

Into the Deep

Issue 168

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"We must rise up and value every instant of time that passes and is in our power. We must not waste a single moment. By divine grace we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year. This year, which only God knows if we shall see its end, must be used in reparation for the past and in preparation for the future."

- Padre Pio

Water in a Glass

Venerable Fulton Sheen

Pour water into the red glass and it looks red; pour it into a green glass and it looks green; pour it into a black glass and it will look black.

When you pour truth into mind *A* and pour it into mind *B*, it does not have the same effect, though it is identically the same truth. *A* may accept it, and *B* does not. The difference is not in the truth; rather the difference is in the mental soil in which the seed of truth is planted.

It is not ignorance alone that is the cause of unbelief. Another and more important cause is behaviour. ... A French infidel once said to Pascal, "If I had your principles, I would be a better man." Pascal said, "Begin with being a better man, and you will soon have my principles."

If we do not live as we think, we soon begin to think as we live; we make a philosophy to suit our bad behaviour... men often question truth because they hate it in practice. If they changed their lives they would change their thinking. Scepticism is not an intellectual position, but a moral position.

Life is worth living p. 254

The Holy Family

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Address 27-12-2009

We can still identify ourselves with the shepherds of Bethlehem who hastened to the grotto as soon as they had received the Angel's announcement and found "Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger" (Lk 2: 16).

Let us too pause to contemplate this scene and reflect on its meaning.

The first witnesses of Christ's birth, the shepherds, found themselves not only before the Infant Jesus but also a small family: mother, father and newborn son. God had chosen to reveal himself by being born into a human family, and the human family thus became an icon of God!

God is the Trinity, he is a communion of love; so is the family despite all the differences that exist between the Mystery of God and his human creature, an expression that reflects the unfathomable Mystery of God as Love.

In marriage the man and the woman, created in God's image, become "one flesh" (Gen 2: 24), that is, a communion of love that generates new life.

The human family, in a certain sense, is an icon of the Trinity because of its interpersonal love and the fruitfulness of this love. ...

The Christian family is aware that children are a gift and a project of God. Therefore it cannot consider that it possesses them; rather, in serving God's plan through them, the family is called to educate them in the greatest freedom, which is precisely that of saying "yes" to God in order to do his will.

The Virgin Mary is the perfect example of this "yes". Let us entrust all families to her, praying in particular for their precious educational mission.

Zenit.org 08-01-2010

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

A Great Example

A lovely story by Regina Abraham in the December edition of Catholic Life (p.13), relates the effect Sr Mercy, a nun from Nigeria has had on the parishes of St Agatha's and St Thomas Apostle in the past nine years. She is one of three who have been very visible in their religious habit wherever they went. Regina relayed the story of Sr Mercy's conversation with a salesgirl who asked "what is that thing on your head?"

Sr Mercy answered that it was her veil which she wore because she was a Catholic nun. The girl was obviously fascinated as Sr Mercy witnessed "her faith, her love for God and her service, but also gave the girl an insight into a life of poverty, chastity and obedience." She informed the girl that she was leaving Australia to which the girl replied, "Oh, do have fun wherever you go."

After relaying the story, Regina wrote: "I could not help but wonder at the impact this conversation would have had on this young girl, who grew up and lived in a world devoid of religious sisters, even in our Catholic schools."

This report also inspires one to ask how many similar stories could be relayed if every Bishop, Priest, Sister, and Brother proudly wore their religious habit when going about their daily duties!

Pat O'Brien, Sale, Victoria

Darkness of the World

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 26-12-2016

Jesus announced in advance to His disciples the rejection and persecution they would meet: "You will be hated by all because of my name".

But why does the world persecute Christians? The world hates Christians for the same reason it hated Jesus, because He brought the light of God, but the world preferred the darkness to conceal its evil works.

We recall that during the Last Supper, Jesus Himself prayed to the Father that He might defend us from the evil worldly spirit.

To follow Jesus means to follow His light, which was lighted on the night of Bethlehem, and to abandon the darkness of the world.

Zenit.org 26-12-2016

The Ladder

Pope Francis, Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, 02-02-2015

Before our eyes we can picture Mother Mary as she walks, carrying the Baby Jesus in her arms.

She brings him to the Temple; she presents him to the people; she brings him to meet his people.

