

Into the Deep

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Joyful Season

Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2019

Each year, through Mother Church, God "gives us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed... as we recall the great events that gave us new life in Christ" (Preface of Lent I). ...

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ's passion, death and resurrection, the culmination of the liturgical year, calls us yearly to undertake a journey of preparation, in the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ is a priceless gift of God's mercy. ...

The path to Easter demands that we renew our faces and hearts as Christians through repentance, conversion and forgiveness, so as to live fully the abundant grace of the paschal mystery. ...

Fasting, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to "devour" everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts. *Prayer*, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy. *Almsgiving*, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. ...

Let us not allow this season of grace to pass in vain! Let us ask God to help us set out on a path of true conversion. Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption, and turn to Jesus' Pasch. Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them. In this way, by concretely welcoming Christ's victory over sin and death into our lives, we will also radiate its transforming power to all of creation.

True Value of Fasting

St John Chrysostom

The fast of Lent has no advantage to us unless it brings about our spiritual renewal. It is necessary while fasting to change our whole life and practice virtue. Turning away from all wickedness means keeping our tongue in check, restraining our anger, avoiding all gossip, lying and swearing. To abstain from these things – herein lies the true value of the fast.

We Need Only Begin

Fr Joseph Langford, co-founder with Mother Teresa of the priestly branch of the Missionaries of Charity

Mother Teresa was called to carry her message not only to the slums of the Third World, but to the threshold of every hurting heart. There is no need to go to India, nor even across town. There are hidden "Calcuttas" all around us – in our own homes and families, in the blind man down the street, in the unforgiven aunt behind the walls of the retirement home. Nor is it necessary to send a cheque – to compensate for not serving in foreign lands. God has not sent us a cheque in our need, but his Son. He gave of himself, without measure – as any of us can, anytime, anywhere. There we are all called to be. There we are sent, as surely as was Mother Teresa. She would tell us to take some step, no matter how small, to serve those around us in their daily struggles. We need nothing special in the way of talent or resources; "we need only begin," as Mother Teresa would say – even in the smallest, most insignificant ways.

Zenit.org 02-09-2010

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

The Tempter is Clever

Pope Benedict XVI, First Sunday of Lent 2013

Last Wednesday, with the traditional distribution of ashes, we entered into Lent, a time of conversion and penance in preparation for Easter. The Church, who is mother and teacher, calls all of her members to renew themselves spiritually, to reorient themselves toward God, renouncing pride and egoism to live in love. ... This always means a struggle, a spiritual combat, because the evil spirit naturally opposes our sanctification and seeks to turn us away from the path to God. That is why each year on the first Sunday of Lent the Gospel narrative of Jesus' temptation in the desert is proclaimed.

Jesus, in fact, after having received "investiture" as Messiah – "anointed" with the Spirit – at the baptism in the Jordan, was led by the same Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus had to unmask and reject the false images of the Messiah that the tempter proposed to him. But these temptations are also false images of man, which always harass our conscience, disguising themselves as suitable, effective and even good proposals. The evangelists Matthew and Luke present three temptations of Jesus, differing in part only in the order. The nucleus of these temptations always consists in instrumentalizing God for our own interests, giving more importance to success or to material goods. The tempter is clever: he does not direct us immediately toward evil but toward a false good, making us believe that power and things that satiate primary needs are what is most real. In this manner God becomes secondary; he is reduced to a means, he becomes unreal, he no longer counts, he disappears. In the final analysis, faith is what is at stake in temptations because God is at stake. In the decisive moments of life and, in fact, in every moment of life, we are faced with a choice: do we want to follow the "I" or God? Do we want to follow individual interest or rather the true Good, that which is really good?

... As St Augustine teaches, Jesus has taken temptations from us to give us his victory. Therefore, we too are not afraid to face combat with the evil spirit: the important point is that we do it with him, with Christ, the Victor. And to stand with him we turn to the Mother, Mary: let us invoke her with filial confidence in the hour of trial, and she will make us feel the powerful presence of her divine Son, to reject the temptations with the Word of Christ, and so to put God once again at the centre of our life.

Zenit.org 13-02-2013

The Thirst of God

Fr Joseph Langford, co-founder with Mother Teresa of the priestly branch of the Missionaries of Charity

Try to deepen your understanding of these two words, 'Thirst of God' (cf. Jn 19:28).

