

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

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The Solemnity of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus June 27 2025

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a devotional with long and historic provenance within Christianity, and in modern times has been established as a Solemnity for the universal Church.

The beginnings of a devotion of the love of God symbolized by the heart of Jesus are found in the fathers of the Church, including Origen, Saint Ambrose, Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Hippolytus of Rome, Saint Irenaeus, Saint Justin Martyr, and Saint Cyprian. In the 11th century this devotion found a renewal in the writings of Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries. This expression was given form by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century in his famous poem/prayer "O Sacred Head Surrounded."



At the end of the 13th century, St. Gertrude, on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, had a vision in which she was allowed to rest her head near the wound in the Savior's side. She heard the beating of the Divine Heart and asked John if, on the night of the Last Supper, he too had felt this beating heart, why then had he never spoken of the fact. John replied that this revelation had been reserved for subsequent ages when the world, having grown cold, would have need to rekindle its love.

In the late 17th century the devotion was renewed and adopted elsewhere, especially following the revelations to Saint Marguerite Marie Alacoque. The saint, a cloistered nun of the Visitation Order, received several private revelations of the Sacred Heart, the first on December 27, 1673, and the final one 18 months later. The visions revealed to her the form of the devotion, the chief features being reception of Holy Communion on the first Friday of each month, Eucharistic adoration during a "Holy hour" on Thursdays, and the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Christ showed me that it was His great desire of being loved by men and of withdrawing them from the path of ruin that made Him form the design of manifesting His Heart to men, with all the treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification and salvation which it contains, in order that those who desire to render Him and procure Him all the honor and love possible, might themselves be abundantly enriched with those divine treasures of which His heart is the source."

"Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thine altar. We are Thine, and Thine we wish to be; but to be more surely united with Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates .



FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Pope Leo XIV takes helm of Catholic Church amid a priest shortage in the U.S.

5 Ways Leo XIV Might Advance Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Leo XIV's doctoral thesis offers clues to his pontificate

New Mexico diocese uses classic cars to drive vocations and evangelization

100 years after her canonization, St. Thérèse's 'Little Way' still guides hearts to God

An athletic pope: Pope Leo XIV works out regularly at this gym

Mel Gibson's 'The Resurrection of the Christ' partners with Lionsgate

Download the official photo of Pope Leo XIV for free

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT

With elections behind us, please join me in congratulating all the 2025/2026 Council Officers. They will be looking for your help and support throughout the fraternal year. The officers cannot plan and execute all of the council programs and activities by themselves. They need everyone to help in small and big ways. We have an active council and I am sure this next year will be even busier. Please answer the call and contribute to the council with your time, talent, and treasure.



Pete McCabe

Since this will be my last Grand Knight Report, I want to thank you all for allowing me to be the Grand Knight of this council. My goal was to improve upon the good works of the past Grand Knights and continue to grow the council. It is amazing to think that our council is only 6 years old! Anything we have achieved has been because of the great works of so many brothers within the council. Please know I am very proud of you and what this council has achieved over the last 2 years.

Thanks for all you do!



The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

LAUGHTER
~ is the best ~
MEDICINE

The sermon this morning: Jesus Walks on the Water.

The sermon for this evening; Searching for Jesus.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things you don't need around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang, "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, "Break forth into Joy."

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were recently married. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

There will be a potluck supper Saturday at 5 pm. Afterwards there will be prayers and medication.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment, and gracious hostility.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be What Is Hell? Come early and listen to the choir practice.

The ladies of the church have gotten rid of clothing of all kinds. They may be seen in the basement after 5 pm.

This evening at 7 pm, there will be hymn singing in the park across the street from the church. Bring a blanket to help you prepare to sin.

House Republicans Move to Defund Planned Parenthood

House Republicans unveiled sweeping legislation that would defund Planned Parenthood for the next decade and prohibit taxpayer funding of so-called "gender transition procedures" for minors under Medicaid.

The bill, part of a broader GOP fiscal package aligned with President Donald Trump's agenda, includes multiple provisions long sought by the pro-life movement.

"Defunding abortion-giant Planned Parenthood, and other abortion facilities, has been a goal of the pro-life movement for decades," said CatholicVote Director of Government Affairs Tom McCluskey. "We have exposed their compliance with fraud, statutory rape, baby body part trafficking, and numerous other abuses, yet never seemed to move



Congress to defund. This Congress, and President Trump, deserve high praise for delivering on an overdue

promise from the Republican Party." The ban would remain in place for ten years from enactment.

Veronica's Veil Displayed at St. Peter's Basilica

Pilgrims gathered April 6 at St. Peter's Basilica to venerate the relic of the Holy Face of Jesus Christ that the veil of St. Veronica shares with the world.

Every day during Lent, a different church in Rome hosts veneration of its relics, continuing a longstanding tradition. St. Veronica's veil is a highlight each year.

St. Peter's Basilica's website said that the veil is considered one of the three most important relics in the basilica, next to a fragment of the Cross and the spear that pierced Christ's side. The website also noted that the veil has been venerated by pilgrims on holy days and every Jubilee since the year 1300.

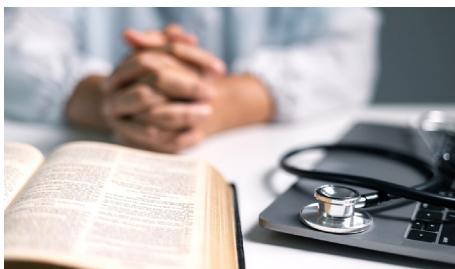
The face of Christ was imprinted on the sacred cloth when St. Veronica wiped Jesus' face as He journeyed to Calvary. The veil has been at St. Peter's Basilica since 1297, at the request of Pope Boniface VIII.

