

The Knowledge of Jesus Christ

Marian Consecration Talk #2

Our Lady of Peace

Santa Clara, CA

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Today my talk is going to be on how to acquire a better knowledge of Jesus Christ. More specifically, I am going to talk about how doing the Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary according to the method of St. Louis Marie de Montfort is a powerful aid in helping us to acquire this knowledge.

In the first Total Consecration talk, which I gave some weeks ago, I spoke about the Spirit of the World and gave some remedies on how **“to free ourselves from the spirit of the world.”** Pope Benedict XVI calls the spirit of the world the **“dictatorship of relativism.”**¹ He says, **“A large proportion of contemporary philosophies . . . [are] saying that man is not capable of truth.”**² Moral relativism is a philosophical worldview that posits that there is no objective truth, only subjective truth—your truth is your truth and my truth is my truth. In other words, a person can determine for him/herself what is true and good and what is right and wrong.

When moral relativism is let loose upon a culture, as it has in ours, this will inevitably obscure *the* Truth Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Mary is the way to *the* Way. That is why Consecration to Mary is so powerful in helping us not only come to a knowledge of Jesus (perhaps for the first time or after a long time) but also to protect and maintain this knowledge throughout one’s life.

Today, there is widespread confusion both in the Church and in the world about *who* Jesus is. Thankfully, we need not look far to know *who* Jesus is because our Catholic Tradition has an over 2,000-year history (rooted in Scripture and backed by the wisdom of innumerable saints and mystics) on the very person of Jesus.

There are four specific ways in which we can come to know *who* Jesus is: I) Catechism (which is essentially rooted in Scripture); II) Divine Mercy Vilnius Image; III) Priesthood (i.e. through Catholic priests); IV) The Most Blessed Sacrament (The Holy Eucharist), which is *the* best way to know Jesus because it is Jesus Himself, *really* and *truly* present—His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

I. Catechism³

I believe **“in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord.”**

Jesus:

CCC 430: “Jesus means in Hebrew: ‘God saves.’” Jesus is the Savior.

CCC 433: “The name of the Savior God was invoked only once in the year by the high priest in atonement for the sins of Israel, after he had sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. The mercy seat was the place of God’s presence.” Now, the name of the Savior, Jesus, can be invoked as many times as one wants.

CCC 435: “The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude the words ‘through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The *Hail Mary* reaches its high point in the worlds ‘blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.’ . . . Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word ‘Jesus’ on their lips.”

Christ:

¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Homily*, Mass for the Election of the Supreme Pontiff, St. Peter’s Basilica, April 18, 2005, http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice_20050418_en.html.

² Pope Benedict XVI. *Light Of The World* (Kindle Locations 762-763). Ignatius Press. Kindle Edition.

³ Henceforth CCC.

CCC 436: “The word ‘Christ’ comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, which means ‘anointed.’ It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that ‘Christ’ signifies. In effect, in Israel those consecrated to God for a mission that he gave were anointed in his name. This was the case for kings, for priests and, in rare instances, for prophets. This had to be the case all the more so for the Messiah whom God would send to inaugurate his kingdom definitively. It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king.”

Son of God:

CCC 442: “Simon Peter . . . confesses Jesus as ‘the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ . . . Christ’s divine sonship will be the center of the apostolic faith, first professed by Peter as the Church’s foundation.”

Lord:

CCC 446: “In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the ineffable Hebrew name YHWH, by which God revealed himself to Moses, is rendered as *Kyrios*, ‘Lord.’” From then on, ‘*Lord*’ becomes the more usual name by which to indicate the divinity of Israel’s God. The New Testament uses this full sense of the title ‘Lord’ both for the Father and—what is new—for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God Himself.”

CCC 447: “Throughout his public life, he demonstrated his divine sovereignty by works of power over nature, illnesses, demons, death, and sin.”

CCC 450: “The Church . . . believes that the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man’s history is to be found in its Lord and Master.”⁴

a. 3: “He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary.”

The Incarnation:

CCC 461: “Taking up St. John’s expression, ‘The Word became flesh,’ the Church calls ‘Incarnation’ the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it.”

Philippians (2:5-8):

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.⁵

⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, 10:3, cf. 45:2.

⁵ Quoted in CCC 461.

Hebrews (10:5-7):

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Lo, I have come to do your will, O God.’”⁶

True God and True Man:

CCC 464: “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. During the first centuries, the Church had to defend and clarify this truth of faith against the heresies that falsified it.”

Arianism:

CCC 465: “The first heresies denied not so much Christ’s divinity as his true humanity (Gnostic Docetism). From apostolic times the Christian faith has insisted on the true incarnation of God’s Son ‘come in the flesh.’ But already in the third century, the Church in a council at Antioch had to affirm against Paul of Samosata that Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature and not by adoption. The first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 confessed in its Creed that the Son of God is ‘begotten, not made, of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father,’ and condemned Arius, who had affirmed that the Son of God ‘came to be from things that were not’ and that he was ‘from another substance’ than that of the Father.

Nestorianism:

CCC 466: “The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God’s Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431 confessed “that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man.”⁸⁹ Christ’s humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb.”

Monophysitism:

CCC 467: “The Monophysites affirmed that the human nature had ceased to exist as such in Christ when the divine person of God’s Son assumed it. Faced with this heresy, the fourth ecumenical council, at Chalcedon in 451, confessed.”

CCC 468: “After the Council of Chalcedon, some made of Christ’s human nature a kind of personal subject. Against them, the fifth ecumenical council at Constantinople in 553 confessed that ‘there is but one hypostasis [or person], which is our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity.’ Thus everything in Christ’s human nature is to be attributed to his divine person as its proper subject, not only his miracles but also his sufferings and even his death.”

CCC 469: “He is truly the Son of God who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became a man and our brother.”

⁶ Quoted in CCC 462.

How is the Son of God Man?

CCC 470: it. “Everything that Christ is and does in this nature derives from ‘one of the Trinity.’ The Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity. In his soul as in his body, Christ thus expresses humanly the divine ways of the Trinity: (516, 626, 2599)

The Son of God... worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.⁷

Christ’s Soul and His Human Knowledge:

CCC 471: “Apollinarius of Laodicea asserted that in Christ the divine Word had replaced the soul or spirit. Against this error the Church confessed that the eternal Son also assumed a rational, human soul.”

CCC 472: “This human soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, ‘increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man,’ and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience.”

CCC 473: “But at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God’s Son expressed the divine life of his person. ‘The human nature of God’s Son, not by itself but by its union with the Word, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God.’ Such is first of all the case with the intimate and immediate knowledge that the Son of God made man has of his Father. The Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts.

CCC 474: “By its union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal. What he admitted to not knowing in this area, he elsewhere declared himself not sent to reveal.”

Christ’s Human Will:

CCC 475: “Similarly, at the sixth ecumenical council, Constantinople III in 681, the Church confessed that Christ possesses two wills and two natural operations, divine and human. They are not opposed to each other, but cooperate in such a way that the Word made flesh willed humanly in obedience to his Father all that he had decided divinely with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our salvation. Christ’s human will ‘does not resist or oppose but rather submits to his divine and almighty will.’”

Christ’s True Body:

CCC 476: “Since the Word became flesh in assuming a true humanity, Christ’s body was finite. Therefore the human face of Jesus can be portrayed; at the seventh ecumenical council (Nicaea II in 787) the Church recognized its representation in holy images to be legitimate.

