

Into the Deep

Issue 25

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

October 2004

Year of the Eucharist

John Paul II expressed the hope that the upcoming Eucharistic Year will help the faithful rediscover the importance of this sacrament.

“With the consecration, the bishop becomes fully a teacher, priest and guide of the Christian community,” the Holy Father said to visiting bishops.

“This is why Christ, the divine Teacher, must always be at the centre of his [the bishop’s] ministry, present both through the Word of Scripture as well as in the sacrament of the Eucharist.”

“I very much hope that the Year of the Eucharist, which will begin on October 10 with the opening of the International Eucharistic Congress, will constitute a providential occasion to understand more profoundly the central importance of the Eucharistic sacrament in the life and activity of each local Church,” he said. The congress will open in Guadalajara, Mexico.

“Bonds of fraternal charity are reinforced around the altar and the awareness is revived in all believers of belonging to the one people of God, of which the bishops are pastors,” the Pope added.

John Paul II reminded the prelates of their duty “to watch over the celebration of the sacraments and worship in general, and that the desire of the faithful be respected to participate in worthy celebrations where nothing is improvised.”

“You are conscious that the mystery of sanctification requires the testimony of a holy life,” he said. “The Spirit of God, which has sanctified you through the episcopal consecration, awaits your generous daily response. The testimony of our life is necessary to confirm what we teach.”

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Presiding From the Cross

“It seems that Pope John Paul II now presides over the universal Church from his place upon Christ’s cross.”

Bishop Patrick Dunn, Auckland

Two Years Old, Sadly

Into the Deep turns 2 this month.

Normally, the second anniversary of a publication would be cause for celebration. Especially as in the case of Into the Deep, when it continues to grow substantially and is met with enthusiastic support from all over the world.

Our subscribers are increasing by the day, contributions are being received from far and wide (both financial and letters to the editor) and the support from orthodox clergy is becoming more vocal. Letters of encouragement and thanks and offers of prayers are constant.

But how sad it is that an independent publication like Into the Deep is wanted and needed by so many orthodox Catholics. How sad that it is vilified by our Bishop and many of the priests in the diocese, who see it as a threat to their liberal agenda. And what an indictment on the diocesan newspaper Catholic Life.

May the day soon arrive when we can trust the leaders of our diocese to hold, teach and defend the Catholic faith as passed on to us by the Apostles and taught through the Magisterium.

On Adoration

It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the Beloved Disciple (cf. Jn 13:25) and to feel the infinite love present in his heart.

If in our time Christians must be distinguished above all by the “art of prayer”, how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament?

This practice, repeatedly praised and recommended by the Magisterium, is supported by the example of many saints. Particularly outstanding in this regard was Saint Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote:

“Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us”.

Ecclesia de Eucharistia, para 25

See www.stoneswillshout.com for all previous issues of Into the Deep

Who's Running This Diocese?

Bishop Coffey has posed this question at least once before, but not answered it. At best, you would hope that he meant it as a rhetorical question, an assertion of his own authority. But a letter recently found its way to *Into the Deep* suggesting a very different – but not unsuspected – type of authority in our diocese.

The letter is from Mr Tony Keenan, general secretary of the Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU), to Bishop Coffey. It is in a tone that suggests a long-standing friendly relationship, for example, Mr Keenan firstly thanks the Bishop for his “genuine concern” towards staff at St Vincent’s school “over the past few years,” and later thanks him for his “support of staff and for the genuine attempts you have made to resolve a very difficult situation.” (Ah, that Fr Speekman could have received such support and genuine attempts from his bishop! But that’s an old story.)

The reason for Mr Keenan’s letter is to “record our concern at the decision of the Congregation for Clergy. It appears an unnecessary intervention in the running of a country parish made from afar.” He was obviously pleased with the Bishop’s decision to remove Fr Speekman, and is now concerned that these people from afar have interfered and told the Bishop to reinstate Fr Speekman – spoiled their plans, so to speak.

Mr Keenan continues by expressing his concern at legal implications (“particularly in the area of occupational health and safety and staff well-being”) that he believes would become an issue should Fr Speekman be returned as canonical administrator of St Vincent’s school. He requests that the Bishop appoint somebody else to “this important role”.

Surely this constitutes defamation of Fr Speekman’s character? How dare Mr Keenan suggest that Fr Speekman is a threat to the staff at St Vincent’s? A canon lawyer shot holes in the investigation and report that the Bishop and Catholic Education Office (CEO) arranged regarding the then-principal’s alleged complaint that Fr Speekman raised his voice at a meeting she attended, causing her to feel bullied and harassed. So much so that the Bishop agreed he would not use any information from that ‘investigation’ again. But then he tried to base his case on it when he had to submit some sort of evidence to Rome.

Rome wasn’t fooled either. The Decree from the Congregation made it abundantly clear that Fr Speekman’s dealings with the school were entirely within his competence as a parish priest, and that his ministry was effective. They were able to find no offence against Fr Speekman.

And yet Mr Keenan implies that Fr Speekman’s presence in the schools would pose some danger to the health of the staff. The principal who allegedly made the complaint (there is suspicion that the complaint was actually made by CEO staff) has since left St Vincent’s, so how can she feel threatened by his return? Fr Speekman has never been informed of any other complaints, so what is Mr Keenan basing his concerns on?

Into the Deep and secular national newspapers have on numerous occasions reported on the tension between the VIEU and orthodox Catholic priests. The VIEU clearly has a problem with priests who expect Catholic schools to have anything to do with the Catholic faith (unless it’s on the school’s terms). They have the power and they want to keep it. Woe betide a priest who wants to take his “important role” as canonical administrator of his parish school seriously.