St. Veronica's act of charity of wiping the sweat from the face of the Lord is commemorated in the Stations of the Cross, St. Peter's Basilica's website stated. The name Veronica is derived from the Latin words vera icona, meaning true icon. St. Veronica is known for her compassion toward



others and is the patron saint of photographers. Her feast day is July 12.

HHS Probes Allegations of Hospital Job Termination Threats for Employees Objecting to Participation in Abortions



The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has launched a compliance review to investigate al-

legations that technicians employed by a hospital faced possible termination due to their objections to performing ultrasounds used in abortion procedures.

"This matter is the second investigation of an entity's compliance with laws protecting the exercise of conscience that OCR has initiated during President Trump's second term.

The Department is committed to enforcement of our nation's laws that safeguard the fundamental rights of conscience and religious exercise. Health care professionals should not

be coerced into, fired for, or driven out of the profession for declining to perform procedures that Federal law says they do not have to perform based on their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

While the department does not identify the facilities involved while investigations are underway, that hospital was later revealed to be Texas Children's Hospital. Nurse whistleblower Vanessa Sivadge came forward with her allegations in June 2024 and was then terminated the following August.

Why Catholics Say Repetitive Prayers

First, let me clear something up: Catholics don't repeat prayers because they think God is deaf—or because they think it's the repetition that earns His favor. No. The heart of Catholic prayer is love, not superstition.

Oh, sorry! For those who might not know what repetition prayers are, here's a simple explanation: Repetition prayers are prayers where certain words or phrases are said more than once—sometimes many times.

Examples include the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or even the repeated "Lord, have mercy" at Mass. So why the repetition?

Now, think about music. Have you ever heard a beautiful song, and you played it again and again? Did the words change?

No. But the meaning sank deeper each time. That's what repetition does—it moves prayer from the lips to the heart.

Jesus Himself repeated prayers. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Bible says, "He prayed the same thing again" (cf. Matthew 26:44). And in Revelation 4:8, the angels cried out "Holy, Holy, Holy"—day and night, without stopping.

Catholics follow that same rhythm because repetition helps the soul focus, reflect, and remain present.

Also, when someone is drowning, they don't say, 'Help me' once and stop. They keep shouting it until someone hears. Repetition in prayer can be like that too—especially when we're desperate for God.

I know someone might say, "Je-



sus warned against vain repetition" (Matt. 6:7)

Yes, He did. But not prayerful repetition. The difference is in the heart.

The True Meaning of Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

The Church is crystal clear that there are no limits to the mercy of God. Jesus Christ died for everyone's sins, and anyone who repents of his sins and follows Christ can receive forgiveness and a new life. So then why does Jesus say in the Gospels that "...whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"? Is this some sort of exception that we must be wary of? Yes, but not in the way you might expect. And here's why. But first, let's look at what Christ says exactly. Our Lord's teaching on "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" is recorded in all three of the Gospels. In Mark, Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin." How are Christians to understand this?

The Catechism addresses this teaching directly. "There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting rejects the forgiveness of sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss." "Why is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable? St. Thomas Aquinas replies that it is a question of a sin that is 'unforgivable' by its very nature, insofar as it excludes the elements through which the forgiveness of sin takes place.' Blasphemy does not properly consist in offending the Holy Spirit in words; it consists rather in the refusal to accept the salvation which God offers to man through the Holy Spirit, working through the power of the Cross. So, should we all be wary of committing the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Not in the sense that we should be worried about committing

a sin so bad that God can't forgive it if we repent. No such sin exists. But we should be wary about refusing God's forgiveness. After we die, there will be no second chances. In his loving kindness, God has offered us a chance for salvation. We should humbly, and speedily, repent of our sins and accept God's gratuitous gift of grace.



Cardinal Dolan Explains Why Catholics Genuflect

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York, explained one of the expressions of reverence Catholics make in church — genuflection — and why they make this sign.

The cardinal commented that a woman who stopped to talk to him after Mass told him that, although she is not Catholic, she loves the Church and enjoys attending Mass but doesn't understand the various postures people take. The cardinal then decided to explain them to his viewers, beginning with genuflection.

"Here's the first posture that we Catholics always do. When we come into church, we look for the tabernacle, where the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is reposed, and we genuflect," he said. "We go down on one knee. We genuflect. Why? That's the ancient sign

of adoration, the ancient sign of esteem, the ancient sign of worship." The cardinal said, "When you hear the name of Jesus, every knee on earth and in heaven should bend, as St. Paul taught. That's genuflection. We do it to Jesus, truly present in the most Blessed Sacrament." "I'm afraid that beautiful tradition of genuflection to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament may have faded a little," that cardinal noted. "We can't let that happen; it's a great act of devotion." In conclusion, Dolan recalled that



"St. Thomas Aquinas said: 'You know what? Satan doesn't have knees because he genuflects to no one.' Well, we do. We genuflect to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

Roger Maris: A New York Yankee and a Catholic Father

A Catholic farm boy from Fargo, North Dakota, had always been a promising athlete. In high school he stood out in baseball, football, basketball, and track. Later, when he moved on to the minor leagues, he excelled there as well.

Nevertheless, when Roger Maris made his major league debut with the Cleveland Indians on April 16, 1957, nobody expected the kid from Fargo to do the unthinkable: break Babe Ruth's home-run record.

Yet within four years, that's exactly what he did.

Maris was 26 years old and a New York Yankee when the 1961 season began. Kansas City had traded him to the Yankees after 1959, and although Maris won the American League's Most Valuable Player Award for the 1960 season, New York fans hadn't taken to him. Quiet and shy, Maris was a faithful family man, more interested in spending time with his

wife and (eventually) six kids than schmoozing with the press.

Then, when it became clear that Maris and his teammate Mickey Mantle were in a race to break the Babe's record of 60 home runs in a single season (albeit, a slightly longer season than Ruth's), things got ugly.

