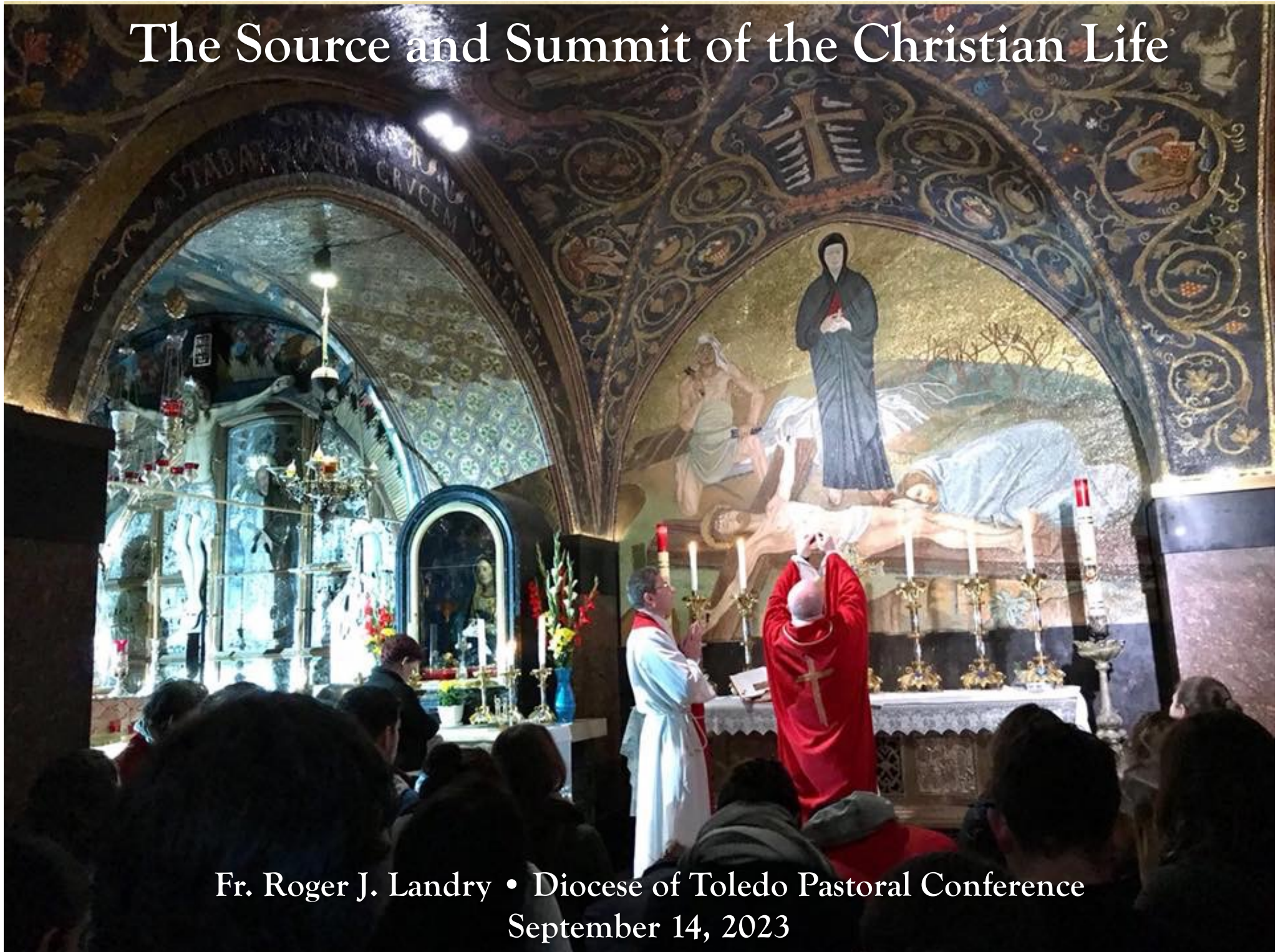
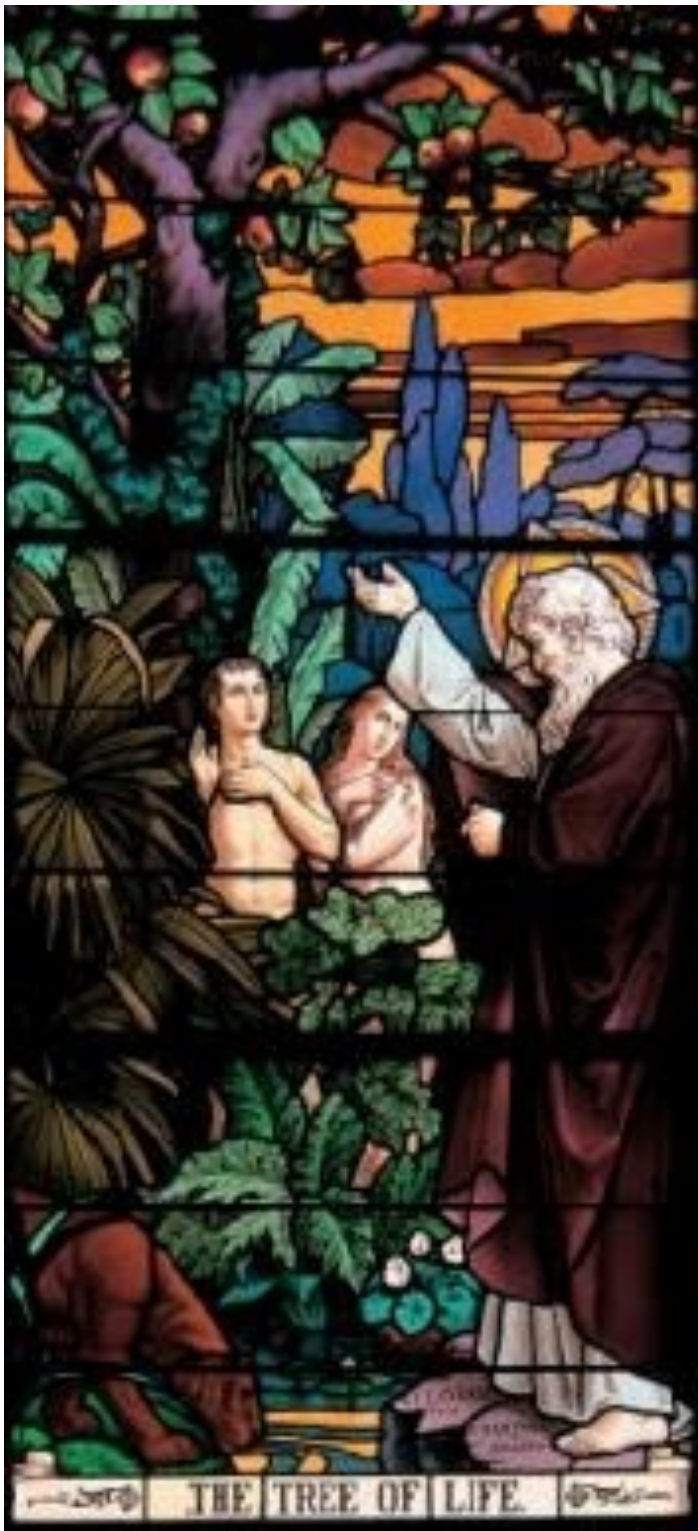


