



# Superior Catechist

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## CHANGING THE CULTURE

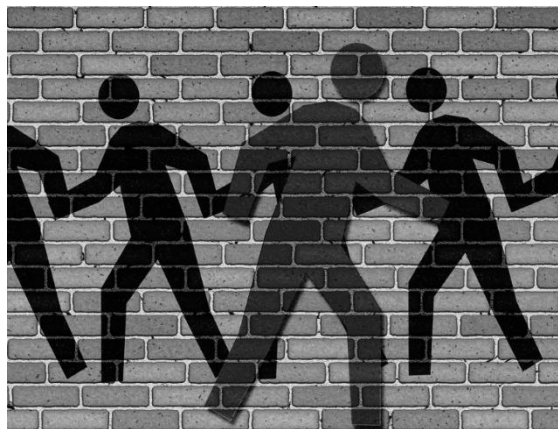
Bob Sutton

I grew up in a relatively large Catholic family who never missed Sunday Mass. I was sent to Catholic elementary and high schools, where school Masses were celebrated with regularity. I also had what I now believe to be a special grace of faith from the Lord, where I never questioned the existence of God or Church teaching (as I understood it to be at the time)—even though by young adulthood many of those around me were questioning both. I also was a faithful altar-server straight up until college, serving at many Masses during the school year. Considering the trajectory of my life, I had received Communion nearly one thousand times by the time I went away to college.

But in reality, the effects that receiving my Lord in communion had on me were minimal. I went to Mass faithfully, and I even went prayerfully, but I was not coming away changed by the encounter in any visible way. While I had a personal faith in God, I was lacking in a personal understanding of what it meant to give my life to him, to desire to live a new life in Christ, and ultimately, to have this change of life flow from personal repentance and conversion. Sherry Weddell points out that any of these four obstacles “can block the ultimate fruitfulness of valid sacraments,”<sup>1</sup> and I was missing three out of four.

This stymied the flow of sacramental grace in my life. It would do the Lord a disservice to say that I had no spiritual benefit at all: I was going to Mass weekly, doing so in a spirit of faith, and offering sincere prayers during

the liturgy. All the same, I can say with certainty that the spiritual effects of Communion for me were minimal. In terms of grace, I was collecting a dime each week at best, but the Lord had been offering me a dollar. And a central reason that I benefited so little was precisely because I had attended Mass in my parish so often.



Counterintuitive as that might sound, it’s true. This was because in my culturally Catholic parish, no one had ever modeled for me in my Catholic schooling or in my parish a disciplined life flowing from the Eucharist, complete with active and visible spiritual fruit. Regularly observing and participating in a parish culture of churchgoing Catholics taught me to expect little transformation from receiving communion (either personally or in the community), and so I never did. Participation was the clear focus, not fruitfulness. Therefore, any catechesis on the Real Presence I received in a classroom setting was always obstructed by what my experience was teaching me—namely, that receiving the Lord in Communion was not meant to result in immediate spiritual fruit that could be visibly perceived in the community.

### A Vitamin Deficiency

Where cultural Catholicism is the norm, liturgies “come close to being magical moments when spiritual vitamins are distributed.”<sup>2</sup> A vitamin, in fact, is more or less what I believed the Eucharist was throughout my teens. I believed that Christ was somehow present when I received Communion, and that it was somehow a benefit

to my soul to receive him. As with any natural vitamin, the only activity required of me was simply to consume it, and the vitamin does the rest. And though we know it's good for us, we don't expect to see any measurable exterior effect.

Yet the Catechism itself contradicted my understanding, calling it "superstition" to believe that the sacraments can be efficacious without "the interior dispositions that they demand" (CCC 2111). To treat the Eucharist as a sort of self-starting vitamin or magic pill is to foster a subtle lie, one which can quickly become a concrete personal belief when it is supported within a cultural Catholic milieu. Instead, "we must be acutely aware that the reception of a valid sacrament does not guarantee that the grace made available has been actively received and is bearing fruit in that person's life."<sup>3</sup>

When we recognize the profound incarnational reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, it may seem absurd to say that one might receive the Lord regularly in Communion and yet experience little to no observable benefit of grace. But the Gospels underscore that very fact: Christ is truly present to the rich young man who walks away without repentance and conversion (Mt 19:16-22); Jesus is truly present in his town of Nazareth, where he is limited in the healings he wants to do there because of the lack of faith of the people (Mk 6:1-6). Even Thomas Aquinas declared that when someone receives the Eucharist without any real interest in union with Jesus, or has not removed obstacles to it, they do not actually benefit from the grace present in the sacrament.<sup>4</sup>

### **Fruit-Oriented**

The increasingly empty pews in our churches weigh heavily on both pastors and active parishioners, leading to frequent discussion and much fretting about efforts to "get people back to Mass." However, accurately evaluating the spiritual culture in a parish cannot take place through the lens of numbers and percentages, but only through the lens of spiritual fruit. Are those who participate in the liturgy being transformed by the encounter with Christ that it provides? Is it leading to acts of prayer, repentance, and conversion? Are the activities in the parish organically flowing from and connected to the Mass as an engine of spiritual power? Are new ministries growing spontaneously within the ranks of active Mass-goers? Are parishioners coming to a conviction that they must reach out to others in loving service and acts of evangelization?