The arms of Mother Mary are like the 'ladder' on which the Son of God comes down to us, the ladder of God's condescension. ...

This is the twofold path taken by Jesus: He descended, He became like us, in order then to ascend with us to the Father, making us like Himself.

In our heart we can contemplate this double movement by imagining the Gospel scene of Mary who enters the Temple holding the Child in her arms. The Mother walks, yet it is the Child who goes before her. She carries him, yet He is leading her along the path of the God who comes to us so that we might go to Him.

Jesus walked the same path as we do, and shows us the new way, the 'new and living way' which is He Himself. ...

Fully five times the Gospel speaks to us of Mary and Joseph's obedience to the 'law of the Lord'.

Jesus came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. This way – He tells us – was His 'food'.

In the same way, all those who follow Jesus must set out on the path of obedience, imitating as it were the Lord's 'condescension' by humbling themselves and making their own the will of the Father, even to self-emptying and abasement.

Mary, the young mother, and Simeon, the kindly old man, hold the Child in their arms, yet it is the Child himself who guides them both.

Vatican Information Service 03-02-2015

Not Complicated

Archbishop Charles Chaput in an interview with Catholic World Report, 24-11-2016

CWR: What is a basic program of spirituality you'd suggest to the ordinary layman-in-the-pew?

Archbishop Chaput: Read. Pray. Worship. It's not complicated. But you do need to actually do it, rather than just talk about it.

Stones Will Shout – And I Want to Shout!

I ran from parish to parish, and I am still running, seeking a Holy Mass – *not* a personal performance! We are supposed to be one holy Catholic Apostolic Church! Catholic means universal, are we not meant to be in unison? Why do I have to continually search throughout my diocese and beyond to find Holy Masses, without laity seemingly taking over most of the priest's duty? Why do our priests allow the laity to have so much input? God requested Moses to remove his sandals, for he was standing on Holy ground! Is not the sanctuary Holy ground? Why do many priests allow so many extraordinary ministers? We have become so used to fast-food outlets to feed us that now it is even happening in God's Holy Church!

I am currently visiting a thriving orthodox Catholic parish many kilometres from where I live, and have visited for many years. Before you enter this church, St Gerard's, North Dandenong, you will be confronted by a sign with symbols and writing e.g. Turn off mobile phone, no talking, then a request for modest appropriate attire and also that it is a house of prayer and worship; Confessions, fasting for an hour before receiving Holy Communion. What an example of a true father of his flock. You would be amazed at the attendance, weekdays and on the weekends, all-male altar servers ranging from young to teens to older, serving even on weekday school holidays. The priest administers the Holy Eucharist under one species to the whole congregation with the provision of kneelers and an altar server holding the Communion plate. There could be an overflowing of worshippers, no use of extraordinary ministers is needed here; not only that, time has been allowed to give thanks to God.

Now an example of what is currently happening in many, many parishes: So it is rush in, rush out, shortest form of the Mass every day of the week; for the sign of peace people are moving all over the Church and the priests leave the sanctuary; some altars are not prepared correctly for the Holy sacrifice; and Heaven help us on a hot day, but cool in the church, when some priests decide not to vest, just suffice with a stole! How do we recognise our priests? They are usually sporting check shirts; sometimes I think they deliberately do not want to be recognised as a Catholic priest. There are many poor souls who miss out because they can't find the witness of Christ! We are called to evangelise – why can't they?

If you're a mother or father the clock is never turned off, if your child is hungry or needs comforting you look after them! What has happened to the Holy day, Sunday? On a Sunday afternoon we used to have the richest form of Benediction, we prayed as a parish – why has it disappeared? It appears to me that some priests knock off early and restart on Tuesdays! I was under the understanding that this is a great calling from God, a vocation not a professional job!

After Masses now in most parishes the Holy dwelling place becomes a hall, talking, noise, no quiet for prayer – what is happening to all of us? The devil is pleased with this outcome, for we have become the community and 'we are the church' – come as we are, let's be happy, clappy and *inclusive*, and we have erased *thee* and *thy* and replaced with you and yours. How many parishes recite the St Michael prayer?

We need to all take responsibility for this mess and schism in Our Holy Suffering Church. It is time that we became *serious*. How often are we called by our priests to pray for them? When was the last time we prayed for families? The marriage, euthanasia, abortion bills that our government want/have are against God's law!

