

Into the Deep

Issue 128

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

May 2013

“Mary, Full of Grace and Faith”

Diocese of Sale Marian Conference

St Michael's Parish, Traralgon

Saturday 11th May 2013

9am: Adoration, Holy Rosary, Confessions

10.30am: Guest speaker Mr Tony Murnane, The Apostolate of Mary

12 noon: Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Prowse and priests of the diocese. Procession of Our Lady and crowning of statue.

1pm: Lunch (BYO)

2pm: Guest speaker Fr Brendan Arthur, parish priest of St Gerard's, Dandenong North.

Our Lady of Guadalupe icon to feature; pilgrims' reunions; St Patrick's College Sale Sodality of Mary reunion.

3pm: Divine Mercy Chaplet. Consecration to Immaculate Heart of Mary and Sacred Heart of Jesus.

3.15pm: Close

For enquiries, please contact me on 0400 218 417.

Pat Crozier, Traralgon, Victoria

Learn From Mary

Pope Francis to Confirmandi, 28-04-2013

The Virgin Mary teaches us what it means to live in the Holy Spirit and what it means to welcome the newness of God in our life. She conceived Jesus by the work of the Spirit, and every Christian, each one of us, is called to welcome the Word of God, to welcome Jesus in ourselves and then bring him to everyone.

...May Mary help you to be attentive to that which the Lord asks of you, and always to live and to walk according to the Holy Spirit!

Zenit.org 29-04-2013

Stand Firm

Zenit.org 08-04-2013 -

At his Saturday morning Mass [06-04-2013], L'Osservatore Romano reported that the Pontiff spoke about martyrdom.

The Pope mentioned the passage from the Acts of the Apostles (4:13-21) proclaimed in the First Reading. In response to the order given by the head priests and Pharisees not to speak of Jesus, Peter and John, “stood firm in the faith” saying, “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Their testimony, he added, “reminds me of our faith. And what is our faith like? Is it strong? Or is it at times a little like rosewater, a somewhat watered down faith? When problems arise are we brave like Peter or inclined to be lukewarm?”

Peter, Pope Francis said, teaches us that “faith is not negotiable. Among the People of God this temptation has always existed: to downsize faith, and not even by ‘much.’” However, he explained, we must get the better of “the temptation to behave more or less ‘like everyone else’, not to be too, too rigid”, because it is “from this that a path which ends in apostasy unfolds.”

Indeed, “when we begin to cut faith down, to negotiate faith and more or less to sell it to the one who makes the best offer, we are setting out on the road of apostasy, of non fidelity to the Lord”.

Yet the very “example of Peter and John helps us, gives us strength”; as does the example of the martyrs in the Church's history. It is they “who say, like Peter and John, ‘we cannot but speak’. And this gives strength to us, whose faith is at times rather weak. It gives us the strength to carry on living with this faith we have received, this faith which is the gift that the Lord gives to all peoples”.

The Pope ended by suggesting a daily prayer:

“Lord, thank you so much for my faith. Preserve my faith, increase it. May my faith be strong and courageous. And help me in the moments when, like Peter and John, I must make it public.”

All issues of *Into the Deep* are at www.stoneswillshout.com

Courage to Choose It

By Archbishop Charles J. Chaput

More than 70 years ago the great French Catholic writer Georges Bernanos published a little essay called “Sermon of an Agnostic on the Feast of St. Thérèse.”

Bernanos deeply loved the Church, but he could also be brutally candid when it came to himself and his fellow believers. Above all, he had a piercing sense of irony about the comfortable, the self-satisfied and the lukewarm who postured themselves as Catholic – whether they were laypeople or clergy.

In his essay he imagined “what any decent agnostic of average intelligence might say, if by some impossible chance the [pastor] were to let him stand awhile in the pulpit [on] the day consecrated to St. Thérèse of Lisieux.”

“Dear brothers,” says the agnostic from the pulpit, “many unbelievers are not as hardened as you imagine. ... [But when] we seek [Christ] now, in *this* world, it is *you* we find, and only you. ... It is you Christians who participate in divinity, as your liturgy proclaims; it is you ‘divine men’ who ever since [Christ’s] ascension have been his representatives on earth. ... *You* are the salt of the earth. [So if] the world loses its flavor, who is it I should blame? ... The New Testament is eternally young. It is *you* who are so old. ... Because you do not live your faith, your faith has ceased to be a living thing.”

Bernanos had little use for the learned, the proud or the superficially religious. He believed instead in the little flowers – the Thérèses of Lisieux – that sustain the Church and convert the world by the purity, simplicity, innocence and zeal of their faith.

That kind of innocent faith is a gift. It’s a gift each of us can ask for, and each of us will receive, if we just have the courage to choose it and then act on it.

The only people who ever *really* change the world are saints. Each of us can be one of them. But we need to want sainthood, and then we need to follow the path that comes with it. ...

If we call ourselves Christians, then let’s live like we mean it – beginning *today*...; so that people who look upon us will see the presence of Jesus Christ instead.

CatholicPhilly.com, 13-02-2013

Silent Revolution

Pope Benedict XVI, 12-12-2010

“It is not violent revolution or great promises that change the world, but the silent light of truth, of God’s goodness, which is the sign of His presence and gives us the certainty that we are fully loved, that we are not forgotten, that we are not the result of chance but of a will to love.”