# The Source and Summit of the Christian Life

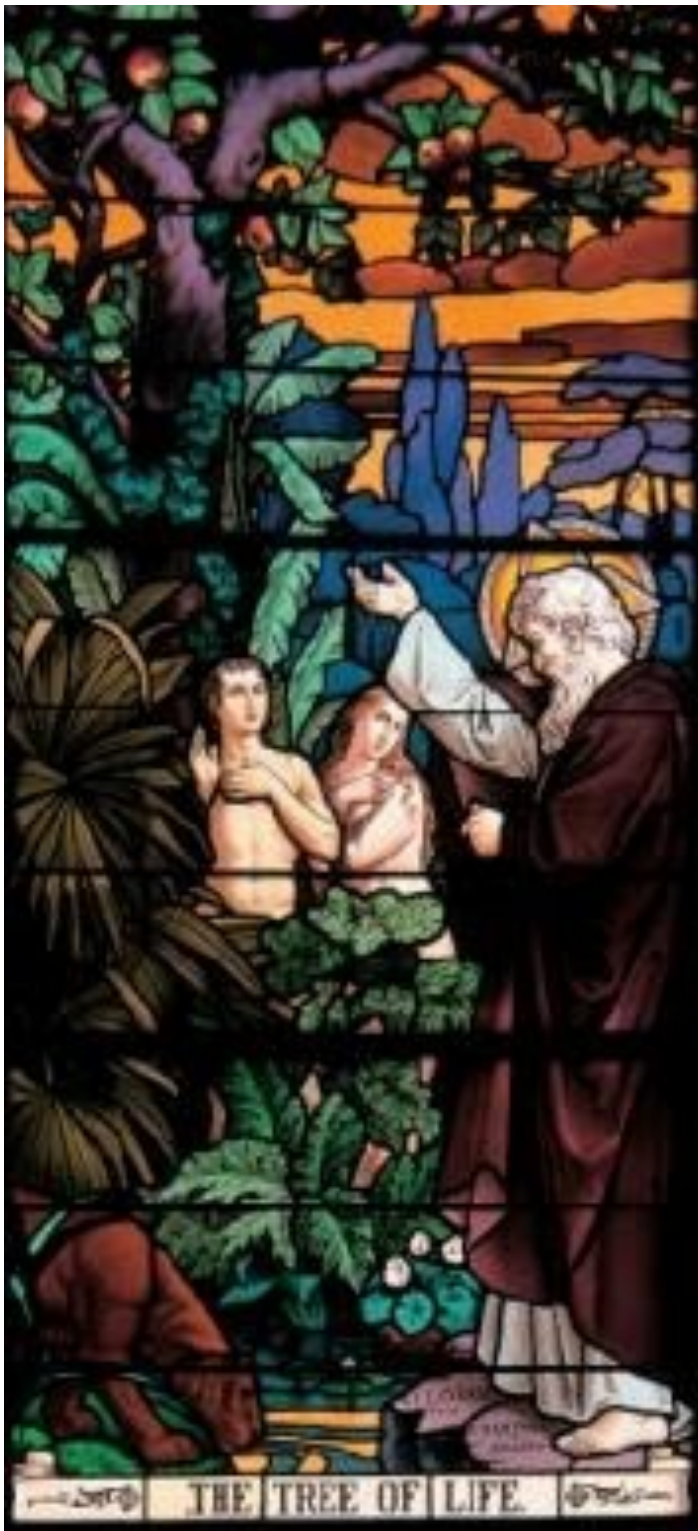


Fr. Roger J. Landry • Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Conference  
September 14, 2023



