

LIFE IS WORTH LIVING

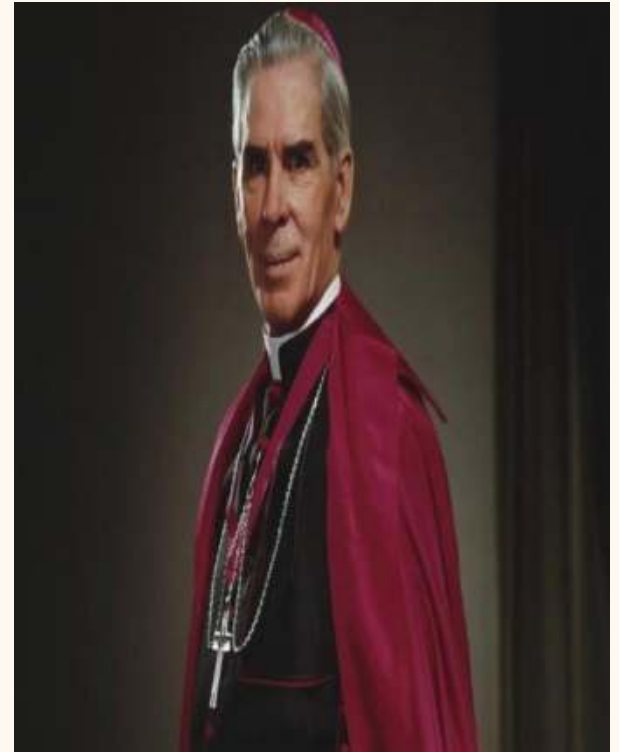
Four Pillars of Faith from Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

With Our Blessed Mother

Host: Catholic Faith Formation, International Center
St. Ignatius Church, Tokyo

Location: Room 310, Kibe Hall
St. Ignatius Church, Tokyo

Sunday, July 5, 2026



Sheen's Prophetic Hope in the Laity

Who is going to save our Church?

*Not our bishops, not our priests and religious.
It is up to you, the people.*

You have the minds, the eyes, and the ears to save the Church.
Your mission is to see that your priests act like priests,
your bishops act like bishops, and your religious act like religious.

*The two greatest saints in Heaven were not clergy.
St. Joseph and Our Blessed Mother were laity.*

— Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

The Four Pillars

A Formation Path for Lay Apostles

PILLAR I

The Meaning of Life

Philosophy • Conscience • Good & Evil

Mary: Immaculate Clarity

PILLAR II

Christ at the Center

Divinity • Humanity • The Mother of Jesus

Mary: The Surest Way to Christ

PILLAR III

Grace & the Sacraments

Sanctifying Grace • Holy Eucharist • Penance

Mary: Mother of the Eucharist

PILLAR IV

Prayer, Love & Eternal Hope

Prayer • The Law of Love • Heaven

Mary: Queen of the Rosary & Hope

Pillar I: The Meaning of Life

Key Lessons from Sheen

- There are two ways of waking up: “Good morning, God” or “Good God, morning!”
 - A well-formed conscience is the voice of God in the soul.
 - Without God, life feels absurd. With God, every moment has eternal meaning.
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Marian Dimension — Mary: Immaculate Clarity

Mary, the Immaculate Conception, shows us perfect clarity of vision and conscience. She lived in the world without being of the world. As lay apostles, we imitate her purity of heart so we can discern truth and bring light to family, work, and society. She is the model of living in the world but not being of it.

Reflection: When did your conscience most clearly guide you recently?

The Human Difference: Moral Tension & Conscience

Key Quotes from Sheen

“The animal left to itself never feels this tension. We feel a tension between what we are and what we ought to be, between the ideal and the fact.”

“Skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism do not have rational foundations. Their foundations are in the moral order with a revolt against conscience.”

Relation to AI and Being Human

These quotes highlight why humans cannot be fully copied by artificial intelligence. AI can simulate ethical reasoning but has no genuine inner “ought.” It possesses no conscience that can be violated and therefore no capacity for real repentance or moral transformation. Humans experience moral tension and the call to become what we ought to be — a drama machines cannot share.

This distinction is central to Catholic anthropology and responsible AI governance.

Pillar II: Christ at the Center

Key Lessons from Sheen

- Jesus is true God and true Man — He fully understands our struggles.
 - “Unless there is a Cross in our lives there will never be a resurrection.”
 - Knowing Christ personally transforms how we carry our daily crosses.
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Marian Dimension — Mary: The Surest Way to Christ

Sheen taught that Mary is the surest, quickest, and most beautiful way to Jesus. She formed Christ in her womb and continues to form Him in us. As lay apostles, we go to Jesus through Mary. She is the model of total surrender and hidden fidelity in daily life. Going to Jesus through Mary is the safest and most effective path.

