

Into the Deep

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Bishop Appeals

Yes, for those of you who knew it couldn't *really* be over, Bishop Coffey has decided to appeal to the Vatican's highest court, the Apostolic Signatura, rather than reinstate Fr Speekman "without further delay" as he was told to. Having received the Congregation for the Clergy's decree on 23 November 2006, Bishop Coffey finally wrote to Fr Speekman on 12 January 2007, advising him that he would appeal the decision.

In the British Catholic newspaper, *The Tablet* (20-01-2007) Bishop Coffey provided some information regarding his reasons. The article quotes him as claiming that the Congregation for the Clergy didn't give him a fair hearing! Imagine that! He was not embarrassed to admit to *The Tablet* that his report on this removal case consisted of 240 pages, and still they couldn't find any new material to justify his removal of Fr Speekman. Imagine the time (15 months for the second case alone), effort, and legal costs (Bishop Coffey used the services of both a civil lawyer and a canon lawyer) that have been wasted on this "purported" (as the Congregation refers to it) second removal. Lucky our diocese is in such a healthy state that Bishop Coffey's energies were not required elsewhere...

Regardless, Bishop Coffey is happy to pursue an appeal to the Signatura. Maybe they'll find something in all the evidence he's presented over the 3½ years, that the Congregation for the Clergy keeps missing, in their unfairness. The Bishop further suggests that Fr Speekman has not been honest, complaining to *The Tablet* that the Congregation "accepted every word of his report without question."

Later in the article, he raises the hope that he will eventually let go of his pursuit of Fr Speekman, saying that if his appeal to the Signatura fails, he won't allow the dispute to continue further. But it turns out that this is only "because, at 74, he is due to retire in a year". What exactly does the Bishop's age or retirement date (always mentioned in such articles) have to do with justice? Nowhere is Fr Speekman's age quoted as relevant to justice being carried out in this case. Ed.

We Ask For Faith

Pope Benedict XVI

"We ask the Mother of God to obtain for us the gift of a mature faith, a faith which we would like, as far as possible, to resemble her own, a clear and genuine faith, humble and at the same time courageous, saturated with hope and enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God; a faith removed from all fatalism and that aims to cooperate in full and joyous obedience to the divine will, in the absolute certainty that God wants nothing other than love and life, always and for everyone."

Liturgical Abuse Due to Ignorance

From an address by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 26-10-2006

...The sacred liturgy is a gift we receive from Christ through the Church. It is not something that we invent. It has therefore unchangeable elements which come from our Saviour Jesus Christ, as in the essential forms of the sacraments, and changeable elements which have been carefully handed on and guarded by the Church.

Many abuses in matters liturgical are based, not on bad will but on ignorance, because they "involve a rejection of those elements whose deeper meaning is not understood and whose antiquity is not recognized" (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, No. 9).

Thus some abuses are due to an undue place given to spontaneity, or creativity, or to a wrong idea of freedom, or to the error of horizontalism which places man at the centre of a liturgical celebration instead of vertically focusing on Christ and his mysteries. [...]

Horizontalism, which makes people tend to celebrate themselves instead of the mysteries of Christ, does damage to Catholic faith and worship and deserves to be avoided.

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Putting Some Persistent Rumours to Rest

There has been a lot of media coverage about Fr Speekman's case since the Vatican issued its second decree in his favour (see page 8 for some examples). This has generated a lot of discussion – on internet discussion boards, websites ('blogs'), among families and friends, within parishes and schools, and on the street. It has been fascinating (not to mention disheartening) to see that many people refuse to allow their opinions and personal convictions to be influenced by facts. Here is another reminder of a few very simple, indisputable facts:

- Bishop Coffey *removed* Fr Speekman as parish priest of Morwell. He did not simply move Fr Speekman to another parish, as usually happens in 'moves'. This was a canonical process of removal, reserved for when a parish priest's ministry is found to be harmful or ineffective. There has to be an investigation prior to the removal, to ensure that there is valid reason for the removal, and the priest has to be advised of the reasons.
- Bishop Coffey did not explain to Fr Speekman what exactly he had done wrong to warrant the claim that his ministry was harmful or ineffective, other than 'his manner of acting and speaking'. He could thus not defend himself nor correct any wrong behaviour. (There are witnesses to Fr Speekman asking Bishop Coffey in a formal meeting, to tell him what he had done wrong, and the Bishop refusing. Later, the Congregation's first decree confirmed that the Bishop did not provide Fr Speekman with reason and arguments for his removal, thereby denying him the ability to defend himself against the allegations.)
- Fr Speekman *obeyed* and left the parish. He has *not* disobeyed his Bishop at any stage.
- Fr Speekman appealed to the Congregation for the Clergy against his removal. He presented his side of the case, Bishop Coffey presented *his* side of the case, with all his evidence and reasons for removing Fr Speekman.
- Having heard *both sides*, the Congregation found clearly in Fr Speekman's favour – that he was removed *without* valid reason; that the evidence Bishop Coffey provided about Fr Speekman's ministry indicated that his ministry was *effective*, not ineffective; that the confusion and disturbance in the parish and diocese that Bishop Coffey blamed Fr Speekman for, was more the Bishop's *own* doing; that the Bishop had damaged Fr Speekman's reputation.
- Bishop Coffey had a choice of returning Fr Speekman to Morwell, or appealing the Congregation's decision to the Apostolic Signatura. He did neither. For over a year he did nothing at all.
- Then Bishop Coffey began a *second* removal process. He took over a year to put this case together – still without talking to Fr Speekman. Fr Speekman (by now working in Sydney) appealed to the Congregation for the Clergy again.
- The Congregation for the Clergy issued another decree, confirming the first: that Bishop Coffey was *still* unable to present valid reasons or arguments for removing Fr Speekman. The Congregation now *insists* that Bishop Coffey abide by the first decree and reinstate Fr Speekman without further delay.
- Bishop Coffey refuses. He now appeals to the Signatura.

