The Most Important Things in Life Are Obligatory

by James F. O’Callaghan

Our Latin Mass parish is distant, so my wife and I sometimes attend a local parish where the number of people at Mass seems to be steadily declining. The priests are not to blame; they are kindly and try hard to inspire. But perhaps unknowingly, or just inevitably, they contribute to the present state in which attendance at Mass is considered optional.

I don’t remember when I first heard a priest say, “Thank you for coming,” but I remember thinking it a strange thing to say, as if the congregation had done him a favor. Equally strange is the “Good morning” with which the Mass begins. The phrase is social, as if the celebration were to be understood as a festive occasion rather than a solemn sacrifice in fulfillment of the commandment to keep holy the Lord’s Day. In the latter case, no one expects thanks for simply showing up.

Childhood memories can be treacherous. When not flatly wrong, they are often framed by the uninformed thoughts of a child. Nonetheless, I remember clearly when Sister Margaret, speaking for the pastor and hence the bishop and hence the pope who is the Vicar of Christ, said we were obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Further, in the Mass, the same chain of authority prescribes every prayer and gesture. She never said anything about our enjoying Mass, though she did insist on our participation: Don’t daydream about baseball and such; get your head into it. Contemplate the mystery and the gift.

That sense of obligation seems a thing of the past. Georgetown’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) estimates that Mass attendance among “self-identified adult Catholics” fell from 55 percent in 1965 to 22 percent in 2016. Why did the sense of obligation weaken? One can argue this or that angle; such arguments have been carried on for years. It is enough here to note that it has weakened. In place of the lost sense of obligation, many well-meaning priests apparently hope to attract people by making the Mass seem enjoyable. Some priests have even begun referring to “holy days of opportunity.”

This nearby parish is welcoming: “Do we have any visitors today?” the priests often ask of those gathered. There’s a lot of singing, mostly of songs intended to make you feel good about yourself—“On Eagle’s Wings,” for example—songs that are light years away from Gregorian chant. The sermons are usually well crafted, with anecdotes and humor and some theme that may stick with you for a while, such as that by nurturing anger we hurt ourselves. Many people like these things. So far, so good, though the varieties of liturgy—with or without guitar accompaniment or hand-holding at the

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Sign of Peace, recitation of the Apostles’ or Nicene Creed—implicitly deny their own importance; new things may replace them next week. In any case, the CARA statistics show that these things don’t go far enough. They don’t suggest that worship is an overriding obligation. Mass comes across as merely one more option in a consumerist culture of limitless “choice”—no more grave or necessary than any other available option. A Catholic whose conscience has been formed in today’s ecclesial atmosphere of encouragement and welcome won’t feel guilty about skipping Mass, and he wouldn’t presume to judge anyone else for preferring golf or a football game on Sunday mornings.

The important things in life are not optional. We have to earn a living, stay faithful to our spouses, care for our children, pay our taxes, drive carefully, etc. In part, we know these things are important precisely because they’re obligatory.

Regarding religious observance, obligation is a large part of the act itself, and the benefit. An obligation fulfilled over the years becomes much more than a duty. Both having the obligation and meeting it forms our character. This is true even of our jobs: We go to work because we must earn a living, but once we feel we are needed, the requirement itself brings satisfaction and a sense of dignity. Similarly, but on a far deeper plane, understanding that God wants me in church reinforces my sense of being God’s creature. We might not think of that, but it does—and all the more so on days when we don’t feel like going. The obligation is a blessing.

Can this sense of obligation be restored? I hope so, but it will be an uphill fight. Priests could begin to talk about it once again. Sermons don’t touch on personal sin much these days; “social injustice” seems to be the only topic meant to inspire any sense of good, old-fashioned Catholic guilt. Nonetheless, the clergy could try. If people began again to understand that missing Mass for no good reason is a mortal sin, they might make a greater effort at consistent (even weekly!) attendance. They might pass this habit on to their children. No preaching would be required at that point. My father was silently eloquent on the topic, driving us 40 miles on gravel roads to Mass when we were on camping trips. It’s what we did on Sundays, period.

“Come join our faith community in celebration” is a refrain commonly heard at parishes these days. But when one feels no obligation, one treats this invitation like, well, an invitation. Invitations have an RSVP line on which one may express one’s regrets for not attending. In the case of the Mass, “regret” doesn’t begin to describe the loss.

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“Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend of liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue.”