The symbol of divine thirst is simple and universal, spanning every time and culture; though it has lost much of its urgency and power in our first world where all is ready at hand to satisfy our needs. But stop and think. As a thirsty man longs for water, so God longs for us. As a thirsty man seeks out the water, so does God seek for us. As a thirsty man thinks only of water, so God's entire being is focused on us. As a thirsty man in the desert will give anything in exchange for water, so God has gladly given all he has, and all he is, in exchange for us. This is the divine symbol entrusted to Mother Teresa so that in an age grown cold she might both remind us of God's yearning, and reawaken our own.

The Law of Love

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, Lenten Sermon 05-03-2010

Is it not a contradiction to speak of love as a "law"? To this question the answer must be given that there are two ways that man can be induced to do or not do something: by constraint or by attraction. The external law induces him in the first way, by constraint, with the threat of punishment; love induces him in the second way, by attraction. Each one, in fact, is attracted by what he loves, without suffering any constraint from outside. Love is like a "weight" of the soul that draws one to the object of one's pleasure, in which one knows one will find one's repose. Christian life is meant to be lived by attraction, not by constraint. ...

Obedience thus becomes the proof that one lives under grace. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments". Love, then, does not replace the law, but observes it, "fulfills" it.

The Death of My Atheist Father

My father was a strong atheist who was very against the Catholic Church. I go to Mass daily which I've done for 25 years. My father would ring me every day and most days would abuse me for going to church each day. He kept telling me to stay away from the Catholic Church because it's evil. I was very concerned about his eternal salvation. I used to pray, "Lord, please take all your suffering, Our Lady's suffering, all of Dad's suffering (he had emphysema) along with my own suffering to please save Dad's soul."

On Divine Mercy Sunday 3 years ago I received a call that Dad was dying and to come straight away. I was on my way to Divine Mercy Sunday at Marian Valley but had to turn around and drive 3 hours to go to Dad. Being Divine Mercy I was praying desperately for my father.

Dad had always said that when he was dying there was to be definitely no Catholic priest called. He told my siblings to make sure that I didn't call a priest! When I arrived, Dad was very sick and scared. It was my sister who called the priest. The priest came at 10pm that night. He was dressed as a normal person with no collar. There were doctors with Dad so the priest could have passed for another doctor. As soon as Dad looked up and saw the priest, he said, "Here comes the devil." Dad was not told at all that the priest was coming! I have spoken to a very holy Catholic friend about this and she said maybe the devil walked in with the priest and Dad saw the devil. I don't know.

Dad was terrified of dying and screamed most of that night. It was terrible. The next day was horrible and the doctors warned us that Dad's emphysema was very bad and he would suffer badly as he died because he wouldn't be able to breathe. His death would be very hard and he was given a morphine drip into his stomach. That night my stepmother slept in a bed beside him and I slept in a bed on the other side of him. All night he faced my step-mum (his wife of 36 years). Very early in the morning they turned him over and he was facing me. I gently took his hand and prayed the Divine Mercy chaplet so he could hear me. Just before I finished the chaplet, he very gently and peacefully breathed his last breath as I held his hand. It was so peaceful, he had no pain or distress, so different from what the doctors told us to expect. Dad's funeral was on his 83rd birthday.

Three months before Dad died, I had to tell Dad I had breast cancer and Dad was broken-hearted. I always felt that Our Sweet Lord gave me some extra suffering to endure to save Dad's soul. I've gladly taken on that suffering. Anything to save my Dad's soul. I now want to offer all my Holy Communions and prayers for our Holy Catholic Church and for our dear priests especially our wonderful holy priests from Nigeria. We are so blessed to have such a priest at our parish. Please Lord send us many more holy priests.

Betty Underwood, Nerang, Queensland

Angels at Mass

St Bridget

One day when I was assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, I saw an immense number of Holy Angels descend and gather around the altar, contemplating the priest. They sang heavenly canticles that ravished my heart. Heaven itself seemed to be contemplating the great sacrifice. And yet we poor, blind and miserable creatures assist at Mass with so little love, relish and respect! Oh, if God would open our eyes, what wonders should we not see?

Praying in the Family

Pope Francis, to WYD volunteers, 27-01-2019

When we pray about things, we feel them more profoundly. Prayer gives force and vitality to everything we do. In praying, we discover that we are part of a family larger than what we can see or imagine. In praying, we open everything we do to the Church that supports and accompanies us from heaven to the saints who have shown us the way, but above all, we open it all to God.

Zenit.org 28-01-2019

"How happy is that guardian angel who accompanies a soul to Holy Mass!"

