

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 65

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

February 2008

## Daily Struggle

*From Pope Benedict XVI's Ash Wednesday homily 2006*

Every day, but particularly in Lent, Christians must face a struggle, like the one that Christ underwent in the desert of Judea, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil, and then in Gethsemane, when he rejected the most severe temptation, accepting the Father's will to the very end.

It is a spiritual battle waged against sin and finally, against Satan. It is a struggle that involves the whole of the person and demands attentive and constant watchfulness.

St Augustine remarks that those who want to walk in the love of God and in his mercy cannot be content with ridding themselves of grave and mortal sins, but "should do the truth, also recognising sins that are considered less grave..., and come to the light by doing worthy actions. Even less grave sins, if they are ignored, proliferate and produce death."

Lent reminds us, therefore, that Christian life is a never-ending combat in which the "weapons" of prayer, fasting and penance are used. Fighting against evil, against every form of selfishness and hate, and dying to oneself to live in God is the ascetic journey that every disciple of Jesus is called to make with humility and patience, with generosity and perseverance.

Following the divine Teacher in docility makes Christians witnesses and apostles of peace. We might say that this inner attitude also helps us to highlight more clearly what response Christians should give to the violence that is threatening peace in the world.

It should certainly not be revenge, nor hatred, nor even flight into a false spiritualism. The response of those who follow Christ is rather to take the path chosen by the One who, in the face of the evils of his time and of all times, embraced the Cross with determination, following the longer but more effective path of love.

Following in his footsteps and united to him, we must all strive to oppose evil with good, falsehood with truth and hatred with love.

*www.zenit.org 10-03-2006*

## Reflective Time Ahead

Now that Bishop Coffey is retired, I assume he will have more time to himself – quiet, reflective time, unhurried and without appointments and engagements and busyness to distract him. I wonder if he will be able to use this peace and quiet to sit back, relax, put his feet up, enjoy the view with a drink in hand, and try to figure out exactly what Fr Speakman actually did wrong to warrant the punishment he has meted out to him unrelentingly over the past 6 years, exiling him from his parish for the past 4½ years. So far, Bishop Coffey has been unable to explain this to Fr Speakman, to Morwell parish, to the diocese or even to Rome. We are all, still, in the dark as to what his crime was.

Of course, rumours abound, and people from near and far will tell you confidently that 'they know'. But when pressed for details, they come to realise they actually have no facts. The most common rumour you'll find on the internet and among the gossipers is that Fr Speakman denied children Holy Communion. However, not only is this untrue, but not even Bishop Coffey claimed this in any of his decrees. As for the vague claim that Fr Speakman is a bully, there is again no evidence produced. On the other hand, we have numerous verified instances of other priests of the diocese raising their voices at people (in the Confessional, at Communion time, after Mass), of the Bishop himself poking his finger into a woman's chest in anger, of priests signing and promoting defamatory petitions, of losing their temper, of lying even. Of much more significance however, is the fact that there are priests in the diocese who openly defy Church teaching, who preach contrary to Catholic doctrine, who refuse to encourage or allow Eucharistic adoration, who stubbornly disobey liturgical laws – all of which have been reported to the Bishop who has taken no action.

So now, Bishop Coffey, in your retirement, consider these priests you were responsible for, as a father, and the people of your diocese you were required to shepherd faithfully, and tell us what Fr Speakman did to deserve your wrath. Honestly. Ed.

**All issues of Into the Deep are at [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)**

## An Exercise of Desire

*Benedict XVI's Encyclical Spe Salvi, on Christian Hope, n.33,34*

Saint Augustine, in a homily on the First Letter of John, describes very beautifully the intimate relationship between prayer and hope. He defines prayer as an exercise of desire. Man was created for greatness – for God himself; he was created to be filled by God. But his heart is too small for the greatness to which it is destined. It must be stretched. “By delaying [his gift], God strengthens our desire; through desire he enlarges our soul and by expanding it he increases its capacity [for receiving him]”.

Augustine...then uses a very beautiful image to describe this process of enlargement and preparation of the human heart. “Suppose that God wishes to fill you with honey [a symbol of God’s tenderness and goodness]; but if you are full of vinegar, where will you put the honey?” The vessel, that is your heart, must first be enlarged and then cleansed, freed from the vinegar and its taste. This requires hard work and is painful, but in this way alone do we become suited to that for which we are destined. [...]

To pray is not to step outside history and withdraw to our own private corner of happiness. When we pray properly we undergo a process of inner purification which opens us up to God and thus to our fellow human beings as well. In prayer we must learn what we can truly ask of God – what is worthy of God. We must learn that we cannot pray against others. We must learn that we cannot ask for the superficial and comfortable things that we desire at this moment – that meagre, misplaced hope that leads us away from God. We must learn to purify our desires and our hopes. We must free ourselves from the hidden lies with which we deceive ourselves. God sees through them, and when we come before God, we too are forced to recognize them. ... Failure to recognize my guilt, the illusion of my innocence, does not justify me and does not save me, because I am culpable for the numbness of my conscience and my incapacity to recognize the evil in me for what it is. [...]

For prayer to develop this power of purification, it must on the one hand be something very personal, an encounter between my intimate self and God, the living God. On the other hand it must be constantly guided and enlightened by the great prayers of the Church and of the saints, by liturgical prayer, in which the Lord teaches us again and again how to pray properly. ... Praying must always involve this intermingling of public and personal prayer. This is how we can speak to God and how God speaks to us. In this way we undergo those purifications by which we become open to God and are prepared for the service of our fellow human beings. We become capable of the great hope, and thus we become ministers of hope for others.

