

Into the Deep

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Suffering Pays

Pope Benedict XVI

In a world in which lying is powerful, truth is paid for with suffering. He who wishes to avoid suffering, to keep it far from himself, will have pushed away life itself and its grandeur; he cannot be a servant of truth and thus a servant of faith. There is no love without suffering, without the suffering of denying ourselves, of the transformation and purification of the "I" for true freedom.

Wherever there is nothing worth suffering for, life itself also loses its value. The Eucharist – centre of our Christian being – is based on the sacrifice of Jesus for us; it was born from the suffering of the love that found its culmination on the cross. We live from this love that gives itself. This gives us the courage and strength to suffer with Christ and for him, thus knowing that precisely in this way our life becomes great, mature and true.

Let Yourself Be Transformed

Pope Benedict XVI

Holiness is always a force that transforms others. In this regard, it is useful to reflect that the Twelve Apostles were not perfect men, chosen for their moral and religious irreproachability. They were indeed believers, full of enthusiasm and zeal but at the same time marked by their human limitations, which were sometimes even serious.

Therefore Jesus did not call them because they were already holy, complete, perfect, but so that they might become so, so that they might thereby also transform history, as it is for us, as it is for all Christians. ...

The Church is the community of sinners who believe in God's love, letting themselves be transformed by him and thus become holy, sanctifying the world.

Power From On High

Pope Benedict XVI, WYD Mass, 19-07-2008

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." But what is this "power" of the Holy Spirit? It is the power of God's life! It is the power of the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation and who, in the fullness of time, raised Jesus from the dead. It is the power which points us, and our world, towards the coming of the Kingdom of God. In [the] Gospel, Jesus proclaims that a new age has begun, in which the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all humanity (cf. Lk4:21). He himself, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, came among us to bring us that Spirit.

As the source of our new life in Christ, the Holy Spirit is also, in a very real way, the soul of the Church, the love which binds us to the Lord and one another, and the light which opens our eyes to see all around us the wonders of God's grace. [...]

The power of the Spirit never ceases to fill the Church with life! Through the grace of the Church's sacraments, that power also flows deep within us, like an underground river which nourishes our spirit and draws us ever nearer to the source of our true life, which is Christ. [...]

Yet this power, the grace of the Spirit, is not something we can merit or achieve, but only receive as pure gift. God's love can only unleash its power when it is allowed to change us from within. We have to let it break through the hard crust of our indifference, our spiritual weariness, our blind conformity to the spirit of this age. Only then can we let it ignite our imagination and shape our deepest desires.

That is why prayer is so important: daily prayer, private prayer in the quiet of our hearts and before the Blessed Sacrament, and liturgical prayer in the heart of the Church. ... In the power of his Spirit, Jesus is always present in our hearts, quietly waiting for us to be still with him, to hear his voice, to abide in his love, and to receive "power from on high", enabling us to be salt and light for our world.

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Protestant Teaching Catholic Faith? No Problem!

Catholic mother Mrs Josie Vitale recently discovered that her daughter's Religious Education teacher at Lavalla Catholic College in Traralgon, is Anglican.

She wrote to the school and to the Diocesan Administrator, expressing her dismay and asking for this problem to be rectified. Mrs Vitale summed up the problem in her letter: "I find it very distressing to discover that someone who does not believe what the Catholic Church teaches is teaching my daughter her Catholic faith." She also complained that very little time is spent on actually teaching the Catholic faith, with time instead devoted to exploring other faiths. Contrary to what the Church expects of Catholic schools, this mother notes that the school has not supported her and her children in the Catholic faith they practise.

Much to her dismay (and the subsequent dismay of ITD), she received letters from both parties reassuring her with condescending platitudes, that having an Anglican teacher teach her daughter Religious Education at a Catholic school is not a problem at all.

Fr Peter Slater, administrator of the Sale Diocese, expressed his conviction that the college was following "the mandated Religious Education curriculum". He maintained that "while your child's teacher may not be a Catholic, as an Anglican she is a Christian and, therefore, would have an understanding of the Catholic faith even though she does not have the gift of our faith." How can Fr Slater, who has an obligation to Catholic parents and their children as a pastor of souls, justify having a person who is not in communion with the Catholic Church teaching the Catholic faith? And if Religious Education at a Catholic school is not about teaching the Catholic faith, then why is it a Catholic school? There is simply no justification for it.