—Samuel Adams
The idea that cohabitation is good preparation for marriage is amazingly persistent, considering that it isn’t even close to being true.

Research consistently shows that couples who do cohabit have poorer relationships before marriage, poorer marriages if they do marry and much higher rates of divorce. When the findings are presented to them, people respond in various ways. Some cohabiting couples I have known make the decision to stop cohabiting just because they do care about the relationship. This seems to me the most sensible response.

Other cohabiting couples tell me that correlation doesn’t prove causation. No, but it is very unwise to ignore it.

Still others say the statistics are phony. Nice try.

Perhaps the most common response is to think “We’re the exceptions.” If there were as many exceptions as people who think they are exceptions, the statistics would be vastly different.

The evidence is so strong that among family sociologists, the debate is not about whether couples who cohabit before marrying have weaker marriages, but why.

The explanation I have always found most intuitive is that in every way, the two relationships are fundamentally different. The whole point of being married is having a commitment, but the whole point of not being married is not having one. How can not having one be practice for having one? It would make better sense to call cohabitation practice for divorce.

Besides, marriage comes with institutionalized norms. Cohabitation doesn’t; you make it up as you go along.

Just because the future is more uncertain in cohabitation, couples have less incentive to invest in the relationship. This makes the future more uncertain still.

And because of the uncertainty, persons who are cohabiting tend to keep score. Keeping score is something you do with your shopkeeper—did I get enough value for what I gave? Did he come out ahead? It shouldn’t be necessary with your beloved. But once the habit is formed, it persists right into marriage.

Friends of mine who study these matters have suggested several additional explanations for both the instability of cohabitation itself and of marriages preceded by cohabitation.

One explanation is that couples who don’t cohabit must make a clear and sharp decision to enter into the commitment of marriage, but cohabiting couples slide from one stage to another with very little conscious decision. First they sleep together. Then they do so more frequently. After a while he spends the night so often that he starts keeping a toothbrush and change of clothes at her house. Then he moves more of his things over there. Eventually he might as well move in, and he does. Marriage is just one more thing the couples slide into.

Here is another explanation. But you won’t like it.

Across human cultures, men tend to prefer the best-looking women. Women, by contrast, care less about men’s looks, but prefer men with higher status and greater financial security.

Now as men grow older, their status and financial security improve. But as women grow older, their looks decline. Do you see where this is going? For each year that a cohabiting relationship continues, the woman becomes less attractive to the

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Mary, Mother of the Church: Monday after Pentecost

As a caring guide to the emerging Church, Mary had already begun her mission in the Upper Room, praying with the Apostles while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14). In this sense, in the course of the centuries, Christian piety has honored Mary with various titles, in many ways equivalent, such as Mother of Disciples, of the Faithful, of Believers, of all those who are reborn in Christ; and also as “Mother of the Church” as is used in the texts of spiritual authors as well as in the Magisterium of Popes Benedict XIV and Leo XIII.

Thus the foundation is clearly established by which Blessed Paul VI, on 21 November 1964, at the conclusion of the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, declared the Blessed Virgin Mary as “Mother of the Church, that is to say of all Christian people, the faithful as well as the pastors, who call her the most loving Mother” and established that “the Mother of God should be further honored and invoked by the entire Christian people by this tenderest of titles” ....

Having attentively considered how greatly the promotion of this devotion might encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety, Pope Francis has decreed that the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, should be inscribed in the Roman Calendar on the Monday after Pentecost and be now celebrated every year.

From the Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 03-03-2018

“Unless we recover the zeal and the spirit of the first-century Christians—unless we are willing to do what they did and pay the price they paid—the future of our country, the days of America are numbered.”

—Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

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The facts are especially cruel to the woman, who is probably hoping that if only she lives with the man long enough, he will marry her. Actually, the longer the two of them cohabit, the more she is placed at disadvantage—and the more he is likely to want out.

“But don’t older married men sometimes dump their wives too?” Sure, but marriage is much more stable than cohabitation. Why? Because it really is a commitment. Even today our mores reflect this. Men who walk out on cohabitation are rarely looked down upon. Cads who ditch their wives for younger ones may sometimes be envied, but they are never admired.

Besides, marriage civilizes men. The longer they are married, the more they grow to understand Browning’s line, “Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made.”

Now tell me: How is a relationship which is based on having no commitment, contains multiple incentives for failure and contains a built-in disadvantage for women good preparation for marriage?

