

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 11

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

August 2003

## **The Real Presence**

“In a homily by Fr Wade Meneces during a Latin Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi, he told an interesting story of Pope John Paul II’s visit to the Baltimore area in 1995:

The pope was scheduled for a quick trip to the local seminary. However, he also wanted to go in to pray at their chapel, which was an unscheduled visit. So a security team and German Shepherd canine unit that was especially trained to find human beings using their superior sense of smell (like the ones used after September 11 attack to find people in the rubble), were sent in to search for people hiding in the various rooms.

They searched the halls and rooms and found nothing. Then they were sent into the chapel where the pope intended to pray. They sniffed in all the aisles and then came to the tabernacle which held the consecrated hosts. The dogs sniffed and pointed, indicating that they sensed a human being present in the holy tabernacle. They would not leave until their handlers called them off. This was witnessed by over ten security people.

The Catholic faith tells us that at the consecration, the host actually, and you could say miraculously, becomes the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

It is interesting that these German Shepherd dogs sensed that a human body was actually present (not just bread) whereas some people can’t sense this, even though we know this to be true, through faith in the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, and the constant teaching of the Church.”

This story was sent to me via e-mail. I have heard of Fr Meneces and seen him on EWTN often. He belongs to the Mercy Fathers order in America and is orthodox. Apart from that I cannot verify the story, but it helps to emphasise that the Jesus we receive is a real Person and is truly present.

*J. Lovegrove, Port Macquarie, NSW*

## **Selective Catholic Life**

I am writing to express my concern at the absence of proper reporting in the Sale diocesan newspaper, Catholic Life.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2003, a considerable number of parishioners made an effort to meet with Bishop Coffey in an attempt to express their concern about his actions regarding Father John Speekman.

They were unable to meet with the bishop that day, but still wanted their message noticed. Surely Catholic Life would be the logical means of transmitting parishioners’ concerns to our Diocese.

The secular media - television, radio and press - were interested in what was happening. Even the police came to see what the commotion was all about.

It took place on the doorstep of Catholic Life office and yet the editor did not see fit to get some facts and write an article. It has since appeared in the national magazine Fidelity, but still not in Catholic Life.

Also we have heard nothing from the Bishop’s Office in the way of an official announcement.

One would have to question the value of Catholic Life to the people of the Sale diocese. Eleven issues a year, usually fourteen pages, many advertisements, some overseas news from informed sources, some local parish events, and no letters from readers.

Are the people of the Diocese of Sale getting value for money? The salary and car package would be considerable. If we had to buy the paper, how many copies would be sold?

Some time back the Catholic Life editor wrote an editorial that we needed more ‘grey people’ in the Church. Well in this instance he is practising what he preaches.

*P. Callahan, Sale*

**“Faith, cheerfulness, optimism.** But not the idiocy of closing one’s eyes to reality.”

Blessed Josemaria Escriva

## Interesting Happenings in Eastern Region

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2003 a representative from the Catholic Education Office, introduced as Alice, came to talk to teachers, parents and parishioners on the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

Eucharist was referred to only as “thanksgiving” (which is what the word actually means) and the “breaking of the bread”. Nothing was said publicly about the Body and the Blood of Christ or the necessity of being in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion. In fact murder was the only serious sin mentioned. Confession was also omitted apart from the First Reconciliation preceding. We were told that the Eucharist continually reconciles us with God and that Jesus dined with prostitutes, so everyone is welcome to “come as you are, that’s how I want you”.

Then on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May the Eastern region of the Sale Diocese gathered in the presbytery at Orbost. Journeying Together was the topic. Bairnsdale, Omeo and Buchan were represented.

The subtle and not so subtle psychology of the new age was pervasive: All were seated in a circle; inside the circle was a small table with a cloth strewn across, a bowl of water on top and a lighted stubby candle.

Three women, Chris, Helen and Mary took control. The priests present did not bless the water, but we were asked to extend our hands over it and pray, then pass the bowl round and sprinkle/bless the person next to us!

It was made clear during the meeting that the Church depended on the laity because of the increasing shortage of priests due to aging and lack of vocations. We must accept and welcome change!

