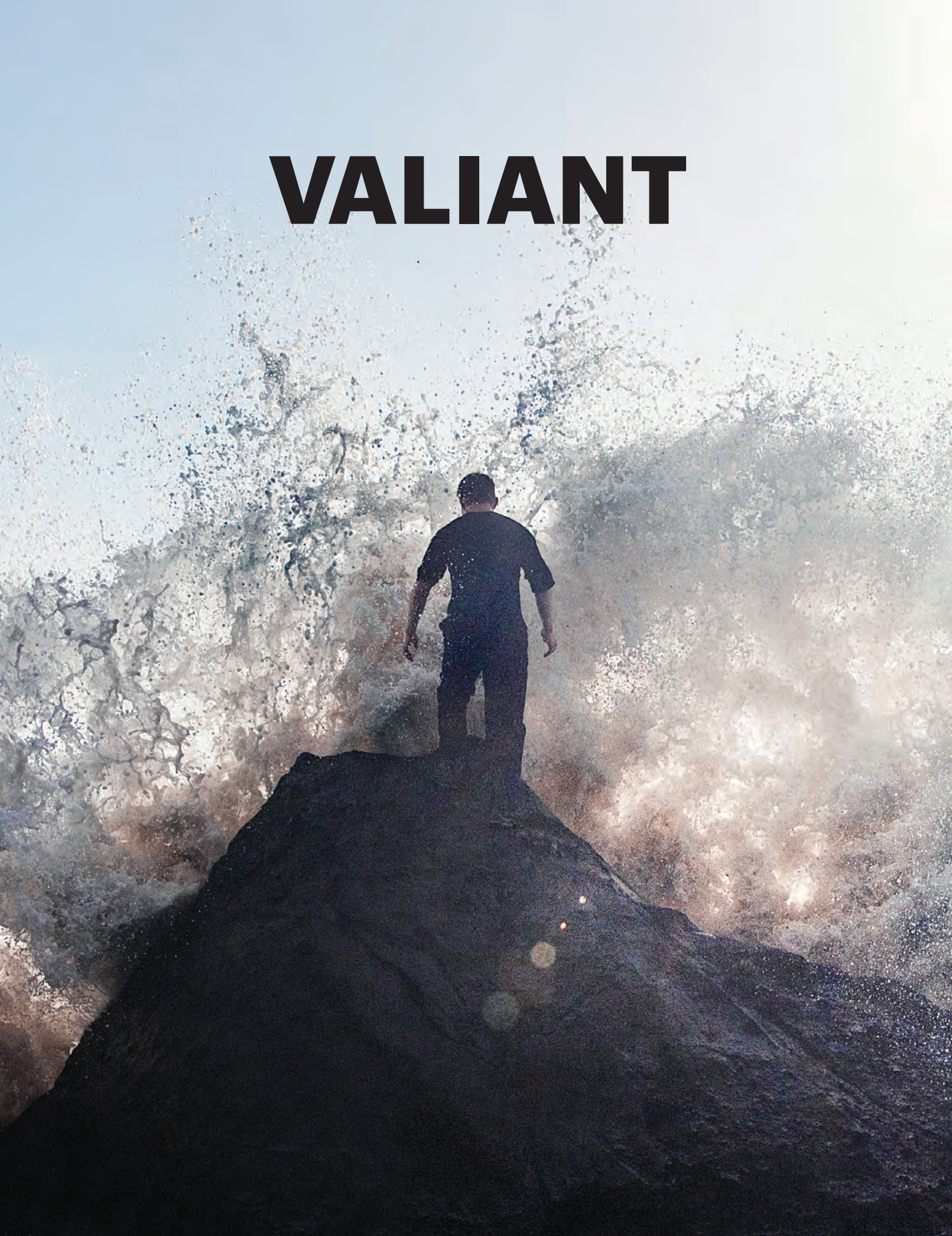
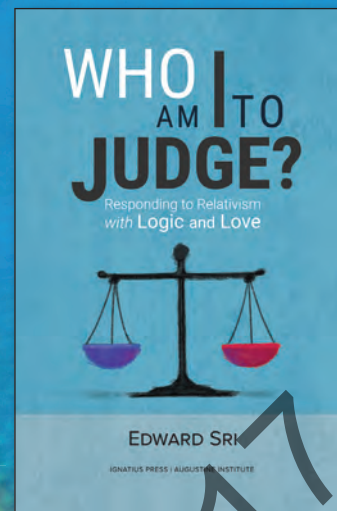
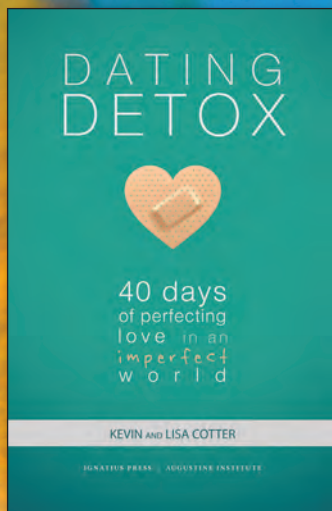
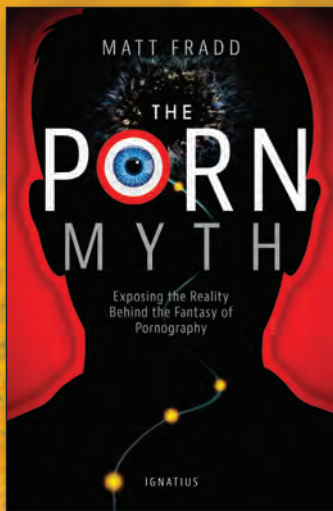


