



LAY WITNESS

October 1, 2020

Feast of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus,
Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Vol. 38, No. 5

*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 was, Who is, and Who is to come” (Rev. 1:4).

*O that a guard were set over my mouth,
and a seal of prudence upon my lips,
that it may keep me from falling,
so that my tongue may not destroy me!*
(Sir. 22:27; RSVCE)

*If any one thinks he is religious,
and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart,
this man's religion is vain.*
(Jam. 1:26)

We live in unprecedented times. Some would say that the political climate is unprecedented. They point to the extremism and polarization of our political system, as well as the increased tensions within many hot-spots of the world and call them unprecedented. I disagree that these things make our time unprecedented. I am not an historian, but I do remember my courses in world, western, and American history. This level of corruption and political upheaval happened within the empires of Greece, Babylon, Rome, China, and the monarchies of the West. For multiple generations, we have all lived in the shadow of a potential world war with devastating, nuclear and biological attacks possible. We walk in that shadow daily, and it is common to us. Despite the historical occurrences of secular corruption and political upheaval at a global level, these are still unprecedented times.

Some would say the crisis in the Church within the ranks of her bishops and priests is unprecedented. They point to the Vatican Bank scandal (which continues to unfold, and affects millions of lives on every inhabited continent), the abuse scandal and the multiple cover-ups by bishops, the distortion of Truth presented by pastors of the Church, and the manipulation of Church discipline by many bishops. I disagree that this is unprecedented. If you were a Catholic living in the Fourth Century, there was a good chance you would hear a homily from your priest or bishop telling you that Jesus is not the Co-Eternal, consubstantial Son of the Father and Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. You would witness wars being fought over arguments about the Incarnation of the Word of God. You would likely know of priests,

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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.

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bishops, and lay faithful being imprisoned and even put to death for believing this seminal truth of Faith. If you lived in the Middle Ages, you may shrug your shoulders at the various scandals that rolled out of the Vatican and diocesan sees across the globe. No, the crisis in the Church is not unprecedented in my mind.

In my mind, what makes these times unprecedented is that all of these anticipated effects of sin are occurring within the framework of instant social communication. Anyone at any time has access to posting videos, audio statements, or electronic texts at little or no cost—and within only minutes! Fifty years ago, what would take days, weeks, or even months to prepare and publish now takes only a handful of minutes. Because of the ready and instant gratification for news or extreme vides, we easily become desensitized to—or distracted from—the legitimate issues expressed. For many people, what makes something newsworthy is not the truthfulness or issue addressed, but the extremism of the words or actions displayed. How many hits and shares does a YouTube videos of a sunset have? Compared to a video of someone eating a ladleful of cinnamon?

My point is this. When God's Word was written in the Book of Sirach more than two millennia ago, most people could not even read or write. If they could write, they had a very limited supply of things to write on. When St. James wrote his letter, the situation wasn't much different. People still got in trouble with what they said. Jesus tells us that "*what comes out of a mouth*" is what makes a man unclean (Mt. 15:11). It is what comes out of the mouth that incites others to sin, even to consensual sins that occur with seeming happiness and mutual intent. As easy as it is to say things imprudently without the instantaneous effects of social media, so much more

is it easy to be imprudent with social media. Pope St. Paul VI and the Fathers of Vatican II warned about this long before email, the world-wide-web, texting, podcasting, and the like (c.f. *Inter Mirifica*, 4 Dec. 1963; *et al.*). What is unprecedented is the ease by which imprudent, offensive, or violence inciting statements can be shared with a global audience and shape the activities of large numbers of people in a short space of time.

Going back to Sirach and St. James, let us encourage each other to slow down our pace of response to the multitude of messages we receive daily. We may not be able to change how others act and think, but we can moderate our own activities, statements, and responses. If each of us become an example of prudence and reason, then each of us also become a lamp, lit and put on a lampstand for all to see. God will use each of us in our own sphere of influence to bring about His Kingdom. We may be wheat among the tares, or a single lamp in a dark room, but Our Father Who sees in secret will be pleased.

In these unprecedented times, I urge you not to let your hearts be troubled by what you read or hear on social media or from the pulpit. Rather, seek a vision of Heaven (Mt. 6:33-34), and weigh all things against that vision in a prayerful response; always remembering, "*I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*" (Jn. 16:33).

