

Into the Deep

Issue 57

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Catholic Witness

The following are quotes from a lecture by Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver on protecting and promoting the common good:

“First, I’m tired of the Church and her people being told to be quiet on public issues that urgently concern us. And second, I’m tired of Catholics themselves being silent because of some misguided sense of good manners. Self-censorship is an even bigger sin than allowing ourselves to be bullied by outsiders.”

“Not acting on our convictions is cowardice. As Catholics we need to live our convictions in the public square with charity and respect for others, but also firmly, with courage and without apology. Anything less is a form of theft from the moral witness we owe to the public discussion of issues. We can never serve the common good by betraying who we are as believers or compromising away what we hold to be true.”

“Humility is the beginning of sanity. We can’t love anyone else until we can see past ourselves. And man can’t even be man without God. The humility to recognize who we are as creatures, who God is as our Father, what God asks from each of us, and the reality of God’s love for other human persons as well as ourselves – this is the necessary foundation that religion brings to every discussion of free will, justice and truth, and to every conversation about “the common good.” Sirach and Psalms and the Gospel of Luke and the Letter of James – these Scriptures move the human heart not because they’re beautiful writings. They’re beautiful writings because they spring from what we know in our hearts to be true.”

“Brothers, we most truly serve the common good by having the courage to be disciples of Jesus Christ. God gave us a free will, but we need to use it. Discipleship has a cost. Jesus never said that we didn’t need a spine. The world doesn’t need affirmation. It needs conversion. It doesn’t need the approval of Catholics. It needs their witness. And that work needs to begin with us.”

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Archbishop Chaput in Melbourne!

Thanks to the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy (ACCC), Archbishop Chaput will be giving a public lecture in Melbourne on Wednesday 4 July.

The Most Rev Charles Chaput, OFM Cap. is the Metropolitan Archbishop of Denver, USA. He is a major figure in the Catholic Church in the USA and a man who has made a strong impact on the renewal of priestly identity and priestly vocations. He has been Archbishop of Denver since 1997, when he was only 52 years old.

In 2001 he published the book “Living the Catholic Faith: rediscovering the basics.” He is a well-known defender of orthodoxy and an inspiring man!

Archbishop Chaput will be the principal speaker at the annual conference of the ACCC, delivering two papers to clergy participants and the one public lecture. The public talk will be held at the Cardinal Knox Centre Lecture theatre, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne (enter via Cathedral car park), starting at 8pm (note change of venue). Attendance is free, but there will be opportunity for donations which will be much appreciated by the ACCC.

What a wonderful opportunity for orthodox Catholics in Victoria! Let’s make the most of it – and support the ACCC in the process!

Source of Blessings

The witness of a priestly life well lived brings nobility to the Church, calls forth admiration among the faithful, and is a source of blessings for the community; it is the best way to promote vocations, the most authentic invitation to other young people to respond positively to the Lord’s call. It is true collaboration in building the Kingdom of God!

Pope Benedict XVI

All issues of Into the Deep are at www.stoneswillshout.com

A Visible Witness

Around three hundred people joined with Bishop Coffey and eleven priests in a Mass of Thanksgiving for the diamond jubilee of the Religious profession of Sister Lauraine Brice, of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, at St Mary's Cathedral, Sale on Saturday May 12.

Now retired and living alone in the Sion Convent in Sale, although still doing God's work of service, Sister Lauraine spent many years teaching at Catholic schools in Sale and Stratford. She distinguished herself by refusing to follow the crowd, but day after day wore her religious habit with great pride and dedication. She is a visible and inspiring witness to all at Sunday and weekday Mass in the Cathedral and wherever she attends.

She is reported to have commented that whatever else, she would refuse to give up wearing her habit. In congratulating Sister Lauraine on sixty years of dedicated service to her Congregation and the community, Bishop Coffey recalled the instance of three Nuns who decided they could better do their work of serving the poor in high rise flats by leaving their community (and obviously their religious habits) and living and working independently. To their surprise, they soon realised that they were failing in their objective of helping the poor.

The irony of this comment by the Bishop was that apart from Sister Lauraine and one other Sister, there were no religious habits evident at either the Mass or the luncheon at the Sion Convent where Sister Lauraine spent so many years teaching the faith to thousands of grateful students. Sadly most religious have abandoned their community, their religious and other good order habits, and are becoming an endangered species.

At the luncheon, Parish Administrator Fr Bernard Buckley welcomed everyone to the parish and commented that it was nice to be able to congratulate someone on a good and productive life without then going out to bury them. He thanked Sister for her dedicated service. Sister Lauraine responded saying that any congratulations were not just to her but to her community.

No doubt many of those present were inspired to come by Sister Lauraine's always visible witness, as much as by her dedicated work in God's service for sixty long and productive years. She is a living legend.

The luncheon was organised by the parish bereavement group with bounteous food supplied by parishioners. Many students of the College, wearing their full school uniform, acted as ushers and waiters for the function for the day. It was inspiring to see.

Pat O'Brien, Sale

Not So Ordinary

The weeks outside the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, are named in Latin *per annum*, or "through the year". It is commonly known as "Ordinary Time", which is unfortunate since it is anything but ordinary.

