**Faith Facts**

**Apologetics.**

**All in the Family: The Communion of Saints**

**Issue .**

What is the communion of saints?

**Response .**

The communion of saints is the intimate union that exists among all the disciples of Christ.

**Blessed Be God, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

Issue .

What is the Holy Trinity?

Response .

The Holy Trinity is the union of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as One God.

**Chosen in Him: The Catholic Teaching on Predestination**

**Issue .**

How does the Catholic Church understand predestination?

**Response .**

God gives us the gift of salvation through grace and faith. In turn, we must use our free will to persevere in good works “prepared beforehand” by God Himself.

**Christ’s Descent into “Hell”**

Issue .

Every time we recite the Apostles’ Creed, we proclaim our belief that Christ descended into “Hell” after His death. But isn’t Hell a place of everlasting torment for the damned?

Response .

The English word “Hell” describes two different places in the Bible. The first, referred to in the Apostles’ Creed, is “Hades” or the “abode of the dead.” The more commonly known “Hell of damnation” (or “Gehenna”) is the place where those who die in a state of mortal sin go.

**Ecumenism and the Unity of the Church**

**Issue .**

What does the Catholic Church teach about ecumenism and Church unity?

**Response .**

The Church’s teaching authority praises efforts to restore the full communion of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities with Christ’s sole Church

**Give It a Rest: Sunday is the Lord’s Day**

**Issue .**

Why does the Catholic Church worship on Sunday, rather than maintaining the Jewish tradition of the Saturday Sabbath?

**Response .**

Through His Paschal Mystery, i.e., His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ fulfilled the “spiritual truth” of the Jewish Sabbath.

**God or Goddess? Our Heavenly Father Knows Best**

**Issue .**

Is it proper for us to refer to God as our mother?

**Response .**

When asked how to pray, Jesus told His disciples to refer to God as “Father”

**Going God’s Way: Moral Conscience**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach concerning moral conscience?

**Response .**

While the natural law written on our hearts teaches us the general, objective principles of the moral life, conscience applies the natural law to particular circumstances

**Gregory the Great and Papal Primacy**

**Issue .**

Gregory the Great condemned the title “ecumenical patriarch” or “universal bishop” . Later, when others tried to apply them to him as bishop of Rome, he refused . In refusing the titles, was the Pope denying the primacy of the papacy ?

**Response .**

No, Pope St. Gregory the Great was simply affirming the constant Catholic doctrine that individual bishops are truly successors of the apostles and not just agents of the Pope

**Honor Thy Mother: Praising Mary and the Saints is Biblically Correct**

**Issue .**

Does honoring and praising Mary and the saints offend God? Some Christians say that such practices are blasphemous

**Response .**

Catholics do not worship or adore Mary the Mother of God and the saints. Rather, we honor and praise Mary and the saints because of their great love and faithfulness to God.

**If I For Get You, O Jerusalem: The Truth About the Crusades**

**Issue .**

What were the Crusades?

**Response .**

The Crusades were an integral part of the attempt to reform, defend, and renew the Church during the Middle Ages. A balanced view of the Crusades entails a firm grasp of the complexities of the historical situation in which they occurred.

**Is Christmas a Pagan Feast?**

**Issue .**

Does Christmas have pagan roots?

**Response .**

Christmas is the celebration of Our Lord Jesus Christ’s birth. It is not a pagan feast. However, history indicates that the Church chose December 25 to evangelize the pagans of the ancient Roman Empire, who celebrated the feast of the “invincible sun” on that day.

**It Works for Me: The Church’s Teaching on Justification**

**Issue .**

How does the Catholic understanding of justification differ from the Protestant understanding?

**Response .**

When Catholics and Protestants use the words “righteousness,” “justification” and “sanctification,” they have different, though similar, definitions for these words. These differences lead to a lot of unnecessary and divisive confusion between the two groups. The Catholic Church teaches, and most Protestants also believe, that people can be saved only by the grace of God The Church differs with Protestants, however, regarding the means of righteousness, justification, and ultimately salvation.

**Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Holy Spirit**

**Issue .**

What do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe about the Holy Spirit?

**Response .**

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the Holy Spirit is a force of God, not a Person.

**Life in the Fast Lane: Why Catholics Abstain**

**Issue .**

Why do Catholics fast?

**Response .**

Fasting is a “spiritual exercise” by which we repent of our sins and strive to become more Christ-like . While Jesus cautioned against prideful fasting (Mt. 6:1-5, 16-18), He Himself fasted (Lk. 4:1-2) and encouraged others to do so to advance His Kingdom (Mt. 17:21).

**Mary, Conceived Without Sin: The Immaculate Conception**

**Issue .**

What is the Immaculate Conception?

**Response .**

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as solemnly defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854, teaches that “the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

**Mary’s Perpetual Virginity**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach concerning Mary’s virginity?

**Response .**

The Church has always professed that Mary was a virgin before birth, during birth, and after the birth of Christ.

**No Bull: Papal Authority and Our Response**

**Issue .**

What is the origin and purpose of papal authority?

**Response .**

Papal authority has divine origin. The Lord made Simon alone, whom He named Peter, the “rock” of His Church. He gave him the keys of His Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock.

**Persevering to the End: The Biblical reality of Mortal Sin**

**Issue .**

Is the distinction between mortal and venial sin biblical?

**Response .**

The Bible describes sins that are mortal (or “unto death”), and those that are not mortal, which we commonly call venial (cf. 1 Jn. 5:16-17 ).

**Pillar and Bulwark of the Truth: The Infallible Magisterium of the Catholic Church**

**Issue .**

What is the Magisterium? What is the charism of infallibility?

**Response .**

The Magisterium is the Church’s teaching office established by Jesus Christ to “guard what has been entrusted” (1 Tim. 6:20). The Magisterium, in service to the Word of God, authentically interprets the Word, whether in Scripture or in the form of Tradition. Infallibility is a charism whereby the Holy Spirit protects the Magisterium from teaching error

**Predestination and Free Will**

**Issue .**

What is meant by “predestination” within a Calvinist understanding of salvation?

**Response .**

predestination refers to God’s sovereign will over all things . According to Catholic teaching, predestination and free will are not mutually exclusive. In contrast, the Calvinist approach to predestination denies the full freedom of will God gives each person.

**Purgatory**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach concerning purgatory?

**Response .**

Purgatory refers to the state of being after death in which people do penance for sins not atoned for on earth. Its biblical basis is found in both the Old and New Testaments.

**Rock Solid: The Salvation History of the Catholic Church**

**Issue .**

Is the Catholic Church a man-made, post-resurrection invention ?

**Response .**

“Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1 is not only a summary of salvation history, but also a summary of how the Catholic Church came to be, through her founder and bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

**St. Augustine’s Real Faith in the Real Presence**

**Issue .**

Did St. Augustine believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist?

**Response .**

Yes. St. Augustine did believe that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at the time of consecration.

**That They May All Be One: The Difference the Church makes**

Issue .

In the 1500s, Protestant Reformers claimed to have divine guidance in attempting to restore the order, truth and unity of the early Christian Church. Does the Bible and other historical evidence support their claim?

Response .

No. As the Bible and other historical evidence testify, Jesus Christ founded the Catholic Church. While some of the Church’s leaders and practices (not doctrines) were in need of reform in the 1500s, the Protestant Reformation erred in rejecting the visible papal authority that God provided to establish and maintain order, truth and unity in His Church. In seeking Christ without His Church, the Reformation created a vacuum of Church authority that has generated more than 20,000 Protestant denominations (listed in the Oxford University Press’s World Christian Encyclopedia).

**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach concerning the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

**Response .**

The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up [“assumed”] body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son’s Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of His Body.

**The First Marian Dogma: Mary, the Mother of God**

**Issue .**

What is the Church’s teaching concerning Mary’s divine maternity?

**Response .**

“Mary is truly ‘Mother of God’ since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.”

**The Human Knowledge of Christ**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach concerning Christ’s human knowledge?

**Response .**

The constant teaching of the Church is that Christ, in His human intellect, knew all things that a created intellect could know from the moment of His conception.

**The Inquisition in the Catholic Church**

**Issue .**

What role did the Inquisition play in the Catholic Church?

**Response .**

To assess the Inquisition properly we must distinguish between the principle which undergirded it, and the actions of those responsible for implementing the principle. The principle – that the Church must guard the faith against deviations – is an obligation of Divine Law (cf. Mt. 18:18; 2 Tim. 1:14). The actions taken to implement the process were sometimes questionable and even deplorable. Yet, because of centuries of misinformation, we must take care to distinguish fact from fiction.

**The Role of the Inquisition in Europe**

**Issue .**

What was the Inquisition?

**Response .**

“Inquisition” was a judicial procedure used in the medieval courts of Europe. Before discussing inquisitorial courts, it is important to have an understanding of the history and context of these courts.

**What’s a Mother to Do? Mary’s Role in Our Salvation**

**Issue .**

What is Mary’s role in our salvation? Isn’t Jesus Christ the one Mediator between God and man?

