

# ***Into the Deep***

Issue 31

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

April 2005

## **Jesus, Crucified and Risen, Stay With Us!**

*Pope John Paul II's 2005 Easter Message*

“Mane nobiscum, Domine!” Stay with us, Lord! (cf. Luke 24:29). With these words, the disciples on the road to Emmaus invited the mysterious Wayfarer to stay with them, as the sun was setting on that first day of the week when the incredible had occurred. According to his promise, Christ had risen; but they did not yet know this. Nevertheless, the words spoken by the Wayfarer along the road made their hearts burn within them. So they said to him: “Stay with us.” Seated around the supper table, they recognised him in the “breaking of bread” – and suddenly he vanished. There remained in front of them the broken bread. There echoed in their hearts the gentle sound of his words.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Word and the Bread of the Eucharist, the mystery and the gift of Easter, remain down the centuries as a constant memorial of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ! On this Easter Day, together with all Christians throughout the world, we too repeat those words: Jesus, crucified and risen, stay with us! Stay with us, faithful friend and sure support for humanity on its journey through history! Living Word of the Father, give hope and trust to all who are searching for the true meaning of their lives. Bread of eternal life, nourish those who hunger for truth, freedom, justice and peace.

Stay with us, Living Word of the Father, and teach us words and deeds of peace: peace for our world consecrated by your blood and drenched in the blood of so many innocent victims: peace for the countries of the Middle East and Africa, where so much blood continues to be shed; peace for all of humanity, still threatened by fratricidal wars. Stay with us, Bread of eternal life, broken and distributed to those at table: give also to us the strength to show generous solidarity towards the multitudes who are even today suffering and dying from poverty and hunger, decimated by fatal epidemics or devastated by immense natural disasters. By the power of your Resurrection, may they too become sharers in new life.

We, the men and women of the third millennium, we too need you, Risen Lord! Stay with us now, and until the end of time. Grant that the material progress of peoples may never obscure the spiritual values which are the soul of their civilization. Sustain us, we pray, on our journey. In you do we believe, in you do we hope, for you alone have the words of eternal life (cf. John 6:68). “Mane nobiscum, Domine!” Alleluia!

## **Eucharist is Source of All**

*Pope John Paul II:*

“With ever-living ardour, contemplate Christ in the mystery of the Eucharist. Following His example, be ready in all circumstances to make yourselves instruments of mercy and communion. The secret of pastoral success is the crucified and risen Lord, Whom we adore in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

As you well know, in order to be eloquent signs of His love and instigators of His peace in all environments, everyone is first of all asked to cultivate an intimate and constant familiarity with Him. From intense participation in the Eucharist springs the spiritual energy needed to bring all projects of goodness to fruition.”

## **God Better Glorified**

*Bishop Coffey's "Reflections"* - monthly “selections of inspirational pieces chosen by Bishop Jeremiah Coffey” in Catholic Life - March 2005, quoting Fr Michael Downey:

“The Church does not exist for itself. Nor does it exist for sacramental celebration. The Church exists for mission and the mission is evangelisation. We recognise that the Church itself must be evangelised.

The Church does not celebrate the liturgy for itself, but for the world. God is not best glorified by good liturgy or by adoring Christ in the Eucharist but by a world redeemed and transformed by the grandeur of self-giving love.”

~ See [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com) for all previous issues of *Into the Deep* ~

# Not “Contradictions” But “Misinterpretations”!

My wife and I have been deeply saddened by the unhappiness in the Morwell parish during the past few years. We moved from Melbourne to Morwell in 1963, and I was in practice as a solicitor there until 1983. We were very much involved in parish life. We might be living in Morwell still, had I not become ill with multiple sclerosis.

After learning of the decision of the Congregation for the Clergy in July 2004 in Fr Speekman’s favour, we hoped that the Morwell parish would become the wonderful, happy parish that we once knew, but the situation obviously remains unchanged.

Accordingly, I wrote to Bishop Coffey in January this year expressing my concern and asking for clarification on the situation. I noted that he said in the August 2004 issue of *Catholic Life* that he intended seeking a review of the Congregation’s decision, and that if he was unsuccessful he would appeal to the Apostolic Signatura. He recognised that all this would “prolong the difficulties in Morwell and in the diocese” and asked for prayers, but we have heard nothing since. I asked His Lordship if proceedings were still under way, what has been done, and what remained to be done, and assured him that I raised these matters not out of idle curiosity but out of genuine concern for a parish and diocese I came to know well.

Bishop Coffey replied to me, reminding me he could not divulge personal and private matters, but assuring me that he was “continuing the case and the results are not forthcoming yet. The Congregations in Rome hasten slowly.”

I told a friend in Morwell, who told Fr Speekman of this reply. Fr Speekman, who himself had not received a response from the Bishop regarding an update on his case, wrote to the Bishop asking for confirmation on whether or not His Lordship had again forwarded a case to the Holy See.

A few days later, Fr Speekman advised me that he had a reply from the Bishop’s Office (signed by Deacon Erskine), stating that “The bishop has not as yet sent anything to the Holy See.”

I then wrote to the Bishop, noting that I had read the Deacon’s reply to Fr Speekman and that as it was a response to a letter sent to the Bishop, His Lordship must have been responsible for the letter even though he did not sign it himself. I explained that I could not see how both letters (the Bishop’s to me, and the Deacon’s to Fr Speekman) could be accurate, and invited his comments.

Bishop Coffey replied, simply saying that “both letters are correct” and that it is my “interpretation that is amiss.” I asked the Bishop to explain this remark to me but have had no reply from him.

