

Into the Deep

Issue 2

November 2002

Liturgy ~ Creative or Repetitive?

“The liturgy is not a show, a spectacle, requiring brilliant producers and talented actors. The life of the liturgy does not consist in ‘pleasant’ surprises and attractive ‘ideas’ but in solemn repetitions. It cannot be an expression of what is current and transitory, for it expresses the mystery of the Holy. Many people have felt and said that liturgy must be ‘made’ by the whole community if it is really to belong to them. Such an attitude has led to the ‘success’ of the liturgy being measured by its effect at the level of spectacle and entertainment. It is to lose sight of what is *distinctive* to the liturgy, which does not come from what *we do* but from the fact that something is *taking place* here that all of us together cannot ‘make’. In the liturgy there is a power, an energy at work which not even the Church as a whole can generate: what it manifests is the Wholly Other, coming to us through the community (which is hence not sovereign but servant, purely instrumental).

Liturgy, for the Catholic, is his common homeland, the source of his identity. And another reason why it must be something ‘given’ and ‘constant’ is that, by means of the ritual, it manifests the holiness of God. The revolt against what has been described as ‘the old rubricist rigidity’, which was accused of stifling ‘creativity’, has in fact made the liturgy into a do-it-yourself patchwork and trivialized it, adapting it to our mediocrity.”

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
in The Ratzinger Report, 1985 - interview with Vittorio Messori.

Do we believe that in our own parishes we are being faithful to the ‘source of our identity’ as Catholics? When there is talk of changing the Mass or making it more ‘relevant’ or ‘interesting’, is the emphasis on the mystery of the Holy? Or on creative busyness, and empty promises to youth?

Fr Des Byrne to speak

On Saturday 16th November, Fr Des Byrne will be visiting our diocese, speaking at St Michael’s hall (next to the church) in Traralgon at 2.00pm. Fr Byrne has recently retired after 32 years as parish priest of St Francis de Sales in Oak Hill, Melbourne.

In 1992 Fr Byrne founded the Confraternity of St Michael for the Catechetical Instruction of Young Adults in the Catholic Faith. Fr Byrne promotes the reality that young people will respond with enthusiasm when presented with the great truths of our Catholic faith. His wisdom and advice will assist us in our efforts to renew the spiritual life of our diocese, particularly our schools. Please invite young people you know, parents with children in the schools, or those who have left the Catholic school system disillusioned, to come and hear Fr Byrne. We are not looking for large numbers but those who will be inspired to become active in the battle we face.

On the crisis in the Church in America:

“What we are seeing today is a crisis in fidelity to Catholic truth: in accepting that truth on the part of the faithful and the priests, and in enforcing and defending that truth on the part of Bishops.”

Father Joseph Fessio,
as quoted by K. Maurer in Fidelity, October 2002

Twisting words...

“The Holy Father says that pastoral concern means the search for the true good of man; it means the ever-clearer discovery of God’s plan for human love; and it means never compromising what is true in the face of human weakness. I have often heard the word ‘pastoral’ used to mean ‘water things down and make it easier than it is’. But anything that does not call people to the truth of love, is un-pastoral.”

Christopher West – lectures on JP II’s Theology of the Body

Pastoral Planning's Culture of Spiritual Death

The early findings of Journeying Together make no mention of Catholic Education. Is this an oversight? Surely many have expressed their concerns and sorrow at what is called "Catholic Education" in our Diocese.

Our Catholic Education system has let us, our children and our grandchildren down. We have been duped by educational experts who have not supplied what they were employed to do, namely nurture our children in their Catholic faith. I do not deny that much good has been done in diocesan schools but the fact of a faithless generation remains.

Fault might not only be attributed to a seductive, disbelieving world but also to those teachers, good in themselves and often hard-working, who themselves did not sufficiently know their own faith or practise it, let alone impart it to their unwitting students. The problem is bigger than any single teacher or single school. The problem is at the diocesan level and only at that level can change be effected.

