

Into the Deep

Issue 63

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

December 2007

Looking Forward

Bishop Coffey turns 75 on 1st January 2008, when he is required to submit his resignation to Rome. There is reason to believe that his resignation will be accepted without delay. Orthodox Catholics in the diocese of Sale look forward with hope to the future. We pray for a new bishop who will lead us in holiness, faithful to the teachings of the Church, and who will renew the diocese and inspire vocations.

Fr Tom Cleary, administrator in Fr Speekman's parish of Morwell, will also be leaving in January. Fr Peter Mizera of Traralgon will take over in Morwell until such time as Fr Speekman is finally 'allowed' to return to his parish. Bishop Coffey's appeal against the Decree by the Congregation for the Clergy in favour of Fr Speekman, still remains at the Signatura.

Ed.

Time of Expectation

Rome was celebrating a season of spiritual preparation for Christmas by the 6th century, but it had already found a home in Gaul and Spain by the end of the 4th century. Originally lasting for three weeks, it was seen as a preparation for baptisms that would be celebrated on Epiphany. As Christmas grew in importance, Advent came to be a time of expectation for that feast of the Lord's birth. It soon developed into a time of expectation of the Lord's glorious return at the end of time.

Today the Church includes both themes: the *parousia* or Second Coming (first Sunday), then the preaching of St John the Baptist announcing Christ's coming into history (second and third Sundays), and the Virgin Mary's preparation for the birth of Christ in Bethlehem (fourth Sunday).

Advent always has four Sundays but its length varies, depending on the day of the week on which Christmas falls.

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

Awaiting the Saviour

Christmas was the central theme of Pope Benedict XVI's catechesis during his general audience [in the Fourth Week of Advent 2006].

"In these final days of Advent," said the Holy Father, "the liturgy invites us to approach...the stable in Bethlehem where the extraordinary event that changed the course of history took place: the birth of the Redeemer. On Christmas Eve, we will stand once again before the manger, and contemplate in wonder the 'Word made Flesh.'..."

"The chosen people awaited the Messiah but imagined him to be a powerful and victorious leader who would free his people from foreign oppression. Yet the Saviour was born in silence and in absolute poverty."

"Does mankind in our own time still await the Saviour?" the Pope asked. "It appears that many people consider God as foreign to their interests. They have no apparent need of Him, and live as if He did not exist or, worse still, as if He were an 'obstacle' to be removed in order to achieve self-fulfillment. Even among believers...are those who let themselves be attracted by alluring mirages and distracted by misleading doctrines that propose illusory shortcuts to happiness."

"And yet," he added, "with all their contradictions, their anguish and their dramas – or perhaps precisely because of them – men and women today seek a road of renewal, of salvation, they seek a Saviour and await, sometimes without knowing it, ...the coming of Christ, man's only true Redeemer."

"Of course, false prophets continue to propose 'low cost' salvation, which always ends up delivering resounding disillusionment."

For this reason, the Pope concluded, Christians must, "with the testimony of their lives, propagate the truth of Christmas, which Christ brings to all men and women of good will. Born into poverty in the manger, Jesus came to offer everyone the joy and peace which alone can satisfy the needs of the human soul."

Vatican Information Service 20-12-2006

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

Bishops Must Stop the Disobedience

Others will want to comment on the thoughts of Dean Balkin of Footscray (ITD, November 07), but I for one cannot remember how long it's been since I attended a parish without abuses in the Mass.

There are four points I'd like to make.

1. Priests who substitute their own words and activities in the place of those mandated by the Church are acting as if their authority is higher than the Pope's. That is, they believe they can overrule him.
2. If a priest publicly exhibits this disobedience, is he not announcing to the faithful that it's no big deal to defy Church authority? And thus that there are no eternal consequences for such disobedience?
3. Further, if he is seen to flout Church laws in the sacraments, how can he expect Catholics to follow his own teaching of the truths and laws of the Church? Indeed, perhaps this is one reason why priests no longer teach such truths. We don't hear much these days about sin, Hell, or about things like abortion or contraception. If Catholics don't use contraceptives, where are all the children?
4. Priests who refuse Communion to those who want to receive on the tongue or kneeling, both of which are permitted, seem to be the most disobedient.

This nonsense will not stop until we get some good bishops, who require priests to read and implement papal directives.

Richard Stokes, Brisbane

Suggestions

I have looked in vain in October and November's newsletters for a reference (even passing) to the retirement of Bishop Coffey and any reference to a successor – surely a milestone in the life of a diocese. Bishop Coffey seemed to be an outgoing and friendly man and one would think that his actions were always those that he thought at the time were for the best.

I am a little confused and disappointed by the criticism of the gift of a window to Anglican cathedral extensions. Do these critics want to return to the sectarianism of the past? As a tiny minority in a state school my childhood was made a living hell. At least my sisters and I were not of Italian extraction like the other little Roman Catholics at our school. We have to grasp the proffered hand of friendship now extended and bury the dead past.

Perhaps you might also give a little more attention to the Catholic Education Office. And perhaps we should all pray for our new bishop – who would want the job?

Peter Norton, Leongatha

Christmas Decorations

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

Q: What would you consider an appropriate time during Advent to put up Christmas trees, ornaments, lights and other decorations in churches and Christian homes? - B.O., Lewistown, Pennsylvania

A: This question is simple only in appearance because customs surrounding the celebration of Christmas vary widely among different cultures.

