

Into the Deep

Issue 4

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

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Parish Is Key to Resisting Secularised Culture, Says John Paul II

Pope John Paul II says the rediscovery of the parish, a home to the sacraments, is the key to the laity's ability to resist the secularised culture.

The Pope expressed this conviction when he met with participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in November 2002.

In his address, the Holy Father said, "The parish community is the heart of the liturgical life; it is the privileged place of catechesis and education in the faith."

"How critical it is to rediscover the value and importance of the parish, as the place where the contents of the Catholic tradition are transmitted!"

"Many of the baptised, in part because of the impact of strong currents of de-Christianisation, seem to have lost contact with this religious legacy," the Holy Father observed. "The faith is often put aside in episodes and fragments of life."

"Only a faith that sinks its roots in the sacramental structure of the Church, which drinks from the sources of the Word of God and of Tradition, which is converted into a new life and renewed intelligence of reality, can make the baptised able to resist more effectively the impact of the prevailing secularised culture," the Pope said.

The work of initiation and formation carried out in the parish must culminate in a personal relationship with the sacrament of the Eucharist, the real presence of Jesus Christ, John Paul II explained.

By participating in the eucharistic celebration, Catholics "hand over their existence -- their feelings and sufferings, conjugal and family life, work and commitments in society -- as a spiritual offering pleasing to the Father, thus consecrating the world to God," the Holy Father continued.

Therefore, the secret to overcome the prevailing secularisation is "in always having present this centrality of the Eucharist in formation and in participation in the life of parish and diocesan communities," the Pope concluded. "It is important to begin always from Christ, that is, from the Eucharist, in all the density of its mystery."

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In the presence of our Lord

It is impossible to measure the spiritual benefits and graces granted to those who spend time in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. As members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, our actions and prayers bear fruit. Every devout reception of Communion, every good Confession and every prayer has positive ramifications for the whole Church.

From 'I the Lord am with you always'

Waiting ...

When you approach the tabernacle, remember that He has been waiting for you for twenty centuries.

St Josemaria Escriva

Twisting words

From 'George Pell', by Tess Livingstone (p196)

The fundamental Catholic appeal is to the truth of Christ's teaching; this norm cannot be set aside by changing fashions. Dissent, he wrote, was being disguised or dressed up with various ruses, for example:

Claim that the Pope is divisive (or the Catechism is) when traditional truths are restated.

Claim that freedom of conscience enables you to choose your faith and morality, to contradict Christ and the Pope, yet claim to be as good a Catholic as the Pope. (The Church has never taught that conscience is supreme. Conscience is at the service of the truth.)

First the parents

Into the Deep raises criticism about Catholic schools; but I think that it comes down first of all to the parents.

A lot of parents are working full-time and doing their own thing for entertainment. 52% of our marriages break up. We cannot compare the Catholic upbringing from 50 years ago to now. Parents don't have enough time for the children, who are looking too much to television. Children are starting to smoke and drink, don't have respect for their parents, teachers, or property of others. 80% of our children are in this situation.

The parents are too tired on the weekend to go to Mass or pray with their children and give them a good example.

St Mary's Primary School in Sale gives a marvellous example with the newsletter written by the principal Ann Vaughan. It gives an explanation of the Sunday Gospel, with the "value of the week". This would be a good lead to talk about when the family is gathered for a meal. Instead of giving critic on the schools, it would be better for us to pray for the teachers and children.

H. Deschepper, Sale

James the brother of Jesus

The discovery of an ancient burial box inscribed "James the brother of Jesus" led to misleading reports in the media that James was the biological brother of Jesus.

As Catholics we know this is incorrect.

Two thousand years ago the Aramaic language did not contain words such as cousin, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew. All relatives were called brethren or brothers.

Matthew 13:55 reads "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Jude?"

Many non-Catholics and even some Catholics take the word brother literally to mean biological brother.

The footnotes of the Douay Rheims Bible explain: "These were the children of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, sister to Our Blessed Lady and therefore according to the usual style of Scripture they were called brethren or brothers, that is, near relations to our Saviour."

Hence James would have been a first cousin to Jesus.

M. Tudor, Moe

Weeping Madonna in WA

Apologies to Bill Ghysen of Canberra for not publishing his name with his letter in the last edition of Into the Deep. It 'slipped off' the end by mistake.

Bill edits a newsletter for Catholics Affirming the Faith Inc., and readers can contact him at CAFaus@bigfoot.com

Did you know?

The total number of seminarians (diocesan and religious) worldwide has grown an incredible 73.1% during Pope John Paul's pontificate, from 63 882 in 1978 to 110 583 in 2000.

We here in Australia may feel discouraged by a lack of priestly vocations, but thousands of young men around the world hunger to offer their lives to God every year.

Kairos, August 2002

Their days are over

I have just come across a copy of Into the Deep. Could you please put me on your mailing list.

It's time the liberal modernists packed up their bags and disappeared into the night, but they are too blinkered to know their days are over.

In the meantime they are leading souls away from the sacramental life of the Church and the mercy of Our Lord.

We must continue to fight - and pray.

Maxwell Lynch, Nambour, Queensland
Sunshine Coast Catholics Advocacy League (Inc.)

Teacher vacancies - no faith required

The *only* place the word 'Catholic' appeared in a newspaper ad for St Mary's Primary School Newborough was in the e-mail address. What chance would there be of employing a practising Catholic teacher? We must demand better.

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

Journeying into the Desert

November 2002 saw the launch of Journeying Together, the 5-year pastoral plan for the Diocese of Sale. In his homily in Sale the following Sunday, Bishop Coffey stated that the Church had become sterile and inward-looking while trying to maintain the status quo. He said over the past 20 years we had stopped reaching out and had merely tried to maintain what we had. His solution, "inspired by the Pope", was to launch Journeying Together.