Catechism? When was the last time we were catechised, how many of our Catholics have a copy of the Catechism or have opened it over the last many years? I have attended a Catechism class which has been very informative and rich for my faith. Over many years I have had connected Christian television, EWTN – I strongly recommend everybody to do the same. We are called to learn and practise the richness, beauty and truth and authentic Church teachings.

Funerals – now where do I start? This is your life, eulogies, non-sacred music, picture shows, and surprise of surprises, even Catholics who had belonged to the Freemasons. All of this should have been left for the wake in respect for the soul and for respect for Christ's Holy Church.

To finish up I would like to share a quote of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen:

"Sin is not the worst thing in the world. The worst thing is the denial of sin."

Wilma Byrne, Moe, Victoria

Religion in Tolerant Societies

Pope Benedict XVI, Westminster Hall, 17-09-2010

Religion...is not a problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to the national conversation.

In this light, I cannot but voice my concern at the increasing marginalization of religion, particularly of Christianity, that is taking place in some quarters, even in nations which place a great emphasis on tolerance.

There are those who would advocate that the voice of religion be silenced, or at least relegated to the purely private sphere. There are those who argue that the public celebration of festivals such as Christmas should be discouraged, in the questionable belief that it might somehow offend those of other religions or none. And there are those who argue – paradoxically with the intention of eliminating discrimination – that Christians in public roles should be required at times to act against their conscience.

These are worrying signs of a failure to appreciate not only the rights of believers to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, but also the legitimate role of religion in the public square.

I would invite all of you, therefore, within your respective spheres of influence, to seek ways of promoting and encouraging dialogue between faith and reason at every level of national life.

We Want to Worship

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, Feast of Epiphany 2017

"We want to worship." Those men came from the East to worship, and they came to do so in the place befitting a king: a palace. Their quest led them there, for it was fitting that a king should be born in a palace, amid a court and all his subjects. For that is a sign of power, success, a life of achievement. One might well expect a king to be venerated, feared and adulated. True, but not necessarily loved. ...

Herod is unable to worship because he could not or would not change his own way of looking at things. He did not want to stop worshipping himself, believing that everything revolved around him. He was unable to worship, because his aim was to make others worship him. Nor could the priests worship, because although they had great knowledge, and knew the prophecies, they were not ready to make the journey or to change their ways.

The Magi experienced longing; they were tired of the usual fare. They were all too familiar with, and weary of, the Herods of their own day. But there, in Bethlehem, was a promise of newness, of gratuitousness. There, something new was taking place. The Magi were able to worship, because they had the courage to set out. And as they fell to their knees before the small, poor and vulnerable Infant, the unexpected and unknown Child of Bethlehem, they discovered the glory of God.

Zenit.org 06-01-2017

Those Who Suffer

From Pope Francis' Message for the 25th World Day of the Sick, to be held on 11 February, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes

- I encourage all of you, the sick, the suffering, physicians, nurses, family members and volunteers, to see in Mary, Health of the Infirm, the sure sign of God's love for every human being and a model of surrender to His will. May you always find in faith, nourished by the Word and by the Sacraments, the strength needed to love God, even in the experience of illness.
- Let us ask Mary Immaculate for the grace always to relate to the sick as persons who certainly need assistance, at times even for the simplest of things, but who have a gift of their own to share with others.

Confession is the Place

Pope Francis, 15-11-2016

The whole world, all of us are in need of God's mercy. It saves us, it gives us life, it recreates us as true sons and daughters of God.

And we experience God's saving goodness in a particular way in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Confession is the place in which we receive the gift of God's forgiveness and mercy, which has initiated the transformation of each one of us and the reform of the life of the Church.

Zenit.org 15-11-2016

When Things Look Bleak

Another Christmas season has passed, but the celebration of the Mystery of the Word becoming Flesh in a stable, in a little town of Bethlehem, continues to boggle my mind and linger in my heart and soul every time I assist at Mass. Each year that the Church recalls this mystery, she urges us to reflect upon and renew the memory of the great love God the Father has blessed us with in the birth of his only begotten Son.

