



LAY WITNESS

April 24, 2022

Divine Mercy Sunday

Vol. 40, No. 2

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

A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

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

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is risen! Happy Easter!

Recently, I have found a great deal of food for Lenten meditation in *Canticle of Canticles* (aka The Song of Solomon or Song of Songs). I shared some of these reflections in a letter shared with the Saint Joseph Foundation's *Christifidelis* readers earlier this year. If you'd like a free copy of that letter, please call our office.

Because this sacred text so beautifully speaks in a veiled way about the love between Christ and His Church, its words are always timely. Even so, there may be no better time to contemplate Christ as the lover of our souls than in this joyful season of Easter. I invite you to read this beautiful and sacred love poem. God has much to say to us through its rich symbolic expressions of the spiritual life. The depth of this short book is amazing and can be applied to our relationship with God and our relationships with others. Today, I turn to a passage found in Chapter Five:

*I sleep, and my heart watcheth. The voice of my beloved knocking.
“Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head
is full of dew, and my locks of the drops of the nights.”*

*“I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my
feet, how shall I defile them?”*

*My beloved put his hand through the keyhole, and my bowels were
moved at his touch. I arose up to open to my beloved: my hands
dripped with myrrh, and my fingers were full of the choicest myrrh.
I opened the bolt of my door to my beloved: but he had turned aside,
and was gone (Canticle 5:2-6; DRV).*

In the previous chapters of Canticles, we find symbolic descriptions of the Beloved (Christ) and the woman he loves (the Church). Interspersed among these descriptions, are accounts of one looking for the other or discussing their relationship with other people. They find each other and express their love, one to the other. They share their intentions about where they want to go and what they want to do. Then we come to Chapter Five and the passage quoted above.

When juxtaposed to the woman's profuse expressions of undying love for her Beloved, the episode that follows can seem confusing. The Beloved

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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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arrives, knocks, and asks admittance. The woman, who fluctuates from a state of wakefulness and sleep throughout the poem seems to be in a lazy stupor. She doesn't want to get dressed and let him in; she doesn't want to walk from her bed to the door and get her feet dirty. Ultimately, the sound of his voice and the memory of his affections overcomes her lazy attitude. When she gets over the annoyance and opens the door, he is gone.

When I read this passage, the woman's failure to respond to her Beloved's invitation seems puzzling, that is until I am honest about the ways I have failed to respond to the Divine Bridegroom in my own life. The woman's annoyance at the Beloved's coming during the night reminds me of the parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were foolish and five were wise, with only the wise virgins ready for the bridegroom when he appeared late in the night (Mt. 25:1-13). I think of how often I miss opportunities to do good and am not sure that I can be counted among the wise virgins.

So often I act like the woman in Canticles. I am prompted by the Holy Spirit to choose the good, but I rationalize away His invitation. I tell myself that I cannot act because, "Now's not a good time." I convince myself that the act of charity I am considering is impractical, imprudent, or inconvenient. This isn't hard to do, because often times, the things Our Lord asks of us can be just that. So often I regret my inaction (or my wrong action) and try to seize an opportunity to do good that has already come and gone.

I thank God that He is such a patient lover and that He allows us to be reconciled to Himself so easily. He is always waiting in the confessional to offer us His forgiveness and the grace "*to stay sober and alert*" (1 Pet. 5:8). Little by little, the Beloved chips away at the "old man" in me that contrives annoyance at doing the good (Eph. 4:20-24). He teaches me to recognize when my distorted imagination is contriving reasons to avoid doing good things. This makes me better able to ignore those feelings of inconvenience and foster an attitude of gratitude to God and service to others. This change in my interior disposition allows me to respond more promptly to the invitations of the Beloved. As I do this, I hope to be more like the Wise Virgins, but I know I still have foolishness that needs to be removed.

So, Lent is over, and Easter has begun. Why talk about all this now? Because it's the point of Easter. As written in the Letter of Paul to Timothy:

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which in Christ Jesus goes with eternal glory. The saying is sure:

If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:8-13; DRV).