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Empowering Sex
On the Lunacy of the Old ‘Sexual Revolution’

by James M. Kushiner, executive director, The Fellowship of St. James, April 27, 2018

Perhaps it’s time for a “back to sex” movement? Forget genders—just two sexes. The sexual revolution took place about the same time as America’s reach for the moon. One was lunar while the other was lunacy.

One was “one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind,” while the sexual revolution was an exciting bold new step for many men and women, but a giant fall for our society.

Now we have transgenderism and surgical shapeshifting visited upon unwanted young body parts. In the middle of this whirlwind, we see the face of sexual predation in bolder and bolder relief. It gets commercial attention. Like this new product, ROAR for Good, Personal Safety Device.

This personal alarm for women—or anyone who wants some extra piece of mind—can alert friends and loved ones of your location.

Athena is a discreet wearable that sends GPS notifications to emergency contacts via Bluetooth. Attach it to your clothes, bag or backpack. Or even wear it as a pendant.

Most would like a daughter, if backpacking somewhere, to have such a device. But why is it “for women” first, and only as an inclusive afterthought mentions “or anyone who ...” Because of the difference between men and women. Women, not men, feel susceptible to physical and sexual attack.

But the myriad differences between men and women were supposed to be ignored, or seen as primarily socially constructed. Equality was sameness, interchangeability. It now is at the point where children may change their own “genders” and a mom and a dad are no longer the ideal for a child to have, but simply parents. Interchangeable? My wife and I were not interchangeable when our children were babies. They all knew the difference. You may as well say the moon and the earth are equal places to live.

There are two and only two sexes. They are and never were interchangeable when it comes to building a society. Fifty years later we still hear about the need for the empowerment of women (mentioned in the ROAR ad video).

Women had, and still have power. Many just chose not to use it. One form of it is called marriage. And not just the form of “marriage,” but its power to create something new, first a one-flesh union of two persons, then a child, a family.

Women have the power to control the sexual congress of the sexes by refusing sexual intercourse outside of marriage. A man must approach, court, speak with, spend time with a woman and her family, wait, control himself, before they wed—many small steps before they leap into bed. That’s power; give that up, and you have what you see today, a stumbling mess of predation, hooking up, dating and somewhere in all that perhaps some arrangement called marriage, but rarely for life.

When sex outside of marriage and childbearing outside of marriage became acceptable, children out of wedlock were paid for with money from the state. It was intended as welfare, charity. This is nothing new.

In 1911, Lloyd George’s Insurance Act was presented at a meeting in rural Scotland, defended by a speaker. A long-legged shepherd rose to question him, and the following dialogue ensued:

“Ye believe in the Bible, sir?”

“With all my heart.”

“And ye consider that this insurance Act is in keepin’ with the Bible?”

“I do.”

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Apostolic Pardon

Questions are often asked about the Apostolic Pardon. Following is a full answer by Rev. Mark J. Gantley, JCL published on EWTN:

The Apostolic Pardon (or blessing) is an indulgence given in situations of danger of death, usually after the absolution of the sacrament of penance. The focus is on the remission of temporal punishment due to sin. The words of the prayer explain the meaning of the act: “Through the holy mysteries of our redemption may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.” Or “By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me, I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

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“Is it not true that under the Act there’s a maternity benefit, and that a woman gets the benefit whether she’s married or no?”

“That’s right.”

“D’ye approve of that?”

“With all my heart.”

“Well, sir, how d’ye explain this? The Bible says the wages of sin is death and the Act says thirty shillin’s?”

(John Buchan, Memory Hold-the-Door, pp. 148–9)

I’ll rephrase the shepherd’s remarks: “Is it not true that under the Sexual Revolution terms there’s a free sex benefit, and a man gets them whether he’s married or no?”

If it ever became the fashion of women again to refuse sexual intercourse outside of marriage, men would have to follow suit. (Yes, there will be exceptions, but they prove the rule.) Wishing that such morals could revive widely may be like taking a moonshot, but what if Christian women to a man held the line? Well, many do. And they and their husbands raise children. And I can hear them all roar.

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The Level of Civilization

by Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

To a great extent the level of any civilization is the level of its womanhood. When a man loves a woman, he has to become worthy of her. The higher her virtue, the more noble her character, the more devoted she is to truth, justice, and goodness, the more a man has to aspire to be worthy of her. The history of civilization could actually be written in terms of the level of its women.

—Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: A Man for all Media, p.123
It’s quite common these days to hear disparaging comments about Catholic dogma and doctrine. But the complaints about dogma are harder to accept when they come from within, from Catholics themselves.

When the Archbishop of Dublin ordained Jesuit deacons in 2015, he warned, “We will not heal those whose lives have drifted from Jesus Christ by throwing books of dogma at them.”

And the new General of the Jesuits recently said, “Doctrine is a word that I don’t like very much; it brings with it the image of the hardness of stone. Instead, the human reality is much more nuanced; it is never black or white; it is in continual development.”

Ironically, it’s precisely because human reality is not black and white that we need the rock-hard reality of dogma. Aside from the fact that the “controversial” doctrines usually have to do with the Sixth Commandment (many would welcome its repeal for obvious reasons), we would do well to consider some of the “difficult” and “rigid” doctrines of Jesus.

For example, the Sermon on the Mount presents some particularly difficult teachings. In the “Lilies of the Field” discourse, Jesus says: “Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.” Without doubting the truth of His words, we may find ourselves struggling to put them into practice. How is it possible to dispel so many of life’s anxieties? Those very difficulties, unfortunately, sometimes lead to rejecting His teaching.

We are said to live in an “Age of Anxiety”—just like every other age, I suppose. The media makes more money selling anxiety. Facts without anxiety are boring. When scientists recently determined that a huge swath of molten carbon lies 200 miles beneath the surface in the American West, reporters deftly linked the story to our fears—suggesting that if a massive volcano erupted in Yellowstone National Park, it would mean the end of the world as we know it. There are many such news reports on subjects from solar flares to low testosterone. So much to worry about, so little time.

Many anxieties, of course, are far more understandable, if not exactly “reasonable.” Personal health—especially as we grow older—can cause worry. But when a doctor diagnoses a malady after tests, the certainty of the diagnosis usually brings some sense of relief. The illness can finally be treated, or at least understood, going forward. The certainty of truth is a remedy for anxiety.

The firm certainties of life vary depending on context. On the one hand, our personal history is certain because events have taken place (even if memory fails) and simply become facts of our life. We were born; we grew up and were educated; we found jobs; we loved; we’ve suffered—the factual certainties are endless.

On the other hand, when we look to the future, humanly speaking, there is only one certainty: death. No matter how certain we think our day planner is, we may not wake up tomorrow. Consequently, the uncertainties of the future are unlimited and can be very unsettling, as any parent knows.

Yet Jesus teaches us not to be anxious about tomorrow. He wants us to look at the facts of life—the lilies of the field, etc.—trust in God’s loving providence.

We know from our childhood catechisms that the dogmas and doctrines of our faith console us with certainties that we’d never have without God’s revelation. Here’s one: “Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if
Sins that Cry to Heaven for Vengeance and Sins against the Holy Spirit?

Most Catholics are familiar with the term mortal sin. Mortal sins deprive the soul of grace. They are serious transgressions of God’s law, done freely and deliberately with a clear understanding of what they are. Their result is to deny a soul entrance to heaven.

There are particular mortal sins that are so evil that they are said to be sins that cry to heaven for vengeance: the shedding of innocent blood, sodomy, oppression of the poor, and defrauding workers of their just wages.

Sins against the Holy Spirit are mortal sins that harden a soul by its rejection of the Holy Spirit. Six sins are in this category. They are despair, presumption, envy, obstinacy in sin, final impenitence, and deliberate resistance to the known truth.

Without such dogmas and doctrines of faith, there would be no clarity for the future except the certain prospect of death.

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she should forget, yet will I [the Lord God] not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” (Is. 49:14–16)

Another dogma needs no comment, and directs us on our way with certainty: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jn. 14:6). If you’re worried about the state of your marriage, Jesus says, again with unequivocal dogmatic certainty: “Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” (Mt. 19:6)

Without such dogmas and doctrines of faith, there would be no clarity for the future except the certain prospect of death. As Flannery O’Connor writes, dogmas are true “windows to the infinite.” As in: “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” (Rom. 6:8)

But even as we strive, with God’s grace, to believe all that Jesus teaches through His Church, we continue an ongoing struggle against anxiety. We are to live in the moment, and that’s difficult to do in a fast-paced world. God provides grace if we’re open to Him, and when we need it, moment by moment, day by day. This is why it is so necessary to repeatedly encounter Christ in prayer, the Sacraments, Sunday Mass and the certitudes of Catholic dogma—God’s revelation of His plan for us. But God does not grant His grace in advance.