The stable in Bethlehem is a practical and simple lesson for us when things look bleak and our best-laid plans are thwarted. It prescribes an attitude and spiritual way for us to live out conversion in our daily lives. It teaches us to see afflictions, failure, hardship, trials and tribulations as gifts in our commitment to a life-long process of ongoing conversion – treasures that aid us in our detachment from the things of this world and in living our call to holiness of life.

In Bethlehem, the Church reminds us that God the Father chose to accomplish the world's salvation through the helplessness and littleness of a baby born in the poverty of a stable with the lowly and despised in attendance, not to mention the inadequacies and failure of a foster father to provide a normal and suitable birthing place.

Bethlehem teaches us that the Son of God did not come in might, power and the splendour of his glory, but as a child, poor, weak and totally dependent on his parents. This is how the Redeemer of mankind, Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father and Prince-of-Peace entered human history to redeem us and be with us.

He gave up all things joyfully, emptied himself, forsaking all glory in order to do the Father's will. In the form of a baby he entrusted his life totally to the love of his Father. It is important for us to learn to see hardships, trial, tribulation, failure and even success and strength as God sees them. We too must humbly commit ourselves to a similar path of trust so that the Father can help himself to the afflictions and poverty of our lives and bring about his work of love and grace.

When we think about it, God made holy the poverty of the stable so that no person would be too weak, too small or too much of a failure to enter into the mystery and reality of His love for man. And it is no coincidence that there in a manger, a feeding box in a stable in Bethlehem (which means house of bread in Hebrew) lies the Bread of Life, the world's sustenance and the strengthening food for the poorest, smallest, weakest and the most fragile of souls.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Lost Relative

My name is Sandra Graham I am searching for my grandmother who disappeared many years ago:

Veronica Norah Cheney nee Harvey

Born 1901

Parents - Jane Hecuba Butterfield

- Henry Harvey

Last heard from 1944.

Family members believe she joined an order around the Wagga region. They believe she was seen twice, once at her brother's funeral. They believe she was known as Sister Veronica.

I would appreciate any information if it is available.

Sandra Graham, Burra, New South Wales

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"God makes us understand his great love for us precisely when we recognize that we are sinners."

Misericordia et misera, n.8

Your Task, Parents

**Pope Francis, to parents of babies he was baptising,
08-01-2017**

Through Baptism, the Church will give faith to your children. And you have the task to make it grow, preserve it, and ensure it becomes a witness to all the others. This is the meaning of this ceremony. This is what I want to tell you: keep the faith, make it grow, so that it can be a witness to others.

Blessings in Lieu of Communion

Answered by Fr Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy and dean of theology at the Regina Apostolorum university

Q: In November 2008 the undersecretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments wrote a letter against the lay conferral of blessings in lieu of Communion. ... I am concerned that the practice is still allowed by some parish priests. Has there been anything further from the congregation in this connection? – J.M., Sydney, Australia

A: We published most of the text of this letter in our column of March 29, 2009, and had already touched upon the topic in earlier years (May 10 and 24, 2005). In that 2009 column we said: "Recently, however, a document has appeared in several Internet sources which indicate that the Holy See is tending toward a negative view of the practice. The document is a letter (Protocol No. 930/08/L) dated Nov. 22, 2008, sent in response to a private query and signed by Father Anthony Ward, SM, undersecretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship. As a private reply the letter is not yet a norm with legal force and, as it makes clear, is not a definitive reply. However, it provides some valuable pointers on the legitimacy of this practice and the mind of the Holy See regarding it.

"The letter said that 'this matter is presently under the attentive study of the Congregation,' so 'for the present, this dicastery wishes to limit itself to the following observations':

"1. The liturgical blessing of the Holy Mass is properly given to each and to all at the conclusion of the Mass, just a few moments subsequent to the distribution of Holy Communion.

"2. Lay people, within the context of Holy Mass, are unable to confer blessings. These blessings, rather, are the competence of the priest (cf. *Ecclesia de Mysterio*, *Notitiae* 34 (15 Aug. 1997), art. 6, §2; Canon 1169, §2; and *Roman Ritual De Benedictionibus* (1985), n. 18).

"3. Furthermore, the laying on of a hand or hands – which has its own sacramental significance, inappropriate here – by those distributing Holy Communion, in substitution for its reception, is to be explicitly discouraged.