# The Exaltation of the Cross

- Stained glass series at St. Jean Baptiste in New York.
- Several Church Fathers saw the Tree of Life (Gen 2-3) as a prefiguration of the Cross, and the fruit of the Tree of Life as a prefiguration of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, which hung from the Cross.
- Salvation history is to allow us to “eat and live for ever.”
- Rev 2:7: “To the victor I will give the right to eat from **the tree of life** that is in the garden of God.”
- St. Augustine: “We too are fed from the Lord’s Cross... when we eat his body”



# The Fruit of the Tree of Life

- Jn 6: “Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you....”
- “The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”
- “I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”
- “Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”



# The National Eucharistic Revival

- One of the most significant initiatives the U.S. bishops have ever initiated.
- It's a response to a crisis in Eucharistic knowledge, faith, amazement, love and life.
- This crisis is seen, among other places, in:
  - Sunday Mass attendance
  - Eucharistic illiteracy
  - Spiritual “Long COVID”
  - Eucharistic scandals
  - Ordinary scandal of many not behaving as if we really believe what we profess.



# The National Eucharistic Revival

- In response to this crisis, the U.S. Bishops have responded with a three-year-plus initiative.
- Various phases:
  - Dioceses (June 19, 2022 to June 11, 2023)
  - Parishes (June 11, 2023 to July 17, 2024)
  - National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21, 2024 in Indianapolis.
  - Mission – July 21, 2024 to June 8, 2025
- But the most important phase is *personal*.
- It's a particular grace for priests to rediscover or fan into a flame the “love we had at first.”

# Conforming Our Life to the Eucharist

- The U.S. Bishops have appointed 56 priests as National Eucharistic Preachers to help spur the whole initiative.
- But every baptized and confirmed disciple is meant to be an effective and credible Eucharistic Preacher, by word and witness, drawing people to Christ who works through him.
- When priests are ordained, they are told, “Understand what you will do, imitate what you will celebrate and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.” The same words can be said to every Catholic.
- Christian life is meant to become a commentary on the words of consecration. Our whole existence is supposed to find its source, summit, root and center in Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.



# Understanding What We Are Doing

- The Martyrs of Abitene (d. 304) show us what it means truly to live Eucharistic lives, to draw our life from Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- They were told by the Roman pro-consul that if they assembled on Sunday morning for Mass in the house of Octavius Felix, they would be arrested and executed. They thanked him for the notice.... but then still all 49 Christians in the town came together on the Lord's Day. When the flabbergasted pro-consul asked them why they didn't heed his warning, one of them, Emeritus, simply said, "*Sine Dominico non possumus!*" "Without the Lord on Sunday, we cannot live."





# The Ars Celebrandi

- Praying rather than just saying the Mass.
- *Pope Benedict XVI*
  - *Mens concordet voci* – “The fundamental element of the true ars celebrandi is this consonance, this harmony, between what we say with our lips and what we think with our heart.”
  - “Celebration is a prayer and conversation with God. ... The priest must enter this colloquy.”
  - “The texts of Holy Mass are not theatrical scripts but prayers, thanks to which, together with the assembly, the priest speaks to God.”
  - “We must interiorize the structure, the words, of the Liturgy, the Word of God.”





# The Ars Celebrandi

- Pope Francis
  - “The *ars celebrandi* cannot be reduced to only a rubrical mechanism, much less should it be thought of as imaginative – sometimes wild – creativity without rules.”
  - “As in any art, the *ars celebrandi* requires different kinds of knowledge. It requires an **understanding of the dynamism** that unfolds through the Liturgy: by means of memorial, **the Paschal Mystery is made present** so that the baptized, through their participation, can experience it in their own lives. Without this understanding, the celebration easily falls into a **preoccupation with the exterior** ... or into a concern only for rubrics.”
  - “It is necessary to know how the **Holy Spirit acts** in every celebration. The art of celebrating must be in harmony with the action of the Spirit. Only in this way will it be free from the subjectivisms that are the fruit of individual tastes dominating.”
  - “The art of celebration is not something that can be improvised. Like every art, it requires consistent application. ... For an artist, in addition to technical knowledge, there has also to be inspiration, which is a positive form of possession. The true artist does not possess an art but rather is possessed by it. ... A **diligent dedication to the celebration** is required, allowing the celebration itself to convey to us its art. ... This is how the art of celebrating is learned.”