If we're not seeing that kind of fruit, any efforts to try to return people to the pews will fail. Whatever proverbial

carrot or stick we employ to lead them back, they are unlikely so stay if their spiritual hunger is no more satisfied than when they were not attending Mass.

It's critical that we cultivate a fruit-oriented view of the Mass. Our efforts should extend beyond merely getting people to attend Mass. There is no question this is important, but reducing evangelization in this way only reinforces the false idea that God is happy with warm bodies rather than active disciples. If adding to the number of parishioners coming to Communion simply adds to the numbers of people not being transformed by communion, then we have not adequately addressed the problem.

The Catechism teaches that sacraments "must be preceded by evangelization, faith and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity" (CCC 1072, emphasis mine). Too often we think of evangelization as directed to non-Catholics or inactive Catholics, but in reality, cultural Catholic parishes have a vital need for evangelization, repentance, and conversion among active Mass-goers. If this group can be made the focus of a genuinely fruit-based evangelism with the Eucharist at the center, the Holy Spirit can swiftly bring about a dynamic transformation in any such community. That fruit can then spill over into the lives of those who are not active in their faith, and even those who have no faith. Their experience and expectations when they come to Mass will then be dramatically different. This is because they will witness the spiritual fruits of those who now live a more authentic reality of the Eucharist in their midst.

### **Conclusion**

As great as the gift of the Mass is, it is too often the case that it has been overcome by a culture focused on participation rather than fruit, and so its intended effects have been largely diminished for many in the pews. We need to acknowledge that a vital part of catechesis when it comes to the Real Presence is not only the reality of who is present, but the spiritual fruit he expects when we receive him.

We cannot afford to settle for communion to be seen as routine, habitual, and devoid of visible spiritual fruit within our parishes. To the contrary, each and every communion should be experienced as an intimate, unique, and powerful encounter with the Lord and his grace. To accomplish this, we need to foster a culture wherein transformation is expected, not accidental.

<sup>1</sup> Sherry Weddell, *Fruitful Discipleship* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2017), 41.

<sup>2</sup> James Mallon, *Divine Renovation: Bringing Your Parish from Maintenance to Mission* (New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2014), 204

<sup>3</sup> Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012), 99.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Aquinas, commentary on John- specifically John 6:57, found at n. 976 on <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/John6.htm>.

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## CATHOLICS AT THE CAPITOL A DAY OF PRAYER, FORMATION & ADVOCACY

Christine Newkirk

Every two years, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) joins several Catholic organizations in hosting *Catholics at the Capitol*. Hundreds of Catholics from around the state come to Madison for this day of prayer, formation and legislative advocacy. *Catholics at the Capitol 2019* will be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin, followed by onsite visits to the *Capitol* to meet with local legislators. This also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (20 years of hosting) of *Catholics at the Capitol*. This is a time for ALL Catholics across the state to learn more about our Catholic Social Teaching, to be engaged in social change and to advocate for the common good.

In addition, this year, especially with the celebration of the 50th Anniversary, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference and the five Dioceses within the Province of Wisconsin, are making a more concerted effort to invite high school aged students to attend and have a unique firsthand experience regarding how they can put their faith in action in a practical and broad way. In particular, Prof. Tom Thibodeau of Viterbo University will be conducting a session on Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that will help our young Catholics more fully understand our social doctrines and how we can put them to practice in our everyday lives.

All participants will also have the opportunity to learn more about the many issues of justice such as being Communities of Generosity, finding Solutions to Homelessness, Latino Ministries and Services, Prison Ministry and Pro-life Health Care. They will hear about special endorsements and/or rejections of legislative issues by our Wisconsin Bishops because of our principles

of faith, and will have the opportunity to visit with local legislators at the Capitol to voice concerns and/or support of current bills and policies being brought to the floor

for consideration. It is a direct opportunity to make a significant and positive difference in the lives of others by advocating for social change in local laws and policies that protect the dignity of life in its many forms.

One of our major principles of Catholic Social Teaching is that of solidarity. This is a moment to be in solidarity with other Catholics in living out the Gospel message in Matthew 5:15-17 to be light to the world regarding social and systemic change that is needed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly for those whose voices are not often heard; or as in Matthew 25:31-40, to be able to answer Christ with a yes, I did do see you and do everything within my power to serve and advocate for my brothers and sisters in need.

