

Into the Deep

Issue 179

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

Jan/Feb 2018

The Mother Who Holds God in Her Arms

Pope Francis, Homily: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, 01-01-2018

These, then, are the secrets of the Mother of God: silently treasuring all things and bringing them to God. And this took place, the Gospel concludes, in her heart. The heart makes us look to the core of the person, his or her affections, and life.

At the beginning of the year, we too, as Christians on our pilgrim way, feel the need to set out anew from the centre, to leave behind the burdens of the past and to start over from the things that really matter.

Today, we have before us the point of departure: the Mother of God. For Mary is exactly what God wants us to be, what he wants his Church to be: a Mother who is tender and lowly, poor in material goods and rich in love, free of sin and united to Jesus, keeping God in our hearts and our neighbour in our lives.

To set out anew, let us look to our Mother. In her heart beats the heart of the Church. Today's feast tells us that if we want to go forward, we need to turn back: to begin anew from the crib, from the Mother who holds God in her arms. Devotion to Mary is not spiritual etiquette; it is a requirement of the Christian life.

Zenit.org 01-01-2018

Why Go to Mass on Sundays?

Pope Francis, General Audience 13-12-2017

What can we answer one who says there is no need to go to Mass, not even on Sunday, because what is important is to live well, to love one's neighbour?

It's true that the quality of a Christian life is measured by the capacity to love, as Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another"; but how can we practice the Gospel without drawing the necessary energy to do so, Sunday after Sunday, from the inexhaustible source of the Eucharist?

We don't go to Mass to give God something, but to *receive from Him what we truly need*. The prayer of the Church reminds us of this, which addresses God thus: "You do not need our praise, but by a gift of your love you call us to render thanks to you; our hymns of blessing do not enhance your grandeur, but obtain for us the grace that saves us" (*Roman Missal, Ordinary Preface IV*).

In conclusion, why go to Mass on Sunday? It's not enough to answer that it's a precept of the Church; this helps to keep its value, but it's not enough on its own. We Christians need to take part in Sunday Mass because only with Jesus' grace, with His living presence in us and among us, can we put into practice His commandment, and thus be His credible witnesses.

Zenit.org 13-12-2017

"Time spent in honour of God for the salvation of souls is never badly spent."

St Pio of Pietrelcina

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

Get a Backbone and Stand Firm

Thank you for your always interesting newsletter. May God bless you to continue.

We have been so upset by the 'yes' vote recently, and now the 'assisted dying' in Victoria which will no doubt spread all over Australia, plus the LGBTI of education of children in schools. Where is the voice of clergy and government to speak out against this pollution of our children?

May God send his angels to protect our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren everywhere and cancel this wicked 'Safe Schools' programme.

We must storm Heaven with prayers for our bishops and priests to "get a backbone" and "stand firm" in combat boots with the complete armour of God against the devil's evil attacks and intrigues. Stand, guarded with the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, with the word of God, and combat boots to stamp out all this evil and bring peace, pleading for God's help and truth for all by informed consciences against the cosmic powers of this dark age.

May the Church Triumphant in Heaven, our Blessed Mother and her son Jesus, help us all!

Thank you again for your encouraging publication with prayers and quotes from our popes and saints.

James and Wendy Harrap, George Town, Tasmania

Good Lent to All!

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 17-02-2010

While we hasten to undertake the austere Lenten journey, we want to invoke with particular confidence the protection and help of the Virgin Mary. May she, the first believer in Christ, be the one who accompanies us in these 40 days of intense prayer and sincere penance, to be able to celebrate, purified and completely renewed in mind and spirit, the great mystery of her Son's Easter. Good Lent to all!

Zenit.org 17-02-2010

I Like ITD, But

I've been a reader of a friend's (subscriber) ITD for some time and enjoy the reflections; however I can't subscribe to your otherwise excellent publication because of my aversion to our present pope.

His dangerous philosophies on climate change and immigration/refugees, and his obnoxious attitude to the US, makes me cringe every time I see his name on your pages.

I like the rest of ITD, especially Pope Emeritus Benedict and Fr Cantalamessa. And I just loved the first page of Dec 2017 so much that I copied it to give my (grown-up) children. Well done on that.

Helen Leach, Bendigo, Victoria

Thank you, Helen, for your feedback and for your appreciation of some parts of ITD. I have addressed similar concerns to yours in a previous issue of ITD (June 2017, p.5), and add the following as a general comment.

