

Into the Deep

Issue 135

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

December/January 2013/14

He is Nearly Here!

But come, let us be still! Tonight, as the conductor raises his baton and holds it motionless over the little town of Bethlehem, the orchestra of the old dispensation falls silent and centuries of rehearsal come to an end. Let us, too, be still.

Anticipation grows – the infant is to be born – the Woman is already in labour. Creation strains to hear the first sound, the first cry of its Redeemer. The moment is joyful, inexpressibly joyful, and full of excitement. He is nearly here – Emmanuel, *God with us!*

*From a homily by Fr John Speekman
Homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com.au*

The Magnitude of the Event

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 09-01-2013

“The Son of God... worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice, and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

It is important then to recover wonder before the mystery, to allow ourselves to be enveloped by the magnitude of this event. God, the true God, the Creator of all, has walked our streets as a man, entering the time of man, to communicate to us his own life. And he did not do it with the splendour of a sovereign, who subjects the world with his power, but with the humility of a child.

Zenit.org 09-01-2013

Not for the Faint-Hearted

Lumen Fidei, 53

Faith is no refuge for the faint-hearted, but something which enhances our lives. It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love. It assures us that this love is trustworthy and worth embracing, for it is based on God’s faithfulness which is stronger than our every weakness.

Dec/Jan Issue

For the first time in its 11-year history, there will be no Into the Deep issue this January. Consider this belated December issue a combined Dec/Jan issue and read it slowly to spread it over two months.

My 81-year old mother arrived from overseas for a 3 month holiday with us. Unfortunately, it turns out she had a mild heart attack during the flight. Further investigations revealed that she has blocked arteries and needs heart by-pass surgery, which will be done in Melbourne shortly. I cannot commit to producing another issue of ITD without knowing what the next few weeks/months hold, so to take the pressure off, I’ve decided to skip January and get back to work for February. Any prayers or Masses for the health of my mother and for a smooth recovery will be greatly appreciated.

- Ed.

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Due to changes in the way Into the Deep is emailed out to subscribers, the last mail-out resulted in numerous subscribers being deleted from the emailing list. The new mailing program deletes any bounced email addresses from the mailing list, so you will not receive future issues of Into the Deep. If this was accidental and you still wish to be on the mailing list, please subscribe via the website – go to www.stoneswillshout.com and “subscribe” on the home page, and your address will be added again. My apologies for the inconvenience. In trying to make things easier, I seem to make them harder at first!

- Ed.

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

Prayer for Families

*Pope Francis, for the Pilgrimage of Families of the World
for the Year of Faith*

Jesus, Mary and Joseph
to you, Holy Family of Nazareth,
today we turn our gaze
with admiration and confidence;
in you we contemplate
the beauty of communion in true love;
to you we commend our families,
so that in them marvels of grace be renewed.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
alluring school of the Gospel:
teach us to imitate your virtues
with a wise spiritual discipline,
grant us a clear vision
that recognizes the work of Providence
in the daily realities of life.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
faithful custodian of the mystery of salvation:
help us to regain an appreciation for silence,
make our families cenacles of prayer
and transform them into little domestic Churches,
renew the desire for sanctity,
sustain the noble toil of work, of education,
of listening, of mutual understanding and of forgiveness.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
reawaken in our society the consciousness
of the sacred and inviolable character of the family,
an inestimable and irreplaceable good.

May every family be a place where goodness and peace
are welcomed
for children and for the elderly,
for those who are sick and alone,
for those who are poor and needy.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
we pray to you with confidence, we entrust ourselves
to you with joy.

[Translation by Joseph Trabbic] Zenit.org 28-10-2013

Of My Own Family

Pope Francis, 25-09-2013

When I hear that so many Christians in the world are suffering, am I indifferent, or is it as if a member of my own family is suffering? When I think or hear it said that many Christians are persecuted and give their lives for their faith, does this touch my heart or does it not reach me? Am I open to that brother or that sister in my family who's giving his or her life for Jesus Christ? Do we pray for one another? How many of you pray for Christians who are persecuted? How many? Everyone respond in his own heart. It's important to look beyond one's own fence, to feel oneself part of the Church, of one family of God!

The Bella Dodd Quote

I have often read about former Communist Bella Dodd's alleged claim that she helped groom over 1,000 men to enter the Catholic Church as trojan horse priests. I have her autobiography, *School of Darkness*, on my Kindle and read it closely, looking for this spectacular claim.

Brian Rooney (Nov ITD, p.6) wrote: "In her lectures during the 1950's [Dodd] confirmed that, "Right now, they are in the highest places in the Church" and that the changes they would effect would be so drastic that "you will not recognise the Catholic Church"."

Not only was Dodd's book ploddingly dull, there was nothing in it which remotely resembled or even hinted at such an amazing feat of religious espionage.

School of Darkness mainly 'exposes' the zeal, dedication and self-sacrifice of young western Communists who despised materialism and paid no heed to their own comfort, in the service of their cause.

I have been able to find no such reliable attribution as to date, time, place or forum in which Dodd allegedly wrote or said that the Church had been deliberately infiltrated by Communist *agents provocateur*. If Mr Rooney could give us a true source of this claim, I will retract.