We divided into groups to share and record what was happening in our parish communities at present and what our dreams for the future were. In our group the women made much of liturgical innovations. Priest, sacrifice and sacrament were omitted. A couple of us raised the importance of prayer before and after Mass and quiet time with the Lord. Helen dismissed it. She too had “been there and done that”, but that now we were supposed to be “celebrating community”. I then asked if this was a Catholic meeting – was there anything specifically Catholic about it? Mary, our selective recorder, was getting quite flustered and informed me that she didn’t bother about that! Obviously what I had dared to say did not make me welcome or part of their inclusiveness.

*R. Earle, Orbost*

## Modern Lepers

I have just read *Into the Deep*’s latest edition, and it prompted me to write on the battle we all have to contend with regarding the modern attitude of many people in the Church today.

Too often we orthodox have been treated like lepers and been given the go-by because we stick our necks out. More often than not we are ignored on the basis that we are mistaken in telling the truth. Well, so be it. There is a saying that ‘any good I can do today, let me do it, for I may not pass this way again’. Sadly, many things we hear today in our Church sermons lack true meaning on our road to heaven, and refrain from demanding high standards.

I am extremely grateful for this magazine which has everything going for it. My prayers are with you all.

*P. Duyndam, Newborough*

## Saints and Superstition

In the June issue of *Catholic Life*, reference is made to the custom of burying “a statue of the saint [St. Joseph] if you are trying to sell your home.”

Invoke the saints in heaven by all means - we are encouraged to do so - but surely this “old custom” is bordering on superstition (or becoming a New Age custom) and is not to be encouraged?

I can cite the rapid sale of many homes that are readily saleable and have nothing to do with the burying of a statue or placing “the statue under her bed.”

*M. Goss, Sale*

## Christ Gives Meaning to Life

“When Christ, the Christ of the Gospel, true God and true man, is preached to people, especially young people, they feel captivated by the beauty of his message, by the fascination of his person. People are too tired of ideas and abstract notions. They need to give meaning to their life and Christ can give it. He gives it.”

Fr Marcial Maciel, author of “Christ is my life” and founder of the Legionaries of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement.

## Scandals in Sale – How will they be addressed?

Reports from the Cathedral parish in Sale are that Fr Mark Godridge has sacked Sr Virginia Mahony, the pastoral associate. Into the Deep has been unable to contact either party to establish the reason, but it is understood that Sr Virginia still had a current contract. A letter has been circulating in Sale in support of Sr Virginia and signatures have been gathered from parishioners. The letter has apparently been sent to both Fr Godridge and the Bishop.

Also in Sale, the sacramental co-ordinator at St Mary's Cathedral parish in Sale, and the religious education co-ordinator at Catholic College Sale, have recently been married in the Church.

This is after a number of years living in Sale with their children, and working in these Church positions, with only a civil marriage contract.

Considering that a civil marriage is not recognised as a valid marriage in the Church, how can it be that they were employed in positions of leadership in the parish and school? Was this known at the time of their appointment, and if so, why was their appointment allowed? If it was not known, how could they have completed applications and interviews without their marital status being established?

What statement does this make about our diocese following the truth of Church teaching on marriage, and what example for students?

While we applaud the couple for validating their marriage, it cannot be ignored that the relationship they previously chose was contrary to Church teaching and that in light of this neither of them were eligible for such positions in the Church. (Incidentally, the RE co-ordinator was appointed after it was suggested to Greg Kingman that he leave the school because he objected that the school was not teaching the Catholic faith.)

We call on the Bishop, the school, and the parish to address this situation. It needs to be made clear, publicly, that what occurred was wrong, that steps will be taken to avoid similar scandals in future, and that Church teaching on marriage will be followed and proclaimed in this diocese.

From 'Apostolate in Irregular Marriage Situations', Italian Episcopal Conference:

On "Catholics who have contracted only a civil marriage:

It is a situation unacceptable for the church, which teaches that for Catholics the only valid marriage which makes them husband and wife before the Lord is the sacramental one, for the valid celebration of which the 'canonical form' is required.

It is not possible to admit to the sacraments of Penance and eucharistic Communion, Catholics married only with a civil ceremony as long as they remain in this situation of life."

## Celebrating Ourselves

An April 2003 issue of Traralgon's Parish Gazette front page was sent to Into the Deep. It contains a letter from the parish priest, Fr Peter Bickley, entitled "The beauty of parish gathering together."

He notes, "I felt proud, for in every parish priest's heart is the desire that his parish enjoys the presence of each other, acknowledges the presence of its members and prays with and for each other. This gathering I believe achieved all three!"

Fr Bickley is referring here not to a Mass or liturgical celebration, but to the "Duck Dive event"!

