

Into the Deep

Issue 100!

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

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Careful in Silence, Useful in Utterances

From the Pastoral Rule of Pope St Gregory the Great

A religious leader should be careful in deciding when to remain silent, and be sure to say something useful when deciding to speak.

In this way he will avoid saying things that would be better not said, or leaving unsaid things that ought to be said.

For, just as thoughtless remarks can lead people into error, so also ill-advised silence can leave people in their error, when they could have been shown where they were wrong.

Negligent religious leaders are often afraid to speak freely and say what needs to be said – for fear of losing favour with people. As Truth himself says, they are certainly not guarding their flock with the care expected of a shepherd but are acting like hirelings; because hiding behind a wall of silence is like taking flight at the approach of the wolf.

These are the people whom the Lord is reproaching through the prophet, when he says: ‘They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark.’

And again he complains: ‘You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it may stand in battle in the day of the Lord.’

To go up into the breaches means to withstand the powers of this world and defend the flock by speaking out freely. And to stand in battle in the day of the Lord is to resist the forces of evil out of a love of justice.

If a religious leader is afraid to say what is right, what else can his silence mean but that he has taken flight?

Whereas, if he stand firm in defence of his flock, he is building up a wall for the house of Israel against its enemies.

The Office of Readings: Week 27, Sunday

Love the Word of God

Pope Benedict XVI, Introduction to Verbum Domini

With this Apostolic Exhortation I would like the work of the Synod to have a real effect on the life of the Church: on our personal relationship with the sacred Scriptures, on their interpretation in the liturgy and catechesis, and in scientific research, so that the Bible may not be simply a word from the past, but a living and timely word.

To accomplish this, I would like to present and develop the labours of the Synod by making constant reference to the Prologue of John’s Gospel (Jn 1:1-18), which makes known to us the basis of our life: the Word, who from the beginning is with God, who became flesh and who made his dwelling among us.

This is a magnificent text, one which offers a synthesis of the entire Christian faith.

From his personal experience of having met and followed Christ, John, whom tradition identifies as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” “came to a deep certainty: Jesus is the Wisdom of God incarnate, he is his eternal Word who became a mortal man”.

May John, who “saw and believed” also help us to lean on the breast of Christ, the source of the blood and water which are symbols of the Church’s sacraments. Following the example of the Apostle John and the other inspired authors, may we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit to an ever greater love of the word of God.

Looking Forward

St Cyril of Jerusalem

“At his first coming, he was wrapped in linens and laid in a manger; at the second, light shall be his robe. In the first coming he endured the Cross, heedless of its shame; in his second coming he will be in glory surrounded by an army of angels. Let us therefore not stop at his first coming but look forward to the second.”

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

A Deep Commitment – But to What?

From an article by Bishop R.F. Vasa, Diocese of Baker

One of the most difficult challenges [for a Bishop] is the maintenance of an appropriate spirit of unity.

A fellow Bishop from Steubenville, Ohio wrote: “Somehow we have gotten to understand the Church as a primarily Congregationalist reality. I know, as a bishop, I think of myself as the pastor of a congregation that covers 13 counties and consists of 35,000-36,000 Catholics. Most Catholics do not think of themselves as belonging primarily to that congregation, and they do not think of me as their primary pastor. So they think of their parish as the primary community and their priests as their primary pastor. So it is an ecclesiological issue.” He further opines: “People have a deep commitment, but it is not a deep commitment to Christ and a deep commitment to the Catholic Church; it is a deep commitment to their parish community.”

This is perhaps stated too strongly but there is a point here worthy of our consideration. Each needs to reflect upon how the primary commitment to Christ is manifested.

There is certainly no necessary conflict between being committed to Christ and committed to one’s parish. When, however, one’s commitment to “one’s own” parish eclipses one’s commitment to Christ and to the broader Church then the local commitment ceases to be a manifestation of unity and becomes something else altogether.

This in no way diminishes the affection one ought to have for one’s parish but it shifts the emphasis from seeing the parish as an end in itself as opposed to a means for eternal salvation.

It has even been reported to me that pastors have heard, “If we don’t have Mass in my church then I will not go!” This manifests a great commitment to the parish but very poor commitment to Christ.

The Diocesan Chronicle, 26-09-2010

Silence

“Silence is like a white screen upon which we can project the film of our daily life so as to see it more clearly. If we projected it on a wall full of pictures, books and other objects, and with a background noise, we would perceive little. Only in silence can we make our choices with greater awareness. In silence we hear the voice of God, and thus become genuine bearers of His Word.”

*Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli,
President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications
Message to communicators of Latin America, December 2010*

ITD Inciting Hatred

I have been receiving your magazine in its printed form from a very good friend for about four months, and consider that it is a necessary adjunct to Traditional Catholic Teaching.

However, I was dismayed upon reading the disgusting piece of poetic doggerel entitled “Nun So Blind...” in your November issue, which was written by some person too cowardly to supply his/her name but rather hid behind a cloak of Anne Onimity.

I’m not saying I agree with what the Joeys are doing, but for a Catholic magazine to incite hatred in this fashion disgusts me. And to liken these women with the pigs infused with devils to be herded into the sea is abominable. No doubt Satan is rubbing his hands with glee that Catholics are becoming like the Muslims and maybe wage civil war on each other.

