

Into the Deep

Issue 178

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

December 2017

Bold Thought

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 4th Advent Sermon 2016

There is a bold thought about Christmas that returns from age to age on the lips of the greatest Doctors and spiritual teachers in the Church: Origen, St Augustine, St Bernard, and many others.

It says, "What good does it do me that Christ was born of Mary once in Bethlehem, if he is not born by faith in my heart as well?"

Sin and Sinners

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 2nd Advent homily 2016

We know that the constant rule for Jesus' actions in the Gospels, in moral questions, can be summarized: "No to sin, yes to the sinner."

No one is more severe than he is in condemning unjustly acquired wealth, but he invites himself to Zacchaeus' house, and simply by going there to meet him he brings a change. He condemns adultery, even that of the heart, but he forgives the adulteress and gives hope back to her; he reaffirms the indissolubility of marriage, but he engages in conversation with the Samaritan woman who has already had five husbands, and he reveals to her the secret he had told no one else in such an explicit way: "I who speak to you am he [the Messiah]".

If we ask ourselves how to justify theologically such a clear-cut distinction between the sinner and sin, the answer is very simple: sinners are God's creatures, created by him and made in his image, and they maintain their dignity despite all their aberrations; sin is not the work of God: it does not come from him but from the enemy. It is the same reason why the Son of God became everything human beings are, "except sin".

Zenit.org 09-12-2016

He Loves You

Blessed Paul VI, Christmas 1971

God could have come wrapped in glory, splendour, light and power, to instill fear, to make us rub our eyes in amazement.

But instead he came as the smallest, the frailest and weakest of beings.

Why? So that no one would be ashamed to approach him, so that no one would be afraid, so that all would be close to him and draw near him, so that there would be no distance between us and him.

God made the effort to plunge, to dive deep within us, so that each of us, each of you, could speak intimately with him, trust him, draw near him and realize that he thinks of you and loves you...

He loves you! Think about what this means! If you understand this, if you remember what I am saying, you will have understood the whole of Christianity.

"We have only to **beg pardon** and all is repaired by **that act of love.**

Jesus opens his heart to us."

St Thérèse of Lisieux

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

Ask and You Receive!

As you know, a few months ago as donations and letters were dwindling, I began thinking that maybe ITD's time had come and gone. There didn't seem to be a point in carrying on for my own benefit. If people were not writing in or donating, maybe they weren't reading either, and maybe I should consider stopping.

After my little editorial in the May 2017 issue, ITD had a renewed burst of support, but by October donations were nearly used up again. Another appeal in last month's issue, and ITD is now in its strongest financial position ever! Thank you so much for such a vote of confidence! I am amazed, and humbled. As one donor wrote in a simple note enclosed with his very generous cheque: "People expect to be reminded when funds are running low. Be not afraid to ask." (Thanks, Leo!) Thank you to *everyone* who has supported ITD. Every contribution is very much appreciated.

One other request I have is to grow our readership. That means inviting friends and neighbours and parishioners and family to subscribe, whether by email or regular mail, and making sure that you update me on any changes of address or email. Each month we lose a few email subscribers when emails are bounced back as undeliverable. Maybe Christmas is a good time to give a copy of ITD along with your Christmas presents to those who may appreciate it. Or to copy your favourite article from this issue and forward it to others by email along with the link, inviting them to subscribe if they like it. We have many priests who subscribe – maybe you could leave a few copies in your churches for others to pick up, or copy an article into the parish bulletin along with the website reference for those who want to read more.

And No January Issue

As I've done the last few years, I'll take a break over Christmas and New Year and there'll be no January issue of ITD, but a combined Jan/Feb issue later on. Wishing everyone a blessed Advent and a happy Christmas between now and then!

Ed.

- Please find enclosed a donation toward keeping Into the Deep going. We need a newsletter like this – please continue with it. – **Janette Crowe, Huntly, Victoria**
- Whatever occurs, ITD must continue, with its avenue and comment for those of us who see a crisis of faith in the Catholic Church. The Church suffers in agony. God help us all. – **John Bohan, Marshall, Victoria**
- I hope this donation will get you going for a little while longer. All the best with all your efforts. – **Bert Van Galen, Mowbray, Tasmania**

Who's Influencing You?