"4. The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* n. 84, 'forbids any pastor, for whatever reason or pretext even of a pastoral nature, to perform ceremonies of any kind for divorced people who remarry'. To be feared is that any form of blessing in substitution for communion would give the impression that the divorced and remarried have been returned, in some sense, to the status of Catholics in good standing.

"5. In a similar way, for others who are not to be admitted to Holy Communion in accord with the norm of law, the Church's discipline has already made clear that they should not approach Holy Communion nor receive a blessing. This would include non-Catholics and those envisaged in can. 915 (i.e., those under the penalty of excommunication or interdict, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin).

"Although the letter as such is not legally binding, some of its points, such as No. 2 on the prohibition of lay ministers giving liturgical blessings, are merely restatements of existing law and as such are already obligatory. ...

Little has changed since that time with respect to universal law. The legal situation of the usage is still murky, with bishops making statements falling on both sides of the argument. There would, however, appear to be a tendency in recent documents to discourage the practice or at least show some hesitancy. [...]

Therefore, I would conclude that the tendency appears to move away from imparting blessings, but, wherever a certain custom already exists, it can be interpreted as a kind of spiritual communion accompanied by a prayer that Christ enter into the person's heart.

This would appear to be a middle-ground approach that I think could be acceptable while awaiting a definitive solution, if one is needed.

Zenit.org 20-12-2016

Offering Every Help

One of the many challenging declarations Jesus left us is in Matthew 21:31 - 'I tell you most solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of heaven before you'.

A response to this declaration is reflected in the way that the Church has moved away from pomp, circumstance and triumphalism. Thus Pius XII lived in occupied Rome and was preoccupied with saving Jews and others to escape from Nazi savagery. John XXIII is remembered as the *aggiornamento* Pope: bringing things up to date. Paul VI laid the Triple Crown on the altar as a sign that it was to be worn by Jesus rather than his representative. Saint John Paul humbled himself by kissing the tarmac of the countries he visited.

Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia*, also maintains this spirit of humility by calling for a new approach to sinners. So chapter 8 opens with the declaration that 'although the Church realises that any breach of the marriage bond is against the will of God, she is also "conscious of the frailty of many of her children".' (291).

There is a clear call for a new mentality. Thus in footnote 351 the Pope wants 'to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy' and 'I would also point out that the Eucharist "is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak"'. Clearly, the Pope is not advocating giving Communion to people in a state of mortal sin; but rather of offering them every help to be free of their sin.

John H. Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Forgive!

Misericordia et misera, n.8

Only God forgives sins, but he asks that we be ready to forgive others even as he has forgiven us: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us". How sad it is when our hearts are closed and unable to forgive! Resentment, anger and revenge gain the upper hand, making our lives miserable and blocking a joyful commitment to mercy.

Not a Poor Cousin

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the pontifical household, First Advent sermon 2016

The Holy Spirit is not simply a "poor relative," so to speak, in the Trinity. He is not "a way that God acts," an energy or a fluid that permeates the universe like the Stoics thought. He is a "subsistent relation" and therefore a person.

He is not so much "a third person singular" as he is "a first person plural." He is the "We" of the Father and Son. To express this in a human way, when the Father and the Son speak of the Holy Spirit they do not say "he"; instead they say "we" because he is the unity between the Father and the Son. Here we can see the extraordinary fecundity of St Augustine's insight in which the Father is the one who loves, the Son is the one loved, and the Spirit is the love that unites them, the reciprocal gift. The belief of the Western Church that the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Father and the Son" is based on this.

The Holy Spirit, nevertheless, will always remain the hidden God, even if we can know him by his effects. He is like the wind: no one knows where it comes from and where it will blow, but we can see the effects of its passing. He is like the light that illuminates everything around it but remains invisible.

This is why the Spirit is the least known and least beloved of the three Persons, despite the fact that he is Love in person. It is easier to think of the Father and Son as "persons," but that is more difficult for us to do with the Spirit. There are no human categories that can help us understand this mystery. ...

We will fully understand who the Holy Spirit is only in Paradise. There we will live a life that will have no end, in a deepened understanding of him that will give us immense joy. He will be like a very gentle fire that will inundate our souls and fill us with bliss, like when love fills a person's heart and that person is happy.

Zenit.org 02-12-2016

"Prayer leads one forward in hope and when things become dark, there must be more prayer! And there will be more hope."

Pope Francis, 18-01-2017

What An Admission!