While the other seasons of the liturgical year commemorate events in the life of Christ, Ordinary Time presents us with Jesus' deeds and teachings during his public ministry. During this season, Catholics grow in their understanding of the Christian life; thus the liturgical colour is green, reminding us of growth.

Ordinary Time has 34 weeks, beginning after the Baptism of Christ and going up to Advent. It is interrupted by Lent and Easter Time.

From INFORM no. 107: "The Church Year" by Fr Timothy Deeter, published by the Catholic Adult Education Centre, Sydney

Tradition?

From the Latin

Handing on!

On Young People

Young people are not afraid of sacrifice, but of a meaningless life.

They are sensitive to Christ's call inviting them to follow him. They can respond to that call as priests, as consecrated men and women, or as fathers and mothers of families, totally dedicated to serving their brothers and sisters with all their time and capacity for dedication: with their whole lives.

Young people must treat life as a continual discovery, never allowing themselves to be ensnared by current fashions or mentalities, but proceeding with a profound curiosity over the meaning of life and the mystery of God, the Creator and Father, and his Son, our Redeemer, within the human family. They must also commit themselves to a constant renewal of the world in the light of the Gospel. More still, they must oppose the facile illusions of instant happiness and the deceptive paradise offered by drugs, pleasure, and alcohol, and they must oppose every form of violence.

Pope Benedict XVI, 13 May 2007, Brazil www.zenit.org

Marian Conference Notes

Regaining Focus

Surely the highlight of the Marian Conference held at Iona last month, was the celebration of the Latin Mass with Fr Glen Tattersall. It was wonderful for those of us who had never experienced a Latin (Tridentine) Mass! Fr Tattersall gave a talk in the morning on the differences between the 'old Mass' and the 'new', emphasising that neither one of them is 'more legitimate' or 'more Catholic' than the other.

He noted how in the old Mass, with the priest facing away from the people and towards the high altar, there was a clearer emphasis on the fact that the priest was leading the people in worship and adoration of Almighty God, rather than gathering together to celebrate their own community. With the priest facing the people there is the risk of the community celebrating itself, as if it were a closed circle. The high altars were built to face east, as a symbol of the resurrection and coming in glory of our Lord.

The Latin Mass leaves very little room for misinterpretation. Much of the Mass is said by the priest in silence, stressing the priestly aspect of the Eucharistic Prayer. In the Eastern tradition, Fr Tattersall explained, there is a physical screen between the sanctuary and the nave of the church; in ours, there is a 'screen of silence'. This, along with the incense that seemed to fill only the sanctuary and not spill out into the rest of the church, highlighted the fact that what happens during the Mass, at the hands of the priest, is sacred, holy, and wholly 'other'. The focus is certainly not on 'us' and what we can do to 'improve' the Mass or make it 'meaningful'!

Fr Timothy Deeter, Director of the Liturgy Office in Sydney, wrote in the Catholic Weekly that it annoys him when he sees "priests begin the Eucharistic prayer, carefully turning this way and that to include the entire assembly, looking them straight in the eyes and saying, "Father, You are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives You praise...". Likewise, priests will smilingly look around as they say, "Lord Jesus Christ, You said to Your apostles: I leave you peace...""

"The problem is regaining focus," continues Fr Deeter. "The Mass is not a dialogue between the priest and the people; it is a dialogue between us – including the priest – and God. That is what was meant in the Tridentine rite: the priest did not turn his back on the people; he simply assumed the same direction as the rest of us: he faced God."

Fr Deeter offers the following simple solution: "When addressing the people, the priest looks at them. When addressing the Father, he lifts his eyes to heaven, as Jesus did. And when addressing Jesus Himself at Communion time, he looks at the Eucharist on the altar."

Healer of All Divisions

Fr Gerard Ryan was the main speaker at the Marian Conference. He spoke on Mary being the healer of all divisions. He explained that after the Fall the first message given to us was about Mary – that she would be the one through whom salvation would be brought to the world, in Jesus. In Luke's Gospel we hear Mary's prophesy that all generations will call her Blessed – and we Catholics fulfil this prophesy.

Fr Ryan said that it is important that we base our understanding in the teachings of the Church. He recommended the litanies to us, saying that they are very helpful and educative. Mary is the refuge of sinners, the comforter of the afflicted. We must not despair but must look forward with happy expectation to healing!

The mystical Body of Christ is holy and sinless. We must not be rocked by scandal in the Church. Fr Ryan reminded us that there has always been scandal and division in the Church, but we must have confidence. In Baptism we are one with Christ, and he said that of all that were given to him, none were lost. Jesus himself prayed that "they may all be one" – he knew that there would be division to overcome.

Fr Ryan noted that most problems and division in the Church have been caused by priests (eg. Fr Arius, Fr Nestorius, Fr Martin Luther). We must always listen to our priests, but we must weigh it up against the Vicar of Christ.

Fr Ryan contends that all divisions will cease once we are united with Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Reminders and Advice

Sunday Mass is the indispensable minimum for Catholics. Reminding us that St John the Baptist was sanctified in the presence of Jesus and Mary at the Visitation, Fr Ryan urged parents to always bring their children to Mass.

Regarding bitterness, Fr Ryan encouraged us to let go, for our own health. He said that holding on to grudges is like "drinking poison that you may kill your enemy"!

