

SYMBOLON

The Catholic Faith Explained

Symbolon is a twenty session exploration into the heart of Catholic faith and teaching. More importantly, participants will come to understand how to apply what they learn to their life as a disciple so that they may live what they believe more effectively and grow in their relationship of love with God. All sessions are held in the parish auditorium from 7:00 – 8:45 PM on the dates listed below.

Session One: September 19, 2017

The Sacraments: Baptism & Confirmation

The session will delve into Catholic understanding of sacrament, the different kinds of sacraments, and how sacraments are a key part of the Christian life and God's plan to restore us to holiness. We explore how Baptism is the "gateway" sacrament to the Christian life and why Catholics baptize infants rather than deferring baptism until a person is older. We'll also explore the significance of Confirmation and its relationship to Baptism. Participants will come to understand the role of these sacrament in helping them to become the person God has called and created them to be, and will be able to fully embrace the gifts and graces imparted upon them at the time they received the sacrament.

Session Two: October 17, 2017

The Eucharist: Source & Summit of the Christian Life

This session will delve in the beautiful mystery of Holy Eucharist. We'll explore what the Eucharist as Real Presence means and why it is central to the Catholic faith. We'll discuss why Jesus couldn't have been speaking metaphorically when he instituted the Eucharist and proclaimed it to be his body and blood. Participants will come to better understand the nature of the Eucharist as a sacrifice and how the sacrifice of the Mass makes present Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and how this effects our participation in the Mass. We'll also delve into the nature of Holy Communion itself, and how it affords Jesus with the opportunity to fulfill his longing to be with us and our longing to be with him.

Session Three: November 21, 2017

Walk Through the Mass: Exploring the Liturgy

This session continues our exploration into the Eucharist by walking us through the Mass. Participants will come to see how what we celebrate today during Mass is intimately linked to apostolic times as well break open the four main parts of the Mass. Participants will also come to appreciate how we encounter the living God in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist so that they may more fully respond to and participate in this, the most intimate encounter with God this side of heaven. Participants will learn how to get "the most" from every Mass and understand why we must attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

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Session Four: December 19, 2017

Penance & Anointing of the Sick: God's Mercy Revealed

This session will explore one of the most misunderstood sacraments in the Church. We'll examine why Penance is an important part of our Catholic faith and why we confess our sins to a priest. Participants will be led through a step-by-step guide to receiving the sacrament of Penance and come to more fully appreciate the benefits and graces of frequent confession. Our evening will conclude with a closer look at the other Sacrament of Healing – Anointing of the Sick.

Session Five: January 16, 2018

Matrimony & Holy Orders: The Sacraments of Service & Communion

This session will delve into Catholic understanding of marriage as a sacrament and the concrete ways that the sacrament helps couples every day. Participants will come to see how Christ's love for his Church is the model for marriage and the importance of the lifelong commitment of marriage. We'll clear up misunderstandings of annulments – what is is...and isn't. We'll conclude our time with an examination of the second Sacrament of Service – Holy Orders – and how this sacrament comes in an unbroken line from the Apostles.

Session Six: February 20, 2018

A Catholic Moral Vision: Virtue, Grace & the Path to Happiness

This session will help participants to understand what leads to true happiness. We'll explore the difference between the modern world view of freedom and the biblical view of freedom. Participants will come to see how virtue is necessary to live life well and what makes an act moral. We'll also clear up some modern misconceptions on morality, such as why "the end" never justifies "the means," how sin hinders our pursuit of happiness, and what we need to have a correctly formed conscience.

Session Seven: March 20, 2018

A Love that Lasts: Discovering Authentic Love

This session delves into authentic love as defined by Christ in Sacred Scripture. We'll explore the differences between eros (sexual love), philia (love between friends), and agape (God's authentic love - love as a choice). Participants will come to understand what it means to love according to God's plan and why the only way we can find the love we desire is by living God's authentic love as we discuss the essential characteristics of this authentic love and the true joy and true freedom that comes from living agape – the only love that lasts.

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Session Eight: April 17, 2018

A Love that Lasts: God's Plan for Sexuality

This session will delve into God's plan for sexuality and how sex is meant to be an expression of total, self-giving love, a love in which couples give themselves to each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We explore Catholic teaching on marital sex and contraception, and clear up some of the misperceptions that exist. Participants will come to not only better understand and appreciate Catholic teaching on sexuality, but also how the marital embrace fits into the total, free, faithful, and fruitful aspect of marriage, and why separation of pleasure from self-giving love is so destructive.

Session Nine: May 15, 2018

Catholic Social Teaching: Building a Civilization of Love

This session will delve into how love of God and neighbor lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching and how Catholic social teaching aims at the flourishing of all human persons. Participants will better understand why Catholic thought on important social issues is intended for the benefit of the whole world and not just Catholics. They will also learn concrete ways they can live out Catholic social teaching in their daily lives.

Session Ten: June 19, 2018

Catholic Social Teaching: Protecting the Dignity of the Human Person

This, our final session of the program, will continue our dialogue and exploration into Catholic social teaching by examining the five words of Jesus that form the foundation of Catholic social teaching. We'll discuss why Catholics think discussion about social issues is good for all human beings. Participants will come to understand the difference between "rights" and "responsibilities" and how the Catholic view differs from the world's view. We'll also explain why the Church insists that all human life is sacred, what the Church means by a "preferential option for the poor," and the importance of family as the fundamental unit of society. Participants will also come to understand the implications for Catholic social teaching on our economic activity and our participation in political life.