St. Paul knew that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not magical. He knew that the incredible graces given through the death and resurrection of Our Savior were not the end of the story. Rather, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the Beloved knocking at the door of His Love; knocking on our doors. It is late and it is night, and He brings with him Light and Joy. Are we annoyed at the invitation to rouse ourselves from spiritual sleep and welcome Him into our house? Will we let the discipline of Lent and the celebration of Easter become ends to themselves? Or will we open the door of grace and continue the discipline we began in Lent and allow the celebration of Easter to change our lives—even in a small way—for the better?

My prayer for you this Easter is that you will not squander the opportunities of grace given in this Easter Season: that you will respond graciously and quickly to the knock on the door when Our Lord comes calling in the opportunities to do good.

Happy Easter! Our Lord is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

God bless you all.

Peace,
Philip C. L. Gray



Resurrection of Christ, by Noël Coypel, c. 1700

'Wokeness' and 'pseudo-religions': Catholic colleges look for ways to challenge growing cancel culture

By Terry O'Neill

Catholic schools and universities are a key battleground in which the war against cancel culture must be fought and won if Christianity is to thrive, Terry O'Neill reports. (St. Mark's College)

In his annual "state of the world" address to the Vatican diplomatic corps last month, Pope Francis expressed his deep concern over a phenomenon that he believes poses an escalating threat: "cancel culture," the increasingly prevalent practice of silencing individuals, institutions, and even, in the Pope's estimation, entire cultures that are deemed to hold incorrect or inconvenient views or values.

In expressing this concern, Pope Francis has given new voice to the growing number of Catholic clerics and academics who fear that cancel culture's relativistic and amoral philosophical underpinnings are the antithesis of Catholic teaching.

They further contend that Catholic schools and universities are a key battleground in which the war against cancel culture must be fought and won if Christianity is to thrive. At its most fundamental level, it's a battle over what is true in the world. And, as such, it's a struggle to which leaders at Catholic colleges in the Vancouver area—Catholic Pacific College in Langley, and Corpus Christi-Mark's College in Vancouver—say they are deeply committed.

The term "cancel culture" has come into common usage over the past few years and is widely understood to mean the increasingly successful attempt to censor views—and to shame and shun those who utter them—that do not conform to the "politically correct" tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and its closely associated cultural manifestation, "woke-ism."

Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez recently said, "Today's critical theories and ideologies are profoundly atheistic." (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

An integral part of the agenda is "diversity, equity, and inclusion" mandates that critics say end up discriminating against members of groups that have not been identified as oppressed or under-represented.

Catholic Pacific College's academic dean and assistant professor of theology says it's important to introduce students "to a tradition in which there is a recognition that there is a good, there is a truth, that there is truth to reality."

(Catholic Pacific College)

Canadian academic and author Jordan Peterson wrote in a National Post column last month that these mandates comprise an "appalling ideology," and constituted the primary reason why he had resigned as a tenured professor at the University of Toronto. As well, Frances Widdowson was fired from her job as a Mount Royal University (Calgary) political-science professor late last year after being a persistent critic of equity mandates and of the contention that Canada's former treatment of its aboriginal residents represented an attempted cultural genocide.

Writing last month for the National Review, Canadian columnist Mark Milke observed, "Widdowson and Peterson are only the most high-profile academic casualties of the woke mania in Canada. It is unlikely that they will be the last."

The interconnected phenomena have sparked widespread debate in the secular world for at least the last several years, but their adverse impact on Christianity and Catholicism has now come into sharper focus with the statements by Pope Francis.

Pope Francis has, in several past addresses, used the term "ideological colonization" to describe the Western world's trampling of Indigenous cultures and institutions. He referred to that phenomenon again in his January address to diplomats representing 183 countries, but also widened his critique to include cancel culture.

Pope Francis warned that political, legal, and cultural "agendas are increasingly dictated by a mindset that rejects the natural foundations of humanity and the cultural roots that constitute the identity of many peoples."

"As I have stated on other occasions," he said, "I consider this a form of ideological colonization, one that leaves no room for freedom of expression and is now taking the form of the 'cancel culture' invading many circles and public institutions."

The Pontiff continued, "Under the guise of defending diversity, it ends up cancelling all sense of identity, with the risk of silencing positions that defend a respectful and balanced understanding of various sensibilities."

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“A kind of dangerous ‘one-track thinking’[...] is taking shape, one constrained to deny history or, worse yet, to rewrite it in terms of present-day categories, whereas any historical situation must be interpreted in the light of a hermeneutics of that particular time, not that of today.”

Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, used more direct language in November when he said that secular movements promoting social justice and “wokeness” are “pseudo-religions” that should be understood as “replacements and rivals to traditional Christian beliefs.”

Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez recently said, “Today’s critical theories and ideologies are profoundly atheistic.” (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

As reported in America Magazine, Archbishop Gomez made the comments in a videotaped address to the 23rd Catholic and Public Life Congress, held Nov. 12-14 in Madrid. “With the breakdown of the Judeo-Christian worldview and the rise of secularism, political belief systems based on social justice or personal identity have come to fill the space that Christian belief and practice once occupied,” he said.

He continued, “Today’s critical theories and ideologies are profoundly atheistic. They deny the soul, the spiritual, transcendent dimension of human nature; or they think that it is irrelevant to human happiness.

“They reduce what it means to be human to essentially physical qualities—the color of our skin, our sex, our notions of gender, our ethnic background or our position in society.”

Archbishop Gomez linked these movements to liberation theology; he added that “they seem to be coming from

the same Marxist cultural vision. Also these movements resemble some of the heresies that we find in church history. These new movements have lost the truth about the human person” because they deny God. No matter how well-intentioned they are, they cannot promote authentic human flourishing.”

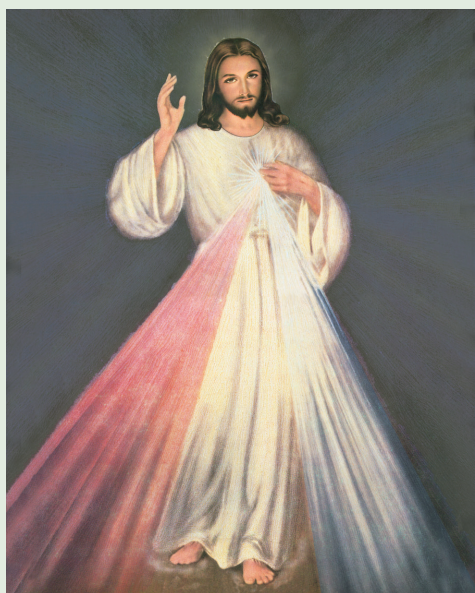
Archbishop Gomez’s speech can also be seen as a critique of CRT, which has been defined as an intellectual movement and framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is a socially constructed category that leads to oppression of minorities. Some of CRT’s more common manifestations are hiring quotas for visible minority (rather than employment policies based on qualifications) and justice-system “reforms” that lessen penalties for members of races or ethnic groups that are “over-represented” among those charged or convicted of crimes.

CRT and “wokeness” are intrinsically anti-Christian, says a representative of the Virginia-based Cardinal Newman Society, whose mission is to promote and defend faithful Catholic education.

“First, critical race theory has a very narrow focus,” Dr. Denise Donohue, Vice-President for Educator Resources, said in answer to questions from The B.C. Catholic. “It premises everything on race and addresses the question of who benefits and who doesn’t.

“But the first principle of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of all people. It is race-neutral. It teaches that all people have a common origin and a common destiny, that we are all children of God, made in his image and likeness.

“We all have individual dignity; we can’t ‘cancel’ anyone. Critical race theory opposes a person’s dignity by



“My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. ... Let no soul fear to draw near to Me. ... It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.”

Spoken by Our Lord to St. Faustina about Divine Mercy Sunday.
(Diary of St. Faustina, no. 699)

imputing unconscious bias within them which negates their individual freedom of choice – that which actually makes them an image of God. And that's another difference. Critical race theory is atheistic and leaves no room for a Creator/creature relationship. There is no transcendence or reliance upon anything higher than man himself.”

She added that, while both CRT and Catholic social teaching focus on the poor and marginalized, their means of eliminating economic and societal disparities clearly differ. Last summer, the Cardinal Newman Society published a fact sheet, drawing on Donohue's research, outlining 10 ways in which Catholic education and CTT are “simply incompatible.” (See below.)

Donohue's colleague, Dr. Dan Guernsey, said it is important that Catholic educational institutions mount a challenge to this anti-Catholic worldview. “Catholic universities should respond to every event, opportunity, and challenge in light of their mission,” said Guernsey, who is the society's Education Policy Editor and Senior Fellow.