The Confraternity of St Michael agrees wholeheartedly with his comment that the Church in the Diocese of Sale has become sterile - but for a different reason: the Church in Sale stopped teaching and proclaiming the rich traditions and truths of the Catholic faith, particularly in our schools. We disagree strongly that Journeying Together will provide the solution.

The disastrous performance of the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and Catholic schools, from which 95% of graduating students no longer practise the Catholic faith, is not even mentioned as a cause of the malaise described by the Bishop. If Catholic schools were achieving a failure rate of 95% in English or Mathematics there would be uproar and calls for action to remedy the situation. But when it is the most important subject of all - passing on the Catholic faith to the next generation - silence reigns.

Of even more concern is the strategy to examine the role of the Priest and Pastoral Leader. The plan recommends that the Bishop, in conjunction with the CEO "establish a working party to review the role of the priest as canonical administrator and if necessary, negotiate governance arrangements for schools to develop effective relationships between parish and school communities."

Several other strategies are to be initiated by the CEO, with the Bishop, "in appointing a diocesan Youth Ministry co-ordinator" and "encouraging young people to share their faith and spirituality with others".

The question which has to be asked is this: "If the CEO, which oversees Catholic schools, has a failure rate of 95% with students while they are a captive audience in schools, how can they be expected to initiate strategies to bring these young people back to the Church after they have left both school and the Church?" It is doomed to failure.

If that was not enough, there seems very little connection between Journeying Together and the teachings of the Catholic Church. The impression given is that we should forget the rich tradition of the Church and hey presto! - somehow answers will come from discussion groups and diocesan bureaucrats.

This ignores the fact that the Church is not a democracy but revealed truth instituted by Jesus Christ and led by Peter and his successors. Without this important truth, Journeying Together cannot succeed. It will merely lead the Church in Sale diocese further into the desert of sterility and decline.

P. O'Brien, Sale

Graces flow in Toowoomba

The campaign to present a submission about the erosion of faith in Catholic education to the Bishop's Conference has resulted in many graces. The submission and letters, by the way, were also sent to the Holy Father's private secretary and The Committee for the Family and for Life. The Association of Catholic Parents also sent a submission which was supported by 20 other Catholic organisations.

As a result of the campaign, we learnt of Raymond de Souza of Saint Gabriel Communications and Apologetics in Perth. We invited him to Toowoomba to give a weekend retreat, "Families of Faith". Out of this weekend, there has developed an apologetics group of over 50 people, who meet weekly in four groups. Through this, Holy Name parish invited Robert Haddad from Lumen Verum Apologetics in Sydney to visit us. We are following his apologetics course called "Defend The Faith", and we have also purchased a set of audio tapes from Raymond de Souza's apologetics group.

Another grace that has flowed is that a group of young people has asked our parish priest if they could have a Holy Hour once a month so that they can get to know Jesus more. Isn't that wonderful? They have also formed a choir and love singing the beautiful old hymns. They tell us they are just getting to know the real Catholic Church, and they love it.

There is now also a network called Catholic Co-ordinators, linking the many small organisations with similar (orthodox) aims. I believe that this is what the Holy Father intended when he encouraged the laity to evangelise the baptised and "Be not afraid".

Norm and Mavis Power, Families United with Saints Joachim and Anne, Toowoomba

Into the Deep

The purpose of Into the Deep 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.

Contact Into the Deep

E-mail stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au

or mail to Mr Pat O'Brien,

RMB 5165 Gibson's Road, Sale 3850.

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

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

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

“Dear young people, have the holy ambition to be holy, like He is holy!
Be not afraid of being the saints of the new millennium! Let the Gospel become the most precious of your treasures!

The very holy Mary give you the strength and the wisdom to speak to God and to speak of God.”

John Paul II

A Generation Betrayed

The book, *A Generation Betrayed*, by Eamonn Keane analyses the ideas of two influential theologians in Catholic Education. Both Thomas Groome and Elisabeth Fiorenza teach contrary to the Catholic faith, and yet their work is widely used and highly regarded by many Catholic Education Offices.

Fr Peter Joseph of Wagga Wagga, writes on the dust jacket: “Good Catholic parents are always asking: “Why do they not teach the Catholic religion at school?” The answer is not a mystery. We know why: it is because educators have lost the faith and have chosen to teach a substitute. Unless there is a gun to their heads, teachers do not teach what they do not believe. The substitute presented as “modern catechetics” has not come from nowhere. There is a direct chain from theologians to lecturers in institutes, from lecturers to bureaucracies, from bureaucracies to teachers, who then pass it all on to children in the classroom.”

Keane says: “Perhaps one is justified in stating that it is not so much a question of Catholic youth giving up the practice of the faith, as it is a case of many of these young people having to come to us for bread and instead we gave them stones.”

From Fidelity, December 2002

Sexual scandal and the media

“In the Church, priests also are sinners.

But I am personally convinced that the constant presence in the press of the sins of Catholic priests, especially in the United States, is a planned campaign, as the percentage of these offences among priests is not higher than in other categories, and perhaps it is even lower.

In the United States, there is constant news on this topic, but less than 1% of priests are guilty of acts of this type. The constant presence of these news items does not correspond to the objectivity of the information nor to the statistical objectivity of the facts. Therefore, one comes to the conclusion that it is intentional, manipulated, that there is a desire to discredit the Church. It is a logical and well-founded conclusion.”

Cardinal Ratzinger

Eucharist?

From the Greek

Thanksgiving