

# NORTH COAST CATHOLIC



A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 2022 VOLUME XIII ISSUE

1



**2022** RENEW A STEADFAST SPIRIT WITHIN ME



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FEBRUARY 2022

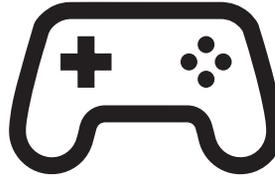
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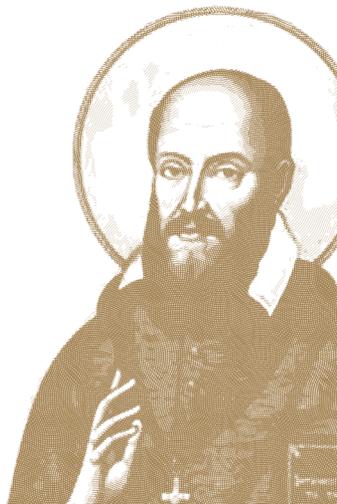
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*St. Francis de Sales,*  
*pray for us!*



# FROM *the* BISHOP

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## NATIONAL EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL



**W**

hile the struggle with various aspects of Covid-19 continue and while the challenges to the free exercise of our faith, in all its aspects, also continue there are great and hopeful signs for 2022 and 2023. Over the years there have been a number of reports and surveys which indicate that a significant number of Catholics either do not believe or simply do not know what the Church teaches about the Presence of the Lord Jesus under the simple forms of bread and wine. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) reiterates what the Church taught in 1551: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation" (CCC, 1376).

Misunderstanding surrounding this mystery dates back to controversies in the early Church, in fact, it dates back to the time of Christ himself. In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus say: "Moreover, the bread which I will give is my own flesh; I give it for the life of the world" (John 6:51). In response to these words, "there was a fierce dispute among his listeners, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'" The Gospel records that as a result of Jesus' insistence on

the truthfulness of his words, "many of his disciples withdrew and no longer went about with him" (John vs. 66).

In my view, it could be legitimately argued that failure to properly understand, or worse, to obstinately reject this teaching of the Church stands at the center of much of the ecclesial dis-ease which we see in the Church today. Church attendance continues to decline - How can someone stay away from Church if he believes that Jesus is truly present and that Jesus is himself received in Holy Communion. The youth continue to disaffiliate from the Church - How can any young person who has received proper instruction on the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist walk away from Jesus without experiencing an extreme sadness (cf. Luke 18:23). Many reject the teachings of the Church on serious moral issues and claim Eucharistic harmony - How can anyone reject Jesus' commands while claiming to love Jesus when Jesus himself says, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Many see the celebration of Holy Mass as a social, communal function while failing to recognize that it is the work of the Church in which the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord are again made present. "In the Eucharist the Church, is as it were at the foot of the cross with Mary united with the offering and intercession of Christ" (CCC, 1370).

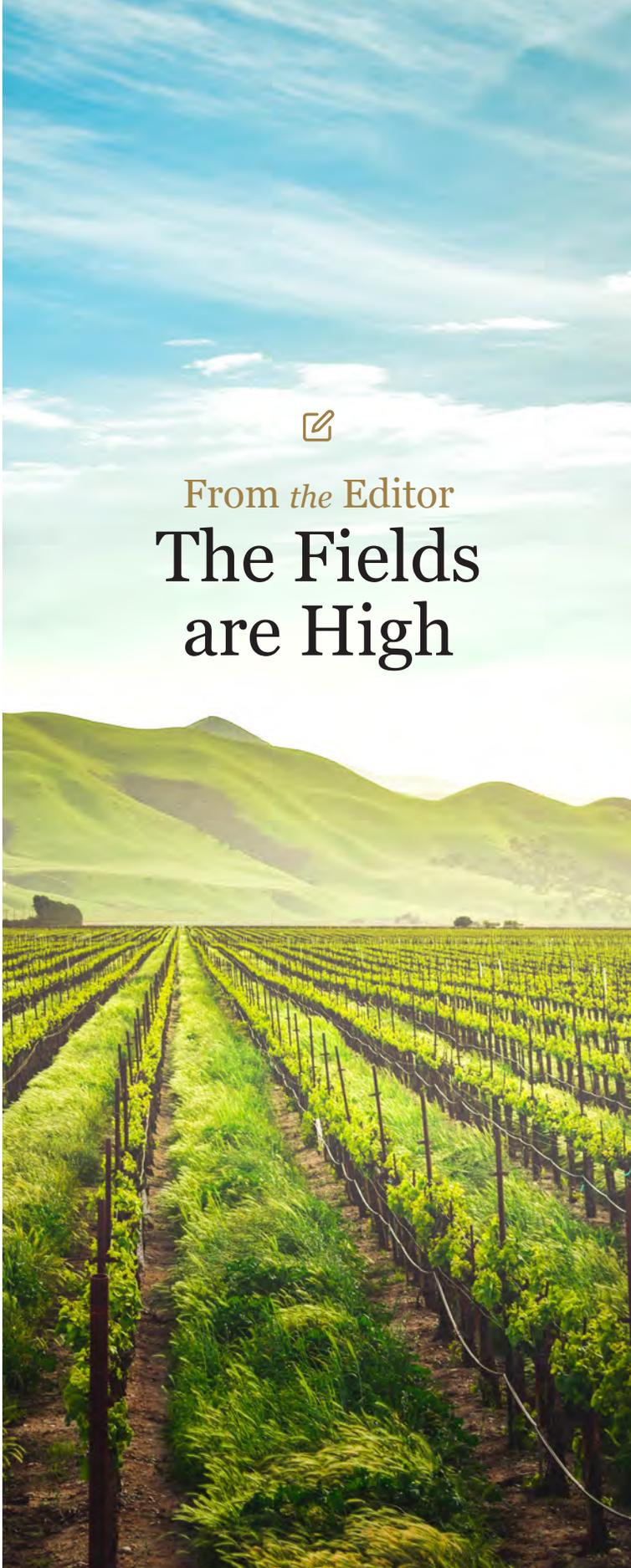
The Catholic Church describes the Eucharist, that is, the Sacrifice of the Mass, as "the source and summit of the Christian life" (CCC, 1324). It is the source, because the Eucharistic Sacrifice makes present and offers anew Jesus Christ's one redemptive

Sacrifice of Calvary, (CCC, 1362-68; 1341). It is the summit, because the Eucharist stands above all the sacraments as the "perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend" (CCC, 1374). When we receive the Most Precious Body and Blood of our Lord in holy communion, it is most important that we reflect upon these truths so as to assure that we always receive our Lord with as little unworthiness as possible. Reverence, attention, devotion - should be our mantra!

While the Eucharist certainly remains shrouded in mystery, this does not mean that we are free to 'create' our own understanding of the meaning of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic Revival envisioned by the Bishops of the United States is a multi-year plan to "renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist". It is my hope to fully engage the Diocese of Santa Rosa in this Eucharistic Revival. To this end I will seek to engage the youth, young adults, parents, catechists, deacons and priests in this first year of a three-year renewal project. Sunday, June 19, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ will figure prominently in this first year of Eucharistic Revival work.

Pray for me as I promise to pray for you. -

**Bishop Robert F. Vasa**



✍

From *the* Editor  
**The Fields  
are High**



**By Chris Lyford**

Editor, North Coast Catholic

**I**n this issue we have information about our new Annual Ministry Appeal. Every year, day after day, good people are working behind the scenes, and center stage to help your family have the preparation and resources to celebrate the most important events in your life.

The significant milestones of your family life are the touchpoints where Jesus Christ manifests His Sacramental presence to your family. He quite literally shows up to the celebration.

The birth of a child and the selecting of Godparents who will encourage the faith of your newborn through example and word, being present not only at the Baptism of your precious little one, but all throughout their life, is a decision that deserves the input of the Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation program of your parish. A program supported by the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage Prep, and Vocational discernment all are all aspects of the pastoral life of your home parish which are supported by the Offices of Marriage and Family Life, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the North Coast Catholic, and others, all sustained by the Annual Ministry Appeal. Read Bishop Vasa's letter in our AMA section to learn about an important new institution in the work of the Church in our Diocese.

Please take some time to detach the envelope from this issue and mail it in with a word of encouragement, and a monetary commitment or one time gift of any amount.

I would like to ask you specifically to consider a monthly donation of \$60 in honor of our diocese celebrating its 60th anniversary. Our Diocese has experienced a lot in its first generation as the Catholic Diocese of Santa Rosa, and we have the wisdom and commitment to embrace the next in order to cultivate a Gospel culture of life and love here where the Vines meet the Redwoods, at the ends of the earth!