**Response .**

Mary’s role can be summarized in the terms Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate (cf. Catechism, no. 969). Mary’s maternal role in our salvation, as summarized by these titles, is part of the constant teaching of the Church.

**Without the Church There is No Salvation**

**Issue .**

What does the Catholic Church mean by the phrase, "Outside the Church there is no salvation" (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)?

**Response .**

All salvation comes through Jesus Christ, the one Savior of the world (cf. Acts 4:12). Christ told the apostles, "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Lk. 10:16). As stated in Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, "Basing itself upon Sacred Scripture and Tradition, [this holy Council] teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation.”

**Catechesis**

**Separation of Church and Home: Preparing Children for Sacraments**

**Issue .**

Who has the right to prepare a child for the sacraments of Confession, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist? Who should make the final determination as to whether the child is ready to receive?

**Response .**

Both pastors of souls and parents have obligations and rights in the preparation of children for the sacraments.

**We Have But One Teacher: Catechesis in Our Time**

**Issue .**

What is the Church’s view of catechesis?

**Response .**

Effective catechesis involves a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ and a growing knowledge of His Church’s teachings. the most important component is the instruction and example given at home, the domestic Church, upon which everything else builds.

**Where Do We Go Wrong? The Top Ten Errors in Catechesis**

**Issue .**

What are the most common problems with some modern catechetical resources?

**Response .**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the ultimate standard by which all catechetical resources should be evaluated. All catechetical programs must be centered in Christ and His teachings. Scripture and Tradition should not be downplayed for the benefit of “personal reflection.”

**Family Issues**

**“Be Fruitful and Multiply”: The Morality of Fertility Drugs**

**Issue .**

Is the use of fertility drugs in conformity with the moral law?

**Response .**

technology that concerns overcoming fertility disorders must be at the service of the dignity of the conjugal union, i.e., the mutual self-giving of spouses expressed in the conjugal act, performed in a truly human way and open to new life (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2361; Code of Canon Law, c. 1061).

**Benziger Family Life**

**Issue .**

Does Catholics United for the Faith recommend the use of the *Benziger Family Life* sex education program in Catholic grade schools?

**Response .**

No, CUF does not recommend *Benziger Family Life* because it violates several principles of Catholic chastity education. These principles were stated in The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (TMHS), which the Pontifical Council for the Family published in 1995.

**Canonical Misconceptions: Pope Pius IX and the Church’s Teaching on Abortion**

**Issue .**

Has the Catholic Church always taught that abortion is a grave sin? If so, how do you respond to the charge that the Church only declared abortion to be murder in 1869 under Pope Pius IX?

**Response .**

The Catholic Church has always taught that abortion is a grave sin as even the ancient Didache, a first-century document that conveys the teaching of the early Church, affirms: "You shall not procure abortion, nor destroy a new-born child" What became clearer over time, because of advances in biology, was the issue of ensoulment, i.e., when the soul is infused into the unborn.

**Catholic Traditions for Advent and Christmas**

**Issue .**

How can families better live the spirit of Advent and Christmas in their homes?

**Response .**

The Catholic Church has designated the four weeks preceding Christmas as Advent, a time to “prepare the way of the Lord” for His coming as our King and Savior. By participating in various time-honored traditions, such as making Jesse trees or putting on a Christmas play at home, Catholic families can engage more fruitfully in the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

**Chastity Begins at Home: Parental Rights and Chastity Education**

**Issue .**

What are the rights and duties of parents when it comes to chastity education? How can they effectively resolve their concerns ?

**Response .**

The Church has consistently taught that parents are the principal and first educators of their children (Catechism, no. 1653). Even with adolescents, classroom programs must not include the more intimate aspects of sexual information, whether biological or affective, which belong to individual formation within the family.

**Choose Life That You and Your Children Might Live: The Truth About Birth Control**

**Issue .**

Is artificial birth control or contraception ever permitted?

**Response .**

Under no circumstances is the use of contraception morally permissible. This is the clear and infallible teaching of the Catholic Church and, because it flows from the natural law as given to us by God, the Creator of all people, it is binding on all men and women (*Humanae Vitae* [HV] 18; Catechism, no. 2036).

**Divorce and Remarriage: The Church’s Perspective**

**Issue .**

What does the Catholic Church teach about remarriage after divorce?

**Response .**

The Catholic Church does not permit the practice of divorce and remarriage under any circumstances. As our Lord says, “The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. ” (Mk. 10:11-12). One can be an innocent victim of divorce, and serious circumstances may warrant a separation of spouses, but remarriage is morally wrong.

**Home Schooling Resources**

**Issue .**

Are there any home schooling resources committed to preserving the teachings of the Catholic Church? Are there other resources available that are not Catholic but respect the Catholic home schooling parent?

**Response .**

Yes, there are many resources available to Catholic home schooling parents. Many home schooling resources are not oriented to Catholic parents and their children. Some include anti-Catholic material. Before purchasing materials, we recommend determining the nature of the curricula.

**Lenten Traditions Within the Home**

**Issue .**

How can families better live the spirit of Lent and Easter in their homes?

**Response .**

The Catholic Church has designated the liturgical season of Lent to be a period of 40 days. It is a period of fasting and self-denial, for we imitate Christ’s fasting for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by the devil (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 538-40). Pope Gregory I described Lent as “the spiritual tithing of the year.” “Either we live the liturgical year with its varying seasons of joy and sorrow, work and rest, or we follow the pattern of the world,” writes Helen McLoughlin

**Male and Female He Created Them: The Church and “Same Sex Marriages”**

**Issue .**

Why does the Church oppose government-sanctioned homosexual “marriages”?

**Response .**

Marriage is by nature defined by the conjugal act between one man and one woman, a monogamous or exclusive union in which the two become one in a lifelong partnership (cf. Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6). This truth is understandable not only through divine Revelation, but also through natural reason.

**Marriage in God’s Plan: Discovering the Power of Marital Love**

**Issue .**

What is the role of marriage in the plan of God?

**Response .**

Christ restored marriage to its original integrity and elevated it to the dignity of a sacrament. Marriage reflects the communion of love that the Godhead shares in Himself and is a means through which God restores man to the communion for which he was created.

**Play it Again: Organ Donation**

**Issue .**

What is the position of the Catholic Church on organ donation for the purpose of transplant? What moral principles are involved?

**Response .**

Since the time of Pope Pius XII, the Church has explicitly stated that both types of transplants are licit based upon the principle of fraternal charity, but only when certain requirements are met. Remembering that the end does not justify the means

**Pure Biology? Effective Chastity Education**

**Issue .**

How can parents determine whether a particular “sex education” program will effectively teach their children the virtue of chastity?

**Response .**

To determine whether such a program is faithfully and effectively assisting the parents, there are six useful questions, based on a wealth of Church teaching on the subject, that should be asked.

**Raising Tomorrow’s Saints: The Catholic Education of Youth**

**Issue .**

What is Catholic education?

**Response .**

Catholic education recognizes that knowledge is at the service of man and must be directed toward the common good and the salvation of all. Such education requires a formation in the virtues that has foundation in the Commandments of God.

**Reproductive Technologies**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach about reproductive technologies?

**Response .**

If they help married couples realize the basic goods involved in marriage, the Church favors technological interventions. The Church opposes technological interventions that violate the natural law regarding the intrinsic goods and natural rights of the human person.

**Returning to the Church**

**Issue .**

What is the process for returning to the Catholic Church?

**Response .**

Former Catholics can always return to the Church—they need only seek a priest. The priest can provide any needed guidance or instruction. A full return to the Church includes a celebration of the sacraments.

**Should I Attend?**

**Issue .**

Does the Catholic Church require Catholics not to attend weddings that the Church does not approve? If he can attend, is it permissible for a Catholic to be in the wedding party?

**Response .**

The Catholic Church does not explicitly prohibit Catholics from attending. However, there are certain moral principles that must be considered before a Catholic decides what to do.

**Should I Be a Confirmation Sponsor?**

**Issue .**

Having received an invitation to be a confirmation sponsor, how can a person decide whether to accept?

**Response .**

There are a number of considerations a person might make when deciding whether or not to accept the invitation to be a sponsor for confirmation. They fall into two general categories: Church norms and personal considerations.

**Should I Be a Godparent?**

**Issue .**

How should a person decide whether to accept the invitation to be a godparent?

**Response .**

There are a number of considerations a person might make when deciding whether to accept the invitation to be a godparent. These fall into two general categories: Church norms and personal considerations.

**The Annulment Process**

**Issue .**

What is a declaration of nullity?

**Response .**

A declaration of nullity is not a divorce. A divorce recognizes a marriage existed but allows common life to end. A declaration of nullity is a decree by a Church court stating that a marriage never existed.

**True Compassion for the Dying: The Church’s Teaching on Euthanasia**

**Issue .**

What is euthanasia? Why does the Church forbid its practice?

**Response .**

The glossary in the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines euthanasia as “an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes the death of handicapped, sick, or dying persons – sometimes with an attempt to justify the act as a means of eliminating suffering.”

**What Makes a Marriage? Consent, Consummation, and the Special Case of the Holy Family**

**Issue .**

Must a marriage be consummated in order to be considered valid? Can a valid marriage be dissolved? If so, what about the marriage of Joseph and Mary, which was not consummated?

