

The image features a white sheet being pulled away from the bottom, revealing a vibrant peacock's tail with several prominent blue and green 'eyes'. The title 'MYS TER ION' is written in large, gold, 3D block letters across the center of the image, with the 'I' and 'O' partially overlapping the feathers.

MYS
TER
ION

STUDY GUIDE

MYSTERION



Frequently Referenced Resources

Mysterion: The Revelatory Power of the Sacramental Worldview, by Fr. Harrison Ayre

Catechism of the Catholic Church ([online edition](#); [print edition](#))

The Documents of Vatican II ([print edition](#))

Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity

Ad Gentes: Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church

Papal Documents

Deus Caritas Est, Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI ([print edition](#))

Redemptoris Missio, Encyclical of Pope John Paul II ([print edition](#))

Pascendi Dominici Gregis, Encyclical of Pope Pius X

Redemptoris Mater, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II ([print edition](#))

Mulieris Dignitatem, Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women ([print edition](#))

Corbon, Jean. *The Wellspring of Worship*. United States: Ignatius Press, 2005.

Hahn, Scott. *Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy*. United Kingdom: Crown Publishing Group, 2005.

Martinez, Luis. *The Sanctifier*. Translated by Sr. M. Aquinas. 2nd ed. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2003.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Translated by John Saward. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014.

Sheed, Frank. *Theology and Sanity*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995.

Letter from Fr. Harrison

Thank you so much for watching *Mysterion*. As you continue your journey “in Christ,” my prayer for you is that you may find Christ anew each and every day.

After having both written this book and filmed this video series, I want to share a small word with you to help encourage you along in your path of following Christ as Way, Truth, and Life. It is difficult to follow Christ, especially in a way that allows Him to be all consuming for us. Add to this the cultural forces that interfere with our ability to find Christ through His Church and the world. These are real obstacles that are felt deeply each day.

But the good news for you is that now you have a tool kit to choose Christ anew each day. Because Christ takes on our flesh, he now lifts us up into the freedom of God. “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Gal 5:1). By virtue of your baptism, Christ has given you His very self. We are not bound to the forces of this world and this age, but we are bound to the Holy Spirit who cries out “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6). We are created anew in Christ to choose God each day. This is the hope: that by reading and studying *Mysterion*, you find your Christian freedom for Christ.

This Christian Way is a choice to consciously seek Christ by living the Truth each day, which leads to Life. It is not a one-time choice, but is a daily choice towards the Father. There will be times of struggle and the Cross, times where God’s felt absence will be deep, times where you will feel overwhelmed, even hopeless at times. Christ is there. In fact, those are the moments Christ is often closest, it is the root of our hope as Christians! To be ‘in Christ’ is to truly embrace reality, to run towards reality with the same vigor and love that the Son has in running towards our reality and taking it upon Himself in the Incarnation. Jesus avoids nothing of reality, not even death, so that God’s life can be there too. Neither ought we to shirk those times of real suffering: they are reality, and therefore where Christ is.

So, choose Christ anew each day! Find Him anew each day in prayer, sacrament, fellowship in the Church. And remain close to Mary, who is the image of the Church, the perfect “yes” to God. Ask her to help you each day, to give you her “yes” so that Christ can be “all in all” in you (Col 3:11).

In Christ,

Fr. Harrison Ayre

How to Use This Guide

This study guide is intended to be a tool to help enrich your experience of the content of the *Mysterion* video series. There is no right or wrong way to use it. If you are able to get together to watch the videos with a small group of people, or if your parish is facilitating a group, that's great! If you learn better on your own, at your own pace, that's great, too!

We encourage you to take some time to really consider what is being said. Do you find yourself encouraged or bothered by something? Are there points you don't understand? If you're not watching the videos in a group, maybe there's someone you can meet over a cup of coffee once in a while to talk about the discussion points together. Hearing others' journeys—and learning to articulate our own—can be a huge help in going deeper with the content.

The reflection questions are meant to be more personal. Our hope is that they will inspire you to pray, to open your heart to God and to deepen your relationship with him. Spend some time quietly praying with them, or journal about them. Let them challenge you, and be sure to spend some of that time listening to what God may be saying to you, too.

