

# *Into the Deep*

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## Without Further Delay!

As reported in the December issue of *Into the Deep*, the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy has issued its latest decree upholding Fr John Speekman's (second) appeal against his (second) removal as Parish Priest of Morwell by Bishop Jeremiah Coffey. No doubt many of you would have been checking the website for further updates on his date of return, as we suggested you do in the last ITD. However, in spite of the Congregation's very strong decision and very clear instructions that Bishop Coffey return Fr Speekman to his parish "without further delay", Bishop Coffey has still not done so. At the time of this ITD being released, the bishop had not even made contact with Fr Speekman.

See page 3 for a full copy of the Congregation's Decree, to understand the extent of Bishop Coffey's defiance of the Congregation's directives. In last month's ITD we wondered if the Congregation was as tired of his obstinacy as we are. The decree shows that they are. Surely they now have to *enforce* their decision.

The decree summarises the history – in July 2004 the Congregation instructed Bishop Coffey, by decree, to return Fr Speekman to his parish; he didn't; he asked them to review their decision; they reviewed his case, but confirmed their decision in another decree; they gave him the option of appealing to the Apostolic Signatura, but he didn't; he "consistently refused" to return Fr Speekman, in spite of the Congregation and the Apostolic Nuncio talking to him; then he "purported" to remove Fr Speekman again, even though he hadn't yet returned him; and then his second case *still* didn't provide any evidence to warrant removing Fr Speekman!

No wonder the Congregation decrees this time that the Bishop is to return Fr Speekman *without further delay*, and to *notify them promptly* when he's done it! Enough is enough!

## Who Can Defend Us?

*From Pope Benedict XVI's Message for Christmas, 2006*

"...'[O]ur Saviour is born to the world', for he knows that even today we need him. Despite humanity's many advances, man has always been the same: a freedom poised between good and evil, between life and death. It is there, in the very depths of his being, in what the Bible calls his 'heart', that man always needs to be 'saved'. And, in this post-modern age, perhaps he needs a Saviour all the more, since the society in which he lives has become more complex and the threats to his personal and moral integrity have become more insidious. Who can defend him, if not the One who loves him to the point of sacrificing on the Cross his only-begotten Son as the Saviour of the world?"

## We Must Recognise Sin

*Pope Benedict XVI to Swiss Bishops on 7 November 2006*

The widespread absence of an awareness of sin is a disturbing phenomenon of our time.

The gift of the Sacrament of Penance not only consists in the reception of forgiveness, but also and above all in being aware of our need for forgiveness. With this Sacrament we are purified, we are inwardly transformed and subsequently able to understand others even better and to forgive them.

For the human being, the recognition of sin is elementary – he is ill if he no longer perceives it – and the liberating experience of being granted forgiveness is equally important for him. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the crucial place where both these things take place.

In this Sacrament, furthermore, faith becomes something completely personal; it is no longer concealed in collectivity. If man faces up to this challenge and in his need of forgiveness presents himself defenceless, as it were, before God, he then has the moving experience of a quite personal encounter with the love of Jesus Christ.

[www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org) 11-12-2006

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# The Human Person, The Heart of Peace

*From the Message of Pope Benedict XVI for World Day of  
Peace, 01 January 2007*

At the beginning of the new year, I wish to extend prayerful good wishes for peace to Governments, leaders of nations and all men and women of good will.

In a special way, I invoke peace upon all those experiencing pain and suffering, those living under the threat of violence and armed aggression, and those who await their human and social emancipation, having had their dignity trampled upon.

I invoke peace upon children, who by their innocence enrich humanity with goodness and hope, and by their sufferings compel us all to work for justice and peace. (para.1)

Peace is based on respect for the rights of all. Conscious of this, the Church champions the fundamental rights of each person. In particular she promotes and defends respect for the life and the religious freedom of everyone. (para.4)

As far as the right to life is concerned, we must denounce its widespread violation in our society: alongside the victims of armed conflicts, terrorism and the different forms of violence, there are the silent deaths caused by hunger, abortion, experimentation on human embryos and euthanasia. How can we fail to see in all this an attack on peace? Abortion and embryonic experimentation constitute a direct denial of that attitude of acceptance of others which is indispensable for establishing lasting relationships of peace.

As far as the free expression of personal faith is concerned, another disturbing symptom of lack of peace in the world is represented by the difficulties that both Christians and the followers of other religions frequently encounter in publicly and freely professing their religious convictions. Speaking of Christians in particular, I must point out with pain that not only are they at times prevented from doing so; in some States they are actually persecuted, and even recently tragic cases of ferocious violence have been recorded.

There are regimes that impose a single religion upon everyone, while secular regimes often lead not so much to violent persecution as to systematic cultural denigration of religious beliefs. In both instances, a fundamental human right is not being respected, with serious repercussions for peaceful coexistence. This can only promote a mentality and culture that is not conducive to peace. (para.5)

Finally, I wish to make an urgent appeal to the People of God: let every Christian be committed to tireless peace-making and strenuous defence of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable rights. (para.16)

# Blackballed!

During November I indicated to members of the Legion of Mary that I was interested in joining.

I later saw the president of the Legion and asked him what the next step should be. He embarrassingly replied that there would be no next step. He then said that the spiritual director of the Legion in Sale, Monsignor McCartan, had said I was not to be admitted to the Legion but refused to give any reason.