Something New

Pope Francis, Easter Vigil homily

They find the tomb empty, the body of Jesus is not there, something new has happened, but all this still doesn’t tell them anything certain: it raises questions; it leaves them confused, without offering an answer.

And suddenly there are two men in dazzling clothes who say: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; but has risen”.

What was a simple act, done surely out of love – going to the tomb – has now turned into an event, a truly life-changing event. Nothing remains as it was before, not only in the lives of those women, but also in our own lives and in the history of mankind. Jesus is not dead, he has risen, he is alive! He does not simply return to life; rather, he is life itself, because he is the Son of God, the living God.

Zenit.org 31-03-2013

Take a Risk

Pope Francis, Easter Vigil homily

How often does Love have to tell us: Why do you look for the living among the dead? Our daily problems and worries can wrap us up in ourselves, in sadness and bitterness... and that is where death is. That is not the place to look for the One who is alive!

Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life! If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won’t be disappointed. If following him seems difficult, don’t be afraid, trust him, be confident that he is close to you, he is with you and he will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do.

Zenit.org 31-03-2013

Pell As Advisor

The following is from a communique issued on 13-04-2013 by the Vatican Secretariat of State:

“The Holy Father Francis, taking up a suggestion that emerged during the General Congregations preceding the Conclave, has established a group of cardinals to advise him in the government of the universal Church and to study a plan for revising the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, ‘Pastor Bonus’ ...

The group’s first meeting has been scheduled for 1-3 October 2013. His Holiness is, however, currently in contact with the aforementioned cardinals.”

The group consists of eight cardinals from around the world, including Sydney’s Archbishop, Cardinal George Pell.

Should We Give Up?

Should we give up the fight? (March ITD, p.1)

In a confused society where nonsense seems more prevalent than common sense, it certainly is a challenge to continue and by so doing, allow God's grace to continue working.

Catholics who reflect on the sorrowful mysteries of the Holy Rosary or the Stations of the Cross will notice the consequences when those in power bow to fickle public opinion. In reality, only that opinion poll, conducted by Jesus himself (Matt 16:13-19), has any permanent value.

Those who have failed to grasp the significance of Jesus' new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you", will dismiss constructive criticism as being intolerant, judgmental or unloving. Such dismissal reflects more on their ignorance of the Gospels and their inability to charitably defend their position.

Prudent judgment may also necessitate a review of how challenges are being presented. So, "After the great example of St Thomas [Aquinas], the principle stands, or ought always to have stood established; that we must either not argue with a man at all, or we must argue on his grounds and not ours." (The Wisdom of Mr. Chesterton, p.15).

Stepping into a debate without sufficient knowledge of the matter under challenge, or trying to argue with anyone incapable of rational thought can only result in frustration. A lack of progress can also result if there is not a common understanding of how one understands such familiar terms as Church or Faith or if one believes that Vatican II was meant to provide new ways of presenting and explaining Holy Mother Church's unchangeable teachings, or to change the very substance of her doctrines in light of a changing world.

May it be only the Holy Spirit who guides us and may St Michael guard and protect us.

John Royal, Bundaberg West, Queensland

Wisdom of Old Age

Pope Francis to the cardinals, 15-03-2013

Courage, dear brothers! Probably half of us are in our old age. Old age, they say, is the seat of wisdom. The old ones have the wisdom that they have earned from walking through life. Like old Simeon and Anna at the temple whose wisdom allowed them to recognize Jesus. Let us give with wisdom to the youth: like good wine that improves with age, let us give the youth the wisdom of our lives.

Vatican Information Service 15-03-2013

What Faith in Action?

My father used to say with a wry smile: "Don't spoil a good story with facts." This would be the perfect motto for Catholic education in the Diocese of Sale (and many other dioceses, no doubt). We continually hear the good story, but nowhere is there any evidence to back up the claims. And it doesn't seem to bother them in the least.

Maria Kirkwood's article in the April issue of Catholic Life (p.8) is about Catholic Education Week. The goal of the Week, apparently, is "to communicate and celebrate the distinctive mission of Catholic education". Now that's hard to imagine! Let them first tell me what the distinctive mission of Catholic education is, and where it's seen in their schools, before they pretend to celebrate it.

The Director of the Catholic Education Office continues regarding Catholic Education Week: "It is an opportunity to promote not only the great work being done in our schools...but also to showcase our specific Catholic ethos." See? All words. Good story. But if you believe that, you're away with the fairies!

It goes on: "The annual Leadership Eucharist and Dinner...celebrates and acknowledges the leaders who are actively working in Catholic education in the diocese and awards teachers in our schools who are seen to embody the spirit of Catholic education." How come the Mass is "used" for school celebrations, and ignored on Sundays? What's Catholic about that? And why this constant hang-up about celebrating people? They celebrate one another for the great work they do in Catholic education, as if the more and louder they celebrate their wonderful work, the more they will drown out the fact that in reality nothing is being done that relates to the Catholic faith.

