

Taking the Highway to Heaven

Following the Eucharistic Jesus to the Summit of Life and Love

A photograph of a long, straight asphalt road stretching towards a large, snow-capped mountain range under a clear blue sky. The road has a yellow dashed center line and white solid edge lines. The landscape is a mix of green grass and low-lying shrubs. The mountains in the background are rugged and covered in snow, with some rocky outcrops visible.

Fr. Roger J. Landry • Mater Salvatoris School
Stamford, Connecticut • January 30, 2024



The Eucharist in Christian Life

- God has placed you here at Mater Salvatoris not just to become smart but to become holy.
- God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother of our Savior, the angels and saints, your teachers and your parents all are hoping that you will be helped here to make well the most important choices in life.
- One of the biggest decisions is to make one's faith personal. Not just to live as a Catholic because one's parents and grandparents are Catholic but because he or she chooses to live as a Catholic. To use one's freedom to pray, to come to Mass, to go to confession, to act with love toward God and others.



The Eucharist in Christian Life

- The most important part of the Catholic life is our relationship to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- The Eucharist is not a “thing,” not even the “holiest thing on earth” but truly Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior. The same Jesus who was in Mary’s womb for nine months. The same Jesus who grew up as a young boy in Nazareth, was found in the temple at 12, who worked as a construction worker, who preached, taught, healed the sick cast out demons, suffered, died and rose. He just looks different.
- We need to relate to Jesus in the Eucharist the way we would have wanted to relate to him if we were alive 2000 years ago.



