

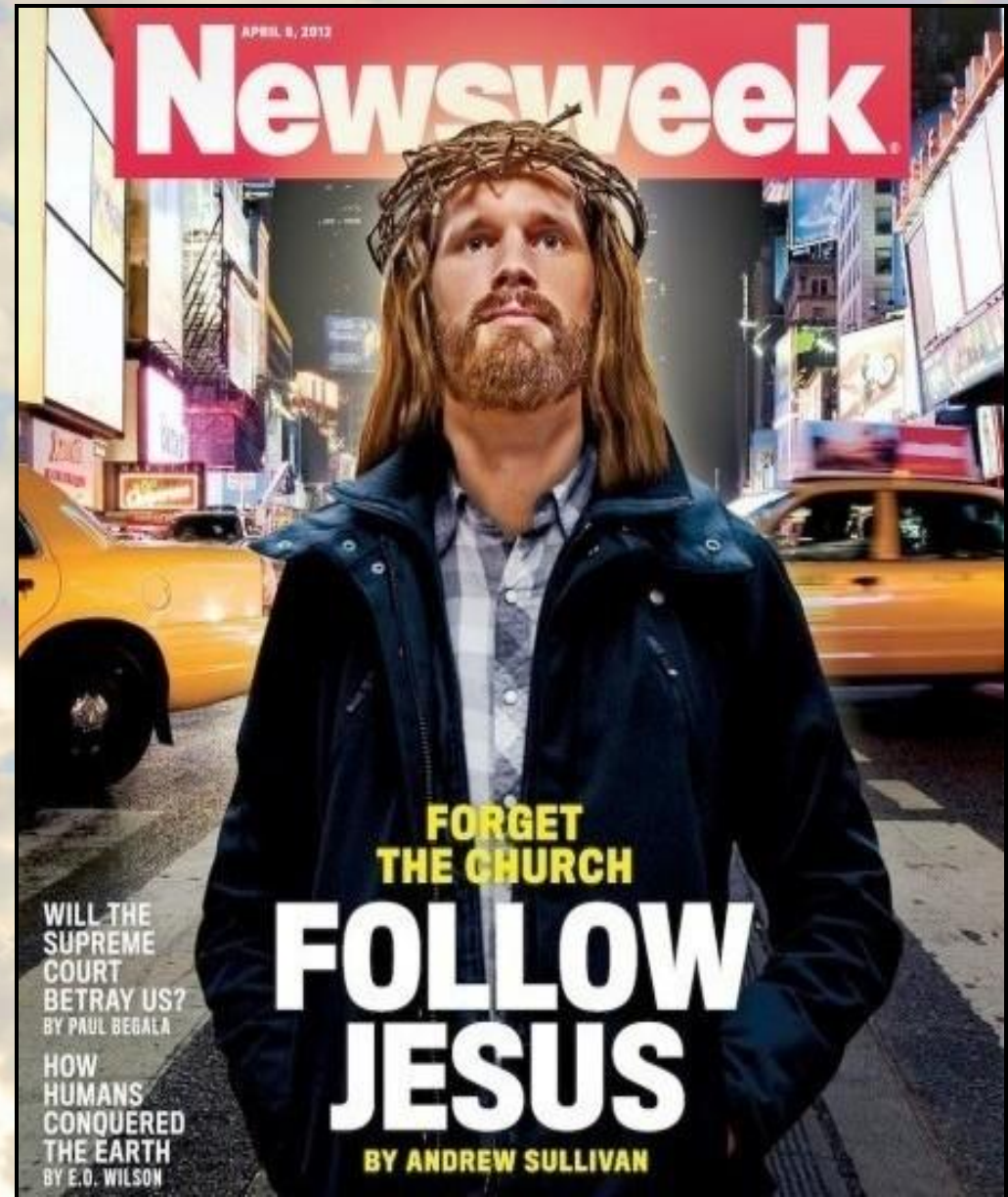
WHY WE NEED THE CHURCH

Being “Spiritual” Is Not Enough

Steven R. Hemler, President



*Can we
follow Jesus
without
going to
Church?*

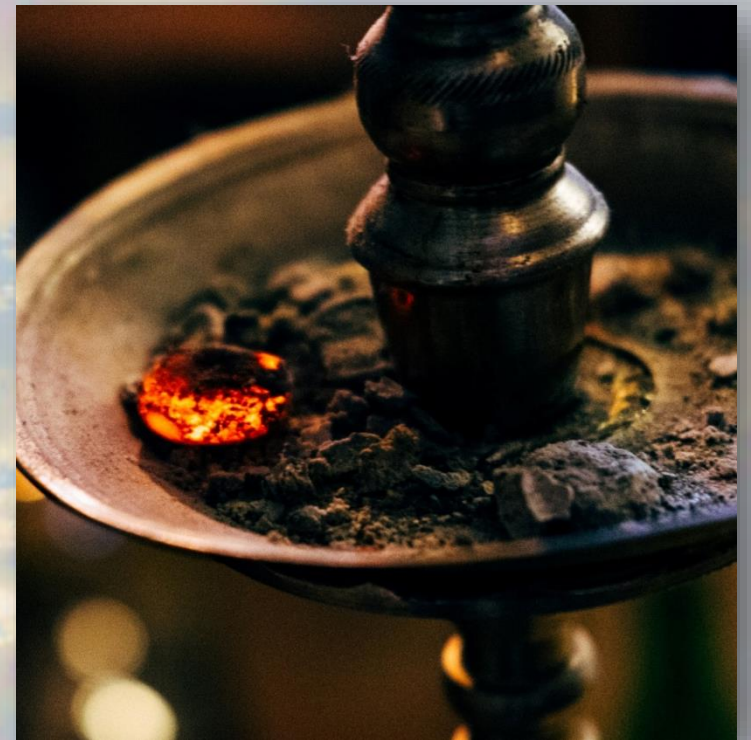


Unchurched Americans

- Over 2/3 of American adults do not regularly attend any church or religious service.
 - Only about 1/3 of “nones” are atheist/agnostic.
 - About 2/3 believe in God/consider Christian. Why not at church?!
- 43% of adults raised Catholic no longer call themselves Catholic.
 - Only 29% of self-identified Catholics attend Mass weekly.
- “Spiritual” OK, “Religious” Not OK.
- Let’s examine why it **IS** important to follow Jesus **IN** the Church.

Supportive Community

- Living a truly Christian life is not easy.
 - It is hard to do difficult things alone.
 - Following Jesus fully can be tough work.
- A supportive community is important.
 - To receive help we need from God and others to live an authentic Christian life.
- Without fellow Christians, our faith would be stunted, fade away, and die.
 - A single coal will lose its fire.
- *Video: Catholics Come Home “Evangomercial”*