"There was nothing formally written that suited our diocesan circumstances in assisting our Catholic communities to prepare young people for Christian initiation. This dilemma led to the formation of this resource." - from an unsigned article, but presumably by a spokesman for the Catholic Education Office, in the December edition of Catholic Life (p.7). It was referring to a new resource, developed by seven lay people and one priest, as a result of interest in "a Catholic faith" shown by young people in parish communities and Catholic secondary schools.

What an amazing admission! A "Catholic" school system costing millions of dollars each year in the Sale diocese and "there is nothing formally written" to teach students the Catholic faith!

It comes twenty-eight years after the then Bishop of Sale, Bishop Eric D'Arcy, addressed the Plenary session of the Roman Secretariat for Non-Believers on behalf of the Australian Bishops. He said: "Since 1970 many Australian pastors, parents and teachers have been expressing strong and constant dissatisfaction about the "Experiential Model Catechetics" which became dominant in Catholic High schools. As that system became entrenched, great numbers of young Catholics were coming away from twelve years of Catholic schooling, ignorant of the Church's specific doctrines; both on faith and morals; ignorant of the reasons that support those doctrines; vulnerable to even the most elementary and hackneyed secularist objections to Catholic beliefs." Despite this damning indictment, nothing changed.

And so, it has been commonly accepted for many years now that almost one hundred per cent of graduates from 'Catholic' schools no longer believe or practise their Catholic faith.

When a document I wrote, entitled "Are our Catholic schools still Catholic?", was distributed in March 2006, the response from senior clergy was immediate and loud. They defended the so-called new core document called "Journeying Together in Hope" as being authentic even though it was based on the false ideas of laicised priest, Thomas Groome, in what he called "shared Christian praxis". This method calls for people to apply what he calls a "hermeneutic of suspicion" to Catholic doctrine. In other words accept what you want but ignore the rest!

Apart from admitting Catholic education is not even pretending to teach the Catholic faith, this new resource raises many questions. Are there numbers of students requesting more information about the Catholic faith? Has the resource been approved by the appropriate authority? Who is going to conduct the heavy courses involved? Who is going to monitor the results and ensure that Catholic Doctrine is adhered to? And why after forty years or more of ignoring Catholic teaching has this resource suddenly appeared on the scene?

And so, I repeat the question asked in March 2006: "Are our Catholic schools still Catholic?"

Pat O'Brien, Sale, Victoria

Mass Intention?

St Joseph's Springvale parish bulletin for Jan 8, in a section titled "What are Mass intentions?" states: "The **first** intention is to celebrate the Mass according to what the Church does."

Recently I read in a significant episcopal statement by three prominent overseas archbishops/bishops: "The Church teaches by means of what she does, and she has to do what she teaches." This confirms what I have already long known and believed in trying to live the Catholic Faith.

In light of the bishops' declaration, the above statement in St Joseph's bulletin re Mass intentions is quite ambiguous, if not outright false, since to this day Masses in the parish continue to include consistent liturgical abuses by both the parish priest and friars under his authority, even after respectful requests for changes that would bring practices into harmony with Church teaching.

I've always been led to believe that the parish priest carefully monitors the content of the parish bulletin, so I find it hard to believe such a seriously false/misleading statement would slip past his notice.

Peter Phillips, Springvale, Victoria

Noisy, Superficial Liturgies

Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, in an interview in the French newspaper La Nef, October 2016

Saint John Paul II teaches us that "mystery continually veils itself, covers itself with silence, in order to avoid constructing an idol in place of God."

I want to declare today that the risk of Christians becoming idolaters is great. Prisoners of the noise of endless human talk, we are not far from constructing a cult according to our own dimensions, a god in our own image. As Cardinal Godfried Danneels remarked, "the chief fault of the Western liturgy, as it is celebrated in practice, is being too talkative." Father Faustin Nyombayré, a Rwandan priest, says that in Africa "superficiality does not spare the liturgy or supposedly religious sessions, from which people return out of breath and perspiring, rather than rested and full of what has been celebrated in order to live and to witness better." Celebrations sometimes become noisy and exhausting. The liturgy is sick. The most striking symbol of this sickness is the omnipresence of the microphone. It has become so indispensable that people wonder how anyone could have celebrated before it was invented!