⁷ GS 22:2.

CCC 477: “At the same time the Church has always acknowledged that in the body of Jesus ‘we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.’ The individual characteristics of Christ’s body express the divine person of God’s Son. He has made the features of his human body his own, to the point that they can be venerated when portrayed in a holy image, for the believer ‘who venerates the icon is venerating in it the person of the one depicted.’”

The Heart of the Incarnate Word:

CCC 478: “Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony, and his Passion and gave himself up for each one of us: ‘The Son of God... loved me and gave himself for me.’ He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, ‘is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings’ without exception.”

“Conceived by the Power of the Holy Spirit”

CCC 486: “The Father’s only Son, conceived as man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is ‘Christ,’ that is to say, anointed by the Holy Spirit from the beginning of his human existence.”

- **Born of the Virgin Mary**

CCC 487: “What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ.”

Coming to a proper knowledge of Jesus, however, could not come about without a proper knowledge of His Mother, Mary. Mary leads us to a knowledge of the *real* Jesus.

Mary’s Divine Motherhood:

CCC 495: “The One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father’s eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.”

Mary’s Virginitly:

CCC 497: “The Gospel accounts understand that the virginal conception of Jesus as a divine work that surpasses all human understanding and possibility.”

CCC 498: “The meaning of this event is accessible only to faith St. Ignatius of Antioch already bears witness . . . : ‘Mary’s virginity and giving birth, and even the Lord’s death escaped the notice of the prince of this world: these three mysteries worthy of proclamation were accomplished in God’s silence.’”

Mary – “Ever-Virgin”

CCC 499: “The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary’s real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man. In fact, Christ’s birth ‘did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it.’”

CCC 500: “Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus.¹⁵⁷ The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, ‘brothers of Jesus,’ are

the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls ‘the other Mary.’ They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression.”

II. Divine Mercy Vilnius Image

Before speaking about the Divine Mercy Vilnius Image, it’s important to provide some background information concerning the 8th and 9th century heresy called *Iconoclasm* “(*Eikonoklasmos*, ‘Image-breaking’),”⁸ which promoted the breaking of sacred images.

Some of our Protestant brothers and sisters in Christ have an iconoclastic mentality with regard to sacred images or statues of the angels and saints. They may even invoke the First Commandment as their defense, which forbids the creation of graven images of angels and saints. Sadly, though, although many of them I’m sure are well-intentioned, they are clearly in the wrong.

The Ecumenical Council of Trent (12/1563, Sess. 25), quoting the 2nd Ecumenical Council of Nicea (787 A.D.), stated the following:

[The holy Synod commands] that images of Christ, the Virgin Mother of God, and other saints are to be held and kept especially in churches, that due honour and reverence (*debitum honorem et venerationem*) are to be paid to them, not that any divinity or power is thought to be in them for the sake of which they may be worshipped, or that anything can be asked of them, or that any trust may be put in images, as was done by the heathen who put their trust in their idols [Psalm 134:15 sqq.], but because the honour shown to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent, so that by kissing, uncovering to, kneeling before images we adore Christ and honour the saints whose likeness they bear (Denzinger, no. 986).⁹

Protestants in general have a hard time with the Catholic understanding of venerating sacred images. They think that such veneration leads one *away* from Jesus but the truth is, is that such veneration leads a person closer to Jesus, when such veneration is done in a true spirit of faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “**The honor paid to sacred images is a ‘respectful veneration,’ (me: *dulia*) not the adoration (me: *latria*) due to God alone.**”¹⁰ And the great Angelic Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas says, “**Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.**”¹¹

The mind of the Church, notably through the wisdom of her saints, such as St. Teresa of Avila, the Doctor of Prayer, understood the power of sacred images in helping the human mind rise to a deeper knowledge of the Divine Person of Jesus.

St. Teresa of Avila in her classic treatise on prayer, *Way of Perfection*, says “**You will find it very helpful if you can get an image or a picture of this Lord—one that you like—not to wear round your neck and never look at, but to use regularly whenever you talk to Him, and He will tell you what to say.**”¹² St. Teresa, a master of prayer, knew what she was talking about because she herself had a wandering mind which made it very difficult for her to concentrate on one subject.¹³

⁸ <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/iconoclasm>.

⁹ “Veneration of Images.” <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07664a.htm>.

¹⁰ CCC 2132.

¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, q. 81, a. 3. ad. 3. Quoted in CCC 2132.

¹² *Way of Perfection*, XXVI. Quoted in: Rorhbach, Peter Thomas . *Conversation With Christ* (Kindle Locations 554-556). TAN Books. Kindle Edition.

¹³ Cf. *Way of Perfection*, XXVI.

For many of us here, even myself, we can identify with St. Teresa's struggles in meditating or praying the Rosary. That is why Jesus in His Eternal Wisdom, gave us sacred images like the Divine Mercy Vilnius Image, to give our imaginations the proper imagery needed for our intellects to come to a real and deeper knowledge of the Divine Person of Jesus. From the visible and sensible, we rise to the invisible and immaterial and spiritual. This is how we naturally learn things.

Now back to the Divine Mercy Vilnius image.

(Briefly give a shout out to the recent Divine Mercy docudrama movie that just came out on Oct. 28th, 2019, which focused on the historical development of the image).¹⁴

A Catholic writer for *Crisis Magazine*, Monica Migliorino Miller, recently wrote a related article on the movie and noted that the **“God’s message of Divine Mercy . . . is much needed in a world marked by hate, violence, and confusion.”** She notes moreover that the movie premiere came out **“on the heels of the suicide of the notoriously cruel ISIS terrorist leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, whose Islamic ideology had led to beheadings, the enslavement of women, rape, torture, and pure brutality.”** Moreover, she says, **“How apt then to watch such a movie at a time when one of the world’s darkest souls was undoubtedly trembling before the judgment throne of God, much in need of the mercy he had refused to give in life.”¹⁵** Jesus in His Mercy indeed wants to save everyone but as He told St. Faustina, **“He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice.”¹⁶**

If there were ever a time when Divine Mercy was so desperately needed, that time would be now and thanks be to God we have in our times the Divine Mercy Image to remind us not only of the need but of the Omnipotence of Jesus' Mercy.

The Divine Mercy Vilnius Image is the original image of Jesus painted by the artist commissioned to paint it, Eugene Kazimirowski, who based it on the apparition of Jesus that the Polish mystic nun, St. Faustina Kowalska, had on 02/22/1931 in the city of Plock, Poland.

Blessed Michael Sopocko, St. Faustina's spiritual director, commissioned Eugene to be the artist to paint the image. In St. Faustina's *Diary* she describes the first time she physically saw Jesus:

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand [was] raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence, I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy.¹⁷

That St. Faustina physically saw Jesus is documented in the archives of St. Faustina. A Sister Christine recounts that **“Children from the town stood in the street opposite the rooms of the nuns and saw rays coming from one of the windows. This was the window of Sister Faustina's cell.”¹⁸**

St. Faustina reported that Jesus appeared to her as He appeared in the Vilnius Image numerous times (I think 20x) throughout her life. One of her holy confessors, Fr. Joseph Andrasz, S.J., says: **“The vision of the**

¹⁴ <https://loveandmercymovie.com/about/>.

¹⁵ <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/faustina-mercy-in-a-merciless-world>.

¹⁶ *Diary*, no. 1146.

¹⁷ *Diary*, no. 47.

