

# *Into the Deep*

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## The Vinedresser

*From a commentary by Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Pontifical Household*

Holiness is like a sculpture. Leonardo da Vinci defined sculpture as “the art of removing.” The other arts consist in adding something: colour to the canvas in painting, stone on stone in architecture, note after note in music. Only sculpture consists of removing, of taking away the pieces of marble that are in excess, so that the figure can emerge that one has in mind.

Christian perfection is also obtained like this, by removing and making useless pieces fall off, namely, desires, ambitions, projects, carnal tendencies that disperse us and do not let us finish anything.

One day, Michelangelo walking through a garden in Florence saw a block of marble in a corner protruding from the earth, half covered by grass and mud. He stopped suddenly, as if he had seen someone, and turning to friends, who were with him, exclaimed: “An angel is imprisoned in that marble; I must get him out.” And, armed with a chisel, he began to work on that block until the figure of a beautiful angel emerged.

God also looks at us and sees us this way: as shapeless blocks of stone. He then says to himself: “Therein is hidden a new and beautiful creature that waits to come out to the light; more than that, the image of my own son Jesus Christ is hidden there, I want to bring it out!” We are predestined to “be conformed to the image of his son” (Romans 8:29).

Then, what does He do? He takes the chisel, which is the cross, and begins to work on us. He takes the pruning shears, and begins to prune us.

We must not worry ourselves thinking of what terrible crosses he may send us! Normally, he does not add anything to what life presents us in terms of suffering, effort, tribulations. He makes all these things serve for our purification. He helps us to not waste them.

*Zenit News 12-05-2006*

## Six Masses a Year, Please

The Sacramental program has begun in our parish and we had our first parent-only workshop recently.

All was going well – we heard the history of initiation in the early Church, explanation of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and quotes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. However, there was one thing that concerned me – it was one of the requirements: that this year children were required to attend six parish Masses.

During the talk it was made known how disappointing it was to have a good number of children and parents involved in the build-up and preparation of the Sacrament, then once Confirmation was over we don't see them again.

It is true, it is very disappointing, but the situation isn't going to change if parents and children are asked to come to a limited number of Masses. It is our obligation to come to *Mass every Sunday*, otherwise we fall into serious sin (mortal sin). Furthermore, what they failed to mention is that when the parents and children come to the Masses, if they didn't have a commitment to every Sunday, they have broken their oath to God and shouldn't receive the Blessed Eucharist until they receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

How are my parish and my school supporting me and my child by sending mixed messages? The Priest and Sacramental Team have very important work, they have our children's souls in their hands. They must stop tip-toeing around and being afraid of offending people. Hearing the truth is our right. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There is no way to our Heavenly Father but through Jesus. By going to Mass, hearing the Word of God, having the Holy Spirit prepare us to receive Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist is the only way this side of Heaven to live the life God sacrificed His only Son for, to obtain eternal life.

*Name and address supplied*

**All issues of Into the Deep are at [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)**

## Magisterium Isn't Opinion

The teaching of the Church is not “mere opinion,” says the secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Addressing the 5<sup>th</sup> Professional Seminar for Church Communications Offices, Archbishop Angelo Amato said that the magisterium of the Church should be considered as “communication of the truth of God on man and his salvation.” [...]

Archbishop Amato acknowledged that there is a “weakening in the faithful of that ecclesial sense that the saints described as ‘to love the Church and feel with the Church.’” For this reason, he said, “the magisterium is not heard, or is rejected.”

The prelate continued: Lacking is “the obedience of the faith and confidence in the efficacy of the Word of God to illuminate our personal and community history.”

“Preferred to the truth of God is the opinion of the ‘I,’” he said. This can be seen “clearly in television debates,” he added.

The archbishop said that, according to this logic, “many interlocutors intervene on an argument, among whom is, for example, a priest. The opinion of the Catholic priest – from my point of view, I would prefer a well-prepared Catholic layman – is put at the same level as that of all others, as the debate does not seek truth, but only the enunciation of opinions.”

The secretary of the Vatican congregation said that to better understand the Church’s difficulties of communication, what must also be taken into account is “the extreme cultural poverty of the majority of Christian faithful.” In this way the “strange success” is explained “of a pertinacious anti-Christian novel, such as ‘The Da Vinci Code,’ full of calumnies, offenses and historical and theological errors about Jesus, the Gospels and the Church.”

“Christians should be more sensible in rejecting lies and gratuitous defamation,” he said, and the Catholic media have the creative task to help in formation.

Mentioning the example of the recent publication of the “Gospel of Judas,” the archbishop explained that “the Catholic press cannot limit itself to giving the news.” Rather, “with the competence of experts of Christian antiquity, [it] must offer readers elements to understand that it is a question of an apocryphal gospel, known by the Fathers of the Church, but which was not accepted by the early Church.”

“The reception of ecclesial documents, instead of being an unbearable and boring burden, can become an amazing and extraordinary permanent formation for pastors and faithful,” Archbishop Amato said.

However, for this to take place, he said, “professionals are required, especially lay people, who know the two languages: of communication and of theology.”

*Zenit 30-04-2006*

## Episcopal Error of Judgment

It should be a serious concern for the Church in Rome that diocesan bishops in Australia have judged Thomas Groome’s methodology “Shared Christian Praxis” as adequate and effective in transmitting to our children the Catholic faith in its integrity and harmonic wholeness.