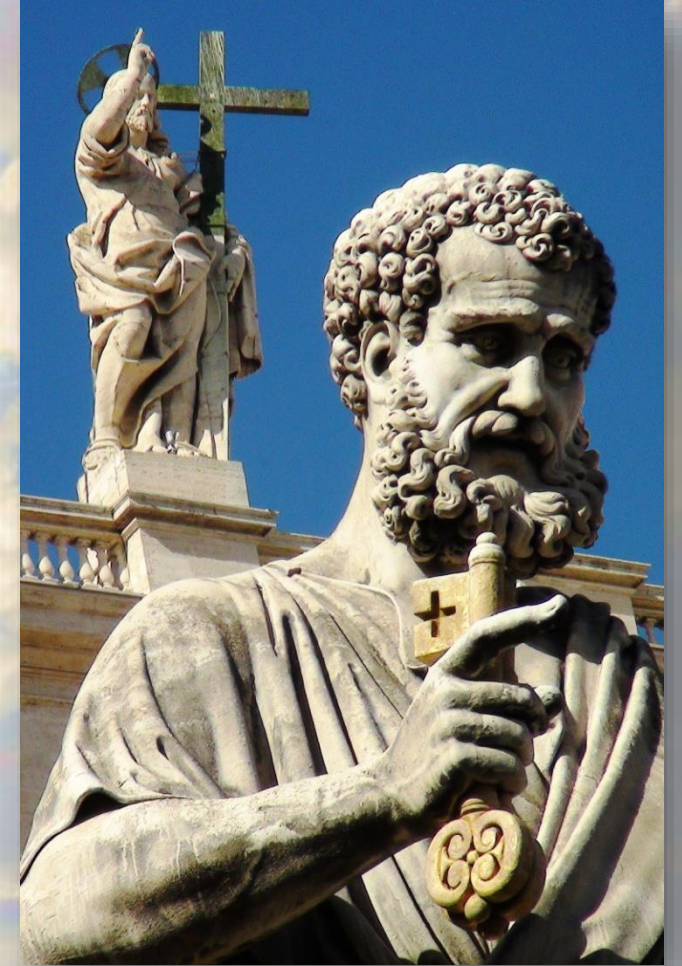
Supportive Community

- We don't go to Church to demonstrate our holiness or hide our sins.
 - The Church is not a haven for saints, but a **hospital** for sinners.
- Faith is deeply personal, but it isn't private. By its nature, faith is communal.
 - Faith must always be internalized, but it is best expressed, strengthened, and lived out with others.
- Christ knew this and left us His Church.
 - Lord's Prayer has plural pronouns (our, us, we).
 - Shows Christ meant for us to be in community.



CHRIST Willed His Church

- Jesus called the Twelve Apostles.
 - Jesus said, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.” (Matt. 16:18)
 - Has lasted for 2,000 years ([Acts 5:34-39](#))
- What did Jesus mean when he asked Paul, “Why are you persecuting **me**?”
 - Jesus equates Himself with the Church.
 - They are inseparable: Christ is the Head of His Body, the Church.
- *Video: Christ is present in the Church*





CHRIST *Willed the Sacraments*



- We are both body and soul, so Jesus entrusted sacraments to the Church.
 - Sacraments are outward physical signs of an inner spiritual reality.
 - Receive God's grace, love, and power.
- Christ is intimately encountered in every sacrament, but most especially in the Holy Eucharist.
 - Eucharist is "source and summit of the Christian life" and integral part of Mass.
- *Video: What generations of Catholics have said about the Mass*

CHRIST *Willed the Eucharist*

- What quotes are most striking?
- Is there a disconnect between the typical experience of Mass and what these quotes say about Mass?
 - If so, why?
- We may need to learn more about what really happens at Mass
 - It's not about mere entertainment.

MASS: *Praise God and Pray Together*

- Two “lungs” of prayer:
 - Personal Prayer and Liturgical Prayer
 - “Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there: If you set it on fire it makes a lot of little flames. But gather these straws into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky; public prayer is like that.”
(St. John Vianney)
- Join prayers of Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication (“A.C.T.S.”)
- *Video: Bishop Barron on why go to Mass*



MASS: *Hear the Word of God*

- During **Liturgy of the Word**, we hear God speak to us in readings from scripture.
 - We also hear Christ's voice in the homily.
 - If we listen with right frame of mind, we will receive a personal message.
 - “By the preaching of God's word, faith is nourished and grows in the grace-filled encounter with the Risen Lord.” (Pope Benedict XVI)
- By hearing, we are prepared to enter into Christ's ultimate act of love — **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.
- *Video: Emmaus and the two parts of the Mass*