**H**appy New Year, and Congratulations, we have reached level 2022! I don't know about you, but I feel like I have been living in a crazy video game for the past two years. Every day, I am faced with a new challenge. I am passing some levels effortlessly and struggling through others. During the past four months, I have had the pleasure of meeting some of our extraordinary Coordinators. While our coordinators are doing everything in their power to protect the children and youth on their campuses, the troubling reality is that most child abuse occurs outside of their reach.

I understand that talking about child abuse is disheartening, but it is a necessary conversation if we want to keep our children and youth safe. Statistics regarding child sexual and physical abuse are horrifying. In the majority of child sexual abuse cases, the victim was abused by a family member or someone trusted within the family circle, and most physical abuse occurs at home. These statistics are frightening; however, we can step up and equip our children by preparing them for the dangers surrounding them and giving them tools they can use to speak up when something does not seem or feel right. But where do we start?

Talking to them is the first step. Children and teens need to know we can handle the ugly and scary things that enter their world. They need to know we are here to protect and help them. Start by asking simple questions, how was your day? What did you do at school today? Once the conversation has started, continue it with follow-up questions. What is your favorite part of school? What is your least favorite? Has anyone made you feel uncomfortable? Let your child know they have the right to say "no" if something or someone makes them uncomfortable, and let them know how important it is for them to tell you. Talk about the fact that not everyone is friendly and give them the tools to respond when confronted with someone who is not pleasant. These conversations will progress as your child gets older. You must pay attention to body language and prepare yourself to hear stuff you might not want to hear.

Sometimes our response to shocking news is 'no way' or 'that can't be true or something similar. So before reacting, keep in mind that your response can significantly impact your child, so do your best to stay calm and reassure your child that you are proud of them for having the courage to tell you and that they did the right thing. Let them know that you are there to support them and protect them.

Our Parish Religious Education programs and schools will teach our Circle of Grace curriculum in the next few months. This curriculum

empowers children and youth to speak up if something or someone makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. It lets children know they have the right to say 'no' when they feel unsafe or unsure of a situation and helps them identify trusted adults in their lives who can help them, hopefully, sooner rather than later. This curriculum also has a section for parents with helpful information about talking to your children about the tough stuff. If you would like a copy, please ask your parish or school Safe Environment Coordinator. Let start this year off by conquering this challenging level and talking to our children.



**Fatima Jimenez**  
Victims Assistance Coordinator  
for the Diocese of Santa Rosa

**PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES**

**JANUARY**  
Rev. David Galeana

**FEBRUARY**  
Rev. John Boettcher  
Rev. Louis Nichols  
Rev. Peter Nwanekezie  
Rev. Balaswamy Govindu  
Rev. John McCormick  
Rev. Robert Benjamin  
Rev. Francis Gayam  
Rev. Sudhakar Mannam



# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CATHOLIC MARRIAGE?

Greetings Family;

With our 3rd annual "Celebrate Marriage Mass" to be held on February 13th at the Cathedral of St. Eugene's, we thought it would be fun to see just how much you know about the teachings on marriage in the Catholic Church. So take this quiz and let's find out. And no peeking at the answers before you finish!

**1. A Catholic marriage is between**

one \_\_\_\_\_ and  
one \_\_\_\_\_.

**2. Who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage?**

- a. The Pope or the Bishop of a Diocese
- b. The priest or deacon
- c. The couple themselves

**3. In the Marriage vows, the couple pledge to be:**

- a. Honest, loving, giving, and forgiving
- b. Free, total, faithful, and fruitful
- c. Dutiful, helpful, and obedient

**4. What two things do the wedding rings symbolize?**

- a. Love and fidelity
- b. Happiness and everlasting love
- c. Suffering and tolerance

**5. The marriage covenant, by its very nature as given to us by God, is ordered to the:**

- a. Everlasting friendship and companionship of the couple
- b. Health and wellness of the husband and wife
- c. Good of the couple as well as the generation and education of children

**6. Who was the first married couple mentioned in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

**7. The family is called the \_\_\_\_\_ Church.**

**8. According to St. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio, women have equal dignity and responsibility with men:**  
• TRUE or FALSE

**9. According to Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife the two shall**

- a. pay their own debts."
- b. live together for better or worse."
- c. become one body."

**10. In what book of the Old Testament can you find an example of a husband and wife praying together before uniting as one flesh?**

- a. Genesis
- b. Esther
- c. Tobit

**Bonus question:**

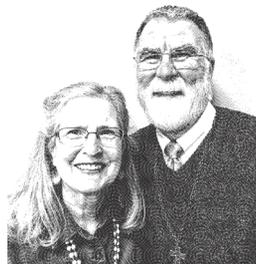
Who is the only married couple who were canonized as saints *together*?

So, stumped on any of these question about the Sacrament Marriage? If so, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) has a whole chapter on Marriage (beginning with paragraph #1601). One of the beautiful aspects of marriage in the Catholic Church is that "God himself is the author of marriage," meaning that marriage is not purely a human institution. It is through our creation in the image and likeness of God that we can find the very love that God has for us in how we love each other. And in Holy Scripture we find that man and woman were created for one another, and that the union of a married couple in mind, body, and spirit is a sign of Christ's presence in our lives and in the world.

And this is one of the reasons why the Catholic Church, through the teachings of Jesus himself, holds marriage in such a high regard as an indissoluble union. And that is why, through the guidance of Bishop Vasa, the updated Marriage Preparation Policy was instituted in 2020 within the Diocese of Santa Rosa, giving engaged couples

an opportunity to fully understand the beauty of the Sacrament of Marriage. If you are interested in reviewing the policy, you can go to the Diocese of Santa Rosa website (srdiocese.org) and under "Ministries" click on "Marriage Preparation." You can find the various components of the Marriage Preparation Policy explained there.

OK, back to the quiz. How'd you do? If you had a little difficulty with some of the questions, it's kind of like marriage itself, it takes work! If anyone was able to answer all the questions correctly, please let us know – we have a small prize we would like to send you. Contact us at the Marriage and Family Life Office. Blessings to you all!



Pax Christi,  
**Carlin and  
Deacon Dave Gould**  
Co-Directors of the Marriage  
& Family Life Office

**ANSWERS: 1.** One man and one woman **2.** c. **3.** b. **4.** a. **5.** c. **6.** Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28) **7.** Domestic **8.** True **9.** c. ...become one body" **10.** c. Tobit 8:4-9  
**Bonus question:** Saints Louis and Zelle Martin, patron saints of married couples, canonized in 2015, feast day July 12th.



# No optimism, much hope

I must confess that I'm not full of Pentecostal joy as I consider the next 12 months.

January 5, 2022 George Weigel  
The Dispatch – Catholic World Report



**W**hile history is always full of surprises, including happy ones, I must confess that I'm not full of Pentecostal joy as I consider the next 12 months.

World politics are likely to be grim. The Russian bear will continue his aggression in Ukraine, perhaps kinetically. China will intensify its pressure on Taiwan after the Winter Olympics (during which the communist regime's massive human rights violations will not receive nearly as much media attention as the BLM movement did in 2020.) Democracy will erode further in Latin America. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes will weaponize refugees and migrants, inventing new forms of human trafficking to destabilize the West. The European Union will continue to insist (as it did recently) that limitations on the killing of unborn children constitute "gender-based violence" because abortion-on-demand is a "fundamental human right" that "cannot be subordinated to cultural, religious, or political considerations." The World Health Organization will remain an obstacle to getting at the truth about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will life in these United States be calmer? I doubt it. In the run-up to the November midterm elections, each party will demonize the other as a mortal threat to the Republic. Crackpot conspiracy theories will flourish on the Internet and in social media. The obscene national debt will mount. If the Supreme Court does its constitutional duty and consigns *Roe v. Wade* and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* to the historical dustbin where we find *Dred Scott v. Sandford* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 51 arguments over providing legal protection to the unborn will unfold across the country; those debates are unlikely to be any more rational than those involving other bitterly contested culture war issues. And as the President's cognitive incapacities become more unmistakable, the possibility of a constitutional crisis looms.

What about the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church? The Barque of Peter seems headed into even stormier seas. Roman disaffection for the Catholic Church in the United States (which is based on a grotesque caricature) will express itself in unpleasant ways. Throughout the world Church, liberal Catholic authoritarianism and bullying will intensify; so will apocalypticism at the other end of the Catholic opinion spectrum. "Synodality" will remain undefined, but

a "synodal process" of "listening" will continue and the voices of Catholic deconstruction will probably dominate the discussion — as they certainly do in Germany, where a "Synodal Way" that would make Martin Luther cringe voted last September to debate whether the Church needs an ordained priesthood. And the Vatican, one suspects, will continue to disappoint those who pray for its return to a robust defense of the basic human rights of all.