Take away the Dodd myth and you have the usual and far more believable progression of clerical crisis, far from being unprecedented in the Church. It is far more likely to attribute the current plague of banality in Catholic practice to a mass episcopal rejection – eagerly embraced by three generations of contracepting Catholics – of Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, reaffirming the Church's condemnation of contraception.

We Catholics are all too adept at sinking to pond bottom without the help of bad priests. In fact, the clerical crisis may be laid at our door on Judgement Day for our failure to pray and make sacrifices for our pastors, who suffer far more severely from satanic attack than we do.

Maryse Usher, East St Kilda, Victoria

God is Present

Pope Benedict XVI, 05-12-2012

Advent invites us once again, in the midst of many difficulties, to renew the certainty that God is present: He came into the world, becoming a man like us, to bring to fulfilment his plan of love.

And God asks us, too, to become a sign of His action in the world. Through our faith, our hope, our love, He wants to enter into the world again, to make His light shine again in our night.

The War on Law

How often do we hear people complain about “the state of the world”? If it’s not families breaking up or the state of the Church (sex abuse or weird Masses), it’s binge drinking or drugs or same-sex marriage or assaults on the streets, home invasions or ... and so it goes on. You name it.

What’s wrong with everything? Are these all different problems, or symptoms of the same problem?

It’s no coincidence that so many things seem to be going wrong all at the same time – it all started at much the same time 50 years ago.

First came the revolution in society in the 60s, which carried over quickly into the Church in the wake of Vatican II. A kind of madness gripped large areas of the world, characterised by a detestation of law and authority.

In the Church we saw the liturgy upended and gutted, an exodus of priests and religious, a betrayal by some of the priests who remained and a widespread reluctance to enforce church laws. The evidence is surfacing now in the various inquiries into the “sexual abuse of children by paedophile clergy” – a misnomer because the vast majority of cases clearly involved priests who were homosexuals and whose victims were boys of 10 and over.

In society at large, violence and crime of a more vicious nature has increased, false educational theories largely corrupted schools and their teachers, producing a generation with no respect for authority. Theft, fraud and corruption have become common in business and public affairs.

Now we have increasing promotion and approval of such evils as abortion and contraception, with more to come. The promoters make no secret of the fact that their aim is to “create an alternative culture that would liberate everyone, regardless of gender, sexuality or gender identity” as stated recently by Britain’s most prominent homosexual, Peter Tatchell. In other words, no restraints on any forms of sexual behaviour.

“Restraint” is the key to all these problems; that is what the Ten Commandments tell us. But modern society has rejected restraint. The truth is that war has been declared on Christianity and even on law itself.

It is not hard to see the mind of Satan behind all this evil in its many forms. St Paul defines Satan’s agent, Antichrist, as “the man of lawlessness”.

Faith and morals are the prime targets. Society is being seduced by a replacement faith, the pantheism of earth worship, and faith is being seduced by all-embracing Modernism. This all-out war calls for heroism on the part of Catholics, as does the war being waged by radical Islam. A heroism rooted in our identity as Catholics and in our fidelity to the Church.

Ruadhri, address supplied, Vic

Changing The Church

Pope Benedict XVI, 25-09-2011

For some decades now we have been experiencing a decline in religious practice and we have been seeing substantial numbers of the baptized drifting away from church life.

This prompts the question: should the Church not change? Must she not adapt her offices and structures to the present day, in order to reach the searching and doubting people of today?

Blessed Mother Teresa was once asked what in her opinion was the first thing that would have to change in the Church. Her answer was: you and I.

Two things are clear from this brief story. On the one hand Mother Teresa wants to tell her interviewer: the Church is not just other people, not just the hierarchy, the Pope and the bishops: we are all the Church, we the baptized. And on the other hand her starting-point is this: yes, there are grounds for change. There is a need for change. Every Christian and the community of the faithful are constantly called to change.

What should this change look like in practice? ... the basic motive for change is the apostolic mission of the disciples and the Church herself.

The Church, in other words, must constantly rededicate herself to her mission. ...

If the Church, in Pope Paul VI’s words, is now struggling “to model itself on Christ’s ideal”, this “can only result in its acting and thinking quite differently from the world around it, which it is nevertheless striving to influence” (*Ecclesiam Suam*, 58).

In order to accomplish her mission, she will constantly set herself apart from her surroundings, she needs in a certain sense to become unworldly or “desecularized”.

Zenit.org 25-09-2011

Christmastide Greetings

As we all, with a Christian background, are approaching this coming Christmas, let’s hear God’s call.

This is a period in which He communicates to all of us His great majesty.

We know that He will do anything to save a soul; and that He has great power to do so. The only thing that He cannot overturn is our free will.

If any soul chooses to shut Him out of his or her life, there is nothing He can do, for free will is God’s gift to us all, and the Father will never take back a gift once given.

Therefore, I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a strong faith in the meaning of Christmas, that without the Cross there is no Christmas.

Bert Van Galen, Mowbray, Tasmania

Do They Believe in the Real Presence?

Like many of you I recently celebrated the anniversary of my First Holy Communion.

Sixty years ago at St Patrick's, Pakenham, we were prepared each day for three months prior to our big day by the Presentation Nuns. We understood that we were receiving our Divine Guest Jesus, truly present in Holy Communion – a truly joyous occasion that is renewed with each subsequent Holy Communion.