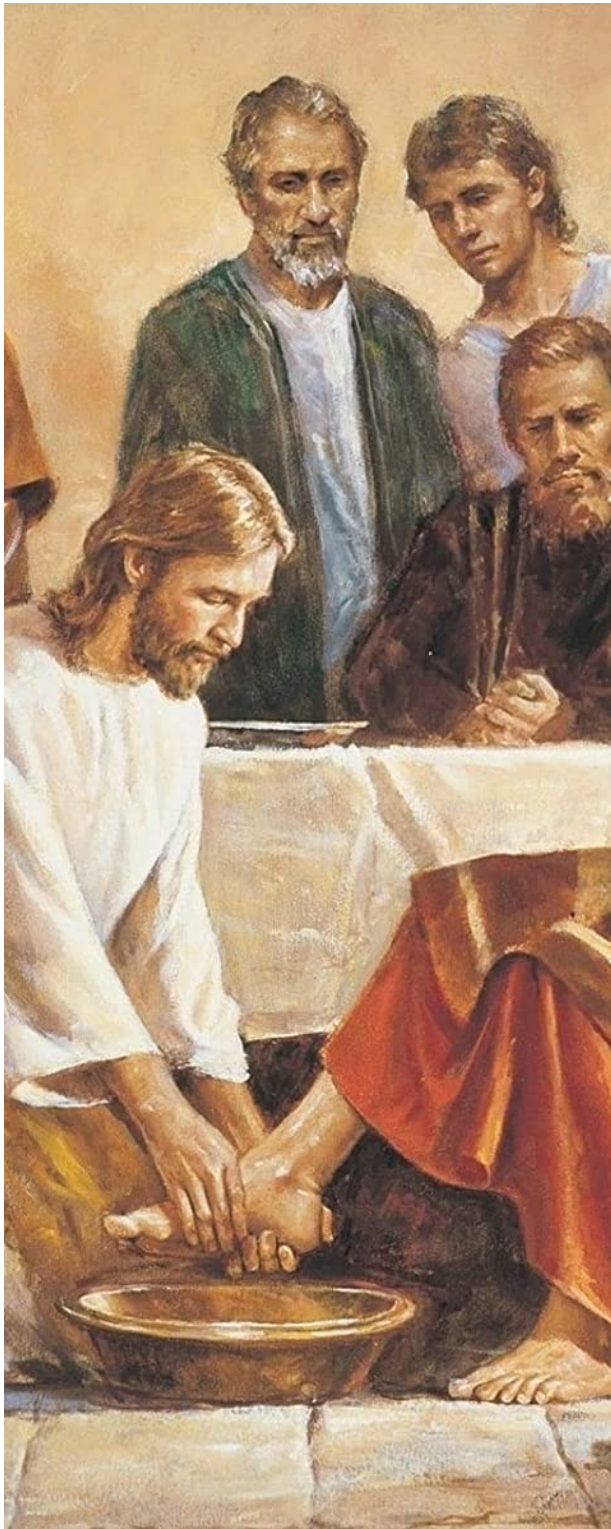
The Eucharist in Christian Life

- Two moments in my life when the truth about Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist became clear to me and changed me.
- The experience at daily Mass when I was four
- The question God prompted me to ask when I was a college freshman at Harvard
- God used both of these experiences of his Eucharistic presence to help me realize that he was calling me to be a priest so that, among other things and above all, I could give him in the Eucharist to the world.



The Eucharist in Christian Life

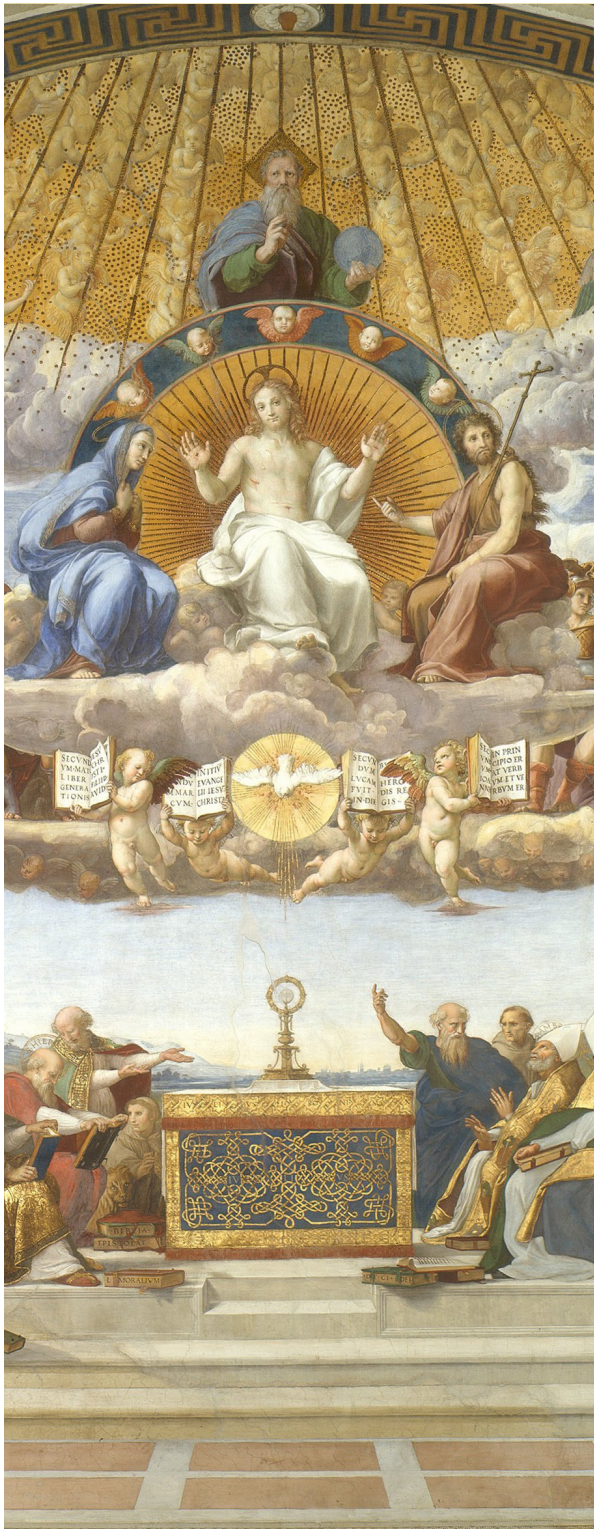
- What is the role of the Eucharistic Jesus in your life right now? How *practical* is your faith? We can look at a few areas.
- The Holy Mass — Do you come? Do you come willingly and with enthusiasm? Do you try to pay attention? Do you hunger to receive Jesus? Do you receive him with a clean soul? Do you thank him for the Mass and for the awesome gift of Holy Communion? Do you pray and try to invite those you can to come to Mass with you?
- Eucharistic Prayer and Adoration — Do you come to spend time with Jesus outside of Mass? To listen to him as he speaks to you? To praise, thank and express your love for him? To ask him to help those you know need his help? To ask him for what you need? To ask him to make you holy?