Jesus told us that we must love each other. St Paul told us that we must correct each other with love.

It would appear that the author of this piece would be too afraid to tell a Joey what he/she thinks of her when he/she is too cowardly to supply their name in a magazine which is only read by traditional Catholics.

I appreciate that it may be desirable for some correspondence to be published anonymously, but please, please, please desist from publishing hatred.

Bob Cashman, Forster NSW

Priests Need Our Support

I recently came across an old copy of the “Mirror”, newsletter of the Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), an organisation I have supported for a long time. I read again ACN president Fr Joaquin Alliende’s article and thought this part would be good to print in ITD:

“We are at the end of a year dedicated to the priesthood in the Church. In recent months we have been forced to acknowledge, with sorrow and shame, as Pope Benedict says, the pettiness and sinfulness of some priests in a number of countries. We have also been forced to witness how the fact of the abuse, committed by a few, has been used unfairly against all. The Letter to the Hebrews states that the priest is chosen from among men, that he is a sinner like all his brothers and sisters – and for that very reason he can all the more be an instrument of Mercy for each one of us.”

Priests, like all of us, live in the same communities and are subject to all of the same influences, social, financial, pressure groups, lobbyists, and church politics etc. They all need our understanding and support.

May God bless you for the work you do by continuing to produce ITD.

Tom Lawless, Hazelwood South, Vic

Pope Eric the First

A reading of an article in the latest Swag (notorious magazine of the National Council of Priests) will enlighten you as to why the faith in this country has been dying. The article was written by Fr Eric Hodgens who recently celebrated his Golden Jubilee.

He is critical of several popes, the doctrine of infallibility, *Humanae Vitae*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (“a violation of human rights”), the devotional life of the Church, the moral teachings of the Church, and priestly celibacy.

Some excerpts from the article:

- “We changed from being priests called and consecrated by God to being presbyters called and ordained by the Church – the People of God.”

- “We realised that clericalism was an evil, not a good, and discarded it with its style and culture.”

- “Discordant decisions were coming down from the pope. Priestly celibacy, despite being highly contentious, was reasserted by Paul VI in 1967 without discussion.”

- “In 1968 *Humanae Vitae* was a shocking disappointment. Most of us never accepted it.”

- “Then came John Paul II. Charismatic in front of the TV camera; brilliant at languages; but – out of touch in scripture and limited in theology...”

- “John Paul’s lust for power showed very early and was taken to monumental proportions. Accountable to nobody, John Paul moved against any opinion other than his own...”

- “The priest at the coal face is not consulted, yet is contemptuously expected to defend policies he and his people do not believe.”

He is critical of Pope John Paul II for stopping the incorrect use of the Third Rite of Penance; for “re-emphasising devotion to the static Real Presence” (“most priests have moved on from that”); for reinforcing a “distorted devotion to Mary”; and for introducing “peculiar devotions such as Sr Faustina’s Divine Mercy Devotion which undercuts Easter”.

He states: “A newly critical laity questions policy but receives no answers. Why can’t women be leaders in the Church? Why do priests have to be celibate? What is wrong with contraception? Why alienate remarried divorcees? Why this salacious preoccupation with sexual mores? ... Why can’t we recognise the reality of homosexual orientation – and the social consequences of that recognition?”

Of course our current Holy Father does not escape criticism. He is lambasted for the new English translation of the Sacramentary adding that many priests are not going to implement it; for receiving back bishops from the Society of St Pius X; for encouraging the Tridentine Mass; for introducing kneeling for

communion on the tongue at his public Masses.

Fr Hodgens questions the intellectual capacity of the Popes; after reading his article in the Swag, any impartial observer would conclude that his intellectual capacity is less than that of a minnow compared to the intellectual giants he is critical of.

Perhaps Fr Hodgens should take note of some of the following:

The priesthood is a masterpiece of Christ’s divine love, wisdom and power. He, not the People of God, instituted the priesthood on Holy Thursday night.

Listen to Mother Teresa – “The cure of all the ills in the Church and the world is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.”

Listen to Our Blessed Mother – “Pray the rosary daily. Pray and do penance.”

How can Father celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass when he obviously does not believe in the Real Presence? How can any unfaithful priest do the same?

We need bishops and priests who will confirm us in our faith, not in our sins. Well may Pope Paul VI say that the smoke of Satan has entered the sanctuary of the Church! As I wrote at the time, we make an awful mistake if we think that Fr Peter Kennedy was an isolated case.

By their silence our bishops have been implicit in the views expressed by Fr Hodgens and those at the National Council of Priests’ conference.

It never ceases to amaze me that those who are critical of the infallibility of the Pope, seem to claim their own infallibility! That is why I have anointed Eric Hodgens as Pope Eric I of the Parallel Church of Australia. Although he does have a contender in Geoffrey Robinson, that retired dissident bishop.

We do not have to like these people. We do have to love them as Christ has commanded. How do we love them? By praying for their conversion – that they will save their souls. “O God, grant that those whom He has chosen as ministers and dispensers of His Sacraments may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry to which they have been called.”