So, after all that, the rumours are a-buzz about what the *real* reason is behind the Bishop's removal of Fr Speekman, if there is no evidence of the *alleged* reason. The Congregation's first decree (2004) concluded that the allegations against Fr Speekman *did not* concern his ministry; rather that there was "a divergence in fundamental questions of Christian life and the discipline of the Church" concerning areas that "are entirely in the competence of the Parish Priest"; and that a minority of people disagreed with Fr Speekman's *Catholic leadership*.

It's what we've always known, and always reported. It's been public for years. But as they say, there are none so blind as they who will not see. This is purely a question of an orthodox priest up against a liberal diocese.

A wise (not to mention cynical!) man once said: 'Don't spoil a good story with facts'. It seems many people, not only the Bishop, take this advice. It's just too hard to believe or imagine that such a drawn-out, painful, bitter affair could be so unnecessary, groundless, unjust and unrelenting – unless Fr Speekman had truly done something terrible enough to deserve it. But you'd think it would be easy enough to explain these terrible things in two cases, wouldn't you? The Bishop, and his blind supporters, should just give it up. Face the facts, that there IS NO evidence, apologise, and get on with it. Ed.

"Liturgy is never anyone's private property, be it of the celebrant or of the community in which the mysteries are celebrated."

Ecclesia de Eucharistia, n 52

New Slant on Obedience

Thank you for providing readers with a copy of the Decree we have been awaiting. It is very useful to have the injustices inflicted on Father Speekman by Bishop Coffey set out in summary form by the Congregation for the Clergy in this latest Decree. Nothing could be clearer. It is quite remarkable that Bishop Coffey, in his letter to Vic Burton, is able to say that “Father Shanley and his bishop are men of obedience”! His Lordship will give hypocrisy a bad name if he keeps this up.

At least Father Tom Cleary seems to be speaking out clearly and accurately. He told *The Age*, “(Father Speekman) wants to win his case, it’s a matter of principle”. As indeed it is. Father Speekman is not motivated by thoughts of personal gain. He has taken a stand because there is a vitally important principle to be upheld. He is defending himself against an appalling injustice but, more importantly, he is defending the parishioners – adults and children – who were in his charge and who are entitled to a parish priest who is loyal and true to the teachings of the Church. Would any Catholic priest who is a man of principle behave differently?

Father Cleary stops short of saying that Bishop Coffey is *unprincipled* but he implies that for the Bishop, we do not have “a matter of principle” here. In any event, Father Cleary makes clear exactly what His Lordship hopes to achieve by disobeying the Congregation’s Decrees for so many months and now appealing to the Signatura. “Father Cleary suggested the next appeal would take at least another year, by which time Bishop Coffey would have turned 75 and retired.”

One suspects that Bishop Coffey’s behaviour from the beginning – his continual discourtesy to Fr Speekman, the injustices done by him to an outstanding parish priest, and his refusal to comply with several Decrees of the Congregation – are explained by Fr Cleary’s concluding remarks. There was never any need for His Lordship to observe or to obey directives from the Congregation if he could “string things out” until he reached retirement age. Fr Cleary, at least, thinks he might just succeed in this.

Thus does a “man of obedience” set an example for the clergy and lay people of his diocese!

Michael Ryan, Rosanna

God Alone

“Let nothing disturb you, nothing frighten you. Everything is passing, only God remains. Patience overcomes everything. Nothing is lacking to those who have God. God alone suffices.”

St Teresa of Avila

The Art of Celebrating the Liturgy

From an address by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 26-10-2006

“Ars celebrandi” is based on the theological truth articulated by the Second Vatican Council, namely that “the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of man is manifested by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which is proper to each of these signs; in the liturgy full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Christ, that is by the Head and his members” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 7). ...

The first place goes to the celebrating priest or bishop. If they are sufficiently inserted into the meaning of liturgical celebrations which have Christ as their Head, if they respect the Scripture, Tradition, historical roots of the sacred texts and the theological riches of liturgical expressions, then the results will be a happy manifestation of the “ars celebrandi.”

Liturgical celebrations will beautifully manifest the faith of the Church, nourish this faith in the participants, awaken this faith in the dormant and the indifferent, and send the people home on fire to live the Christian life and spread the Gospel. This is very far from the cold, man-centred and sometimes openly idiosyncratic mannerism which our Sunday congregations are sometimes forced to endure.

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Pray for Christian Unity

Pope Benedict XVI

“Of course the path to unity continues to be long and difficult; however, we must not be discouraged and must continue to go forward on it, relying first of all on the sure support of the One who, before ascending to heaven, promised his followers: “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Unity is a gift of God and fruit of the Spirit’s action. Therefore, it is important to pray. The more we draw near to Christ, being converted to his love, the closer we also come to one another.”

