



Sacramentals:

Tools of Grace

A presentation by Casey Smith

Today we'll discuss...

- Sacramentals

- What are they?
- Why does the Church recognize these things as methods of grace?
- What is their relationship to the Sacraments?
 - Including some examples!
- How are Sacramentals not idolatry?

- Veiling

- History and Biblical Context
- Arguments for Veiling
- Theological Significance: Why Women?
- Current status in Canon Law
- Arguments Against Veiling

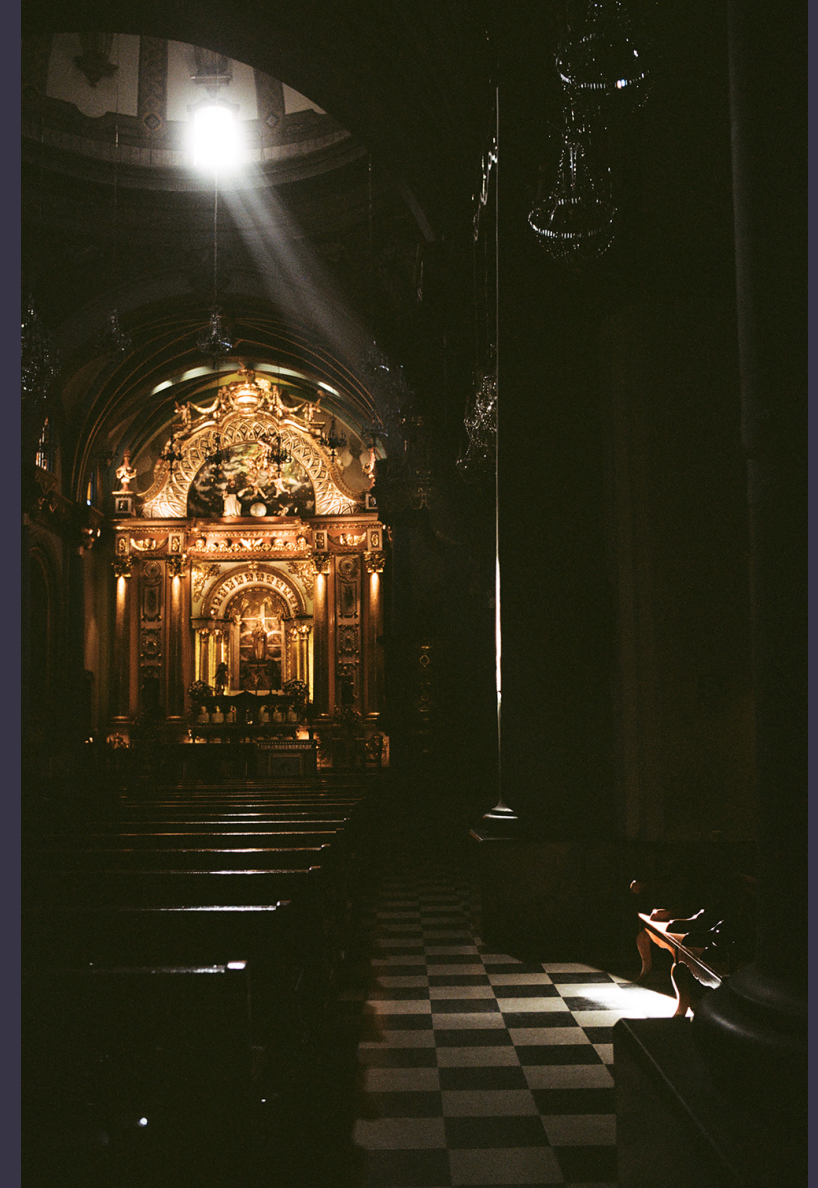
First, a short video:

What Are Sacramentals?

Why does the Church recognize these things as methods of grace?

- We have evidence of this in the OT
 - And the Lord said to him: Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem: and mark Thou upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof." (Ezekiel 9:4)
- As well as the NT
 - With that, he spat on the ground, and made clay with the spittle; then he spread the clay on the man's eyes, and said to him, Away with thee, and wash in the pool of Siloe (a word which means, Sent out). So he went and washed there, and came back with his sight restored. (John 9:6-7)

- **Exterior actions reflect and reinforce interior dispositions.**
- St Augustine defined sacraments as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace”
- Sacramentals operate on a similar principle
- “The mystery of God is discovered, and God and people touch each other through the finite through sacramentals.”
- Symbols help guide us in these endeavors because of our spiritual/physical nature