Incidentally, at Mass on the Feast of the Holy Family, I heard a visiting Passionist priest say that God blesses the unions of unmarried couples because they have children and are a family. Can you believe it? Another who confirms us in our sins.

John Henderson, Morwell

As tragic as Fr Hodgens’ article is, there is reason for hope. He expresses a “giving up” of the liberals, a realisation that they have lost the fight. They are bitter, resentful and disappointed. They see their fellow liberals dying out, and only young orthodox priests coming up in the ranks. They have nothing left to lose.

- Ed.

The Owl and the Eagle: A Fable

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, in an Advent reflection, 03-12-2010

There are nocturnal birds, such as the owl and the little owl, whose eye is made to see in the dark of night, not in the day. The light of the sun would blind them. These birds know everything and move at ease in the nocturnal world, but know nothing of the daytime world.

Let us adopt for the moment the genre of the fable, where the animals speak among themselves. Let's suppose that an eagle makes friends with a family of little owls and speaks to them of the sun: of how it illuminates everything, of how, without it, everything would fall into darkness and cold, of how their nocturnal world itself would not exist without the sun.

What would the little owl answer other than: "What you say is nonsense! I've never seen your sun. We move very well and get our food without it; your sun is a useless theory and therefore it doesn't exist."

It is exactly what the atheist scientist does when he says: "God doesn't exist." He judges a world he does not know, applies his laws to an object that is beyond their scope. To see God one must open a different eye, one must venture outside the night. In this connection, still valid is the ancient affirmation of the Psalmist "The fool says: there is no God."

www.zenit.org 04-12-2010

Views on Same-Sex 'Marriage' Sought

On 15 November 2010, the Greens party member Adam Bandt MHR moved a motion which, after being amended by Government Minister Mr S. Jones, passed by one vote. It states: "The House calls on all parliamentarians, consistent with their duty as representatives, to gauge their constituents' views on ways to achieve equal treatment for same sex couples, including marriage". Again the Christmas period is chosen when many voters are on holidays. It is expected that the Bill will be introduced to parliament early 2011.

We all have to work hard right now to let our MP know that this sort of thing is definitely not on. This can be done by phone, email, letter or visit to your member. For those who do not know their MP please go to: www.family.org.au/qld/findMP.

Leon Voesenek, North Tamborine, QLD

Mass Movement Whose Time Has Come?

"Right to Faith" Movement

As I read through the last issue of ITD for 2010 a couple of things struck me as obvious: a lot of people are asking, compared to better times that they experienced, "What went wrong?", and "Can anything be done about it?"

As to the first question, we have to understand that World War II produced immense social changes, which are still going on. There was a wave of anti-colonialism and anti-authority, led by new forms of authoritarianism. People reacted against this, and by the 1950s the beginnings of the cultural revolution were starting to touch Australia.

Perhaps the best symbol of this new mood in society was the phenomenal success of the Beatles, with their odd haircuts, way-out clothes, new music preaching a utopian world message of peace and flower-power, unfettered freedom, etc. Their lifestyles were the new yardstick of ideals and values for a gullible youth, which suited the intelligentsia.

This means that the world in which we live now has changed radically from the world in which we grew up, and we cannot turn the clock back, but we can recover the essentials of our Faith. To do so we have to band together, perhaps as never before, because a mere individual won't achieve anything. So Ruadhri's appeal for a "Right to Faith" movement (ITD, Dec 2010, p.8) seems on the right track.

Such a movement would mean that individuals and parents would not be powerless, as they are at the moment, when trying to deal with a parish priest, specially if he is overawed by the power of the Catholic Education Commission, or a bishop scared of the power of a teachers' union. To have effect in a Catholic school parents would have to throw their weight behind it in a very real way.

If all this were to happen real changes for the better could be expected. There is nothing like the power of a mass movement whose time has come. No wonder that the Pope, in his homily for the beatification of Cardinal Newman, quoted his message about teachers of religion, reprinted on the first page of ITD for November with the heading: "Well-Instructed Laity". A "Right to Faith" movement could well take those words as its charter. Are there people out there prepared to swamp ITD (or Ruadhri, via ITD?) with their names, commitment, time and support to kick this movement off?

S.C., Melbourne

"We cannot collaborate with evil without gradually becoming evil ourselves."

Archbishop Charles Chaput

Speaking of Scandal

Archbishop Raymond Burke, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, at the World Prayer Congress for Life, 9 October 2010

When those who profess to be Christian, at the same time, favour and promote policies and laws which permit the destruction of innocent and defenceless human life, and which violate the integrity of marriage and the family, then citizens, in general, are confused and led into error about the basic tenets of the moral law.

In our time, there is a great hesitation to speak about scandal, as if, in some way, it is only a phenomenon among persons of small or unenlightened mind, and, therefore, a tool of such persons to condemn others rashly and wrongly. [...]

One of the ironies of the present situation is that the person who experiences scandal at the gravely sinful public actions of a fellow Catholic is accused of a lack of charity and of causing division within the unity of the Church.

In a society whose thinking is governed by the “dictatorship of relativism” and in which political correctness and human respect are the ultimate criteria of what is to be done and what is to be avoided, the notion of leading someone into moral error makes little sense. What causes wonderment in such a society is the fact that someone fails to observe political correctness and, thereby, seems to be disruptive of the so-called peace of society.