¹⁸ Tarnawska, op.cit., p. 116. Quoted in: Torretto, Richard "Rick". A Divine Mercy Resource:How to Understand the Devotion to Divine Mercy (Kindle Locations 2112-2113). iUniverse. Kindle Edition.

Merciful Jesus in this particular representation occurred repeatedly during Sister Faustina's lifetime. Our Savior evidently wanted the image to be deeply impressed upon her soul."¹⁹

Jesus told St. Faustina the following things about the image:

- **"Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory."**²⁰
- **"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You."**²¹
- **"By means of this Image, I shall be granting many graces to souls; so let every soul have access to it."**²²
- **"I desire that this image be venerated throughout the world."**²³

The Divine Mercy Image, Hated By Demons

The Divine origin and promises of the image inevitably frightened Satan and incurred his wrath. In fact, St. Faustina recounts in her *Diary* that once she was at a ceremony in which the Divine Mercy image was displayed while her spiritual director gave a sermon on Divine Mercy. St. Faustina then said the following: **"When he began to speak about the great mercy of the Lord, the image came alive and the rays pierced the hearts of the people gathered there, but not all to the same degree. Some received more, some less. Great joy filled my soul to see the grace of God. When the sermon was over, I did not wait for the end of the service, as I was in a hurry to get back home. When I had taken a few steps, a great multitude of demons blocked my way. They threatened me with terrible tortures, and voices could be heard: 'She has snatched away everything we have worked for over so many years!' When I asked them, 'Where have you come from in such great numbers?' the wicked forms answered, 'Out of human hearts; stop tormenting us!'"**²⁴

At another time, St. Faustina saw a finished painted image of Jesus done by the painter Eugene and she was deeply grieved because it wasn't as beautiful as Jesus truly is. And so she ran to the chapel and wept. She told Jesus, **"Who will paint You as beautiful as You are?"**²⁵ Jesus responded, **"Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace."**²⁶ In saying this, Jesus isn't implying that one cannot use other beautiful versions of the Divine Mercy Image. As long as the version of the Divine Mercy image you're using helps you spiritually, and it's used in faith, then all the more reason for you to use it to strengthen your faith in the merciful Jesus.

Blessed Michael observed how the artist Eugene suffered greatly from Faustina's incessant meticulous demands to create a perfect rendition of Jesus as she saw him. The artist had to continually keep repainting the face and St. Faustina kept calling the various finished products ugly. Jesus, however, eventually let Faustina know that the final painting, which we have today, was good enough. The final version of the image was finished in 1934 and hung inside the Bernardine Sisters' convent located nearby St. Michael's Church in Vilnius, where Fr. Sopocko, her spiritual director, was rector at the time.

¹⁹ Joseph Andrasz, S.J., *Divine Mercy . . . We Trust in You!* (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Helpers, 1986), p. 24. Quoted in: Torretto, Richard "Rick". *A Divine Mercy Resource: How to Understand the Devotion to Divine Mercy* (Kindle Locations 2164-2166). iUniverse. Kindle Edition.

²⁰ *Diary*, no. 47, 48. Underline emphasis mine.

²¹ *Diary*, no. 327.

²² *Diary*, no. 570.

²³ *Diary*, no. 47.

²⁴ *Diary*, no. 417-418.

²⁵ *Diary*, no. 313.

²⁶ *Diary*, no. 313.

Now let's examine some specific details about the image and meditate on them.

The Meaning of the Image:

The meaning of the image has a scriptural basis to it, particularly taken from the Gospel of John 20:19-23, wherein Jesus appeared to His disciples who were in hiding behind locked doors and said to them, **“Peace be with you.”** The image evokes Jesus' peace, which surpasses all understanding. In fact, notice that Jesus, who is the Light of the world, is surrounded by but untouched by the darkness around him. Jesus infinitely transcends the darkness of this world. This striking characteristic of the image seems to convey to us that Jesus, the Light of the World, is *the One* who truly gives meaning to people whose lives are plagued and devoured by darkness.

As notable Marian priest, Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, in his book *The Divine Mercy Image Explained*, says, **“When we feel surrounded by the darkness of fear, hopelessness, and despair, we can simply look at the Image of Divine Mercy, and there he is. There he is appearing in our midst, casting away our darkness and fear, moving us to receive the gift of the Spirit, and filling us with his peace as we place our trust in him.”**²⁷

St. John Paul II in 1997 in an address to some sisters of St. Faustina's own religious order, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, commented on the Vilnius image; he said:

Anyone can come [and] look at this image of the merciful Jesus, his Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what [St.] Faustina heard: “Fear nothing. I am with you always.” (Diary, n. 412). And if this person responds with a sincere heart: “Jesus, I trust in you!”, he will find comfort in all his anxieties and fears. In this dialogue of abandonment, there is established between man and Christ a special bond that sets love free. And “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” (1 Jn 4:18).²⁸

Notable Marian priest, Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, in his book *The Divine Mercy Image Explained* says the following about the image: **“Now, while the Image of Divine Mercy is not miraculous in the sense of being written by God himself, it does have a supernatural origin . . . especially in the Vilnius version of the Image of Divine Mercy, we behold a particularly graced work of art that comes from God himself. In fact, one could even say that this grace-filled image serves as a kind of completion of the holiest image of all: the Shroud of Turin. One could say this because, whereas, the Shroud gives emphasis to the Passion and death of our Savior, the Divine Mercy Image emphasizes the other half of the Paschal mystery, the Resurrection. Moreover, someone recently discovered that if you superimpose the face of the Shroud of Turin on the face of Jesus in the Vilnius image, they are nearly identical—yet, amazingly, St. Faustina had no access to an image of the Shroud!”**²⁹

The scientific discoveries and connections concerning the Divine Mercy Image and the Holy Shroud of Turin are breathtaking because they defy all scientific explanations and scientifically confirm many of the supernatural truths of our faith, especially related to the *real* presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, which surpass reason. Time, unfortunately, does not permit me to delve into these discoveries and connections, but if you're interested

- **(Briefly mention my powerpoint presentation).**

The Divine Mercy Image has even had numerous miracles associated with it. It has protected people and their property from Superstorms—in fact, there was a documented case in 2012 in Connecticut during Hurricane Sandy in which the person said the Sign of the Cross, held the image facing the direction of the oncoming storm, and recited the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

²⁷ *The Divine Mercy Image Explained*. Kindle. Location 21%, 182 of 983. Henceforth DMI.

²⁸ Given to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Krakow-Lagiewniki, Poland, 06/07/1997, n. 1.

²⁹ DMI. 15%, 118.

Moreover, the image has also miraculously healed people from physical ailments. One case involved an Italian man by the name of

Ugo Festa (Miraculously Healed):³⁰

Ugo Festa was born in 1951 in Vicenza, Italy. He was struck with numerous crippling health problems. By the time he was 39 years old, he was suffering from multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and epilepsy. Then, as the story goes:

On the 28th of April 1990, he went with a pilgrimage to Rome. In his unfortunate situation, he was introduced to Mother Teresa, who was in Rome at the time with a group he got to know. Ugo was invited along with this group to a retreat at the shrine of Divine Mercy in Trent, but he refused. On leaving, one of the group, a nun, gave him five copies of the Divine Image Picture and a Divine Mercy medal. The following day the 29th April 1990, Ugo wore the medal and carried in his arms the Images to be blessed to the papal audience at the Vatican. At the bottom of the steps to St. Peter's the Holy Father passed by. Ugo asked him to bless his Divine Mercy pictures. After blessing the pictures the Pope asked him how he was.