Firstly, they should be concerned that someone like Thomas Groome, who has publicly rejected fundamental divinely revealed truths of the faith, could have his method employed to teach those same doctrines, which comprise the content of the Faith. This is preposterous, for it allows a person to teach what he himself does not believe.

Secondly, Rome should be concerned that diocesan bishops have mandated Religious Education curricula which use a methodology that is inspired by a philosophy which is based on a false premise of man and progress and which has a materialist view of the world. It deceives our young people of their true origin and destiny and robs them of the certitudes of their Catholic faith and heritage. It is a philosophy which Pope John Paul II considered so dangerous a threat to mankind and Christianity that he found it necessary to respond to it with his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (Redeemer of Mankind).

This being the case, how can bishops who have professed obedience and communion, and who have been informed by this encyclical, judge Groome’s method to be adequate and faithful to the contents of the Catholic faith?

This same question should be asked of all those priests, religious and lay educators who are at pains to justify the continued use of this method when the disastrous result which is so painfully obvious, is the only logical outcome.

What does this say about our bishops, who are more inclined to listen to modern speculative theologians, ‘experts’, the educational elite who consider themselves to be change agents, rather than the Vicar of Christ? They have damaged and endangered the faith and morals of the unwitting souls entrusted to their care. This is a serious dereliction of duty and a grave scandal.

*Gregory Kingman, Morwell*

## Motivation for Action

“The principle motivation for action must always be the love of Christ; charity is more than a simple activity and implies the giving of self; this gift must be humble and removed from all feelings of superiority; and its strength comes from prayer, as the example of the saints shows.”

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## More on Liturgical Dance

With regard to the question of Liturgical Dance (May ITD), it is interesting to read what *Notitiae* 11 202-205 by the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship (1975) does say, specifically:

“However, the same criterion and judgment cannot be applied in the western culture.

Here dancing is tied with love, with diversion, with profaneness, with unbridling of the senses: Such dancing, in general, is not pure. For that reason it cannot be introduced into liturgical celebrations of any kind whatever: that would be to inject into the liturgy one of the most desacralized elements; and so it would be equivalent to creating an atmosphere of profaneness which would easily recall to those present and to the participants in the celebration worldly places and situations.”

“If the proposal of the religious dance in the West is really to be made welcome, care will have to be taken that in its regard a place be found outside of the liturgy, in assembly areas which are not strictly liturgical.”

*Rosanna Sherman, Kaponga, New Zealand*

## Bible Health

According to a report in the Sunday Mail (14/5), the latest brain explosion from the “experts” at accident-prone Queensland Health, is to have bibles removed from hospital wards because “their presence might offend non Christians”.

Also disguised as a hygiene measure, this is one of many direct attacks on Christianity. Tell you what – how about an even better idea for a hygiene measure? Why don’t the top executives at Queensland Health remove themselves from the workplace, because they offend me and many others, with their endless incompetence and no end of ridiculous decisions.

*Frank Bellet, Petrie, QLD*

## Believe in the Resurrection!

“Christ’s resurrection is the central event of Christianity, a fundamental truth that must be reaffirmed with vigor at all times, as to deny it in different ways, as has been attempted and continues to be attempted, or to transform it into a merely spiritual event is to make our faith vain. “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14).”

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## Religious to be Faithful

On 22 May, Benedict XVI received male and female superiors general from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life.

In his address to the assembled religious, the Pope said, “Consecrated people today have the task of being witnesses to the transfiguring presence of God in an ever more disoriented and confused world.”

After emphasizing the fact that “secularized culture has penetrated the hearts and minds of no small number of consecrated people, who see it as a form of access to modernity and a way to approach the modern world,” the Holy Father pointed out how “alongside an undoubted impulse of generosity - one capable of witness and of complete donation - consecrated life today also knows the trap of mediocrity ... and of consumer mentality.”

“There is a need for courageous decisions at both an individual and community level, impressing a new discipline on the lives of consecrated people and bringing them to discover the all-inclusive dimension of ‘sequela Christi’ (following Christ).”

Being of Christ, Pope Benedict affirmed, “means keeping a living flame of love burning in your hearts, continually nourished by the richness of the faith, not only when it brings with it inner joy, but also when united to difficulties, aridity and suffering.” In this context, he recalled how inner life is nourished by prayer, and above all by daily participation in the Eucharist.

“In order to belong entirely to the Lord,” he went on, “consecrated people embrace a celibate lifestyle.” This also means “renouncing the need to display, assuming a sober and humble way of life. Male and female religious are called to show this also in the way they dress, with simple clothes that are a sign of poverty lived in union with Him, Who was rich and became poor to make us rich with His poverty.”

The Pope also referred to the “yoke” of those called to carry out “the delicate task of superior.” This yoke “will be all the lighter the more consecrated people know how to rediscover the value of the obedience they profess.”

“Male and female consecrated people,” the Holy Father concluded, “are called to be, in the world, a credible and luminous sign of the Gospel and its paradoxes, without conforming themselves to the mentality of this century, but transforming themselves and continually renewing their commitment, in order to better discern the will of God.”

*Vatican Information Services*

*What are the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit?*

*What are the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit?*

See page 11 to jog your memory.

