

# ***Into the Deep***

**Issue 8**

**Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland**

**May 2003**

## **Parishioners Feel Betrayed!**

Reports from a meeting in Traralgon entitled "Life and Leadership in our Parish Communities" (based on Mission Direction 4 of diocesan pastoral plan Journeying Together) indicate that many left with a sick feeling in their stomach. Not only did they hear clear dissent from Church teaching, but they saw our Bishop Jeremiah Coffey sitting by and supporting the anti-Church sentiment.

The Bishop himself gave the opening address. He noted that we need to create a vision of the Church – evidently unaware of or disregarding the fact that it is the Church that gives us vision, not we who must guide the Church. He commented, "You might think you have a vision of the Church that you think is right, and then you don't listen to others."

What about listening to the Magisterium at some stage, Bishop Coffey? Why is this always about us and our ideas and our opinions? The Church offers us the Truth in all its glory and richness, and Journeying Together takes all that away from us and offer us some weak, human substitute.

The Bishop proceeded to say that we're all lazy, priests and laity alike, and we don't know how to share life. Perhaps that's why Journeying Together is such a lifeless program.

He urges us to "put out into the deep" (we liked that reference!) and show courage – that our "present attitude wouldn't launch a duck!" This may be true, but let's draw our courage from Christ and the teachings of His Church, not from a pastoral plan whose primary objective is trying to change the Church. This is clearly beyond the authority of the Bishop and the diocesan pastoral council.

Bishop Coffey gave the reason why Journeying Together is built around 'conversations' – because in conversation we are all equal and we can listen to one another.

Where is the Bishop's hierarchical leadership in our pastoral plan? He claims that Journeying Together is based on Pope John Paul II's 'Novo Millennio Ineunte' and yet in reality he bases it on the outcome of endless human conversations where people full of self-importance can share how to 'right' the 'wrongs' of Church teaching. This is hardly what our Pope had in mind!

*See inside for reports on the other presentations.*

## **Guest Speaker in the Valley**

**Raymond de Souza will be presenting a talk in Traralgon on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Little Theatre in Grey Street.**

In the last 20 years Raymond has given over 2000 talks and seminars on **Catholic Apologetics and evangelisation**.

He has helped organise Religious Education programs in parishes, schools and lay organisations in the United States, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, Brazil, New Zealand, Fiji and Australia.

With the support of Archbishop Barry Hickey, he founded and directs St Gabriel Communications apostolate in the Archdiocese of Perth. It is a lay apostolate of Catholic apologetics and evangelisation whose mission is to present and promote the truths of the Catholic faith in a dynamic and contemporary style.

His talks explain and defend the Catholic faith in an intelligent and charitable manner, and aim to bring about a greater knowledge of and love for the Catholic faith among the laity.

He chairs the Cathedral Branch of the Catholic Order of the Knights of the Southern Cross and is the Perth Co-ordinator for Human Life International and of the Lay Associate members of the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy in Western Australia.

We are delighted that Raymond will be visiting us in Gippsland and warmly invite you to attend.

## **Easter Hope!**

We can suppress Truth, laugh at it, gang up on it, deny it, accuse it of being a lie, condemn it, torture it, kill it, bury it in the grave ... but on the third day Truth will rise again. *From the internet*

"What the Church needs in order to respond to the needs of man in every age is holiness, not management." *Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger*

# Journeying Together Meeting Leads Us Only To Ourselves

The following are further reports from the meeting in Traralgon on "Life and Leadership in our Parish Communities." All reports were compiled and submitted by a number of people who attended the afternoon.

## Fr Krotwaar Teaches Error

Fr Bernard Krotwaar gave a presentation supposedly on parishes in partnership, but it sounded more like an argument against the priesthood.

Fr Krotwaar maintains that Masses are "not of primary importance" when it comes to sharing a priest between two parishes. Masses are only "practical details". What is really important is changing the identity of the church.

In fact, he finds that the shortage of priestly vocations in Australia is really a blessing, because now we can learn what the Church truly is, by empowering and enabling the laity.

The priest's role is no longer one of authority, Fr Krotwaar claims, and the laity's role is no longer to "pray, pay and obey". No, we have grown beyond that and into the wonder of 'collaborative ministry' where all vocations are equal. He even contends that without collaborative ministry "the church will go nowhere"!