Pondering all this, I recently called a friend and said, "Give me some good news." To which he immediately replied, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Exactly.

It's always good for the Church to make that basic confession of faith, but especially when the shadows are lengthening across the historical landscape. A good way to root ourselves in the first Christian proclamation — "Jesus is Lord" — is to revive the ancient custom of announcing the date of Easter and the other moveable feasts of the Church year immediately after the Gospel is read or sung on the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Here's the formula that the priest-celebrant or deacon would use this year, taken from the Roman Missal:

"Know, dear brethren, that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of his Resurrection, who is our Savior.

"On the second day of March will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season. On the 17th day of April, you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the 26th day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the fifth day of June, the feast of Pentecost. On the 19th day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. On the 27th day of November, the First Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

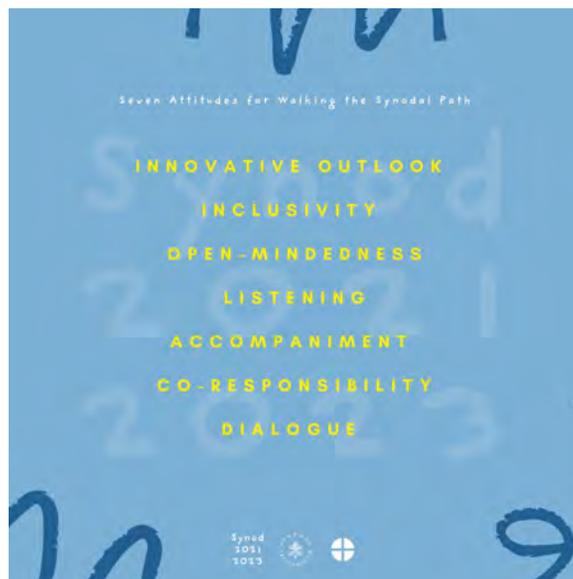
No matter what the vicissitudes and trials of history, Christians live in a different time-zone: the time-zone of salvation history. That is the truth to which the solemn liturgical proclamation of those dates attests. And that is why, however shaky the grounds for optimism, there is every reason for hope.



# USCCB CHOICE OF WORDS DRAWS CRITICISM

By Shannon Mullen

Washington, D.C. Newsroom, Jan 11



**T**he U.S. bishops took to Twitter Monday, January the 10th seeking feedback on the upcoming Synod on Synodality. And hoo, boy, they got it.

The 11 a.m. tweet from the Twitter account of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops backfired in a big way, triggering hundreds of negative comments from people who took umbrage at what they saw as the USCCB’s awkward embrace of corporate buzzwords.

Within hours it became “the tweet that Catholic Twitter can’t stop talking about,” as one commentator phrased it. By Tuesday morning, the USCCB had shut down comments from anyone it doesn’t follow or mention by name.

“Here are seven attitudes we can all adopt as we continue our synodal journey together. Which one inspires you the most? Let us know in the comments below,” the USCCB tweeted. The attitudes listed are: innovative outlook, inclusivity, open-mindedness, listening, accompaniment, and co-responsibility.

Most chose option 8: biting sarcasm.

“If you truly are being held captive in the HR Department, blink twice, we will send in a rescue team,” wrote one of the first people to respond.

“If I wanted corporate speak I’d go to my job on Sundays,” another person said.

“Sounds like something that comes out of the Calm app, not Catholicism. Thanks, I

will skip,” wrote another.

“Who wrote this spiritual guidance, Nabisco Corp?” someone wanted to know.

“Is this entire synod being run by human resources interns?” another wrote.

“We’re not a Fortune 500 company, we are literally the body of Christ.”

And on, and on, it went. You get the idea.

No one said gathering constructive input from the world’s 1 billion Catholics was going to be easy. And with a name like “the Synod on Synodality,” even the best minds on Madison Avenue are going to have their work cut out for them.

Still, this clearly was not the sort of dialogue the USCCB had in mind. A USCCB spokesperson did not immediately respond Tuesday morning to an email seeking comment about the tweet.

The Synod of Synodality is a global, two-year consultative process of “listening and dialogue” that began in October 2021. The opening of the process is a diocesan phase expected to last until April 2022. The Vatican has asked all dioceses to participate, hold consultations, and collect feedback on specific questions laid out in synod documents.

A synod is a meeting of bishops that aims to discuss a topic of theological or pastoral significance, in order to prepare a document of advice or counsel to the pope. At the end of the current process, a synod of bishops is scheduled to take place in Rome in

October 2023 to produce a final document.

2 of 2 An infographic showing the timeline for the synod on synodality.

“Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: ‘It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium,’” the USCCB says on its website.

“This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church’s ‘renewal’ proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission.”

In its early goings, however, many Catholics still haven’t heard about the Synod on Synodality, or don’t understand what it is, exactly. Other Catholics are suspicious about the process, or already hostile toward it, believing it will serve to amplify voices of dissent and be used in an attempt at changing Church discipline.

All of those attitudes, and more, were reflected in the avalanche of comments to the USCCB’s tweet.

The Vatican published a social media toolkit in October to help bishops and others guide the consultative process. The document includes templates for social media posts, a suggested hashtag (#ListeningChurch), and a





# EXPLAINING THE DOBBS ABORTION CASE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR US

## What is the Dobbs Case?

The case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization is before the Supreme Court in its current term. "Dobbs" represents the State of Mississippi because he is the head of the Mississippi Department of Health. The Jackson Women's Health Organization is an abortion clinic in Mississippi opposing the State of Mississippi.

**B**ack in 2018, the State of Mississippi passed the Gestational Age Act. This law prohibited abortion after 15 weeks' gestation, with exceptions for medical emergency or severe fetal abnormality.

Abortion supporters claim that this law violates the Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Together those Supreme Court decisions said it violated the US Constitution for any state to place an "undue burden" or a "substantial obstacle" in the way of a woman seeking an abortion during that period of time called "pre-viability," up to 6 months of pregnancy as defined by the Court at the time of the decisions. (The Court used the information they had at the time. With advances in medicine since *Roe* and *Casey*, now many premature babies can survive, at earlier stages in pregnancy than when these cases were decided.)

On the other side, the State of Mississippi contends that "nothing in constitutional text, structure, history, or tradition supports a right to abortion." In other words, it is arguing for outright reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, and the case that reaffirmed *Roe*, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Mississippi is asking the US Supreme Court to overturn, to set aside, its precedent set by earlier decisions. Technically, this is hard for the Court to do, but it has been done before and can be done again.

Mississippi argues that states should be free to regulate or even prohibit abortion if they have a "rational" reason for doing so and that Mississippi has several more-than-rational reasons: protecting the life of unborn human beings; protecting the medical profession from involvement in "barbaric" procedures; and protecting women's health.

In the middle is the US Supreme Court, and they could rule in several ways.

The Court can rule pre-viability prohibitions, like the one in the State of Mississippi, are unconstitutional. In this case, the Gestational Age Act would be struck down. Protections provided under the law would have to cease.

The Court could accept the reasoning offered by the State of Mississippi and overturn *Roe* and *Casey* and uphold the Mississippi Gestational Age Act. This

would be a pro-life ruling.

Or the Supreme Court could craft a ruling that takes some other, as yet unknown course and possibly leave the door open for another case in the future to challenge *Roe* and *Casey*. This kind of ruling could satisfy some pro-life demands, but not all pro-life demands.

Back to the Drawing Board

By taking on the *Dobbs* case, the current US Supreme Court is, in a sense, accepting the fact that, whatever good it meant to achieve, *Roe* and *Casey* simply has not been accepted by huge numbers of Americans over nearly 50 years, as nearly all other Supreme Court decisions have. It is time to "go back to the drawing board."

Before getting to the questions of the impact of *Dobbs*, it's important to correct some misconceptions and review some history.

First, a decision by the US Supreme Court on abortion in Mississippi will be applied to all other states across America. For example, in *Roe*, a decision to strike down a restriction on abortion in Texas was then applied to laws in all the other states. *Roe* and *Casey* put limits on what states could and could not do to regulate abortion and protect the unborn. *Dobbs* could undo, in whole or in part, the limits *Roe* and *Casey* put on states to regulate abortion and protect the unborn.