## God of Truth and Love

My Lord and God, how great Thou art.  
Your strength I take as mine.  
With righteous shield and sword of truth,  
I fight the foe malign.

Their sins will be no more concealed;  
their faults for all to see.  
They have no love of truth, as I;  
they lie and they deceive.

My precious child, I love them too;  
I died that they be saved.  
I lived to show all how to live,  
and in whose image all are made.

You know My words, you know My deeds.  
Now take these as your own.  
Love one another as I have loved  
and together journey home.

I am the Way, the way of love.  
I am the Truth for all.  
Don't use My name to point and blame  
in your unholy war.

My Lord and God, I did not know,  
forgive me from above;  
and lead me on into the deep  
mystery of Your Love.

*Mrs Bernadette Micallef, Mount Waverley*

## Deacons and Benediction

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

**Q:** Is a deacon allowed to give the blessing with the Eucharist at the Benediction? - F.P., Kolkata, India

**A:** A deacon is an ordinary minister of the Eucharist and as such, in the absence of the priest, may perform practically all of the rites foreseen in the ritual for worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass.

Thus he may give Benediction providing no priest is present or available. In doing so he wears the same vestments as the priest (cope and humeral veil along with alb/surplice and deacon's stole).

If a priest is available, the deacon assists the priest in the manner described in the books: exposing and reposing the Blessed Sacrament, offering him the monstrance for the blessing, and replacing it upon the altar afterward.

The unavailability of the priest need not mean total absence but a reasonable impediment. If, for example, a deacon is leading Eucharistic devotions while a priest attends many penitents in confession, then the deacon could impart Benediction.

[www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)

## Catechesis for Families

In preparation for the 5<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families, the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Archdiocese of Valencia have elaborated a catechetical program for all parishes worldwide.

The catechesis, called "The Family, the First and Principal Transmitter of the Faith," addresses important topics of the Catholic Church in a reflection on the essence of the Christian family, the values of marriage and the transmission of the faith. The meeting will be held July 1-9 in Valencia, Spain. The following are the titles of the catecheses, in nine chapters.

Introduction: Human love cannot exist if it seeks to detach itself from the Cross

1. The Family, the first and principal transmitter of the faith
2. God One and Triune
3. The Person of Jesus Christ, the centre and synthesis of the Christian faith
4. The Holy Spirit and the Church
5. The sacraments, special moments for the transmission of the faith
6. The commandments of God's law
7. Sunday: the Eucharist and other expressions
8. Popular piety
9. The Blessed Virgin Mary.

The catechesis is available in full on the Vatican website. See our own website [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com) under "Documents" to access it.

## A Need for Firm Action

Should the Bracks government return to office in Victoria at the November elections, it will decriminalise abortion. Should the Liberal Party win office, they will not only decriminalise abortion but support euthanasia as well. If we remain docile it will most certainly come to pass.

While Bishops and Priests remain quiet from the pulpit on the matter of abortion and euthanasia, it is still contrary to our Catholic teaching. They are bound to remind the faithful of their need to obey the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; not only on these issues but also on all the teachings therein. We all need to be staunch when it comes to these issues.

In a recent Age poll to ask if abortion should have legal rank, the result was 83% for and 17% against. There were 1378 votes. These 'shock' figures should call every Catholic to an action that can put a stop to this evil trend.

May we ask of your readers that they might bombard our politicians with letters, taking a strong exception to their views on these issues. There is need for a most firm action at this point in time.

*M & L Morrissey, Sandringham*

## Parish Business

We have a strange happening here in this parish. The parish council has been disbanded, a Good Samaritan nun has been called in so that we can have a year's discussion about a Strategic Plan for 2010. This consists of discussion of "where we've been", "where we're at", and "where we want to go"! The strange thing is that we seem to be the only parish undergoing this "torture". Why, one wonders.

And we are now getting a 'dromenon circle' in the grounds. Recently a piece about it appeared in the bulletin. It was about a "global educator" who uses the circle. This was followed by a barrage of words which no one I know can understand. So far I haven't seen anyone walking about on it, thank goodness.

*Elizabeth Heenan, Kyneton*

The 'dromenon' is a maze or labyrinth. "Walking the Dromenon", explains the Kyneton/Trentham parish bulletin, is "an experience of the spiritual journey." Regardless of the connection the bulletin makes to a cathedral in the Middle Ages, today the 'dromenon' has been revived by new-age groups. It is ironic that in a parish that has Eucharistic Adoration (only twice a month), and has a church of Our Lady of the Rosary, there should be a need for an 'alternative' aid to prayer and meditation.

This from the parish website: "People who have entered the dromenon with some question or problem have often found a clue or direction that they had not been aware of previously. The walk can stir the imagination and new and unexpected patterns emerge and bring renewal. Each time people walk the dromenon they can become more empowered to find and do the work they feel their soul searching for." No prayer, no God, no Jesus, no Church – just walk the walk, meditate, and empower yourself! Ed.