Who is really in charge? Let’s see whether Bishop Coffey bows to union pressure, or asserts Church authority. If he decides not to return the schools to Fr Speekman’s rightful authority, then we have a fair idea of who is really running this diocese, to answer his own question.

Perhaps the real reason for Fr Speekman’s removal is only now coming to light.

Previous Articles

For previous articles on union involvement in Catholic Education, see *Into the Deep*: January 2004 (issue 16) p.7; April 2004 (issue 19) p.6; May 2004 (issue 20) p.5.

See also the article by Special Correspondent in this issue of *ITD* page 7, reprinted in part from *ITD* October 2003. And relevant excerpts from the Decree re Fr Speekman’s case on page 9 this issue.

Pell Unafraid to Act Like a Bishop

Cardinal George Pell has shown yet again that he is strong and courageous when it comes to standing up for the Faith.

It was recently reported that he told Sydney Sisters of St Joseph that they were not to host a conference of a group of liberal Catholics on Church property. He stopped two priests from addressing the conference, and directed Bishop Power not to celebrate Mass for the dissenters.

Of course he was publicly opposed for his decisions and begrudgingly obeyed by those concerned. His official statement explained his position simply: “The Liberal party does not hold its conferences at a Labor party branch office.”

“It’s Just Not Cricket!”

A well known saying which has been redefined by the Catholic Diocese of Sale, for the Parish Staged Play,

“It’s Not Just Cricket!”

Now playing in Morwell Catholic Parish.

Part 1.

The *Scene* can be any cricket ground.

The *Pitch* is, well it’s a cricket pitch, what do you expect?

Imagine if you will, being in charge of a mixed cricket match.

For one of the batsmen you blindfold him!

Over a period of eleven (11) minutes you allow, or even encourage the bowler to direct fourteen (14) consecutive deliveries of hers at the blind-folded batsman.

Highly irregular and irresponsible, there is no sense of fair play or justice. You neither warn the batsman to expect a delivery or that one had just been delivered. The batsman cannot defend his wicket, he is almost certain to be injured and he is assured of ‘getting out’ (being dismissed).

The scenario of course could never happen. It’s just too bizarre to imagine!

Part 2.

The *Scene* is the Diocese of Sale.

The *Pitch* depends on whom you believe (but it is a long one), extending from St Vincent’s, Morwell to the Cathedral in Sale.

Imagine if you can, the Bishop (Jeremiah Coffey), the person in charge of the Sale Diocese allowing -

Over a period of eleven (11) months, fourteen (14) complaints from a school principal to be delivered against one of his Parish Priests (Fr John Speekman) and not warning or bringing them to his attention to defend.

The scenario of course could never happen. It’s just too bizarre to imagine!

* Footnote -

“...Subsequently, the Most Reverend Ordinary met with Father Speekman on 24 November 2001, and therein indicated that over the previous eleven (11) months, he had been made aware of fourteen (14) separate complaints made by Mrs. Swenson against Father Speekman. However, the Most Reverend Ordinary admitted that he had never communicated those complaints to Father Speekman”

* ‘Decree’, Given at the Seat of the Congregation for the Clergy 8 July, 2004

Peter Kelly, Morwell

Woe to me if I do not preach it!

The safeguarding of the faith and the unity of the Church were the priorities John Paul II emphasised when meeting with newly appointed bishops of mission territories.

The 130 new bishops were attending a seminar organised by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

“In all cultures,” the Pope told the bishops, “your Churches” are “called to manifest the communion of the only Church of Christ, in fidelity to the Magisterium.”

“Your first concern is to be diligent guardians of the integrity of the faith and of the unity of the Church,” he said.

The Holy Father urged the prelates to ensure that “communion with the Roman Pontiff and with other bishops grows ceaselessly, especially within your episcopal conference and your ecclesiastical province.”

John Paul II also encouraged the prelates to be “models for the Christian people, drawing from spiritual experience, an intense sacramental life, and permanent formation, the strength to be servants of the Gospel.”

“Bishops must promote tirelessly an authentic pastoral program and a pedagogy of holiness,” the Pope added.

The Pontiff summarised his advice in an expression of the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:16: “If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!”

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Priest Would Feel Compromised

I have enjoyed reading your publication. Congratulations.

I can verify what you said in the September issue of *Into the Deep* about liturgical abuse at the Sale Cathedral:

Five years ago I was on holidays and I was late, so I did not ask to concelebrate a weekday Mass. But I attended one, and every abuse that you named happened then! How grateful I was that I was late! I would have been so compromised had I been vested. I did not even communicate, but celebrated a private Mass later in the day elsewhere.

The whole question of response by faithful Catholics is much exercising my mind and prayer. May God guide you and give you the wisdom and charity that you need to do the work you are undertaking.

An Australian priest (Name and address supplied)

Catholic Education is Divisive

Recent editions of the St Mary's, Sale, weekly parish bulletins have requested parishioners to contribute news items which would be of interest to others.

In response I submitted a notice informing parishioners of the forthcoming visit by well-known author and lecturer, Eamonn Keane, to Morwell on Saturday 2nd October. The brief notice advised the three topics on which he would speak (a) Marriage, (b) the Priesthood, and (c) the crisis in Catholic Education, and I requested that it be inserted in the September 19 and 26 editions.