“Vatican II affirms that a central mission of Catholic universities is to offer ‘a public, enduring, and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture,’” he said in emailed answers to B.C. Catholic questions. “Insofar as woke-ism and critical race theory are currently powerful cultural forces, Catholics should examine them in an academic context.

“Insofar as central elements of their underlying philosophies run counter to the Christian mind (influences of Marxism, materialism, relativism, etc.), these elements must be called out and examined against an authentic Christian anthropology and a comprehensive Catholic worldview. Catholic universities should not use their institutional reputation and resources to further a mindset antithetical to Christianity.”

This would be in keeping with St. Pope John Paul II's 1990 “Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities,” in which he declared, “It is the honour and responsibility of a Catholic university to consecrate itself without reserve to the cause of truth.”

St. Pope John Paul II continued, “The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterest service, namely of proclaiming the meaning of truth, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished.”

Andrew Kaethler, Academic Dean and Assistant Professor of Theology at Catholic Pacific College in Langley, said in an interview that one important way he carries out this important responsibility is to introduce his students “to a tradition in which there is a recognition that there is a good, there is a truth, that there is truth to reality, that we

can encounter it, and that the logos (universal divine reason) that undergirds all reality—that of our own individual logos and everyone's—interconnects with The Logos, and therefore see reality for what it is.”

Kaethler said that does not mean that he wants the college's graduates to go out into the world “wagging their fingers, and saying, ‘wrong, wrong, wrong.’” There is a time and place for naysaying, he said.

“But our students are better off if they are equipped to respond by offering a counter story, the story of the true, the good, and the beautiful—that is, Gospel.”

On the specific issue of CRT, “We want to teach our students to relate to the truths that are within critical race theory—the desire to combat racism and to have empathy with those who are struggling—but then to provide a far more beautiful response than CRT, a response that, unlike CRT, does not perpetuate the problem that it seeks to overcome,” he said.

On the interconnected issues of cancel culture, Kaethler said Christian teaching is clear. “As Joseph Ratzinger [Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI] beautifully sets out, to be the elect means that we have been called to lay our lives down for the sake of the world,” he said. “Part and parcel of this is forgiveness, something that does not exist within cancel culture.

“There's no room for forgiveness in this perspective because it overlooks persons. Here one does not live for the other, and the human person is lost in group think. This is terrifying.”

The newly-appointed President and Principal of Corpus Christi-St. Mark's, Dr. Gerry Turcotte, agreed that the pursuit of truth is central to a Catholic college's mission. Turcotte, who will replace retiring Dr. Michael W. Higgins in August, said in an interview that, “the cause of truth is one that allows and encourages, specifically in Catholic universities, the asking of questions about all the most difficult issues.”

However, this does not mean dissenting or differing voices should not be heard. “We need to create a space of dialogue, where we can meet and encounter truth,” Turcotte explains. “It's arguably the hardest thing to do. And I think it was always the mission of Catholic universities to pursue this.

“This was why the Catholic Church created the very first universities in the first place, to create a space where difficult questions could be asked, and it's always going to be uncomfortable, because of the wide range of issues, and it's something that you have to negotiate in the university system.”

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Morsels of Mirth

Q. Why did the unemployed man get excited while looking through his Bible?

A. He thought he saw a job.

Q. What animal could Noah not trust?

A. Cheetah

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson. He brought the house down.

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married?

A. Ruthless.

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Turcotte, who is currently President and Vice-Chancellor of St. Mary's University in Calgary, said he will devote himself to continuing the Corpus Christi-St. Mark's tradition of "creating these amazing individuals" who are going "out into the community to make a difference.

"I think that's the antidote to the negativity and to guilt and to all other issues we may be struggling with. It's creating people who have good strong values and who want to make a difference and to do the right thing in our community, even when that's a difficult thing to do."

Turcotte said that he personally is dedicated to improving the community and to social justice. "And I believe strongly that Catholic education can heal a lot of the wounds that our planet is experiencing right now," he said. "And I will come in with energy, and I will come in with an open heart, and I will try to assist in every way I can to make the mission of the colleges a success. And through that success, and through those actions, to really celebrate the dynamism and the beauty of the Catholic faith."