## Prayer and Meditation:

### Are We Talking to Ourselves or to God?

From *Jesus Christ, The Bearer of the Water of Life - A Christian Reflection on The "New Age"* (n.4)

By the Pontifical Council for Culture and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

The tendency to confuse psychology and spirituality makes it hard not to insist that many of the meditation techniques now used are not prayer. They are often a good preparation for prayer, but no more, even if they lead to a more pleasant state of mind or bodily comfort. The experiences involved are genuinely intense, but to remain at this level is to remain alone, not yet in the presence of the other. The achievement of silence can confront us with emptiness, rather than the silence of contemplating the beloved. It is also true that techniques for going deeper into one's own soul are ultimately an appeal to one's own ability to reach the divine, or even to become divine: if they forget God's search for the human heart they are still not Christian prayer. Even when it is seen as a link with the Universal Energy, such an easy 'relationship' with God, where God's function is seen as supplying all our needs, shows the selfishness at the heart of this *New Age*.

New Age practices are not really prayer, in that they are generally a question of introspection or fusion with cosmic energy, as opposed to the double orientation of Christian prayer, which involves introspection but is essentially also a meeting with God. Far from being a merely human effort, Christian mysticism is essentially a dialogue which implies an attitude of conversion, a flight from 'self' to the 'you' of God. The Christian, even when he is alone and prays in secret, is conscious that he always prays for the good of the Church in union with Christ, in the Holy Spirit and together with all the saints.

## Still Trying to Get the Message Across

For a long time now, in the little ways open to them, the laity have been trying to get the message across to bishops – who have the responsibility of an authoritative role – that all is not right in parishes.

On Good Friday this year, I took myself off to a well-known parish run by a monastic order. Here, I thought, I would be able to experience the liturgy properly. What a bummer!

Some sheepish celebrant who seemed apologetic about his role, 'fitted in' to a succession of non-descript laity (female) who dominated the whole celebration. The Reading of the Passion, supposed to be a sermon in itself, was interrupted by amateur dramatics as 'Tom, Dick and Scary' were given some role play. Even the dress of these people was disgusting. The dishevelled character that filled in as altar assistant (server) on the day was something to be seen to be believed. The universal prayers of the Church I hardly recognised; all debatable current social issues and left-wing politics. At the veneration of the cross, I gasped; a plain wooden cross, with no figure, typical of Protestantism, was the centre-piece. No chance to kiss 'the cross', which is part of the ceremony, until the actual liturgy was over. What is laid down as public ritual had been converted into a private devotion!

At Communion the high altar was ignored. Instead a coffee table was used, with lay 'ministers' who self-communicated, while the Provincial of the Order and other priests looked on! The parish priest, I am told, will take no advice.

*S.C., Melbourne*

# Final Boarding Call

Recently we had a meeting at the church where I attend Sunday Mass. Bob Osmak wrote an excellent summary of this meeting in the May issue of ITD. The meeting was called by the parish priest to deal with the issues facing the parish, in particular the lack of priests in south east Queensland. Since we were divided up into small groups perhaps my summary will fill some gaps.

## Ensuring the desired result

For around 20 years I have attended many such meetings. They invariably divide the attendees into small groups led by a facilitator. They manage to get the same results up on the board at the end. And the same decline in Mass attendance goes on and on, regardless. My own contribution proposed that priests actually teach the Catholic Faith. And that Catholic schools do the same. This was presented on the result-board as “Education – chaplaincy”.

Over the years, those Catholics who believe in the truths of the Church find it very hard to get a hearing. Each meeting we attend seems to have the usual suspects, often from outside the parish, brought in to provide the desired result (I was reminded of the old story of the man who broke into the Kremlin and stole next year’s election results!). I was told that the ‘facilitators’ were members of the parish council. It has been my experience in attending these meetings that those who run the meeting, and ensure the “correct” result, invariably have a loose connection with the teachings and discipline of the Church.

## Assess the teachers

It might be an interesting exercise to subject members of parish councils to an examination on Christian doctrine (such as the tests Catholic children were given 50 years ago). I suspect that the result might follow the pattern of literacy and numeracy in state schools. What about administering such a test to those teaching in seminaries and Catholic teachers’ colleges? And then include teachers in Catholic schools. And last we come to priests and bishops. We have all heard such silliness from priests over the years, that we have a fair idea of how the tests will go.

How long is it since a parish priest taught these things? – wilful contraception is always mortally sinful; homosexual acts are an abomination; missing Mass on Sunday without lawful excuse is a grave matter; grave matters, unrepented, lead to eternal damnation; Friday is a day of abstinence (or a legitimate substitute); to promote the idea of women priests is open rebellion against Christ’s Church; Hell exists, and the saints tell us that most of us will go there.

We heard from the parish priest how bad the ‘old’ Church was. Many priests delight in attacking the ‘old’ Church, pre-Vatican II.

## Priests are overworked

The overwhelming message was that we need to relieve the priests of their heavy workload. We were told how the number of Catholics has increased faster than the number of priests. However, the number of people *attending Mass* has decreased significantly. Three years ago in our parish it was almost standing room only at the 9.30 Mass. Now we are lucky to half-fill the church, and many of the seats have been removed. So in reality, the workload of priests in administering the sacraments has decreased.

Our usual suspects gave us the usual response. We need to have more lay involvement in priestly work. We need to combine parishes. We need to have social gatherings, hospitality, youth meetings and so on. Fortunately, this meeting did not promote the silliness of ordaining women (although this was raised briefly). The bottom line was that no blame for the problems of the Church could be placed anywhere near those responsible.

