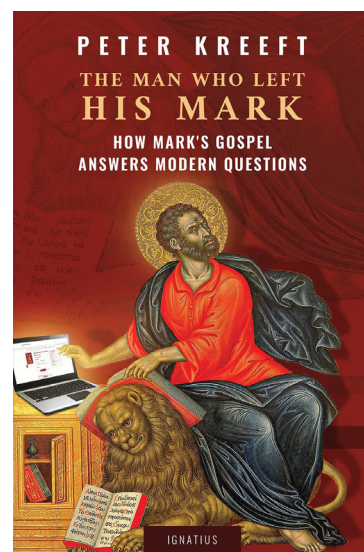


## BOOK RECOMMENDATION — THE MAN WHO LEFT HIS MARK

by Tim McCormick

It is usually around the time Lent begins each year that my freshmen classes begin a full read-through of the Gospel of Mark. As I was preparing to approach Mark again this year, I discovered a book that has been a great aid in my reading of the text. The book is *The Man Who Left His Mark: How Mark's Gospel Answers Modern Questions* by Dr. Peter Kreeft. Kreeft, professor of Philosophy at Boston College, has compiled 252 contemporary questions about all the everyday concerns of life. As you read through Mark, Kreeft presents questions about faith, love, suffering, friendship, and other meaningful topics.

It is a delightful little book that helps you to take the text and make it applicable to the everyday moments and concerns of life. As the description of the book suggests, **"Kreeft's goal of this book is for us to allow Jesus to speak more directly to us, to answer our questions in a personal and profound way, so that we will learn more about ourselves, and about Him. And thus how to know, love, and follow Him more closely in our lives."** Kreeft accomplished this in a deceptively simple yet profoundly deep way. I highly recommend it.



## A LENTEN DISCUSSION — SACRAMENTALS

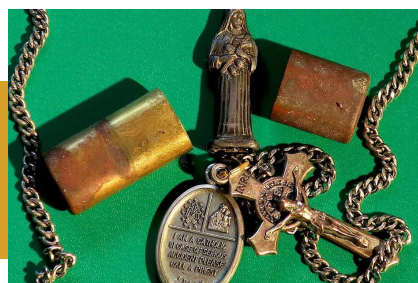
by Ken Pullis

"Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted **sacramentals**. These are sacred signs that bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains what a sacramental is and how they draw us closer to Christ, just like the Sacraments. **These help us in our walk with the Lord, and while they do not confer grace as the Sacraments do, they can prepare us to receive grace from God in the sacraments and to cooperate with God's grace.** Some common examples of sacramentals include holy water, rosaries, scapulars, and the Stations of the Cross. Candles, ashes, and palms are also sacramentals. These objects remind us of God's love for us and His willingness to provide for us and protect us.

We have direct contact with sacramentals — **holy water and rosaries** — at Bishop Foley Catholic when we visit the chapel on Tuesday for Mass and one day a week for each Theology class. We had a special **blessing of the throats with candles** on the Feast of St. Blaise at the beginning of this month. Many of you experienced God's blessings through the **imposition of ashes** at the start of Lent a few weeks ago. All of these actions and objects remind us of God's loving providence in our lives, and they prepare us to be receptive to God's grace in the Sacraments.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will sanctify us through the sacramentals as they prepare our hearts and souls for the grace of the Sacraments. Have a blessed and holy Lent!



*Read more!*

### Sacramentals and Blessings

[www.ncregister.com/blog/sacramentals-and-blessings-a-quick-and-easy-guide](http://www.ncregister.com/blog/sacramentals-and-blessings-a-quick-and-easy-guide)



## THE BEATITUDES: PART VII

Reflection by Steve Petty

Have you ever thought about what it would be like if someone could truly see into your heart, to truly know what type of person you are? In reality, people wouldn't even really need to do that, because you know what's in a person's heart by their actions. This is why it's important for Christian disciples to embrace the sixth beatitude:

**"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."** Matthew 5:8

This beatitude exalts those whose hearts are uncomplicated by the worldly ways of thinking. If a person is intent on worldly affairs and goals, the true treasure of that heart is not God. Someone who has a pure heart is one who has a clear and simple view of life's meaning and purpose: love of God and love of neighbor. All of life is lived through this prism: How do I more fully love God today? How do I more fully love my neighbor today? If disciples are always seeking to better love God and neighbor, their hearts are pure. They're not fettered with other desires that lead to narcissism. This short reflection from Pope Francis about the sixth beatitude is well worth our time and reflection:

**"This Beatitude speaks of those whose hearts are simple, pure, and undefiled, for a heart capable of love admits nothing that might harm, weaken, or endanger that love. The Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. 'Man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart' (1 Sam 16:7). God wants to speak to our hearts (cf. Hos 2:16); there he desires to write his law (cf. Jer 31:33). In a word, he wants to give us a new heart (cf. Ezek 36:26)...' Guard your heart with all vigilance' (Prov 4:23). Nothing stained by falsehood has any real worth in the Lord's eyes. He 'flees from deceit, and rises and departs from foolish thoughts' (Wis 1:5). The Father, 'who sees in secret' (Mt 6:6), recognizes what is impure and insincere, mere display or appearance, as does the Son, who knows 'what is in man' (cf. Jn 2:25).**

As we continue our sojourn through Lent, let us seek to actively purify our hearts. How do we do this? We do this by getting our priorities straight. Life, in its simplest terms, comes down to one thing: **love**. As God's children, we are called to love. The problem is that we are sinners. Sin infects the heart and darkens it. When this happens, the light of God's love, the love that reaches out to neighbor, is covered in a layer of soot. **That's why we need to purify the heart through holy practices, such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.** We also need to receive the grace of God through the sacraments. Think of it in terms of cleaning a window. The window is covered with dirt. The dirt doesn't allow the light to shine through. In order to clean the window, we need to spray on some Windex and wipe it off. The action of actually wiping the window is our actions, while the actual cleaning agent, the Windex, is God's grace. We rely on God's grace to purify our hearts, but He wants us to do our part in the purification.