Compare this with to what we see paraded in front of us at Mass nowadays.

The charade of the Rite of Reception for Baptism and other Sacraments where a large number of parents present their children; parents we have not seen since Confirmation or their wedding or perhaps at Christmas and Easter. The charade happens when Father asks the parents at Baptism, do they undertake to bring their child up in the practice of the faith and to keep God's commandments. The response is, we do. Father and the parish community both know that in 95% of cases the parents don't understand the question. This is where our bishops and priests blind the eyesight of their intelligence to deny the light of the truth. And what is worse is that they knowingly and willingly do it in the Real Presence of our Eucharistic Lord.

Children are poorly prepared and receive the Sacraments without the proper dispositions and without the desired effects, thus putting the Sacramental life of Jesus in danger. It begs the question – do our bishops, priests and laity still believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist? Is there any evidence to suggest that they do?

Let's look at some practices that have crept in over the past 30 years. Talking in Church, the genuflection replaced by the Nod, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist sculling the Precious Blood and giving blessings, Holy Communion given to non-Catholics, everybody welcomed to Holy Communion at weddings, funerals, school Masses, graduation Masses etc. without any direction from the priest as to our responsibility to make a worthy Holy Communion, not a sacrilegious one. It appears to me that the greatest sacrileges are made on the greatest feast days or occasions. Christmas, Easter and school graduation Masses should not be occasions where Jesus is terribly offended.

Do our children and grandchildren hear from the pulpit about our responsibilities and obligations to Sunday Mass or understand and accept the Church's teachings, especially on the subject of birth control, marriage and divorce, just to name a few?

These errors of omission all point to a lack of belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and a Protestantising of our Faith.

Our objections and concerns about these abuses has led to the same type of treatment the victims and parents of child abuse received – not believed, treated with contempt and described as pious, judgmental, orthodox Catholics

Like the anorexic teenager who believes the lie that she is too fat, our bishops and priests don't believe it's their responsibility to lead us back to belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Pope John Paul II put the blame fairly and squarely on the chest of our bishops, when he said it is your fault that the faith is dead in your diocese.

Let us not continue to blind the eyesight of our intelligence to deny the light of the Truth. If we do we will become like the priests and Israelites of the passion. We won't recognize Jesus in His Real Presence.

Our Lady pleads for us to pray for her beloved sons especially her Shepherds. Mary Queen of Priests, pray for them.

Pat Crozier, Traralgon, Victoria

Live Your Faith

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 09-01-2013

The fact of the Incarnation, of God becoming a man like us, shows us the unprecedented realism of divine love. ... The Son of God truly became man, he was born of the Virgin Mary, in a specific time and place, in Bethlehem during the reign of the Emperor Augustus, under the Governor Quirinius; he grew up in a family, he had friends, he formed a group of disciples, he instructed the Apostles to continue his mission, he completed the course of his earthly life on the cross.

This mode of action by God is a powerful stimulus to question ourselves about the realism of our faith, which should not be limited to the sphere of feelings and emotions, but must enter into the concrete reality of our existence, it must touch our everyday life and direct it also in a practical way.

God did not stop at words, but showed us how to live, sharing our own experience, except sin. The Catechism of St Pius X, which some of us have studied as children, with its simplicity, to the question: "What should we do to live according to God?", gives this answer: "To live according to God we should believe the truth revealed by Him and keep His commandments with the help of his grace, which is obtained by the sacraments and prayer." Faith has a fundamental aspect which affects not only the mind and the heart, but all our lives.

Zenit.org 09-01-2013

Untying Knots

Pope Francis, 12-10-2013

Mary's faith unties the knot of sin (cf. Lumen Gentium, 56).

What does that mean? The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council took up a phrase of Saint Irenaeus, who states that “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary; what the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith”.

The “knot” of disobedience, the “knot” of unbelief. When children disobey their parents, we can say that a little “knot” is created. This happens if the child acts with an awareness of what he or she is doing, especially if there is a lie involved. At that moment, they break trust with their parents. You know how frequently this happens! Then the relationship with their parents needs to be purified of this fault; the child has to ask forgiveness so that harmony and trust can be restored.

Something of the same sort happens in our relationship with God. When we do not listen to him, when we do not follow his will, we do concrete things that demonstrate our lack of trust in him – for that is what sin is – and a kind of knot is created deep within us. These knots take away our peace and serenity. They are dangerous, since many knots can form a tangle which gets more and more painful and difficult to undo.

But we know one thing: nothing is impossible for God’s mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by his grace. And Mary, whose “yes” opened the door for God to undo the knot of the ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul by his fatherly mercy.

We all have some of these knots and we can ask in our heart of hearts: What are the knots in my life? “Father, my knots cannot be undone!” It is a mistake to say anything of the sort! All the knots of our heart, every knot of our conscience, can be undone. Do I ask Mary to help me trust in God’s mercy, to undo those knots, to change? She, as a woman of faith, will surely tell you: “Get up, go to the Lord: he understands you”. And she leads us by the hand as a Mother, our Mother, to the embrace of our Father, the Father of mercies.

Zenit.org 14-10-2013

Joy of Belonging

Pope Francis, 09-10-2013

Let us ask ourselves: what do I do to communicate to others the joy of encountering the Lord, the joy of belonging to the Church? To proclaim and witness the faith is not the concern of a few, it also concerns me, you, each one of us!