I remember hearing as a child, the question flippantly asked: "Is the Pope Catholic?" Once I was old enough to understand that it was a sarcastic comment, I thought it was hilarious. Everyone, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, knew it to be an indication of something that is clearly obvious and only a fool wouldn't know it to be true.

And yet in today's 'climate', *within* the Church, people are asking this question seriously and almost forcing others to answer the question in the negative. It's almost as if anyone who respects the Pope is not considered really Catholic themselves anymore.

I don't think a Catholic publication should be expected to either ignore the Pope or 'correct' him. There are enough Catholic publications already refusing to acknowledge the Pope. Where does this get us? Pope Francis may not be your "favourite" Pope, history may show him to not have been the "best" Pope, but he *is* the Pope. We are Catholic and we owe him our respect and loyalty. We must pray for him – as he continually exhorts us to – we must listen to him, be open to learning from him, and let God do the rest. Who is really in charge, after all?

Ed.

"Pray, hope and don't worry. Anxiety doesn't help at all. Our Merciful Lord will listen to your prayer." - St Pio of Pietrelcina

Fasting and Almsgiving

St Leo the Great

Initially, men are made new by the rebirth of baptism. Yet there is still required a daily renewal to repair the shortcomings of our mortal nature, and whatever degree of progress has been made, there is no one who should not be more advanced. All must therefore strive to ensure that on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.

Dear friends, what the Christian should be doing at all times should be done now with greater care and devotion, so that the Lenten fast enjoined by the apostles may be fulfilled, not simply by abstinence from food but above all by the renunciation of sin.

There is no more profitable practice as a companion to holy and spiritual fasting than that of almsgiving. This embraces under the single name of mercy many excellent works of devotion, so that the good intentions of all the faithful may be of equal value, even where their means are not. The love that we owe both God and man is always free from any obstacle that would prevent us from having a good intention. The angels sang: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. The person who shows love and compassion to those in any kind of affliction is blessed, not only with the virtue of good will but also with the gift of peace.

The works of mercy are innumerable. Their very variety brings this advantage to those who are true Christians, that in the matter of almsgiving not only the rich and affluent but also those of average means and the poor are able to play their part. Those who are unequal in their capacity to give can be equal in the love within their hearts.

Repent and Believe

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 17-02-2010

"Repent and believe in the Gospel" ... The call is to conversion, a word that must be taken in its extraordinary seriousness, discovering the amazing novelty it contains.

The call to conversion, in fact, uncovers and denounces the easy superficiality that very often characterizes our way of living. To be converted means to change direction along the way of life – not for a slight adjustment, but a true and total change of direction. Conversion is to go against the current, where the "current" is a superficial lifestyle, inconsistent and illusory, which often draws us, controls us and makes us slaves of evil, or in any case prisoners of moral mediocrity.

With conversion, instead, one aims to the lofty measure of Christian life; we are entrusted to the living and personal Gospel, which is Christ Jesus. His person is the final goal and the profound meaning of conversion; he is the way which we are called to follow in life, allowing ourselves to be illumined by his light and sustained by his strength that moves our steps.

In this way conversion manifests its most splendid and fascinating face: It is not a simple moral decision to rectify our conduct of life, but it is a decision of faith, which involves us wholly in profound communion with the living and concrete person of Jesus.

Zenit.org 17-02-2010

Ashes

Directory for Popular Piety, n.125

The act of putting on ashes symbolizes fragility and mortality, and the need to be redeemed by the mercy of God. Far from being a merely external act, the Church has retained the use of ashes to symbolize that attitude of internal penance to which all the baptized are called during Lent. The faithful who come to receive ashes should be assisted in perceiving the implicit internal significance of this act, which disposes them towards conversion and renewed Easter commitment.

How Can We Ever Hope To Reverse This Situation, Without God?

Within but the space of a few years, perhaps between the years 1956 to 1965, I have witnessed the total demise of the men's Holy Name Society, the ladies' Sacred Heart Sodality, the Children of Mary, the youth groups National Catholic Girls Movement, the Young Christian Workers – each attractions for our youth upon leaving schools or colleges and for young men of intelligence with business potential in mind or the many avenues to meet with young Catholic ladies in the many and varied social and sporting events regularly conducted or the many parish-owned properties in the Melbourne Archdiocese and the larger cities throughout Victoria. Specific Sunday Masses were held at the alternate Sunday's Mass for these Societies, until the unbelievable happened. Was it the advent of the sporting Sundays or was it the organised school sport at junior level?

