

Into the Deep

Issue 10

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

July 2003

Come Holy Spirit!

“The Church of Christ is always, so to speak, in a situation of Pentecost: she is always gathered in the Upper Room in prayer, and at the same time, driven by the powerful wind of the Spirit she is always on the streets preaching.

The Church is kept ever young and alive, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, because the Spirit constantly descends upon her in order to remind her of all that the Lord has said to her (Jn14:25) and to guide her into the fullness of truth (Jn16:13).

I offer a special greeting to the many families present here: you are an important part of society and the Church, for ‘marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values’ (Familiaris Consortio, 1).

In contemplating Mary and Joseph as they present the Child Jesus in the Temple or on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Christian parents can see a reflection of themselves as they take part in the Sunday Eucharist with their children or gather in prayer at home.

Nowadays the family requires special consideration and concrete policies aimed at promoting and protecting its essential nature, its development and its stability.

Dear Christian families, do not be afraid to present to others, first and foremost by the witness of your lives, God’s authentic plan for the family as a community of life founded on marriage, in other words, on the stable and faithful union of a man and a woman, bound to each other by a bond which is publicly manifested and recognised.

It is your responsibility to provide for the human and Christian education of your children, trusting also in the expert assistance of committed and well-trained educators and catechists.

Society today is tragically fragmented and divided. This is the reason why it is so desperately unfulfilled. But Christians do not become resigned to weariness or paralysed by inertia. May you be a people of hope! May you be a people which prays: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live’ (Ez37:14).

From the Pope’s Pentecost homily, Croatia, June 2003

Into the Deep Too Negative

I would like to express how disappointed I was with the last edition of Into the Deep.

The paper was full of nothing but negativity - Bishop Coffey, Fr Krotwaar, Liz Hanney, Sr Doreen. Surely something good happened in our diocese in the past month - R.C.I.A candidates being confirmed, baptised into the Catholic faith.

This paper has a great opportunity to evangelise. How can Parish Cell leaders and members be evangelising when they are so full of negativity?

I asked to have my name taken off the mailing list, but, would still like to receive my copy just in case the paper changes direction. I hope you have the courage to print this article just exactly as I have written it.

G. Thomas, Sale

It is indeed sad that there is a need for a publication such as Into the Deep in our diocese. However, there is much happening locally that is unfortunately not in keeping with Church teaching, and there is no other forum for this to be raised or discussed.

The diocesan newspaper, Catholic Life, is full of positivism if that’s what you’re looking for. What we’re trying to do is present the teaching of the Church and evaluate where we are falling short of living this truth. Without accepting that there are things wrong, we have no chance of growing in truth.

For too long, orthodox Catholics have had to put up with modernism and give up their rights. We have a right to the fullness of truth that the Church offers, instead of the pathetic offerings of those who think they know better.

It’s not pretty to look at the gory details of what’s happening. But turning a blind eye, making excuses for failures, or looking at the feel-good things only, is what got us into this negative situation in the first place. Ed.

Truth

“Truth is too strong a word for our ears, which are accustomed to weak thought. To speak of truth in contemporary culture is a provocation and challenge.”

Cardinal Paul Poupard

School Supported?

A policy document for the sacraments of initiation for children was recently released for the Diocese of Sale.

Catholic Life proclaimed it as being family-centred, parish-based, and school- and catechist-supported, and that families could be assured of support from schools in preparing for their sacraments.

Here in the Sale parish a co-ordinator has been appointed to oversee the program. Despite assurances to the contrary, teachers at St Thomas' school were unable to establish which of their students were making their first reconciliation and so were unable to assist with their preparation.

In addition, parents are being billed \$25 for each student for each sacrament. Many are unhappy with both the content of the program and with the financial burden.

All of which poses a question: Why do we spend millions on school fees in 'Catholic' schools and then remove the most critical element of Catholic education - initiation for the Sacraments, from them?

Perhaps it is an oblique admission that 'Catholic' schools are failing in their most important task, which is to pass on the teachings and beliefs of the faith to the next generation.

P.O'Brien, Sale

Fidelity in Celebrating Mass

Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy in Rome, reflects on Pope John Paul II's 'Ecclesia de Eucharistia': "John Paul II reminds priests that it is incumbent on them to uphold the dignity and honour of the Eucharist. He laments the multiple abuses and inappropriate innovations carried out by many priests in the years following the Second Vatican Council, and appeals for a renewed fidelity in celebrating the Eucharist according to Church norms."

100% not 95%

Your publication keeps repeating that the Catholic Education Office has presided over schools where 95% of students graduating are lost to the Church.

The truth is that Catholic education authorities have a 100% failure rate because they are not passing on the truths and beliefs of the Catholic faith.