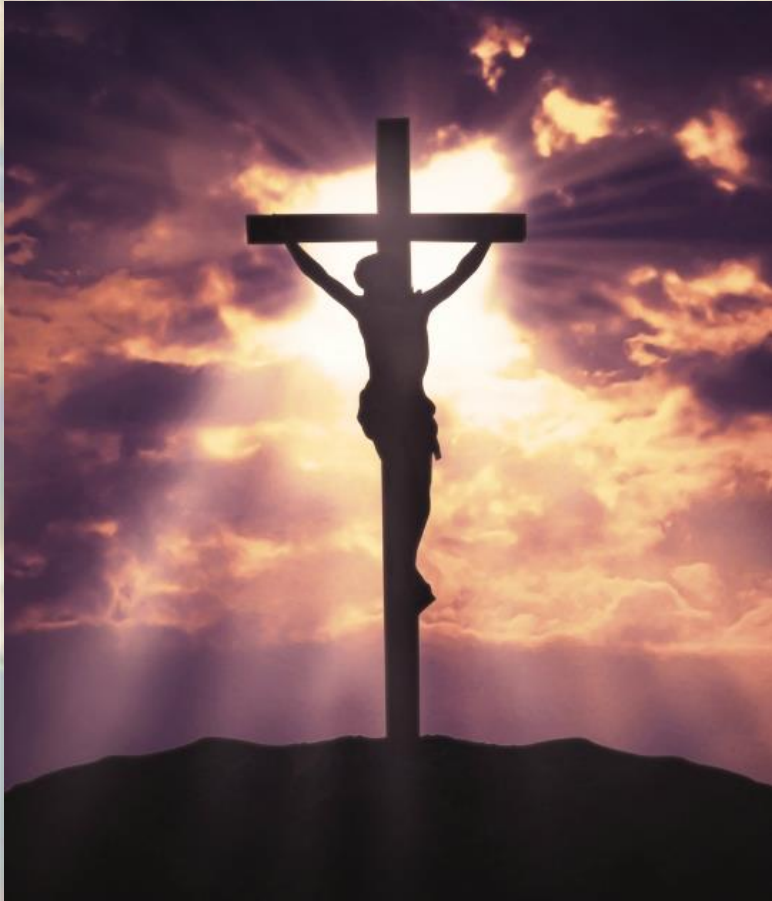




24: *THE WALK TO EMMAUS*

13 That very day two of them were going to a village named
about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and talking with each other
these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and
together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But they
kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, “What is the
conversation which you are holding with each other as you wa

MASS: *Share in Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross*



- During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we share in Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
 - God makes available to us, with lavish generosity, the saving power of the cross.
 - "It is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, the work of our redemption is accomplished." (Vatican II)
- *Archbishop Alexander Sample: Mass is re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice*

MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*



- At Consecration during Liturgy of the Eucharist, bread & wine become Body & Blood of Christ.
 - In the ancient Jewish tradition, body and blood signify the whole being of a person.
 - By giving us his Body and Blood, Jesus Christ has chosen to give us His entire self.
 - We are intimately united to Jesus Christ's full humanity and divinity when we receive Him in Holy Communion.
- It's not a mere symbol, but Jesus' real flesh and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine.
 - Spiritual food for spiritual life ([John 6:53-56](#)).

MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*



- **“We are what we eat.”**
 - By Holy Communion we receive grace to become more like Jesus Christ (“Christified”).
 - Christ gradually changes our values, our thoughts, attitudes & our actions to become more like His own.
- Pope St. Leo the Great: “The effect of our sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive.”
- St. Augustine (regarding the Eucharist):
Believe what you receive, **receive** what you believe, **become** what you receive.
- *Video: Bread for the Journey*