Churches were full, many of full capacity, the attraction being, I believe, the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament and the almost certain eloquence of the Parish Priest, or even a curate.

Today our priests and bishops despair of ever seeing a church full of a varying age of parishioners, despite being told by various popes and Pope Francis in recent times, on very special occasions, the dangers of not communicating the love of God to all peoples and nations.

As Pope John Paul II told our bishops of Oceania, "all renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion. Every aspect of the Church's mission to the world must be born of a renewal which comes from contemplation of the face of Christ." (Ecclesia in Oceania, no.19)

God help us all.

John Bohan, Geelong, Victoria

The Value It Brings

Enclosed please find a small contribution to your excellent publication. I look forward to its arrival each time and pass it on to one of my friends in our Cenacle. I apologise for being so remiss in not helping out before now, as I've been a recipient for a long time and I truly appreciate the tremendous effort to put it together. Lack of money is no real excuse for the value it brings and I resolve to be better in the future. Be assured of my prayers.

Gwen Bradley, Chatswood, New South Wales

Find the Moment

Pope Francis, General Audience 24-01-2018

There are always conflicts: even at home; always. But bad treatment of conflicts is even worse. Conflicts must not be brushed under the bed: conflicts must come to light, be faced and resolved with dialogue. Think of the little conflicts you will certainly have at home: they must not be hidden, but faced. Find the moment, and speak: conflict is resolved in this way, with dialogue.

Zenit.org 24-01-2018

A Foretaste of the Boundless Love That Awaits

Pope Benedict XVI, to Congress on the Family in Sweden, May 2010

...God's gift to us of marriage and family life enables us to experience something of the infinite love that unites the three divine persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, are made for love – indeed at the core of our being, we long to love and to be loved in return. Only God's love can fully satisfy our deepest needs, and yet through the love of husband and wife, the love of parents and children, the love of siblings for one another, we are offered a foretaste of the boundless love that awaits us in the life to come. Marriage is truly an instrument of salvation, not only for married people but for the whole of society. Like any truly worthwhile goal, it places demands upon us, it challenges us, it calls us to be prepared to sacrifice our own interests for the good of the other. It requires us to exercise tolerance and to offer forgiveness. It invites us to nurture and protect the gift of new life. ... I encourage all of you in your efforts to promote a proper understanding and appreciation of the inestimable good that marriage and family life offer to human society.

The Holy Name Society

From an article of the same name, by Fr James Tierney, 08-04-2007

Fr Tierney is founder of Cardinal Newman Faith Resources and author (incl. Catholic Family Catechism and Handouts on catechetics)

At Pennant Hills in 1956 and 1957, there were three sodalities: the Holy Name Society for men and boys, which met on the second Sunday of the month; the Women's Sacred Heart Sodality, on the first Sunday; and the Children of Mary, for the girls, on the third Sunday. In some parishes, the Catholic Youth Organisation had the early Mass on the fourth Sunday and then went on a picnic.

The Holy Name and the Sacred Heart sodalities had so many members that they formed a solid block for most of the church at their monthly 7am Mass on their respective Sundays. ... On their respective Sundays, these groups returned to church for evening devotions – of Rosary, Litany, Sermon and Benediction – and others came, too. ... At Pennant Hills, on Holy Name Sundays, the only space remaining for women and children at the early Mass was at the far back of the church, so full was the rest of it packed with men and boys. ... Another feature of the sodalities was their monthly Confession...

The Holy Name pledge was recited at the end of the sermon. ... The priest asked all the men and boys to stand, and to raise their right hands...and repeat the phrases after him:

I believe, O Jesus, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
I believe all the sacred truths that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches.
I proclaim my love for Thy Vicar on earth, the Pope.
I promise to give good example by the regular practice of my faith.
In honour of Thy Divine Name I pledge myself against
Perjury, blasphemy, profanity and obscene speech.
I pledge my support for all lawful authority, both civil and religious.
I dedicate my manhood to Thy Sacred Name, O Jesus,
And beg Thou keep'st me faithful to these pledges until death.

