

Into the Deep

Issue 194

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

June 2019

If You Do Not Forgive...

Pope Francis, General Audience 24-04-2019

As much as we may strive, there is always an inexhaustible debt to God which we can never pay back: he loves us infinitely more than we love him.

And then, as much as we try to live according to Christian Teaching, in our life there will always be something for which to ask forgiveness. Let us think about days spent lazily, about moments in which rancour has filled our heart, and so on. These unfortunately not rare experiences are what make us implore: "Lord, Father, forgive us our debts". Thus we ask God for forgiveness.

On close reflection, the invocation could well be limited to this first part; that would have been nice. But instead Jesus joins it to a second expression that forms one with the first. ... we ask the Lord to forgive our debts, our sins, 'as' we forgive our friends, the people who live with us, our neighbours, the people who have done something bad to us. ...

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses". But this is powerful! I recall: several times I have heard people say: "I will never forgive that person! I will never forgive that person for what he did to me!" But if you do not forgive, God will not forgive you. You close the door. Let us consider whether we are able to forgive or if we do not forgive.

When I was in the other diocese, a distressed priest told me that he had gone to administer the Last Rites to an elderly woman who was on her deathbed. The poor woman could not speak. And the priest asked her: "Madam, do you repent of your sins?" The woman said "yes"; she could not confess them, but she said yes. It is sufficient. And then again: "Do you forgive others?" And the woman said, on her deathbed: "No". The priest was upset. If you do not forgive, God will not forgive you. Let us consider, we who are here, whether we forgive or whether we are able to forgive. "Father, I cannot do it, because those people treated me so harshly". But if you cannot do it, ask the Lord to give you the strength to do so: Lord, help me to forgive. ...

God gives every Christian the grace to write a story of good in the life of his or her brothers and sisters, especially of those who have done something regrettable or wrong. With a word, an embrace, a smile, we can pass on to others the most precious thing we have received. What is the most precious thing we have received? Forgiveness, which we too must be able to give to others.

w2.vatican.va

Candle-light Vigil

Please join us for a candle-light vigil on the steps of the Victorian Parliament on June 18, the eve of the commencement of the euthanasia legislation. Tuesday 18 June @ 6 p.m. for 6. 30 p.m.

Denise M Cameron, President, Pro-Life Victoria (Inc)

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

Longing to Be Saints

Pope Francis, Regina Caeli address 20-05-2018

The Time of Easter culminates in today's celebration of Pentecost, centred on the death and Resurrection of Jesus. This Solemnity inspires us to remember and relive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the other disciples gathered in prayer with the Virgin Mary in the Upper Room. On that day the history of holy Christianity began, because the Holy Spirit is the source of holiness, which is not the privilege of the few, but the vocation of all. Indeed, through Baptism, we are all called to participate in the same divine life of Christ and, with Confirmation, to become his witnesses in the world. ...

Through the ancient prophets the Lord had already announced his plan to the people. Ezekiel: "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You... shall be my people and I will be your God". The prophet Joel: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.... Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit.... All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." And all these prophesies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, mediator and guarantor of the perennial outpouring of the spirit. And today is the celebration of the outpouring of the Spirit.

Since that day of Pentecost, and until the end of times, this holiness, the fullness of which is Christ, is bestowed upon all those who are open to the action of the Holy Spirit and strive to be docile to him. It is the Spirit who makes us feel complete joy. The Holy Spirit, by coming to us, overcomes aridity, opens hearts to hope, and spurs and fosters interior maturity in our relationship with God and neighbour. It is what Saint Paul tells us: "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control". The Spirit creates all this in us. For this reason today we celebrate this richness which the Father gives us.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary to obtain for the Church even today a renewed Pentecost, a renewed youthfulness that will give us the joy of living and witnessing to the Gospel and to pour out upon us a fervent longing to be saints for God's greater glory.

w2.vatican.va

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal

162. In the distribution of Communion, the Priest may be assisted by other Priests who happen to be present.

If such Priests are not present and there is a truly large number of communicants, the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, that is, duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been duly deputed for this purpose.

In case of necessity, the Priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion.

These ministers should not approach the altar before the Priest has received Communion, and they are always to receive from the hands of the Priest Celebrant the vessel containing the species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful.