## God and Caesar

Congratulations to Peter Phillips of Springvale, Victoria, who will receive the free copy of Cardinal George Pell’s book, “God and Caesar”, kindly donated by Connor Court Publishing. Peter’s name was randomly selected from those who had contacted ITD and mentioned the book. Happy reading, Peter!

## New Year Resolutions

*From an article by Fr Thomas Euteneuer,  
President, Human Life International [www.hli.org](http://www.hli.org)*

The 2008 resolutions [proposed by Human Life International] focus on the Catholic Church’s comprehensive view of the fight for life which has to do as much with the sanctity of marriage and the family as with the defence of life itself. Here are three pro-life New Year’s resolutions for your 2008 list of priorities:

**Be wise:** 2008 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the papal encyclical on birth control, *Humanae Vitae*. Read it! Learn why the Catholic Church is still the leading voice of conscience about the single most influential factor in creating and maintaining the abortion culture - contraception;

**Be vigilant:** After you read *Humanae Vitae* you will understand the evil of contraception. It is a demon that enters into the sanctuary of a marriage. Chase it out of your marriage with the same vigour as you would chase an intruder out of your home. And then, make sure your kids and grandkids know why contraception is not a benign “lifestyle choice” and is the worst possible preparation for marriage;

**Be a prayer warrior:** Join HLI’s St Michael the Archangel Campaign and pray every day for the conversion of abortionists. Abortion doesn’t just happen. Someone with a medical degree and sharp instruments commits these crimes against humanity and makes loads of money off the death of innocents. These people need serious conversion, and our prayers will bring many of them out of the darkness and into the Light.

## Joyful Determination

*From Pope Benedict XVI’s message for World Youth Day*  
“My dear young friends, if you take part frequently in the eucharistic celebration, if you dedicate some of your time to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Source of love which is the Eucharist, you will acquire that joyful determination to dedicate your lives to following the Gospel. At the same time it will be your experience that whenever our strength is not enough, it is the Holy Spirit who transforms us, filling us with his strength and making us witnesses suffused by the missionary fervour of the risen Christ.”

# Walking Out on Mass

I write regarding the somewhat simple but necessary matters of obedience and respect/reverence.

I am a professional woman working in a government body. In this organization, for all correspondence I am required to use standard spelling, type and font size. There are also standard paragraphs to be used as templates and they can only be varied with permission from a superior officer. I am also required to use standard appellations. Even though I might be on first name terms with the Chief Executive Officer at my workplace, I must always refer to him by his correct statutorily designated title when I write or speak about him outside the organization. Infringement of these requirements can result in disciplinary action. Sure some of these requirements irk me greatly. However, as a public servant, unless the government asks me to do something illegal, I must obey and my personal preferences do not count.

Let's look at the situation of female religious who insist on using inclusive language during Mass – for example, in the Creed saying “and became *human*” instead of “and became man”; saying “It is right to give *God* thanks and praise” instead of using “Him”; and “Blessed is *the one* who comes in the name of the Lord” instead of “He who comes”.

Ok, so they might prefer to refer to God as “Susan” or “Jennifer”. There is absolutely nothing stopping them doing so in their private worship. However, these disaffected, self-opinionated women think they have the right to disobey what has been laid down by the Church as the set formulae for public worship.

Recently in my parish, when legitimately, reasonably and charitably requested by our priest to use the correct wording and not the inclusive version, two had the audacity and irreverence to straight away get up and walk out of the Mass. A third Sister just kept on loudly using the inclusive language for the rest of the Mass.

If I behaved at work the way I witnessed these three religious women behave in my parish, I could be subject to formal disciplinary action. These religious “professionals” just smugly get away with it. What a pity those in power in the Church do not take action against such women.

This was the second extremely disappointing display of irreverent behaviour from female religious in a week in my parish. After a weekday Mass, another came into the sacristy and asked Father if he would give her Holy Communion. When asked why, this woman advised Father that she had a phone call during Mass and had missed Holy Communion. Father charitably and correctly advised Sister that by answering the phone during Mass and missing Holy Communion she did not have her priorities right and therefore he would not give

her Holy Communion after Mass.

In my workplace, to avoid censure for being late for a meeting conducted by a superior officer I have to proffer a most serious and substantial reason. Seems like this religious woman doesn't realize that in the Church she is there in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I wonder if she would try such a move if she was going to a banquet with some leading academic/cultural figure.

These two incidents involved religious women from three major religious orders.

Good on you Father, thanks so much for being brave enough to uphold the rules!

*A grateful parishioner (name and address supplied)*

## World Day of the Sick

*From Pope Benedict XVI's message for the 16<sup>th</sup> World Day of the Sick, which will be celebrated on the diocesan level on 11 February 2008. [www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org) 20-01-2008*

While I extend my cordial greetings to all sick people and to all those who take care of them in various ways, I invite the diocesan and parish communities to celebrate the next World Day of the Sick by appreciating to the full the happy coinciding of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes with the International Eucharistic Congress.

May it be an occasion to emphasise the importance of the Holy Mass, of the Adoration of the Eucharist and of the cult of the Eucharist, so that chapels in our health-care centres become a beating heart in which Jesus offers himself unceasingly to the Father for the life of humanity! The distribution of the Eucharist to the sick as well, done with decorum and in a spirit of prayer, is true comfort for those who suffer, afflicted by all forms of infirmity.

