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A Ministry of the Redemptorists

## Readers Rave About **You Are the Catholic Brand**

*You Are the Catholic Brand* is a timely, inviting, and engaging help for those who want to live life with more purpose and highlight their brand as a disciple to their spouse, parent, friend, coworker, or neighbor. Drawing from life experience, Matthew Kilmurry offers a guide to building a relationship with God, overcoming personal weakness, and discovering the mission God has for you.

—Donald Cardinal Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, DC

The practical advice in Matthew's book comes at the perfect time, when so many people seek a greater understanding of their Catholic identity. His real-life examples and encouragement help us, the body of Christ, articulate a greater purpose for our lives and rise to the challenge of being more courageous and authentic witnesses to the faith.

—Jennifer Baugh, founder and executive director of Young Catholic Professionals, a national nonprofit organization inspiring young professionals “to Work in Witness for Christ”

Christianity, and sharing the good news, depends on Christians. That's right: YOU! Matthew's book reminds us of the essential truth about living our faith loudly, proudly, and effectively. We all need to work on our brand of faith—not by wearing it on our sleeves but by living it out from our hearts. This book can help the average Catholic to become an extraordinary evangelizer.

—Rev. Leo E. Patalinghug, author, speaker,  
television and radio host; see him at [GraceBeforeMeals.com](http://GraceBeforeMeals.com)  
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Matthew Kilmurry has been at the forefront of the efforts of the Church to move its communication into the digital age. Matthew's heart is deeply rooted in his Catholic faith, something that is branded on his soul. The uniting of his faith and his experience in creating brands has brought forth *You Are the Catholic Brand*, a wonderful book on how to communicate the good news in a digital age.

—Most Rev. Christopher Coyne, bishop of Burlington (VT)  
and chair of the Committee on Communications,  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

Matthew Kilmurry has done the impossible: He has combined the lessons of marketing with the demands of the new evangelization, creating an absorbing guide for all Catholics who want to spread the good news of our faith but are unsure how. With unflinching honesty, Kilmurry draws lessons from his own personal experiences and successful marketing career, giving practical suggestions to help even the shyest of disciples accompany, encounter, and change all those we come in contact with, starting with ourselves.

—Greg Erlandson, author, editor, and publishing executive

Beautifully written and exceptionally real, *You Are the Catholic Brand* provides practical ways to offer others an encounter with Christ and his Church while deepening personal faith. Matthew Kilmurry shows clearly how evangelization starts with a creative and courageous invitation by the Holy Spirit and us.

—Rev. Frank Donio, SAC,  
director, Catholic Apostolate Center, Washington, DC

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*You Are the Catholic Brand* is a wonderful teaching resource for parish leaders and others in ministry, as well as an invitation to the faithful to see how to evangelize. How we share our own experiences as Catholics and how we communicate the importance of the Catholic faith in building a personal relationship with Jesus is directly related to our success in helping others to better know Jesus through the Church. Matthew Kilmurry expertly melds marketing and evangelization in this unique guide that I pray will help the faithful answer God's call to spread the good news to all nations.

—Most Rev. William E. Lori, archbishop of Baltimore

Matthew Kilmurry invites us to brand training about our faith. Speaking from the intersection of faith and consumer culture, *You Are the Catholic Brand* is an enthusiastic, interesting, and accessible take on evangelization. I appreciate it for helping us to read the signs of the times.

—Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, PhD, professor of pastoral theology, Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology, consultant to the USCCB's Communications Office, and author of *Connected Toward Communion*

Matthew Kilmurry is a fresh and engaging new voice within the Catholic world. In his book, readers are afforded a penetrating look into Kilmurry's marketing mind as he effectively enables you to share your love for Christ and his Church with a hungry world. This is a smartly conceived book that will certainly reshape the way people present their faith to the world.

—Kevin Wells, former sportswriter, speaker, and best-selling author of *Burst: A Story of God's Grace When Life Falls Apart*

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Bravo, Matthew, for summarizing succinctly, powerfully, vividly, and hopefully the role and mission of Christians today. Pope Francis says Christianity is an encounter with Jesus that brings us to others. Matthew understands the urgent need of this encounter very well and will help you understand it, too. I highly recommend this book to pastors, evangelists, lay leaders, youth ministers, university chaplains, and serious Catholics who are trying to dialogue with the world around us. It is a breath of pure oxygen.