I wrote to Monsignor on November 29 and asked him to state in writing why I was not to be admitted to the Legion. Receiving no reply after two weeks I rang the presbytery and asked to speak to him. He was not available so I left a message saying I was expecting a reply and for him to contact me.

There was still no reply so on December 19, I waited for him after Mass and approached him as he walked back to the presbytery. I asked him if he was going to give me reasons in writing for his decision. He replied: "You should know why!" and that he had no intention of replying. When I persisted he then said that I was "divisive", and walked away. Apparently justice and fair play are subjects that he is unfamiliar with.

*Pat O'Brien, Sale*

# Moving Mountains

The recently-published book by Michael Gilchrist was a very accurate and factual summary of the decline of Catholic faith practice in Australia (and indeed, for most of the secular-trended Western World) over the past forty or so years. I have been a witness to this era!

In reality, the 'blame' simply has to be shared by the majority of both clergy and the Catholic laity for allowing this to happen! Rather than being a sudden occurrence, it really has been a gradual drift over a period of time, towards daily prosperity and earthly comfort!

Thankfully, the critical issues are now being addressed (by people such as yourselves) and – through selected avenues of hearts craving truth, love and obedience – God continues to 'sneak back' into the equation.

The key tier where constant and heartfelt prayer is now the number one priority, concerns the leadership coming from our Bishops. They are the critical link in Catholic connection between the 'guaranteed Holy Spirit teachings coming from the Papacy' to the Catholic laity – us, the community of faith.

Perhaps letters and phone-calls may not change the hearts of some of them – so more fervent prayer, novenas, rosaries and Mass offerings are needed (to move mountains!)

*Errol Duke, Adelaide*

# ***DECREE* from the Congregation for the Clergy**

Prot. N. 20050577

Whereas, the Congregation for the Clergy issued a Decree on 8 July 2004 (Prot. N. 20031880), which upheld the recourse made by the Rev. John Speekman against the dispositions of the Most Reverend Jeremiah Coffey, Ordinary of the Diocese of Sale, as contained in that decree of the Ordinary dated 31 July 2003 (the “First Decree of Removal”);

Whereas, the Decree of the Congregation declared that the First Decree of Removal violated the law *in procedendo*: “because the letter by the Most Reverend Ordinary to Father Speekman dated 13 May 2003 did not contain valid causes or arguments for the removal of Father Speekman, which causes and arguments are required for validity under canon 1742”;

Whereas, the Decree of the Congregation also declared that the First Decree of Removal violated the law *in decernendo*: “because (1) the Most Reverend Ordinary has not demonstrated that the ministry of the Rev. John Speekman has “become harmful or at least ineffective” as required by canon 1740, (2) the causes for the removal are deemed insufficient under cann. 1741 and 1742, and (3) the rights to due process under the law (can. 221) have been denied Rev. John Speekman in the exercise of his role as Parish Priest of a parochial school subject to his authority”;

Whereas, by petition dated 29 July 2004, the Ordinary requested the revocation or amendment of the Decree of the Congregation;

Whereas, after having carefully reviewed the material presented by Ordinary in his petition of 29 July 2004, and having noted his response *in decernendo* and *in procedendo*, the Congregation confirmed its previous dispositions by a Decree issued on 8 August 2004 (Prot. N. 20041554) that rejected the petition of the Ordinary to revoke or amend the Decree of the Congregation dated 8 July 2004;

Whereas, despite the directives of the Decree of the Congregation dated 8 August 2004, whereby the Congregation advised the Ordinary that “an appeal to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura can be made within thirty (30) days,” the Ordinary did not appeal the decision of the Congregation;

Whereas, despite the inquiries of the Congregation as well as the intervention of the Apostolic Nuncio of Australia, the Ordinary has consistently refused to implement the legitimate Decree of the Congregation by restoring Father Speekman to the office of Parish Priest of Morwell Catholic Parish;

Whereas, Father Speekman has not been resident in Morwell Catholic Parish since the issuance of the First Decree of Removal dated 31 July 2003;

Whereas, on 15 October 2004, the Ordinary began a “new and separate process” for the removal of Father Speekman as Parish Priest of Morwell Catholic Parish;

Whereas, on 14 December 2005, the Ordinary issued a Decree of Removal of Parish Priest (the “Second Decree of Removal”) which purported to once again remove Father Speekman from the office of Parish Priest of Morwell Catholic Parish;

Whereas, the Second Decree of Removal does not provide new causes and arguments – duly proven – which would justify the decision for removal; such causes and arguments for removal having already been considered insufficient by the Congregation in its Decree of 8 July 2004 (Prot. N. 20031880); and

Whereas, by petition dated 18 January 2006, Father Speekman made recourse against the Second Decree of Removal dated 14 December 2005.

Now, therefore, after carefully reviewing the forgoing, as well as the *acta* of the case provided by Father Speekman and the Ordinary,

**THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY hereby decrees**

**(1) that the petition of Rev. John Speekman against the Second Decree of Removal dated 14 December 2005 is upheld because, notwithstanding the substantial compliance of the Ordinary with the procedural law governing the Removal of a Parish Priest, the Second Decree of Removal violates the law *in decernendo* because it fails to introduce new information which would lead the Congregation to a different disposition in the case and because it relies upon causes and arguments for removal that were previously found to be insufficient by the Congregation; and**

**(2) that the dispositions of the Decree of the Congregation for the Clergy issued on 8 July 2004 (Prot. N. 20031880) are to be implemented without further delay and the Congregation is to be notified of such implementation in a prompt manner.**

*Given at the Seat of the Congregation for the Clergy, 20 November 2006  
Signed, Dario Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos*

## Protecting Reputations

Vic Burton of Lakes Entrance, wrote to the editor of Catholic Life about its misleading reporting of Fr John Shanley's "retirement" – see ITD December 06, p.6.