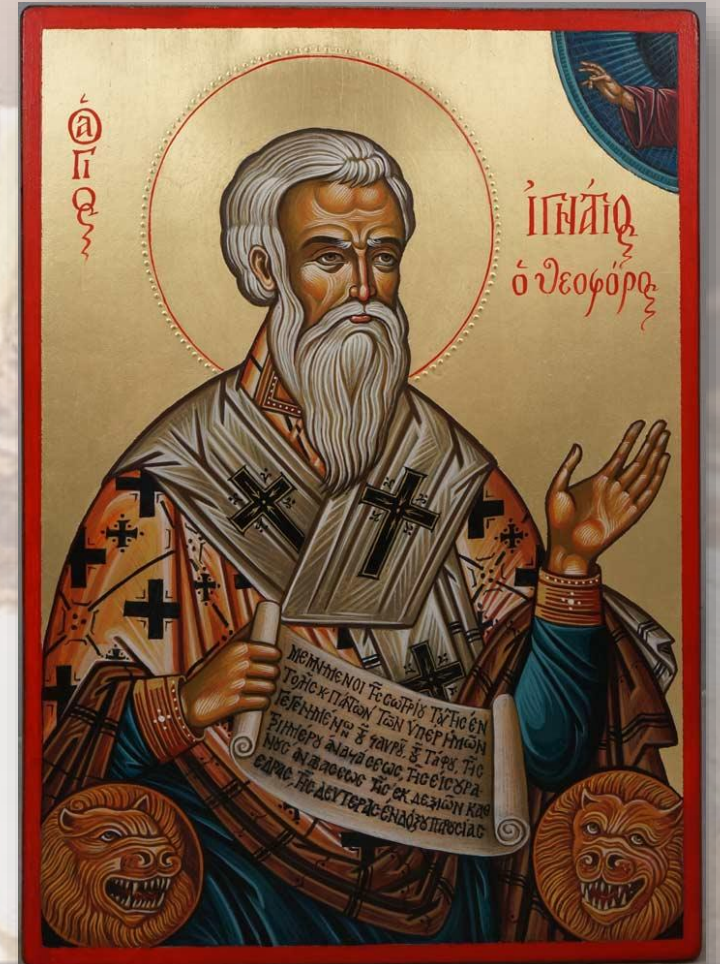
Chapter 1

**BREAD FOR
THE JOURNEY**

MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*

- Belief in “Real Presence” of Christ’s body blood under appearance of bread and wine was present **from the beginning**.
 - Not a medieval invention.
 - Roman persecutions.
- St. Ignatius of Antioch (105 A.D.):

“I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the **flesh** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and I desire the drink of God, namely His **blood**, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.”



2019 Pew Survey



- Only **one-third** of adult Catholics agree that “during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually **become** the body and blood of Jesus.”
 - Nearly **70%** of Catholics believe the bread and wine “are **symbols** of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”
 - Even **37%** who attend Mass **weekly** believe the bread and wine “are **symbols** of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”

MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*

- It's surprising that not all **Catholics** believe in the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood under appearance of bread and wine.
- In order to manifest Christ's Real Presence and dispel doubts, God sometimes provides **Eucharistic miracles**.
- Eucharistic miracles are unexplainable phenomena, such as consecrated hosts **bleeding** and being visibly transformed into **human flesh**.
 - CAINA has another presentation on ***The Science and Significance of Eucharistic Miracles***.
 - Available for free viewing on CMAX.TV



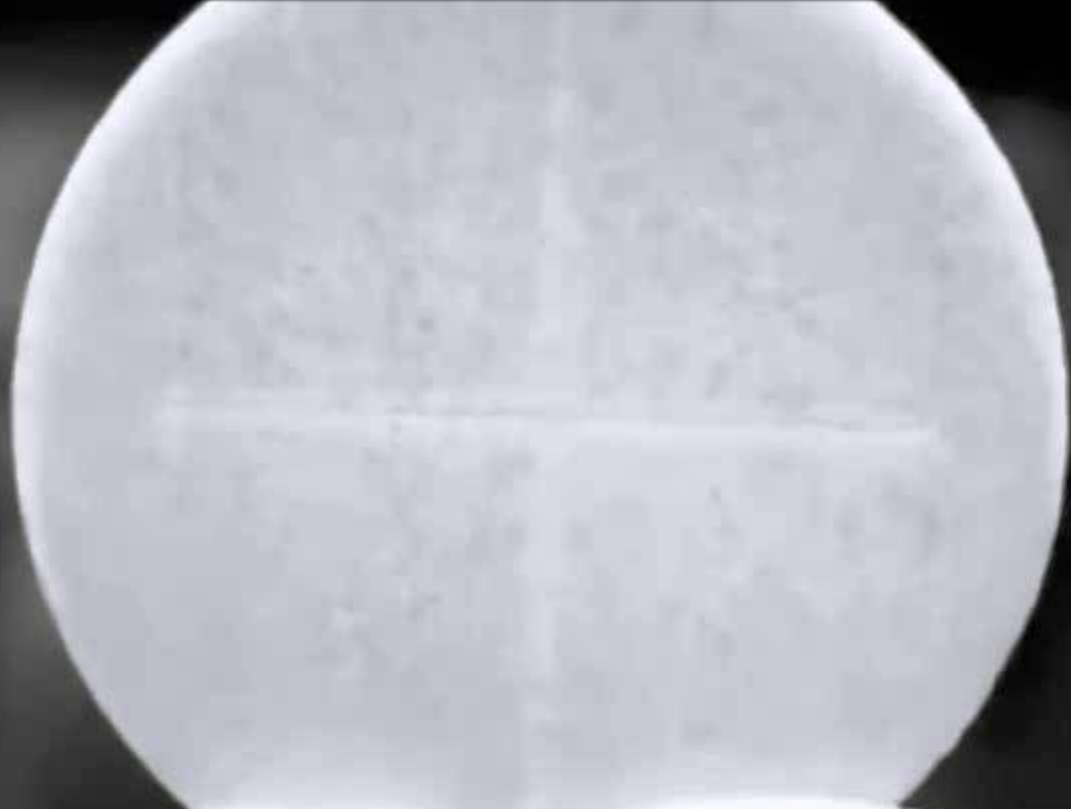
MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*