Priests who still claim their authority are apparently threatened by loss of their power. Orthodoxy, it appears, is fear-driven.

However, Fr Krotwaar admits that even in collaborative ministry someone must ultimately be in charge – "for better or for worse, this still seems to be the priest." He hastens to add that this "mustn't be viewed in the traditional hierarchical sense," but must involve shared decision-making and consultation. The priest must be brought into discussions so that he can share his views and feelings, but must not be seen as authoritative.

Fr Krotwaar notes that differences of opinion can lead to learning and growth. He implies that there is no Divine revelation, no Magisterium, no ultimate truth, but that all opinions are equally valid and the church/parish priest must take them all into consideration.

How can the Bishop tolerate this sort of talk? How can he relinquish his authority for the sake of keeping up appearances? Why does he continue to recommend Fr Krotwaar as a valuable speaker?

Perhaps Bishop Coffey agrees with Fr Krotwaar's statement that experts shouldn't need "a priest's stamp of approval" to do what they deem to be necessary in a parish. It's all up for grabs. We can shape the church any way we wish, without the need for conformity with the universal Church. The Bishop himself has said in the past, when confronted with the Pope's recommendations, "I'm pope in this diocese."

## Sr Doreen Calls Us All to Lead

Sr Doreen Dagge shares the view that we are all equal, and that the ordained ministry is no more important than any other group or club we may belong to.

She stresses that we are *all* leaders. (Which begs the questions, Who do we lead? Who do we follow? One would think that the church had very adequately addressed this issue already, with the 'sacred order' of hierarchy.)

Interestingly, while we are all supposed leaders, the parish priest must *resist* the temptation to lead. He must try to find his way *with* the parish group so that everyone feels comfortable.

Sr Doreen diagnoses the problem with the Church is that it isn't willing to evaluate. The Church needs *our* wisdom, she maintains.

## Hanney Offers Shallow Substitute

Liz Hanney, the co-ordinator of Journeying Together, was kind enough to ask what words or concepts people were having trouble with in Journeying Together. However, she did not consider these worthy of actually explaining. As was the case through the whole afternoon, there was no option of engaging the presenters by asking questions or raising issues. Only small-group discussions were allowed, and then there was no verbal feedback to the meeting. It seems that 'conversations' are sometimes one-sided.

Ms Hanney drew extensively on 'Novo Millennio Ineunte', but failed to show any real understanding of concepts in the Pope's letter. She reduces his deep understanding of 'communio' (to be in full communion with) to a simple human issue of 'relationships'. This is like equating married love to the relationship you have with your hairdresser.

In terms of working with parish priests, she calls for collaborative relationships. This, according to Ms Hanney, avoids the suggestion that the parish priest is in charge or is responsible for the parish and emphasises rather that we are equal leaders.

She does note (from Novo Millennio) that education in prayer should be the foundation of any pastoral program. However, she then suggests that it is up to us "as leaders in the Church" to lead people to holiness.

Collaboration, says Ms Hanney, "exists because it is right", and "is central to God's plan of salvation"!

Why are ideas such as this propagated and supported by our Bishop and allowed to influence a diocesan pastoral plan?

## Principal's Response

I would expect a Catholic publication at the very least to match the professional ethics of the secular press.

Your decision, without permission, to publish a confidential letter from my Board Chairman to the Chairmen of other School Boards flies in the face of such ethics and scandalizes the Faith to which we both profess.

The electronic media is a wonderfully powerful tool for evangelization but it carries the potential to corrode and divide. With "Into the Deep" you have a unique opportunity to bring together the People of God and despite our separate failings to be an encouragement and support, particularly for those of us who carry the heavy responsibility of educating children.

*Mr Christopher Holt  
Principal Marist-Sion College*

Please be assured, Mr Holt, that while we will protect our sources (as does the secular press) the letters we published were submitted to us for publication and were not marked as confidential in any way. In any case, as this relates to the funding of schools and unfair levies imposed by the Catholic Education Office on those schools, it deserved to be published and discussed by the wider Catholic community. For too long, the CEO has been a law unto itself in both economic and spiritual terms. It must be made accountable in both these fields.

*Ed.*

## New Encyclical on the Eucharist

Pope John Paul II has released a new encyclical, on the Eucharist. Here are some of his reasons for the document:

"The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by him she is fed and by him she is enlightened."

"There are places where there is almost total abandonment of the practice of Eucharistic adoration."

