

Into the Deep

Issue 102

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

March 2011

Be Transformed

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 17-02-2010

“Remember man that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return.”

The little gesture of the imposition of ashes reveals to us the singular richness of its meaning: It is an invitation to live the time of Lent as a more conscious and more intense immersion in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, in his death and resurrection, through participation in the Eucharist and in the life of charity, which stems from the Eucharist and in which it finds its fulfilment.

With the imposition of ashes we renew our commitment to follow Jesus, to allow ourselves to be transformed by his Paschal Mystery, to overcome evil and do good, to have the “old man” in us die, the one linked to sin, and to have the “new man” be born, transformed by the grace of God.

Walk Resolutely Towards Christ

From Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten Message, 2011

The Lenten journey, in which we are invited to contemplate the Mystery of the Cross, is meant to reproduce within us “the pattern of his death” (Ph 3: 10), so as to effect a deep conversion in our lives; that we may be transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit, like St Paul on the road to Damascus; that we may firmly orient our existence according to the will of God; that we may be freed of our egoism, overcoming the instinct to dominate others and opening us to the love of Christ. The Lenten period is a favourable time to recognize our weakness and to accept, through a sincere inventory of our life, the renewing Grace of the Sacrament of Penance, and walk resolutely towards Christ.

You Can Do It!

Lenten 40 Days For Life

This autumn, from March 9 (Ash Wednesday) to April 17 (Palm Sunday) our community is again uniting with hundreds of other cities around the world for the largest and longest coordinated pro-life movement in history.

The 40 Days for Life campaign recognizes that “with God all things are possible.” People of faith are praying that this campaign will help bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

40 Days for Life is a focused pro-life campaign that has motivated over 400,000 people worldwide, saved more than 3,599 lives from abortion, led to the conversion of 43 abortion workers, and closed 9 abortion facilities. Simply put, God has used this campaign to save lives and renew hope to end abortion but He needs YOU!

He calls YOU to join together with believers throughout our state for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting and peaceful vigil outside the Fertility Control Clinic, 118 Wellington Parade, Melbourne East, between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm during the times of your choice.

Learn how you can speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves by contacting me at fonsforlife@skymesh.com.au, phone 5194-2340, mobile 0429-181-897; or Trudi on 0407-350-948, tarashi@bigpond.com.au; or by visiting www.40daysforlife.com/melbourne.

Commit yourself to timeslot(s) on our website or contact one of us. Being a prayer warrior is a great Lenten sacrifice!

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” Matt 25: 40-41

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during the campaign.

Fons Janssen, Willung South, Vic

[See launch details p.11 this issue. - Ed.]

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

A Conversation of Love

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 17-11-2010

I would like to affirm with joy that today in the Church there is a “Eucharistic springtime”: How many persons pause silently before the Tabernacle to spend time in a conversation of love with Jesus! It is consoling to know that not a few groups of young people have rediscovered the beauty of praying in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament. ...

I pray that this Eucharistic “springtime” will spread increasingly in every parish...

The Venerable John Paul II, in the encyclical “Ecclesia de Eucharistia,” said: “In many places, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness. The devout participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is a grace from the Lord which yearly brings joy to those who take part in it.” (no. 10)

... As we are taught by the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in a unique and incomparable way. He is present in a true, real and substantial way, with his Body and his Blood, with his Soul and his Divinity. In the Eucharist, therefore, there is present in a sacramental way, that is, under the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, Christ whole and entire, God and Man.” (no. 282)

Dear friends, fidelity to the encounter with the Eucharistic Christ in Sunday’s Holy Mass is essential for the journey of faith, but let us try as well to frequently go to visit the Lord present in the Tabernacle!

Gazing in adoration at the consecrated Host, we discover the gift of the love of God, we discover the passion and the cross of Jesus, and also his Resurrection. Precisely through our gazing in adoration, the Lord draws us to himself, into his mystery, to transform us as he transforms the bread and wine.

The saints always found strength, consolation and joy in the Eucharistic encounter.

With the words of the Eucharistic hymn “Adoro te devote,” let us repeat before the Lord, present in the Most Blessed Sacrament: “Make me believe ever more in You, that in You I may have hope, that I may love You!”

[Translation by Zenit] www.zenit.org 17-11-2010

Advice from Mother Teresa

“If I can give you any advice, I beg you to get closer to the Eucharist and to Jesus... We must pray to Jesus to give us that tenderness of the Eucharist.”

The Lost Sheep

Late last year, after previously being widowed, I got married once more, to a lady who was also widowed.

We had a Catholic wedding service at which a local Church of Christ minister was also present. My wife (when on her own previously and had no car) became alienated from her only accessible Catholic parish from indifference shown by fellow worshippers. As a consequence she then started attending a Church of Christ community within walking distance of her home and now has involvement with their services.

Since becoming married, she attends Catholic Mass with me on Sundays and I go along to her services as well.

Her community is so vibrant and friendly and shows a great love towards Jesus and the Scriptures. I can see where her emotional attachment there has been so beneficial for her spirituality.

However, what surprised me even more is that their membership is mainly made up of former Catholics who have been alienated from the Catholic Church for one reason or another. They have found their deep love of God there as an alternative. And even more surprising, they don’t speak ill of the Catholic Church in any way.

It has made me conscious that from times when the Church did appear somewhat cold and uncaring, it has never made a unified approach to contacting many of these souls with the theme of welcoming them back to Catholic practice.