The 5% who do remain loyal do so in spite of their 'Catholic education', not because of it.

Fr L Cusack, Melbourne

Seduction Into New Age

I would like to congratulate Fr Hengel on his article in Catholic Life (April) warning about the dangers associated with the New Age movement.

Unfortunately some aspects of it are creeping into Catholic literature. I have known of workshops on Enneagrams being held at Catholic centres. The bookshops in Melbourne are full of literature on the New Age movement and young people who are looking to fill their need for spirituality are often seduced into the beliefs of the New Age. It is good that it is beginning to be exposed.

Catholic children need to have an education that is firmly rooted in their Catholic faith so that they will have no need for these alternative and dangerous spiritualities.

M. Tudor, Moe

De Souza's Talk on the Rosary

Those (usually of other faiths) who oppose the prayer of the rosary, often quote Matthew 6:7 which refers to pagans who think by 'speaking much' when they pray (or 'babbling', or using 'vain repetition') they will be heard.

However, Raymond points out that while Jesus condemned babbling in prayer, he taught us to open our hearts and pray the Our Father. It was the prayer he taught his followers and they would have been expected to repeat it.

The Holy Spirit gave us the words to the Hail Mary.

In Luke 11:8, Jesus urges us to pray with persistence. Psalm 136 is a most repetitive psalm, much like a litany. In the agony in the garden, Jesus repeated his prayer three times, in the same words. In the Book of Revelation 4:8, we hear that in heaven "they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and who is to come!'"

Prayer of repetition (and therefore the rosary too) must be profoundly pleasing to God!

However, Raymond warns that to pray the rosary with our thoughts on other things would still amount to meaningless babbling.

He sites three problems in society that can be related to the mysteries:

We don't want to be poor – contemplate the poverty and simplicity in the Joyful Mysteries;

We don't want to suffer – share the Cross of Christ in contemplating the Sorrowful Mysteries;

We live for this world – contemplate and learn to desire eternal life in the Glorious Mysteries.

(Not sure that he's got to the Luminous Mysteries yet...!)

See Good in Journeying Together

I would like to reply to your last edition of Into the Deep where there was reporting on the meeting sponsored by the Latrobe Valley Pastoral Group entitled "Life and Leadership in our Parish Communities".

At that meeting there were in excess of 110 people present. Evaluation sheets were handed out and 70 were returned. Of these 70, 5 expressed dissatisfaction with the day's proceedings ... 5/70 I do not call "many leaving with a sick feeling in their stomach" as you stated! However 5/70 leaving with that feeling is too many and I am sad that they left the day with that feeling.

Journeying Together consulted the People of God - the Hierarchy, the Presbyterate and the laity, to try and formulate a plan for the Diocese of Sale over the next 5 years. We are all journeying together in faith. We are all members of the Church; we all have differing vocations and differing responsibilities flowing from those vocations, BUT we are called to be active and to produce the fruit which the Holy Spirit has graced us to produce.

What would it be like for you and your readers to reflectively read the Journeying Together document again, and to see some good in what the Spirit working in good people has helped to produce so that our Diocese can continue to grow in love and relationship with God and each other.

Would it be possible for you to publish the texts of the three speakers on that day (Fr Krotwaar, Sr Doreen Dagge and Mrs Hanney) so that your readers may read the whole of their talks in context and thus make up their own minds, rather than the snippets that have been published out of context and in a most disrespectful way.

We all need to work together and pray together.

J. Hanrahan p.b.v.m., Moe

70 out of 110 completed their evaluation sheets – maybe the other 40 were too disgusted to bother?

Who is Journeying Together to 'consult' the hierarchy? Consultation cannot take the place of leadership. We are entitled to authentic leadership from the hierarchy of the Church, not from a gathering of common opinions.

We have Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit will never leave His Church. Surely we need to open our hearts to receive the truth, not create our own version of it?

The trouble is, we have read Journeying Together reflectively... and there's not much that's good and wholesome to reflect upon. It's a vacuous document that's all about 'us' and 'our' hopes and understandings and beliefs. It fails to address the core issues. How, for instance, can we bring youth back to the faith without addressing the basic problem of Catholic schools not teaching the Catholic faith?

We'd be hard-pressed to find space to publish the full texts but will publish links if they post their presentations on a website. It would be difficult, however, to justify their comments in any (Catholic) context. Ed.

Notice re Fr Speekman

The following notice appeared in the Morwell Catholic Parish bulletin on 22 June 2003:

"Bishop Coffey has sent further information in response to my decision not to resign. I share it because there are so many rumours damaging my reputation.

The bishop says 'You have not been accused of a canonical offence, nor have you been accused of losing the support of the majority of the people of the Parish of Morwell. However, your priestly ministry at Morwell has become ineffective because of your manner of acting.'