Please know that I remember you daily in my prayers, and I am forever grateful for your efforts to serve Christ and His Church.

God bless you; St. Joseph keep you!

Peace,

Philip C. L. Gray

Lectio Divina in our Catholic Life Today

by Fr. Scott A. Haynes, S.J.C.

(Fr. Haynes' exhortation to practice lectio divina and his insightful guide to making what can feel like an intimidating task approachable could never be untimely. First electronically published on CUF.org in November of 2008, we are pleased to bring "Lectio Divina in our Catholic Life Today" to print for our readers for the first time.)

Practicing Catholics are exposed to an enormous amount of Sacred Scripture at Holy Mass during the course of the Church year. In her Sacred Liturgy, Holy Mother Church sets forth the inspired Word of God as the "compass pointing out the road to follow."¹ Sadly, this source of divine wisdom seems to have little effect in the life of most Catholics. Why is this, when the Word of God should shape our lives?²

As creatures made in the image and likeness of God, we have been endowed with both intellect and will. But these faculties of the mind and of the heart need proper formation. The psalmist directs us, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths" (Ps. 119:105). But if our intellect is deprived of the light of the divine Word, our wills will be weak and find it hard to pursue the virtuous life. Regrettably, many Catholics are poorly formed in the Tradition of the Church, which finds the Scriptures at its heart, and consequently, when they sincerely try to "live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world" (Tit. 2:12), they learn it is personally difficult to put those truths into action.

We must realize in all honesty that the culture of death has so infested American culture today, so that even the intellect and will of the average practicing Catholic is more influenced by the secularist, relativistic, and anti-life agenda of the news media than by the Scriptures, which reside in the heart of the Church's Apostolic Tradition.

Knowing Jesus Through the Bible

In October of 2008, the Synod of Bishops addressed this situation, calling upon preachers to convert the intellect, imagination, and will of Catholics today. Cardinal Francis George said, "Too often the contemporary imagination has lost the image of God as actor in history. The contemporary intellect finds little consistency in the books of the Bible and is not informed by the *regula fidei* [rule of faith]. The contemporary heart has not been shaped by worship and the submission to God's Word in the liturgical year."³

So, in the midst of the "information age," the Church has waged a battle against a formidable enemy—ignorance. The battle is centuries old. In the 4th century, St. Jerome stated that to ignore Scripture is to ignore Christ ("*Ignoratio Scripturarum, ignoratio Christi est.*"). In our own times, the Church is calling us to return to a practice of prayer, time-tested, that will help us peel back that veil of ignorance. That method is called *lectio divina*.

While everyone is familiar to some degree with liturgical prayer (i.e., the Mass and the Divine Office) and with devotional prayer (i.e., the Rosary, novenas, etc.), few Catholics today know the powerful method of prayer called *lectio divina* or divine reading. *Lectio divina* is a reading of a passage of Scripture, received as the word of God and leading, at the prompting of the Spirit, to meditation, prayer, and contemplation.⁴ Because liturgical and devotional prayer is saturated with the Scriptures, *lectio divina* is an indispensable method of enriching the conversation we have begun in heaven (cf. Phil. 3:20).

Lectio divina nourishes the interior life of sanctifying grace in the heart of the baptized. It nurtures the Christian's thirst for the solid food of faith, hope, and love. St. Jerome says, "We eat His Flesh and drink His Blood in the divine Eucharist, but also in the reading of Scripture."⁵ For the Word of God to be "living and effectual" (Heb. 4:12), there must be an invocation of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit descends upon us in *lectio divina*, we begin to experience what St. Paul knew when the scales fell from his eyes, for then we too begin to perceive the Truth—Jesus Christ.

Many today deny the Scriptures were composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But for the

fathers of the Church this is simply unthinkable, because the Bride of Christ possesses the Spirit that has dictated the Word. When the Spirit opens the Scriptures to the members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Gospel becomes a window into divine reality, a "verbal icon of Christ."⁶

The Monk's Ladder

Whereas certain schools of Catholic spirituality⁷ appeal to different personality types, *lectio divina* is suited to all, ideal for extraverts and introverts alike. Regardless of temperament, Catholics struggle to properly balance their intellect and will with their emotional life. In a juggling act, many Catholics fumble through their spiritual life because they give their emotions free reign. Ruled by emotions, they live on a roller coaster, exhibiting moral conduct inconsistent with their Profession of Faith. Surely, if emotions dominate, people will tend toward narcissism or sentimentality. On the other hand, if people deny emotions, keeping a stiff upper lip, like the stoics of antiquity, their personality can become arid, brittle, and inflexible, and will eventually snap. *Lectio* helps to integrate the intellect, will, and emotions and is, therefore, an indispensable aid to the spiritual life.