He was surprised to receive a response from Bishop Coffey himself. Sadly, the Bishop resorted to the 'privacy clause' that has been used over and over in Fr John Speekman's case, to cast doubt on the integrity of the man and to try to silence his supporters.

What terrible thoughts are conjured up about a priest who is told to move on for no clear reason, and when details are sought from his Bishop, we hear that "there is more to this, but I can't tell you."

In Fr Speekman's case, Bishop Coffey apparently considered himself not at liberty to tell Fr Speekman himself what he was being accused of, not to mention the Congregation for the Clergy, who couldn't find just reason either.

For Fr Shanley's reputation to be protected, we need Bishop Coffey to be clear about his motives for telling him to leave. As with any priest, if he has been involved in criminal behaviour, he must be properly accused and tried. If he has been found guilty of any misconduct deserving of being relieved of his parish (in the midst of a priest shortage), then it should be clearly stated. If he is innocent of any wrong-doing, he is owed a public apology from his Bishop.

What is Bishop Coffey hiding? And what powers does he bend to?  
Ed.

## A Man of Obedience

Dear Vic

Thank you for your letter of 5 November 2006 to Mr Colin Coomber of Catholic Life. I wish to reply in his place.

I have known and loved Fr John Shanley since 1951. As Bishop of the Diocese, in consultation with the priest – the priests of the Diocese have to submit their resignation at the age of 75. The Bishop of the Diocese submits his own resignation at the age of 75 to the Pope. It is true that if his health is good, a priest may continue, with a review each year.

A Bishop is under the supervision of other powers. No man is an island and Fr Shanley and the Bishop are men of obedience. Fr Shanley was never a greater priest when [sic] he obeyed his Bishop.

I realise that you do not know the whole story and I am not at liberty to tell you. The people of Lakes Entrance have had the pastoral wisdom of Fr Shanley for 30 years. Please give thanks to God for this privilege and continue to care for him. Vic, in your position, please welcome the new parish priest.

Yours sincerely  
Jeremiah Coffey, Bishop of Sale

## Christians and Muslims

*From an address by Pope Benedict XVI in Turkey*

Christians and Muslims, following their respective religions, point to the truth of the sacred character and dignity of the person. This is the basis of our mutual respect and esteem, this is the basis for cooperation in the service of peace between nations and peoples, the dearest wish of all believers and all people of good will.

For more than forty years, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council has inspired and guided the approach taken by the Holy See and by local Churches throughout the world to relations with the followers of other religions. Following the Biblical tradition, the Council teaches that the entire human race shares a common origin and a common destiny: God, our Creator and the goal of our earthly pilgrimage. Christians and Muslims belong to the family of those who believe in the one God and who, according to their respective traditions, trace their ancestry to Abraham (cf. Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions "Nostra Aetate" 1, 3).

This human and spiritual unity in our origins and our destiny impels us to seek a common path as we play our part in the quest for fundamental values so characteristic of the people of our time. As men and women of religion, we are challenged by the widespread longing for justice, development, solidarity, freedom, security, peace, defense of life, protection of the environment and of the resources of the earth. This is because we too, while respecting the legitimate autonomy of temporal affairs, have a specific contribution to offer in the search for proper solutions to these pressing questions.

Above all, we can offer a credible response to the question which emerges clearly from today's society, even if it is often brushed aside, the question about the meaning and purpose of life, for each individual and for humanity as a whole. We are called to work together, so as to help society to open itself to the transcendent, giving Almighty God his rightful place. The best way forward is via authentic dialogue between Christians and Muslims, based on truth and inspired by a sincere wish to know one another better, respecting differences and recognizing what we have in common. This will lead to an authentic respect for the responsible choices that each person makes, especially those pertaining to fundamental values and to personal religious convictions.

[...] May we come to know one another better, strengthening the bonds of affection between us in our common wish to live together in harmony, peace and mutual trust. As believers, we draw from our prayer the strength that is needed to overcome all traces of prejudice and to bear joint witness to our firm faith in God. May his blessing be ever upon us!

## Above The Law

Anyone who has studied the Fr Speekman case can only conclude that Bishop Coffey has conducted himself throughout the whole process as though he is above the law. It would seem that canon law only applies to priests, religious and laity, and not to bishops. No wonder people opt for civil action against the Church rather than canonical action.

The first decree of the Congregation for the Clergy declared that Bishop Coffey violated the law procedurally because his initial letter to Fr Speekman did not contain valid causes and arguments for his removal; and in his decision-making process because he removed Fr Speekman without having sufficient reason or evidence for removal. The Bishop violated Fr Speekman's rights to due process under the law, first by taking the side of the school principal over the canonically designated Parish Priest in opposition to relevant canonical and civil law governing their relationship, and secondly by publicly issuing a decree in his absence, removing the primary schools from Fr Speekman's competence and authority.

Despite enquiries from the Congregation and the intervention of the Apostolic Nuncio, for 15 months the Bishop obstinately refused to return Fr Speekman. Then without new evidence, the Bishop began a second farcical process of removal. Completely disregarding the Congregation's legitimate decree and rejecting its contents, he thus persisted in violating canon and civil law, without any serious consequences.