This pledge enshrined one of the central aims of the sodality, to honour the Holy Name of Jesus against its profanation in daily speech, especially in the work places of men. Shame on us for ever abandoning it!

Note the four items "perjury, blasphemy, profanity and obscene speech". Obscene speech is swear words, or coarse and crude language unworthy of the lips and minds of communicants. Such words are not sinful in themselves, but uttering them can be a failure in the edification we owe our neighbour. ... Profanity is the irreverent use of the Holy Name of Jesus, or God, or the Holy Spirit. ... Profanity can ease the way into grave sins of blasphemy, which is cursing God, and perjury, which is calling on God as a witness to a lie.

After Holy Communion, the priest led the men and boys in the Holy Name prayers – short Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Thanks, Praise, Adoration, Petition, Sorrow, Humility, and so on. The rest of the congregation joined in, too.

There was also the distinctive Holy Name badge... A good number of university students wore it. It was a good talking point with non-Catholics.

Thrilling to Experience

Pope Francis, Lenten Message 2014

The Gospel is the real antidote to spiritual destitution: wherever we go, we are called as Christians to proclaim the liberating news that forgiveness for sins committed is possible, that God is greater than our sinfulness, that he freely loves us at all times and that we were made for communion and eternal life. The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope! It is thrilling to experience the joy of spreading this good news, sharing the treasure entrusted to us, consoling broken hearts and offering hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness. It means following and imitating Jesus, who sought out the poor and sinners as a shepherd lovingly seeks his lost sheep.

They Legislated a Lie

By David Van Gend

David van Gend is president of the Australian Marriage Forum and author of *Stealing from a Child: the Injustice of 'Marriage Equality'* (Connor Court)

An appeal to my fellow conservatives: please stop congratulating that chap who has his boot on your neck. Even Tony Abbott did it, telling parliament on 7th December, 'I congratulate the Yes campaign for its victory' as if the debate about same-sex marriage was a cricket match, not a profound struggle for our families and freedoms.

The Yes campaign shows no such magnanimity. Bill Shorten famously called No voters 'haters crawling out from under rocks' while Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews urged a rainbow crowd to 'get mad and get even'. On the last day of debate, leaders of the Yes campaign in the gallery applauded a reference to 'the erosion of religious liberty', which they regard as a license to hate.

This No voter has felt that boot on the neck: vandalism at work, multiple threats of violence, a vexatious case before the Anti-Discrimination Commission, a ban on my book by a major printer, and on it goes. Others have fared much worse, and the harassing of dissenters will only escalate under the new regime. As libertarian leftie Brendan O'Neill said, 'Coercion is built into gay marriage'.

For gentle gay couples who need social affirmation, a law for same-sex marriage will bring comfort. But for serious LGBTQ activists, this debate has never been about marriage – which they despise – but about power: capturing the legal high ground from where their full coercive agenda can be implemented. This ranges from imposing radical gender theory on our kids to passing laws that let cross-dressing males use girls' bathrooms; from bankrupting bakers who don't want to write a gay marriage slogan on a cake to prosecuting pastors for teaching Christian doctrine on marriage and sexuality; from removing mother and father from birth certificates to changing 'husband and wife' into 'partner 1 & 2', as we have seen overseas. Such is the seamless garment of the genderless revolution.

It's not as if the revolutionaries have been coy about their plans. Michelangelo Signorile urged the LGBTQ community 'to fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, because the most subversive action lesbians and gay men can undertake... is to transform the notion of "family" entirely.' Lesbian social historian E.J. Graff agreed that 'Same-sex marriage is a breathtakingly subversive idea'. Masha Gessen told the Sydney Writer's Festival in 2012, 'Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there', and her preference was to abolish marriage entirely. Feminists like Ellen Willis celebrate this subversion of patriarchal power: 'Conferring the legitimacy of marriage on homosexual relations will introduce an implicit revolt against the institution into its very heart.'

Subversion, lying, an implicit revolt... These are the words of culture warriors intent on deconstructing a despised heteronormative institution and – to quote lesbian lawyer Paula Ettelbrick – 'radically reordering society's view of reality'.

Oblivious to the radicals, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull assured Parliament that same-sex marriage is a conservative cause that will bring 'more marriages, more commitment, more love'.

Tell that to veteran gay activist Denis Altman. On the same Sydney Writers' panel as Masha Gessen he reminds us, 'One of the things about gay male culture is that it is not a monogamous culture'. Q&A panelist Dan Savage agrees, as a gay man, that gay marriage can only be 'monogamish'. So much for 'more commitment'.