Ugo told the Holy Father—John Paul II—he felt very despondent and was at a crisis in his life. The Holy Father said “How could you have a crisis with Jesus the Divine Mercy in your arms? Entrust yourself to him and pray for my Sister Faustina to intercede.” With this advice Ugo changed his mind and decided he would go to the Divine Mercy Shrine in Trent after all.

At the side altar in the Villa O'Santissima Villazzano in Trent, there is a shrine to the Divine Mercy with a life-sized icon of the Divine Image. On the fourth day of praying in front of this icon, *Ugo suddenly noticed the arms of the Image stretched out to him and tremendous warmth flowed through his body.* He found himself standing on his feet with his arms outstretched to the Lord and he heard himself loudly praising Jesus the Divine Mercy. *He saw Jesus coming down to him, his white garment blowing as if in a breeze, and he thought, “My God, this is the man from Galilee coming to me.”* **Then he heard Jesus say in a clear voice, “Rise up and walk.”** And Ugo Festa began to walk!

The Rays:

Jesus told St. Faustina: “The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross.”³¹

This passage refers back to the Gospel of John 19:34: “One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.”³²

Fr. Gaitley remarks, “The blood and water flowing from the pierced side of Christ truly is the fountain from which, in our heart of hearts, we all long to drink. It's the fountain of Baptism and the Eucharist, which summarize the whole sacramental life of the Church, the life of grace.”³³

³⁰ <https://spiritdailyblog.com/miracles/miraculous-divine-mercy-image>. The following related quotes are taken from the aforementioned article. Underline emphasis mine.

³¹ *Diary*, no. 299.

³² <https://biblia.com/books/rsvce/Jn19.32>.

³³ DMI. 23-26%, 199-223.

The following beautiful prayer in St. Faustina's *Diary* sums up the meaning of the two rays. **"O, Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of mercy for us, I trust in you."**³⁴

Jesus I Trust In You:

Jesus said to St. Faustina, **"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to this fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature, 'Jesus, I trust in you.'"**³⁵

But the graces that we receive depend on our degree of trust. That is why Jesus told St. Faustina, **"The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is—trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to me, because I pour all the treasures of My graces into them."**³⁶ **"When a soul approaches Me with trust, I fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls."**³⁷

Fr. Gaitley remarks, **"When we harden our hearts with distrust, his graces pour off our souls like water over stone. Unfortunately, when it comes to our relationship with God, distrust often comes to us more easily than trust This wound makes us, like our first parents, want to hide from God when he approaches us—especially after we've sinned the Image of Divine Mercy is meant to heal this wound in our hearts. It's meant to help us come to see God not as one from whom we need to flee but as one in whom we should trust as our merciful Savior."**³⁸ Moreover, Fr. Gaitley observes that he loves this detail of Jesus' right hand raised low near his heart because this gesture, Fr. Gaitley says, **"communicates a deep gentleness that doesn't scare us off."**³⁹

The Gaze:

Jesus told St. Faustina, **"My gaze from this image is like My gaze from the Cross."**⁴⁰ If you notice, Jesus' eyes are downcast; He doesn't look directly at us, so as not to threaten us. As Fr. Gaitley says, **"This is how Jesus approaches us in the Vilnius version of the Divine Mercy Image. There, he takes a small step toward us without looking directly at us his gaze is one of great love but also one of great humility and gentleness."**⁴¹

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*:

The multivalent spiritual features and interpretations contained in the Divine Mercy Vilnius image make it a very special image because it fulfills what the-then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy* explains about the three essential aspects that constitute all sacred art, namely, that 1) Christ is presented as the crucified One, 2) the Risen Lord, 3) and *the* Lord who will come again—this last aspect has both a Eucharistic and an Eschatological tone to it.⁴²

The Step:

Fr. Gaitley says, **"This *small* step points to Jesus' *first* coming, namely, his Incarnation, when he comes to us as a little baby in Nazareth. But this *sure* step also points to the certainty of his Second Coming."**⁴³

³⁴ *Diary*, nn. 84, 187.

³⁵ *Diary*, no. 327.

³⁶ *Diary*, no. 1578.

³⁷ *Diary*, no. 1074.

³⁸ DMI, 28%, 251.

³⁹ DMI, 28%, 251.

⁴⁰ *Diary*, no. 326.

⁴¹ DMI, 28%, 256.

⁴² Cf. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), pp. 132-133.

⁴³ DMI, 34%, 304.

Jesus told St. Faustina, **“You will prepare the world for My final coming.”**⁴⁴ The Mother of God also told her, **“You have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge. Oh, how terrible is that day! Determined is the day of justice, the day of divine wrath. The angels tremble before it. Speaks to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for [granting] mercy.”**⁴⁵

The Divine Mercy Vilnius Image and the Eucharistic Coming of Jesus:

Fr. Gaitley says, **“This gaze of the image . . . provides a kind of window for us to better appreciate the mystery of the timeless gaze of Christ from the Sacraments In the Eucharist, Christ lovingly gazes on us from the depths of his Passion and from the heights of his Resurrected Glory *at the same time* the Divine Mercy Image. It depicts Christ not in a single historical moment. Rather, it depicts the Resurrected Christ in his eternal glory and timelessness. It reveals the Resurrected Christ who defies the laws of space and time, the Resurrected Christ who can only be recognized with the eyes of faith, the Resurrected Christ who also bears the wounds of his Passion are so sums up in himself the whole Paschal mystery. And as we gaze on him gazing on us, we are drawn into the eternal moment that the image represents.”**⁴⁶

Our particular judgment really begins now in our relationship with the Eucharistic Lord. St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians had a very clear warning about receiving sacrilegious Communion; he says, **“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”**⁴⁷ Once, St. Teresa of Avila saw a priest who was in mortal sin celebrating Mass and she saw, as she says, **“two devils whose appearance was abominable horns were wrapped around the poor priest’s throat.”**⁴⁸

The Second Coming and the General Judgment (cf. CCC 1038)

After Jesus’ 2nd Coming, all souls of those who have already died will be miraculously reunited with their bodies to be ready for the General Judgment, where Christ will decide the eternal destiny of each person (either an eternity in Heaven or Hell).

What about those who are still alive during Jesus’ 2nd Coming?

Fr. Waze Menezes, CPM, in his new book on The Four Last Things gives a good explanation: **“Those persons still living at the time of the Second Coming of Christ will still receive their Judgment accordingly. If these people are in a state of grace but still have temporal punishment to atone for, it could be that just living on earth prior to the Second Coming would be punishment enough. After all, our Lord revealed some of the signs that would precede His Second Coming: natural disasters, famine, pestilence, wars, loss of faith, and hatred.”**⁴⁹ St. Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians (4:15, NAB), says, **“We who live, who survive until his coming, will in no way have an advantage over those who have fallen asleep.”**⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *Diary*, no. 429.

⁴⁵ *Diary*, no. 635.

⁴⁶ DML 37%, 333.

⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 11:27, 29-30. *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament*. Hahn, Scott. The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament (Kindle Locations 17247-17251). Ignatius Press. Kindle Edition.

⁴⁸ <https://christtotheworld.blogspot.com/2010/06/saint-teresas-vision-of-demons.html>.