The people opposing controversial issues such as abortion, same sex marriage and euthanasia generally come from a religious background and when, faithful to the moral/ethical tenets of their particular religion, they voice their opposition, they are often insulted with labels such as "religious bigots", "religious extremists", "homophobes", "unenlightened relics of some bygone era" etc. These labels however, are simply forms of intimidation, intolerance and bullying which society itself claims it wants to eradicate. Unfortunately in a few cases they also provoke insulting responses.

This labelling also highlights one big common mistake that needs to be blotted out – the assumption that the essence of religion is morals/ethics. It is not. Not everyone has a religion but everyone has some moral/ethical values by which they desire to live. "Tell an atheist that ethics equals religion and he would be rightly insulted for you would be calling him either religious because he is ethical or unethical because he is nonreligious. Ethics may be the first step in religion, but it is not the last." (Peter Kreeft).

These issues, then, are not about freedom (everyone is free to choose) nor are they primarily about religion, but about values – either the gradual replacing of one set of values with another or something even worse – that no one's values are in any way superior to another's. Tell that to those who we remember on Armistice Day and Anzac Day or to the One whose message of salvation began 9 months before His birth – the birth we remember each 25th December.

"A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it" (G K Chesterton).

John Royal, Bundaberg West, Queensland

Consecration of Russia

The article "Heads in the Sand" in your November issue (p.3), is in error. The EWTN chronological list clearly spells out the events leading to the acceptance by Our Lady, through Sr Lucia, of Russia being consecrated by all the Bishops of the world to her Immaculate Heart.

Taking quotes from the EWTN Fatima Chronology list of events concerning the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, under the date March 25, 1984 this took place, as quoted:

Pope John Paul II, "united with all the pastors of the Church in a particular bond whereby we constitute a body and a college," consecrates "the whole world, especially the peoples for which by reason of their situation you have particular love and solicitude." Both the Pope and Sr. Lucia initially seemed uncertain that the consecration has been fulfilled, but shortly thereafter Sr. Lucia tells the papal nuncio to Portugal that the Consecration is fulfilled.

Also on this EWTN site, under August 29, 1989 is a letter in which Sr Lucia affirms that the consecration has been accomplished. She writes:

Received your letter and, although I have very little time at my disposal I will answer your question which is: Is the Consecration of the world, according to the request of Our Lady, made?

On Oct. 31, 1942, His Holiness Pius XII made the Consecration. I was asked if it was made as Our Lady requested. I answered "NO," because it was not made in union with all the bishops of the world.

Later, on May 13, 1967, His Holiness Paul VI made the Consecration. I was asked if it was made as Our Lady requested. I responded "NO," for the same reason, it was not made in union with all the bishops of the world.

On May 13, 1982, His Holiness John Paul II made the Consecration. I was asked if it was made. I responded "NO." It was not made in union with all the bishops of the world.

Then this same Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II wrote to all the bishops of the world asking them to unite with him. He sent for the statute of Our Lady of Fátima – the one from the little Chapel to be taken to Rome and on March 25, 1984 – publicly – with the bishops who wanted to unite with His Holiness, made the Consecration as Our Lady requested. They then asked me if it was made as Our Lady requested, and I said, "YES." Now it was made.

And in another letter of 3 July, 1990, Sr Lucia writes:

I come to answer your question, "If the consecration made by Pope John Paul II on March 25, 1984 in union with all the bishops of the world, accomplished the conditions for the consecration of Russia according to the request of Our Lady in Tuy on June 13 of 1929?" Yes, it was accomplished, and since then I have said that it was made.

Bernadette Maguire, Tamworth, New South Wales

An Alert on White Ribbon Australia

Christian advocacy group FamilyVoice Australia is very disappointed that White Ribbon Australia advocates for violence against unborn babies, having adopted a pro-abortion stance.

"While Australians would certainly acknowledge that the White Ribbon campaign has done much to raise awareness of family violence, their statement overtly calling for abortion – which is by definition violence against the most defenceless in our society – seems at best unwise or at worst hypocritical," said FamilyVoice Australia National Director Ashley Saunders.