May the next World Day of the Sick be, in addition, a propitious circumstance to invoke in a special way the maternal protection of Mary over those who are weighed down by illness; health-care workers; and workers in pastoral care in health! I think in particular of priests involved in this field, women and men religious, volunteers and all those who with active dedication are concerned to serve, in body and soul, the sick and those in need. I entrust all to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, the Immaculate Conception. May she help everyone in testifying that the only valid response to human pain and suffering is Christ, who in resurrecting defeated death and gave us the life that knows no end.

With these feelings, from my heart I impart to everyone my special Apostolic Blessing.

## Waiting for a New Bishop

The diocese of Sale is currently in the hands of Fr Peter Slater, who was elected Diocesan Administrator by the priest consultors of the diocese, while we await the appointment of our new Bishop. For Fr Slater's history with *Into the Deep* refer to the Feb, March, Aug, Sept, Oct and Nov issues of ITD 2006. And please keep up the earnest prayers for an orthodox bishop to be appointed to our diocese soon. Ed.

## Back-to-School Tips

The prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education offered students some advice as the new school year gets under way.

Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski told Vatican Radio that students should try to grow in true wisdom, develop an ever-increasing critical sense and know how to discern good from evil. [...] The 67-year-old prelate said it is not enough to gain technical knowledge.

"To live wisely involves sacrifice, renunciation, domination of our desires, of our instincts," he said. "But only living wisely makes a person mature and doers of the true good, of true progress.

"Contact with the Lord, with Christ, helps a great deal in the formation of wisdom, therefore teaching religion is important."

"It is important that your faith grows," the cardinal added, "and never forget your prayer," because "your greatest friend is Christ."

Cardinal Grocholewski exhorted students to live in contact with God, saying, "It is he who truly loves you and who will help you to become mature persons who know how to contribute to the true good and that of others."

The cardinal also spoke about the values that schools today must try to recover: "Above all one must try and love the truth and search for the truth. Often today we see this relativism in regard to the search for truth about our life and our destiny. In this way various demagogues and tendencies to dominate others can befall us. Instead, to grow in the truth, to love the truth, means to become ever freer."

The cardinal maintained that already in elementary schools, "there must be efforts to root in the hearts of children, of young people, this love of truth."

"For us Christians, the truth can never be separated from that which Jesus has taught us: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,'" he explained.

Cardinal Grocholewski also had a word for professors, defining a good educator as "one who loves their students. It is very important that teachers confirm with their lives, with their example, with their love, that which they teach."

*www.zenit.org 17-09-2007*

## Real Education

Young people are demanding a "real education," one that gives them what they need to face the challenges of life, Benedict XVI says. The Pope affirmed this in a letter ... directed to the city and the Diocese of Rome.

In the letter, Benedict XVI noted that education today "seems to be becoming ever more difficult. [...] Hence there is talk of an 'educational emergency,' confirmed by the failures that too often crown our efforts to form well-rounded individuals, capable of collaborating with others and of giving meaning to their lives. There is also talk of a 'break between the generations,' which certainly exists and is a burden, but is the effect rather than the cause of the failure to transmit certainties and values."

The Holy Father said parents and teachers may feel the "temptation to give up" on education, and even run the risk "of not understanding what their role is." He identified "a mentality and a form of culture that lead people to doubt the value of the human person, the meaning of truth and of good and, in the final analysis, the goodness of life itself."

Faced with such difficulties, "which are not insurmountable," the Pope said: "Do not be afraid! [...] Even the greatest values of the past cannot simply be inherited, we must make them our own and renew them through often-difficult personal choices."

"However," he added, "when the foundations are shaken and essential certainties disappear, the need for those values returns to make itself imposingly felt. Thus we see today an increasing demand for real education." It is demanded by parents, by teachers, "by society as a whole, ... and by the young people themselves who do not want to be left to face the challenges of life alone." [...]

"It would, then, be a poor education that limited itself to imparting notions and information while ignoring the great question of truth, above all of that truth which can be a guide to life," he said. [...]

"Education cannot forgo that authoritative prestige which makes the exercise of authority credible" the Holy Father wrote. He added that this is "acquired above all by the coherence of one's own life." [...]

The Holy Father then referred to hope as the "soul of education," citing "Spe Salvi" and saying that "our hope today is threatened from many sides and we too, like the ancient pagans, risk becoming men without 'hope and without God in the world.'"

"At the root of the crisis of education lies a crisis of trust in life," he concluded. "Hope directed toward God is never hope for me alone, it is always also hope for others. It does not isolate us but unites us in goodness, stimulating us to educate one another in truth and in love."

*www.zenit.org 23-01-2008*

## Wrong Crisis

Someone once said, "Where the peril lies, there too lies the remedy." This is particularly true of the situation in the Church in this country.

There is an increasing lack of faith and confidence in the Church as a sacrament, a transcendent saving reality that is integral to the very act of faith. This lack of belief and confidence in the Church as the Sacrament of absolute Truth and Salvation, has manifested itself in the falling away from the faith by young people, in the decline of vocations to the priesthood, the confusion about the true vocation of the laity and in the hideous things which modernists have done to the worship of God. It is no coincidence that the lack of this belief corresponds to the lack of belief in the priesthood as a sacrament and a divine gift.

However, faith is the real crisis and not ministry, and no amount of petitioning for change to the priesthood, turning Churches upside down, and turning the liturgy into a spectacle to attract and entertain people, can produce the necessary faith to remedy this crisis. It is only the divine gift of faith which St Peter has handed down that can fix it. This is what is needed in an abundance and what is essential for true reform, and of this gift, the Catholic Church is Mother.