“Through Baptism, all Christians have been freed from spiritual deafness, enabled to hear God’s word and charged to bear witness to it in word and deed, by the exercise of Christian charity. May our common prayers and our efforts to live fully the grace of our baptism hasten the day when all Christ’s followers will live in perfect communion.”

Opting Out

After reading Fr Herman Hengel's article in *Catholic Life* (December 2006) I felt I should certainly answer it. The following is from a letter I wrote to Fr Hengel:

Yes, there have been "dramatic changes in methods of education" but rather than "putting out into the deep", you people have opted out of your responsibility to give our children their faith, what the Catholic Church teaches: the Ten Commandments, the sound Church teaching on sexual behaviour, the wonder of Jesus Christ's Sacraments which enable us to live a truly Christian life. In fact you have opted out of giving our children the choice of being real Catholics armed with the great knowledge of their faith that will uphold them through thick and thin.

What is the point of teaching children "to think for themselves, to reflect and to make choices"? What a contradiction in terms! We are paying a fortune to have our children given the right choices in life to get them to heaven and to live Christian lives worthy of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ and to help convert the whole of Australia as we are all sent out to do. "Teaching our children how to access information" is not why we send our children to school at such expense. It is not until they are in the higher secondary forms that this becomes important.

We are sending our children to Catholic schools to have them taught the Catholic faith in all of its glorious truth and its great logic and its great answers to how to live a Christian life within God's great loving care, so that we can live with Him for all eternity in heaven within the fire of His love.

So what exactly are you teaching them, if you are "teaching them to make choices"? It certainly isn't the Catholic faith, as we silly parents have been fondly believing. It seems to me you are giving them every other choice except the Catholic faith. My last four children had their faith torn from them at the regional Catholic College in Bairnsdale.

"Times have changed" alright and our children are not being educated at all, in the true meaning of the word. It is no wonder that "their parents and elders do not always like it". Our children are not being given God's laws to live by but are left to rely on uninformed consciences within a godless society.

The Catholic Church does not "move on" to the cultural mores of the day. It stands firm, with Jesus Christ at the helm. Jesus Christ did not do away with God's laws, He came to fulfill them.

It is time for a real change, back to our faith and God's wonderful order created by keeping His laws. You can start by teaching our teachers the faith and how to teach religion properly. We are still hoping that our priests will finally realise what a failure the CEO has become and will do something about it.

Mary McMahon, Orbst

Homily Should Make Hearts Burn

From an address by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 26-10-2006

"The homily," says the Second Vatican Council, "is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 52). In it the Word of God is bread broken for the people. The sacred readings are related to the realities of life in the world of today. The homily, well delivered, should make the people's hearts burn within them (cf. Luke 24:32).

Unfortunately, many homilies as delivered by priests or deacons are not up to what is desirable. Some homilies seem to be mere sociological, psychological or, worse still, political comments. They are not sufficiently grounded in Holy Scripture, liturgical texts, Church tradition and solid theology. In some countries there are people who do not appreciate that the delivery of the homily at the Eucharistic Sacrifice is a pastoral ministry assigned only to ordained ministers: deacon, priest or bishop. Lay people laudably conduct catechesis outside Mass, but not the homily which demands ordination.

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Acting Beyond His Powers

I understand that the Legion of Mary is a *lay* organisation. While a spiritual director – of the right kind – may be desirable, the organisation can function without one. Where there is one, his role is to be a *spiritual* advisor, not administrator.

Of course, the local Legion of Mary is free to listen to its spiritual advisor, but his competence is not to run the *administrative* side of the organisation (see ITD Jan 07, p2).

Pat O'Brien should make this very clear to the local members, who perhaps don't grasp its implications. After all, Msgr McCartan doesn't exactly have an unblemished track record himself.

A mere Vicar General is not the Bishop. He cannot appoint or depose parish priests, or excommunicate anyone, as he has threatened in the past, and now carries on a vindictive war of attrition after organising a disgraceful and slanderous petition against a lawful and innocent priestly colleague in the diocese.

The faithful in Sale must have had a gutful. Now they have to deal with a Vicar General who is too ignorant to know, or purposely acts beyond his legal powers, just like his master.

S.C., Melbourne

Religion and Ideology

Cardinal Paul Poupard, president of the Pontifical Councils for Culture and Interreligious Dialogue

“The great risk exists of using a specific terminology inadequately and of confusing essential concepts, for example, by equating ideologies and religions.

By religion is understood a relationship between God and man. It is a real and existential, personal and inter-subjective, conscious and free, dynamic, necessary and perfecting relationship of the human being.

Ideologies, instead, especially those of the 20th century, are the negation of this relationship with God and, as we have seen, do not perfect man, but tend to oppress him in a total manner, so much so that they are called, in fact, totalitarian.”

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Sunday is Sacred

Pope Benedict XVI

Sundays remain the fundamental seedbed and the primordial nucleus of the liturgical year; ... a fragment of time pervaded by eternity, because its dawn saw the Risen Christ enter victoriously into eternal life.

For the first Christians, participation in Sunday celebrations was the natural expression of their belonging to Christ, of their communion with His mystical Body, in joyous expectation of His glorious return.

Today, it is more than ever necessary to reiterate the sacred nature of the Lord's day and the need to participate in Sunday Mass. The cultural context in which we live, often marked by religious indifference and secularism that obscure the horizon of transcendence, must not cause us to forget that the People of God who came into being with the events of Easter must return [to those events] as an inexhaustible spring, in order to better understand ... their own identity and the reasons for their existence.