In both processes of removal, Bishop Coffey has been the one violating laws, being uncooperative and defiantly disobedient, while Fr Speekman has been the one penalized and made to suffer by being banished from his parish for three and half years.

Since the first decree, the Bishop has been able to exploit canonical time and abuse his rights to delay Fr Speekman's reinstatement, with apparent impunity. Three times in three years the Congregation, by decree, has declared justice but as long as this is not translated into action, it will remain just that - a declaration - and the Church would be failing to protect orthodox priests against abusive bishops. The current decree from the Congregation declares that Fr Speekman is to be returned without further delay. It has now been 40 days since this decree was issued and Fr Speekman is still not in his parish in Morwell. Where is the *real* justice?

*Gregory Kingman, Morwell*

## Christophobic

"I am becoming tired of the mockery of those who seem to regard faith communities, especially Christian ones, as intrusive and contrary to the common good. I label them Christophobic."

*Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster*

## Accomplices

When a crime has been committed, the police seek out all who have any degree of involvement. From these, various levels of responsibility will eventually reveal any accomplice *before* the fact, the culprit, any accomplice *after* the fact, the negligent, etc.

Using these criteria to clarify who is who in the Speekman affair, it seems hard to deny that there were accomplices *before* the fact: the school principal, officers and senior management of the Catholic Education Office, the teachers' union, and the bishop. Can all this have happened without collusion? It could well be evidence of conspiracy, but of what?

The Congregation for the Clergy clearly eliminates Fr Speekman as culprit, and lays the blame on the activists, specially the bishop, as he has charge of those under him, and overall responsibility to see that his diocese runs justly and harmoniously.

Accomplices *after* the fact? Well, just about everybody, even many senior clergy, *except* Fr Speekman. He has kept quiet and played by the rules. All the others are lying low and have left the bishop to carry the can.

History records many lessons of where the senior personages have been sucked in to a set-up, and, because of weakness and fear of undue pressures, succumbed to actions guaranteed to secure their failure.

People need rules. The CEO has them but does not abide by them. Should this be allowed to continue? Fr Speekman has paid his price, but when this saga is over should the corporate structure of the CEO be reformed to prevent further instances?

At heart is the role of the parish priest in his parish. Is he going to be allowed to exercise his proper authority, or will the 'faceless few' survive to fight on?

*S.C., Melbourne*

## Fighting the Good Fight

I am writing to congratulate you all for your splendid efforts in relation to Fr Speekman.

I have no doubt that your commitment to publicising the shabby treatment of Fr Speekman and the pathetic, baseless attempts of Bishop Coffey to get rid of such a fine priest, as well as your efforts to encourage prayer and support for Fr Speekman, significantly contributed to the end result, which is such a vindication for all concerned, and most especially Fr Speekman.

So thank you all for your efforts and every blessing as you keep fighting the good fight. We 'outsiders' know only a little of the calumny you have borne for standing up for the faith and the truth.

*Clare Ryan, Glen Waverley*

# So-Called Catholics Clamour for Cloning

A very disturbing trend to emerge from both the cloning and RU486 debates in Federal Parliament has been anti-life politicians claiming adherence to the Catholic faith. Considering the Church's complete and irreversible condemnation of abortion and of course cloning, it leads one to ask: How do these politicians get away with it?

**I believe Church leaders should be addressing this public scandal with a degree of urgency.**

Imagine a high profile Greenpeace activist was photographed clubbing baby seals to death in Alaska. One would imagine that his fellow environmentalists at Amsterdam headquarters would at least call him in 'for an explanation'.

In what really is an analogous but even more serious contradiction, MPs masquerading as 'discerning' and 'prayerful' followers of Christ are voting for abortion and cloning. They must be made to answer for their scandalously obstinate public dissent.

## **Confusing Claims**

We have ended up with the spectacle of Senator Claire Moore claiming in a newspaper profile: "I've been involved in pro-choice groups and women's groups for a long time. I'm a practising Catholic, which is terribly confusing for a lot of people and sometimes confusing for me." Confusing indeed.

And then there is Malcolm Turnbull. His website proudly beams his association with World Youth Day (including hosting three prominent international Archbishops at his family home) and he concludes an article with this prayerful reflection, "Let us pray that World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney will fill the world with Christ's love and that all of us who are engaged in this great endeavour shall share in and be inspired by God's passionate love for the human adventure."

Another 'great endeavour' in the 'human adventure' Turnbull has been involved in, is the passage of a cloning Bill recently passed by Parliament. Catholic convert Turnbull rhetorically asked the Parliament regarding the embryo, "[W]hile these human cells are alive, can they be regarded as a human person?" He continued, "It seems to me that our society has already reached a conclusion to the effect that an embryo at this very early stage is more in the nature of a potential than an actual human being and that the rights of this microscopic bundle of cells are not equal to those of a foetus, let alone a newborn baby." If I had a dollar for every time Turnbull used his vote in Parliament to betray the Church, I'd nearly be as rich as, well, Malcolm Turnbull.

Turnbull's temerity is startling. He stood up at the end of the RU486 debate to clarify his support for the abortion pill. He is then sent to Rome on behalf of the

Government to deliver a message to the Holy Father. Turnbull gives comments on his website about the latest papal encyclical, about the Eucharist, the liturgy and quotes passages from scripture with the rapidity of a preacher. In Parliament he supported using the ova from aborted females to make embryo clones destined for destruction!