It is through her that the necessary belief in Christ is born anew in the hearts of men and women. Among many who identify themselves as Catholic in this country, there is a lack of faith in Jesus as the incarnate Word, who is the head and founder of the Catholic Church. And, even though these Catholics profess their belief in the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in the creed, they then, with an arrogance greater than that of the protestant reformers, agitate, protest and scheme to change and reshape her to suit their own tastes, wishes and dreams.

It's about time these so-called Catholics were challenged to make a conscious decision that they really mean to be professing Catholics. The first step in doing this would be to humbly show gratitude for this great eternal gift. The second step would be to learn to believe, worship, pray and think with the Church. And last but not least, to submit their hearts, minds and souls to the teaching office of the Church, to let their Mother teach, guide and nourish them in their baptismal call to holiness.

*Gregory Kingman, Morwell*

**"Pain**, received with faith, becomes the door by which to enter the mystery of the redemptive suffering of Jesus and to reach with him the peace and the happiness of his Resurrection."

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## Incessant Prayers for Priests

Priests aren't perfect, and they need help to live their vocation and mission in today's world, says the prefect of the Congregation for Clergy.

Cardinal Cláudio Hummes said this in comments to L'Osservatore Romano about the initiative launched by his dicastery on December 8 to promote perpetual Eucharistic adoration and spiritual motherhood to support priests.

Cardinal Hummes said in the Vatican newspaper that priests have never been perfect "because we are all sinners," but that "recently, very serious facts have been reported." But, he affirmed, less than 1% of priests are unfaithful to their commitment of celibacy. Still, he said, all priests need "spiritual help in order to live their own vocation and mission in today's world."

"We have proposed to bishops that they promote in their dioceses authentic 'cenacles' in which consecrated and laity are dedicated – united in a spirit of true communion – to prayer in the form of continuous Eucharistic adoration," the cardinal explained.

The objective is that "from every corner of the earth, prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, praise, petition and reparation will always be lifted to God – an incessant prayer in order to raise up a sufficient number of holy vocations to the priesthood, and together with this, to accompany them spiritually, with a type of spiritual motherhood," he added.

Cardinal Hummes, 73, stated that women religious have a special role to play in aiding priests: "Following the example of Mary, feminine consecrated souls can spiritually adopt priests to help them with their surrender, prayer and penance."

The cardinal contended that the vocation to be a spiritual mother of priests is "too little known, barely understood, and because of this, rarely lived, in spite of its fundamental and vital importance."

"Regardless of age and marital status, all women can become spiritual mothers for a priest," he explained. He said the commitment implies praying "for a specific priest and thus accompanying him for life," usually anonymously.

Cardinal Hummes added, "This, as history tells us, produces great spiritual fruits for priests" who "spend their whole life, even with their limits, for God and for their neighbour [...] preaching and cultivating the good, helping people."

In a society in which the predominant culture is "very critical of" religion, and frequently acts "as if faith was disappearing," the cardinal affirmed that all Christians are called to pray for their ministers, conscious that priests "are the greatest benefactors of humanity."

[www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org) 08-01-2008

# The Biblical Basis of Celibacy

In response to Frank Bellet's article on Married Priesthood (ITD, Jan '08), I agree that the shortage of priests will not be solved by allowing priests to marry. However, in the much needed effort to educate people about the purpose and benefits of celibacy, I do not think we need to instruct people that its merits simply lie in that fact that celibacy enables priests to be more available. Even those who do not argue against it can often misunderstand why the Church expects it of its priests. It is often seen as simply a disciplinary measure to enable them to dedicate their lives totally to all the pastoral demands placed on them. But this is certainly not the primary reason why priests and religious do not marry.

Celibacy is more likely to be appreciated if we understand that it: (i) gives testimony to our most vital origin and to whom we truly belong; and (ii) gives witness to the ultimate destiny that awaits us. I will discuss (i) in this article and (ii) next month.

## Who is my mother?

In the Old Testament, what was important was generation. It was a terrible thing not to have a progeny. As for the succession of the Priesthood, it was always in the carnal order because priests could only come from the tribe of Levi and priests were always married. As you can see, in the order of nature *generation* is all important. This old order ends with Matthew and Luke giving us the long generation of Christ, one tracing it back to Abraham, and the other tracing it back to Adam himself.

Then the emphasis upon generation ends because when you get to the New Testament, what matters, is not *carnal* generation and having children of the flesh. What matters is having children according to the *Spirit*. Therefore, in this new order we have Our Lord speaking of another kind of progeny. This spiritual progeny can be seen in Christ's response to His mother. Remember when she was worried about Him, and sent message to Him? Here Jesus responded by saying, "Who is my mother?" Can you imagine anyone saying that about his mother, unless he was trying to make a point? Jesus was making it clear that relationships in the order of blood are subordinate to the order of the Spirit: "He who does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:48-50; Mk 3:34-35).

Now do not get me wrong. Marriage still has a very special place in the world. We would soon become extinct if it did not! Furthermore, a married couple's love is a sign of Christ's love for the Church. That is why Jesus defended the sanctity of marriage, telling the Pharisees that a man must be faithful to his wife lest he commit the sin of adultery (for how could an unfaithful marriage be a sign of His faithful love for

us?) In saying that, the Apostles said to the Lord, "If that's the position of husband and wife, it's better not to marry!" (Mt 19:10). Imagine, the Apostles telling our Lord that! "Why get married at all?" What kind of men must they have been?

## Repression or Expression of Love?

So our Lord says to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can." (Mt 19:11-12)

If you were a eunuch, you would be someone who was either born with defective genitals, or they would be mutilated. When a King defeated his enemies, he would often capture the survivors and make them into his slaves. Some of these he would make into eunuchs. By doing this, he would be able to entrust his bride (or his harem if he had more than one wife) to the care of his eunuch.