"We are not surprised to learn that a number of churches have chosen to withdraw their support of the White Ribbon campaign, having learned of their pro-abortion position. As Christians our desire is to support the dignity of all human beings and defend against any kind of violence against the innocent or vulnerable," Mr Saunders said.

www.fava.org.au 17-11-2017

Fighting the Good Fight

After fifteen years in production, it is important to look back and review the reasons ITD began and whether it has adhered to the task.

When the April 2002 edition of [Sale diocesan newspaper] Catholic Life published an editorial urging Catholics to "become more grey" and "join the silent majority", there was widespread concern expressed by many people of the Sale diocese. Insult was added to injury with the unbelievable advice that "there is nothing apathetic about being undecided, indeed it may even be a virtue." Further insult was added when the same edition of Catholic Life announced that letters to the Editor would no longer be published. We were informed that a page educating readers about the teachings of the Church would replace the letters page. This excuse never happened!

A few Catholics, already concerned about the direction our diocese was heading, came together and began a publication. The publication immediately struck a chord with many concerned readers and was much appreciated, by not only Sale diocese residents but many throughout Australia and overseas. Bishop Coffey was approached but gave little hope that the situation would change. He conceded that Catholic schools were not fulfilling their task of handing on the faith to our children, but rejected suggestions to repair the neglect that had occurred. And so the battle to revive our diocese began.

In quick succession, the attacks on Fr John Speekman gathered momentum as Catholic Education officials demanded that Bishop Coffey discipline Fr Speekman for upholding the teachings of the church. The Bishop finally sacked him from the Morwell parish without revealing the reasons why. Tragically, Fr Speekman was hounded, even by his fellow priests, and finally left the diocese and transferred to the Wagga Diocese in NSW.

While this was going on, Bishop Coffey introduced a new program called Journeying Together. Although devoid of almost any Church teachings, much time and effort was devoted to this journey without any noticeable increase in knowledge or activity among parishioners. The numbers of graduates from Catholic schools continued to decline until almost 100% of students no longer practised or had any knowledge of the beautiful truths of our Catholic faith. Journeying Together in Hope, a new curriculum, was introduced containing empty words and almost nothing of the teachings of the Church, but stoutly defended by the Bishop and most priests. Like its namesake of journeying, it produced no results and the deterioration in our diocese continued.

In a victory of some sort, the 2016 December edition of Catholic Life finally admitted that the diocese had "had nothing formally written that suited our diocesan circumstances in assisting our Catholic communities in preparing young people for Christian initiation." While this admission is welcome, there is no evidence that there is any move to repair the damage done over the last forty years. The church pews continue to empty, vocations are non-existent, and spiritual life in the Sale diocese is moribund.

So while we have not won the battle, we have at least highlighted the issues and exposed those responsible. ITD has fought and continues the good fight. Well, done.

Pat O'Brien, Sale, Victoria

Easy Weapon

Pope Francis, Morning Mass 13-11-2017

Scandal is evil because scandal wounds; it wounds the vulnerability of the People of God and it wounds the weakness of the People of God. And very often, these wounds are felt throughout one's life. ...

How many Christians, by their example, alienate people, by their incoherence... Christians' incoherence is one of the devil's easiest weapons to weaken the People of God and to alienate the People of God from the Lord. To say something and to do another. ...

How coherent is my life? Is it coherent with the Gospel, coherent with the Lord? Do I scandalize or not and, if so, how? And thus, we can respond to the Lord and get a bit closer to Him.

Zenit 13-11-2017

Despair is Defeated

Pope Francis, General Audience, 14-12-2016

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings,
who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns' ...

Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Is 52:7, 9-10). ...

God has not abandoned his people, and he has not left them to be vanquished by evil, because he is faithful, and his grace is greater than sin. We must learn this, because we are stubborn and do not learn. However, I ask: what is greater, God or sin? God! And which is victorious to the end? God or sin? God. Is he able to defeat the most serious, most shameful, the most terrible sin, the worst of sins? With what weapon does God defeat sin? With love!