—Rev. Thomas Rosica, CSB, CEO, Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation, English-language attaché, Holy See Press Office

Matthew Kilmurry articulates a fresh vision of the good news of Jesus Christ. His voice is authentic and moving as he witnesses to the love and power of Christ and also encourages us to witness with intention and passion.

—Sr. Theresa Rickard, OP, DMin,  
president and executive director, RENEW International

As Catholics, we are privileged to be spokespersons for the most life-changing product the world has ever seen: the gospel. With humor and depth, Kilmurry will help Catholics of any age share their faith more confidently, effectively, and with greater impact.

—Rev. Michael White, pastor of the Church of the Nativity, Timonium, MD, and coauthor of the best-selling book *Rebuilt*

I'm a sinner. You're probably a sinner, too. And for sinners like us, the thought of representing Catholicism to the world isn't just scary—it seems like the ultimate spiritual joke! But in this book, Matthew Kilmurry shows us how to represent and pass along our faith. It's our job as Catholics, whether we're ready or not.

—Lino Rulli, *The Catholic Guy* (Sirius XM Satellite Radio),  
author of *Sinner* and *Saint*

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# **YOU ARE THE CATHOLIC B R A N D**

**MATTHEW  
KILMURRY**



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*THE MOST POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS IS YOU.*





*For Jennifer Brinker.  
Friend, godmother, and master of the red pen.*

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# Introduction

**You represent the Catholic Christian brand to everyone you meet.** We often believe that's solely the responsibility of those living religious life (the pope, bishops, priests, deacons, sisters, and brothers). But in reality, the Catholic brand also belongs to lay Catholics who live, work, and play in the world outside the Church. You have been given tremendous power as a Catholic, and whether you know it or not, you are wielding that power at all times. There is no "off" button. Your influence is always "on" even if you don't feel like a good Catholic.

I am convinced that everyday Catholics have no idea how important they are and how much they impact the Catholic brand each day. It is the mission of this book to help all Catholics in the United States see with a new lens how much they influence the Catholic brand, and to give them tools to wield that power for the glory of God. This book is for all Catholics no matter where you are in your journey. Get ready. Your faith, your personal Catholic brand, will never be the same.

Achieving, managing, and growing a brand is a concept now

accepted by both CEOs and checkout counter clerks alike. Brands have exploded on the scene and have become the watchword for our consumer culture. You can easily think of dozens of brands that are a part of your daily life. Many of us display them with pride on our clothes and the cars we drive.

There may be no brand that has had more negative press than the Catholic Church. We hear the accusations all the time: persecution, wars, sexual abuse. Some of this press is true and the criticism well deserved. But some of it is false or a distorted view of the truth. This book does not suggest ways to fix the world's view of the institutional Church; instead, it focuses on something more manageable—and more important. You.

Every time we receive the holy Eucharist, we become a walking tabernacle. You may be the only tabernacle someone ever comes into contact with. It's a wonderful privilege and offers fantastic opportunities for evangelization, compassion, and mercy.

Over the last hundred years, companies have started to understand the benefits of creating a brand, something we as Catholics have known for two thousand years. Companies spend years researching and boatloads of money defining themselves. One of the most important aspects of creating a brand is developing a mission statement, a short, concise statement on what the company believes and how it plans on accomplishing its mission. Sound familiar? As Catholics, we recite something similar anytime we say the Creed. Just as companies need employees to buy into the brand with enthusiasm and a willingness to live out the brand in their daily work lives, so does the Catholic Church. If the employees don't buy into the brand, it falls flat.

But be encouraged! Unlike employees in a company who get just one day of brand training during orientation, Catholics have some of the most time-tested training material ever created. In addition, we have a helper, the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength, knowledge,

and power to be who God intended us to be. All we have to do is be willing. If only all jobs came with supernatural help like that!

So, as Catholics, what can we learn from brands? First, it's important to note that brands have always been around. There is no person or organization that comes close to the success achieved by Jesus and the Catholic Church he established.