Another aspect of our Catholic Social Teaching is that of subsidiarity --- to advocate and influence at a grassroots level, particularly for those who are most directly affected by policies and local practices. This is an opportunity to foster the many ways we treat life with dignity, from conception to natural death.

See you all at the Capitol on Tuesday April 30, 2019!

**Christine Newkirk** is the Director of Ecclesial Ministries & Diocesan Consultation for the Diocese of Superior.



# PRO LIFE. BUT WHY?

Erich Wallace

A few weeks ago, I attended the March for Life in Washington, D.C. with 76 other people from the Diocese of Superior and 650,000 people from across the nation. I have never really done anything “pro-life” per-se, except attend a “Right to Life” banquet several years ago because of a last minute invitation. Saying that, I was excited to get educated about the pro-life movement through this trip. With the new legalization of late-term abortions in New York (when the mother’s life is in jeopardy) and with all of the discussion about abortion in the media and amongst the public in general, I feel like I need to express myself about it, so here it goes.



First off, it seems that the main question that the argument between the pro-life and pro-choice parties comes back to is: “When does an embryo/fetus actually become a human?” This very fundamental question of the highest importance has me absolutely baffled because we live in a time where there are six people leaving the Catholic Faith for every one that joins, oftentimes in the name of “scientism (an ideology that promotes science as the purportedly objective means by which society should determine normative and epistemological values).”<sup>1</sup> As a result, people will look to science for all of their answers and disregard faith or anything that can’t be scientifically proven. Yet, it seems, they will turn a blind eye to what science shows in the development of an unborn child. [Disclaimer: I do not believe faith and science are contradictory; I believe they complement one another.] I can’t see why someone would turn to science for all of their answers and yet say a child isn’t a human until a certain point in its development or until it is born. At the moment of fertilization, the baby’s genetic makeup is complete and the sex is determined.<sup>2</sup> It also has a DNA completely separate from its mother’s. To me, if something has a fully developed genetic makeup, it is a member of the species it is being born into. The only difference between an embryo and a person reading this is time.

Saying that, though, in a pro-choice article titled, “How to Argue Pro Choice: 11 Arguments Against Abortion Access, Debunked,” author Seth Millstein admits he is probably not going to convince his audience that a fetus is not a human, but still presents common pro-life arguments

and how to refute them. The first portion of his article states the following:

*“Common (pro life) Argument #1: A fetus is a human being, and human beings have the right to life, so abortion is murder.*

*Your (pro choice) Response: I’m probably not going to convince you that a fetus isn’t a life, as that’s basically the most intractable part of this whole debate, so I’ll be brief:*

- *A fetus can’t survive on its own. It is fully dependent on its mother’s body, unlike born human beings.*
- *Even if a fetus was alive, the “right to life” doesn’t imply a right to use somebody else’s body. People have the right to refuse to donate their organs, for example, even if doing so would save somebody else’s life.*
- *The “right to life” also doesn’t imply a right to live by threatening somebody else’s life. Bearing children is always a threat to the life of the mother...*
- *A “right to life” is, at the end of the day, a right to not have somebody else’s will imposed upon your body. Do women not have this right as well?<sup>3</sup>*

So, let’s look at the first point: “A fetus can’t survive on its own. It is fully dependent on its mother’s body, unlike born human beings.” *A fetus can’t survive on its own.* Seriously? A two or three old toddler can’t survive on its own either. Heck, nowadays, a 15 year-old kid could hardly survive on their own. They would probably starve to death playing Fortnite if mom didn’t have the meatloaf ready at six every night, am I right? Should we be able to kill toddlers and teenagers as well? This pro-choice argument can’t be considered logical unless it is also okay with the killing of children or any human that cannot survive on his or her own, which, in this country, is considered murder. Huh. Who would have thought?

The second point: *“Even if a fetus was alive, the ‘right to life’ doesn’t imply a right to use somebody else’s body. People have the right to refuse to donate their organs, for example, even if doing so would save somebody else’s life.”* I mean honestly, this argument just makes me very uneasy and I think the wording of it would be completely changed depending on if a baby is wanted or unwanted. Would an expectant mother who is eager to become a mom ever say, “This baby is just **using** my body; what a