Every time Maris took to the field in 1961, boos, not cheers greeted him. Threats and hate mail poured into the Yankee's office, and the press routinely savaged him. People didn't want to see Ruth's record broken by an outsider. Maris, however, handled it with grace, keeping his cool and finally hitting his 61st home run in the last game of the regular season.

Maris went on to play five more seasons with the Yankees before finishing up his career in 1968 as a St. Louis Cardinal. Seventeen years later, Hodgkin's lymphoma took the 51-year-old father's life.

In his funeral Mass at the Fargo

cathedral, con-celebrated by the bishop and four priests, nearly 1,000 people turned out to honor Maris, not simply for the way he played baseball but, more fundamentally, for the way he lived life.



We Remember
We Celebrate
We Believe

A strong friendship
doesn't need
daily conversation.
As long as the relationship
lives in the heart,
true friends
will never part.

If you have
the option
of saying
something
right
or being nice,
choose nice.



Julie Burkhardt

TIME Praises Late-Term Abortionist

Julie Burkhardt has been fighting for decades to provide abortions in some of the most rural and conservative areas of the U.S.

After Wyoming banned abortion in 2022, she joined other advocates to challenge the ban, and opened Well-spring Health Access, the state's only full-service abortion clinic. In 2024, a judge ruled in Wellspring's favor, declaring the near total ban

unconstitutional. But then the gov-ernor signed new legislation requir-ing abortion clinics to be licensed as ambulatory surgical centers, forcing Wellspring to stop providing abor-tions while it challenges the regula-tion in court. The clinic is still open, taking phone calls and talking to pa-tients even if it can't provide abor-tion services.

Burkhardt is no stranger to the ups

and downs of this fight. She has faced arson, death threats, and legal obstacles.

She's now the co-owner of Hope Clin-ic in Illinois, which has seen a 700% increase in out-of-state patients since abortion restrictions went into effect in neighboring states.

Burkhardt is devoted to making sure patients can get abortion care, no matter where they live

Five Things Catholics Should Stop Saying

1) God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

This phrase aligns with the harmful idea that we need to be independent, hard-working people for God to notice us, which is not true!

God helps those who ask for help, who need his help, not those who can help themselves. If you need help, go to God.

2) Stay Strong

This phrase is often used to show support, synonymous with saying, "Don't give up." Similar to the first phrase, this one focuses on independent ability rather than dependence on God. This is almost never the case. Not only am I NOT strong enough on my own; attempting to get through something with my strength alone is only going to make things much worse.

Telling someone to stick it out on their own will get them nowhere, but en-couraging someone to rely totally on God, to let go of their need for control, is what will replace "stay strong" with something like "Christ be your strength."

3) God Wants Us to Be Happy

While God does not want us to experience unnecessary suffering, He also doesn't want us to avoid it entirely. Happiness is an emotion, and emotions can be misleading. Suffering is not always a bad thing-look at the Crucifixion! Rather than saying God wants us to be happy, we should say that God wants us to be holy.

4) Believe in Yourself

Could there be anything more blasphemous in our age? Of course it isn't a pass to do absolutely nothing yourself. There has to be a balance. It is not me that I am believing in when I set out to do something good. It is the power of God that dwells in me, guides me, and will ultimately accomplish what God wants done. Believing we can do anything apart from God or that we are solely responsible for our accomplishments is a big problem. It wasn't you who



accomplished it. It was Him working through you.

5) No Regrets

You should have lots of regrets in life. Contrition is a very good thing that we all need a little more of. This does not mean we should live in a con-stant state of shame, but instead, move beyond our mistakes by hating our sin. Having regrets is a sign of humility.

Thousands of Christians Gather to Protest Satanic Ritual in Kansas Capital

Christians from across the state and country gathered in Topeka, Kansas, and lifted their voices in prayerful song as a group of satanists assembled next to the Kansas State Capitol building for a so-called "black mass," a sacrilegious ritual mocking the Eucharist and the Christian faith.

The only physical separation between the groups was a few strips of yellow police tape.

"How great is our God," the Christians sang, nearly drowning out the satanists' insults and obscene statements. One satanist began blowing a shrill whistle to cut through the praise of God.

Nearby, a group of young men shouted "Christ is King" through a loud-speaker, while a group of Catholics gathered silently around an elevated crucifix, some on their knees with a Rosary, heads bowed in prayer. The satanists continued shouting back.

Another satanist, wearing a shirt bearing an upside-down cross and the words, "I am here to do the devil's work," approached the tape barrier to converse with some of the Christians, telling them that he was praying to Satan for them.

On an adjacent side of the Capitol, more Christians stood impassively with flags and signs to protest the desecration that was about to begin. Four young men bearing a statue of



Inside the church, the faithful recited the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Mass began immediately following the Holy Hour. It was celebrated by Archbishop Naumann and concelebrated by seven other priests.

Our Lady of Fatima made their way through the crowd toward the Capitol as those around them sang "Immaculate Mary."

The event has been a source of contention for weeks, with many Christians demanding its cancellation.

Thomas Keyes, the faithful navigator and deputy Grand Knight of his local Knights of Columbus council, said that the protest was not done out of malice or hate, but "purely out

of love."

The Satanic ritual began at 11 a.m. outside the Capitol. While some Christians remained to protest and witness to the faith as the ritual proceeded, thousands more headed to nearby churches for adoration and Mass. Along with Kansas City Archbishop Joseph Naumann, hundreds of faithful adored the Eucharist in Mater Dei Church which is directly across the street from the Capitol.

Catholic Charities of Chicago Hires Lobbying Firm Tied to Abortion Industry

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago has contracted with a lobbying firm that also represents organizations supporting or providing abortions.

The firm, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies, is currently registered to lobby on behalf of Catholic Charities before the Illinois state government.

