

THE LAYMAN'S LANTERN

The User's Guide

How to find your way through the Lantern, and how to use each part of it.

LAYMANSLANTERN.ORG

CONTENTS

I. Welcome to the Lantern

II. Finding Your Way

III. Searching the Site

IV. The Homepage

V. Reading the Essays

VI. Learning the Faith

VII. Prayers and Your Own Prayer Book

VIII. Devotions

IX. The Holy Bible

X. The Catechism

XI. The Calendar and the Holy Days

XII. History and Reference

XIII. Learning Latin

XIV. Printing and PDFs

XV. Staying in Touch

XVI. Phones, Keyboards and Accessibility

XVII. What Your Browser Remembers

XVIII. Quick Reference

I. Welcome to the Lantern

The Layman's Lantern is a Catholic reading site for the ordinary faithful. It gathers long-form essays and meditations, plain explanations of doctrine, the Church's prayers and devotions, the Douay-Rheims Bible, the catechisms, and a liturgical calendar into one quiet place. It is meant to be read slowly: a study, not a feed.

This guide explains what is on the site and how to use each part of it. Read it straight through, or go to the section you need from the contents. Everything here is free to read, and nothing requires an account.

> **TIP** This guide is also a PDF. Use the *Download the PDF* button at the top of the page to keep a copy or print it.

II. Finding Your Way

The menu

The bar across the top of every page carries the main sections: **Home, Articles, Topics, Faith, Prayer, Devotions, Bible, Calendar, Links** and **About**. The section you are in is highlighted.

- On a computer, rest the pointer on **Articles**, **Topics** or **Faith** to open a panel listing what is inside, with a short note on each page. **Devotions** opens a short list of every devotion.
- Click the small arrow beside a section's name to open or close its panel without leaving the page.
- On a phone or tablet, the menu folds into the menu button (☰). Tap it to open a drawer; the section you are reading opens by itself. Tap outside the drawer to close it.

The footer

The foot of every page holds a directory of the whole site in four columns: *Learn the Faith*, *Pray the Faith*, *Read the Faith* and *The Lantern*. The last column links to this guide, the questions page, the A–Z Index, the newsletter and the contact address.

Four ways to find a subject

1. **Search** looks through every page, prayer and Bible verse. See the next section.
2. **The A–Z Index** lists every subject in alphabetical order, as at the back of a book. Choose a letter from the bar, or type in the *Find in the index* box to narrow the list. The buttons beneath it show only essays, doctrine, prayers, devotions, questions, topics or reference pages.

3. **Topics** gathers the site into nine threads, among them Our Lord Jesus Christ, Our Lady, the Last Things, Church History, Sacred Scripture, Prayer & Fasting, the Saints, Apologetics and the Catholic Latin Primer. Each thread brings together the essays, doctrine pages, prayers and devotions on one subject.
4. **The Faith** lists every doctrine page under three headings: what to believe, how to live it, and whom to know.

III. Searching the Site

Open the search box from anywhere by pressing / , or Ctrl K (⌘ K on a Mac). You can also click the magnifier at the right of the menu bar.

- Type a word, a prayer, or a book of Scripture. Results appear as you type, grouped into Scripture, Articles, Prayers, Faith, Devotions and Pages.
- Use ↑ and ↓ to move through the results, Enter to open one, and Esc to close the box.
- Hold Ctrl (or ⌘) while pressing Enter or clicking to open a result in a new tab.

The Search page itself lists every entry on the site and narrows the list as you type. Its address changes as you search (for example /search?q=rosary), so a search can be bookmarked or shared.

IV. The Homepage

The homepage runs, from top to bottom:

- **The masthead**, with buttons to explore the Faith, read the newest essay, and read Catholic news, and a shortcut to the Blessed Mother.
- **Today in the Church**, a card showing the date (with its Roman form), the feast and its rank, the season, any commemorations, and the Holy Father's intention for the month. Its buttons open the day's Gospel or Epistle, the calendar, and the holy days. The reading opens in a window over the page; close it with Esc , the close button, or a click outside, or follow *Open in the reader* to continue in the Bible.
- **Where Should I Start?**, four paths for different readers: those new to the Faith, returning Catholics, those studying Scripture, and those looking for tradition.
- **Latest Writing**, the three newest essays.
- **Four Pillars of the Site**, the main parts of the Lantern, each linked to its page.