From a strictly liturgical standpoint the preparations for receiving the Christ Child intensify from Dec. 17 onward and this is probably a good time to set up the parish crib, except for the image of the child, which is often added just before Midnight Mass in more or less solemn fashion. Other parishes prefer to set up the crib on Christmas Eve. There are no official rites regarding this widespread custom.

In those places that use the Advent wreath, it is placed on the first Sunday of Advent. ...

Dec. 17 or the nearest Sunday might also be a good date to set up Christmas trees and other decorations in Christian homes, but it really depends on local custom and tradition. It is unnecessary, however, to fall under the spell of commercial enterprises which tend to anticipate the Christmas season, sometimes even before Advent begins.

Because some Christmas decorations have often lost their original religious meaning, churches should be rather circumspect about employing them and should do so with great discretion. If used at all, these decorations are best set up on Christmas Eve so as to respect the integrity of the Advent season.

Christmas trees are preferably located outside the sanctuary and church proper, and are best left in vestibules or church grounds. ...

As far as possible, decorations should be religiously themed, leaving plastic reindeer, sugar canes and Santa Claus in the local shopping mall or at least within the confines of the parish hall for children's events.

Within the church proper, apart from the crib, Christmas may be evoked by using, for example, traditional poinsettias, holly and other traditional elements according to the culture.

Zenit

Humility

“It is in being humble that our love becomes real, devoted and ardent. If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are. If you are blamed you will not be discouraged. If they call you a saint you will not put yourself on a pedestal.”

Mother Teresa

Notes on the 1962 Missal

The explanatory note [on *Summorum Pontificum*] also highlights some of the characteristics of the 1962 Missal:

“It is a ‘complete’ or ‘integral’ Missal in the Latin language, that is, it also contains the readings for the celebrations (it is not distinct from the ‘Lectionary’ as the later 1970 Missal is).

“It contains just one Eucharistic prayer, the ‘Roman Canon’ (corresponding to the first Eucharist Prayer of the later Missal, which includes a choice of various Eucharistic Prayers).

“Various prayers (including a large part of the Canon) are recited by the priest in a low voice inaudible to the people.

“Other differences include the reading of the beginning of the Gospel of John at the end of Mass.

“The 1962 Missal does not provide for concelebration. It says nothing concerning the direction of the altar or of the celebrant (whether facing the people or not).

“The Pope’s Letter envisages the possibility of future enrichment of the 1962 Missal (inclusion of new saints, new prefaces, etc.)”

Vatican Information Services 07-07-2007

Much Work To Be Done

Thanks for your much appreciated information found in ITD each month. There is so much work to be done by the ‘remnant flock’ to stand up for the Truth, the Light of Christ, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in these intensely dark times experienced in so many dioceses through lack of leadership from bishops and priests alike.

In our monthly diocesan newspaper from Bathurst diocese, it is so disturbing to see priests and nuns portrayed as ordinary secular men and women, unrecognisable as Religious in the way they are dressed. It is a violation of canon law, not to mention the poor saints who suffered so much to found and establish these religious orders and their Rule, which is no longer adhered to.

We had the Paul Collins petition handed out at Mass in the parish of Gunnedah where we often attend Mass, along with the letter Paul Collins and Frank Purcell sent to the priest. What dangerous times we are living in! Many, many souls are being jeopardised while bishops and priests desist from speaking out for Truth and allow for these seeds of doubt to take root in such a weakened faithful.

May God’s blessings be with you for all your endeavours to instil truth into minds, hearts and souls as God’s loving instruments.

Bernadette Maguire, Coonabarabran, NSW

The Christian Who Prays

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, n.37-38

It is time to reaffirm the importance of prayer in the face of the activism and the growing secularism of many Christians engaged in charitable work.

Clearly, the Christian who prays does not claim to be able to change God’s plans or correct what he has foreseen. Rather, he seeks an encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ, asking God to be present with the consolation of the Spirit to him and his work.

A personal relationship with God and an abandonment to his will can prevent man from being demeaned and save him from falling prey to the teaching of fanaticism and terrorism. An authentically religious attitude prevents man from presuming to judge God, accusing him of allowing poverty and failing to have compassion for his creatures. When people claim to build a case against God in defence of man, on whom can they depend when human activity proves powerless? [...]

Often we cannot understand why God refrains from intervening. Yet he does not prevent us from crying out, like Jesus on the Cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46). We should continue asking this question in prayerful dialogue before his face: “Lord, holy and true, how long will it be?” (Rev 6:10). It is Saint Augustine who gives us faith’s answer to our sufferings: “*Si comprehendis, non est Deus*” – “if you understand him, he is not God.”

Our protest is not meant to challenge God, or to suggest that error, weakness or indifference can be found in him. For the believer, it is impossible to imagine that God is powerless or that “perhaps he is asleep” (cf. 1 Kg 18:27).

Instead, our crying out is, as it was for Jesus on the Cross, the deepest and most radical way of affirming our faith in his sovereign power. Even in their bewilderment and failure to understand the world around them, Christians continue to believe in the “goodness and loving kindness of God” (Tit 3:4). Immersed like everyone else in the dramatic complexity of historical events, they remain unshakably certain that God is our Father and loves us, even when his silence remains incomprehensible.