Years ago I was involved with our local Neighbouring Visitation program which had some success. Since then, a lack of willing/able participants has seen this fall by the wayside although there are now signs of moving into that area once more.

I feel sure that, because of His love towards sinners and those who have previously felt on the outer, Jesus would wish us (as a Church of His founding) to make more of a concerted effort to reach out to others in love.

We also need to pray for our Church leaders more, get them to be pro-active in this way, and to support them personally with our efforts to assist.

I would be interested in what our readers think too!

Errol Duke, Elizabeth East, South Australia

“Whoever participates in the Holy Mass stands almost on the threshold of the heavenly sphere, from which he contemplates the worship carried out by the angels and the saints.”

Pope Benedict XVI, 25-10-2010

Know What You Believe!

Pope Benedict XVI

in his preface to "Youcat", the new catechism for youth

Dear friends, young people! Today I counsel you to read an extraordinary book. ...

Some persons tell me that the Catechism does not interest today's youth, but I do not believe this affirmation and I am sure I am right.

Young people want to know what life truly consists of. ... This book is fascinating because it speaks to us of our very destiny and that is why it concerns each one of us very closely. Because of this I invite you: Study the Catechism! This is my heartfelt wish.

[I]t does not offer easy solutions; it calls for a new life on your part; it presents to you the message of the Gospel as the 'precious pearl' for which there is need to give everything.

Because of this I ask you: Study the Catechism with passion and perseverance! Sacrifice your time for it! Study it in the silence of your room, read it together, if you are friends, form groups and study networks, exchange ideas on the Internet. In any case remain in dialogue on your faith.

You must know what you believe; you must know your faith with the same precision with which a specialist in information technology knows the working system of a computer; you must know it as a musician knows his piece; yes, you must be much more profoundly rooted in the faith of the generation of your parents, to be able to resist forcefully and with determination the challenges and temptations of this time.

www.zenit.org 04-03-2011

Bishops to Set Out Into the Deep

Pope Benedict XVI to new bishops, 05-02-2011

"Duc in altum" (Luke 5:4) – Set out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Jesus said this to Peter and his companions when he called them to become "fishers of men."

"Duc in altum" – Pope John Paul II, in his last years, took up these words again in a powerful way and proclaimed them in a loud voice to the Lord's disciples today.

"Duc in altum" – the Lord says to you in this hour, dear friends. You are called to posts that are related to the universal Church. You are called to cast the net into the troubled sea of our time to bring men to follow Christ; to draw them out, so to speak, of the salty waters of death and darkness into which the light of heaven does not penetrate. You must bring them to the shore of life, into communion with Jesus Christ.

[Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic] www.zenit.org 06-02-2011

Pope John Paul the Great

Although we regularly refer to Pope John Paul the Great, that title has not been sanctioned by the Church. I have often wondered if the Church would ever proclaim John Paul "Great". It appears that hope is at hand.

May I introduce you to a small web site with a big message? I hope you like it because it is somewhat like a meteor, it will only exist in the ether till the end of April. It is in five languages (English, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish) and can be accessed at www.blessedpopejohnpaulthegreat.com. This is what it says:

Blessed Pope John Paul the Great

Pope Benedict will beatify Pope John Paul II on Sunday 1st May 2011.

At present many Catholics around the world unofficially refer to that wonderful pope as "Pope John Paul the Great" (as is evidenced by the fact that Google records this title countless times); however, he has never been officially declared "Great" by The Church.

Perhaps if thousands of us were immediately to write a letter or send an email to Pope Benedict humbly requesting him to use the forthcoming occasion of the beatification of Pope John Paul to refer to him as "Blessed Pope John Paul the Great" it would bring great joy to the heart of millions of people.

All we need to write is:

"Dear Holy Father, May I humbly request you to use the forthcoming occasion of the beatification of Pope John Paul II to refer to this wonderful pope in your sermon as Blessed Pope John Paul the Great."

Please write "Pope John Paul" on the top left hand side of your envelope. You can mail your letter to:

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, Vatican City

Or email benedictxvi@vatican.va.

Pat Ryan, London UK

Gradual Deepening

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 02-02-2011

Prayer is life and it develops gradually at the same pace with the growth of the Christian life: It begins with vocal prayer, passes to interiorization through meditation and recollection, until it attains union of love with Christ and with the Most Holy Trinity. Obviously, it is not a development in which going up to the higher steps means leaving behind the preceding type of prayer, but is rather a gradual deepening of the relationship with God, which envelops our whole life.

www.zenit.org 02-02-2011

Dealing With Original Sin

As children at primary school we heard about sin, even Original Sin. We didn't really understand it, but accepted it as part of being Catholic.

At secondary school we learned a bit more – that because of Original Sin, our minds were darkened and our wills weakened. Still we didn't grasp what that implied, but accepted what we were taught.

In later adult life I have often wondered, and suppose that it is a doctrine about human nature. If what we were taught as children is right, then somehow our intellect is blinded and our will is easily led astray.

Experience shows that we don't know everything, and even what we do know we don't fully understand. Every time we learn something new or design a new invention, new dimensions and implications soon show how short-sighted we are.

New things pose new possibilities for us, with new choices to be made, and we are not always up to it. We can't be bothered, become tired, battle-weary, hurt, etc.