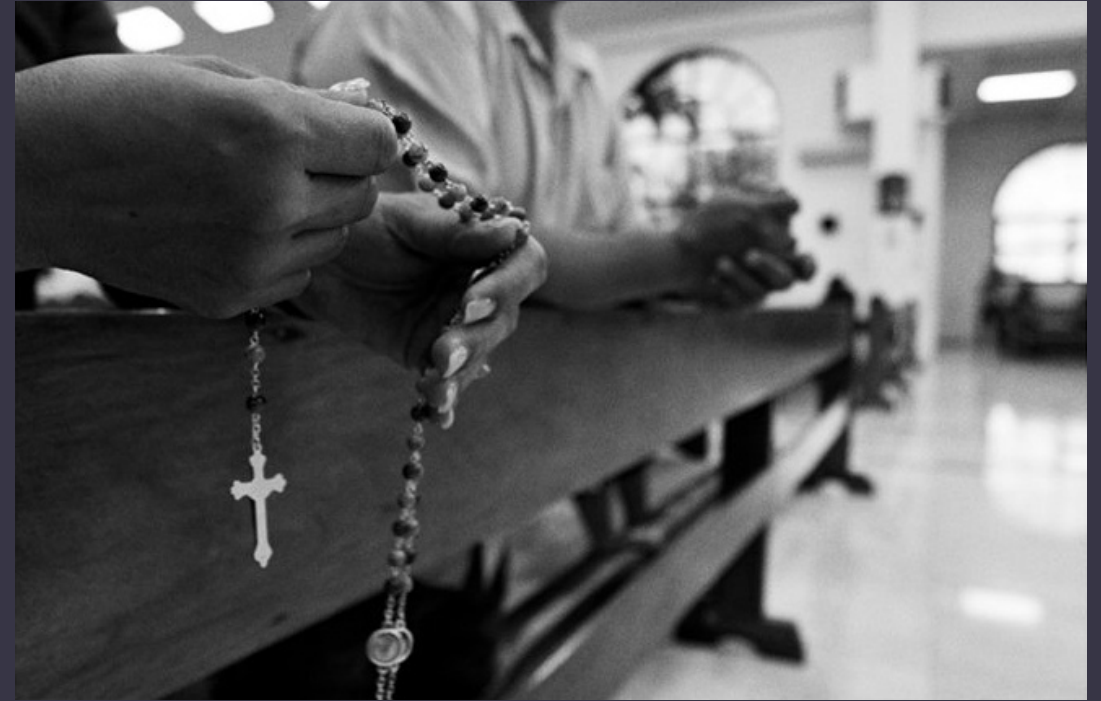
Relationship to the Sacraments

- There are 3 big differences between a Sacrament and a Sacramental
 1. Sacraments were instituted by Christ. Their protection and administration is reserved to the Church. Sacramentals were instated by the Church.
 2. Sacraments are “efficacious signs of God’s grace”, meaning that they convey grace to us directly and regardless of the disposition of the minister. Sacramentals confer grace from the work of the one performing the action, meaning that your spiritual disposition matters.
 3. The type of grace received is different. Sacraments confer both sacramental and sanctifying grace, but sacramentals do not. They do not confer sanctifying grace but rather *dispose* us to receive it later.

Example Time!

The Rosary

- Earliest prayer ropes we know of start showing up c. 300 AD
- Show up in India and the ME around the same time (parallel but independent)
- Actual form of Rosary evolved over time
- In its final form the Rosary was given to St. Dominic by Our Lady
- Connection to LoH- the Poor Man's Psalter
- Promoted by many saints and popes
- Marian!!!



Brown Scapular

- “Whoever dies invested with this Scapular shall be preserved from the eternal flames. It is a sign of salvation, a sure safeguard in danger, a pledge of peace and of my special protection until the end of the ages.”
- Requirements
 - To wear the Brown Scapular continuously.
 - To observe chastity according to one's state in life.
 - The daily recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary OR to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays OR with the permission of a priest say 5 decades of the Holy Rosary.



Don't Take my word for it...



Medals



“In themselves medals possess no particular power. They are symbols that remind the wearers of their personal faith and religious commitment. It became tradition that medals be blessed by a priest when special indulgences became attached to wearing them.”

Holy Water

"From long experience I have learned that there is nothing like holy water to put devils to flight and prevent them from coming back again."

-St Teresa of Avila



Photo U G C

I WILL GO IN TO THE ALTAR OF GOD:
TO GOD WHO GIVETH JOY TO MY YOUTH.