# Active Participation



- Benedict XVI: “Given the close relationship between the *ars celebrandi* and an *actuosa participatio*, it must first be said that the best catechesis [mystagogy] on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself, celebrated well” (SC 64).
- “The word ‘participation’ does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration, ... [but rather] greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* encouraged the faithful to take part not as ‘strangers or silent spectators’ but as **participants in the sacred action**, conscious of what they are doing, actively and devoutly” (SC 52)
- *Actuosa participatio* involves “constant conversion,” “recollection and silence,” “fasting,” “when necessary, sacramental confession,” and an “effort to participate actively in the life of the Church” (SC 55).



## “The most beautiful Masses of my life”

- Venerable Francis Xavier Cardinal Nguyen van Thuan was Bishop of Hue, Archbishop of Saigon, imprisoned for 13 years (1975-88) by the Communists in Vietnam, 9 in isolation.
- Eventually released and became VP, then President of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.
- Surreptitious message to his family: “Please send me a little wine as medicine for my stomachache.”
- Each day during isolation, as close as he could to what he thought was 3 pm, he would celebrate Mass from memory with three drops of wine, one drop of water and a few breadcrumbs on his hand.



## “The most beautiful Masses of my life”

- In a reeducation camp with 50 other crowded prisoners, he would celebrate at 9:30 pm over his bed with Catholics watching guard.
- Under a mosquito net, he would distribute tiny pieces of hosts to Catholics.
- Then he would wrap tiny fragments of the Eucharist in the aluminum wrappers of cigarette packs, keep one in his shirt pocket and distribute others to faithful Catholic prisoners.
- “Those were the most beautiful Masses of my life.”



## “The most beautiful Masses of my life”

- From *Road to Hope: A Gospel from Prison*, his “five loaves and two fish.”
- “If you appreciate the value of the Eucharistic Celebration, you will participate in it no matter how far away or difficult it is. The greater the sacrifice involved, the more evident is your love for God.”
- “If you are all alone in some remote place or in the darkness of a prison, turn your mind toward the altars of the world where our Lord Jesus Christ is offering his sacrifice. Unite yourself to the Eucharistic sacrifice. Then your heart will be filled to overflowing with consolation and courage.”
- “The whole of the Lord’s life was directed toward Calvary. The whole of our life should be oriented toward the Eucharistic celebration.”



## “The most beautiful Masses of my life”

- “If you have lost everything but still have the Blessed Sacrament, you actually still have everything, because you have the Lord of heaven present here on earth.”
- “The Eucharist shapes Christians.”
- “As the drop of water put into the chalice mingles with the wine, so your life should become one with Christ’s.”
- “Holy people are those who continue to live the Eucharistic celebration throughout the day.”



## If Only We Would Live Our Masses!

- St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia (1877-1940), one of the two co-patrons of the Eucharistic Revival, was a priest of Seville, Bishop of Malaga and then of Palencia and is the founder of the Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth (1935), the Disciples of St. John (1910) and the Children of Reparation (1935). Pope St. Pius X highly approved of his work. Known as the “Bishop of the Tabernacle” for spreading devotion to the Eucharist and encouraging frequent communion, he was beatified in 2001 and canonized in 2016.



## If Only We Would Live Our Masses!

- “Every altar is a Calvary where Jesus is immolated and offered up in the sacrifice of redemption. If the first Mass had the power to transform the world, the rest of the Masses celebrated have the power to preserve and deepen that transformation. **If only we would live our Masses!** To live the Mass is to know the Mass thoroughly, to reverence the Mass highly for its value, to take as our norm of behavior what Jesus does in the Mass, and to delight in the Mass. Our utmost happiness on earth should be these words (if I am a priest): ‘I celebrate Mass’ or (if I am a member of the faithful), ‘I participate in the Mass.’ This knowledge, reverence, imitation and delight in the Mass should be so deeply rooted in me that during every hour of every day, it could be said of me, ‘He is living his Mass.’”





# If Only We Would Live Our Masses!

- “If I make the Mass ever more my own, incorporating myself into the Sacrifice of Jesus, then not only do I celebrate the Mass but also I become the Mass.”
- When he was dying, he said, “I ask to be buried next to a tabernacle, so that my bones, after death, as my tongue and my pen in life, are saying to those who pass: ‘There is Jesus! There he is! Do not leave him abandoned!’”
- His relics, traveling now throughout the United States, are meant to point to Jesus in the Eucharist saying, “There he is!”



## Making Mass Our Source, Summit, Center and Root

- St. Josemaría strove to make his whole day a continual Mass, making each day “totally Eucharistic.”
- Saint Josemaría taught in a practical way how to make the Mass the center of our daily life. He divided the 24 hours of the day into two parts: Until noon he lived the presence of God by concentrating on thanksgiving for the Mass that he had celebrated that morning, and after the Angelus/Regina Caeli he began to prepare himself for the next day’s Mass.
- He wrote in 1945: “In this way, closely united to Jesus in the Eucharist, we will attain a continual presence of God in the midst of the ordinary occupations proper to each one’s situation on this earthly pilgrimage of ours, seeking our Lord at all times and in all things. ... Only thus will we be contemplative souls in the midst of the world, as our vocation demands, and we will become truly priestly souls, converting every aspect of our being into a continual praise of God.”