Reflection: How does knowing Christ as true God and true Man change the way I carry my crosses?

Pillar III: Grace & the Sacraments

Key Lessons from Sheen

- The sacraments give us divine life — we cannot renew the Church by our own strength.
 - The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.
 - Frequent Confession restores grace and gives strength for mission.
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Marian Dimension — Mary: Mother of the Eucharist

Mary stood at the foot of the Cross and was present at Pentecost. She is the model of receiving grace with faith. Sheen loved to remind us that Mary is the Mother of the Eucharist — she gave us Jesus, the Bread of Life. A lay person close to Mary receives the sacraments with greater love and fruitfulness.

Reflection: Which sacrament has most helped you experience that life is worth living?

Pillar IV: Prayer, Love & Eternal Hope

Key Lessons from Sheen

- Prayer is a dialogue with God — not a monologue.
 - “It takes three to make love, not two: you, your spouse, and God.”
 - Our hope is in Heaven. Suffering united to Christ leads to resurrection.
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Marian Dimension — Mary: Queen of the Rosary & Hope

Sheen was a great apostle of the Rosary and encouraged families to pray it daily. He spoke of offering “roses” to Our Lady through small sacrifices and acts of love. Mary is the Queen of Heaven who fills us with hope in eternal life. Sheen said that at the judgment, Our Lord may say: “I heard my Mother speak of you.”

Reflection: How can I offer “spiritual roses” to Our Lady this week?

Key Quotes from Sheen on the Laity

"Who is going to save our Church? Not our bishops, not our priests and religious. It is up to you, the people."

"The two greatest saints in Heaven were not clergy. St. Joseph and Our Blessed Mother were laity."

"Everyone, make the Holy Hour... He will say, 'I heard my Mother speak of you.'"

"Let Christ be formed in you — as Mary let Him be formed in her."

Continue the Journey: 50 Lessons from Sheen

Your Life Is Worth Living – 50 Lessons to Deepen Your Faith

(Reissued with Foreword by Bishop Robert Barron)

These 50 lessons powerfully support the Four Pillars. Scan the QR codes to watch key episodes.

Episode 43 – Good Friday (Dying Man Hospital Story)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7hHNmm1OBQ>

Episode 30 – The Eucharist



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkqH9xD932Y>

Episode 5 – The Meaning of Love



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qTjGIEVFPA

Full Playlists (Scan to open)



Sheen's Vision for Evangelization in Japan

"Who is going to save our Church? Not our bishops, not our priests and religious. It is up to you, the people."

Applying This Vision in Japan

- The laity are the primary agents of the New Evangelization in Japan's secular context.
- Personal witness in daily life (workplace, family, neighborhood) is more powerful than programs.
- Small faith communities and personal apostolate are essential for growth.
- Inculturation: expressing the Gospel in ways that resonate with Japanese culture and sensitivity.
- Every baptized person has a missionary vocation — not only clergy and religious.

Key Discussion Topics

- How can lay Catholics in Japan live as "missionary disciples" in daily life?
- What forms of witness are most effective in Japanese culture today?
- How can we better form and support lay apostles in parishes and communities?

Living the Four Pillars as Lay Apostles

This Week's Challenge

- Pillar I: Examine your conscience each night with Mary's help
 - Pillar II: Spend 5 minutes daily going to Jesus through Mary
 - Pillar III: Receive the Eucharist or Confession with renewed love
 - Pillar IV: Pray the Rosary and offer Our Lady a "spiritual rose"
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Small Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Share with 2–3 others: Which pillar or lesson gave you the most hope today, and one practical way you will live it this week?

Closing Commissioning

Sheen's Call to Us

"Who is going to save our Church? Not our bishops, not our priests and religious. It is up to you, the people. You have the minds, the eyes, and the ears to save the Church."

— Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

Closing Prayer

O Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of the Laity, form Christ in us. Help us live these pillars with clear minds, sacramental love, and joyful hope. May we one day hear Jesus say: "I heard my Mother speak of you." Amen.

Thank You

*May Our Lady keep you close to her Son,
and may Archbishop Fulton Sheen intercede for you.*

Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen, pray for us.

St. Ignatius Church Tokyo • International Group

July 5, 2026