**Response .**

A marriage is valid in which both parties have expressed their free consent to be married through the exchange of vows, even though they have not consummated their union. However

**General**

**A Matter of Reception: Abortion, Holy Communion, and Catholic Politicians**

**Issue .**

Should Catholic politicians who publicly support abortion rights receive Holy Communion?

**Response .**

All Catholics who reject the Church’s moral teaching concerning the evil of abortion and/or advocate or promote abortion rights should not receive Communion until they repent of their position . Additional factors come into play in the case of Catholic politicians .

**A Season of Hope: Jubilee Year 2000**

**Issue .**

What is the significance of Jubilee Year 2000?

**Response .**

The Third Millennium is a threshold of Hope for all men seeking peace in God's plan. In his Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, John Paul II outlines how we can enter fully

**Above and Beyond: The Church’s Teaching on Miracles**

**Issue .**

What is a miracle? What is the purpose of miracles?

**Response .**

Traditionally understood, a miracle is a supernatural sign or wonder, brought about by God, signifying His glory and the salvation of mankind.

**All Hallows’ Eve**

**Issue .**

Is the celebration of Halloween a pagan feast? May a Catholic celebrate Halloween in good conscience? What is the history of this popular American holiday?

**Response .**

We celebrate Halloween on the evening before All Saints Day. The word itself is a shortened form of “All Hallows’ Eve,” which quite literally means “the eve of All Saints.”

**All You Need is Love: The Theological Virtue of Charity**

**Issue .**

What is the virtue of charity? How can I better live it in my life?

**Response .**

Charity allows us to love God above all else for His own sake, and to love our neighbor for the love of God (cf. Mk. 12:29-31; Catechism, no. 1822) .

**Ant-Judaism vs. Anti-Semitism: Was Christianity Responsible for the Nazi Holocaust?**

**Issue .**

Did Christian teaching, as is increasingly being alleged, create cultural conditions which ultimately drove the Jews to their mass graves during the mid-twentieth century?

**Response .**

... While it is sinful for Christians to be prejudiced in this way, the sorry truth is that such antagonism exists as an historical fact. the question of anti-Semitism, or a philosophical belief in the inferiority of the Jewish race does not exist and has never existed in Catholic doctrine or social teaching.

**Attending a Non-Christian Worship Service**

**Issue .**

May a Catholic attend non-Christian worship services?

**Response .**

Catholics are not prohibited from attending non-Christian worship services. However, before attending a non-Christian worship service, there are some considerations a Catholic should make.

**Attending a Protestant Service**

**Issue .**

May a Catholic attend a service at a Protestant church?

**Response .**

A Catholic may attend and participate in common prayer at services in Protestant churches. Catholics are encouraged to pray and sing, and they may read or preach, but a Catholic may not receive “communion” .

**Avoiding War and Safeguarding Peace**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach about just war?

**Response .**

While recognizing the right of nations to legitimate self-defense under the just war doctrine, the teaching Church urges the avoidance of war .

**Burying a Statue of St. Joseph to Sell Your House**

**Issue .**

What does the Church say about the custom of burying a statue of St. Joseph for the purpose of selling one’s home?

**Response .**

The Church teaches that the faithful should pray to the saints for their intercession. The custom of burying a statue of St. Joseph for the purpose of selling one’s home can be in harmony with the teachings of the Church when

**Can God Do the Impossible?**

**Issue .**

Can God do the impossible?

**Response .**

What is possible for God extends beyond the limits of human reason or human possibility .

**Capital Punishment**

**Issue .**

What is the Church’s teaching on capital punishment?

**Response .**

The traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, so long as it is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against an unjust aggressor.

The Church also affirms that non-lethal means of punishment are generally more in keeping with the good of society and the dignity of the human person. In today’s society, the cases in which the execution of a criminal is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically nonexistent (Catechism, no. 2267) .

**Christian Joy**

**Issue .**

What is Christian joy?

**Response .**

Pope St. Paul VI teaches that Christian joy “consists in the human spirit’s finding repose and a deep satisfaction in the possession of the Triune God”

**Christian Stewardship: What God Expects from Us**

**Issue .**

What is Christian stewardship? How can I be a proper steward of God’s gifts?

**Response .**

Christian stewardship is a way of living in which we recognize that everything belongs to God .

**Cloning: An Affront to Human Dignity**

**Issue .**

What is human cloning? Why does the Church teach that cloning is immoral?

**Response .**

Cloning is a form of artificial reproduction in which the offspring produced is genetically identical to the individual from whom he or she originated. Human cloning is immoral because it attacks the dignity of human procreation and

**Daily Penance & Days of Penance**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach about daily penance? What are the days of penance, and how ought Catholics to observe them?

**Response .**

As part of our response to Christ’s exhortation to repent, the Church urges us to live penitentially every day. While Catholics are called to do penance primarily in daily life, the Church has established special days of penance

**Dark Night of the Soul**

**Issue .**

What is the “Dark Night of the Soul”?

**Response .**

The concept of the “Dark Night of the Soul” comes from the writings of St. John of the Cross. It refers to the purification of the sensual and spiritual appetites

**Debunking the Overpopulation Myth**

**Issue .**

Could we not cure countless social problems if we stabilized or curbed the rate of population growth?

**Response .**

No. Proponents of population control argue that the earth has too fragile an environment, and too limited space Historic and scientific facts prove these arguments false. Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church provide a proper understanding of the issues involved, and offer just solutions for the social problems of our day .

**Doctors of the Church**

**Issue .**

What does it mean to be a doctor of the Church? Who are the doctors of the Church?

**Response .**

The doctors of the Church are certain men and women who are revered by the Church for the special value of their writings and preaching and the sanctity of their lives .

**Drawing the Line: The Church’s Teaching on Embryonic Stem Cell Research**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach about embryonic stem cell research?

**Response .**

The Church teaches that the intentional destruction of human embryos, which is necessary for embryonic stem cell research, is gravely immoral (cf. Catechism, no. 2274-75) .

**Eastertide: Determining the Date for Easter**

**Issue .**

How is the date of Easter determined by the Church?

**Response .**

Easter falls on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox (first day of spring). The Council of Nicea (AD 325) set this standard for the date for Easter to provide uniformity to the Church’s observance .

**Ecumenical Councils of the Church**

**Issue .**

What is an ecumenical council?

**Response .**

An ecumenical council is a gathering of all the bishops of the world, either called for by the Pope or confirmed by him, in the exercise of their authority over the universal Church. Infallibility is present

**Following Our Bishops: Apostolic Authority in the Church**

**Issue .**

As a Roman Catholic, I understand that the Pope has authority over the entire Church. What, then, is the role of my local bishop?

**Response .**

In communion with the whole Church, and under the guidance of the Pope, bishops are called to exercise authority in the name of Christ in their respective dioceses. Because the bishop is truly a successor of the apostles, our attitude should be characterized by charity, respect, and obedience .

**Frozen Embryos and Embryo Adoption**

**Issue .**

What should be done with frozen embryos, which are the result of in vitro fertilization (IVF)? Is “embryo adoption” a morally acceptable solution?

**Response .**

Frozen embryos are produced using immoral means by the fact of their existence, these tiny human beings have the right to life cannot be destroyed or experimented on, nor can they be left frozen . faithful Catholics are free to propose possible solutions within the moral framework provided by the Church .

**Fundamental Option**

**Issue .**

Some contemporary theologians deny that an individual act, even though it involves grave matter, full knowledge, and free consent (i.e., mortal sin), can separate man from God .

**Response .**

According to the Church, individual acts of sin have the capacity to reorient the person, effectively changing the direction of his fundamental option .

**God’s Big Bang: The Church and Evolution**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach regarding evolution?

**Response .**

The Church rejects all theories of evolution that do not reflect the revelations of God. Pius XII “already stated [in *Humani Generis*] that there was no opposition between evolution and the doctrine of the faith about man and his vocation, on condition that one not lose sight of several indisputable points

**Hell: The Self-Exclusion from God**

**Issue .**

What is Hell? Where is it?

**Response .**

“*To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’*” .

**Here I Am, Lord: Vocations in Christ**

**Issue .**

What is meant by the term “vocation”?

**Response .**

The glossary in the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines “vocation” as: “[T]he calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. God has created the human person to love and serve him; the fulfillment of this vocation is eternal happiness. Christ calls the faithful to the perfection of holiness.”

**Hold Fast to What is Good: On Borrowing Forms of Meditation from Eastern Religions**

**Issue .**

Should Christians look to non-Christian methods of meditation to draw closer to God?

**Response .**

The Church acknowledges the usefulness of some elements of meditation found in non-Christian religions, provided that these elements be renewed or redefined by the Catholic faith. The Church’s basic understanding of Christian prayer must not be expanded to incorporate non-Christian elements.

**“Holy Things to the Holy”: Sacred Things, Places, and Times**

**Issue .**

What does the Church call sacred and why? What is the proper use of the sacred?