This brings home some measure of truth about what we learned as children when told of Original Sin. My best grasp of it now is to watch the evening news on TV or read in the daily papers of the scandals about crime and corruption. Is this not how Original Sin reveals itself in real life?

I expect that the Church understands all this, so I wonder why we don't hear much of it in sermons these days.

Armies around the world belong to the secular world, yet in the army the need for authority is understood so well that there are ranks and uniforms to define it. Rank is what matters, and it resolves day-to-day doubts. Saluting the uniform is practical maintenance of authority.

If armies function even with disbelievers, why do not bishops, priests and religious believe in the need for authority? Have we too many weak personalities? Leadership is about knowing where to go, how to get there, and courage in hard times.

Society in general might not have much respect for authority, but we need it, as ordinary human beings. As Catholics we need it to help us control the effects of Original Sin in our lives.

S.C., Melbourne

Fasting From Images

Pope Benedict XVI, 07-02-2008

"It seems to me that the time of Lent should be a time of fasting from words and images, because we need a little silence, a little space, without being constantly bombarded with images. We need to create spaces of silence ... to open our hearts to the true image, to the true Word."

Commitment to Conversion

From Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten Message, 2011

Through the traditional practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, which are an expression of our commitment to conversion, Lent teaches us how to live the love of Christ in an ever more radical way.

Fasting – far from depressing

Fasting, which can have various motivations, takes on a profoundly religious significance for the Christian: by rendering our table poorer, we learn to overcome selfishness in order to live in the logic of gift and love; by bearing some form of deprivation – and not just what is in excess – we learn to look away from our "ego", to discover Someone close to us and to recognize God in the face of so many brothers and sisters. For Christians, fasting, far from being depressing, opens us ever more to God and to the needs of others, thus allowing love of God to become also love of our neighbour.

Almsgiving – capacity to share

... The greed of possession leads to violence, exploitation and death; for this, the Church, especially during the Lenten period, reminds us to practice almsgiving – which is the capacity to share. The idolatry of goods, on the other hand, not only causes us to drift away from others, but divests man, making him unhappy, deceiving him, deluding him without fulfilling its promises, since it puts materialistic goods in the place of God, the only source of life. How can we understand God's paternal goodness, if our heart is full of egoism and our own projects, deceiving us that our future is guaranteed? The temptation is to think, just like the rich man in the parable: "My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come...". We are all aware of the Lord's judgment: "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul..." (Lk12: 19-20). The practice of almsgiving is a reminder of God's primacy and turns our attention towards others, so that we may rediscover how good our Father is, and receive his mercy.

Prayer – intimate communion with Him

... By meditating and internalizing the Word in order to live it every day, we learn a precious and irreplaceable form of prayer; by attentively listening to God, who continues to speak to our hearts, we nourish the itinerary of faith initiated on the day of our Baptism. Prayer also allows us to gain a new concept of time: without the perspective of eternity and transcendence, in fact, time simply directs our steps towards a horizon without a future. Instead, when we pray, we find time for God, to understand that his "words will not pass away" (cf. Mk 13: 31), to enter into that intimate communion with Him "that no one shall take from you" (Jn 16: 22), opening us to the hope that does not disappoint, eternal life.

www.zenit.org 22-02-2011

The “Spirit of Vatican II” Myth

I have never read such an absurd tirade against Popes, the priesthood and the Church’s teaching on faith and morals by a Catholic priest.

John Henderson’s article ‘Pope Eric the First’ in January’s ITD (p.3) brings to our attention the battle that the National Council of Priests is waging against Holy Mother Church, and exposes the NCP magazine, *The Swag*, as being in public opposition to the Pope.

Why was *The Swag* allowed to publish Fr Hodggen’s scandalous article? At least some higher Church authority stopped it from being published on *CathNews* (much to Fr Hodggen’s disgust, as he noted on Fr Peter Kennedy’s South Brisbane website).

The NCP laid bare the true “spirit of Vatican II” at its recent conference, but for years *The Swag* has been allowed to cultivate that spirit – a spirit that is nothing more than a slogan, a myth based on the dreams and hopes of the left-worshipping radicals who unsuccessfully lobbied for change at the Council.

This alleged “spirit of Vatican II” misrepresented the intentions of the Council Fathers. In fact, not a single doctrine of belief formally defined by the Church was changed and nor did any of the 16 Council documents cast doubt on or question them or propose new ones. What the documents show is that the Fathers of the Council reaffirmed the doctrines of faith as handed down by the Apostolic Tradition.

Contrary to this often-invoked spirit, the Council did not change the requirement for all Catholics to attend Mass on Sundays, or to observe some penitential practice on Fridays; it did not call for the general use of the third rite of reconciliation, the abolition of the Latin Mass, or the removal of altar rails and tabernacles from sanctuaries; it did not call for religious and priests to remove their habits, soutanes or collars. None of the constitutional documents called for the democratization of the Church, lay leadership in parishes or an increase in liberal activism in dioceses.

One call which the Council did in fact make, and which these “spirit of Vatican II” priests all too conveniently forget, was the universal call to holiness (*Lumen Gentium* 5, 39-42) – a call which is still the same today as it was before the Council and will be for ages to come. This holiness to which we are all called cannot take root in a spirit of disobedience, defiance, dissent, opposition and rebelliousness.