Second, an all-too common misconception goes if *Roe* made abortion legal in all 50 states, overturning *Roe* will make abortion illegal in all 50 states. This is not an accurate understanding of the situation. An important distinction is required. The Court did not rule on what was "legal" but rather what kind of law violated the US Constitution and could no longer be enforced and had to be changed according to the ruling of the Court. There is no foreseeable situation where abortion would become illegal in all 50 states.

Before *Roe* was decided in 1973, except for saving the life of the mother, 44 states prohibited abortion in all situations or nearly all situations. For example, before *Roe*, Louisiana and Texas banned abortion except to save the life of the mother. At the same time, New York State and Oregon allowed abortion in nearly all cases before viability of the unborn baby.

When the Court decided *Roe*, those

44 states had to end their prohibitions on abortion and allow abortion under more circumstances, under rules that had been set by the US Supreme Court in their decision.

And that brings us to why we need your help.

The Supreme Court will hear oral argument in the *Dobbs* case on December 1, 2021 and are likely to issue an opinion in the case in late June 2022. (These dates are subject to change by the court.)

Simply put, when the US Supreme Court rules on the *Dobbs* case next summer, we can expect abortion advocates to introduce a flood of legislature and/or ballot measures aimed at undoing a pro-life decision, as well as, we hope, a flood of legislation and ballot measures to take advantage of our new ability to protect unborn life.

As legislation is introduced, we need your voice. We may not be advocates sitting in the US Supreme Court, but we are all advocates in the court of public opinion - whether in our homes, in our churches, on social media or in the public square. We must continue to speak up by posting on social media, contacting legislators, working with churches, and advocating for legal protection for the unborn and their mothers.

If pro-lifers had been silent, instead of so active and vocal over fifty years, the *Dobbs* case would never have happened. If you had been silent, abortion advocates would be in complete control of the Courts, of the legislatures and all but a few of the American people. Instead, they must now actually go into Court and be held to account and justify what cannot be justified. Now is the moment we have been waiting for.

We will be with you every step of the way providing accurate, up to date information on the situation as things evolve and ways you can use your power as a citizen and pro-life advocate to defend life.

We also must work to create a society where no mother feels pressured to have an abortion - where she has access to the material support, medical care, nutrition, housing, childcare, and a real caring environment which encourages her and allows her to choose life.

So get ready. Prepare to speak. And stand with us as we continue to fight for the unborn and their mothers.



Greetings in our Savior Jesus Christ!

This month, I write to invite you to support the valuable ministries of our Diocese. After the testing of these past two years, I am confident that our ministries are more ready than ever to share a message of faith, hope, and charity sorely needed in our society today. You can help foster the faith. Your prayers and monetary contributions, joined with that of faithful men and women throughout our Catholic community, reach souls through catechetical formation, Catholic education, marriage preparation, vocation support, Restorative Justice, and other ministries. I invite you to join in strengthening the faith in our Diocese by giving to this year's *Annual Ministry Appeal*.

I wish to bring to your attention a positive development among the ministries. In the midst of the restrictions and separations of the pandemic, four of our ministries banded together to offer a range of support and resources richer than any single ministry could supply. Our Offices of Youth Ministry, of Marriage and Family Life, of Catholic Schools Faith Formation, and of Religious Education have together formed the Family Support Network.

I urge to affirm your commitment to the mission of Christ in our Diocese by contributing to the 2022 *Annual Ministry Appeal*. Please visit [srdiocese.org](http://srdiocese.org) to give online, or return the envelope in this edition to further this mission. More information on the Family Support Network and the other ministries supported by the *Annual Ministry Appeal* is contained in this issue.

While God has no need of our assistance, he chooses to use you and me to help our brothers and sisters. His return for our small efforts is immeasurable and His generosity is unbounded.

Asking every grace and blessing upon you, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

The Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa  
Bishop of Santa Rosa



# ONE FAMILY IN MISSION

Your gift to One Family in Mission, the Annual Ministry Appeal of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, allows you to foster the faith through ministries touching souls and changing lives across our Catholic community.

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# UNA FAMILIA EN MISIÓN

Su donación a Una Familia en Misión, la Petición Anual para los Ministerios de la Diócesis de Santa Rosa, le permite fomentar la fe a través de ministerios que tocan almas y cambian vidas en toda nuestra comunidad Católica.



# TOUCH LIVES AND CHANGE SOULS

## STRENGTHENED...

By trial, our ministries continue to spread the Good News of Christ. Made possible by the Annual Ministry Appeal, these ministries foster the faith in our Diocese and your support is needed. The work of the Appeal is your work. Your prayers and monetary contributions, joined with that of faithful men and women throughout the Diocese, touch the lives of our young people and catechists, our clergy and seminarians, and marriages and families all over the diocese.

# TOQUE VIDAS Y CAMBIE ALMAS

## FORTALECIDOS...

A prueba, nuestros ministerios continúan difundiendo las Buenas Nuevas de Cristo. Estos ministerios, que son posibles gracias a la Petición Anual Ministerial, fomentan la fe en nuestra Diócesis y se necesita su apoyo. El trabajo de esta Petición es el trabajo de ustedes. Sus oraciones y contribuciones monetarias, unidas a las de fieles hombres y mujeres de toda la Diócesis, tocan las vidas de nuestros jóvenes y catequistas, nuestro clero y seminaristas, y los matrimonios y familias de toda la diócesis.

# MINISTRIES BY GROUP

## CLERGY

- Clergy formation
- Diaconate life and formation
- Seminarians
- Vocations

*Seek first the kingdom of God.*  
Matthew 6:33

## CLERO

- Formación del clero
- Vida y formación diaconal
- Seminaristas
- Vocaciones

*Por lo tanto, busquen primero el reino.*  
Mateo 6:33

## MARRIAGE & FAMILY

- Marriage and Family Ministry
- Marriage Tribunal
- Respect Life

*Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*  
Luke 18:16

## FORMACIÓN Y DIVULGACIÓN

- Ministerio de Matrimonios y Familias
- Tribunal para Matrimonios - Eclesiásticos
- Respeto a la Vida

*Dejen que los niños vengan a Mí y no se lo impidan, porque el reino de Dios pertenece a los que son como ellos.*  
Lucas 18:16

## FORMATION & OUTREACH

- Catholic Schools
- Child and Youth Protection
- Communications
- Formación catequista
- Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa
- Newman Centers
- Religious Education
- Restorative Justice
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry

*Go... and teach all nations.*  
Matthew 28:19

## FORMATION & OUTREACH

- Escuelas Católicas
- Protección de Niños y Jóvenes
- Comunicaciones
- Formación de catequistas
- Hermanas Marianas de Santa Rosa
- Centros Newman
- Educación Religiosa
- Justicia Restaurativa
- Adolescentes y Adultos Jóvenes

*Ve ... y enseña a todas las naciones.*  
Mateo 28:19

## FOSTER THE FAITH

You can give to the Annual Ministry Appeal in the following ways.

- Send a check to:  
ANNUAL MINISTRY APPEAL 2021  
Diocese of Santa Rosa  
P.O. Box 4077  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
- Donate online at [www.srdiocese.org](http://www.srdiocese.org)
- Planned Giving (through wills or trusts)
- Matching Gifts (speak to your employer)
- Stock Donations
- Call the Development Office at 707-566-3344