Later he refers to children being presented for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, and notes, "This has been very well received by parishioners, every time we do this we celebrate lay people in our church."

*Celebrate lay people in our church? Through bringing children for the Sacraments? What was he thinking when he wrote this? This sounds like the frighteningly empty modern tendency to centre our faith on ourselves instead of on Christ; and so parish should be about celebrating ourselves, with Jesus perhaps just a comforting background figure. As long as we all feel good about ourselves and one another, all will be well.*

Duck Dives to create a faith community, and Sacraments to celebrate lay people. Where are we going?

The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*. "Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming them to the Son of God. *Catechism 1129*

## Youth Ministry?

“The whole notion of ‘youth ministry’, some have argued, is based on a false premise, that ‘youth’ need to be reached ‘where they are’ and enabled to ‘open up’ and speak about their emotional needs and desires. It is the program of Church bureaucrats who have nothing of substance to offer, and it provides them with the opportunity and the subjects for their own theories and desires.”

*From ‘Amchurch Comes Out’, by P.Likoudis, p.167*

‘Amchurch’ [American Church] signifies “a deeply entrenched, influential, dissident faction within the leadership of the Church in [the USA] – among the bishops, the heads of Religious orders, college and university administrators, chancery officials, prominent theologians, and seminary faculty.”

*p.iii of Foreword by Fr Joseph Wilson*

## Pause, Pray and Understand

*Also from the Foreword:*

“There is a deep-seated illness rampant in the Church today. That there are so many people who are able to look around them, disregard the evidence of decay and disorder, callously ignore the fact that countless souls are being harmed and led astray, and use the term ‘renewal’ about what they see in the Church, is dismaying.” (p.vi)

“... We who love the Church must pause, pray, understand what has been allowed to fall upon her, and implore His mercy.” (p.ix)

## Fr Duster’s Twisted Words

I was recently listening to a homily by Father Feather Duster of St Peacock’s Parish.

What a lovely man, telling us it was no longer a grave matter to miss Mass on a Sunday.

He went further – “Anyone here practising contraception, come to Holy Communion. I’m not going to be judgemental and tell you that is another mortal sin.

Personal Confession? I haven’t got the time or the inclination to listen to your waffle in Confession. That is why we are going to have the Third Rite. All stand and I will give you general absolution.

Then you have those who still believe there is a hell and purgatory – rubbish! We all go to heaven. A loving God does not condemn anyone to hell.

You are such a loving, caring and sharing community that I will not be leaving this place. You make me feel so good, so comfortable.”

What a beautiful man!

Then someone from the back piped up, “Father, you have offended me and I am reporting you to the bishop.”

Fr Duster replied, “Don’t bother, son. The bishop looks after his priests. He will not believe you and think you are only spreading gossip.

Oh, by the way, I will be away for some time on long service leave. Sr Fem will lead the liturgy while I’m away. Of course she won’t be giving the Third Rite – or will you, Fem?”

*Mr Ortho Dox*

## Authority of the Church is Clearly Defined

The following reflection appeared in St Mary’s Cathedral parish newsletter on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 29 June 2003:

‘Jesus entrusted a specific authority to Peter: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt16:19). The “power of keys” designates authority to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: “Feed my sheep.” (Jn 21:15-17, cf.10:11). The power to “bind and loose” connotes the authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgements, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles (cf Mt18:18) and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom He specifically entrusted the keys of the Kingdom. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 553).’

This authority clearly defines the responsibility and duty of the Pope, bishops and priests to lead and to proclaim the teachings given by Christ to the Church. There are people at meetings regarding the diocesan pastoral plan *Journeying Together*, who advocate that the laity should assume greater leadership of the Church, that priests should not be authoritative, and that all opinions are equally valid. It is to be hoped that these people will carefully read this definitive and authoritative teaching before continuing their destructive campaign at future meetings.

*P. O’Brien, Sale*

## Why I Protested At the Bishop's Office

Many people have questioned me for taking part in a public protest outside the Bishop's Office in Sale at the end of May, regarding my parish priest Fr John Speekman. Basically, I wanted truth and justice to prevail.

Fr Speekman is a good and faithful priest and a man I respect. He leads this parish to a deeper prayer life and to holiness. He has brought people back to the faith. He has helped my own faith grow. I know I am not alone in my regard for him and his ministry. I wanted to know why he was to be removed from this parish, or from Sale diocese? What has he done that is so serious to prompt such a drastic course of action?