Fr Hodggen’s article was a reflection of a priest who confided his priesthood to the “spirit of Vatican II” myth, a priest whose identity and spirituality was formed and shaped by a spirit of change, contradiction, defiance, and dissent; a priest convinced that Vatican II was some sort of super-council, the origin of Catholic Christianity, a council that superseded all previous councils and redefined the priesthood.

In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald online (28-01-2011) Fr Hodggen continued his ranting dissent, calling for a change in “policies” that alienate lapsed Catholics. He thinks that the Church will grow if divorced and remarried Catholics are allowed to receive Holy Communion; practising homosexuals are welcomed to Communion; women are allowed to become priests; contraception, abortion and IVF are considered acceptable. Fr Hodggen believes that most “involved Catholics” are open on these matters.

The Church in Australia is littered with priests like this. They no longer know who they are, what they have become and who or what they have been sent to preach. And, as disgraceful and flagrant as their opposition might be, the real scandal and tragedy of course, is caused by bishops who entrust the salvation of thousands of souls to these lost priests.

For many years priests like Fr Hodggen and Fr Kennedy were allowed to disregard core Church doctrines and disciplines, to violate Canon law, abandon communion with the Pope and use their authority to lead their parishes astray without having to face any consequences. Bishops, who have all the necessary powers to guard the faithful and preserve the unity and mission of the Church, failed to act against these wolves.

Bishops not only accommodated these “spirit of Vatican II priests” but elevated them to positions of leadership, while dealing heavy-handedly with any orthodox priests who questioned their inaction or stood up for Church teaching.

Fr Speekman is a case in point. In Bishop Coffey’s first decree of removal he admitted that, “Fr Speekman is a very good and deeply spiritual man. He is intensely passionate in his love for the Church, and in his vision for the spread of the Gospel. He certainly brings the best out of devout people.” But he removed him anyway, because the liberals didn’t like him. Yet the “spirit of Vatican II” priests in the diocese are allowed to cause untold damage to the faith and undermine unity, cost-free.

Fr Speekman was an orthodox pastor of souls, who took seriously his priestly and canonical duty to catechise the faithful so that through doctrinal formation, the faith of his parishioners could be living, manifest and active. Yet he was swiftly removed from his parish for “ineffective ministry” the first time, and then two years later, when he wasn’t even in his diocese, for “disturbance to communion”.

The “spirit of Vatican II” is nothing but a big myth. But it is one that explains plenty – from aspects of the Fr Speekman scandal to a culture of seeming impunity for the “spirit of Vatican II” priests.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

The Desolation of Feeling Betrayed

I am someone who can empathize with the desolation of those who have been betrayed by the very people who should have supported them (e.g. the author of “Nun So Blind”, ITD Nov 2010, p.9).

In 2008 when pro-life Victorians were battling the horrendous Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008, those of us who were leaders of the active pro-life organisations were banned by the Respect Life Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne from attending a meeting at Parliament House, Melbourne, at which the keynote speaker was Gianna Jessen, an abortion survivor.

Among those banned were Margaret Tighe of Right to Life Australia, Denise Cameron of Pro Life Victoria, Peter and Jenny Stokes of Salt Shakers, my husband Charles Francis, AM, QC, and myself. We were banned because the Respect Life Office in collaboration with the Australian Christian Lobby apparently wanted to present “a fresh new face” to the MPs, so veteran pro-lifers were banned, even though some of us had been invited to attend by pro-life MPs.

At the time my husband Charles was suffering from terminal cancer, but he spent his last months using his legal skills to oppose the Abortion Bill. The Respect Life Office not only failed to recognize the expertise of those involved in opposing abortion over the years, but in particular failed to recognise that Charles, a former State MP, had during his legal career as a Queens Counsel won settlements for women damaged by abortion.

That the Respect Life Office strategy was not only un-Christian but stupid was evident in the result: Victoria now has the second-worst abortion legislation in the world, second only to China where abortion is generally compulsory after one child.

After the elections in November 2010 we now have more pro-life MPs in the current Victoria Parliament but this is largely due to the efforts of the banned organisations, some of whom formed a Life Coalition, and others who worked through Right to Life Australia and Pro-Life Victoria, supporting minor pro-life parties and pro-life candidates in the major parties. This achievement offers hope for the future, but is no thanks to the Respect Life Office which has never apologised to any of the active pro-life leaders for its mistaken strategy.

The Respect Life Offices work well in Sydney and Perth but in Melbourne has effectively estranged itself from the major pro-life organisations in Victoria.

Babette Francis, Melbourne

*National & Overseas Co-ordinator,
Endeavour Forum Inc. (NGO having special consultative status
with the Economic & Social Council of the UN)*

Baptism Connected to Lent

From Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten Message, 2011

“You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him.” (cf. Col 2: 12)

The Lenten period, which leads us to the celebration of Holy Easter, is for the Church a most valuable and important liturgical time, in view of which I am pleased to offer a specific word in order that it may be lived with due diligence. ...

The fact that, in most cases, Baptism is received in infancy highlights how it is a gift of God: no one earns eternal life through their own efforts. The mercy of God, which cancels sin and, at the same time, allows us to experience in our lives “the mind of Christ Jesus”, is given to men and women freely. ...

A particular connection binds Baptism to Lent as the favourable time to experience this saving Grace. ...