He defends the teaching of other faiths because "Australia is a multi-faith society". But Lavalla is not a multi-faith school, it is not an ecumenical school, or an independent Christian school – it claims to be a Catholic school. It exists to teach the Catholic faith and to aid the Church in its work of saving souls. Do students really know their own Catholic faith well enough to be able to compare with other faiths? Let's test them on the Catechism first for example, and see what results we get.

To top it off, Fr Slater makes a sweeping statement of confidence in the school (the Catholic Education Office would be so proud of him!): "I hope that this has helped to allay your fears concerning your daughter's religious education at school. I feel sure that the strong faith foundation she is receiving at home is being supported by her school." His empty rhetoric and misplaced confidence is an insult to

orthodox Catholics who see the rotten fruits of Catholic education in their own families.

The principal of Lavalla Catholic College, Ms Erica Pegorer, also reassured Mrs Vitale that there was nothing at all to be concerned about: "I can assure you that the teachers in the Religious Education faculty are well lead and professionally formed...". She speaks glowingly of the school's RE programme and it being up-to-date and compliant. Obviously this Catholic mother must be mistaken in her perceptions and experiences.

In relation to the Anglican RE teacher, Ms Pegorer has "no hesitation in her ability and qualifications to teach the theoretical components of the subject. As a person of deep faith herself, she is very committed to the fundamental call to be a faithful person of courageous action. She is a wonderful Christian. She is committed to her own faith and gives witness to Gospel values in all that she does." Am I missing something, or is there not a deep and widening chasm between the beliefs of Anglicans and those of Catholics? How can a committed Anglican give faithful witness to Catholic beliefs?

In addition to these meaningless assurances, both Fr Slater and Ms Pegorer make mention of the difficulty of finding committed Catholic teachers. But this just doesn't ring true when you think of how orthodox Catholic teachers are carefully weeded out of our liberal Catholic education system, how orthodox priests are kept away from teaching school students, and how little emphasis we see being given to real efforts to attract committed Catholic teachers. They are simply empty words, echoed again and again by bureaucrats in the Catholic education system who need a reason to keep up their minimalist Catholic "ethos" so that they can keep their ties to the Church as loose as possible, all on their terms.

Fr Slater believes that "every teacher employed in a Catholic school makes a commitment to support its values" – but this is useless if the values are not Catholic. Ms Pegorer says that they support their RE programme with "other spiritual development programmes such as retreats and liturgies and the promotion of the Catholic faith through action and practice". If this were true, our parish churches would be brimming with young people – and their teachers – each Sunday.

The gushing support of an Anglican teacher teaching Catholic religious education is just another symptom of a problem that runs so deep in our Catholic education system that it can only be changed with a thorough cleansing from the top down. At the moment we don't even have a priest or principal honest or courageous enough to admit the problem. And Catholic parents have nowhere to turn.

- Ed.

What the Church has to say about Religious Education in Catholic Schools:

Identity of a Catholic School

"The Catholic School"

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977)

Evangelisation is...the mission of the Church; that is, she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all, generate new creatures in Christ through Baptism, and train them to live knowingly as children of God. (n.7)

The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. (n.9)

Often what is perhaps fundamentally lacking among Catholics who work in a school is a clear realisation of the identity of a Catholic school and the courage to follow all the consequences of its uniqueness. (n.66)

By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. (n.78)

Deserving the Title

Catechesi Tradendae - On catechesis in our time
Pope John Paul II, 1979

[The Catholic school] would no longer deserve this title if, no matter how much it shone for its high level of teaching in non-religious matters, there were justification for reproaching it for negligence or deviation in strictly religious education. Let it not be said that such education will always be given implicitly and indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils. (n.69)

Adherence to Magisterium

"Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith"

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1982)

[T]he Catholic school...involves a sincere adherence to the Magisterium of the Church, a presentation of Christ as the supreme model of the human person, and a special care for the quality of the religious education in the school. (n.38)