- **A passage of Scripture**, and then the form to **receive new writing** by email.

The card follows whichever calendar you chose on the Calendar page, 1962 or 1969.

V. Reading the Essays

Articles lists every essay and meditation, newest first, each with its topic and a short summary.

Each essay closes with **Keep Reading**, three other essays you may like, each with its topic and reading time. Below them are **Previous** and **Next** links to the essays published just before and after it, and links back to all the writing and to the newsletter.

Many of the longer pages carry a **Contents** rail in the margin that marks the section you are reading. On a narrower screen it becomes a **Contents** button at the top of the page.

VI. Learning the Faith

The doctrine pages explain the teaching of the Church plainly, quoting Scripture, the Fathers and the catechisms. They are listed on The Faith, and include the Covenants, the Foundations of the Faith, the Sacraments, the Mass, Sacramentals, the Last Things, Purgatory, the Great Heresies, the Councils, the World Religions and Spiritual Warfare.

Apologetics

Apologetics answers nearly fifty common objections to the Faith. Type in the search box (press `/` to jump to it) or choose a category, and open any question to read its answer. *Open all* and *Close all* expand or fold the whole list. *Copy link to this topic* copies a link that opens that answer directly.

A Taxonomy of Sin

A Taxonomy of Sin is a moral atlas arranged in folios. Choose a lens across the top (nature and gravity, the anatomy of an act, vices and patterns, culpability and cooperation, grave warnings) to show only the folios it touches, and *Show all* to return. A prompt leads on to the Examination of Conscience.

The Examination of Conscience

The Examination of Conscience follows the Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, with about two hundred questions. Tick any that apply, and a bar appears at the foot of the screen counting them.

- **Review my checklist** shows what you have ticked, with buttons to print, copy, or clear it.
- **Print my checklist** prints a dated page with lines for notes, the Act of Contrition, and a reminder of how to begin your confession. **Print the full examination** prints every question.
- Your ticks are kept only in your own browser and are never sent anywhere. Use **Clear all** when you are finished, especially on a shared computer.

VII. Prayers and Your Own Prayer Book

Prayers collects the Church's traditional prayers in fifteen sections, from the foundational prayers and the acts of faith, hope and love to the litanies, consecrations, prayers of protection, and the prayers for the sacraments.

- **Language.** Under *Show the prayers in*, choose English, Latin, or Both. Your choice is remembered.
- **Contents.** The index beside the prayers marks the section you are reading. On a phone it becomes a *Contents* button.
- **Copy** copies a prayer's words, and **Link** copies a link straight to it.

Making a prayer book

1. Tick **Add to book** under each prayer you want. You can also select or clear a whole section, or every prayer.
2. A bar at the foot of the screen counts your prayers. Press **Preview** to see the book.
3. Under *Book options*, choose the paper (Letter, Half-letter or A5), add a name for the cover after *Prepared for*, and choose whether to include the Latin and whether to use large print.
4. Press **Print / Save as PDF**. The book has a cover, a contents page with page numbers, and numbered pages. To keep a PDF, choose *Save as PDF* as the printer.

> TIP Your selection is kept in your browser, so you can add prayers over several visits and print when you are ready.

VIII. Devotions

Devotions lists the structured devotions on the site, each on its own page:

- Eucharistic Adoration: how to keep a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, with the Church's Eucharistic hymns and prayers and meditations for the hour. The hour is also set as a small booklet, A Holy Hour, to print, or to download as a PDF.
- The Scriptural Rosary: tabs for the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries, with a verse before each Hail Mary.
- The Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Chaplet of St. Michael.
- The Stations of the Cross: read the *Full Devotion*, or choose *Station by Station* and move with *Previous* and *Next*.
- The Seven Sorrows of Mary, the Shoulder Wound of Christ, and the Lenten Reflection.

The Rosary and the two chaplets have a switch between English and Latin at the top of the prayers.