St John Vianney

Catechetical Impoverishment

The Catholic Church, that is, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which we stand and profess our belief in every Sunday, is the Spotless Bride of Christ, our Mother and teacher here on earth.

She is the bulwark of divinely revealed truth, truth that comes from above and which is not determined by a democratic process here below. She is the school of catechesis, evangelisation and prayer, the one who forms, restores and shapes us into the likeness of Christ and the image God intended for us since the beginning of time. She is the only divine and living reality that can absolve us from our sins and make us holy. Through, with and in her alone, God has made it possible for all humanity to participate and share in His Divine Trinitarian love and life. She is a divinely-willed, patriarchal and hierarchical institution which was founded by Christ himself to be the sole means of salvation for the whole world.

As Catholics we know of no other way to holiness and salvation except through her sacramental system (7 of them: Baptism Confirmation Reconciliation, Eucharist, Marriage, Holy Orders and Extreme Unction) established by Christ as the means of grace, and given to his twelve Apostles.

Having read quite a few parishes' summaries of responses to the 2020 Plenary Council's question, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?", I was deeply saddened by the catechetical, spiritual and theological impoverishment of the vast majority of Catholics' responses with regards to the nature and purpose of the Church. Many haven't got the slightest clue as to what and who the Church is, and the purpose of her existence here on earth. And whilst the majority profess to believe in her every Sunday at Mass, judging by the responses, many consider her to be an archaic man-made organisation that needs to change with the times.

I could not help but conclude that Christ's Church, which he established as the Sacrament of Salvation for all of humanity, is in a deep crisis of faith and leadership, which has resulted in crises in catechesis, education, morality, the Sacraments, and most importantly her evangelizing mission. There is a state of chaos and confusion over what she teaches and what she does not teach. And the overriding reason for this of course, is that bishops, priests, teachers and parents have failed in their God-given duties and responsibilities to transmit her faith over the past four generations.

As practising Catholics, we have to make a concerted effort to know the Faith, and set time aside to study it, because knowledge of the Faith is crucial for spiritual combat, conversion and growth.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Loving the Cross

St John Vianney

The Cross gave peace to the world; and it must bring peace to our hearts. All our miseries come from our not loving it. The fear of crosses increases them. A cross carried simply, and without those returns of self-love which exaggerate troubles, is no longer a cross. Peaceable suffering is no longer suffering. We complain of suffering! We should have much more reason to complain of not suffering, since nothing makes us more like our Lord than carrying His cross. Oh, what a beautiful union of the soul with our Lord Jesus Christ by the love and the virtue of His Cross! I do not understand how a Christian can dislike the Cross, and fly from it! Does he not at the same time fly from Him who has deigned to be fastened to it, and to die for us?

Five Minutes a Day

Pope Francis, Morning Mass, 28-02-2019

Do not follow your instincts, your strength, indulging in the passions of your heart. ...if you are not able to dominate them, they will dominate you.

Don't say: 'God's compassion is great, he'll forgive me my many sins,' and so I continue doing what I want. Regarding this, the advice of the father or grandfather is: "Don't wait to convert yourself to the Lord, don't postpone it from day to day because the anger of the Lord will suddenly burst forth."

Let's take a little time every day to examine our conscience, to convert to the Lord, without putting it off for tomorrow. Five minutes at the end of each day will help us think about a change of heart and conversion to the Lord, without procrastination.

Zenit.org 28-02-2019

The Most Precious Thing

Pope Benedict XVI, 09-01-2011

By giving us the faith, the Lord gave us the most precious thing in life: the most authentic and most beautiful reason to live. ... The faith is a great gift with which He also gives us eternal life, which is true life. ...

By receiving Baptism, these children are given an indelible spiritual seal, the 'character' which will exist forever as an interior mark of the fact that they belong to the Lord, and which makes them living members of His mystical body which is the Church. In becoming part of the People of God, a journey begins for these children today, which should be a journey of sanctity and conformity to Jesus. He is placed within them like the seed of a magnificent tree which must be allowed to grow.

Of course, a free and informed adherence to this life of faith and love will later become necessary, and this is why, following Baptism, children must be educated in the faith, instructed in accordance with the wisdom of Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church so that the seed of faith they receive today may grow within them and they may achieve full Christian maturity. ...

The collapse of stable points of cultural reference and the rapid and continual transformation of society make the task of education truly difficult. Hence it is necessary that parishes make every effort to support families, small domestic Churches, in their duty to transmit the faith.

w2.vatican.va

What do we learn from the temptations of Jesus in the desert?