Sunday was not chosen by the Christian community, rather by the Apostles, indeed by Christ Himself Who on that day, “the first day of the week,” arose and appeared before the disciples. ... Each Sunday celebration of the Eucharist enacts the sanctification of Christian people, until that Sunday without end, the day of the definitive encounter of God with His creatures.

Vatican Information Services 01-12-2006

Test Your Memory

Name the Twelve Apostles

See page 6

A Scandal for the Church

The latest ploy by Bishop Coffey to again appeal the decision of the Congregation for the Clergy in favour of Fr Speekman, can only be described as despicable. He has been and is still holding the Congregation in contempt, and has shown he has no respect for Church discipline.

Fr Speekman has been the victim of a conspiracy that has been allowed to escalate as time passes. It has now reached such proportions that it has become a scandal not only locally but nationally and world-wide. The Bishop's continued defiance and disobedience of the decrees issued by the Congregation, has caused and is causing great harm to the Church.

All those who have collaborated – in the Catholic Education Office, clergy, school communities, religious and their associates, and members of the laity, with the Bishop – should hang their heads in shame. They are equally to blame for the continuing conspiracy.

What of the actions, or lack thereof, of the Australian Bishops? Late in 2006 they called for justice to be given to David Hicks. Their silence in relation to justice for Fr Speekman has been deafening. David Hicks has yet to be tried. Fr Speekman has now been cleared twice of any wrong-doing and yet the Bishops individually and collectively refuse to do anything. Their call for justice for David Hicks whilst ignoring the lack of justice shown to Fr Speekman, one of their own brother priests, reeks of hypocrisy.

It has been said that this case is about personalities. This assumption is far from the truth. It is all about and only about truth and justice. Whilst the truth is suppressed and justice denied, we all suffer.

If this particular matter ever came before the civil court, the truth would be known. All involved could be subpoenaed, have to give evidence under oath, and be cross-examined. An interesting scenario, and one which most of those involved would face with a great deal of trepidation.

Meanwhile the scandal continues and is doing the Church great harm, and we wonder why the faith is dying. Unless the Congregation forces the Bishop to reinstate Fr Speekman, its authority is seriously compromised. After all, when authority ceases to be exercised, it ceases to be respected.

What do we make of Fr Hengel's role? He is a leading figure in an organisation that defends priests who are unfairly attacked. Well Father, if you continue to refuse to defend the attack on Fr Speekman and in fact join in the attack by signing a petition against him, I would suggest your credibility is on the line. It is a sad day when one loses trust in one's Bishop and priests. No wonder pride takes first place in the list of the seven deadly sins.

John Henderson, Morwell

Fast and Abstinence

Answered by Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university www.zenit.org

Q: An inquirer in our parish RCIA program asked why chicken could not be substituted for fish during Lenten days of abstinence. Can you explain the reasons for the preference for fish for the days of abstinence? - T.W., California

A: In the tradition of the Church, laws relating to fasting are principally intended to define what pertains to the quantity of food allowed on days of fasting, while those regulating abstinence refer to their quality.

The law of the fast means that only one full meal may be taken during the day while two light meals are permitted in accord with local custom as to the amount and kind of food. While the consumption of solid food between meals is forbidden, liquids, including tea, coffee and juices, may be taken at any time.

The law of abstinence prohibits eating the flesh, marrow and blood products of such animals and birds as constitute flesh meat. In earlier times the law of abstinence also forbade such foods that originated from such animals, such as milk, butter, cheese, eggs, lard and sauces made from animal fat. This restriction is no longer in force in the Roman rite.

Vegetables as well as fish and similar cold-blooded animals (frogs, clams, turtles, etc.) may be eaten. Amphibians are relegated to the category to which they bear most striking resemblance. This distinction between cold- and warm-blooded animals is probably why chicken may not replace fish on days of abstinence. This classification can scarcely preclude all doubt regarding the law of abstinence. But local usage and Church authorities usually provide a sufficient basis to resolve problematic questions.

Abstinence was technically stricter in former times. Yet, the actual observance of the law was, and is, confined to such circumstances as carry no insupportable burden. This is why people who are sick, very poor or engaged in heavy labour (or who have difficulty in procuring fish) are not bound to observe the law so long as such conditions prevail. Diversity in customs, climate and food prices also modified the law of abstinence.

Although in past times penitential days and times requiring fast and/or abstinence were more abundant, present canon law (Canons 1250-1253) has somewhat reduced these days. Canon 1250 states: "The penitential days and times in the universal church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent." Canon 1251: "Abstinence from eating meat or some other food according to the prescripts of the conference of bishops is to be observed on every Friday of the year unless a Friday occurs on a day listed as a solemnity. Abstinence and fasting however are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday."

The bishops' conference may substitute abstinence from other foods for meat in those countries where eating meat is uncommon, or for some other just reason. They also enjoy broad authority, in the light of Canon 1253, to "determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part for abstinence and fast."

Abstinence is obligatory after reaching the age of 14; fasting becomes obligatory from age 18 until midnight of one's 59th birthday.