The role of the religion teacher is of first importance; for what is asked for is not that one impart one's own doctrine, or that of some other teacher, but the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself? ...always taking care...to be faithful to the...light of the Magisterium... (n.59)

A Member of the Church

"The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School"
The Congregation for Catholic Education 1988

Teachers find the light and the courage for authentic Religious education in their...generous and humble communion with the Holy Father. (n.44)

The effectiveness of religious instruction is closely tied to the personal witness given by the teacher; this witness is what brings the content of the lessons to life. (n.96)

Teachers...will... help students to discover the real value of the Sacraments: they accompany the believer on his or her journey through life. This journey takes place within the Church, and therefore becomes more comprehensible as students grow in an understanding of what it means to be a member of the Church. The essential point for students to understand is that Jesus Christ is always truly present in the Sacraments which he has instituted, and his presence makes them efficacious means of grace. The moment of closest encounter with the Lord Jesus occurs in the Eucharist, which is both Sacrifice and Sacrament. In the Eucharist, two supreme acts of love are united: Our Lord renews his sacrifice of salvation for us, and he truly gives himself to us. (n.78)

The life of faith is expressed in acts of religion. The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer. The latter is not just another way of praying; it is the official prayer of the Church, which makes the mystery of Christ present in our lives – especially through the Eucharist, Sacrifice and Sacrament, and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (n.83)

A truth which is loved by the teacher, and communicated in such a way that it is seen to be something valuable in itself, then becomes valuable to the student. (n.107)

Witness to Belief

Code of Canon Law

803 §2. The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life.

804 §2. The local ordinary is to be concerned that those who are designated teachers of religious instruction in schools, even in non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in correct doctrine, the witness of a Christian life, and teaching skill.

The Fear of God

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

The fear of God is quite different from being afraid. The fear of God must be learned: "Come, my children, listen to me," a Psalm says, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (33:12); being afraid, on the other hand, does not need to be learned at school; it overtakes us suddenly in the face of danger; the things themselves bring about our being afraid.

But the meaning itself of fearing God is different from being afraid. It is a component of faith: It is born from knowledge of who God is. It is the same sentiment that we feel before some great spectacle of nature. It is feeling small before something that is immense; it is stupor, marvel mixed with admiration. Beholding the miracle of the paralytic who gets up on his feet and walks, the Gospel says, "Everyone was in awe and praised God; filled with fear they said: 'Today we have seen wondrous things'" (Luke 5:26). Fear is here simply another name for stupor and praise.

This sort of fear is a companion of and allied to love: It is the fear of offending the beloved that we see in everyone who is truly in love, even in the merely human realm. This fear is often called "the beginning of wisdom" because it leads to making the right choices in life. Indeed it is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit! (cf. Isaiah 11:2).

www.zenit.org 20-06-2008

Take the Next Step

Cardinal George Pell, at World Youth Day

Secular wisdom claims that leopards do not change their spots, but we Christians believe in the power of the Spirit to convert and change persons away from evil to good; from fear and uncertainty to faith and hope. [...]

Our task is to be open to the power of the Spirit, to allow the God of surprises to act through us. Human motivation is complex and mysterious, because sometimes very strong Catholics, and other strong Christians, can be prayerful and regularly good, but also very determined not to take even one further step. On the other hand, some followers of Christ can be much less zealous and faithful, but open to development, to change for the better because they realize their unworthiness and their ignorance. Where do you stand?

Whatever our situation we must pray for an openness of heart, for a willingness to take the next step, even if we are fearful of venturing too much further. If we take God's hand, He will do the rest. Trust is the key. God will not fail us.

He Has a Body

*From a translation of Benedict XVI's homily at vespers for
the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. The service was the
inaugural ceremony of the Pauline Jubilee Year,
which runs through June 29, 2009.*

I would like...to recall the word that the Risen Christ spoke to [Paul] on the road to Damascus. ...the Lord asked him: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He answered: "Who are you, Lord?" And he received the reply: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." By persecuting the Church, Paul was persecuting Jesus himself. "You are persecuting me."

Jesus identifies himself with the Church in a single subject. In this exclamation of the Risen One – which transformed Saul's life – is contained the whole doctrine of the Church as Body of Christ.