**Response .**

According to the Code of Canon Law (CIC 12-5), a place is said to be sacred if it is designated for divine worship. Such things must be used according to their purpose

**Hope: A Pilgrim’s Virtue**

**Issue .**

What is the theological virtue of hope?

**Response .**

The theological virtue of hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and eternal life with God (cf. Catechism, no. 2090). This virtue is infused at Baptism

**Horoscopes: Should the Christian Faithful Use Them?**

**Issue .**

Should the Christian faithful utilize horoscopes?

**Response .**

Consulting horoscopes is a form of divination and as such, rejected by the Church an offense against the First Commandment nor should they be used as entertainment, even if a person does not believe that they have a power to predict the future .

**Human Suffering: Why Does God Permit It?**

**Issue .**

“If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all His creatures, why does evil exist?”

**Response .**

“To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question” (Catechism, no. 309) .

**I Will Give You Shepherds: Addressing the Priest Shortage**

**Issue .**

Is there a priest shortage?

**Response .**

Some compare current ratios of priests to faithful with ratios from other eras, though some say that demand for priests has diminished . Others contend that “priests shortage” is a slogan used by those who seek structural change . Apart from how “shortage” is defined, though, in some parts of the world the faithful acutely feel a need for priests .

**Indulgences**

**Issue .**

What is an indulgence?

**Response .**

An indulgence remits temporal punishment or consequences due to sins for which we have already been forgiven. The Church dispenses indulgences when, as a minister of Christ’s Redemption, “she dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfaction won by Christ and the saints

**Is Missing Sunday Mass a Mortal Sin?**

**Issue .**

Is missing Sunday Mass a mortal sin?

**Response .**

The requirement to attend Mass on Sunday and other holy days of obligation, rooted in the Third Commandment and codified in Church law (cf. Code of Canon Law, canons 1246-48) is a serious obligation for all Catholics .

**Jehovah as a Name of God**

**Issue .**

Where do we get the word “Jehovah”? Is “Jehovah” an acceptable pronunciation of the name of God?

**Response .**

The origins of the word “Jehovah” go back to Exodus 3:14 when God reveals his name to Moses . While a common pronunciation, “Jehovah” is a misnomer that developed out of an improper understanding of the Hebraic texts .

**Lent: Discipline and History**

**Issue .**

How did Lent arise? What is its current discipline, and what is its history?

**Response .**

At the beginning of His public life, Jesus was tempted for 40 days in the desert (Mt. 4:1–11; Mk. 1:12–13; Lk. 4:1–13). “By the solemn 40 days of *Lent*,” the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, “the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.”

**Let the Son Shine: The Truth About the New Age Movement**

**Issue .**

May Catholics participate in New Age activities?

**Response .**

No. The New Age movement opposes the Catholic Faith denies doctrines essential to Christianity is rooted in witchcraft ideology and practice .

**Mary, Mother of the Church**

**Issue .**

Is “Mother of the Church” an official title of the Blessed Virgin Mary? How do we understand this title?

**Response .**

“Mother of the Church” is a title of the Blessed Virgin Mary that was solemnly proclaimed by Pope Paul VI at the closing address of the third session of the Second Vatican Council

**Morality is Habit-Forming: The Cardinal Virtues**

**Issue .**

What are the cardinal virtues? What is the role of the cardinal virtues in the Christian life?

**Response .**

Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good (Catechism, no. 1803). Four of the human or moral virtues are known as *cardinal* virtues.

**New Ecclesial Movements**

**Issue .**

What are the new ecclesial movements, and what have been the popes’ assessments of them?

**Response .**

The new movements that have been approved by the Church represent, according to Pope John Paul II, a providential response to charisms given by the Holy Spirit at this time in the Church’s history .

**Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur**

**Issue .**

What are the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*? Do they guarantee that a work will authentically present the teachings of the Church?

**Response .**

In the Catholic Church, certain types of writings need a bishop’s authorization to be published for use in Catholic instruction. However, the nihil obstat and imprimatur are not an endorsement and do not guarantee that the entire contents of a work are true.

**No Man’s an Island: Associations of the Faithful**

**Issue .**

What is an association of the faithful? Are there different types?

**Response .**

According to canon law: “In the Church there are associations distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, in which the Christian faithful, either clergy or laity or clergy and laity together, strive by common effort to promote a more perfect life”

**Non-Mass Use of Churches**

**Issue .**

What are the Church’s norms regarding the use of churches for events other than the Mass?

**Response .**

A sacred place should only hold events that exercise or promote worship, piety, and religion. However, in certain circumstances the bishop may allow other uses as long as they are not contrary to the sacred nature of the place.

**Not in Vain: The Rosary and Repetition**

**Issue .**

Is the Rosary a prayer of “vain repetition” (cf. Mt. 6:7)? What type of prayer is the Rosary?

**Response .**

Any prayer from the heart, repetitive or otherwise, is acceptable to God. How many times should we repeat “I love you” to our Heavenly Father? The matter then is not simply repetition, but vain repetition

**One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: The Marks of Christ’s Church**

**Issue .**

What are the four marks of the Church?

**Response .**

The four marks of the Church are an important element of the Catholic faith, dating back to the earliest ecumenical councils In the Nicene Creed we profess one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

**Papal Succession**

**Issue .**

How is a pope elected? How do the faithful know that a papal election is valid?

**Response .**

As a matter of faith, the Church teaches that as long as the Church exists God will provide a valid succession of popes. As the First Vatican Council dogmatically pronounced: “Therefore, if anyone says that it is not according to the institution of Christ our Lord himself, that is, by divine law, that St. Peter should have perpetual successors in the primacy over the whole Church; or if anyone says that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of St. Peter in the same primacy, anathema sit”

**Popular Piety**

**Issue .**

What is popular piety? How does popular piety fit into the life of the Church and individual Christians?

**Response .**

“Popular piety” is a collective term used to describe practices, devotions, and other activities “that do not replace the liturgical life of the Church; rather, they extend it into daily life.”

**Preach to the Ends of the Earth: The Means of Social Communication**

**Issue .**

What are the means of social communication? How can they be used most effectively for spreading the Gospel?

**Response .**

In the Vatican II document, *Decree on the Means of Social Communication* (*Inter Mirifica*), the Magisterium provided a necessary understanding of the means of social communication and their proper use in the world

**Private Revelation**

**Issue .**

What is the difference between private revelation and public Revelation?

**Response .**

By divine Revelation God has communicated Himself and His will concerning our salvation the deposit of faith, entrusted to the Apostles Private revelation is so-called not because it is only for individuals or small groups, but to distinguish it from public Revelation. Authentic private revelations neither add to or subtract from the deposit of faith.

**Proclaiming the Good News to the World: The Church’s Evangelizing Mission**

**Issue .**

What is evangelization? What is the role of evangelization in the life of the Church? What is meant by the “new evangelization”? What is my role in evangelization?

**Response .**

Evangelization is the proclamation of Christ and His Gospel by word and example, in fulfillment of Christ’s command (cf. Catechism, no. 905). The Church’s fundamental mission is to call all people to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

**Reiki**

**Issue .**

What is Reiki? Is there medical evidence that Reiki is effective? Is Reiki compatible with the Catholic faith?

**Response .**

Reiki means “universal life energy” Reiki has foundational beliefs and practices that are irreconcilable with Catholicism Because Reiki practitioners believe they can harness and use this universal life energy, Reiki is not simply a form of superstition but rather opens oneself up to dangerous involvement in the occult practices of divination and magic (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2111, 2116-17).

**Responding to Scandals in the Church**

**Issue .**

What is scandal? If the Church is holy, how can there be scandal in the Church? How ought we to respond to scandals?

**Response .**

Scandal is an attitude or behavior that leads another to do evil. We ought to examine our consciences, repent of our own sins of scandal, make reparation, and, when prudent, offer fraternal correction in response

**Sacred Art**

**Issue .**

What is sacred art? How is its significant in the life of the Church?

**Response .**

Works of sacred art are symbols of faith they foster deeper devotion and encourage a greater understanding of truth.

**Should I Obey? Faithfully Responding to Lawful Authority**

**Issue .**

If someone in authority demands that I do something wrong, should I obey?

**Response .**

Obedience to lawful authority is an ordinary means of working out our salvation. Unfortunately, today, many people are told to do things that they believe are wrong. Should they blindly obey? Before a decision is made to obey or disobey, each situation requires prudent discernment and prayerful consideration of certain principles.

**Signs and Symbols**

**Issue .**

Is What is the Catholic perspective on the use of signs and symbols?

**Response .**

Signs and symbols are creatures, either created directly by God or designed by men using natural shapes and designs, which mean or communicate something more than their own existence

**Small Faith Communities**

**Issue .**

Should small faith communities be encouraged as a means of strengthening or renewing families, parishes, and dioceses?

**Response .**

Small faith or “ecclesial base” communities can be a great asset to families, parishes, and dioceses if they are faithful to teaching and living authentic Catholic doctrine.

**“So That We Might Become God”: Understanding Catechism No. 460**

**Issue .**

What is meant by the quote from St. Athanasius that is found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God” (no. 460)?