Holidays

“Each good Christian knows that holidays are an appropriate moment for physical relaxation, as well as for nourishing the spirit by giving greater space to prayer and mediation, in order to grow in our personal relationship with Christ and to adapt ourselves ever more to His teachings.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Longing for Peace Unites Us

Peace is the goal toward which humanity aspires, and it is also “one of the most beautiful names of God,” Pope Benedict XVI explained in a [2006] meditation for Advent. [...]

According to the Holy Father, during Advent “the Church gives voice to that waiting for God profoundly inscribed in the history of humanity, a waiting that is often suffocated and deflected toward mistaken directions.”

“And it does so, first of all, but not only, with prayer,” he added. “‘Good works’ are essential and inseparable from prayer.”

Benedict XVI affirmed that Advent is “the most appropriate period to become a time lived in communion with all those – and thank God they are many – who hope for a more just and fraternal world.”

“This commitment to justice can unite, in a certain sense, men of any nationality and culture, believers and nonbelievers,” the Pope said. “All are animated by a common longing – even if it is different because of their motivations – toward a future of justice and peace.

“Peace is the goal to which the whole of humanity aspires! For believers ‘peace’ is one of God’s most beautiful names, who desires understanding among all his children...”

www.zenit.org 04-12-2006

Beyond Me

US Bishop Thomas Tobin on US politician Rudy Giuliani’s admission that he believes abortion is morally wrong but that the viewpoints of those who think it is right must be respected. Giuliani professes to be Catholic.

Bishop Tobin wrote: “Rudy’s explanation is a classic expression of the position on abortion we’ve heard from weak-kneed politicians so frequently in recent years: ‘I’m personally opposed to it but don’t want to impose my views on other people.’

“The incongruity of that position has been exposed many times now. As I’ve asked previously, would we let any politician get away with the same pathetic cop-out on other issues: ‘I’m personally opposed to ... racial discrimination, sexual abuse, prostitution, drug abuse, polygamy, incest ... but don’t want to impose my beliefs on others?’”

“Rudy’s defection from the Catholic faith on this moral issue is not unique, of course,” Bishop Tobin lamented. “Catholic politicians of both parties, nationwide, have followed a similar path in abandoning the faith for the sake of political expediency [...]. How these intelligent men and women will someday stand before the judgment seat of God and explain why they legitimized the death of countless innocent children in the sin of abortion is beyond me.”

www.zenit.org 05-06-2007

So Annoyed ..

One of the things I don’t like about the Catholic Church is the poor communication.

I mean, why should I have to learn from one of the teachers at the school that it’s no longer a sin to miss Mass on Sunday if it’s a bit inconvenient to go? And why should the sacristan have to update me about people not needing to go to confession anymore. They could have mentioned it at the Priests’ Inservice last month. And how embarrassing to have to be corrected by the Religious Education Coordinator for using the word ‘sin’ in my homily! Apparently we are supposed to say ‘moving away from God’s love’ now. She might have left it till after the staff meeting to make such a big deal of it.

It’s all too much for me. Why hasn’t the bishop said anything? Yesterday I discovered, from one of the good Sisters from over the road that I’ve been wasting my time encouraging Eucharistic Adoration. Apparently they’ve decided it’s much better to adore God at home.

What puzzles me, though, is that no one can tell me where I can get a list of these new teachings. Surely Rome must have put out something! My guess is that it’s an update to the Catechism.

I asked, silly me, at the Liturgy Meeting and at the Parents and Friends and got what I deserved. I said I was wondering if anyone had any document from Rome or any information at all about the new teachings that had come out. Well, you should have seen the amazement on their faces! It was like they had been practising for a moment like this because they all looked at me in utter disbelief and said, ‘Dear me, John, everybody knows the Church has moved on!’

I can tell you I felt like a real dill. Just wait till I see the bishop next .. I’ll tell him to get his act into gear and start informing his priests about all these changes to Church teaching.

(NB - all characters mentioned above are entirely fictional and do not refer to you or anyone you might know, or any of their relatives or friends. True!)

Posted by Fr John Speekman on 23-11-2007 on his blog at <http://homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com/>

There is Peace

Pope Benedict XVI

The nearness of Christmas sets a particular tone, a liturgical one, to our meditation.

On Christmas night we will hear the words of the angelic hymn: “Peace on earth to men loved by the Lord.” The meaning of these words is not “may there be peace”, but rather “there is peace”; it’s a news not just a wish. “The birth of the Lord,” St Gregory the Great said, “is the birth of peace.”

Where Peter Is, There is the Church

Most of you would be well aware of a petition that has been circulating, to be presented to the Bishops' Conference. The petition requests the bishops to address the shortage of priests by ordaining married men, inviting priests who have left the ministry to return, and to discuss the role of women in ministry and in the authority structures of the Church, including the question of women's ordination.

May God help us. An attendance at most Masses shows that women are floating around the sanctuary in ever-increasing numbers. Most of our pastoral associates come from the ranks of ageing female religious. They tend to take control of the parish and recruit other willing women associates.

The petition was created and written by Paul Collins and Frank Purcell, both 'ex'-priests. You would all know of the dissident Paul Collins, but what of Frank Purcell? Those of you resident in the Sandhurst diocese would know him well. He is on the editorial board of the Sandpiper, the Catholic paper of the diocese.

A cursory look at the petition shows up a few interesting signatories: Therese Quinn RSJ (who gave a retreat to the CWL of the Morwell Parish in 2006); Fr McGinnity, chairman of the National Council of Priests (who comments that the petition contains most of the aims of the NCP); and two deacons of the Sale diocese – Jim Erskine (Bishop Coffey's secretary) and Tony Aspinall (assigned to Cranbourne parish); to name a few.