VALIANT





For Clear Moral Judgments & Actions

◆ THE PORN MYTH

Matt Fradd

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Edward Sri

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FALL/WINTER 2017

I am a seeker of truth, a pursuer of wisdom. I will accept the quest at all costs. I have been created for a purpose and will not fail in my will and determination to fight for and protect the dignity of life and those who cannot protect themselves. I am not here for myself, I have been created in the image and likeness of God himself and I will not let Him down. I accept with honor, courage, fortitude and love the cross He has given me and will faithfully persevere until the very end. I will not forget the martyrs who went before me, who valiantly gave the ultimate sacrifice, their very lives in honor of a higher cause, a stronger purpose, love and truth Himself: God the father, Jesus Christ the son and the Holy Spirit. Some will deny, others will ignore; I will remain vigilant for *"of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father..."* —Mark 13: 32

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www.valiant.osv.com

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Our Sunday Visitor Publishing

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For bulk rates, call 1-888-430-7512. Periodicals postage paid at Huntington, IN 46750, and additional points of entry. Postmaster: Send address changes to Radiant Magazine, PO Box 403, Congers, NY 10920-0403.

Editorial contact: Rose@be-radiant.com

Advertising information: adsales@osv.com

1-800-348-2440

www.osv.com

Cover photo by Joshua Earle Photography

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THE LONE RANGER



AND HIS MASK

BY SAM GUZMAN



When I was a boy, I loved watching the Lone Ranger on TV. If you haven't seen the show, it's about a mask-wearing cowboy who fights crime in the old West along with his Indian sidekick, Tonto. Hailing from the golden age of TV, the Lone Ranger is action-packed entertainment, and while the six-shooters and horses and gunfights were enough to thrill any boy's heart, what intrigued me most about the Lone Ranger was the mask.