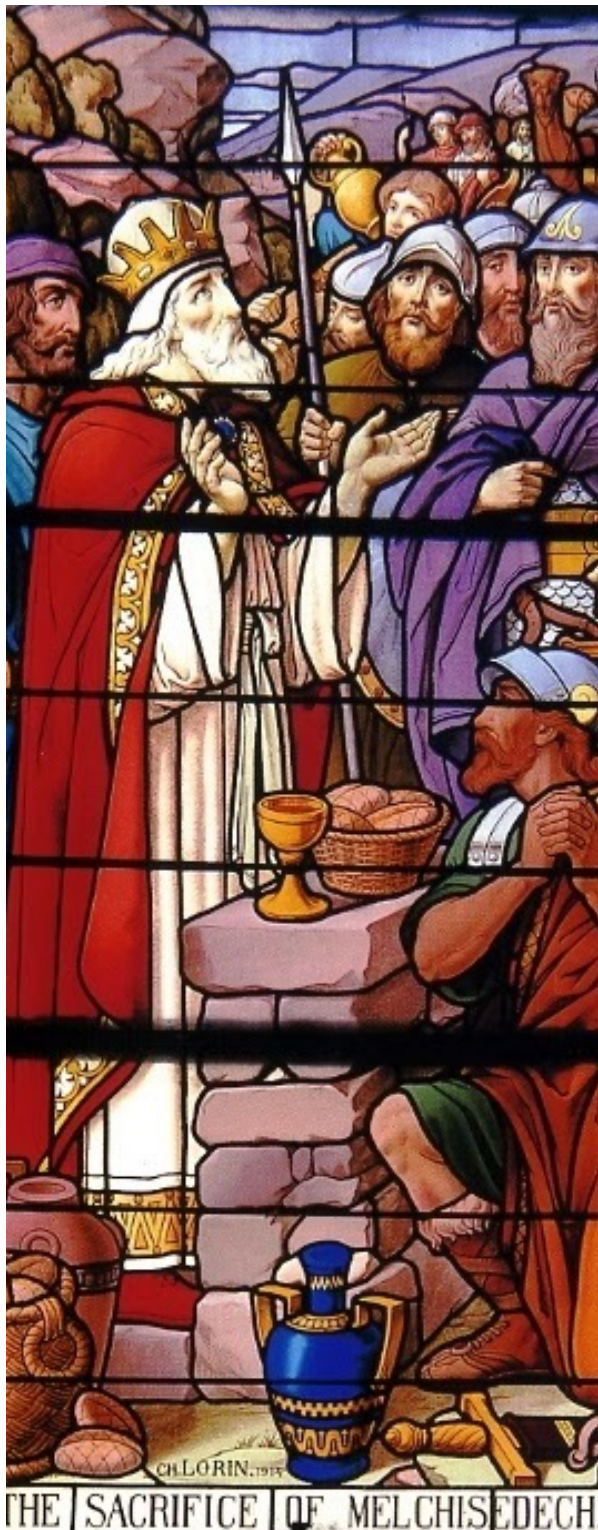


## Source, Summit, Center and Root of Christian Life

- He urged everyone to live in accord with the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, channeling one's whole existence through the Eucharistic sacrifice each day: "Keep struggling, so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar really becomes the center and the root of your interior life, and so your whole day will turn into an act of worship, an extension of the Mass you have attended and a preparation for the next. This will then overflow in aspirations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and the offering up of your professional work and your family life."
- "A person who fails to love the Mass fails to love Christ. We must make an effort to 'live' the Mass with calm and serenity, with devotion and affection. And this is why I have always suspected that those who want the Mass to be over with quickly show, by this insensitive attitude, that they have not yet realized what the sacrifice of the altar means."

# Preparation for Mass

- Stoking our hunger, desire, and anticipation for the Mass. The importance of fasting.
- Preparing to encounter Christ, to enter into his prayer as well as his suffering, death, and risen life, and to become the tabernacle of his incarnate presence.
- Whole history of God's preparation: Tree of Life, Cain and Abel, Melchizedek, Abraham and Isaac, Moses and the Burning Bush, Passover, Manna, the Rock, Ark of the Covenant, Tent and Temple, Elijah and the Hearth Cakes, the Annunciation, Nativity, Cana, Multiplication of Loaves and Feet.
- The Lord's preparation on Holy Thursday





## St. Thomas Aquinas' Prayer of Preparation

“Almighty and everlasting God, behold I come to the Sacrament of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: I come as one infirm to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.

“Therefore, I implore the abundance of your measureless bounty that you would vouchsafe to heal my infirmity, wash my uncleanness, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty and clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such sorrow and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention as may be profitable to my soul's salvation.”



## St. Thomas Aquinas' Prayer of Preparation

“Grant to me, I pray, the grace of receiving not only the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, but also the grace and power of the Sacrament. O most gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took from the Virgin Mary, as to merit to be incorporated into His Mystical Body, and to be numbered amongst His members.

“O most loving Father, give me grace to behold forever your beloved Son with His face at last unveiled, whom I now intend to receive under the sacramental veil here below. Amen.”