The news item did not appear on September 19, so I saw the Administrator Fr Buckley and asked him why it was omitted. He said that "the term crisis in Catholic Education was divisive" and he had directed that it not be published. My immediate response was to say that it was a bit rich to say anything was 'divisive' given the current goings-on in the Diocese.

If my comments were "divisive," then Fr Buckley would have been very concerned at comments by Bishop Coffey's predecessor, Bishop Eric D'Arcy. Addressing the Plenary Session of the Roman Secretariat for Non-Believers in 1988, on behalf of the Australian Bishops, Bishop D'Arcy said:

"Since 1970 many Australian pastors, parents and teachers have been expressing strong and constant dissatisfaction about the "Experiential Model Catechetics" which became dominant in Catholic high schools. As that system became entrenched, great numbers of young Catholics were coming away from twelve years of Catholic schooling, ignorant of the Church's specific doctrines: both on Faith and morals; ignorant of the reasons that support those doctrines; vulnerable to even the most elementary and hackneyed secularist objections to Catholic beliefs."

Yet now in 2004, in her column in the September edition of Catholic Life, we find the Director of Catholic Education Dr T D'Orsa, peddling the same experientialist nonsense condemned by Bishop D'Arcy in 1988. She wrote: "Notional knowledge can supply "correct" answers to questions, but knowledge based in experience is what motivates and shapes us as persons, the persons whom God invites to relationship."

It is not orthodox Catholics who are being 'divisive', but those who refuse to face the reality that there is a monumental failure of the current Catholic education system, that has a 95% failure rate in passing on the Catholic faith.

My considered response to Fr Buckley's phony excuse was to inform him that if I was to be treated like a pariah, then our contributions to the planned giving program would cease.

Pat O'Brien, Sale

Media in Pastoral Plans ~

Archbishop John Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications has stressed in a recent speech that all dioceses should have a pastoral plan for communications.

"How can we communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ?" he asked. "Obviously with good example, ... through the preaching and teaching of the basic truths of the faith, knowledge of the Bible, and by helping people to pray."

"We communicate the Good News of Christ through the positive work that the Church does in his name," and through the media, he added.

Recalling the 1992 pastoral instruction "Aetatis Novae" on communication, Archbishop Foley said that this document "suggests that a pastoral plan for communication be developed in each diocese and that communication be part of pastoral plans."

The archbishop referred to radio and television programs and Catholic publications and said they should be of high quality.

"That mark of high quality," he added, "must come from our authenticity, our credibility as representatives of the Gospel of Christ."

From Zenit news

~ And Catholic Life?

Consider Catholic Life, our Sale diocesan newspaper.

It withdrew Letters to the Editor over two years ago, seldom mentions the Catechism or insists on Church teaching, it promotes the pitiful Journeying Together pastoral plan with no room for criticism of it, and promotes Catholic education shamelessly, disregarding the obvious failures to educate in the faith. It gives free voice to Dr Therese D'Orsa, Director of the Catholic Education Office, regardless of the wild and unsubstantiated claims she regularly makes about how faithful Catholic schools are to Catholic teaching.

It selectively publishes information about the Fr Speekman case. Bear in mind that there was no mention at all of the Bishop's decree removing Fr Speekman as canonical administrator of the schools in his parish, nor of his decree removing Fr Speekman as parish priest of his parish, nor of the outcry from parishioners at any stage, nor of Fr Speekman's appeal to Rome against his removal. The first mention was that Fr Tom Cleary had been appointed administrator of Morwell Catholic Parish. There has been no mention that the Congregation for the Clergy rejected the Bishop's appeal to them to review their decision against him. And now we have the article about how supportive the priests are of the Bishop.

Authentic, credible, representing the Gospel of Christ? Or simply putty in the Bishop's hands?

Steadfast Ministers of Truth

In the face of the growth of secularism, John Paul II has appealed, especially to bishops, to find new ways of proclaiming the faith.

When meeting with the bishops of the Pacific, the Pope said that "...the peoples of Oceania are growing in their understanding of the need to renew their faith and find a more abundant life in Christ."

"In this quest they look to you, with great expectation, to be steadfast ministers of truth and audacious witnesses to Christ," he continued.

"They wish for you to be vigilant in seeking new ways to teach faith in such a way that they will be strengthened by the power of the Gospel, which must permeate their way of thinking, standards of judgment, and norms of behaviour," he said.

"This demands that you, as teachers of the faith and heralds of the Word, preach with clarity and precision how faith in fact has the force to shape culture itself by penetrating it to its very core," the Holy Father added.

"Anchored in the Christian tradition, and alert to the signs of contemporary cultural shifts, your episcopal ministry will thus be a sign of hope and direction for all," he said.

"In this context, it is your preached and lived testimony of God's extraordinary 'yes' to humanity which will inspire your peoples to reject the negative aspects of new forms of colonisation and to embrace all that begets new life in the Spirit!," the Holy Father said.

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Salient Points Ignored in Letter

Thank you for your reply to my letter (September ITD). However you have ignored the salient points made:

1) "Bishop Has No Grace". I wrote to you objecting to that heading, which certainly does not show respect for the Office or for the man, in this case Bishop Coffey.

It is not yours to know how much grace any person has or has not. I trust your readers will read the Decree of the Congregation for the Clergy, which upheld Fr Speekman's appeal, and rightly so. In that Decree Bishop Coffey is treated with due respect whilst his incorrect actions are clearly enumerated.

2) In regards to our empty Church, I made the point that the exodus began in the 70's. At no point did I make the assumption that it ended in the 70's.

Moira O'Callaghan, Cranbourne

Give Us Priestly Leadership

The following letter was sent to Bishop Coffey on 04 August 2004 by three committee members of Into the Deep. We have not received a reply.