## Party line

Toward the end, one or two more orthodox Catholics managed to mention the idea of bringing foreign priests here to alleviate the shortage (which many would argue has been artificially induced). There were strenuous efforts on the part of the parish priest to close down this part of the discussion. No one was allowed to have an opinion which disagrees with the party line. Faced with a parishioner able to present a determined alternative to his own view, the parish priest waved his arms, turned his back and strode off. There is perhaps a precedent in the Pharisees who stopped their ears against the truth at the martyrdom of St Stephen.

## What is wrong with obedience?

This parish, like many others in Queensland, sees abuses in the Mass every Sunday. Some parishioners in this part of the world cannot remember seeing their parish priest properly vested for Mass. There are unauthorised prayers in many Masses, and the regular horde of illicit extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. I have not heard a good reason why saying Mass the way the Church lays down is somehow inferior.

If we want more priests, we have to do what successful parishes and dioceses do. If we want the number of priests to further decline, all we need to do is what we have been doing. If we want people to come to Mass, we have to tell them how necessary Mass is. If we want our children to come to Mass, we must bring them. Catholic schools have utterly failed us.

During the week, we often attend children’s Masses. The children have no idea when to stand, sit or kneel. Neither do their teachers. They don’t know the

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prayers of the Mass. And we don't see them on Sundays. But most of them go to Communion.

### Airline seats

In one of the groups, which included 3 teachers in Catholic schools, there was general agreement that those who don't attend Mass are often "very spiritual", the implication being that somehow they are better Catholics than those who go to Mass.

With attendance around 10%, we are headed for extinction. Imagine if Qantas or Virgin had a load factor of 10%. How long would their management survive? But Queensland seems to be in a permanent state of damage control, denying any responsibility. Actually pointing out the elephant in the room can be hazardous. Why are souls less important than airline seats?

### What can we do?

What can we do to actually get more priests?

In the short term, given the frightening damage done by those responsible, we need to bring in priests from countries where God has raised them in abundance. They are there all right, but they need to be asked. (Several years ago, priests in south east Queensland would claim that there are no overseas priests available and willing to come here. Now that this has been demonstrated false, they are claiming that foreign priests are somehow not suited to this country).

Second, we need to get priests to say Mass every day, as the Church "earnestly recommends" (which means if a priest does not say Mass he had better have a good reason).

Third, we need to get our priests dressing, looking and acting like priests, saying Mass without inserting their own illicit creativity.

Fourth, we need to get our priests to promote adoration, the rosary, weekly confession, and devotions like benediction.

Fifth, we need to get our priests to teach what Christ commanded them to.

In the long term, we need to remove from the seminaries those who have been discouraging vocations, and replace them with priests who still believe in obedience to the Magisterium. We need to do the same in Catholic teachers' colleges, and then in Catholic schools. All this is so obvious, but I suspect that in a year or two I'll be attending yet another meeting with the same agenda, and the same result.

### Greater authority than Christ

Where on earth did our priests get the authority to change the Mass, to change the teachings of the Church, to change the laws of the Church? Christ gave His Church full authority to teach and to make laws for the good of the people. Our priests, in ridiculing these laws and teachings are claiming higher authority than Christ Himself.

Priests often claim that these changes follow the teachings of Vatican II. They don't. I find it hard to believe that they have read the Vatican II documents. If they had, they would quickly realise the silliness of their behaviour.

Then they claim that the changes are the will of the faithful. I cannot think of any abuse which has been brought on by the congregation. Even having the congregation say the doxology was orchestrated by celebrants. And those abuses in the Mass, including the illicit "ministers", were all instigated by priests, claiming they are permitted by Vatican II "to involve the laity." But look at what the Church actually says and it is clear that these claims are dishonest. Extraordinary ministers are permitted when the priest is old, infirm, or somehow unable to distribute Communion, or when the numbers of recipients are so great that Communion would be unduly delayed. These words, "extraordinary", "unduly", make a mockery of the rosters of regular ministers. Are they claiming that there should be more priests at Mass, when the congregations are now quite small?

### The lives of the saints

Today, no one seems to read the lives of the saints. Yet these are the successful members of the Church. They made it to Heaven. If we want to go there, shouldn't we follow them as faithfully as we can? Sadly, many priests scorn the advice of the saints. In Queensland we have nuns into the occult, priests openly defying the Church, and laypeople running parishes.

Here are some quotes which certainly make me afraid. Our priests and bishops don't seem to be afraid. Perhaps they believe we are all going to Heaven. The saints believed otherwise.

**St John Chrysostom:** *The floor of Hell is paved with the skulls of bishops.*

St John was not the first to say this, and not the last. He was a bishop himself.

**St John Vianney:** *Take away the priests, and in twenty years the people will worship the beasts.*

This is the patron saint of parish priests. And how prophetic! Our priests left us 20 years ago, and look, we are worshipping Moloch. We have sacrificed 2 million babies to a demon.

**St Faustina Kowalska:** Sister Faustina had a vision in which she saw the people, led by their priests and bishops, go singing and dancing over a precipice. Sister Agnes Sasagawa of Akita had a similar message.

**St Vincent Ferrer:** After his death, St Vincent Ferrer appeared to his former bishop. He told the bishop that the day he died 33 000 went to Hell.