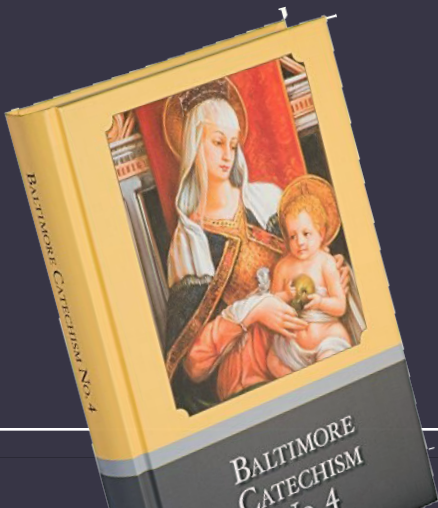
Incense

- Burning = zeal
- Fragrant = holiness
- Smoke = prayers



Questions about Sacramentals

- What sacramentals do you use, Casey, and how did you find out about those that you continue to use in prayer?
- How should one discern whether a sacramental is helping them pray or becoming a superficial distraction? Or, how do we avoid complacency in our prayer routine?
- What's a good *starter* when it comes to sacramentals?
- Unrelated question: can you talk about how to explain what Catholicism is to people who have no experience or knowledge of religion, like Chinese exchange students?



Ask me questions!





VEILING

UNIQUELY CATHOLIC, UNIQUELY FEMININE

On the menu for today:

- My personal experience
- What is it?
- History and Biblical Context
- Theological Significance: Why Women?
- Current status in Canon Law
- Arguments For and Against

I did not want to veil

- I thought it was weird
- Lace is not a staple of my wardrobe
- It will make me stand out
- People are going to think I'm like holier than thou or some nonsense
- People are going to look at me
- It's weeeeeird!



DO IT!





"WEARING THE VEIL HELPS ME GROW IN
VIRTUE, MODESTY, HUMILITY,
AND AUTHENTIC FEMININITY."
-CRYSTALINA EVERT

What is veiling?

- To be really literal about it, it's basically this:



- A personal devotion
- “The outward sign of an internal gesture of reverence to God”

Why is it awesome?

1. It's an challenging (and distinctly feminine!) way to grow in humility and holiness
2. It's got some seriously beautiful symbolism behind it
3. It's based in Scripture
4. It's tradition!
5. It's extremely counter cultural

Fostering holiness 🙏

- A sense of the sacred: who is God?
- It helps the attention-challenged (me) stay focused at Mass and in prayer



Humility

- A gentle reminder that it's not all about me
- Reminds me who the real focus of the Mass is: Jesus
- St. Paul "But if a woman nourish her hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering."
- Veiling not because of some "primordial" sense of feminine shame; **we are covering our glory so that He may be glorified instead.**
- We cover ourselves because we are holy -- and because feminine beauty is incredibly powerful. If you don't believe me, consider how the image of "woman" is used to sell everything from shampoo to used cars.
 - More on this later >:(





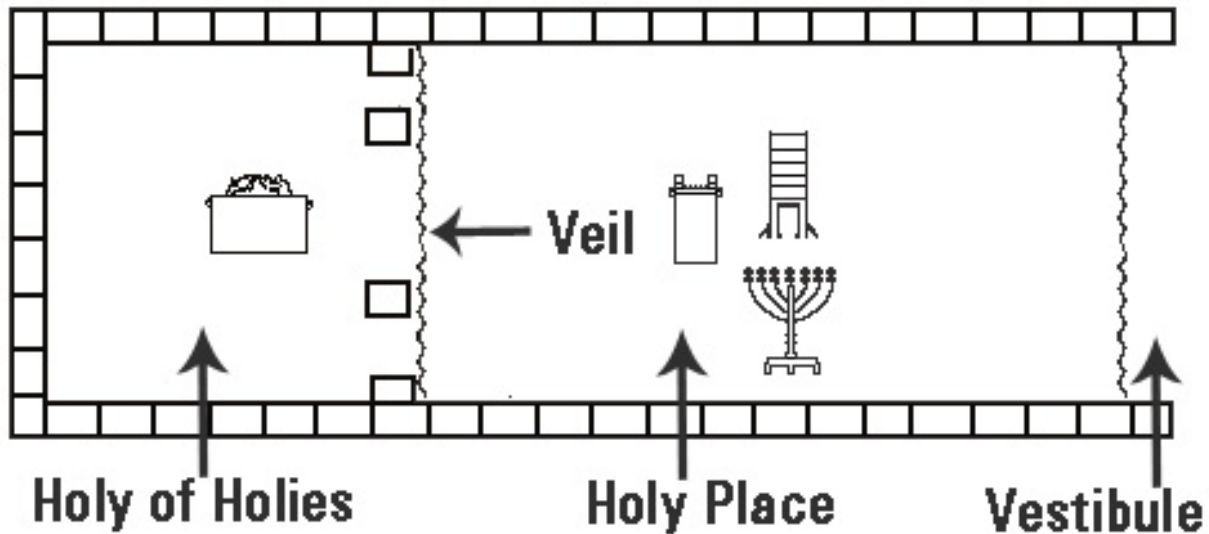
Historical and Biblical Context

- What is the origin of veiling, and when did it start?