Even in discussing the theme "Faith in Action", Kirkwood doesn't consider it has anything to do with Catholic faith specifically. No, faith in action in Catholic education terms means formal community service programs, everyday interactions with others, social justice activities and fundraising, according to the article – even helping someone cross the road safely! These may all be good, but when there is no Catholic faith underlying these good works, why call it faith in action? Or is it some other, generic 'faith' she's talking about? If it's Catholic faith, these children and teachers would be at Mass every Sunday, and in Confession lines. But we know that's not the case. So let's call it "Goodwill in Action" and be honest. Shouldn't we at least be able to expect honesty from Catholic schools?

A throwaway line that "social justice activities can never be a replacement for formal religious education classes and liturgical celebrations, however", sounds rather empty after all that.

- Ed.

Take Souls Seriously

From Pat O'Brien in the April issue (p.3):

'According to Maria Kirkwood, the director of Catholic Education in the Sale diocese (Catholic Life, March 2013), it is not important that pupils, and graduates, of Catholic schools should attend Sunday Mass.'

Given that 3% (I have heard even 2%) of Catholic children continue with Mass after leaving school, I'd like to submit the following points, which should seem irrefutable to a Catholic.

1. For a Catholic to deliberately miss even one Sunday Mass, that person enters the state of mortal sin.
2. Dying in the state of mortal sin means eternal damnation and hatred of God forever.
3. The saints (e.g. St Alphonsus of Liguori, St John Chrysostom) tell us that as you live, so shall you die. That is, those who live constantly in the state of sin are unlikely to die in the state of grace.
4. Children at a Catholic school cannot plead ignorance, since that Catholic school was set up for the purpose of teaching the faith. The Catholic Education Office, the teachers, and the parish priest have accepted this responsibility, and will be judged on their performance. Those not performing should be removed for the sake of the souls in their charge.
5. If the lines at the confessional are as short in Gippsland as they are in Queensland, then this indicates that few people are serious in attempting to save their souls. Or have the priests managed to eliminate sin altogether?
6. The parish priest is obliged to teach the children the nature of sin and Hell, in the hope that they might avoid going there.
7. If Maria Kirkwood is comfortable with the idea of children going to Hell, why is she involved in Catholic education? Should this not be brought to the attention of the bishop, so that he can make suitable arrangements to protect the souls of the innocents in his charge? He might have a close look at any others in the system who do not take souls seriously.

Is it possible that this situation arose because there is no one left in Sale who still believes the teachings of the Church?

Richard Stokes, Burpengary, Queensland

Human Plans

Pope John Paul II

Human progress planned as alternatives (to God's plan) introduce injustice, evil and violence rising against the divine plan of justice and salvation. And despite transitory and apparent successes, they are reduced to simple machinations destined to dissolution and failure.

Being Gazed Upon

Pope Francis in a video message for the Holy Saturday live broadcast of the Shroud of Turin on Italian television

I join all of you gathered before the Holy Shroud, and I thank the Lord who, through modern technology, offers us this possibility.

Even if it takes place in this way, we do not merely "look", but rather we venerate by a prayerful gaze. I would go further: we are in fact looked upon ourselves.

This face has eyes that are closed, it is the face of one who is dead, and yet mysteriously he is watching us, and in silence he speaks to us.

How is this possible? How is it that the faithful, like you, pause before this icon of a man scourged and crucified?

It is because the Man of the Shroud invites us to contemplate Jesus of Nazareth. This image, impressed upon the cloth, speaks to our heart and moves us to climb the hill of Calvary, to look upon the wood of the Cross, and to immerse ourselves in the eloquent silence of love.

Let us therefore allow ourselves to be reached by this look, which is directed not to our eyes but to our heart. In silence, let us listen to what he has to say to us from beyond death itself.

By means of the Holy Shroud, the unique and supreme Word of God comes to us: Love made man, incarnate in our history; the merciful love of God who has taken upon himself all the evil of the world to free us from its power.

This disfigured face resembles all those faces of men and women marred by a life which does not respect their dignity, by war and violence which afflict the weakest...

And yet, at the same time, the face in the Shroud conveys a great peace; this tortured body expresses a sovereign majesty. It is as if it let a restrained but powerful energy within it shine through, as if to say: have faith, do not lose hope; the power of the love of God, the power of the Risen One overcomes all things.

So, looking upon the Man of the Shroud, I make my own the prayer which Saint Francis of Assisi prayed before the Crucifix:

Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the shadows of my heart,
and grant me a right faith, a certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and understanding, Lord,
so that I may accomplish your holy and true command. Amen.

Zenit.org 02-04-2013

The Unity We Seek

Pope Benedict XVI, Pentecost homily 2011

Pentecost is the feast of unity, of understanding and of human communion. We can all recognize how in our world, even if we are ever nearer to each other with the development means of communication, and geographical distances seem to disappear, understanding and communion among persons is often superficial and difficult. Inequalities continue that do not infrequently lead to conflicts; dialogue between generations is hard sometimes opposition prevails; we see daily events which appear to suggest that people are becoming more aggressive and more unsociable; it seems to be too demanding to try to understand each other and we prefer to be closed up in our own "I," in our own interests. In this situation can we truly find that unity that we need and live it? ...