In order to undertake more seriously our journey towards Easter and prepare ourselves to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord – the most joyous and solemn feast of the entire liturgical year – what could be more appropriate than allowing ourselves to be guided by the Word of God? For this reason, the Church, in the Gospel texts of the Sundays of Lent, leads us to a particularly intense encounter with the Lord, calling us to retrace the steps of Christian initiation...

By immersing ourselves into the death and resurrection of Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are moved to free our hearts every day from the burden of material things, from a self-centred relationship with the “world” that impoverishes us and prevents us from being available and open to God and our neighbour. In Christ, God revealed himself as Love.

The Cross of Christ, the “word of the Cross”, manifests God’s saving power (cf. 1Cor1:18), that is given to raise men and women anew and bring them salvation: it is love in its most extreme form.

www.zenit.org 22-02-2011

God Excludes No One

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, 31-10-2010

God excludes no one, neither the poor nor the rich. God does not let himself be conditioned by our human prejudices, but sees in everyone a soul to save and is especially attracted to those who are judged as lost and who think themselves so. Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God, has demonstrated this immense mercy, which takes nothing away from the gravity of sin, but aims always at saving the sinner, at offering him the possibility of redemption, of starting over from the beginning, of converting.

www.zenit.org 31-10-2010

On Being Catholic

In 1987 I was one of six deacons at St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria being prepared for the Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree by those wonderful Irish Franciscans who taught us, as they had taught South Africa's diocesan clergy for forty years before.

We were given the following guidelines for preparation by our sacramentology professor, Fr Matthew Macdonald OFM: Suppose that, as a priest, an intelligent and educated layman stops you on a street corner and asks you a question about any aspect of Catholic teaching. Could you give him a cogent answer on the spot?

That was a yardstick, not just for the completion of a degree, but for a life of pastoral ministry. I have never forgotten that answer. It was one of the best pieces of advice I was ever given as a priest-to-be.

The other was by one of the other professors, Fr Bonaventure Hinwood OFM, an eccentric but kindly man of extreme common sense who taught us dogma. The most important thing, he told us, is not to be a modern Catholic or a progressive Catholic or a traditional Catholic or any other special kind of Catholic; it is simply to be Catholic, a member of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; an ordinary Catholic.

From the holy founder of my Congregation, we can learn the vital difference between ordinariness and mediocrity. In the early 1500's, when the missionary Letters from India of St Francis Xavier were causing a stir in Europe, Philip Neri and his nascent community wondered whether they should join the great mission to evangelise India. An old hermit near Tre Fontane just outside Rome, whom he consulted, advised him: "Rome shall be your Indies." In other words, God was not calling Philip to exotic places and exotic tasks; there was enough to do right under his nose in Rome.

From this grew the Oratorian idea of the "ordinary way to holiness": that the immediate, everyday things surrounding us are paths to holiness if we offer them up truly to God. *To be ordinary does not mean to be mediocre*; the everyday and ordinary can be lived out with excellence. Housewife and mother, school-teacher, bank clerk, gardener; these humble callings can be paths to holiness as surely as being a preacher in exotic climes.

Would that we could learn this lesson in the Church. There is indifference and mediocrity everywhere, from clergy to laity. A priest should be a man of profound prayer, and he should never cease to study, throughout his life. A perfunctory reading of the daily Office does not begin to satisfy this need. No matter how busy we might be, priests have to *make* time for

private prayer, and to pray especially for those whom we serve.

Listening to some sermons, one could be forgiven for wondering if the preacher has opened a single book since he left the seminary. Study is essential to a priest's continued ministry, for an ongoing renewal and enrichment of the message that he delivers. I believe that a fair proportion of priestly "burn-out" is due to an endless round of tramping within an increasingly confined mental circle, a life made narrow and tedious by lack of renewal in study and prayer.

But lay people, too, have a task here. The first is to pray ardently for their priests, no matter who or what, and to support them in their priestly ministry. You have no idea to what degree positive comments and encouragement can build up a priest. Most of what he tends to hear is negative.

And there is nothing to stop lay people from studying their faith independently as well.

There are always priests ready to help, even to give instruction, though you might have to look around a bit. The Oratory in Port Elizabeth, for example, has a Newman Society on the first Wednesday of every second month, alternating with a Music Association. There are priests who would be happy to offer adult courses, if they only thought that there were Catholics interested in hearing them.

But the great thing is simply to do what the Church does. This applies to us all. We have everything we could possibly need, and more. An infallible Teaching Office; seven Sacraments, moments of intense encounter between ourselves and the Lord Jesus; a magnificent, simple yet moving liturgy in the Eucharist; the most profound book ever written, Holy Scripture, an inexhaustible well of inspiration. It is all in our hands. All we have to do is simply, humbly and obediently take hold of these incalculable gifts and use them to serve God with *excellence*.

As a convert, the Church is the most precious thing on earth to me. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" There really *is* nowhere else to go. But with what the Church has to offer us, why should we *need* to go anywhere else?

On converts, just one last thing. Many years ago a Calvinist friend converted to Catholicism, to great opposition from his family. His father inadvertently described the Catholic Church as a "sheep in wolf's clothing", thus hitting upon a great truth. Perhaps it is time for us to unmask this savage sheep, and to reveal it as the spotless lamb that it really is. What a joy that would be to us all!

