

St. Mary's of the Lake, Watkins Glen, NY
St. Benedict's, Odessa, NY



Being Church in Today's World Part I

Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff
September 22, 2022

1



Being Church in Today's World, Part I

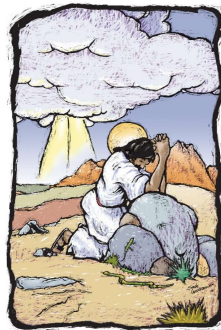
Webinar Tips

- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for "fit to window" under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters "Q & A". Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does, you can drag it around.

2



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3



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Why This Series?

In evaluations from previous presentations, people have asked for discussion of the contents of:

- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
 - Part I – Used in my series, *We Profess, We Believe* on the Nicene Creed - <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/the-creed.html>
 - Part II – *Sacraments: Channels of God's Grace* (<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/sacramentsvideo>)
 - Part III – Used various presentations
 - Part IV – Christian Prayer - *Giving Our Hearts to God: What It Means to Pray* – <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/prayer2021>

4



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Why This Series? Cont'd

- *Evangelium Vitae*
 - "Humanae Vitae"
- For both of these see my series on pro-life teaching, *Treating Life with Dignity and Love* – <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/prolife>
- and other Church doctrines that would help Catholics better form our consciences, in order to stand against the evils coming at us in this world.
 - As Catholics, are we bound to follow everything the Pope says?

5



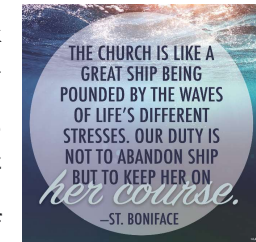
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Why This Series? Cont'd

The above has made me think but I think the question that a person wrote on their evaluation of *Praying the Rosary From the Heart* may best sum up the heart of this presentation.

- "What is the future of Christianity???"

Will there be a "remnant" left?



6



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Why This Series? Cont'd

Another comment asked:

- "How did this happen? It seems like both a slow erosion and at the same time a fast decline."

Some people blame it all on Vatican 2.

- The Second Vatican was not well-explained.
 - For example, some people **think** it said you no longer have to go to Mass weekly or confession
- Catechesis lost substance
- What effect did secular culture have on church participation?

7



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Keeping with the Past

While all of the previously mentioned documents are less than 60 years old, they are **not new** teaching.

- Hermeneutic of continuity
- They apply past teaching to the modern day world
 - For example, our Church's teaching on contraception goes back to Genesis 38:9-10, "*Onan, however, knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, **he wasted his seed on the ground, to avoid giving offspring** to his brother. What he did greatly **offended the LORD**, and the LORD took his life too.*"

8



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Are We Building a New Tower of Babel Today?

*"They said to one another, 'Come, let us mold bricks for stone, and harden them with fire.' They used bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky, **and so make a name for ourselves**; otherwise we shall be scattered all over the earth.'"* (Genesis 11:3-4)

The Lord responded by confusing their speech. Today, all the Lord needs to do is let the people have their way and we crumble on our own and don't even realize it.

9



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Where do we go for answers?

- Friends
- Family
- Teachers/Mentors
- Government
- Majority
 - If everyone jumped off a bridge, would you?
- Do we ask God for **guidance**?
- My prayer – "For all those who hold government office, that they set aside personal ideologies, partisan politics, and popular opinion, to do what is right and just in God's eyes."

10



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What we see as common is not necessarily "normal" or good.

Lots of people are doing it and nothing bad has happened right?
Do mass shootings relate to lack of respect for life?

11



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In the World but Not of the World

- John 15:19 – "If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you."
- John 17:14-16 – "I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world."
- Romans 12:2 – "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect."

12



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Looking for Truth

In his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis "The way many platforms work often ends up favouring encounter between persons who think alike, shielding them from debate" (*Fratelli Tutti*, 45). This does not contribute to a "well-formed conscience," which we discuss later.

For more of my thoughts on *Fratelli Tutti* see
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/our-relationships-with-others.html>

13



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Paul writes to Timothy, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. **For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths.** But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

14

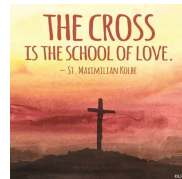


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Who Can We Trust?

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends"

John 15:13



15



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"If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free."

(John 8:32)



16



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What is Truth?

- Eighth commandment - "You shall **not** bear false witness against your neighbor."

17



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So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, **to testify to the truth**. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "**What is truth?**" (John 18:37-38)



18



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What is Truth? Cont'd

- There is factual truth!