Redemptionis Sacramentum

88. The faithful should normally receive sacramental Communion of the Eucharist during Mass itself, at the moment laid down by the rite of celebration, that is to say, just after the Priest celebrant's Communion. It is the Priest celebrant's responsibility to minister Communion, perhaps assisted by other Priests or Deacons; and he should not resume the Mass until after the Communion of the faithful is concluded. Only when there is a necessity may extraordinary ministers assist the Priest celebrant in accordance with the norm of law.

151. Only out of true necessity is there to be recourse to the assistance of extraordinary ministers in the celebration of the Liturgy. Such recourse is not intended for the sake of a fuller participation of the laity but rather, by its very nature, is supplementary and provisional.

Bishop Foley Accuses Orthodox Catholics of Ignorance and Bigotry

On 29 April, the Buddhist centre in Cairns hosted an "interfaith celebration" at St Monica's Catholic Cathedral, including a blessing by a Buddhist "His Holiness". Bishop James Foley of Cairns, approved this (see May ITD, p.7).

ITD reader Garry O'Brien arranged a peaceful assembly to pray outside the cathedral on the evening of the event, having notified both the Police and the Bishop. There were 15 Catholics praying the rosary.

On 1 May, the Cairns Post ran an article about it, which included the following:

The head of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns has slammed protesters at an interfaith event, saying they were encouraging "ignorance and bigotry". ... Bishop James Foley said the protesters were "clearly acting against the church's teachings". "I'm concerned about what is influencing these people. I find it very disturbing when people choose to not follow the church's teaching," he said. "There has never been a greater need for people with different faiths to come together." ... "I'd be very happy for these events to continue," he said. "We have very fine classical music concerts in the cathedral, and Anzac Day events. It's the largest worship space in town, and I'm happy for it to be used by other religious groups. When the stained glass creation windows were made we had many donations from the wider community, so it's a building that belongs to everybody, and that's what cathedrals always have been."

This is a fascinating response by the Bishop, with astonishing accusations against Catholics – ignorance, bigotry, acting against church teaching. And he goes on to make claims himself that are contrary to church teaching! No, a cathedral is not a public hall for concerts and public events. No, a cathedral is not simply a 'worship space' for people of any faith. And no, that's not what "cathedrals have always been". And donating to a stained glass window does not make you a buyer of a piece of a sacred Catholic cathedral to use for whatever you like. What is he thinking?

Ed.

On Concerts in a Church

Bishop Foley is also happy to host "very fine classical music concerts" in St Monica's Cathedral, Cairns (see above). This doesn't seem to be consistent with the following:

Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, 1987

5. According to tradition as expressed in the Rite for the Dedication of a church and altar, churches are primarily places where the people of God gather, and are made one as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, and are the Church, the temple of God built with living stones, in which the Father is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Rightly so, from ancient times the name "church" has been extended to the building in which the Christian community unites to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, to celebrate the Eucharist and to prolong its celebration in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Churches, however, cannot be considered simply as public places for any kind of meeting. They are sacred places, that is, "set apart" in a permanent way for Divine Worship by their dedication and blessing. ...

8. ... The principle that the use of the church must not offend the sacredness of the place determines the criteria by which the doors of a church may be opened to a concert or religious music, as also the concomitant exclusion of any other type of music. The most beautiful symphonic music, for example, is not in itself of religious character. ...

9. Sacred music, that is to say, music which was composed for the Liturgy, but which for various reasons can no longer be performed during a liturgical celebration, and religious music, that is to say, music inspired by the text of sacred scripture or the liturgy and which has reference to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Saints or to the Church may both find a place in the church building...

Rocket Science

I have a friend who regularly says, "It's not rocket science!" when he is dismayed at someone not understanding something that to him is very simple and straightforward. It was the first thing I thought when I read an article in Zenit (05-04-2019) about the decline in the number of Catholics in Australia and the Australian Bishops being "keen to understand what's behind it". I mean, it's not rocket science!