The *For Further Reading* section invites you to consider the video's topics in the light of the Church's official teachings in the *Catechism* and papal documents, as well as to read Fr. Harrison's presentation of the topic in the book *Mysterion*. Many of these texts are available to read online for free (see links above).

The *Go Deeper* sections are exactly that: guideposts to help you find resources that will help you deepen your understanding of each topic. As you pray with these topics, you'll likely find that one or two stand out as a place you'd like to go a little deeper. Start there.

We very highly recommend praying with at least one of the scripture passages along with each video. Read it slowly before and after the video. What word or phrase stands out to you? Talk to God about it. Tell him what you see and ask him for greater light and understanding. Above all, allow yourself to be immersed in the truth and love of God, who reveals himself through these scriptures because he wants you to know and love him, too.

Group Leaders

You know your group dynamics best, but we recommend following a structure like the following:

5 minutes: Open with a brief prayer and read one of the scripture passages listed slowly.

20 minutes: Play the video. Pause on the image at the end for at least 3 minutes.

5 minutes: Re-read the scripture passage, then allow for quiet reflection.

15 minutes: Small group sharing. Break into groups of 3-5 people. Remind participants to spend at least as much time listening as they spend speaking. This isn't a moment for participants to teach or correct one another; the emphasis should be on sharing their responses to the content.

10 minutes: (optional) If the leader feels comfortable doing so, you might invite the groups to come back together and share any questions or misunderstandings that may have come up. Note down any questions you aren't sure about (or which may take too long to answer), and bring them to your pastor or other catechist to find a way to answer them for the next session. Close with a brief prayer.

EPISODE ONE

The Sacramental Worldview

For Group Discussion

1. After hearing Fr. Harrison’s explanation, how do you understand the sacramental worldview?
2. “Isn’t it remarkable that Christ is here?” What does this phrase suggest for you?
3. When Jesus is viewed as only a historical figure, his power and role are minimized, and we neglect his presence to us today. What are some concrete ways we can be sure to be aware of Jesus’ presence here and now? Briefly in one sentence and in your own words, what does the incarnation mean to you?
4. “If the Incarnation is true. . . .” How would you finish this sentence? What does it really mean for us that God became man?
5. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. Pope Benedict XVI wrote that “when we separate Christ and God, behind this effort there is also a doubt as to whether God is at all capable of being so close to us.” Do you *really* believe that God loves you? What makes it difficult?
2. “God is the passionate lover who comes in pursuit of us today.” What thoughts or emotions does this statement bring up in you? Take some time to speak to God or journal about them.
3. How do you fall into the trap of subjecting Christ to your own ideas and preferences, rather than the other way around? How might God be inviting you to change the way you see things?
4. Where would you like to be more attentive to the presence of Christ in your life? How might he be inviting you to encounter him more profoundly in these places? What is one small, concrete step you can take toward accepting this invitation?

Scripture to Pray With

Psalm 19 John 1:1–18
Luke 1:26–38 Ephesians 3:14–20

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 1–22
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 774–76;
456–60; 2014
Lumen Gentium, nos. 47–48

Go Deeper

Encyclical Letter on Christian Love/Deus Caritas Est, especially paragraph 1
Theology and Sanity by Frank Sheed, chapter 10

EPISODE TWO

Participation in Christ

For Group Discussion

“We are mysteriously ‘in Christ’ more than we are in this room!” Spend a few moments discussing what this might mean, and how it might affect us.

1. All of creation exists as a means for God to reveal his presence to us. What blocks us from recognizing him? What are some distractions that get in our way?
2. Fr. Harrison named three steps to finding Christ in our lives:
 - 1.) Prayer;
 - 2.) Attentiveness to our thoughts, feelings, and desires; and
 - 3.) Judging our experiences in the light of Christ. Brainstorm some ways to apply these steps in daily life.
3. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. “Participation in Christ is much more rooted in *being* than in *doing*.” Spend some time just being with God. How might you become more mindful of his presence with you throughout your day?
2. Do you find within yourself behaviors that are contrary to Christ’s teaching? Spend some time making an examination of conscience. With an attitude of faith and trust, ask Jesus to help you to conform your heart more closely to his own.
3. Over the next week, try to ask Jesus each day for a deepening appreciation of his presence in your life. Consider asking him to show you how you might be a witness of his presence to the people in your life.