Fr John apparently raised his voice in frustration at a parish sacramental team meeting in November 2001, when the teachers present repeatedly disputed his statement that all mortal sins must be confessed at Confession. St Vincent's school principal at the time, Mrs Swenson, apparently felt distressed and harassed by this 'behaviour' of Father's, and complained not to Fr John, but to educational consultant Vincent Carr of the Catholic Education Office. He in turn took this issue up with not Fr John, but the Director of the CEO, Therese D'Orsa. She then notified not Fr John, but the Bishop. He, still without notifying Fr John, was suitably convinced by someone along the way that this was very serious and deserved a full investigation. The bishop authorised not an independent party, but the CEO itself, to investigate this incident.

I can't believe that such a simple matter can be raised to such high priority, with the bishop's full support. How can matters get so out of hand that it ends up determining whether Father John should remain as parish priest of Morwell? These are questions that have not been answered by the bishop in any forum.

During this whole process, Fr Speekman has been the subject of much gossip and innuendo. What will be done to address this? It seems this gossip and innuendo has been listened to by the bishop and the vicar general. In some cases they appear to have taken it as truth and even acted upon it, such as the vicar general's letter to Fr Speekman threatening him with suspension on the basis of a rumour he had heard. Has any effort been made to consult with Father on the veracity of the allegations and rumour? If not, why not?

I wonder what the motive is of certain parishioners who have been spreading gossip and rumour about Father, thus undermining his position.

I can assure you that every avenue had been exhausted before I decided to protest at the Bishop's office. It is not an easy thing to do, to 'go public' and protest, and not something I thought I would choose to do (or need to do). The last straw was, as noted in May's Stop Press, that the bishop could insist that Fr John resign and still refuse to tell him why.

There HAS to be more to this than an incident of a raised voice in a meeting. We want to know what it is. I think it smells stronger and stronger of a conspiracy to get rid of Fr John, an orthodox priest who challenges schools to look at why they are not passing on the Catholic faith to their students.

J. Henderson, Morwell

## Last Things

"Let's remember that not so long ago, in sermons, during retreats or missions, the *Last Things* - death, judgment, heaven, hell and purgatory - were always a standard part of the programme of meditation and preachers knew how to speak of them in an effective and evocative way. How many people were drawn to conversion and confession by these sermons and reflections on the Last Things!"

*Pope John Paul II  
Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p179*

**What is Zenit?** Zenit is an international news agency that provides objective coverage of events, documents and issues emanating from or concerning the Catholic Church. Subscribe at [www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)

## Reform of the Church

Father Benedict Groeschel offers a blueprint based on prayer in order to deal with current Church problems. "We need a time of penance, we need a national program of penance," the Franciscan Friar of the Renewal told a recent conference for priests, deacons and seminarians, held at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio.

"Reform of the Church must begin with worship and preaching and prayer," the Franciscan said. "We will be asked what we have done in our time to seek the reform of the Body of Christ."

"One has come to us who all people of the world were waiting for. He is our absolute hope," said the founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in New York. "If you don't preach him, no one in the world has any real hope."

*Zenit News*

## Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Orbost	Friday 10.00am – 11.00am
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.00am – 12noon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday 10.00am – 11.00am 11 <sup>th</sup> of the month 1 Hour after Mass
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
Warragul	Saturday 10.00 – 11.00am
Drouin	Thursday 10.00am – 11.00am
San Remo	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am

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

“The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church.

It is the responsibility of the pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.”

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia 25*

## Vocations Hinge on Families

“If we want vocations we have to cultivate families.”

Pastoral efforts to foster vocations should begin with families, says Father Amedeo Cencini, a leading formator of candidates for the priesthood and consecrated life in Italy.

Parents must be “those who are the first to give example of generosity, selflessness, opening to others and to the needy in particular, in fostering a sense of responsibility and solidarity, of sobriety and simplicity of life, of courage in facing difficulties, and of sacrifice.”

“It is even one of today’s new vocations, to be fathers and mothers who are open to life, to be bridegrooms and brides who in their love bear witness to the beauty of human love blessed by God.”

“Only in this way will a long-term authentic vocational culture be created as fertile ground for the birth of priestly vocations,” Father Cencini concluded.

Zenit News

## Bumper Sticker Wisdom

Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity.

*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*

## Sanctuary?

From the Latin

## Holy Place

## Contact Into the Deep

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