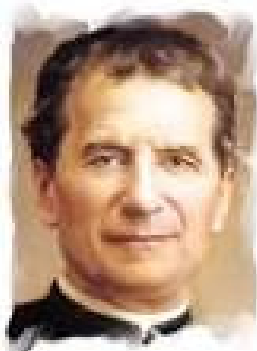
Public records show that the same firm also lobbies for Rush University Medical Center, which provides abortions, and CVS Health, whose pharmacies dispense drugs used in chemical abortions.

In 2024 and 2025 one of the firm's lobbyists gave \$1,000 each to per-

sonal PACs, which aim to elect pro-choice candidates at state and local levels. The firm itself gave personal PACs \$3,000 in 2023 and another \$3,500 last August. It also donated \$1,500 to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle's campaign fund. Preckwinkle supports abortion and helps oversee a county-run health system that offers abortions. Catholic Charities' operations in Chicago fall under the supervision of Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago. With an annual operating budget of roughly \$200 million, the agency is one of the region's largest providers of services ranging from housing to immigration support.



Priest Devotes His Life to Serving Poor Street Urchins



Don Bosco

Founder of the Salesian Society, Don Bosco was born of poor parents in a little cabin at Becchi, a hill-side hamlet near Piedmont, Italy, August 16, 1815; he died January 31, 1888.

When he was little more than two years old, his father died, leaving the support of the three boys to the mother, Margaret Bosco. Don's early years were spent as a shepherd and he received his first instruction at the hands of the parish priest. He possessed a ready wit and a retentive memory, and as years passed his appetite for study grew stronger. Owing to the poverty of the home, however, he was often obliged to turn from his books to the field, but the desire of what he had to give up never left him. In 1835 he entered a seminary and after six years of study was ordained priest on the eve of Trinity Sunday by Archbishop Franzoni of Turin.

Leaving the seminary, Don Bosco went to Turin where he entered zealously upon his priestly labors. It was here that an incident occurred which opened up to him the real field of effort of his afterlife. One of his duties was to accompany Don Cafasso upon his visits to the prisons of the city, and the condition of the children confined in these places, abandoned to the most evil influences, and with little before them but the gallows, made such an indelible impres-

sion upon his mind that he resolved to devote his life to the rescue of these unfortunate outcasts.

On the eighth of December, 1841, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, while Don Bosco was vesting for Mass, the sacristan drove from the Church a ragged urchin because he refused to serve Mass. Don Bosco heard his cries and recalled him, and in the friendship which sprang up between the priest and the boy was sown the first seed of Don Bosco's future work of mercy. He entered eagerly upon the task of instructing this first pupil of the streets; the boy's companions soon joined him, all drawn by a kindness they had never known, and in February, 1842, the group numbered twenty boys, in March of the same year, thirty, and in March, 1846, four hundred.

The success of Don Bosco's mission was not of long duration. To his great distress he was obliged to give up his rooms and was subjected to petty annoyances and obstacles which, at times, seemed to spell the ruin of his undertaking. His perseverance in the face of all difficulties led many to the conclusion that he was insane, and an attempt was even made to confine him in an asylum. Complaints were lodged against him, declaring his community to be a nuisance, owing to the character of the boys he befriended. The group was moved to St. Martin's, to St. Peter's Churchyard, to three rooms in Via Cottolengo, where the night schools were resumed, and finally to a rough shed upon the site of which grew to a group of boys that counted seven hundred members. Don Bosco took lodgings nearby, where he was joined by his mother. "Mama Margaret", as Don

Bosco's mother came to be known, gave the last ten years of her life in devoted service to the little inmates of this first Salesian home. When she joined her son, the outlook was not bright. But sacrificing what small means she had, even to parting with her home, its furnishings, and her jewelry, she brought all the solicitude and love of a mother to these children of the streets. The evening classes increased and gradually dormitories were provided for many who desired to live at the dormitory. Thus was founded the first Salesian Home which now houses about one thousand boys.

Eventually there were 250 houses of the Salesian Society in all parts of the world, containing 130,000 children, and from which there annually went out 18,000 finished apprentices. In the motherhouse Don Bosco had selected the brightest of his pupils, taught them Italian, Latin, French, and mathematics, and this band formed a teaching corps for the new homes which quickly grew up in other places. Up to 1888 over six thousand priests had gone forth from Don Bosco's institutions, 1,200 of whom had remained in the society. The schools begin with the child in his first instruction and led, for those who choose it, to seminaries for the priesthood. The society also conducted Sunday schools, evening schools for adult workmen, schools for those who enter the priesthood late in life, technical schools, and printing establishments for the diffusion of good reading in different languages. Its members also had charge of hospitals and asylums, nursed the sick, and did prison work, especially in rural districts.

Don Bosco died in 1888.

The Endearing Story about How the Ladybug Got Its Name

Ladybugs are associated with various symbols, including luck and good fortune. However, did you know there is a symbol from a Catholic perspective?

The story goes that in Europe during the Middle Ages, swarms of pesky insects (probably aphids) destroyed crops and threatened faithful farming communities with starvation.

In desperation, the farmers, who had a devotion to the Blessed Mother, turned to the Virgin Mary for help! Soon after, a cloud of black-spotted, red-orange insects came and de-

voured the plant-destroying pests, saving the crops!

The farmers considered this an answer to their prayers and a sign of Our Lady's intercession. They began referring to these life-saving, beautiful insects as "Our Lady's Bugs." Variations of this name, including "The Beetles of Our Lady" and "Lady Beetles," came about. In Germany,"

The bug's red-orange wings represent the mantle of the Blessed Virgin Mary, while the black spots symbolize her joys and sorrows.





The Catholic Church has always maintained the official position on the unacceptability of Ma-

sonry. What is the Church's problem with Freemasonry?

There were several medieval trade guilds, including one for stonemasons. The guilds had levels of membership which reflected a worker's ability and education in the trade: apprentice, master, and so on. Since literacy wasn't exactly universal, and the postal system wasn't exactly reliable, these trade unions gave their members secret handshakes and passwords, so when they arrived at a new job site, they could prove their professional qualifications.