The Zenit article was looking at a report based on Australian census data from 2016 (report released April 2019: Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia). The report shows that there has been a drop in the number of Australians identifying as Catholics, comparing census data of 2011 and 2016. Catholics as a proportion of the Australian population dropped from 25.3% to 22.6%. None of this was particularly surprising. But then came Archbishop Mark Coleridge's quote: "The drop in the number of Catholics is concerning, and the bishops are keen to understand what's behind it and respond as positively as possible." The bishops are keen to understand what's behind it? It makes me want to laugh out loud – but I have to remind myself that this is deadly serious.

We have masses of children baptised, huge numbers in Catholic schools, large groups of children receiving the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation, like sheep through the turnstiles. During "the Sacraments", our church walls are plastered with the names and drawings of children we never see, other than at the required number of Masses they may have to attend before they "get" their Sacraments so they can have their parties. And some couples still like to have a church in their wedding photos, so they come for the required marriage preparation, have their wedding, and go. Parish priests, and their bishops, are like meek and humble servants, doing whatever the parents or teachers demand, and dutifully disregarding any Church teaching that might turn people away. And then we wonder why people fall away from the faith and why others aren't drawn to the faith.

The bewilderment of our Australian Bishops as to why the number of Catholics is declining, is hard to fathom. You don't teach, no one learns. It's not rocket science!

Ed.

Not a Lack of Money

Archbishop Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia, 12-04-2019, at a seminary dinner

The problem in American Catholic life is not a lack of money or resources or personnel or social influence. The central problem in constructing a Christian culture is our lack of faith and the cowardice it produces. We need to admit this. And then we need to submit ourselves to a path of repentance and change, and unselfish witness to others.

Catholic News Agency 12-04-2019

Thank You

Thank you for your generous work, giving us Into the Deep. The article by Cardinal Robert Sarah in the May edition, is splendid. I am so grateful to you for producing these things. And the lines from the children's hymn – beautiful. I feel we need simplicity and words that express our love.

Helen Casanova, Westmere, Victoria

Be Specific About Accusations

I know nothing of Fr Rynne and the Meander Valley parish (ITD April and May, p.3) and this letter is not to be taken as a commentary on that issue, but I am sick at heart about vague accusations about someone's "manner".

This happened to me when Bishop Tomlinson of Bendigo objected to me speaking in his diocese because he did not approve of my "manner" (see ITD September 2018 p.4). I went through a long tortuous process through official Catholic channels to find out what it was about my "manner" that he objected to but it got nowhere. He would not specify what he found objectionable about me or my "manner".

In my view bishops who make vague accusations about someone's "manner" should be specific so that the individual can correct whatever needs to be corrected.

Babette Francis, Melbourne, Victoria

Growing in Awareness of Christ's Presence

As Catholics we are called by Christ to bear fruit, fruit that will last. As a matter of fact, Scripture teaches us that God hates sterility, and the Church is commanded to convert and baptize the whole world.

This is not a suggestion, and we do not have a choice with regards to this command. Catholics are people who have chosen Christ as the only meaning of their lives, and are called to establish an ever more profound communion with Him by sinking their roots deep into his living presence and Mystery in His Church. This is the only way we can give our faith and life a chance of growing and producing fruit, fruit that will last.

The Scriptures makes it very clear that without Christ we can do nothing. Cut off from him we will die and wither. Hence, it is fundamentally important that we become aware, and learn the many ways in which Christ is present in His Church. This presence confronts all of us with a Mystery ever to be pondered.

For example, Christ is present in His Church when she prays, since it is He who prays for us and prays in us and to whom we pray as our God.

The Sacraments are the actions of Christ who administers them through his priests. Therefore, they are Holy in themselves, and by the power of Christ they pour grace into our souls when they touch our bodies.

Christ is present in His Church in a manner which surpasses all others in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This sublime Sacrament contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, which is Christ himself, our living bread, who through his very flesh and blood, feeds, forgives, heals, nourishes, and offers life to God's great family, and the entire world.

All the masters of the spiritual life recommend that in order to grow in holiness and virtue we have to "practice the holy presence of God". We have to be rooted in him and built on him and held firm by faith in him if we are to be effective and fruitful as Catholics, and bear fruit that will last. Because no matter what station in life we find ourselves, ultimately Christ is the one who will determine our fruitfulness in his great family, the Church and the world.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Suicide – Delivered

From a recent Action Alert from Pro-Life Victoria (Inc)

The Alfred Hospital pharmacy is to be "the sole service for dispensing" the lethal poisons in Victoria. "For people too sick to travel, the pharmacy service will deliver them their medication and provide information on administration" (Media release by Acting Minister for Health Martin Foley, 05-01-2019).

