

COUNT CAPPONI
D. CN. L. (LATERAN), LL. D. (FLORENCE)
ADVOCATE OF THE HOLY ROMAN ROTA AND OF THE APOSTOLIC
SIGNATURA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF CANON LAW AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE

Dear [name],

One of the most important and effective Catholic organizations that I have seen in my long life was launched many years ago by a self-sacrificing Catholic gentleman from Texas. He has now become my good friend, although I am from an old Italian family and I have always lived in Florence. Because he is a convert to Catholicism, when he founded the St. Joseph Foundation no one knew him. Now, Charles Wilson serves on the Board of EWTN, Mother Angelica's TV network, and his organization is well-respected by quite a few bishops both in the Vatican and, certainly, in the United States. In fact, his publication and the organization which it represents have become extremely valuable guardians of Catholic truth—and of the rights of individual Catholics.

Recently, it should be noted, an American, Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis, was called to Rome by Pope Benedict to head the Apostolic Signatura, the Church's highest appellate tribunal.

Canon law is where Catholic truth and the rights of good Catholics come together. Because he made countless headlines by telling Catholic politicians who support the killing of unborn children not to receive the Eucharist, Archbishop Burke's appointment to this vital canon law position illustrates the importance of this work in the eyes of the Pope.

The St. Joseph Foundation's canon lawyers carry on this kind of work in the U.S. and have handled thousands of briefs, memoranda and cases. Most of them you would never hear about, but they have become part of an ongoing effort of righting the Church which Pope Benedict has begun, and with him, Archbishop Burke.

Yet, quite unlike other lawyers and law firms, there is no charge for the St. Joseph Foundation's services!

- No charge for those cases in which the Foundation takes on academic bullies in Catholic universities who, for example, target other faculty members or an occasional student.
- No charge for supporting the rights of much-abused Catholics of all ages who wish to worship with the old Latin Mass.

- No charge for supporting priests and lay faithful who have fought efforts of some bishops and their liturgy “experts” to de-emphasize the Holy Eucharist’s place in a church.
- No charge for putting a stop to weird “liturgies” which often have included invalid breads for the Consecration.
- No charge for defending good priests who are being persecuted by their bishops for many reasons which, to my sorrow, I have seen many times since Vatican II.
- No charge for helping to stop or ameliorate the demolition of magnificent old Catholic churches all over the United States, or the “updating” of sanctuaries.
- No charge for providing counsel in difficult matters, such as the required immunization of children in Catholic schools with vaccines manufactured from stem cells of aborted babies.

Most unfortunately, often the outcome of cases handled by the St. Joseph Foundation appears to be disappointing. But they have laid the groundwork for many a reversal of bad Church policy even when, at first glance, the case seems lost—and virtually all of its clients are happy to have had the Foundation’s support. This is why it is absolutely essential that the Foundation’s totally unique work continue. What is right and just must always be defended in the Holy Catholic Church.

Carefully written cases, memoranda or canonical briefs must be done.

The rights of Catholics in the law of the Church have not always been fully respected in recent decades. The cases which the Church decides, in its canonical courts, normally have nothing to do with the sensationalized stories the anti-Catholic news media choose to portray.

That is why I have made it a point to note that you hear very little about the work of the St. Joseph Foundation. But in its newsletter, which comes at no cost to those who support the Foundation, you can nevertheless learn many details of the cases or briefs filed. For example:

1. “What Happens When Bishops Are Found Wanting?” _ . “A Quarter-Century of Canonical Frustration”
2. “The 196_ Mass with Post-1970 Innovations: Is It Likely?”
3. “Observations on the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum” (on the old Mass)
4. “Recent Trends in Ecclesiastical Disputes”
5. “The ‘Splendid Poverty’ of the Jesuits”
6. “Reflections on Some Themes of the Holy Father” (about Benedict and his efforts to curtail Church Liberalism)
7. “Similarities between Canon and Secular Law: Using Them to Our Advantage”
8. “For Every Case Its Proper Course: Reflections on the Maciel Communiqué” (on the Legion of Christ’s late founder, Fr. Maciel)

In the past three years alone, Charles Wilson and his staff have:

- advised numerous local Catholic groups as well as national organizations
- filed administrative appeals formally before dicasteries of the Roman Curia
- seen several dozen other matters settled which were “in the pipeline” due to its work since the late 1990s and earlier.

As an advisor to Mr. Wilson who has himself worked on numberless canon law matters in my career and forged ties with too many cardinals and archbishops to remember (which in any case is difficult at my age!), I can assure you that the St. Joseph Foundation’s experts are first-rate. Moreover, several of his advisors are young men—for me, that is anyone the age of my sons, or younger! —who are highly capable and extremely well-trained. Again, they have earned the respect of some of the most important leaders in the Roman Catholic Church.

I hope that I have been able to convey why the St. Joseph Foundation has also merited your respect—your prayers—and, please, your most generous donation. It is the only group of its kind in the world.

I have good reason to think that the Holy Father himself, as a cardinal in the Curia, was aware of Mr. Wilson and the St. Joseph Foundation’s good work.

Most sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neri Capponi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and a long, sweeping underline.

Neri Capponi

The Saint Joseph Foundation has served as canonical counsel to EWTN for almost ten years. Its advice has always been helpful and, on one occasion, the Foundation provided invaluable assistance in preparing an appeal to the Holy See, the outcome of which was favorable.

Deacon R. William Steltemeier, Chairman
EWTN Global Catholic Network

I am grateful to the St. Joseph Foundation for its steadfast support of the traditional Latin Mass. The Foundation has defended the rights of the Catholic faithful devoted to the Church's Latin liturgical heritage, and for years it has worked to promote more widespread celebration of the traditional Mass.

Byron M. Smith
Una Voce America

It is too bad that relatively few Catholics are aware of the fine work of the Saint Joseph Foundation. I have first-hand knowledge of the assistance the Foundation has provided, especially in matters related to the liturgy and to Catholic families. It is a marvelous resource and I pray that it will continue to serve the Church for years to come.

Helen Hull Hitchcock
Editor, Adoremus Bulletin
President, Women for Faith and Family

As a canon lawyer with a private practice, I have worked with the St. Joseph Foundation since 1996. The services provided by the Foundation to its clients are of the highest quality, and the staff does not back away from difficult situations, even when the prospects of a positive outcome are not high. The Foundation's staff takes great care to provide skillful arguments and sensible strategies in all their cases. For 25 years, the Foundation has been compiling decisions developed from its thousands of cases, and makes use of these decisions to develop compelling arguments for new cases and situations arising in the Church today. There is no other organization like the St. Joseph Foundation in the entire world. The Foundation has my support and is worthy of the support of all faithful Catholics.

Philip C.L. Gray, J.C.L.