Lying or failing to tell the truth, however, is never a sign of charity. A unity which is not founded on the truth of the moral law is not the unity of the Church. The Church’s unity is founded on speaking the truth with love. The person who experiences scandal at public actions of Catholics, which are gravely contrary to the moral law, not only does not destroy unity but invites the Church to repair what is clearly a serious breach in Her life.

Were he not to experience scandal at the public support of attacks on human life and the family, his conscience would be uninformed or dulled about the most sacred realities.

Learn to See Jesus

“The Rosary and Stations of the Cross are nothing else than a guide devised by the heart of the Church to learn to ‘see Jesus’ and thus to arrive at the answer of the Ninevites: repentance, conversion. The Rosary and the Stations of the Cross have been for centuries the great school for seeing Jesus; these days invite us to enter this school again, in common with the faithful of so many centuries.”

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Journey Towards Easter, 1987 (p.35)

Do Not Lose Heart

From Pope Benedict XVI’s Message for the 44th World Day of Peace, celebrated 01 January 2011

“Religious Freedom, The Path To Peace”

At the beginning of the new year I offer good wishes to each and all for serenity and prosperity, but especially for peace. ...

It is painful to think that in some areas of the world it is impossible to profess one’s religion freely except at the risk of life and personal liberty. In other areas we see more subtle and sophisticated forms of prejudice and hostility towards believers and religious symbols.

At present, Christians are the religious group which suffers most from persecution on account of its faith. Many Christians experience daily affronts and often live in fear because of their pursuit of truth, their faith in Jesus Christ and their heartfelt plea for respect for religious freedom. This situation is unacceptable, since it represents an insult to God and to human dignity; furthermore, it is a threat to security and peace, and an obstacle to the achievement of authentic and integral human development. ...

It is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one’s rights. ...

Religion is defended by defending the rights and freedoms of religious communities. ...

In the face of present difficulties, may Christ’s followers not lose heart, for *witnessing to the Gospel is, and always will be, a sign of contradiction.*

Pray for Persecuted

Asia Bibi, a Christian 45-year-old mother of five, was charged with blaspheming Mohammed in a conflict with fellow farm workers some 18 months ago in Pakistan.

Aid to the Church in Need reported that Bibi and her two daughters were defending their religion, and were beaten by their colleagues for this; afterwards, a group of men accused her of violating the blasphemy laws. On Nov. 7 Bibi was sentenced to death by hanging.

Auxiliary Bishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore said: “The right way to proceed is for Christian lawyers and human rights’ activists to work together on an appeal case. Through these means we will succeed.” He made an appeal for prayer for Bibi and her family, noting that “prayer is a very powerful weapon that we have.”

He reported that Christians throughout Lahore and elsewhere have been fasting and holding prayer services for Bibi. Both Benedict XVI and his secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, have made public appeals for Bibi’s release.

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Our Priests

By Anne Onumos

It's not by chance we had that year
That special Year for the Priest
Increase your prayers for Priests so dear
From the greatest to the least.

Pray for those who have lost their way
Those weak and vulnerable ones
Pray that they no longer may stray
Return as prodigal sons.

Pray for those who are sick and old
Whose suffering God only sees
Pray till the end that they be bold
Uphold the Church's decrees.

Pray for those who are mistreated
Because of their orthodox views
May their strength not be depleted
These Priests help fill up the pews!

Pray for those who are discerning
And don't know which way to go
Pray they choose the path they are yearning
May they in Jesus' love grow.

Pray for those who had become confused
During their formative years
May their hearts and souls be infused
With strength to allay all their fears.

Pray for those who have dissented
And attack the Church from within
All of this could have been prevented
Pray for the changes to begin!

Do not condemn the Priests who have left
But pray with all your hearts
Pray their souls may not be bereft
Of graces that God imparts.

Let us turn to the Mother of Priests
Whose heart is all mercy and love
Pray to Her that vocations increase
May She pray for our Priests from above.

*Mary, Queen of Apostles, pray for us
And obtain for us many faithful and holy priests.*

Depraved Ideas

Every society in human history has considered marriage to be between two persons of the opposite sex for the union of spouses, the procreating of children and the founding of families, the very basis of human society (public and private good).

The idea of sexual satisfaction between persons of the same sex, without capability of procreation, was always considered unnatural and perverse by all societies.

People of faith regarded sodomy as one of the deadliest sins (Leviticus 18:22 "an abomination" and St Paul 1 Cor 6:9 "will not inherit the Kingdom of God"). They justly discriminated against the evil behaviour while continuing to respect the dignity of those persons concerned (hate the sin but love the sinner).

Now, many people around the world are suffering a real unjustifiable discrimination against their proper religious rights to guard their beliefs, their families, schools, charities, adoptions, jobs and professions by new moralists, homosexuals, demanding acceptance of their depraved ideas and behaviour as if they can change human nature, be an acceptable alternative and reject criticism as discrimination and hate speech.