"Bishop Coffey, could you please confirm that Mr Quillinan is *not* an 'ex'-priest. We have heard that he is. Yet you have employed him in the Catholic Education Office, and have authorised his running of "Spirituality Days" such as the one in Leongatha on 2nd June 2004, where he talked on prayer and spirituality. We have also heard that he has addressed the priests of the diocese at an in-service.

If he were indeed an 'ex'-priest, we would be horrified that you could allow him to have such a position of influence in the diocese, against both canon law and common sense. To have an 'ex'-priest address priests is like having a divorced couple speak to married people on how to enrich their marriage.

It is bad enough that you employ and support Fr Hugh Brown, in his capacity as either Fr Brown or Mr Brown. You even have Mr/Fr Brown as a member of your diocesan spirituality team. [Another member] on the spirituality team, is apparently also an 'ex'-priest. You have 'ex'-priest Steve Nash working at the Catholic College in Sale. He was appointed as Religious Education Co-ordinator when he wasn't even laicised or validly married, and you were happy to turn a blind eye.

Do you lead a diocese where 'ex'-priests are held in higher esteem than serving priests? No wonder you have lost any semblance of Catholic spirituality in the diocese and have had such a poor record of vocations to the priesthood during your episcopate.

We call on you to remove 'ex'-priests from positions of leadership in the diocese, and refrain from appointing more. We want authentic Catholic leadership in our diocese, and if you are unable to provide this, perhaps the time has come for your retirement."

Mr Pat O'Brien, Mr John Henderson, Mr Pat Crozier

Catholic Adult Education

As reported in AD2000 (September 2004), Sydney's Catholic Adult Education Centre offers correspondence courses for people wanting to learn more about their Catholic faith but are unable to attend classes locally.

Topics include Faith and Reason, The Creed, The Sacraments, Christian Leadership, Sex Marriage and the Church, Vatican II for Today, and others that sound equally stimulating and enriching.

See www.caec.com.au or ring (02) 9643 3660 for more details on how to avail yourself of this great opportunity to grow in your faith!

Receiving Both Species from an Extraordinary Minister

Answered by Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University.

Q: “I am a convert to Catholicism. Little if anything was taught to me during RCIA regarding the liturgy, yet I was immediately encouraged to become a Eucharistic minister as soon as I received the sacraments. The training I received amounted to about four hours on a Saturday. When I transferred to a different parish, all I had to do was sign up to be a Eucharistic minister. There was one brief training focusing on where to stand. My husband tells me that it is not appropriate to receive under both species at a Mass unless there are enough priests or deacons to administer both the Body and the Blood. Is it wrong to partake of both species if both are offered, albeit by Eucharistic ministers?”

R.E., Glendale, Arizona

A: The 1973 instruction “*Immensae Caritatis*”, No. 6, outlines some of the personal qualities demanded of the extraordinary minister:

“The person who has been appointed to be an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is necessarily to be duly instructed and should distinguish himself by his Christian life, faith and morals. Let him strive to be worthy of this great office; let him cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show himself as an example to the other faithful by his piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful.”

It is thus clear that due care must be taken in selecting and forming the extraordinary ministers, presuming of course that they respond to an authentic need, because of the delicate and sacred character of the office that they are called to fulfill.

They should be trained not only regarding where to stand but also with regard to proper procedures to follow when approaching the altar to receive the sacred vessels from the priest; how to return them; how to avoid accidents; and how to proceed if accidents occur. They should also be instructed on the limits of their office with respect to purifying the sacred vessels and approaching the tabernacle.

I would recommend that, in order to appreciate the importance of their service, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist be encouraged to foment their love for the Eucharist through adoration or frequent visits to the tabernacle.

They should also have at least one retreat a year as well as other instructions in Catholic doctrine and the norms and spirit of the liturgy.

This brings us to the second part of your question. If no priest or deacon is available to distribute the Precious Blood in the circumstances where Communion under both kinds is permitted and

customary, then it cannot be considered an abuse to avail of the services of an extraordinary minister of Communion.

There is no reason to refuse the chalice if offered in this way, although there is no obligation to do so. While receiving Communion under both species is more perfect from the point of view of the sign, it is important to remember the Church's teachings that Christ is received whole and entire under either species.

Thus, one's Communion is perfectly complete when it is received under the species of bread alone. One is not deprived of extra graces by not receiving from the chalice.

Zenit News

No Prayer to Start Meetings

On 26 August, the Parish of Sale Education Committee, POSEC, presented a session open to all with guest speaker Mr Jim Quillinan.

POSEC was formed out of Journeying Together with the aim of Catholic primary and secondary schools having the same direction in religious education.

The theme for the evening was Christian Spirituality.

The Master of Ceremonies gave the welcome and introduction and Mr Quillinan began his talk. This is where my difficulties began.

There were present our Parish Administrator Fr Buckley, two laicised priests and three Religious Brothers. I thought that with the importance of the topic, spirituality, we would have begun with prayer, especially asking the Holy Spirit to guide the speaker to say what was necessary for us to hear and for us to hear what the Holy Spirit wanted us to hear. Not even the sign of the cross.

You may say – if you felt so strongly about it, why didn't you speak up? Well, I did exactly that at a Journeying Together meeting in Sale and the then Sacramental co-ordinator accused me and others of trying to take over the meeting and finished with these words, “I don't have to listen to this crap!”

Not exactly the way I would describe suggesting we ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit, but that is only my opinion.