The Eucharist in Christian Life

- Eucharistic Charity — Jesus told us, “Do this in memory of me,” which means not only to celebrate the Mass but to give our own body, our own blood, out of love for others. He began the first Mass by washing feet, showing the necessity of service. St. Teresa of Calcutta said that the same one who said to us, “This is my Body,” tells us, “I was hungry and you gave me food.”
- Eucharistic Apostolate — How can we keep the good news of great joy that God is with us in the Eucharist to ourselves? Others need him just as much as we do? Whom can we invite?

The Eucharistic Revival



- The Church in the USA is now living a three-year-plus Eucharistic Revival to help us rediscover and live the amazing gift that Jesus Christ is with us in the Holy Eucharist. It's meant to "revive," or help to come to full life again, every diocese (like the Diocese of Bridgeport), every parish, every Catholic including you. It's a time of enormous graces.
- It will involve this year the first national Eucharistic Congress in 83 years, which will take place in Indianapolis from July 17-21. It will be preceded by four national Eucharistic Pilgrimages (starting from New Haven, northern Minnesota, southern Texas and San Francisco) that will converge in Indianapolis.
- The Revival is meant to help us all relate to Jesus in the Eucharist, with joy and gratitude, as the source, summit, root and center of our life.



The Eucharistic Revival

- There are two patron saints of the Eucharistic Revival.
- The first is St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, a Spanish bishop who died in 1940, famously known as the “Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle.”
- The second is the first, and until now, youngest blessed or saint in history (the one born closest to us), Blessed Carlo Acutis.
- I’d like to focus the rest of our time on him, because I think he has much to teach all of us, but especially students in a Catholic school.



Blessed Carlo Acutis

- First millennial to be beatified.
- Born May 3, 1991, baptized May 18, 1991 and called home, October 12, 2006. Would be 31 now.
- His beatification was the first time both parents of someone raised to the altars were able to be present.
- Brilliant young computer programmer, who, when websites were really just beginning, zealously made websites and exhibitions on Eucharistic Miracles, Marian apparitions, Angels and Demons and the Last Things.
- He was a normal, talkative kid who played Pokémon, Playstation, loved animals, played the saxophone and soccer.
- “All of us are born as originals, but most of us die as photocopies.”
- “God has written for each of us a unique and unrepeatable story – but he has left us free to write the end of the story.”



“The Eucharist is My Highway to heaven”

- He grasped there are many ways of following Christ faithfully and receiving his gift of salvation, but living a truly Eucharistic life is the fastest.
- Hungered to make his first Holy Communion, which he did a year early at 7.
- From that point forward, he attended daily Mass and made several holy hours a week in the presence of the Eucharist.
- “The biggest gift God gave to men was to send his only Son, Jesus Christ.”
- “You go straight to heaven if you participate in Mass every day.”
- He also brought his family members to daily Mass, sought to encourage peers and tried to enthuse the whole world for this gift.



A Christocentric Life

- At seven years old, after making his first Communion, he said: “To be always united to Jesus — this is my program of life”
- “*Non io, ma Dio*” (Not I, but God)
- “Sadness is looking at ourselves; happiness is looking towards God.”
- “A life is really beautiful only if one loves God above every other things, and his neighbor as himself.”