I have sought in vain to understand what lies ahead for Morwell and its parish priest and its parishioners. Despite everything that has happened, it seems clear the Bishop will tell no one – not even Fr Speekman – exactly what he has done or proposes to do. He has treated the Congregation’s decree with contempt and despite his professed “heavy heart” about “the difficulties in Morwell and in the diocese” he seems determined to prolong those difficulties indefinitely. That a Catholic bishop should treat one of his priests so unjustly, violating Canon Law, and then ignore the rulings of the Congregation for the Clergy is quite extraordinary.

If any of your readers can help me to interpret His Lordship’s very brief letters without going “amiss”, I would be much obliged.

*Michael Ryan, Melbourne*

## Thank You, Bishop Porteous

Thank you Bishop Porteous for defending our faith and integrity!

Bishop Julian Porteous, auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Sydney, announced that a feminist theologian from the United States, Dr Carol Christ, will not be speaking at a Catholic venue as previously arranged. Carol Christ is associated with “goddess spirituality” and pagan rituals, disputes the “idea” of a male God and doesn’t believe in the institutional Church.

Bishop Porteous stated: “Following an enquiry from myself on behalf of the Archdiocese, the Dominican sisters decided it would be inappropriate for a talk promoting Goddess worship and pagan spiritualities as an alternative to the basic tenets of the Christian faith to be held in a Catholic venue.”

## Quaint ‘Demands’ of Dissenters

In September last year, Cardinal Pell instructed the Sisters of St Joseph not to allow the Australian Reforming Catholics (ARC) group to hold their conference on Church property – it was to be held at Mary McKillop Place (reported ITD October 2004). The Josephites reluctantly obeyed, and the conference was held elsewhere.

*Fidelity* (March 2005) has reported some demands that ARC has, and they make for amusing reading. This group demands that “apologies be given to gays, divorced and aboriginal people and all discriminated against by unjust church structures,” and that lay people should have a say in appointing priests and bishops to correct the present system which “puts priests above the people.”

Thank heavens for Cardinal Pell! And how sad for Blessed Mary McKillop.

## Priests to Live What They Pray

John Paul II's annual letter to priests gives them very personal advice: to live the words they say when celebrating the Eucharist.

The Pope's letter begins: "My thoughts turn to you, dear priests, as I spend this time recuperating in hospital, a patient alongside other patients, uniting in the Eucharist my own sufferings with those of Christ. In this spirit, I want to reflect with you on some aspects of our priestly spirituality."

"The priest is someone who, despite the passing of years, continues to radiate youthfulness, spreading it almost 'contagiously' among those he meets along the way," the Holy Father writes. "His secret lies in his 'passion' for Christ. As St Paul said: 'For to me life is Christ.'"

"Particularly in the context of the new evangelization, the people have a right to turn to priests in the hope of 'seeing' Christ in them," the letter continues. "The young feel the need for this especially; Christ continues to call them, to make them his friends and to challenge some to give themselves completely for the sake of the Kingdom."

"Vocations will certainly not be lacking if our manner of life is truly priestly, if we become more holy, more joyful, more impassioned in the exercise of our ministry. A priest 'won' by Christ more easily 'wins' others, so that they too decide to set out on the same adventure," the Pope states.

To achieve this objective, he gives priests this advice: "for us, the words of institution must be more than a formula of consecration: they must be a 'formula of life.'"

John Paul II refers to the words of Christ at the institution of the Eucharist: "Take and eat all of you; this is my Body, which will be given up for you"; "Take and drink of it all of you, for this is the cup of my blood."

The priest, the Holy Father says, repeats these words "in persona Christi" (in the person of Christ). "In a certain sense, when he says the words: 'take and eat,' the priest must learn to apply them to himself, and to speak them with truth and generosity."

"If he is able to offer himself as a gift, placing himself at the disposal of the community and at the service of anyone in need, his life takes on its true meaning," the Pontiff writes.

John Paul II concludes his letter by placing all priests in the hands of the Virgin Mary. "I pray to her, then, for all of you, and I entrust to her especially the elderly, the sick, and those in difficulty," he states.

The Holy Father's 24th Holy Thursday Letter to Priests was presented to the press by Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, prefect of the Congregation for Clergy. The prefect said that "in the silence of his suffering," the Holy Father "repeats with the example of a life given 'until death' St Paul's affirmation: 'we proclaim Christ crucified ... the power of God and the wisdom of God.'"

## Pews Emptying Because Christianity Not Preached

With Christian moral values and legal protections under assault on all sides, it is commonly said that the reason pews are emptying is that traditional religion is not relevant. A new survey of thousands of churchgoers in the UK says the opposite however, and indicates that the emptying of the churches has been caused mainly by preaching and pastoral care that has been emptied of moral or doctrinal Christian content. [...]

The results of the year-long survey of 14,000 UK residents by the interdenominational Ecumenical Research Committee has been called 'surprising' by mainstream secular and Christian media. The overwhelming response is to call on churches "to robustly defend moral values with conviction and courage and cease being 'silent' and 'lukewarm' in the face of moral and social collapse." [...]

Several 'traditionalist' Anglican clerics said that they had "to keep their own views to themselves in case their bishop, who held opposing beliefs, would remove them from their diocese." Many Catholics in North America have written that a similar situation exists there in which the churches are controlled exclusively by bishops and lay administrators who brook no Christian opposition to their officially sanctioned left-liberal dissent from the faith.

91% of responses followed a uniform theme that the decline in traditional Christian moral and doctrinal teaching has caused the outflux of congregations. They listed the lack of apologetics, the reasoned defence and explanation of Christian doctrine, as one of the main reasons for the collapse. "It's a myth today that the people of this country have rejected Christianity; they simply haven't been told enough about it to either accept or reject it," wrote one respondent. [...]

Many responded that the churches now teach easy forgiveness; an attitude that 'God loves me anyway,' and that there is no need to attend church or live a morally demanding Christian life. [...]