Over time, membership of those guilds of stoneworkers dropped a lot. That had to do with a fall in demand for big building projects like castles and cathedrals, and some of it had to do with people becoming a lot less mobile.

Masonic lodges needed to find a way to get some new members to start paying dues. As a selling point, they played up the legends, the secret handshakes, and the private clubhouse aspects of the lodges. The transformation from a network of trade unions to secret societies took a while, but the formal beginning of Freemasonry was in 1717, when the first Grand Lodge was founded in the back room of a London pub.

From there, Masonic lodges started popping up all over the place. In the beginning, Catholics joined, since the Church hadn't said anything about it, one way or another. That changed in 1738, when Pope Clement XII banned Freemasonry as promoting the idea that it doesn't matter what you believed about God, as long as you are a good Mason, because everyone in the lodge was serving a higher notion of natural virtue. Eight popes soon issued encyclicals or papal bulls denouncing Freemasonry and imposing a penalty of automatic excommunication for any Catholic who joined.

When the Church's leaders first spoke about Masonry as "plotting against the faith," they meant that the Masonic

worldview was subverting the teaching of the Church for Catholics who joined and teaching them that it was equally valid to be a Catholic, a Protestant, some other religion entirely, or nothing at all, and that it was becoming a Mason which would lead to a person's spiritual and moral well-being.

During the centuries that passed, the Masonic lodges operated as revolutionary cells against the papal states and other governments, and engaged in acts of what we'd today pretty easily label terrorism. While the Church absolutely condemned violent revolutions, popes continued to ban Freemasonry primarily because of its philosophy, not its politics.

Meanwhile, in America, Masonic lodges openly opposed the opening of Catholic churches, and in some cases jointly endorsed anti-Catholic candidates, and local branches of the Ku Klux Klan.

Freemasonry often says of itself that it isn't a religion, that it's just a society of men who value fellowship and cooperation and natural virtue. Actually, though, modern Masonry's chief architect, James Anderson, defined it in his 1728 Masonic constitution as "A religion in which all men agree." And there are a lot of Masonic rituals which the Church considers to be pretty religious in tone, even somewhat sacramental.

The first ritual of initiation in Freemasonry--to become an apprentice--involves the applicant stripping down and removing any articles he may be wearing, like a wedding ring or crucifix. Then he's told to get half dressed, wearing a shirt on his right side, one trouser leg rolled up, one slipper and blindfolded. Then a noose is placed around his neck, and he's led into the lodge hall where he's announced as "Mr. X, who has long been in darkness and now seeks to be brought to light." The candidate is then told to embrace the "principle of Freemasonry that the natural eye cannot perceive the mysteries of the Order until the heart has embraced the deep spiritual and mystic meanings of those sublime mysteries."

The apprentice also affirms that he is in search of "the light" which only Masonry can give him. The rest of the ritual involves moments where the candidate is made to process through the hall blindfolded, kneel, be prayed over, and eventually be admitted to the lodge.

The Church — including eight popes — thought that this ritual represents a kind of renunciation of the faith for a Catholic, a sort of apostasy or at least

a heresy against the Church. And the further the candidate advances in Masonry, the weirder (and more explicitly anti-Catholic) the rituals get.

By the middle part of the 20th century, the opposition between the Church and Freemasonry was pretty much universally understood, even by non-Catholics. But in the decades following Vatican Council II, bishops in some places began to ask if all of the papal condemnations weren't a bit out-of-date.

In some northern European countries, they were broadly considered to be just fraternal clubs. Nobody is advocating for the overthrow of the papal states here, bishops said, so can't Catholics be allowed to join?

Bishops in different places ask and are asked if there is really still a problem with Freemasonry. Breathless speculation about international plots and secret Masonic infiltration of the Church's hierarchy can help sell a lot of books, but if the more lurid Dan Brown stuff isn't true, there isn't really a problem with Masonry, right?

In the 1970s, the bishops of Germany engaged in a six-year dialogue with local Masonic leaders to examine if there was any reason why Catholics shouldn't be allowed to join. Their conclusion was that there were a lot of reasons why Masonry remained at odds with the Catholic faith and concluded: "The Freemasons have essentially not changed. Membership places the foundations of Christian existence in question. Detailed investigation of the Masonic rituals and fundamental ideas, and of their current, unchanged self-understanding make this clear: Membership in both the Catholic Church and the Freemasons is incompatible. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion."

But if joining a Masonic lodge puts Catholics in the state of grave sin, and they can't receive communion, what about legal penalties? Are such Catholics still automatically excommunicated?

Automatic penalties need to be declared by a competent authority in order for them to attain full legal effects, and becoming a member of a secret society isn't usually a public act, making it hard for a bishop to impose or declare any kind of penalty. That said, it does happen.

Through the last ten years, Pope Francis has continued to hold the ban on Catholics becoming Masons. The Church's stance on Masonry hasn't changed, and that stance isn't likely to change anytime soon.