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.106

The temptations of Jesus in the desert recapitulate the temptation of Adam in Paradise and the temptations of Israel in the desert. Satan tempts Jesus in regard to his obedience to the mission given him by the Father. Christ, the new Adam, resists and his Victory proclaims that of his passion which is the supreme obedience of his filial love. The Church unites herself to this mystery in a special way in the liturgical season of Lent.

Cardinal Pell

Media Release: 25 February 2019

Cardinal George Pell has always maintained his innocence and continues to do so.

An appeal has been lodged against his conviction and he will await the outcome of the appeal process.

Although originally the Cardinal faced allegations from a number of complainants, all charges except for those the subject of the appeal have now been either withdrawn, discharged or discontinued.

He will not be commenting in the meantime.

**Paul Galbally
Galbally & O'Bryan Lawyers**

Cardinal Pell was convicted of sexually abusing two young choirboys in the sacristy of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, straight after Solemn Mass one Sunday morning in 1996. The chances of that being practically possible are very slim indeed (given the timing, the public place, the people around, the vestments worn etc.), and there is no evidence – it is simply the accuser's word against Pell's, and a jury has now found in favour of the accuser. Non-Catholics in the media, even anti-Catholics, even anti-Pell Catholics, have spoken up about the reasonable doubt, the implausibility, the lack of evidence, the scapegoat factor.

Regardless, he's been convicted and he must await the outcome of his appeal. We have to wait too, but at least not in jail. Pray for Cardinal Pell. As my husband reminded me, jail is not foreign to us Christians – St Paul went to jail, St Peter went to jail, and a long line of others since then. And of course, the Lord went to the Cross. Innocent suffering is not new.

If Pell was wrongly convicted, no doubt his immense suffering will be powerful in atoning for sins and renewing the faith within the Church. May he feel the breath of Our Lord close to him on the cross and may he be comforted in the arms of Our Mother Mary.

Pray for Cardinal Pell, for the poor souls who have been victims of child abuse and who forever carry the scars, and for justice for all perpetrators everywhere and for their conversion.

Ed.

Tasmanian Experience

On a recent visit to Tasmania, my husband and I were lucky enough to meet, on the Spirit of Tasmania, a group of young Benedictine monks. They are a new order in Australia, based in Colebrook, Tas. It all started when a young family from Australia went searching throughout France (in 2002) for a monastery that would send monks to Australia to bring traditional, contemplative Benedictine monastic spirituality here, in the hope it will revitalise our country. The Notre Dame Priory was finally initiated in Colebrook in 2017. A summary of their order is below, and a reflection from the Prior is opposite.

We were also blessed to be in Hobart for Sunday Mass with Archbishop Julian Porteous. What a wonderful Mass! A solemn and beautiful liturgy, reverent parishioners, and an inspiring homily (see page 8 of this ITD). On our return to Victoria, we had to find Sunday Mass in Melbourne and ended up at Blackburn North with Fr Nicholas Dillon. Another wonderful blessing! Mass celebrated beautifully and solemnly, that makes the soul surge with joy. How truly blessed I am to be Catholic! God is good!

Ed.

Notre Dame Priory, Colebrook, Tasmania

From the Notre Dame Priory brochure:

On 22 February 2017, a group of men living the traditional monastic life established a community in Tasmania, under the guidance of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, the Most Reverend Julian Porteous. They were officially erected as a Public Association of Christ's Faithful on the 20 December 2017, and are placed under the principal patronage of Our Lady of Cana and the secondary patronage of St Joseph, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and St Regina of Alésia. [In one of the Prior's reflections on the website, he says: "It is to Our Lady of Cana that we prayed for many years to give us monks. We asked her to intervene with her Son and tell her "They have no monks." She heard our prayer." ! Ed.]

WHAT IS A MONK? The word "Monk" comes from the Greek "monos" meaning "alone", because monks strive to concentrate on the one, thing necessary – God and the salvation of one's soul. Praying together the sacred liturgy, contemplating the grandeur of God in the beauties of nature, lending each other a helping hand in daily work, monks live continually in the realm of the Sacred, and seek to draw all souls with them into the Sanctuary of God.