With the progress of science and technology we have developed the power to dominate forces of nature, to manipulate the elements, to manufacture living beings, almost attaining the ability to make human beings. In this context, praying to God seems like something obsolete, useless, because we can build and realize anything we want. But we do not grasp that we are reliving the very experience of Babel. Indeed, we have multiplied the possibilities of communicating, of having information, of transmitting news, but can we say that the capacity to understand each other has grown or is it perhaps the case that, paradoxically, we understand each other less and less? Have not a sense of diffidence, of suspicion, of mutual fear worked themselves into our lives to the point that we have become dangerous to each other? Let us return, then, to the initial question. Can unity, concord really exist? How can they exist?

We find the answer in Sacred Scripture: only with the gift of God's Spirit can there be unity. This Spirit will give us a new heart and a new tongue, a new capacity to communicate. And this is what happened on Pentecost. On that morning, 50 days after Easter, a tempestuous wind blew upon Jerusalem and the flame of the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, who were gathered together, settling on each and lighting divine fire in them, a fire of love with the power to transform. The fear dissipated, the heart felt a new force, tongues were loosened and began to speak with boldness, in such a way that all could understand the proclamation of Jesus Christ dead and risen. At Pentecost, where there was division and estrangement, unity and understanding were born. ...

Dear friends, we must live according to the Spirit of unity and of truth, and for this we must pray that the Spirit enlighten us and lead us to overcome the fascination with following our own truths and instead the truth of Christ transmitted in the Church. ...

[Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic] Zenit.org 12-06-2011

Where Are We Heading?

News reports that violence is increasing in shopping centres, coming on top of calls for armed guards in our hospitals, must surely be raising questions in people's minds as to where our society is heading. We already have armed guards on Melbourne train stations and presumably the next demand, after hospitals, will be for armed guards in shopping centres.

What will come after that? Armed guards in our schools if current threats and violence escalate as seems inevitable? Of course, robberies in convenience stores and clubs are also causing concern. Road rage is increasing, random and unprovoked bashing of people on our streets, especially elderly and often therefore virtually helpless victims, all leading to demands for more police to control this unbridled violence. With more and more police and armed guards being demanded who will guard the armed guards?

It is obvious that a significant minority of people no longer accept that they have a moral obligation to respect the rights of others. Democracy can only work when almost all accept such an obligation. We see this vividly when terrorists explode bombs and kill thousands. They do not care that innocent people are killed. Neither do thugs care who is hurt just so long as they get their way.

It is obvious that increasing numbers of people have no respect for the law and either are not afraid of the consequences of their actions or just don't care.

It is ironic that while all this is happening, strident demands are being made to keep any mention of God or religion out of the public debate.

Belief in God and hope for eternal salvation provide strong moral grounds for acting decently and respectfully for the rights of others. The Ten Commandments underpin the moral guidelines needed for a healthy and respectful society, but they have been twisted, ignored, and distorted, and so have become meaningless in shaping our laws and codes of behaviour. Perhaps it is time to look again at this option. What else is there?

Pat O'Brien, Sale, Victoria

Advice to Priests

Monsignor Enrico Feroci, quoting Pope Francis

"Leave the doors of the churches open, so that people will come in, and leave a light on in the confessional to indicate your presence and you will see the queue fill," Francis said to us [at lunch with the priests of Rome 28-03-2013]

Zenit.org 02-04-2013

Yes, All Are Welcome! But Not Anything Goes

From a blogpost by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York

It was a lesson I began to learn when I was seven or eight.

My buddy Freddie from across the street and I were playing outside. Mom called me for supper.

“Can Freddie stay and eat supper with us?” I asked.

“He’d sure be welcome, if it’s okay with his mom and dad,” she replied.

“Thanks, Mrs. Dolan,” Freddie replied. “I’m sure it’s okay, because mom and dad are out, and the babysitter was just going to make me a sandwich whenever I came in.”

I was so proud and happy. Freddie was welcome in our house, at our table. We both rushed in and sat down.

“Freddie, glad you’re here,” dad remarked, “but ... looks like you and Tim better go wash your hands before you eat.”

Simple enough ... common sense ... you are a most welcome and respected member now of our table, our household, dad was saying, but, there are a few very natural expectations this family has. Like, wash your hands!

So it is with the supernatural family we call *the Church: all are welcome!*

But, *welcome* to what? To a community that will love and respect you, but which has rather *clear expectations* defining it, revealed by God in the Bible, through His Son, Jesus, instilled in the human heart, and taught by His Church.

The Church is *Catholic* ... that means *all are welcome*;

The Church is *one* ... that means we have a Person – Jesus – and His moral teaching that unite us;

The Church is *apostolic* ... that means that His teaching was entrusted to His apostles, and carefully handed-on by His Church. The sacred duty of the Church is to invite people, challenge people, to live the message and teachings of Jesus.

This balance can cause some tensions. Freddie and I were loved and welcomed at our family table, but the clear expectation was, no dirty hands!

Blessed John Paul II used to say that the best way to love someone was to tell them the truth: *To teach the truth with love*. Jesus did that – He was *love* and *truth* in His very person – and so does His Church.

We love and respect everyone ... but that doesn’t necessarily mean we love and respect their *actions*.

Who a person is? We love and respect him or her ...

What a person does? Truth may require that we tell the person we love that such actions are not consonant with what God has revealed.

We can never judge a person ... but, we can judge a person’s actions.

Jesus did it best. Remember the woman caught in adultery? The elders were going to stone her. At the words of Jesus, they walked away.