Symbolism

- Sacred things are veiled

Diagram of the Temple



It's tradition!

- Roots in the OT (the temple)
- Veiling has been a tradition for women since day one!
- St. Paul writes about it
- It was actually required (it isn't any more)



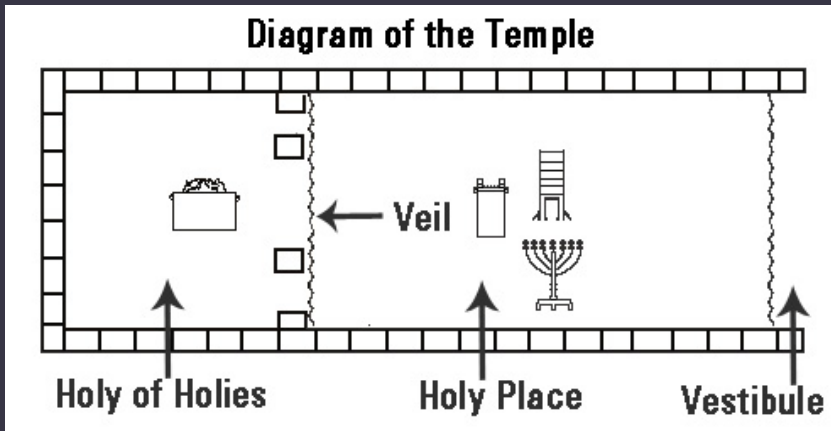




Theological Context: Why Women?

- Consider the Historical context of veiling: why do we veil things at all
- Answer: because they are sacred





Distinctly Feminine

“The veil is a sign of the great dignity inherent to a woman, who has the potential to receive life within herself... both human life and the supernatural life of God.”

-Veils by Lily





“And this is why the female body should be veiled because everything which is sacred calls for veiling. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he veiled his face. Why did he veil his face? Because he had spoken to God and at that very moment there was a sacredness that called for veiling...

Veiling indicates sacredness and it is a special privilege of the woman that she enters church veiled.”

–Dr. Alice von Hildebrand

“It's a very great mystery. Like Our Lady, every Catholic woman, as a woman, is a living icon of the church. So when she veils herself here, in the presence of Our Lord, it's a visible reminder for all of the spousal relationship - the bridal relationship - between the Church and Christ.”





Veiling is “so rich with symbolism: of submission to authority; of surrender to God; of the imitation of Our Lady as a woman who uttered her "fiat!"; of covering our glory for His glory; of modesty; of chastity, of our being vessels of life like the Chalice, the Ciborium and, most especially, Our Lady.”

It's counter-cultural

Culture says....	The Church says...
Women should have the right to abort	All lives have value
You should get married and divorced as many times as you want and to whoever you want	Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman that lasts until death
There is no real right and wrong, it's all your opinion, just do your own thing.	God's law establishes right and wrong and those principles apply to everyone

Men and women and dignity

- In St. Paul's time veiling also had modesty connotations
 - "Note, too, that Paul is in no way being "misogynist" here...Men need women, women need men. But we have different roles, each equal in dignity -- and all for the glory of God (and, of course, we are to treat each other absolutely equally in the order of charity!).The veil is a sign of our recognizing these differences in roles."
- Equal \neq the same
- How does this contrast with what our culture says about the dignity of men and women?



THE ONLY THING BETTER THAN DRESSING IS UNDRRESSING



LET'S GET ZESTY

ARE YOU KIDDING ME



Women and men are equal in dignity before God



Experience teaches us: to know each other well and grow in harmony, the human being requires the reciprocity of man and woman.

—Pope Francis

"The veil is a visual sermon, ... a public proclamation before the Lord that He IS the Lord and that we love Him and that we are ready to obey him. It's a totally counter-cultural statement proclaiming obedience in the midst of a culture that is totally permeated with this attitude of '**I will not serve.**'"



So to Sum Up:

1. It's an challenging (and distinctly feminine!) way to grow in humility and holiness
2. It's got some seriously beautiful symbolism behind it
3. It's based in Scripture
4. It's tradition!
5. It's extremely counter cultural

Current Status in Canon Law

- **1918 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1262:** Men, in a church or outside a church, while they are assisting at sacred rites, shall be bare-headed, unless the approved mores of the people or peculiar circumstances of things determine otherwise; women, however, shall have a covered head and be modestly dressed, especially when they approach the table of the Lord.
- **1983 Code of Canon Law, Canon 6:** When this Code goes into effect, the following are abrogated:
 - (1) the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917;
 - (2) other universal or particular laws contrary to the prescriptions of this Code, unless particular laws are otherwise expressly provided for;
 - (3) any universal or particular penal laws whatsoever issued by the Apostolic See, unless they are contained in this Code;
 - (4) other universal disciplinary laws dealing with a matter which is regulated ex integro by this Code.