It Felt Like Home

*From an article by Renée Schafer Horton,
NCR Online, 10-10-2103:*

I went to Confession on Saturday. I think the last time I celebrated the sacrament in a traditional Saturday afternoon setting was more than a decade ago. When someone asked me why I was going, the answer was simple: I was compelled to go because of the Pope.

Not because Pope Francis has asked Catholics to get back in the confessional, but because his recent interviews and heartfelt actions as pastor in chief have made me want to be a better person and a more fulfilled, better practicing Catholic. I’ve felt like I’ve not only been given hope for the church, but a challenge for myself. ...

Every day, I hear from Catholics who, like me, are reconsidering their lives, their actions, their faith practice, all because of an Argentine priest who proclaims, “I am a sinner”. The Pope isn’t getting this reaction by outlining a list of do’s and don’ts. Instead, the world’s parish priest proclaims the message of God’s mercy in such human terms one cannot help but listen. He lives a life so obviously influenced by Jesus that one cannot remain unaffected. It is almost as though, if you listen close enough, you can hear him say, without uttering a word, “Try this again; it will lead you to Jesus.”

This weekend, I did try it again, walking into a dimly lit confessional, getting on my knees and saying, “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.” And for the first time in a long time, it felt like home.

Don’t Be a Nominal Christian

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 05-11-2013

The Lord is very generous. The Lord opens all doors.

The Lord also understands those who say to Him, ‘No, Lord, I don’t want to go to you.’ He understands and is waiting for them, because He is merciful.

But the Lord does not like those who say ‘yes’ and do the opposite; who pretend to thank Him for all the good things; who have good manners, but go their own way and do not follow the way of the Lord: those who always excuse themselves, those who do not know joy, who don’t experience the joy of belonging.

Let us ask the Lord for this grace of understanding: how beautiful it is to be invited to the feast, how beautiful it is to take part in it and to share one’s qualities, how beautiful it is to be with Him and how wrong it is to dither between ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ to say ‘yes,’ but to be satisfied merely with being a nominal Christian.

Zenit.org 05-11-2013

Cart Before the Horse

There is no other place in the Church where the hierarchy's dysfunction is heightened and the ensuing chaos made more palpable than at a school Mass, where the stewards of the divine mysteries hand over the liturgy to a nominal Catholic school community as some sort of utility.

It is like walking into a home in which the children rule the roost – an absolute circus. This is often as a result of a 'come as you are', non-judgemental diocesan policy which disregards the laws of the Church and confers sacraments on children of unconverted parents who have no intention of raising their children in the practice of the faith. It apparently doesn't matter that many of these children and their parents have no relationship with the Church, nor that many of the teachers have no understanding of liturgical gestures, language, prayers and symbols – as long as they feel sufficiently entertained by participating.

The Mass is the heart of our Catholic faith, the source and summit of our spiritual life. It is the most intimate encounter with God this side of heaven. It is not a starting point to introduce people to the faith.

School Masses also run the risk of encouraging people to go to Holy Communion. Because the Eucharist is the real living presence of the Lord himself, we dare not receive him in a state of mortal sin. It does not matter who you are as a Catholic, the Church teaches very clearly that in order to receive our blessed Lord in Holy Communion worthily you have to be in a state of grace. If you have committed a mortal sin, a sin which severs your relationship with Christ and his Church, you have to go to the sacrament of Penance and receive absolution before you can receive him (CCC 1415). To receive him unworthily is to commit sacrilege (CCC 2120). It pains me to even think of the harmful messages our priests are sending to Catholics and non-Catholics alike about the real presence of Christ in his Church. It is hard to imagine that our bishops and priests could misunderstand this central doctrine of the Church and the very reason for their own existence. Yet they have created a sea of troubles for the Church by giving sacraments to unevangelized families through the schools.

You cannot expect children to love what they do not know. The history of the Church shows that the Word of God in the Sacred Scriptures proclaimed and meditated upon has been an enduring and primary source in the work of evangelization. The Catechumenate for both adults and children start the conversion process with the Word of God. Why doesn't the diocese follow this ancient tried and proven way, so that families can learn as much as they can about the Eucharist and appreciate it more fully; before receiving it fruitfully and being able to pass on the faith to their children more permanently?

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Santa Claus

From an article by Fr Shenan Boquet, President, Human Life International

Actually Saint Nicholas – Santa Claus – was a real person, a Catholic bishop who, as a member of the Church Triumphant, remains available to us as both a reminder of great Christian virtue and as an intercessor.

He is remembered both for his holy generosity – a giver of gifts – and his holy courage.

One of the more famous stories about him involves how he spent his inheritance. Born of a wealthy family in what is present-day Turkey, he came into his legacy at a fairly young age when his parents died, and spent it primarily on the poor and in building the Church. When he heard of a man despondent over his inability to provide a dowry for his three daughters, he secreted gold coins into the man's home (including, according to tradition, throwing the gold into a stocking hung over the fireplace), thus allowing his daughters to be married and saving them from lives of destitution and even probable lives of sin given the limited options of the time and place.