“Is there no one left to condemn you?”, the Lord tenderly asked the accused woman.

“No one, Sir,” she whispered.

“Neither do I condemn you,” Jesus concluded. “Now go, but sin no more.”

Hate the sin; love the sinner. [...]

So, for example, the Church loves, welcomes, and respects the alcoholic ... but would not condone his binge;

The Church loves, welcomes, and respects a prominent business leader ... but would not condone his or her failure to pay a just wage to a migrant worker;

The Church loves, welcomes, and respects a young couple in love ... but would challenge their decision to “live together” before marriage;

The Church loves, welcomes, and respects a woman who has had an abortion, and the man who fathered the child and encouraged the abortion ... but would be united with them in mourning and regretting that deadly choice;

The Church loves, welcomes, and respects a woman or man with a same-sex attraction ... while reminding him or her of our clear teaching that, while the *condition* of homosexuality is no sin at all, still, God’s teaching is clear that sexual *acts* are reserved for a man and woman united in the lifelong, life-giving, faithful, loving bond of marriage.

The Church loves, welcomes, and respects wealthy people, while prophetically teaching the at-times-uncomfortable virtue of justice and charity towards the poor.

We are part of a Church where, yes, *all are welcome*, but, no, not a Church of *anything goes*.

Remember last Sunday’s moving gospel of Jesus, the Good Shepherd? An effective pastor cherishes, protects, feeds, and leads his flock, while welcoming his sheep into the fold. But ... he will not let them wander off and do whatever or go wherever the sheep might want to go. His duty is to bring them back and rescue them from danger.

cardinaldolan.org

Don't Give in to Pessimism

Pope Francis to the cardinals, 15-03-2013

Christ is the one who guides the Church through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church, with his life-giving force that unifies one body from many: the mystical Body of Christ.

Let us never give in to pessimism, to that bitterness that the devil offers us every day. Do not give in to pessimism and discouragement. We have the firm certainty that the Holy Spirit gives the Church with His mighty breath, the courage to persevere and also to seek new methods of evangelization, to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

The Christian truth is attractive and persuasive because it responds to the deep needs of human existence, convincingly announcing that Christ is the only Saviour of the whole person and of all persons. This announcement is as valid today as it was at the beginning of Christianity when there was a great missionary expansion of the Gospel.

Vatican Information Service 15-03-2013

The Mystery of the Voice

Pope Francis, Regina Coeli address, 21-04-2013

Jesus wants to establish a relationship with his friends that is the reflection of the one he himself has with the Father: a relation of mutual belonging in total confidence, in intimate communion.

Jesus uses the image of the shepherd and his sheep to express this profound shared understanding, this relationship of friendship.

The shepherd calls his sheep and they recognize his voice, they respond to his call and follow him. This is a beautiful parable!

The mystery of the voice is suggestive: we think about how from our mother's womb we learn to recognize her voice and our father's voice; from the tone of someone's voice we can perceive love or scorn, affection or coldness.

Jesus' voice is unique! If we learn to distinguish it from others, he will lead us along the path of life, a path that stretches even beyond death. ...

Let us invoke Mary's intercession, she who is the Woman of "Yes." Mary said "Yes" her whole life! She learned to recognize Jesus' voice from the time she carried him in her womb. Mary our Mother, help us to recognize Jesus' voice always better and to follow it to walk along the path of life!

Zenit.org 21-04-2103

Misguided Sympathy

Marriage is both a personal and a public institution for the good of society. It predates all religious and state laws as a law of nature.

It requires one man and one woman to live together for mutual support, to have marital relations only with each other, and to jointly raise any children of their union.

Even couples unable to have children give witness by their marital acts to the inherent life-giving orientation to procreation which exists in a marriage.

However, some today through misguided sympathies, seek to redefine marriage by including same-sex unions which really work to undermine marriage, because it would then become no longer the institution founded in the natural order for procreation, but as something primarily centred on the desires and emotions of adults.

The misguided good intentions of many are based on the philosophical misconception about the nature of equality.

Equality can never be an absolute value, but only a derivative and relative value. After all, a man cannot be a mother nor a woman a father, so they can never be absolutely equal, but only relatively equal because they are biologically different.

So in marriage they are different and not absolutely, but relatively equal. This is why same-sex unions are not being excluded from marriage, they simply cannot be marriage by definition. This is not discrimination.

To succumb to the clamour of the minority, for the sake of peace – or because it seems "inevitable" that we equate same-sex union with marriage – would be appeasement which will destroy the very nature, meaning and purpose of marriage and which will be bitterly regretted.

Marriage, the home, children, and the family life this generates, are the foundation and basic building blocks of society.

Already marriage and family life are under attack by many pressure today – social, economic, political – that to formally institutionalise the desires of a tiny minority for same-sex unions to be called "marriage" will further destroy the basis of society which is true marriage.

Fr Bernard McGrath, Bendigo, Victoria

"Realise that you may gain more in a quarter of an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament than in all other practices of the day."

St Alphonsus Liguori

Step Into Reality

I recently came across this article by Fr John Speekman that was printed in the July 2003 issue of AD2000. I believe it is THE ANSWER to the current mess we face. What do you think? And how much closer do you think we've come to addressing the problem in the last 10 years? - Ed.