Current Status in Canon Law

- Should all women veil? Is it a universal requirement?
 - Yes
 - No
- Can we dismiss veiling as just a personal devotion?
- No devotion ever required by Canon Law
 - Not even the Rosary or the Scapular!



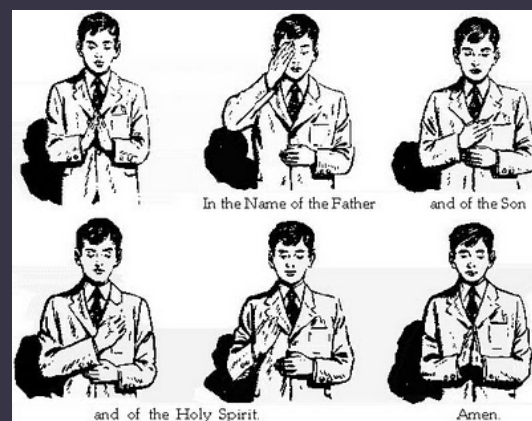
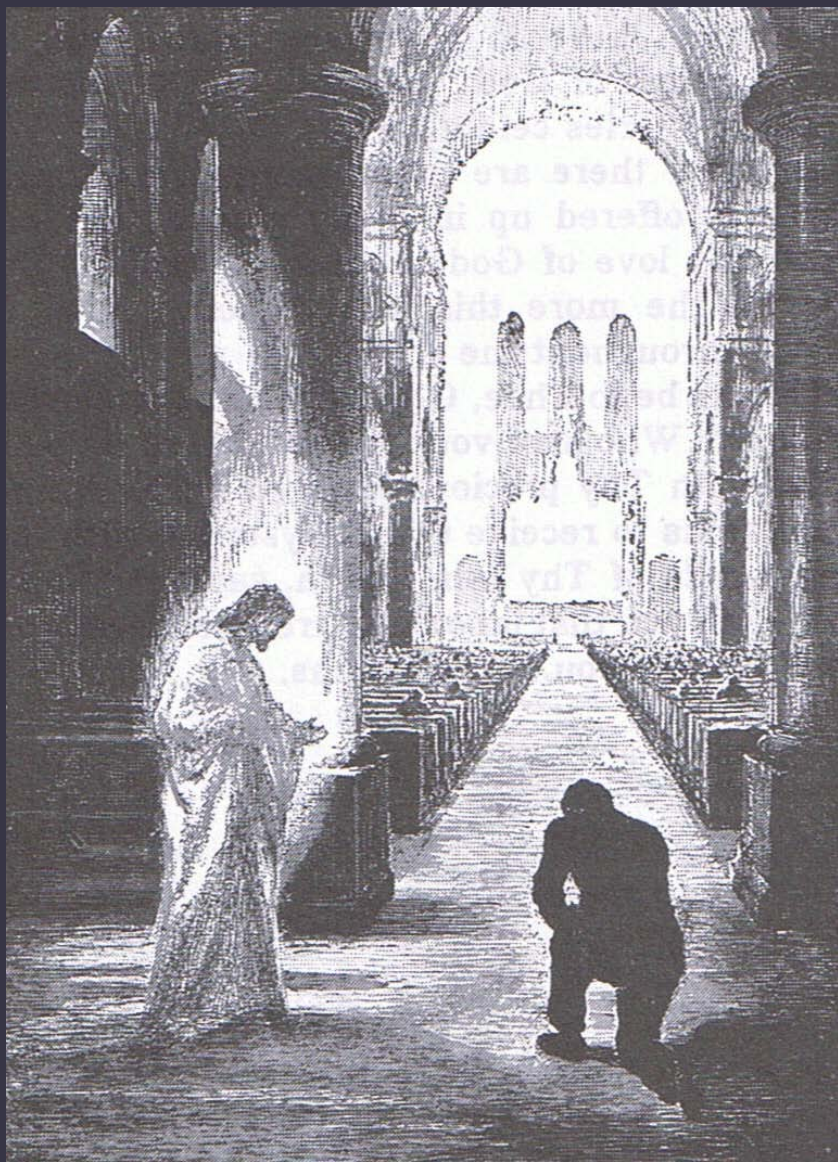
Questions About Veiling

- Couldn't veils promote vanity and distraction as much as uncovered hair? Like women competing to have the finest lace, best hat, whatever?
- I know from several women that the stigma of "Holier than Thou" [explain what this means] gets applied to women who choose to veil. Please tell us what your experience with this is, if any, and how you suggest portraying oneself so as to discourage such remarks about a holy tradition like veiling. Put simply, how does one veil well?