But this is the same man who punched Arius, the priest who at the Council of Nicaea challenged the nature of Christ as the second Person of the Holy Trinity. The same heroic and fierce love that drove Saint Nicholas to give his wealth and time to serve the poor drove him to strike a heretic who was attacking Nicholas' true love, Jesus Christ.

He was famously humble and meek, in no way given to violence, yet he would not stand by while people starved or while others attacked the Source of his love.

Santa Claus – the Catholic bishop and real man of holiness – is a model for the kind of love we are all called to as followers of Christ. We are to love fiercely, completely, seeing Christ in the poor even as we see Him in the Church he established on the rock of Peter.

Human Life International e-Column, 07-12-2012

Trying to Have the Last Word

Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear! What verbosity my quote from the scriptures has elicited from our intrepid correspondents, Richard Stokes and S.C.! (Oct ITD). Not content with a simple "point taken" and moving on, they subject us to a critical analysis of Christ's message which, in essence, is wisely telling us not to outsmart ourselves.

It's all rather sad really, that grown men have to resort to such a defence of their egos, hanging on like the proverbial dog with a bone trying to have the last word. Shakespeare says it all with his comment, "Methinks thou protesteth too much".

William Power, Knowsley, Victoria

Addressing The Real Issues

Pope Francis has called on bishops around the world to evaluate the state of their dioceses with regard to families, basically asking them, do Catholics in your diocese know Catholic teaching on marriage and family? If not, how are you addressing this? If they do know Catholic teaching, are they living according to it? If not, what are you doing about it? - Ed.

Here are some excerpts from the Preparatory Document for the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: "The pastoral challenges for the family in the context of evangelisation":

The social and spiritual crisis, so evident in today's world, is becoming a pastoral challenge in the Church's evangelizing mission concerning the family... Never before has proclaiming the Gospel on the Family in this context been more urgent and necessary.

The importance of the subject is reflected in the fact that the Holy Father has decided to call for a Synod of Bishops, which is to have a two-staged itinerary: firstly, an Extraordinary General Assembly in 2014, intended to define the "status quaestionis" and to collect the bishops' experiences and proposals in proclaiming and living the Gospel of the Family in a credible manner; and secondly, an Ordinary General Assembly in 2015 to seek working guidelines in the pastoral care of the person and the family.

Concerns which were unheard of until a few years ago have arisen today as a result of different situations, from the widespread practice of cohabitation, which does not lead to marriage, and sometimes even excludes the idea of it, to same-sex unions between persons, who are, not infrequently, permitted to adopt children.

The many new situations requiring the Church's attention and pastoral care include: mixed or inter-religious marriages; the single-parent family; polygamy; marriages with the consequent problem of a dowry, sometimes understood as the purchase price of the woman; the caste system; a culture of non-commitment and a presumption that the marriage bond can be temporary; forms of feminism hostile to the Church; migration and the reformulation of the very concept of the family; relativist pluralism in the conception of marriage; the influence of the media on popular culture in its understanding of marriage and family life; underlying trends of thought in legislative proposals which devalue the idea of permanence and faithfulness in the marriage covenant; an increase in the practice of surrogate motherhood (wombs for hire); and new interpretations of what is considered a human right. Within the Church, faith in the sacramentality of marriage and the healing power of the Sacrament of Penance show signs of weakness or total abandonment.

Consequently, we can well understand the urgency with which the worldwide episcopate is called upon to gather cum et sub Petro to address these challenges. For example, by simply calling to mind the fact that, as a result of the current situation, many children and young people will never see their parents receive the sacraments, then we understand just how urgent are the challenges to evangelisation arising from the current situation...

The teachings of the faith on marriage is to be presented in an articulate and efficacious manner, so that it might reach hearts and transform them in accordance with God's will, made manifest in Jesus Christ. ...

Questions:

1. a) Describe how the Catholic Church's teachings on the value of the family contained in the Bible, *Gaudium et spes*, *Familiaris consortio* and other documents of the post-conciliar Magisterium is understood by people today? What formation is given to our people on the Church's teaching on family life?
- b) In those cases where the Church's teaching is known, is it accepted fully or are there difficulties in putting it into practice? If so, what are they?
- c) How widespread is the Church's teaching in pastoral programmes at the national, diocesan and parish levels? What catechesis is done on the family?
3. a) What experiences have emerged in recent decades regarding marriage preparation? What efforts are there to stimulate the task of evangelisation of the couple and of the family? ...
- b) How successful have you been in proposing a manner of praying within the family which can withstand life's complexities and today's culture?
- d) In what way have the local Churches and movements on family spirituality been able to create ways of acting which are exemplary?
6. b) How do parents in [irregular marriages] approach the Church? What do they ask? Do they request the sacraments only or do they also want catechesis and the general teaching of religion?
- d) What is the sacramental practice in these cases: preparation, administration of the sacrament and the accompaniment?
7. a) What knowledge do Christians have today of the teachings of *Humanae vitae* on responsible parenthood? Are they aware of how morally to evaluate the different methods of family planning? ...

God Exists, God is Good, and God is Near

Pope Benedict XVI, 16-12-2012

On this third Sunday of Advent, called “Gaudete Sunday,” the liturgy invites us to be joyful. Advent is a time of personal effort and conversion to prepare for Lord’s coming, but today the Church gives us a foretaste of the joy of Christmas, which is near.