little parasite!”? I don’t think so! A uterus is **for** growing a human, that’s its entire purpose. A child growing inside of a woman’s body is not simply *using* it, it’s coming into being the way that God **and science** intended. To address the second part of the point: “People have the right to refuse to donate their organs, even if doing so would save another life (so why can’t a mother refuse the use of her organs to the baby inside her)?” This argument stems from author Judith Jarvis Thomson’s 1971 paper titled “A Defense of Abortion.”<sup>4</sup> As *Catholic Answers* staff apologist Trent Horn states, there is a crucial difference between refusing to donate an organ (which would indirectly lead to a person’s death), and directly aborting an unborn child.<sup>5</sup> The crucial difference is the intent. Someone’s death as a result of another person not donating an organ to them does not mean the person who didn’t donate willed the death of that person. Abortion is most often done with the intent of killing the baby. Hypothetically speaking, and to paraphrase a further example from Trent Horn from his article “Abortion and Good Samaritan Arguments,” if I refused to donate a kidney to my cousin and my cousin survived anyway, there would be cause for celebration. If a child survived an abortion, in almost all cases, this would be seen as a failure. On top of that, just because I refused to donate my organs to a dying person doesn’t mean I have the right to directly kill them.<sup>6</sup> That, also, would be murder.

The third point states, “*The ‘right to life’ also doesn’t imply a right to live by threatening somebody else’s life. Bearing children is always a threat the life of the mother...*” While I do agree that childbirth can be dangerous because The United Nations Population Fund states in 2015 303,000 women died of complications related to pregnancy or childbirth, the number of maternal deaths was 216 per 100,000 live births. That’s 0.002%. Of the hundreds of thousands that die during pregnancy, over 85% of them happen in the impoverished areas of sub-saharan Africa and southern Asia where there is a lack of availability to good health care.<sup>7</sup> What needs to be done here is not to allow abortions but to increase access to good health care.

The last point Seth Millstein makes: “*A ‘right to life’ is, at the end of the day, a right to not have somebody else’s will imposed upon your body. Do women not have this right as well?*” I guess the conclusion I’ve come to on this is: what about the woman or man inside your body? Don’t they have the right to not have someone else’s will imposed upon them? In other words, I support the mother’s right to life and the baby’s. It takes me back to

the Declaration of Independence line that we all have to memorize in fifth grade: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”<sup>8</sup> **Life**, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. First among these is life. I suppose some may argue that by having a baby it may impede their right to liberty or to the pursuit of happiness, but it seems that that shouldn’t take away a baby’s right to life. To quote Mother Teresa (St. Teresa of Calcutta): “*It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.*”<sup>9</sup>

I know many people are in the pro-choice movement thinking they are doing good, protecting human rights, protecting women’s rights, but to further quote Mother Teresa: “Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love is abortion.”<sup>10</sup>

It seems to me that us humans try to seek our happiness through selfishness. I do it all the time. I believe the same lies over and over: that by choosing selfishness over love, it will bring me happiness. But it doesn’t. Love is always the right choice. My prayer is that expectant mothers would choose love and trust, that by choosing love, they will find joy. My prayer is also that we as Christians would not only be pro-birth but would be pro-life and support struggling single moms, look into fostering and adoption, and be people who don’t simply try and push someone into having a baby and then forget all about them. I fear that I can be that person as I’ve started delving more into this pro-life stuff, but Lord, help me, help us, to be those that choose love.

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientism>

<sup>2</sup> <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/7247-fetal-development-stages-of-growth>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bustle.com/articles/17141-how-to-argue-pro-choice-11-arguments-against-abortion-access-debunked>

<sup>4</sup> Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1.1 (Autumn 1971): 48.

<sup>5</sup> Trent Horn, “Abortion and Good Samaritan Arguments,” *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* (Volume 18, Number 3, Autumn 2018), 435.

<sup>6</sup> Trent Horn, “Abortion and Good Samaritan Arguments,” *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* (Volume 18, Number 3, Autumn 2018), 437.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/maternal-health>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://marchforlife.org/mother-teresa-favorite-quotes/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://marchforlife.org/mother-teresa-favorite-quotes/>

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# BENEFITS OF HANDS-ON LEARNING?

Rita Lee

As a child I loved science. I split my time between sitting in a traditional science classroom during the school day and playing outside when classes were done. Our little group of neighborhood friends explored the woods and tromped through fields, yards, and gardens. We dug in the earth, played in the river, and watched the birds. All these years later do I remember the chapter on environmental science from my textbook, or do I remember what I learned through experience in the classroom of nature?

Hands-on learning has gained popularity in recent years, but it is not a new concept. It has, in fact, been valued for generations. The apprenticeships of years gone by are an excellent example of learning by doing. By providing practical experience and personal involvement in the learning process, we can instill a love of learning in the students who grace the seats in our classrooms. Well designed, hands-on activities have a variety of benefits for these developing minds.

First, students retain far more information when they are allowed to practice what they are learning in a hands-on activity. Research shows that students retain about 20% of the information they hear in a lecture and about 30% of what they see in a demonstration. By contrast, retention skyrockets to 75% of material learned through a hands-on experience. Hands-on means minds on!