⁴⁹ Menezes, Fr. Wade. *The Four Last Things: A Catechetical Guide to Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell* (Kindle Locations 711-714). EWTN Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁰ Menezes, Fr. Wade. *The Four Last Things: A Catechetical Guide to Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell* (Kindle Locations 719-721). EWTN Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

Nevertheless, whether we like it or not, the General Judgment *is* going to happen; Scripture affirms this. St. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews (9:28) says, **“Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him”**⁵¹ Moreover, in his first letter to the Thessalonians (4:14-18), Paul says, **“The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”**⁵²

The Catechism affirms this sober truth as well: **“In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man’s relationship with God will be laid bare The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good that each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life.”** (CCC 1039).

This powerful truth should spur us on to seriously fight against sin and advance in virtue.

If we are and die in a state of grace, we have *nothing* to fear; if we are in mortal sin and die in that state, we have *everything* to fear. St. Augustine once said, **“All that the wicked do is recorded and . . . when ‘our God comes He does not keep silence.”**⁵³ Fr. Waze Menezes remarks, **“Everyone’s misdeeds will be made manifest to everyone else. But so will our works of charity and kindness, and we will be blessed with full knowledge of the fruits of those actions.”**⁵⁴

That being said, we see then that none of us (and not even the minutest, hidden details and sins in our lives) can escape Christ’s Lordship. Christ is Omniscient; hence why St. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews (4:13, NAB), says, **“Nothing is concealed from him; all lies bare and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.”**

III. Priesthood (Priests)

Priests, especially when they offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and preach in homilies, and hear Confessions act *in Persona Christi* (in the Person of Christ). The great spiritual power that every priest possesses and the intense intimacy that each priest possesses by virtue of his ordination are tremendous gifts for the life of the Catholic Church and sinners; without priests, we would not have the Eucharist and the absolution of our mortal sins. One can see then why the devil hates priests so much. The extraordinary lives of priestly saints, notably, St. Padre Pio (with his many gifts, such as the Stigmata) and St. John Vianney, and the many frightening battles that they both had with Satan, testify to the power of the priesthood. The devil once retorted to St. John Vianney, **“If there were three such priests as you, my kingdom would be ruined.”**⁵⁵

In St. Faustina’s *Diary*, Jesus said a number of things which show the power of priests.

- **“When you approach the confessional . . . , I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul.”** (*Diary*, 1602).
- **“The person of the priest is, for Me, only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a . . . priest it is that I am making use of; open your soul in confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light.”** (*Diary*, 1725).

⁵¹ Menezes, Fr. Wade. *The Four Last Things: A Catechetical Guide to Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell* (Kindle Locations 646-648). EWTN Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

⁵² <https://biblia.com/books/rsvce/1Th4.14>.

⁵³ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 18. Quoted in CCC 1039. Cf. Ps. 50:3. Quoted in *The*

⁵⁴ Menezes, Fr. Wade. *The Four Last Things: A Catechetical Guide to Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell* (Kindle Locations 685-687). EWTN Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵ <https://christtotheworld.blogspot.com/2010/08/saint-john-vianney-vs-devil.html>.

- **“The Lord Jesus greatly protects His representatives on earth. How closely He is united with them; and He orders me to give priority to their opinion over His. I have come to know the great intimacy which exists between Jesus and the priest. Jesus defends whatever the priest says, and often complies with his wishes, and sometimes makes His own relationship with a soul depend on the priest’s advice. (Diary, 1240).**

Cardinal Robert Sarah, *The Day Is Now Far Spent*:

The prefect Cardinal Robert Sarah in his groundbreaking new book on the current crises plaguing our Church and world entitled *The Day Is Now Far Spent* has an illuminating and powerful chapter which addresses the Crisis of the Priesthood that we’re currently facing.

To begin his book, Cardinal Sarah first brings to our attention the figure of the notorious Apostle who betrayed Jesus, Judas Iscariot. Judas is a perfect image of the anti-priest, that is, he is the embodiment of everything that a priest shouldn’t be. Speaking to priests, Cardinal Sarah says that **“his shadow hangs over us today.”**⁵⁶ Today we have the problem of relativism, which Cardinal Sarah says, **“is the mask of Judas disguised as an intellectual.”**⁵⁷ **“The mystery of Judas is spreading,”** Cardinal Sarah remarks, but, he says, **“I want to say to all priests: stay strong and upright.”**⁵⁸

Then, speaking to you lay faithful, Cardinal Sarah says, **“The mystery of Judas, the mystery of betrayal, is a subtle poison. The devil seeks to make us doubt the Church. He wants to regard her as a human organization in crisis. However, she is so much more than that: she is the continuation of Christ. The devil drives us to division and schism. He wants to make us believe that the Church has betrayed us. But the Church does not betray. The Church, full of sinners, is herself without sin!”**⁵⁹

Cardinal Sarah then reminds us not to be scandalized by today’s priestly scandals and not lose hope in the dignity and power of the priesthood; he says, **“The Church is suffering; she is trampled on, and her enemies are within. Let us not abandon her. All pastors are sinful men, but they bear within themselves the mystery of Christ.”**⁶⁰

Priests, as St. Faustina calls them, are **“bright candles enlightening human souls.”**⁶¹ And St. Faustina in her *Diary* also prays for priests, saying, **“Let your brightness never be dimmed.”**⁶²

Bishops and priests may abandon their posts and flock and even Christ and His Bride, the Church, and they may do so in unspeakably scandalous ways, but Christ will never stop calling call men (that is, those who are truly called) to the priesthood nor will He stop loving His closest friends, namely, priests. Jesus truly loves priests and will until the end of time use their priesthood to save souls. Every priest is an *alter Christus* (another Christ). Our job as lay Catholics is to not only to pray for priests that they may be holy but that they be protected from all diabolic deceptions and machinations.

Cardinal Robert Sarah says, **“The light of the priesthood has been darkened.”**⁶³ Moreover, he says, **“When the faith of the clergy grows weak, something like an eclipse takes place: the world is plunged into dark shadows.”**⁶⁴ Our world today is submerged in unprecedented darkness because priests aren’t being the priests they’re called to be.

⁵⁶ *The Day Is Now Far Spent*. Kindle. Location 2%, 55 of 5725. Henceforth Sarah.

⁵⁷ Sarah. 2%, 55.

⁵⁸ Sarah. 2%, 75.

⁵⁹ Sarah. 2%, 75.

⁶⁰ Sarah. 2%, 75.

⁶¹ *Diary*, 75.

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ *The Day Is Now Far Spent*. Kindle. Location 13%, 688 of 5725.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*. Location 15%, 788.

Cardinal Sarah gives the solution; he says, **“Priesthood in the first place is not doing; it is being.”**⁶⁵ In other words, what he’s saying is that priests today need to *be* true priests of Christ, and then and only then will they become bright candles enlightening human souls. Cardinal Sarah remarks, **“Satan has a fierce hatred of priests. He wants to defile them, to make them fall, to pervert them. Why? Because by their whole life they proclaim the truth of the Cross.”**⁶⁶

Contrary to what our secular culture says, our world *needs* priests. As Cardinal Sarah says to priests, **“You make the powers of this world tremble! . . . Your presence is unbearable to the prince of lies . . . Without you, dear brother priests . . . humanity would be less great and less beautiful. You are the living rampart of the truth,”**⁶⁷ **“the rampart of . . . saved humanity.”**⁶⁸ And they do this in a powerful way by faithfully living out celibacy, in imitation of the life of Christ who Himself was celibate. **“Priests,”** Cardinal Sarah says, **“by their celibacy, pierce the cloak of distrust and suspicion that weights on the world and cuts it off from God. Their example is necessary and makes them credible. How could we encourage young people to embark on the adventure of indissoluble marriage if we ourselves are not capable of giving our lives forever?”**⁶⁹ Where do priests get the strength to persevere in celibacy? The Holy Eucharist.

