

Into the Deep

Issue 184

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The Grace to Hunger For God

Pope Francis, in a homily at Ostia, 03-06-2018, Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

In life, we constantly need to be fed: nourished not only with food but also with plans and affection, hopes and desires. We hunger to be loved. But the most pleasing compliments, the finest gifts, and the most advanced technologies are not enough; they never completely satisfy us.

The Eucharist is simple food, like bread, yet it is the only food that satisfies, for there is no greater love. There we encounter Jesus really; we share his life and we feel his love. There you can realize that his death and resurrection are for you. And when you worship Jesus in the Eucharist, you receive from him the Holy Spirit and you find peace and joy.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us choose this food of life! Let us make Mass our priority! Let us rediscover Eucharistic adoration in our communities! Let us implore the grace to hunger for God, with an insatiable desire to receive what he has prepared for us.

Zenit.org 03-06-2018

Remain Anchored

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 18-06-2018

Sometimes history, with its events and its protagonists, seems to go in the opposite direction to the plan of the heavenly Father, Who wants justice, fraternity and peace for all His children.

But we are called to live these periods as seasons of trial, hope and watchful waiting for the harvest.

In fact, yesterday as today, the Kingdom of God grows in the world in a mysterious way, in a surprising way, revealing the hidden power of the small seed, its victorious vitality.

Within the folds of personal and social events that sometimes seem to signal the sinking of hope, we must remain confident in the silent but powerful action of God.

This is why, in moments of darkness and difficulty, we must not break down, but remain anchored in fidelity to God, in His presence that always saves.

Remember this: God always saves. He is the Saviour.

Zenit.org 18-06-2018

Do I Pray?

Pope Francis, Homily in Genoa 30-05-2017

We can ask ourselves, every one of us can ask himself: Do I pray? And all [of us], as the Church, as Christians, exercise this power to take to God people and situations. The world is in need of it. We ourselves are in need of it. We run and work so much in our days, we are committed to many things; however, we risk coming to the evening tired and with a heavy spirit, similar to a ship loaded with merchandise that after a difficult trip enters the port with the sole desire to dock and put out the lights. Living always between so many races and things to do, we can get lost, shut ourselves in ourselves and become restless over nothing. In order not to be submerged in this "harm of living," let us remember every day to "cast our anchor in God": we bring to Him the burdens, the persons and the situations, entrusting everything to Him. And this is the strength of prayer, which connects Heaven and earth, which enables God to enter in our time.

Zenit.org 30-05-2017

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Foreign Bodies

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, 2nd Lenten homily 2018

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ... Take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. ... If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:14-21) ...

The situation of the community in Rome described by Paul represents in miniature the current situation of the whole Church. I am not speaking of the persecution of martyrdom to which our brothers and sisters in faith are exposed in so many parts of the world. I am speaking of the hostility, the rejection, and the often deep disdain with which not only Christians but all believers in God are regarded by broad sectors of society, in general the sectors that are the most influential and that determine normal mainstream thinking. Christians are considered precisely to be foreign bodies in the midst of this evolved and emancipated society.

Paul's exhortation does not allow us to lose even an instant in bitter recriminations and in fruitless arguments. ... This is an issue of understanding what attitude of heart needs to be fostered in facing a humanity that, as a whole, rejects Christ and lives in darkness rather than in the light. It should be an attitude of deep compassion and spiritual sadness, of loving these people and suffering for them, of taking responsibility for them before God – just as Jesus took responsibility for all of us before the Father – and of not ceasing to weep and pray for the world.

This attitude is one of the most beautiful characteristics of holiness in some Orthodox monks. I am thinking of St. Silvanus of Mount Athos. He said, "There are some people who wish destruction and the torments of the fires of damnation on their enemies and the enemies of the Church. They think that way because they have not been instructed about the love of God by the Holy Spirit. The one who has truly been taught instead sheds tears for the whole world. You say, "He is evil, so let him burn in the fires of hell." But I ask you, "If God gave you a nice place in Paradise and from there you saw somebody you had wanted to be tormented actually thrown into the fire of hell, perhaps then you would be grieved for him, whoever he was, even if he were an enemy of the Church."