The survey has supported what Christians themselves have been saying for decades, that there is little point in attending a church whose message is no different from that of the materialistic secular world.

*March 7 2005 LifeSiteNews.com*

## Ignorance of Truth

"All of the evils which poison people and trouble so many hearts have a single cause and a single source: ignorance of truth."

*Blessed Pope John XXIII*

# Children's Holy Hours ~ Real Youth Ministry!

Father Antoine Thomas, 46, a priest of the Congregation of St John, has been working in youth ministry for 15 years and began leading children's holy hours more than 10 years ago. Now he has started a program, Children of Hope, that helps others lead adoration for kids. He is based in Illinois. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Zenit:

*Q: What benefits have you seen from children spending time with our Eucharistic Lord?*

*Father Thomas:* The children have a great excitement about being part of this kind of prayer group. They enjoy being at the feet of Jesus, resting under the loving gaze of he who is no longer hidden in the tabernacle. The children experience a pacification of body, mind and spirit. They have a deeper desire to pray, are more attentive at Mass and have an unshakeable faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

To keep them focused, we developed a simple format, leading the children through prayer, Scripture, silence and songs ([www.childrenofhope.org](http://www.childrenofhope.org)).

*Q: What can parents, parishes and schools do to encourage kids to attend adoration regularly?*

*Father Thomas:* Parents, first and foremost, must bring them before Jesus and adore with them regularly. Make time either before or after school for a visit. Arrive early for Mass to visit Our Lord in the tabernacle for a few minutes. Stay after Mass, praying in thanksgiving together.

Many schools have begun adoration [for] the Year of the Eucharist. For schools, we recommend a shorter format. It works well to bring the children in groups each half-hour all day long until all have had a turn.

For the parish, we recommend one hour weekly adoration for children ages 5 to 12. Younger siblings are welcome as long as they are able to sit still and the parents remain to supervise them.

There are three other things we can recommend to encourage the children.

First, read and share with them the "Letter to Children" written by Pope John Paul II. In it he shares his thoughts on the importance of the prayers of children for the world.

Second is the story of Fatima. When the angel first appeared to the three shepherd children he prostrated himself and said, "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love you." He told the children to pray this way because the hearts of Jesus and Mary were attentive to them. This helps the children to realise how important their prayers are.

Third, share with them the sixth day of the Divine Mercy Novena. On this day, Our Lord told St. Faustina: "Today bring to me the meek and humble souls and the souls of little children, and immerse them in my mercy. These souls most closely resemble my heart. They strengthened me during my bitter agony. I saw them as earthly angels, who will keep vigil at my altars. I pour out upon them whole torrents of grace. I favour humble souls with my confidence." In these words we see how these children today fulfill this. They are the angels keeping vigil at his altar. Praised be Jesus Christ now and forever.

## Prayer For Our Priests and Bishop

We pray for our priests. Lord, bless them with the fullness of your love, to help them be faithful ministers of Christ the High Priest, so that they will be able to lead us to him, the fountain of our salvation.

We pray for our bishop, that despite his own unworthiness he may faithfully fulfil the office of apostle which Jesus Christ has entrusted to him. We pray that he may become more like our High Priest and Good Shepherd, the teacher and servant of all, and so be a genuine sign of Christ's loving presence among us.

*From the Holy Thursday Chrism Mass*

## The Veronica

The Veronica is a holy relic of a veil with the image of Christ's face imprinted on it. According to an ancient tradition, on the road to Calvary a pious woman gave Our Lord her veil to wipe the blood from his eyes – and the miraculous image remained.

Veronica comes from "vera icon," or "true image," but over the years the name of the woman and of the object became one and the same. Today it is kept in the pier of St Peter's above the 15-foot statue of St Veronica by Francesco Mocchi. *Zenit*

## Last Acceptable Prejudice

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, archbishop of Genoa referred to sociologist Philip Jenkins, who says that the success of the book *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown is one more proof that anti-Catholicism is the last acceptable prejudice.

"I wonder," said the cardinal, "what would have happened if a book like this had been written, full of lies, on the Buddha or Mohammed or even, for example, if a novel had been published that manipulated the history of the Holocaust."

## Make Sure Seminarians Can Live in Celibacy

John Paul II says the emotional maturity of candidates for the priesthood, and their ability to live in celibacy, must be verified from the moment they enter the seminary.

The Pope made this proposal in the message he sent on 1 February 2005 to Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education...

“Already from the moment of the admission of young men to the seminary, their ability to live in celibacy must be carefully verified so that, before ordination, they will develop a moral certitude about their emotional and sexual maturity,” wrote the Holy Father.

The Congregation for Catholic Education has the authority to watch over the formation imparted in seminaries. [...]

“In light of the present social and cultural changes, it might be useful on occasions that educators make use of the work of competent specialists to help seminarians understand more profoundly the exigencies of the priesthood, recognising in celibacy a gift of love to the Lord and to brethren,” the Pope wrote.

With this additional help, he stated, seminarians will have, before their ordination, the necessary “emotional and sexual maturity.”

*www.zenit.org*

## Network of Prayer for Vocations

In this Year of the Eucharist, John Paul II is promoting a worldwide network of prayer for vocations.

This network, animated by the Pontifical Work for Ecclesiastical Vocations, under the Congregation for Catholic Education, seeks “to create through a shift of prayer in each continent, a chain of petition that unites the Christian communities of the whole world.”

“I would like to confirm, in this context, that the Eucharist is the source and nourishment of every priestly and religious vocation,” explained the Pope in a message addressed to the congregation presided over by Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski.

“I wish, therefore, to express my appreciation for all the initiatives integrated in this ‘network’ of prayer for vocations, and I hope it will embrace the world,” said the Holy Father.