Fr Ryan's retreats are available on DVD, CD and MP3.

Beware the D-words!

A fascinating aside in Fr Ryan's talks, was his observation that we tend to get caught up in all the "D-words": despair, disillusionment, doubt, division, despondency, disarray, deformation, divorce, depression, death... See if you can think of others!

Labour of Love

Thank you to Fr Michael Willemsen, parish priest of Iona, who willingly spent the whole day (apart from Mass and lunch) in the Confessional, with a constant line of people waiting!

A Tragedy for the Church

Following last month's ITD where Fr Cleary wrote in defence of Fr Sean McDonagh (p.10), a reader from Sydney drew our attention to an interview that Fr McDonagh gave on an Irish radio station in April 2005 (RTE News). He was expressing his opinions on the election of Joseph Ratzinger as Pope, and they were very interesting to hear. Here are some of his thoughts:

- the election of Ratzinger as Pope was "a tragedy" for the Church;
- the Pope's age "sends a message to young people that Christian faith is about octogenarians";
- women feel extremely alienated by his election;
- it's a lost opportunity for the Church at this time;
- Ratzinger, like his predecessor, would not address the crisis in ministry;
- to show women that the Church takes them seriously, a decision could have been made ten years ago that half the world's cardinals would be women;
- John Paul II's pontificate was too long. To address this problem, any future pope – "man or woman" – should be told that the term of office is ten years;
- local churches should be autonomous – "taking instructions from Rome all the time may not actually be an apt way of dealing with problems";
- liberation theology should not have been condemned by Pope John Paul II, as it comes from the Book of Exodus, and it's also what Jesus was about;
- John Paul II's document on liberation theology was "disingenuous, to say the least" [disingenuous = withholding information; not genuinely sincere].

The full interview at www.rte.ie/news/2005/0421/news1pm.html.

The Words We Know

I was talking to a Mexican lady recently whose first language is Spanish. She only started learning English a few years ago but her English is very good and I complimented her on it. She admitted that she manages ordinary conversation well, but finds it difficult to talk about more complex things – "because I can only use the words I know," she said.

It immediately made me think of the mystery of our faith, of how words fail us in trying to explain or understand the great mysteries of our faith – because we can only use the words we know; and they are just not enough.

Ed.

Comments

Having read the contributions to *Into the Deep* (May 2007, p10-11), I have two comments to make.

The first is that it appears that Fr Tom Cleary does not believe in Plenary Indulgences and, sadly for those whose deathbed he may attend, does not believe he can offer one to anybody.

The second is that his friend, Fr Sean McDonagh, does not seem to believe that God told man (as the only rational one of His creatures) to "increase and multiply, and fill the earth...and rule over" His Creation (Genesis 1:28), which was made for man's use and benefit. The Fall, of course, meant that Nature would now resist man ("cursed is the earth in thy work...Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth...In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" Genesis 2: 17, 18, 19). And yet we can continue to trust in the Providence of a loving Father, for God also promised a Saviour (Gen. 3:15). True, this world is passing away, but we look for one that is to come. And if the whole of Creation is groaning, it is groaning till all is perfected in Christ Jesus.

Anne Buchan, Wangaratta

Against Idolizing Nature

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, at a conference on climate change and development:

"Nature is for the human person and the human person is for God.

"Nature is not an absolute, but a wealth that is placed in the person's responsible and prudent hands.

"The person has an indisputable superiority over creation and, in virtue of his personhood and being gifted with an immortal soul, cannot be placed on an equal plane with other living beings, nor can he be considered a disturbing element in the natural ecological equilibrium.

"The person does not have an absolute right over nature but rather a mandate to conserve and develop it in light of the universal destination of the earth's goods which is one of the fundamental principles of the social doctrine of the Church."

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Did you know?

Vatican citizenship is not inherited nor can it be acquired by being born in the city. It can only be acquired based on service to the Holy See and is revoked upon termination of employment by the Vatican.

Fr Speekman Update

Early this year, Bishop Coffey decided to take his case against Fr Speekman to the Church's highest court, the Apostolic Signatura (see ITD Feb 07). Bishop Coffey claimed (in the media, at least) that the Congregation for the Clergy had treated him unfairly in upholding both appeals made by Fr Speekman against both cases of removal by Bishop Coffey. In order to appeal the Congregation's findings to the Signatura, Bishop Coffey must contend that the Congregation has in some way violated the law in their decision/s to uphold Fr Speekman's appeals (see ITD March 07).

Hence, as we understand it, the situation at present is more about Bishop Coffey's questioning of the Congregation's handling of the case, than it is about anything Fr Speekman has or has not done. However, Fr Speekman was asked by the Signatura to nominate from a list provided by them, his own advocate to represent his interests, or he could accept the advocate the Congregation had appointed for themselves. He accepted the latter, and has been informed that the brief is currently being prepared.

We await with interest the outcome of this seemingly never-ending saga. In the meantime, Fr Speekman's parish of Morwell is virtually unrecognisable after nearly 4 years of Fr Cleary's liberal influence; and Fr Speekman continues to minister 'in exile' in the Sydney Archdiocese.

It's hard to believe that this all started in November 2001 with a school principal claiming she was harassed and bullied in a parish meeting when Fr Speekman explained the Church's teaching on the requirements of a valid Confession...