Just look at the Church's presence in today's world. There is a folk-tale that Napoleon once bragged to a French cardinal that he would destroy the Church. The wise and unintimidated cardinal responded, "Good luck. We've been trying to do that for centuries."

But Christianity isn't merely a brand, it's a religion. People don't turn their lives over to brands directly. As my former boss said, a brand is a "gut feeling." A brand consists of things you've learned throughout your life: thoughts, pictures and colors, statistics, experiences you've both had and not had, smells and tastes, comforts, speeches, and everything else wrapped into a single emotional experience. As humans, we can't process all those individual pieces at once when we're making a decision. As a result, our minds compensate by giving us a lifetime summary that enables us to say yes or no. We make the vast majority of our decisions through these gut feelings.

The Roman Catholic Church represents an archetype brand. Here in America, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and many other organizations work hard to create positive, Catholic centric brand messages. Yet, the Church holds its core values given by God, not to an institution—though the institution of the Church is vital in continuing to uphold those values—but to the individuals who accept the gift of faith. It is an organization in which the people make the brand rather than the brand making the people.

The only people capable of improving the Catholic brand are individual Catholics, not just bishops and priests but also lay leaders and the working faithful. Corporations quickly learned the importance of

individuals in marketing. Despite billions spent on advertising, a top-down approach only works until that first bad personal experience.

However, a positive experience can do more for a brand than billions of dollars in advertising. For example, the first time I heard of Jos. A. Banks, they were having a “buy one suit, get two free” sale.

I had just taken a job where I would need to wear a suit every day. It was perfect timing. The employees who helped me were very friendly. They took time to ask about my suit wearing history and my upcoming needs. They showed me suit and shirt options that could be mixed and matched to maximize my purchase, so that three outfits could extend over five days. I was thrilled!

Two months later, I ended up ripping the sleeve of my suit jacket. I wasn't sure if I could get a replacement jacket or not, but thought it was worth going back to check. I thought they might even have replacement sleeves to repair the jacket. Despite how crazy it sounded, I went back and asked if there was a way to replace just the arm. The employee took my coat and disappeared in the back to talk to the tailor. Five minutes later he returned with a brand new suit. “Do you have a dollar?” he asked. “Yeah,” I mumbled, dumbfounded. “I'll need it to put a transaction in the computer,” he said.

It took me a moment to realize I was getting a completely new suit for one dollar, two whole months after my original purchase.

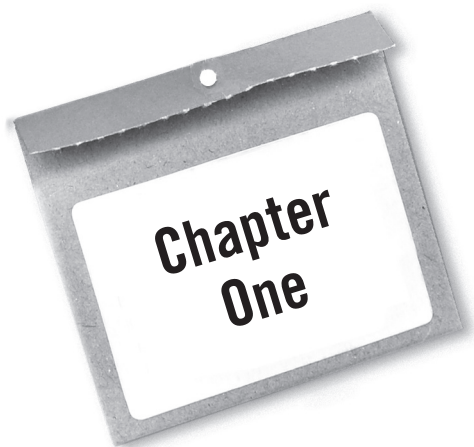
Like 99 percent of businessmen wearing suits, I don't really know the difference between the material, the cut, or the stitching. I only know three things about suits: how they feel, how they fit, and the experience I have purchasing it. This experience made me a Jos. A. Banks customer forever.

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In the same light, the Catholic Church is a large umbrella sheltering a myriad of experiences of faith. Everyone from saints to sinners, charismatics to traditionalists, apologists to social justice workers, finds emotional experiences that keep them coming back to the Church. These variations are different, complementary expressions of the one true faith. If we want to continue bringing Catholics home or converts into the Church, we have to provide great “customer service” that keeps our friends, family, and acquaintances coming back.

We are all spokespersons for the Catholic brand whether we intend to be or not. Following these six simple steps, which will be explained in more detail in the following chapters, will help you more effectively communicate your Catholic brand.