This means that "God reigns"; these are the words of faith in a Lord whose power bends down to humanity, stoops down, to offer mercy and to free man and woman from all that disfigures in them the beautiful image of God, for when we are in sin, God's image is disfigured. The fulfillment of so much love will be the very Kingdom instituted by Jesus, that Kingdom of forgiveness and peace which we celebrate at Christmas, and which is definitively achieved at Easter. And the most beautiful joy of Christmas is that interior joy of peace: the Lord has remitted my sins, the Lord has forgiven me, the Lord has had mercy on me, he came to save me. This is the joy of Christmas!

These are, Brothers and Sisters, the reasons for our hope. When everything seems finished, when, faced with many negative realities, and faith becomes demanding, and there comes the temptation which says that nothing makes sense anymore, behold instead the beautiful news brought by those swift feet: God is coming to fulfil something new, to establish a kingdom of peace. God has "bared his arm" and comes to bring freedom and consolation. Evil will not triumph forever; there is an end to suffering. Despair is defeated because God is among us. ...

The message of the Good News entrusted to us is urgent. We too must run like the messenger on the mountains, because the world cannot wait, humanity is hungry and thirsty for justice, truth, peace.

And seeing the little Child of Bethlehem, the little ones of the world will know that the promise was accomplished; the message is fulfilled. In a newborn baby, in need of everything, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, there is enclosed all of the power of God who saves. Christmas is a day which opens the heart: we need to open our heart to this littleness which is there in that Child, and to that great wonder. It is the wonder of Christmas, for which we are preparing, with hope, in this Season of Advent. It is the surprise of a Child God, of a poor God, of a weak God, of a God who abandons his greatness to come close to each one of us.

w2.vatican.va

Don't Shut Him Out

Happy Christmastide. As we all with 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 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 strong faith in the meaning of Christmas that without the Cross there is no Christmas.

Bert Van Galen, Mowbray, Tasmania

The Value and Significance of the Holy Mass

Pope Francis, General Audience 08-11-2017

Today we begin a new series of catecheses, which will direct our gaze toward the “heart” of the Church, namely, the Eucharist. It is fundamental that we Christians clearly understand the value and significance of the *Holy Mass*, in order to live ever more fully our relationship with God.

We cannot forget the great number of Christians who, throughout the world, in 2,000 years of history, have died defending the Eucharist; and how many, still today, risk their lives in order to participate in Sunday Mass. In the year 304, during the Diocletianic Persecution, a group of Christians from North Africa was surprised as they were celebrating Mass in a house, and were arrested. In the interrogation, the Roman Proconsul asked them why they had done so, knowing that it was absolutely prohibited. They responded: “Without Sunday we cannot live”, which meant: if we cannot celebrate the Eucharist, we cannot live; our Christian life would die. Indeed, Jesus said to his disciples: “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day”.

Those Christians from North Africa were killed because they were celebrating the Eucharist. They gave witness that one can renounce earthly life for the Eucharist, because it gives us eternal life, making us participants in Christ’s victory over death. This witness challenges us all and calls for a response as to what it means for each of us to partake in the Sacrifice of Mass and approach the Lord’s Table. Are we searching for that wellspring that “gushes forth living water” for eternal life, that makes of our life a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and makes of us one body in Christ? This is the most profound meaning of the Holy Eucharist, which means “thanksgiving”: thanksgiving to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who engages us and transforms us in his communion of love.

Ember Days

From an answer by Fr John Flader, Question 277 in Question Time 2, Connor Court Publishing 2012

The Ember Days were three days of prayer and fasting observed four times a year, coinciding roughly with the beginning of the four seasons of the calendar. While we don’t hear much about them anymore, they do still exist. ...

The origin of the Ember Days probably goes back to the time of the early Romans, when people involved in agriculture had the custom of praying to their gods and goddesses to provide a productive sowing in December, a plentiful harvest in June and a rich vintage in September. While it is not certain, the Church may have taken over the custom and christianised it. In any case, at the time of Pope Callistus (217-222), a fast was prescribed in June, September and December of each year. Pope Leo the Great (440-461) considered the fast to have originated from the Apostles. It is not certain when the fourth season was added but the earliest mention of it is in the writings of Philastrius, bishop of Brescia, who died around 387...