Various methods of *lectio divina* exist, but the traditional method was developed in monastic life. Nicknamed the "Monk's Ladder,"⁸ the monk climbed four rungs of *lectio divina*, drawn into contemplation of the divine things. But the "Monk's Ladder" is not confined only to monasteries, neither to a remnant of pious faithful, nor to a "group of specialists in prayer."⁹ *Lectio* is for all Catholics.¹⁰ So, as Catholics seek profound communion with the Word of God, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Lk. 11:9).

The How-To of Lectio Divina

Traditionally, *lectio divina* consists of these four stages:

- **Seek**
Lectio—Reading as a receptive hearing of Sacred Scripture
- **Find**
Meditatio—Meditation as a pursuit of truth according to reason
- **Knock**
Oratio—Prayer as an approach to God, knocking on the doors of God's heart
- **And the door will be opened unto you**
Contemplatio—Contemplation as tasting the sweet joys of God's presence

Seek. Climbing the "Monk's Ladder," we must learn to listen to God in a spirit of reverence. In the preface to his

Rule, St. Benedict instructs us to listen to the Word of God “with the ear of our hearts.” Only in silence can we hear the “still, small voice of God” (1 Kings 19:12). Perceiving God’s Word, we learn that “the Word has a face; it is a person, Christ.”¹¹

Reading the Scriptures in this elevated way surpasses mere literary phenomenon. Benedict XVI teaches that just reading the Bible “does not mean necessarily that we have truly understood the Word of God. The danger is that we only see the human words and do not find the true actor within, the Holy Spirit.”¹² If we invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit, our *lectio* becomes a sacred moment, and that veil of ignorance covering our intellect is parted in two by the finger of God. When the divine touch of the Holy Spirit rends that veil from top to bottom, He sheds divine light upon our very existence and integrates our minds with “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn. 14:6).

Find. As we continue our ascent, we place our foot firmly on the second rung of this ladder—*Meditatio*. In our meditation on the inspired Word, we are led to discover “the great truth of God,”¹³ rich in heavenly wisdom. Divine wisdom, by putting everything in focus, helps us to see as God sees. But “worldly wisdom,” which is passing away, is foolishness because it embraces evil under the false appearance of the good.¹⁴

Thus St. Jerome states, “He who does not know Scriptures does not know the power of God nor his wisdom.”¹⁵ In *lectio*, one is led to discover some Biblical passage that resounds in his soul. And thus, one must ponder it just as the Blessed Virgin Mary “kept all these words, pondering them in her heart” (Lk. 2:19).

Knock. The third rung of the “Monk’s Ladder” consists of a prayerful conversation with God. Before our “Abba, Father,”¹⁶ we make a personal offering and consecration of our entire life. In our encounter with the divine presence, we reveal the cancer of our sins in all humility, begging Him to heal these with His grace. In our prayer we reach up to heaven like Moses and cry out with full-throat, “Show me Your glory!” (Ex. 33:18)

And the door will be opened to you. At last, God bends down and pulls us to the top of the “Monk’s Ladder” so that we might rest “in the shade of the Almighty” (Ps. 91:9). Coming into God’s awesome presence, our tongues fall silent as our minds contemplate His glory. Peeking into heaven, St. Paul reports, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him. But to us God hath revealed them by his Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:9–10).

Lectio Divina Meets Sacred Art

The fruits of *lectio divina* are manifold, but one interesting realization of *lectio* is in the area of sacred art. If we consider the Catholic art of the Middle Ages, for example, we could find countless depictions of Biblical scenes that demonstrate how the artist’s meditations on the Scripture are realized artistically. In medieval renditions of the Annunciation, it is not uncommon to depict the Virgin kneeling, reading Isaiah’s prophecy before King Ahaz¹⁷ when the Archangel Gabriel arrives to exclaim, “Hail, full of grace.”