Christ did not return to Heaven, leaving a handful of followers to carry his cause forward. The Church is not an association that wishes to promote a certain cause. It is not about a cause. It is about the person of Jesus Christ, who also as Risen remained "flesh." He has flesh and bones, affirms the Risen One in Luke, in face of the disciples who thought he was a ghost. He has a body. He is personally present in the Church. "Head and Body" form a single subject, said Augustine. "'Know you not that your bodies are members of Christ?' wrote Paul to the Corinthians, and he adds: 'That, according to the Book of Genesis, man and woman become one flesh?'"

So Christ becomes one spirit with his own, one subject in the new world of the resurrection. In all this, the Eucharistic mystery is visualized, in which Christ constantly gives his Body and makes of us one Body: "Is not the bread we break communion with the body of Christ? Because, though being many, we are only one bread and one body, as we all share in one bread."

www.zenit.org 30-06-2008

Become Saints!

Pope Benedict XVI

Young people today face a bewildering variety of life-choices, so that they sometimes find it hard to know how best to channel their idealism and their energy.

It is the Spirit who gives the wisdom to discern the right path and the courage to follow it. He crowns our poor efforts with his divine gifts, just as the wind filling the sails sweeps the ship forward, far surpassing what the oarsmen can achieve through their laborious rowing.

In this way, the Spirit enables men and women in every land and in every generation to become saints. Through the Spirit's action, may the young people gathered for World Youth Day have the courage to become saints! This is what the world needs more than anything else.

The Anti-Catholic Brigade

On the eve of the arrival of the Holy Father in Sydney for World Youth Day, the ABC Lateline program used an old sexual abuse case to attack Cardinal Pell and the Catholic Church. Subsequent ABC programs, as well as the left-wing neo-Marxist media pagans, all got in on the act and continued their anti-Cardinal Pell and anti-Catholic tirade throughout the WYD event in an attempt to hijack the Holy Father's faith-filled and joyful celebration with youth from across the world.

It is not only the ABC and other left-wing media that have publicly vilified and attacked Cardinal Pell and the Church – for many years now these attacks have come from bishops, priests and lay religious men and women in the Church. Liberal bishops such as Coffey, Connors, Malone, Morris, Power, and Robinson to name but a few, have all at some stage publicly made their opposition to Cardinal Pell and his orthodoxy known.

Similarly, the dissenting priests and religious who signed the Collins/Purcell petition have all used the ABC and left-wing media as a forum to criticize, deride and attack the Church, her faith and moral teaching.

In many ways these dissidents have fuelled the left-wing media's bigotry and anti-Pell attacks. When one listens to the negative carping of the self-opinionated bitter cranks you get the distinct impression that they do not want the faith and the Catholic Church to be revitalized in this country. They would prefer its demise and that WYD was a rolled-gold disaster so that they could justify the need for their liberal agenda of lay leadership and ministry, women's ordination and the abolition of celibacy.

Hence, it was no coincidence that the ABC Lateline program interviewed former priest Paul Collins and the American journalist Robert Blair Kaiser in relation to Cardinal Pell's handling of the 26-year-old sexual abuse complaint. Both were scathing in their criticism of the Cardinal and the Catholic Church.

WYD however, has exceeded everyone's expectations and its overwhelming success has knocked the wind right out of the collective liberal dissenters' sails. The youth love Pope Benedict XVI and are humbled to be members of a Church family that is much bigger than themselves. They love the Truth and are not afraid of it or ashamed to proclaim it to the world with joy. They are quite prepared to suffer hardships and difficulties for it and their faith.

WYD has given us a glimpse of the future of the Church in this country. It is through these hopeful and joyful young people that Christ will once again be born in the hearts of men and women in our world. This should be a cause for great joy.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Yes or No to Freedom

*From a general audience address of Pope Benedict XVI,
on St Maximus the Confessor*

In this drama of Jesus' agony, of anguish and death, of the opposition between the human will not to die and the divine will that offers itself to death, in this drama of Gethsemane the whole human drama is realized, the drama of our redemption. St Maximus tells us, and we know that this is true: Adam – and Adam is us – thought that the "no" was the apex of liberty; that only he who can say "no" is truly free; that to truly realize his liberty, man must say "no" to God.