The Ember Days were prescribed for the universal Church by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) to be observed on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after December 13 (the feast of St Lucy), after Ash Wednesday, after the feast of Pentecost and after September 14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The days were to be observed by prayer, fasting and abstaining from meat in order to thank God for the gifts of nature, to teach people to make use of these gifts with moderation and to assist the needy.

The Ember Days are still observed liturgically in the Tridentine Rite, but the obligation of fasting and abstaining, while encouraged, is no longer strictly required. ... In 1966, by the Decree *Paenitemini*, Pope Paul VI declared that the Ember Days were no longer to be days of fast and abstinence. With the revision of the liturgical calendar in 1969, the Holy See left it up to the Bishops’ Conference of each country to determine whether and how the Ember Days should be celebrated. In their Plenary meeting in November 2007, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, in response to a request from the Knights of the Southern Cross for a day of prayer for good seasons, recommended the introduction of two Ember Days, of prayer and fasting, to be observed each year. They are observed on the first Friday of Autumn in March and on the first Friday of Spring in September.

Do You Understand?

Pope Francis, General Audience 08-11-2017

The Eucharist is a wondrous event in which Jesus Christ, our life, makes himself present. Participating in the Mass is truly living again the redemptive passion and death of Our Lord. It is a visible manifestation: the Lord makes himself present on the altar to be offered to the Father for the salvation of the world.

The Lord is there with us, present. So often do we go there, look at things, talk amongst ourselves while the priest is celebrating the Eucharist ... and we do not celebrate close to Him. But it is the Lord! If today the President of the Republic were to come, or some very important world personage, it is certain that we would all be close to him, that we would want to greet him. But think: when you go to Mass, the Lord is there! And you get distracted. It is the Lord! We have to think about this. "Father, it's that the Masses are dull" – "But what are you saying, that the Lord is dull?" – "No, no. Not the Mass, the priests" – "Ah, may the priests convert, but it is the Lord who is there!" Do you understand? Do not forget it. "Participating in Mass is living again the redemptive passion and death of Our Lord".

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Teach Children the Sign of the Cross

Pope Francis, General Audience 08-11-2017

Have you seen how children make the sign of the Cross? You do not know what they are doing, whether it is the sign of the Cross or an outline. ... Children must be taught how to make the sign of the Cross properly. This is how the Mass begins; this is how life begins; this is how the day begins. This means that we are redeemed by the Lord's Cross. Watch the children and teach them how to make the sign of the Cross properly.

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The Sacraments Meet This Human Need

Pope Francis, General Audience 08-11-2017

It is really important to return to the basics, to rediscover what is essential, through what we touch and see in the celebration of the Sacraments. The question of the Apostle Saint Thomas, seeking to see and touch the nail wounds in Jesus' body, and the desire to be able in some way to "touch" God in order to believe in him – what Saint Thomas asks of the Lord is what we all need: to see him, to touch him so that we may be able to know him. The Sacraments meet this human need. The Sacraments, the Eucharistic celebration in a particular way, are signs of God's love, the privileged ways for us to encounter him.

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Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St Margaret Mary:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of my Heart is exposed and honoured.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.
12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

ewtn.com

Pray For Harm to be Undone

About 50 years ago Pope Paul VI renewed one of the infallible teachings of the Church in *Humanae Vitae* – that divine law which forbids the use of artificial contraception. The Australian bishops, instead of backing up the Head of their Church, produced a rather uncertain document (1974) which included this:

The encyclical On Human Life is an authentic and authoritative document of the Church, and as such, it calls for a religious submission of will and of mind (Lumen Gentium n.25). . . It is not impossible, however, that an individual may fully accept the teaching authority of the Pope in general, may be aware of his teaching in this matter and yet reach a position after honest study and prayer that is at variance with papal teaching. Such a person could be without blame; he would certainly not have cut himself off from the Church; and in acting in accordance with his conscience he could be without subjective fault.

