

Your guide to Catholic podcasts

The bizarre year that is 2020 has drastically altered almost every aspect of our lives, including our media habits.

Whether or not we are major users of digital media or not, we are all swimming more and more in media-saturated environments, and most likely the people we interact with on a regular basis have their minds and hearts filled with the latest movies, audio books, YouTube videos, GIFs, songs, tweets, memes, sports scores, breaking news alerts, texts, Instagram posts, video games, Facebook rants or viral sensations they just partook of. (In my media workshops to priests and seminarians, we discuss that to “smell like the sheep” today means “smelling” like the mediated pastures in which the people in the pews are perpetually grazing.)

We each have to discern how we will engage in today’s smorgasbord of information, inspiration and entertainment – but if we’re involved in any kind of pastoral guidance of others (looking at you, parents), we must be keenly aware of the power, presence and content contained in the dazzling digital behemoths that our particular sheep (and lambs) are accessing.

The amount and variety of podcasts available today is staggering. It’s the perfect outlet for the plebeian creator, because it can be easily and cheaply produced with simply the human voice and doesn’t require visuals or, more importantly, the visual attention of its users – ideal for multitasking and background imbibing. Unlike live radio, you can listen when it’s convenient for you, pausing and rewinding at will. Today, you can find a niche podcast for just about any arcane interest on earth and sign up for automatic downloads of each show as it is released.

I did an informal poll on “Catholic Twitter” – around 1,000 responses from my 38,000 followers and their followers – as to their favorite podcasts. Below is a carefully curated list for your listening pleasure.

There are some podcasts, radio shows and YouTube channels that I didn’t include here, although I avidly listen to them. I didn’t include them because, while I listen to them to stay abreast of the wider world, some of these media channels go too far: mudslinging, ad hominem attacks, shouting matches, flirting with sedevacantist terror, alt-left/alt-right, my-way-or-the-highway, infighting, heresy, unverifiable end times/apocalyptic discourse, private revelations, disobedience, sketchy fact-checking, etc.

Obviously, this is not a comprehensive list, and obviously I have not listened to all these podcasts myself, but I have vetted them as best I could with the following criteria: helpful, enriching, faithful and often delightful. I take no responsibility for any particular content or any particular podcaster. I take no responsibility for any podcast/podcaster that goes haywire in any way in the future. Furthermore, I have been a guest on several of these podcasts, but I have not been bribed, sponsored or remunerated for promoting them. I’m sorry (or maybe #SorryNotSorry in some cases) if your favorite podcast is not listed. Don’t @ me.

To find these podcasts, search for them in your favorite podcast app or web browser. The quotes sprinkled throughout are taken either from a fan of the podcast or from the podcast’s description or website.

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FOR LAUGHS



The Quizzical Papist: Father Brad Doyle of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, offers two different podcasts under one heading: The Quizzical Papist is Catholic trivia, and in Coffee Talk, Father Doyle offers interviews, catechesis and looks at the intersection of faith and culture.

Forte Catholic: “Bringing the joy of the Gospel to you and your crew. Fun discussions and fantastic guests.”

The Crunch: Interesting, thoughtful, entertaining: Two young adult Catholics’ take on Church and life. “The only comedy podcast that gets you to heaven.”

The Catholic Talk Show: “Featuring Ryan DellaCrosse, Ryan Scheel and Father Rich Pagano, the show is hilarious, entertaining and informative.”

Catching Foxes: Two college friends discuss faith and culture. Casual and funny.

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The Burrowshire Podcast: Word on Fire’s Brandon Vogt and Father Blake Britton are best friends who share conversations about faith, culture, books and the spiritual life.

The Holy Ruckus: “Everything from faith, entertainment, pop culture, hot takes and more. This is Catholicism lived loud!”

[The Father Mike Schmitz Catholic Podcast:](#) A Catholic take on today's most-discussed issues. Father Mike can always be counted on to tell listeners the truth with the utmost charity and a side of goofy. You'll be proud to share this podcast with friends.



[Thirty Minutes with the Perrys:](#) This dynamic Christian duo of husband and wife excel at poetry jam/spoken-word performance and undiluted life lessons for the under-30 set.

[God and Comics:](#) Three priests talk about God and comics. Pretty obvious, right?

[A Catholic Priest Talks About:](#) Short explanations of different Catholic topics from ... you guessed it: a Catholic priest.

