



The Anchor

Book Review

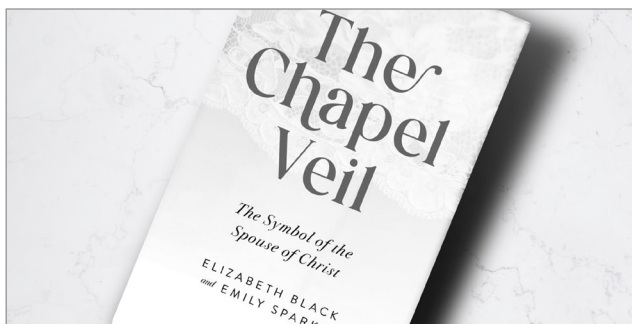
By Dan Beauchamp

The Chapel Veil: The Symbol of the Spouse of Christ

by Elizabeth Black and Emily Sparks

...is a wonderful little book explaining the rich theological and symbolic meanings of the Catholic tradition of the chapel veil. This much needed book by publisher Sophia Institute Press will give you all the reasons why the chapel veil should be worn and the unveiling of its sacred mystery. All in 39 pages!

The authors of this book believed that during the 1950's, 60's and 70's, the chapel veil became easy to discard from the life of the Church because many knew not its purpose, nor its tradition. The theology and symbolism of the chapel veil slowly became forgotten by the faithful. Many wrongfully saw the chapel veil as a symbol of male domination. A few decades before the Second Vatican Council, the chapel veil began to slowly disappear, being replaced by big fancy hats. Some deciding more on "the letter of the law in covering one's head" than understanding the reasons behind the wearing of the veil. Eventually, the 1983 Code of Canon Law removed the obligation of wearing the chapel veil all together. How things differ today from the times of the glorious Church Fathers who, according to the authors, strongly defended the Catholic tradition of wearing the chapel veil.



Taken from the writings of St. Paul in Sacred Scripture as well as those of the Church Fathers: St. Bede, St. Ambrose and especially St. John Chrysostom, the authors of this book reveal that when a woman covers her head, she acknowledges the following four points: **submission to Christ her Spouse, the sacrifice of her glory, adoration and humility before God and knowing that she is a vessel of life, holiness and purity.** What contains life and what is sacred is usually covered. During Old Testament times, the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem was covered by a long curtain. Mount Sinai was veiled by clouds when the glory of God came upon it. The glory of God not only rested upon the Blessed Virgin Mary but dwelt within her. She is the living tabernacle! The authors affirm the teachings of the Church Fathers on a woman's privilege to wear a veil before God as an outward sign of the honour given to the Woman (the Blessed Virgin Mary). A great call to imitate her! The chapel veil also is a physical sign of woman's role as a tabernacle of life. A reminder of the holiness of her body. The tabernacle on the altar contains Christ, the True Life. Therefore, being sacred, the tabernacle is veiled to preserve its purity and holiness. Woman was created to be a vessel of life, bearing life within her. Therefore, she is veiled to cover her sacredness as a temple of life. The theology and tradition of the chapel veil is rooted in woman's identity as symbolic of the unchanging role of woman in creation. The veil shows that for woman, holiness is attained not by partaking in the headship of Christ but by loving Him as a spouse and receiving Him. Unfolding further the writings of the Church Fathers, the authors inform the readers on the link between the chapel veil and the Eucharist, demonstrating that the woman's veil is a powerful symbol of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist. As a finishing touch to their chapel veil masterpiece, the authors share the following opinion: by restoring the tradition of wearing the chapel veil, reverence and respect for the amazing gift of the Eucharist will be revived in the Church.

I highly recommend this little book to all parishioners who want to truly understand the truth behind the wearing of the chapel veil and the good that will come of it in the personal lives of the faithful but especially in the life of the Church. I invite you to stop by St. Clement Gift Shop and Bookstore and purchase or order your copy today!

"But every woman praying or prophesying with her head not covered, disgraceth her head.."

- Words of Saint Paul. 1 Corinthians, 11:5
(New Testament-Douay-Rheims-Sacred Scripture)