Given the unjust treatment meted out to Fr Speekman because of his orthodoxy and adherence to Church teaching, one wonders what action, if any, will be taken against these deacons who have shown their opposition to Church teaching. What is their future in the Sale diocese?

These petitioners show a distinct lack of knowledge of the teachings of the Church. Do they really think that the Bishops have any authority to accede to their demands? Are they not aware that any Bishops who carried out their demands would be in schism?

Let me return to the Sandhurst diocese and look at what has occurred under the watch of Bishop Grech. I will cite a few examples.

In January 2006 a letter was circulated by the Director of the diocesan Catholic Education Office, Denis Higgins, to all Catholic secondary schools. It dealt with the "Health and Personal Development ... addressing such difficult contemporary issues as HIV and the AIDS problem, issues around the decreasing age of onset of puberty, sexuality and drug education, in order to ensure that students have the basic knowledge and skills to deal with the real world."

Included with the letter was a "show bag" containing information on such issues as the Morning-After Pill, condoms and how to use them, the Pill, and steps on how to obtain your own Medicare card. Despite protests to the Bishop, no action was taken. In fact, they were not even acknowledged. Denis Higgins still remains as Director of the CEO.

More recently we had three dissenters speaking at the Education Conference at Shepparton, as reported in ITD. Now we have a dissident 'ex'-priest working for the local Catholic paper. What, if any, action will Bishop Grech take? To a casual observer it could appear that the Sandhurst diocese is a haven for liberal dissenters.

This petition is a well-planned and orchestrated attack on the Church and the authority of the Pope. The action and participation of those involved could reasonably be described as treason.

There is a crisis of leadership and authority among the bishops in this country. This has been exemplified in the acceptance of the 'shared praxis' method of the dissident 'ex'-priest Thomas Groome in the religious education curricula of so many Catholic schools.

A letter circulated by Paul Collins "pushing" the petition (as he says) contains some disturbing comments. He states that they are working with four bishops to get the petition on the agenda of the Bishops' Conference. He further names Bishop Pat Power as a supporter of the petition and claims that "by far the majority [of bishops] are sympathetic to many of the aims of the petition." Early on in the petition they already had 87 priests signed.

Frank Purcell has stated that they now have over 16,000 signatures. One could well ask if these bishops, priests, religious and laity have lost the faith.

I do not deny these people the right to state their beliefs or opinions, but what I do say to them is cease calling yourselves Catholic. If you are not happy with the Church and her teachings, leave and start your own religion.

This Bishops' Conference could well be a watershed for the Church in this country. The bishops have to unequivocally reiterate their loyalty to the Magisterium. They have to deal with those employed by the Church by dismissing them from any positions they may hold.

This dissension has been going on for far too long and like a cancer, has to be cut out otherwise it will continue to spread. Over to you, My Lords.

In the meantime, pray and remain strong in the faith. Remember always "Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia" – Where Peter is, there is the Church.

John Henderson, Morwell

Gaudete Sunday: This Child is our Victory, Rejoice!

By John Mallon

Catholic Online, 12-12-2005 www.catholic.org

The Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday, the 'pink candle' Sunday, the Sunday we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath.

Gaudete is the imperative plural form of the Latin verb *gaudere* (to rejoice). It is a command ordering us to rejoice! In these days of penance and preparation leading up to the feast of our Saviour's birth, it reminds us of the joy that is to come, and serves, amid this season of penance, as a kind of 'break' when we recall the hope we have because of the coming of Jesus.

In Advent, we not only celebrate the first coming of our Lord, but eagerly prepare for His Second Coming as well, when the restoration of all things takes place.

Too often many of us shudder at the thought of our Lord's coming in glory, as if it were a frightening event – and certainly it will be for those who knowingly rejected Jesus. But for Christians who persevere it will be our great deliverance from the troubles and trials of this world. All the world will bend the knee – some in terror – but as for God's friends, they will bend the knee in joyful adoration as Jesus takes His place as King. The earliest Christians cried 'Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!' expecting Jesus to come at any moment. So should we – we should long for His return with our lamps trimmed and our souls ready. It is indeed something to celebrate – and prepare for. Advent turns our hearts and minds to this reality.

Should commercialism or the evils of the world get us down we need to look at the Advent wreath with its candles burning down patiently, a new one each week in the spiral they create, going down as we light the pink one the third week which fills us with joy that we are getting closer and closer to the coming of the Lord.

We can place ourselves on the hillsides with the shepherds in the silent chill with patient anticipation of they-knew-not-what until the angel told them. We can imagine the three wise men silhouetted in the brightness of the Christmas star. And then we can meditate on being in that stable with the smell of straw, animals, and a beautiful Newborn Who is our hope. We can let our burdens drop away at the foot of the manger when He smiles at us. We can receive Him into our arms and hearts as Mary holds Him out to us as the gentle Joseph looks on.

This Child is our victory. Rejoice!

"We conquer souls on our knees"

St Charles Borromeo

Movie Warning

The following email was forwarded to ITD by a reader, written by Therese Yassa, Institute for Advancing Community Engagement, Australian Catholic University, National Mount Saint Mary Campus

There will be a new children's movie out in December called "The Golden Compass". The movie has been described as "atheism for kids" and is based on the first book of a trilogy entitled "His Dark Materials" that was written by Phillip Pullman.

