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Dear Friends,

Although I have not taken down the last of our outdoor Christmas decorations, I see that the season of Lent will be upon us in just about three weeks: Ash Wednesday comes on February 22nd, and that is not even its earliest possible date.

We are offering a special opportunity to engage the fundamental elements of the Christian faith: the story and teachings of Jesus, our understanding of the nature of God, the basic elements of prayer, an overview of the theory and practice of being the Church, and a look at what we believe about life, death, and what comes after.

We rarely have the opportunity for such a comprehensive survey of the defining elements of what it means to be a Christian and to be a Church. A few months ago I came across what I experienced to be a sound, accessible, and engaging survey of these issues in a video series presented by the Rev. Robert E. Barron. Well, so far so good.

The unexpected—at least for me—element of this series is that Father Barron is a Roman Catholic priest and the title of the series is *Catholicism*. And certainly a small portion of his program is about material of special interest to Roman Catholics, but, as I watched it, I was reminded not only of how the Anglican tradition shares deep roots with the Roman church, but also how, in the last generation, our trajectories have been visibly converging.

We handle failure in marriage differently; we deal differently with the authority (and selection) of clergy; men and women have different roles in our respective structures, and the Anglican tradition may contain a wider range of views about the nature and functioning of the sacraments. We have significantly different views on some social issues, but there may be more variety within each of our traditions than the hierarchy of either is comfortable acknowledging. And in liturgy, we tend to go between the traditional and the contemporary from week to week, whereas the Roman practice, after a generation of contemporary language, is now shifting to the more traditional.

I am so accustomed to hearing about ways in which we are different, that I was very pleasantly surprised to hear Fr. Barron eloquently and clearly present what I understand to be the heart of the Christian faith and life. And in his first session, the two theologians he cites by name—C. S. Lewis and N. T. Wright—are both Anglicans.

I will present five of these videos on successive evenings in our Tuesday night Lenten Dinners beginning on February 28. On the following Saturday mornings at 10:00 am, I will offer a repeat of Tuesday's program and, in a separate room at the same time, a screening of another of the presentations in the series. Here is the schedule:

Tuesday, February 28:	God becomes Human: the story of Jesus
Saturday, March 3	Human nature and human possibility: the story of Mary <i>Repeat:</i> God becomes Human
Tuesday, March 6	The teachings of Jesus
Saturday, March 10	The birth of the Church: Peter and Paul <i>Repeat</i> The teachings of Jesus
Tuesday, March 13	What do we mean when we say "God"?
Saturday, March 17	The nature and life of the Church <i>Repeat</i> What do we mean when we say "God"?
Tuesday, March 20	Prayer and the life of the Spirit (<i>repeat scheduled on request</i>)
Saturday, March 24	<i>No meeting this Saturday.</i>
Tuesday, March 27	Last Things: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory
Saturday, March 31	The Bread of Life, the Bread of Heaven: The Eucharist <i>Repeat:</i> Last Things: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory

Using videos, and following this schedule, is an experiment. I hope you will share in it with us and give us your feedback. Each unit is free-standing, but the more of them you see, the more each will make sense.

The Rev. Cn. John G. Hartnett