

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 5

Newsletter of the Confraternity of St Michael, Gippsland

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## **The role and renewal of the Catholic laity**

Pope John Paul II has a powerful message for the laity. He tells us that if the Church is to evangelise the culture, the laity are the ones who are going to have to take the lead. The laity are the ones with primary responsibility to bring Christ to the various sectors of family, social, professional, cultural and political life - because we are the ones who are present in those sectors.

In the 1970s, when I was teaching at Boston College Law School, someone took down all the crucifixes from the walls one summer. Though the majority of the faculty at that time was Catholic, not one of us entered a protest. When I told my husband, who is Jewish but very pro-Catholic, he was astonished. He said, "What's the matter with you Catholics? There would be an uproar if anyone did something like that at a Jewish school. Why do Catholics put up with that kind of thing?"

I began to wonder: Why *do* we Catholics put up with that sort of thing? It seems to me that the problem is one of formation. How can we live our faith without compromise, if we don't know our faith?

I can't help wishing when I read that we are supposed to "put out into the deep", that the Holy Father had added a note to the effect that: "Be not afraid" doesn't mean "Be not prepared."

In a society like ours, if religious education does not come up to the general level of secular education, our boats are going to start sinking. We are going to run into trouble defending our beliefs - even to ourselves. We are going to feel helpless when we come up against the secularism and relativism that are so pervasive in our culture.

Many lay spokespersons are promoting some pretty basic misunderstandings: that the best way for the laity to be active is in terms of ecclesial governance; that the Church and her structures are to be equated with public agencies or private corporations; and that she stands in need of supervision by secular reformers. But there is an upsurge around the world of lay associations, formation programs and ecclesial movements that think and feel with the Church. What a contrast between these vibrant groups that work in harmony with the Church and the lay organisations that define their aims in terms of power.

*From an address in November 2002 by Mary Glendon, a US law professor who has served on the Pontifical Council for the Laity.*

This is the lay people's call! To evangelise the culture ~ unlike the message transmitted in *Journeying Together* that the lay people's call is to wider lay leadership and collaboration in the Church. (Ed.)

## **Transforming Schools**

At times it is said that the school, like the family, is "in crisis".

This expression is used to refer to the widespread feeling that this institution, recognised in its essential worth, is in need of a profound transformation that will enable it to respond to the present needs of society.

However, it is not enough to modify programs and structures to achieve this objective.

A well-functioning school depends, above all, on the constructive quality of the relation between teachers and students.

*John Paul II*

## **Twisting words**

"All the good works in the world are not equal to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass because they are the works of men; but the Mass is the work of God. Martyrdom is nothing in comparison for it is but the sacrifice of man to God; but the Mass is the sacrifice of God for man." - *St John Vianney*

Contrast this powerful message with the modern view of the Mass as simply a shared meal, with the emphasis on gathering together and celebrating our own community life.

How tragically shallow we can make something so profound and sacred and Life-giving!

## Perpetual Adoration should be priority for every parish

In the book “Letters to a Brother Priest” by Monsignor Ramirez, Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu in the Philippines is quoted: “The only one who would not want Jesus to be adored day and night, and the only one who would do anything to prevent it, is Satan himself.” Again, “Perpetual adoration is a clarion call to our people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, our Saviour, who is present in Person in the most Blessed Sacrament.”

How is it that when the priest at the consecration says the words “This is my Body – This is my Blood” the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus? We do not know, it is a mystery, but we believe it. How much we believe will determine the extent of our own reverence for this most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

When we look on the Host in the monstrance exposed on the altar, do we really believe that this is Jesus truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity?

If our response is a strong affirmative surely we would want to be in his presence talking to and listening to Him – adoring Him as our God. As we pass the tabernacle do we give Him a casual nod or do we genuflect with solemnity and dignity?

How do we get to know someone? By visiting, speaking to and listening to them. The more we visit the more we get to know them. The same applies to Jesus.

We should encourage our Bishop and priests to strenuously promote perpetual adoration – to make it the first pastoral initiative of our diocese. The laity could become involved in the organisation of the hourly visitation.

When we meet Jesus what will our answer be when he asks, “Why did you not visit me? I was waiting for you day and night and you did not come.”

J. Henderson, Morwell

## Holy Communion on the Tongue

In the Warragul parish bulletin in late November, it was noted that “The Bishop has asked that the Host should be received on the hand – NOT ON the tongue.”

Some of us have always received Communion on the tongue, since our First Holy Communion many years ago. I still wonder why Communion on the hand was introduced as an option at all, and have found no reasonable explanation so far. Personally, I feel unworthy to handle the Body of Christ, and believe that this should be reserved for the consecrated hands of the priest. Which raises the question of lay people distributing Holy Communion at Masses, and having Communion under both species available – I can’t help wondering if this is simply to ‘involve’ more people in the Mass.

However, my question is why, in Warragul, is receiving Communion on the tongue no longer allowed? Is it still allowed elsewhere in the diocese? Is this a new Church law, or a new diocesan directive? If it is either, or both, then why is it not enforced throughout the entire diocese? If it is neither, then why is it being enforced at Warragul at all?

Name and address supplied

## Life Issue

“The first ethical duty should be to ask oneself if, at the beginning of his existence, man can be considered as something that can be destroyed.”

Carlo Casini, Italian Pro-life Movement

## Pre- and Post-Vatican II?

**Q.** In the diocesan pastoral plan, there is reference in Mission Direction Number 3 to “a deeper understanding of post-Vatican II theology.” Is there a pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II theology? My understanding is that the Catholic Church does not change. You can develop doctrine but you cannot change it.