As this was the first POSEC night I had attended I did not want to be seen as trying to take over. If POSEC really want to achieve spiritual direction and growth in students and not just have a “feel good” session, please start with prayer in future and ask for spontaneous prayer from those present.

I look forward to the next meeting.

Peter Callahan, Sale

Victory for Truth

Congratulations to Father Speekman for winning his Appeal to Rome (twice now). We hope there won't be another Appeal to cause Father more suffering.

And what of our other beloved priests in the diocese? Their silence has been deafening – not a public word has been spoken.

It's just as well the laity have not remained silent. We admire priests like Father Speekman who are not afraid to tell us what the Catholic Church really teaches, although it might upset a few people who don't want to obey the rules.

We are totally fed up with the flow of theological jargon that has penetrated deep into some of our schools, churches, universities, and seminaries.

I've personally been protesting for the last 15 years about flawed Lenten Programmes, and visits to our parish by people like Monica Hellwig (theologian), and Father Michael Morwood, whose book is now banned.

Well, it's reassuring to know Rome is on our side, so now maybe we can break this great wall of silence, and clergy and laity can work together to expose erroneous teachings. For with Rome on our side there will be no fear of reprisals.

"Let's work together for what must be done. Love each other in all that we do. 'Till all our people are one."

Mary Tudor, Moe

Lies, Racism and Hypocrisy

Into the Deep always reports about spreading the truth and letting the truth be heard. Into the Deep printed an untruth!

Peter Kelly of Morwell quoted an article about Fr John Speekman that appeared in a Morwell Parish paper. No one bothered to notice that the dates Peter quoted were not correct! The anniversary of Fr John Speekman's ordination to the priesthood was actually Tuesday 17th August! Not as quoted, Saturday 7th August.

How many other untruths does Into the Deep quote?

Also I think it is very sad when racism has to come into issue. The Diocese of Sale has many parishioners of Irish descent – are they to be told to go back and dig potatoes? Are you also going to tell the Dutch to go back and tiptoe through the tulips? As a child we were taught that God loved all his children! All the children of the world! Red and yellow, black or white all are precious in His sight! I wonder if Fr John Speekman is supportive of your racist comments?

Hypocrisy is another issue arising from Into the Deep. At Sunday morning Mass, celebrated by Bishop Coffey, parishioners associated with Into the Deep receive the Body of Christ, consecrated by our Bishop, then proceed out of the Cathedral to be seen handing out copies of Into the Deep which had headlines calling for Bishop Coffey to resign.

Christianity? I will let the readers decide.

Gwen Thomas, Sale

CEO Has Outgrown Its Master – or – It's All About Money!

There are other factors beside the school that contribute to current catechetical confusion and wrangling, but the school is the arena where it is all being played out. The CEO is central to the problem. It has no real teaching authority – that belongs to the parish priest. But it wields vast power through its role: to collect and distribute huge sums of money. Actually, the money doesn't really belong to it, but the parishes on whose behalf it is supposed to act.

Over the years a number of perceptive and concerned priests have tried to open up discussion on the kind of teaching happening in schools (mostly CEO-programmed), but have fallen foul of higher authority. In every case the bishop backed the CEO against the pastoral role of their priests. What does this tell us? That money, and the power it bestows, has blinded many as to the priorities.

The CEO in each diocese employs many people. Their wages, and a high percentage of teachers' wages, are paid by the government of this country. If that were to stop we would have to close down the so-called Catholic school system as we have it. Now, which bishop wants that! It is easy to understand, therefore, that good men are simply a political sacrifice in the larger scheme of things.

It is important to realise that power is not necessarily a bad thing. All those with responsibilities to carry out, need some measure of power to ensure that they can do what they have to. The problem arises when it is power of the wrong kind, in the wrong measure, used in the wrong way, for the wrong purposes. Now the pastoral role of priests, in the mind of the real Church, is not something up for grabs, or to be usurped, but that is what has happened. Any CEO, on the other hand, as useful as it could be when properly run, is no more than a local bureaucratic organisation that has outgrown its place and master.

One obvious truth stands out: priests who, in exercising their true pastoral role offend against the bureaucratic power drive of the CEO will never win, because they are regarded as disposable when weighed against the power of money in millions.

S.C., Melbourne (reprinted from ITD October 2003)

Questions Put to Our Bishop

The following is from a letter written by Richard Earle to Bishop Jeremiah Coffey:

“The last letter I wrote to you asking certain questions with regard to lay participation in the final doxology and self-intinction of Holy Communion, you did not answer directly but seemed to imply that the Diocese of Sale and the Catholic Church in Australia were independent of Rome.

Since then you have been on your *ad limina* visit to Rome and written in ‘Catholic Life’. The Australian bishops, of which you are one, have pledged their allegiance to Rome, and Rome has issued *Redemptionis Sacramentum*.