Thank you for your generosity



**100%**  
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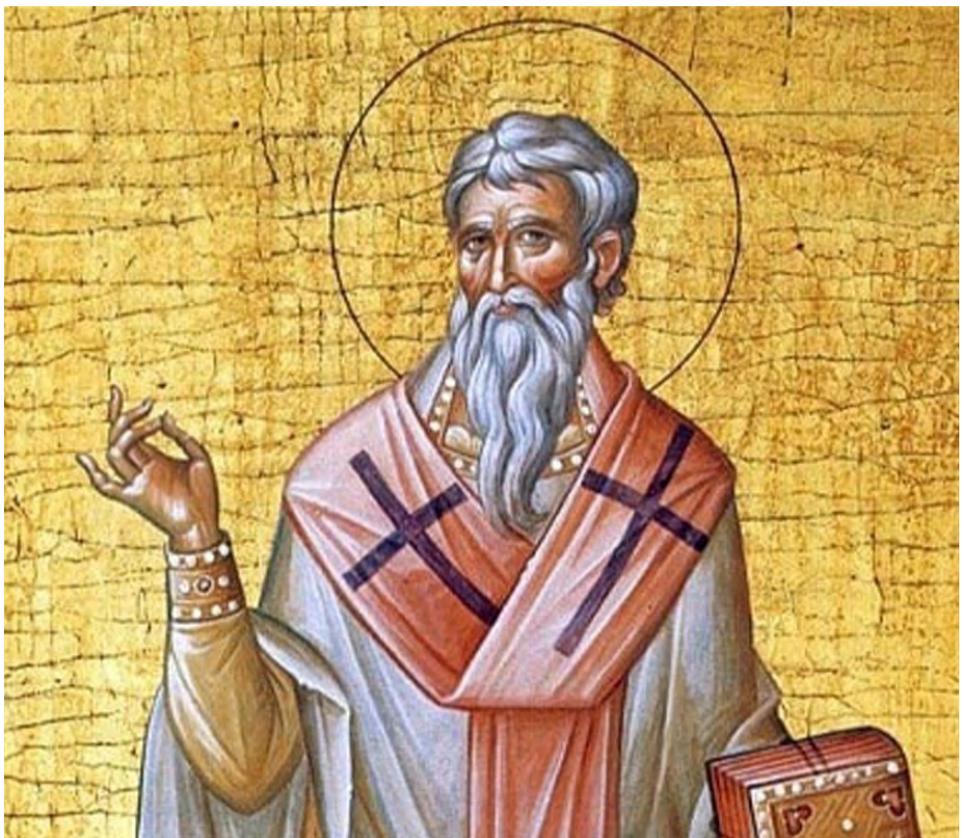


# IRENÆUS of LYONS

Getting to know  
the newest and  
oldest doctor of  
the Church

**Kevin Clarke, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Sacred Scripture,  
St. Patrick's Seminary and University



**I**n February 2021, a 104-year-old Colombian man, Lucio “Chiquito” Caicedo, completed his doctorate. Thanks to some quiet time during the Covid-19 lockdown, he was able to solve a math problem he had been working on for decades. Perhaps Caicedo has an intercessor in St. Irenaeus, who has waited more than 1,800 years to be named “doctor.” For both elders, the wait is up.

Earlier this month, Pope Francis announced to a joint group of Catholic and Orthodox that Irenaeus indeed will be named a doctor of the Church, the “Doctor of Unity” (Doctor unitatis). This news follows a petition from French Cardinal Phillipe Barbarin that Irenaeus of Lyons, the second century bishop martyr, be named a doctor of the Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops threw their support behind the petition in November 2019.

“The last shall be first and the first shall be last”

Irenaeus, who lived most of his life in the second century (130–202), is now going to be the oldest doctor in the Church’s history. He predates the previous elder Athanasius by nearly two centuries (296–373). Not only is Irenaeus unique by becoming the earliest doctor, he now is the first doctor who also is

a martyr, though some scholars have pointed out that the evidence he is a martyr may be lacking. Irenaeus grew up in Smyrna, one of the churches in Asia Minor addressed by the great early martyr Ignatius of Antioch. Irenaeus is a close connection with the doctrine of the Apostles. Irenaeus boasts of his having seen the great Polycarp of Smyrna when he was a young man. John the Apostle himself established Polycarp as bishop of Smyrna, according to Tertullian.

Irenaeus left us two major writings, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* and the more famous *Against Heresies*, which is titled, according to Irenaeus, *The Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called*. Both of these works are significant, but the *Against Heresies* is one of the largest early Christian treatises on theology. Irenaeus is the most scholastic of the Fathers in the earliest Church.

Understanding the writings of the Doctors of the Church

The old reliable Catholic Encyclopedia has a helpful entry from John Chapman on doctors of the Church. It is in the public domain, so anyone can read it. He writes, “Certain ecclesiastical writers have received this title on account of the great advantage the whole Church has derived from their doctrine.”

He also says that church doctors must be eminently learned, must possess a high degree of holiness, and must be proclaimed a doctor by the Church.

Catholics should not be tempted to think that the writings of the Doctors of the Church are on a par with Scripture. The declaration of a saint as a “doctor of the Church” is not an *ex cathedra* statement. In other words, such declarations are neither safeguarded by the gift of infallibility, nor do they indicate that a Church doctor’s writings are without error. Inerrancy would prove an impossible standard. Even the Doctor Angelicus, Thomas Aquinas, also known as the Common Doctor, made mistakes, famously regarding the Immaculate Conception, which would not be defined until six centuries after his death. That fact does not stop us from reading St. Thomas.

St. Irenaeus, too, is not without error. Irenaeus, like St. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, were of the opinion that Christ would return to reign on earth for a thousand-year period before the judgment, which is based on an overly literal interpretation of Rev 20:6. This doctrine is known as millenarianism, or chiliasm, and is held in some form by groups of Protestants. But in 1944, the Holy Office (which later became the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) decreed that chiliasm

“cannot be safely taught.” Thus, the later tradition is our guide to discerning Irenaeus’s words about the 1,000-year reign. Other interpreters have taken the numbers in the book of Revelation symbolically. In book 20 of his work the *City of God*, St. Augustine takes the 1,000 years to refer to the intervening period between Christ’s first and second comings, the thousand representing the whole of time of the Church’s reign, since a thousand is the cube of ten.

However, there is no reason not to commend ourselves to the study of Irenaeus more seriously. Indeed, reading his work can bear very much fruit for us today. So, it would benefit us to go to his texts and read. Let us have a brief look at his doctrine.

What is Irenaeus’s doctrine?

As we can see above, Irenaeus grew up in a young church beset by those exploiting its youth. This was true from the beginning of the Apostolic era—the New Testament testifies to the troubles caused by Simon Magus, the prophetess Jezebel, “antichrists,” and others—and continues in the second century. Irenaeus is particularly important for having written against the gnostic heretics, especially Valentinus and Basilides. Anyone who has ever set out to read his magnum opus, *Against Heresies*, recognizes the challenge of making it through the early chapters of book 1. He goes to great length to spell out the gnostic cosmogony as accurately as he is able. Irenaeus shows that the second-century gnostics were masters at interpreting the Scriptures—masters at reading them out of context. Irenaeus gives a fascinating metaphor of the gnostic approach to Scripture: it is as though they see a beautiful mosaic of a great king, and then they take all the tiles and rearrange them to their own liking into an image of a fox or a dog and they say that their new construction is the king (AH 1.8.1). They have missed the “content and unity” of the Scriptures. To further make the point of how they misread Scripture, Irenaeus takes a number of lines of Homeric poetry, each about a different character, and rearranges them to make it appear that they are all about Hercules (AH 1.9.3). No one would tolerate such abuse of the works of Homer, so why tolerate its being done to the Scriptures?

Further solidifying his contribution as interpreter of the Scriptures, he shows how there is remarkable continuity between New and Old. Like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus is eager

in his *Demonstration* to show how all the prophecies of the Old Testament point to Jesus Christ. This is particularly important because of a second century heretic, Marcion, who did not consider the Old Testament inspired and regarded its god as evil. In fact, Marcion also rejected most of the New Testament except for Luke and some of Paul’s writings. Clearly, Marcion finds intellectual heirs in the new atheists of today, which makes Irenaeus’s doctrine of Scripture apropos. Irenaeus relates the amusing story of an interaction between St. Polycarp and Marcion. When Marcion asked recognition from Polycarp, Polycarp responded, “I do recognize you as the first-born of Satan” (AH, 3.3.4).

Irenaeus’s point is that all things must be measured against the “rule of truth.” In the *Demonstration*, he calls it the “rule of faith” (*Demonstration*, 3). Irenaeus did not have the benefit of proclaiming the Nicene Creed at liturgy, for it had not yet been written, but his “rule of truth” reads like a credal statement. He writes, “The Rule of the Truth that we hold is this: There is one God Almighty, who created all things through His Word; He both prepared and made all things out of nothing, just as Scripture says...” (AH 1.22.1). The idea of a rule (Greek: *kanon*) presupposes that a “measuring rod” or a standard has been given. In other words, Irenaeus does not regard the faith as some human invention to be manipulated, but something divine to be measured against and safeguarded.

For Irenaeus, one of the surest defenses of the truth of the faith is its apostolicity. St. Clement of Rome first attests to this doctrine in the late first century in his letter to the Corinthians. Irenaeus claims that all of the churches have the ability to trace their succession back to the apostles themselves. He then says his book would be too long if he traced the succession of all the churches—though we wish he had. Nevertheless, he traces the apostolic succession of the Church of Rome from Peter to Pope Eleutherus (d. 189).

Irenaeus is also well known among scholars for his theology of recapitulation, which he develops from St. Paul. For Irenaeus, Christ recapitulates, or “heads up again,” all things in himself, not only humanity but all the creation. Irenaeus likes to use the phrase “recapitulative economy” to indicate the saving plan of Christ the Lord. This is why it is important that Christ be one just like us,

from the same stock as Adam, the first one made in his image and likeness. At the heart of Irenaeus’s “recapitulative economy” is Christ’s coming through the Virgin, and the Scriptures foretell them both.