Having drawn his disciples' attention to these kinds of eunuchs, Jesus then told them that there is another type of eunuch. They too would serve their king; however, while this kind of physical mutilation was repugnant to the Jews, Jesus is using the word "eunuch" here metaphorically. Just as a eunuch was a high official who exclusively served the king, so too, "the eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" are those who are called to dedicate their lives in an exclusive love for Christ our King.

Here Christ's teaching on celibacy is clearly taken to mean a way of life that is a committed and dedicated life of love, because Christ taught us about celibacy just after teaching about the total dedication and love that is required for couples in marriage. Therefore, by asking his Apostles to become eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God it is very clear that Jesus was asking them to renounce marriage to look after His Bride, the Church. There is a lovely parallel in this which helps us to see that celibacy is not *repression*, but an *expression*. That is, it is an expression of love for Christ's Bride.

## Spiritual Children

Furthermore, progeny is now going to be ultimately *spiritual*. That is why Jesus called his Apostles, "my children." How could he call James and John His children? Because we are no longer living in the *carnal order* of *physical* generation, but in the *Kingdom of God order* of *spiritual* generation. Notice

*Continued on page 7*

how St John in his letter calls his converts his own children, and St Paul in his letter to the Galatians said, "You are my children and I was in labour with you over and over again until you took the shape of Christ" (Gal 4:19).

Likewise, St Paul – when he wrote to Philemon about the runaway slave – said, "I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment" (Phile 1:10). So it is not now carnal birth, but there is to be "virgin birth." That is to say, conversions that come about through the proclamation of the Word of God. St Peter knew only too well of this spiritual progeny (these "virgin births") because in his first letter, he wrote, "Your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God." (1 Pet 1:23).

Therefore, those who we priests "beget" through the conversions that result from our dedicated way of life and the proclamation of the Word are our children. This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. For example, as regards women first of all, he proclaimed: "Sing aloud oh barren woman who never bore a child. Break into cries of joy you who have never been in labour. For you shall have more sons than she who lives in wedlock" (Isaiah 54:1). How beautiful these words are for religious women! And for all others who take on celibacy.

### **Dry Trees**

The Prophet Isaiah had more encouraging words too. Here he foretells how the eunuchs of God's Kingdom would not be fruitless: "...do not let the eunuch say: 'Behold, I am just a dry tree.'" For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give to them in my house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, a name imperishable for all times." (Isaiah 56:3-5)

These are indeed beautiful words because people living the celibate vocation can often be seen as "just a dry tree." "Dry" not just in the sense of not bearing any "fruit," (that is, physical children) but "dry" in the sense of being deprived of love. However, if children of the flesh are the fruit of human love, why would not children of the Spirit be the fruit of God's love, a love which is received deeply and profoundly in the priest's soul? The answer is obvious but seldom acknowledged because celibacy is seen by the world in terms of what is given up rather than what is received.

Having looked at the Scriptures, what then is celibacy? Celibacy is recognition of a "virgin birth"; that we ultimately belong to the Kingdom of God and not to nature.

*Fr Michael de Stoop  
Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Sydney*

## **Care for God's Creation**

"How disturbing it is that not infrequently the very social and political groups that, admirably, are most attuned to the awe of God's creation pay scant attention to the marvel of life in the womb. Let us hope that, especially among young people, emerging interest in the environment will deepen their understanding of the proper order and magnificence of God's creation of which man and woman stand at the centre and summit."

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## **The Heart of the Ecumenical Journey**

*On Pope Benedict's general audience during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:*

[...] Vatican Council II promulgated the Decree on Ecumenism "Unitatis Redintegratio" which, the Pope said, "lays great emphasis on the role and the importance of prayer for unity. Prayer", he added, "is at the very heart of the ecumenical journey".

"It is thanks to this spiritual ecumenism, founded on prayer and sincere conversion, ... that the joint search for unity has undergone considerable development over the last few decades, diversifying into many different initiatives: from mutual knowledge to fraternal contact between members of different Churches and ecclesial communities, from ever more friendly dialogue to collaboration in various fields, from theological dialogue to the search for tangible forms of communion".

Vatican Council II "also highlighted prayer in common", said Pope Benedict, "because in joint prayer Christian communities come together before the Lord and, aware of the contradictions caused by their divisions, manifest their desire to obey His will". ... Joint prayer is not, then a form of volunteer work or sociology, but an expression of the faith that unites all Christ's disciples".

"It is the awareness of our human limitations that encourages us to abandon ourselves faithfully in the hands of the Lord. ... The profound significance of the Week of Prayer lies precisely in the fact that it is firmly founded on the prayer of Christ ... 'that they may all be one, ... so that the world may believe'".

"So that the world may believe!" the Pope concluded. "We particularly feel the realism of those words today. The world is suffering from the absence of God, ... it wishes to know the face of God. But how can men and women today know the face of God in the face of Christ if we Christians are divided? Only in unity can we truly show the face of God, the face of Christ, to a world which has such need to see it".

*Vatican Information Service 23-01-2008*

## Office of Readings

*By Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university*

The Office of Readings is the longest of the five offices of the Liturgy of the Hours which all priests and transitional deacons are required to pray daily as an intrinsic part of their ministry of sanctification and intercession. Many permanent deacons and religious also pray it either voluntarily or as part of their rule.

In recent years, following the reforms promoted by the Second Vatican Council, praying the Divine Office, in whole or in part, has become increasingly popular among lay people who desire to unite themselves to the Church's official prayer either as individuals or in groups.