The motives for practicing abstinence are admirably expressed by St. Augustine in his Sermon on Prayer and Fasting: Abstinence purifies the soul, elevates the mind, subordinates the flesh to the spirit, begets a humble and contrite heart, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, extinguishes the fire of lust, and enkindles the true light of chastity. In short, the Church mandates fast and abstinence in order to help free us from the chains of slavery to sin. Rather than an onerous obligation it is a cry of freedom from all that binds us to ourselves and to our passions.

Education in Silence

Pope Benedict XVI

"In-depth reflection on Christian truths and the study of theology or other religious disciplines presuppose an education in silence and contemplation, as it is necessary to be able to listen with the heart to God who speaks. ... Only if they proceed from the silence of contemplation can our words have a certain value and usefulness and not fall into the inflation of the world's speeches which seek the consensus of public opinion."

The Twelve

Simon Peter;

Andrew, his brother;

James and John, sons of Zebedee;

Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas;

James the son of Alphaeus;

Thaddaeus, also known as Jude;

Simon the Zealot;

and Judas Iscariot.

Catholics in Korea

We were recently in Gwangju in Korea and went to Mass at Pung Am, our old parish. Incredible (and somewhat exciting) to see a Mass celebrated without abuses. And no one talking in church. All the women wearing mantillas, many stamped with the logo Legio Mariae.

There is a new priest there, a young man perhaps in his late twenties; some members of the choir recognised us and took us to meet him. As is traditional, they were dressed in their choir robes. And the congregation wore their best clothes, just as Australians used to a few years back. No shorts, jeans or sports clothes.

Pung Am is a small suburb, maybe less than a kilometre across, semi-circular in shape because of the surrounding mountains, and only about six years old. The original church (not much more than 3 years old) was pulled down in 2005 to make way for a new church double the size. I think the new one seats about 1 000, and it was packed. We were in the overflow, in the balcony, which by itself holds about as many as our parish church in Queensland.

The priest was dressed like a priest, and the nuns looked and behaved like nuns (but not like Australian nuns).

On Christmas day we went to our new local parish at Samgak, and we have been there each day since. We met the parish priest, Fr Dominic, who is about 30, and his assistant, who is in his twenties.

At a daily Mass there were something like 100 people, in spite of heavy snow. I took a photo as I suspect many would not believe this, but it's normal for Korea. We go early for daily Mass and find the church steadily filling half an hour before the priest arrives. After Mass we stay for rosary, and some are still there perhaps an hour later, praying, doing the stations, or in adoration. I estimate that daily Mass attracts more people than Sunday Masses in Queensland.

As you are aware, Korea produces about 200 priests each year, and some have told me they'd love to come to Australia. But they must first be asked by an Australian bishop.

Those running the Queensland Church these days have no idea what they have lost. I think it was St Faustina who saw in a vision a large crowd of people go singing and dancing over a precipice, led by their priests and bishops.

Our Korean friends ask us about Australia. When I tell them about the Church in Queensland, they shake their heads in stunned disbelief. How could the Catholic Church be like that?

Once again, it's going to be hard to leave Korea.

Richard Stokes, Brisbane

Real Choice

In the debate over abortion counselling, you would think that the Catholic Church is the only body opposed to abortion. Other churches, particularly the growing number of charismatics have a similar view. Also I have met non-believers and agnostics, who are opposed to the procedure.

I believe that the pro-abortion groups (it is inaccurate to describe them as "pro choice") are quite happy to support the idea that abortion clinics will pass out unbiased information, but contrary to their self-proclaimed name of pro-choice, do not want women to have the "choice" of counselling from those with the opposite view.

Frank Bellet, Petrie QLD

Concern for the Bishop

I have been following Fr Speekman's saga on and off for a number of years. I just read your December issue concerning a retiring priest, and became concerned about the Bishop. The Bishop comes across as going about his priestly duties because he has to pretend he is still a religious man. The Bishop appears to have personal issues with priests who are truly prayerful and follow the teachings of the Church.

I hope that a Church delegation would review the Bishop's ability to continue to perform not only his priestly duties, but that of a Bishop as well.

Mary Dorris, Gulfport, Mississippi

How does the Church nourish the moral life of a Christian?

The Church is the community in which the Christian receives the Word of God, the teachings of the "Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), and the grace of the sacraments. Christians are united to the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ in such a way that their moral life is an act of spiritual worship; and they learn the example of holiness from the Virgin Mary and the lives of the Saints.

Why does the Magisterium of the Church act in the field of morality?

It is the duty of the Magisterium of the Church to preach the faith that is to be believed and put into practice in life. This duty extends even to the specific precepts of the natural law because their observance is necessary for salvation.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 429, 430

The Right to Delay Justice

It would appear that all the public statements which have been made on Bishop Jeremiah Coffey's behalf about appealing to the Apostolic Signatura are not only bold in their intentions to delay Fr Speekman's reinstatement, but also in assuming that the appeal would take the Bishop right up to his retirement in 2008. These people, in true liberal fashion, speak as though justice in administrative law of the Church depends on the Bishop and his decision to retire.

The Bishop's decision to appeal, with the intention of delaying justice, is another stunt of disobedience under the cover of canonical right. It is contrary to what he was commanded to do by his superiors to resolve the controversy in his diocese. He has deliberately chosen to prolong the injustice to Fr Speekman, the disorder in Morwell parish, the chaos in the diocese and the scandal in the country. What is disturbing about this, is that in spite of being called to be, as Bishop, a primary witness of pastoral charity, communion and holiness, Bishop Coffey seems unperturbed by his reason for exercising his right to appeal.