A Love for the Mass

- “The more often we receive the Eucharist, the more we become like Jesus”
- “I think that many people do not fully understand the value of the Mass, because if they recognized the enormous blessing we have in a Lord who gives himself as our food and drink in the Sacred Host, they would go to Mass every day to participate in the fruits of the sacrifice and let go of so many superfluous things.”
- When he would receive Holy Communion, he’d pray in thanksgiving: “Jesus, come right in! Make yourself at home!”
- He would occasionally be teased by peers for going to Mass every day, but he sought to help them appreciate the gift they were missing.



He Prioritized Adoration

- He tried to make a Eucharistic holy hour every day and succeeded several days a week.
- He would often pray for a half-hour in adoration, to gain a plenary indulgence for the souls in Purgatory.
- Whenever he would travel as a boy, he would try to find an open Church just so that he could say “hello” to Jesus.
- “I like to speak to Jesus about all that I am experiencing and feeling”
- “To him I can always confide something. I can also complain, question him about his silence and tell him what I do not understand. And then, within me, I find a word that he sends me: a moment of the Gospel that fills me with conviction and certainty.”



He Prioritized Adoration

- “We can find God, with his Body, his Soul and his Divinity, present in all the tabernacles of the world! If we think about it, we are more fortunate than those who lived 2,000 years ago in contact with Jesus, because we have God really and substantially present with us always. It’s enough to visit the closest Church! We have Jerusalem on our doorsteps. Jerusalem is every Church! If only people visited tabernacles with the same devotion!”
- “You see queues in front of a soccer match or an actor or rock singer, but you don’t see a queue for the tabernacle where there is the Real Presence of God who lives among us.”
- “When we face the sun we get a tan, but when we stand before Jesus in the Eucharist, we become saints.”



He Spread Love for the Eucharist

- He prayed often about how to convince lukewarm people to attend Mass on Sunday. He found success talking about the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano and about the apparition of the angel in Fatima and so he was filled with a desire to evangelize by those means.
- He used to ask his parents to take him to various Eucharistic shrines and Marian sanctuaries throughout the world.
- At the age of 11, he learned computer programming to build websites to catalogue and promote Eucharistic miracles. He researched and wrote about them until they grew to a 196-part series.
- In 2005 it was exhibited in the Vatican during a conference on Eucharistic miracles during the Year of the Eucharist.
- It's traveled all over the world, to all five continents, and is available for free on the internet.



Eucharist-inspired Charity

- The Eucharist drew Carlo into the dynamic of divine self-giving.
- “The only thing that will make us truly beautiful in God’s eyes is the way that we have loved him and our brothers.”
- “Life is a gift because as long as we are on this planet, we can increase our charity. The higher it is, the more we will enjoy the eternal Blessedness of God.”
- To the homeless, he would spend his allowance on buying them sleeping bags, blankets and thermoses so that he could fill them with warm drinks with food to take to them.
- He would defend students from bullying, whether because they had physical disabilities, were wearing a Sari, or had made moral mistakes.



Eucharist-inspired Charity

- Once when he was young, he brought his entire piggy bank to school to give to kids who needed it more.
- He would tutor students, especially in computer programming.
- He had a special solicitude for classmates who were experimenting with drugs or struggling with chastity.
- He would turn down the offer for new clothes or sneakers and ask that the money instead go to the poor.
- He would go “litter hunting” while walking his dog in the park to make his corner of the world more beautiful.



Eucharist-inspired Charity

- He would greet all of the doormen and janitors at school by name even though immigrants.
- He would help the housekeeper with ironing so that she could get home to her family early.
- “Money is nothing more than shredded paper. What counts in life is the nobility of the soul, that is, the way we love God and neighbor.”



Gratitude for Confession in Preparation for the Eucharist

- He had a great love for Jesus in his Divine Mercy, with an image in his room. He grasped the connection between the Sacrament of Confession and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- He would go to the Sacrament of Confession weekly in order to be more united to Jesus especially in Holy Communion.
- “Why do human beings worry so much about the beauty of their bodies and not worry about the beauty of their souls?”
- “The only thing we have to fear is sin.”
- “What does it serve a person to win a thousand battles if he is not able to conquer himself?”
- “Conversion is nothing more than lifting your gaze upward from low to high. A simple movement of the eyes is enough.”