Dr Brendan Nelson, who credits the Jesuits for influencing his decision to go into medicine, proudly proclaimed during the abortion pill debate to believe in 'One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' and then proceeded to vote in favour of RU486, not to mention cloning.

Teresa Gambaro stood in Parliament on December 4 and said, "As a Roman Catholic, I take my faith and the issues of human life very seriously." On December 6 Teresa voted for cloning and for the harvesting of eggs from aborted baby girls.

## **Thomas Aquinas Used**

After giving a dissertation on Thomas Aquinas and moral theology, Warren Snowdon MP said, "I feel comfortable in my position as a Catholic in being able to support this legislation." It is incumbent upon us to make Warren feel less 'comfortable' next time he votes for killing innocent human beings.

Greg Hunt, who to my knowledge is not Catholic, similarly relied upon Aquinas in support of the Bill. Apparently Greg thinks he has discovered that the Catholic Church has only upheld the sanctity of human life since 1887. He puts it down to the meddling of Pope Leo XIII. Who is writing his speeches? Dan Brown? Unborn human life has been sacred for Catholics since the Apostles.

Brendan Patrick John O'Connor MP, another self-proclaimed (and well-named) Catholic, also found that quoting Aquinas led him to vote in favour of plundering late term aborted female children to create clones. The next biggest victim of this debate, after the mutilated innocent embryos, must surely be Thomas Aquinas.

## **More Catholics for Cloning**

Joel Fitzgibbon talked about 'my Catholic faith' then voted for cloning (in addition to his earlier vote for RU486). Anthony Albanese did so in a similar fashion on RU486. Maria Vamvakinou 'consulted her parish priest' before voting for cloning. Catharine King, conceding almost with regret that she was 'brought up Catholic' came to the conclusion that abortion, embryo experimentation, foetal farming and cloning are all OK. Patrick Francis Farmer (who is on the same World Youth Day committee as Turnbull) voted in favour of cloning. Likewise Stephen Francis Smith and Joseph Benedict Hockey.

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During the cloning debate much was made of Dr Paul Brock's 'devout', 'serious' and 'committed' Catholicism. He was quoted by pro-clone politicians because he had Motor Neurone Disease and he was Catholic. An example (there were a few) was the breathless summary from Senator Judith Adams, "During his 15 years in the religious order of the Marist Brothers in the Catholic Church, Dr Brock spent six years of solid formal studies in philosophy, theology and ethics." This is only quoted approvingly because Brock urged the politicians to support the Bill.

Apparently Pam McCombe and Barry Marshall from the infamous clone-enabling Lockhart Committee also profess Roman Catholicism. This argument was used by Senator Ian MacDonald to defend cloning's spiritual credentials. That is an especially disturbing fact if one reads the chillingly dehumanising Lockhart report findings.

I could go on and on. I do not highlight these examples for the sake of judging others. It is an objective fact that cloning and abortion are expressly opposed to Christian teaching, and in particular to Catholic teaching. A politician cannot reconcile a vote in favour of these abhorrent measures with faith in the Christian Church. They should not be invited to cut the ribbon at school fetes, speak at diocesan conferences, stand on the stage at World Youth Day or take active leadership positions at their parish.

### **A Bishop Speaks Out**

I would call upon our Bishops to adopt the same attitude towards this public scandal as Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted (Phoenix Diocese). In a document titled *Catholics in the Public Square*, instructing the faithful on the dilemma of public officials betraying Church teaching, he wrote:

"There are several issues that are "not negotiable" for Catholics in political life, because they involve matters that are intrinsically evil... Pope Benedict XVI [has] stated: '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 [is] the protection of life in all its stages, from the first moment of conception until natural death'."

Bishop Olmsted went on to say, "If a politician is actively supporting and furthering the culture of death, he is not only causing scandal; he is sinning. Similarly, when a politician performs actions (like voting) that allow for abortions and even promote abortions... that politician is materially co-operating in grave sin. When this occurs, then the politician cannot receive Holy Communion without previously making a good confession. A good confession would require sincere sorrow for such sin and a firm purpose of making

amendment. Since the harm done would be public in nature, the amendment should also be public."

### **Prayer and Action**

That is a key, that the amendment be public. All of those who voted for cloning and abortion this year should make a public renunciation of their own actions. Pro-lifers should try and give courage to these fallen Catholic representatives. We need to pray for them. That is vital. But prayer does not preclude action. Our Catholic community must reproach them officially for their scandalous public dissent because they continue to cause sorrow for their neighbours in the pews.

*Marcel White, East St Kilda*

## **Another Strong Bishop**

It is interesting to read that Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln Nebraska, has recently had confirmation from the Holy See that a decision he made years ago to excommunicate Catholics who remained members of organisations with anti-Catholic beliefs or practices, was legitimate and within his competence as Bishop. One of these organisations was Call to Action.

Zenit News (11-12-2006) reports that Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, stated in his letter: "The judgment of the Holy See is that the activities of 'Call to Action' in the course of these years are in contrast with the Catholic Faith. ... Thus to be a member of this Association or to support it, is irreconcilable with a coherent living of the Catholic Faith."

Call to Action claimed that the Church 'ignored' social issues such as the environment, poverty, drug abuse and international conflicts. But their proposed 'solutions' included the ordination of women, married priests, new forms of liturgy, and the use of contraception. They have also been closely linked to abortion providers.

Bishop Bruskewitz said, "My prayer will always be that when people understand they have taken a wrong turn, they will stop and take the right turn."