IX. The Holy Bible

The Bible is the Douay-Rheims in Bishop Challoner's revision, with all seventy-three books of the Catholic canon. Psalms follow the Douay numbering, so Psalm 22 here is Psalm 23 in most modern Bibles. The page has four tabs:

- **Browse.** Show all books, or only the Old or New Testament. Choose a book, then a chapter. Move between chapters with the links at the top and foot of the text. Click a verse number to copy that verse with its reference.
- **Search.** Search the whole text, and narrow the results by testament, by group of books, or to Marian verses only.
- **Reference.** Type one or more references, such as John 3:16, Genesis 1, Apocalypse 12:1-6, and press *Look Up*.
- **Reading Plans.** Read the whole Bible in twelve, six or three months, either Testament in three months, or the historical books in about two. Choose *Begin today* or a start date. Each day, open the passage, then mark it as read. Your progress is kept in your browser.

The address follows what you read, so laymanslantern.org/bible/john/3 opens St. John, chapter 3, and can be bookmarked or shared.

X. The Catechism

The Catechism holds all four editions of the Baltimore Catechism, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, with a glossary of nearly four hundred terms.

- **Browse** by catechism and section, then choose *Read* or *Study Flashcards*.
- **Flashcards.** Click the card, or press Space or Enter, to turn it over. Move with ← and →, and use *Shuffle* to mix the order.
- **Glossary.** Choose a letter, or search the terms.
- **Search** looks through every catechism at once, or through one if you choose it under *Filters*.

XI. The Calendar and the Holy Days

The Calendar shows the feasts, seasons and liturgical colours for any month of any year.

- **1962 or 1969.** Use the switch at the top to choose the 1962 calendar of the traditional Latin Mass or the 1969 calendar used in most parishes. Your choice is remembered, and the homepage card follows it.
- Move from month to month with the arrows.
- Click any day to see its rank, season and colour (with the stole of that colour and its meaning), the saint of the day, any commemorations, and the readings, which open over the page.
- *Verification Dates* lists the dates of Easter, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, Corpus Christi and the First Sunday of Advent for the year.

Holy Days of Obligation lists the holy days for this year and the next two, as the law of the Church sets them in the United States. Each is marked as obligatory, falling on a Sunday, or with the obligation lifted, with the reason given.

The colour of the day

The site's accent colour follows the liturgical colour of the day. If you would rather keep one colour, use the **Liturgical colour** switch at the foot of any page. Your browser remembers the choice.

XII. History and Reference

- The Catholic Timeline sets biblical, Church and world history on one scroll. Search for people, places and councils; read it as a *Story* or an *Index*; and narrow it by era, type, chronology and years. Click an entry to put its link in the address bar for sharing. *From Adam to Abraham* opens a chart of the lifespans in Genesis, and the *Research guide* explains the eras, chronologies and papal succession.
- The Popes lists all 267 popes from St. Peter to Leo XIV. Search by name, year or birthplace, and filter by era or by saints, blessed and martyrs.
- The Councils, the Apostles, the Early Church Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, the Patriarchs and the Angels each tell their part of the story.
- Catholic News gathers the day's headlines from Catholic outlets, linked to the original reporting. Choose a region (all, Vatican, world or United States), hide any outlet under *Sources*, and press *Show more* for further headlines.
- Links collects Catholic websites, channels and apostolates worth your time.

XIII. Learning Latin

The Catholic Latin Primer teaches the Church's language from the altar outward: pronunciation, grammar, the prayers you already know line by line, vocabulary, readings from the Vulgate, and quick-reference tables.

Its flashcards come in decks drawn from the primer. Choose a deck, press *Show the answer*, and mark each card *Again* or *Got it* (or press ← and →). You can shuffle, choose English or Latin first, and restart a deck. Finished decks are remembered.

Wherever a Latin original exists, the prayers and devotions give it beside the English. Why Speak a Dead Language? explains why the Church keeps it.