Gratitude for Confession in Preparation for the Eucharist

- “In order to rise up high, a hot air balloon needs to shed weight, just like the soul that, in order to raise itself up to heaven, needs to remove those small weights called venial sins. If by chance, there is a mortal sin, the soul falls to the ground. Confession is like the fire underneath the balloon enabling the soul to rise again. It is important to go to confession often.”
- He would examine his conscience in his journal: “How am I with my parents? How well do I obey my teachers and get along with my classmates?”
- He loved to eat and at one point, he found he was eating too much. He imposed on himself more moderation.
- “If you can, confess each week, even your venial sins,” he instructed those in catechism.



The Word of God and the Word Made Flesh

- He read the Bible every day as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- He called the Bible his “compass.”
- He urged his catechetical students and others to try to read a small part of the Bible each day.
- He caught the connection in the Emmaus scene between Christ’s leading the disciples on a liturgy of the word to make their hearts burn and their recognizing him in the “Breaking of Bread.”



The Body of Christ and the Mystical Body the Church

- He grasped what St. John Paul II wrote in the encyclical, “Ecclesia de Eucharistia,” that the Eucharist makes the Church.
- The ultimate impact of the miracle of the Eucharist is not just to bring about Christ’s Real Presence but to make us “one body, one Spirit in Christ.”
- He sought to love the Church like Christ loved the Church, as his Bride and Body.
- Against those who said, “Jesus, yes, the Church, no,” he said, “Criticizing the Church means criticizing ourselves. The Church is the dispenser of treasures for our salvation.”



The Eucharist and Work

- He would try to unite all his studies and computer work to the Holy Eucharist.
- He begged his parents to find him books on programming and, starting at 11, he taught himself various programming languages. He also taught himself film editing, website creation, graphic design, editing and layout of comics.
- He built the website for his parish Church, a site for volunteers at his Jesuit high school, and one for the Pontifical Academy for the Cult of Martyrs.
- He was alert not to become addicted or enslaved to the digital world.



The Eucharist and Work

- Pope Francis featured what Bl. Carlo can teach young people in his 2019 exhortation to young people *Christus Vivit*.
- “Carlo was well aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted. ... Yet he knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty. Carlo didn’t fall into the trap.”
- “He saw that many young people, wanting to be different, really end up being like everyone else, running after whatever the powerful set before them with the mechanisms of consumerism and distraction.



The Eucharist and Work

- “In this way they do not bring forth the gifts the Lord has given them; they do not offer the world those unique personal talents that God has given to each of them.”
- “As a result, Carlo said, ‘everyone is born as an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies.’ Don’t let that happen to you! ... Dare to be more! ... You can become what God your Creator knows you are, if only you realize that you are called to something greater. Ask the help of the Holy Spirit and confidently aim for the great goal of holiness. In this way, you will not be a photocopy. You will be fully yourself.”



Love for Our Lady

- His love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist led him to a great love for Our Lady for giving us Jesus and for showing us how to receive him well.
- He called Our Lady “The only woman in my life.”
- As a young child, he would blow kisses to her and Jesus every time he passed a Church.
- He prayed the Rosary daily and, at 5, at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Pompeii, he consecrated himself to her.
- He visited Lourdes and Fatima. He strongly promoted the practice of first Saturdays.



Love for Our Lady

- He worked hard to create a 156-piece display of the Apparitions and Marian Shrines of the world, which his mother finished after his death.
- “The Rosary is the shortest staircase to reach heaven”
- “After the Eucharist, the Holy Rosary is the strongest weapon to fight the devil.”
- He died on Oct 12, the memorial of Our Lady of the Pillar and Our Lady of Aparecida.