M.Tudor, Moe

**A.** Exactly. As Cardinal Ratzinger puts it: “This schematism of a *before* and *after* in the history of the Church, wholly unjustified by the documents of Vatican II, which do nothing but reaffirm the continuity of Catholicism, must be decidedly opposed. There is no ‘pre-’ or ‘post-’ conciliar Church: there is but one, unique Church that walks the path toward the Lord, ever deepening and ever better understanding the treasure of faith that he himself has entrusted to her.” (The Ratzinger Report, with Vittorio Messori, 1985)

## **Journeying together!**

Journeying whither?

## **Journeying to get her?**

Surely not!

In Revelation 12 we read how the dragon stands before the woman, journeys to get her and devour her son, but she flees into the wilderness. The dragon is angry and makes war “on the rest of her seed who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

What a blessing it would be if they meant:

## **Journeying with Her to receive Her Son!**

That sounds more like it!

To Jesus through Mary with the ever strong Pope John Paul II holding the candle and supported by our prayers so that we may truly journey with him, through Her to Jesus in 2003.

An Australian order priest recently told me that one Sunday he was asked to offer Mass and preach in a Victorian country town. He chose to preach on *Humanae Vitae* – against abortion and how a contraceptive mentality leads to a culture of death. How dare he! After Mass he was hounded by a number of parishioners who were going to take the matter further! A minority backed him up. He returned home to abusive phonecalls. Both the bishop and his religious superior told him that in no way was he to preach on these matters and upset church-going Catholics.

Who is She whose statues are weeping in WA, SA, QLD and elsewhere but nevertheless is “fair as the moon, bright as the sun and terrible as an army set in battle array”? Is she not our Mother? Is she not the Mother of her beloved sons, our priests? Pray that unlike Satan we are not journeying to *get* her but that we may journey with her, put out into the deep and prepare for her Son’s coming in joyful hope!

The good news is that with the blessing and support of Archbishop Hickey, Raymond de Souza and the Perth Cathedral Knights are producing excellent tapes (and broadcasts on Radio Fremantle) concerning all the solid Catholic topics like Marian dogmas, the Mass: Meal or Sacrifice?, Papal Infallibility etc – topics seldom taught and defended from our pulpits nowadays.

R.Earle, Marlo

## **The Role of the Church**

There is a common view that the role of the Church in today’s world is to look after the poor, to eradicate poverty, to achieve equality between peoples and nations, to stop war and work for peace, to protect the environment, to provide education for all.

While all of these aims are worthwhile and praiseworthy, they are not the primary mission of the Church.

The Church knows and teaches (although it is often very muted today in our teaching institutions) that the reason we are here on earth is “to know, love and serve God here on earth and then to be happy with Him forever in heaven.”

That simple phrase could be our guiding slogan for our life here on earth. We know that when we die God has prepared a place that eye has not seen, heart has not believed, and mind has not conceived, the wonderful things He has prepared for us in eternity.

And so, while many are disappointed today as they were in the time of Christ, we know that Jesus did not come to change the world but to change the hearts of men (a term that includes women and children) – to inspire each of us to love God with all our mind, our heart and our intellect. “What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world then suffer the loss of his own soul?”

So Jesus established His Church, not to change the world, but to help us to save our souls and spend eternity being happy with Him forever. If the Church relieves poverty, provides good secular education, stops war, but fails to provide man with the knowledge and tools to enable him to save his soul, then it is all a waste of time, effort and money.

The mission of the Church is the salvation of souls.

P.O’Brien, Sale

## **Here’s looking at you**

We often want to examine the Church ~ instead of ourselves. We hear of all the issues “the Church needs to look at” ~ but not what we need to look at, in our own hearts.

## **Penny for your thoughts ... Who is God?**

God is the Creator of the world; He is a living being without beginning or end.

He is infinitely great and infinitely good.

# Sacrament?

From the Latin

## Sacred

From the Greek

## Mystery

### Pope's Priorities for Bishops

John Paul II proposed two priorities for all bishops: to nourish a desire for holiness among people in a world without ideals, and to help priests, especially those experiencing difficulties. The pope addressed these priorities in September 2002 when he met with 120 bishops from 33 countries.

The Holy Father said that in today's society, characterised by religious indifference and at times even hostility, to be a bishop is one of the most difficult missions.

"The primary task of a pastor is to foster an authentic desire for holiness in all believers, a holiness to which we are all called and in which the aspirations of the human being culminate," John Paul II said in his address to the bishops. "Another of your priorities is attention to your priests, who are the closest collaborators of your ministry," he added. "The spiritual care of the priest is a primary duty of every diocesan bishop."

"The gesture of the priest who, on the day of priestly ordination, puts his own hands in the hands of the bishop, professing to him 'filial respect and obedience,' can at first sight seem like a gesture in only one sense," the Holy Father explained. "The gesture, in reality, commits both of them: the priest and the bishop. The young priest chooses to entrust himself to the bishop and, for his part, the bishop commits himself to take care of those hands," the Pope said. "In this way the bishop becomes responsible for the fate of the hands which he embraces between his own. A priest must be able to feel, especially in moments of difficulty, of loneliness, that his hands are held tightly by the bishop's."

"Moreover, you must be passionately dedicated to promoting genuine vocations to the priesthood, with prayer, the testimony of life, and pastoral solicitude," the Pontiff said.

Zenit news service

*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

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

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

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

### Contact Us

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

### 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.