Morality can only be decided by the objective standards of tradition and natural law and not by a dominant group, ('mob rule', 'might is right', 'majority opinion') which soon becomes a dictatorship of either the right or the left, and the ruin of our civilisation, based on the Judeo-Christian heritage of the culture of life-love which we celebrate and should think about at Christmas time.

Father Bernard McGrath, Bendigo

Prayer for Church in China

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 01-12-2010

"I entrust to your prayer and to that of Catholics worldwide the Church in China that, as you know, is going through particularly difficult moments.

We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, to support all the Chinese bishops, so dear to me, so that they will give witness to their faith with courage, placing every hope in the Saviour we await.

Moreover, we entrust to the Virgin all the Catholics of that beloved country so that, with her intercession, they will be able to live an authentic Christian existence in communion with the universal Church, thus contributing also to the harmony and common good of their noble people."

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The Same Surprise as Peter

"Even today the Lord invites us to push out into the deep, and I am sure we shall have the same surprise as Peter: the fish will be in abundance, because the Lord dwells in Peter's boat – the boat that has become his cathedra and throne of mercy."

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Journey Towards Easter, 1987 (p.159)

The Right to Oppose Same-Sex Marriage

*Excerpts from a letter of reply from Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney,
to Mr Peter Furness, Australian Marriage Equality, 22 Dec 2010*

You raise a number of important questions in your letter and to avoid misunderstanding it is important to clarify where we stand on these matters.

1. In your letter you express concern about “undue involvement by the clergy in a debate about the reform of the civil law”. It is of course quite inappropriate for priests or bishops to serve as legislators or as decision makers in government. But in Australia priests and bishops enjoy the same rights to freedom of speech and to participate in public debate as everyone else. This applies particularly to important questions of justice, and to issues which threaten to further erode the family, with all the suffering this brings for individuals and the community.

The Federal Parliament has resolved that MPs should consult with their constituents about same-sex marriage, and as constituents Catholics have the same right as other Australians to express their views to their MPs.

It is entirely appropriate for priests to support and encourage the people in their parishes to take part in this consultation about the meaning of marriage. In doing so, they are continuing a proud tradition of working with lay people and members of religious orders to defend important values and the rights of others - in this case, the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, which has been significantly eroded and constrained wherever same-sex marriage has been legalised.

2. You also suggest that encouraging people to take part in this consultation by informing them about the issues involved and the reasons why marriage can only mean a union of one man and one woman “will unnecessarily inflame discrimination and prejudice” against non-heterosexual people in the Church and particularly those who are young. The Catholic Church is committed to defending the rights of every person, including people who are non-heterosexual, and this is a responsibility to which I am deeply committed, both as a bishop and personally. The suffering and hardship that prejudice and unjust discrimination cause for non-heterosexual people is a matter of serious pastoral concern to me and to most Catholics. We support appropriate measures to address these issues and offer non-heterosexual people our support, compassion and respect, free from personal judgements.

It is also important to register strongly that it is not an act of prejudice or discrimination to oppose same-sex marriage. Your letter seems to imply that it is. ... It is precisely the false claim that opposition to same-sex marriage in itself is a form of prejudice or discrimination which has been so damaging in undermining freedom of thought, conscience and religion in those jurisdictions overseas where same-sex marriage has been legalised.

3. ...the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion remains as a universal human right. It is not in your gift or that of the parliament to offer us this right or take it away, irrespective of what any particular legislation may or may not say. Any attempt by the parliament to undermine or abridge freedom of thought or conscience or religion, on this or any other issue, will be strenuously and actively opposed by the Catholic community.

4. The issue of same-sex marriage is not about the rights of non-heterosexual people or about equality. We already have “relationship equality” in Australia, because marriage, homosexual relationships, and unmarried heterosexual relationships are all treated equally before the law.

The key point on which we differ is not how we define marriage, but about its nature. Is marriage just a word, the meaning of which can be changed by the courts or the parliament? Or does it have a unique reality which cannot be changed, regardless of how we might change the language we use for it? The reality of marriage is that it is about a man, a woman and children. This is how marriage has always been understood across time and cultures, and it is how Australians continue to understand marriage, as shown by the fact that most Australian couples decide to marry when they decide to have children.

There are other relationships, and I acknowledge that love and genuine companionship are often part of them, but they have a different nature from marriage. Nothing is gained and many significant things are lost by pretending these differences do not exist, or by trying to erase them by calling them by the same name. For the Catholic Church, the issue of same-sex marriage is not primarily about homosexuality or discrimination, but about the nature of marriage, and the good things it makes possible because of its nature, for spouses, for families and for the community.

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Take Responsibility

It seems there is a growing sensitivity to criticism and scrutiny among our bishops and priests. They do not like to be publicly reminded of who they are or to be judged by their own words or held accountable for their actions. They forget that they were not called, consecrated and appointed to lobby for change, to dissent, to empower, or to create new visions to shape a 'Church of the future', but to save souls.

When orthodox Catholics warn of errors and complain to bishops about dissenting priests, liturgical abuses and deformities of the sacraments, they are accused of being fanatics, negative, critical; they are despised, treated like the enemy and accused of being divisive.