Pullman is a militant atheist and secular humanist who despises C. S. Lewis and the "Chronicles of Narnia". His motivation for writing this trilogy was specifically to counteract Lewis' symbolisms of Christ that are portrayed in the Narnia series.

Clearly, Pullman's main objective is to bash Christianity and promote atheism. Pullman left little doubt about his intentions when he said in a 2003 interview that "my books are about killing God." He has even stated that he wants to "kill God in the minds of children". It has been said of Pullman that he is "the writer the atheists would be praying for, if atheists prayed."

While "The Golden Compass" movie itself may seem mild and innocent, the books are a much different story. In the trilogy [called "His Dark Materials"], a young streetwise girl becomes enmeshed in an epic struggle to ultimately defeat the oppressive forces of a senile God. Another character, an ex-nun, describes Christianity as "a very powerful and convincing mistake." In the final book, characters representing Adam and Eve eventually kill God, who at times is called Yahweh. Each book in the trilogy gets progressively worse regarding Pullman's hatred of Jesus Christ.

"The Golden Compass" is set to premier on December 7, during the Christmas season (and starring Nicole Kidman), and will probably be heavily advertised. Promoters hope that unsuspecting parents will take their children to see the movie, that they will enjoy the movie, and that the children will want the books for Christmas.

Please consider a boycott of the movie and the books. Also, pass this information along to everyone you know. This will help to educate parents, so that they will know the agenda of the movie.

So many things today are darkness concealed in what appears to be innocent.

"First of all, we should pray because we are believers, for prayer is the recognition of our limitations and of our dependence: from God we come, to God we belong, to God we shall return."

Pope John Paul II

Money Well Spent

Directly under the Holy See, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) supports the faithful wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. ACN is a Catholic charity helping to bring Christ to the world through prayer, information and action.

Founded in 1947 by Fr Werenfried van Straaten, whom Pope John Paul II named “an outstanding apostle of charity”, the organisation is now at work in about 145 countries throughout the world.

The charity undertakes thousands of projects every year including providing transport for clergy and lay Church workers, construction of church buildings, funding for priests and nuns, and help to train seminarians. Since 1979, 45 million copies of ACN’s Child’s Bible, ‘God Speaks to His Children’ have been distributed worldwide.

ACN also helps poor priests overseas by sending out, every year, more than 1.2 million Mass offerings to the Church in need throughout Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

At a recent Congress in Rome to mark the 60th Jubilee celebrations for the charity, Pope Benedict XVI told ACN that its priorities should be evangelisation through the media and saving Christianity in the Middle East from extinction.

The ACN senior representatives heard how Benedict XVI “looks back in profound gratitude” on the charity’s history.

The ACN senior staff also attended the Pope’s Angelus address at which Benedict XVI described the organisation’s work as “an eloquent testimony to the love of God.”

To help this cause please contact the Australian office of ACN on (02) 9679-1929 or write to Aid to the Church in Need, PO Box 6245 Blacktown DC NSW 2148. e-mail: info@aidtochurch.org. You can donate on-line at www.aidtochurch.org

*Phillip Collignon
National Director, ACN (Australia)*

Last Month and Next Month

Apologies for the confusion in last month’s ITD, with the November 2007 issue having “October 2007” at the bottom of each page!

And apologies in advance for the delayed issue of next month’s printed copies of ITD. Due to our printer being closed from Christmas to 8 January, printed copies of ITD will be ready later than usual.

There will be no delay to the electronic version – the January ITD will be available on the website and emailed out around the first day of the month as usual.

Ed.

Love the Word of God

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience

We will turn our attention today to St Jerome, a Father of the Church who placed the Bible at the centre of his life: He translated it into Latin, he commented on it in his writings, and above all he committed to live it concretely in his long earthly existence, despite his naturally difficult and fiery character, which he was known for. [...]

What can we learn from St Jerome? Above all I think it is this: to love the word of God in sacred Scripture. St Jerome said, “To ignore Scripture is to ignore Christ.” That is why it is important that every Christian live in contact and in personal dialogue with the word of God, given to us in sacred Scripture.

This dialogue should be of two dimensions. On one hand, it should be truly personal, because God speaks to each of us through sacred Scripture and has a message for each of us. We shouldn’t read sacred Scripture as a word from the past, but rather as the word of God addressed even to us, and we must try to understand what the Lord is telling us.

And so that we don’t fall into individualism, we must also keep in mind that the word of God is given to us in order to build communion, to unite us in the truth along our way to God. Therefore, despite the fact that it is always a personal word, it is also a word that builds community, and that builds the Church itself. Therefore, we should read it in communion with the living Church.

The privileged place for reading and listening to the word of God is in the liturgy. By celebrating the word and rendering the Body of Christ present in the sacrament, we bring the word into our life and make it alive and present among us.

We should never forget that the word of God transcends time. Human opinions come and go; what is very modern today will be old tomorrow. But the word of God is the word of eternal life, it carries within itself eternity, which is always valuable. Carrying within ourselves the word of God, we also carry eternal life.

