

Apprenticeship in The Art of Living

Fr. Roger J. Landry
Duc in Altum Virtual Schools Summit
October 28-30, 2020

Evangelization: Teaching How To Live



- Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, during the Jubilee for Catechists in Rome in December, 2000, spoke about the reason why the Church must engage in a New Evangelization.
- “A large part of today’s humanity does not find the Gospel in the permanent evangelization of the Church – that is to say, the convincing response to the question: How to live.”
- “This is why we are in need of a new evangelization: if the art of living remains an unknown, nothing else works. ... To evangelize means ... to teach the art of living.”
- “We are searching for, along with the permanent and uninterrupted and never to be interrupted evangelization, a new evangelization, capable of being heard by that world that does not find access to the ‘classic’ evangelization.”
- Jesus is the Master in this School:
 - “At the beginning of his public life Jesus says: ‘I have come to evangelize the poor.’ This means: ‘I have the response to your fundamental question; I will show you the path of life, the path toward happiness. Rather: I am that path.’”
 - “This art [of living] can only be communicated by [one] who has life, who is the Gospel personified.”

Jesus the “Philosopher”



- In *Spe Salvi* (2007), Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the early Christian understanding of how Jesus taught us to live.
 - “The figure of Christ is interpreted on ancient sarcophagi principally by two images: the philosopher and the shepherd.
 - “Philosophy at that time was not generally seen as a difficult academic discipline, as it is today. Rather, the philosopher was someone who knew how to teach the essential art: the art of being authentically human—the art of living and dying. ... The true philosopher who really did know how to point out the path of life was highly sought after.
 - “Towards the end of the third century, on the sarcophagus of a child in Rome, we find for the first time, in the context of the resurrection of Lazarus, the figure of Christ as the true philosopher, holding the Gospel in one hand and the philosopher's travelling staff in the other. With his staff, he conquers death; the Gospel brings the truth that itinerant philosophers had searched for in vain.
 - “In this image, ... we see clearly what both educated and simple people found in Christ: he tells us who man truly is and what a man must do in order to be truly human. He shows us the way, and this way is the truth. He himself is both the way and the truth, and therefore he is also the life that all of us are seeking. He also shows us the way beyond death; only someone able to do this is a true teacher of life.”

Jesus Came to Teach Us

The Art of Living



- Jesus is the personified response to the prayer of the Psalms, “Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth” (Ps 86:11)
- He came as the “Way, the Truth and the Life,” saying to us not just, “Do what I say,” but “Follow me!”
- He came not just to “inform” but to “form.”
- He taught, “A disciple is not above his teacher. ... It is enough for the disciple to become like his teacher” (Mt 10:24-25). He seeks to make us like him.
- The mission of the Church is to impart this formation. St. Paul, for example, labored until “Christ be formed” in others,” urging people to “train yourself in godliness,” to “have the mind of Christ” until one could say, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Eph 6:4; Gal 4:19; 1 Tim 4:7-8; 1 Cor 9:26-27; Phil 2:5; Gal 2:20).

The *Aparecida* Document on the Five Stages in the Art of Living

1. **Encounter with Jesus** – We meet Jesus, come to know that He is alive and at work in human life, in my life, and is calling me to follow him. It begins often with the kerygma proclaimed by someone already evangelized.
2. **Conversion** – Meeting Jesus helps us to see we're not living yet as we ought, that we're being summoned to a new life, one based not on sand but on Christ as rock, seeking to live by his criteria rather than the world's.
3. **Discipleship** – “Disciple” in Greek means “student,” which in Latin means “zealous.” We're called to be on fire not just to know but to live according to what Jesus teaches us.
4. **Communion** – We are made in the image and likeness of God, who is a loving Trinitarian communion of persons. Christians are called to experience this communion, in families, parishes, movements, religious communities and more, like the first Christians who prayed, ate, and to Jerusalem together and had all things in common.
5. **Mission** – As the grow in communion with the Triune God and with each other, Christians experience the need to share the joy of the faith with others, to bring them into communion too. The same Lord who says, “Come to me,” says, “Go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.”

