



Plunging our Roots into Christ

“That you, rooted and grounded in love, may know the love of Christ that surpasses understanding.”

During the Year of Faith, we will be moving successively through the 12 Articles of the Catholic Faith as found in the Nicene Creed.



Article 10: The Forgiveness of Sins

“I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins”

The Church has always taught that God’s central motive for becoming man was so that he could offer himself in atonement for human sin. On the Crucifix, we contemplate this great mystery of love, that God *himself* would do the work of satisfying his own justice and take upon himself the punishment due to the rest of us because of our sin. When Jesus Christ made his self-offering to the Father on our behalf, his self-gift so overwhelmingly satisfied divine justice that a deluge of mercy was unleashed into the world, a flood that has no end and is never exhausted. The Church teaches that this

deluge of forgiveness is made accessible to the human race through the sacraments of the Church. Through the sacraments, the infinite mercy of God reaches out and touches the concrete lives of individual men and women in every time and place.

The Church teaches that all of the sacraments have the character of forgiving sins. This economy of forgiveness is first unlocked for us at Baptism, which forgives original, mortal (serious/deadly) and venial (less serious) sin. After Baptism, the Holy Eucharist forgives venial sin and helps strengthen us against further sin, as do the other sacraments. Confession is the only sacrament after Baptism that forgives mortal sin. We can say that it is *the* sacrament of God’s merciful love. Confession cleanses the heart, maintains the flow of grace in the soul and repairs damaged relationships (both with God and others). Regular recourse to the sacrament of Confession, then, is an absolute *must* for a healthy spiritual life and also a healthy spiritual community.

This last point is perhaps one of the most important areas of reflection in our conversation about the new evangelization. When looking for the reasons that faith has waned in so many parish communities, we should consider seriously that a major cause is the decrease in the practice of regular sacramental Confession among practicing Catholics. Consider how the Church is a living body, linked together by spiritual bonds and kept alive by the grace of God flowing among us, much like the blood that flows through the human body, keeping it alive. Sin, on the other hand, works like spiritual cholesterol. When it is allowed to reign unchecked (unconfessed), it builds up in the heart clogging the spiritual arteries*. This “build-up” of sin constricts grace and decreases the flow of spiritual life, causing the decline of life in the person and in the community to which he belongs. Imagine, then, the deadening effect of long-term and widespread neglect of the sacrament of Confession in a parish! On the other hand, imagine what an unleashing of new grace and life for a parish will follow upon the restoration of a culture of regular sacramental Confession. It is safe to say that the new evangelization will not flourish among us unless a mindset of seeking the forgiveness of sins and regular recourse to the sacrament of Confession is resurrected in our communities. Let us devote a good portion of our time and energy this year to re-kindling among practicing Catholics a lively sense of the beauty of Confession and the power of forgiveness found in all of the sacraments. As the spiritual arteries of our parish communities are unclogged, we will be amazed at the deluge of grace and new life that begins to pour forth among us.

*Thanks to Matthew Pinto, president of Ascension Press, for the analogy of the ‘clogged arteries’ in this context.

Confession:

Key to Unlocking the New Evangelization in your Parish



Reviving the practice of regular Confession in a parish community, means creating a *culture* in the parish where Confession is as natural to life as the air we breathe. How can this happen? It takes an intentional and unified effort on the part of a parish. Here are some areas that require our attention:

- ◆ **Cultures are generated through *custom*:** The person reading this page is the *first* person who must commit to making a habit of regular Confession (monthly is a very healthy habit). Then, it must be actively encouraged among parish leaders and staff. PREP programs and Catholic schools should also have regular Confession built into their calendars. As it becomes a custom in the parish, the habit will begin to “rub off” on the entire community.
- ◆ **Cultures are generated through *language*:** It is important to infuse homilies, bulletin articles and parish vestibules with language and images about the beauty and goodness of Confession. We must work to bring Confession back into the Catholic vocabulary.
- ◆ **Cultures are generated through *narrative*:** Bring in speakers who have a story to tell about how Confession transformed their lives. Choose a parish mission speaker who can help people understand the great benefit of Confession for marriages, families and daily living.
- ◆ **Cultures are generated through *music and art*:** Be sure to integrate into your hymn repertoire songs about the mercy of Christ, his work of atonement for our sins, and our need for his forgiveness. Make sure a Crucifix is in a central place in your Church. Purchase a beautiful image of the Sacred Heart or Divine Mercy and place it near the Confessional.
- ◆ **Cultures are generated through *education*:** When the Gospel is appropriate, use the opportunity to give catechesis on the Sacrament of Confession and its many benefits. Require parents of children receiving the Sacrament to attend an adult-level catechesis on the same subject. Add a catechesis on Confession to any adult faith formation program. Make resources available for celebrating the Sacrament of Confession in your parish vestibule, website, facebook page, etc...