Ed.

Still Looking For Answers

In the decree issued in November 2006 it stated Fr Speekman is to be restored as Parish Priest at Morwell immediately, and that Rome should be notified that it has occurred.

Well it is 6 months since this decree was issued. I enquired about this matter and was told that Rome had no power to do this, and the Bishop had no intention of allowing Fr Speekman to resume his duties in the parish.

Well I want to know why the Bishop (if this is true) wasted the diocese's money on not one but two decrees if he was going to disobey the order from Rome in the first place. Surely the parish of Morwell deserves a lot of answers from the Bishop.

Tom Watts, Morwell

Membership in the Masons

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

Q: A member of the RCIA program was told by another member of the parish that if they were going to become Catholic they needed to terminate their involvement with the Masonic lodge before they could join. Is this still the case? - T.N., Michigan

A: The Church's position with respect to membership of Masonic lodges, even though canon law no longer explicitly mentions the Masons, has not substantially changed. The new code states in Can. 1374: "A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty..." This text greatly simplified the former code which had specifically mentioned the Masons. This change led some Masons to think that the Church no longer banned Catholics from being Masons, since, among other things, in many countries membership at a lodge was merely social and had nothing to do with plotting against the Church.

In order to clarify the issue the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a declaration on Nov. 26, 1983. This declaration, signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, states [in part]: "The Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion."

The congregation's judgment, therefore, was not so much based on whether the Masons...effectively plot against the Church today. ...Rather, the Vatican congregation above all stressed the incompatibility of some Masonic principles with those of the Catholic Church. This incompatibility resides in some aspects of Masonic ritual, but more importantly in elements regarding the question of truth.

In its effort to bring together people of different provenances, Masonry requires that its members adhere to a minimal belief in a supreme architect of the universe and leave aside all other pretensions of truth, even revealed truth. It is thus basically a relativistic doctrine, and no Catholic, nor indeed any convinced Christian, may ever adhere to a group that would require him, even as a mere intellectual exercise, to renounce the affirmation of such truths as Christ's divinity and the Trinitarian nature of God.

Of course, for many people active in Masonic lodges, the conversations and activities are more social in nature and rarely veer toward the realm of philosophical speculation. A Catholic, however, cannot ignore the fundamental principles behind an organization, no matter how innocuous its activities appear to be.

Hitting the Target

As predicted by me in the last edition of ITD, it did not take long for the squeals against those involved in the protest against the Education Conference at Shepparton, to be heard. If Fr Cleary's vitriolic attack on Molly Brennan, Janet Kingman and Joseph Vanjek (May ITD) is any indication, the target must have been accurately hit.

In light of Fr Cleary's actions since he came to Morwell, his judgmentalism is extraordinary. I could elaborate on his various attacks on those he perceives as Fr Speekman's supporters; his actions in his dealings with Greg Kingman (pastoral associate at the time); his use of the Blessed Sacrament as a form of punishment when he cancelled adoration to "get rid of the rebels"; his presiding at a public meeting where those present denigrated Fr Speekman and Greg Kingman; his distribution of Holy Communion to known non-Catholics – but I won't. I will instead concentrate on his inconsistencies.

In his letter, Father "as a conscientious priest" defends his friend and fellow Columban, Fr Sean McDonagh. Fr McDonagh may have all the degrees in the world, high I.Q. etc., but if he dissents from Church teaching and is critical of the Pope, all of his attributes are worthless.

Let me contrast this position of Fr Cleary's with his actions in regard to Fr Speekman. As readers of ITD will know, Fr Speekman was run out of his parish and the diocese for no other reason than being orthodox. The only thing those responsible did not do was tar and feather him. Those involved in the campaign against Fr Speekman include the CEO, the principal of St Vincent's at the time, disgruntled parishioners, and even the Union. Without any shred of evidence the Bishop issued a decree of removal.

How did Fr Cleary defend Fr Speekman against this unjust removal? He did nothing. In fact he did the opposite. He added to the innuendo and gossip by stating there was more to the case, thus damaging Fr Speekman's reputation. What this "more" was, neither he nor anyone else has ever been able to say, even to Rome.

When Fr Speekman won his appeal at the Congregation for the Clergy, did Fr Cleary accept this? No, he in fact advised the Bishop to ignore the Congregation's decision. He went even further by signing a petition against Fr Speekman's return to his parish. Fr Cleary should heed the advice we learnt long ago: "People in glass houses should not throw stones".

Bishop Coffey has caused grave scandal not only in the Sale diocese but to the wider Church. Fr Cleary, in his warped loyalty to the Bishop, has collaborated in this scandal. The actions of the Bishop, Fr Cleary

and other priests of the diocese, have put the faith of many in jeopardy. When the Bishop, with the encouragement of Fr Cleary and others, defies and flagrantly disobeys Rome, what are the laity to think?

Let us pray that the Bishop, Fr Cleary and all involved in the continuing unjust treatment of Fr Speekman will have a conversion of heart. Meanwhile let us all persevere in the faith and knowledge that justice and truth will triumph.

Finally let me say that those who decry ITD as irrelevant are way off the mark. ITD is experiencing an enormous growth and financial support. Get involved and unite with us in defending the faith.