Documento —
de Aparecida

Texto conclusivo da
Conferência Geral do Episcopado
Latino-Americano e do Caribe





Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

- Jesus does not show us just the art of living but the art of helping others to live, so that they may have life to the full (Jn 10:10).
- His three years of public ministry were not just to proclaim the Gospel himself but to form the twelve apostles, the 72 disciples and the whole Church to live and share the faith, with the help and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in perpetual Pentecost.
- We have a chance to focus on twelve lessons he teaches.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

1. The Priority of Prayer

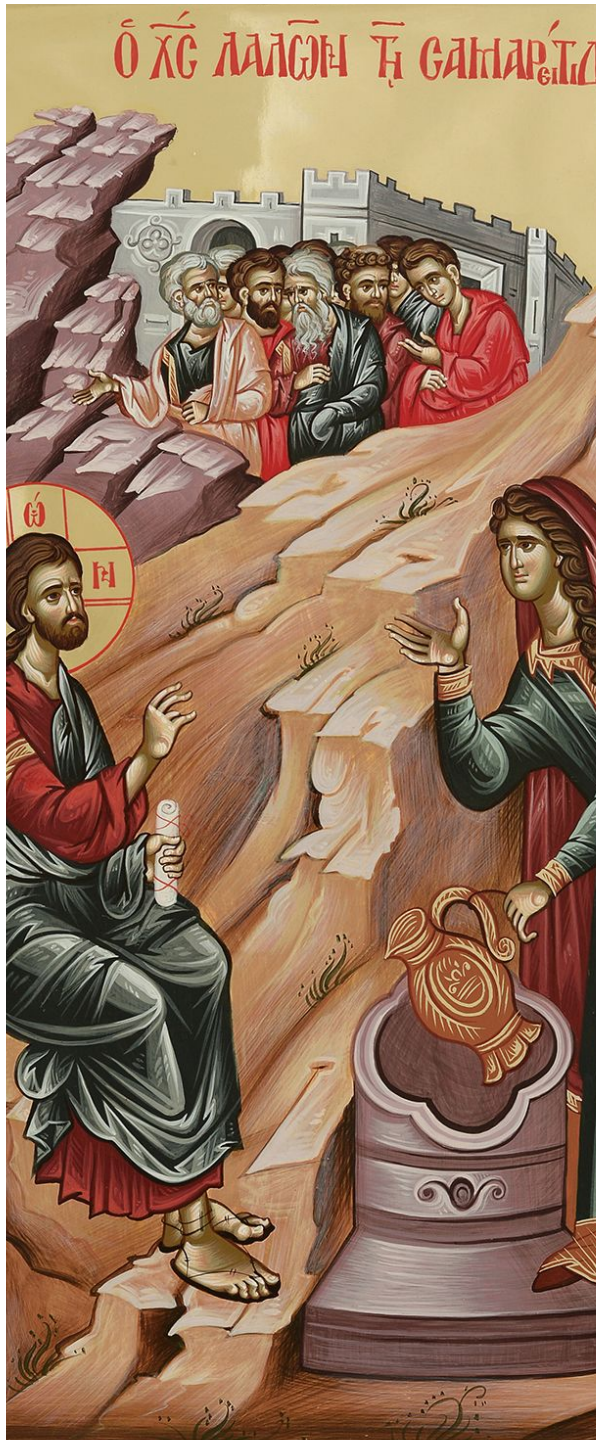
- Before Jesus called, he prayed, even spending all night in prayer before summoning the apostles.
- Jesus called us to “pray to the Master of the Harvest” for laborers for his harvest.
- We need to pray not just for the new evangelization, but for individuals, like St. Monica prayed for her husband, mother-in-law and son, St. Augustine.

2. The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

- The soil matters. Need to be aware of hardened, superficial (rocky) and distracted (thorny) soil

3. We need more than words

- In the instructions to the 12 and to the 72, Jesus focuses not just on the “message” but the “packaging.”
- We need to en flesh what we’re proclaiming: the peace of the kingdom, trust in providence, gratitude, mutual love.
- We can’t nurse failure or rejection.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

4. We called to try to incarnate the words we preach.
 - We're called to proclaim by body language:
 - "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21).
 - "Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you teach." (Rite of Ordination of a Deacon)
 - "Let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38)
 - Jesus was constantly calling us to integrity, to purity of intention (Lk 10:20). It's not those who say, "Lord, Lord," but those who do the will of God who are credible (Mt 7:21).
 - He was summoning us not to be like the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, who do not practice what they preach.