Perhaps some had hoped St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort would be the next doctor of the Church. After all, de Montfort will likely become a doctor sooner or later. Our Lady’s devotees, however, will not be disappointed by St. Irenaeus, who regards Mary as the New Eve. He appears to take this title “New Eve” implicitly from St. Paul, who frequently refers to Christ as the “last Adam” (see 1 Cor 15:45). In his recapitulation theology, he has a prominent place for Mary, who reverses the curse. Just as Adam was taken from the “virgin earth,” so also the New Adam comes from the Virgin’s womb by “the same arrangement of embodiment” (*Demonstration*, 32). Further, the image of Mary Undoer of Knots, one of Pope Francis’s favorite images of Our Lady that he has promoted throughout his ordained ministry, has St. Irenaeus at its source. He writes, “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience” (AH 3.22.4). Mary plays no small role in salvation history.

Who follows Irenaeus?

In the 27-year pontificate of St. John Paul II, he only named one doctor of the Church, St. Therese of Lisieux. In the past decade alone, however, we have seen a 12% increase in the number of Church doctors, and there is no reason for this trend not to continue. In 2012, Pope Benedict named Sts. John of Avila and Hildegard of Bingen. Irenaeus marks the second doctor chosen by Pope Francis, along with St. Gregory of Narek. Who, then, is next? There are some interesting possibilities.

A *La Civiltà Cattolica* article by Giandomenico Mucci in 1997, the Little Flower’s year of elevation, listed eighteen potential doctors of the Church (twenty-one if you count Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, and Cyprian, whom Mucci said should be eligible even though they were martyrs). Since 1997, each of the doctors who have been named is mentioned as a candidate in Mucci’s article. Ladies first and in alphabetical order. On the list there are four saints: Bridget of Sweden, Gertrude of Helfta, Margaret Mary Alacoque, Veronica Giuliani; and one blessed: Julian of Norwich. There are ten men saints left on his list: Antonino of Florence, Bernardino of

Siena, Cyril and Methodius, Ignatius of Loyola, John Bosco, Lorenzo Giustiniani, Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, Thomas of Villanova, and Vincent de Paul.

We do not have the space to discuss each of these, as each have their own merits. There is only one Jesuit doctor of the Church, St. Peter Canisius. However, a strong case could be made for St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), whose writings and example have been extremely significant. It would also be pertinent for the first Jesuit pope to make such a declaration, especially as Ignatius would be a worthy choice. Also, an intriguing possibility on this list is Julian of Norwich (1343–1416), who is not yet a canonized saint. Julian is also a controversial figure at times, and Pope Francis's naming her would not only be messy, but it would be wise and welcome among those who appreciate her work.

But the possibilities are not limited to those on Mucci's list. Some on social media have thrown around the name of Origen of Alexandria (184–253), and there is no disputing his effect on Biblical exegesis. He had a marked effect upon the Cappadocian Fathers, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and many other saints. Origen is a de facto doctor of the Church, when it comes to Biblical interpretation, at least. However, some of his doctrines are especially problematic, namely, his doctrines of the fall of souls and

of the universal restoration. Origen was also denounced by multiple ecumenical councils. Maybe popes will someday warm toward Origen, but he has a massive uphill battle and is not venerated by the Catholic Church. Still, the pope of surprises (or one of his successors) could have one in store for us.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (335–395), however, is, and has often played third fiddle behind his brother Basil the Great and fellow Cappadocian Gregory Nazianzen. But interest in Gregory of Nyssa is booming today. Even though, like Origen, he presents similar theological difficulties, he does not carry around the weight of the Church's rejection, and thus makes an intriguing candidate.

A much more likely candidate from the patristic era is Maximus the Confessor (580–662). Maximus defended the doctrine of Christ's two wills and suffered mutilation and eventually death because of his injuries. He also is a particularly important figure who lived the unity between east and west. He is a Greek witness to the validity of the Latin creed and a defender of Latin authors. Many regard him as the greatest theological mind of the patristic era. Maximus certainly merits the title doctor of the Church and should be on anyone's list.

St. John Henry Newman (1801–1890) is one of the names most commonly floated. Canonized in 2019, Newman continues to have a significant impact through the

abundant writings he left behind. He likely will be named doctor. If he were named doctor next, he would be the second-most recent, followed only by Therese of Lisieux (1873–1897).

Some might suggest Pope St. John Paul II, but Mucci had argued that the writings of popes are already more significant because of their magisterial weight. However, two popes are doctors of the Church—Leo the Great and Gregory the Great. John Paul II, often called "the Great," could someday find himself in their company. It might be better if the Church takes her time in elevating John Paul II in order to lend more credibility to the duration of his impact upon theology. To date, St. Alphonsus Ligouri is the quickest to have risen to the rank of doctor of the Church, a mere 84 years after his death.

But each of these candidates must wait a little longer. It is time for us to get to know this Doctor unitatis, who guides us to the unity of God's salvific plan for the universe. Bishop, martyr, and now doctor, St. Irenaeus's feast day is June 28.

Dr. Kevin Clarke is assistant professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Patrick's Seminary & University in Menlo Park, where he has taught courses on Scripture, Patristics, and Church History.

## SIMBANG GABI CELEBRATED AT ST. ROSE

By Patrick and Maridel Perlas.



**S**t. Rose of Lima Catholic Church (Santa Rosa) once again brought back Simbang Gabi last Dec. 15 – 23, 2021. Simbang Gabi is a devotional nine-day series of Masses practiced by Catholics in the Philippines in the anticipation of Christmas.

The Church was decorated with the Pilipino lanterns that lights up the Mass. The readings and some Prayers of the Faithful were read in the Pilipino language. The ambiance of the church felt nostalgic, and a lot of the Filipino enjoyed having the tradition

back. Simbang Gabi at St. Rose was the project of Fr. Michaelraj Philominsamy. Let's keep our prayers filled with reflection and gratitude throughout the coming year!

Thank you to all the Host of Simbang Gabi, Al & Belinda Biscocho and the Arcilla Family, Demie & Rosie de la Cruz, Precy de la Cruz, Chris & Cora Kern, Nativity Lavitoria, Daisy Lavitoria, Dave & Siony Lorange, Genie Marcos & Family, Patrick & Maridel Perlas, Marcus & Cherie Pipkin, Ness & Leila Salonga, Lou Scott, Rene & Tina Tiongson, Bong & Nora

Valle, James & Ednaly Virata, and Michael & Cora Wade. The hosts helped and supported in organizing the Simbang Gabi. The hosts served Lechon at the reception on the last night of the Simbang Gabi.

Our Choir members who sang to share the spirit of Christmas were Maria Bayonito, Daisy Lavitoria, Nativity Lavitoria Mata, Maridel Perlas, Dino Trovela, Savanna & Sophia Waterkamp. Maya Gregori and Donna Trovela as Choir leaders. Thank you to Jacob and Aaliyah Salonga, our Altar Servers.

# What the US Bishops' 'Eucharistic Coherence' Document Can Do — *If We Let It*

The Editors of the National Catholic Register  
November 23, 2021

**EDITORIAL:** Hyper-politicized interpretations of the document make two crucial mistakes.



**T**he U.S. bishops are committed to making reverence for the Eucharist central for every Catholic, reaffirming Church teaching on the Real Presence and proper reception of the sacrament.

After months of public controversy, the U.S. bishops approved a teaching document on the Eucharist at their fall general assembly: "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church."

To the elation of some and the disappointment of others, the document contains no explicit Communion ban of Catholic politicians who promote abortion rights, like President Joe Biden. Because the document had been irresponsibly framed by many in the media as solely concerned with that issue, strident voices from different ecclesial extremes have dismissed the final version with words like "tepid" and "incoherent."

If it didn't ban Biden from receiving Communion by name, what, both sides ask facetiously, was even the point of it? Some have even used this criticism of the final document to advance a self-serving narrative of the bishops as ineffective and irrelevant.

Such interpretations make two critical mistakes. First, they mistake the role and the jurisdiction of the USCCB, the episcopal conference of the Catholic Church in the United States. The bishops' document contained no "by-name" Communion ban for pro-abortion-rights politicians because the USCCB has no power to take such disciplinary action — it never has. According to canon law, that's a pastoral matter decided upon by the local ordinary of the politician in question: the bishop who is ultimately responsible for the spiritual care of said politician and of the local flock.