We know that every parish priest is committed to growing his parish and evangelising the families in it. I am personally hoping to do so in a special way through the parish sacramental program.

Since recent studies have shown conclusively (AD2000, August 2002, p. 6) that most parents no longer send their children to Catholic schools for faith reasons it is reasonable to assume that the primary faith task of the Catholic school has become evangelisation.

As a school teacher, and now a priest, it has become clear to me that it does not help to put all Year 2, 3, or 6 through First Reconciliation, or First Communion, or Confirmation (even with parents' permission) and then send them back into a faith environment which will not allow them to live the sacrament they have received.

I believe this practice of "force-feeding" the sacraments to non-practising children from unevangelised families has, over the years, come to constitute a significant obstacle to the commencement of true evangelisation.

I see it as a failure to trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about through conversion what we seek to bring about through sacramentalisation.

The decision to sacramentalise children should be handed back to the family. I understand this to be the meaning of those programs which claim to be "family-centred".

We should work to awaken families to the fact that it is their responsibility to seek out sacraments for their children from the parish.

What is it that is stopping us from accepting the simple fact that so many of the families – in my parish up to 95 percent – of children in our Catholic schools do not make the effort to bring their children to Sunday Mass? They have, for the time being, chosen to exclude themselves from active Church life. We do not judge them but I think it is about time we accepted their decision. We can then begin the real work of evangelisation in our Catholic schools.

A family which is not conscious of a need to have its children sacramentalised should be evangelised. It should not be offered a "no-strings-attached" sacrament or a "no-responsibility-attached" sacrament or, perhaps, most clearly of all, a "no-community-attached" sacrament.

We are all aware there are three dimensions to Catholic life – word, sacrament and community. A sacrament is always a celebration in and of the

community. We cannot alter this fact. A sacrament without its connection to the community is like a fish out of water.

I do not want to encourage or perpetuate the celebration of sacraments that do not have their life within the community and are not tied to the community. The first thing we need to do is stop doing it – and the second thing we need to do is start learning to evangelise.

Of course there will be difficulties and setbacks, but look at what is happening at present! Our present practice, and many others as well, is rapidly weakening us as a faith community, by encouraging nominalism as the hallmark of our Catholic faith.

When a family is successfully evangelised it will ask for the sacraments for its children and there will be no need for the well-meant but ultimately unhelpful prodding of the primary schools.

The student population in our schools is very different today from what it was 30 years ago. Today too many of them come from families which have no real connection to the local parish whereas in the past they were mostly practising.

It might be helpful here to remember what Malcolm Muggeridge once said: "Every step into reality is a step closer to God." I do not think it would be too flippant of me to say that what we urgently need to do now in our search for answers to these problems is to get real – to set our watches to real time.

To have scores of smiling, excited children receiving a sacrament on a "sacrament" Sunday is a pleasant sight, but we need to be a little more hard-nosed and ask ourselves, is this as real as it gets? Is this as real as we can make it? Is this celebration an expression of a point of real growth based on a real foundation of faith, and ready now to grow in a real way in the family and in the parish?

To answer this question I think we need only look at what happens on the Sunday after the big celebration and ask ourselves – where have all these excited, smiling children gone? When will we see them again?

I am very much a supporter of the Catholic school system and I want to see it bring together all its vast potential for the evangelisation of our young people. But to do so, I believe, we have to change direction – we have to cease this preoccupation with sacramentalising children from unevangelised families and begin to support the parish in the difficult but exciting task of evangelising families.

Stand Firm and Defend

Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition To Unions Between Homosexual Persons

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2003

The Church's teaching on marriage and on the complementarity of the sexes reiterates a truth that is evident to right reason and recognized as such by all the major cultures of the world. Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives. (n.2)

The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behaviour or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behaviour, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity. The Church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself. (n.11)

Scripture and Tradition

Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum, n.9

There exists a close connection and communication between Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known.

Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed.

Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.”

Peddling Propaganda

I commend the editor and Pat O'Brien for taking the newly appointed Director of the Catholic Education Office, Sale diocese, to task for continuing to peddle propaganda about the state of Catholic schools in the diocese. Her diatribe creates the assurance that all is well with Catholic education in the same way as Therese D'Orsa did when she was the director.

After reading her souped-up assessment of the schools and her somewhat ignorant understanding of the purpose of Catholic education, Pat posed the question as to whether Maria Kirkwood can be taken seriously. Well, I would like to ask Bishop Prowse if, having made this appointment, he expects the faithful to take him seriously in future when he writes, preaches and teaches about evangelization and renewal.

He had the chance to start afresh and begin a new chapter in the history of the diocese with regards to Catholic education, and to prove that he took his apostolic mandate and that of the Church's seriously, and he didn't.

The appointment of Director of Catholic education is a key one in the service of the Church's all-important mission of evangelization, a mission which is grounded in and flows from the holy Eucharist. Like all other key appointments in the diocese they ultimately reflect the Bishop's decisions and judgments as the leader, and express his intentions and desires for the flock entrusted to his pastoral care.

It is unbelievable that a Director of Catholic Education could fail to understand that faithful attendance of Sunday Mass reflects our relationship with the Church and expresses our commitment to ongoing conversion, purification and a desire for holiness.