*"Parents have to tell children that they can't test everything in the medicine cabinet or drink everything under the sink. The Church is our mother and gives us these instructions as protection against dangers we might not perceive. ... It is liberating, not enslaving."*

*Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz*

## Where is Your God?

*From a sermon by Father Raniero Cantalamessa,  
Pontifical Household preacher*

In Psalm 41 we read: “Tears are my bread day and night, as they daily say to me, ‘Where is your God?’ ... While my bones are broken, my enemies who trouble me have reproached me; they say to me all the day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

This sadness of the believer, caused by the presumptuous denial of God that surrounds him, has never had more reason to exist than it does today.

After the period of relative silence that followed the end of Marxist atheism, we are witnessing the return to life of a militant and aggressive atheism of a scientific and scientistic kind. The titles of some recent books speak eloquently of this: “The Atheist Manifesto,” “The God Illusion,” “The End of Faith,” “Creation without God,” “An Ethics without God.”[1]

In one of these treatises we read the following declaration: “Human societies have developed various normative means for acquiring knowledge which are generally shared, and through which something can be accepted. Those who affirm the existence of a being that cannot be known through those instruments must take upon themselves the burden of proof. For this reason it seems legitimate to hold that, until the contrary is proved, God does not exist.”[2]

With the same arguments we could demonstrate that love does not exist either, from the moment that it cannot be ascertained by the instruments of science.

The fact is that the proof for God’s existence is found in life and not in the books and laboratories of biology. First of all, in the life of Christ, and in the lives of the saints and of countless witnesses of faith. It is also found in the much derided signs and miracles that Jesus himself gave as a demonstration of his truth and that God continues to give but which atheists reject *a priori*, without trying to investigate them.

The reason for the sadness of the believer, as for the psalmist, is the impotence that he feels when faced with the challenge of those who say “Where is your God?” With his mysterious silence God calls the believer to share his weakness and defeat, allowing victory only under this condition: “The weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor 1:25).

*www.zenit.org 16-12-2006*

[1] Respectively Michel Onfray, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Telmo Pievani, Eugenio Lecaldano.

[2] Carlo Augusto Viano, “Laici in ginocchio,” Laterza, Bari.

## A Tale for All Seasons

Once upon a time, there was this king – Henry II. And once upon another time, centuries later, there was this priest – a Bishop. And, at this time, there is this teller of two stories – stories with strange likenesses.

Both the King and the Bishop were mighty, both had a lot of uncritical support, and both were powerful Absolute Monarchs in their own territory – the King by virtue of Civil Law; the Bishop by virtue of Canon Law.

The King in his Kingdom, the Bishop in his diocese, enjoyed this happy state of affairs, until it came to pass, in the course of time, that – to coin a phrase – it seemed that there was a fly in the ointment.

Despite the chronological disparity, it was the same fly that troubled the King and the Bishop and that fly was none other than the Pope in Rome who should, some thought, then as now, mind his own business.

To the great indignation of the King and of the Bishop, the Sovereign Pontiff would, in neither case, lay down his apostolic authority, bend to their wills, and “rid (them) of a turbulent priest” – that is, “turbulent” in their rarely questioned view.

For Henry, the solution was immediate, tidy and apparently final. His knights just murdered Thomas à Becket.

With the passage of the centuries, changing social customs had made bodily murder unfashionable in ecclesiastical circles. So the Bishop’s friends in the episcopate and priesthood had to content themselves with the attempted murder of the troublesome priest’s character, reputation and livelihood.

It is doubtful that their best efforts had even the appearance of success such as attended Henry’s knights. But, in any case, as it turned out, Henry’s troubles had not been laid to rest with the laying to rest of Thomas à Becket. Poor Thomas was done for, but Henry’s conscience was not.

More and more often his thoughts turned to that which he had forgotten – the Hereafter – so, very wisely, he came to the conclusion that there was nothing for it but very public, very painful, very humiliating penance.

That is the end of the King’s story. As to the denouement of the Bishop’s Saga, you must wait with what patience you can summon.

*Horrie Billy Dicktoo (name and address supplied)*

## Liturgy is Universal

“The Liturgy is not a “self-manifestation” of the community through which, as people say, it makes its entrance onto the scene; rather, it is the exit of the community from merely “being-itself”...and its entry into the vast living community in which God himself nourishes us. This universal character of the Liturgy must once again penetrate the awareness of one and all.” *Pope Benedict XVI*

*www.zenit.org 11-12-2006*



# Rejoice That We Live in Difficult Times!

Have they lost the faith or merely the plot? I am referring to far too many of our bishops, priests and religious.

Our Holy Father singled Australia out as a country where the faith is dying. Who is to blame for this dire crisis? The bishops of course – for the buck stops with them. They are more concerned with saving the planet, as is evident in their involvement in such issues as global warming, saving the Barrier Reef, the Murray River etc. Certainly there are various dioceses which are attempting to reverse the decline. But these are in the minority.

Our Catholic schools are no longer Catholic. This has been well documented in past issues of ITD and elsewhere. Our Catholic Education Office bureaucracy is far more interested in the money it obtains from the government – more enrolments equals more money. How else do you explain the fact that in most Catholic schools, half the pupils are non-Catholic and only a mere 3% or so would be practising Catholics. These figures make a mockery of school Masses.

What of the various liturgical abuses that litter the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Our bishops in the main ignore the Pope. Look at their failure to implement the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*.