The solutions offered - the *Parishes in Partnership Program* and now the latest *Journeying Together* - good as they may be, are off the mark. Such programs are ineffective and ultimately, if believed, lead to even more of the culture of spiritual death in which our Diocese finds itself. By spiritual death, I explicitly mean a culture that is remiss in sustaining its members' baptismal grace. School numbers are high but Mass attendance is comparatively non-existent. The statistics are undeniable. Yet even in the face of cogent facts those to whom responsibility falls are in denial.

It is now time for all members of our diocese to think for themselves, to speak out and maybe even vote with their pocket. It is the good lay people who have poured millions of dollars into a systemic failure.

Jesus gives us a parable: *Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?* [Luke 6:39]. *Journeying Together*, I believe is the blind leading the blind. It is the formation of yet another costly process. It is the promotion of a tired agenda for the implementing of priest-less parishes in our dying Diocese. The emphasis, action, money and impetus is all placed on *Parishes in Partnership*. Parishes soon to be devoid of priests are eventually also devoid of people.

Some solutions are within our strength. I suggest that prayer must be our first and ongoing act of faith. We need to give a regular corporate display of our faith in the Word of God by asking God for more Priests on a diocesan level. Promoting Eucharistic Holy Hours each week in every parish throughout the diocese can do this.

Teachers need support to undergo a renewal in both their knowledge and practice of the faith. They are employed as Catholic educators not secular teachers. If they cannot align themselves with this truth they should be honest enough to resign and join the secular system. Catholic teachers and Catholic Education Offices need to be held responsible for the outcome they produce.

This hard message is meant to be a call to arms. The gift of our personal effort to do everything possible for the overthrowing of the culture of spiritual death that is attacking our young and not so young is needed now! We need to shed our luxuries, our personal time constraints and apathy, knowing that I, and I hope many others, ...*can do all things in him who strengthens me.* [Phil 4:13]

Pat Crozier, Traralgon

Lack of Hierarchical Support

Never underestimate the powerful influence of mothers.

I think it is difficult enough for them in these controversial times of scandal to encourage their sons to become priests.

You just can't imagine their thoughts and feelings of apprehension when essential support from the hierarchy is not available to all of our priests, as we have seen in Morwell.

Betty Axten, Morwell.

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!

John Paul II

Around the Diocese

Urgent Problem

Sale Diocese, in a desperate effort to rejuvenate a church in crisis, has launched a programme called Journeying Together. Please God this attempt to get more people back in the pews will succeed, but I have my doubts.

Some suggestions have been: make the Mass more fun, young people are bored; have more rock music; there are too many rules and regulations; have women priests.

Of course there are those of us who say: appreciate the sacredness of the Mass, learn to understand it; enrich your prayer life, say the Rosary; attend Adoration of the Blessed Eucharist.

The gap in thinking between the orthodox and the modernists is widening.

The Catholic faith is not a democracy, where everyone has their say, but a *revealed* faith, instituted by Jesus Christ and led by Peter and his successors down to Pope John Paul II.

Morals and doctrine and the format of the Mass are clearly defined and accessible to all.

Following Vatican II, some modernists tried to re-invent the Catholic church to their own desires. We have never had such a flood of trendy innovations, theological jargon, absurdities and silly ideas. How sad it is that so many wonderful, genuinely sincere Catholics have been misled by these false teachings.

This conspiracy to modernise Catholic teaching infiltrated Catholic schools, with the result that we have now lost two generations of youth who are ignorant of true Catholic teaching.

It is obvious that the religious education system in our schools needs a complete overhaul for 2003. Only competent, spiritual, knowledgeable and practising Catholics should be employed to teach religion. A quality assurance programme should be set up with regular checks made on the content of the religious teaching and the resultant understanding the students have of the Catholic faith. To my knowledge, Journeying Together has not addressed this urgent problem.