John Paul II also encouraged the work of “those who dedicate time and effort to promote a pastoral vocations network within the ecclesial community.”

In his message, the Pope pointed out that a decisive moment to establish this network will be April 17, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

*www.zenit.org*

## How can this be?

I would like to express my concern at what occurred during my weekly hour of adoration at Sacred Heart Church on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March. As I walked into the Chapel to commence my adoration I became distracted by a noisy group of grade six children talking amongst themselves. I believe they were there to attend reconciliation. The noise they were making and their moving around made it impossible for me to concentrate. I became aware that the teacher on one or two occasions spoke with them briefly but it had little effect.

It is very disappointing that after more than six years of Catholic education these children, who are about to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, still do not have the basic understanding of why we need to be respectful in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist. The children appear to be unaware of the sacredness of the church and show little respect for the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. How can this be?

*R. Roodenrys, Morwell Parishioner for over 50 years*

## Examination of Conscience

I wonder why the Liturgy Team forgot to mention sin in our Easter preparation for reconciliation.

Not one single mention of lying, cheating, stealing, avarice, lust, adultery, fornication, missing Mass on Sundays, impure thoughts words and actions, calumny and detraction, false witness etc. Instead of reminding us of our sins, we get the usual talk about the inequality of the sexes, race discrimination, and other social issues.

Scripture tells us Moses was so angry that he broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments, but the Lord did give them back to him again. Well I tell you, I’m pretty angry too, that the Liturgy Team has completely eradicated sin from our preparation for reconciliation. It appears they’ve smashed the Ten Commandments up again.

No wonder this generation doesn’t know about sin or the Commandments – they’ve never been told. Are they changing the laws to suit a licentious generation?

I do get tired of making myself unpopular by pointing out these obvious omissions. One really does wonder why such nice people and committed Christians from the team are oblivious to some very important teachings of the Catholic Faith. Maybe it’s not their fault, maybe they’ve just allowed themselves to be indoctrinated by the absurd ideas that some academics have inflicted on us since Vatican II. One of these silly ideas was the ‘fundamental option’, which also got rid of individual sin. Pope John Paul II condemned it in his encyclical *Splendour of Truth*.

*Mary Tudor, Moe*

## Lack of Courage

Courage, or lack of it, is typified in the way many Bishops and priests act today.

A lack of courage was shown by Bishop Coffey when he bowed to the wishes of the Catholic Education Office, a few disgruntled parishioners and the union, and removed Fr Speekman from the parish of Morwell.

A lack of courage has also been shown by the administrator of the parish. He has used the pulpit to attack those he has perceived as being supporters of Fr Speekman. He has vigorously insisted at a meeting of devout Catholic ladies that they cease distributing miraculous medals and taking the statue of Our Lady to parishioners' homes. He has presided at a well-organised stacked meeting where Fr Speekman and Gregory Kingman were denigrated (in their absence) by some who also showed a distinct lack of courage. He has bowed to teachers' wishes and failed to correct them when they showed a lack of understanding of the Catholic faith.

The Decree upholding Fr Speekman's appeal against his removal clearly laid the blame for any disruption in the Morwell parish at the feet of the Bishop. Bishop Coffey appealed the Congregation's decision, and his appeal was quickly rejected.

It is now over 8 months since the Bishop was told to re-instate Fr Speekman. He has refused to obey. In doing so, he has shown a lack of courage and humility. If the Bishop had courage and humility he would apologise to Fr Speekman and re-instate him immediately (and if the Bishop knew Fr Speekman he would know that he would immediately be forgiven). He would apologise to the parish community for the great hurt he has caused.

It takes a big man to admit he was mistaken and apologise. It takes an even bigger man to do so when he happens to be a Bishop who has tremendous power.

Courage is not shown when one refuses to correct those – whether they be priests, CEO officials, teachers or others – who do not comply with the teachings of the Church.

Of course a lack of courage is also shown when Bishops and priests attack the soft targets – elderly ladies who are simply spreading devotion to the Mother of God, orthodox members of the laity who report abuses and are simply defending the faith.

Cardinal Ratzinger has stated, "The crisis in the Church today is before all else a crisis of priests and religious orders." Including Bishops.

*John Henderson, Morwell*

Stop telling God how big your storm is.  
Instead tell the storm how big your God is.

## "Dear sick people,

if you add your pain" to the suffering of Christ Who died on the Cross to redeem us, "you can be His privileged cooperators in the salvation of souls. This is your duty in the Church, which is always aware of the role and value of sickness illuminated by faith. Your suffering, dear sick friends, is not useless! Rather, it is precious because it is sharing in the mysterious but real salvific mission of the Son of God."

*Pope John Paul II*

## Thomas Groome - Shared Praxis

ITD contributors seem to have a hang up about Thomas Groome and the 'shared praxis' approach to teaching RE. And Mr Eamonn Keane seems to be the only source for their arguments.

Thomas Groome's approach is being used in a number of Dioceses in Australia. The core material (or the theology, doctrine...) of the RE Curriculum being used already in several Dioceses has been vetted by a number of Church censors for orthodoxy. Even Mr Eamonn Keane has been given the opportunity to comment by the Bishop of Parramatta. It is faithful to Church teaching and the role of the Magisterium in communicating that Teaching.

Of course, 'shared praxis' refers to the method of communicating the teaching to the pupils. Eamonn Keane, rather mischievously, tries to create the impression that Thomas Groome's book, called "Sharing Faith – the way of shared praxis", is a text book with doctrinal content. 'Shared praxis' is a method of teaching, it is not doctrinal content.