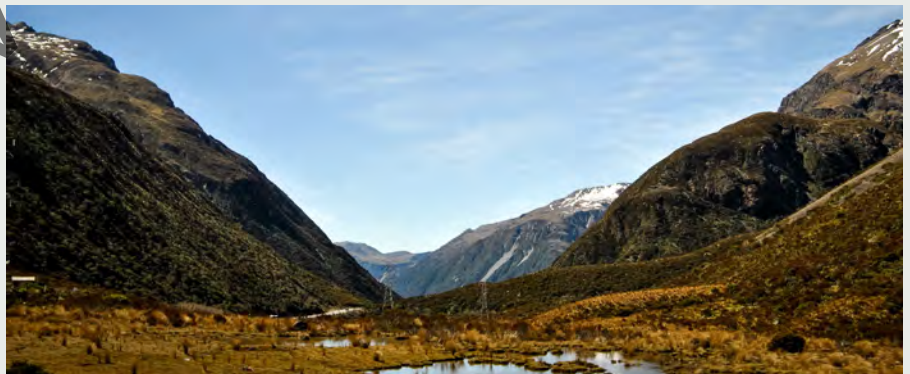
In the show, the Lone Ranger is never shown without his mask. He never takes it off. Many villains, desperate to know his true identity, capture the Lone Ranger and try to unmask him, but they are always prevented in one way or another. In a real way, the mask is part of the Lone Ranger's identity, and the mystery of it all intrigued me as a boy. Who was behind the mask? What did he really look like? What was his name? Where did he come from? Viewers never find out, and the mask served as a shield of sorts, protecting the Lone Ranger's true self from bad guys and fans alike.

While the Lone Ranger is a fictional character, I would argue there is an element of universal truth in his masked identity. For in actuality, we all wear masks to one degree or another. We all guard our innermost selves from view, never revealing who we truly are to others. Why? Because of one of the most powerful emotions we can experience—shame.

What is shame? Many confuse shame with guilt, but they are not the same. Guilt is the awareness that you have done something wrong. Shame is a belief that you are fundamentally flawed.

Guilt is about what you do, while shame is about who you are. Moreover, shame is the fear that, deep down, we are unworthy of love. It is the deep-seated fear that, if people knew what we were really like, they would reject us and no longer love us.

Because we are afraid of rejection, shame causes us to hide. The earliest example of this is Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. After succumbing to the serpent's temptation, the first thing Adam and Eve did was hide from God. They were ashamed. They knew they had violated God's commandments and damaged their loving relationship with him, and they feared his displeasure. For the first time, they were distrustful of God's goodness and



believed he would harm them for what they had done.

Shame causes fear, and fear causes us to hide. So for most of us, the self we present to others is carefully guarded and, more often than not, is a masked version of who we really are. Often, this is unconscious. We don't even realize we are doing it, but we are nonetheless.

Social media especially feeds our mask-making habit, allowing us to carefully curate how we appear to others in our various online profiles. But creating an artificial image need not be limited to the digital realm, for we do it just as easily in ordinary life. It simply feels safer to create an artificial version of ourselves that we believe is acceptable to others.

The problem is, these masks, these false selves, are a form of deception and even lying—and lying at bottom is pride. Pride has many faces, but above all, it is rooted in a revolt against reality, against the way things truly are. It is a denial of the truth and an attempt to substitute our own version of reality that suits our desires. And if pride can be defined as lying, humility necessarily means embracing the truth.

Our various masks may deceive others, but the one person we can never deceive is God. Our heavenly Father is not interested in our pretenses or attempts to pretend we are better than we are. He sees through our masks, and He wants to remove them from us. This is inevitably a painful process—one that leaves us feeling naked and vulnerable, but it is necessary nonetheless.

One of the chief ways our Lord removes our masks is in the Sacrament of Confession. All of us have committed sins we'd rather no one know about, that cause us to burn with shame. Often, these sins are extremely painful to confess. Even naming them feels like tearing a scab off a wound. Yet, naming our sins

to another and bearing the shame is the only way to find true healing. And it is the only way to real humility.

Shame tells us that if others know who we really are, we will be rejected and despised as unworthy of love. But the confessional is different. It is the one place where we can remove our masks, the one place where we can reveal who we are in all our brokenness and sinfulness and even ugliness, and instead of receiving judgement or punishment or rejection, we receive unlimited mercy.

Like the ashamed prodigal, we reluctantly return to our Father expecting punishment and displeasure, but instead receive forgiveness, joy, and a feast of celebration. In revealing who we are fully and receiving unconditional love in return, the wounds of shame are healed, and we are restored to our true identity as beloved sons.