Additionally, students who are involved in hands-on learning are more engaged in their own learning process. It is far more difficult to “tune out” an activity in which you are an active participant. When allowed to be a part of the learning process, students feel more empowered and take ownership of their learning. Changing up the learning environment from the traditional teacher-directed classroom permits students to choose the direction of their inquiry.

Providing these hands-on experiences also helps to develop critical thinking skills. As they work their way through these activities, students need to make constant decisions in order to achieve the intended outcome. Even preschool children working through the process of completing an independent art project are making critical decisions about how to use the tools provided and the order of the steps they need to take to complete to task. Unlike homework where students turn in the assignment and wait for the teacher to check it to receive feedback, in a hands-on environment the teacher can move

throughout the room and provide instant feedback for the students to use immediately to change their plan of action or improve upon a certain aspect of the project. This leads us back to the initial point made earlier. Critical thinking skills are retained at a much higher frequency than facts or skills learned through memorization.

Every student who enters our class has their own unique set of skills and God-given talents, and therefore has a unique style of learning. Providing hands-on experiences caters to a wider variety of these learning styles. A single project can provide opportunities for critical thinking, observation, performance, critiquing, and team work. These types of activities can also engage students who are auditory learners, who like to talk their way through what they are doing. Some students need visual stimulation and thrive on having the opportunity to see what others are creating.

No classroom or subject area is immune to the benefits of hands-on learning. Manipulatives help our younger students understand math concepts. Experiments turn obscure science theories into reality. Handing our rhythm instruments and teaching a song about the states and capitals can change the excitement level of any social studies classroom. Games and activities can be included in any subject. In religion class we have made “Prayer Pails” for home, learned songs about favorite Bible characters, dramatized Scripture stories, and created our own Stations of the Cross booklets. The ideas are endless.

If you are looking for a way to get students excited about learning, adding hands-on activities is a great way to do it. Not only will your students be engaged in their learning, they will remember what they learn when they leave the classroom.

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# HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES LIVE THE SACRAMENTS OF PENANCE & EUCHARIST

By Joseph D. White

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the sacraments, “the masterworks of God in the new and everlasting covenant” (1116). The sacraments confer upon us a special grace that assists us in becoming the people God created us to be. Unfortunately, too often the first celebration of the sacraments in childhood is approached as if it were a one-time developmental milestone, rather than the beginning of a lifelong celebration or a further step down the path of continuing conversion.

Both experience and research have shown us that the period of preparation for the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist is a rare time when even families who are only marginally connected to the parish are willing to spend more time in formation. This can be an opportunity for evangelization, if catechists and catechetical leaders are open to the Holy Spirit and focus their catechesis not only on preparation for the initial reception of the sacraments but also on the ways in which the sacraments can change our lives.

## The Sacrament of Penance

The Sacrament of Penance reconciles us with God and with his Church. Quoting the Council of Trent, the *Catechism* describes a feeling of “peace and serenity of conscience” that follows the celebration of the sacrament (1468). Our friendship with God is restored, as is our dignity as his children. This connection with the Father and confidence in his love strengthens us to go forward and follow his plan for our lives. A clear conscience also helps us to grow in holiness, in part because it makes us more sensitive to sin in our lives. When we clean something, we are more motivated to keep it clean, and we more readily notice small blemishes as they occur. Likewise, the freedom from sin that comes from confession helps us to be more mindful of the near occasion of sin. By reconciling us with one another, the forgiveness we receive in the Sacrament of Penance also reminds us to live peacefully with our neighbors, forgiving others as we have been forgiven.



## Practical Tips for Catechists and Catechetical Leaders

To help children and families live the fruits of the Sacrament of Penance, consider the following:

- **Encourage families to go to confession on a regular basis.** Provide them with a schedule of confessions at your local parish. Encourage them to go as a family, perhaps once a month or so. Remind children and parents that the Sacrament of Penance is not just reserved for serious sins, but rather helps us strengthen our resolve to avoid all sin and to grow in holiness.
- **Provide families with a family-friendly examination of conscience,** and encourage them to use this daily, perhaps before bedtime. It’s helpful for all family members to examine their consciences, noting the times in the day when they followed God’s will and when they “missed the mark.”
- **Encourage families to return to the Sacrament of Penance the week before First Communion Masses,** when there is a gap in time between the first celebration of penance and the first celebration of Eucharist.
- **Offer strong catechesis on the Beatitudes** and what they mean in the lives of children and families, emphasizing that Jesus’ teaching in this passage offers us insight into how to cultivate the mind and heart of a disciple of Jesus. When we speak of living lives of holiness, we often focus on avoiding sin (which is essential), but the Beatitudes go further than this, for they point us to what we *should* do and show us our destiny as children of God.