Hence there is sinful hubris in presuming to tinker with the teachings of Christ or to disparage Catholic “dogmas” and “doctrines” by suggesting they are subject to constant change. Those who do so become agents of confusion and anxiety, truly undermining Christ. Members of the hierarchy of the Church are not above the firm teachings of Christ.

Church doctrines—regardless of their perceived “rigidity”—are good because through them we encounter Christ and the providence of God. The firm certainties of the teachings of Christ not only direct us, they help relieve the anxieties that plague us daily. After all, “You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (Jn. 8:32) Not a bad dogma to reflect upon.

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Saints and Name Days: Remembering Your Friend in Heaven
by Rev. George Rutler

April 30, 2018 (LifeSiteNews.com)—It occurred to me this past week, celebrating Saint George the Martyr (or “Mega-Martyr” as he is known among the effervescent Byzantines), that friendship with a patron saint, on one’s name day—or “onomasto-tico”—is a practice that needs revival.

There are friends and acquaintances, but it is a special privilege to have a heavenly friend as a companion and encourager. It is helpful, but not necessary, to know much about what they did when they were alive here. In the case of George, little is known, and when the unknown bits are embellished with fanciful legends such as stabbing dragons, they can seem remote. But think of an athlete, who has a native talent for some sport, and how a coach can protect and develop it. In that sense, albeit in a strained analogy, the patron saint is available to help.

There are those called Fundamentalists who object to the whole economy of saintly intercessions. The suffix “-ist” can distort a good thing. An artist well serves art, as a pianist is why there are pianos, but race and sex and things spiritual are not the same as a racist or sexist or spiritualist. Fundamentals in religion are the cornerstone of Faith, but a Fundamentalist misses the fundamental point of asking saints to pray for us, as if that compromised Christ as the sole mediator between man and God. That uniqueness is the essence of all the Church’s prayers offered “through Christ our Lord.” The faithful certainly can pray directly to Jesus, but the Lord also wants us to do so not as a solo exercise, but as part of his whole Church. He ordered us to pray for others (Matthew 5:44). Saint James said that “the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effect,” which is why Saint Paul urged “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

The saints in heaven are not remote from those who have been baptized, even if our chapels and churches and homes seem far different from the golden environment of the eternal realms, where they “fall down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Revelation 5:8). Meanwhile, if much is not known about the saints, they know us. In the case of Saint George, I expect he wants us to know that dragons are real, in the form of the cruelties and vices that afflict mankind, and that the saints can help us to slay the passion and pride of those dragons through the power of the King of Saints: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace” (John 16:33).

Reprinted from LifeSiteNews.

Cardinal Raymond Burke—speaking before an impressive delegation of pro-life leaders from across the globe said the following:

“Fundamental to understanding the radical secularization of our culture is to understand also how much this secularization has entered into the life of the Church Herself … ” His Eminence rightly identified an “exponential” increase in the secularization of Western culture. And he again correctly identified that this has been in part “due to a grave impoverishment or even lack of adequate catechesis in the Church during the past four decades.”
The teaching of “no salvation outside the Church” is important and one that must rightly be understood.

It is in fact a doctrine of the Church often repeated by the Fathers of the Church and taught formally. However, it must be understood properly. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has this to say by way of explanation: “Outside the Church there is no Salvation.”... Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body. Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church ... is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door. Hence, they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it. This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church” (CCC, #846–847).

This much is sure: Whoever is in heaven was saved by Jesus Christ in and through his Body the Church. But, as we know, there are many barriers to people fully understanding that the Church is the sole and necessary means for salvation, and thus, simply being outside the Church usually does not alone bring condemnation.

God can and, it would seem, does draw others unto himself in ways not always known to us. All of this can console us and bring an understanding that the teaching “outside the Church there is no salvation” is not understood absolutely. But this consolation must not be the source of letting our missionary zeal wane. While it is possible to be saved beyond the Church, sacraments and explicit faith in Christ, it is much more difficult. Consider the following teaching from the Second Vatican Council: “Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life .... But often men, deceived by the Evil One, have become vain in their reasonings and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, serving the creature rather than the Creator (cf. Rom 1:21, 25).

“Or some there are who, living and dying in this world without God, are exposed to final despair. Wherefore, to promote the glory of God and procure the salvation of all of these, and mindful of the command of the Lord, ‘Preach the Gospel to every creature’ (Mk 16:16), the Church fosters the missions with care and attention” (Lumen Gentium, #16).