The Scriptures do not tell us what Mary is doing at the moment of the Annunciation, but the minds of medieval artists pondered on this passage through *lectio divina*, and they could well imagine Mary reading Isaiah’s prophecy about the coming of the Messiah—they found this a compelling insight, believing Mary was already steeped in the Word of God before the Word became flesh in her very womb.

If we truly desire to seek God’s presence in our life (*Lectio*), we will find (*Meditatio*) that if we knock (*Oratio*) at the door of Mary, she will open to us the door of the Holy Spirit (*Contemplatio*), and we will feast on the fruit of her womb—Jesus.

Scott A. Haynes, S.J.C., is a member of the Canons Regular of St. John Cantius. For more information about this order and its ministries, visit www.cantius.org, www.societycantius.org, or www.sanctamissa.org.

Morsels of Mirth

Q. How does Moses make his coffee?

A. Hebrews it.

Q. How do we know Peter was a rich fisherman?

A. By his net income.

Q. Who was the smartest man in the Bible?

A. Abraham. He knew a Lot.

Q. Why didn’t they play cards on the Ark?

A. Because Noah was standing on the deck.

Our Role as Fishers of Bishops...

We are often asked, both by members and by strangers, why we don't get all the bishops to give public praise and support to CUF, or when we're going to see to it that the bishops jolly well do this or that. The answer to both questions is, of course, that "We're not, because we can't."

The bishops, in union with the Pope, are commissioned by Christ Himself to teach, govern, and sanctify in the Church. The situation in the Church today is very novel, turbulent and perplexing. The bishops are beset on every side by persons and groups shouting advice good and bad, leveling criticism just and unjust, and exerting pressures right, left, and center, from within and without. If we want the bishops to so much as listen to us, we must be right in what we say, courteous in how we say it, and patient in awaiting a response. And if we are going to feel free to offer contrary views when warranted, we have a duty both in justice and charity to offer praise and encouragement when deserved. We here know from experience what a tonic it is to open a letter which is very short, gives us a little pat on the back, and asks us not to waste time acknowledging it. Gosh!! We feel we'd do anything for such people! But when we confront long, aggressive criticism, behind which we can almost see the bony finger being wagged at us...!

This is not to say or imply that it is our task simply to remain passive and let Bishop George do everything. Vatican II tells us explicitly that we are not allowed to remain passive; that, on the contrary, we have our part to play and a strict duty to play it. What we are discussing here is how we may best play it.

Bishops have been appointed as fishers of men. But in a sense, and in our own way, we have to be fishers of bishops! This involves, among other things, being at least as patient with their failings (which we can't help) as we are with our own (which we can help). We have to bear in mind that today it does really require a kind of heroism for a bishop to declare his solidarity with an organization which has been labeled as conservative or "traditional": for that, a bishop has to rise above the "spirit of the times" and above the calumnies of many of the bureaucrats with whom he probably spends much of his time. Nothing we can do will bring this about in the short run; patience and prayer, meekness and truth will surely accomplish it in the long run.

— Reprinted from the March 1973 Newsletter

CUF developed its Lay Witness Protocol based on the obligations of the Natural Law and the Gospel, to guide those who wish to engage with members of the hierarchy in an effective, charitable way. If you would like a copy, please contact our office at CUF.org or call 1800 MY FAITH (1.800.693.2484).



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Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

O sweet Jesus, whose overflowing charity for men is requited by so much forgetfulness, negligence, and contempt, behold us prostrate before thy altar (if said elsewhere, "in thy presence") eager to repair by a special act of homage the cruel indifference and injuries, to which thy loving Heart is every subject.

Mindful, alas! that we ourselves have had a share in such great indignities, which we now deplore from the depths of our hearts, we humbly ask thy pardon, and declare our readiness to atone by voluntary expiation not only for our own personal offences, but also for the sins of those who, straying far from the path of salvation, refuse in their obstinate infidelity to follow Thee, their shepherd and leader, or, renouncing the vows of their baptism, have cast off the sweet yoke of thy Law. We are now resolved to expiate each and every deplorable outrage committed against Thee; we are determined to make amends for the manifold offences against Christian modesty in unbecoming dress and behavior, for all the foul seductions laid to ensnare the feet of the innocent, for the frequent violations of Sundays and holidays, and the shocking blasphemies uttered against thee and thy saints. We wish also to make amends for the insults to which thy Vicar on earth and thy priests are subjected, for the profanation, by conscious neglect or terrible acts of sacrilege, of the very Sacrament of thy divine love; and, lastly, for all the public crimes of nations who resist the rights and the teaching authority of the Church which Thou hast founded.