From the Prior on the website:

Dedicated to God following the Rule of St Benedict, the monks will take vows of stability, conversion of life, poverty, chastity and obedience, and spend their time in prayer and labour for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Our most important prayer is the solemn celebration of the Sacred Liturgy with the Holy Mass, and Divine Office eight times a day, source and summit of the life of the Church. Our first and most important work... is to provide silent and guided retreats, both in the future monastery precincts and in other venues where silence can be maintained, based on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, an invaluable aid for the conversion of souls and their ongoing progress in reaching sanctity.

My vision for this foundation is that it will attract numerous young men to lead the Benedictine life, and that in the near future the monastery will provide not only a home to those who are called to be part of the community, but will also have a large guest house and retreat centre where both men and women can come to spend time with the monks, taking part in their liturgy and enjoying the peace, quiet and laborious joy of the cloister. It is also hoped that there will one day be a nearby twin monastery of Benedictine nuns who would also support the monks' retreat apostolate by overseeing a retreat house for women.

The primacy of liturgical prayer and the retreat apostolate being safeguarded, there will be ample room in the monastery for all that Benedictines have been known to do throughout history, from agriculture to teaching theology, from publishing and book-binding to giving spiritual guidance. Any work that is compatible with the essentials of their life can be undertaken by the monks for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

For more information: Notredamemonastery.org, or Notre Dame Priory, PO Box 85, Colebrook TAS 7027

Judge Not Before The Time

Dom Pius Mary Noonan, OSB, Founder, Notre Dame Priory, Colebrook, Tasmania

The apostle St Paul...tells the Corinthians that, as minister of Christ, he cares little for the judgment men might pronounce upon him. He was sent by Christ and he answers to Christ, not to men.

But the apostle goes further and tells us that he cannot judge himself either. What does that signify? St Paul is here trying to get across the amazing capacity the human conscience has of hiding things from itself. The path to hell is paved with good intentions. The Holy Father reminded us of that just a couple days ago. St Paul is clear that it is not because we might consider ourselves just, that we are so. It is so easy to blind ourselves to reality, to adapt reality to our way of seeing things.

It is perhaps for this very reason that God gave His Church a visible structure. It is easy to point the finger at others, especially when they are in visible positions of authority. And God knows superiors can fail in their duties. St Paul reminds us that a minister of Christ must be found faithful, the understanding being that this is not automatic. But his severe injunction to refrain from judging places us before an unavoidable reality: we do not know what goes on in the hearts of others. We do not even know what goes on in our own heart! How could we be judge of others?

For sure, objective actions and words demand to be assessed. If something is wrong, it is wrong; if something is evil, it is evil. Period. But when it comes to the internal dispositions of souls, that is a domain where we have no entrance. God alone judges consciences and souls. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord was clear: "Judge not and you will not be judged". If we want to have a lenient and merciful judgment, we have at our fingertips a sure way of success: refrain from judging others in this life.

True, it is sometimes very hard not to judge someone's intentions when there are repeated actions or words that seem to confirm our intuition. And that is where we need to be very attentive: the most gifted and insightful of persons can only go by what he sees and hears: he does not know what goes on in the heart, and therefore cannot pass judgment.

... let us divest ourselves of all rash judgment on others, whoever they might be and whatever suffering or scandal they might cause. We do not know what they are dealing with, we cannot read their intentions. ... God is their judge as He is our judge. May He find us humble, poor and meek. ...

God reveals Himself to the humble. Only to the humble. Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto Thine.

www.notredamemonastery.org/from-the-prior, 23-12-2018

Let Priests Devoutly Celebrate the Mysteries

Redemptionis Sacramentum, n.31

In keeping with the solemn promises that they have made in the rite of Sacred Ordination and renewed each year in the Mass of the Chrism, let Priests celebrate "devoutly and faithfully the mysteries of Christ for the praise of God and the sanctification of the Christian people, according to the tradition of the Church, especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation". They ought not to detract from the profound meaning of their own ministry by corrupting the liturgical celebration either through alteration or omission, or through arbitrary additions. For as St Ambrose said, "It is not in herself...but in us that the Church is injured. Let us take care so that our own failure may not cause injury to the Church". Let the Church of God not be injured, then, by Priests who have so solemnly dedicated themselves to the ministry. Indeed, under the Bishop's authority let them faithfully seek to prevent others as well from committing this type of distortion.