But the painful reality is that in nearly every diocese in this country disorder, dissent and scandal are disturbingly present and communion is threatened by the enemy within. The faithful have been subjected to an epidemic of liberalism and have been forced to grin and bear the devaluing and violation of the faith.

There is a degree of ignorance that has settled in – we simply accept so much of what has been going on in the Church for the last 30-40 years that it now seems normal. But right and wrong, good and evil, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, heterodoxy and orthodoxy, are not each the same as the other. And anyone in the Church who tries to present it as such is deceitful.

Now is not the time to retreat into some spiritual bubble or grotto and sit back in the hope that this liberal epidemic will blow over. Faithful Catholics need to step up and take responsibility for this time in the Church.

Bishops have been appointed to make provisions for the spiritual welfare of our souls and the souls of our children entrusted to their pastoral care now, not in the future. Yet, their governance, leadership and ministry show no urgency or pressing concern for our preparation to meet God. Souls are in need of ordering, grace, healing, forgiveness and saving today. What about the souls who do not know about sin and its effects on their lives, who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his Church?

Our life and future as Catholics is in Christ and his Church. He is the future and purpose of our existence. Our future in Him has already begun. He left all the members of his body the duty to live in accordance with his way of living. Now more than ever he needs the fearless, public, vocal and consistent witness to the truth as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

It is not enough for devout, faithful and orthodox Catholics to carry their faith in their hearts; we must profess it, bear witness to it and defend it with our mouths and with our lives, thus making the truth of his Gospel and Paschal Mystery present where there is confusion, corruption, dissent, division, error and ignorance.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Many See, But Do Not Understand

From Pope Benedict XVI's Epiphany homily, 2010

Although the few of Bethlehem have become many, believers in Jesus Christ always seem to be few. Many have seen the star, but few have understood its message.

Scripture scholars of Jesus' time knew the word of God perfectly. They were able to say without any difficulty what was to be found in Scripture regarding the place in which the Messiah would be born, but, as St Augustine says, "as the milestones (that indicate the way), they remained inert and immovable".

Hence, we can ask ourselves: What is the reason that some see and others do not? What is it that opens the eyes and heart? What is missing in those who remain indifferent, from those who indicate the way but do not move?

We can answer: the excessive certainty in themselves, the pretension of knowing reality perfectly, the presumption of already having formulated a definitive judgment on things, thus making their hearts closed and insensitive to the novelty of God. They are certain of the idea they have of the world and do not let themselves be moved in their deepest being by the adventure of a God who wants to meet them. They place more confidence in themselves than in him, and they do not consider it possible that God, being so great, can make himself small, that he can really come close to us.

In the end, what is missing is genuine humility, which is able to submit to what is greater, but also the genuine courage that leads one to believe what is really great, even if it is manifested in a defenseless child.

Lacking is the capacity to be children at heart, to be amazed, and to come out of oneself to undertake the way indicated by the star, the way of God.

Nevertheless, the Lord has the power to make us able to see and to save us. Therefore, we want to ask him to give us a wise and innocent heart, which will allow us to see the star of his mercy, which will lead us on his way, to meet him and be inundated by the great light and the true joy that he has brought to this world.

[Translation by Zenit] www.zenit.org 07-01-2010

Convert Them Yourself

St Veronica Giuliani

"We cannot go preaching around the world to convert souls, but we are obliged to pray continually for all those souls who are offending God ... particularly with our sufferings, that is with a principle of crucified life."

Dissenters Old and New

From her very institution the Church has experienced dissenters, traitors, internal and external critics.

The very first dissenter in the Church was Judas who, among other things thought that Mary Magdalene wasted money in anointing the feet of Jesus (Jn 12:1-8).

There have been dissenters within the Church ever since – modern-day examples include clergy who will not adhere to required liturgical rubrics and/or deviate from authorised liturgical texts, and, of course their spineless or compliant clerical overseers who allow such dissent.

Among the first would-be or external critic was Simon Magus (the Magician). Not wanting to be a Christian, Simon *did* want to possess the powers of the Holy Spirit. The Church simply was not able to accede to his desires; it was not in her power to give the Sacrament of Confirmation to a non-Christian.

Today, some critics want the Church to provide the Sacrament of Holy Orders to persons who are incapable (like Simon Magus) of reception of this Sacrament. It is not that the Church does not “like” women (She has been criticised enough for her attitude towards Mary, the mother of Jesus, the mother of God – for goodness sake!) No! It is because Her Founder, Jesus Christ only gave a mandate for the reception of this Sacrament to males. She is also unable to change the concept that men cannot conceive babies.

Scripture records that Jesus said that the Church would not be prevailed against by the forces of Hell (Matt. 16:18). From her very beginning, throughout her entire history, and for whatever period lies ahead, her members have been/will be, by their very nature, sinners in very wide degrees. The past half-century witnessed a veritable invasion in seminaries of homosexuals: some non-practising and chaste, and others who possessed an agenda.

From that latter group came priests who committed the heinous crime of Ephebophilia – against young males. However, the record shows that only approximately 4-5% of all priests have criminally offended. That is, approximately 95% of priests have not offended, and that celibacy is not the problem. Nor is ordination of women the solution.

F. John Loughnan, Delacombe, Vic

Lament in Short Supply

I have often wondered whether members of many Australian religious orders ever sit down and ask themselves about their future. After reading a report on CathNews I now know that they do not.