John Henderson, Morwell

A Remedy for Anxiety

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

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27).

[Jesus speaks of] an interior peace of the heart, of the person with himself and with God. This much is clear from what Jesus immediately adds in this passage from John: "Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

This is the most fundamental peace. Without this peace, no other peace can exist. A billion drops of dirty water do not make a clean ocean and a billion troubled hearts do not make up a human race at peace. [...]

Jesus makes us understand what is opposed to this peace – worry, anxiety, fear: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

Easy to say – someone might object. How do we placate anxiety and disquiet, the worry that devours us all and keeps us from enjoying peace? Some people are by temperament more disposed than others to these things. If there is some danger, they blow it out of proportion, if there is some difficulty, they increase it by 100%. Everything becomes a reason for anxiety.

The Gospel does not promise a remedy for all these problems; to a certain extent they are part of our human condition, exposed as we are to forces and dangers much bigger than ourselves.

But the Gospel does indicate some remedy. The chapter from which this Gospel passage is taken begins: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and have faith in me too" (John 14:1). Trusting in God is the remedy.

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Types of Terrorism

Abortion and euthanasia are examples of “terrorism with a human face,” and, together with suicide bombers, are the scourge of contemporary society, says a Vatican official.

Archbishop Angelo Amato, secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, made this statement during a talk on “The Problem of Evil: Philosophical and Theological Reflections.” [...]

“Reading the daily papers – or using Internet, TV or radio – every day we see a perverse film about evil, which is ‘filmed’ in every part of the world with scenery and backdrops ever more cruel, as we see in the thousands of provocations of international terrorism,” explained Archbishop Amato.

He continued: “Besides the abominable terrorism of suicide bombers, which is ever-present in the media, there is the so-called terrorism with a human face, which is also a daily occurrence and just as repugnant, which continues to be propagated by the media, manipulating traditional language with expressions that hide the tragic reality of the facts.”

As an example, the 68-year-old prelate mentioned that abortion is referred to as “the voluntary interruption of pregnancy” instead of “the killing of a defenceless human being.” Euthanasia is defined merely as “death with dignity,” he observed.

Evil today “is not only the action of single individuals or identifiable groups, but comes from dark centres, the laboratories of false opinions, from anonymous powers that hammer away at our minds with false messages, judging behaviour in tune with the Gospels as ridiculous and out of date,” he lamented.

The Archbishop explained that Christians can build themselves up “through the formation of a right conscience that searches for and loves the true and the good and avoids evil.”

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At the Heart

Families stand at the heart of the Church’s mission of evangelization, for it is in the home that our life of faith is first expressed and nurtured. Parents, you are the primary witnesses to your children of the truths and values of our faith: pray with and for your children; teach them by your example of fidelity and joy! Indeed, every disciple, spurred on by word and strengthened by sacrament, is called to mission. It is a duty from which no one should shy away, for nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ and to make him known to others!

Pope Benedict XVI

An Example to Follow

The Fr John Speekman’s plight continues with very little immediate progress in sight. Why? We read countless factual criticism articles about the Bishop and the situation, a number of documentations from Rome of Fr John’s vindication, but still, no clear light is being seen.

So what is wrong? Why does there seem to be no Divine intervention? Could this whole fiasco be a manipulation of satan causing strife amongst God’s people, His church? Can it be that the Holy Spirit is attempting to tell us something and/or teach us something? Might the lesson being taught be one that is directed to Fr John only or for that matter to the Bishop? Who can rightly say? In this letter I would like to concentrate on the “us”. That is, perhaps the lesson is more likely for us than it is for them.

When writing letters of criticisms, no matter how factual the event or experience may have been, are we doing so in the spirit or are we doing it in the flesh? For if it is in the latter, I think we can forget any solution to the problem. All we seem to be achieving is the degrading of God’s anointed, namely the Bishop. Whether we are for the Bishop or against him, he still remains an anointed servant of God.

Is Fr John not showing us the way by his example? Has he not done all that he possibly could, both personally and legally to resolve the situation, even to being obedient to the Bishop by not remaining in the Parish of Morwell? What a questioning and struggling time for Fr John’s faith and yet, although the situation saddens him intensely, he trusts in the Lord, endures in silence and in prayer, remaining devoted to his calling and continuing to practice his ministry. How hard is that! And what an act for us to follow.

If we are convinced that what we are doing is in the Spirit, then we need to profoundly examine ourselves. For if it is in the Spirit, it requires prayer, and the rebuttal can only be done in and with love. Remember St Paul’s words: “Love is always patient and kind, never jealous, not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.” (1Cor 13:4-7)

Therefore, before putting pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard we should remember that all criticisms and/or rebuttals must be void of judgment of the person and personal attacks, be the truth, objective and not have hidden personal agendas.

So, “let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” (Heb 12:1)

Jacques Martin-Lefevre, Wandiligong, Vic

Secularization of Catholic Schools

Following on from my last article on Catholic education, this one is an explanation of the damage that is being done to the Church by liberal bishops and dissenting ‘experts’ and educationalists currently in positions of leadership in various dioceses in the country.