Second, these dismissive responses to a teaching document on the Eucharist reveal a dangerously reductive and ideological perspective. They treat the Body and Blood of Christ as nothing more than a political football, a mere object to be used in partisan politics. So if the document doesn't say anything that can be conveniently weaponized for partisan points, they treat it as irrelevant.

Although Biden's election — and the unique scandal of a Catholic president promoting an intrinsic evil — may have served as the most urgent catalyst for this document, the bishops have repeatedly made clear it is part of a much broader response to a pervasive crisis of Eucharistic belief and practice in the U.S. Bizarrely, even the fact of this crisis has been disputed by some, though recent polling unambiguously affirms that it is sadly the case.

Critiquing many of these hyper-politicized interpretations that view the document as insignificant, Villanova philosopher Terence Sweeney said the fact "that so many of us respond to this with a shrug (since it is nonpolitical) is a scandal" and a sign that "the real incoherence is in our hearts."

In fact, it is precisely this incoherence that "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church" can help to address — if we let it.

The document may not be the most sublime, but it is a timely and edifying

synthesis of the Church's teaching on the Eucharist and its application in our lives as Catholics in the United States. It contains beautiful catechesis on the Eucharist's connection to our divinization, participation in Christ's sacrifice, and communion with God and one another. It underscores the importance of taking part in the Lord's Day liturgy and highlights practical means for fostering Eucharistic devotion.

And it speaks clearly and powerfully about "the personal and moral transformation" sustained by the Eucharist, which affects not just our lives as individuals, but all of our relationships and, indeed, "our society as a whole." As the document notes, the Eucharist calls for a coherence between what we profess and how we live, committing us to the poor, the unborn and the vulnerable in our midst. Do critics of the document really deny that meaningful fruit cannot come from prayerful engagement with this text or the initiatives generated from it?

Furthermore, although the document doesn't individually name and ban those who publicly dissent from Church teaching and the moral law from receiving Communion (again, because it can't), it lays out clearly the relevant teaching.

Regarding Eucharistic coherence, for instance, the bishops teach, "The person who, by his or her own action, has broken communion with Christ and his Church but receives the Blessed Sacrament acts incoherently, both claiming and rejecting communion at the same time." Highlighting the danger of scandal that such a scenario can entail, the bishops cite Pope St. John Paul II, who taught that "those who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Eucharistic communion." The bishops themselves affirm that "[i]t is the special responsibility of the diocesan bishop to work to remedy situations that involve public actions at variance with the visible communion of the Church and the moral law. Indeed, he must guard the integrity of the sacrament, the visible communion of the Church, and the salvation of souls."

What the document contains, then, is an undeniable restatement of the Church's perennial teaching on Eucharistic coherence, including guidance for when and why a Catholic might need to be barred from Holy

Communion. Only the most obtuse, politically motivated readings of the document could deny that it, in fact, is applicable to pro-abortion-rights politicians. So while the USCCB can't ban politicians who promote intrinsic evils from receiving Communion as a means for protecting their souls and encouraging their repentance, local bishops can — and this document may help them to do so.

It's not unreasonable to think that, on the basis of the document's restatement of tried-and-true Church teaching and its near-unanimous approval by the episcopal conference, local ordinaries may be encouraged to make the difficult, but sometimes needed, decision of publicly stating that pro-abortion-rights politicians will not be admitted to Communion in their dioceses.

Finally, the bishops' document can contribute to greater Eucharistic coherence in America precisely because it is not just a document. Instead, it is the "cornerstone" of a much grander Eucharistic Revival, set to launch this coming summer, before culminating with a National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024. As Stephen White has noted, the document is "a beginning by the bishops, not the end."

Clearly, the "pointlessness" of this document has been grossly overstated. One wonders what some might have to gain by undercutting a document devoted to restoring authentic Eucharistic belief and practice in the United States.

But the fruitfulness of the bishops' teaching is not inevitable. In a way, this mirrors the way the bishops chose to break up and frame their teaching on the Eucharist: as a gift from Christ, which calls for our faithful response.

Through his apostles' successors, Christ has given the Church in the U.S. an invaluable gift: a chance to embark on a revival of our Eucharistic faith. The next step is up to us — as bishops, clergy and laypeople, and as families, parishes and dioceses. How will we respond?



# REAVIVAMIENTO EUCARÍSTICO NACIONAL

**S**i bien la lucha contra varios aspectos del Covid-19 continúa y los desafíos del ejercicio libre de nuestra fe, en todos sus aspectos, siguen siendo un reto en nuestros días, también encontramos grandes y esperanzadores signos para el 2022 y 2023. A lo largo de los años ha habido una serie de informes y encuestas que indican que un número significativo de católicos no creen, o simplemente no saben, lo que la Iglesia enseña sobre la Presencia real del Señor Jesús bajo las especies simples de pan y vino. El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica en 1997, reitera lo que la Iglesia enseñó en 1551: "Porque Cristo nuestro Redentor dijo que lo que ofrecía bajo la especie de pan era verdaderamente su Cuerpo, se ha mantenido siempre en la Iglesia esta convicción que declara nuevamente el Santo Concilio: por la consagración del pan y el vino se opera la conversión de toda la substancia del Cuerpo de Cristo nuestro Señor y de toda la substancia del vino en la substancia de su Sangre; la Iglesia católica ha llamado justa y apropiadamente a este cambio transustanciación." (CIC, 1376).

El malentendido en torno a este misterio se remonta a controversias suscitadas en tiempos de la Iglesia primitiva, de hecho, se remonta a la época del mismo Jesucristo. En el capítulo sexto del Evangelio de Juan, escuchamos a Jesús decir: "Además, el pan que yo daré es mi propia carne; lo doy por la vida del mundo." (Juan 6:51). En respuesta a estas palabras, "hubo una feroz disputa entre sus oyentes, '¿Cómo puede éste darnos a comer su carne?'" El Evangelio registra que como resultado de la insistencia de Jesús en la veracidad de sus palabras, "muchos de sus discípulos se retiraron y ya no andaban con él." (Juan vs. 66)

En mi opinión, se podría argumentar legítimamente que no comprender adecuadamente, o peor aún, rechazar obstinadamente esta enseñanza de la Iglesia se encuentra en el centro, en gran parte, de la enfermedad eclesial que actualmente vemos en la Iglesia. La asistencia a la iglesia continúa disminuyendo - ¿Cómo puede alguien mantenerse alejado de la Iglesia si cree que Jesús está verdaderamente presente y que Jesús mismo es recibido en la Sagrada Comunión? Los jóvenes continúan desafiados de la Iglesia - ¿Cómo puede cualquier joven que ha recibido la instrucción adecuada sobre la presencia de Jesús en la Eucaristía alejarse de Jesús sin experimentar una tristeza extrema (cf. Lucas 18:23)? Muchos rechazan las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre cuestiones morales serias y reclaman la armonía eucarística: ¿Cómo puede alguien rechazar los mandamientos de Jesús mientras El mismo afirma: "¿Si me amas, guarda mis mandamientos" (Juan 14:15)?

Muchos ven la celebración de la Santa Misa como una función social y comunitaria sin reconocer que es obra de la Iglesia en la que se hace presente nuevamente la pasión, muerte y resurrección de nuestro Señor. "En la Eucaristía, la Iglesia, con María, está como al pie de la cruz, unida a la ofrenda y a la intercesión de Cristo" (CIC, 1370).

La Iglesia Católica describe la Eucaristía, es decir, el Sacrificio de la Misa, como "fuente y cumbre de la vida cristiana" (CIC, 1324). Es la fuente, porque el Sacrificio Eucarístico hace presente y ofrece de nuevo el único Sacrificio redentor del Calvario de Jesucristo (CIC, 1362-68; 1341). Es la cumbre, porque la Eucaristía está por encima de todos los sacramentos como "perfección de la vida espiritual y fin al que tienden todos los sacramentos" (CIC, 1374). Cuando recibimos el Preciosísimo Cuerpo y la Sangre de nuestro Señor en la santa comunión, es muy importante que reflexionemos sobre estas verdades para asegurarnos de recibir siempre a nuestro Señor con la mayor dignidad posible. Reverencia, atención, devoción, ¡debería ser nuestro mantra!

Si bien la Eucaristía ciertamente permanece envuelta en un misterio, esto no significa que seamos libres de "crear" nuestra propia comprensión del significado de la Eucaristía. El reavivamiento eucarístico previsto por los obispos de los Estados Unidos es un plan de varios años para "renovar la Iglesia, encendiendo una relación viva con el Señor Jesucristo en la Sagrada Eucaristía". Espero involucrar plenamente a la Diócesis de Santa Rosa en este Reavivamiento Eucarístico. Con este fin, buscaré involucrar a los jóvenes, adultos jóvenes, padres, catequistas, diáconos y sacerdotes en este primer año de un proyecto de renovación de tres años. El domingo 19 de junio, la solemnidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo ocupará un lugar destacado en este primer año de trabajo de reavivamiento eucarístico.