Exorcism Takes Place in St. Louis Hospital in 1949

As a young man, my father studied nursing. In 1955, when he was 20 years old, he did clinical studies at a St. Louis hospital. He was assigned to the psych ward. Strangely, there was a room on the fifth floor that had been sealed off for years. People asked questions, but the hospital staff remained tight-lipped about the room—one rumored to be associated with evil noises and dark phenomenon. An exorcism had taken place there in 1949. In January of that year a thirteen-year-old Maryland boy was given a Ouija board by his spiritualist aunt. She then died, and the boy became hooked on the game, playing it for hours on end, and using the board in attempts to contact his dead aunt. Strange noises, like the constant dripping of water and a sound like claws scratching under the bedroom floor began. Then his parents started noticing scratch marks, welts, and bruises on their son's skin. The physical abnormalities were coupled with an acute change in personality, as the once quiet and timid boy became angry and violent. But it was only after the boy started speaking in Latin, a language he had no way of knowing, that the parents sought help for their only child. After consulting a medical doctor, psychologists, psychiatrists, and a psychic, the parents finally turned to their Protestant minister. After observing the boy's bed, with the boy on it, moving back and forth and rising off the floor, the shocked minister told the boy's parents, "You have to see a Catholic priest. The Catholics know about things like this." Shortly thereafter, the family moved to St. Louis to live with relatives. A niece who went to the Jesuit St. Louis University told her priest-professor about her cousin. And after an evaluation of the boy, a priest, known to be totally fearless, was sent by the archbishop to perform an exorcism. The exorcism went on for over a month, during which the exorcist and his priest-assistants "endured unspeakable insults, blasphemies, filthy language, and even physical violence from the devils who possessed the boy. At the beginning of the process, the priests also heard the de-

mon claim that if the boy would say just one special word, he would depart him. But the demon promised that was not going to happen. The priests and hospital staff were forbidden to speak of the exorcism, but years later the priest's diary of the event was found in an abandoned desk drawer. An author got his hands on it, and a best-selling book loosely based on the events, titled *The Exorcist*, was published in 1971. Hollywood made it into a huge movie in 1973. When the priest first visited the possessed boy on March 11, 1949, he found him visibly upset by an evil presence in the room. The priest boldly placed his beads around the terrified boy's neck and began to pray the Rosary. He then told the boy about the three shepherd children at Fatima, Portugal. Those children, around the boy's age, were given the special privilege of seeing the Virgin Mary and praying the Rosary with her. Fascinated with the Fatima story, the boy inquired about the Catholic Faith and over the next few weeks, he took instruction, was baptized and received First Communion. His parents converted as well. April 10, 1949, was Palm Sunday. For safety and privacy reasons, the boy was admitted to the psyche ward at Alexian Brothers Hospital, the only ones who would take him. On the day after Easter, the demon, in his guttural and diabolic voice, taunted the priests about the one word the boy would never say. Then they were stunned as the voice coming from the boy changed. No longer was the voice vile and disgusting, it was warm and full of confidence. The boy was in a trance when out of his mouth came these words: "I am Saint Michael, and I command you to leave the body in the name of Dominus." The boy then went into the worst convulsions since the start



of the exorcism. When the convulsions ceased, he said, "He is gone." The boy could not remember the words that came out of his mouth. He only remembered seeing St. Michael with a fiery sword in his right hand and with his left hand pointing down to a pit from which both heat and the devil's resistant laughter emanated. The boy recalled how St. Michael smiled at him and spoke. But he only remembered one word: Dominus. That was the key word, Latin for Lord. The boy went on to live a normal, healthy life. He got married and named his first son Michael. The priest-exorcist seemed to go on living and working as usual, but his relatives said that until his death in 1983 the priest suffered physically and mentally from what he endured during the 1949 exorcism. Many otherwise rational people snicker when they read articles like this one. They laugh upon hearing that the devil hates Latin and words like Dominus. However, it is quite rational to believe that Satan hates the word Dominus—for it is a word that denotes superiority. People who refuse to bow down and serve their Maker hate that word. So you are in a war but take courage. Christ has given you all the tools you need for victory in the war for your soul. All you have to do is use them. And He gives you your weapon: the cross. All you have to do is carry it. Then you will laugh for all eternity. Catholics know about things like this. --by Amy Garland

The Gory Details of Capital Punishment over the Years

The idea of capital punishment is of great antiquity and formed a part of the primal concepts of the human race. The first Divine pronouncement which seems to sanction the death penalty is found in Genesis 9:6: "Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed; for man was made to the image of God." In Exodus 21, that penalty is prescribed for murder, for a willful assault upon the father or mother of an offender, for cursing a man's father or mother, and for stealing. Down to their latest days the Kingdoms of Israel and Juda preserved capital punishment.

No more cruel form of punishment for offences deemed capital existed in ancient times than that which prevailed among the Jews: stoning to death. This form of capital punishment is repeatedly mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. It would appear from the Book of Esther that hanging was the punishment which prevailed among the Assyrians.

The ancient Greeks punished homicide and many other offences with death. Murder was punished with death, and other degrees of homicide and malicious wounding were punished with banishment and confiscation of goods. Treason was punished with death. The goods of traitors who suffered death were confiscated, and their houses razed to the ground. It was not permitted to bury their bodies in the country, but they were cast out into some desolate place.

The punishment of death at Athens was generally by poison. The condemned murderer was directed to take a cup of hemlock or other poison and drink it. Criminals of low social grade, such as slaves, were beaten to death with clubs.

During the Middle Ages, cruel punishments were commonly employed, and the death penalty was very frequently inflicted. One of the most horrible forms of punishment was burning at the stake. Witches were

burned at the stake in England as late as 1609. The number of victims in Scotland has been estimated as more than four thousand. Many persons were convicted of witchcraft and were tortured, imprisoned, and burned. The laws against witchcraft were formally repealed in England in 1736.

The traditional method of capital punishment in England has been by hanging the criminal by the neck until dead, although during the Middle Ages beheading was customary. A person convicted of treason of any kind would be dragged to the place of execution. The person convicted would be disemboweled while still alive, beheaded, and his body divided into four quarters. The dissection of the bodies of criminals led to great abuse and was abolished in 1832.

In England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the people seemed to have a passion for witnessing public executions. Many hired windows at a considerable expense for such occasions. During the French Revolution, executions in Paris were witnessed by vast throngs including many females. These bloodthirsty women employed themselves with their knitting while attending daily at the scaffold. Those were the beginning days of the guillotine.