Perhaps this is a final call for our flight to Heaven. Let's hope we are able to show a valid boarding pass.

*Richard Stokes, Brisbane*



## Positives Outweigh Negatives

I was not going to respond to the letter by Eva van Strijp (ITD April '06) but feel that I do need to address a couple of issues regarding Lifeteen (particularly in my parish of St Michael's) and youth ministry. It saddened me to hear that someone so young has such a negative opinion/experience of Lifeteen and youth ministry in general – I hope that in the future Eva can experience some of the things that I have experienced in youth ministry – of which the positive far outweigh the negative. When I visited Castle Hill I found it to be very different to the description given by Eva.

Much of Eva's concerns, eg, flirting, irreverence, music and dress code are not things that we commonly come across in our parish of St Michael's, Traralgon. It is quite the opposite – our youth display reverence, our music is appropriate, I have not seen flirting and mostly, young people dress appropriately. The Lifeteen program actually has resources to cover these areas, so leaders can address such things when the need arises. I must say that sometimes I think that some of the youth can be far more reverent than some of the adults that attend Mass!

We recently held a Youth Camp with our younger Youth Group and our theme was "The Mass". We used this opportunity to explain the parts of the Mass and helped the youth to understand what it is all about. We had a guest speaker who talked about "The Eucharist" and we celebrated Mass together with our wonderful new priest, Fr Mizera. The Lifeteen resource provided us with a DVD which covered things like dressing appropriately, arriving early, being prepared before Mass, as well as all the parts of the Mass. These are the sorts of things we also teach at our "Lifenights" for the older youth.

I think that having young people of both sexes involved in a Catholic youth group is great – what better way to meet people and form friendships/relationships than with people who have the same beliefs. My parents met at the "Catholic 20's club" back in the 70's and are grateful to have found a partner who has the same faith – it has been a great basis for their marriage. In a controlled group, leaders can set an example of good, healthy, Christian relationships and this is far more valuable than the messages they are constantly bombarded with by the media and the secular world.

The last point that I'd like to make is that any program is only as good as the people who are organising it. The leaders we have at St Michael's are not only a great bunch of people but are also very faith-filled, spiritual and true to the Church and its teachings – we try and set a good example for the youth we work with.

If anyone else would like to comment on Lifeteen, please come and look at the content of the resources before making judgements – I hope you will be pleasantly surprised! Please continue to pray for all youth (and for us leaders too!)

*Louise Varsaci, Traralgon*

## What We Want From Priests

*From an address by Pope Benedict XVI to priests in Warsaw*

The faithful expect only one thing from priests: that they be specialists in promoting the encounter between man and God. The priest is not asked to be an expert in economics, construction or politics. He is expected to be an expert in the spiritual life. With this end in view, when a young priest takes his first steps, he needs to be able to refer to an experienced teacher who will help him not to lose his way among the many ideas put forward by the culture of the moment. In the face of the temptations of relativism or the permissive society, there is absolutely no need for the priest to know all the latest, changing currents of thought; what the faithful expect from him is that he be a witness to the eternal wisdom contained in the revealed word. Solicitude for the quality of personal prayer and for good theological formation bear fruit in life.

*Zenit 25-05-2006*

## Media Misinformation on the Catholic Stance on Condoms

In spite of various news reports "confirming" that the Vatican is "set to approve" the use of condoms in marriage when one partner has HIV/AIDS, the Vatican has officially clarified that this is not true. What is actually happening is (reported in Zenit 25-04-2006):

Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, clarifying information published recently in the media, told Zenit that this "profound study," requested by Benedict XVI, takes into account "both the scientific and technical aspects linked to the condom, as well as the moral implications in all their amplitude."

The Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers does not have the "competency to present a document to the Church. It is the Holy Father who has the competency or whoever he entrusts" with the task, the cardinal explained.

"In the last analysis this Vatican dicastery is not a doctrinal dicastery; this dicastery does not produce documents," he continued. "Herein lies the error of some information. We are a pastoral dicastery to carry out the Church's presence with the sick, in particular, those who suffer from the AIDS virus.

"Within this competency, we have our medical, technical and theological consultants and we are doing this study with them."

"We are in the first stage," the 73-year-old cardinal said. "This study is promoting a dialogue only at the level of the Holy See and it is not finished yet. Once it's finished, will there be a document? There might or might not be. To issue a document is not proper to this dicastery. That it is or is not issued by another dicastery depends on the Holy Father."



# The Sacrament of the Eucharist

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

## WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

**1328** The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called:

Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim - especially during a meal - God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification.

**1329** The Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem. *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread, above all at the Last Supper. It is by this action that his disciples will recognise him after his Resurrection, and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies; by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him.

The *Eucharistic assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful, the visible expression of the Church.

**1330** The *memorial* of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection.

The *Holy Sacrifice*, because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Saviour and includes the Church's offering. The terms *holy sacrifice of the Mass*, "*sacrifice of praise*," *spiritual sacrifice*, *pure and holy sacrifice* are also used, since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church's whole liturgy finds its centre and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration the *Sacred Mysteries*. We speak of the *Most Blessed Sacrament* because it is the Sacrament of sacraments. The Eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name.

**1331** *Holy Communion*, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body. We also call it: *the holy things (ta hagia; sancta)* - the first meaning of the phrase "communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed - *the bread of angels, bread from heaven, medicine of immortality, viaticum*. . . .