Scripture to Pray With

John 14:5–10 Philippians 2:5–11
Romans 6:3–11 Colossians 3:1–4

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 23–33
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1691–96;
2012–14; 2014
Documents of Vatican II: Lumen Gentium, nos.
6–7
Gaudium et Spes, ch. 1.

EPISODE THREE

The Obstacle of Modernism

For Group Discussion

1. A daily experience of existential dread, or “of the edge of the cliff of nothingness,” is something that many of us experience in the contemporary world. What are some ways our faith can equip us to face this reality in our daily conversations? How can we acknowledge this experience (of fear), but still point to the truth and the hope of Christ?
2. Share about some experiences of hope, wonder, or awe. How has creation moved you to a deeper love or appreciation for God?
3. Fr. Harrison named three ways to overcome modernism in our lives:
 - 1.) Acknowledge its pervasiveness;
 - 2.) Recognize that God *does* enter our world; and
 - 3.) Cultivate evangelical charity. Discuss for a few moments how we might put these into action, and why they can help us acknowledge that God is present and active in our life.
4. “We must become saints!” How does our becoming saints help to address modernism, and to inform and confront modernistic tendencies with a sacramental worldview?
5. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. At 6:28 in the video, Father begins giving some examples of how modernism might affect our thinking. Have you heard—or believed—any of these things yourself? Spend some time considering how Christ is the true center of our life and how the Church helps us live with Christ as way, truth, and life informing our choices (and that “we are not our own authority”).
2. How might God be asking to work through you? Are there invitations which you hesitate to respond to? Spend some time in prayer, discussing these with the Lord.
3. Over the next week, ask Jesus to make himself known to you and to help you deepen your appreciation of how he works through creation. Consider keeping a daily journal of your observations.

Scripture to Pray With

John 14:8–14 Hebrews 1:1–2
1 Timothy 2:5

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 35–51
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 65; 771–76

Go Deeper

The Sanctifier by Archbishop Luis M. Martinez, Chapter 2: Our Delightful Guest
Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius X: *On the Doctrines of the Modernists (Pascendi Dominici Gregis)*

EPISODE FOUR

The Church: Universal Sacrament of Salvation

For Group Discussion

1. Christ gives us his grace and love in our weakness particularly in the sacrament of Confession. How do you view the sacrament of confession? In what way is the Sacrament of Confession an image of the Church?
2. Father says the Church is an “essential element” in our lived faith. Why do we need the Church to live an authentic faith? How have you experienced the Church as essential in your own life and experience of the Sacraments?
3. God works through his creation. By the grace of the Incarnation everything that is human is permeated by Christ. Are our human weaknesses a barrier to God’s grace? What does this mean for Christ’s transforming action within us?
4. “The Church is the universal sacrament for salvation.” It is through the Church that Christ continues and fulfills his saving mission. What does this mean for the mission entrusted to us as disciples in the Church?
5. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. What are my personal hesitations about the sacrament of confession? Does anything keep me from a full and free confession of my sins through the sacrament?
2. Has my heart been awakened through a particular grace received in the sacrament of reconciliation? How can I deepen that gift?
3. Jesus said to St. Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you.” Can you name a moment where you had to face your own weakness? Did strength come? From where? Did you see this moment as a sacred moment that drew you to deeper communion with God?
4. How is Christ inviting me to participate in His saving mission? Have I embraced His invitation to be his conduit of his grace and love in the world? What concrete steps can I take to share in Christ’s mission (to be his hands and feet reaching out to others)?

Scripture to Pray With

Matthew 16:13–19; John 3:5
28:19–20 2 Corinthians 12:1–10
Mark 16:16
Luke 15

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 55-81
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 151, 1420–
1470, 1480–1498
Gaudium Et Spes, no. 22
Lumen Gentium, nos. 1–8, 14, 16, 48

Go Deeper

Encyclical letter of John Paul II: *Mission of the Redeemer*
Theology and Sanity by Frank Sheed: Chapter 29 “Sufficiency in the Church”; Chap 30 “Life of Grace”;
Chap. 31 “The Landscape of Reality.”