**Response .**

When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them supernatural grace that allowed them to participate in His divine nature. Christ became man in order to restore this grace

**Spiritual Communion**

**Issue .**

What is a spiritual communion? How does one make a spiritual communion?

**Response .**

A spiritual communion is made when we fervently desire to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

**Tattoos**

**Issue .**

What is the teaching of the Church on tattoos and body piercing?

**Response .**

Tattoos and acts of body piercing are not intrinsically evil. The Church offers principles by which Catholics can discern whether it is sinful to be tattooed or have one’s body pierced in particular situations.

**The Book on Gambling**

**Issue .**

Is gambling immoral? Should a parish use bingo or other games of chance as a means of supporting itself?

**Response .**

Gambling is not intrinsically evil and can be a legitimate form of entertainment so long as it is kept within the confines of virtuous conduct.

**The Enneagram**

**Issue .**

What is the enneagram? May Catholics use the enneagram?

**Response .**

Because it is merely a symbol of geometric design, the enneagram itself presents no offense to faith or morals. However, particular use of the enneagram for cultic or pseudo-scientific practices can pose a threat to Catholic belief and practices.

**The Grammar of Dissent: Identifying and Engaging Heresy**

**Issue .**

What is heresy? What is dissent? How might Catholics effectively engage dissenters?

**Response .**

The Code of Canon Law, canon 751, defines heresy as “the obstinate denial or doubt, after baptism, of a truth which must be believed by divine and catholic faith.”

**The Necessity of Law and Right Order**

**Issue .**

What is the purpose of law and order?

**Response .**

Law and order express the presence and will of God. In the absence of law and order, chaos exists. Obedience to lawful authority is an ordinary means of working out our salvation.

**The Sign of the Cross**

**Issue .**

What are the history and significance of the sign of the cross?

**Response .**

The sign of the cross—an immemorial Christian custom first mentioned in writing at the beginning of the third century—signifies the grace of redemption and strengthens us (cf. 1 Cor.1:23)

**The Theological Virtue of Faith**

**Issue .**

What is faith?

**Response .**

[Faith is] both a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed.

**The Third Part of the Secret of Fatima**

**Issue .**

What is the “third secret” of Fatima?

**Response .**

The third part of the secret of Fatima concerns the suffering of the Vicar of Christ, bishops, priests, consecrated men and women religious, and lay faithful during the 20th century

**The Year of the Eucharist**

**Issue .**

Why did Pope John Paul II designate October 2004-October 2005 as the Year of the Eucharist?

**Response .**

Pope John Paul II proclaimed the Year of the Eucharist in order to make our ordinary lives more Eucharistic, to emphasize the truth that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life

**Vatican Wealth**

**Issue .**

How can Catholics explain to critics the significant wealth of the Vatican and the Church in general, given the Church’s consistent exhortation to help the poor?

**Response .**

The Church is called to be the good steward of the spiritual riches of Christ’s Mystical Body while also exercising a stewardship of her material resources for the temporal and eternal well-being of all humanity.

**Where Do We Go from Here: The Concept of Limbo**

**Issue .**

What is Limbo? What does the Church teach concerning Limbo?

**Response .**

Theologians developed the concept of Limbo as an attempt to explain the destiny of those who die without baptism, yet do not merit the pains of hell. The concept of Limbo does not appear to belong to the deposit of faith.

**Who Art in Heaven: The Dwelling Place of God**

**Issue .**

What is heaven? Where is it?

**Response .**

Heaven is “a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is our meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit.” It is the fulfillment of God’s desire to be one with each man as God is one with Himself in the Trinity (cf. Jn. 17:20-24).

**Groups & people**~~.~~

**A Friend in Word and Deed: Pope Pius XII and the Jews**

**Issue .**

Both before and after he became Pope, what was Pius XII’s record regarding the Jewish people and the Nazis?

**Response .**

As a papal envoy to Germany from 1917-29, Vatican Secretary of State in the 1930s, and Pope during World War II, Pius XII established a clear record of supporting the Jewish people against the German National Socialist Workers’ Party, more commonly known as the Nazis. Because of a defamatory drama in the early 1960s, Pius XII’s wartime record has been unjustly tarnished.

**A Voice of Reason? The Truth About Voice of the Faithful**

**Issue .**

What is Voice of the Faithful?

**Response .**

VOTF is an association of Catholics formed in 2002 in response to the clerical sex abuse crisis While VOTF officially claims that it “does not seek any change in Church doctrine,” the vast majority of its leaders, advisors, and speakers are known for their outspoken dissent from Church teaching.

**Can Catholics Be Freemasons?**

**Issue .**

Can Catholics be Freemasons?

**Response .**

No because of this group’s “irreconcilable” opposition to Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church. The old Code of Canon Law (1917) imposed excommunication upon Catholics who became masons. Recent Vatican directives under Pope John Paul II have reaffirmed the long-standing ban.

**Catholics United for the Faith: Proclaiming Christ to a New Generation**

**Issue .**

What is Catholics United for the Faith (CUF)?

**Response .**

Catholics United for the Faith is an international lay apostolate founded on 9 September 1968 by Alphonse J. Matt, Alphonse J. Matt, Jr., and Joseph A. Rheinberger. They incorporated CUF to unite the faithful from all walks of life in order to support, defend, and advance the efforts of the Teaching Church in accord with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

**Eastern Catholic Churches**

**Issue .**

What are the Eastern Catholic Churches?

**Response .**

Eastern Catholic Churches are “Churches of the East in union with, but not of Roman rite, with their own liturgical, theological, and administrative traditions”

**Jehovah’s Witnesses: A Catholic Response**

**Issue .**

What do Jehovah’s Witnesses basically believe, and how I can effectively evangelize them with the saving truths of Catholicism when they knock on my door?

**Response .**

Charles Taze Russell founded the JWs in 1872. Though many JWs may live moral lives in many ways, they are not Christians, because they deny basic doctrines such as the divinity of Christ and the Trinity.

**Mormonism and the “Great Apostasy” Theory**

**Issue .**

What is the best way to respond to Mormon missionaries when they come to my door? How can I best share the Catholic Faith with them while refuting the errors contained in Mormonism?

**Response .**

any discussion with them must be guided by charity. With that in mind, the best way to approach a discussion is to have your Mormon visitors focus on defending their claim of a “Great Apostasy” in the early Church.

**Muslims and the One God**

**Issue .**

Does the Catholic Church teach that Muslims adore the same God as Christians?

**Response .**

The Church teaches that the followers of Islam adore along with Catholics the one, living, merciful, and all-powerful God who is the Creator of heaven and earth. [But] objectively there are deficiencies and even errors in non-Catholic rituals that constitute impediments to salvation.

**Old Catholics**

**Issue .**

Who are the Old Catholics?

**Response .**

The Old Catholics are members of seven autonomous churches in schism from the Catholic Church. Most of the Old Catholic churches trace their origins to a group of German priests and laymen who dissented from the First Vatican Council

**Pope Saint John Paul II’s Enduring Legacy**

**Issue .**

What may be learned from the life and pontificate of John Paul II?

**Response .**

“Pope John Paul II taught us that there is much more to the papacy than speaking, writing, greeting people and traveling Pope John Paul II taught us how to live, how to suffer and how to die”

**Saints Peter and Paul**

**Issue .**

How do we know that Saints Peter and Paul spent their final years in Rome and were martyred there?

**Response .**

There is a wealth of evidence that Saints Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. The two apostles exercised complementary ministries in which Saint Paul was subordinate to Saint Peter.

**Seventh-Day Adventists**

**Issue .**

What do Seventh-day Adventists believe?

**Response .**

Seventh-day Adventists are identified with two main beliefs: the Sabbath is to be observed on Saturday, and Christ’s return (the Advent) is the only hope for good in the world

**St. Francis de Sales: Patron of CUF’s Information Services**

**Issue .**

Who is St. Francis de Sales? What has the Magisterium taught about him? Why is he the Co-Patron of CUF’s Information Services?

**Response .**

St. Francis de Sales was the first to make wide use of religious tracts. The Magisterium has drawn attention to his charity in dealing with opponents of Catholic doctrine and his teaching on lay spirituality

**St. Hildegard of Bingen: The Genius of a Woman**

**Issue .**

Who was Hildegard of Bingen? Was she a saint?

**Response .**

Hildegard of Bingen was a Benedictine prioress of 12th Century Germany. many people today know Hildegard of Bingen primarily for the beautiful chants she composed. This is unfortunate. Hildegard is not only a woman who wrote chant, but a saint of the Catholic Church and a prominent figure in her day

**St. Joseph: Patron of the Universal Church and CUF**

**Issue .**

Why is Saint Joseph Patron of the Universal Church and Co-patron of Catholics United for the Faith?

**Response .**

Pope Pius IX named Saint Joseph Patron of the Universal Church because of his dignity, holiness, and glory as spouse of the Blessed Virgin and foster father of Jesus Christ

**St. Nonna: Patroness of CUF’s Information Services**

**Issue .**

Who is St. Nonna?

**Response .**

Although famous in her own time, most of what modern Catholics know of St. Nonna is found in the writings of her son, St. Gregory the Theologian

**St. Patrick: The Apostle of Ireland**

**Issue .**

Who was St. Patrick? Why should we care about him today?