5. The Priority of the One-on-One
 - While Jesus sometimes preached to vast multitudes, he shows us that most of the work of spreading the faith is one-on-one, through the apostolate of friendship, like he showed with Nicodemus, Nathaniel, Andrew and John, Peter, Matthew, the Samaritan Woman, the Gerasene Demoniac, and many others.
 - Most fish are caught with a rod, not a dragnet.
 - Every one matters: "It's not the will of the heavenly Father that one little one be lost" (Mt 18:14)



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

6. Entering into the other's life and conversation

- Jesus entered into the conversation of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, leaving Jerusalem and all it symbolized, heading downhill into the night.
- Often the reason for people's departure from the faith contains the seed of their return. The two disciples were leaving because they thought Jesus' crucifixion was a contradiction of their Messianic hopes, but the anonymous Wayfarer helped them to see it was a confirmation!

7. Use of analogies and stories

- Jesus was constantly using parables with those who didn't share the faith, not just to lead them by illustration from what they knew to what they didn't know about the kingdom, but to challenge them to work, to struggle to understand the application.
- Many of his Parables continue to touch people deeply: the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Two Debtors.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

8. The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion
- Jesus' first public words: "The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15).
 - Ratzinger: "The Kingdom of God is not a thing. ... The Kingdom of God is God. Kingdom of God means: God exists. God is alive. God is present and acts in the world, in our, in my life. ... God is the most present and decisive reality in each and every act of my life, in each and every moment of history."
 - Once we recognize the gift of the kingdom, we turn away from counterfeits (*a-vert*), turn toward Christ (*ad-vert*) and seek to "turn with" (*con-vert*) him.
 - Ratzinger: "The Greek word for converting means to 'rethink,' to question one's own and common way of living; to allow God to enter into the criteria of one's life; to judge not merely according to the current opinions. So to convert means: not to live as all the others live, not do what all do, not to feel justified in dubious, ambiguous, evil actions just because others do the same. It means to begin to see one's life through the eyes of God; looking for the good, even if uncomfortable; not aiming at the judgment of the majority, of men, but on the justice of God—in other words: to look for a new style of life, a new life.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion
(continued)

- Various parables of the Kingdom show us:
 - To treat the kingdom like a treasure buried in a field, or a pearl of great price, worth more than everything else, because the Kingdom is God.
 - Not to be afraid to start small, like a mustard seed, or to act like leaven in dough.
 - To be urgent, because the fields are white and ripe for the harvest.
 - To be positive and focus on the growth of the wheat rather than negatively obsessing about the weeds.
 - To be grateful for fellow workers in the vineyard, no matter when they've arrived.

9. Preaching Preceded and Backed Up by Deeds

- Jesus' miracles both paved the way to faith as well as confirmed it. They were deeds fundamentally not of power but of mercy!
- Stupendous miracles still happen, as every cause for canonization reveals. But the greatest miracles are in the Sacraments and our whole life is supposed to be quasi-sacrament of the presence of God living within. Our charity, our mercy, is meant to precede, follow and characterize our proclamation.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

10. A Summons to High Standards

- We shouldn't be afraid of challenging others as Jesus has challenged us. Jesus calls our standards to surpass those of the Scribes and Pharisees and the virtuous pagans. He calls us to love as he has loved, to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful, to be holy as the Lord our God is holy.
- This involves loving our enemies, praying for persecutors, picking up our Cross daily and following him, plucking out our eyes or chopping off our hands and feet if they lead us to sin, becoming servants of all the rest, and going and selling all that we have, giving the money to the poor, and coming to follow him.
- Watering down the faith *loses* people, because God has made people with a capacity and yearning for greatness.
- We can only proclaim this when we're striving to live it ourselves, not by our own efforts, but by God's grace.



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

11. A Willingness to Suffer for Him Who Died for Us

- Jesus sends us out as lambs in the midst of wolves, promising that if they hated him, they'd hate us, and that we'd be dragged before religious and civil authorities on account of his name, like we saw happen to St. Stephen, Saints Peter and John, St. Paul and so many of the saints and martyrs.
- Jesus was rejected by his fellow Nazarenes, by the Samaritans, by the crowds in Pilate's praetorium, by Judas, by the thief on his left, and many more. "He came to his own and his own received him not" (Jn 1:11).
- But he told us why he would permit this: "It will lead to your giving testimony" (Lk 21:13).
- How many people converted because of the witness of the martyrs? People who would not have otherwise come to the faith?