It is the personal responsibility of every individual bishop to proclaim the Gospel and to teach the Faith in the diocese entrusted to his care (canon 756.2). Bishops are solely responsible for their Catholic Education Offices. Yet on the face of the evidence it seems that once this bureaucratic structure was established, bishops all too readily abdicated their evangelizing responsibility and delegated their authority as primary teachers of the faith, to the CEO. This is the bureaucracy which has been responsible for the current disastrous effects on the faith at every level of the Church.

The greater a school’s student intake, the greater its government subsidy. In reality this has meant that Catholic schools have taken in so many non-Catholic students that the composition of the classes makes it near impossible to teach the Catholic faith in its entirety. Instead of teaching students the doctrines of the faith, schools end up teaching a ‘new age’ generic Christianity that accommodates everyone and ‘appeals’ to everyone. Students are being educated in secular humanism and the psychology of religion. They are shown that we live in a pluralistic society and that there cannot be one system of belief that is valid for all times and places.

The method that best suited this pluralistic understanding of religion was Thomas Groome’s ‘Shared Christian Praxis’. This contemporary method understands modern catechesis as a process of reflecting critically on the significance and value of religion in culture and society. It is a method which promotes the student’s ‘exploration of a new consciousness’ and a ‘way of being in the secular world’.

Through this method students can come to regard religion and all matters of faith as something that belongs to individual subjective choices and to develop an exclusive belief in their own potential. They can end up believing that the Catholic Church is

a democratic body of believers who determines what they will believe and how they will worship. This contemporary method reduces young people’s baptismal vocation and the entire sacramental life of grace in the Church, to a state of critical self-consciousness. It is within the critical reflective framework of shared Christian praxis that the ‘Church of the past’ is labelled as authoritarian, oppressive, full of prejudices, unjust, arrogant and closed to the world. It is within this framework that the ‘Church of the past’ with her faith and morals can be viewed by students with suspicion, doubt, distrust and fear, rather than something that they should live up to.

So, when reflecting on the significance and relevance of religious experience and how it affects their lives, students are left to judge for themselves which religion contributes more effectively to their personal success, happiness and fulfilment. Hence, it is through this critical reflective process that students are free to conclude that Catholicism is obsolete and no longer relevant to their modern way of living. Through this method students are encouraged to live a life centred on self and are trained in making choices to govern themselves rather than adhere to the Church and her teachings.

This development of ‘self-consciousness’ and self-absorption is opposed to the Gospel and a life lived in Christ and his Church. It is a form of personal development which bankrupts Catholics of the richness of their life of grace in Christ which they inherited through baptism, and locks them into an existence of rootlessness and meaninglessness. Students are not taught about the challenges and demands of a re-created life in Christ. They are not trained to observe the teachings of His Church and the Truth found in her with their whole mind, heart and soul. They are not taught that a Eucharistic life of grace enables them to live according to God’s plan and that living one’s Catholic vocation is not contrary to human existence but a fulfilment of it.

Subsequently, the Gospel, the sacraments of initiation and the Church’s doctrines are not likely to play any effective part in shaping their lives and they are unable to live their Catholic call to holiness with joy.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

“At this time, there is an urgent need for an adequate knowledge of the faith as it is presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its accompanying Compendium.”

Pope Benedict XVI, to Brazilian Bishops, 11-05-2007

On Priests

If the priest has God as the foundation and centre of his life, he will experience the joy and the fruitfulness of his vocation. The priest must be above all a “man of God” (1 Tim 6:11) who knows God directly, who has a profound personal friendship with Jesus, who shares with others the same sentiments that Christ has (cf. Phil 2:5). Only in this way will the priest be capable of leading men to God, incarnate in Jesus Christ, and of being the representative of his love.

In order to accomplish his lofty task, the priest must have a solid spiritual formation, and the whole of his life must be imbued with faith, hope and charity. Like Jesus, he must be one who seeks, through prayer, the face and the will of God, and he must be attentive to his cultural and intellectual preparation.

Pope Benedict XVI, 13 May 2007, Brazil www.zenit.org

To Religious and Consecrated Persons

...In a world that so often gives priority to seeking well-being, wealth and pleasure as the goal of life, exalting freedom to the point where it takes the place of the truth of man created by God, you are witnesses that there is another meaningful way to live; remind your brothers and sisters that the Kingdom of God has already arrived; that justice and truth are possible if we open ourselves to the loving presence of God our Father, of Christ our brother and Lord, and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter.

With generosity and with heroism, you must continue working to ensure that society is ruled by love, justice, goodness, service and solidarity in conformity with the charism of your founders. With profound joy, embrace your consecration, which is an instrument of sanctification for you and of redemption for your brothers and sisters.

... I invite you always to work together with the Bishops and to work in unity with them, since they are the ones responsible for pastoral action. I exhort you also to sincere obedience towards the authority of the Church. Set yourselves no other goal than holiness, as you have learned from your founders.

Pope Benedict XVI, 13 May 2007, Brazil www.zenit.org

Transparent Lives

“The world needs transparent lives, clear souls, pure minds that refuse to be perceived as mere objects of pleasure. It is necessary to oppose those elements of the media that ridicule the sanctity of marriage and virginity before marriage.”