Mary Tudor, Moe

Adult Education?

St Mary's Cathedral parish in Sale has commenced a program of adult education. The first speaker was RoseMarie Prosser, Religious Education Co-ordinator at Gennezano College in Melbourne and a lecturer in theology at Yarra Theological Union. She holds a Master's Degree in Theology.

In her talk to about sixty parishioners, she provided a comprehensive picture of the current state of our nation and the social changes that have occurred in recent years. She noted that young people were largely indifferent to the Church and her teachings. Sadly, the one solution she seemed to offer was that we had to be "connected" to our young people. However, she made several statements that were questionable to say the least.

She pointed out that her generation was expected not to have sex before marriage but she believed that young people of today have a much "healthier" attitude to sex than her generation. She said the Church had to look closely at her attitude to sex, particularly the requirement that every sex act should be open to the possibility of conception. In a rather insulting comment to mothers of large families, she said, "Surely no one wants to go back to the days of women having eight babies." Why not?

As I left the meeting room, Mrs Prosser happened to follow me out. I turned and introduced myself and asked why she didn't give us some hope by speaking about an eternity of happiness with God in heaven. She argued that the Kingdom of God is already here and we don't have to wait.

Sometime later, I was reading the letters column in Fidelity. Ivy, NSW, wrote: "Over the last twenty years, 99% of visiting priests giving lectures and talks here for a week or two have been openly opposed to the Church and the Pope's teachings. Why?"

Members of the Sale parish should ask the same question. Why should we have to suffer the views of a so-called 'expert' who openly questions Humane Vitae, one of the great teachings by Pope Paul VI about marriage and the beauty of sex in its proper context?

Pat O'Brien, Sale

What's this all about?

The idea of a newsletter came about in response to the following:

- we no longer have a voice in our diocesan Catholic newspaper,
- many orthodox Catholics in various parishes feel isolated and alienated,
- too often we find ourselves griping about what we see happening in our diocese that doesn't conform to Church teaching, but we feel helpless to do anything about it,
- letters and visits to our Bishop have not been effective.

In the light of this, we want the newsletter to provide:

- a forum for us to critically evaluate and share where we, as a diocese and as individuals, are in relation to our faithfulness to Christ and His Church,
- a means for us to co-ordinate our efforts to restore love for orthodoxy,
- a vehicle for Letters to the Editor,
- a means for us to support one another in remaining true to the Catholic faith,
- information that can be easily and confidently used in defence of the faith when approaching or challenging persons or institutions who are required to be providing examples of Catholic life, and
- an opportunity for readers to ask questions and have questions answered by our editor and helpers.

Letters to the Editor

Readers are welcome to contribute letters or articles. We cannot guarantee that all will be published, and some will be edited due to space.

Please keep letters factual, and report only first-hand information. It will be easy to slip into bitterness or gossip, which we need to avoid.

The purpose of sharing letters is to pass on relevant information and suggestions for making positive changes, that is, in line with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

We live in joyful hope that the diocese we love can be faithful to the authentic tradition of the Church. As such, Into the Deep aims to be a messenger of hope and not of doom.

Name, address and phone number must accompany letters. However, if there is a reasonable request, anonymity will be preserved when publishing.

Contact Into the Deep...

E-mail stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au

or mail care of Mr Pat O'Brien,

RMB 5165 Gibson's Road, Sale 3850.

Please notify by either mail or e-mail if you would like to be added to the regular mailing list.

Stones Will Shout...

And as he rode along, they spread their garments on the road. As he was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "*I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.*" Luke 19:35-40

Into the Deep...

"*Put out into the deep* and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish, and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "*Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men.*" And when they had brought their boats to land, and they left everything and followed him. Luke 5:4-11

"*It is necessary that the church go into the deep of the new millennium, beginning with the contemplation of the face of Christ.*" John Paul II

Hierarchy?

From the Greek ...

Sacred order

This page intentionally left blank. Do not print.