Would, O divine Jesus, we were able to wash away such abominations with our blood. We now offer, in reparation for these violations of thy divine honor, the satisfaction Though didst once make to thy Eternal Father on the Cross, and which Thou dost continue to renew daily on our altars; we offer it in union with the acts of atonement of thy Virgin Mother and all the saints, and of the pious faithful on earth; and we sincerely promise to make recompense, as far as we can with the help of thy grace, for all neglect of thy great love, and for the sins we and others have committed in the past. Henceforth we live a life of unwavering faith, of purity of conduct, of perfect observance of the precepts of the Gospel and especially of charity. We promise to the best of our power to prevent others from offending Thee, and to bring as many as possible to follow Thee.

O loving Jesus, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our model in reparation, deign to receive the voluntary offering we make of this act of expiation; and by the crowning gift of perseverance, keep us faithful unto death in our duty and the allegiance we owe to Thee, so that we may all one day come to that happy home, where Thou with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

– Shared by Lay Witness and Christifidelis
reader Sean from California

Not Only Hearers of the Word, But Doers Also...

Most of us have heard, at one time or another, the cliché, "Well, I just think CUF is too negative, too critical." You and I know that in most cases such an assessment is simply an evasion of the issue.

However, this cliché does touch a very important point to which all of us must be constantly on the alert. Yes, there are times when we must be critical of what is happening in the Church; yet, at the same time, we must not allow ourselves to slip into the position of being only critical and negative. As the Chairman of our Denver, Colorado Chapter recently stated in a Chapter Newsletter:

"We are all in agreement about present conditions in the Church and society. Brief accounts of such developments are welcome at CUF meetings. But we must devote most of our time and energy to determining what to do about conditions – how to reverse tides flowing the wrong way, and how to initiate some tides of our own flowing toward a stronger faith and more upright culture. We cannot stay on the defense, but must go on the offense, and do

so calmly, rationally, and charitably – in order to so do effectively."

It would be well for each of us to keep in mind that the problem in the Catholic Church in this country is not, primarily, what particular priests or others are doing (or not doing), or what they have said or written. As distressing as these things may be, the real tragedy lies not in their words or their actions, but rather in the consequences of their actions on individual Catholics and on the outward image of the Catholic Faith in this country.

We could spend the next 50 years criticizing and exposing what this or that person has said or written and yet the consequences of their actions would still continue; the fullness, the purity, and the beauty of the Catholic Faith and the love which it can generate between God and man, and between man and man, is simply not going to be taught or be very visible. It is very similar to the kind of situation which would develop if revolutionaries were to dynamite a dam, thus shutting off the lights in the city. We could

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devote 20 years to assigning blame, dispatching investigating teams, and exposing the conspiracy to the public; yet, the dam would still be broken, and someone would have to repair it so that the lights could come on again. This is what I believe should now take first priority; not who is responsible or who is at fault, but rather how do we promote the Faith.

Similarly, in parishes where the fullness of Catholic truth is not being taught, in spite of many complaints which might be registered with those in authority, and in spite of the many exposés which might be printed, the likelihood is that the situation will continue and the fullness of the Catholic Faith will not be given to the people.

In like manner, in society at large, the Church is neither as vigorous nor as visible as it was a few years ago and the influence of the Faith is practically non-existent. Again, one can condemn, and criticize, and lecture, and berate those in authority, yet the probable net effect of all this is that the Church still will not be active and visible in our society. In fact, I doubt that all the exposés in the world will lead to the kind of results we desire.

I believe we must explore ways and means to promote the Faith concretely in its fullness within the Church and in our society.

We need to seize the initiative and construct a positive, believable, and viable alternative to the spiritual chaos we see about us. This will mean not so much that there be an increase of critiques, exposés, and analyses, but rather that we engage in programs and actions which will advance the

Faith and the fullness of the Gospel message. In the practical order, this means we should strive to bring about a closer identity of the average Catholic with his Faith and we must begin with ourselves.