One of the catalysts of the dissent gripping us at this point in time, was the infamous Renew programme that grew out of the Call to Action conference in Detroit in 1976. The plan was to change the Church from the bottom – the laity. This strategy came straight from Hell. The liberals in the Church – the ‘change agents’ – are still at it. They are of course doomed to failure. But in the meantime they do immense damage to the faith and to souls. Don’t get sucked in.

These ‘change agents’ are not confined to bishops and priests. Members of religious orders and their associates are also involved. To obtain a more comprehensive insight into the parlous state of the faith in this country, read Michael Gilchrist’s latest book, *Lost*.

To arrest the decline in the faith, an enormous effort has to be undertaken at a parish level with the full endorsement of the local bishop. A similar effort has to occur in our schools. If, because of the entrenched educational bureaucracy, it cannot be done, stop calling them Catholic.

Liturgical abuses have to be dealt with. Loyalty to Sunday Mass has to be emphasised, as does the frequent reception of the Sacraments, the practise of the daily rosary and the need of Eucharistic Adoration.

The bishops have abdicated their authority. When authority ceases to be exercised it ceases to be respected. Far too often, many bishops misuse their authority to persecute orthodox priests, whilst those

with a liberal bent get away with murder.

When a priest ceases Eucharistic Adoration with the backing of the Bishop as happened in Morwell a year ago, we could well ask if they believe in the Real Presence. Cardinal Vidal, the Archbishop of Cebu in the Philippines has stated, “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.” (Letters to a Brother Priest)

He says again, “Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is the solution to our problems of declining vocations, disintegrating families and the deflection of many of our brethren to fundamentalist sects.”

It is not rocket science to see the solution to our many problems. We need bishops who are going to grasp the nettle and lead us all in holiness, not so much with words but with the example of their own holiness.

Too many of our bishops seem to be looking at and blaming others for the declining faith in this country, when in fact it is their fault. They seem to have made the ostrich redundant. It is not too difficult to make the assumption that some of our bishops have lost the faith.

We live in difficult times, but do not be discouraged. Rejoice that we live in these difficult times. It may be *your* prayers, sacrifices and defence of the faith that will rectify the situation. Don’t wilt. Continue to pray and fight the good fight. Make sure you are on God’s side and remember the words of St Vincent de Paul: “Give me ten good priests and I will convert the whole of France.”

*John Henderson, Morwell*

## Catechesis is about Faith

*Pope Benedict XVI to Swiss Bishops on 7 November 2006*

Precisely in the past 50 years or so, catechesis has come a long way in its methodology. On the other hand, however, since much has been lost in anthropology and in the search for reference points, all too often catechesis does not even reach the content of the faith.

... It is important in catechesis, which includes the contexts of school, parish, community, etc., that faith be expounded fully, in other words, that children truly learn what “creation” is, what the “history of salvation” brought about by God is, and who Jesus Christ is, what the sacraments are and what is the object of our hope...

I think that we must all do our utmost for a renewal of catechesis in which the courage to witness to our faith and find ways to make it understood and accepted is fundamental. Today, religious ignorance has sunk to an abysmal level.

*www.zenit.org 11-12-2006*

# Full of Surprises!

The December issue of diocesan newspaper Catholic Life was a most entertaining read!

## WYD Fits!

From page 1 the fun began. An article on planning World Youth Day states proudly: "The diocese has made World Youth Day a priority because it fits in to the recommendations regarding youth in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, Journeying Together." Phew! Imagine if we had to write to the Pope and explain that unfortunately our diocese can't support WYD because it doesn't fit in with our pastoral plan!

## Getting it Wrong

Then on page 4, under the heading "Get it right!", a dig at politician Kim Beasley for regularly getting people's names wrong. Only Catholic Life called him Kim Bassinger - an actress! (Not sure why this rated a mention in Catholic Life at all, of course.)

## Only the Father Knows

Also on page 4, a classic from Fr Bernie Krotwaar! In an article titled, "World is facing 'end-time' event in the near future", he relates Mark's Gospel on the Second Coming (13:24-32) to environmental issues such as the greenhouse effect, water contamination and air pollution. He concludes that we will soon, in a matter of a generation or two, become extinct. Fortunately this "will not be the end of the world (some form of germ life and evolution will continue)," he says. And what is the Christian response to this? Fr Krotwaar proposes that "the Christian faith response to this is not to divorce politics and religion." Of course...

## Put Out Into the Past!

But wait, there's more! On page 13, Fr Herman Hengel writes under the heading, "Jesus and Pope urge to 'put out into the deep'". He follows a long-winded track of vaguely related quotes and bits of information, in order to end up with: "Some people want to stay in the past, and for example, use teaching methods of the past. They do not recognise that times have changed, education and culture have moved on. ... Using the phrase "Into the Deep" as a catchcry to stay in the past is a misuse of Jesus' words and a misreading of this Pastoral letter of Pope John Paul II." Can't imagine who he'd be referring to...

## A Church of Convenience

And the last laugh, on page 15 an article titled, "Rethink on condoms issue". It mentions that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has completed a study on condoms in order to address the questions people have on the use of condoms within marriage when one partner has AIDS. They have presented their study to the Pope and of course we fully expect his answer to be consistent with the teachings of the Church. But Catholic Life quotes Cardinal Barragan

as saying, "Let's hope that the Holy Father says what is most convenient on this subject." Convenient! Hardly a criterion for solid Catholic teaching. Let's hope that something was lost in the translation!