The noise from outside and our own interior noises make us strangers to ourselves. In the midst of noise, a human being cannot help falling into banality: we are superficial in what we say, we utter empty talk, in which we talk and talk again... until we find something to say, a sort of irresponsible "muddle" made up of jokes and words that kill. We are superficial also in what we do: we live in a banal state that is supposedly logical and moral, without finding anything abnormal about it.

Often we leave our noisy, superficial liturgies without having encountered in them God and the interior peace that He wants to offer us.

CatholicWorldReport.com 03-10-2016

"When the Eucharist is being celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the divine victim immolated on the altar." **St John Chrysostom**

Euthanasia Must Always Be Forbidden

Catechism of the Catholic Church

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

Looking for Answers, Rejecting God

I was driving home from work the other day and flicked over to some talkback radio. They were talking about homelessness in Melbourne, people sleeping in the city streets, and what to do about them. One 20-something year old woman was interviewed, who'd been homeless since she was 16, thrown out of her parental home for whatever reason and on the streets since then. Apparently she'd been in emergency housing before and said it was more dangerous than the streets so refused any further offer of accommodation.

People phoned in and gave their comments. The question asked by the talkback host was 'Do you sympathise or are you sick of it?' There were answers and reasons from both sides. He interviewed a woman in charge of some city mission that dealt with the homeless on a large scale. She claimed that all the research has been done and we know the solution – we need affordable house prices. It was an economic thing, a housing affordability issue.

As I drove and listened to this, I couldn't help thinking this was all missing the mark. I couldn't help bringing it back to God, faith, and family life. Is a 16-year old out on the street because she can't afford a house? Or is she on the street because something went horribly wrong in her parental home?

In Australia it's trendy to be 'progressive', atheist, or at least anti-religion. You're scoffed at if you believe in God, go to church, talk about faith. Believing in the value of a stable family, with one-woman-one-man marriage, once and forever, makes you a backward, hateful bigot. Believing in the value of the life of every child, and the child's right to his mother and father, is vile and discriminatory. But such resistance to God and faith and simple morality blocks out the very answers we're looking for.

Keeping sex for marriage, and keeping marriage forever, and raising children in that environment – and making that the norm ("everybody's doing it") – will go a long way to addressing homelessness (and countless other social and emotional problems). How many children are raised across two (or more) homes, how many have to deal with mum, dad, mum's partners, dad's partners, and various other children? What abuse do they face in the home, and what drives them to choose the streets instead?

If we strive to live as Christ commands us, we provide stability for our children and lead them into wisdom. The likelihood of drifting into meaninglessness, emptiness, loneliness, drugs and other addictions, is lessened, as is the likelihood of a life of crime.

Stable family life not only reduces homelessness, but it has an economic impact of only needing one house per family. Faith in Christ leads us to want to live this life, for our own good and for the good of others. It's a win-win situation. God's plan for life and love is beautiful, and strong, and wise, and achievable. But you try to find someone on talkback radio, or in government, willing to take any of that seriously. It's easier to blame house prices.

- Ed.

Glory Be!

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 09-01-2017

There is a little prayer that we pray, the Gloria – "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit" – but we often say it mechanically, "like parrots". This prayer is adoration, glory! I adore the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Adore, with little prayers, in silence before the grandeur of God, adore Jesus and say: 'You are the only One, you are the beginning and the end, and I want to be with you for all my life, for all eternity. You are the only One'.

Insidethevatican.com 09-01-2017

Double Standards

"Our hearts are breaking," he said. "People have died," he said. "All of them were innocent," he said. This was a "terrible crime", an "evil act".

Premier Daniel Andrews was quick to take a stand after the rampage in Melbourne when a man killed pedestrians by driving into them. Yet he's proud of his abortion law that allows (and funds) the killing of any unborn baby, for any reason, at any age. No heartbreak there, no concern for innocent victims there, no judgement of evil.

He makes me sick.

- Ed.

Thinking and Feeling

Homily of Fr John Speekman for 27th Sunday Year C, homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com.au

A previous bishop once asked me at lunch what I thought of a certain matter and as my response began, 'I feel that...' He interrupted me immediately and said, 'Spare me your feelings, John; tell me what you think.' I was, naturally enough, mortified and the broad grins of my brother priests around the table didn't make my humiliation easier. During dessert I thought to score a point by asking the bishop if he thought like another piece of cake. He was not amused.