How is it possible to submit mind and will to a papal document and yet disobey it with impunity? Since six years had elapsed since the Pope's document, the cat was already well and truly out of the bag. Dissenting priests had a field day in the anti-Catholic media, pushing doubt and heresy, while the defenders of the faith fell silent. Parishes issued ambiguous statements, waiting in vain for guidance from their bishops. A correction was forced out of the bishops a couple of years later, but the damage was done. Catholics had begun using contraceptives at the same rate as non-Catholics, and families became limited to one or two children. And a new class of people arrived – married without children.

Had the bishops performed the task they were appointed to do, it could be argued that today Australia would have a population of about 100 million, with young people able to take care of their parents and grandparents, instead of placing them in old folks' homes. Builders would be busy building. Many more teachers would be required, and the economy would be able to steam ahead just as it did in the fifties and sixties, when Australia was the envy of the world. Now we are importing foreigners to build our population, instead of raising home-grown Australians. Our country would have secure borders, and have twice the economy of any Western European country.

But instead, we have a population of 25 million aging Australians. Our retirees will soon be unable to receive a pension, because there are not enough young people working to pay taxes. Our defence force will soon be reduced to training with white flags, and our politicians are focused on gender identity and same-sex marriage for people who can never have families, instead of the issues needed for survival of our culture.

For this the bishops have to accept responsibility. In more than 50 years, I have not heard a bishop or priest speak from the pulpit about contraception. We see almost no children at Mass now. Children who have spent their childhood at Catholic schools continue with Mass at the rate of just 2%. How many millions of future Australians have been lost to this country through contraception? How many young Australians have not survived pregnancy?

There is no doubt that a time will come when each bishop will face his final audit. There will be no place to hide, and he will be forced to look his Divine Master in the eye and admit guilt. All we can do is place this information before them, and pray that they will come to their senses and start to undo all the harm they have done.

Richard Stokes, Burpengary, Queensland

Only with the help of God, in his love for all peoples,

Can we ever hope to defeat the relentless and irreversible indoctrination of our youth
Who remain oblivious to the black insensibility of their minds,
Aided either by their insidious TV, or their mobile phone screens.
Do we need the advent of another "Fulton Sheen",
Or have we gone too far down that bottomless pit?

Name and address supplied

Because He Said So

Right now, it's a tough time to be a faithful, practising member of the Catholic Church.

The sexual abuse of children and the cover-up scandal has done enormous damage to the Church's credibility and all-important mission in the world. This scandal has left society with a very low opinion of the Catholic Church, and has caused many Catholics to be ashamed of her. The fact that the entire priesthood has been tarnished by a comparatively small group of disordered and dysfunctional priests is a great tragedy.

Nevertheless, this scandal is principally and repeatedly brought up by the legion of enemies in and out of the Church, to attack her and to try to destroy her faith and morals. They try to define the Catholic Church in terms of her malicious and sinful members, and to paint her as a force for evil rather than a force for good in the world.

But if the truth be known, the Catholic Church is more than a 'handful' of bishops and priests who don't know who they are or what it means to be a priest or to hold a privileged office in the Church. In spite of the sins and recent scandals of her members, her contributions on a local, national and global scale is nothing short of phenomenal.

Let's face it, there are 1.2 billion Catholics on all seven continents of the world. All too often militant secularists forget that every day the Catholic Church feeds, houses and clothes more people than any other institution could ever hope to in the world. It takes care of more sick people, and visits more prisoners than any other institution.

These anti-Catholic segments of the media and society in general have lost sight of the historical fact that it was the Church which championed the cause to make education available to the common man. The left-leaning intellectual 'elite' of the West owe an enormous debt to the Church for her pioneering role in universal education, and for giving the West the many democratic freedoms which they take for granted and which they are determined to curb or destroy. All too often those who despise the Church, her faith, morals and truth, have lost sight of the fact that it was the Catholic Christian Faith that civilised the West, that created its once admirable and noble culture and structure.