**Response .**

St. Patrick is the Patron Saint of Ireland and known for his efforts to evangelize and convert the pagan Irish of his time. In more recent times, his sanctity is less known

**St. Thomas More: Patron of Catholics United for the Faith**

**Issue .**

Who is Saint Thomas More? Why is he one of the patrons of Catholics United for the Faith?

**Response .**

H. Lyman Stebbins, first president of CUF, wrote that Saint Thomas More is a CUF patron because he is a model layman who was faithful to the Holy See

**The Encyclicals of Pope Saint John Paul II**

**Issue .**

What topics did Pope John Paul II examine in his fourteen encyclicals?

**Response**

Pope John Paul devoted three encyclicals to the Divine Persons, three to subjects that touch upon the truth of the Catholic faith and morality, three to the Church’s social doctrine, two to missionary activity, and three to other subjects

**The Society of St. Pius X**

**Issue .**

What is the Society of St. Pius X (commonly referred to as the “SSPX” or the “Society”)?...

**Response .**

The Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X is a clerical association founded in 1970 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, CSSp. The SSPX has had a tumultuous relationship with the Catholic Church from its founding. Pope St. Paul VI suppressed the Fraternity before it completed its experimental stage Though the censures declared against certain members of the SSPX were lifted, its relationship with the Catholic Church remains tense and irregular. None of its members enjoy communion with the Catholic Church.

**The Welcome Wagon: My Experience With CUF by Scott Hahn**

**My Experience with CUF .**

In 1986, when I left the Protestant ministry for full communion with the Church, I was elated about my new discoveries Yet I felt quite alone. I knew very few Catholics who shared my enthusiasm for the faith. My still-Evangelical wife was somewhat scandalized by this situation. “Where’s the welcome wagon?” she asked wryly. I had no answer. Then, one night in Milwaukee, I attended a meeting of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF).

**We Are Church**

**Issue .**

What is “We Are Church”?

**Response .**

The “International We Are Church Movement” (IMWAC), or simply We are Church (WAC), is an international coalition whose supporters desire radical revisions of Church teaching and discipline

**Who Is John The Baptist?**

**Issue .**

In John 1:19-23, John the Baptist says that he is not the Christ, Elijah, or “the prophet.” What does this mean?

**Response .**

John the Baptist is not the Christ, the Elijah *actually* returned from Heaven, or *the* prophet (i.e., a law-giver like Moses), so his statements are accurate. However, John is truly a prophet because he prepared the way of the Lord and first introduced the Lamb of God

**Liturgy & Sacraments**

**Announcements at Mass**

**Issue .**

When should announcements be made during Mass?

**Response .**

“Following the prayer after communion, if there are any brief announcements, the deacon may make them, unless the priest prefers to do so himself” [*General Instruction to the Roman Missal* (GIRM), no. 139].

**Approved biblical Translations for Mass Readings**

**Issue .**

In Latin Rite Masses celebrated in the United States according to the rite Pope Paul VI promulgated following Vatican II, which biblical translations may be used for the readings?

**Response .**

On May 19, 2002, the use of the four-volume *Lectionary for Mass*, based upon the New American Bible, became mandatory in the United States for the aforementioned Masses.

**Baptism of Desire**

**Issue .**

Is Baptism of desire a teaching of the Church or a theological opinion?

**Response .**

The teaching that the desire for Baptism brings about the effects of Baptism for those who could not receive the Sacrament is more than a theological opinion. However, the Catechism speaks of the Baptism of desire only after stating that Baptism is the only means by which the Church knows a person is saved.

**Baptismal Fonts**

**Issue .**

What is a baptistery? Where should it be located?

**Response .**

“The baptistery is the area where the baptismal font flows or has been placed. It should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism and should be a place worthy for Christians to be reborn in water and the Holy Spirit.”

**Baptism: Is There a “Rite” Time?**

**Issue .**

May people be baptized during Lent?

**Response .**

Because Lent is a time of preparation for catechumens and Easter the most important feast of the Church year, the Church has designated that the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday be the ordinary time

**Bread and Wine Used in the Consecration of the Eucharist**

**Issue .**

What constitutes proper matter for the bread and wine used in the Consecration at Mass? If variations in matter occur, do the variations invalidate the Eucharist or simply make it illicit?

**Response .**

In both the Oriental and Latin Churches, the matter for the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is bread and wine. The amount of variation in the matter determines whether the Eucharist is invalid or illicit.

**Catholic Funerals & Burials in Catholic Cemeteries**

**Issue .**

Who may receive a Catholic funeral?

**Response .**

Any baptized Catholic in good standing has a right to a funeral within the Church and according to her liturgical practice. There are some people to whom the Church denies Catholic funeral rites.

**Catholic Funeral Rites: Common Questions**

**Issue .**

What is a Catholic funeral? (Is it just the funeral Mass? The vigil? The committal?) What is a Mass for the Dead?

**Response .**

Catholic funeral rites are the liturgical rites in which the Church “commends the dead to God’s merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins.”

**Catholic-Protestant Weddings**

**Issue .**

What role can a Protestant minister play in a Catholic wedding between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic? Can vows be exchanged before both the Protestant minister and the Catholic priest? Can a Catholic be married at a Protestant service?

**Response .**

The 1993 Directory on Ecumenism encourages a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic to be celebrated in a ceremony outside of the Mass

**Children’s Masses: Don’t “Play” with the Word of God**

**Issue .**

Regarding Masses for children, may the readings be acted out in a play?

**Response .**

While “dramatic elements” may be used, such as dividing the sacred readings into different parts or roles, “care should be taken not to give the impression that the Liturgy of the Word is play.”

**Children’s Masses: May Lay people Read the Gospel and Give the Homily?**

**Issue .**

May lay people read the read the Gospel and provide the homily at a children’s Mass?

**Response .**

The *Lectionary for Masses with Children* implies a lay person may read the Gospel in certain circumstances

**Christ’s Presence in the Mass**

**Issue .**

In what ways is Christ present in the Mass?

**Response .**

At Mass Christ is present in the priest, in sacred scripture, in the congregation, and in the Eucharist. Among these, Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is preeminent.

**Come Worship the Lord: Promoting Adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist**

**Issue .**

What is adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist? How can I promote adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist with exposition in my parish and diocese?

**Response .**

The Most Holy Eucharist is the body and blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (cf. Mt. 26:26-28; Jn. 6:55). Because this sacrament is the fullness and substance of His divinity and humanity, His presence demands proper adoration.

**Communion Services**

**Issue .**

What is a Communion service? When may a Communion service be celebrated? Who may conduct such a service? Does a Communion service fulfill the obligation to attend Mass on a Holy Day or Sunday?

**Response .**

A Communion service is a Catholic liturgy that may be celebrated when no priest is available to celebrate Mass. It includes the readings of the day and the distribution of the Eucharist. It is not a Mass

**Cross or Crucifix at Mass?**

**Issue .**

What are the Church’s norms regarding the use of crosses and crucifixes during Mass? May a crucifix with the image of the resurrected Christ ever be used?

**Response .**

the latest edition of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* provides that “a cross with the figure of Christ crucified upon it” should be used in entrance processions and in the sanctuary

**Defending Our Rites: Constructively Addressing Liturgical Abuse**

**Issue .**

How do I know if liturgical abuse occurs in my parish? What can I do about it?

**Response .**

In most instances, the issues are easily addressed by applying certain principles and norms of liturgical law

**Dogmatizing Discipline: Papal Authority, Modifying the Mass & the Truth About *Quo Primum***

**Issue .**

When Pope Saint Pius V issued his apostolic constitution (*Quo Primum*) that promulgated the venerable Tridentine Rite of the Mass in 1570, could he bind all future Popes from modifying or superseding this rite?

**Response .**

No, because the rite of the Mass by its nature involves much *changeable* discipline, as opposed to simply *unchangeable* doctrine

**Elevation of the Host**

**Issue .**

Is During the liturgy of the Eucharist, when is the host to be elevated? What are the associated rubrics or rules?

**Response .**

The consecrated host is elevated at two distinct times during the Eucharistic Prayer: after the words of consecration and during the final doxology

**Eucharistic Consecration: Kneeling or Standing?**

**Issue .**

Are Catholics in the United States supposed to kneel during the consecration at Mass?

**Response .**

With Vatican approval, the U.S. Bishops in both 1969 and 1995 decreed as a norm that people are to “kneel beginning after the *Sanctus* [the “Holy, Holy, Holy”] until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, before the Lord’s Prayer”

**Eucharistic Exposition: Appropriate Devotional Activities**

**Issue .**

What devotional activities are appropriate during Eucharistic exposition?

**Response .**

Any devotional activity, whether communal or private, during Eucharistic exposition should direct the faithful to the worship of Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament. The Church particularly encourages the reading of the Scriptures and silent prayer

**First Confession & First Communion**

**Issue .**

Should a child receive First Confession before First Communion?