National Catholic Register writer, Patti Armstrong, recently interviewed⁷⁰ veteran exorcist and the former spiritual director of St. Mother Teresa, Msgr. John Esseff of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and asked him, **“Why do you think people have lost faith in the Eucharist?”** Pausing for a moment, he explained that **“the loss of faith in the Eucharist to the bishops and priests who lack fervor in their own faith.”** Moreover, he remarked, **“I have noticed in my life as a priest, that if I am in love with Jesus, the people will be one degree less than me. If I’m on fire, they are warm. If I am warm, they’ll be moderate. If I’m just moderate and I do everything correctly, but I don’t have that fervor, our people are cold. And if I am cold—and this is where I think we are with so many priests and bishops—the people are fallen away.”**

Today, the Church and world need holy priests, but holy priests must be prayed for. They don’t just fall from the sky.

Love, support, offer penances, and pray for priests more than you ever have because we’re living in evil, diabolic times, times in which the priesthood is being aggressively assaulted in a way never before seen. As St. John Vianney said, **“When people want to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest; for when there is no priest, there is no sacrifice, and when there is no sacrifice, there is no religion.”**⁷¹ Today, the commonly heard godless mantra is **“I’m not religious, I’m spiritual.”** This erroneous thinking offends and subverts the purity of the teachings of our Catholic Religion and consequently our knowledge of Jesus. The renowned former chief exorcist of Rome, Fr. Gabriele Amorth, was right: **“Where religion regresses, superstition progresses.”**⁷² We’re seeing this today especially with the alarming rise in various forms of New Age, Occult practices, Wicca,⁷³ Santeria, and so on. All of these superstitious, anti-Catholic practices, rife within our culture, are a clear indication that our culture does not know Jesus anymore.

Kanye West:

Thankfully, though, even in the secular arena, the Holy Spirit is working by leading people to a knowledge of Jesus. For example, rapper, Kanye West, a contemporary music artist that many of your Gen Z & Millennial-aged children know, has been making big headlines lately because of his recent groundbreaking conversion to Christianity and his new music album entitled: *Jesus is King*, which attacks today’s destructive cultural

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Location 16%, 856.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Location 18%, 988.

⁶⁷ Sarah. 18%, 988.

⁶⁸ Sarah. 19%, 1011.

⁶⁹ Sarah. 19%, 1064.

⁷⁰ <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/armstrong/exorcist-blames-bishops-and-priests-for-loss-of-faith-in-eucharist>.

⁷¹ Quoted in: <https://churchpop.com/2018/11/15/this-powerful-prayer-by-st-faustina-is-perfect-for-the-church-in-crisis/>.

⁷² Amorth, Gabrielle. *An Exorcist Tells His Story* (p. 53). Ignatius Press. Kindle Edition.

⁷³ Cf. <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/armstrong/exorcist-warns-witchcraft-promises-freedom-delivers-shackles>.

progressivism.⁷⁴ As one author on the *National Review* said, “**Kanye West is now a cultural reactionary by the standards of our society, and could be, in time, a cultural wrecking ball that dislodges . . . cultural liberalism He’s just the figure, given his massive iconic cultural status, to bring a needed message that our society should reconsider what it deems praiseworthy.**”⁷⁵

On the Patrick Madrid Show, on his Nov. 4th show, Hour 1, he spoke about Kanye’s conversion and mentioned a Catholic actress, Patricia Heaton, who supports Kanye. But she also warned Kanye to be ready for what’s to come for being so vocal about Christ, namely, persecution.⁷⁶ Our secular culture does not know nor does it ever want to know Christ and what He stands for. The Standard of Christ is diametrically opposed to the Standard of the Satan, which is the Standard of the World. As Jesus in the Gospel of John (17:25) says to His Father, “**O righteous Father, the world has not known thee.**”⁷⁷

So Kanye is in for a fight and thus far he’s shown admirable signs that he’s all in, but Fr. Mike Schmitz of Ascension Press, in a recent video about Kanye’s conversion, tempers everyone’s excitement by urging us to be patient in seeing how his conversion develops and not expect so much. Moreover, he says, we must “**pray for our brother we have to pray for him . . . none of us want him to fall and if he does fall we want him to have the grace to get back up. We don’t anything to happen to his family, we want his family to be protected, to be guided, to be lifted up by the Holy Spirit.**”⁷⁸

IV. The Most Blessed Sacrament (The Most Holy Eucharist)

I’m sure all of us here are firm in their faith in Jesus’ *real* presence in the Eucharist and so therefore, I don’t need to give you a Catechetical treatise to try to convince you about this truth. Nevertheless, we here who have faith in this most sublime mystery are called to counter the recent Pew research’s study which discovered that **69% (7/10)** of Catholics believe that the Eucharist is merely a symbol.⁷⁹ And Mary is ready and willing to help us to fight for this counter-revolutionary cause to inspire others to better know and love our Eucharistic Lord.

Sacred Scripture (especially in John 6), the Apostolic Tradition of the Church, and the Catechism all affirm that in the Eucharist, as the Catechism says, “***The whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.***”⁸⁰ (CCC 1374).

Earlier in this talk, I briefly mentioned in passing the amazing connections between the Divine Mercy Vilnius Image, the Holy Shroud, and the Eucharistic Miracles. Now let’s look at some of these connections in greater detail.

As I mentioned earlier, the face of the man on the Shroud perfectly matches the facial contours of Jesus on the Divine Mercy Vilnius image.

Moreover, extensive research has been done on the Shroud to the point that scientists were able to create a 3-D carbon copy of Jesus’ actual body as it appears on the Shroud. It was discovered that Jesus was, if I’m not mistaken, around **5’11”**!⁸¹

How did the Image on the Holy Shroud get there?

⁷⁴ Cf. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/10/kanye-wests-conversion-could-be-a-cultural-wrecking-ball/>.

⁷⁵ <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/10/kanye-wests-conversion-could-be-a-cultural-wrecking-ball/>.

⁷⁶ Listen from 42:00 min onward. <https://relevantradio.com/2019/11/the-patrick-madrid-show-november-4-2019-hour-1/>.

⁷⁷ John 17:25. <https://biblia.com/books/rsvce/Jn17.24>.

⁷⁸ Watch from 6:10 min onward. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJK0g7Ry5I0>.

⁷⁹ Cf. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/>.

⁸⁰ Council of Trent (1551): DS 1651.

⁸¹ For a video on these discoveries, watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4RBXVs70_g

Italian physicist, Paolo De Lazzaro recently discovered that the ultraviolet light necessary to create such an image (which would need to be several billion watts) “exceeds the maximum power released by all ultraviolet light sources available today.”⁸²

(Segway into a discussion on the images of the 2 Eucharistic Miracles which are located below me).

1. Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, Italy (8th c. – first reported):⁸³

- a. During Holy Mass, a Priest doubted the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and the bread and wine miraculously transformed into living human flesh and blood!
- b. The flesh and blood continue to exist uncorrupted after 12 centuries!
- c. The flesh’s origin? – An anatomic dissection of a living heart, which is impossible!
- d. The flesh derives from living heart striated muscular tissue (myocardium – heart wall).
- e. The blood (genuine hemoglobin) belongs to the human species and is blood TYPE AB (+), and contains all the elements in normal, healthy, human blood.
- f. The blood type is amazingly also the same type of blood found on the Shroud of Turin (and the Sudarium of Oviedo), which is the most common blood type found in people from the Middle East, and only 5% of the world’s population has type AB blood.