In fact, Advent is also a time of joy, because during this season expectation of the Lord is reawakened in the hearts of believers, and awaiting the arrival of a person we love is always a reason for joy. ...

The first reading that we heard is an insistent invitation to joy. The passage begins with the words: “Rejoice, daughter of Zion... exult and acclaim with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem” (Zeph3:14), which is similar to that announcement of the angel to Mary: “Rejoice, you who are full of grace” (Lk1:26).

The essential reason why the daughter of Zion is able to rejoice is expressed in the statement that we just heard: “The Lord is with you” (Zeph3:15,17); literally, it would be: “is in your womb,” with a clear reference to God’s dwelling in the Ark of the Covenant, which is always with the people of Israel.

The prophet wants to tell us that there is no longer any reason for despair, discouragement, sadness, whatever the situation is that we must face because we are certain of the Lord’s presence, who is able by himself to calm our hearts and make them rejoice.

The prophet Zephaniah, moreover, makes it understood that this joy is reciprocal: we are invited to rejoice, but the Lord too rejoices in his relationship with us; in fact, the prophet writes: “He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will make you new with his love, he will be joyful over you in praise” (3:17).

The joy that is promised in this prophetic text finds its fulfillment in Jesus, who is in Mary’s womb, the “Daughter of Zion,” and in this way makes his dwelling among us. In fact, coming into the world, he grants us his joy, as he himself tells his disciples: “I have told you these things so that my joy would be in you and your joy would be complete” (Jn15:11).

Jesus brings salvation to men, a new relationship with God that overcomes evil and death, and he brings true joy by his presence, which brings light to our journey, a journey that is often troubled by darkness and egoism. And we can reflect and see whether we are truly aware of this fact of the Lord’s presence among us, he who is not a distant God but a God who is with us, a God who is in our midst, who is here with us in the holy Eucharist, who is with us in the living Church. And we must be bearers of this presence of God. And thus God rejoices through us and we can have true joy: God exists, and God is good, and God is near.

Zenit.org 16-12-2012

Teach the Truth

It would appear that the splendour of truth cannot be repeated too often here or elsewhere where the word of God is of prime importance, hence it is suggested that we pray that the message as issued by the late Pope John Paul II in October 1993 and titled as *Veritatis Splendor* be heeded. This encyclical was reportedly eight years in preparation, which suggests to all the importance of what the late Holy Father intended to say to us, to his laity, to his priests, to his bishops and to those who have been influenced or assisted by Catholic theologians whose ultimate and total authority must be derived from the Holy Spirit and in communion cum Petro et Paulo and in fidelity to the Catholic faith.

The minds of many bishops, priests and academics were re-formed by advanced dissenters and they have themselves been influenced to join with the dissenters who are from the ranks of ordained clergy as well as from various religious communities with centres scattered widely across the globe.

Much great strength and faith is needed by the church-attending Catholics, and more so by the nominal Catholics who do not have ready access to such information which although available, is not made available to students of colleges and schools, as would be part of their formation as Catholics. This faith required by youth is needed to resist such continuous attacks by the so-called educated elite in the government-funded institutions in the democratic society we have. Hence being democratic we are truly free to educate our Catholic children as our dioceses and consciences may wish.

Addressing Caritas International on 21-06-2011 our noted world trouble-shooter Archbishop Chaput instructs, “Everything in Catholic social ministry begins and ends with Jesus Christ. If it doesn’t, it isn’t Catholic. And if our social work isn’t deeply, confidently and explicitly Catholic in its identity, then we should stop using the word ‘Catholic.’ It’s that simple.” (ITD Sept 2011, p.8).

John Bohan, Geelong West, Victoria

Esteem for Silence

Servant of God Paul VI, Address at Nazareth, 05-01-1964

Oh! That there would be reborn in us the esteem for silence, that wonderful and indispensable atmosphere of the spirit: while we are deafened by so many noises, sounds and clamorous voices in the frantic and tumultuous times of modern life. Oh! Silence of Nazareth, teach us to be resolute in good thoughts, intent upon the interior life, ready to listen well to the secret inspirations of God and the exhortations of the true masters.

The End of the Waiting

Pope Benedict XVI, 23-12-2012

Mary's visit to her relative Elizabeth: This is not merely a polite gesture but, with great simplicity, depicts the meeting between the Old and the New Testament. The two women, both pregnant, in fact incarnate expectation and the One expected. The older Elizabeth symbolizes Israel, who awaits the Messiah, while the younger Mary bears the fulfilment of this expectation to the benefit of all humanity. In the two women we meet and recognize first of all the fruit of their wombs, John and Christ. The Christian poet Prudentius comments: "The child in the old womb greets, through his mother's mouth, the Lord, son of the Virgin". The elation of John in Elizabeth's womb is the sign of the end of the waiting: God is about to visit his people.

Proof of God

The thoroughly-atheist apostle Richard Dawkins (author of *The God Delusion*) who embraces Darwin's theories of evolution with a religious fervour, has described religious faith as "belief without evidence", thus as a belief without empirical proof.

That makes no sense since God is not part of the natural order as are, for example, our bodies, trees, deserts or any true-blue Aussie meat pie with or without tomato sauce.

Since God is not part of the material universe, Dawkins's insistence on scientific evidence to prove His existence is therefore utterly unscientific.