Jesus' Teaching Us How to Teach Others the Art of Living

12. A true “spirituality” of evangelization:

- Authentic Christian spirituality is life according to the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18)
- He promised that we should not worry about what we are to say, because the Holy Spirit will help us to know what we are to say (Mt 10:19)
- At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down as tongues of fire: tongues to speak, fire for ardor, so that we might give joint witness together with the Holy Spirit to Christ.
- John Paul II said, “Missionary activity demands a specific spirituality, which applies in particular to all those whom God has called to be missionaries.” It includes four elements:
 - Complete docility to the Spirit – We need all his gifts!
 - Intimate communion with Christ – We need to decrease so that he may increase, we must have his mind, his heart, his burning apostolic charity.
 - Love for the Church – Christ loved the Church and gave his life up for her. We must love the Church as Christ did. “Fidelity to Christ cannot be separated from fidelity to the Church.”
 - Holiness – The universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. Pastoral techniques, resources, study are not enough. Every phase of mission and new evangelization has been led by saints, by people of the beatitudes. The new evangelization requires a “new ardor for holiness.”



Pope Francis on Evangelized Evangelizers

- The fruit of Christian formation is “missionary disciples in communion.”
- Preaching the Gospel is the “first task of the Church. ... What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity.*” (EG 15)
- “The primary reason for evangelizing is the love and salvation of Jesus that we have received, urging us to greater love of him. “What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known?” (EG 264)
- “We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive and a message that cannot mislead or disappoint.” It ennobles us and is never out of date. (EG 265)
- It’s impossible to persevere in fervent evangelization “unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. ... We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize.” (EG 266)



The Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus

- The cover slide for this presentation was from the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, dating from the year 359, and discovered last century in the Vatican *Scavi*, where I had the honor to be a guide.
- It is the image that the Church uses to introduce the third section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, dedicated to “Life in Christ,” or the Christian moral life.
- The *Catechism*, supervised by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, describes the image in a way that summarizes this entire lecture.
 - “Christ in glory, portrayed very young as a sign of his divinity, is seated on the throne of heaven, with Uranus, the pagan god of heaven, as his footstool. The apostles Peter and Paul stand on either side of Christ, toward whom they are turning and from whom they receive two scrolls: the new law.
 - “As Moses had received the old law from God on Mount Sinai, now the apostles, represented by their two leaders, receive from Christ, the Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, the new law, no longer written on tablets of stone, but engraved by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of believers. Christ gives the strength to live according to the ‘new life.’ He fulfills in us what he has commanded for our benefit.”
- Christ not only teaches the art of living but gives us the strength to embrace that life and live it to the full!

Prayer



- The one who shows us best how to respond to Jesus' help to learn the “art of living” and to raise others to learn and live this “art” is the Blessed Virgin Mary, his most faithful disciple, who from St. John onward has been raising people to be more and more like Jesus.
- We turn to her with the prayer made to her by Pope Francis at the end of his exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel,” asking for her intercession that we might enter into her contemplative heart, which is the heart of the New Evangelization, and come to encounter the fruit of her womb at the depth he desires, to convert, to enter into his school, to join him in the Christian community, and to go out and proclaim the treasure of our faith to every creature.
- Let us pray together:



Prayer

Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who, moved by the Holy Spirit, welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith.

As you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One, help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence, you brought joy to John the Baptist, making him exult in the womb of his mother. Brimming over with joy, you sang of the great things done by God.

Standing at the foot of the cross with unyielding faith, you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection, and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardor born of the resurrection, that we may bring to all the Gospel of life which triumphs over death.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths, that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation, Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast, pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are, that she may never be closed in on herself or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!