Zenit.org 02-03-2018

No Night Without End

Pope Francis, General Audience, 04-10-2017

... When the sky is all cloudy, [a Christian is] one who is able to speak of the sun as a blessing. See, the true Christian is thus: not lamenting and angry but convinced, by the strength of the Resurrection, that no evil is infinite, no night is without end, no man is definitively mistaken, no hatred is invincible for love.

... The martyrs of all times, with their fidelity to Christ, tell us that injustice isn't the last word in life. In the risen Christ, we can continue to hope. ... whoever has Christ truly by his side no longer fears anything. ... Fallen, they always rise.

See, dear brothers and sisters, why a Christian is a missionary of hope. Not by his merit but thanks to Jesus, the grain of wheat that fell on the ground died and bore much fruit.

Zenit.org 04-10-2017

My Fears are Great

St Augustine

"The glory of this age passes; on Judgment Day all these honours will be good for nothing. It is not my intention to waste my life on the vanity of ecclesiastical honours. I think of the day when I will have to render an accounting for the flock that has been entrusted to me by the Prince of pastors. Understand my fears, because my fears are great."

Resisting Temptation

St Pio of Pietrelcina

Stop entertaining those vain fears. Remember it is not feeling which constitutes guilt but the consent to such feelings. Only the free will is capable of good or evil. But when the will sighs under the trial of the tempter and does not will what is presented to it, there is not only no fault but there is virtue.

Little Catholic Moments

There are simple little moments that bowl me over sometimes and fill me with joy! I can be kneeling quietly in front of the Blessed Sacrament and hear the padding of soft footsteps somewhere behind me in the chapel. Then the Confessional door creaks open and groans closed. Then the muffled murmuring of voices before I drift back to my prayer. A while later I'm aware of the groaning of the door again, the quiet footsteps of someone returning to a pew; the creak of another old pew, and someone else rises to head towards that door, and the process repeats itself. Again and again. And again. It makes my heart swell and my lips smile involuntarily. A little Catholic moment. Here we all are, in the same quiet chapel, with the same great God we all believe in, both there on the altar in the monstrance and there in the Confessional in the priest. We're all in this together. Real communion. The priest is a friend to us all, yet no one shies away from going to Confession to him. We all know what we're there for, and it's not the man the priest is, but the great gifts he can give us as our Father, how he can tend to our souls and make us new again, how he can present Christ in the monstrance to us and be Christ in the Confessional for us.

Another chapel, another parish, another time of adoration: this time the stillness is periodically broken by the swinging open of the heavy chapel door, letting noise and cold in for a short time, before it lazily swings itself closed again, and the chapel returns to silence. You hear the footsteps of someone heading for a pew, genuflecting slowly on both knees, and settling into their place. Maybe the quiet rattle of rosary beads being taken out. And back to silence. Moments later the door opens and another person joins us. And again. And again. We're all there for the same reason, all aware of the God in front of us, all in this together. Another little Catholic moment of great joy.

Then at the end of a Mass somewhere else, the priest has left the church, we finish singing the last hymn, and then – silence. Everyone quietly kneels down and says their thanksgiving prayers, or gathers their things in silence and leaves quietly. You can hear the friendly chatting going on outside the church at a short distance, not loud enough to be intrusive or disrespectful. And you're free to remain another minute or six, as you may wish, before joining the gathering outside. There's a natural unity, a natural communion amongst us, because we all know why it's sacred in there, we know where we've come from, and we know Who we've received and why we need to be thankful.

Different people, different times, different places, but the same overwhelming sense of communion with one another through our communion with the Lord. Thank God for the Catholic Church!

Ed.

A Roadmap in Two Words

Pope Francis, Homily in Geneva, 21-06-2018

"Father". The prayer begins with this. We can continue with other words, but we cannot forget this first one, for the word "Father" is the key to opening God's heart. Simply by saying *Father*, we are already praying in the language of Christianity. As Christians, we do not pray to some generic deity, but to God who is, before all else, *our Father*. Jesus told us to say *"Our Father, who are in heaven"*, not "God of heaven, who are Father". Before all else, even before his being infinite and eternal, God is Father.

All fatherhood and motherhood are derived from him (cf. Eph 3:15). In him is the origin of all goodness and life itself. The words "Our Father" reveal our identity, our life's meaning: we are God's *beloved sons and daughters*. Those words solve the problem of our isolation, our sense of being orphans. They show us what we have to do: love God, *our Father*, and others, *our brothers and sisters*. The "Our Father" is the prayer of *us*, of the Church. It says nothing about *me* and *mine*; everything is caught up in the *you* of God ("*your name*", "*your kingdom*", "*your will*"). It speaks in the first person plural. "Our Father": these two simple words offer us a roadmap for the spiritual life.