By doing so they participate not only in prayer within Christ's body but also in a truly liturgical manner, that is, prayer of Christ's body, and thus, in a certain manner, in the prayer of Christ himself.

In its present form the office consists of the same elements of the other offices: an opening hymn, three relatively short psalms or segments of longer psalms, versicle, responsories and closing prayer. Primarily however, this office is characterized by two substantial readings, one taken from the Old or New Testament (except the Gospel) and the other taken from the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the saints, or from the Church's magisterium.

The second reading is usually related to the Scripture reading either as a commentary or as a reflection on one of the themes contained in the Scripture lesson. On saints' days the second reading often highlights one of the saint's characteristic virtues or is taken from his or her own writings.

The purpose of these readings is similar to a "lectio divina," or spiritual reading. They are meant to spur meditation and reflection on God's Word and how to live it guided by the best of spiritual writers and therefore to shape our way of thinking according to a truly Christian standard.

*www.zenit.org 23-01-2007*

## Your Kingdom Come

"If we want to pray for God's Kingdom to descend upon us, we ask this with the power of the Word: That I be removed from corruption, freed from death, released from the chains of error; that death will never reign over me, that the tyranny of evil will never have power over us, that the enemy never rule over me or make me a prisoner through sin, but may your kingdom come, so that the passions that rule me may be removed from me or, better yet, be obliterated."

*St Gregory of Nyssa*

## How Lent Developed

As early as the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the *Didache*, a book that describes liturgical practices in the early Church, speaks of Wednesdays and Fridays as being fast days. Rome then added Saturday as a further fast day, in preparation for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. Soon all of Christian antiquity without exception kept these three days of fasting and penitential prayer each week.

Friday, of course, commemorated the Lord's death. Wednesday was considered the day when Judas arranged to betray Jesus. Saturday was variously seen as the Sabbath, the day of Christ's burial, and the vigil of the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.

The Wednesday, Friday and Saturday before Easter Sunday became the nucleus of our Lenten season, which was brief but very intense; only bread and water were taken as nourishment. The fast was gradually extended to the other days of that week, which was called "Great Week" or "Holy Week".

During the 4<sup>th</sup> century, a three-week preparation for Easter became the norm, beginning on what is now *Laetare* (Rejoice!) Sunday, our 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent.

Sometime between 354 and 384 AD, the fast of 40 days came to Rome, perhaps influenced by a similar observance that had begun in Egypt at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This fast was seen less as a preparation for Easter than as an imitation of Christ's 40-day fast in the desert after his baptism.

Jesus linked fasting to prayer and almsgiving (Mt 6:1-18). Once the catechumenate (program of instruction of converts) was well-organised in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, this 40-day period offered an opportune time to conduct the final weeks of preparation of candidates for Baptism during the Easter Vigil.

Meanwhile, penitents who had been excluded from receiving Holy Communion for various offences were readmitted to the Eucharistic assembly at the Easter Vigil in some Churches, or on Holy Thursday in Rome. Thus Lent took on the character of preparation for this reconciliation. Today, communal celebrations of the sacrament of Penance, with individual confession and absolution, are a feature of Lent in many parishes.

All of these developments have come down to us as the Lent we know today: a 40-day period of prayer, self-denial and charity, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday. Sundays are not included, since they are never days of penance. During this season catechumens prepare for the sacraments of initiation and most of the baptised approach the priest for reconciliation, moving towards the intense Triduum celebration of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection.

*From INFORM no. 107: "The Church Year" by Fr Timothy Deeter, published by the Catholic Adult Education Centre, Sydney*



## De Facto Infallibility

Just over a hundred years ago there was a very vigorous debate in Europe and England over the propriety and timing of the forthcoming declaration on papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council. The joke at the time was “Why worry about the infallibility of the Pope when every parish priest in Ireland is infallible!”

Funny as it may seem, we have gone past that ridiculous situation. Almost every individual (conscience) is now thought of as somehow ‘infallible’, despite the limited knowledge and power of every individual human being. Some years back our present pope drew attention to the stupidity of this claim when he observed: “It is strange that some theologians have difficulty accepting the precise and limited doctrine of infallibility, but see no problem in granting de facto infallibility to everyone who has a conscience.”

If each of us were able to declare with absolute certitude what is right for ourselves in every circumstance, there would be no need for any moral law, or any other law or rule of any kind. Priests could make up the liturgy as they go along, teachers and Education Offices could teach just whatever they like, bishops could do just what suits them, and none of us would be accountable in any sense to any other person or authority.

There would be no such thing as “truth” – it would all be relative to each person at the time. This is one of the themes that Pope Benedict deals with in his latest encyclical on “Christian Hope” (not secular hope). He makes it clear that the pundits of our time have got it wrong because, no matter how intelligent their theories and plans for the world and society, they fail because they leave out God and the effects of original sin.

In his address to the Cardinals before the conclave that was to elect him Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger, as he then was, warned them of their duty to protect the Church and the world from the “dictatorship of relativism”. That is when, effectively speaking, there are no rules, and the powerful call the shots and impose their own preferences on others, specially the weak. It becomes a form of totalitarianism.

What saves us from complete moral relativism are a number of factors necessary for morality: conscience, the shared experience and wisdom of the society and community of which we are a part, reality itself, and finally, what God has revealed of his will for us. All this means that we are not totally isolated individuals completely free to please ourselves, even as to what side of the road we want to drive on.

Very few would today defend the idea that the Nazis of World War II were ‘free in conscience’ to do what they did to their victims. Joseph Stalin in Russia, Chairman Mao in China, and Pol Pot in Cambodia

knocked off over 100,000,000, in our lifetime, to ‘reconstruct’ society the way they wanted it. This is what the ‘subjectivism’ of an absolute conscience allows.