## The Sacrament of Eucharist

In the Eucharist, Jesus shares his very self with us—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. St. Augustine, in his Easter Sermon 227, says, regarding the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist: “If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive.” The Eucharist strengthens our connection with Jesus Christ and “preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism” (CCC, 1392). The Eucharist also cleanses us from venial sin and preserves us from future mortal sins (CCC, 1395). The Eucharist also unites us more closely to Christ’s Mystical Body, the Church (CCC, 1396). It brings us closer together with the Family of God.

After we have been fed on the Eucharist in Mass, we are sent forth to live as Christ in the world. This means working to serve others, especially those in need. The *Catechism* points out that the Eucharist “commits us to the poor,” saying “to receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren” (1397).

### Practical Tips for Catechists and Catechetical Leaders

To help children and families live the fruits of the Eucharist, consider the following:

- **Encourage families to follow the Church teaching to receive the Eucharist every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.** Knowing that there are some families who see First Communion as a one-time milestone or “rite of passage” for their child, gently remind families in parent meetings and written correspondence that the Catholic Church “still teaches all Ten Commandments,” including the one to remember the Lord’s Day. The commandments will be an important part of their child’s formation for the Sacrament of Penance. As a child psychologist, I have often pointed out to families that when children learn the commandments and understand that God asks us to worship him on the first day of the week, if their parents do not make sincere efforts to follow this teaching (or other commandments), they are putting their child in a terrible bind. The child is forced with a choice to either take God’s commandments less seriously or to see their parents as being in serious sin. To put a child in

the position of choosing between their parents and God is unfair.

- **Speak often with children about the ways in which you expect to see them grow as they draw closer to Jesus through the Eucharist, and encourage parents to do the same.** Emphasize that this might not happen all at once, but will occur over time as they nourish themselves on his Body and Blood. After all, one healthy meal doesn’t give our bodies all the nutrition we need, but when we eat healthy food on a regular basis, we become stronger and healthier, and less likely to get sick. In the same way, receiving the Eucharist on a regular basis helps us to grow stronger spiritually, strengthens us to do the good things God created us to do, and helps us to resist temptation and avoid sin.
- **Emphasize the link between receiving Christ in the Eucharist and living at the hands and feet of Christ in the world.** Give families practical ways they can serve others, perhaps through parish ministries such as a food pantry or supply drive for women in crisis pregnancies. Make a list of local charities in the community that allow families to volunteer together.

God has given us great gifts in the sacraments. These encounters with Jesus Christ himself have the potential to change our lives when we are open to the grace that is offered to us. May God bless you as you assist children and families in understanding the treasure that is theirs as they meet Jesus in Penance and Eucharist.

**Dr. Joseph White** is a clinical child psychologist and former parish catechetical leader. He currently serves as a National Catechetical Consultant for Our Sunday Visitor Publishing and is the author of the book, *The Way God Teaches: Catechesis and the Divine Pedagogy* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2014).

This article originally appeared on pages 19-20 of the printed edition of the January - March (Vol. 5 No. 1) issue of *The Catechetical Review* and is also available online at [Review.Catechetics.com](http://Review.Catechetics.com). It is reprinted here with permission from the publisher Franciscan University of Steubenville. Spanish translation of this article is available at [Review.Catechetics.com](http://Review.Catechetics.com) <https://review.catechetics.com/como-ayudar-los-ni%C3%B1os-y-sus-familias-vivir-los-sacramentos-de-la-penitencia-y-reconciliaci%C3%B3n-y-de-la>

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# TEACHING RESOURCES

## Catholic Teacher Resource



**CATHOLIC  
TEACHER RESOURCES**

Catholic Teacher Resources is a non-profit organization located in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, California USA. Since 1970 we have provided Catholic resources to assist Catholic teachers in implementing religious instruction using technology in the classroom.

Our Catholic Teacher Resources website was launched in September 2009 for all the Catholic K-8 schools in the San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland dioceses. The proceeds from this website provide multi-media equipment in our inner city schools.

## Alliance for Catholic Education



The University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) sustains and strengthens under-resourced Catholic schools through leadership formation, research and professional service to ensure that all children, especially those from low-income families, have the opportunity to experience the gift of an excellent Catholic education.

## Resources for Catholic Educators



### Resources for Catholic Educators

The *Resources for Catholic Educators* web site seeks to assist Catholic teachers and catechists in their role as educators of the faith by providing them with information and easy access to resources.

## Books from Religion Teacher.com



*The Religion Teacher's Guide to Lesson Planning* by Jared Dees – This is a free e-book that includes tutorials on how to lesson plan effectively. This step-by-step to lesson planning for religion teachers and catechists teaches readers how to prepare a lesson, craft clear lesson objectives, implement effective assessments, and meet the students' needs. It includes lesson templates, lesson objective starts, assessment ideas, and 250 teaching strategies and activities from the latest research in education.