Every time we make the sign of the cross at the start of the day or before any other important activity, every time we say "*Our Father*", we reclaim our roots. We need those roots in our often rootless societies.

Zenit.org 21-06-2018

No Reply

The Catholic Secondary Principals of Australia (CaSPA) will be conducting their National Conference in Cairns from 15-17 July; Primary Principals are also being invited to attend. This Conference will be very influential within Catholic education with up to 500 delegates expected to attend from all over Australia.

Unfortunately, the two keynote speakers, Father Frank Brennan and Senator Kristina Keneally, are outspoken supporters of same sex marriage in defiance of Church teaching.

Now that Plenary Council 2020 is underway "with a year of listening and dialogue", I pray that someone at the episcopal level will look at the CaSPA Conference and move to replace Father Brennan and Senator Keneally with speakers loyal to the Magisterium.

I emailed CaSPA in February asking them to consider alternative speakers but have not received a reply. In April I emailed all the principals of Catholic colleges in the Cairns Diocese with the same request but did not receive any replies. Later in April I went further afield and emailed all the principals of Catholic colleges in the Archdiocese of Sydney again with the same request but did not receive any replies.

The Executive Director of Parents and Friends Queensland advised that they have no concerns with Father Brennan attending the Conference.

Does CaSPA have a formal link with the Catholic Church because the souls of our children are at stake here?

Garry O'Brien, Cairns, Queensland

"Oh my Jesus,
Forgive us our sins,
Save us from the fires of hell,
And lead all souls to Heaven,
Especially those in most need
of thy mercy."

Religious Violence

Pope Francis, at a conference on "Tackling violence committed in the name of religion", 02-02-2018

Violence promoted and carried out in the name of religion can only discredit religion itself.

Consequently, such violence must be condemned by all, and especially by genuinely religious persons, who know that God is always goodness, love and compassion, and that in him there is no room for hatred, resentment or vengeance. The religious person knows that among the greatest blasphemies is to invoke God as the justification for one's own sins and crimes...

The religious person knows that God is the Holy One, and that no one can claim to use his name in order to perpetrate evil. Every religious leader is called to unmask any attempt to manipulate God for ends that have nothing to do with him or his glory. We need to show, with unremitting effort, that every human life is sacred, that it deserves respect, esteem, compassion and solidarity, without regard for ethnicity, religion, culture, or ideological and political convictions.

Zenit.org 02-02-2018

The Church

Catechism of the Catholic Church

777 The word "Church" means "convocation." It designates the assembly of those whom God's Word "convokes," i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ.

778 The Church is both the means and the goal of God's plan: prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf Rev 14:4).

779 The Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed of two components, human and divine. That is her mystery, which only faith can accept.

780 The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men.

The Greatest of All His Miracles

St Thomas Aquinas

Since it was the will of God's only-begotten Son that men should share in his divinity, he assumed our nature in order that by becoming man he might make men gods.

Moreover, when he took our flesh he dedicated the whole of its substance to our salvation. He offered his body to God the Father on the altar of the cross as a sacrifice for our reconciliation. He shed his blood for our ransom and purification, so that we might be redeemed from our wretched state of bondage and cleansed from all sin.

But to ensure that the memory of so great a gift would abide with us forever, he left his body as food and his blood as drink for the faithful to consume in the form of bread and wine.

O precious and wonderful banquet that brings us salvation and contains all sweetness! Could anything be of more intrinsic value?

Under the old law it was the flesh of calves and goats that was offered, but here Christ himself, the true God, is set before us as our food. What could be more wonderful than this?

No other sacrament has greater healing power; through it sins are purged away, virtues are increased, and the soul is enriched with an abundance of every spiritual gift. It is offered in the Church for the living and the dead, so that what was instituted for the salvation of all may be for the benefit of all. Yet, in the end, no one can fully express the sweetness of this sacrament, in which spiritual delight is tasted at its very source, and in which we renew the memory of that surpassing love for us which Christ revealed in his passion.