Only in this way, he thinks, he is finally himself; he has arrived at the summit of liberty. This tendency was also present in Christ's human nature, but he overcame it, because Jesus saw that "no" is not the greatest liberty. The greatest liberty is to say "yes," to conform to the will of God. Only in saying "yes" does man really become himself. Only in the great opening of the "yes," in the unification of his will with the divine will, does man become immensely open, he becomes "divine."

To be like God was Adam's desire, namely, to be completely free. However, he is not divine, the man who is closed in on himself is not completely free. He is so by coming out of himself, it is in the "yes" that he becomes free. And this is the drama of Gethsemane: not my will but yours.

Transferring one's will to the divine will, that is how a true man is born. That is how we are redeemed.

This, in a few words, is the fundamental point of what St. Maximus wished to say, and we see that here the whole human being is questioned; here is the whole question of our life.

www.zenit.org 25-06-2008

Persecution Continues

The Beatitudes of the Gospel invite us to take up a number of ideals. They are about nonconformity with evil; they give us ways of resisting models of behaviour that the individual is pressured to accept because 'everyone does it'. The world cannot tolerate this kind of resistance; it demands conformity to its own measures and norms.

The struggle to abide in peace and at harmony with God is an indispensable part of the struggle that is life on earth for each one of us. When we lose sight of God, peace disintegrates and violence proliferates to a formerly unimaginable degree. The result we see only too clearly around us. For this reason there will be persecution for the sake of righteousness in every period of history.

S.C., Melbourne

The Tragedy of St Mary's South Brisbane

The tragedy of St Mary's parish in South Brisbane gets worse the more you look. ITD reported on this last month, with a shocking letter from a local, as well as the awful "Liturgy of the Eucharist" pretence that they use at that parish (ITD July 2008, p.2,3). It's hard to imagine that such a Eucharistic prayer – using words unrelated to the Church's approved liturgical texts and where the whole congregation says the words of consecration – can be valid. However, we'll leave that to the Church authorities to sort out, much like they had to sort out St Mary's pretend baptisms in the past, using "in the name of the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier" (refer ITD April 2008, p.4).

The parishioners of St Mary's seem to be very proud of their radical practices and seem intent on being the least Catholic they can possibly be, concentrating rather on generic social justice issues than on the Catholic faith or tradition. This is supported by (or led by?) their two priests. Neither is referred to as "Father" in any bulletins or parish magazines I have read. On the bulletin their names are listed under "Mass presiders", and in the magazine they are referred to by first name, and don't appear in vestments or Roman collars – you have to work it out for yourself who the priests are. In fact, in one picture of an adult baptism in the church, the priest in casual clothes and a stole looks on while one of the candidates pours water over the head of the other one. The caption says the one pours water on the other "as they are both baptised". Hmmm, another one for the authorities to look at.

The bulletins are littered with issues that appear more political than faith-related. For example, a petition "supporting human rights in China" promoted by St Mary's was not about the persecution of Christians, or Catholic clergy, or women forced into abortions or sterilisations, as one might think, but about the persecution of those who practise Falun Gong, a non-Christian type of spirituality. "Friends of Sabeel" is a regular parish group that advertises in the bulletins. Sabeel describes itself as an "ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians". Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, recently censured by the Australian Catholic Bishops for not accepting Church doctrine, (see ITD June 2008, p.3) is

welcomed and praised for "methodically offer[ing] a critique of the church's use and misuse of power, from the pope proclaiming infallibility down to the preacher claiming a divine authority for every word spoken from the pulpit."

"Visiting scholar" B. Brandon Scott is advertised, with a link to the "progressive spirituality" website for more information. The website claims proudly that "spirituality is maturing and religion is diminishing", and calls for like-minded people to join, that is, people who don't believe in the doctrines of their church, and who are "repulsed by claims that Christianity (or Islam, Judaism etc) is the only true way".