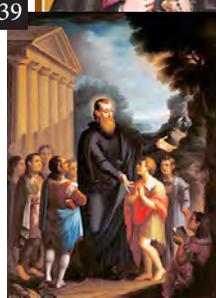
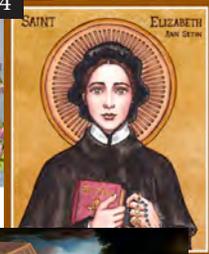
Ore por mí como prometo  
orar por usted.

**Reverendísimo**  
**Robert F. Vasa**  
Obispo de Santa Rosa

# SAINTS

for

## JANUARY+FEBRUARY



1. January 01: Mary, Mother of God
2. January 02: St. Basil and St. Gregorian Nazianen
3. January 03: St. Genevieve
4. January 04: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
5. January 05: St. John Neumann Saint Thomas Aquinas
6. January 06: Blessed Andre Bessette
7. January 07: St. Raymond of Penyafort
8. January 08: St. Thorfinn
9. January 09: St. Julian and St. Basilissa
10. January 10: St. William
11. January 11: St. Theodosius
12. January 12: St. Marguerite Bourgeoys
13. January 13: St. Hillary of Poitiers
14. January 14: St. Macrina
15. January 15: St. Paul the Hermit
16. January 16: St. Berard and Companions
17. January 17: St. Anthony of Egypt
18. January 18: Blessed Christina
19. January 19: St. Canute
20. January 20: St. Fabian and St. Sebastian

21. January 21: St. Agnes
22. January 22: St. Vincent of Saragossa
23. January 23: St. John the Almsgiver
24. January 24: St. Francis de Sales
25. January 25: Conversion of St. Paul
26. January 26: St. Timothy and St. Titus
27. January 27: St. Angela Merici
28. January 28: St. Thomas Aquinas
29. January 29: St. Gildas
30. January 30: St. Bathildis
31. January 31: St. John Bosco
32. February 01: St. Brigid of Ireland
33. February 02: Presentation of the Lord
34. February 03: St. Blase
35. February 04: St. Jane Valois
36. February 05: St. Agatha
37. February 06: St. Paul Miki and Companions
38. February 07: Blessed Giles Mary
39. February 08: St. Jerome Emiliani
40. February 09: St. Apollina and the Martyrs of Alexandria
41. February 10: St. Scholastica
42. February 11: Our Lady of Lourdes
43. February 12: St. Meletius
44. February 13: St. Catherine of Ricci

45. February 14: St. Cyril and St. Methodius
46. February 15: St. Faustinus and St. Jovita
47. February 16: St. Onesimus
48. February 17: Seven Founders of the Servite Order
49. February 18: St. Bernadette
50. February 19: St. Barbatus
51. February 20: St. Eucherius
52. February 21: St. Peter Damian
53. February 22: Chair of St. Peter
54. February 23: St. Polycarp
55. February 24: St. Montanus, St. Lucius and Companions
56. February 25: St. Caesarius of Nazianzen
57. February 26: St. Porphyry
58. February 27: St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows
59. February 28: St. Romanus and St. Lupicinus



# Walk for Life West Coast brings 15,000+ to San Francisco

San Francisco, Calif., Jan 24 (CNA)



**A**rchbishop Salvatore Cordileone condemned abortion as the equivalent of a sacrament of a “new secular religion” in his homily at the Mass for Walk for Life West Coast on Saturday at the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco.

More than 15,000 people gathered Jan. 22 for the 18th annual Walk for Life West Coast.

The event was held on the 49th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision, which found that a woman had a legal right to an abortion throughout her pregnancy.

Cordileone, speaking about how the devil is using a strategy of “divide and conquer” to alienate humanity from both God and each other, said that this form of secularism “has all become a sort of religion on its own, one that takes the form of a hyper-aggressive, anti-Christian kind of a secularism.”

“This is all around us nowadays, and this kind of secularism has all the marks of a religion: infallible dogmas, rituals, saints, creedal statements and condemnation of heretical teachings along with punishment of the heretics who hold them and dare to speak them in public, index of forbidden books, even sacraments,” he said.

Abortion, said Cordileone, has become the “blessed sacrament” of this militant secularism.

It is “what they hold most sacred, the

doctrine and practice upon which their whole belief system is built.” This is why, he explained, “we see such visceral and violent reaction to any even minimal regulation of abortion in the law, regulations that even those who believe it should be kept legal would see as reasonable, such as informed consent and parental consent.”

“It should come as no surprise that the first to challenge the Texas Heartbeat Bill was the Satanic Temple, and precisely on the grounds of deprivation of religious liberty: they need abortion to carry out their religious rituals,” said Cordileone.

The antidote to this, said the archbishop, is living “according to true wisdom,” meaning “the path to lasting happiness, a path which is walked by means of the virtues, both the natural and the theological virtues.” This is accomplished by a devotion to the sacraments.

“We have the real Blessed Sacrament,” said Cordileone. “How much of the desecration of human life we witness in our time is due to a loss of the sense of the sacred, even that which is most sacred, the Blessed Sacrament? Do we do all possible to respect the integrity of the Blessed Sacrament and avoid its desecration by receiving reverently and worthily, always giving God our best in worship?”

Cordileone stated that Christians who are in favor of abortion rights, who have been “mindlessly co-opted by the new secular

religion and its false blessed sacrament” are equivalent to the Israelites who worshiped Moloch.

“But there is only one Blessed Sacrament; to live as if there were two brings desecration of what is sacred on both fronts: the Bread of Life on the altar and human life in the womb,” he said.

Now, said the archbishop, society is at a “very pivotal moment” with the upcoming Supreme Court Decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. Despite this, and the serious potential for the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, Cordileone warned that it is not the time to “think we can relax our efforts even with the right decision.”

“The devil will not stop until he is defeated and returned to hell definitively when our Lord returns,” he said. “There will always be attacks on the dignity of human life, and they will intensify,” noting that California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) pledged to make California a “sanctuary state for abortion.”

“So we will continue to work to build a culture of life, by advocating for life, by providing women in crisis pregnancies love and support and all that they need to know they are valued, respected and have friends walking with them in their time of distress, giving them the opportunity to make the happiest decision of all, the decision for life,” he said.

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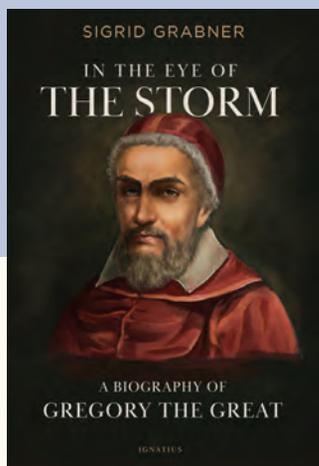
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# HOW SAINTS LIVED AND DIED



## ◆ IN THE EYE OF THE STORM: A Biography of Gregory the Great

Sigrid Grabner

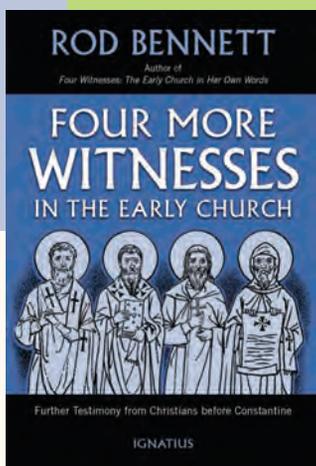
Rome in 590. A plague is tearing through the city. Pope Pelagius II is dead. Outside the walls, Lombard soldiers are raising their swords. What can save the Eternal City? All eyes are on the next Pope. This tells the dramatic story of St. Gregory the Great, raised against his will to the papacy, "in the eye of a storm", at the helm of an "old and rotten ship".

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## ◆ FOUR MORE WITNESSES IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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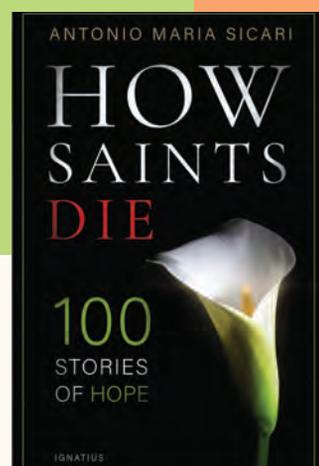
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