"The first step in prayer is to be humble, go to the Father and say: 'Look at me, I am a sinner.' And the Lord listens." – Pope Francis, 11-01-2019 Tweet

Not Compromising the Truth

From a homily by Archbishop Julian Porteous, Hobart, 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Jesus...read it out: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.. he has sent me to bring good news to the poor..." Then following the reading he sat down. We are told that all eyes of the Synagogue were fixed on him in anticipation. He had chosen this particular reading. They waited for his comments. Then he said simply, with calm assurance, "This text is being fulfilled even as you listen." Then he began to preach. ... We are told that "he won the admiration of all". The people were amazed as he spoke. His words both surprised and moved them. They had not heard this sort of preaching before.

But then some began to voice resistance. Wait a minute – who is this? He is just the son of the local carpenter. Where did he get all this? Who does he think he is? Murmuring had begun. People started to query what he was saying. Doubts entered people's minds. They turned more to questioning his right to preach and stopped listening to what he was saying. ...

Clearly Jesus sensed this and he challenged them. His first reference was to a common saying: "Physician heal thyself". In other words – don't tell us what to do, but look at yourself. This may have been because Jesus would have spoken about the Kingdom of God and restated his common theme in his early preaching – repent for the Kingdom of God in close at hand. They resented him calling on them to correct their lives and their faith. ... Jesus then challenged them by speaking about two stories from the Scriptures. Stories they would have known – one concerned the prophet Elijah and one his successor, Elisha. In both instances miracles were worked not among the Jewish people but to pagans. This challenge infuriated them. They reacted and forced him out of the town. This was the first sign that the ministry of Jesus would be a controversial one. ...

Jesus could have taken a softer path. He could have sought to go with the flow, and tried to curry favour with these people. There is always a pressure to back off and be accepted. This is the great challenge we face today as Catholics. We are being urged to conform, to accept the status quo. We are being asked to compromise our belief in some fundamental truths, like the true nature of marriage. The pressures on us are great. It is far easier to go along with popular opinion than state what we really believe.

Here the example of Christ is important. On key issues the Lord could not compromise. He had a mission, a message, and he was not going to be deflected from what he knew he had to proclaim. He was not going to back away from the truth of his message. He was not going to soften his teaching. He was prepared to lose people who did not agree with him, but he also knew that he would attract people who recognised the truth of his words.

My brothers and sisters, here is an example for us. We as Catholics must stand by the truth of our faith. We must not compromise what we believe to be true and right. In a particular way this applies to the Church's teaching on sexuality, gender, marriage and family. These are God-given truths that we embrace and live by, even if our society has abandoned them.

So we must be prepared to be ostracised in some circles. We know that people will be speaking about us behind our backs. We know that we will be seen as not fitting in. However, we will stand by our beliefs. When the opportunity arises we will humbly present what we believe.

We cannot back away from the truth. We are not ashamed of the Gospel. We cannot accommodate false ideas. We will live by the full Christian truth as taught by the Church and enshrined in the Catechism. This is how we can be the missionary disciples Pope Francis has called us to be. We will live our faith humbly with hearts full of love and mercy, and with minds dedicated to living by the truth.

hobart.catholic.org.au, 03-02-2019

"A soul given up to pleasure naturally feels aversion toward the bitterness of self-denial."

St John of the Cross

Who May Receive Ashes

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

Q1: On Ash Wednesday is it appropriate for young children to receive the ashes? The formula "Turn away from sin, and be faithful to the Gospel," implies the recipient is capable of committing sin. We normally consider this to be at the age of reason, that is, 7 years of age. Parents often bring up small children, from babes in arms, to toddlers, to 4-5-year olds, and want them to receive the ashes. Is this appropriate, given that the children might have no understanding of what is involved? – E.K., Toronto

Q2: Are there any limits as to distribution; i.e., who may properly receive ashes? Can non-Catholics and baptized infants receive? – S.M., Indianapolis, Indiana

A: The rules regarding imposition of ashes are scant, to say the least, and do not seem to put any particular limitations as to who may receive them. The rubrics of the missal simple say that "the Priest places ashes on the head of all those present who come to him ..."

The Congregation for Divine Worship published a circular letter regarding these celebrations in 1988. Regarding Ash Wednesday it says:

"21. 'On the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent, the faithful receive the ashes, thus entering into the time established for the purification of their souls. This sign of penance, a traditionally biblical one, has been preserved among the Church's customs until the present day. It signifies the human condition of the sinner, who seeks to express his guilt before the Lord in an exterior manner, and by so doing express his interior conversion, led on by the confident hope that the Lord will be merciful. This same sign marks the beginning of the way of conversion, which is developed through the celebration of the sacraments of penance during the days before Easter.'