In the light of this, I and many other practising Catholics in this diocese, need you, as our bishop and the man ordained to be the chief pastor of souls in this diocese, to answer these questions:

1. With regard to celebrating Holy Mass, why do you say that “the norms of celebrating are followed carefully” (Catholic Life June ’04) when in many cases this simply is not true – not even when these abuses (*irregularities* as you prefer to call them – Catholic Life August ’04) are brought to priests’ attention?
2. Why do you apparently ostracize good orthodox priests, and even more obviously, why do you remove Fr Speekman without giving good reasons for such damage to himself, his parishioners and the many souls he has helped?
3. Why do you not have the strength and humility to accept the overwhelming evidence in Fr Speekman’s favour by the Congregation of the Clergy?
4. Why do you persist in depriving your people of at least one *good* priest and force ‘parishes in partnership’ on us when clearly we could have more priests if you really wanted them?
5. Why is little or no mention made of this major issue, the suffering in Morwell Parish and the slander to Fr Speekman’s character, in the official diocesan newspaper? Rumours that he must have done something terribly wrong have not been denied.
6. In Catholic Life August 2004 under ‘Official Notices’ you write briefly on ‘Review of decision sought’:
 - a) Who are the “College of Consultors and others” that have “strongly suggested” to you to appeal against a decision so obviously in Fr Speekman’s favour?
 - b) What other masters/mistresses do you serve?
 - c) You say if your current appeal fails, which it has, you will appeal to the Apostolic Signatura. Having read the Congregation of the Clergy’s decision, would it be correct to say that you are playing for time at Fr Speekman’s and many Morwell parishioners’ expense? What options would your College of Consultors give you if the Congregation of the Clergy’s decision was finally upheld by the Signatura? What further damage would be done to our diocese and the souls of many if the ‘snowed under’ Signatura takes years as Fr Cleary suggested it may.
 - d) You say you do this with a heavy heart. This does not make sense unless, of course, the mysterious College has such a hold on you that they have forced you to do this.
7. Why do you appear to pay lip service to Rome yet, at the same time, support dissenters? The example that I am currently referring to is the new R.E. syllabus...which is based on the shared Christian praxis of Thomas Groome, a dissident ex-priest whose methodology is heretical. When I wrote to you before on this subject you replied saying my comments had been noted; now it is being hailed by some of our so-called Catholic Schools as a “massive project that will promise to be a very effective programme”. Will it be even more effective at turning young Catholics away from their Faith than the 95%+ failure rate of the Melbourne Guidelines which you launched a few years ago in spite of the letters written to you?
8. You are aware that anti-Catholic, anti-life sex education is given in our so-called Catholic Schools and that R.E. teachers are employed who blatantly flout the Church’s fundamental moral teachings thus setting a very bad example. Why do you choose to do nothing about it?
9. Why should those of us in Sale Diocese who choose to be followers of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, contribute financially to a Diocese whose leader appears to protect those who are at best fence-sitters (people in grey?) and, at worst, enemies of the Church.
10. Why are those like Greg Kingman, Fr Speekman, Raymond de Souza and Fr Byrne, who powerfully promote Catholic Truth, sidelined or expelled?
11. Why do you continue to support Journeying Together as a Diocesan Programme when it is so obviously flawed and going nowhere?
12. Do you consider yourself a shepherd of Christ’s flock? Does saving souls matter to you?”

Richard Earle, Marlo

Bishops Must Act Against Abuse

Many people think that Bishops in general are not convinced that lay people have a case about liturgical abuse.

I have attended a wedding with readings from some obscure Muslim poet. I wasn't sure I was at Mass until the start of the Canon. The priest went on to become a bit of a guru, was sent overseas, and came back in charge of the formation of others in a seminary!

In one parish, the parish priest allows people to expose the Blessed Sacrament themselves, in shirt sleeves. Who educated these men?

At a funeral I have heard a woman use the so-called 'eulogy' to publicly criticise her separated husband! I have heard a relative publicly shame his long dead grandparents. At another funeral I watched a Bishop put up with a eulogist spend 35 minutes telling us all how his deceased father never said a word. On another occasion I saw many leave after several people spoke for 40 minutes, and Mass hadn't even begun.

Perhaps this is the best. Even since the 'new' regulations (old regulations newly released to remind us), a high profile parish priest, in someone else's church, begins by announcing: even if you don't "commune" with us (Catholics, that is), just come and "commune" (at Communion in the Mass)! All this in the presence of the resident parish priest and concelebrants. Then, at the offertory, he had a female relative of the deceased come up to the altar, accept the chalice and paten which she (!) offered, joined by him. Is this man's Bishop going to have the guts to say that personal friendship cannot overlook this sort of thing?

I'm sure being a Bishop is not easy. It is not about popularity with fashions or powerful lobbies, but religious duty. Will the courageous man stand up and do it!

S.C., Melbourne

An Interesting Argument

Please do not send me Into the Deep anymore, I just don't have the time for all this nonsense.

If the Bishop sacked Fr Speekman then I think he must have had good reasons for it. However, I wish to remain neutral and go about the parish visiting the sick etc. without having to worry about this sort of thing which is splitting the parish in two. Whatever happened to supporting our Bishop and the clergy who are doing the best that is humanly possible?

I know that you are trying to bring all the facts to the people in the parish, but you don't seem to realise that some of us are just not interested.

Maureen Hardy, Sale

If you think that the Bishop had good reasons for sacking Fr Speekman, then you are not remaining neutral, are you? And whatever happened to supporting Church teaching, never mind this one or that one? And what if the Bishop is not supporting Church teaching – do we still support him regardless?

Ed.

It is not whether the Bishop had reason or not to sack Fr Speekman that I am against, but the split that it is causing in our Church. There are so many good and holy Catholics in our Parish who are going about doing good works and having this put upon them. It is not about taking sides.

Instead why aren't we praying to God and Our Lady for the right thing to be done and leave it in their care. I know of so many people who are doing this already. I attend 8.30 Mass on Sunday to which the Bishop mostly says this Mass and his teaching seem fine to me.

Maureen Hardy

Precisely! The split is being caused by the Bishop and it is unnecessary, unjust, and irresponsible.

As for his teaching – it is not about whether it seems fine to you or not, but whether it is faithful to the Magisterium.