I conclude with a something St Jerome had said to St Paulinus of Nola, in which the great exegete expressed the reality that in the word of God we receive eternity, life eternal. St Jerome said: “Let us seek to learn on earth those truths which will remain ever valid in heaven” (Ep. 53,10).

www.zenit.org 07-11-2007

“Don’t you feel, here on earth, that you are already in the kingdom of heaven, just by living in these texts, meditating on them, and not seeking anything else?” *St Jerome*

The Present Moment

Mother Angelica remains relevant to people because they can't turn away from her directness, her passion and her lovable humour, says friend and biographer Raymond Arroyo.

Arroyo, director of EWTNews and host of "The World Over," is the author and editor of two books on the woman religious. "Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles" was a New York Times best-seller and has recently been translated into Spanish. He is also the editor of "Mother Angelica's Little Book of Life Lessons and Everyday Spirituality".

The following is from Zenit's interview with Arroyo:

What has been the most profound lesson you've learned from Mother Angelica?

Arroyo: For years, Mother had been urging me, and her legions of viewers, to live in the "present moment."

The week before the biography was published in 2005, Hurricane Katrina took our home and evicted my family and me from New Orleans. We didn't know where we were going to live, where we were going to send the kids to school, where our friends were. And yet there was this sense that this was part of God's plan for us.

Mother often says that "most people live in the past or in the future." We fret about the things we can't control or stew over things long gone. In doing so we are not at "home in the present moment."

I once asked Mother to describe the present moment for me, and she said: "We have to ask God, 'What are you calling me to do, right now in this present moment?' Not yesterday or tomorrow, but right now. God's will is manifested to us in the duties and the experiences of the present moment. We have only to accept them and try to be like Jesus in them."

This living in the present moment kept Mother attuned to the desires of God throughout the day and attentive to what he expected of her moment by moment.

The teaching became a great consolation to my family and myself after Katrina, and I continue to practice it even now. Three weeks after we lost the house, I became the only homeless author on the New York Times best-seller list. The present moment is funny that way.

www.zenit.org 15-06-2007

The Centre of Your Life

"Set the Eucharist at the centre of your personal life and community life: love the Eucharist, adore the Eucharist and celebrate it ... Live the Eucharist by testifying to God's love for every person."

Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 2000

But can't God forgive me without this sacrament?

*An excerpt from **The Gift of Confession - Abridged Edition in Q & A Format** by Fr Michael de Stoop which features answers to this and other frequently asked questions. Copies of this book are available from Catholic bookshops or from the publisher's website: www.connorcourt.com.au*

God is not restricted to the sacraments in forgiving sins. We can receive God's forgiveness through a perfect act of contrition, especially at the point of death. However, we receive far more abundant graces and benefits from the sacraments than we would obtain by making the same acts without the sacraments because Christ Himself is at work in them. This is especially true of the Sacrament of Reconciliation because the Church teaches that *attrition* (imperfect sorrow) *outside* the Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot obtain the forgiveness of serious sins, whereas *attrition* is enough to dispose us to obtain God's forgiveness *in* Confession. Knowing this can be very reassuring. This does not mean we should not strive to have perfect contrition when we go to Confession because the more perfectly disposed we are the more graces we receive from the sacraments.

There is reason to believe that many are not aware of this because it is not uncommon for Catholics to say, "I don't need to go to Confession. I have told God in prayer that I am sorry. He has forgiven me already." While it is true that our venial sins can be forgiven by such means, it is complacent to think that our serious sins are forgiven through prayer alone because we can never be sure if we have perfect sorrow for our sins.

The Church teaches: "Individual and integral confession of serious sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church" (CCC no. 1497).

Love the Word of God

Quotes from St Jerome

"The study and meditation of Scripture makes man wise and at peace."

"Read the divine Scriptures with much regularity; let the Holy Book never be laid down by your hands."

"Love sacred Scripture and wisdom shall love you; love it tenderly, and it will protect you; honour it and you shall receive its caresses."

"Stay firmly attached to the traditional doctrine that has been taught to you, so that you can preach according to the right doctrine and refute those who contradict it."

Tragedy or Triumph

When sudden death occurs it is often described as tragic. And when it is the father or mother of a young family, or a young person, then it is very upsetting and traumatic for those left behind.

But is it necessarily tragic for the deceased? If they have led a good life and kept God's Commandments to the best of their ability and confessed any sins, then hopefully they are enjoying paradise with God in Heaven. If so, it is not a tragedy but a triumph.

Many claim that death is the end, others don't seem to care, while others sometimes wonder but let sleeping dogs lie. But those with hope in the resurrection believe that death is not the end but the end of the beginning.

The fact is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came on earth to suffer and die and rise from the dead so that we can attain an eternity of happiness with God and the saints in paradise, providing we keep His Commandments and work to know, to love, and to serve Him here on earth.

'Eye has not seen, heart has not believed, and mind has not conceived the wonderful place I have prepared for you' – is God's eternal promise to those faithful to Him here on earth. There is no tragedy in that! Why do we not hear this good news story from our pulpits and from Church leaders and Catholics involved in the public debate? Then rather than be denigrated, religion could become very relevant indeed!

Pat O'Brien, Sale

God and Neighbour

We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

Nostra aetate, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions" n. 5

Trust in His Love

Pope Benedict XVI

"Let us accept Christ's invitation to face daily events trusting in His provident love. Let us have no fear for the future, even when it appears dark and gloomy, because the God of Jesus Christ, who adopted history to open it to its transcendent fulfillment, is its alpha and omega, its beginning and end. He guarantees that each small but genuine act of love contains all the meaning of the universe, and that those who do not hesitate to lose their lives for Him find them fully."