It was to impress the vastness of this love more firmly upon the hearts of the faithful that our Lord instituted this sacrament at the Last Supper. As he was on the point of leaving the world to go to the Father, after celebrating the Passover with his disciples, he left it as a perpetual memorial of his passion. It was the fulfillment of ancient figures and the greatest of all his miracles, while for those who were to experience the sorrow of his departure, it was destined to be a unique and abiding consolation.

Office of Readings, Corpus Christi

I Cannot Let This Rest

I refer to the following paragraph of a letter by Gregory Kingman on page 8 of ITD, November 2017, the month in which circumstances forced me to move to an aged care village, leaving part of my heart (i.e. books, family history etc.) at Geelong West: "Be assured, we have not arrived at this place in history by accident. There is an intelligent evil being behind all of this chaos and confusion currently in the Church, hell-bent on our destruction and the destruction of our Lord's Mystical Body."

Within the last two years, I was asked to photocopy a small paper booklet for a farmer friend of 79 years. The task completed, I returned his old copy with the new copy. I saved a copy for myself, which I loaned to another close friend. There was evidence in the end pages, details of the recruiting of seminarians to American institutions in the many thousands to become ordained priests and pass loose and false doctrine at the behest of the Freemason society, an enemy to the Catholic faith. A lady and gentleman named in these latter pages, but each since converting to the Catholic faith, substantiates the evidence that even the enemy has reached into the Vatican through the decades.

Alas, I ask, has Cardinal Pell fallen to this evil, in the Vatican, Ballarat Royal Commission, by members of this evil society, here in Melbourne? Is what I imagine possible? Am I allowed to even mention it?

Am I in any way able to access copies of the small booklet which has gone astray? Later copies coming to me fail to name the lady and gent. Has secrecy been breached? I cannot let this rest in my mind, and macula degeneration has limited my sight for me to seek further.

A Royal Commission relies on evidence, and a false case, I believe, has swamped His Eminence. I fear the influence of the "intelligent evil" is poised to render similar damage to the Catholic faith in Australia.

John Bohan, Geelong, Victoria

The Secret of Fruitfulness

It never ceases to amaze me how often Catholics who find the practice of the Church's faith a burden, seem to know all about the "spirit of Vatican II" and the supposed changes that it ushered in. I wonder if they ever read a document of the 16 that were produced by the Council.

They can tell you all about how the Council made the Liturgy 'more inclusive' by allowing Churches to be turned upside down and inside out, but they cannot show where in the documents it actually says so. The reason for this is, of course, that many have heard ad nauseam about all the 'changes' of Vatican II from some liberal bishop or priest with an agenda to shape the Church of the future and deconstruct her traditional liturgy.

But you ask them if they've heard about the Council's universal call to holiness, its teaching on the moral obligation to give "obedience of faith" and "religious assent" and they will look at you as if you're talking gibberish. In this country, the majority of the hierarchy have paid scant regard to the Church's doctrines on faith and morals, and the doctrines concerning obedience of faith and religious assent have in many ways not been heeded.

Do the majority of these Catholics, clergy and laity alike, even know that these two essential doctrines exist? When last did you actually hear someone preach about them? When you look at the levels of dissent and ignorance about many of the Church's teachings, you would answer "no" to both these questions. No wonder the Church in this country has become sterile, her faith seems to be dying and her evangelising mission has come to a grinding halt.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (the magisterial compendium of all her doctrine), paragraphs 891-892, all the faithful are required to express faithfulness, loyalty and obedience to the Church's magisterium on faith and morals.

Our 'yes' to all that the Church believes, and our obedience of faith to her teachings, are directly connected to the fruitfulness of our own spiritual lives, the success of the Church's mission and her work in the world. Put succinctly, God rewards faithfulness, obedience and orthodoxy.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Obedience of Faith

Catechism of the Catholic Church

891 ...When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed," and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions "must be adhered to with the obedience of faith." (*Lumen Gentium* n.25) ...

892 Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a "definitive manner," they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful "are to adhere to it with religious assent" (*Lumen Gentium* n.25) which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

Authentic Teachers

***Lumen Gentium*, n.25**

Among the principal duties of bishops the preaching of the Gospel occupies an eminent place. For bishops are preachers of the faith, who lead new disciples to Christ, and they are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach to the people committed to them the faith they must believe and put into practice, and by the light of the Holy Spirit illustrate that faith. They bring forth from the treasury of Revelation new things and old, making it bear fruit and vigilantly warding off any errors that threaten their flock.

Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. ...

God Himself Speaks to Us

Pope Francis, General Audience, 31-01-2018

Catechesis on the Mass: Liturgy of the Word

Today we continue the catechesis on the Holy Mass. After pausing to reflect on the Introductory Rites, let us now consider the Liturgy of the Word, which is an integral part because we gather precisely to listen to what God has done and still intends to do for us. It is an experience which occurs "live" and not through hearsay because "when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the Gospel" (GIRM, 29; cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7, 33). ...

And how many times, as the Word of God is being read, are comments made: "Look at him... look at her; look at the hat she is wearing: it's ridiculous...". And the comments begin. Isn't that true? Should comments be made while the Word of God is being read? No, because if you are chatting with others, you are not listening to the Word of God. When the Word of God is being read from the Bible - the First Reading, the Second Reading, the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel - we must listen, open our heart because it is God himself who is speaking to us, and we must not think about other things or talk about other things. ...

The pages of the Bible cease to be writings and become living words, spoken by God. It is God, who through the reader, speaks to us and questions us, we who listen with faith. The Spirit "who has spoken through the prophets" (Creed) and has inspired the sacred authors, makes the Word of God that "we hear outwardly have its effect inwardly" (Lectionary, Introduction, 9).

But in order to listen to the Word of God, we also need our heart to be open to receive the Word in our heart. God speaks and we listen to him, in order to then put into practice what we have heard. It is very important to listen. At times perhaps we do not fully understand because there are a few somewhat difficult Readings. Yet God speaks to us in another way; [we must be] silent and listen to the Word of God. ...

We need to listen to him! It is in fact, a question of life, as we are reminded by the profound expression that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). ...

In this sense, we are speaking of the Liturgy of the Word as a "meal" that the Lord prepares in order to nourish our spiritual life. The meal of the Liturgy is a lavish one which draws largely from the treasures of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, because in them, the Church proclaims the one and the same mystery of Christ. ...

Here I wish to also recall the importance of the Responsorial Psalm whose function is to foster meditation on what was heard in the reading that precedes it. It is preferable that the Psalm be enriched by song, at least in the response (GIRM, 61).

The Liturgical proclamation of the very same readings with the songs derived from Sacred Scripture expresses and fosters ecclesial communion by accompanying the journey of each and every one. It is thus understandable that some subjective choices such as the omission of readings or their substitution with non-biblical texts are forbidden. ... It is the Lord who is speaking to us. Substituting that Word with other things impoverishes and compromises the dialogue between God and his people in prayer.

On the contrary, the dignity of the pulpit and the use of the Lectionary, the availability of good readers and psalmists [are required]. But we must look for good readers! Those who know how to read, not those who read [distorting the words] and nothing is understood. ... They must be prepared and rehearse before the Mass in order to read well. And this creates a climate of receptive silence.

We know that the Word of the Lord is of indispensable help so as not to get lost, as is clearly recognized by the Psalmist who, speaking to the Lord, confesses: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119[118]:105). How can we face our earthly pilgrimage with its difficulties and its trials without being regularly nourished and enlightened by the Word of God which resounds in the Liturgy?

Of course it is not enough to listen with our ears without welcoming into our heart the seed of the Divine Word, allowing it to bear fruit. ...

w2.vatican.va

Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)

At a time when there is very great confusion about sex and sexuality, revisiting Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) has much to offer.

Pope Benedict used the classical Greek concepts of love – Eros, Philo and Agape – as the framework for the encyclical. The Pope recognizes the difficulty caused by language. "Let us first of all bring to mind the vast semantic range of the word "love": we speak of love of country, love of one's profession, love between friends, love of work, love between parents and children, love between family members, love of neighbour and love of God. Amid this multiplicity of meanings, however, one in particular stands out: love between man and woman, where body and soul are inseparably joined and human beings glimpse an apparently irresistible promise of happiness." (*Deus Caritas Est*, n.2) ... "That love between man and woman which is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself on human beings, was called *eros* by the ancient Greeks." (n.3)

Sadly, this relationship has gained a poor image because of confusion about sexuality. "The Greeks – not unlike other cultures – considered *eros* principally as a kind of intoxication, the overpowering of reason by a "divine madness" ... of being overwhelmed by divine power, to experience supreme happiness. ... The Old Testament firmly opposed this form of religion ... but it in no way rejected *eros* as such. ... Evidently, *eros* needs to be disciplined and purified..." (n.4).