# Eucharistic Adoration

- One of the most important ways we prepare for Mass is through Eucharistic adoration, which increases the general reverence given to Christ in the Eucharist, because lack of reverence, lack of treating the Eucharistic Jesus as Lord, is one of the reasons why so many take him in the Eucharist for granted.
- If Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, then we should treat him the way we would if he were visible in his humanity. The Eucharist is the same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem and adored by Mary and Joseph, the angels, the shepherds and the wise men. We should make time for him who is “God with us” literally with us on our altars and in our tabernacles, monstrances.
- Adoration is essential likewise for worthy reception of Holy Communion. St. Augustine: “No one eats that flesh without first adoring it; we should sin were we not to adore it.” Adoration outside of Mass strengthens our adoration during Mass.



# The Church's Promotion of Adoration Today

- St. John Paul II – *The Supper of the Lord, Stay with Us, Lord and The Church Draws Her Life from the Eucharist*
- “The encouragement and the deepening of Eucharistic worship are proofs of that authentic renewal that the Council set itself as an aim of of which they are the central point. ... The Church and the world have a great need of Eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this Sacrament of Love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation. ... May our adoration never cease.”
- “There is a particular need to cultivate a **lively awareness of Christ's real presence, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass.**”
- “The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle must be a kind of *magnetic pole* attracting an ever-greater number of souls enamored of him, ready to wait patiently to hear his voice and, as it were, to sense the beating of his heart.”
- “The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. ... It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.”





# The Church's Promotion of Adoration Today

- Benedict XVI – *The Sacrament of Love*
  - “Eucharistic Adoration is simply the natural consequence of the Eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration. Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. ... The act of adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself. Indeed, only in adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature.”
  - “Therefore, I heartily recommend to the Church's pastors and to the People of God the practice of eucharistic adoration, both individually and in community.”

# The Church's Promotion of Adoration Today

- Pope Francis
  - “The moment I most savor the religious experience, however long it may be, is when I am before the tabernacle.”
  - “What is most important is adoration: the whole community together looks at the altar where the sacrifice is celebrated and adores.”
  - “I want to encourage everyone to visit – if possible, every day – especially amid life’s difficulties, **the Blessed Sacrament of the infinite love of Christ and His Mercy**, preserved in our churches and often abandoned, to speak filially with Him, to listen to Him in silence and to peacefully entrust yourself to him.”
  - “We cannot know the Lord without this habit of worship, to worship in silence, adoration.”
  - He says that Eucharistic adoration crushes our idols.





## Learning to Live Off the Eucharistic Jesus

- St. Isaac Jogues (1607-1646), born in France, desired to be a Jesuit, priest, and missionary, not just to bring the Gospel of Jesus to the New World but Jesus himself in the Blessed Sacrament.
- He was accustomed in seminary not only to attending Mass every day but to spending long vigils in prayer before the tabernacle. He well knew that as a missionary, traveling by canoe for days, with limited supplies of unleavened bread and wine, there would likely be times when he would not have access to the altar or tabernacle, but he longed to be able to found new chapels, altars, and tabernacles so that many others who did not know yet the ongoing reality of Christ's incarnation might come to realize that God is with them, too.



## Learning to Live Off the Eucharistic Jesus

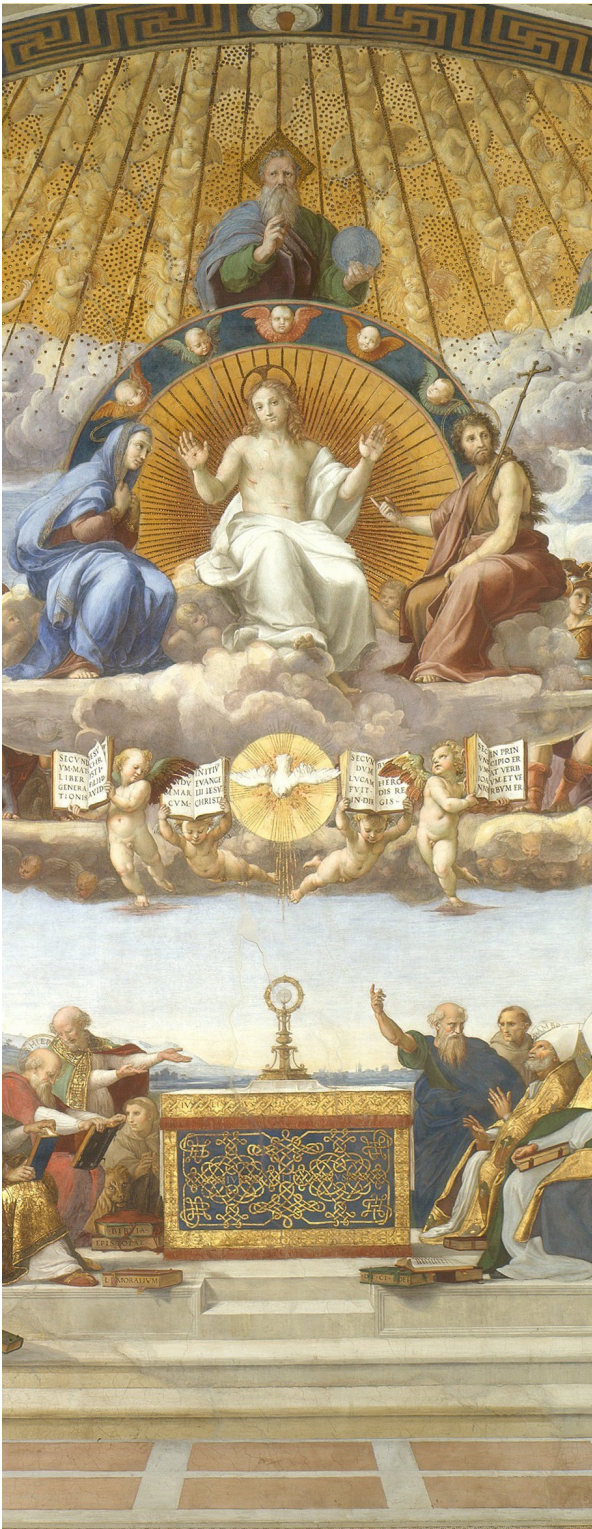
- After six years as a missionary, he was captured by the Mohawks close to Three Rivers in Quebec. He was brought down to Ossernenon, modern Aurieville, on the northern lip of the Mohawk River. Among the tortures St. Isaac needed to endure was to have his thumbs and index fingers severely mutilated, which meant that even if he had the liberty to celebrate Mass, he would no longer be able to, because according to the rubrics at the time, the priest had to hold the consecrated host exclusively with those severed digits.
- This man of the Eucharist ended up going 17 months without even being able to receive the Eucharist, until, with the help of the Dutch, he was able to escape through modern day Albany, Manhattan, and England to arrive in France on Christmas Day 1643.