Inconsistent, Arrogant and Ridiculous

Perhaps a pontifical office with authority over sacred music would correct the abuses that have occurred in this area, suggested a Vatican official.

Monsignor Valentín Miserachs Grau, director of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, said this at a conference marking the 80th anniversary of the diocesan institute of Sacred Music of Trent, L'Osservatore Romano reported.

The pontifical institute directed by the monsignor was originally established by the Holy See in 1911. It is an academic institution dedicated to teaching and also performing sacred music. But, Monsignor Miserachs said, "In my opinion, it would be opportune to establish an office with authority over the material of sacred music."

Monsignor Miserachs contended that "in none of the areas touched on by Vatican II – and practically all are included – have there been greater deviations than in sacred music."

"How far we are from the true spirit of sacred music, that is, of true liturgical music," he lamented. "How can we stand it that such a wave of inconsistent, arrogant and ridiculous profanities have so easily gained a stamp of approval in our celebrations?"

It is a great error, Monsignor Miserachs said, to think that people "should find in the temple the same nonsense given to them outside," since "the liturgy, even in the music, should educate all people – including youth and children."

"Much music written today, or put in circulation, nevertheless ignores not only the grammar, but even the basic ABC's of musical art," he continued. "Due to general ignorance, especially in certain sectors of the clergy," certain media act as loudspeakers for "products that, devoid of the indispensable characteristics of sacred music – sanctity, true art, universality – can never procure the authentic good of the Church."

The monsignor called for a "conversion" back to the norms of the Church. "And that 'norm' has Gregorian chant as its cardinal point, either the chant itself, or as an inspiration for good liturgical music." He noted that his recommendations are not related to Benedict XVI's document on the use of the 1962 Roman Missal.

"Nova et vetera," he urged, "the treasure of tradition and of new things, but rooted in tradition."

Monsignor Miserachs suggested that contact with tradition should "not be limited to the academic realm, or concerts or records." Instead, "it should become again the living song of the assembly that finds in it that which calms their deepest spiritual tensions, and which makes them feel that they are truly the people of God."

www.zenit.org 08-11-2007

God and Caesar

A book by Cardinal George Pell, edited by Michael Casey

God and Caesar brings together a selection of Cardinal George Pell's writings on Christianity, politics, and society. Drawing on a deep knowledge of history and human affairs, the essays pinpoint the key issues facing Christians and non-believers in determining the future of modern democratic life.

Cardinal Pell considers questions such as: Is democracy only secular? What role can the Catholic Church and its moral vision play, and have they played, in strengthening democracy? What is the bishop's critical role in building a culture of life? And why is belief in God important to the health of a democratic society?

Christ's instructions to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21) remain the starting point for any reflections on Christianity and political life. *God and Caesar* is an indispensable text that helps illuminate what Christ's teaching means today.

Special Offer!

If you mention *Into the Deep* when ordering your copy from us, you will receive a discounted price of \$24.95 (regular price is \$29.95) and you will pay no postage!

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Thank you to Anthony for this generous offer to readers of *Into the Deep*! He has also provided ITD with a free copy of *God and Caesar*, which we will give away to one lucky reader selected randomly from all who contact us between now and 25th of January and mention the book. Ed.

*From the Foreword of God and Caesar
By Msgr Brian E. Ferme:*

"The contemporary and widespread view holds that the Church cannot impose its ideas on a free contemporary society, but the present collection [of essays] offers some important correctives to the contemporary and fashionable view: a massive confusion on what is meant by individual conscience; a tendency to privatize belief and consequently to privatize Catholic teaching as if it did not reflect fundamental truths; the importance of clearly stating one's beliefs and in the process encouraging a robust discussion on the real nature of participatory democracy. The simple fact is that the Church has a fundamental role to play in the formation of a country's values, especially through its role in democratic debate. Any attempt to silence the Church's genuine role is perilous for contemporary society."

Educators in Faith

Pope Benedict XVI

A witness of Christ does not merely transmit information but is personally involved with the truth Christ proposes and, through the coherency of his own life, becomes a dependable reference point.

However, he does not refer to himself, but to Someone who is infinitely greater than he is, in whom he has trusted and whose trustworthy goodness he has experienced. The authentic Christian educator is therefore a witness who finds his model in Jesus Christ, the witness of the Father who said nothing about himself but spoke as the Father had taught him (cf. John 8:28).

This relationship with Christ and with the Father is for each one of us, dear brothers and sisters, the fundamental condition for being effective educators in the faith.

www.zenit.org 23-06-2007

Feast of the Lowly

*From a 2006 commentary by Pontifical Household preacher,
Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent*

He has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness

With the Magnificat, Mary helps us to take in an important aspect of the Christmas mystery on which I would like to insist: Christmas as the feast of the lowly and as the ransoming of the poor. [...]

Our temptation is to do exactly the opposite of what God does: to want to look to those who are on top, not at those who are on the bottom; to those who are prosperous, not to those who are in need.

We cannot be content just remembering that God considers the lowly. We ourselves must become little, humble, at least in our hearts.

The Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem has only one entrance, and you cannot pass through it without bending down. Some have said that it was built this way so that the Bedouins could not enter seated on their camels. But there is another explanation that has always been given, and which, in any case, contains a deep spiritual truth. This door is supposed to remind pilgrims that in order to penetrate the deep meaning of Christmas it is necessary to humble oneself and become little.