After the first Decree from the Congregation in 2004, Bishop Coffey was given the option to appeal to the Signatura if he had any grievances with their judgment. He rejected it. Now, when told *again* to reinstate Fr Speekman, this time without further delay, and to notify them promptly once he's done it – he decides to appeal to the Signatura! This is quite extraordinary! When the Bishop first rejected this option and deviated from the proper administrative process, the Congregation was duty-bound to safeguard Fr Speekman's natural and canonical rights. Besides the Bishop, they are the competent authority entrusted by the Holy Father with this responsibility. For a year they allowed the Bishop to disregard their legitimate decree on the basis that he had "new" evidence, then another year before they concluded that they had been misled by an uncooperative administrator.

After nearly 3 years of dealing with the Bishop, there should be enough evidence to indicate that the Bishop has been acting in bad faith and that the necessary goodwill and action required to resolve the contentious situation in the Sale diocese will not be provided by him.

It would appear from the summary of the Congregation's second decree, that this case has long passed being about the reinstatement of Fr Speekman and is more about his abusive Bishop. It is incumbent upon the Holy See to provide the necessary action to restore Fr Speekman to his parish and to safeguard the faithful's right to good order in Morwell parish and the diocese of Sale.

All these stunts to delay due process of the law are attempts to deprive it of its meaning, and to practically render the Church's administrative process ineffective.

Canon law is not an optional extra, something that is extraneous to the life and ministry of the Church, that can be disregarded by Bishops. It is the Church's fundamental legislative document, juridically and legislatively it is based on divine revelation and tradition, and as such it is absolutely necessary for the Church. It exists to preserve proper sacred order so that Christ's faithful can be reconciled in justice based on charity, with the rights and duties of each safeguarded and defined (ref. Apostolic Constitution, *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*).

In a country where the faith is dying and generations of young people have concluded that the Church is irrelevant, the spiritual scandal that has been created by Bishop Coffey has added a few more nails to its coffin.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

As The News Spread

Articles published about Fr Speekman's case:

01-12-2006: *CathNews* (Australia, national on-line)
"Vatican backs reinstatement of Gippsland priest"

09-01-2007: *CathNews* (Australia, national on-line)
"Congregation for the Clergy decree on Sale priest published"

12-01-2007: *The Age* (Australia, daily newspaper, Victoria)
"Vatican orders Bishop to reinstate removed priest"

15-01-2007: *LifeSite News* (USA and Canada)
"Aussie bishop launches final appeal to oust faithful priest despite Vatican orders to reinstate him"

16-01-2007: *CathNews* (Australia, national on-line)
"Sale bishop appeals to Vatican "supreme court""

16-01-2007: *Gippsland Times* (Australia, local newspaper, Sale)
"Vatican overrules bishop"

20-01-2007: *The Tablet* (United Kingdom, Catholic newspaper)
"Bishop appeals against Vatican order to reinstate priest"

February issue: *AD2000* (Australia, national Catholic journal)
"Vatican orders reinstatement of wrongly removed Sale Diocese parish priest"

And numerous internet discussion boards, websites and blogs around the world.

Pilgrimage to Fatima

Perhaps your readers may be interested in knowing of a forthcoming pilgrimage, organised by The Archconfraternity of St Philomena, Australia.

The Archconfraternity of St Philomena is linked with the Shrine of St Philomena, Mugnano del Cardinale, Italy. St Philomena is the Patroness of the Holy Rosary, giving up her life as a martyr at the tender age of 13. It is my job (voluntary) to make her name known once more, especially here in Australia.

A new statue of this little Wonder Worker is presently being made for Australia and has received a beautiful blessing from Cardinal Pell. This I hope, will turn eyes and ears back to her story, which is rich with love and faith, expressing full confidence in Jesus and Mary.

This appointment was originally given to me by the Rector of the Shrine in the year 2000 as I travelled to Mugnano with youth before joining the World Youth Day events. This appointment was again confirmed last year at the Sanctuary, as we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the relics of St Philomena travelling from Rome to Mugnano del Cardinale. A pilgrimage of 48 people left Australia to visit shrines in Italy and France in August '05.

Australia received a presentation of two small relics of St Philomena – one is at the Fatima Centre Chapel, Poath Rd, Murrumbena, Melbourne and the other is at the Devotional Centre of St Philomena, St Joseph's Parish, Rochester, country Victoria.

I am presently organising a pilgrimage for 2007, "Sanctus Sanctus Sanctus" visiting Italy, France, Spain and Portugal in reparation for the Seven Sorrows of Our Blessed Mother, arriving in Fatima for the 90th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun.

Cost will be approximately \$6500 per person and includes flights, transfers, luxury coach travel, 30 nights accommodation, daily breakfast and 18 dinners. There will be a Catholic priest as a spiritual director.

Destinations will include Rome, Mugnano, Loreto, Assisi, Turin, La Salette, Lourdes, Avila, Fatima, Ars, Padua and Lyon, amongst many others. The pilgrimage departs 15 September 2007. Please contact me for more detailed information and an application form. Applications close the end of February or when full.

I hope that some of our Catholic people who read *Into the Deep* will be in a position to join me on this pilgrimage. This pilgrimage is under the protection of St Philomena as we RSVP to Our Lady's call - making reparation, sacrifice, vigilance and prayer.

May God and His Blessed Mother continue to bless you and your Catholic magazine, keeping us informed.