"The blessing and imposition of ashes should take place either in the Mass or outside of the Mass. In the latter case, it is to be part of a liturgy of the word and conclude with the prayer of the faithful."

Although it is clear that young children have no need to repent nor to do penance, I would see no reason to refuse to impose ashes if their parents present them. This act can serve as a means of forming them in Catholic traditions just as they will teach them to make the sign of the cross and will often bring them to Mass several years before their first Holy Communion.

On Ash Wednesday many people, including numerous irregularly practicing Catholics, request the imposition of ashes. There is no good reason to refuse anyone, and indeed this gesture might light a spark of repentance. ... Since receiving ashes is a sign of penance and does not necessarily imply communion of faith, I think that this sign could be granted even if the priest knew that they were not Catholics.

In short, I think the best practice is to simply trust the good faith of those requesting the imposition of ashes and not worry about their motivation or provenance. Unlike the case of receiving Communion it is unlikely that any harm can come from receiving ashes, and sometimes God can use these moments to produce much good.

Zenit.org 13-03-2012

Wrong Number

Pope Benedict XVI to German Pilgrims, 25-04-2005

Christ did not promise us an easy life. Those looking for comfort have dialled the wrong number. Rather, he shows us the way to great things, to goodness, to an authentic human life.

Supporting Catholic

Thank you for such a wonderful publication. As Catholics it's good if we can support everything Catholic. I have given a small donation and would really love to be added to your mailing list.

Betty Underwood, Nerang, Queensland

Saint Joseph

Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (2001)

218. ...God...assigned to Joseph of Nazareth, "the just man", and spouse of the Virgin Mary, a particularly important mission: legally to insert Jesus Christ into the line of David from whom, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be born, and to act as his father and guardian. ...

219. The virtues of St Joseph have been the object of ecclesial reflection down through the centuries, especially the more recent centuries. Among those virtues the following stand out: faith, with which he fully accepted God's salvific plan; prompt and silent obedience to the will of God; love for and fulfilment of the law, true piety, fortitude in time of trial; chaste love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, a dutiful exercise of his paternal authority, and fruitful reticence.

220. Popular piety has grasped the significance, importance and universality of the patronage of St Joseph "to whose care God entrusted the beginning of our redemption", "and his most valuable treasures". The following have been entrusted to the patronage of St Joseph: the entire Church was placed under the patronage and protection of this Holy patriarch by the Blessed Pius IX; those who are consecrated to God by celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven: "in St Joseph they have [...] a type and a protector of chaste integrity"; workers and craftsmen, for whom the carpenter of Nazareth is a singular model; the dying, since pious tradition holds that he was assisted by Mary and Jesus in his last agony.

221. The person and role of St Joseph is frequently celebrated in the Liturgy, especially in connection with nativity and infancy of Christ: during Advent; Christmastide, especially the feast of the Holy Family, on the **Solemnity of St Joseph (19 March)**, and on his memorial (1 May).

St Joseph is also mentioned in the *Communicantes* of the Roman Canon and in the *Litany of the Saints*. The invocation of the Holy Patriarch is suggested in the *Commendation of the Dying*, as well as the community's prayer that the souls of the dead, having left this world, may "be taken to the peace of the new and eternal Jerusalem, and be with Mary, the Mother of God, St Joseph, and all of the Angels and Saints".

222. St Joseph plays a prominent part in popular devotion: in numerous popular traditions; the custom of reserving Wednesdays for devotion to St Joseph, popular at least since the end of the seventeenth century, has generated several pious exercises including that of the *Seven Wednesdays*, in the pious aspirations made by the faithful; in prayers such as that of Pope Leo XIII, *Ad te, Beate Ioseph*, which is daily recited by the faithful; in the Litany of St Joseph, approved by St Pope Pius X; and in the recitation of the chaplet of St Joseph, recollecting the *Seven agonies and seven joys of St Joseph*.

Ad te, Beate Joseph

To thee, O blessed Joseph, do we have recourse in our tribulation, and having implored the help of thy thrice holy Spouse, we confidently invoke thy patronage also. By that charity wherewith thou wast united to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and by that fatherly affection with which thou didst embrace the Child Jesus, we beseech thee and we humbly pray, that thou wouldst look graciously upon the inheritance which Jesus Christ hath purchased by His Blood, and assist us in our needs by thy power and strength.