Ed.

Congregation for Clergy Reinforces Priests' Duty to Catechise

From the Decree issued by the Congregation in July 2004 upholding Fr Speekman's appeal against his removal:

"The allegations against Father Speekman do not concern his ministry *per se*, but his relationship with a small number of employees of the Parish. It is clear that the meeting...which commenced the series of events leading to Father Speekman's removal, is the consequence of a divergence in fundamental questions of Christian life and the discipline of the Church. It concerns areas that are entirely in the competence of the Parish Priest (canons 528; 776).

Although Father Speekman must be careful in his manner of speaking and acting so that his human qualities do not become a stumbling block to the faithful, a pastor of souls has a serious duty of catechising the faithful so that through doctrinal formation, the faith of the people may be living, manifest and active (can. 773).

The letters from the parishioners as well as the testimony of the Bishop and the priests that he consulted in the removal process indicate that Father Speekman is an orthodox priest, faithful to the Magisterium and dedicated to the Parish. A minority of the parishioners, with help from the teachers and employees of the Diocese, has convinced the [Bishop] to remove Father Speekman because they disagree with his Catholic leadership."

Too Much Power for CEO

The following is from a letter written to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy:

May I ask leave respectfully to address you in order to beg Rome for speedy and decisive action to justify and re-instate the Rev. John Speekman of Morwell, Diocese of Sale, Victoria, Australia.

What happens in Sale in this matter has great significance for other Victorian dioceses, for the problems that have emerged there stem from a situation that exists in other dioceses also.

Among the many matters of concern for traditional Catholics in Australia is the impression that, at least in some dioceses, the Most Reverend Ordinary appears to have lost control of the Catholic Education Office, is not the arbiter of that which will be taught in moral and religious matters. Employees, including the Director of Catholic Education, seem to believe that they are outside traditional authority, and act accordingly, with apparent immunity.

In support of my opinion, I enclose evidence from the Diocese of Sandhurst, Victoria, Australia – part of a Personal Education Programme and a copy of a letter from the Director of Catholic Education for distribution to parents of pupils in Catholic Schools.

In his letter, the Director claims that “information not congruent with current Catholic teaching is necessary in the real world” and, therefore, Catholic schools should supply it regardless of the fact that it includes directions for fifteen year old girls on how to procure an abortion using the “morning after” pill, and such misinformation as “condoms are the only available protection against sexually transmitted diseases”.

It is unlikely that the Most Rev. Joseph Grech, Bishop of Sandhurst, approves of that teaching. Nonetheless, two years later, we still have the same Director of Catholic Education in charge of the religious and moral education of our children if we continue to entrust them to Catholic schools.

Such is the present unchallenged power of our Catholic Education Offices. Speedy and decisive action from Rome in the Rev. Father John Speekman case is seen by traditional Catholics as their hope for successful challenges to that power, for the restoration of authority, according to Canon Law, exercised by the Most Rev. Ordinary in the area of the religious and moral education of our children.

Molly Brennan, Bendigo

Decree Available

A copy of the full Decree from the Congregation for the Clergy regarding the appeal of Fr John Speekman is now available at www.stoneswillshout.com under Latest News.

Corrections to Express Letter

As someone who was, for a long time, a parishioner of Sacred Heart parish, Morwell, I have followed with deep concern the plight of the parish for the past twelve months or more.

I was bewildered by the letter from Mr B. Lenscak in the Latrobe Valley Express (30/8), but then realised that Bishop Coffey has not made public the contents of the Decree of the Congregation for the Clergy. This leaves Mr Lenscak at a serious disadvantage.

True it is that a bishop “should rightly expect due obedience and respect from all his priests”. But bishops and priests have a serious obligation to obey and respect the provisions of Canon Law. As a qualified lawyer, Mr Lenscak should understand this.

After due consideration of all relevant circumstances, the Congregation for the Clergy found that Bishop Coffey had been guilty of serious violations of Canon Law in his treatment of Father Speekman.

If he had read a copy of the Decree, Mr Lenscak would not have said that Father “apparently obtained some decision he considers favourable to him”. In the words of the Administrator appointed by Bishop Coffey, the decision was “heavily in favour of Father Speekman”.

One further point should be made. Mr Lenscak asserts that “the church authority...did not make any effort to ascertain the feelings of Morwell parishioners”. He will be pleased to hear that the feelings of the parishioners were made known. Part of the Decree reads:- “Since receiving the recourse from Father Speekman, the Congregation for the Clergy has received more than twelve (12) personal letters from parishioners of Morwell indicating their desire for Father Speekman to remain in the Parish. Further, the Congregation has received a petition from the President of the Morwell Parish Council signed by 330 of the 450 practicing Catholics in the Parish. Not one letter has been received by the Congregation in support of the decision to remove Father Speekman”.

In any event, “the other side”, when Father Speekman appealed against his dismissal, was for the bishop to present – not for the parishioners – and Bishop Coffey presented his case in the fullest detail.

As for the bishop’s appeal, I understand that it has been dismissed, but that he may intend to keep appealing until all avenues of appeal are exhausted. Ultimately, one would hope, the requirements of Canon Law will prevail.

Michael J. Ryan LL.B, Rosanna

Priests Pledge Blind Loyalty to Bishop

In the September issue of Catholic Life, there is a report on a meeting of the priests of the Diocese, called by Vicar General Mgr Dan McCartan, to gather support for the Bishop.