Love for the Saints

- Love for the Eucharist led him to a friendship with many Eucharistic saints, especially young ones: Saints Tarcisius, Bernadette, Dom Savio, Francisco and Jacinta, Aloysius Gonzaga, Pio of Pietrelcina, and James Alberione.
- He had a great devotion to St. Francis of Assisi and spent several weeks each summer in Assisi. He particularly related to St. Francis' love for Jesus in the Eucharist.
- That love led to imitation: "The only thing we have to ask God for in prayer is the desire to be holy."
- "Holiness is not a process of addition but subtraction. The less I am, the more I give space to God."



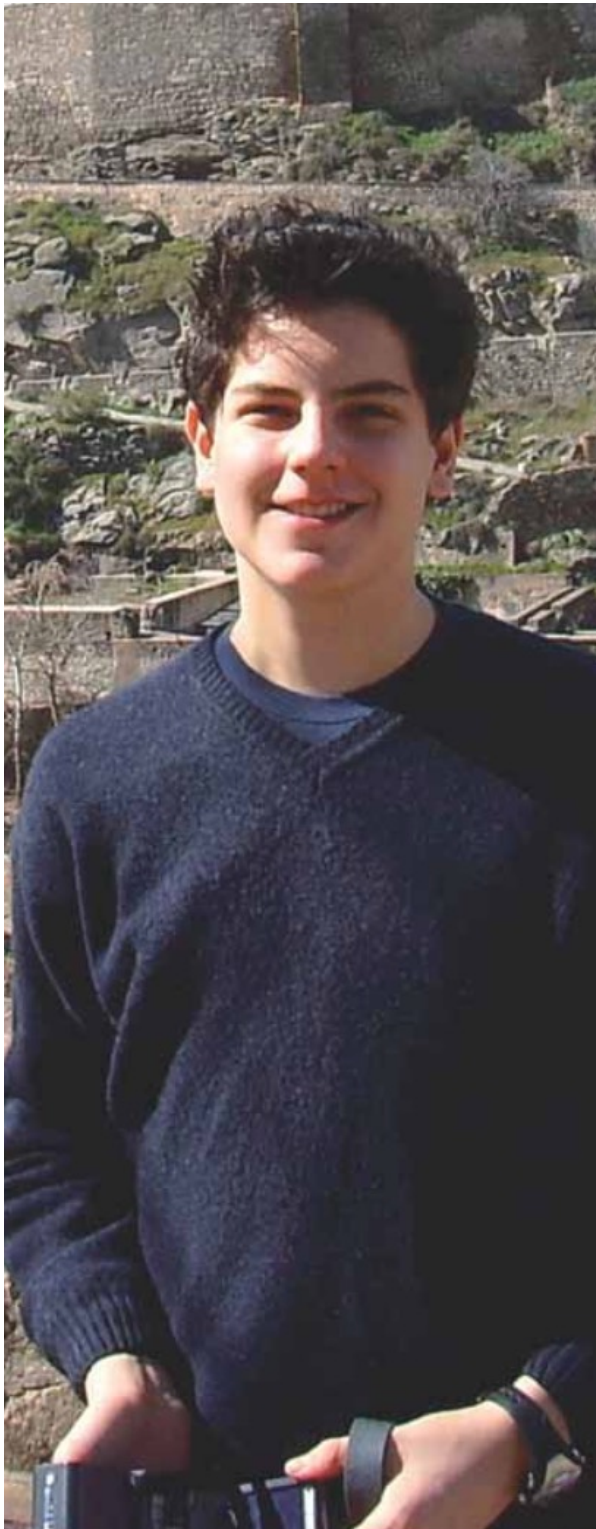
A Focus on the Last Things

- Love for Jesus in the Eucharist led him to the “eschatological dimension” of the Eucharist, focused on the last things.
- He created a 160-part series on Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, featuring testimonies and mystical visions of saints.
- After the death of his grandmother, he prayed often for the souls in Purgatory, sought plenary indulgences, and gave up desserts, films, and video games as mortifications for them.
- “My goal is to get to heaven”



A Focus on the Last Things

- “Our goal must be the infinite, not the finite. The infinite is our homeland. Heaven has been waiting for us forever.”
- “Death is the start of a new life.”
- “To have a long life doesn’t mean this is a good thing. One can live a very long time and live badly.”
- “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn’t interest me. Going to bed at night saying we’ve done something wonderful, that’s what matters to me.”