As Catholic colleges in B.C. look to grapple with these fundamental issues, retired St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Secondary teacher Peter Nation is working to educate parishioners, parents, and other interested people about the dangers of the woke worldview.

Nation, who is the founder of Catholic Voices Canada, said in an interview that he believes the intent of woke ideology and cancel culture "is to bring down the Judeo-Christian tradition, including specifically the family and the moral law, and so it is a threat to Western civilization as a whole."

He also believes that woke philosophy has infiltrated deeply into all schools and that students, even those in elementary schools, have been thoroughly indoctrinated. For example, Nation said he heard from one Grade 4 teacher who was explaining how adjectives must agree with nouns in French. Her students were outraged when she used the word "white."

As an antidote, Catholic Voices launched its "Awake from Woke" education series last April. The virtual sessions show that woke ideology is based on beliefs and assumptions that are the antithesis of the Catholic faith. Catholic Voices has held 14 such sessions so far. One scheduled for February will instruct participants on how to engage in conversations about woke ideology.

"Adults themselves need to be educated before our young people can stand against cancel culture," he said. "One problem has been that woke ideology has been camouflaged by terminology like 'diversity, inclusivity, and equity,' and 'social justice,' which sound like they are secular initiatives that could be aligned with Catholic social teaching. They are not."

Nation said the struggle to counter woke-ism is not an easy one, especially given the inroads the philosophy has made. But he said success may be found through a commitment to the "unity of family and friends," through devoted "prayer warriors," by "taking back institutions through friendships," and through the "Awake from Woke support network" of parents and students.

10 ways Catholic education is incompatible with Critical Race Theory

The following are 10 ways Catholic education and critical race theory are incompatible, summarized from the Cardinal Newman Society's Principles of Catholic Identity, Catholic Curriculum Standards, and "Background on Critical Race Theory and Critical Theory for Catholic Educators" by the society's Dr. Denise Donohue.

1) Catholic education teaches from the truths of our faith and Christian anthropology. But critical race theory is a political, divisive ideology that is antithetical to the Catholic worldview.

2) Catholic education teaches the dignity of all people, made in the image and likeness of God. But critical race theory has its origins in critical theory, a Marxist-inspired movement that views all things through the lens of power and divides society into oppressors and the oppressed. Critical race theory marks this division according to racial lines.

3) Charity and community are central to the mission of Catholic education. But critical race theory promotes division and forces people into competing racial groups.

4) Catholic education conforms consciences to Christ and his Church. But critical race theory imputes unconscious bias upon persons and deems racism a permanent condition.

5) Catholic education teaches that sin is an individual fault that can have devastating social impact. But critical race theory imputes guilt for “social sins” committed in the past.

6) Catholic education teaches the unity of faith and reason and helps students know and live the truth. But critical race theory is skeptical of objective truth and rejects the Western intellectual tradition. It places individual experience and cultural constructivism over reason.

7) Catholic education recognizes individual autonomy and cultivates students’ capacity for reason, without regard to skin color. But critical race theory assumes that race defines how one thinks and looks at the world.

8) Catholic education observes human accomplishments and failings according to a Catholic worldview, by which racism is one element of a fallen and redeemed nature. But critical race theory demands that history be taught through the lens of race, power, and privilege.

9) Catholic education favours literature that promotes understanding of the human condition across time and culture. But critical race theory demands that classic texts be set aside for contemporary literature that is narrowly focused on race and social deconstruction.

10) Catholic education respects the natural and religious rights of parents to direct the formation of their children in collaboration with the school. But critical race theory manipulates education to form children according to its narrow ideology and to reshape culture.

“Woke” social justice is not Catholic social justice: Bishop Barron

One of North America’s most popular Catholic apologists says Catholics committed to social justice for the poor and disenfranchised should be aware of the dangerous, anti-Catholic underpinning of the “woke”

social-justice movement currently holding sway over Western culture.

Bishop Robert Barron, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, said in an April 2021 interview with Pablo Kay, Editor-in-Chief of Angelus News, that advocates of “woke” ideology have made no secret of the philosophical underpinnings of their perspective. “They do indeed find inspiration in [Communist Karl] Marx, [German philosopher Friedrich] Nietzsche, [French philosopher Jean-Paul] Sartre, [Algerian-French philosopher Jacques] Derrida, and [French historian and philosopher Michel] Foucault, among others,” he said.