As to 'more love', how is that calculated? Marriage of two men institutes motherless homes; it destroys the primal love between mother and baby. Marriage of two women abolishes the love between father and child. How does that add up to 'more love'? As a child of lesbian parents, Heather Barwick writes, 'Same-sex marriage and parenting withholds either a mother or father from a child while telling him or her that it doesn't matter. That it's all the same. But it's not. A lot of us, a lot of your kids, are hurting.' Another, Katy Faust, writes, 'We are just the tip of the iceberg of children currently being raised in gay

Continued on p.7

households. When they come of age, many will wonder why the separation from one parent who desperately mattered to them was celebrated as a "triumph of civil rights".'

Even Mr Turnbull's expectation of 'more marriages' withers before the data: one hundred scholars of marriage and family testified to the US Supreme Court in 2015 that, in several US states and overseas jurisdictions, 'after the adoption of same-sex marriage the opposite-sex marriage rate declined by at least five per cent'. This abrupt decline was in addition to any existing downward trend – and it makes good sense. Why would a young man and woman bother marrying at all when their relationship is now no different in the eyes of law and culture to the two blokes and their cocker spaniel in the unit upstairs?

So our Prime Minister's vacuous three-point slogan is dead wrong: his gay marriage victory will help subvert monogamy, devalue natural marriage and deprive future children of a parent's love. What is there to congratulate?

Yes, his side has won and same-sex marriage is now legal, but it remains forever untrue and unjust, corrupting and coercive. Untrue to nature, which alone defines the male-female essence of marriage; unjust to future children who will be deprived, by law, of their mother or their father. Corrupting of our children's minds through the imposition of disturbing and indecent LGBTQ sex education and gender ideology. Coercive of any who dissent from the new gay orthodoxy, harassed into silence by anti-discrimination law.

A lie has been legislated, an injustice institutionalised. A new power has been given to radicals to determine what our kids are taught at school and what conscientious objectors may say in public. This is the new battle-line. LGBTQ advocates now have same-sex marriage in law, but they must not have the minds of our children or the voices of our pastors.

So cut the congratulations and pass the ammunition.

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An Encounter with The Lord

Pope Francis, General Audience, 15-11-2017

We continue with the catecheses on the Holy Mass. To understand the beauty of the Eucharistic Celebration, I want to begin with a very simple aspect: the Mass is prayer, rather, it's the prayer *par excellence*, the highest, the most sublime and, at the same time, the most "concrete." In fact, it's the encounter of love with God through His Word and the Body and Blood of Jesus. It's an encounter with the Lord.

However, first we must answer a question. What is prayer really? It is first of all dialogue, personal relationship with God. And man was created as being in personal relationship with God, who finds his fulfilment only in the encounter with his Creator. The journey of life is towards the definitive encounter with the Lord.

The Book of Genesis affirms that man was created in the image and likeness of God, who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, a perfect relationship of love, which is unity. From this we are able to understand that all of us have been created to enter into a perfect relationship of love, in a continuous giving and receiving of ourselves to thus be able to find the fullness of our being. ...

To pray, as every true dialogue, is also to be able to remain in silence – in dialogues there are moments of silence – in silence together with Jesus. And when we go to Mass, perhaps we arrive five minutes early and we begin to chat with the one who is next to us. However, it's not the moment to chat: it's the moment of silence to prepare oneself to dialogue. It's the moment to recollect oneself in the heart to prepare oneself for the encounter with Jesus. Silence is so important! Remember what I said last week: we are not going to a show; we are going to an encounter with the Lord, and silence prepares us and accompanies us. We remain in silence together with Jesus. ...

w2.vatican.va

National Sanctity of Human Life Day

U.S. President Donald Trump declared 22 January 2018 to be National Sanctity of Human Life Day.

The following is from his official Proclamation:

Today, we focus our attention on the love and protection each person, born and unborn, deserves regardless of disability, gender, appearance, or ethnicity. Much of the greatest suffering in our Nation's history – and, indeed, our planet's history – has been the result of disgracefully misguided attempts to dehumanize whole classes of people based on these immutable characteristics. We cannot let this shameful history repeat itself in new forms, and we must be particularly vigilant to safeguard the most vulnerable lives among us. This is why we observe National Sanctity of Human Life Day: to affirm the truth that all life is sacred, that every person has inherent dignity and worth, and that no class of people should ever be discarded as "non-human."