[Outcast Catholic:](#) Two Iowa priests reach out to those who feel distant from the Church.

BOOKS/LITERATURE/FILM

[Mars Hill Audio Magazine:](#) Not so much a podcast (you have to pay for a subscription, but it's worth it). Ken Myer (a former NPR producer) hosts a bi-monthly conversation with Catholic and Christian authors. Highbrow. Lots of history, theology and philosophy with an eye toward cultural currents. Yum.

[The Tolkien Professor:](#) All things Tolkien by astute ancient-to-medieval literature expert, Dr. Corey Olsen.



[Mystery Through Manners:](#) "A storytelling podcast that explores the living expressions of the Catholic faith from the perspective of everyday Catholic Americans."

The Well-Read Catholic: From Plato and Vergil to Dante and the Bible, last week's hot release to the Great Books of antiquity. A digital Catholic book club.

Criteria: The Catholic Film Podcast: "Devoted to works of high artistic caliber and Catholic interest, exploring the Vatican film list and beyond."

The Catholic Culture Podcast: Exploring Catholic arts and culture with a variety of notable guests.

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CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS

The Coaster: Grab a beverage (thus, "coaster") and join the hosts each week for some "authentic conversation with people who don't take themselves too seriously."

The Catholic Hipster: Tommy Tighe and Sarah Vabulas talk about "the Catholic Faith and anything hipster. They interview some of the big names in Catholic new media about their experiences growing up Catholic and what we can do to attract and educate Catholics."

Do Something Beautiful: Former "America's Next Top Model" contestant, Catholic wife, mom and author Leah Darrow is out to inspire both men and women to "do something beautiful" with their lives.

Catholic Stuff You Should Know: Four priests host a "consciously unprofessional" show with "lighthearted explorations into various prominent and obscure Catholic topics."

Bellator Society: The hosts dub themselves "Warriors for the true, good and beautiful, and this podcast is our conversation about all those things and so much more."

Three Dogs North: According to the hosts, "Christianity is not

something you just sit around and podcast about.”

Pints with Aquinas: Matt Fradd hosts, so come for the Aussie accent, stay for the A-list guests.

This is Jen: Jen Fulwiler, the ever effervescent wife, mom of six, author, Texan, comedian and former atheist.

The Van Maren Show: “Tries to get a handle on what is really going on in our culture today.”

The Art of Catholic: Join Catholic evangelist Matthew Leonard for “joyful, passionate (and often humorous) explanations of the deep truths of the faith.”

The Catholic Conversation: Steve and Becky Greene “help Catholics faithfully live their vocation by providing Church teaching, navigating moral challenges and exploring current issues.”

CHURCH LIFE

Every Knee Shall Bow (Your Catholic Evangelization Podcast): Confidentially share your faith with anyone as the hosts give listeners five simple takeaways each podcast to share the Gospel.

Crisis: Clergy Abuse in the Catholic Church: An initiative of The Catholic University of America, this podcast is a 10-part series that explores the sexual abuse crisis in the Church.

Clerically Speaking: “A priest from Canada and a priest from the states walk into a bar” Wildly popular.

Light of the East: Byzantine priest, artist and Theology of the Body speaker Father Thomas Loya looks at the richness of the Eastern Church.

CATECHESIS AND APOLOGETICS

Catholic Answers Focus: From the folks at Catholic Answers. For those who “want to take a deep dive into the reasons behind Church teaching.”

The Word on Fire Show: – The country’s “media bishop” makes complex issues accessible with a multi-disciplinary Catholic approach and the common touch

Father Spitzer’s Universe: A Q&A podcast hosted by Jesuit uber geek and sci-guy Father Robert Spitzer.

Way of the Fathers: Mike Aquilina hosts this podcast exploring the Fathers of the Church.

What God Is Not: “A Byzantine podcast about mystery.” Delish.

All Things Catholic with Dr. Edward Sri: Prolific author and theologian Edward Sri gives listeners “insights on understanding and living out the Catholic faith.”

Ask Father Josh: Father Josh Johnson answers “real-life problems” and gives advice about life, faith, morality and relationships. He pulls no punches in this contemporary, wise and wildly popular podcast.



Catholic Bytes: A podcast for busy Catholics. “A short, dynamic podcast delivering talks on various topics about the Catholic faith for people on the go.”

Jimmy Akin’s Mysterious World: “A fascinating look at ancient mysteries, folk tales, urban legends, crimes, conspiracies and the supernatural from the twin perspectives of faith and reason.”