*31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* by Jared Dees – 31 Days covers a wide range of topics with many exercises to become a better disciple, servant, leader, and teacher. Part IV includes many resources for creating engaging and interactive lesson plans.

*The Catechist's Toolbox* by Joe Paprocki – A great resource for both new and experienced catechists. Joe creatively shares number strategies and advice for all facets of religious education in a way only he can.

*Beyond the Catechist's Toolbox* by Joe Paprocki – A follow-up to *The Catechist's Toolbox*, this short book provides a lesson planning framework to use in class that mimics the Liturgy.

*Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* by Robert Marzano – Marzano is one of my favorite educational researchers. This book contains research-proven ideas for various teaching strategies and activities. You might also want to check out the more practical *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works*, which includes worksheets, rubrics, and summaries of the research in the main text.

#### Information and logos taken from

<https://www.thereligionteacher.com/religious-education-resources/>  
<https://www.catholicteacherresources.com/about-us/>  
<https://ace.nd.edu/resources/recommended-websites-for-teachers>  
<http://www.4catholiceducators.com/who.htm>



## Saint in the Spotlight

# St. John Bosco

“Don Bosco”

Born: August 16, 1815, Italy

Died: January 31, 1888, Italy

Feast Day: January 31

*“Without confidence and love, there can be no true education. If you want to be loved...you must love yourselves, and make your children feel that you love them.”*

St. John Bosco was born in Italy in 1815. He grew up in poverty with his mother and brothers after his father died when John was 2 years old. John knew from an early age that his desire and God’s will for him was to become a priest. His vocation was encouraged by his mother, and he was ordained when he was 26.

Many people know St. John Bosco for his incredible work with the poor and homeless boys in the city of Turin. He not only cared for their physical needs by helping them find work and giving them an education and place to live, but his example helped hundreds of them to encounter God through the Church and the sacraments. What many people may not know, is that as John Bosco became the saint that inspired others, he was himself inspired by saints.

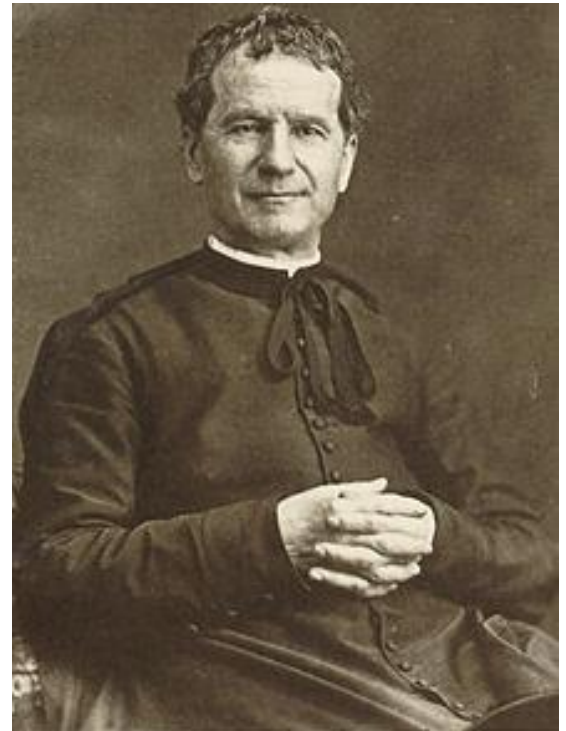
His first example of sainthood and of living a Christian life was his mother, Margherita Occhiena, who was declared Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006. His mother not only cared for him as a child, but helped her son in his work with the boys of Turin. She became a mother for hundreds of boys, helping them like she had helped her son.

Since John came from a poor family, he struggled to obtain an education that would allow him to study for the priesthood. He was again helped toward his goal by a saint. St. Joseph Cafasso was canonized by Pope Pius the XII in 1947, and was known both for his work with condemned prisoners, and for his work as a teacher and spiritual director. It was under the guidance of St. Joseph that John was encouraged in his own work.

St. John Bosco wanted to help other boys complete their education like St. Joseph Cafasso helped him. It was through this work that he met St. Dominic Savio. Although Dominic was his student, John was amazed by his devotion and love for God and Our Lady, by his prayer life, and by his ability to influence others toward good. St. Dominic died very young, but many of his close friends would later join St. John Bosco in founding the Salesian congregation. St. Dominic was canonized in 1954.

In 1859, St. John founded the Salesian Order to further expand his work beyond what he could do alone. He was joined in this goal by Mary Mazzarello who he encouraged to begin interacting and caring for the poor girls in the area in the same way John was ministering to the boys. Her love for the girls she taught, fed, and clothed eventually resulted in a growing religious community of women to help her in her work in 1872. St. Mary Mazzarello was canonized in 1951.