Mary McAndrew, marymcandrew1@hotmail.com
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Gowanbrae 3043
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Confusion of Roles Damages the Church

From an address by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 26-10-2006

The common priesthood of all the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained priest come from Christ himself.

Confusion of roles in the hierarchical constitution of the Church does damage. It does not promote witness to Christ nor holiness for clergy and laity.

Neither attempts at the clericalization of the laity, nor efforts toward the laicization of the clergy, will bring down divine graces.

"In liturgical celebrations," says Vatican II, "whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, each person should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and liturgical norms require of him" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 28).

It is false humility and an inadmissible idea of democracy or fraternity, for the priest to try to share his strictly priestly liturgical roles with the lay faithful. ...

If the role of the priest is weakened or is not appreciated, a local Catholic community may be dangerously lapsing into the idea of a priestless community. This is not in line with the genuine concept of the Church instituted by Christ.

If a diocese does not have enough priests, initiatives should be taken to seek them from elsewhere now, to encourage local vocations and to keep fresh in the people a genuine "hunger" for a priest (cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, No. 32). Non-ordained members of the faithful who are assigned some roles in the absence of a priest have to make a special effort to keep up this "hunger." And they should resist the temptation of trying to get the people accustomed to them as substitutes for priests (cf. *op. cit.*, No. 33).

There is no place in the Catholic Church for the creation of a sort of parallel "lay clergy" (cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, Nos. 149-153,165).

Priests on their part should show themselves transparently happy in their vocation with a clear identity of their liturgical role. If they celebrate the sacred mysteries with faith and devotion and according to the approved books, they will unconsciously be preaching priestly vocations.

On the other hand, young people will not desire to join a band of clerics who seem uncertain of their mission, who criticize and disobey their Church and who celebrate their own "liturgies" according to their personal choices and theories.

www.zenit.org 20-01-2007

Picking the Day Lent Begins

(and other interesting facts about calendars!)

By Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University

The beginning of Lent depends on the date of Easter. Easter follows a lunar, rather than a solar, calendar and is celebrated on the Sunday that follows the first full moon after March 21, the spring equinox. Therefore Easter cannot fall earlier than March 22 or later than April 25. All the other movable celebrations in the Church calendar ultimately depend on the date of Easter.

Most of the Eastern Churches follow the same basic principles but often celebrate Easter on a different date because they continue to follow the calendar of Julius Caesar without the corrections incorporated by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Julius Caesar's calendar calculated the year as 365 days and 6 hours and thus was about 11 minutes and 9 seconds more than the sun's actual course. Although tiny, this excess puts the calendar off by a day, more or less, every 128 years. Thus, the Council of Nicaea already found it necessary to regress the date of the spring equinox to March 21 instead of the original date of March 25.

By the time of Pope Gregory XIII the difference had grown so much that the spring equinox occurred on March 11. In 1581 with the bull *Inter Gravissimas* Pope Gregory promulgated a widespread reform which, among other things, re-established the spring equinox on March 21 by eliminating 10 days from October 1582. Coincidence would have it that St Teresa of Avila died on that very night of October 4-15.

The error of Julius Caesar's calendar was corrected by deciding that the turn of the century - always a leap year in the Julian calendar - would be so only when the year could be divided by 400, whereas there would be no leap year in the others. Most Catholic countries, and even some Protestant ones, accepted the reform almost immediately. Some countries, such as England, held off accepting the papal reform until 1752 while Russia did not adopt it until after the Communist takeover in 1918. The calculation is still not perfect as there is still a difference of 24 seconds between the legal and the solar calendar. However, 3,500 years will have to pass before another day is added.

Getting back to Lent. This season comprises 40 days before Easter without counting Sundays which, even though they are called "Sundays of Lent," are not days of penance. Church tradition has always excluded fasting and penance on a Sunday. The tradition of a fast in preparation for Easter goes back to the late third century but it varied in duration. The tradition of a 40-day fast was established in Rome between 354 and 384, although it began after the first Sunday. Later, at the start of the sixth century, the beginning of Lent was moved up to Ash Wednesday in order to guarantee 40 days of effective fasting.

Stubborn Refusal

We always knew that the Bishop wanted to drag this out for as long as possible; ideally until his retirement. It is absolutely perplexing that he would endorse this sentiment in print for all the world to see – first in the Morwell parish bulletin (26/11/06) and then in *The Age* (12/01/07).

In essence the Bishop of Sale is saying that he has no intention of:

- i) Doing the honourable thing,
- ii) Doing what was morally expected of him as a Bishop in the Roman Catholic Church,
- iii) Doing what was canonically expected of him in regards to respecting the rights and reputation of Father John and his obligations to protect a priest in his flock,
- iv) Accepting the now twice confirmed, unequivocal decision from the Congregation for the Clergy,
- v) Practising what he would preach in relation to pastoral charity and the act of forgiveness.

Above all, his stubbornness, lack of reasoned argument (and evidence), contempt for the parishioners of Morwell; and of crucial importance – his retirement date! – are seemingly the drivers in his decision making process.

This is really a great moment in time to be a Catholic in the Diocese of Sale!