The Counsel of Trent: Apologist Trent Horn offers “an entertaining, informative and practical explanation of the Catholic faith.” With A-list writers and speakers.

The Catholic Podcast: “Joe Heschmeyer and Jennie Punswick cover all things Catholic: Theology, spirituality, Catholic family life and the state of the Catholic Church today.”

MARRIAGE AND PARENTING



Electric Waffle Podcast: Wife and husband (and parents), Katie Prejean McGrady and Tommy McGrady discuss Catholicism, cultural trends and the “joyful chaos” of their lives.

Messy Family Project: “Family life is messy and unpredictable, but it is the greatest adventure you will ever have.”

Coffee and Pearls: Wisdom for Catholic Moms: Short (15 minutes!) weekly episodes that strive to decomplicate everything that goes with “momming.”

Diapers and Disciples: Young parents who are “learning to pray, share the love of Christ, and raise our little disciples in diapers.”

FOR THE GUYS



The Catholic Man Show: Two professional Oklahoma radio guys and best friends saw the need for a manly Catholic radio show. CMS is dedicated to the lost art of living virtuously. Each show features a manly drink, manly gear and a manly topic. Slogan: Cheers to Jesus!

Vital Masculinity: Providing “the foundation for males from all walks of life to begin their path to reclaiming their manhood and living noble, manly lives against the grain of the modern world.”

dude|Catholic: “Two dudes trying to live and encourage others to live like good Catholic men in a world that’s starving for what most think is irrelevant.”

Just a Guy in the Pew: “Welcome to the pew. The place where everyday guys talk about everyday things, in front of the one person that can do something about it: Jesus Christ.”

The Catholic Gentleman Podcast: “A show for Catholic men on the topics of living with virtue and holiness in the modern world.”

FOR THE GALS

Abiding Together: Sister Miriam James Heidland, Michelle Benzinger and Heather Khym let us listen in on a casual chat on important faith-filled themes. Guaranteed to lift your spirits and help you deepen your relationship with God.

Blessed Is She: “Let’s take a seat at the table next to one another, dive into prayer together, and grow in love as daughters of the King.”

The Feminine Genius: In the spirit of Pope St. John Paul II’s “On the Dignity and Vocation of Women,” Rachel Wong celebrates women of God striving to make the world a better place.



Fountains of Carrots: Two friends – one American, one Canadian – have way too much fun interviewing stellar guests and instilling a love for good books in their listeners.

Just One Small Thing: Women have their own wisdom (every woman has one small piece of the puzzle that is shared on this podcast) and their own path to holiness.

BIBLE STUDY

The Jeff Cavins Show: Creator of the Great Adventure Bible Study, “Jeff Cavins shares faith tips and Scripture truths to help you live as a modern-day disciple of Jesus Christ.”

The Road to Emmaus with Scott Hahn: “Join Scott Hahn to learn how sacred Scripture forms and informs our notions of morality and spirituality, liturgy and the sacraments, and so much more.”



The Bible Study Evangelista: Author Sonja Corbitt’s “Catholic Bible study series created with you in mind: bites of spinach that taste like cake.”

Father Simon Says: Father Richard Simon does a Bible study that explores the daily readings. Not a homily or reflection, a BIBLE STUDY. With humor and profundity.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Poco a Poco Podcast: The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal offer “practical spirituality” as they break open the Gospel in light of their years of prayer, communal life and work with the poor.



Discerning Hearts: Ignatian spiritual director Father Timothy Gallagher, OVM, offers spiritual discernment in everyday

decisions.

Catholic Heritage Spirituality: A husband and wife team discuss the writings of the saints.

Faith Full Podcast: “Brings compelling storytelling about faith, spirituality, religion and life to people curious about the ways faith influences our world.”

Godsplaining: Young Dominicans talk all things Catholic in the Dominican intellectual tradition.

PARTING THOUGHTS FROM SISTER HELENA:



- Do you want to start listening to podcasts but don't really understand how they work? Just Google a tutorial. You'll figure it out.
- Young people are already heavy podcast users, so share this list with them. Young adults and “screenagers” aren't just listening to hot beats in those headphones.
- Don't be that ignorant Catholic. Educate your soul. Pick a podcast or two and dive in.
- My final podcast recommendation is from a Twitter padre: “The best podcast is the one that keeps you close to Christ,” to which I say, Amen!