The Rosary Test

- Take a critique of veiling
- Sub in “Rosary”
- Does it still work?





My halo is brighter
than yours.



Questions About Veiling

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Questions About Veiling

- Couldn't ~~veils~~ **praying the Rosary** promote vanity and distraction as much as uncovered hair? Like women competing to have the ~~finest lace, best hat, whatever~~ **nicest beads, prettiest Rosary, etc.**?
- I know from several women that the stigma of "Holier than Thou" [explain what this means] gets applied to women who choose to ~~veil~~ **pray the Rosary**. Please tell us what your experience with this is, if any, and how you suggest portraying oneself so as to discourage such remarks about a holy tradition like veiling. Put simply, how does one ~~veil~~ **pray the Rosary** well?

Common Impediments To Veiling

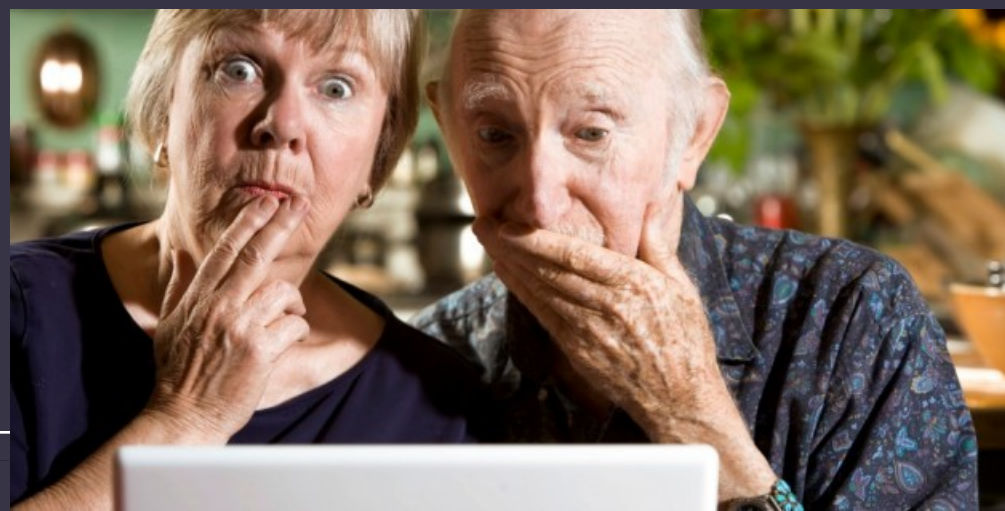


It will make me self conscious 😞

- I've actually found that veiling made me /less/ self conscious
- Once you can get over the initial weirdness, you train yourself to think about yourself less



Judgment



People will think I'm being "holier than thou"

If praying the Rosary, genuflecting, or kneeling made people think you being ~holier than thou~ would you stop doing those things?



Questions About Veiling



As they grow
in holiness, will
all women
begin veiling
eventually (is
it a logical
next step)?



I've heard
that the
Amish
women's
head-
coverings
were
inspired by
an earlier
style of
church veil.
Is this true?

We made it! Ask me things 😊



One person asked...

- St Paul writes about avoiding behaviors that are “stumbling blocks” for our brothers in Christ. Read the full context [here](#).
- Could veiling be one of these behaviors that causes our brothers to sin? In other words, if our wearing of the veil causes people to sin by being uncharitable, wouldn't it be better to just not do that thing?
- Answer: I think the Rosary test can be applied here as well. If someone saw you going to Daily Mass, or praying the Rosary, or genuflecting, the fact that that caused them to sin by being uncharitable is not a good enough reason for you to not do those things. If the occasion arises, definitely use the opportunity to love them and catechize them. Your responsibility in that scenario is to be loving, to be understanding, and (if you can) to educate. You could certainly use conflict as an opportunity for introspection... to check yourself and make sure you're doing the right thing. But if we can't constantly mitigate our devotional lives based on other peoples' opinion.