Resources: <http://archphila.org/reconciliation/index.htm>

You Don't Want to Miss These!



PROFESSOR BRAD GREGORY

Professor of Early Modern European History, University of Notre Dame and author of *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*

SCIENCE VS. RELIGION? THE COMPATIBILITY OF CATHOLICISM AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 • 7PM

Ever had a friend or family member contend that the Catholic Church is “down” on science? Is there a teen or young adult in your life who thinks that faith is unintellectual and therefore not worth taking seriously? Ever have someone point to historical events like the Galileo affair as proof that the Church is against science? Come and listen to Professor Gregory’s brilliant explanation of the Church’s deep respect for science and the historical path that has led the modern world into the error that faith and science are incompatible.

Don’t come alone! Bring with you your friends and family who struggle to reconcile the claims of faith and of science. Invite those who work in the field of science. Invite people who identify themselves as atheist or agnostic and challenge them to put their conceptions of God and the Church to the test. An excellent opportunity to evangelize and be evangelized!



ROSS DOUTHAT

Author of *Bad Religion: How We Became A Nation of Heretics* and Op-Ed Columnist for New York Times

**BAD RELIGION:
HOW WE BECAME A NATION OF HERETICS**
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 • 7PM

Ross Douthat traces the historical and social developments in the United States that have led to a steady erosion of a robust and authentic Christianity and replaced it with the ‘feel good,’ self-centered religion practiced by many Catholics and non-Catholic Christians today. He makes a case for the only effective remedy to this “bad religion”, that Christians become saints.

This lecture addresses religion as a whole in our country and particularly, Christianity. This is a great opportunity to invite your friends of different Christian denominations to a lecture that addresses the concerns that all of us share about the state of religion in the United States.



ARCHBISHOP CHAPUT YEAR OF FAITH LECTURE SERIES
ST. CHARLES SEMINARY, WYNNEWOOD, PA

REGISTER: ARCHPHILA.ORG/YEAROFFAITH

Around the Archdiocese...

To share information about evangelization events being hosted in your parish, please contact:
Meghan Cokeley, Director, Office for the New Evangelization
215-587-5630 • mcokeley@adphila.org

Office for the New Evangelization website: www.phillyevang.org

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Where</u>
August 1, 11:30am-12:30pm	<i>Women's Rally against HHS Mandate</i>	Washington, D.C.
Topic:	Women are invited to give witness to their disagreement with the HHS Mandate and its attack on women's dignity and religious freedom.	
More info:	www.facebook.com/WomenSpeakForThemselves	
August 13-14, 5pm	<i>Revolution or Revelation? Law, Life, Science & Faith</i>	Malvern Retreat House Malvern, PA
Topic:	Law, religious liberty, science and medical ethics issues facing Catholics and all people of faith today.	
Speakers:	Larry Cirignano, founder of CatholicVote; Ted Meehan, Director of the PA Catholics Network; Bobby Schindler, brother of Terri Schiavo & President of the Life & Hope Foundation; Brian Gail, author of <i>Fatherless, Motherless, and Childless</i>	
More info & registration:	www.malvernretreat.com • 610-644-0400	
August 23-24	<i>Discovering Christ Conference</i>	St. Philip Neri Church Linthicum Heights, MD
Topic:	Come learn about the powerful evangelization process for parishes that is transforming lives and communities!	
Speakers:	Dave Nodar, Founder and Director of ChristLife; Fr. Erik Arnold, Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help; and other members of the ChristLife team	
More info & registration:	www.christlife.org • Pete@ChristLife.org • (410) 531-7701	
Sept 12, 19 Oct 1, 7pm	<i>Archbishop Chaput Year of Faith Lecture Series</i>	St. Charles Seminary Wynnewood
Topic:	Sept 12: Prof. Brad Gregory – <i>Science vs. Religion? The Compatibility of Catholicism and the Natural Sciences</i> Sept 19: Ross Douthat – <i>Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics</i> Oct 1: Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.— <i>Fire Upon the Earth: A Call to Conversion and a New Evangelization</i>	
More info:	All lectures take place 7-9pm in Vianney Hall Auditorium at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. Cost is \$5.00 per lecture.	
To register:	archphila.org/yearoffaith	
Sept 28, 9:30am-4pm	<i>Women Religious and the New Evangelization: A Report from the Synod</i>	Mother Boniface Spirituality Ctr Philadelphia
Topic:	<u>For women religious:</u> Join with women religious from many congregations to hear a report from the recent Synod on the New Evangelization and how women religious are called to respond to this new missionary impulse in the Church	
Speakers:	Sr. Sara Butler, MSBT, Consultor, Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization	
More info & registration:	267-350-1830 • mbcretreat@msbt.org • www.msbt.org/mbsc.htm	