XIV. Printing and PDFs

Every page on the site prints cleanly from your browser. To keep a copy, choose *Save as PDF* in the print window. Some pages are made for printing:

WHAT	WHERE	HOW
This guide	/downloads/users-guide.pdf	Download the ready-made PDF, or print this page
A Holy Hour booklet	/downloads/a-holy-hour.pdf	Download, or print from /devotions/holy-hour
Your own prayer book	/prayers	Tick the prayers, then *Print / Save as PDF*
Your examination checklist	/examination	*Print my checklist*
The Bitter Cup analysis	/bitter-cup-theological-analysis	*Download PDF* opens the print window
The Catholic Timeline	/catholic-timeline	*Print* prints what your filters show

XV. Staying in Touch

New writing by email

Enter your email address under Receive New Writing on the homepage and press *Subscribe*. A welcome letter follows, and then an occasional letter whenever a new essay or meditation is published. Every letter has a link to unsubscribe in one step.

RSS

If you use a feed reader, add laymanslantern.org/feed.xml to follow new essays there.

Questions and feedback

The Questions & Feedback page answers what readers most often ask. At its foot is a form for your own question, a correction, a subject you would like to see, or a note about the site. Every message is read by hand. You can also write to bill@laymanslantern.org.

Supporting the Lantern

The site is free and will stay so. If it has served you, Support the Lantern explains how to give through Ko-fi. An optional donor account, opened with the same email address you use at Ko-fi, keeps a record of your gifts.

XVI. Phones, Keyboards and Accessibility

Every page is made to read well on a phone, to meet accessible contrast for text, and to be used with a keyboard alone. Press Tab to move from link to link; the one in focus is outlined.

KEYS	WHERE	WHAT THEY DO
/ or Ctrl K (⌘ K)	Any page	Open the search box
↑ ↓ Enter	Search box	Move through the results and open one
Esc	Anywhere	Close the search box, a menu panel, the drawer, or a reading window
↓ ↑ Home End	Menu panels	Open a panel and move between its links
/	Apologetics	Jump to the search box
Space ← →	Catechism flashcards	Turn the card; previous and next
← → S	Latin flashcards	Again; got it; shuffle

To make the text larger, use your browser's zoom (Ctrl +, or ⌘ + on a Mac). Every page reflows to fit. If you prefer less motion, set that preference in your device, and the site's small animations will stop.

XVII. What Your Browser Remembers

The Lantern carries no advertising and no tracking scripts. A few choices are saved in your own browser so the site remembers them next time. They never leave your device:

- the calendar you follow, and whether the colour of the day is on
- the language you chose for the prayers, the prayers in your prayer book, and its options
- your Bible reading plan and its progress
- your Examination of Conscience checklist
- the Latin flashcard decks you have finished
- any news outlets you have hidden

Clearing your browser's data for the site removes them all. Your email address is kept only if you subscribe, send a message, or open a donor account.

XVIII. Quick Reference

PAGE	ADDRESS
Home	laymanslantern.org
Articles (every essay)	laymanslantern.org/articles
Topics	laymanslantern.org/topics/
A–Z Index	laymanslantern.org/topics/a-z
The Faith (doctrine)	laymanslantern.org/faith
Prayers	laymanslantern.org/prayers
Devotions	laymanslantern.org/devotions/
Eucharistic Adoration	laymanslantern.org/devotions/eucharistic-adoration
The Holy Bible	laymanslantern.org/bible
The Catechism	laymanslantern.org/catechism
Calendar	laymanslantern.org/calendar
Holy Days of Obligation	laymanslantern.org/holy-days
Examination of Conscience	laymanslantern.org/examination
Apologetics	laymanslantern.org/apologetics
Catholic Timeline	laymanslantern.org/catholic-timeline
The Popes	laymanslantern.org/popes
Catholic Latin Primer	laymanslantern.org/topics/catholic-latin-primer
Catholic News	laymanslantern.org/news
Links	laymanslantern.org/links
Search	laymanslantern.org/search
Questions & Feedback	laymanslantern.org/faq
This guide	laymanslantern.org/guide
About	laymanslantern.org/about
Support the Lantern	laymanslantern.org/support
New writing by email	laymanslantern.org/#subscribe
RSS feed	laymanslantern.org/feed.xml

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