Reverence for every human life, one of the values for which our Founding Fathers fought, defines the character of our Nation. Today, it moves us to promote the health of pregnant mothers and their unborn children. It animates our concern for single moms; the elderly, the infirm, and the disabled; and orphan and foster children. It compels us to address the opioid epidemic and to bring aid to those who struggle with mental illness. It gives us the courage to stand up for the weak and the powerless. And it dispels the notion that our worth depends on the extent to which we are planned for or wanted. ...

Today, citizens throughout our great country are working for the cause of life and fighting for the unborn, driven by love and supported by both science and philosophy. These compassionate Americans are volunteers who assist women through difficult pregnancies, facilitate adoptions, and offer hope to those considering or recovering from abortions. They are medical providers who, often at the risk of their livelihood, conscientiously refuse to participate in abortions. And they are legislators who support health and safety standards, informed consent, parental notification, and bans on late-term abortions, when babies can feel pain. These undeterred warriors, many of whom travel to Washington, D.C., every year for the March for Life, are changing hearts and saving lives through their passionate defense of and loving care for all human lives. Thankfully, the number of abortions, which has been in steady decline since 1980, is now at a historic low. Though the fight to protect life is not yet over, we commit to advocating each day for all who cannot speak for themselves.

Dear Bishops

Pope Francis to Bishops in Myanmar, 29-11-2017

Remember the first task of the Bishop.

When the first Christians received the laments of the Hellenists because their widows and children were being neglected, the Apostles gathered and "invented" the deacons. And Peter announced this news and announced also the task of the Bishops saying: "we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Cf. Acts 6:1-6).

Prayer is the Bishop's first task. Each one of you must ask himself in the evening, in the examination of conscience: "How many hours did I pray today?"

Zenit.org 29-11-2017

"The root of all evil is 'I', 'Me', 'Mine'..."

St Pio of Pietrelcina

Thrown Off Our Horse

Pope Benedict XVI, in *Saint Paul the Apostle*, p.25

We are only Christians if we encounter Christ. Of course, he does not show himself to us in this overwhelming, luminous way, as he did to Paul to make him the Apostle to all peoples. But we too can encounter Christ in reading Sacred Scriptures, in prayer, in the liturgical life of the Church. We can touch Christ's Heart and feel him touching ours. Only in this personal relationship with Christ, only in this encounter with the Risen One do we truly become Christians. And in this way our reason opens, all Christ's wisdom opens as do all the riches of truth.

Therefore let us pray the Lord to illumine us, to grant us an encounter with his presence in our world, and thus to grant us a lively faith, an open heart, and great love for all, which is capable of renewing the world.

Destroying Our Civilised Existence

As a country, our society and culture is in a desperate, critical spiritual state. We have rejected God and I believe we are seeing, every day, the hideous fruits of our godless civilization. I'm not saying more God-centred cultures don't have their fair share of murder, violence and crime, but at least when we value the sanctity of life, and have an understanding of good and evil, we generally know how to process horrific acts. We know how to grieve and where to look for redemption and healing. Moreover, a culture that is, like ours, almost entirely lost and confused and devoured by its own self-deification and self-centredness, creates an environment that actively fosters and encourages horrors such as death and violence.

Take the latest hypocritical hysteria about African gang violence in Victoria. The numerous calls by sections of the media and the public to send them back to where they came from, because "they do not fit in our culture" is not only presumptuous, but downright wrong. Ironically, these violent African gangs fit in very well. They are simply mirror-imaging the culture of death our successive left-wing, pagan Marxist governments have advanced and continue to engineer unopposed. Moreover this self-inflicted gang violence pales into insignificance compared to the level of death perpetrated by their radical Marxist ideologies which claim to be advancing women's rights, equality and justice. As it were, the bitter fruits of our current state government's radical sexual, anti-life and anti-family agenda are unfolding right before their eyes, and they seem wilfully blind to the fulfilment of their own policies.

The unabated progression of the culture of death in Australian law and society, especially in Victoria, poignantly demonstrates a relationship between the graphic violence carried out by African immigrant youth shown on the evening news, and the silent butchering of millions of babies, the images of whose suffering little bodies will never be considered fit for public viewing.