"The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation."

## Selective Apology

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, a Lenten Ritual of Apology was held in parishes throughout the diocese of Sale. A careful reading of the ceremony shows that the apology was very selective in repairing alleged hurts caused by the Church.

For instance, participants were asked to apologise for:

- "When the Church has given religious legitimacy to the false and divisive notion of men's superiority to women.

- When the God-given gifts and intelligence of women have been unrecognised or unwelcomed in the Church and in Christian societies.

- When the Church has promoted the cultural marginalisation of people on the basis of their sexual orientation.

- When Catholic Christians have felt distanced or excluded from parish life: because of differences of opinion, through divorce or remarriage, because of their personal situation and circumstances."

But the crowning insult came with the statements "that the Church has failed in hope, in faith and in love."

Predictably, there was no apology to orthodox Catholics who follow Church teaching but are denigrated and belittled by some bishops, priests and bureaucrats who seem to despise the Church established by Christ and led by our Holy Father.

Nor was there an apology to parents who have entrusted the education of their children to the Catholic schools only to see them lost to the Church because they have not been taught the Catholic faith.

Nor was there an apology for the many priests and bishops who refuse to preach about vital teachings of the Church such as the Mass, marriage, contraception, sin, the salvation of souls, eternal damnation.

Nor was there an apology to teachers such as Greg Kingman at Catholic College Sale when in 1998 he protested in vain to school authorities, in frustration to Catholic Life, and to the Bishop, that the Catholic religion was not being taught in the school. His courageous efforts were rewarded with abuse and he was unjustly forced to leave the school, and has been unable to find employment in the Catholic education system since.

*P.O'Brien, Sale*

## Leadership of the Parish Priest may NOT be weakened, says Pope

"It would be a fatal mistake to be resigned to present difficulties, and act as if we should prepare ourselves for a Church of tomorrow that some imagine as being almost without priests. In this way, the measures adopted to remedy the present scarcity, in spite of all goodwill, would be seriously harmful for the Ecclesial [Church] Community. ... Therefore it will be necessary to guard oneself from any form that tends *de facto* to weaken the leadership of the parish priest, because the very structure of the parish community would be distorted."

*Pope John Paul II, in the Introduction to "The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community"  
Instruction from the Congregation for the Clergy, January 2003*

## Devalue Priest, Devalue Christ

“Stressing the function of the priest in the parish community, one brings to the fore the centrality of Christ...”  
*John Paul II*

## Identity of the Priest

God himself reveals the identity of the priest.

No sociologist can tell you what a priest is. Sociology would only conclude that the priest purveys spiritual services to those who appreciate the place that religion holds in social life.

No psychologist can tell you what a priest is. Psychology would only surmise that the priest offers religious counselling to those who may prefer his availability to that of a secular therapist.

No politician can tell you what a priest is. Politics would only assume that the priest ensures a stability for the secular regime that the public authorities may have difficulty realising.

None of these human enterprises can reveal the essence of the priesthood. Only Christian faith discloses who a priest is.

He must prepare the way of the Lord.

We (priests) begin by recalling our own creaturely condition. We are not the light, but we are sent to testify to the Light. We continue by acknowledging our own sinfulness. We are not worthy to untie the sandals of Christ, but by his gracious mercy we hold in our hands his Body and Blood.

The Christian people need many... holy men to serve as heads and shepherds so that the Baptised can achieve the holiness that the Incarnation of the Son of God introduces into the world.

It comes as an imperishable grace. No political power can capture it. No sociologist can explain it. No psychologist can produce it.

No. The grace of the Incarnation comes as a free and unique gift from God.

*Father Romanus Cessario, professor at St. John's Seminary in the Boston Archdiocese, from Zenit news*

## Alleluia?

From the Hebrew

## Praise ye the Lord!

*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!

John Paul II

## Into the Deep

The purpose of Into the Deep 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.

## Contact Us

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

Or mail to Mr Pat O'Brien, RMB 5165 Gibson's Road, Sale 3850.

Please notify by e-mail if you would like to be added to the regular e-mailing list.

## Letters to the Editor

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters or articles. We cannot guarantee that all will be published, and some will be edited due to space. Please keep letters factual, and report only first-hand information.

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, address and phone number must accompany letters. However, if there is a reasonable request, anonymity will be preserved when publishing.