For the Slides of this Talk

You may download a PDF of the PowerPoint slides of this talk and listen to the audio recording by going to:

www.catholicpreaching.com

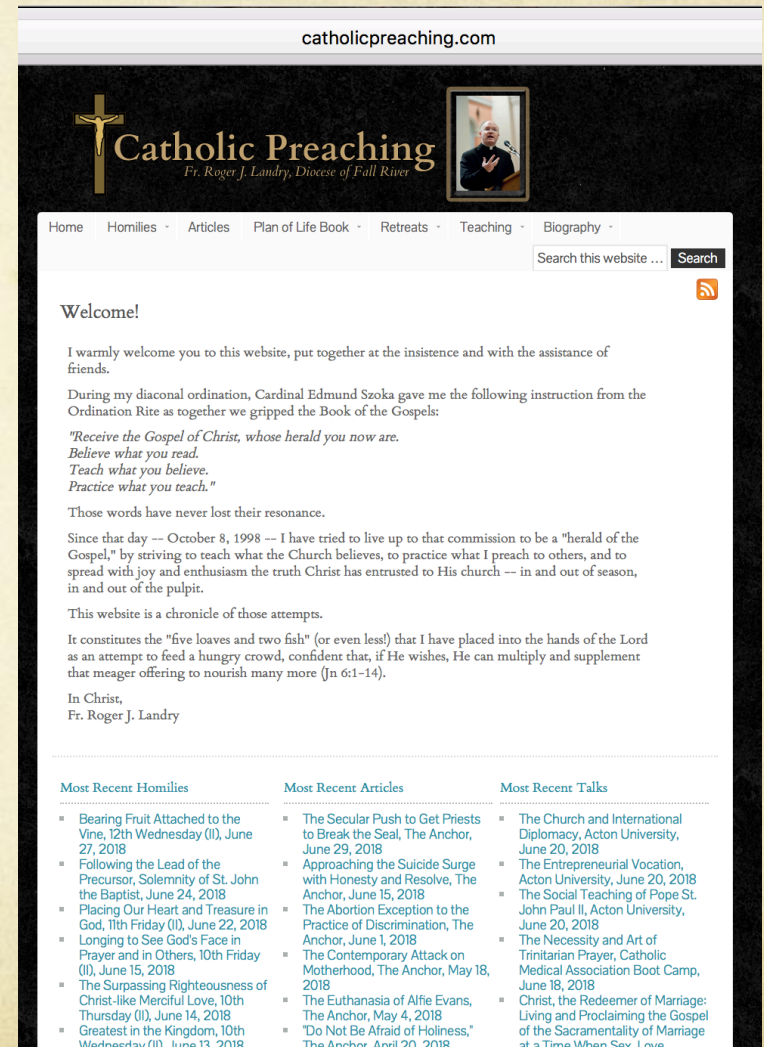
and then clicking on the appropriate link under “Most Recent Talks”

Email: fatherlandry@catholicpreaching.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/FrRogerLandry

Twitter: [@FrRogerLandry](https://twitter.com/FrRogerLandry)

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The screenshot shows the homepage of catholicpreaching.com. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Homilies, Articles, Plan of Life Book, Retreats, Teaching, and Biography. Below the navigation is a search bar and a social media icon. The main content area features a welcome message from Fr. Roger J. Landry, followed by a quote from Cardinal Edmund Szoka. Below the quote, there are three columns of recent content: Most Recent Homilies, Most Recent Articles, and Most Recent Talks. Each column lists several items with their titles and dates.