Interestingly enough this 'shared praxis' is basically the method St John used in writing the fourth Gospel. Often he uses some incident or scene or question as a starting point for Jesus to have a long discussion with his listeners. Perhaps the most famous is in Chapter 6: the multiplication of loaves and fishes. It begins with an awareness that there is a large hungry crowd in a isolated place. Jesus feeds them. Then Jesus leads them in a discussion from physical life to eternal life, from physical feeding to spiritual feeding. There is a movement from a normal life situation of being hungry to being fed, to questions about eternal life, to Jesus being able to give eternal life, nourishing the way to eternal life and to challenging his audience and Apostles about responding.

"Shared praxis" is a method of teaching. It is a movement from expressing a reality or experience, to reflecting on that, followed by a story and vision of the faith community, expressing and making this faith our own and giving a response or decision. St John uses this method numerous times in his Gospel to communicate the Good News Jesus came to bring.

*Rev. Fr. Herman Hengel, Warragul*

## Shared Praxis – Eamonn Keane’s Response

In his preface to my book *A Generation Betrayed*, Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz, D.D., S.T.D. said:

“It is difficult to exaggerate the value that one will be able to attribute to the fine work by Eamonn Keane, *A Generation Betrayed: Deconstructing Catholic Education in the English-Speaking World*... Eamonn Keane has given us in his critique of Thomas Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis...not only a work of superb content and high intellectual order, but also an inspiration to confront courageously the malign and pervasive germs and viruses, which have in recent decades, infiltrated, and, in some instances, infected the various aspects of Catholic ecclesial life, particularly catechetics and Catholic education...”

I cite Bishop Bruskewitz’s preface to my book to balance the slur against my work contained in Fr Herman Hengel’s letter where he wrongly accuses me of “mischievously” trying “to create the impression” that Groome’s book *Sharing Faith* “is a text book with doctrinal content.” While there are many erroneous assertions in Fr Hengel’s letter, I will respond to a just some of them.

My critique of Shared Christian Praxis, and RE curricula based on it, has been motivated by a desire to defend the integrity of Catholic doctrine in its transmission. I have stated that *Sharing Faith* is a book that attacks and maligns many Catholic doctrines, while simultaneously promoting an approach to religious education that calls for the subversion of the teaching of the Church.

Regarding catechetical methodology, Pope John Paul II stated in *Catechesi Tradendae* that “The choice made will be a valid one to the extent that, far from being dictated by more or less subjective theories or prejudices stamped with a certain ideology, it is inspired by the humble concern to stay closer to a content that must remain intact” (n. 31). He added that young people should not be given the idea that the doctrine of the faith is based on “fallible opinions or uncertainty,” but rather that we must “show them” how it is based on the “immovable rock” of the Word of God “who cannot deceive or be deceived.” (n. 60). In 1998, the Holy Father again drew attention to catechetical methodology when he said “the methodologies used have to respond to the nature of the faith as truth received (cf. 1Cor15:1)” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, 3/6/98).

Referring to the link between catechesis and methodology, the *General Directory for Catechesis* stated that the catechetical process must be based upon “the principle of fidelity to God and fidelity to man,” adding that this requires “an avoidance of any opposition...or presumed neutrality between method and content.” (n.149)

Fr Hengel asserts that there is no link between pedagogical method and Catholic doctrine in Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis. As presented by

Groome in *Sharing Faith*, Shared Christian Praxis is clearly hostile to the doctrinal element in Catholicism. He states that “Religious educators should approach the faith tradition with a healthy suspicion” (p.233). In another of his books titled *Educating for Life*, he asserts that the cultivation of such a sceptical approach to Catholic teaching is justified on the basis that “Such a ‘critical consciousness’ seems theologically appropriate to Catholic tradition, given how much untruth is in every statement of faith.” (p.142).

Shared Christian Praxis treats Catholic doctrine as mythic putty that has to be subjected to never-ending and contradictory re-interpretations. Indeed, it opens up the possibility for a repudiation of all Catholic doctrine. In *Sharing Faith*, Groome even advises against presenting the faith in the form of doctrinal propositions. He says that “Revelation as doctrine” which “understands revelation as ‘divinely authoritative doctrine inerrantly proposed as God’s word by the Bible or by official Church teaching’...is not appropriate to movement 3 of shared Christian praxis.” (pp. 218-19).

Now, to take just one example from *Sharing Faith* where Groome repudiates Catholic doctrine. He alleges that the doctrine of the Church requiring that the ministerial priesthood be reserved to men alone “is a countersign to God’s reign” which is “doing spiritual and moral harm to society” (p.518). He further asserts that Jesus established his Church as “a discipleship of equals” (pp.301,304), with women presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist in the early Church (cf. p. 310). These assertions imply that the Catholic Church is perpetuating a conspiracy to keep women in a subjugated state contrary to what Jesus intended. Such erroneous assertions place Groome’s *Sharing Faith* in the same genre as Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code*.

Through the consistent application of his own method of *Shared Christian Praxis*, Groome has been led to repudiate Catholic doctrines that do not sit comfortably with postmodern consciousness. This fact alone should prompt Catholic education authorities to steer clear of the method. In prescribing its use, and in recommending *Sharing Faith* to teachers in diocesan core curriculum documents, Catholic education authorities are indeed causing scandal. Not to acknowledge this is to refuse to engage truthfully with “what is written.”

Finally, Fr Hengel contradicts himself. He makes the erroneous assertion that Groome’s “shared praxis” is a “method of teaching” without doctrinal content, while using Jn6:1-14 as an illustration of such a method, with the implication that Jesus’ method of teaching is free of doctrinal content, which is nonsense.

Eamonn Keane, Sydney

## Youth Masses Follow Own Rules

A newsletter from St Michael's Parish in Traralgon introduces "LifeTeen youth ministry" with great enthusiasm.