St Paul, on the other hand, has made it quite clear, even if uncomfortable for the trendies of the Church, from bishops, theologians, teachers and activists, down to the rest of us: “My conscience does not reproach me at all, but that does not prove that I am acquitted.” (1 Cor 4:4)

*S.C., Melbourne*

## Leading Sinful Priests Back

*From “Adoration, Reparation, Spiritual Motherhood for Priests” produced by the Congregation for the Clergy, 2007*

### *Servant of God Consolata Betrone (1903-1946)*

The sacrifices and prayers of a spiritual mother for priests benefit especially those who have gone astray or who have abandoned their vocations.

Jesus calls countless women in his Church to this praying vocation, like Sister Consolata Betrone, a Capuchin nun from Turin. Jesus said to her, “Your life-long task is for your brothers. Consolata, you too, shall be a good shepherdess and go in search of your brothers and bring them back to me.”

Consolata offered everything for “her brother” priests and others consecrated to God who were in spiritual need. While working in the kitchen, she prayed continuously in her heart, “Jesus, Mary, I love you, save souls!”, and she consciously made every little service and duty into a sacrifice. Jesus said in this regard, “These are all meaningless things, but because you bring them to me with such love, I confer immeasurable value to them and shower them on the discontented brothers as grace for conversion.”

Very grave and difficult cases were often entrusted to the prayers of the convent. Consolata would take upon herself the corresponding suffering that each entailed. For weeks or months on end she sometimes endured dryness of spirit, abandonment, meaninglessness, inner darkness, loneliness, doubt, and the sinful state of the priests.

She once wrote to her spiritual director during these struggles, “How much the brothers cost me!” Yet Jesus made her a magnificent promise, “Consolata, it is not only one brother that you will lead back to God, but all of them. I promise you, you will give me the brothers, one after another.” And so it was! She won all the priests entrusted to her back to a fulfilling priesthood. There are recorded testimonies of many of these cases.

## Basics Not Taught Properly

Prior to Christmas I had to attend some of the Primary Schools in Morwell and surrounding districts to present an RSL Education Award to the chosen student in each school graduating from Grade 6 going into secondary studies in 2008. I attended the 3 Catholic Primary Schools who held Liturgy Services before their presentations and one school had a Mass instead.

I could not help but notice the lack of basic teachings in our Faith when hardly any children blessed themselves properly (if at all) and genuflection was totally off the programme, with a half-hearted bend from the waist sufficing. Hardly any child I could see recited any prayers in the Liturgy or Mass. One school treated the altar like a table in the hall to display their school symbols on, which should have been laid in front of the altar.

I asked a priest about my concerns and what could be done to correct this situation. He said that because on average more than 65% of the children who attend Catholic schools in the diocese are not Catholics, the principals and teachers are hesitant to make an issue of religious teachings so as not to embarrass the non-Catholic children. This same laxity can be seen in children being prepared for their first Holy Communion and Confirmation every year. Is it time that Catholic schools teach our faith from the basics up, and maybe we have only Catholic children taught in Catholic schools?

*Mal Bugg, Morwell*

## Short and Sharp

*A new column for Into the Deep?*

Instead of the Australian bishops funding an in-depth survey of 41 non-practising Catholics to find out why they don't go to Mass anymore (ITD Jan 08, p.6), the bishops should have surveyed themselves to find out how many of them actually implement what the Church teaches. - *GK, Morwell*

FOR SALE – SIGN, four years old (sadly only used once) complete with two wooden handles so it can be held up high with conviction for all to see, with the wording - SHAM BISHOP SHAME. Sign no longer required as the owner has now finally moved on and the bishop has thankfully moved out. (Price negotiable) - *Bert Vanderzalm, Morwell*

## Primary Agency of Peace - the Family

*From Pope Benedict XVI's message for the 41st World Day of Peace, January 1, 2008*

Whoever, even unknowingly, circumvents the institution of the family, undermines peace in the entire community, national and international, since he weakens what is in effect the primary agency of peace.

This point merits special reflection: everything that serves to weaken the family based on the marriage of a man and a woman, everything that directly or indirectly stands in the way of its openness to the responsible acceptance of a new life, everything that obstructs its right to be primarily responsible for the education of its children, constitutes an objective obstacle on the road to peace. The family needs to have a home, employment and a just recognition of the domestic activity of parents, the possibility of schooling for children, and basic health care for all. When society and public policy are not committed to assisting the family in these areas, they deprive themselves of an essential resource in the service of peace. The social communications media, in particular, because of their educational potential, have a special responsibility for promoting respect for the family, making clear its expectations and rights, and presenting all its beauty.

The social community, if it is to live in peace, is also called to draw inspiration from the values on which the family community is based.

...We do not live alongside one another purely by chance; all of us are progressing along a common path as men and women, and thus as brothers and sisters. Consequently, it is essential that we should all be committed to living our lives in an attitude of responsibility before God, acknowledging him as the deepest source of our own existence and that of others. By going back to this supreme principle we are able to perceive the unconditional worth of each human being, and thus to lay the premises for building a humanity at peace. Without this transcendent foundation society is a mere aggregation of neighbours, not a community of brothers and sisters called to form one great family.

[...] I invite every man and woman to have a more lively sense of belonging to the one human family, and to strive to make human coexistence increasingly reflect this conviction, which is essential for the establishment of true and lasting peace. I likewise invite believers to implore tirelessly from God the great gift of peace. Christians, for their part, know that they can trust in the intercession of Mary, who, as the Mother of the Son of God made flesh for the salvation of all humanity, is our common Mother.