Name and address supplied

A Bishop's Responsibility

From an address by Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, on 26-10-2006

Obviously ecclesial communion has to mean "communion" with the diocesan bishop and between bishops and the Pope. In the diocese, the bishop is the first steward of the mysteries of Christ. He is the moderator, promoter and guardian of the entire liturgical life of the diocesan Church (cf. *Christus Dominus*, No. 15; Code of Canon Law, Canon 387; *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, No. 19). The bishop directs the administration of the sacraments and especially of the holy Eucharist. When he concelebrates in his cathedral church with his priests, with the assistance of deacons and minor assistants, and with the participation of the holy people of God, "the Church reveals herself most clearly" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 41). ...

The sacred liturgy is not a free-for-all research area, but rather the public and official prayer of the Church for which the Pope and the bishops are chiefly responsible.

www.zenit.org 20-01-2007

“They First Rejected Me”

Sale Diocese is only a microcosm of the macrocosm we see in the affluent and declining Western Church. Most readers and contributors of ITD have been extraordinarily blessed by Our loving Saviour and His most precious Mother, with the eyes to see, ears to hear, and in many cases the privilege of sharing in a small way in His bitter sufferings.

As a small, sinful and very weak member of His Mystical Body I can only boast, as St Paul says, in the graces and love Our Lord has lavished upon me. When we are humbly trying to follow Christ, and we are persecuted, we know we are doing the right thing. The seed has to die before bearing much fruit! We in Australia have been too comfortable for too long.

ITD arose from the grey ashes of lukewarm Catholic Life. We have a bishop who supports heretics and dissident priests (eg. Morwood and Groome) and sidelines or dismisses his orthodox priests. This same bishop preaches obedience yet repeatedly and blatantly disobeys Rome (Fr Speekman’s case is just one example). We have a Vicar General, Mons Dan McCartan, who excludes a loyal practising Catholic, Pat O’Brien, from the Legion of Mary on the false grounds that he is too divisive. This same Vicar General excluded Raymond de Souza (Catholic apologetics exponent and EWTN speaker) from speaking at any Catholic school or church in the diocese – probably for similar reasons that he excluded Pat O’Brien. How can this senior priest practise the same divisiveness that he falsely accuses others of, and organise a divisive petition to pit priests against Fr Speekman and each other; and accompany the Bishop to summarily retire Fr Shanley against his wishes.

Yes, we are all sinners, but surely the Catholic Church teaches that when we sin we need to confess our sin and make reparation. But perhaps that’s old hat now – many priests and bishops don’t seem to believe in sin or confession or hell nowadays.

The approach of bishops and priests like these is not so subtle now. They have power and numbers on their side, but thanks to publications like AD2000, Fidelity and ITD, more people are becoming aware. You don’t deny God, you just gradually undermine Him and sideline His commandments. We see it regularly in their attitude to the Real Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, which I agree is actually the solution to our problems – if our Bishop and priests were really serious about gaining vocations, promoting Christ’s Church and winning souls for Heaven. Their attitude is sadly epitomised by a Queensland Bishop’s response to being asked why most Catholics no longer genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament. He replied that Christ is just as much present in each of us and we don’t genuflect to each other do we?

The good news is that God’s grace is working through ITD and I suspect that even without the big budget of award-winning Catholic Life and its many unread copies, ITD has more readers. I know I write on behalf of many other struggling Catholics when I publicly thank ITD for the prayerful and illuminating articles and letters. The January 07 edition was especially good.

Finally, but most importantly, we have to thank our Bishop, Vicar General, Catholic Life, and the CEO, because the suffering they cause is yet another gift from the Sacred and Sorrowful Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Richard Earle, Marlo

Love the Cross

Pope Benedict XVI on the Stoning of St Stephen

St Stephen’s story tells us much. For example, it teaches us that we must never disassociate the social commitment of charity from the courageous proclamation of the faith. He was one of the seven entrusted above all with charity. But it was not possible to disassociate charity from proclamation. Thus, with charity, he proclaims Christ crucified, to the point of also accepting martyrdom. This is the first lesson that we can learn from the figure of St Stephen: Charity and proclamation always go together.

St Stephen speaks to us above all of Christ, of Christ crucified and risen as the centre of history and of our life. We can understand that the Cross occupies always a central place in the life of the Church and also in our personal lives. Passion and persecution will never be lacking in the history of the Church. And, precisely persecution becomes, according to Tertullian’s famous phrase, source of mission for the new Christians. I quote his words: “We multiply every time we are harvested by you: The blood of Christians is a seed.”

But also in our lives the cross, which will never be lacking, becomes a blessing. And, accepting the cross, knowing that it becomes and is a blessing, we learn the joy of the Christian, even in moments of difficulty. The value of the testimony is irreplaceable, as the Gospel leads to him and the Church is nourished on him. St Stephen teaches us to learn these lessons, he teaches us to love the cross, as it is the way through which Jesus always makes himself present again among us.

www.zenit.org 10-01-2007

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 st 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 nd Thursday 10am – 11am 11 th 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

Confide in Him

St Padre Pio

“As soon as you are before God in the Blessed Sacrament ... confide all your needs to Him, along with those of others. Speak to Him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart, and give Him complete freedom to work in you as He thinks best.”

“On leaving the church, you should be recollected and calm. Firstly, take your leave of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Ask His forgiveness for the shortcomings committed in His divine Presence and do not leave Him without asking for – and receiving – His paternal blessing.”

*Praying in the Presence of Our Lord,
by Eileen Dunn Bertanzetti (p.107)*

*“Man is never greater
than when he kneels.”*

Pope John XXIII

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

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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 15th 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.