Most watchful Guardian of the Holy Family, protect the chosen people of Jesus Christ; keep far from us, most loving father, all blight of error and corruption: mercifully assist us from heaven, most mighty defender, in this our conflict with the powers of darkness; and, even as of old thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the supreme peril of His life, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; keep us one and all under thy continual protection, that we may be supported by thine example and thine assistance, may be enabled to lead a holy life, die a happy death and come at last to the possession of everlasting blessedness in heaven. Amen.

Thinking at the Wrong End

The Royal Commissions into child sex abuse, banking, and now aged care, together with issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia and asylum seekers etc., involve the theme, or more appropriately, the virtue, of justice. Justice can be understood as a matter of right and obligation, of rendering to others what is rightfully due to them.

In contemporary society when decisions about any important issue are made, one group sees the decision as just while an opposing group sees it as unjust and all too often this produces vitriolic language or ill-will towards others which is then perpetuated through the media. Justice is divided in itself. At this point Blaise Pascal's warning remains timely though it was given over three centuries ago: "Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that unless we love the truth, we cannot know it." The Ten Commandments are the most obvious expression of the demands of justice.

As the celebration of Holy Eucharist is rightly called the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, it too involves justice. It has become apparent, to me anyway, either through personal observation during my sometimes distracted participation in the Sacred Mysteries, isolated comments in general conversation or articles in various magazines or periodicals, that not a few priests, lay ministers assisting at the Liturgy and the laity in the pews themselves are ignorant of, or unwilling to abide by, the norms laid down by the Church, with particular reference to Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.22, and the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, issued in 2004 regarding certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist.

Obviously ignorance, and lack of proper instruction, humility and a willingness to obey lawful authority, are only part of the problem. Many within society and the Church have embraced the widely accepted philosophy of Relativism, either with a view that Man/secular humanism can establish a tolerant, inclusive society, or perhaps for misguided ecumenical reasons without due consideration or scrutiny of what actually underpins this philosophy, that is, the intrinsic evil in its rejection/denial of universal, objective truth in matters pertaining to morals, ethics and religion.

Consider how this impacts the virtue of faith. Without objective truth applied to the virtue of faith, the remaining virtues of hope, charity prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance have no concrete reference point and will face opposition from opposing sides. In other words perpetual change according to man's whim becomes inevitable and we are getting glimpses of this in the gender issue and political correctness gone mad.

The 2020 Plenary Council could well be "a time of due season", a time to make a definitive choice. No doubt many valuable facts and suggestions will be put before the Council. But decisions concerning any of these without a concrete reference point must suffer. Chesterton put it this way, "The man who begins to think without proper first principles goes mad: he begins to think at the wrong end."

John Royal, Bundaberg West, Queensland

Regulation of Liturgy

Sacrosanctum Concilium, n.22

1. Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.
2. In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.
3. Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

Remedy

Redemptionis Sacramentum

169. Whenever an abuse is committed in the celebration of the sacred Liturgy, it is to be seen as a real falsification of Catholic Liturgy. ...

170. In order that a remedy may be applied to such abuses, there is a pressing need for the biblical and liturgical formation of the people of God, both pastors and faithful, so that the Church's faith and discipline concerning the sacred Liturgy may be accurately presented and understood.

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 1 st Friday 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; 1 st Friday till 4pm
Trafalgar	Wed & First Sat: (9.30am Mass) –10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10.00am – 11.00am 1 st Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Jan on)
Wonthaggi	1 st Friday 7.00pm – 8.00pm

All or Nothing

Pope Francis, Canonisation homily 14-10-2018

To you, too, Jesus says: "Come, follow me!" Come: do not stand still, because it is not enough not to do evil in order to be with Jesus. Follow me: do not walk behind Jesus only when you want to, but seek him out every day; do not be content to keep the commandments, to give a little alms and say a few prayers: find in Him the God who always loves you; seek in Jesus the God who is the meaning of your life, the God who gives you the strength to give of yourself. Again Jesus says: "Sell what you have and give to the poor." ... He asks you to leave behind what weighs down your heart, to empty yourself of goods in order to make room for him, the only good. ... Because if our hearts are crowded with goods, there will not be room for the Lord, who will become just one thing among the others. ...

Jesus is radical. He gives all and he asks all: he gives a love that is total and asks for an undivided heart. ... We cannot respond to him, who made himself our servant even going to the cross for us, only by observing some of the commandments. We cannot give him, who offers us eternal life, some odd moment of time. Jesus is not content with a "percentage of love": we cannot love him 20 or 50 or 60 percent. It is either all or nothing.

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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