Lack of this discipline and purification can result in a poor image for *eros*. Certainly, *eros* is often seen as inferior to *agape*, which many view as the highest form of love. Yet can God, who is love, be fragmented? "God is the absolute and ultimate source of all being; but this universal principle of creation – the *Logos*, primordial reason – is at the same time a lover with all the passion of a true love. *Eros* is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified to become one with *agape*." (n.10)

In the encyclical letter, Pope Benedict XVI recognizes the vast range of meaning of the word "love". Yet the love between a man and a woman – *eros* – has particular significance. This love between a man and a woman can be corrupted by what the Greeks termed 'divine madness'. This corruption has tainted the image of *eros*. Yet God is love in all its true manifestations and *eros* has 'become one with *agape*'.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

I'm Confused

I'm confused. The Australian Plenary Council 2020 logo says "Listen to what the Spirit is saying". Capital S Spirit to me means the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit. Third Person in the Blessed Trinity.

But the website is all about me, and you, and us, and our opinions.

So who are our bishops actually listening to? And who is leading them?

Here are some statements from the Australian Plenary Council 2020 website:

- "Your voice is important. Speak boldly and with passion". Ah, if only our bishops and priests would speak boldly and with passion about Church teaching.
- "Your input is essential to enable us to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying'". Wouldn't it be nice if we could trust our bishops and priests to listen to the Holy Spirit by being obedient to the Church? Don't they think the Holy Spirit speaks through Scriptures and Tradition, through the Catechism, the Code of Canon Law, liturgical law? Or are they just looking for an excuse to deviate from this (or to justify their current deviations from this)?
- "Together, we are on a journey of listening to God by listening to one another". So God sent his only Son into the world so that we might... listen to one another? That doesn't sound right?
- "All people are invited to engage in...an open and inclusive experience of listening, dialogue and discernment about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia". I suspect that if everyone discerns the future of the Catholic Church in Australia, there will *be* no future of the Catholic Church in Australia. It would become Protestant. Isn't the Catholic Church a divinely instituted hierarchy?

Ed.

Truly Difficult to Understand

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 19-06-2018

To pray for those who want to destroy me, my enemies, so that God may bless them: This is truly difficult to understand. ...

We can recall events of the last century, like the poor Russian Christians who, simply for being Christians, were sent to Siberia to die of cold. And they should pray for the executing government that sent them there? How can that be? Yet many did so: they prayed.

We think of Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Should they pray for the dictator who sought a 'pure race' and killed without scruple, even to pray that God should bless him? And yet many did so. ...

There is an infinite distance between us – we who frequently refuse to forgive even small things, and what the Lord asks of us, which he has exemplified for us: To forgive those who seek to destroy us.

... Not only forgive, but even pray that God may watch over them! Even more, to love them. Only Jesus' word can explain this. ...

I think all of us have one – someone who has hurt us or wants to hurt us. The Mafia's prayer is: 'You'll pay me back.' The Christian prayer is: 'Lord, give them your blessing, and teach me to love them.' Let us think of one enemy, and pray for them. May the Lord give us the grace to love them.

Zenit.org 19-06-2018

Temple of the Living God

St Irenaeus

Indeed, it is to the Church herself that the "Gift of God" has been entrusted... In it is in her that communion with Christ has been deposited, that is to say: the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, the strengthening of our faith and the ladder of our ascent to God... For where the Church is, there also is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church and every grace.

Quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.797

Frightened by Hell

I have had children and grandchildren at Catholic schools, without any serious danger of their learning the hard truths of the faith.

Not only are children not taught Catholic moral teaching and the consequences of failure to follow the Ten Commandments, but there has been material used in Catholic schools which opposes divine law.

I have heard that priests and Catholic schools especially refuse to teach about Hell. They claim that this would frighten the children, and be counter-productive. Good teachers fear punishment should they attempt to raise it in religion class.

This shows a deplorable ignorance. In 1917 Our Blessed Mother appeared to three young children (the youngest a 7-year-old girl), and showed them a vision of Hell, with souls falling in to begin a dreadful punishment that will last for eternity.