# Best Approached With Sandals Off

*From a speech by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 11 November 2007 at the Gateway Liturgical Conference, Missouri. www.zenit.org 11-01-2008*

The translation of liturgical texts from the Latin original to the various vernaculars is a very important consideration in the prayer life of the Church. It is a question, not of private prayer, but of the public prayer offered by holy Mother Church, with Christ as the Head. The Latin texts have been prepared with great care as to sound doctrine, exact wording “free from all ideological influence...” (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 3).

The words used in the sacred liturgy manifest the faith of the Church and are guided by it. The Church, therefore, needs great care in directing, preparing and approving translations, so that not even one unsuitable word will be smuggled into the liturgy by an individual who may have a personal agenda, or who may simply not be aware of the seriousness of the rites.

Translations should, therefore, be faithful to the original Latin text. They should not be free compositions. [...]

Some of these Latin expressions are difficult to translate. The best experts in liturgy, classics, patrology, theology, spirituality, music and literature are needed so that translations beautiful on the lips of holy Mother Church can be worked out. Translations should reflect that reverence, gratitude and adoration before God’s transcendent majesty and man’s hunger for God which are very clear in the Latin texts. [...]

Many liturgical texts are steeped in biblical expressions, signs and symbols. They resonate with prayer patterns that date back to the Psalms. The translator cannot afford to ignore this.

A language spoken by millions of people today will undoubtedly have many shades and variations. There is a difference between English used in the Constitution of a country, that spoken by the President of a Republic, the conversational language of dock workers or students and the conversation between parents and children. The manner of expression cannot be expected to be the same in all these situations, although all are using English.

What form should liturgical translations adopt? No doubt liturgical vernacular should be intelligible and easy to proclaim and to understand. At the same time, it should be dignified, sober, stable and not subject to frequent change. It should not hesitate to use some words not generally in use in everyday conversation, or words that are associated with Catholic faith and worship. Therefore, it should say chalice and not just cup, paten and not plate, ciborium and not vessel, priest and not presider, sacred host and not consecrated bread, vestments and not dress. [...]

Intelligibility should not be pushed to mean that every

word must be understood by everybody at once. Just look carefully at the Credo. It is a “symbol”, a solemn summary statement, on our faith. The Church has had to call some General Councils for an exact articulation of some articles of our faith.

Not every Catholic at Mass will immediately understand in full such normal Catholic liturgical formulae as Incarnation, Creation, Passion, Resurrection, Consubstantial with the Father, Proceeding from the Father and the Son, Transubstantiation, Real Presence, Transcendent and omnipotent God. This is not a question of English, or French, or Italian, or Hindi or Kiswahili. Translators should not become iconoclasts who destroy and damage as they go along. Everything cannot be explained during the liturgy.

The liturgy does not exhaust the entire life activity of the Church (cf. *SC*, n. 9). There is also need for theology, catechetics and preaching. And even when a good catechesis has been delivered, a mystery of our faith remains a mystery.

Indeed, we can say that the most important thing in divine worship is not that we understand every word or concept. No. The most important consideration is that we stand in reverence and awe before God, that we adore, praise and thank him. The sacred, the things of God, are best approached with sandals off. [...]

It follows that no individual, even a priest or deacon, has authority to change the approved wording in the sacred liturgy [refer *Redemptionis Sacramentum* n. 59]. This is also common sense. But sometimes we notice that common sense is not very common.

## The Gospel Terrifies

*From Spe Salvi n.29*

[St Augustine] once described his daily life in the following terms: “The turbulent have to be corrected, the faint-hearted cheered up, the weak supported; the Gospel’s opponents need to be refuted, its insidious enemies guarded against; the unlearned need to be taught, the indolent stirred up, the argumentative checked; the proud must be put in their place, the desperate set on their feet, those engaged in quarrels reconciled; the needy have to be helped, the oppressed to be liberated, the good to be encouraged, the bad to be tolerated; all must be loved”. “The Gospel terrifies me” – producing that healthy fear which prevents us from living for ourselves alone and compels us to pass on the hope we hold in common.

## Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 <sup>st</sup> 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 Fridays 4pm – 8pm (alternating months, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
Morwell	<i>CANCELLED</i>
Orbost	Friday 10am – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10.30am – 11.30am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2pm First Friday 11.30am – 6pm
Trafalgar	Tuesdays 10am – 11am First Saturdays 10am – 11am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Fridays 4pm – 8pm (alternating months, January onwards)

Please contact us to update and extend this list with hours of Adoration throughout Gippsland.

### Mass for Vocations

Sale Saturday 9am

## Adoration at Bray Park, Qld

I would like to advise that weekly Eucharistic Adoration is held at Bray Park, Queensland, on Wednesdays following 8.30am Mass, concluding at 9pm. Also on First Fridays from 7.30pm overnight to 8am Mass Saturdays.

*Frank Bellet, Petrie Qld*

## Spiritual Centre

*Pope Paul IV, *Mysterium Fidei* n.68*

The Eucharist is reserved in churches or oratories to serve as the spiritual centre of a religious community or a parish community, indeed of the whole Church and the whole of mankind, since it contains, beneath the veil of the species, Christ the invisible Head of the Church, the Redeemer of the world, the centre of all hearts, “by whom all things are and by whom we exist.”

*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*

## Contact Into the Deep

[www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)

[stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au](mailto:stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au)

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- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
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ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email and on the website; printed copies up to a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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, our diocesan newspaper,
- 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.