Incidentally, nothing in Darwin's theory of evolution is inconsistent with the existence of God. Consequently, the belief that evolution is part and parcel of God's plan is very reasonable.

Henk Verhoeven, Beacon Hill, New South Wales

Thinking Ourselves Wise

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 15-10-2013

Even today, there are so many idols and today there are many idolaters, so many who think themselves wise. Even among us, among Christians! ...those who believe themselves wise, that know everything.

And they have become fools and changed the glory of God who is incorruptible with an image: my own self, my ideas, my comfort. This is not just something historical – even today in the streets there are idols. All of us have some form of hidden idol. We may ask ourselves in front of God: what is my hidden idol? That which occupies the place of God!

Zenit.org 15-10-2013

The Old and The New

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 09-01-2013

St John says that the Word was with God from the beginning, and that all things were made through the Word, and nothing that exists was made without Him.

The Evangelist clearly alludes to the story of creation that is found in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis, and re-reads them in the light of Christ. This is a fundamental criterion in the Christian reading of the Bible: the Old and New Testaments should always be read together and from New, the deepest sense also of the Old is revealed. That same Word, that exists with God from always, which is God Himself and by means of whom and in sight of whom all things were created, became man: the eternal and infinite God immersed himself in human finitude, in his creature, to lead man and the whole of creation to Him.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms: "The first creation finds its meaning and its summit in the new creation in Christ, the splendour of which surpasses that of the first creation" (no. 349).

The Fathers of the Church have compared Jesus to Adam, so much so as to define him the "second Adam" or the final Adam, the perfect image of God.

With the Incarnation of the Son of God a new creation occurs, which gives the complete answer to the question "Who is man?". Only in Jesus is God's plan for the human being fully revealed: He is the definitive man according to God. The Second Vatican Council strongly reiterates this: "The truth is, that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light ... Christ, the new Adam, fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

In that child, the Son of God contemplated in Christmas, we can recognize not only the true face of God, but also that of the human being; and only by opening ourselves to the action of his grace and trying every day to follow Him, do we realize the design of God for us.

Zenit.org 09-01-2013

Marlo Retreats

You are invited to attend the following country retreats at The Ark in Marlo:

- Fr Emmanuel Adami, 21-24 February
- Fr Bernard McGrath, 4-7 April

Payment is by anonymous donation. Everything is provided: home cooking, talks, Holy Mass, rosary, Stations of the Cross walks, beach walks, shrines, adoration, prayer and daily Benediction.

For booking and further information, phone 5154 8419.

Richard Earle, Marlo, Victoria

Christmas Gift-Giving

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 09-01-2013

On Christmas we usually exchange a few gifts with the people closest to us. Sometimes it may be an act done out of convention, but generally it expresses affection, is a sign of love and esteem.

In the prayer over the offerings of the Mass at dawn on the Solemnity of Christmas the Church prays:

“Accept, O Lord, our offering in this night of light, and by this mysterious exchange of gifts transform us in Christ your Son, who raised man next to you in glory.”

The thought of giving is at the heart of the liturgy and brings to our consciousness the original gift of Christmas: on that holy night God, becoming flesh, has wanted to become a gift for men, he has given himself up for us, God gave his only Son as a gift for us, he assumed our humanity to give us his divinity. This is the great gift.

Even in our giving it is not important whether a gift is expensive or not; whoever does not manage to donate a little of himself, always gives too little; indeed, sometimes we try to substitute our hearts and the commitment of donating ourselves with money, with material things.

The mystery of the Incarnation means that God hasn't done so: he hasn't given something, but has given himself in his only-begotten Son. Here we find the model of our giving, so that our relationships, especially the most important ones, may be guided by generosity and love.

Zenit.org 09-01-2013

Blue and Violet

By Fr Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university

A reader from Oregon asked “whether a priest can add or change the liturgical colour assigned for each liturgical season? For example, during Advent instead of purple, the pastor at my parish uses blue as the colour of the season. He explained that so as not to confuse Advent with Lent and also in honour of Mary, blue is a more suitable colour.”

Blue is not one of the normal liturgical colours. Blue vestments may be used, however, as a papal privilege. This privilege has been granted to some Marian shrines and to some countries for major solemnities of the Blessed Virgin. It cannot be used as a substitute for violet.

If a pastor believes that it is a good idea to distinguish Advent from Lent, then he can easily do so by using different shades of violet vestments. There is no need to contravene liturgical laws by incorporating colours not approved for general liturgical use.

Zenit.org 17-07-2012

Commitment Required

The diocese of Sale is now awaiting a new bishop. I would imagine that he should be asking himself: “Did our traditional catechetics work?” Well, Catholics then knew who they were, and what they believed, and why. I suggest that the reason for this was the personal side of faith, which we call commitment.

The new catechetics is not very interested in the past and its history, so many modern Catholics don't know where they have come from. They are interested in the present, but without the need for commitment. It is an intellectualised view of the problems of life, which are thought to be soluble by more of man's personal effort.

We know that a university's academic approach to life and the world is cognitional, so the nature of its learning is impersonal, but should this be the model for catechetics? The new bishop would know that adults relate to life and its issues differently from children, but it is mostly children who are the subjects of the kind of catechetics taught in our schools.