All poisons for doctor assisted suicides and euthanasia across Victoria will be delivered to those wanting to suicide solely by Alfred Hospital pharmacists in what is a world first for the "Death Peddlers." Victorian taxpayers are being forced to pay all the costs.

The notion of a kind of 'Uber-style poison service' service to country Victoria – where there now is a chronic shortage in access to much needed palliative care – is particularly outrageous.

There is no requirement for any doctor or other health practitioner to be present when the poison is taken. This huge gap creates enormous issues and question marks over the whole process of so called assisted suicides: How do we know who actually used the poisons to kill themselves, as there is to be no autopsy! What pressure was put on victims to take the poisons? What about the complete failure of this poison delivery service to give any protection from elder abuse of potential victims?

Our 3 Silent Witness events at Peter Mac had a huge impact by our silent witness against what is happening there. We have since held a Silent Witness at the Alfred so that staff can learn that their hospital is "driving" assisted suicides and euthanasia in Victoria by its organizing, preparing and distributing the euthanasia poisons.

Want more information or have any questions? Phone Des Kelly 0439 835 723, or Eugene Ahern 0402 296 290

We Have Taken Away Priests' Identity

Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in an interview with La Nef magazine 05-04-2019, on his latest book, 'The Day is Far Spent'

I think that the crisis of the priesthood is one of the main factors in the crisis of the Church. We have taken away priests' identity. We have made priests believe that they need to be efficient men.

But a priest is fundamentally the continuation of Christ's presence among us. He should not be defined by what he does, but by what he is: *ipse Christus*, Christ Himself.

The discovery of many cases of sexual abuse against minors reveals a profound spiritual crisis, a grave, deep, and tragic rupture between the priest and Christ. Of course, there are social factors: the crisis of the '60s and the sexualization of society, which rebound on the Church. But we must have the courage to go further. The roots of this crisis are spiritual. A priest who does not pray or makes a theatre out of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, a priest who only confesses rarely and who does not live concretely like another Christ, is cut off from the source of his own being. ...

We, the bishops, bear a large share of responsibility for the crisis of the priesthood. Have we been fathers to them? Have we listened to them, understood and guided them? Have we given them an example?

Too often dioceses are transformed into administrative structures. There are so many meetings. The bishop should be the model for the priesthood. But we ourselves are far from being the ones most ready to pray in silence, or to chant the Office in our cathedrals. I fear that we lose ourselves in secondary, profane responsibilities.

The place of a priest is on the Cross. When he celebrates Mass, he is at the source of his whole life, namely the Cross. Celibacy is a concrete means that permits us to live this mystery of the Cross in our lives. Celibacy inscribes the Cross in our very flesh. That is why celibacy is intolerable for the modern world. Celibacy is a scandal for modern people, because the Cross is a scandal.

In this book, I want to encourage priests. I want to tell them: love your priesthood! Be proud to be crucified with Christ! Do not fear the world's hate! I want to express my affection as a father and brother for the priests of the whole world.

[Translated from the French by Zachary Thomas] catholicerald.co.uk, 05-04-2019

The Legend of the Yoke

Just a note to tell you that Holy Mass was celebrated in our parish on 7 May for the 'wellbeing of Cardinal Pell'. When I see how this good priest is made to suffer, I am reminded of Christ telling us, "My yoke is easy and my burden light". The Greek word for 'easy' means 'well-fitting'. I remember back in the 1940's when I was young on the farm in Ireland we had yokes (collars) hanging along the walls of the stables for each of the four horses. Each horse had its own special collar. If we put the black mare's collar on the grey horse it would have hurt him, it would have chafed him so much he would have bled. So we made sure we gave each horse its own individual collar.

In Palestine at the time of Our Lord, the yokes were made of wood. Each yoke was individually made for the animals. The farmer would initially take his ox to the carpenter for its measurements to be taken. The animal then returned home but in the meantime the carpenter roughed out the yoke. At the agreed time the animal returned to the carpenter for the final fitting when any necessary adjustments were made to ensure that the yoke was well-fitting. It was important that the yoke did not chafe the animal's neck. The yoke was tailor made for the ox.