I can now view the 'evidence' for his claims at the Bishop's Office and then I am allowed to provide written objections as to why I should not be removed from the office of Parish Priest of Morwell.

Bishop Coffey again invited me to resign."

Traralgon Speaker's Beliefs

Continuing on the presentation delivered by Paul Denny at Traralgon parish's meeting for the 'Spiritual and Pastoral Visit by Bishop Coffey' in May, Mr Denny's talk on 'Parish Council' included the following advice: (Remember he draws "on the wisdom of God and humans" in this - see June issue of Into the Deep)

"Along the way, there are some serious pitfalls to be avoided.

A. Clericalism. Clericalism is identifying the church with its ordained ministers. The ordained ministers are not the church, the Pope is not the church, the Curia is not the church: we are church."

Later he 'applies' this by suggesting,

"Let us agree not to use the word 'church' unless we mean the whole church."

What an interesting interpretation! One wonders why he thinks it necessary to raise this as such a serious pitfall. Perhaps he agrees with the mistaken notion that the church is free to move away from a hierarchical 'model', and so the less emphasis on clergy the better. Less about 'them' and more about 'us', maybe?

According to the Catechism (para752), "The Church... draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ's Body." Without clergy we have no Body of Christ and therefore no Church.

We can only hope that no one at the meeting (including the Bishop) took him seriously.

Open Letter to Bishop Coffey and Mons D McCartan

I have been living in the Parish of Morwell for fifty-five years and at the moment I am confused and angry at the way the Parish is reacting to the situation of Father Speekman. All I would like to know is the truth and the facts about his [proposed] removal from the Parish.

At this point I would like to refer to the Gospel of Matthew (18:15-20) where Jesus says to his disciples: "If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge" (etc).

According to Father this was not carried out. Why? When the decree was read at Mass (last June) Father was on holidays. Father has told me he did not know the decree was to be read out nor was it explained to him at the time. Why? Furthermore, Father stated Mons D McCartan told him that unless he changes his attitude he would suspend him but did not explain what he was doing wrong. Why?

I posted a letter to Mons McCartan (16.09.02) expressing my concerns. I received no reply so I phoned Mons McCartan about six weeks later. He told me that Father knew about the decree prior to it being read out so I suggested he come down to Morwell and front Father in front of the Parish so we could find out the truth. He flatly refused. Why? He also added that Father needs lots and lots of prayers said for him but gave no reasons. Why?

I phoned Bishop Coffey later on last year and suggested the same thing but he told me he was going to see Father to sort things out. Six months later he approached Father and asked him to resign, without giving him a reason. Why?

Surely common sense says that all parties concerned in this dispute sit down with an open discussion with the Parish, so the truth can be judged by the Parish and put a stop to the rumours.

T. J. Watts, Morwell

Problem Defined

While Catholic education authorities refuse to accept they are largely responsible for the fact that 95% of students in Catholic schools leave the Church despite twelve years under their jurisdiction, an editorial in the Herald Sun (16-06-03) is in little doubt as to the cause.

Commenting on an interview with Sydney Archbishop George Pell, the editorial says that Pell's strong stand on Church teaching is hard to comprehend in a materialistic and morally liberal society.

"That does not mean it is wrong, but is the traditional teaching being properly explained to the young? It would seem not."

If an editorial in a secular newspaper is able to define the problem, why can't Catholic education authorities accept responsibility for their failure?

Mother Angelica's Humour

You have to distinguish between the orthodox church and the electric church – with the latter, every time you go to church you get another shock!

Holy Communion to Non-Catholics

As a teenager I can remember not being allowed to attend a close friend's funeral because she was an Anglican, and not being able to be bridesmaid to a close friend because she was getting married in an Anglican church. This upset me greatly. I'm glad that things have changed in that respect and that we can attend church services of other denominations.

However, I understood that it was just to *attend* a service, not to participate in the receiving of Communion.

Therefore, it saddens me greatly that in my parish I see the priest giving Holy Communion to people of other denominations. Priests - Fr Malcolm Hewitt and Fr Brendan Hogan - in St. Colman's Parish Orbost have been giving Communion to members of the congregation that are members of other church denominations when they attend Mass at St. Colman's. Of those receiving communion one is a parent of students in the primary school and one is a staff member of the school. I am not saying that these people are not Christian, they are lovely people. However, they are not Catholic, and therefore should not be allowed to receive Communion in a Catholic Church. Priests should not bend rules just to "keep the peace" or because they are afraid of offending people. Priests are supposed to be faithful to Church teaching.