For schoolchildren to live a life anchored in the sacraments of the Church is to put their faith into practice and allow themselves to be schooled by the divine Master himself, the object of Catholic education and the one who ultimately enlightens it.

As practicing Catholics, these children then situate themselves regularly in the school of prayer and communion, faith and evangelization and last but not least the school of holiness.

Spiritually speaking, this school is far more important than the nominally Catholic ones that have been placed under Maria Kirkwood's directorship.

Her appointment is astonishing, and like so many other key appointments which have been made, seems to have done nothing but contribute to the ongoing dysfunctional spiritual culture so prevalent in the diocese, and has doomed yet more children to live this dysfunction without truth, faith, hope and love.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Making All Things New

Pope Francis, Confirmation Mass homily, 28-04-2013

This is the work of the Holy Spirit: he brings us the new things of God. He comes to us and makes all things new; he changes us! ...

All of us are journeying towards the heavenly Jerusalem, the ultimate newness which awaits us and all reality, the happy day when we will see the Lord's face – that marvellous face, the most beautiful face of the Lord Jesus – and be with him for ever, in his love.

...God is even now making all things new; the Holy Spirit is truly transforming us, and through us he also wants to transform the world in which we live. Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us! How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!

A second thought. ... The journey of the Church and our own personal journeys as Christians are not always easy; they meet with difficulties and trials. To follow the Lord, to let his Spirit transform the shadowy parts of our lives, our ungodly ways of acting, and cleanse us of our sins, is to set out on a path with many obstacles, both in the world around us but also within us, in the heart. But difficulties and trials are part of the path that leads to God's glory, just as they were for Jesus, who was glorified on the cross; we will always encounter them in life! Do not be discouraged! We have the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome these trials!

And here I come to my last point. ... Remain steadfast in the journey of faith, with firm hope in the Lord. This is the secret of our journey! He gives us the courage to swim against the tide. ... There are no difficulties, trials or misunderstandings to fear, provided we remain united to God as branches to the vine, provided we do not lose our friendship with him, provided we make ever more room for him in our lives. This is especially so whenever we feel poor, weak and sinful, because God grants strength to our weakness, riches to our poverty, conversion and forgiveness to our sinfulness. The Lord is so rich in mercy: every time, if we go to him, he forgives us.

Let us trust in God's work! With him we can do great things; he will give us the joy of being his disciples, his witnesses. Commit yourselves to great ideals, to the most important things. We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for little things; push onwards toward the highest principles. Stake your lives on noble ideals, my dear young people!

Zenit.org 29-04-2013

Do What Works

There is a new Pope, for us as Catholics, and for the whole world. Normally, the reaction is generally positive, as it should be. The Australian media trotted out some of the tired old critics who always have a chip on their shoulder because, with their utopian mentality, they are looking for heaven on earth now. Don't hold your breath, the real world of evil is still very much with us.

The great religious orders have always been known to have a measure of influence, but people have often let their imaginations do their thinking for them on this topic. Whatever people think of the Jesuits, they have never had one of their members become pope – until now. Religious Orders are usually headed by someone known as the General Superior, or just “the General”. For a long time those in the know have thought the Jesuits too influential and have christened their General “the Black Pope”, so now the Jesuits have two popes to obey: a black one and a white one!

I was breathless to find the local Jesuit the media picked for an opinion interview on the new Pope to be, well, ‘underwhelmed’. He launched into a lecture on ambition, of all things, as if Jorge Bergoglio S.J. had sought the role of Pope instead of being elected. It was a churlish and judgmental response, when the appropriate response would have been delight and congratulations.

Melbourne's clerical comic was as expected: begrudging and flippant. It seems he has learnt nothing since having to be removed from his parish. Though now in a wheelchair, that will win him no votes. Instead of ratbag theories, we need to do what we should, relying on the Holy Spirit and prayer.

S.C., Melbourne

Not an ID Card

Pope Francis, Homily 23-04-2013

The Church thus is more a Mother: a Mother of more children, of many children. She becomes ... more and more a Mother: a Mother who gives us faith, a Mother who gives us our identity.

But our Christian identity is not an ID card. Christian identity is a belonging to the Church because all of these belonged to the Church, the Mother Church, because finding Jesus outside of the Church is not possible. The great Paul VI said: it is an absurd dichotomy to want to live with Jesus but outside of the Church. And that Mother church who gives us Jesus gives us an identity that is not merely a seal; it is a belonging. Identity means belonging.”

Vatican Information Service 24-04-2013

Catholic Stats in Aus

Here are some interesting figures from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Pastoral Research Office, in a report titled: "A profile of the Catholic Community in Australia", dated March 2013.

First, how many Catholics there are:

"According to the 2011 Australian Census, Catholics made up just over a quarter (25.3 per cent) of the Australian population: there were 5,439,268 Catholics in a total Australian population of 21,507,719."

Then, how many go to Sunday Mass:

"In 2011, the total number of people at Mass in Australia on a typical weekend was about 680,000, only about 12.5 per cent, or one-eighth, of the total number of Catholics." But – it's worse – only "about 85%" of that 12.5% go every Sunday.

Mass attendance figures come from the ACBC National Count of Attendance. I wonder if the Bishops will ever release figures by diocese? Or by parish? I don't think they'd be game to!