Appendix A: References

Sacramentals References

- [What Are Sacramentals? \(only a little lost video\)](#)
- [Introduction to Sacramentals](#)
- [Information on Sacramentals from the Baltimore Catechism](#)
- [What Are Sacramentals? \(EWTN\)](#)
- [Catholic Sacramentals: Gifts of Grace](#)
- [The Value of Sacramentals: An Essay from Catholic Culture](#)
- [Biblical Basis for Sacraments and Sacramentals](#)
- [Sacrosanctum Concilium](#)
- [Brown Scapular FAQs](#)
- [Answers about the Brown Scapular from EWTN](#)
- [7 Things You Should Know About the Brown Scapular](#)

Veiling References

- [Catholic Women's Veiling Devotion: a facebook page for those who veil or are interested in veiling. Ladies only \(sorry boys!\)](#)
- [Basic Info on Veiling from Fisheaters \(A+\)](#)
- [FAQ section from Veils by Lily, a popular online mantilla store](#)
- [Thoughts on the Veil](#)
- [The BEST post on veiling I've ever read, it covers literally everything](#)
- [A Guy's View of the Veil](#)
- Not Catholic but: [Why I Wear a Head covering in Church](#)
- [Catholic Women Veiling: What's the Deal?](#)
- 2010 News article including canon law info: [For Better or for Worse, Mantillas are Making a Comeback](#)
- [To Veil or Not to Veil](#)
- [Veiled for the Sake of the Angels](#)
- [Veiling in Christianity \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_headcovering
- [Should I Veil? I Debate Between Me and My Brain](#)
- [Veiling and the Evangelization of Men](#)
- [The Theological Significance of the Veil](#)
- [The Privilege of Being a Woman by Alice von Hildebrand](#)

Veiling References

- [Are Women Required to Cover Their Heads in Church? From Canon Law Made Easy](#)
- [Answers on Head coverings in Church from EWTN](#)

Great post on veiling

- <http://heartlessmuffineater.tumblr.com/post/111304917211> This is the BEST post on veiling that I've come across. It lays everything out there simply and succinctly. I would HIGHLY recommend it.

Appendix B: Personal Testimonies

What do you think? From Kailyn

I first saw a woman veiling my freshman year of college and I didn't know what it meant. I thought it meant she was in the process of becoming a nun. But I asked her and when she told me about it, I thought it was very beautiful. I thought a lot about it, but unfortunately my boyfriend at the time strongly deterred me by telling me that it would make me prideful and that people would be distracted (which I can say now is SO not true), so I didn't. I started going occasionally to the Latin Mass however, and another Novus Ordo church in my town, and most of the women there wore veils so I bought a veil and started wearing it there. What I had been told was that it was a sign of reverence, and I was directed towards 1 Corinthians 11. It points towards the fact that Christ is our true bridegroom and we are His brides. When I started veiling at those select churches, every time I put on my veil it was a tangible reminder that I was stepping into the presence of God. The veil also helped keep me from being distracted because I could wear it so it blocked out some of my peripheral vision. When I prayed after receiving the Eucharist, I could use it to cover my face and further shut out all distractions to focus on Who I had just received. The experience was so beautiful that I started wearing my veil also when I went to Adoration, and even in other private prayer (note that the wearing it in private prayer was more of a sentimental thing and a longing to use this tangible reminder of God's holiness and His love for us). What finally got me to start wearing it every time I stepped into His Eucharistic presence was a book called Jesus, Our Eucharistic Love. This book had many beautiful truths about the Eucharist to share, and I would recommend it for everyone, especially when you are in Adoration! There was a section on veiling and I cannot remember exactly what it said, but it impressed upon me just why veiling is so important to help us remember the greatness of God's Real Presence. I went on the internet to find what other women had said about why they started veiling, and it made so much sense I couldn't see it any other way. So now I do it every time I go to Mass or Adoration, and sometimes I am the only one, and sometimes I am bringing a non-Catholic to Mass and I am still the only one wearing the veil and I wonder what they will think, but they almost always ask and I love getting to tell them. I even had an older woman come up to me once with tears in her eyes as she told me that she used to wear a veil and had stopped when everyone else did, but that seeing someone with a veil made her want to start again. It reminds me that being in the Eucharistic presence is special, and I hope it reminds other people too smile emoticon

What do you think? From Emily

I started veiling going into sophomore year at Purdue, so it's been about 2 years. I heard about veiling from my fiancée, who sent me a couple articles on it just in case I was interested. It was evident from all of the different perspectives that there isn't just one reason why people veil - there are lots of different ideas - but the one common theme that kept popping up was honoring God. I prayed about it, and Sam gave me my first veil soon after I started learning about it, but I waited a while and prayed more about it until I felt I was ready and could at least wear it with good intentions. And once I started, I haven't gone back!

Veiling, for me, is about humbling (well, at least trying to humble) myself in the presence of God, and in that way, I can show Him a special reverence and honor only directed towards Him. The veil has been a great reminder for me during Mass and while I am in front of the Tabernacle of where I am, what I am (supposed to be) doing, Who I am kneeling before. The veil, while I don't wish to demean it, is a sort of tool for me - it keeps me grounded and focused on God during Mass. It also, in a way, reminds me to try to imitate Mary in her humility, meekness, gentleness, and prayerfulness.