catholicpreaching.com

Catholic Preaching
Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River

Home Homilies Articles Plan of Life Book Retreats Teaching Biography

Search this website ... Search

Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry

Most Recent Homilies

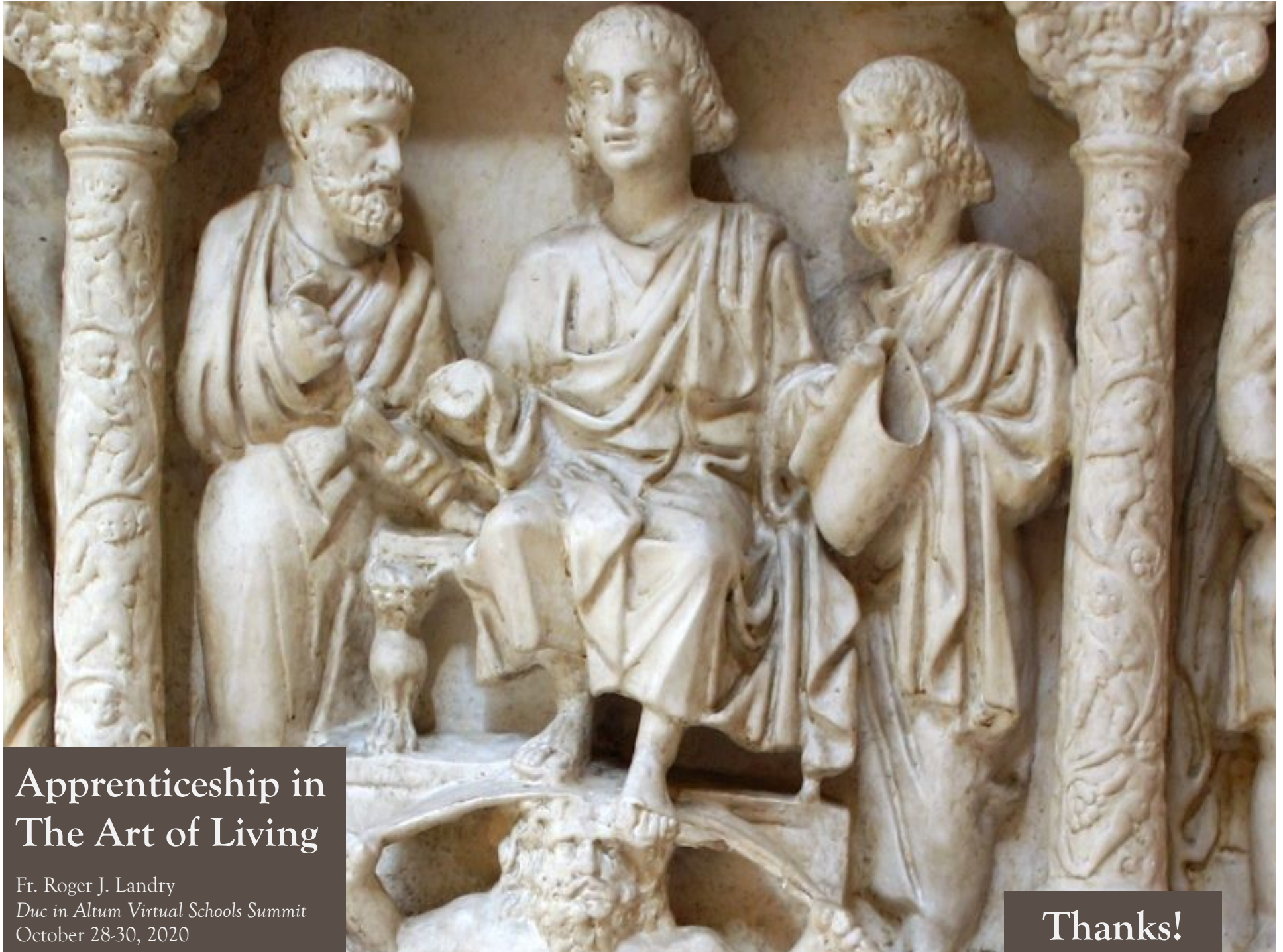
- Bearing Fruit Attached to the Vine, 12th Wednesday (II), June 27, 2018
- Following the Lead of the Precursor, Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 2018
- Placing Our Heart and Treasure in God, 11th Friday (I), June 22, 2018
- Longing to See God's Face in Prayer and in Others, 10th Friday (I), June 15, 2018
- The Surpassing Righteousness of Christ-like Merciful Love, 10th Thursday (I), June 14, 2018
- Greatest in the Kingdom, 10th Wednesday (I), June 13, 2018

Most Recent Articles

- The Secular Push to Get Priests to Break the Seal, The Anchor, June 29, 2018
- Approaching the Suicide Surge with Honesty and Resolve, The Anchor, June 15, 2018
- The Abortion Exception to the Practice of Discrimination, The Anchor, June 1, 2018
- The Contemporary Attack on Motherhood, The Anchor, May 18, 2018
- The Euthanasia of Alfie Evans, The Anchor, May 4, 2018
- "Do Not Be Afraid of Holiness," The Anchor, April 20, 2018

Most Recent Talks

- The Church and International Diplomacy, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Entrepreneurial Vocation, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Social Teaching of Pope St. John Paul II, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Necessity and Art of Trinitarian Prayer, Catholic Medical Association Boot Camp, June 18, 2018
- Christ, the Redeemer of Marriage: Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of the Sacramentality of Marriage at a Time When Sex, Love,



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Thanks!