It admits a fascinating fact! It reports that the priests made a resolution to “support the Bishop in whatever he decides” regarding the case of Fr John Speekman, and that “our advice to the bishop is to get the best possible canonical advice with a view to pursuing an appeal to the Apostolic Signatura (the Church’s highest court, in Rome).”

Now that’s not the fascinating bit. It’s bad enough that priests should gang up on one of their brothers to make sure the Bishop does a proper job of getting rid of him. But listen to this: They also resolved “that each priest receive a copy of the decree from the Congregation for the Clergy upholding Fr Speekman’s appeal.”

Now *that’s* fascinating! Our priests made these great resolutions to support the Bishop in getting rid of Fr John, without even knowing what the case was all about! How could they urge an appeal to the Signatura without having read the Decree from the Congregation that they want him to appeal against? It sounds like, ‘We don’t care if he was right and you were wrong, Bishop; just finish him off.’ It makes one of their other resolutions, to “support any opportunity for reconciliation between the Bishop and Fr Speekman” sound awfully hollow.

But there’s more. Three priests were “commissioned by the meeting” to seek a meeting with Fr John “on behalf of all the priests and the deacons, seeking reconciliation.”

Can they be any more confused? They support the Bishop; they support reconciliation between the Bishop and Fr John; they advise the Bishop to pursue legal action against Fr John (by appealing against the Congregation’s decision, which they haven’t read); and then they want to seek reconciliation with Fr John themselves – about what? ‘We’re sorry that we passed a motion against you at the meeting?’ ‘We are all hurt by the Bishop’s actions in removing you, but we want *you* to apologise?’ ‘We want to apologise to you on behalf of the Bishop, but he doesn’t want to talk to you’?

What on earth did they expect to achieve in this little meeting they sought with Fr John? Thank goodness Fr John had the sense to decline their meeting. We understand that he made it clear to them that it was the Bishop he needed to speak to, not them.

In fact, before this meeting even happened, Fr John had written to the Bishop expressing his eagerness to reconcile with the Bishop following the Congregation’s decision, and the Bishop’s response to him was essentially that the time for reconciliation was over.

Let’s hope the Bishop sees the futility of the current situation, and decides to reinstate Fr John as Rome has told him to, and so begin the process of *genuine* reconciliation.

John Henderson, Morwell

Fr Speekman to be Removed Again

In spite of the fact that Bishop Coffey announced to the diocese last month that he was going to appeal to the Signatura, he has since notified Fr Speekman that he will instead begin the process of removing Fr Speekman *again!*

The Bishop has not given any detail on when or how or *why* he intends to proceed with a second removal process, or what is to happen to his priest in the meantime.

It seems that the Bishop is playing politics with Fr Speekman’s life and ministry, not to mention plunging the Morwell parish, and the whole diocese, into further chaos. And for what reason? What has Fr Speekman *done* to warrant such persecution? Where are the charges, where is the evidence?

If Bishop Coffey had a case, he could have presented it to the Signatura. If he has not, why does he persist in trying to fabricate one? We could list a series of offences for each priest of this diocese – why does the Bishop not remove them all?

Parishes in Partnership Disaster

New Mass times for ‘parishes in partnership’ Leongatha-Korumburra (Catholic Life Sept 04) show the disastrous consequences of trying to run parishes with lay leadership.

On two weekends of each month, Leongatha offers a lay-led Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion *in spite of* having Mass available on the same weekend in Leongatha!

Other Liturgies of the Word – with or without Holy Communion – are regularly offered at towns less than half an hour’s drive from an available Mass on any given weekend.

This degrades and belittles our understanding and appreciation of the Mass. How can any priest accept this without compromising the teachings of the Church, and his very own priesthood? Priests are not dispensable or replaceable, and the Mass is not an optional ceremony.

Let’s get serious about our faith! It’s not a game.

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 st Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30am Heyfield 10am – 4.30pm
Cranbourne	Tuesday (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Wednesday (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Friday (9.30 Mass) 10am – 10pm Saturday (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am First Fridays 7.30pm – midnight (alternating months, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9am – 12noon 2 nd Thursday 10am – 11am 11 th of the month 1 Hour after Mass
Morwell	Thursday 9pm – Friday 9pm
Orbost	Friday 10am – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10.30am – 11.30am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2pm First Friday 11.30am – 6pm
Trafalgar	Tuesdays 10am – 11am First Saturdays 10am – 11am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Fridays 7.30pm – midnight (alternating months, January onwards)

Please contact us to update and extend this list with hours of Adoration throughout Gippsland.

Simplicity and Depth of the Rosary

“The Rosary is my favourite prayer. A marvellous prayer! Marvellous in its simplicity and its depth. [...]

It can be said that the Rosary is, in some sense, a prayer-commentary on the final chapter of the Vatican II Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, a chapter which discusses the wondrous presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Against the background of the words *Ave Maria* the principal events of the life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the...mysteries, and they put us in living communion with Jesus through – we might say – the heart of his Mother.

At the same time our heart can embrace the decades of the Rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind. Our personal concerns and those of our neighbour, especially those who are closest to us, who are dearest to us.

Thus the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life.”

Pope John Paul II, shortly after his election to the Holy See in October 1978; as quoted by him in his Apostolic Letter On the Most Holy Rosary, October 2002

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

Doctrine?

From the Latin

Teaching!

Contact Into the Deep

E-mail stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au
Into the Deep, PO Box 446, Traralgon, Vic 3844
www.stoneswillshout.com

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

The purpose of ITD is to provide a forum for those who:

- no longer have a voice in Catholic Life, our diocesan newspaper,
- 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 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.

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.

Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of ITD.