A report from a Sister of St Joseph, Carmel Pilcher, on December 8, stated that Sr Carmel was asked by a friend and colleague how she felt about the Josephites “dying out”. “I was somewhat taken aback by the question and simply dismissed it as something that doesn’t bother me,” she replied.

She went on to say, “I can’t remember the last time I heard any of our Sisters, either in casual conversation or at a more formal meeting, lament the state of our organisation,” refusing to take her head out of the sand.

So there we have it! A fast-aging order of Nuns with few vocations and no cause for lament. I wonder what St Mary of The Cross MacKillop would think of such a sad state of affairs?

Then it is little different to the state of Catholic Education in this country. Around twenty five years ago, the Sisters of St Joseph, of Sion, and the Brigidines, all decided to throw away their religious habits and lost interest in teaching children about God. Lay people began to replace them and the prevailing philosophy became more worldly, with education about the Catholic Faith a low priority.

The result has been that around 97% of graduates from Catholic schools no longer practice their faith. Few in Catholic education lament this state of affairs, or show little obvious concern for the spiritual plight of their pupils. They certainly show no intention of changing what has been a disastrous new direction. In fact, they react with hostile abuse should anyone question their abysmal results and congratulate themselves on the great job they are doing.

The unjust treatment of Fr John Speekman, who questioned the direction Catholic education was heading, and has been banished to the wilderness for the last eight years, is testament to that fact.

Any lament at this sorry state of affairs for Religious Orders and Catholic Education is in short supply indeed!

Pat O’Brien, Sale

Not Worthy of the Name

From an address by Cardinal Raymond Burke, prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, 15-12-2010

“How tragic that the very secularism which the Catholic university should be helping its students to battle and overcome, has entered into several Catholic universities leading to the grievous compromise of their high mission.”

“A Catholic college or university, at which Jesus Christ alive in his Church is not taught, encountered in the Sacred Liturgy and its extension through prayer and devotion, and followed in a life of virtue, is not worthy of the name.”

Choose The Better Part

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, 18-07-2010

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

The words of Christ are very clear: they show no disdain for an active life, or for generous hospitality, but contain an evident reference to the fact that what is truly necessary is something else: to listen to the Word of the Lord. And in that moment the Lord is there, present in the Person of Jesus. All the rest will pass and be taken away from us, but the Word of God is eternal and gives meaning to our daily activities.

This Gospel episode is highly appropriate for the holiday season because it recalls the fact that, although human beings must work and dedicate themselves to domestic and professional duties, above all they need God, Who is the inner light of Love and Truth.

Without love, even the most important activities become valueless and bring no joy. Without profound meaning, all our actions are reduced to sterile and disordered activism. And who gives Love and Truth if not Jesus Christ? Let us learn then, brothers and sisters, to help one another, to collaborate, but first and foremost together to choose the ‘better part’, which is and will always be our greatest good.

Vatican Information Service 18-07-2010

Indifference

The secular media consider the issue of abortion at best irrelevant and at worst a dangerous digression championed by pro-life diehards.

Can we, however, regard ourselves as being a genuinely civilised nation if we treat our most vulnerable with such indifference? What is supposed to be the safest place for a human being – the womb – has been transformed into a slaughterhouse for humanity. The fact that it is happening in other countries as well (e.g. over 50 million in America since 1973) does not make the procedure a manifestation of ethical behaviour.

In his book *Practical Ethics*, the influential bio-ethicist Peter Singer advocates making it legal to kill disabled infants up to 28 days after birth, and older “non-persons with disabilities” as well.

Australian legislatures have legalised abortion; will they, eventually, also legalise the ‘involuntary’ euthanasia of disabled infants?

Henk Verhoeven, Beacon Hill NSW

Moral Marshmallows

When people object to anyone bringing ‘religion’ into a debate, they are adopting the most self-contradictory position that it is possible for a human to dream up.

Religion is in essence about recognising and choosing between good and bad. When people say, “Don’t bring your religion into this discussion of what is right or wrong”, they are merely claiming the superiority of their own “religion” over their opponent’s, without explanation or justification. That is a remarkable combination of ignorance and arrogance. They obviously hold certain things, e.g. that there are viable alternatives to the traditional family, that abortion is a good thing. They must have some reasoning to justify these. *That* is their religion.

It is no coincidence that the regimes through history which oppressed their members with the greatest tyranny were the most specifically godless (cf. Hitler, Stalin, various Mexican presidents, Mao Tse Tung, Pol Pot, Kim Il Sung, Saddam Hussein).

Should our government’s apparent philosophy of no fixed moral standards prevail, God help Australia. No-one else can. History shows quite clearly that one essential factor in promoting a healthy, integrated society is the moral law. The role of Catholicism in constructing and maintaining Europe is acknowledged even by its enemies. A most convincing demonstration of this factor in reverse is the history of Western countries since 1968.

The greatest author of the 20th century, G. K. Chesterton wrote a book, “The Five Deaths of the Faith”, and marvelled how completely dead on each occasion the Church seemed to be; and how each revival seemed like a resurrection.