The legend goes that Christ, who is described in the gospels as a craftsman (tekton), made the best ox-yokes in all of Galilee. The farmers used to come from all over the region to him in Nazareth so that He could fit out their animals. Like all carpenters of the time He had a small shop and over the door he had a sign which read, "My yokes fit best". Let us all pray for the wellbeing of our beloved Cardinal.

Pat Ryan, London, UK

The Trap of the Manipulators

Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in an interview with La Nef magazine 05-04-2019, on his latest book, 'The Day is Far Spent'

La Nef: Is there a homosexual problem in the heart of the Church and if so, why is it a taboo?

Cardinal Sarah: Today the Church is living with Christ through the outrages of the Passion. The sins of her members come back to her like strikes on the face. Some have tried to instrumentalize these sins in order to put pressure on the bishops. Some want them to adopt the judgments and language of the world. Some bishops have caved in to the pressure. We see them calling for the abandonment of priestly celibacy or making unsound statements about homosexual acts. Should we be surprised? The Apostles themselves turned tail in the Garden of Olives. They abandoned Christ in His most difficult hour.

We must be realistic and concrete. Yes, there are sinners. Yes, there are unfaithful priests, bishops, and even cardinals who fail to observe chastity. But also, and this is also very grave, they fail to hold fast to doctrinal truth! They disorient the Christian faithful by their confusing and ambiguous language. They adulterate and falsify the Word of God, willing to twist and bend it to gain the world's approval. They are the Judas Iscariots of our time.

Sin should not surprise us. On the other hand, we must have the courage to call it by name. We must not be afraid to rediscover the methods of spiritual combat: prayer, penance, and fasting. We must have the clear-sightedness to punish unfaithfulness. We must find the concrete means to prevent it. I believe that without a common prayer life, without a minimum of common fraternal life between priests, fidelity is an illusion. We must look to the model of the Acts of the Apostles.

With regard to homosexual behaviours, let us not fall into the trap of the manipulators. There is no "homosexual problem" in the Church. There is a problem of sins and infidelity. Let us not perpetuate the vocabulary of LGBT ideology. Homosexuality does not define the identity of persons. It describes certain deviant, sinful, and perverse acts. For these acts, as for other sins, the remedies are known. We must return to Christ, and allow him to convert us. When the fault is public, the penalties provided for by Church law must be applied. Punishment is merciful, an act of charity and fraternal love. Punishment restores the damage done to the common good and permits the guilty party to redeem himself. Punishment is part of the paternal role of bishops. Finally, we must have the courage to clearly apply the norms regarding the acceptance of seminarians. Men whose psychology is deeply and permanently anchored in homosexuality, or who practice duplicity and lying, cannot be accepted as candidates for the priesthood.

[Translated from the French by Zachary Thomas] catholicerald.co.uk, 05-04-2019

Cairns History

Regarding the "Buddhist Blessings at Cairns Cathedral" (May ITD, p.7): The Leftist, Labor-supporting former Archbishop John Bathersby of Brisbane (now retired in Stanthorpe, Qld) was also once the Bishop of Cairns. St Monica's Cathedral was my parish church some 36 years ago. Archbishop Bathersby and I locked horns to the extent that he had all my communications to all Brisbane Archdiocesan parishes and other institutions in Brisbane banned. He didn't appreciate my orthodoxy. Looks like nothing's changed at the Cathedral.

John McMahon, Kolonga, Queensland

Hard Times

Archbishop Charles Chaput, in an address to seminarians, 27-03-2019

The temptations to fear, anxiety, depression, and fatigue are experiences we all share, especially in hard moments for the Church like today. Fear, like anger, is a good and healthy thing when it's in its proper place – and toxic when it's not.

So do we really believe in Jesus Christ or not? That's the central question in our lives. Everything turns on the answer. Because if our Christian faith really grounds and organizes our lives, then we have no reason to fear, and we have every reason to hope.

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Do You Need My Hands, Lord?

Prayer of Mother Teresa

Do you need my hands, Lord, to help the sick and the poor who are in need today?

Lord, this day I offer you my hands.