Now I know that just because I veil does not mean that I am somehow "holier" or "more pious" than anybody else - while those thoughts are tempting, I quickly remind myself who I am veiling for - Jesus.

It's definitely nerves wrecking when you first start veiling - for me I was pretty self conscious about it, and was afraid people were going to think that I thought I was an all high and mighty traditionalist who thought herself blah blah blah - but again, my desire to honor Jesus trumped all of these fears and worries. I hope that I have been a good example to others at Mass, but I try not to think about it too much. God's Will be done, whether we veil or not! smile emoticon I personally think it is a beautiful practice, but only if done prayerfully and with proper discernment. It is a small way, but a very powerful way, that we as women can honor God in His Eucharistic Presence.

Casey, if anyone has any further questions after the meeting, I would be happy to talk to anyone about things! You can give them my email if anyone wants it: gille@purdue.edu

Appendix C: Long Form Quotes

These days, the idea of submission to the authority of her husband is frowned upon, to put it mildly. But it shouldn't be, once we realize that the bridal veil signifies the submission of this particular woman to the loving care of her husband. It signifies her trust, her confidence in his Christ-like leadership. It signifies that she has chosen to follow him as a loving partner and companion. It also signifies that he has been specifically consecrated to handle that sacred vessel – to safely touch that ark – and that's something mysterious and beautiful.

But that doesn't explain why little girls would wear a veil, does it? It doesn't explain why professed virgins, nuns, religious sisters would wear veils, does it? Obviously, the mystical symbolism of a veil goes far, far beyond the relationship of one particular woman and one particular man. What does it mean? What sort of a mystery is presented us when we see a woman veiled before the altar?

It's a very great mystery. Like Our Lady, every Catholic woman, as a woman, is a living icon of the church. So when she veils herself here, in the presence of Our Lord, it's a visible reminder for all of the spousal relationship – the bridal relationship – between the Church and Christ.

That relationship between the Church and Christ is a very deep mystery, indeed. So whenever we see a veiled woman here, before the altar, be she six or be she sixty, it's a visible reminder for all of us of this spousal relationship, this bridal relationship between Christ and His Church.

And because the veil also signifies the submission of the bride to the loving care of her husband, it means that the veil of a Catholic woman is also a visible reminder of the perfect submission of the church to the loving rule of Christ.

The veil is a visual sermon, it's a visual statement, it's a public proclamation before the Lord that He IS the Lord and that we love Him and that we are ready to obey him. It's a totally counter-cultural statement proclaiming obedience in the midst of a culture that is totally permeated with this attitude of "I will not serve."

That, in any age, but especially in ours, is a very great mystery indeed.

"There are three essential differences that separate sacramentals from the Sacraments. First, the Sacraments were instituted by Christ. This means that their protection and administration, though not their substance, are reserved to the Church. Sacramentals, on the other hand, were, for the most part, instituted by the Church and are therefore at the complete disposal of the Church. One exception is the washing of feet at the Last Supper. This ritual is considered a sacramental because it was not intended by Christ as something essentially related to the salvation or sanctification of the world.²

Second, the Sacraments are efficacious signs of God's grace. This means that, barring human obstacle, they convey to us the grace they signify in virtue of the rite or action performed (*ex opere operato*). "When the proper matter for each Sacrament is present and the correct words are spoken, the grace of the Sacrament is conferred."³

Hence, the Sacraments, sometimes called the Sacraments of salvation, do not depend on the character of the minister who might have unfortunately fallen into sin prior to presiding at one of the Sacraments. While the Sacraments "work" regardless of the person who administers them, or for that matter of those who receive them, there may be a hindrance to what the Sacrament has been instituted to bring about in the soul, if one is unwilling or fundamentally not disposed to receive them.

In contrast, sacramentals confer grace from the work of the one performing the action (*ex opere operantis*). "Here the grace received is determined by the spiritual disposition or worthiness of the individual and the intercessory prayer of the Church."⁴

The third difference consists in the grace received. While "the Sacraments confer both sanctifying and sacramental grace as they are conferred, such is not the case with sacramentals. [Sacramentals] do not confer sanctifying grace immediately, but rather, dispose the individual to receiving it. Moreover, the different graces are received in proportion to the various purposes of each sacramental."⁵

While it is perhaps difficult to classify the different sacramentals, since they tend to overlap in practice, some have distinguished between *permanent* sacramentals (blessed objects) and *transitory* sacramentals (actions which have a sacred significance when performed, i.e., ceremonies, independent religious actions and the religious use of blessed objects).⁶ Sacramentals may also refer to times, places, and gestures.

With respect to time, the Church has established liturgical seasons, feasts, and fasts. "They qualify as sacramentals in that they are established by the Church in order to stimulate the faith of the people and dispose them to a regular and more generous service of God."