## Learning to Live Off the Eucharistic Jesus

- As soon as he disembarked and had asked directions to the closest Church, he went to confession, attended Mass and received Holy Communion. “It was then,” he said, “that I began to live again and tasted the sweetness of my deliverance.” He had longed for so long to receive!
- Through the help of the Jesuit Provincial and the Queen of France, he petitioned Pope Urban VIII for a dispensation. The Pope replied, “*Indignum esset Christi martyrem Christi non bibere sanguinem.*” “It would be unworthy that a martyr of Christ not drink Christ’s blood.” Finally, in March 1644, after 20 months, he was able to go up to the altar of God, hold Christ in his mangled hands, and receive Christ’s Precious Body and Blood.
- He was martyred ultimately because of the Mass kit he had left in Auriesville in preparation for Mass.

# Discussion Questions



- Union with the Eucharistic Jesus is meant to be the source and summit, starting point and goal, of the Christian life. Do I live a truly Eucharistic life, uniting who I am and what I do to the Eucharistic Jesus? How can I “upgrade” my communion with Jesus in the Eucharist? How can I better unite the work I do for the Church to the Eucharist?
- Jesus tells us, “Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (Jn 6:27) How much do I hunger for Jesus in the Mass? Do I hunger and thirst for a holy communion of life with him?
- The Eucharistic Revival is happening because of a crisis in Eucharistic knowledge, faith, amazement, love and life in the Church in the United States as a whole. Only one of six Catholics attends Mass each Sunday. Thinking about those Catholics I know who have drifted away from the regular practice of the faith, what do I think would be the most effective way to invite them back?
- Regarding Eucharistic knowledge, surveys show that seven out of ten Catholics in the USA do not believe what the Church teaches, that after the consecration, the bread and wine are totally changed into Jesus, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. What practical ways can we do better to communicate the truth of the Mass and the Real Presence to others, especially to the young?



## 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. You may also follow postings of articles, homilies and teachings on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

You can also subscribe to the podcast of daily homilies, lectures and talks through Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

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

God's Comfort and the Conversion Required to Receive It, Second Sunday of Advent (B), December 6, 2020

Accepting, Following and Announcing Jesus without Offense, Second Sunday of Advent (EF), December 6, 2020

Walking the Way of the Kingdom Jesus Indicates, First Saturday of Advent, December 5, 2020

Running to Meet Our Light, Strength and Salvation, First Friday of Advent, December 4, 2020

Listening to and Acting on the Long Awaited One's Words, First Thursday of Advent, December 3, 2020

Going Hungry to Meet Christ in a Three-Fold Banquet, First Wednesday of Advent, December 2, 2020

Childlike Eyes to See, First Tuesday of Advent, December 1, 2020

Singing the Song of the Lamb, 34th Wednesday (II), November 25, 2020

Turning to the Lord Who Comes to Judge the Earth, 34th Tuesday (II), November 24, 2020

Following the King and Lamb Wherever He Goes, 34th Monday (II), November 23, 2020

### Most Recent Articles

Our Duty and Salvation, The Anchor, November 27, 2020

Living the Reality of the Kingdom of Christ, National Catholic Register, November 19, 2020

The Knights Our Age Needs, The Anchor, November 13, 2020

Remembering Andrew Walther, November 7, 2020

Just a Parish Priest, The Anchor, October 30, 2020

Coming to Know the Original Three-Dimensional Carlo Acutis, The Anchor, October 16, 2020

A Good Shepherd Full of Christian and Priestly Virtues, The Pilot, October 5, 2020