ITD is concerned about the fact that in LifeTeen Masses, people "gather round the altar" during the "special Eucharistic prayers." There is no allowance for this in Canon Law, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal or Second Vatican Council documents.

ITD has urged Fr Bickley to remain faithful to the rubrics of the Mass and forbid this proposed practice. It would be an awful example to youth for a parish priest to allow a practice that is contrary to Church law, and it would in no way demonstrate that the LifeTeen program is 'based on, focused on and directed toward the Eucharist', as it claims to be.

Another issue is the suggestion that music will be the focus of the LifeTeen Mass.

The purpose of sacred music is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.112). This Vatican II document continues, noting that instruments other than the organ are allowed in divine worship "only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful"(n.120). It also reminds us that "The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources." (n.121). *Ecclesia De Eucharistia* emphasises that sacred music "must be outstanding for its ability to express adequately the mystery grasped in the fullness of the Church's faith". (n.50)

We need to help Catholic youth appreciate the deep mystery of the Eucharist and be caught up in the wonder of the Church's great wisdom and beauty. There is no need to 'embellish' or 'popularise' the Mass to make it attractive – we need rather to learn about what the Mass is and how to participate more fully in it with our heart and mind.

As a parish priest Fr Bickley has a wonderful opportunity to help them in this regard, and we look forward to seeing the fruits of his efforts.

## Low Liturgical Expectations

No wonder we have some 'unusual' interpretations of liturgy in the Sale diocese. The Diocesan Liturgy Team includes among others, an 'ex'-priest, a dissident priest and a dissident layman (who refers to skin-tight liturgical dance 'suits' as "liturgical condoms"). What hope do we have of this team leading us in faithfulness to liturgical norms and all the teachings of the Catholic Church?

## Marian Conference Returns!

The 9<sup>th</sup> Diocese of Sale Marian Conference will be at St Michael's Church, Traralgon on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May.

This year's conference features international speaker Father Tim Deeter. The theme for the Conference is, "Mary Queen of the Eucharist."

More details in the next issue of ITD.

## Change your hearts

Unless we change our hearts we are not converted.

Changing places is not the answer.

Changing occupations is not the answer.

The answer is to change our hearts.

And how do we change? By praying.

The most important thing to do to change my heart is confession. After confession, Holy Communion.

And then I am full of grace.

*Mother Teresa*

## Colour of Sacred Vestments

~ *From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 346:*

**White** - For Easter and Christmas seasons; also celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not Martyrs; Solemnities of All Saints and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist; Feasts of Saint John the Evangelist, of the Chair of Saint Peter, and of the Conversion of Saint Paul.

**Red** - Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of Martyr Saints.

**Green** - Ordinary Time.

**Violet or Purple** - Advent and Lent, and may be worn in Offices and Masses for the Dead.

**Rose** - may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).

~ *From Redemptionis Sacramentum No. 121:*

"The purpose of a variety of colour of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year." On the other hand, the variety of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments. In fact, these "sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself."

## Why No Mass Good Friday?

“If the Eucharist is “the memorial of the Passion,” why is it that the Church abstains from celebrating it precisely on Good Friday?

There is a profound theological reason for this.

The one who makes himself present on the altar in every Eucharist is Christ, not dead but risen and alive. And so the Church abstains from celebrating the Eucharist on these two days when we remember Jesus lying dead in the tomb, his soul separated from his body (although not from his divinity).”

*Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa  
Preacher of the Pontifical Household*

## Mistaken Beliefs

“There are not one hundred people in this world who dislike Catholicism, but there are millions who dislike what they mistakenly believe Catholicism to be.”

*Archbishop Fulton Sheen*

## Spying In Church

Recently I read in AD2000 (Feb 2005, p.5) of what Archbishop Bathersby of Brisbane considers “spying in the church.” He is not the first bishop in Australia to try to weasel out of his responsibility by tipping the can on the faithful.

When the Church ordains a man he becomes a public officer of the Church, does he not? When celebrating Mass he is performing an official act of public worship, is he not? Part of the role of a good bishop is to ensure that the public worship of the Church is carried out properly, and in a dignified manner, is it not?

Australians hate doblers and spies, we know, but that cannot apply to public events in the same way as to private affairs. If the report is true, the people of Brisbane have had to endure ten years of a priest administering Baptism, the most basic sacrament, probably invalidly, because of some weird practice of the Church liturgy. Thankfully, he has now been corrected. Why? Did some “spy” report him?

I think it is a bit rich for bishops in Australia like Archbishop Bathersby who on TV complained about the *Statement of Conclusions* from Rome, now turned into a dead letter, to be grizzling because someone takes careful notice of a public performance. You can't have it both ways. A public liturgy must be defensible, by nature, or it should not be public!

The problem that those like Archbishop Bathersby cannot face is twofold: The faithful have the right to orthodox public worship and liturgy; and it is his duty, and of those like him, to see to it. If they can't, there is a choice open to them.

*S.C., Melbourne*

## Rare and Exceptional Cases

Sale Cathedral Administrator Fr Bernard Buckley has been present at some Masses as part of the congregation. As we are reminded in *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (n.128), a priest is not allowed to simply assist at Mass without concelebrating:

“...Priests who are present at a Eucharistic Celebration, unless excused for a good reason, should as a rule exercise the office proper to their Order and thus take part as concelebrants, wearing the sacred vestments. ... It is not fitting, except in rare and exceptional cases and with reasonable cause, for them to participate at Mass, as regards to externals, in the manner of the lay faithful.”