**1332** *Holy Mass (Missa)*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives.

# Petition for Adoration to Resume

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2005, Fr Cleary arbitrarily ceased Eucharistic adoration with exposition in Morwell (see previous issues of ITD).

In reply to a letter I sent to Bishop Coffey I received an answer setting out the conditions relating to exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. One such condition was that at least 2 people must always be present. In the parish bulletin of 8<sup>th</sup> January, Fr Cleary advised of the same conditions.

My research has found that this is not correct. Nowhere in the Code of Canon Law or in *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (Congregation for Divine Worship) does it specify how many adorers must be present. In fact, article 90 of the latter states, "The form of adoration in which one or two members of the community take turns before the Blessed Sacrament is also to be maintained and highly commended" (emphasis added).

Article 80 of the same states, "The same piety which moves the faithful to Eucharistic Adoration attracts them to a deeper participation in the Paschal mystery."

On 2 December 1981, Pope John Paul II opened a chapel of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in St Peter's and urged all parishes around the world to do the same.

In light of the above, on 29<sup>th</sup> April I presented Fr Cleary with a letter and petition containing 67 signatures of regular adorers, requesting resumption of Exposition. In the ensuing conversation Father stated he found some hypocrisy with adoration. He accused me of sinning against the 5<sup>th</sup> precept of the Church and suggested he put a notice at the back of the church stating that I did not support the church financially. I advised him to go ahead.

On the same date I forwarded a copy of the petition to Bishop Coffey with a covering letter requesting he give permission for Eucharistic adoration. To date I have had no reply from either Fr Cleary or Bishop Coffey.

Morwell Catholic Parish has become more divided since the arrival of Fr Cleary as administrator in our parish priest Fr Speekman's absence. Bear in mind that Canon Law states that in such cases, the administrator "may not do anything which could prejudice the rights of the parish priest..." (Canon 540§2). Interestingly, the canon continues, "When he has discharged his office, the parochial administrator is to give an account to the parish priest" (540§3).

I await further developments and pray that Fr Cleary and Bishop Coffey will see sense and give permission for the resumption of Eucharistic adoration in Morwell.

*John Henderson, Morwell*

# Faith vs Nonsense

by John Mallon, Contributing Editor, *Inside the Vatican*

Recently I was asked to write an article on the novel *The Da Vinci Code*. I hadn't read it and had never really paid much attention to the controversy surrounding it, so I scanned the book as well as some Catholic books written in response to it. I interviewed the authors of *The Da Vinci Hoax*, Carl Olson and Sandra Miesel (Ignatius Press), asking them the questions I had about it. (I strongly recommend their book to anyone with questions about *The Da Vinci Code* phenomenon.)

The reason the editor asked me to write on *The Da Vinci Code* was that the film made from the book was about to be released and he wanted me to provide a warning to those who might be "weak in faith."

And in fact, there are dangers for those weak in faith. Miesel and Olson contend, among other things, that one of the main dangers of the novel is that so many Catholics are not well instructed in the Catholic faith or history, and that many people get their knowledge of these things from entertainment, and will uncritically swallow whole some of the absurd claims of the novel.

This is tragic. As they note, there are people who will never crack open a Bible, let alone the *Catechism*, who will read and believe the claptrap in this book.

I found the book to be a real page-turner and entertaining – provided you keep in mind that it is total fiction and anything it says about Catholicism and history is utter nonsense.

But what really got me thinking was the nice old-fashioned expression the editor used about "those weak in faith." It got me thinking about the nature of faith. I could imagine readers of this book, including Catholics, falling into an infinite loop of doubt, asking, "But how do you know?" when someone tries to explain that the book is false regarding Catholicism. For example, the novel asserts that Jesus was not God, but fell in love and married Mary Magdalene and had a child with her, and from the very beginning the Church has sought to cover this up. Why? Critics of the Church would argue because it is a threat to the "male hierarchy's" "power base" and that the Church has a "negative" view of women and sexuality.

Dissident Father Richard McBrien, interviewed for a secular TV documentary on *The Da Vinci Code*, actually asserted this old canard that the Church had a negative view of women and sexuality. Incredulously, I thought, "Hasn't he ever heard of John Paul II? Theology of the body?" But this is beside the point. Those who wish to hold such views, be they dissident theologians or radical feminists, will not be moved by facts once their minds are made up. There is no shortage of people today who are living in ways inimical to the Gospel, especially in terms of sexuality, who are nevertheless spiritually starved. They are seeking some kind of "spirituality" that will

not make moral demands on them, and they will relish anything, like *The Da Vinci Code*, that supports or gives credibility to this doomed quest.

*Da Vinci Code* author, Dan Brown, seems to hold the view that the "male hierarchy" has sought for centuries to suppress this notion of a Jesus married to Mary Magdalene in order to eliminate what he calls "the sacred feminine."

There is one reason and one reason only the Church rejects the idea that Jesus was married and had a child, and it is not because the Church "doesn't like women" or thinks "sex is dirty." That reason is because it is not true. "But how do you know? How do you know?"

