazine output. See the following schedule for the remainder of 2023 & beginning of 2024:

November 2023 (Thanksgiving Edition) - November 23, 2023

December 2023 (Christmas Edition) - December 20, 2023

January 2024 (Reflecting on the Nativity) - January 10, 2023

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*May the souls of the faithfully
departed rest in peace!*