Pope Benedict XVI

High Price to Pay

To be sensible a person needs a strong dose of down-to-earth common sense when dealing with the law. Having a cause to fight is one thing, but victory is never certain. Pragmatism tells us that there comes a time when the sensible thing to do is just walk away, for further fighting will be counterproductive i.e. it will cost more than the hoped-for result, which is never certain anyway.

What is certain is that the Diocese of Sale has obligations towards Fr Speekman which have not been honoured so far. If Fr Speekman were fully reinstated and compensated years ago, as he should have been, the diocese would have had to pay, and rightly so. If instead the Bishop manages to string this issue out until his retirement, Fr Speekman would have a legal action against the Bishop personally, not just the diocese, for the wrong done him.

With the irrefutable documental evidence of Rome on his side, Fr Speekman could not lose. Any canonical and civil court would rejoice in awarding what are called exemplary damages. The unusually large amount of such awards is both to punish the culprit and send a message to others in like situation that it is just not worth it. That would certainly put a significant dent in the hoped-for retirement package of the Bishop. He would have to ask himself – was it worth it?

S.C., Melbourne

No Amnesty for the Unborn

According to The Age (28 May 2007) Amnesty International has officially changed its neutral policy on abortion, and will now be advocating that abortion be decriminalised worldwide.

This has grave implications for any Catholics who have in the past supported AI or been members of the human rights organisation.

Ed.

Superficial to Forget Sin

Sacramentum Caritatis, no. 20

The loss of a consciousness of sin always entails a certain superficiality in the understanding of God’s love. Bringing out the elements within the rite of Mass that express consciousness of personal sin and, at the same time, of God’s mercy, can prove most helpful to the faithful. Furthermore, the relationship between the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation reminds us that sin is never a purely individual affair; it always damages the ecclesial communion that we have entered through Baptism.

An Opportunity to Choose

An article by Fr John Speekman, published in *The Priest*, May 2007

My father went to see the priest about the Baptism of his first child. He had not been looking forward to the interview. He wasn't practising the Faith.

The priest asked him to go home and pray and to ask God to help him decide whether he believed or not. He told my father to consider:

- If you don't believe, stop pretending!
- If you do believe - practise your faith!
- Don't drag your faith around like a dead cat on a piece of string.

This question of choosing is just as much a crucial question for you and me as it was for my father, or for Joshua and the Hebrews at Shechem. Joshua called the People together and said: "... choose today whom you wish to serve ..."

As Bob Dylan sings in his song *Gotta Serve Somebody*: "It may be the devil, or it may be the Lord, but you gotta serve somebody."

All we have to do is choose but this is not as easy as it sounds even when the People say with one voice: "We ... will serve the Lord, for he is our God".

Their decision to serve ("we will serve") goes hand in hand with their statement of belief ("for he is our God"). It makes it very clear that the modern distinction between believing and serving (practising) is totally unscriptural.

"Oh, of course, Father, I believe, and so does my husband. It's just that, well, we don't go to Mass because we don't believe it's necessary. We pray at home. We have our faith." Note what the couple is really saying: "We believe ... it's just that ... well ... we don't really believe."

Okay, so what's going on here? Let me ask this couple some questions ... "Do you believe you have a grave obligation to attend the Eucharist with the faith community each Sunday?" No! "Do you believe it's a mortal sin to miss Mass on Sunday?" No! "Do you believe you need to confess missing Mass deliberately before you can go to Holy Communion?" No!

So now at least we know one thing clearly – this couple in fact does not believe what the Church teaches. This is why they do not practise. They may be baptised, they may have been brought up in a Catholic home, they may have attended a Catholic school, they may have their faith, but they do not believe what the Church believes.

Please understand me, this is not an accusation! I'm not judging this couple. I have no idea of their spiritual journey and what has brought them to this point. I am merely making a very important diagnosis. This couple does not hold the faith of the

Church. They are living according to *their faith* but not according to the Faith.

Well, what now? What are some of our options?

- Go ahead and baptise the child and hope the parents will find faith at some later time and raise the child as a practising Catholic?
- Give the parents an hour's worth of instruction on the meaning of being a Catholic and then hope for the best and baptise the child?
- Tell the parents how important it is to attend Mass on Sundays and then baptise the child?
- Delay the Baptism till the parents come to some faith of their own?
- Refuse the baptism because they have no intention of raising the child in the practice of the Faith?

My own answer to this very difficult question is that we should offer this couple an opportunity to choose. This is what my father was offered; this is what Joshua offered the People; this is what Jesus offers his followers in the Gospels.

On a practical level this will involve a prolonged, prayerful, gentle catechesis similar to the Catechumenate – during which couples can be renewed (re-evangelised) in their understanding of the Catholic Faith. Somewhere within this process the couple will choose.

If they choose not to enter the process they have still chosen. All concerned will find this a difficult decision to accept but it must be respected. Jesus, too, experienced the disappointment of watching people walk away.

Faith is a grace-filled, individual choice. We cannot make it for others, nor can we insulate people from the need to make it. This has been one of our most unhelpful tactics in the determination we have to keep people somehow attached to the Church at all costs.

My father chose for the Church he knew so well but which he had left. The faithfulness with which he lived his decision over the years was an example and an encouragement for each one of his children, all eight of whom still practise the faith. I thank that priest for allowing my father to choose.