Did Our Lady somehow offend? Should we issue a warning in case she tries to do it again? Are priests and Catholic teachers somehow more knowledgeable than the Mother of God?

Is it possible that these priests and teachers have not heard of Fatima?

Richard Stokes, Burpengary, Queensland

Plenary Council 2020

The Australian Council of Catholic Bishops has asked people to answer the question, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" You can have your say by going online to: plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say. My answer is the following:

1. A return to the Magisterium as codified in the Catechism.
2. Consistent catechesis on the faith.
3. A return to traditional values and practices.
4. Bishops who uphold the faith.
5. Faithful and holy priests.
6. Reverent and holy liturgical celebrations of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

I encourage everyone to have your say. It is important.

**Fr Ken Clark, PP
Ordinate Parish of the Most Holy Family, Gippsland**

What is a Plenary Council?

Fr John Flader, Catholic Weekly, 06-06-2018

Q: Dear Father, now that Australia is planning for a Plenary Council to be held in 2020, can you tell me exactly what a Plenary Council is and how it differs, say from a national assembly or some other national gathering.

A: It is not surprising that you are unfamiliar with the term Plenary Council since the last such gathering in this country took place in 1937, before most of us were born.

In simple terms a Plenary Council is a gathering of the bishops of a particular territory, along with a number of priests and others, to consider matters of importance for the Church in that territory and to pass legislation on them. Any such legislation must first be approved by the Holy See (cf. Can. 446).

The principal reason why Plenary Councils have not been held in this country since 1937, and why they are exceedingly rare in other countries as well, is that the Second Vatican Council gave rise to bishops conferences, in which the bishops of a given territory gather periodically to consider matters of importance and make decisions on them. In this country the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference ordinarily meets twice a year for periods of a week or more to consider such matters. The Second Vatican Council entrusted to the bishops' conferences a large number of matters to be decided for each territory, and the bishops of this country have met and ruled on them and other matters often over the years.

If the bishops' conference can already discuss and legislate on these matters, why have a Plenary Council? The obvious answer is that in a meeting of the bishops conference only the bishops take part, whereas in a Plenary Council representatives of the clergy and laity can also participate.

In fact, as the Australian bishops have indicated, there is to be a process of preparation for the 2020 Plenary Council in which all Catholics in the country are invited and encouraged to express their views on how they see the Church at the present time and what suggestions for change they would like to see implemented. All of these observations will be gathered and considered before the Council meets in 2020. It is a very important opportunity for everyone to contribute to this Council and it shows how the bishops value the thoughts of every single Catholic. We all have ideas on these matters and now is the time to express them. This can be done through parish gatherings and also directly online at the website of the Council: plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au. There the bishops say: "We invite all Australians to engage in an open and inclusive process of listening, dialogue and discernment about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. Your voice is needed – join in!"

As to who can actually take part in the Plenary Council itself the Code of Canon Law is very clear. In the first place all the bishops are to attend and it is only they who have what is called a deliberative vote, meaning that only their votes count in passing any legislation (cf. Can. 443, §1).

Other categories of persons who are to be called are vicars general and episcopal vicars. Major Superiors of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life of both men and women are to be called in a number determined by the bishops conference. Rectors of ecclesiastical and Catholic universities along with their deans of theology and canon law are also to be called, as are some of the rectors of major seminaries (cf. Can. 443, §3). The vote of all these is consultative, meaning that it is taken into account by the bishops but does not count in passing legislation.

Finally, priests and other members of the faithful may also be called, but their total number is not to exceed half of all the others mentioned and their vote too is consultative (cf. Can. 443, §4).

In summary, the number of those attending is clearly established and limited, as is the nature of their vote. In this sense, a plenary council is very different from a national assembly, where as many people can attend as the bishops determine. But a national assembly has no power to pass legislation as does a Plenary Council.

Let us get involved by making our voice heard in the preparatory phase and let us pray for the fruits of the Council, which can be very important for the future of the Church in this country.

www.catholicweekly.com.au

The Laws of Growth Demand Obedience

Homily of Fr John Speekman, for 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

My Sunday Missal for this weekend is headed: *The Laws of Growth*. It got me thinking. Firstly, such laws do exist and they are rather rigid. They demand obedience – preparing the soil, planting, watering, composting, weeding, sunlight, and so on. Farmers know all about these laws, they have an intimate knowledge of them. And what's more, they know the exact time when all these things should be done.