The policy around the world varies at present. By the early twentieth century, capital punishment had been abolished in many countries. Execution upon the gallows was in vogue in Austria and Portugal. Hanging was conducted privately in Great Britain and in most of the states of the Federal Union. In America, the states of New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, North Carolina, and Virginia were among the first to execute criminals

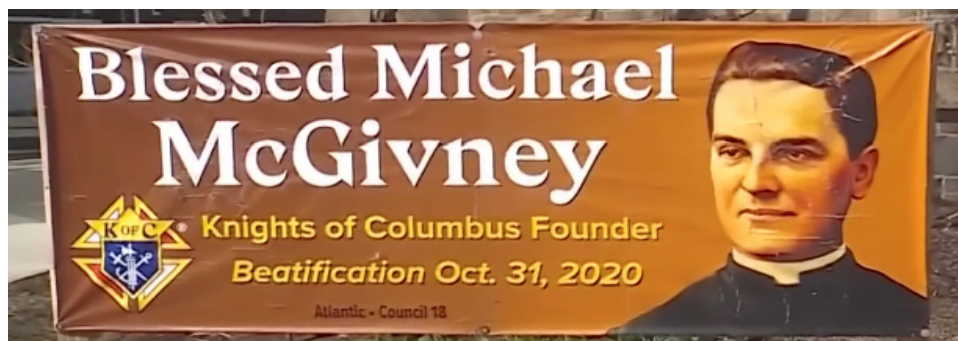
by electricity. In Switzerland criminals condemned to death were publicly beheaded; in Prussia they were privately beheaded. In Ecuador, they were shot. In Spain they were publicly executed by means of strangling. In China they were strangled in public with a cord. In Brunswick they were beheaded.

Moving forward to the Catholic church's view of capital punishment, from 2015-2020, 136 people were executed by state or federal government in the United States. Even if judgments of their guilt were correct, is death an acceptable punishment? The Catholic Church today says no, because their lives were sacred and worthy of a chance for repentance and reconciliation.

John Paul II's theology came together in his important 1995 encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*, to form the church's theological argument against the death penalty. John Paul II maintained that the state has sufficient means to protect the community, short of capital punishment.

Four years later, in 1999, while celebrating Mass in St. Louis, John Paul II publicly demanded an end to the death penalty. Pope Benedict XVI, following his many personal appeals opposing death sentences around the world, extended the arguments of his predecessor, calling on world leaders "to make every effort to end the death penalty and to reform the penal system in a way that ensures respect for prisoners' human dignity."

Pope Francis in October 2020 went further to insist that the church cannot allow "stepping back" from this doctrinal injunction against capital punishment, insisting that the church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.



Kelsey Grammer: The Abortion of My Son Eats Away At My Soul

In his new memoir, actor and producer Kelsey Grammer details the regret he experiences over the abortions of two of his children. Referring to the first one, he writes, "Though I have supported it in the past, the abortion of my son eats away at my soul."

In 1974, Grammer's girlfriend became pregnant. He wrote that he was willing to take care of his son, but his girlfriend did not want to, so he did not pressure her to keep the baby.

"I supported the idea that a woman has the right to do what she wants with her own body. I still do," he writes. "But it's hard for me. Still is." Six months before his own sister died, Grammer writes that he "volunteered to have my son's body vacuumed out of his mother's body. I regret it. That's all I meant to say."

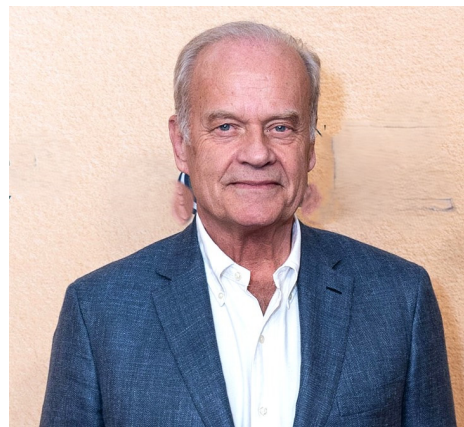
He also criticized the doctors who

perform abortions, writing, "the doctor, or so-called doctors, who have executed generations of children in this manner — I have no idea how they call themselves doctors. Something about the 'first, do no harm' thing."

Grammer also wrote that doctors pressured him to abort one of the twins — a little boy and girl — that he and his current wife, Kayte Walsh, were expecting. The boy's amniotic sac ruptured at 13 weeks.

"Doctors advised us his continued growth without the safety of his amniotic fluid would surely kill him and probably take Faith too," Grammer writes. "It did not repair." He added that he and his wife prayed about the decision and followed the doctor's advice.

"We killed our son so Faith might live.



We wept as we watched his heart stop," Grammer recalls in the memoir. "It is the greatest pain I have ever known. Kayte's scream was enough to make a man mourn for a lifetime."

Texas Fire Department Receives Newborn under New Safe Haven Law

A young Dallas couple surrendered their newborn at a local fire station this week, using the state's Safe Haven Law to ensure their child's safety and future.

The couple approached firefighters at Garland Fire Department and explained that they were unable to provide for the baby. Rather than resorting to unsafe alternatives, they made the difficult decision to legally relinquish custody, granting the infant a chance at adoption through a compassionate process.

"This is a tough decision for any parent," said James Dugger, the department's media relations officer. "To stop and think about what they could do in this situation — rather than abandoning or harming the baby — they made the right decision."

Medical personnel immediately assessed both the baby and the mother and transported them to a nearby hospital, where both were found to be in good health. The couple's decision was protected under the Baby Moses Law, which allows parents to legally surrender infants up to 60 days old at hospitals, fire stations, or police departments that are staffed 24/7. The law guarantees anonymity



and freedom from legal consequences, aiming to prevent infant abandonment and harm.

"If there's a young couple or a young mother on her own that thinks there's no option of what to do with their baby there is an option," Dug-

ger added. "This is a great safe option to give that baby a chance at a normal healthy life."