**Response .**

Yes. The Church definitively teaches that “[c]hildren must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time” (Catechism, no. 1457)

**Gathering Around the Altar at the Consecration**

**Issue**

Are members of the congregation permitted to stand around the altar during the consecration at Mass?

**Response .**

the faithful can infer from Church documents that the congregation should not gather around the altar during the consecration. The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments has issued a prohibition of this practice

**General Absolution**

**Issue .**

What is General Absolution? What are the Church’s norms regarding General Absolution?

**Response .**

General Absolution is an exceptional means of forgiving sins that the Church provides in grave circumstances, such as when 1) danger of death threatens a person

**Genuflecting at Mass**

**Issue .**

What are the Church’s guidelines concerning genuflecting during Mass? What other guidelines does the Church provide regarding reverence toward the Blessed Sacrament?

**Response .**

Even when not participating at Mass, one should always adore the Blessed Sacrament whenever entering a Church, either by genuflecting toward the tabernacle or visiting the Blessed Sacrament chapel (CB, no. 71). If one is unable to genuflect, a bow is an appropriate substitute

**God’s Dwelling Place: The Placement of a Tabernacle in a Church**

**Issue .**

Where should the tabernacle be located in a parish church?

**Response .**

“The tabernacle, in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved, should be placed in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer” (Code of Canon Law, canon 938 §2)

**God’s Gift to His Bride: Priestly Celibacy**

**Issue .**

What is priestly celibacy?

**Response .**

Celibacy is a vocation, a gift from God freely accepted and a sacrifice freely undertaken by those responding to His call to the consecrated life. As a discipline, celibacy serves to conform the priest better to Christ

**Gospel Truth Concerning Lay Readers: The Role of the Laity During the Liturgy of the Word**

**Issue .**

May a lay person proclaim all the readings at Mass?

**Response .**

A lay person may proclaim the first and second readings but not the Gospel

**Holy Communion for Catholics with Celiac Sprue, Alcoholism and Other Related Diseases**

**Issue .**

How does the Church provide for Catholics who suffer from Celiac Sprue disease, alcoholism, or other related diseases, so that they can receive Holy Communion? What are the norms that regulate the use of these alternatives?

**Response .**

Communicants may always receive under one species alone—either bread or wine—and still receive the Body, Blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord

**Holy Communion Under Both Species**

**Issue .**

What is the Church’s teaching concerning the reception of Holy Communion under both species?

**Response .**

In 1984, with Vatican approval, the U.S. bishops authorized reception of Holy Communion under both species Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, Communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. But “the sign of Communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in that form the sign of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly”

**I Believe in One God: The Nicene Creed and the Mass**

**Issue .**

What is the Nicene Creed? Where did it come from? When must we pray the Nicene Creed (the profession of faith) at Mass?

**Response .**

The Nicene Creed is a summary of the Deposit of Faith as handed on to the Church from Christ Himself through His Apostles

**I Confess: The Biblical Basis of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**Issue .**

Why do Catholics confess their sins to a priest? Is this biblical?

**Response .**

Jesus empowered His apostles to forgive men's sin, sending them to be ministers of reconciliation in His name, as His Heavenly Father first sent Him (Jn. 20:21-23)

**Indelible Characters of Ordination**

**Issue .**

What are the “indelible characters” received at ordination?

**Response .**

A sacramental character, received in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, is an indelible spiritual mark

**Intinction**

**Issue .**

Is intinction permitted by the Church?...

**Response .**

The Church has provisions and norms for receiving Holy Communion under only one species or both

**Invalid Masses**

**Issue .**

Which changes and omissions render a Mass of the Roman Rite invalid?

**Response .**

A Mass of the Roman Rite is invalid when the celebrant of the Mass is not a validly ordained priest, when the priest does not have the proper intention, when wheat bread or grape wine is not used, or when the words “This is my Body” or “This is my Blood” are not said

**Is the Washing of Hands Required at Mass?**

**Issue .**

Is the washing of hands during the Liturgy of the Eucharist a required part of the Mass?

**Response .**

According to the Sacramentary, which provides the official guidelines for celebrating the Mass and other liturgical rites of the Church, the washing of hands is a required part of the Mass

**Kneeling After Communion**

**Issue .**

Are Catholics in the United States forbidden to kneel after receiving Communion? What should faithful Catholics do where the mandated practice is to stand?

**Response .**

The faithful are not forbidden to kneel after receiving Communion

**Lay Preaching**

**Issue .**

Are all Catholics called to preach?

**Response .**

as set forth below, a “homily” is part of the sacred liturgy and should only be given by ordained ministers

**“Let the Children Come to Me”**

**Issue .**

Why does the Catholic Church baptize infants?

**Response .**

Children, even babies, were not excluded from the Old Covenant. Likewise, the family of God in the New Covenant is for all people, including babies. As Jesus Himself said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Lk. 18:16)

**Liturgical Dancing**

**Issue .**

Is liturgical dance permitted at Mass and other liturgical celebrations in western culture?

**Response .**

Liturgical dancing **is not appropriate** in western culture, according to statements made by the Vatican in 1975 and 1994

**Loss of the Clerical State**

**Issue .**

What is the process for a priest to leave the priesthood? May a priest return to the clerical state after losing it?

**Response .**

The priest himself may request to be dismissed from the clerical state, the bishop may counsel the priest to do so, or the loss of the clerical state can be imposed as a penalty

**May a Lay Person Expose the Blessed Sacrament**

**Issue .**

May a layperson expose the Blessed Sacrament?

**Response .**

*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* provides for the following laypersons to expose. A layperson may not, however, give a blessing with the Eucharist after adoration, or perform benediction

**Music During the Proclamation of the Prayers at Mass**

**Issue .**

Should the proclamation of prayers during Mass be accompanied by music?

**Response .**

The Church affirms the use of music and musical instruments in the liturgy. However, some prayers during the Mass are to be proclaimed without any musical accompaniment

**Music in the Sacred Liturgy**

**Issue .**

What is the nature of sacred music, and what are the principles that guide its use? What are sacred music’s historic roots?

**Response .**

The roots of music in liturgical worship reach back to the Old Testament

**Norms for Confession**

**Issue .**

Who can hear confessions?

**Response .**

To validly absolve from sin, a priest must have the faculty to exercise the power of forgiveness. The priest may be limited in his exercise of this power. In danger of death, any priest can absolve from sin

**Norms for Eucharistic Adoration with Exposition**

**Issue .**

Who is the “ordinary minister” for exposition of the Holy Eucharist? May lay people serve in this role?

**Response .**

As decreed by the Vatican, a priest or deacon is the “ordinary minister” for exposition, though lay people may also serve

**Norms for Infant Baptism**

**Issue .**

How soon should infants be baptized?

**Response .**

Infants should be baptized without delay if the infant is in danger of death or within a few weeks after birth (Code of Canon Law, no. 867, § 1-2)

**One Hour Fast Before Communion**

**Issue .**

Does the one-hour Eucharistic fast refer to an hour prior to the reception of Holy Communion or an hour prior to the beginning of Mass?

**Response .**

The one-hour Eucharistic fast refers to an hour prior to the reception of Holy Communion

**Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

**Issue .**

What is an “extraordinary” Eucharistic minister? What is the role of lay people in the distribution of Holy Communion?

**Response .**

An extraordinary minister of the Eucharist is a Eucharistic minister who is not ordained. The “ordinary” ministers of Holy Communion are bishops, priests, and deacons

**Posture after the Agnus Dei**

**Issue .**

What is the proper posture following the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)?

**Response .**

In the United States, the norm for posture immediately following the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”) is kneeling (cf. *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, no. 43)

**Postures and Gestures During the Mass**

**Issue .**

Why does the Church regulate postures and gestures during the Mass? What are the proper postures and gestures for the faithful during Mass?

**Response .**

The Church provides norms for posture and gesture to preserve the sacred nature of the liturgy and to benefit the faithful

**Preparation of the Gifts: When to Stand**

**Issue .**

At what point during the preparation of the gifts are the members of the congregation to stand?

**Response .**

When the priest faces the people, extends his hands, and invites the people to pray by saying, “Pray brothers and sisters”

**Proper Handling of Eucharistic Species After Communion**

**Issue .**

What are the Church’s norms for handling the Body and Blood of our Lord after Communion and after Mass? How may we dispose of remaining Eucharistic Bread or Precious Blood?

**Response .**

When handling the Eucharistic species, the greatest care and reverence must be used. One is handling God.

**Saturday Vigil Mass**

**Issue .**

At what time can a Holy Day vigil Mass be celebrated?

**Response .**

The common practice for the earliest vigil Mass is 4 p.m

**Self-Communication**

**Issue .**

May a member of the lay faithful self-communicate?

**Response .**

“Self-communication” refers to the reception of Holy Communion without the assistance of a minister. A lay person may not self-communicate

**Signs of the Christ: Sacraments of the Catholic Church**

Issue .

What is a sacrament? How many are there?

Response .

“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace instituted by Jesus Christ to make us holy.” The Church herself is the universal sacrament of salvation through which we receive the seven sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Marriage

**Smells, Bells, and Other Liturgical Odds and Ends**

**Issue .**

Has the Church discouraged or forbidden the use of incense at Mass, the ringing of bells at the consecration, the use of hand missals and Communion patens, kneeling after receiving Holy Communion, the use of tabernacle veils, or the use of chalice veils?