Do you need my feet, Lord, to lead me today to those who need a friend?

Lord, this day I offer you my feet.

Do you need my voice, Lord, so that I can speak to all those who need a word of love?

Lord, this day I offer you my voice.

Do you need my heart, Lord, so that I can love everyone, without exception?

Lord, this day I offer you my heart.

Anorexia

I read in a TV guide recently: "Louis Theroux – Talking to Anorexia. Louis spends time in two of London's eating disorder facilities to meet women with anorexia – a mystery illness with the highest death rate of any psychiatric disorder."

It struck me that with anorexia we all understand that there is something wrong with the patient when she is deathly skinny and yet firmly believes that she's fat. We know she needs help. We don't go around agreeing that she's fat and helping her in her efforts to lose weight.

Yet with transgender people and same-sex 'marriage', we see something that is clearly mixed up and wrong, and yet we're expected to (made to!) affirm it as right and normal. We look at a man who thinks he's a woman, and we have to call him a woman and behave as if he's a woman, even though we all know very well he's a man. And when two men or two women 'marry' one another, we have to pretend it makes sense. And when it comes to the high death rate among these populations, we just have to look the other way.

I wonder how long it will be before we're not allowed to say that someone with anorexia has an illness, but that they just have a different perception of themselves which is just as acceptable and legitimate as anyone else's self-perception?

Ed.

God Doesn't Lose

Archbishop Charles Chaput, in an address to seminarians, 27-03-2019

And here's the thing: In 2019, even the simplest acts of faith, such as setting time aside on Sunday morning to worship the Lord, are more and more obviously *contra mundum*, against the world. This means our faith is now more costly, but also more visible, and thus more powerful. As Jesus says, "Let your light shine before men."

The gift of this moment, the blessing of our disestablishment, is that we're being exposed to the world as followers of Jesus Christ, even as we stumble and fall. And through the witness of the faithful who trust, and serve, and endure in his love – despite all our failures and weaknesses – God will make the Gospel new and more radiant. History is a record of that story again and again. God doesn't lose.

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A Deep, Tranquil Sea

Excerpts from Pope Francis' homily at morning Mass, 21-05-2019

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account." The peace of Jesus goes with this life of persecution, of tribulation. A peace that is deep down, deep down, very profound to all these things. A peace that no one can touch, a peace that is a gift, like the sea that deep down is tranquil, while on the surface there are waves.

This peace is something different, which comes from the Holy Spirit within us, and that brings with it strength. Peace, the peace of Jesus, teaches us to go forward in life. It teaches us to endure. To endure: a word we don't understand well, a very Christian word, it means to carry a burden.

This means managing to endure, carry the burden of life, the difficulties, the labour, everything, but without losing peace, rather bearing the burden and having the courage to go forward.

This can only be understood when there is the Holy Spirit within, who gives us the peace of Jesus.

May the Lord grant us this peace that comes from the Holy Spirit, this peace that comes precisely from Him, and that helps us to endure, to carry, the many difficulties in life.

Zenit.org 21-05-2019

Our Refusal to Love God

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in an essay on the current crisis of the faith and of the Church – “some notes by which I might contribute one or two remarks to assist in this difficult hour” (Section III, 1)

What must be done? Perhaps we should create another Church for things to work out? Well, that experiment has already been undertaken and has already failed. Only obedience and love for our Lord Jesus Christ can point the way. So let us first try to understand anew and from within [ourselves] what the Lord wants, and has wanted with us.

First, I would suggest the following: If we really wanted to summarize very briefly the content of the Faith as laid down in the Bible, we might do so by saying that the Lord has initiated a narrative of love with us and wants to subsume all creation in it. The counterforce against evil, which threatens us and the whole world, can ultimately only consist in our entering into this love. It is the real counterforce against evil. The power of evil arises from our refusal to love God. He who entrusts himself to the love of God is redeemed. Our being not redeemed is a consequence of our inability to love God. Learning to love God is therefore the path of human redemption.

Let us now try to unpack this essential content of God's revelation a little more. We might then say that the first fundamental gift that Faith offers us is the certainty that God exists.