Experts say there is no shortage of families ready to adopt. Between one and two million families in the US are currently waiting to adopt a newborn. That translates to roughly 30 to 40 prospective adoptive families for every baby placed for adoption at birth.

This statistic challenges a persistent myth, the article adds: that the foster care system would be overwhelmed if more babies were placed for adoption. In fact, newborn placements typically bypass the foster system entirely, going straight into adoptive homes.

While Safe Haven laws offer one solution for parents in crisis, advocates emphasize that surrender is not the only path. For mothers who wish to parent but lack resources or support, pregnancy resource centers across Texas offer counseling, supplies, housing referrals, and ongoing guidance.

"For every young mother who feels alone or without options, there is help," an associate said. "There is hope, and there are families waiting with open arms."



Getting Rid of Hard Feelings

It feels so good to hold a grudge, but when it is

relinquished, the peace that follows is so much better.

We are often not in complete control of our relationships when we are hurt and offended. Sometimes the best we can do is take comfort in St. Paul's admonition, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Rom. 12:18). Do what is within your power to enjoy clean relationships but accept when you have done all you can to repair a relationship.

But the hard feelings we harbor are our responsibility and letting them go may be the key to living a happy or "blessed" life, as Aristotle says. He further explains that true happiness can only come from those things that are completely within our control. External things—like money, beauty, health, and honor—may get the better of us, so the philosopher explains that they can't be the key to happiness. It just wouldn't make sense. Accordingly, offering or withholding forgiveness is our responsibility alone.

As the adage goes, "Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

It's easy to think of a bitter grudge as our own personal property, to do with as we please. It is, however, just another species of self-indulgence, a witch's brew of resentment and anger. It differs little from the other more apparent types of self-gratification having to do with the appetites and passions: promiscuous sex, misuse of money, unrestrained

ambition, and gluttony. The only real difference is the pain that accompanies the offense. St. Paul elsewhere warns, "Be angry but do not sin."

One of the most disgusting parables in the Gospels is that of the unforgiving slave in Matthew 18:21-35. Peter approaches Jesus to make sure the Lord didn't expect the Apostles to take this forgiveness thing too far, beyond all reason. Peter, confident he knew the answer, came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Peter undoubtedly knew that the number seven has special theological significance. It occurs numerous times in the Old Testament and then later there are multiple occurrences in the New Testament. Among other things, it symbolizes perfection or completion. So, Peter was confident that seven times would be more than enough. Jesus undoubtedly stunned the disciple when he answered, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times," meaning there is no limit.

Jesus then introduced the parable. It has to do with "a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves." He brought in his slave and asked him about his debt. It was the impressive sum of "ten thousand talents" of gold. The biblical "talent" was approximately 63 pounds, so that 10,000 talents would be about 630,000 pounds. The price of gold at the moment is wavering around \$2,636 per pound. The slave then owed, in today's figures, about \$1,660,680,000. Since the indebted slave was unable to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and children be sold into slavery. The parable continues: "The slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'" The slave's master took pity on him and canceled

the debt.

Unfortunately, that slave then went to one of his fellow slaves who owed him a much smaller amount, a mere "hundred denarii" or "silver coins". This is a little harder to determine but today, one "silver coin" weighs one troy ounce, which costs at the moment \$29.61. So, let's say the second slave owed the first \$2,961. The first slave who had just received mercy, though, was unwilling to offer forgiveness to his companion and had the latter thrown into prison until he could pay. Word got back to the master; outraged, he called the slave in: 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

Jesus then applies the analogy, sternly warning, "So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

No matter the frequency of the sacraments, nor the devotion to Scripture, nor the commitment to charitable works, human beings remain deeply flawed and in need of mercy, not only from God, but from each other.

The reward of a relationship cleared by sincere forgiveness is something more than the way things were before the argument. Rather, they are made better than they were before the commencement of hostilities. The Easter Vigil Mass offers the memorable line, "O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer."

Redemption doesn't just clear away sin; the redemption of a relationship means conditions may be, in some way or another, superior to what was before.

Love one
♥ ANOTHER ♥
as I have
LOVED
you
-JOHN 15:12

"With
GOD
All Things
Are
Possible!"

Faith
It makes things
possible, not easy

Bishop Barron Explains Need for Updated Pastoral Guide on Pornography

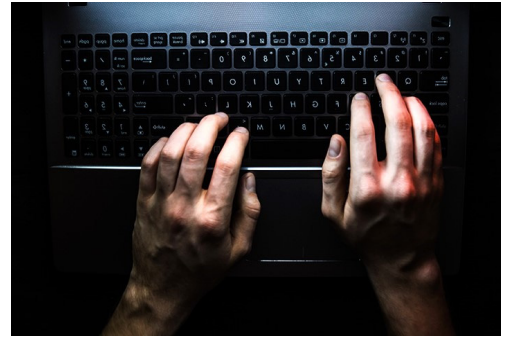
On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop Robert Barron put out a statement explaining why they released a new edition of "Create in Me a Pure Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography."

"The need for us to help those trapped in this addiction is even more urgent today than it was ten years ago when the first edition was published," said Bishop Barron, who is the chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

"We hope Create in Me a Pure Heart will renew the commitment to chastity in the life of the Church and society. Polls show the moral acceptance of pornography has increased significantly in recent years," he continued. "This jump underscores the reason we need to address this crisis. We also hope that the document will bring healing to victims and instill in all who hold positions of responsibility the courage to protect the vulnerable."

The guide was originally published in 2015 to acknowledge the harmful effects of pornography. The updated version focuses on the problem of loneliness and how it accelerates pornography use.

"We recognize that many individuals start viewing pornography because of deep per-



sonal wounds," the bishops wrote. "Several risk factors that threaten vulnerable people are rooted in escalating cultural trends. Chief among these is the loneliness epidemic."



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



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