1. BE CONVERTED ANEW.
2. KNOW WHAT TYPE OF CATHOLIC YOU ARE AND GET ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT IT.
3. KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS.
4. PERSONALIZE YOUR MESSAGES.
5. MEASURE YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT.
6. MAINTAIN YOUR BRAND.



# Be Converted Anew

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BECOME THE TYPE OF CUSTOMER  
EVERY COMPANY DREAMS ABOUT.

**Sunblock has been the bane of the Kilmurry family vacation for as long as we've had kids.** With six small children, we go through it like water. Inevitably, someone gets sunburned or they cry and wipe their eyes and then cry some more because it stings. Our family finally took to the Internet in search of a solution, where we came across an Australian sunblock called **Blue Lizard**. This sunblock was everything it claimed to be. It only needed to be applied once, and the stinging eyes were gone.

We soon converted from customers to Brand Evangelists. We touted the awesomeness of this sunblock to anyone willing to listen on a hot, sunny day. We converted a few of our friends by offering to make bulk orders so everyone could save on shipping. We became the type of customers every company dreams about. We probably talked with greater ease and enthusiasm about this sunblock than our amazing experiences with Jesus and his Church. How many of us can think of a product we evangelize with more enthusiasm than our faith?

### **Brand Evangelist**

“Brand Evangelist” is a term currently circulating through the business world. It’s corporate jargon that refers to customers so in love with the brand, they do unofficial marketing for it. Businesses have shifted focus from creating new customers to activating Brand Evangelists and giving them the tools to do marketing for the company.

This kind of marketing is believable too, because it’s compounded by a hundred or a thousand Brand Evangelists. There is nothing more powerful. Who hasn’t encountered a passionate fan of a movie, car, restaurant, or band? Their enthusiasm is contagious. Through those fans you live a transformational experience, the moment they took a bite of the best pizza in the world, how the car felt as they turned a sharp corner, or a movie that left them speechless. All you need is the

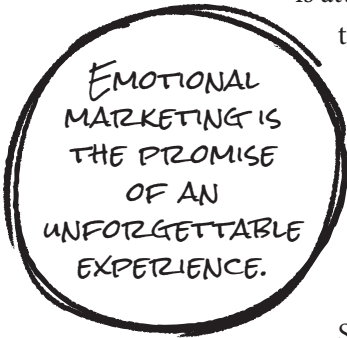


look on their face. Those rational details like ingredients in the pizza sauce, the car's suspension system, or the technical details of the movie's production aren't irrelevant, but they don't have the impact of that emotional connection.

The experience created an emotion for the Brand Evangelist that is attractive to others, and that is what emotional marketing is all about. It's the promise of an unforgettable experience. This is true in our spiritual lives also. Those of us who are converts often feel unequipped to pass along the faith because we don't always know the details of our faith like the exact Scripture quotes for a given situation or the accurate historical accounts. We are left paralyzed. But just as the Brand Evangelist doesn't know the ingredients of the pizza sauce or the car's suspension, we have to remember that all those details about the faith aren't the only thing people are attracted to. People are looking for an unforgettable experience. They're looking for conversion.

Whether your conversion happened in a flash of lightning or a slow progression, it is time to be converted anew. Pope Francis compels all of us to do so in the opening of his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord." The Lord does not disappoint those



who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.” (Paragraph 3)

The single biggest choice we have in this life is one that requires setting aside faith in ourselves and believing in something greater. We are called to answer the question Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do *you* say that I am?” This is historically referred to as the *Kerygma*, the basic presentation of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When the restaurant chain **Friday’s** went through a major re-brand, they required that all employees go through the brand training again, even if they had been employed for many years. The reasoning was that it’s always a good idea to review what makes a brand special. That’s exactly what Pope Francis, our “CEO,” is calling Catholics to do. Our brand training is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. But when Pope Francis suggests this encounter, what does he mean? Unlike a corporate brand that wants everyone to share the same perspective, Catholics develop different answers to the question “Who do you say that I am?” just as Jesus did when he asked his disciples. Each person should have an unique perspective on his or her conversion to Christ and a unique perspective on who Christ is.

As you consider the question “Who do you say that I am?” think in terms of a problem and a solution. Write it down. What problem does Jesus solve for you? What solution does he offer you? The answer