They should never forget that since the beginning, and throughout the history of salvation there have been dominions, principalities, caesars, emperors, kings and queens, governments and dictators who have fought against the Church, persecuted her members, and have used their might to try to eradicate her truth, to no avail. Even within her, men and women have fought against her and her faith and she has outlasted them all, and will continue to be a force for good – indeed, greatness. Why? Because Christ, the foundation of the Church and the world, the Redeemer of mankind and the centre of history and the universe, said so.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Mass is Not a Spectacle

Pope Francis, General Audience 08-11-2017

Why does the priest presiding at the celebration say at a certain point: "Lift up our hearts"? He does not say: "Lift up your cell phones to take a photo!" No, that's bad! I tell you, it makes me sad when I am celebrating here in St Peter's Square or in the Basilica to see many cell phones lifted up, not only by the faithful but also by some priests and even bishops! But please! Mass is not a spectacle: it is going to encounter the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord.

w2.vatican.va

We Must Purify Ourselves

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 09-11-2017

We are all sinners – all, all. If one among you isn't, let him raise his hand, because that would be a beautiful curiosity. We are all sinners. That's why we must purify ourselves continually, and also purify the community: the diocesan community, the Christian community, the universal community of the Church, to make her grow.

Zenit.org 09-11-2017

To Christian Spouses

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Address 08-10-2006

My thought is directed to all Christian spouses: With them I thank the Lord for the gift of the sacrament of marriage, and exhort them to remain faithful to their vocation in each stage of life, "in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness," as they promised in the sacramental rite.

May Christian spouses, aware of the grace received, build a family open to life and capable of facing together the numerous and complicated challenges of our time. Their testimony is particularly necessary today. Families are needed that do not let themselves be drawn by modern cultural currents inspired by hedonism and relativism, and that are willing to realize their mission in the Church and in society with generous dedication.

In the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, the Servant of God John Paul II wrote that the sacrament of marriage "makes Christian married couples and parents witnesses of Christ 'to the end of the earth,' as authentic 'missionaries' of love and life." This mission is oriented both to the internal life of the family – especially in mutual service and in the education of children – as well as the external: the domestic community, in fact, is called to be the sign of God's love to all. The family can only fulfill this mission if it is supported by divine grace. For this reason, it is necessary to pray tirelessly and to persevere in the daily effort to keep the commitments assumed on the wedding day.

I invoke the maternal protection of the Virgin and of Joseph her spouse on all families, especially those going through difficulties. Mary, Queen of the Family, pray for us!

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"The holy Rosary is a powerful weapon. Use it with confidence and you'll be amazed at the results."

"Say the Holy Rosary. Blessed be that monotony of Hail Mary's which purifies the monotony of your sins!"

St Josemaria Escriva

Prepare with Joy

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 11-12-2016

Christmas is near. The signs of its coming are evident on our streets and in our homes. Also here in the Square, the nativity scene has been set up, and at its side, the tree. These external signs invite us to welcome the Lord who always comes and knocks at our door; he calls to our heart to come close. He invites us to recognize his steps among those of our brothers and sisters who pass beside us, especially the weakest and most needy.

Today we are invited to be joyful at the imminent arrival of our Redeemer; and we are called to share this joy with others, giving consolation and hope to the poor, to the sick, to those who are lonely or unhappy.

May the Virgin Mary, the "handmaid of the Lord," help us to hear the voice of God in prayer and to serve him with compassion in our brothers, to arrive at Christmas prepared, preparing our hearts to welcome Jesus.

Zenit.org 11-12-2016

Just for Fun

Sent in by a reader:

- Old age – that time of life when actions creak louder than words!
- If old age is in the mind, how come it keeps creeping down into the body?
- Age doesn't always bring wisdom. A lot of the time Age turns up all by itself!
- Time might be a great healer, but it's a terrible beautician.
- Progress was ok when I was young, but now it's gone on far too long.
- The three ages of man: Youth, Age, and You're looking wonderful.
- You know you're getting old when everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work.
- You know you're old when the candles cost more than the birthday cake.
- It never worries me when I get lost. All I do is change where I'm going.
- Old age is when you know all the answers but no one bothers to ask you the questions.
- You know you're old when you have more fingers than teeth.