*Rev. Fr Phillip Vietri C.O., Oratory of St Philip Neri
Port Elizabeth, South Africa*

Prayer is Not Time Wasted

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 02-02-2011

St Teresa of Avila is an authentic teacher of Christian life for the faithful in all times. In our society, often lacking in spiritual values, St Teresa teaches us to be tireless witnesses of God, of His presence and His work. ... May the example of this profoundly contemplative and industrious saint, encourage us to dedicate adequate time to daily prayer, to openness to God in order to discover His friendship and so to discover true life. ... Time spent in prayer is not lost; it is a time in which we open the way to life, learning to love God and His Church ardently, and to show real charity towards our neighbours.

Vatican Information Service 02-02-2011

Better Ideas for Mass

There was an article in CathNews recently (03-02-2011) by Sr Carmel Pilcher, who is noted as being a *Sister of St Joseph based in Sydney who works as a liturgical consultant*.

A religious sister, and a liturgical consultant. Surprising then, to read her apparent disdain for the Mass.

Her article was about natural disasters in Australia and how priests should take the opportunity to celebrate Mass in a “raw” context (e.g. standing in the sludge of a flood) instead of a church, because the Mass would take on new significance that way.

Poor Mass. So insignificant that it needs something contextual to make it relevant.

She refers with scorn to “some Catholic leaders” who have as their “primary preoccupation ... ensuring the dignity and sacredness of the Mass”, and she mocks the attention paid to “the wafting smell of incense, beautifully embroidered vestments and the gold of chalices and patens”.

As opposed to this, Sr Carmel says, “Others recognise that Christ is present in the very human experiences of our lives, and these become the focus of the liturgy.” And she wants “space for people’s stories in our worship”.

She concludes by suggesting that “for people living the paschal mystery” it might feel more sacred to them if Mass was celebrated without a church, without vestments and without gold chalices.

It really sounds like Sr Carmel thinks Mass would be much better with us and our experiences as the focus instead of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Come to think of it, that way we could do away with the Mass altogether and have community gatherings instead (wouldn’t need those inadequate men-priests then either).

- Ed.

Remember You Are Dust

By Anne Onumos

Our Lenten journey is about to begin
A time of reflection; to turn from all sin.
As we come forward the ash to receive
Ask God from our hearts that we truly believe.

May Christ’s bitter Passion consume all our minds
In these forty days to Christ’s will be resigned.
Remember we’re dust and to dust we’ll return
A life full of virtue all men should so yearn.

From sin turn away and believe in the Gospel
Words one should not take as something mere
trifle.

An inner conversion should be our intent
And not only now also way beyond Lent!

Turn to Our Lady the Virgin most Holy
May She assist us Her children so lowly.
To carry our Crosses one day to the next
Especially in times when we’re deeply perplexed.

Dear Heavenly Father I have this one plea
Help all your children to take Lent seriously.
Help us to pray more and specially to fast
Tearfully in ashes let us leave our past.

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.

Prayer After Communion

*Instruction on Eucharistic Worship, n. 38
Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1967*

On those who receive the Body and Blood of Christ, the gift of the Spirit is poured out abundantly like living water, provided that this Body and Blood have been received sacramentally and spiritually, namely, by that faith which operates through charity.

But union with Christ, to which the sacrament itself is directed, is not to be limited to the duration of the celebration of the Eucharist; it is to be prolonged into the entire Christian life, in such a way that the Christian faithful, contemplating unceasingly the gift they have received, may make their life a continual thanksgiving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and may produce fruits of greater charity.

In order to remain more easily in this thanksgiving which is offered to God in an eminent way in the Mass, those who have been nourished by holy Communion should be encouraged to remain for a while in prayer.

Hear and Evangelise!

Letter of an Iraqi Priest

By Father Albert Hisham Naoum, an Iraqi Chaldean priest studying in Rome, who was a friend of the two priests who died in the Oct. 31 attack on Our Lady of Salvation Syrian Catholic Church

www.zenit.org 11-11-2010 [Translation from Arabic by ZENIT]

The martyrs of the Church of Our Lady of Salvation showed the world once again who we are, the Christians of Iraq, and they joined the martyrs of our Church, those who sacrificed their lives to Christ our Lord, who taught us to bear witness to the resurrection of life, for forgiveness, for hope, for love, for faith, joy. ...

Who has ears to hear, hear us now, and know that Christ lives in the Christians of Iraq. It's a witness that lives and will continue to live. And if there is someone who does not feel the importance of witnessing in life, we would only say to him and to the whole world, that for us it is life itself. What the world calls "nothing," for us it is "everything"!

The Christians of Iraq are well aware that the risen Christ has conquered death, not because they are baptized believers, but rather because, with him, they have experienced death on the cross several times, and with him they drank the bitter cup, and have experienced the abandonment of others. And side by side with him they walked the way of his cross, and fell under the weight of their cross... Yet, they continue to stand up and live their faith as they have always done throughout history, walking along the path of suffering.

For Christians in Iraq, October 31 was not the first time they have suffered, and no human being, especially those who claim to want peace, but really don't, can pretend that this will be the last time. But they do not interest us, because our hope has never been, and never will be, in them, but in the One who took up his cross and walked the path of death to ensure that life will continue and eventually win. ...

Have you heard how they died in this massacre, the two brave priests, Wasim Sabieh and Thair Saad Abdal? Did you know that they defended the faithful and tried to save their lives by offering their own from the first moment the criminals set foot in church? Did you know that a father protected his son by covering him completely with his own body while they were lying on the floor, and died in a hail of bullets so that the child would survive? Have you heard that the killers murdered a four-month-old baby girl and a young woman who, on the day of her death, had received the best news, namely that she was pregnant, and so went to church to thank God for this gift?