The Lone Ranger's mask may make for good television, but it is no way to live for the rest of us. The only way to heal the wounds of shame is by revealing them—by becoming vulnerable and, in a sense, naked before God. We must end the charade of pride and embrace the rugged truth that is humility. No more masks, no more pretending. For only when we stop hiding can we begin healing.





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SAM GUZMAN



©

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Are you a Catholic Hipster?

hip·ster

noun informal

a person who follows the latest trends and fashions, especially those regarded as being outside the cultural mainstream.

Did you fall in love the first time you went to Mass in the Extraordinary Form?

Do you sneak a peek at your Breviary app during work meetings?

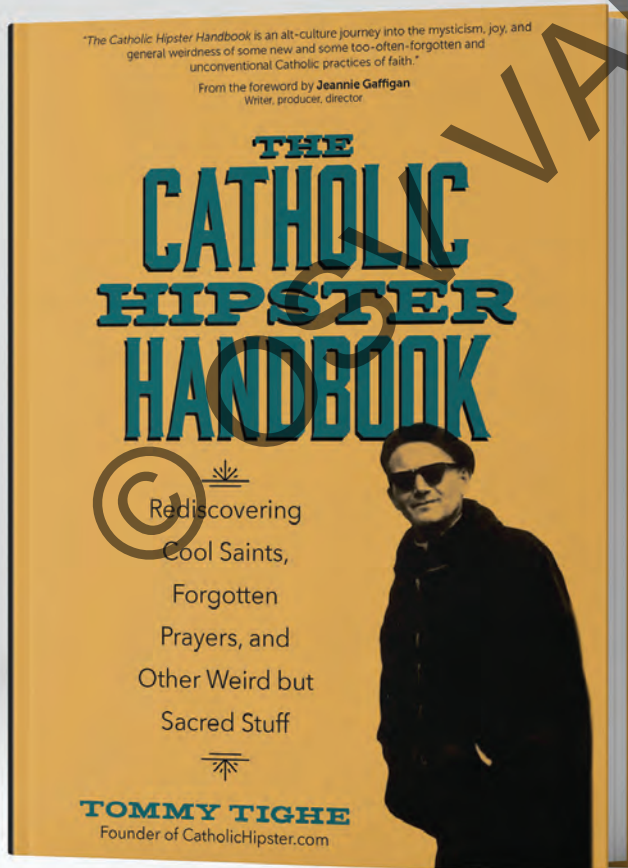
Do you know who St. Eligius, St. Isidore the Farmer or the Venerable Solanus Casey are?

Do you recite the Morning offering, the Invocation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or know the extended Our Father?

Are you a young dad who always makes sure your kids set up the corn, butter and cake for St. Brigid and her cow on the eve of her relatively unknown feast day?

If yes, then come and explore stories about trendy saints, profound yet forgotten ancient prayers, and all of the many telltale signs of what it means to be a hipster Catholic. This book is like a hipster CCD, Confirmation and RCIA all wrapped into one to help lead you closer to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Tales about glasses-wearing, beard-sporting, farmers-market-visiting Catholics are not only going to motivate you to rediscover the faith, but set you on fire for the Lord!

So, what are you waiting for?



"The Catholic Hipster Handbook" by Tommy Tighe is out September 22, 2017. Check out CatholicHipster.com to learn more.



Astronaut: Michael Hopkins

You're thousands of miles above the earth; you can see all of God's glorious creation below you, including the oceans, the mountains, entire cities and complete weather systems in action. It's a surreal, almost out-of-body experience for you. Then, you embark on a space walk outside of the comfort of

your international space station; here goes nothing... Nope, you're not dreaming an elaborate dream or watching too much "Interstellar," you're astronaut Mike Hopkins and just living a day in his extremely not normal life.



Mike, you are currently serving with NASA as an active astronaut, having spent 166 days in space during which you have orbited the Earth 2,656 times and spent 13 hours outside of your space station on space walks. How in the world did you make this a reality? How did you become an astronaut?

