



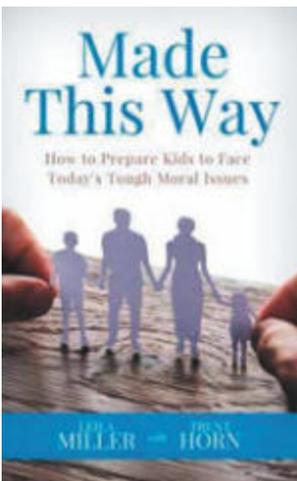
From the Desk of Fr. Leo F. Arnone

The Value of Our Sacramentals: The parishes received instructions on how we are to utilize some of our traditional sacramentals in consideration of covid restrictions. (You can read about it on Proclaim!) But to prevent you from seeing these as a source of contagion, I want to highlight these sacramentals as a source of grace and blessing for our lives.

While they are similar in name, Sacraments and sacramentals have a distinct role in the life of the Church. The Seven Sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace to those who receive them worthily. Sacramentals are things, places and gestures set apart and blessed by the Church to help raise the mind and soul to God of those who behold or use them in their devotions.

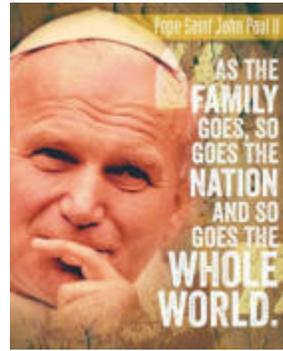
In the Sacraments we encounter Christ Himself and receive His Sanctification through them. Sacramentals, such as holy water, candles, palms and ashes, receive their value only after having been formally blessed by the Church. Once blessed, we can obtain: actual grace, forgiveness of venial sins, remission of temporal punishment, health of body and material blessing, and protection from evil spirits.

My concern with all these covid restrictions, now placed on our sacramental usage, is that they have become so harsh as to make you believe that everything, everywhere and everyone is a source of contagion – that is a “Chicken Little” mentality. Jesus said: *Fear is useless. What is needed is faith* (Mk.5:36). I trust those who are at risk will know and choose to refrain from contacting and/or spreading germs. I can only hope that you all will trust that the Sacraments and sacramentals are not going to kill you. Choose not to live in fear!



Made This Way: How to Prepare Kids to Face Today's Tough Moral Issues. Back in October I had told parents and educator about this “good read.” After presenting the Church’s teaching on the topics of sex outside marriage, same-sex marriage, divorce, contraception, abortion, reproduction technology, modesty, pornography, transgendered identity and homosexuality, the author gives excellent practical advice for little kids and big kids. A reader was so impressed they donated 20 of these books to make available

to others. Besides making them available, I’d like to then host a group session that we may talk about the lessons learned and how we might help our children to prepare for these tough issues they are sure to face. Come see me if you’d like a copy.



FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

II - SERVING LIFE

1. *The Transmission of Life*

The Church Stands for Life

30. The teaching of the Church in our day is placed in a social and cultural context which renders it more difficult to understand and yet more urgent and irreplaceable for promoting the true

good of men and women.

Scientific and technical progress, which contemporary man is continually expanding in his dominion over nature, not only offers the hope of creating a new and better humanity, but also causes ever greater anxiety regarding the future. Some ask themselves if it is a good thing to be alive or if it would be better never to have been born; they doubt therefore if it is right to bring others into life when perhaps they will curse their existence in a cruel world with unforeseeable terrors. Others consider themselves to be the only ones for whom the advantages of technology are intended and they exclude others by imposing on them contraceptives or even worse means. Still others, imprisoned in a consumer mentality and whose sole concern is to bring about a continual growth of material goods, finish by ceasing to understand, and thus by refusing, the spiritual riches of a new human life. The ultimate reason for these mentalities is the absence in people's hearts of God, whose love alone is stronger than all the world's fears and can conquer them.

Thus, an anti-life mentality is born, as can be seen in many current issues: one thinks, for example, of a certain panic deriving from the studies of ecologists and futurologists on population growth, which sometimes exaggerate the danger of demographic increase to the quality of life.

But the Church firmly believes that human life, even if weak and suffering, is always a splendid gift of God's goodness. Against the pessimism and selfishness which cast a shadow over the world, the Church stands for life: in each human life she sees the splendor of that "Yes," that "Amen," who is Christ Himself. To the "No" which assails and afflicts the world, she replies with this living "Yes," thus defending the human person and the world from all who plot against and harm life.

The Church is called upon to manifest anew to everyone, with clear and stronger conviction, her will to promote human life by every means and to defend it against all attacks, in whatever condition or state of development it is found.

Thus, the Church condemns as a grave offense against human dignity and justice all those activities of governments or other public authorities which attempt to limit in any way the freedom of couples in deciding about children. Consequently, any violence applied by such authorities in favor of contraception or, still worse, of sterilization and procured abortion, must be altogether condemned and forcefully rejected. Likewise, to be denounced as gravely unjust are cases where, in international relations, economic help given for the advancement of peoples is made conditional on programs of contraception, sterilization and procured abortion.