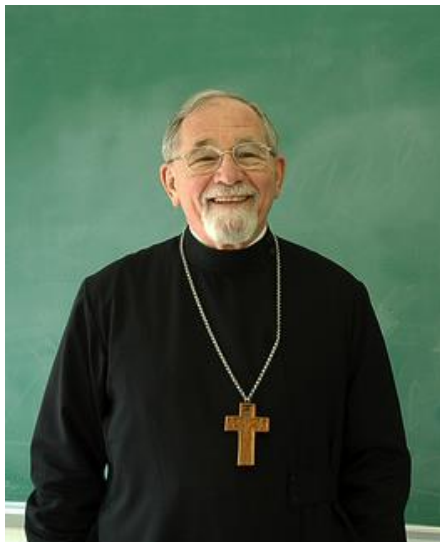




55 MAXIMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

By Father Thomas Hopko

Father Thomas Hopko was an Eastern Orthodox priest and theologian. He served as Dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary from 1992-2002 as well as Rector of Three Hierarchs Chapel during this time. He died on March 18, 2015. During his life, he created a set of maxims or a rule of life for Christians which are reprinted below.¹



1. Be always with Christ and trust God in everything.
2. Pray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer done by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. Repeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation and fast on fasting days.
8. Practice silence, inner and outer.
9. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and holy communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings to a trusted person regularly.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books, a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person, one of the human race.
19. Be polite with everyone, first of all family members.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and attentive, fully present where you are.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
37. Flee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.

¹ Image © Amber Schley, 2007.

38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, grumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't seek or expect pity or praise.
41. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God, not people.
46. Accept criticism gracefully and test it carefully.
47. Give advice only when asked or when it is your duty.
48. Do nothing for people that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, and never on darkness, temptation and sin.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your faults serenely, under God's mercy.
54. When you fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear or shame.

LIVING MERCY IN MOMENTO MORI

By Rev. Mr. Joshua Miller-Shawnee, SSM

Anyone who has traversed the Catholic blogosphere lately has likely noticed an interesting trend. Ancient “Memento Mori” practices and devotions have found new life among a diverse array of Catholics. Rather than being a morbid, fatalistic fascination with the macabre, Memento Mori devotees assert that taking time daily to remember one’s death is a deadly serious way of joyfully and thankfully embracing all that life has to offer on this side of Last Rites. As it turns out, remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return has inspired many a comatose Catholic to dust off their rosaries and daily missals in pursuit of life eternal sooner rather than later.



This should be welcome news for the members, friends, and supporters of the Society of Mercy. For our charism should continually draw us back to the fountain of life that is the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, namely praying for and burying the dead. If grave digging and being a professional mourner aren’t your thing, don’t give up the ghost. There are still a variety of means by which to practice these spiritual and corporal works of mercy in ways that won’t creep out your still living family members, friends, neighbors, and parishioners.

First, pray for the dead. At the Parish Church of St. Jerome’s we remember the dead at every mass, say special masses for the recently departed, and consistently commemorate the many saints, martyrs, and prophets who have gone before us. After all, in the great Communion of Saints, death is a doorway not a wall. Taking time to remember and pray for the dead can be a sobering reminder of our own mortality and a comforting reminder that we too will remain beloved, active participants in the life and witness of the Church even in our repose.

Next, support hospice ministries with your time, talents, and treasure. Journeying with the dying and comforting the bereaved are particularly meaningful ways of living into our charism of mercy. Embracing a non-stipendiary funeral ministry is another way of being a real blessing during a time of grief and duress, particularly for the economically disadvantaged in your community. If your schedule allows, you can also reach out to funeral homes to be placed on a call list to attend memorials where there are likely to be few or no attendees. Being present to bear witness to these holy moments is sure to bless the merciful with unexpected reciprocal graces.

Also, celebrate the “Autumn Triduum” in a solemn and intentional way. Fully observing All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day is powerful liturgical and sacramental way to practice these particular works of mercy and an opportune time to call others to the remembrance of their deaths in a communal and culturally significant way. Finally, be an active participant in our Confraternity of All Souls. At St. Jerome’s, we have incorporated the Confraternity’s memorial calendar into our requiem schedule. We also keep a list of names in our All Saints Chapel where our columbarium is located so that parishioners may intercede for the souls of these faithful departed. Find a way to include the work and witness of the Confraternity in your particular ministry context.

The resurrection of the ancient Memento Mori devotions and meditations may be a passing fad. Only time will tell. What remains eternally, however, is the grace of having walked in the way of mercy in this life for those have moved on to the life of the world to come. If nothing else, praying for and burying the dead will call us to a living remembrance of our own inevitable death. And if the Memento Mori devotees are correct, thinking about the end may be a perfect, even if unexpected place to find light, life, and new beginnings.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

The Reverend John Bulksas, SSM Joins the Society

Fr. John lives and serves in West Yorkshire. He trained at St Gregory's College where he read Theology and Manchester University where he gained a social work degree. Ordained to the priesthood in the Old Roman Catholic Church in 2003, Fr. John worked in social work and care professions in the secular life until he retired in 1991. Fr. John says he has a simple faith and teaches the love of Christ through the teachings of the church; not by the letter, but in the spirit of love and charity of Christ.



The Reverend Mr. Joshua Miller-Shawnee, SSM Joins the Society

Originally from Grove Oklahoma, Deacon Miller-Shawnee joined the Society and serves as Interim Pastor of St. Jerome's Parish in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Deacon Miller holds a BA in theology from St. Gregory's University, an MLS from Emporia State University, and is completing an M.Div. from Phillips Theological Seminary (where he also earned a graduate diploma in theological studies). Deacon Miller-Shawnee began his year-long probationary period for incardinating clerics in August and looks forward to continuing to serve the People of God.



JOURNAL OF OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC STUDIES PUBLISHED

Publication Documents Old Roman Catholic History

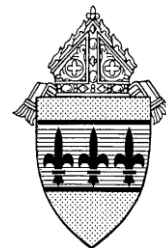


For many years, the major passion of the Superior General has been to document and detail Old Roman Catholic history. This has finally been achieved with the Journal of Old Roman Catholic Studies. The annual publication attempts to preserve our history while providing insight into some of members. The journal can be

found here: www.oldromancatholic.church/publications.

SOCIETY PROVIDES SERVICES TO OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Partnership Established Between Society and Jurisdiction



The Old Roman Catholic Church in North America is a historic descendent of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church lead by Archbishop Carfora. It was previously known as The Old Roman Catholic Church English Rite until the name was changed in 1975. That same year, Archbishop Francis Facione took over as Presiding Bishop of the Church. Before his death on June 14, 2019, he requested that our Superior General succeed him as head of the Church. This was confirmed by the Church's Executive Council on June 29, 2019.

For a variety of factors, the Old Roman Catholic Church in North America dwindled numerically. Following the tradition of missionary dioceses in the Roman Catholic Church, the Society of Mercy consented to staff ministries of the Old Roman Catholic Church in North America as needed. This creates a visible connection between the two entities while preserving the history and tradition of both organizations.