We have astronauts from all walks of life: doctors, military pilots, Navy SEALs, teachers, scientists, engineers, etc. One thing every astronaut has in common is the fact that we were really passionate about what we did in life before becoming an astronaut. It doesn't always work out to be accepted to the rigorous program as an astronaut, and starting out by doing something incredibly rewarding is an important first step in realizing any dream. My dream was to become an astronaut, and I applied four different times in the course of 13 years until I was finally accepted. Quitting was never an option for me; I was determined to continue applying until NASA wouldn't accept my applications anymore. The rejection along the way was difficult; it was always a tough 24 hours after receiving the news I wasn't selected, but then I got up the next day, went through why I wasn't accepted and how I could improve in the areas that were insufficient to reaching my goal. It was important to be smart about it, self-critique my actions and accept feedback from others around me that I respected. All of those things helped me to reach my goal of becoming an astronaut.

You assisted in test-flying airplanes with the Air Force, spent time working at the Pentagon and conducted two space walks during your time in space; you obviously have been in some intense situations, how do you handle the pressure?

Training is huge. What we do beforehand definitely helps me know what to do during the actual event—muscle memory we call it. Things become habit, so that when the pressure is on and things are happening quickly, having that habit pattern to refer back to helps slow things down. Doing that helps me get through an emergency event faster. I've been very fortunate in my career to not have to deal with too many unexpected crises. When something does happen, though, after solving the



problem, it is important to be able to put it behind you and focus on the tasks ahead.

Let's go back to your space walks—tell us what was going through your mind?

When I opened the hatch and looked out through the vacuum of space down to earth 250 miles below, I thought, "What am I doing? This is insane!" I was experiencing a chaos of emotions; I was excited, nervous, extremely focused and maybe even a little scared. But then, as I mentioned earlier, my training kicked in and I simply started walking through our tasks step by step. Before I knew it, hours had passed and we were coming back into the air lock after successfully making repairs to the International Space Station.

This issue is about seeking truth and pursuing wisdom; what was it like to be looking down upon humanity?

For me, that brought about clarity—to look down and see earth



in all of its glory; it was hard to imagine that there wasn't a God. How can something so beautiful and incredible not be created by the hand of God? Accepting Christ and becoming Catholic was a 44-year journey for me. I converted in 2012. Religion wasn't something I grew up with. My wife was Catholic and our kids were receiving the sacraments, but I had not become Catholic myself. I went to Mass with my family for all of those years, but never felt a need to receive Christ in communion. That all changed for me when I realized my dream of becoming an astronaut. Once I was accepted to the program and assigned to a mission, I had it all: a beautiful wife, kids I loved, my dream job, but something was still missing. I felt a void, and it was then I realized that void was Jesus. I needed to be one with Him. Once I became Catholic and was able to receive Him in communion, I didn't ever want to be separated from Him.

So that is why you asked for special permission to bring Jesus into space with you?

Yes, I was given the privilege of bringing six consecrated wafers that I divided into 24 pieces. I received communion once each week while up there, as well as right before my two space walks. Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist puts everything into perspective for me. I trust Him, I know that I don't need to be afraid or worry. Everything happening, everything I'm doing, it's part of His plan and I feel a strong sense of peace.

That is incredible. Now that you are back on Earth, what is your ideal way to spend a day?

A great day for me is spending time with my family. Both of my sons play hockey, and they often have weekend tournaments where I may watch up to 8 games in a weekend. I absolutely love it; I could watch them play 20 games in the weekend if they had that many. I love seeing my kids grow up and watch them enjoying life. It's so great for my wife and I to be walking with them through it. I was even able to watch them play hockey live while aboard the International Space Station during a few of our video conferences, so I was able to actually do my "ideal" activity on earth AND in space!

Michael S. Hopkins was selected by NASA as an astronaut in 2009. The Missouri native was a member of the Expedition 37/38 crew and has logged 166 days in space. He launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to the International Space Station in September 2013. During his stay aboard the station, he conducted two spacewalks totaling 12 hours and 58 minutes to change out a degraded pump module. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the Univ. of Illinois and a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from Stanford University. Hopkins currently supports International Space Station Operations at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX.

To learn more about his experiences, visit www.nasa.gov/astronauts/biographies/michael-s-hopkins