The big difference of course, is that unlike the legal barbaric and violent dismembering of our tiniest and most vulnerable fellow human beings in the womb by the abortion industry, which has been shielded from the public eye by the left-wing, politically-correct media for many years, the terror and social chaos caused by African gang violence is there for all to see.

I would have no qualms in blaming the federal and state governments for the way the culture of death has progressed in Australian law and society, but I hesitate because there has been very little, if any authentic Christian influence over the last thirty years to counter or prevent the culture of death taking root – a missing Christian influence that must squarely be laid at the feet of those in the ranks of the Catholic Church's hierarchy in this country.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Living Lent Well

Pope Francis, 10-02-2016, to young people of the Prelature of the Pontifical Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be careful not to practice your good works before men to be seen by them"... "When you give to the poor do not sound a trumpet before you"... "Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you".

The Word of God gives us the right perspective in which to live Lent well. When we do something good, sometimes we are tempted to seek praise and to be rewarded: that's human glory. But it's a false reward because it makes us focus on what others think of us. Jesus asks us to do good for the sake of good. He asks us to feel we are under the watchful gaze of our Heavenly Father at all times and to live in relationship with Him – not in relationship with the opinion of others.

Living in the presence of the Father gives us a much deeper joy than worldly glory can give us. May our attitude this Lent be one of living in secret where the Father sees us, loves us and waits for us. Naturally, exterior things are important too, but we must always choose to live in the presence of God.

Let us do what we can, in prayer, in sacrifice, and in acts of charity, humbly before God. This way we will be worthy of God the Father's reward. I wish you a blessed Lent.

The Best Time of Life

Fr Cantalamessa, 2nd Advent Homily 2017

Christ, as we have seen, is not only the centre...of human history, the one who, with his coming, creates a "before" and an "after" in the passage of time; he is also the one who fills every instant of that time. He is "the fullness," ... he also fills salvation history with himself: first as figure, then as event, and now as sacrament.

What does all of this mean when carried over to the personal level? It means that Christ should fill my time as well. We should fill as many moments of our life with Jesus as we can. It is not an impossible plan. It does not mean thinking about Jesus all of the time but "noticing" his presence, abandoning ourselves to his will, telling him quickly, "I love you!" every time we have the opportunity (or better the inspiration!) to recollect ourselves. ...

The reflection on "Christ and Time" that I have tried to present can bring about an important inner healing for the majority of us: a healing from the unfruitful regret about our lost "blissful youth," a liberation from that ingrained mentality that leads us to see old age only as a loss and a disease but not also as a grace.

In front of God the best time of life is not the time that is the most full of possibility and activity but the time that is most full of Christ because this time belongs already to eternity.

Zenit.org 22-12-2017

A Force to be Reckoned With

Now that political activism has normalised same-sex 'marriage', it will become an offence to defend a sacrament, and priests who teach the faith will be in grave danger. Of course, there are parishes which will not be greatly affected by this.

But it is time for our bishops to show that they are a force to be reckoned with, and point out that passing a law in no way changes the true situation. Sodomy still cries out to Heaven for vengeance, and who can say that we shall be spared this vengeance? Sodom and Gomorrah weren't.

Richard Stokes, Burpengary, Queensland

The Christian Sunday

Pope Francis, General Audience, 13-12-2017

The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the life of the Church (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2177). We Christians go to Mass on Sunday to encounter the Risen Lord, or, better, to let ourselves be encountered by Him, to listen to His word, to eat at His table, and thus become Church, that is, His living Mystical Body in the world today.

It was understood, from the first moment, by Jesus' disciples, who celebrated the Eucharistic encounter with the Lord in the day of the week that the Jews called "the first of the week" and the Romans "day of the sun," because *on that day Jesus rose from the dead* and He appeared to His disciples, speaking with them, eating with them, giving them the Holy Spirit, as we heard in the biblical Reading. The great effusion of the Holy Spirit also happened on Sunday, the fiftieth day after Jesus' Resurrection.

For these reasons, Sunday is a holy day for us, sanctified by the Eucharistic celebration, the Lord's living presence among us and for us.

Hence, it is the Mass that *makes* Sunday Christian! The Christian Sunday revolves around the Mass.

For a Christian, what sort of Sunday is it that lacks the encounter with the Lord?