- Over 150 Vatican-approved EMs, including 5 scientifically studied:

- **Lanciano**, Italy, About 750 A.D.
- **Buenos Aires**, Argentina, 1996
- **Tixtla**, Mexico, 2006
- **Sokółka**, Poland, 2008
- **Legnica**, Poland, 2013



- Similar findings from scientific studies of Eucharistic miracles:
 - Human **heart muscle**, blood **type AB** (same as Shroud of Turin).
- Scientific studies affirm EMs are divine signs that manifest the Real Presence of Body & Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.
- *Video: Eucharistic Miracle of Buenos Aires*



MASS: *Be filled with and become like Jesus Christ*

- At Mass, Jesus offers his living heart in the Holy Eucharist.
 - Heart that suffered for love of us.
 - Jeannette Williams regarding EMs: “It’s as if Jesus, by transforming into a human heart, is crying out to us, ‘I’m here! I love you! My heart yearns for you! Was not my crucifixion enough to prove my love for you? See, then, and believe. I have remained hidden in the Eucharist for these two thousand years that I may remain close to you. Please, approach me. Receive me. Quench my thirst for your love’.”
- St. John Vianney: “There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.”

MASS: *Strengthens us for our mission*

- Our mission is to go forth to **love and serve** the Lord and one another.
 - “By their fruit shall you know them.”
- Mass equips us for our mission.
 - Christ **strengthens** us in His **community**,
 - **Forms** us by His **Word**, and
 - **Nourishes** us in our Holy **Communion** with Him.
- *Video: Bishop Barron discusses our being sent on mission at end of Mass*
 - *Liverpool Eucharistic Congress*





MASS: *Commands of God, Jesus, and the Church*



- 3rd Commandment: “Remember to **keep holy** the Sabbath day.”
- At Last Supper, Jesus commanded us to “**do this** in remembrance of me.”
- Catholic Church requires Mass attendance on Sundays & Holy Days.
- *Video: Fr. Larry Richards Mass more than obligation*



Presentation Summary

- We Need a Supportive Community.
- **Christ Willed** the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist.
- **Christ asks us to do what He Wills.**
 - *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”* (John 14:15)
 - *“Whoever rejects you rejects me.”* (Luke 10:16)

Closing: *What Really Happens at Mass*

- St. John Chrysostom (4th century, Archbishop of Constantinople):
 - “When Mass is celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the divine victim immolated on the altar.”
- *Final Video: The Veil Removed*
 - Reveals the coming together of heaven and earth at Mass, as seen by saints and mystics, revealed by Scripture, and in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.



CAINA

Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America

[HOME](#)

[PRESENTATIONS](#) ▾

[VIDEOS](#) ▾

[ARTICLES](#)

[FACEBOOK](#)