2 + 2 always equals 4

That is, unless you **redefine** "2" or "4"

But if we can redefine words when ever we what,
nothing means anything

Yet this is exactly what some people want to do like
when they attempt to redefine things like marriage.

19



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Role of Modern Psychology

- in **understanding** morality
- in **determining** morality, what is right and wrong

20



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Where do we go for
Truth?

21



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*"I am the way
and **the truth**
and the life "*

John 14:6

22



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Truth And Schisms

- From Evaluations - Schisms in the church today
 - Over 30,000 Protestant denominations
 - In own diocese - Spiritus Christi
 - People today think the church should conform to the world
 - German Synod - <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/tags/8479/german-synodal-way>
- We are we to do?
 - Pray from the depth of our hearts "Thy will be done" as we remember Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17

23



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The Eucharist as Source and Summit

- Our belief in the Real Presence goes back to Jesus' words at the Last Supper, "*this is my body...this is my blood.*"
- The Revival seeks to make known today what has always been taught.
 - Documents like USCCB document on the Eucharist seek to help us understand what the church has always taught
- How people spending time in Adoration can help them as individuals and help the broader church

24



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Did The Second Vatican Council Change (Evolve) Church Teaching?

- "Thus, the council did not seek to remake the church from the ground up. It did not seek to change her basic mission or doctrines. It did not seek to weaken the vocation of the Catholic Church as "mother and teacher" of all humanity. Instead, the council sought to make the church *more* fruitful in her work by reinvigorating the forms and means of Catholic life in the light of new conditions." (Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 107).

25



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Did The Second Vatican Council Change (Evolve) Church Teaching?

- "In other words, *Lumen Gentium* both affirmed and adjusted Catholics' understanding of their church. It confirmed papal authority but restored the collegiality of bishops. It confirmed the hierarchal nature of the church but restored the Catholic sense of *communio*-that is, the church as a communion of free persons and local churches. It confirmed the unique priesthood of the ordained but restored an awareness of the common priesthood of all believers and the dignity of laypersons, each of whom shares "in the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability" (LG 17)."(Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 113).

26



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The Church Has Had It Struggles

For example:

- Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation
 - Example - selling of indulgences

27



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From my document "What Sort of Church Should We Be?

"800 years ago, God said to St. Francis of Assisi, "repair my church." At first, St. Francis thought God was referring to the local church building but God had something much bigger in mind, to repair the church as it was being lived out. I believe God is saying to us today "repair my church" with the same meaning as when he said these words to St. Francis." (3).

28



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From Archbishop Chaput in *Strangers in a Strange Land*

- "The Gospel should move us to change the world for the better, not bless it as it is" (78).
- "The 'power' of the Church resides not in her public statements or material resources, her structures or social services, but in her ability to form and lead her people-and to be their first loyalty" (188).

→ to do so we must understand what it means to be "church" – more on that next time

29



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Spiritual Warfare

- When we think the government has taken over morality and/or promotes relativism, we ask for the intercession of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher, recalling their "battle" with King Henry VIII.

30



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Spiritual Warfare cont'd

- Fr. Dwight Longenecker begins chapter 1 of his book, *Immortal Combat: Confronting the Heart of Darkness*, with a discussion on how people today no longer like to use language of spiritual warfare. What is your reaction to a person who talks about the devil as a real person?
- The devil is most powerful when we think he doesn't exist. Why? Because we don't fight what we think doesn't exist.

31



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Spiritual Warfare cont'd

Hell does exist!

- Ezekiel 18:26-28 "When the just turn away from justice to do evil and die, on account of the evil they did they must **die**. But if the wicked turn from the wickedness they did and do what is right and just, they save their lives; since they turned away from all the sins they committed, they shall live; they shall not die."
- Some think it doesn't or that it is empty because God forgives everything → nothing to fear
 - Matthew 7:13-14 – enter through the narrow gate
 - Matthew 7:21 – not everyone who says to Jesus Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

32



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Why Bother?

- Because we are in a battle against evil. We need help that comes from God (Revelation 12).



St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

*Be our defense against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

33



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Future Schedule

- *Being Church in Today's World* continues
 - October 27th
 - November 17th
- When you exit this webinar a short evaluation questionnaire should come up to invite your feedback.
- The slides for this presentation will be available online at <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/beingchurch2022>

34



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Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

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35



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36



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37



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38



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39



Being Church in Today's World, Part I

Resources cont'd

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Weigel, George, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church*. Basic Books: New York. 2013.

40