And therefore, we see that people often are deceived or let themselves be deceived. So, the fact that people can be saved apart from the Church is not a blank check or presumption that they likely will be saved. It must always be our earnest work to evangelize, for many “prefer the darkness” (see Jn 3:19).
Upcoming Speakers at Catholic Citizens Forum—Spring 2018

June 8—Most Reverend Donald J. Hying, bishop of the diocese of Gary. Bishop Hying is a native of West Allis, Wisconsin, ordained in 1989 and ordained auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, having previously served as rector of S. Francis de Sales Seminary from 2007–11. He served in numerous parishes, as well as La Sagrada Familia, the archdiocese’s parish in the Dominican Republic. Bishop Hying serves on the USCCB Subcommittee to Aid the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. The subject: The Urgency of the New Evangelization.”

July 13—To Be Announced.

Luncheons are at 11:45 a.m. at the Union League Club of Chicago, 65 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago. Tickets $35. Business attire. Reservations required. Call Maureen at 708-352-5834.

Time to Log Off—A Digital Diet

A Weekend Fasting from Personal Devices

by Carolyn Moynihan, May 7 2018

Digital addiction, or nomophobia, may not be in the DSM-5, but there’s little doubt that it exists. And there are plenty of helpful hints around about how to self-detox.

Time to Log Off proposes a periodic 5:2 digital diet: five days using technology and two days off-screen. It’s not clear whether they include television or streaming Netflix for (family or social) entertainment, but they definitely mean abstaining from email and social media. They even suggest deleting these apps from your phone or laptop to remove temptation to log on, and reinstalling them after your two-day fast.

The weekend is the best time for this, the site suggests. And they have five other tips for making the diet work:

• Buy an alarm clock. (If you don’t know what that is, ask your grandmother.) Removing the phone from your bedroom is the number one way to ensure adherence to the diet.
• Dig out your camera. If you really want to take photos, there is another way.
• Do some “mindful” exercise that reconnects your mind to your body, instead of being in your head all the time. They suggest yoga. And then there’s tennis. Anyone?
• Get outside and take a walk in some natural spot—a garden, bushwalk or at the beach. Immersing yourself in nature is a great stress reliever and also distracts you from your yen for a Facebook or Instagram update.
• Enlist support from family and friends. Even better, get them to do the 5:2 diet with you. The last thing you need is someone bringing their phone to the dinner table. And—who knows?—you might end up having a great face-to-face conversation around the barbecue.

It’s a fairly obvious list, but one shouldn’t underestimate the challenge of staying disconnected for two whole days. Then again, there was a time within living memory when if we really needed to communicate remotely we used the telephone plugged into the wall socket. Like the camera, most of us still have one.

Thanks to Fabrizio Picciarelli at Family and Media for drawing our attention to this great website.

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Spring 2018 Update

You may have read about the coast-to-coast rosaries around the full border of Poland, the coast of Ireland and more recently Great Britain and Australia. A Rosary Coast To Coast is now being planned for our country. The events will begin with a 54-day rosary novena starting August 15 and ending in rallies throughout the United States and at the Capitol on October 7, 2018. The international coordinators from other countries had pledged to join us in prayers. Americans across the country are invited to lead, pray and engage with the Rosary Coast to Coast wherever they can gather. There is also one planned to circle Lake Michigan. They are sponsored by the Holy League, under the spiritual guidance of Cardinal Raymond Burke. We will keep you updated.

We need your support! Our winter quarterly newsletter which was delivered to the post office in Chicago in February was not delivered in many of the areas where our members reside. Because we depend greatly for the financial support we receive from those who receive the newsletter, we are experiencing a financial shortfall. We are in need of your immediate help with additional funds to support our activities — our website, our quarterly newsletter and the expenses related to our regular luncheon speakers. Please consider a donation at this time to help us in our mission. We thank you in advance for answering our plea. God Bless You!

Dignity of Woman


“Respecting the dignity of woman means accepting and valuing her at the level of her full humanity, including the maternal meaning of her femininity and the innate patterns of her fertility cycle. Such rhythms—and the maternal ends to which they’re directed—are not problems to be solved, maladies to be remedied, or, worse, evils to be rejected, but rather aspects of the woman that ought to be embraced as part of the reverence owed to woman in accordance with her dignity.”