Whenever we see that the Faith is not being practiced, we must take up the slack and bear witness to the truths which are not being stated. Of course, the deficiencies of religious education texts and other programs must be brought to the attention of those in authority, but we must also show them a concrete alternative which they can implement.

We need to be not simply readers of our own rhetoric, but rather, living, vocal, and militant representatives and apostles of the Church. Let each of us resolve to be not just hearers of the Word, but doers also.

Yours in Christ,

Kirby M. Sheridan
Executive Director

– Taken from the March 1973 Newsletter



The Madonna of the Rosary
by Bartolomé Estéban Murillo

CUF LINKS

Chapter News

Rebecca served as the Chairwoman of Our Lady of Guadeloupe Chapter in Texas from 2006 to 2016 and had these encouraging words to share with those considering chartering a chapter:

“I think having a chapter is useful for more than one reason. The main reason is evangelization and prayer. The second is that it provides credibility for lay Catholics who want to promote/defend the faith, and to make suggestions on a diocesan level--such as recommendations for CCE or RCIA catechetical tools. One individual working alone has little or no say-so, but a formal group has more of a presence, while still being closely connected to a parish.”

Thank you, Rebecca and all the members of Our Lady of Guadeloupe Chapter, for your years of service.

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 to find the chapter nearest you!

Help other chapters by sharing how yours has continued to pursue CUF's mission in these difficult times. Send updates and pictures to administrativeassistant@cuf.org

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CUF LINKS

Information Services

After the promulgation on June 24th of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Response" and "Doctrinal Note" concerning the validity of certain Baptismal formulas, we have received several questions regarding valid formulas for Baptism. It is important to safeguard and protect such a fundamental Sacrament, which washes us from sin, grants us God's sanctifying grace, and makes us members of the Church. If you

would like to know more about Baptism, we offer a FAITH FACT *What Must Be Done for a Valid Baptism?* that lists the conditions for a valid conferral of this Sacrament.

CUF's Information Services always provides its research and resources free of charge. If you would like to learn more about Baptism or have any other question about the Catholic Faith, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1-800 MY FAITH (693-2482).

St. Joseph Foundation

The Foundation's last update mentioned the recently issued documents from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Vademecum*) and the Congregation for Clergy (the Instruction regarding Parish Reconfiguration). It is still too soon to gauge the impact of these two documents on cases at the Foundation. The Instruction has been heavily cited in pleadings both at the local level and in appeals to the Holy See. Only time will tell.

On September 22, the CDF issued a letter, *Samaritanus bonus* on the Care of Persons in the Critical and Terminal Phases of Life. It may seem reasonable to assume that the letter was motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent overwhelming of health-care systems and resources in many countries. The virus has influenced all aspects of life, both physical and spiritual; for example, it has generated discussions not only

in the areas of ordinary vs. extraordinary care, euthanasia, and abortion, but also vaccination policies in Catholic schools, the administration of sacraments, and the Doctrine of Conscience. By addressing issues related to euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, *Samaritanus bonus* does not address all these discussions. It does address cultural issues that existed before the pandemic and applies basic Catholic Moral Teaching on the value and dignity of life in practical ways. The document challenges the laws of the state and even the mediocrity of bishops, pastors and the Faithful. In light of the document, it is clear to us that the pandemic has unveiled the true landscape in which the Pilgrim Church finds herself. Of course, the American Church may have to contend with a very different landscape in the weeks to come. -Natasha

Yakin' About

We are very happy to announce that Brandon O'Nan has filled the Information Specialist position full-time. Brandon has served as an intern off-and-on for two years. His circumstances changed, and he accepted the full-time position at the beginning of September. Please join us in welcoming Brandon. You can call 1-800-MY FAITH (693-2484) and ask him any question about the Catholic Faith. See how he does.

Now there is a way to support CUF with every phone call you make! Charity Mobile customers can designate Catholics United for the Faith as their charity of choice using the Charity ID#1198, and Charity Mobile will donate 5% of their monthly plan's price to Catholics

United for the Faith. Charity Mobile is the Pro-Life mobile phone company and has been supporting the Pro-Life, Pro-Family movement for almost 25 years! You can learn more at CharityMobile.com.

Have you invited a family member or friend to become a CUF member? Let's grow the ranks!

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!

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