A world without God can only be a world without meaning. For where, then, does everything that is come from? In any case, it has no spiritual purpose. It is somehow simply there and has neither any goal nor any sense. Then there are no standards of good or evil. Then only what is stronger than the other can assert itself. Power is then the only principle. Truth does not count, it actually does not exist. Only if things have a spiritual reason, are intended and conceived – only if there is a Creator God who is good and wants the good – can the life of man also have meaning.

That there is God as creator and as the measure of all things is first and foremost a primordial need.

But a God who would not express Himself at all, who would not make Himself known, would remain a presumption and could thus not determine the form [Gestalt] of our life. For God to be really God in this deliberate creation, we must look to Him to express Himself in some way. He has done so in many ways, but decisively in the call that went to Abraham and gave people in search of God the orientation that leads beyond all expectation: God Himself becomes creature, speaks as man with us human beings.

In this way the sentence "God is" ultimately turns into a truly joyous message, precisely because He is more than understanding, because He creates – and is – love. To once more make people aware of this is the first and fundamental task entrusted to us by the Lord.

A society without God – a society that does not know Him and treats Him as non-existent – is a society that loses its measure. In our day, the catchphrase of God's death was coined. When God does die in a society, it becomes free, we were assured. In reality, the death of God in a society also means the end of freedom, because what dies is the purpose that provides orientation. And because the compass disappears that points us in the right direction by teaching us to distinguish good from evil. Western society is a society in which God is absent in the public sphere and has nothing left to offer it. And that is why it is a society in which the measure of humanity is increasingly lost. At individual points it becomes suddenly apparent that what is evil and destroys man has become a matter of course. ...

Why did paedophilia reach such proportions? Ultimately, the reason is the absence of God. We Christians and priests also prefer not to talk about God, because this speech does not seem to be practical. ... God is regarded as the party concern of a small group and can no longer stand as the guiding principle for the community as a whole. This decision reflects the situation in the West, where God has become the private affair of a minority.

A paramount task, which must result from the moral upheavals of our time, is that we ourselves once again begin to live by God and unto Him. Above all, we ourselves must learn again to recognize God as the foundation of our life instead of leaving Him aside as a somehow ineffective phrase. ...

(Translated by Anian Christoph Wimmer) Catholic News Agency

Snippets of Inspiration

In going through some old files on my computer, I came across excerpts from homilies of Fr John Speekman that had struck me at the time. Now, reading them again years later, they struck me again. Maybe they will speak to you too. **Ed.**

“Mass does nothing for me”

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

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

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

When young people tell me the Mass does nothing for them I tell them it’s actually meant to do something for God. The Mass is meant to please God. We come to give him (not ourselves) glory and praise and honour and worship. This is our obligation as God’s servants.

And when they complain that they don’t like the music or such-and-such a hymn I tell them we’re not singing these hymns for their enjoyment; we are singing them for God. We are here at Mass to do something for God. (27 C)

The Faith

My parents understood that the Faith was not about them and *their* hopes and wishes, nor was it about *their* ideas or opinions. My parents understood clearly, and they gave their children to clearly understand, that the Faith was about *God’s truth, and his hopes and dreams for them*. My parents did not have *their* faith, like so many who call themselves Catholic today, they had *the Faith*, and that is a vastly different thing – the faith of the Catholic Church – the faith which obliged them to a joyful obedience.

He means you no harm

Don’t be afraid of Jesus, he means you no harm. Don’t be afraid to open the doors of your heart to him, to give him access to your inner self. Don’t be afraid to let him into your relationships, your marriage, your family, your private life. Talk to him, trust him, confide in him because that is why he came. He is looking for you. He wants you to approach him. He already knows you through and through, every detail of your life, and yet he loves you with a love no other person can equal. Don’t be afraid of his love; it will bring you healing, completeness, joy, peace and life.

Two Men

Two men confronting each other: Jesus and Pilate.

Two men: A ruler and a slave. A master and a servant. A king and a subject.

But which is which?

(Christ the King B)

The Difference Between Them

Apostle: A term meaning one who is *sent* as Jesus was sent by the Father, and as he sent his chosen disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world.

Disciple: Those who accepted Jesus’ message to follow him are called his disciples.

Evangelist: One of the four authors to whom is ascribed the writing of the Gospels, i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The term is also used for one who works actively to spread and promote the Christian faith.