Furthermore, *The Laws of Growth*, can be applied to almost anything. They apply to humans, producing healthy children, for example – children with healthy bodies, minds, emotions, and values. They apply also to the animal world in which every species is governed by its own unique laws of growth. For a politician to get ahead he must discover the laws of growing a healthy, stable society, and a strong economy. Up till now, if the figures can be believed, President Trump seems to be making strides in this area; as he puts it – making America great again.

The Church, too, has laws of growth. Every diocese, every parish, every believer is governed by them. Recently the Catholic Church in Australia announced a Plenary Assembly which, I assume, which I hope, has the aim of making the Catholic Church in Australia 'great again'.

So let's go to the gospel. You will notice in both parables there is something God does and there is something we do – it's a kind of partnership between God and us.

A man throws seed on the land. That's our part and it includes all the necessary work we can do to ensure that God is able to do his part. And what is God's part? *Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know.* As every farmer knows, it is simply beyond his capacity to make the seed grow – it grows all by itself, or, as the gospel puts it: *of its own accord.* That is God's part. Isn't it all remarkably like the profound co-operation between God and a husband and wife in the conception of a child?

My own reflection on this topic of the laws of growth leads me to acknowledge that there are many, many ways to inhibit growth, to stunt it, to destroy it, but only one way to promote it. The laws of growth are one, and they are inflexible. They demand obedience. Destruction? Well, absolutely anyone can destroy. To put it very simply: any kid with a box of matches can destroy a forest, a harvest, or a life.

To help you to understand what I'm going to say next I wonder if you know people who have struggled all their life with obesity. They have tried the banana diet and the stewed apple diet and the carb free and sugar free and fat free diets. They have tried every single diet known to modern man and still, fifty years later, they are still overweight. And why is this so? Leaving aside medical conditions and genetic makeup, we can say it's because they failed to grasp the simple laws contained in the phrases, *moderate eating and regular exercise.*

So now let's come back to the Church. What are the Laws of Growth in the Church? How do we make the Church grow? The answer never varies. In fact, it's the glue which binds the Sacred Scriptures together: *orthodoxy* – right teaching, right thinking and *orthopraxis* – right behaviour. When will the bishops, priests and people grasp this truth? The faith of the apostles and the Christian life which flows from it, as it comes to us today through the bishops of the Catholic Church, is the only law of growth we possess. There is no other. Nothing else, especially liberalism, will make us grow.

Believe as the Church believes; live as the Church lives. Never mind the bad apples, whether they be clergy or lay. Don't be distracted by them. Just believe what the Church believes and live the social, moral, liturgical, spiritual life which the Church proposes for us. This is our way to Christ and to the Father.

If the farmer plants a seed and it doesn't grow it's not God's fault. He doesn't ask, 'How can I make it grow?' – he asks, 'What have I done to stop it from growing?' When it comes to the Plenary Assembly I hope the bishops, too, understand that it's not God's fault the Church is in decline. I hope they ask, 'What have we done wrong? How have we strayed from the laws of growth, from orthodoxy and orthopraxis?'

<https://temporaryhomily.blogspot.com>

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

Please Don't Leave Him

Pope Francis to Seminarians, 10-12-2016

When you find a priest who distances himself from the people, who seeks other things – yes, he does come, says Mass and then goes off, because he has other interests than the faithful people entrusted to him – this harms the Church. Closeness! – as Jesus was close to us. There's no other way: it's the way of the Incarnation. ...

To be close like Jesus, it's necessary to know Jesus. But I will ask: how long do you sit before the Tabernacle every day? One of the questions that I always asked priests, also good ones, all, was: in the evening, how do you go to bed? ... "Oh, yes, I get tired. ... I watch television. I rest a bit." Ah, good, but don't you greet the One who sent you to the people? Spend at least a moment before the Tabernacle? "Ah, yes, it's true! But I fall asleep." Blessed be the Lord! What is more beautiful than to fall asleep before the Lord? This happens to me, it's not a sin. ... Please, don't leave the Lord! Don't leave the Lord alone in the Tabernacle! You need Him. ...it is He who sends you, it's He who gives you the strength – you need personal prayer with the Lord, because you must be for your people like Jesus.

Zenit.org 12-12-2016

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