Also can't help wondering why Catholic media publish this information in such 'hopeful tones', as if a decision has already been made to allow a restricted use of condoms. Recently there were equally hopeful reports on the Church "reconsidering" allowing married priests. All the Vatican was doing was discussing the issue, and, after due consideration, reaffirmed the value of celibacy as we'd expect. The liberal media were so deflated by the outcome that they hardly mentioned it, in spite of the excited reports earlier predicting how the Church was about to allow married priests. Ed.

## Too Much To Ask

In a contribution to the December edition of Catholic Life, Fr Hengel states that some people want to stay in the past, refusing to recognise "that times have changed, education and culture have moved on." This is obviously a dig at Into the Deep and its supporters.

Perhaps Fr Hengel needs reminding that while times and culture have certainly moved on, the teachings of Christ still remain as they have been for over two thousand years since He gave them to us. So is it too much to ask that our clergy and our schools adhere to and teach as the Church and Christ teaches, rather than the misleading and false (if not heretical) diatribe that 'experts' such as Thomas Groome put forward?

*Pat O'Brien, Sale*

## Misleading

In the last issue of Catholic Life there was an article stating that the Vatican is considering allowing condoms to be used by married couples where HIV/AIDS is a problem.

As this is something that is only being *discussed* by the Vatican, there appears no need to print such an article. Family Life International (Australia) has a leaflet titled "The real truth about condoms" stating that from studies carried out, condoms do not protect against most sexually transmitted diseases, and if used consistently and correctly still left a 15% infection rate of HIV/AIDS. In contrast, in countries where chastity has been promoted there has been a significant decrease in the incidence of HIV/AIDS transmission.

Perhaps Catholic Life should be more discerning about printing matters that are only under discussion and which could be damaging to both the physical and moral well-being of people.

*Margaret Lowden, Lakes Entrance*

## On The One Hand...

Bishop Coffey says he's a man of obedience...  
(letter to Vic Burton)

Bishop Coffey says a focus of his diocese is addressing the shortage of priests...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Bishop Coffey is considering bringing priests in from Germany, India and Vietnam...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Bishop Coffey says we must stand on our own two feet and stop following Melbourne Archdiocese...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Bishop Coffey flags ecumenical services instead of Mass as a way to deal with the priest shortage...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Bishop Coffey says our diocese needs leadership...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Bishop Coffey says people should think of others during the festive season...  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

Monsignor McCartan, Vicar General, says Pat O'Brien is divisive...  
(conversation with Pat O'Brien)

## ...And On The Other

...The Vatican says Bishop Coffey has consistently refused to obey a legitimate Decree of July 2004  
(Decree of the Congregation for the Clergy)

...Bishop Coffey removes Fr John Speekman contrary to Canon Law; enforces Fr John Shanley's retirement in spite of Fr Shanley wanting to stay on; prevents Fr Brian O'Connor (chancellor of the Diocese) from saying public Sunday Masses; refuses to renew the contract of Fr Ignaci Smaga, visiting priest to the Polish community.

...Bishop Coffey ostracises 3 priests of his own diocese.

...Bishop Coffey suggests that we follow rural Queensland's example of having ecumenical services.  
(Gippsland Times 22/12/2006)

...the Catholic Church teaches that ecumenical services are never an answer to priest shortages.  
(e.g. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, n167)

...Bishop Coffey is supposed to *BE* our leader!

...Bishop Coffey has not even communicated with Fr Speekman since the Vatican's decree.

...Mons McCartan organises a divisive petition to pit priests of the diocese against Fr Speekman and against one another.

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## Uneasy Truce

For some time I have been uneasy about how you tend to portray Bishop Coffey (although I defend your right to cry the 'truth'). You may not intend to, but you paint a picture of Bishop Coffey as a cross between a buffoon and the antichrist.

And in defence of school teachers (and I myself am critical of them), I know that I couldn't do as well. There was a letter in November ITD from a vet in Queensland with kids in primary school, critical of the Catholic school system there, in relation to religious instruction. While agreeing with the general thrust, I remember Catholicity in the 50's and I remember being a Catholic kid in a state school (not fond memories). While what I call the 'anglicisation' of our Church is not pleasing, it is certainly more pleasant than the return of the 40's/50's would be, at least to me.

I do believe in the primacy of one's own well-informed conscience and in this respect I welcome the monthly arrival of *Into the Deep*, and in this spirit I enclose a small donation. In relation to well-informed conscience, we seem to be experiencing what I call the 'death of guilt'.

On another note, the hoopla about the 'resurgence' of the DLP and the abortion debate, and the general level of hate leveled at Tony Abbot and other Christians in politics and life in general, lead me to believe that sub-conscious bigotry and anti-Catholicism is alive and well, the charge perhaps generally led by what I call 'post-Catholics'.

*Peter Norton, Leongatha*

*"Knowing God is not enough. For a true encounter with him one must also love him."*

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## 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 4pm – 8pm (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
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## *Trust*

*that your sufferings, united to those of Christ, will prove fruitful for the needs of the Church and the world.*

*Pope Benedict XVI*

## *Contemplate*

“Learn from the Virgin Mary, the first person to contemplate the humanity of the Incarnate Word, the humanity of Divine Wisdom.

In the Baby Jesus, with whom she had infinite and silent conversations, she recognized the human Face of God, so that the mysterious Wisdom of the Son was impressed on the Mother’s mind and heart.”

*Pope Benedict XVI*

*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  
Australia**

- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
- 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 and on the website; printed copies up to a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.