EPISODE FIVE

The Marian Dimension

For Group Discussion

1. How can women in the Church be images of the “concrete Mary” Fr. Harrison speaks about? What do you envision this meaning?
2. Why is the Church’s Marian Principle or the “Marian stance” essential to understanding the Church’s mission?
3. What struck you about Sr. Tracey’s story? What does her Marian reference to “being a chalice” mean for you?
4. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. Who are the “concrete Marys” in your life? How have they nourished your life in Christ?
2. How can a relationship with Mary, the Mother of God, nurture our relationship with Christ her son? Are you open to exploring this more deeply in prayer?
3. What are Marian virtues? How am I invited to grow in them? What’s a good first step?

Scripture to Pray With

Luke 1:26–38 Acts of the Apostles 1:4–11
John 2:1–12

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 83-95
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 507, 773,
829, 963–973
Lumen Gentium, ch. VIII, nos. 52–69

Go Deeper

Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, *Mother of the Redeemer*: Part 3 “Maternal Mediation”
Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women/*Mulieris Dignitatem*
The World’s First Love, by Fulton J. Sheen
Mary the Church at the Source by Pope Benedict XVI

EPISODE SIX

Liturgy and Prayer: Living Discipleship

For Group Discussion

1. Is there a time that you were particularly moved during the Holy Mass or a celebration of the Sacraments? Can you describe how the experience impacted you or your relationship with God or the Church?
2. Why is “liturgy”—our worship as Church—essential to having a sacramental worldview?
3. In the *waters* of Baptism, we participate in the paschal mystery, Christ’s living, dying, and rising. What are other moments in the sacraments or in daily life that lend themselves to experiencing Christ through the material world?
4. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. Is there a time or times when you became more aware of the activity of grace during Holy Mass or a celebration of the sacraments? What was that experience like?
2. Have you experienced God present through the “material world”? How? Have you spent time in prayer, talking to God about this experience?
3. Do I set aside the time to pray? Does my prayer lean toward a purely “spiritual” expression or do I strive to tell God my real day to day struggles “embodied” by deep expressions of my heart to God. Does my prayer feel *real* to me or am I just going through the motions?

Scripture to Pray With

Matthew 3:13–17
Colossians 1:15–22
Philippians 2:1–11

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 99–140
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1056–1075,
2558–2865
Lumen Gentium, ch. VIII, nos. 52–69
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Go Deeper

Spirit of the Liturgy, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, especially Part 4 “Liturgical Form,” and chapter 2 “The Body and the Liturgy”
Letter & Spirit, From Written Text to Written Word in the Liturgy by Scott Hahn
Apostolic Letter, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering (Salvifici Doloris)*, Pope John Paul II
Wellspring of Worship, Jean Corbon

EPISODE SEVEN

Conclusion

For Group Discussion

1. How has the experience of Church been a gift to me? How could I more fully receive this gift?
2. What struck me about Fr. Harrison's final invitation: "Be Christ to the world"?
3. What is my *takeaway* from this time of reflecting more deeply on the sacramental worldview? Did my view of the world shift or deepen? How?
4. Which episode stands out to you most clearly? Is there something about
5. Which element of the icon stood out to you the most? What did you see in it?

For Personal Reflection

1. Have I deepened my desire to be "In Christ"? What does this mean to me?
2. Spend some time reflecting on Fr. Harrison's invitation "You are the most important material through which He [Christ] works. . . . Be Christ to the World."
3. Refer back to your favorite episode in the series. What struck you about it? How might you like to grow more in your understanding of that topic?

Scripture to Pray With

John 8:31–32 Philippians 1:3–6, 19–26; 3:8–9
1 Corinthians 15:10 Galatians 2:19–21
Ephesians 14:17 Colossians 3:3

For Further Reading

Mysterion, pp. 141–164
Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 203, 232,
1816, 2565,
Apostolicam Actuositatem
Ad Gentes Divinitus