Uniting sufferings to the Mass

- We are all called to “make up what is lacking in our flesh for the sake of Christ’s Body, the Church” (Col 1:24), to pick up our Cross and follow Christ, uniting our sufferings to his.
- In early October 2006, when he was 15, he got what he thought was the flu, but when he didn’t get better, his lymph nodes swelled and he started to urinate blood, he was diagnosed with the most aggressive form of leukemia (acute promyelocytic). He would die three days later.
- He had a premonition he would die. After his death, his mom found a video he had recorded in August 2006 saying that when he reached 70 kg (154 pounds), he would die. That’s what he weighed the day he was diagnosed.
- Upon hearing the diagnosis, he said to his mother, “The Lord has given me a wake-up call.”
- When he got the diagnosis he said, “I offer all the sufferings I have to suffer to the Lord for the Pope and for the Church.”



Uniting sufferings to the Mass

- He said he wasn't afraid to die, because "with the incarnation of Jesus, death becomes life. In eternal life, something extraordinary awaits us."
- "I am happy to die because I have lived my life without wasting a minute on things that do not please God."
- When the doctors asked him if he were in pain, he said, "There are people who are suffering much more than I."
- He died of a hemorrhage of the brain caused by the leukemia at 6:45 am on October 12, 2006.
- His funeral was packed with people overflowing into the streets of Milan. High school students mixed with homeless people, doormen, custodians, non-Catholics.



Raised to the Altars

- After his death, a devotion sprang from those who knew him and many more came to know him through the Eucharistic Miracles series.
- A Diocesan Inquiry was held in Milan from Oct. 12, 2013 to Nov. 24, 2016. On July 5, 2018, he was declared Venerable.
- The miracle for his beatification took place on Oct. 12, 2013 in Brazil, with a relic brought to him from Assisi by his parish priest. Four-year-old Matheus Vianna had a malformed pancreas and couldn't eat solid foods. He touched the relic and said, "Stop vomiting!" After Mass he was joyful, hungry and ate beef and French fries. Medical tests showed a perfect pancreas.
- Carlo was beatified Oct. 10, 2020 in Assisi and entombed in Assisi.



The Program of Life He Lived & Taught to Catechism Students

- Becoming a saint — You have to want this with all your heart and if you don't desire it, you have to pray for it constantly to God.
- Try to go every day to Mass and to receive Holy Communion.
- Remember to pray the Rosary every day.
- Read a little of the Bible every day.



The Program of Life He Lived & Taught to Catechism Students

- If you can, stay a few minutes every day in Eucharistic adoration in front of the tabernacle where Jesus is really present, and you will see your level of holiness increase considerably.
- If you can, go to Confession every week, even if just to confess your venial sins.
- Make mortifications, sacrifices and renunciations frequently to Our Lord and our Lady to help others.
- Ask your Guardian Angel continuously for help so that he becomes your best friend.

Prayer to Blessed Carlo



- The prayer the Church prays on Blessed Carlo's liturgical Memorial each year, which focuses on his Eucharistic love, example and charity:
- “O God, who in the life of Blessed Carlo, has revealed the unfathomable riches of the Eucharist and made him an example to young people and a witness of mercy to the poor, grant also to us, through his intercession, to live always united to you and to recognize you in our brothers and sisters whom we meet along our way. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.”
- He shows us how to follow him on the Highway to Heaven and follow Jesus to the Summit of Christian Life and Love with Him!



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
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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-
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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,
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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,
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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-
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Preaching on Marital Love and
Accompanying Couples toward the Full
Embrace of the Church's Teaching, Diocese
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2020

The Divorced and Remarried, Challenges
and Triumphs in Pastoral Care, Diocese of
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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

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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
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Thank you!

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