**Response .**

No

**Spiritual Parents: The Role of Godparents in the Catholic Church**

**Issue .**

What is the role of godparents (sponsors)?

**Response .**

A godparent promises to provide an example of faith to “help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it” (canon 872)

**St. Blaise and the Blessing of Throats**

**Issue .**

What is the blessing of St. Blaise? Who may give the blessing of throats on the Feast of St. Blaise?

**Response .**

Priests, deacons, and even lay ministers provide the blessing of throats on the Feast of St. Blaise. However, the formula used by a layperson for the blessing is different than that used by an ordained minister

**The Church’s Norms for Cremation**

**Issue .**

What are the Catholic Church’s norms on cremation?

**Response .**

The Church recommends and encourages the burial of Christian bodies, but allows for cremation when it is not chosen for reasons contrary to Church teaching (Code of Canon Law, nos. 1176 §3, 1184 §2°)

**The Gloria**

**Issue .**

Does the Gloria have to be recited at every Mass and does it have to be sung?

**Response .**

Regarding the Gloria, it “is to be sung or said on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and in special, more solemn celebrations” (General Instruction to the Roman Missal, no. 31)

**The Graces of Confirmation**

**Issue .**

What is the biblical basis of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

**Response .**

Confirmation is a sacrament of Christian initiation with a strong biblical basis; it completes baptismal grace and strengthens the individual with the power of the Holy Spirit

**The History of Daily Mass in the Church**

**Issue .**

When did the celebration of daily Mass begin in the early Church?

**Response .**

The Eucharist began to be celebrated daily on a regional basis in the seventh century. During this time the practice became widespread in Frankish monasteries and in rural parishes

**The Location of the Choir During Mass**

**Issue .**

What is the proper location of the choir during the Mass?

**Response .**

The Vatican II Instruction on Implementing the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (*Inter Oecumenici*) states: “The choir and organ shall occupy a place clearly showing that the singers and the organist form part of the united community of the faithful and allowing them best to fulfill their part in the liturgy” (no. 97)

**The Mass: Timeless and Changing**

**Issue .**

Which parts of the Mass have remained unchanged over time? Why have some parts of the Mass changed?

**Response .**

The Second Vatican Council teaches that “the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change”

**The Placement of Gifts During the Consecration**

**Issue .**

Where should the priest place the gifts of bread and wine for the consecration?

**Response .**

In the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (*GIRM*) and *Sacramentary*, the Church instructs that both the bread and the wine should be placed on the corporal on the altar for the consecration

**The Sacrament of Confirmation**

**Issue .**

What is the sacrament of Confirmation? How is it significant today?

**Response .**

Confirmation completes baptismal grace by strengthening the individual with power of the Holy Spirit, and enlivens the graces of the other sacraments (cf. Catechism, no. 1285)...

**This is My Body: Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist**

**Issue .**

Does the Catholic Church teach that we actually eat the body of Christ and drink His blood when we receive Holy Communion?

**Response .**

Yes. The Catholic Church has always taught that in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus—the whole Christ—is truly, really, and substantially present

**What Must be Done for a Valid Baptism?**

**Issue .**

What does the Catholic Church require for valid baptism?

**Response .**

For valid baptism to occur, the Catholic Church requires proper matter, form and intention

**Who Receives Holy Communion First?**

**Issue .**

May the extraordinary ministers or the congregation receive communion at the same time as the priest? May anyone receive before the presiding priest?

**Response .**

No. According to the rubrics in the Sacramentary’s “Order of the Mass,” the presiding priest self-communicates before distributing Holy Communion to anyone else. Only concelebrating priests may receive at the same time as the principal celebrant

**Why Not Women Priests?**

**Issue .**

Did Jesus Christ, God the Son, institute the all-male priesthood and, if so, why? Is it an unchangeable teaching or a rule that can be modified as times change?

**Response .**

Jesus instituted the all-male priesthood to help fulfill His plan of salvation for all men and women. Jesus is the bridegroom who laid down His life for the sake of His bride, the Church

**Worthy Reception of Holy Communion**

**Issue .**

What conditions are necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Communion?

**Response .**

The Church exhorts Catholics to examine their consciences, “discern the Body” and fast in order to receive Holy Communion worthily

**Scripture**

**An Ordinance Forever: The Biblical Origins of the Mass**

**Issue .**

What are the biblical origins of the Mass and the New Testament priesthood?

**Response .**

Both the Old and New Testaments provide clear evidence that the Mass is a true sacrifice, offered by a priest, and the victim is the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ

**Apocalypse Not Now: The Church, The Millennium, and the Rapture**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach regarding millennialism and the rapture?

**Response .**

There are three basic interpretations regarding Revelation 20 and “the millennium.” The Church has traditionally taught one commonly known as “amillennialism,” which means that the reign of God began with Christ’s death and resurrection and the “thousand years” is a figurative number to describe the reign of His Church (2 Pt. 3:8-10; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 664, 668-682)

**Call No Man Father: Understanding Matthew 23:9**

**Issue .**

Why do Catholics call priests “father,” if Jesus says, “call no man your father on earth” (Mt. 23:9)?

**Response .**

Because God created us in His image and likeness, we share in the attributes of God. Insofar as men share in the attributes of the Father, they participate in the one fatherhood of God

**Dreaming the Impossible Dream: The Annunciation of St. Joseph**

**Issue .**

What is the Annunciation to St. Joseph?

**Response .**

The Annunciation to St. Joseph refers to the coming of an angel to St. Joseph in a dream

**Eat, Drink, and Be Catholic: The Biblical Prohibition Against Eating Blood**

**Issue .**

How is the prohibition of eating blood found in the Bible (cf. Gen. 9:3-4, Lev. 17:10-14, and Acts 15:28-29) to be understood?

**Response .**

The prohibition against eating blood found in the Old Testament was a discipline associated with the covenant between God and Noah and incorporated into the Mosaic Covenant

**His Name is John: The Beloved Disciple and Author of the Fourth Gospel**

**Issue .**

Is the Apostle John the Beloved Disciple and author of the fourth Gospel?

**Response .**

Yes. The Church, which alone has been given the task of interpreting God’s written and spoken Word, has consistently maintained her teaching on these matters

**Just Grape Juice? The Sober Truth About Biblical Wine**

**Issue .**

Does Scripture really forbid the drinking of alcohol?

**Response .**

Scripture forbids drunkenness the numerous descriptions of drunkenness in Scripture would be inaccurate, and the scriptural prohibition on drunkenness would be senseless, unless alcohol was available

**Making “Sense” Out of Scripture: The Four Best Kept Secrets in Biblical Studies Today**

**Issue .**

What are the four senses of scripture?

**Response .**

Traditionally, there are four senses of Scripture, which are outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 115-119

**Now you See ‘em, Now you Don’t: Dispensing with the Rapture**

**Issue .**

Is there biblical and other historical evidence to substantiate belief in the Rapture?

**Response .**

Some Christians believe that Jesus will one day instantaneously take people selected by Him from earth to heaven (the Rapture). The Bible and other historical evidence do not support belief in the Rapture. Christ established His reign on earth 2,000 years ago when He founded the Catholic Church

**Sola Scriptura? Not According to the Bible**

**Issue .**

What does *sola scriptura* mean? What is the Catholic response to this doctrine?

**Response .**

*Sola scriptura* is the Protestant doctrine that Scripture alone is “the primary and absolute source of authority, the final court of appeal

**Taking God at His Word: A Catholic Understanding of Biblical Inerrancy**

**Issue .**

Does the Catholic Church teach biblical inerrancy? What is meant by the word “inerrancy”?

**Response .**

Yes, “inerrancy” simply means the state of being free from error. The Catholic Church has always taught that Sacred Scripture is inerrant

**The “Brothers and Sisters” of Christ**

**Issue .**

How can the Catholic Church teach that Mary was a virgin after the birth of Christ when there are references in Scripture to the “brothers and sisters” of Jesus?

**Response .**

if we carefully examine these passages in context, it becomes clear that these “brothers and sisters” are not other biological children of the Blessed Mother

**The Complete Bible: Why Catholics Have Seven More Books**

**Issue .**

Catholic Bibles contain seven more Old Testament (46) books than Protestant Bibles (39) Why are there differences?

**Response .**

Catholic Bibles contain all the books that have been traditionally accepted by Christians since Jesus’ time. Protestant Bibles contain all those books, except those rejected by the Protestant Reformers in the 1500’s

**The Historicity of the Infancy Narratives**

**Issue .**

What does the Church teach about the historical nature of the Gospel accounts of the Nativity?

**Response .**

The Church unambiguously affirms the historical nature of the four Gospels

**What’s in a Name? Protocanon, Deuterocanon, Apocrypha**

**Issue .**

What do the terms “Canon of Scripture,” “protocanon,” “deuterocanon” and “apocrypha” refer to?

**Response .**

“Canon of Scripture” refers to the whole of inspired Scripture; the books that are accepted as inspired by God