“Is this new kind of catechetics working?” Surely a new bishop should give solid attention to this question, for most people, and the statistics, would say “No” to the question. If not, why not? The laity of the Church have a big investment in this matter, paying for buildings and teachers' salaries, but what is there to show for it in terms of commitment to church life?

Very little, most think, considering the enormous input over the years. Can I suggest that we are teaching the wrong kind of catechetics. Why be surprised when we teach a system that does not require commitment, to find that it produces practical atheism!

The new bishop has his work cut out for him, and deserves support. Part of that is the acceptance that, among the faithful, there is a repository of faith that deserves to be listened to attentively, for the problem has both a theoretical and experiential dimension.

Authority alone will not solve this. A living, functioning church is what is needed. That means people, ordinary people, not just an elite, *committed* to what the Church is on about.

S.C., Melbourne

Avoid Rash Judgment

St Ignatius of Loyola (Catechism n.2478)

Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favourable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.

Divorced and Remarried Catholics

Excerpts from an article in *L'Osservatore Romano* by Archbishop Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (full article reprinted in *Zenit* 24-10-2013). **PART 2** (Part 1 in *Nov ITD*) – to be continued next issue

Testimony of the Magisterium in the Present Day

The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* – issued by John Paul II [in] 1981... and of fundamental importance ever since – emphatically confirms the Church's dogmatic teaching on marriage. But it shows pastoral concern for the civilly remarried faithful who are still bound by an ecclesially valid marriage. ... Paragraph 84 on "divorced persons who have remarried" contains the following key statements: ...

2. Pastors and parish communities are bound to stand by the faithful who find themselves in this situation, with "attentive love". They too belong to the Church, they are entitled to pastoral care and they should take part in the Church's life.

3. And yet they cannot be admitted to the Eucharist.

Two reasons are given for this:

a) "their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist"

b) "if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage".

Reconciliation through sacramental confession, which opens the way to reception of the Eucharist, can only be granted in the case of repentance over what has happened and a "readiness to undertake a way of life that is no longer in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage." Concretely this means that if for serious reasons, such as the children's upbringing, the new union cannot be dissolved, then the two partners must "bind themselves to live in complete continence".

4. Clergy are expressly forbidden, for intrinsically sacramental and theological reasons and not through legalistic pressures, to "perform ceremonies of any kind" for divorced people who remarry civilly, as long as the first sacramentally valid marriage still exists.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's statement of 14 September 1994 on reception of holy communion by divorced and remarried members of the faithful emphasizes that the Church's practice in this question "cannot be modified because of different situations" (no. 5).

It also makes clear that the faithful concerned may not present themselves for holy communion on the basis of their own conscience: "Should they judge it possible to do so, pastors and confessors... have the serious duty to admonish them that such a judgment of conscience openly contradicts the Church's teaching" (no. 6). ...

It remains of the utmost importance, "with solicitous

charity to do everything that can be done to strengthen in the love of Christ and the Church those faithful in irregular marriage situations. Only thus will it be possible for them fully to receive the message of Christian marriage and endure in faith the distress of their situation. In pastoral action one must do everything possible to ensure that this is understood not to be a matter of discrimination but only of absolute fidelity to the will of Christ who has restored and entrusted to us anew the indissolubility of marriage as a gift of the Creator" (no. 10).

In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* of 2007, Benedict XVI summarizes the work of the Synod of Bishops on the theme of the Eucharist and he develops it further. In No. 29 he addresses the situation of divorced and remarried faithful. For Benedict XVI too, this is a "complex and troubling pastoral problem".

He confirms "the Church's practice, based on Sacred Scripture (cf. Mk10:2-12), of not admitting the divorced and remarried to the sacraments", but he urges pastors at the same time, to devote "special concern" to those affected: in the wish that they "live as fully as possible the Christian life through regular participation at Mass, albeit without receiving communion, listening to the word of God, eucharistic adoration, prayer, participation in the life of the community, honest dialogue with a priest or spiritual director, dedication to the life of charity, works of penance, and commitment to the education of their children". If there are doubts concerning the validity of the failed marriage, these are to be carefully examined by the competent marriage tribunals.

Today's mentality is largely opposed to the Christian understanding of marriage, with regard to its indissolubility and its openness to children. Because many Christians are influenced by this, marriages nowadays are probably invalid more often than they were previously, because there is a lack of desire for marriage in accordance with Catholic teaching, and there is too little socialization within an environment of faith. Therefore assessment of the validity of marriage is important and can help to solve problems.

Where nullity of marriage cannot be demonstrated, the requirement for absolution and reception of communion, according to the Church's established and approved practice, is that the couple live "as friends, as brother and sister". Blessings of irregular unions are to be avoided, "lest confusion arise among the faithful concerning the value of marriage". A blessing (benedictio: divine sanctioning) of a relationship that contradicts the will of God is a contradiction in terms.

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	Friday 10am – 6pm (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 12.30pm First Friday 11.30am – 4pm
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

United to Jesus

Pope Francis, General Audience, 23-10-2013

This reality that Mary teaches us is very beautiful: to be always united to Jesus. We can ask ourselves: do we remember Jesus only when something is not going well or when we are in need, or is our relationship constant, a profound friendship, also when it is a question of following him on the way of the cross?

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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.

Prayer for the Sick

St Augustine

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones. And for all your love's sake. Amen.