Glossary, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pocket Edition, 2000

Silence

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, 4th Lenten Homily 2019

An expression of worship that is more efficacious than any words is silence. By itself silence points to a reality that far surpasses any words. This message resounds forcefully in the Bible: "Let all the earth keep silence before him!" (Hab 2:20), and "Be silent before the Lord God!" (Zeph 1:7).

According to one of the Desert Fathers, when "the senses are enveloped in endless silence and with the help of silence our memories fade," then all that remains is to worship.

Job performs an act of worship when, finding himself face to face with the Omnipotent at the end of his trial, he exclaims, "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth" (Job 40:4). It is in this sense that the verse from a psalm later taken up by the liturgy says in the Hebrew text, "To you, silence is praise" (see Ps 65:2, Masoretic text).

To worship, according to the beautiful expression of St Gregory Nazianzus, means to lift up to God "a hymn of silence." Just as when one climbs a high mountain, little by little the air becomes more rarified, so too as one draws nearer to God, little by little speech must become briefer until in the end a person becomes completely mute and unites himself or herself in silence to the one who is ineffable.

If you really want to say something to "quiet" the mind and prevent it from wandering around on other topics, you should do it with the shortest expression that exists, "Amen, yes." To worship is in fact to consent. It is letting God be God. It is saying yes to God as God and to oneself as a creature of God. This is how Jesus is defined in Revelation, as "the Amen," the yes personified (see Rev 3:14), or one can repeat ceaselessly with the Seraphim, "*Qadosh, qadosh, qadosh,*" "Holy, holy, holy."

Worship therefore requires people to bow down and be silent. But is such an act worthy of human beings? Doesn't it humiliate them, derogating their dignity? In fact, is it truly worthy of God? Does God really need his creatures to prostrate themselves on the ground before him and keep silent? Is God possibly like one of those oriental sovereigns who contrived worship for themselves?

We cannot deny it: worship also involves for a human being an aspect of radical self-abasement, making oneself small, a surrender and a submission of oneself. Worship always involves an aspect of sacrifice, an offering up of something. Precisely because of this it attests that God is God and that nothing and no one has the right to exist before him except by his grace. In worship we offer up and sacrifice our "I," our own glory, our self-sufficiency. But ours is a false and inconsistent glory, so it is freeing for a person to be rid of it.

Zenit.org 05-04-2019

A Bishop Teaching His People

Bishop Joseph Strickland, in an interview with LifeSiteNews

I was in a public high school, and there was a very small number of Catholic young people at my high school. At the same time I believe I'm probably the only practicing Catholic of all of those, and I think the missing ingredient was not really knowing the basic teachings of the Church and not knowing what the Real Presence really means – that Christ is there in the form of consecrated bread and wine. Just across the board there is a lack of really solid knowledge of what the Catholic Church is, where it came from, who established it, how it continues through 2000 years of history. I've always had the bias that if people really know that, they're going to embrace the Catholic faith. And I think we've seen a lot of those stories, especially I've seen them in recent years, of some very high profile converts who have studied themselves into the Catholic faith.

I guess with that emphasis on teaching and learning, I would hope we can help teach all of the people in the Diocese of Tyler, teach them into to the Catholic faith, and not just leave it to them individually to go after that truth on their own. Which they certainly can, but I feel like it's my job as bishop and it's our work as a diocese to teach people the treasure they have in their Catholic faith.

LifeSiteNews 12-04-2019

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

"When Mass is being celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the divine victim immolated on the altar."

St John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Church

"It is most true that he who attends holy Mass shall be freed from many evils and from many dangers, both seen and unseen."

St Gregory, Doctor of the Church

"Without doubt, the Lord grants all favours which are asked of Him in Mass, provided they be fitting for us; and, which is a matter of great wonder, oftentimes He also grants that also which is not demanded of Him, if we, on our part, put no obstacle in the way."

St Jerome, Doctor of the Church

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ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email and on the blog; printed copies about a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15th of the month).

Editor: Janet Kingman

Subscription is free. We rely on donations.

Cheques to be made out to Janet Kingman.

ITD's bank details for **Direct Deposits:**

Account name: Janet Kingman

BSB: 013-745 (ANZ)

Account number: 2901-63632

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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