St. John Bosco died January 31, 1888 in Turin. He is an amazing example of how one person’s life can touch so many others. His story encourages us to seek out saints in our own lives and to be inspired and guided by them.





# MARK your CALENDAR

## **Catholics at the Capitol**

April 29-30, 2019 @ Madison  
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

## **SMDP Principal Meetings**

April 1-4, 2019, SMDP Tracking Meeting via phone  
May 14, 2019, @ Rice Lake  
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

## **High School Discipleship Training**

April 5-7, 2019, @ Crescent Lake, Rhinelander  
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

## **Youth Rally**

March 13, 2019, @ St. Peter the Fisherman, Eagle River  
April 24, 2019, @ St. Anthony, Superior  
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

## **School MAP Testing Windows**

April 15 - May 10, 2019  
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

## **Professional Development Days**

April 25, 2019, St. Joseph Parish Center, Hayward  
"Goodness is Contagious"  
Contact: Chris Newkirk, cnewkirk@catholicdos.org

## **Chrism Mass**

April 9, 2019, Cathedral, Superior

## **SUMMIT**

May 9, 2019, @ St. Peter, Cameron  
Contact: Kay Berg, dreyouth@smctomahawk.com

## **Orientations**

### **Teacher**

April 11, 2019, Online via Go-To-Meeting

### **Principal**

April 11, 2019, Orientation via Go-To-Meeting  
Contact: Grace Geisler, ggeisler@catholicdos.org

## **Men's Retreat**

March 22-23, 2019 @ CrossWoods, Mason  
Contact: Grace Geisler, ggeisler@catholicdos.org

## **FED Retreat**

May 16, 2019, @ St. Joseph, Rice Lake  
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

## **NCCL Convention**

May 19-23, 2019, Orange County, CA  
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

## **NCEA Convention**

May 19-23, 2019, @ Chicago, IL  
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

## **Extreme Faith Camp**

May 5, 2019 Extreme Team Required Training @ Rice Lake  
June 9-14, 2019 Crosswoods, Mason  
June 16-21, 2019 Crescent Lake, Rhinelander  
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

## **Totus Tuus**

June 9-14, 2019 @ Cathedral, Superior  
June 9-14, 2019 @ St. Mary, Hammond  
June 16-21, 2019 @ St. Anthony, Park Falls  
June 16-21, 2019 @ St. Joseph, Hayward  
June 23-28, 2019 @ St. Peter the Fisherman, Eagle River  
June 23-28, 2019 @ St. John the Baptist, Glenwood City  
June 23-28, 2019 @ St. Joseph, Rice Lake  
July 7-12, 2019 @ Our Lady of Sorrows, Ladysmith  
July 7-12, 2019 @ Holy Rosary, Medford  
July 7-12, 2019 @ Immaculate Conception, New Richmond  
July 14-19, 2019 @ St. Francis de Sales, Spooner  
July 14-19, 2019 @ Holy Family, Woodruff  
July 21-26, 2019 @ Our Lady of the Lake, Ashland  
July 21-26, 2019 @ St. Francis Xavier, Merrill  
July 28- Aug 2, 2019 @ St. Mary, Tomahawk  
July 28- Aug 2, 2019 @ St. Patrick, Hudson  
Contact: Grace Geisler, ggeisler@catholicdos.org



# Superior Catechist



Diocese of Superior  
PO Box 969  
Superior WI 54880

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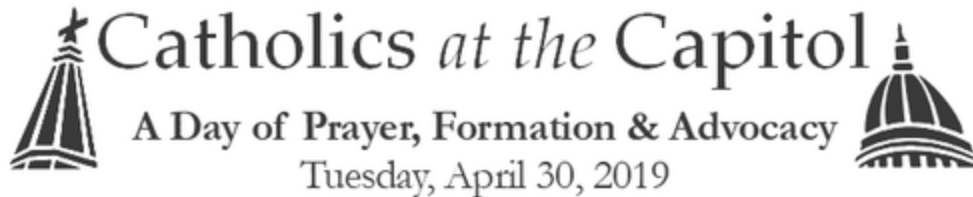
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## Catholics at the Capitol

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to pray with fellow Catholics, learn about issues, engage in civil discourse, and visit with legislators.

*1969-2019 – WCC Celebrates 50 Years!*



**FOR: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND CHAPERONES  
TO REGISTER: PLEASE CONTACT GRACE GEISLER AT  
GGEISLER@CATHOLICDOS.ORG OR 715-234-5044**



Organized by:  
Wisconsin Catholic Conference

More information found on page 3 and  
at [catholicdos.org/catholics-at-the-capitol](http://catholicdos.org/catholics-at-the-capitol)