Well, we are witnessing another near-death experience, accompanied by the collapse of the civilisation which depended on it. When Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* on the sanctity of human life, this was followed by as massive a refusal to accept this doctrine, as there was in the 4th century when 80% of the bishops apostasised. The different and more dangerous factor was that the modern apostasy was silent. Imagine how World War II would have gone if 80% of our brigadiers and colonels had been furtively sympathetic to Hitler.

Our present-day silent moral marshmallows bear the main responsibility for the state of our civilisation. At the same time they present a compelling demonstration of Christ’s guarantee that even this mass disloyalty will not destroy His Church.

Don Gaffney, Tarragindi, QLD

“An act of thanksgiving when things go against our will means more than a thousand acts of thanksgiving when things go according to our will.” Fulton Sheen

Starting School

Pope Benedict XVI to school children, 23-09-2010

Dear children, you go to school and you learn naturally, and I am recalling that seventy-seven years have now passed since I began school. I lived in a small village of three hundred inhabitants, ... yet we learned the essential things.

Most importantly, we learned to read and write. I think it is a great thing to be able to read and write, because in this way we can know other people's ideas, read newspapers and books. We can also know what was written two thousand or more years ago; we can know the spiritual continents of the world and communicate with one another. Above all there is one extraordinary thing: God wrote a book, He spoke to us human beings, finding people to write the book containing the Word of God. Reading that book, we can read what God says to us.

At school you learn everything you need for life. You also learn to know God, to know Jesus and thus you learn how to live well. At school you make a lot of friends and this is a beautiful thing because in this way you form one big family, but among our best friends, the first we meet and know should be Jesus Who is a friend to everyone and truly shows us the path of life.

Vatican Information Service 24-09-2010

Important, But...

In the November issue of ITD (p.4) I expressed my horror at a reflection printed in the Traralgon Catholic parish bulletin that showed a lack of understanding of the nature of the Eucharist and "challenged" the Church in her teaching on the Eucharist.

The obvious thought is of course that parish priest Fr Peter Bickley perhaps didn't write it. But then he is responsible for having it published in his bulletin. As far as I am aware, no retraction or apology has been published.

On 14 December however, there was an article in the Latrobe Valley Express on Fr Bickley's up-coming move to Bairnsdale parish ("Sad goodbye for Valley's Catholic parish stalwart", by Louis Nelson) that sheds light on Fr Bickley's own understanding of the Mass and his priesthood.

He considers the Mass and the Sacraments important, but not exactly the highlight of his priesthood. Fr Bickley is quoted as saying: "The leadership in mass and the sacrament is important to me – but it's being with the families and their needs through ups and downs which is most special."

He went on to say, "I wanted this parish to teach me how to be a priest." Perhaps the parish forgot to teach him some of the more important bits.

- Ed.

A Queensland Creed

~ A Satire ~

We believe in God.

We believe that all people except racists and sexists are made in her image.

We believe that the force opposed to god is evil and thus masculine.

We believe that when the present pope dies, we shall get a pope who will give us women priests.

We believe that the greatest issues facing the world are global warming, gay marriage, and the rain forest.

We believe that all will be saved, except for the hypocritical right-wingers.

We believe that Pope Paul was afraid to admit error when he pronounced against contraception.

We believe that no pope is infallible without the consent of theologians.

We believe that god knows how hard marriage is, and she would want the divorced and remarried to receive communion.

We believe that in any case, it is just bread.

We believe that god is a god of love, and since homosexuals love each other, they should be permitted to marry each other.

We believe that children in catholic schools should be taught about the benefits of sodomy.

We believe that the Bible is a collection of stories made up hundreds of years after Christ, and made to fit the legends and myths of Christianity.

We believe in the Spirit of Vatican 2. Where the real Vatican 2 is different, it is wrong.

We believe that it is the task of theologians to correct the inaccuracies of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the church must constantly change, and the people adapt to new beliefs.

We believe in the right of priests to demonstrate their creativity, especially in the Mass.

We believe that all have the ability to forgive sins. But we believe that this is no longer necessary.

We believe that those who complain about abuses in the Mass are spies and sinners, and particularly unAustralian.

We believe that all things should be tolerated in the spirit of diversity and accommodation, except for those intolerant racist right-wingers.

We believe that if these commandments are followed, the world will enter a period of extended peace and happiness.

Richard Stokes, Calboolture QLD

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	6pm Thursday – 6pm Friday (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Friday 9.30am – 10.30am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10am – 11am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2pm First Friday 11.30am – 6pm
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

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Australia**

- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
- There is no subscription fee.
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- 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.

The One Christ is the Foundation of the One Church

Pope Benedict XVI, Barcelona, 07-12-2010

The Lord Jesus is the stone which supports the weight of the world, which maintains the cohesion of the Church and brings together in ultimate unity all the achievements of mankind. In him, we have God's word and presence and from him the Church receives her life, her teaching and her mission. The Church of herself is nothing; she is called to be the sign and instrument of Christ, in pure docility to his authority and in total service to his mandate. The one Christ is the foundation of the one Church. He is the rock on which our faith is built. Building on this faith, let us strive together to show the world the face of God who is love and the only one who can respond to our yearning for fulfilment.