Paradise

Pope Francis, General Audience 25-10-2017

"Paradise" is one of the last words spoken by Jesus on the Cross, addressed to the good thief. ...

It is there, on Calvary, that Jesus has his final appointment with a sinner, to throw open the gates of His Kingdom for him too. This is interesting: it is the only time that the word "Paradise" appears in the Gospels. Jesus promises it to a "poor devil" who, on the wood of the cross, had the courage to proffer Him the most humble of requests: "Remember me when you have entered your kingdom" (cf. Lk 23:42). He had no good works to assert; he had nothing; but he entrusted himself to Jesus, whom he recognized as innocent, good, so different from himself. Those words of humble remorse were enough to touch Jesus' heart.

The good thief reminds us of our true condition before God: that we are his children, that he feels compassion for us, that he is defenceless each time we show our nostalgia for his love. In many hospital wards or prison cells this miracle is repeated countless times: there is no person, as bad a life as he may have lived, who, faced with despair, is without recourse to grace. We all appear before God empty-handed, somewhat like the tax collector in the parable who had stopped to pray at the back of the Temple. Each time a person, performing the last examination of conscience of his life, discovers that his shortcomings far exceed his good deeds, he must not feel discouraged, but must entrust himself to God's mercy. And this gives us hope; it opens our heart!

God is Father, and he awaits our return to the very end. And when the prodigal son returns and begins to confess his sins, the father closes his mouth with an embrace. This is God: this is how he loves us!

Paradise is not a fairytale place, much less an enchanted garden. Paradise is the embrace of God, infinite Love, and we enter there thanks to Jesus, who died on the Cross for us. Where there is Jesus there is mercy and happiness; without him there is cold and darkness. At the hour of death, a Christian repeats to Jesus: "Remember me". And even if there may no longer be anyone who remembers us, Jesus is there, beside us. He wants to take us to the most beautiful place that exists. He wants to take us there with the small or great deal of good that we have done in our life, so that nothing of what he has already redeemed may be lost. And into the Father's house he will also bring everything in us that still needs redemption: the shortcomings and mistakes of an entire life. This is the aim of our existence: that all be fulfilled, and be transformed into love.

If we believe this, death ceases to frighten us, and we can also hope to depart from this world in a peaceful way, with so much confidence. Those who have met Jesus no longer fear anything. We too can repeat the words of the elderly Simeon; he too was blessed by the encounter with Christ, after a lifetime spent in anticipation of this event: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation". At that instant, at last, we will no longer need anything; we will no longer see in a confused way. We will no longer weep in vain, because all has passed; even the prophecies, even consciousness. But not love: this endures. Because "love never ends".

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Communion to the Sick

Redemptionis Sacramentum, n.133

A Priest or Deacon, or an extraordinary minister who takes the Most Holy Eucharist when an ordained minister is absent or impeded in order to administer it as Communion for a sick person, should go insofar as possible directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person's home, leaving aside any profane business so that any danger of profanation may be avoided and the greatest reverence for the Body of Christ may be ensured. Furthermore the Rite for the administration of Communion to the sick, as prescribed in the Roman Ritual, is always to be used.

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 2pm – 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

The Mystery of This Holy Night

Pope Francis, Christmas Eve 2016

“The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men.” (Tit2:11)

The words of the Apostle Paul reveal the mystery of this holy night: the grace of God has appeared, his gift is free; in the Child given unto us the love of God is made visible.

It is a *night of glory*, that glory proclaimed by the angels in Bethlehem and also by us today all over the world.

It is a *night of joy*, because from this day forth, and for all times, the infinite and eternal God is *God with us*: he is not far off, we need not search for him in the heavens or in mystical notions; he is close, he is been made man and will never distance himself from our humanity, which he has made his own.

It is a *night of light*: that light, prophesied by Isaiah (cf.9:1), which would illumine those who walk in darkness, has appeared and enveloped the shepherds of Bethlehem.

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Contact *Into the Deep*

www.stoneswillshout.com/wp

stoneswillshout@bigpond.com

12 Vincent Road, Morwell, Vic, 3840, Australia

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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.

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