O people of the world, these are the Christians of Iraq. Hear and evangelise to everyone! ...

Holiness not a "Flight Through Mystical Clouds"

Pope Benedict XVI on St John of the Cross (1542-1591), General Audience 16-02-2011

Dear brothers and sisters, in the end the question remains: Does this saint with his lofty mysticism, with this arduous way to the summit of perfection, have something to say to us, to the ordinary Christian who lives in the circumstances of today's life, or is he only an example, a model for a few chosen souls who can really undertake this way of purification, of mystical ascent?

To find the answer we must first of all keep present that the life of St John of the Cross was not a "flight through mystical clouds," but was a very hard life, very practical and concrete, both as reformer of the order, where he met with much opposition, as well as provincial superior, as in the prison of his brothers of religion, where he was exposed to incredible insults and bad physical treatment. It was a hard life but, precisely in the months spent in prison, he wrote one of his most beautiful works.

And thus we are able to understand that the way with Christ, the going with Christ, "the Way," is not a weight added to the already sufficient burden, but something completely different, it is a light, a strength that helps us carry this burden.

If a man has a great love within him, it's as if this love gives him wings, and he endures life's problems more easily, because he has in himself that light, which is faith: to be loved by God and to let oneself be loved by God in Christ Jesus.

This act of allowing oneself to be loved is the light that helps us to carry our daily burden.

And holiness is not our work, our difficult work, but rather it is precisely this "openness": Open the windows of the soul so that the light of God can enter, do not forget God because it is precisely in opening oneself to his light that strength is found, as well as the joy of the redeemed.

Let us pray to the Lord so that he will help us to find this sanctity, to allow ourselves to be loved by God, which is the vocation of us all, as well as being true redemption.

[Translation by ZENIT] www.zenit.org 16-02-2011

The Presentation:

"It is the meeting of the two Testaments, the Old and the New. Jesus enters the ancient Temple, He who is the new Temple of God: He comes to visit his people, bringing to fulfilment obedience to the Law and inaugurating the end times of salvation."

Pope Benedict XVI, 02-02-2011

Communion Services in the Absence of a Priest

Answered by Legionary of Christ Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university

Q: Earlier this year, our pastor was away for a while. Before leaving, he looked for priests to cover the Sunday Masses. He was unable, he said, to find one for the vigil Mass. So, instead of informing us of this, he had the deacon celebrate a Word service, with homily, music, etc., and distribute Communion. The deacon said that this was valid. We normally attend a Sunday morning Mass, but because of a family commitment, we attended the vigil Mass. We live in a large archdiocese without a shortage of priests, and there are many Catholic churches in the area where we could easily get to Mass. I would have liked to have been informed about this prior to attending this service, since it was known by our pastor. Instead, when the pastor returned, he said this happens in other parts of the country and is valid. I believe that since we have ample opportunity to attend a Mass, not a service, that it is not valid in this case. Is this correct?

- J.P., Newark, New Jersey

A: The principles involved in this matter are articulated in the Directory of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, issued by the Holy See in 1988. These principles are usually taken up by the bishops' conference which may also issue more specific guidelines. Each bishop can then decide on the applicability or not of these guidelines in his diocese and may issue norms determining if and when such a Sunday celebration is allowed.

Regarding the general conditions permitting this form of celebration, the 1988 directory is clear:

“18. Whenever and wherever Mass cannot be celebrated on Sunday, the first thing to be ascertained is whether the faithful can go to a church in a place nearby to participate there in the eucharistic mystery. At the present time this solution is to be recommended and to be retained where it is in effect; but it demands that the faithful, rightly imbued with a fuller understanding of the Sunday assembly, respond with good will to a new situation.

“21. It is imperative that the faithful be taught to see the substitutional character of these celebrations, which should not be regarded as the optimal solution to new difficulties nor as a surrender to mere convenience. Therefore a gathering or assembly of this kind can never be held on a Sunday in places where Mass has already been celebrated or is to be celebrated or was celebrated on the preceding Saturday evening, even if the Mass is celebrated in a different language. Nor is it right to have more than one assembly of this kind on any given Sunday.

“24. It belongs to the diocesan bishop, after hearing the council of presbyters, to decide whether Sunday assemblies without the celebration of the eucharist should be held on a regular basis in his diocese. It belongs also to the bishop, after considering the place and persons involved, to set out both general and particular norms for such celebrations. These assemblies are therefore to be conducted only in virtue of their convocation by the bishop and only under the pastoral ministry of the pastor.

“25. ‘No Christian community is ever built up unless it has its roots and centre in the eucharistic liturgy.’ Therefore before the bishop decides on having Sunday assemblies without celebration of the eucharist, the following in addition to the status of parishes (see no. 5) should be considered: the possibility of recourse to priests, even religious priests, who are not directly assigned to the care of souls and the frequency of Masses in the various parishes and churches. The pre-eminence of the celebration of the eucharist, particularly on Sunday, over other pastoral activities is to be respected.”

No. 21 above is quite clear that the use of a celebration without a priest is viewed as an exception when Mass cannot be celebrated on a given weekend. It is not designed to substitute particular Masses and in normal circumstances would not be a valid substitution for attending Mass.