Introducing the statistics on Catholics in Catholic schools, is this fascinating statement:

"Attending Sunday Mass is one way of being connected to the Church. Another way is through Catholic schools, either as a student, a parent or a teacher." Whether intentional or not, this suggests that attending Sunday Mass is sort of parallel to attending a Catholic school, like they're both equal 'ways' of being Catholic. What would really be interesting is to get figures on the 'overlap' – those who are involved in Catholic schools *and* who also attend Sunday Mass.

Other statistics relating to Catholic schools are:

"The 2011 Census tells us that 272,542 Catholic children of primary school age attended Catholic schools, and 210,514 Catholic students of secondary school age attended Catholic schools. That means that 52.8 per cent of Catholic students attend Catholic schools..."

"The Census also tells us that Catholic students account for 72.5 per cent of Catholic school enrolments."

- Ed.

I Have a Purpose

Blessed John Henry Newman

God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

End of Month of Mary

Pope Benedict XVI, at the conclusion of the procession commemorating the end of the Marian month of May, 2012

The month that the devotion of the faithful dedicates in an altogether particular way, to devotion to the Mother of God, closes with the liturgical feast that recalls the "second Joyful Mystery": Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

This event is characterized by the joy expressed by the words with which the Holy Virgin glorifies the Almighty for the great things that He has done looking on the humility of His handmaid: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour".

The Magnificat is the canticle of praise that rises from redeemed humanity by divine mercy, it rises from the whole people of God; at the same time, it is the hymn that denounces the illusion of those who believe themselves to be lords of history and arbiters of their destiny.

Mary, on the contrary, has put God at the centre of her life; she abandoned herself trustfully to His will, in an attitude of humble docility to his plan of love. Because of her poverty of spirit and humility of heart, she was chosen to be the temple that bears the Word in herself, God made man. ...

Dear friends, this evening we wish to turn our gaze to Mary with renewed filial affection. We must always learn from our heavenly Mother; her faith invites us to look beyond appearances and firmly to believe that our daily difficulties are, in fact, part of a springtime which has already begun with the risen Christ.

This evening we wish to draw from Mary's Immaculate Heart with renewed trust, allowing ourselves to be imbued with her joy which had its most profound source in the Lord. Joy, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is a fundamental distinguishing characteristic of Christians. It is founded on hope in God, it draws strength from incessant prayer and it enables us to face trials and suffering with serenity.

As St Paul reminds us: 'Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer'. These words of the Apostle are like an echo of Mary's 'Magnificat' and exhort us to reproduce, in our own selves and in our everyday lives, the sentiments of joy in the faith expressed in that Marian canticle.

[Translation by ZENIT] zenit.org 01-06-2012

"Lord, guard our hearts united forever so that in following your path our affection becomes charity."

St Augustine

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 st Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30am Heyfield 10am – 4.30pm
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
Cranbourne	Friday and Saturday in the Church: (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by PIN available at parish office.
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday 10am – 6pm (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 12.30pm First Friday 11.30am – 4pm
Trafalgar	Wednesday and First Saturday: (9.30am Mass) 10am – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, January onwards)
Wonthaggi	First Friday 7pm – 8pm

Mary, our mother

And mother of the Redeemer,
Gate of heaven and Star of the sea,
Come to the aid of your people,
Who have sinned,
Yet also yearn to rise again!
Come to the Church's aid,
Enlighten your devoted children,
Strengthen the faithful throughout the world,
Let those who have drifted
Hear your call,
And may they who live as prisoners of evil
Be converted!

Pope John Paul II

Why Should We Adore God?

YouCat, n.485

Every person who understands that he is God's creature will humbly recognise the Almighty and adore him. Christian adoration, however, sees not only the greatness, omnipotence, and holiness of God. It also kneels before the divine Love that became man in Jesus Christ.

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- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
- There is no subscription fee.
- We rely on donations (cheques made out to John Henderson please).
- Donate to ITD via Ritchies Supermarkets Community Benefit program by nominating Into the Deep as your group, with CB number 81799, and shopping at your local Ritchies Supermarket (56 supermarkets throughout Eastern Australian) with your Community Benefit Card.

ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email and on the website; printed copies about a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15th of the month).

Editor - Janet Kingman

The purpose of ITD is to provide a forum for those who:

- no longer have a voice in Catholic Life, and other diocesan newspapers,
- wish to understand and defend the teachings of the Catholic Church,
- wish to support and defend those who are unjustly treated by Church bureaucrats and organisations,
- wish to campaign for the renewal of our Catholic schools,
- wish to promote Eucharistic adoration in all parishes,
- wish to have a means of support and contact for one another in remaining true to our Catholic faith.

Letters to the Editor

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters or articles. We cannot guarantee that all will be published, and we reserve the right to edit letters. The purpose of sharing letters is to pass on relevant information and suggestions for making positive changes, that is, in line with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We live in joyful hope that the diocese we love can be faithful to the authentic tradition of the Church. As such, Into the Deep aims to be a messenger of hope and not of doom. Name and contact details must accompany letters. However, if there is sufficient reason, anonymity will be preserved when publishing. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of ITD.

*“Lord, thank you so much for my faith.
Preserve my faith, increase it.
May my faith be strong and courageous.
And help me in the moments when, like
Peter and John, I must make it public.”*

Daily prayer recommended by Pope Francis