Returning to the Sacrament of Divine Love, The Anchor, September 18, 2020

The Pastoral Malpractice of Liturgical Abuse, The Anchor, September 4, 2020

The Chosen, The Anchor, August 21, 2020

### Most Recent Talks

Receiving the Lord Jesus as Mary and Joseph, Advent Day of Recollection for the Leonine Forum, December 5, 2020

Novena in Preparation for the Immaculate Conception, Leonine Forum, November 28 to December 8, 2020

Blessed Michael McGivney and the Call to Holiness, McGivney Festival Young Adult Prayer Vigil, October 31, 2020

Apprenticeship in the Art of Living, Duc in Altum Virtual Schools Summit, October 28-30, 2020

Preaching on Marital Love and Accompanying Couples toward the Full Embrace of the Church's Teaching, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020

The Divorced and Remarried, Challenges and Triumphs in Pastoral Care, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020

The Heart of the New Evangelization: Meeting, Knowing and Loving Jesus Back, New Zealand Evangelion's In his Name Virtual Conference, October 10-11, 2020

Christian Anthropology: The Human Person in the Modern World, Leonine Forum Opening Lecture, October 8, 2020

Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching, UNSRC Catholic Club, August 27, 2020

Making Better Confessions, Catholic Information Conference, July 24, 2020

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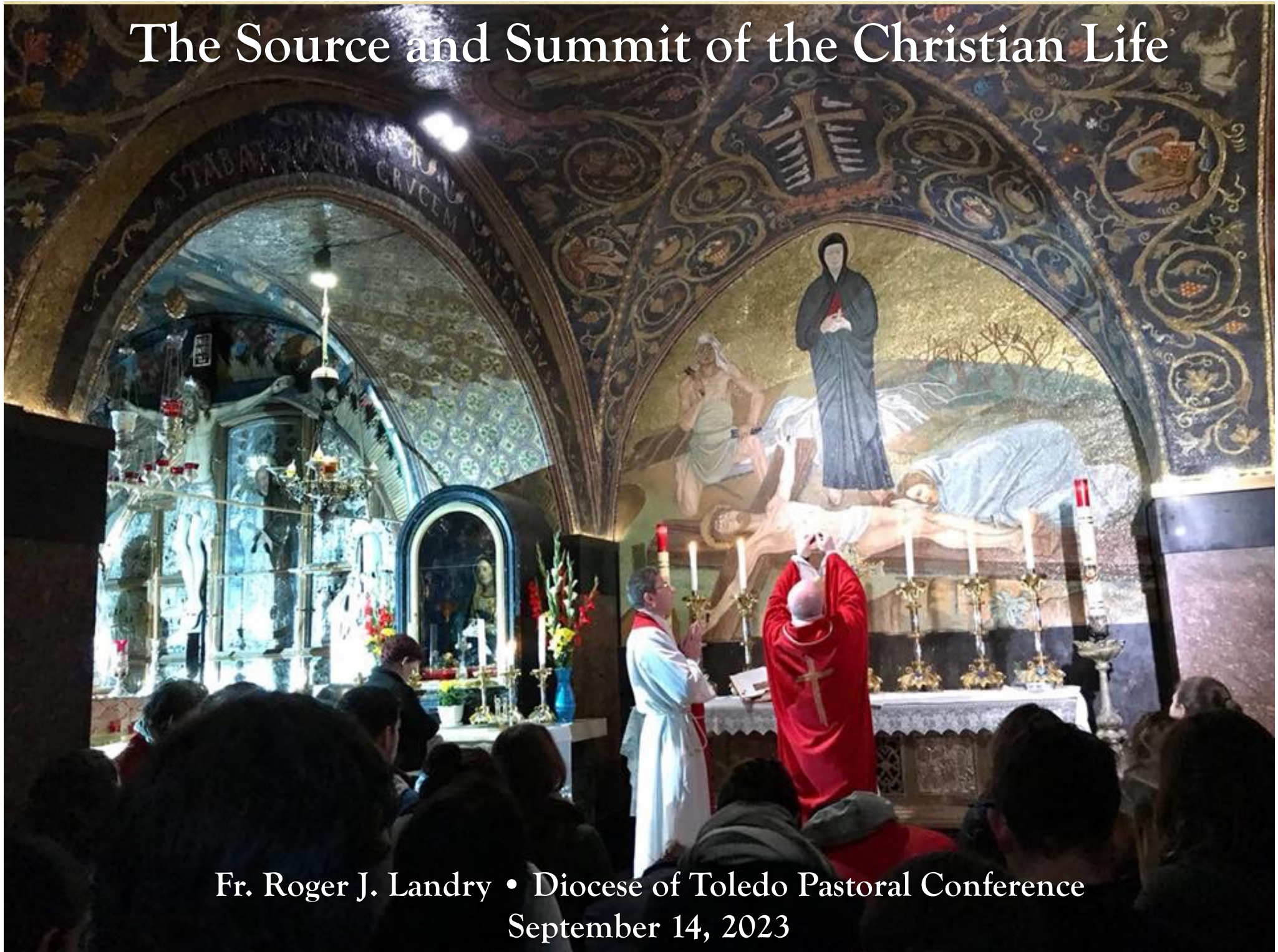
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