

Better Catholicism via the iPhone

Let me preface this article by saying that I've been married to a beautiful, dynamic Presbyterian woman for 10 years. In those wonderful years I have come to the conclusion that there's nothing that keeps a Catholic sharper than an astute Protestant because it sometimes requires me to explain why we Catholics believe and worship the way we do. It has also given me a more profound appreciation of all of the Christian communions, which should be a natural virtue of an adherence to true Catholic orthodoxy.

But I think I have stumbled into a new paradigm of orthodoxy that I haven't been able to fully grasp. It's swept me up into a sea of new practices and possibilities. I'm not sure it has a name yet, but I call it iPhone Catholicism.

It all started when I unintentionally scheduled an appointment on the afternoon of Holy Thursday last year and didn't realize it until a few days before our meeting. The appointment location was a few hours away. I knew there would be no way I'd make it back home in time for evening Mass and I felt like a jerk.

Since I never wanted this to happen again, I was hoping there might be an iPhone calendar application that would sync with Microsoft Outlook, which would list all of the holy days on my iPhone and laptop in advance. I was surprised to find a number of applications that not only did that, but included all of the Catholic feast days as well. So I downloaded the calendar as well as a Catholic Bible. Never again will I schedule a meeting on Holy Thursday.

This was only the first of many technological events that began to change my faith



RAY MUTH

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routine. You see, each morning I try to read what we call the Office of Readings through a series of books called the Breviary. The Office usually consists of three psalms, a Scripture reading and then a reflection, often from a great teacher like St. Augustine.

If you're familiar with the Breviary, you know it's a little tricky to maneuver around. Unless you practice, it's tough to figure out what you are supposed to read that particular day, especially when you're not fully awake.

But the days of fumbling around through my four-volume set ended when I downloaded an application called Universalis on to my iPhone. It is the complete Breviary of more than 5,000 pages. Best of all, it places you in the right set of readings each day. Now I just flick on my iPhone and presto.

Then a month or so later I

stumbled across an iPhone application for the scriptural rosary. I sometimes forget where I place my rosary beads, but I never forget where I put my iPhone. So I thought this could be useful.

Believe it or not, I discovered there are a good number of rosary iPhone applications. What rock have I been living under?

If interested, I suggest getting the Holy Rosary Deluxe version. This might strike most Catholics as peculiar, but you can actually choose to have your iPhone vibrate after praying each bead or you can choose to have it vibrate after completing each decade of the rosary. It may sound like heresy to some, but I have found this to be a better way to keep my place than actually using the bead method since I'm usually half-asleep in the early morning hours.

Also, the deluxe version comes with words, which is great because I always get a few words mixed up between my Nicene Creed said at Mass and the Apostles' Creed. Great application!

As this is Lent, I know what you are now thinking. Is there an iPhone application that comes with the Stations of the Cross? Yes, there is. And it's great.

Maybe what I'm saying isn't your cup of tea, but for iPhone Catholics, old school meets new school in a rather unorthodox orthodoxy. Perhaps some of these applications will become a staple of the next generation. I suspect it won't be long before I'll be downloading Father Al's sermon podcasts onto my iPhone.

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