

# INFORMED

THE FORMED NEWSLETTER FOR PASTORS AND PARISH LEADERS

“When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.” —Luke 24:30–31



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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

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Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! With this Easter greeting I hope you are also experiencing the great joy found in celebrating this Paschal Mystery. Thanks be to God, after a year in which many churches were closed due to the pandemic, we now are seeing more and more churches opening to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in person. We have curated special content related to the Eucharist, to help you welcome parishioners back for in-person worship and to prepare for the celebration of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) in early June (either Thursday, June 3, or Sunday, June 6). While the statistics about the belief in the Real Presence of Christ among regular Mass attendees are cause for concern (mentioned in newsletter), a renewed focus on this wonderful mystery can revitalize one's spiritual life and even the whole parish! Parish leaders who have encouraged their flock to participate in a small group based on an Augustine Institute program like *Lectio: Eucharist* by Dr. Brant Pitre or *Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist*, with theologians, pastoral leaders, and priests talking about the importance of the Eucharist, have seen an increase in devotion for the Blessed Sacrament. May we continue to pray for each other.

The disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus finally perceive who Jesus is when he breaks bread and gives it to them. Sadly, many of today's Catholics do not recognize the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, even though our faith tells us that “the Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’” (CCC 1324, quoting *Lumen Gentium*, 11).

# 69%

Percentage of U.S. Catholics that believe the bread and wine “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”

A Pew Research Center survey published in August 2019 found that 69% of U.S. Catholics believe that the bread and wine “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”

# 43%

Percentage of U.S. Catholics that believe the bread and wine are merely symbols of Jesus and that “this reflects the position of the Church.”

Moreover, the Pew survey found that, overall, 43% believe that the bread and wine are merely symbols of Jesus *and* believe that “this reflects the position of the Church.”

How can parishes combat this false belief and open their parishioners' eyes to the truth that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist?

FORMED offers two excellent resources.

### **Lectio: Eucharist**



In this 10-episode video series, acclaimed author and teacher Dr. Brant Pitre digs down to the biblical roots of the Eucharist, through its

foreshadowing in the miraculous events of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and apostolic teaching. Participants discover firsthand how Christ's Body and Blood are an integral and wondrous part of God's plan for their salvation.

### **Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist**



Available in English and Spanish, this four-episode video series explores the truth and beauty of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, from its

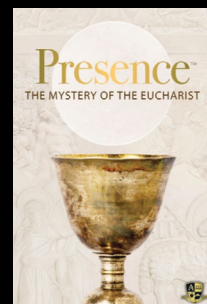
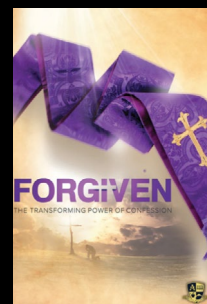
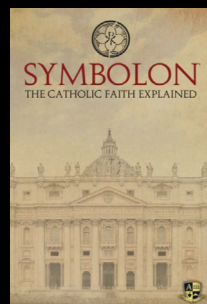
origins in Sacred Scripture to its profound role in the life of the Church and her members. It is the crescendo of the entire story of salvation.

FORMED parishes can stream both series for free. Leader's guides and study guides are available digitally on FORMED and physically at <http://catholic.market>.

# HIGHLIGHTS ON FORMED

As parishes plan for autumn's RCIA and sacramental preparation classes, the Augustine Institute invites you to incorporate the catechetically solid, beautifully produced, and consistently engaging resources on [formed.org](http://formed.org).

## The Sacraments



### **Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained**

This 20-part video series systematically presents the Catholic Faith for catechumens and candidates in parish RCIA programs. *Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained* illustrates the “big picture” of the Catholic Faith with the Creed as the guide.

### **Reborn: You, Your Child, and the Heart of Baptism**

This three-part video series explores the deeply personal power of Baptism, bringing to light the spiritual reality for parents and godparents and, most importantly, the child being baptized.

### **Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession**

This five-part video series explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows how the sacrament reveals the depth and bounty of God's love.

### **Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist**

This four-part video series explains why what seems to be simple bread and wine is actually “the source and summit” of the Catholic Faith.

### **Beloved: Finding Happiness in Marriage**

This video series is divided into two parts: six sessions for those preparing for marriage and six sessions of enrichment for those already married. Led by Dr. Tim Gray, *Beloved* explores the essential realities of marriage, dealing with the deepest spiritual, emotional, and practical aspects of the sacrament.

*\*All of these programs are available in English and Spanish, with SYMBOLON also available in Portuguese.*

# FURTHER FORMATION

## **Earn an online Master of Arts in Theology with the faculty you enjoy of FORMED**

Do you have a burning desire to learn more about the Faith? Do you wish to serve the Church as a leader in the New Evangelization? The Augustine Institute Graduate School offers an online Master of Arts in Theology, with the flexibility for working professionals and busy parents to complete the degree one class at a time. Our distance students have a direct line of communication to the faculty seen on [formed.org](http://formed.org). The faculty, all of whom make the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church, instruct students in the rich intellectual tradition of the Faith. We offer scholarships for those serving the Church in full-time roles and invite you to join other parish leaders in the pursuit of godly learning. Apply for the upcoming summer term at [www.augustine.edu](http://www.augustine.edu).



# PARISH SPOTLIGHT

When Debbie Shearn—volunteer Bible study leader at St. Albert the Great Parish in Louisville—chose *Lectio: Eucharist* as a study, she had the results of a 2019 Pew Research Center survey in mind.

In that survey, only 31% of Catholics said that they believed that during Mass, the bread and wine become Jesus's Body and Blood.

Twenty-five women began *Lectio: Eucharist* in March 2020, coinciding with the shutdowns that resulted from the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The participants watched the *Eucharist* videos on [formed.org](http://formed.org) and then communicated with one another via email and a private Facebook page.

“It was amazing,” Shearn said. “There was no Mass, and people were saying, ‘I can't wait for Mass again. I'm starving for the Eucharist.’”

Katie Frandsen, the Bible study facilitator at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Lansing, Kansas, said that what she likes about *Lectio: Eucharist* is that it is “a nice combination of Scripture study and faith formation.”

Dr. Patrick Spiering, the FORMED coordinator at St. Vianney Parish in Brookfield, Wisconsin, said that after every session of *Lectio: Eucharist* at his parish, participants would say, “I did not know that,” about the biblical roots of the Eucharist and the Mass.

Dr. Kathy Johnson, the volunteer adult faith formation leader at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Duncanville, Texas, echoed Spiering's point.

The early-on training and catechesis for many Catholics, Johnson said, was “inadequate. They're very motivated to learn more.”

Johnson's parish has used the LECTIO studies on Philipians, prayer, Mary, and the Eucharist.

“They're the best and highest quality out there,” Johnson said.

The LECTIO series, she said, is “aimed at the head and the heart. [Participants] are not only gaining knowledge; their hearts are being transformed and set on fire.”



Dr. Kathy and Dick Johnson

# LITURGICAL CALENDAR



## **The 13th Day**

On May 13, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, commemorating the first of her six apparitions to the shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, in the year 1917. This feature film is based on the memoirs of the oldest seer, Lucia Santos, and many thousands of independent eyewitness accounts.



## **Joan of Arc**

On May 30, we celebrate Saint Joan of Arc and her heroic witness to Christ—at the age of nineteen, she died a martyr's death. This feature film chronicles the legendary warrior and saint who, at seventeen, led one of the greatest military campaigns for freedom the world has ever witnessed.