Zenit.org 13-12-2017

Promote, Regulate, Be Vigilant

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n.387

The Diocesan Bishop, who is to be regarded as the High Priest of his flock, from whom the life in Christ of his faithful in some sense derives and upon whom it depends, must promote, regulate, and be vigilant over the liturgical life in his diocese.

It is to him that in this Instruction is entrusted the regulating of the discipline of concelebration (cf. nos. 202, 374) and the establishing of norms regarding the function of serving the Priest at the altar (cf. no. 107), the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds (cf. no. 283), and the construction and ordering of churches (cf. no. 291). It is above all for him, moreover, to nourish the spirit of the Sacred Liturgy in the Priests, Deacons, and faithful.

Contemplate Baby Jesus More Often

Pope Francis, General Audience, 30-12-2015

The devotion to the Child Jesus is very widespread. Many saints have cultivated it in their daily prayer, and they wanted to model their lives on that of the Child Jesus. ...

And this is a great mystery, God is humble! It is we who are proud, filled with vanity and we believe ourselves to be something great, [but] we are nothing! He, the great, is humble and is made a child. This is a real mystery! God is humble. This is beautiful!

There was a time when, in the divine-human person of Christ, God was a child, and this must have its own special meaning for our faith. It is true that His death on the Cross and His Resurrection are the ultimate expression of His redeeming love, but do not forget that all His earthly life is revelation and teaching. During the Christmas season, we remember His childhood. To grow in faith, we need to contemplate Baby Jesus more often. Certainly, we do not know anything much about this period. ...

...We know little of the Child Jesus, but we can learn a lot from Him if we look at the lives of children. ...

We find out, first of all, that children want our attention. They must be the focus, why? Because they are proud? No! Because they need to feel protected. And it is necessary for us to put Jesus at the centre of our lives and to know, even if it could seem paradoxical, that we have a responsibility to protect Him. He wishes to be in our arms, wishes to be cared for and to be able to fix His gaze on us. Also, make Baby Jesus smile by demonstrating to him our love and joy because He is in our midst. His smile is a sign of love that gives us the certainty of being loved.

Children, finally, love to play. To play with a child, however, means abandoning our logic to enter theirs. If we want them to have fun, you need to understand what pleases them, and not be selfish and make them do things that we like. It is a teaching for us. Before Jesus, we are called to give up our pretense of autonomy – and this is the core of the problem: our pretense of autonomy – to welcome instead the true form of freedom, which consists in knowing who we have in front of us and serving Him. He, this child, is the Son of God who comes to save us. He came among us to show us the face of the Father, which is rich in love and mercy.

Hold, then, the Child Jesus in our arms, putting ourselves at His service: He is the source of love and serenity. ...say, "Jesus, I want to be humble like you, humble like God," and ask Him for this grace.

Zenit.org 30-12-2015

Dear Priests

Pope Francis, to men being ordained to the priesthood, Bangladesh, 01-12-2017

Now, dear sons, you are to be raised to the Order of the Priesthood. For your part, you will exercise the sacred duty of teaching in the name of Christ the Teacher.

Impart to everyone the word of God which you have received with joy. Meditating on the law of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe, and that you practice what you teach. In this way, let what you teach be nourishment for the people of God. Let the holiness of your lives be a delightful fragrance to Christ's faithful, so that by word and example you may build up the house which is God's Church.

Likewise, you will exercise in Christ the office of sanctifying. For by your ministry the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful will be made perfect, being united to the sacrifice of Christ, which will be offered through your hands in an unbloody way on the altar, in union with the faithful, in the celebration of the sacraments. Understand, therefore, what you do and imitate what you celebrate. ...

Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and who came to seek out and save what was lost.

Zenit.org 01-12-2017

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

Prayer to Seek God Continually

St Augustine

O Lord my God, I believe in you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Insofar as I can, insofar as you have given me the power, I have sought you. I became weary and I laboured. O Lord my God, my sole hope, help me to believe and never to cease seeking you.

Grant that I may always and ardently seek out your countenance. Give me the strength to seek you, for you help me to find you and you have more and more given me the hope of finding you.

Here I am before you with my firmness and my infirmity. Preserve the first and heal the second.

Here I am before you with my strength and my ignorance. Where you have opened the door to me, welcome me at the entrance; where you have closed the door to me, open to my cry; enable me to remember you, to understand you, and to love you. Amen.

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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