[ABOUT](#) ▾

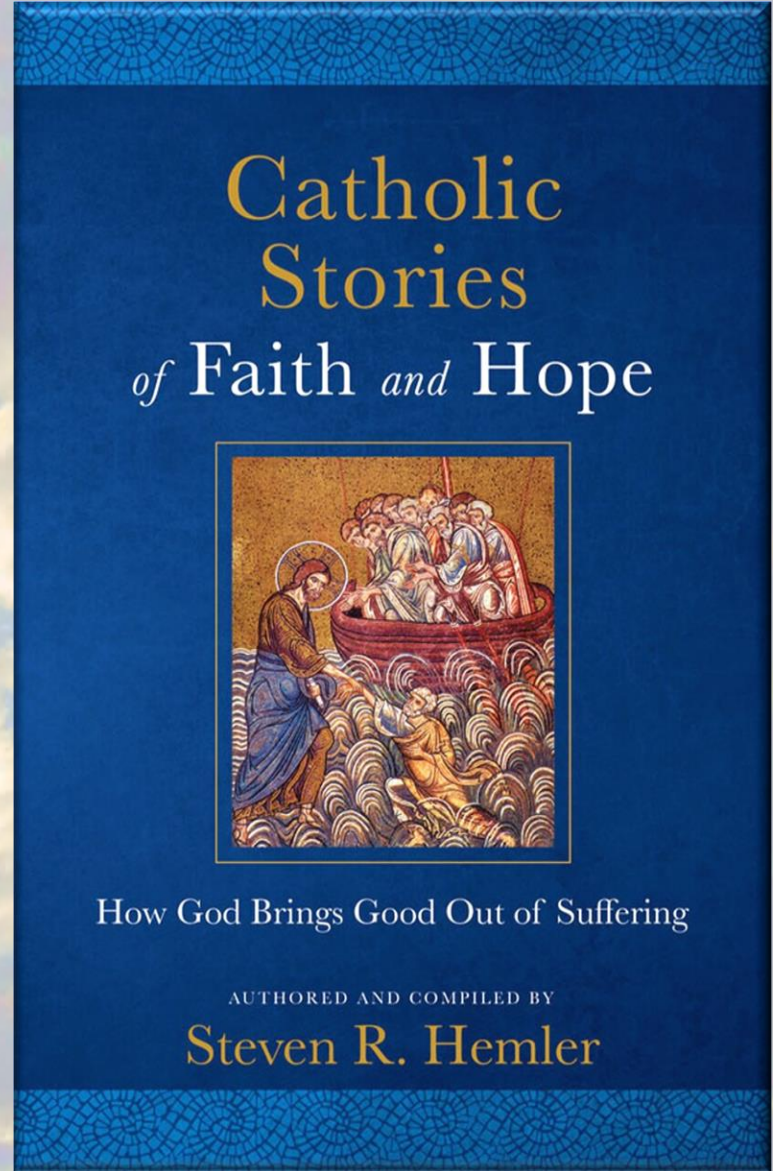
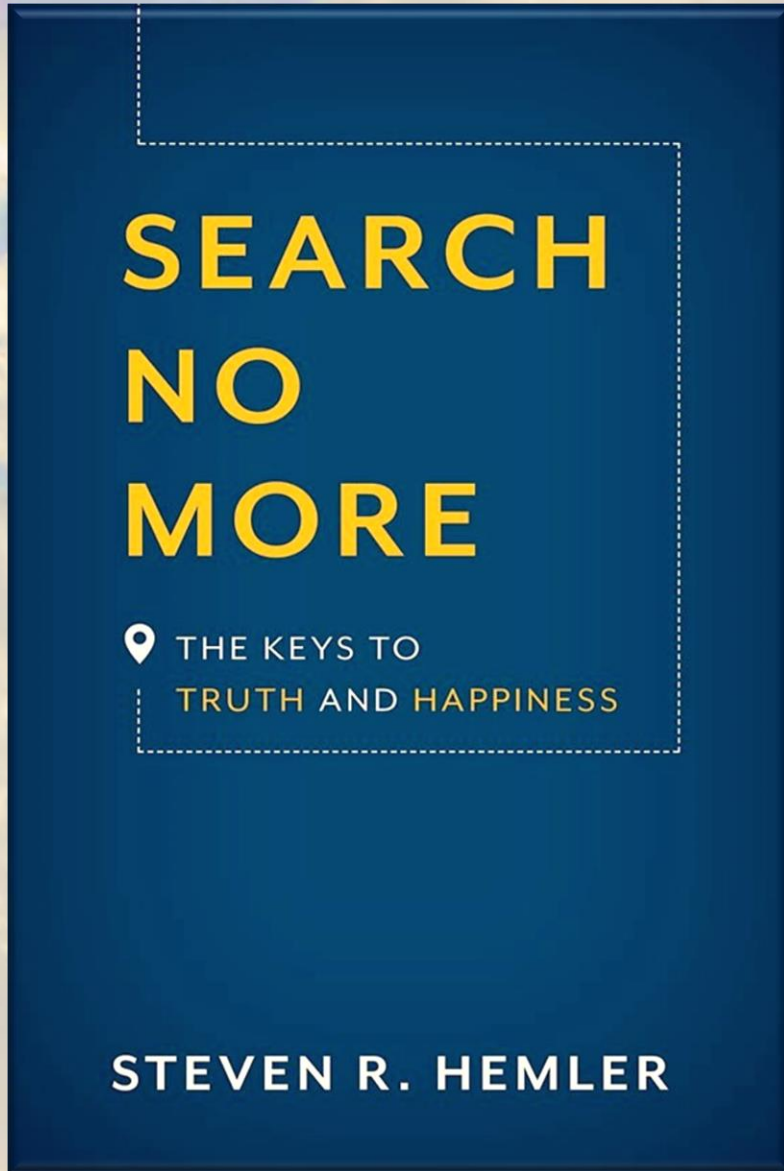
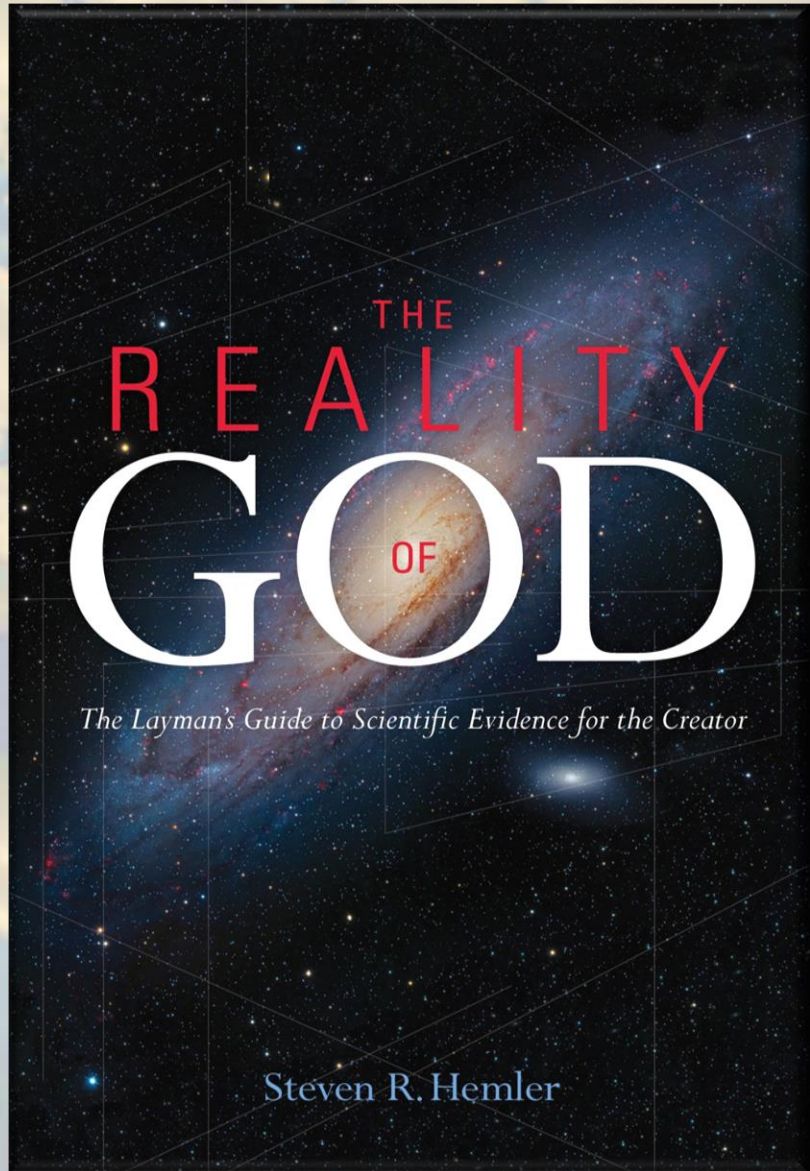


CAINA[®]

Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America



www.cainaweb.org





Questions?

Comments?

WHY WE NEED THE CHURCH

Being “Spiritual” Is Not Enough

Steven R. Hemler, President