K. Doherty, Marlo

"The Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church." *Catechism para.1395*

On Receiving Holy Communion

The following is part of a letter from Fr John Speekman to his parishioners, that was attached to the Morwell Catholic Parish Bulletin on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Every one of us who calls himself or herself Catholic has a grave obligation to attend the Eucharist *every* Sunday¹ unless for a serious reason we are unable to be there. No one is free to change this precept of the Church. It is simply a part of what it means to be a Catholic.

If you deliberately miss Mass without serious reason, you commit a grave (mortal) sin².

Do you know what a grave sin really is³? It is the most serious sin because it causes us to lose our baptismal innocence and our communion with God and his Church.

To receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin is to make what is called a 'sacrilegious⁴ Communion'. A sacrilegious Communion is a terrible sin. It must be confessed as a separate grave sin.

My friends, if you thought you had cancer, or heart disease, you would immediately make an appointment to see the doctor. You wouldn't delay even one day. And yet mortal sin is much worse than cancer. Cancer can kill your body but mortal sin is a terminal disease of your soul – and if you die in this condition you are lost forever⁵.

If you are aware of having committed a mortal sin by missing Mass or some other sin: e.g. fornication, adultery, stealing, slander, etc ... you are obliged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation first, before you go to Communion⁶.

My dear people, we can all keep the laws regarding the reception of Holy Communion; all it means is a good confession.

Examine your conscience first. Give this exercise plenty of time and prayer. All your mortal sins must be confessed so you need to bring them all to mind. Then just confess them. It's not so hard to do. Just be simple and humble about this. The priest will help if he sees you are struggling.⁷

Catechism of the Catholic Church

¹ **Paragraph 2181:** The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.[119]

² **Paragraph 2181:** Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

³ **Paragraph 1472:** ... Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life ...

⁴ **Paragraph 2120:** Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us.[52]

⁵ **Paragraph 1033:** To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state ... is called "hell."

⁶ **Paragraph 1385:** ... St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." [216] Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

⁷ **Paragraph 1493:** One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.

Journeying to Nowhere

A Journeying Together meeting in Sale on 24 May involving the parishes of Sale, Maffra and Heyfield, was notable for two reasons.

Firstly, when the meeting opened without the traditional Sign of the Cross or a prayer seeking God's blessing, a Sale parishioner rose and protested. He pointed out that the meeting would have been better to spend some time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in the Church next door. With that, the Sacramental Co-ordinator for Sale parish, Maria Haggett, vigorously protested. "You people! No wonder young people don't attend these meetings. I have had enough and am leaving," she proclaimed as she stormed out of the meeting. Those attending were flabbergasted that a Sacramental Co-ordinator could object to prayer and adoration before a meeting of Catholics. Perhaps that is why her program receives much criticism in Sale.

The second feature of the meeting was the dearth of ideas for the future. The only action decided by the Sale contingent was to hold a cup of tea after Sunday Mass. Problems facing the Sale diocese would hardly seem to be solved with a cup of tea.

One participant commented that we seem to be journeying to nowhere. "We discussed the same issues twelve months ago. Nothing has happened since," he said.

P.O'Brien. Sale

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2.00pm First Friday 11.30am – 6.00pm
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10.30am – 11.30am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11.00am – 12 noon
Morwell	Thursday 9.00pm – Friday 9.00pm

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

“Perpetual Adoration is the most beautiful thing you could ever think of doing. People are hungry for God.”

Mother Teresa

Our Vocation is Holiness

“What is the vocation of a Christian?”

The answer is demanding, but clear: the vocation of a Christian is holiness.

It is a vocation which has its roots in Baptism and is proposed anew by the other sacraments, and principally by the Eucharist.

Consequently there are essential questions to which we continually need to respond:

What have I done with my Baptism and my Confirmation? Is Christ truly the centre of my life? Do I give space to prayer during my day? Do I live my life as a vocation and a mission?

Do not grow discouraged in the face of complex situations! Seek in prayer the source of all strength for the apostolate and draw from the Gospel the light to guide your steps.”

From a homily by John Paul II, June 2003

Hope in Times of Trial

On the solemnity of Corpus Christi, Pope John Paul II said the Eucharist is the source of hope for the faithful in the face of earthly life’s challenges.

He hoped that each one of the faithful, nourished by Christ in the Eucharist, “will be able to face with hopeful confidence any trial in life.”

“The Bishop of Rome, Successor of Peter, his brothers in the episcopate and priesthood, all religious, the consecrated laity, and all the baptised live from the Eucharist,” he said.

“Christian families in particular live from the Eucharist,” as it is the nourishment to continue “in the way of conjugal and family holiness,” John Paul II added.

www.zenit.org

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

Consecrate?

From the Latin

Make Holy

Contact Into the Deep

E-mail stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au

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

Into the Deep, PO Box 446, Traralgon 3844

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.

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.