However, since circumstances can vary widely, No. 24 grants wide leeway to the bishop to make concrete options in line with the general principles. ...

Convenience, such as the priest being unavailable at a specific time but able to celebrate at another moment, does not justify holding this service.

For these reasons, and given the circumstances of the case, I would say that the choice of substituting Mass with the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest was incorrect.

www.zenit.org 11-01-2011

The Sunday Obligation

Fr Edward McNamara

“The Sunday obligation is to assist at Mass. A Communion service can never fulfil that obligation. In other words, if Mass is possible at another time, one is obliged to go to Mass. If Mass is unavailable, one does well to assist at a Communion service but has no obligation to do so.”

www.zenit.org 25-01-2011

Communion Services in Sale Diocese

The following is from Fr Hugh Brown, latest administrator of Morwell Catholic Parish, in a letter to parishioners in the parish bulletin of 16-01-2011:

“On one matter, due to the scarcity of priests, there may well be occasions when I cannot provide a priest for a scheduled Mass. In that case, Deacon Terry will preside at a Communion Service. If this is necessary I will provide appropriate notice, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.”

From Morwell, it is a 15 minute drive to Traralgon, Churchill, Moe or Newborough churches. It is hard to imagine the justification for scheduling a Communion Service. (This occurs in other areas of our diocese as well.)

However, as each diocesan bishop has the authority to decide on this matter in his own diocese, I have asked Bishop Prowse what norms apply to Sale Diocese. He has advised that he intends to issue diocesan guidelines on the matter in due course.

- Ed.

Pancakes and Blood Money

Shrove Tuesday is Tuesday the 8th of March. There will be pancakes at 6.30pm followed by the screening of the film “Blood Money” at 7pm, finishing at 8.30pm. Venue: Caroline Chisholm Library, 3/358 Lonsdale Street (approximately opposite St Francis Catholic church), Melbourne. A gold coin donation would be appreciated.

RSVP: Fons ph 5194 2340, or 0429 181 897, or email fonsforlife@skymesh.com.au; Trudi ph 0407 350 948 tarashi@bigpond.com.au.

Blood Money is a documentary film that exposes the truth behind the abortion industry. This film will examine the history of abortion, from the inception of Planned Parenthood and the profitability of abortion clinics, to Roe v. Wade, to the denial of when life begins, to the fight to save the lives of innocent babies, and the devastating effects it has on women that have had them.

The Lenten 40 Days for Life campaign will start the next day (Ash Wednesday) with a 7.00am Mass at St Patrick’s Cathedral Melbourne for our Catholic friends, and then we will go to 118 Wellington Parade to pray and witness peacefully.

We are going to dedicate our Melbourne campaign to the elimination of that dreadful law passed in October 2008 when abortion was voted to be legal right up to birth!

Fons Janssen, Willung South, Vic

Consequences of The Creed

The whole world rejoiced when a German journalist reported that the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI supposedly gave his consent to the use of condoms in certain circumstances. The report was not confirmed by the Vatican but the Melbourne Age newspaper made an issue of it and held a survey on the matter. The survey resulted in 90% agreeing with what was reported. We can only assume that those who responded to the survey were not members of the Catholic faithful.

The Catholic faithful that attend Mass on Sunday recite the Creed [We believe] in one voice but individually many hold different views on Catholic teaching. We cannot write our own rules on Catholic dogma or practice our faith in a manner we see fit. To quote Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman: “There are two basic requirements for the genuine follower of Christ: faith and obedience.”

In regard to faith and morals we, as Catholics, are losing ground and laws are being passed that belittle those standards. We seem no longer to have representatives in parliament who have respect or concern for the Catholic position or who hold regard for Christian values.

In the coming year laws will be framed to allow for same-sex marriage, euthanasia, further freedom to the access of abortion, surrogacy and adoption by homosexual couples. If as Catholics we offer no objection to these matters the standard will be set. Our Prime Minister and the Premiers of Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania are members of Emily’s List and as such will support these bills as they are in agreement with their agenda. Mr Baillieu, Premier of Victoria, can see no harm in abortion.

Make it your aim to lodge a view on those matters and make our political leaders understand that what “we believe” is paramount to us.

Leo Morrissey, Sandringham

The Twelve Promises

EWTN and The Sacred Heart Legion present a brand new television series: The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, hosted by your friend Raymond de Souza.

Mark your calendars: Beginning in March, **online** 10am Tuesday mornings Sydney time, and repeated at 2.30am Saturdays (in the wee hours for the Aussie night owls). From April also via **satellite**, Mondays 1am, Thursdays 1.30pm and Fridays 7.30pm (Sydney times).

Every weekly episode deals with a different promise of the Sacred Heart and applies it to the needs of the Church and society today.

Raymond de Souza: Raymond@KeysofPeter.org

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

Contact *Into the Deep*

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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.

Remember you can support us by shopping at Ritchies!

Just pick up your Community Benefits card or key-tag when next you're at Ritchies. If ITD had even one family doing their weekly shopping at each Ritchies supermarket (across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland), we'd be able to earn a regular monthly income towards producing ITD – and it wouldn't cost you anything! Your CB card/tag can be used at any Ritchies supermarket or liquor store. Register your CB card to Into the Deep, CB number 81799 so that the cost of your purchases goes towards out totals. You can find out more at www.ritchies.com.au. Ritchies started in 1870 and is Australia's largest independent supermarket and liquor chain.