In the days that follow we will hear our old Italian carol sung: "Tu scendi dalle stelle, o re del cielo..." (You descend from the starry skies, O King of heaven...). But if God has descended "from the starry skies," should we not also come down from our pedestals of superiority and power and live together as brothers reconciled?

We too must climb down from the camels to enter into the stable of Bethlehem.

www.zenit.org 22-12-2006

Rebel With a Cause

After removing Fr Speekman from Morwell parish, Bishop Coffey made it clear to certain priests in the diocese, that under no circumstance would he return Fr Speekman to Morwell parish while he is the Bishop of Sale. His tenure as bishop has lasted 18 years and tragically a third of that time has been devoted to persecuting and pursuing Fr Speekman for the Bishop's own failings. No wonder the diocese is in a state of spiritual decay.

Nevertheless, after more than 4 years of canonical due process, deliberations and arbitration and Vatican decrees in Fr Speekman's favour, the only certainty that has come out of this saga, is that Bishop Coffey has been true to his word in refusing to allow Fr Speekman to return. On the first of January Bishop Coffey will turn 75 and retire as the Bishop of Sale without reproof, and apparently unrepentant for the grave scandal he caused in the Church and the damage done to Fr Speekman (he graciously noted to The Tablet newspaper last year that he would not pursue the matter any further after his retirement).

Throughout this saga everyone around the country has witnessed Bishop Coffey's ill will and intransigence, unbecoming of a bishop in the Catholic Church and a betrayal of the communion he has pledged.

However, when a rebellious bishop can rally the majority of his priests to support his divisive actions, alarm bells would have sounded in Rome. They would have realized that the situation in the diocese in Sale is far more serious than vindicating the rights of a simple parish priest. Rome would have realized she was dealing with a bishop who had become a loose cannon. But it would appear that truth and justice have been sacrificed in this case in order to appease a lawless and recalcitrant bishop.

The fact is though, that for many years Bishop Coffey has operated in this manner, and has undermined the Church's orthodoxy. And now after 18 years of overseeing the ruining of the faith and discrediting of the Church in the diocese, he has rewarded himself with a prestigious car and a house at the sea in Paynesville.

Fr Speekman on the other hand, who faithfully carried out his office as parish priest according to the norms and prescriptions of the Church, who respectfully adhered to due process and humbly obeyed the laws of the Church and decrees of his bishop, got a 4½ year sentence. He was banished from his parish and diocese, and despoiled of his reputation, rights and office. He has served out his exile in the archdiocese of Sydney, until Bishop Coffey has reached his use-by date.

For orthodox Catholics in the diocese, it is as though we have been inflicted with a scourge caused by a process of appointment of bishops that hasn't produced the kind of leadership that's necessary in an age of secularism and relativism.

A grave concern is the fact that more than 70 percent of bishops in this country, like Bishop Coffey, have all the necessary power at their disposal to cause chaos and to ruin the Church locally with their liberalism. This reality alone should bring orthodox Catholics to their knees, to do penance and to pray for their conversion.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Preview Available

What is 'good', what is 'evil' and who decides...?
... in plain English, where does the buck stop?

As mentioned in the November issue of ITD, Raymond de Souza in association with EWTN presents this penetrating series on the distinctions between good, evil and man's individual choice.

Raymond questions the very foundations of modern social ethics, exploring the ideologies and tendencies brought about by a hundred years of anti-Catholic propaganda and relativism.

Now a preview is available! An excerpt of the first episode is at http://saintgabriel.com.au/g.o.e_clip.htm for you to view.

Saint Gabriel Communications International is proud to present the 13 part series in a four DVD set, available from www.SaintGabriel-International.com.

Dominic de Souza, Pennsylvania

Pray Even Longer

St Louis de Montford, in The Secret of the Rosary

Even if you suffer from dryness of soul, boredom and interior discouragement, never give up even the least little bit of your Rosary – for this would be a sure sign of pride and faithlessness. On the contrary, like a real champion of Jesus and Mary, you should say your Our Fathers and Hail Marys quite dryly if you have to, without seeing, hearing or feeling any consolation whatsoever, and concentrating as best you can on the mysteries. You ought not to look for candy or jam to eat with your daily bread, as children do – but you should even say your Rosary more slowly sometimes when you particularly find it hard to say. Do this to imitate Our Lord more perfectly in His agony in the garden: "Being in an agony, he prayed the longer," (Lk 22:43) so that what was said of Our Lord (when He was in His agony of prayer) may be said of you too: He prayed even longer.

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	Friday and Saturday 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

The Faith to See

St Peter Julian Eymard

Words cannot express the perfection of his adoration. If Saint John leaped in the womb at the approach of Mary, what feelings must have coursed through Joseph during those six months when he had at his side and under his very eyes the hidden God! If the father or Origin used to kiss his child during the night and adore the Holy Spirit living within Him, can we doubt that Joseph must have often adored Jesus hidden in the pure tabernacle of Mary? How fervent that adoration must have been: My Lord and my God, behold your servant! No one can describe the adoration of this noble soul. He saw nothing, yet he believed; his faith had to pierce the virginal veil of Mary. So likewise with you! Under the veil of the Sacred Species your faith must see our Lord. Ask St Joseph for his lovely, constant faith.

“If I can give you any advice, I beg you to get closer to the Eucharist and to Jesus”

Mother Teresa

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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- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
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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.