We know by faith. Faith is not a mere opinion among many, though it may appear so to those who lack it. Faith is something solid. You can stand on it, and when you do you can see farther. The Book of Hebrews states, "Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen." (*Heb* 11:1, emphasis added)

Faith is a substance, a thing, and, like love, a mode of knowing. Christians are people who know and love Jesus Christ personally and know that He can be trusted, especially when He promised the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (*John* 16:13) and for Catholics this promise is uniquely fulfilled in the gift of the Magisterium. We believe Jesus when He says this, that the Magisterium (the Pope and the bishops in union with him), is protected by the Holy Spirit from all error in faith and morals.

Faith is also a gift. If we lack it we can – and should – ask for it. If we have it we can – and should – ask for more. Faith is how, as Catholics, we know.

In keeping with this, another item *The Da Vinci Code* brings to mind is the problem of conspiracy theories. C.S. Lewis described involvement in the occult as a kind of spiritual lust, creating an extremely unhealthy – indeed diabolical – addiction. I think the same can be said of conspiracy theories, wasting time with mildly entertaining speculation about goings-on "behind the scenes." This, too, represents a kind of morose delectation like pornography or gossip which takes us nowhere good and leaves us worse off than when we started. I wish there were a way I could convince all Catholics to simply dismiss all conspiracy theories out of hand like so many impure or uncharitable thoughts as part of a spiritual discipline. We Catholics have better, more important things to do.

Faith has the power to deliver us from nonsense.

*Published in Inside the Vatican magazine, May 2006; reprinted with permission. John Mallon also has regular columns on the website Catholic.Org. An archive of his work appears at <http://www.johnmallon.net>. You can reach Mr Mallon at [johnmallon@insidethevatican.com](mailto:johnmallon@insidethevatican.com)*

## The Church and Politics

*Pope Benedict XVI*

It must not be forgotten that, when Churches or ecclesial communities intervene in public debate, expressing reservations or recalling various principles, this does not constitute a form of intolerance or an interference, since such interventions are aimed solely at enlightening consciences, enabling them to act freely and responsibly, according to the true demands of justice, even when this should conflict with situations of power and personal interest.

As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the principal focus of her interventions in the public arena is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she is thereby consciously drawing particular attention to principles which are not negotiable. Among these the following emerge clearly today:

- protection of life in all its stages, from the first moment of conception until natural death;
- recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family – as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage – and its defense from attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different forms of union which in reality harm it and contribute to its destabilisation, obscuring its particular character and its irreplaceable social role;
- the protection of the right of parents to educate their children.

These principles are not truths of faith, even though they receive further light and confirmation from faith; they are inscribed in human nature itself and therefore they are common to all humanity. The Church's action in promoting them is therefore not confessional in character, but is addressed to all people, prescinding from any religious affiliation they may have. On the contrary, such action is all the more necessary the more these principles are denied or misunderstood, because this constitutes an offence against the truth of the human person, a grave wound inflicted onto justice itself.

*www.zenit.org 30-03-2006*

### **Answers** to Questions on page 3

*The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:*

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord.

*The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit:*

Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-control, Chastity.

## The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

*Redemptionis Sacramentum n. 154 - 160*

...“The only minister who can confect the Sacrament of the Eucharist in persona Christi is a validly ordained Priest”. Hence the name “minister of the Eucharist” belongs properly to the Priest alone. Moreover, also by reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon, to whom it belongs therefore to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ's faithful during the celebration of Mass. [...]

In addition to the ordinary ministers there is the formally instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass. If, moreover, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay member of Christ's faithful may also be delegated by the diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the norm of law, for one occasion or for a specified time, and an appropriate formula of blessing may be used for the occasion. [...] Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.

This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist”, by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.

If there is usually present a sufficient number of sacred ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be appointed. Indeed, in such circumstances, those who may have already been appointed to this ministry should not exercise it. The practice of those Priests is reprobated who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons.

Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged. This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation... is not at all a sufficient reason.

It is never allowed for the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to delegate anyone else to administer the Eucharist [...].

Let the diocesan Bishop give renewed consideration to the practice...regarding this matter, and if circumstances call for it, let him correct it or define it more precisely. [...]

## Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30am Heyfield 10am – 4.30pm
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
Cranbourne	Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat in the Church: (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by PIN available at parish office.
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	<i>CANCELLED</i>
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

## A Need for Silent Adoration

*From an address by Pope Benedict XVI to priests in Warsaw*

Let us not be consumed with haste, as if time dedicated to Christ in silent prayer were time wasted. On the contrary, it is precisely then that the most wonderful fruits of pastoral service come to birth.

There is no need to be discouraged on account of the fact that prayer requires effort, or because of the impression that Jesus remains silent. He is indeed silent, but he is at work. In this regard, I am pleased to recall my experience last year in Cologne. I witnessed then a deep, unforgettable silence of a million young people at the moment of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! That prayerful silence united us, it gave us great consolation.

In a world where there is so much noise, so much bewilderment, there is a need for silent adoration of Jesus concealed in the Host. Be assiduous in the prayer of adoration and teach it to the faithful. It is a source of comfort and light particularly to those who are suffering.

*Zenit 25-05-2006*

*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)

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

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

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- *There is no subscription fee.*
- *Donations are welcome! (Cheques made out to John Henderson please)*

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

Editor - Janet Kingman

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 and contact details must accompany letters. However, if there is sufficient reason, anonymity will be preserved when publishing.

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