Bishop Barron said “woke” social-justice advocates derive several principles from these thinkers. “First, they advocate a deeply antagonistic social theory, whereby the world is divided sharply into the two classes of oppressors and oppressed,” he said. “Second, they relativize moral value and see classical morality as an attempt by the ruling class to maintain itself in power.”

His third observation was that social justice warriors focus more on racial and ethnic categories than individual characteristics, which leads them to endorse the idea of collective guilt while supporting “a sort of reverse discrimination to address the injustices of the past.”

“Fourth, they tend to demonize the market economy and the institutions of democracy as part of a superstructure defending the privileged,” Bishop Barron explained. “Fifth, they push toward equity of outcome throughout the society, rather than equality of opportunity.” And finally, “wokeism” employs divisive strategies of accusation that are contrary to the Gospel demand to love our enemies.”

Bishop Barron concluded: “Suffice it to say that Catholic social teaching stands athwart all of this. It wants social justice, of course, but not on ‘woke’ terms. Its heroes are not Marx, Nietzsche, and Foucault, but rather Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, Jesus the Lord, Ambrose, Aquinas, and Teresa of Calcutta.”

<https://bccatholic.ca/news/catholic-van/woke-ness-and-pseudo-religions-catholic-colleges-look-for-ways-to-challenge-growing-cancel-culture>

Prayer to the Guardian Angel of Our Nation

O Great Protector sent to us by the loving Providence of God Our Father, hasten to our aid! Our country is in great turmoil. Assist us in this, our hour of need. Darkness is threatening to overcome us. Do not let Jesus, our Light, be eclipsed! Battle the forces of evil with us and for us.

Dearest Blessed Virgin Mary, Immaculate Conception, Queen of the Angels, send Legions upon Legions of the Holy Angels to assist the Guardian of Our Nation. May the cry of victory soon be heard across our land, “Long live Christ the King!” Amen.

Shared by Linda, a CUF member in Maryland

CUF LINKS

Chapter News

John Henry Newman Chapter of West Virginia will be hosting CUF President, Philip Gray, to speak on canon law and the bounds of papal authority. All are welcome

to invite a friend and join us on Friday, April 29 at 7pm at St. James in Charles Town, West Virginia.

Information Services

As the spring arrives, so does “wedding season”. Weddings are such joyful occasions, but unfortunately, many of the people we love don’t abide by the Church’s teachings regarding the sacrament. One of the most common questions CUF’s Information Services has answered over the years is whether Catholics are allowed to attend

weddings of which the Church does not approve, such as when a baptized Catholic chooses to be married outside the Church. Call 1-800 MY FAITH and request a free copy of CUF’s “Should I Attend?” FAITH FACT to receive the Church’s guidance for this and similar situations.

Saint Joseph Foundation

From the beginning of his ministry as Pope, Francis has worked to enhance the institution of the Synod, which he holds to be one of the most precious legacies of the Second Vatican Council. During the first synod of his papacy, the Synod on the Family, SJF published “A Synod is a Synod is a Synod—Or is it?” in its *Christifidelis* newsletter (cf. Vol. 33.4). It was authored by SJF’s Founder, Charles M. Wilson and still serves as a prescient reflection as the universal Church engages the Synod on Synodality.

As the Diocesan Phase (‘listening sessions’ within each particular church which will be synthesized as a

liaison point for the subsequent phase) concludes, many Catholics still wonder what is the purpose of this synod? Can the Stein quote—a rose is a rose is a rose—be applied to this synod as Mr. Wilson applied it to the Synod of the Family? Will we see a difference between what the Synod on Synodality is and what people will say it is once it concludes in October 2023? CUF members may be interested in the *Christifidelis* article and other archival materials on the matter. Please be sure to visit stjosephcanonlaw.com or call 740.937.2054 for hardcopies.

-Natasha

Yakin’ About

We want to showcase the spiritual life of our members in *Lay Witness*! Submit your original prayers, meditations, and articles with your reply card or email

administrativeassistant@cuf.org. Thank you for sharing!

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

Have questions about the Catholic Faith?

FAITH FACTS

THE ANSWERS YOU NEED

1 (800) MY FAITH