

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

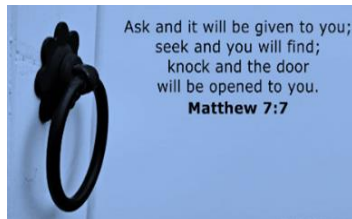
November 2025 – Issue 172

Did you know...?

THE HOST APOSTOLATE
WWW.THEHOSTAPOSTOLATE.ORG

14, GOATBECK TERRACE,
LANGLEY MOOR,
COUNTY DURHAM DH7 8JJ
thehostapostolate@gmail.com

November begins with great feasts 'All Saints' and is followed by 'All Souls'. Right at the end of the month we move into Advent. Between these two times it is worth pondering our own purpose and our own attitudes. This might help us to prepare for Advent, a time of reflection on the Coming of Jesus into the world and His purpose in doing so, as well as how ready we are to greet Him. We live in a time of great confusion on so many matters of conscience as well as 'false truths' so called 'fake news', as well as having to distinguish between our opinions and thoughts and those of others as well as various facts and figures which can sometimes shape our feelings and choices. It is almost taken for granted that what we want or believe is without question right, irrespective of anything that might indicate otherwise.



The number of people in our churches is falling, and the population is getting older. While this is not true necessarily worldwide it is sometimes wise to reflect on this and ask ourselves some searching questions. It is truly encouraging to find that young people, in spite of this, are still asking important questions and slowly there is a revitalisation going on almost unnoticed, in the church. Are we ready for those searching questions? Are we able to answer them? How informed are we about our faith? How well do we understand it?

Do we know, or care, about where to find the answers. As well as the young, how many people have drifted away from the church because of what they *thought* was the teaching and could not accept it only to find out sometime years later, that they had been misinformed? We are charged with being informed and it is our duty to seek information and answers. In civil society there is an apt phrase that 'ignorance of the law is not an excuse or justifies you in wrongdoing'. While no one may know all aspects of every law, there is a broad agreement that

we cannot just refuse to take notice and use that as an excuse for breaking it. Even more importantly the reason for the Law or rule is to help us live better lives in harmony. Equally we have a responsibility to shape a better one if that is required.

Over the years there have been some laws and rules or even an encouragement of belief that were there to enhance worship and bring us to prayer and a deeper faith. There are many such, but a few seem to appear with greater frequency, and it is to clarify these that I ask the question. They are commonly held by many people yet are not necessarily the teaching of the church.

The following are statements and opinion that people have expressed and their belief in the answers *shapes their path*. Many people have forgotten the purpose of Holy Days of, yes, *obligation* believing that they are no longer obligatory and that Mass attendance is an option. While this is **Not** true it is reflected in attendance on those special feast days.

Another example is the observance of the fast before receiving Holy Communion out of reverence for The Lord. It was made easier and shorter, and some will recall the fast was from midnight the night before, then shortened to three hours, and now one hour, but it is still important and a mark of respect. Equally it does not prohibit the reception of The Eucharist for those who are sick and cannot fast or for whom Holy Communion is brought in that circumstance. It is a Sacrament of Healing and is essential to receive in that circumstance.

Did you know that the significant reader, proclaimer of the Gospel at Mass is the Deacon, Priest, and Bishop of course...

While lay people are rightly encouraged to read the Old Testament and Acts of the Apostles, the words of the Gospel, as Jesus' Teaching and Word are restricted to the priest at Mass...

"We must defend the truth at all costs, even if we are reduced to just twelve again". Saint John Paul II

This does not mean that they cannot be read and shared by all in other settings, of course.

Did you know that receiving the Sacrament of Confession, Reconciliation, at least once a year is still an obligation especially in Lent or Easter? How many people have abandoned this practice altogether. What would you say to a person asking you that question?

Did you know that receiving Holy Communion 'in the hand and 'on the tongue' is permissible and not banned as so many seem to think? The customs vary in some countries but where they are different it is in favour of the *practice of the tongue*.

There are many Rites or ways of celebrating Mass and some older than the Roman or Latin rite. The Eastern rite Churches like the Chaldean, Syro-Malabar some Melkite rites are fully in Communion with the Church in Rome under the Holy Father.

Another common belief and this one is very sad indeed that is that 'divorce' prevents a person from attending Mass. This is especially serious as it is held to be the case by so many. It has never been true. What **is** prohibited is the reception of Holy Communion by those who have **divorced and remarried** without seeking and annulment or special dispensation. (There is much to learn here and too much to explain in a short piece.) It is also true that the church recognises the 'civil marriage' but not as a Sacramental one. This can also be rectified if the couple wish to validate their marriage, at a later date.

There are so many beliefs that need to be checked upon and understood. Perhaps the most serious is the view, that the Real Presence of Jesus in The Eucharist is in fact only a kind of mere representation and not a fundamental truth of our faith. He is present Body Soul and Divinity in entirety. **'This is my Body'** is as true as the words that Jesus utters at the Last Supper. It is not an opinion or a nice thought, or just a memorial.

If any of the statements have surprised, you or puzzled you, maybe during these next months you can seek out the answers. If you did not know or understand them maybe it is time to seek the answers out. A simple catechism is still to be found and published, but also available online for those who

can use it. Also seek out someone who may know the answers or can help you find them. There are so many more things to learn and as the catechism states 'this ignorance can be imputed to personal responsibility when someone 'takes little trouble to find out what is true and good or when conscience by degrees is almost blinded though habit (or sin) (CCC.1704) *Remember that grace is abundant to those who seek and that God is faithful and will lead you.*

Halina Holman ©



Pope Leo XIV

"The third 'pillar' of the Church's mission is truth. Truly peaceful relationships cannot be built, also within the international community, apart from truth. Where 'ambiguous and ambivalent' words and 'the virtual world', with its altered perception of reality, takes over unchecked, it is difficult to build authentic relationships, since the objective and real premises of communication are lacking. The Catholic Church will always seek to speak the truth and dedicate itself to lovingly serving others and protecting the life and well-being of everyone." May 2025

Feast Days in November

2nd **Thirty-first Sunday in Ord. Time** **All Saints' Day**

3rd All Souls' Day

4th St. Charles Borromeo

7th St. Willibrord

9th **Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

10th St. Leo XIII, Pope

11th St. Martin of Tours

12th St. Josaphat

16th **Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

17th St. Hilda of Whitby

18th Dedication of the Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul

21st **Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

22nd St. Cecilia

23rd **Our Lord Jesus Christ the King**

24th **St. Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions**

25th St. Catherine of Alexandria

30th **First Sunday of Advent (Year A)**