## Guardians of the Mystery

*John Paul II's 'Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 2005'*

“Mysterium fidei!” Every time he proclaims these words after consecrating the bread and wine, the priest expresses his ever-renewed amazement at the extraordinary miracle worked at his hands. It is a miracle which only the eyes of faith can perceive. The natural elements do not lose their external characteristics, since the “species” remain those of bread and wine; but their “substance,” through the power of Christ's word and the action of the Holy Spirit, is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. On the altar, then, Christ crucified and risen is “truly, really and substantially” present in the fullness of his humanity and divinity. What an eminently sacred reality! That is why the Church treats this mystery with such great reverence, and takes such care to ensure the observance of the liturgical norms intended to safeguard the sanctity of so great a sacrament.

We priests are the celebrants, but also the guardians of this most sacred mystery. It is our relationship to the Eucharist that most clearly challenges us to lead a “sacred” life. This must shine forth from our whole way of being, but above all from the way we celebrate. Let us sit at the school of the saints! The Year of the Eucharist invites us to rediscover those saints who were vigorous proponents of Eucharistic devotion (cf. “Mane Nobiscum Domine,” 31). Many beatified and canonised priests have given exemplary testimony in this regard, enkindling fervour among the faithful present at their celebrations of Mass. Many of them were known for their prolonged Eucharistic adoration. To place ourselves before Jesus in the Eucharist, to take advantage of our “moments of solitude” and to fill them with this Presence, is to enliven our consecration by our personal relationship with Christ, from whom our life derives its joy and its meaning. (para 6)

## Admission of Guilt

Whenever orthodox Catholics point out to Bishop Coffey liturgical irregularities, the contradiction of Church teaching by priests, or the harm caused by modernist catechetics in Catholic schools, he fails to respond to their concerns and he prohibits them from publishing their views (where he can i.e. *Catholic Life*). In some instances the bishop, who believes that charity is the key to everything, has dismissed these people as 'devout' Catholics incapable of dialogue.

On the rare occasion that he has responded to letters, the bishop has been quick to point out that *he* is the bishop of the diocese and that *he* makes the decisions regarding whatever is Catholic in the diocese.

Reminding people that he is the bishop is not only stating the obvious, but owning up to the fact that he is responsible for the poor decisions and the subsequent spiritual impoverishment of this diocese.

People would not write to the bishop and point out irregularities or liturgical abuses if they knew it was not his responsibility or they thought he did not have the authority to correct them. What people are finding out is that the bishop does not correct errors and liturgical abuses because he himself propagates them.

Look at some of the bishop's decisions: endorsed JT (riddled with modernism), removed Fr Speekman without just cause, refused to abide by the decision of a higher authority (thereby keeping a priest out of active ministry in the diocese), supported Fr Cleary as administrator of Morwell parish in spite of his prejudicial handling of the parish, ignored complaints regarding liturgical abuse (even his own), promoted lay leadership above supporting his (orthodox) priests, refused to acknowledge the failure of Catholic education. The list can continue.

With a priest and deacon having left their ministry, and a number of priests due to retire this year, the bishop's decision to unnecessarily delay Fr Speekman's re-instatement is incomprehensible and scandalous.

So when the bishop says, "I make the decisions in this diocese" not only is this an admission of guilt but an acknowledgment that whenever he has made decisions which did not consider the good of the Church or that were not informed by the mind of Christ, he ended up penalising the laity and thwarting the Mission of the Church.

The diocese of Sale is reaping the bitter fruits of many years of the bishop's poor judgement. Visit Morwell Parish under the administration of Fr Tom Cleary and get a taste.

*Gregory Kingman, Morwell*

## Bishop's Lack of Concern

It would seem that his Lordship Bishop Coffey has not yet been persuaded to reinstate the Rev. Father Speekman in spite of the overwhelming evidence of his error. The Bishop's teaching of love and charity towards all men, especially the marginalized, has become a contradiction when he is seen to exercise the opposite. His lack of concern for our parish priest became evident well before his sacking of Fr Speekman, taking the word of a schoolteacher and not discussing the complaint with Father John until nearly a year later. The Bishop's first concern should have been for his priest, like a father and son relationship, instead of taking sides with the much more persuasive Catholic Education Office.

The Bishop's concern for the parishioners of Morwell also leaves a lot to be desired. Having previously had to cope with two other parish priests being removed from our parish for obscure reasons, we also have to deal with this present painful trauma which has been proved by the Congregation of the Clergy to be of his Lordship's own doing, again leaving us to recover without a credible explanation.

I strongly recommend that the Bishop read Matthew Ch18:6 about the millstone. This warning does not only apply to the faithful. We now have members in our parish who no longer practise the faith as a consequence of his decision to sack an innocent and respected parish priest. Fr Speekman's love and understanding for the sinner in reconciliation, his teaching of truth and his gentle guidance gave us hope and encouragement in helping to improve our spiritual lives.

The blame for this mess we are in rests squarely on His Lordship's shoulders. It is high time the situation was corrected by reinstating Fr John, as instructed by the authorities in Rome. Surely His Lordship can see his agenda is not working. Perhaps his plan is, if he does nothing the parishioners will forget and they will get on with it. This strategy may well work on some, but most of us who still have moral conscience won't rebuild on an unsound foundation e.g. injustice, unfairness, contradiction etc. What we need is open, honest and transparent dialogue. With our love for Jesus and His Mother there is nothing that cannot be accomplished, requiring goodwill from Bishop Coffey and all of us.

We are blessed in Morwell with many wise and sincere people with special gifts, able and willing to work together for the good of the parish. Many of these gifts are at present wasted for they are not being exercised. May I be so bold as to suggest that we earnestly commence to pray from the heart requesting Our Lady to intercede for us (many of course are already doing this) perhaps during Mass and Adoration, or our own special prayer time. Our parish community and the Roman Catholic Church depend on it.

*Bert Vanderzalm, Morwell*

## Misunderstanding the Mass

Priests and laity who seek to change established liturgical norms probably don't properly understand the rules, says Cardinal Christoph Schönborn.