It is undoubtedly true that in this world there are 'thinkers' and 'feelers'. I confess to being, in certain areas, one of the latter. If you ask me if I'd like an ice cream I just consult my tummy and say, 'Hmmm .. yes.' On the other hand, a priest friend who sometimes accompanies me on holidays would look at his watch and work out how long since breakfast and how long till lunch and make a decision based on his calculations. A true 'thinker'.

Thinking and feeling are usually thought of as two separate functions of the soul although sometimes it can be difficult to disentangle them. In most people they work together harmoniously for the wellbeing of the individual as long as it is remembered that the rational intellect is a higher faculty than the emotions. Many people have forgotten this. Unfortunately those who live their lives guided by their changeable and unpredictable feelings will usually lurch from one disaster to the next.

In broad terms feeling tends to self; thinking tends beyond self. Therefore, in our contemporary, individualistic, self-centred society feeling gets more airplay than thinking. Quite frankly, I was shocked to discover recently that among our primary school students one of the worst sins they could commit was 'hurting someone's feelings'. From here it's only a short step to 'feeling good' is better than 'being good' or 'doing good'.

An over-emphasis on feelings leads inevitably to an over-emphasis on self. The subversive little phrase 'Are you comfortable with that?' is symptomatic of the trend. Good becomes that which makes you feel good.

No wonder the young say, 'I don't go to Mass because I get nothing out of it; it does nothing for me.' Having long ago lost any intellectual grasp of the meaning of the Eucharistic liturgy they are reduced to judging it by how it makes them feel.

We priests, instead of undertaking the task of re-catechising our people have all too often fallen into the trap of entertaining them – making them feel good. And so we have had rock Masses, and puppet Gospels and clown homilies, and all sorts of innovations and novelties bordering on abuse and even sacrilege.

When young people tell me the Mass does nothing for them I tell them it's actually meant to do something for God. The Mass is meant to please God. We come to give him (not ourselves) glory and praise and honour and worship. This is our obligation as God's servants. And when they complain that they don't like the music or such and such a hymn I tell them we're not singing these hymns for their enjoyment; we are singing them for God. We are here at Mass to do something for God. And when they tell me they don't like the priest I tell them that God does. I tell them that God saw something very attractive in that man and called him from all eternity to be a priest. We would show ourselves very wise to go with God's choice.

Feelings tend to invert the order of things. Reason puts them back the way they should be. I heard recently of a priest who complained to his parishioners that he is rarely thanked for the work he does among them, for saying Mass and delivering sermons, and a parishioner interrupted him and told him that as a father he rarely gets thanks for providing for his family, and his wife rarely gets thanked for her housekeeping. 'That's our duty, Father, and your duty is to do what you're doing.'

Strong words, straight from the rational intellect, and they certainly put the 'hurt feelings' back in their place. Just listen to what Jesus thinks of the matter: So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, 'We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty.' Those words put us all in our place, and 'in our place' is a wonderful place to be. It brings peace to all around.

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfield	1 st Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30pm Heyfield 10.00am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Low Mass 10am) 10.30 – 11.00am
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) 10.00am – 11.00am
Cranbourne	Fri & Sat in church: (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by PIN available at parish office.
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11.00am First Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Dec on)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Maffra	Wednesday (5pm Mass) – 6pm
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 – 12pm First Friday 11.30am – 4pm
Trafalgar	Wed & First Sat: (9.30am Mass) – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10.00am – 11.00am First Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Jan on)
Wonthaggi	First Friday 7.00pm – 8.00pm

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

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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. There is no guarantee that every letter will be published, and we reserve the right to edit letters. 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.

*"If we really understood the Mass,
we would die of joy."* **St John Vianney**

Stop and Adore

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 06-01-2017

The Magi did it: having found the Babe, "they prostrated themselves and adored Him". They did not just look at him, they did not just say a prayer of circumstance and go away, no, but they adored: they entered in a personal communion of love with Jesus. Then they gave Him gold, incense and myrrh, or their most precious goods. Let us learn from the Magi not to dedicate to Jesus only our spare time and a thought every now and then, otherwise we will not have His light. As the Magi, let us get underway, clothed in light following the star of Jesus, and let us adore the Lord with our whole selves.

Zenit.org 06-01-2017