Best Defence

"In our day, Our Lady has been given to us as the best defence against the evils that afflict modern life; Marian devotion is the sure guarantee of her maternal protection and safeguard in the hour of temptation."

Pope Benedict XVI

Farms of Hope

On 12 May 2007, Pope Benedict XVI visited a “Fazenda da Esperanca” (Farm of Hope) in Guaratingueta, Brazil. The “fazendas” are centres for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and are present in several countries. The rehabilitation centre in Guaratingueta was founded in 1983 by Franciscan Father Hans Stapel, 62. Today there are 31 “fazendas” throughout Brazil.

The following is from an interview with ZENIT, where the German priest comments on the success of the centres - 84% overcome addiction.

Q: What is the secret of your success in fighting drug abuse?

Father Stapel: I believe the secret lies in the fact that we are simple and uncomplicated: We live the Gospel, we work and take joy in our work and live like a family. In every house there are between 12-14 young people, so there is an opportunity for dialogue, to work together and – this is important – to conform their lives according to the Gospel.

The Gospel is a school of love, where we learn to be there for one another and not think about ourselves. When we can be freed from ourselves, then the real problem is solved. What leads someone to drugs is often other addictions that come from being selfish. What we need to do is stop being so focused on ourselves.

Q: In general, how can a person avoid what you call the “prison of addiction”?

Father Stapel: It happens when we are able to come out of ourselves. We must think of others. Only in others can we find ourselves. Me, me, me – I must find myself – this is today’s mentality and it is fatal. I only find myself when I love others.

Q: How are the young people who are here now able to accomplish this first step of liberation from self?

Father Stapel: By coming to us and learning this new way of life being lived by the others who are already here. In that way they can adopt this new way of life automatically. They all start work early in the morning, they try to live God’s word together and then they can understand the rest.

When they have problems in the beginning we talk about it in a very concrete way, never theoretically. They don’t take courses or anything like that, we live life. This is the secret. They must begin. Life is easy. Wherever things are complicated, the divine element is missing and there is only the human element at work.

God said things very clearly: Whatever you do to the least of my people and your neighbour, you do it to me. When you begin living for others you experience joy. Whoever gives is received; whoever is lost is found. This is the secret.

www.zenit.org 11-05-2007

The Distribution and Reception of the Eucharist

Sacramentum Caritatis n. 50

I ask everyone, especially ordained ministers and those who, after adequate preparation and in cases of genuine need, are authorized to exercise the ministry of distributing the Eucharist, to make every effort to ensure that this simple act preserves its importance as a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus in the sacrament. ...

All Christian communities are to observe the current norms faithfully, seeing in them an expression of the faith and love with which we all must regard this sublime sacrament. Furthermore, the precious time of thanksgiving after communion should not be neglected: besides the singing of an appropriate hymn, it can also be most helpful to remain recollected in silence.

In this regard, I would like to call attention to a pastoral problem frequently encountered nowadays. I am referring to the fact that on certain occasions – for example, wedding Masses, funerals and the like – in addition to practising Catholics there may be others present who have long since ceased to attend Mass or are living in a situation which does not permit them to receive the sacraments. At other times members of other Christian confessions and even other religions may be present. ... In these cases, there is a need to find a brief and clear way to remind those present of the meaning of sacramental communion and the conditions required for its reception.

Wherever circumstances make it impossible to ensure that the meaning of the Eucharist is duly appreciated, the appropriateness of replacing the celebration of the Mass with a celebration of the word of God should be considered.

Last Laugh

“The schools were started by nuns and brothers and priests who established high standards and believed strongly in values of faith and hope and commitment to learning. This legacy is alive today in the teachers of Latrobe Valley Catholic schools who continue to pass on these important values.”

This statement was made by an un-named spokesperson for Catholic education, quoted in an Education Week article in the Latrobe Valley Express (3 May 2007).

Is someone honestly suggesting that Catholic schools of today continue to pass on the Catholic faith to children as they did in generations past? Who are they kidding?

I dare schools to make Year 12 students sit even a simple Catechism test before they leave school, to assess the extent of their actual knowledge of the faith.

Ed.

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfield	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 4pm – 8pm (alternating months, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
Morwell	CANCELLED
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

Renewing Our Faith

When we contemplate the Lord at Mass, raised up by the priest after the consecration of the bread and wine, or when we devoutly adore him exposed in the monstrance, we renew our faith with profound humility.

The Holy Eucharist contains all the spiritual wealth of the Church, that is to say Christ himself, our Passover, the living bread come down from heaven, given life by the Holy Spirit and in turn life-giving because it is the source of Life for mankind.

This mysterious and ineffable manifestation of God's love for humanity occupies a privileged place in the heart of Christians. They must come to know the faith of the Church through her ordained ministers, through the exemplary manner in which they carry out the prescribed rites that always point to the eucharistic liturgy as the centre of the entire task of evangelization.

The faithful, in their turn, must seek to receive and to venerate the Most Holy Sacrament with piety and devotion, eager to welcome the Lord Jesus with faith, and having recourse, whenever necessary, to the sacrament of reconciliation so as to purify the soul from every grave sin.

Pope Benedict at the canonisation Mass of Bl Antônio de Sant'Ana Galvão

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

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- 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.