The archbishop of Vienna, in an interview with Kath.net, commented on the deep meaning of the liturgy and the Mass as an "event."

"The faithful are entitled to participate in a celebration of the liturgy that is valid," said the cardinal.

Furthermore, he said, the clergy are obliged to celebrate "in community" with the universal Church.

"This right and this obligation are not confining," he said. "They are the necessary prerequisites for the faithful to participate in the service of the Church and not in something that is the fruit of somebody's hobby or of private liturgical ideas – however well-meant these might be."

The most profound reason for insisting on liturgical order is because the Mass is a divine service, said Cardinal Schönborn.

"Christ himself is the celebrant, who is addressing us in his word and who leads us into his devotion to the Father for the salvation of all mankind," he said. "Therefore it was always the primary concern of the Church that Jesus Christ is the centre of the liturgy."

Regarding those who say the liturgical norms leave no place for creativity, the cardinal suggests that this might be due to misunderstandings.

He recommended meditating "the beautiful and rich General Instruction of the Roman Missal. In the liturgy of the Church there are quite a few places which allow for creativity."

Cardinal Schönborn continued: "The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are made present for us. Can there be anything more magnificent than this event?"

When the faithful see the Mass as "more thrilling than any show and more beautiful than all plays," he said, they are more motivated "to get involved as much as possible in this event and to celebrate it with body and soul."

The cardinal added: "When the Mass is seen as boring, the fault is not that of the liturgy, but the result of our poor disposition and lack of faith."

*www.zenit.org*

## Thank You, Sisters!

How lovely to see Sr Lauraine Brice and Sr Mariana Handley in their habits pictured in Catholic Life, March 2005. What a wonderful witness to their vocation! Thank you, Sisters. You may not realise how refreshing and inspiring it is to see religious wearing their habits (not to mention priests and their collars).

## No Lay Homilies Allowed, Still

*Catholic Life* has a small section for 'World News' each month. It was fascinating to see in this section of the March 2005 edition, an article entitled "Vatican approves lay sermons."

Firstly, because it would seem to be aimed at ITD, which has regularly raised concern about lay people giving homilies in the diocese (notably at St Mary's Cathedral in Sale) and has quoted Church teaching on the matter.

And secondly, because the report is erroneous. The Swiss bishops did indeed put a proposal to Rome to allow lay theologians to give homilies, but their proposal was rejected. Swiss Bishop Grab stressed during a press conference (reported by kath.net news service) following their ad limina visit that "no priest shall be hindered to preach, and that no lay people are allowed to give a homily."

*Redemptionis Sacramentum* reminds us (drawing from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the *Code of Canon Law*, and the *Instruction Ecclesiae de mysterio*) that because the homily is part of the Liturgy itself, it may never be entrusted to any layperson (cf. n.64), and there can be no exceptions (cf. n.66). It continues:

"If the need arises for the gathered faithful to be given instruction or testimony by a layperson in a Church concerning the Christian life, it is altogether preferable that this be done outside Mass. Nevertheless, for serious reasons it is permissible that this type of instruction or testimony be given after the Priest has proclaimed the Prayer after Communion. This should not become a regular practice, however. Furthermore, these instructions and testimony should not be of such a nature that they could be confused with the homily, nor is it permissible to dispense with the homily on their account." (RS n.74)

## Wearisome...

"For me, as a priest, all this liturgical disobedience is really wearisome." (*a Swiss priest, quoted on kath.net*)

## Last Laugh

"The revocation of Fr Roger Haight's right to teach theology by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in February was greeted with a public statement of dismay by the Catholic Theological Society of America. This dismay is so out of touch with reality that it reminds me of someone who believes the forward progress of an automobile is caused by constantly changing the scenery."

(Jesuit Father Roger Haight's 1999 book *Jesus, Symbol of God* questions the divinity of Christ.)

*Dr Jeff Mirus, www.catholicculture.org*

## Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30am Heyfield 10am – 4.30pm
Cranbourne	Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat in the Church: (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by swipe card.
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am First Fridays 7.30pm – midnight (alternating months, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9am – 12noon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday 10am – 11am 11 <sup>th</sup> of the month 1 Hour after Mass
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
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.

### Mass for Vocations

Sale Saturday 9am

## Talking to Jesus

It was the day after her First Holy Communion, and the little girl had gone to Holy Mass and Communion with her godmother, who could not resist prying, and asked her little protégé what she had said to Jesus in her lengthy, obviously fervent thanksgiving after Communion. “I thanked Him for coming; I asked Him to come again. I asked Him to keep me good, so that I can receive Him again. Then, I recited my ABC’s for Him, counted from one to ten for Him, and I told Him a ghost story!”

*A true story from Fr Dan Lord, SJ, as quoted by Fr Joseph Wilson, Diocese of Brooklyn, www.thewandererpress.com*

### “Dear young people,

be moved always by the longing to discover the truth about your life. May faith and reason be two wings that lead you to Christ, truth of God and truth of man. In him you will find peace and joy.

May Christ be the centre of all your life. This is my sincerest wish, which I express from my heart to all, accompanying it with my prayers.”

*Pope John Paul II*

*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*

## Contact Into the Deep

[www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)

E-mail [stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au](mailto:stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au)

Or **PO Box 446, Traralgon, Vic 3844**

*Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.*

*There is no subscription fee but donations towards are most welcome.*

ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email, printed copies later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month.

### Editorial Committee:

Janet Kingman, Editor

Pat O’Brien, Sale

John Henderson, Morwell

Mary Tudor, Moe

Bernadette Horner, Traralgon

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 we reserve the right to edit letters.

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 sufficient reason, anonymity will be preserved when publishing.

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