2. Eucharistic Miracle (Buenos Argentina, 08/18/1996 – Church of Santa Maria y Caballito Almagro):

Magis Center:⁸⁴

On that day in the evening, Fr. Alejandro Pezet was told by a woman parishioner that a consecrated host had been desecrated on a candle holder in the back of the Church. Unable to consume the host, Fr. Pezet put it into a glass of water into the tabernacle so that it would dissolve (the ordinary practice for respectfully handling such a host).

When he opened the tabernacle on August 26, he saw that the host had been transformed into a piece of bloody tissue which was much larger than the original host. When Fr. Pezet informed Archbishop Bergoglio of the occurrence, the Archbishop asked him to have the host professionally photographed.

The photograph occurred on September 6, 1996, and it was decided to keep the host in the tabernacle without publicizing it or its origin.

After three years, the bloody tissue had not decomposed. This is truly extraordinary and virtually impossible to explain through natural causation—particularly because no special attempt was made to preserve it. Since the original photographs revealed the complete lack of decomposition, Archbishop Bergoglio asked that the bloody tissue be scientifically examined

On October 5, 1999, in the presence of the Cardinal’s representatives, scientist [Dr. Ricardo Castanon Gomez](#) took a sample of the bloody fragment and sent it to New York for analysis.

⁸² <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/150417-shroud-turin-relics-jesus-catholic-church-religion-science/>.

⁸³ For information on this miracle, read: <http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharist/mir/lanciano.html>.

⁸⁴ The following, including Dr. Zugibe’s findings from: <https://magiscenter.com/the-eucharistic-miracle-overseen-by-archbishop-bergoglio-now-pope-francis/>.

Since Dr. Gomez did not want to prejudice the scientific committee who would be examining the tissue in New York, he did not reveal its source. A team of five scientists was assembled, including the famous cardiologist and forensic pathologist, Dr. Frederic Zugibe (author of many books on forensic pathology). Zugibe testified:

“The analyzed material is a fragment of the heart muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves. This muscle is responsible for the contraction of the heart. It should be borne in mind that the left cardiac ventricle pumps blood to all parts of the body. The heart muscle is in an inflammatory condition and contains a large number of white blood cells. This indicates that the heart was alive at the time the sample was taken. It is my contention that the heart was alive, since white blood cells die outside a living organism. They require a living organism to sustain them. Thus, their presence indicates that the heart was alive when the sample was taken. What is more, these white blood cells had penetrated the tissue, which further indicates that the heart had been under severe stress, as if the owner had been beaten severely about the chest.”

3. Eucharistic Miracle (Legnica, Poland – 2013, exposed at the WYD for public veneration, 04/17/2016):⁸⁵

- a. Occurred in St. Hyacinth’s Church in Legnica, Poland during a Christmas Mass (12/25/2013) in which a host accidentally fell during Communion time.
- b. Cardiologist, Barbara Engel, who was one of the scientists involved in analyzing the host, said, “We have identified myocardial fibres, typical of myocardial tissue with alterations that often appear during the agony.”
- c. The scientific evidence showed striking parallels to those of the Lanciano and Argentina Eucharistic miracle.

Knowledge of Jesus Must Lead to Loving Jesus

Now knowing Jesus’ real presence in the Holy Eucharist is only half the battle because knowing Jesus isn’t enough—we need to love Jesus. Jesus is God, and the greatest Commandment, Jesus Himself said, is to love God with one’s whole mind, heart, soul, and strength (cf. Mt. 22:37-38). But coming to know and in turn love Jesus requires Mary’s powerful help. The saints, notably, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta knew this.

St. Mother Teresa in 1947 had three powerful visions in which she felt that **“call within a call,”** which eventually led to her founding the Missionaries of Charity religious order. In these visions, Mary played a key role in helping Mother Teresa answer the call to satiate Jesus’ thirst. Fifty years after her first vision, Mother Teresa commented on this vision, saying, **“If Our Lady had not been with me that day, I never would have known what Jesus meant when he said, ‘I thirst.’”**⁸⁶ In another letter dated March 25th, entitled, **“I Thirst,”** Mother Teresa said that Mary’s **“role is to bring you face to face, as John and Magdalene, with the love in the Heart of Jesus crucified.”**⁸⁷ In another powerful letter to her sisters dated March 25th, 1993, which she wrote after reading a Lenten message of JP II on meaning of **“I Thirst,”** she said the following:

I worry some of you still have not really met Jesus—one to one—you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in chapel—but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes—to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you He misses you when you don’t come close. He thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don’t feel worthy. When not accepted by

⁸⁵ For more on this miracle, read: <https://aleteia.org/blogs/the-daily-catch/the-daily-wow-eucharistic-miracle-in-poland-approved-by-bishop-after-testing/>.

⁸⁶ Joseph Langford, MC, *Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady: Sharing Mother Teresa’s Mystical Relationship with Mary* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007), 40.

⁸⁷ Quoted in: Fr. Michael Gaitley, *33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat In Preparation for Marian Consecration*. Kindle. 31%, 1024 of 3383. Henceforth Gaitley.

others, even by yourself sometimes—He is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don't have to be different for Jesus to love you. Only believe—you are precious to Him. Bring all your suffering to His feet.⁸⁸

Suffering has to come because if you look at the cross, he has got his head bending down—he wants to kiss you Suffering, pain, sorrow, humiliation, feelings of loneliness, are nothing but the kiss of Jesus At times you come so close to Jesus on the cross that he can kiss you. I once told this to a lady who was suffering very much. She answered, “Tell Jesus not to kiss me—to stop kissing me.” Suffering is a gift from God.⁸⁹

To want to suffer out of love for Jesus is a powerful way of coming to know Jesus. Mary, who stood at the foot of the Cross leads us into the pierced Sacred Heart of Her Son in order to plumb the depths of His “**excessive mercy**” and “**all-powerful love,**”⁹⁰ as He told St. Margaret Mary.

But one cannot suffer with Jesus without Mary and the heavenly strength from on-high which comes from the Eucharistic Bread from Heaven, which has been called the **Bread of the Strong**. Since devotion to Mary always leads one to a greater desire for fervent and frequent Communion—the chief source of strength that enables one to suffer well—Mary is therefore the best saint to pray to when we're experiencing an apparently “meaningless” and painful Cross.⁹¹ Mary gives meaning to the Cross because She never abandoned Her Son who was dying on the Cross. At the foot of the Cross, She focused on Her crucified Son and Lord, and that is why She understood the value of the Cross. *The price for coming to this knowledge?* Suffering. Mary, the Co-Redemptrix, redeemed the sinful world alongside Her Son, *the Redeemer*, and at the price of unspeakable suffering.

As Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen in his powerful book on Mary *The World's First Love* aptly says, “**He (me: that is, Jesus) also plunged the sword into her own soul in the sense that He called her to be a cooperater with Him, as the new Eve, in the regeneration of humanity. When the mother of James and John asked political preferment for her sons, they were asked if they could drink of His chalice. That was the condition of being in His Kingdom. What draining of the chalice, then, shall be the condition of being the Mother of the Crucified!**”⁹²

As St. John took Mary into his home, that is, into his soul, so must we do the same especially in moments of intense suffering; through Total Consecration, our sufferings can be embraced and sanctified by the touch of Mary's tender, motherly hands. If we freely let Her, Mary alongside Her Eucharistic Son will, St. Louis de Montfort says, “**conform, unite and completely consecrate us to Jesus Christ.**”⁹³

This is the paradox of doing Total Consecration to Mary: through Total Consecration Mary desires to conform us so perfectly to the image of Her Son so that we can come to the point of actually finding joy in our sufferings. As St. Maximilian Kolbe said, “**The way of the Immaculate, even though it be strewn at times with crosses and suffering, is not, nevertheless, all that burdensome and obscure. We always feel this maternal affection.**”⁹⁴ St. Therese said, “**Since my first communion...I asked Jesus to change all the consolations of this earth into bitterness for me. I had a perpetual desire to suffer. I wasn't thinking, however, of making suffering my joy; this is a grace was given to me later on.**”⁹⁵

⁸⁸ From her letter to the Missionaries of Charity, 03/25/1993. Quoted in: Gaitley. 30%, 975.

⁸⁹ *A Life for God: Mother Teresa Treasury*, ed. Lavonne Neff (NY: Harpercollins, 1996), p. 139. Quoted in: Gaitley. 29%, 923.

⁹⁰ These words are from Jesus' 12th promise to those who faithfully practice the nine first Fridays devotion. <https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/promises-of-the-sacred-heart-of-jesus.html>.

⁹¹ “Holy Communion augments our union with Christ. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus” (CCC, #1391). St. Peter Julian Eymard says in Holy Communion, “[He] enlightens the mind and gives it a special aptitude for discovering more and more clearly the things of God . . . Communion awakens in us a hunger for God . . . This attraction, mysterious to some extent is a special grace of Communion.”

St. Peter Julian Eymard, *Holy Communion*, trans. Clara Morris Rumball (Cleveland: Emmanuel Publications, 1940), 76-77.

⁹² Read on Calibre e-reader. 87%.

⁹³ de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #120 (p. 61). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁹⁴ Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate*, #69, (Kindle Locations 389-390). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

⁹⁵ St. Therese of Lisieux, *Her Last Conversations*, trans. John Clarke (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1977), 123.

Remnant Theology: Strive to Be and Remain in that Remnant

Throughout Holy Scripture, we see “remnant theology” at work. This occurs when a majority of God’s people stop following God and only a small remnant of faithful Catholics remain to atone for the sins of men after a purification. Recently, Monsignor Charles Pope affirmed that today we’re experiencing remnant theology since in a recent related article he explained that **“the Lord is pruning His Church It is going to take a stronger and purer Church to endure the cultural tsunami that has been rolling in.”**⁹⁶

As secularism, godlessness, and the sexual impurity unleashed by the global sexual revolution continue to ravage our world, we must look forward to the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary promised at Fatima. She will eventually come in a powerful way to put an end to all the nonsense and sexual impurity that we’re seeing today. I heard a talk on YouTube from two years ago by a notable exorcist, Fr. Chad Ripperger, on the current state of our times and in he mentioned something to the effect that the reason why he thinks the Lord is permitting modernism to rise is so that when Our Lady powerfully crushes it under Her foot, Jesus will draw our attention to Her power. And by Jesus manifesting Mary’s glorious power, such glory will redound to the glory of God *in* Jesus Christ and then we will see how powerful Jesus is *through* Mary.⁹⁷

Our task in these evil, diabolic times in which we’re currently living in is to pray fervently to Our Lady, saying, as Mother Teresa prayed in her following prayer: **“Immaculate Heart of Mary, keep me in your most pure heart, so that I may please Jesus through you, in you, and with you.”**⁹⁸

Devotion to the Eucharist and the Mother of God are two of the most certain signs that one is in a state of grace God, that one is part of God’s remnant. These signs along with the frequent, abnormally long confession lines and here at OLOP are strong indicators that Mary is preparing Her children for something. What that something is, if anything, only God knows. This incredible phenomenon of the continual massive influx of penitents and incredible conversions that we priests are seeing here at OLOP, I can’t help but think what this all portends for the near future.

Is something cataclysmic on the horizon? When we look at what’s currently going on in the Catholic Church and the world, and when we recall Mary’s motherly warnings at Her various apparitions such as Fatima, Akita, and Kibeho, we would do well to ponder this question, not to become morbidly obsessed and fearful but to become more eternity-minded and trustful.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that historically, movements dedicated to Our Lady—as was seen in the life of the polish Franciscan martyr, St. Maximilian Kolbe, who promoted Total Consecration to *The Immaculata*—prepared the people of Poland (and even Japan, notably, Nagasaki) for the atrocious sufferings that would befall them on account of World War II.⁹⁹

Today, there is a massive movement dedicated to promoting Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary according to St. Louis de Montfort’s method, not to mention a massive movement of getting people pray the Rosary to combat the evils of our times. Today, we need another Lepanto, Guadalupe, Fatima-Dancing-of-the-Sun moment.

Mary may well be preparing Her children to know Jesus and His love for them as much as they can so that they’ll be strengthened to persevere in remaining in His Love (cf. John 15:4) if and when a chastisement hits.

⁹⁶ <https://blog.adw.org/2019/09/can-remnant-theology-teach-us-church-today/>.

⁹⁷ Cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfBC7RcQLao&t=2221s>.

⁹⁸ Joseph Langford, MC, *Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady: Sharing Mother Teresa’s Mystical Relationship with Mary* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007), 72. Quoted in: Gaitley, Michael E., 33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat In Preparation for Marian Consecration (Kindle Locations 1069-1070). Marian Press. Kindle Edition.

⁹⁹ Claude R. Foster, *Mary’s Knight: The Mission and Martyrdom of Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe* (Libertyville, Ill.: Marytown Press, 2002), p. 567-568. Gaitley, Michael E. (2015-02-22). *The Second Greatest Story Ever Told* (Kindle Locations 2334-2416). Marian Press. Kindle Edition.

Bishop Athanasius Schneider recently wrote a timely book entitled *Christus Vincit: Christ's Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age* and in it he has a powerful chapter on the 3rd Secret of Fatima in which he says, **“In light of the current crisis, I think we have to maintain a somewhat sober attitude and concentrate on the essence of the message of Fatima, which is penance; to stop sinning because God is already too offended; to make reparation and expiation for the sins against God, against the Most Holy Eucharist, and against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”**¹⁰⁰

To know Jesus is the ultimate quest of our existence but this quest comes with a price. That price is *The Cross*. The Cross entails, suffering and death, that is, death to sin!

The Second Vatican Council explains how the Mother of God proved Her love for Jesus by accepting her own cross. It says that **“She stood in keeping with the divine plan, suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself, with a maternal heart, to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth.”**¹⁰¹

We may try to deny our present darkness and want to run away from the royal road of the Cross. But the Cross is our *only* Light and the only Ladder to Heaven.

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”¹⁰²

May we use our short time here on earth wisely by doing everything within our power, with God's grace, to *know* Jesus better so that we can love and serve Him *through* His Mother, Mary, so that we can get to Heaven.

¹⁰⁰ Schneider, Bishop Athanasius. *Christus Vincit: Christ's Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age* (Kindle Locations 5033-5038). Angelico Press. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, #58.

¹⁰² Quoted in: <https://www.thecampofsaints.com/2019/11/the-new-akita-message-is-absolutely.html>.