Dr Meath Conlan's visits and talks in Brisbane are given much publicity at St Mary's. He offers sessions on "mindfulness meditation", and an introduction to Dom Bede Griffiths (who had strong ties to Hinduism). Dr Conlan is described as embracing Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism as well as the ancient/cosmic religions of Egypt and the Near East.

In the parish magazine, one of the 'Mass presiders' writes an article suggesting that no religion has any claim on truth, and that those of all beliefs should "allow our doubts and uncertainties to unite us all"; he also refers to the Gospel of Phillip. Why doesn't he consider writing about what our Catholic Church teaches? And if it's because he doesn't believe it, why is he still Catholic?

One of the home-made 'final blessings' of St Mary's includes reference to being "a people sent to heal each other", "who name the truth", and who gather "in the company of Jesus" ... it seems they have no need to learn the truth from Jesus, or be healed by Him. This is a community that only needs itself.

Another 'blessing' refers to being sent to be "faithful to the breaking of the bread". As they are obviously not referring to faithfulness to the Catholic Mass, we can only wonder what they are referring to.

It is hard to imagine that St Mary's South Brisbane is actually a Catholic parish.

If Archbishop Bathurst does not take all steps within his power to put an end to the non-Catholic nonsense at this parish, he himself should be severely censured.

- Ed.

"Prayer is pure receptivity to God's grace, love in action, communion with the Spirit who dwells within us, leading us, through Jesus, in the Church, to our heavenly Father."

Pope Benedict XVI, WYD Mass, 19-07-2008

"Stop listening to your fears. God is your guide and your Father, Teacher and Spouse. Abandon yourself into the divine bosom of His most holy good pleasure. Keep up your spiritual exercises and be faithful in prayer."

St Paul of the Cross

The Buddha is Gone

The buddha at St Mary's South Brisbane is gone. A parishioner told me that another parishioner has 'thrown away' the buddha.

After Mass one morning I was verbally attacked by a St Mary's parishioner. It seems that a 'friend of mine', someone judgemental, like myself, had gone and broken the buddha. How dare he destroy 'our property'? I am apparently negative, trying to destroy all the wonderful things the parish has done. They are afraid that they will lose this wonderful church. I need to examine my conscience, and go where I like the way they run things. I should not be going to a place like St Mary's.

So much for inclusiveness and tolerance.

One morning there were leaflets near the old altar (i.e. behind the altar-rails) describing a Buddhist gathering. It is possible that the buddha was used for these Buddhist ceremonies, and this is why it had been placed in front of the tabernacle.

St Marys has a long way to go before it gains the appearance of normality, but at least a small step has been made on that path.

Richard Stokes, Brisbane

The Real 'New Age'

Pope Benedict XVI, WYD Mass, 19-07-2008

Empowered by the Spirit, and drawing upon faith's rich vision, a new generation of Christians is being called to help build a world in which God's gift of life is welcomed, respected and cherished - not rejected, feared as a threat and destroyed. A new age in which love is not greedy or self-seeking, but pure, faithful and genuinely free, open to others, respectful of their dignity, seeking their good, radiating joy and beauty. A new age in which hope liberates us from the shallowness, apathy and self-absorption which deaden our souls and poison our relationships.

Dear young friends, the Lord is asking you to be prophets of this new age, messengers of his love, drawing people to the Father and building a future of hope for all humanity.

The world needs this renewal! In so many of our societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert is spreading: an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair. How many of our contemporaries have built broken and empty cisterns (cf. Jer 2:13) in a desperate search for meaning - the ultimate meaning that only love can give? This is the great and liberating gift which the Gospel brings: it reveals our dignity as men and women created in the image and likeness of God. It reveals humanity's sublime calling, which is to find fulfilment in love. It discloses the truth about man and the truth about life.

Opportunities for Renewal

We all know that loyalty is a good thing, but there are also misplaced loyalties. At a crucial moment of his life Jesus made it very clear that, ultimately, it is only the truth that will make us free.

A good while ago Fr Speekman thought that he was treated wrongly, and quite rightly and justly appealed to the appropriate higher authority to examine and decide on the merits of his case. The verdict and explanation were a resounding endorsement of his position as Parish Priest, with all its responsibilities.

Unfortunately his brother priests refused to see this, and engaged in a covert action of misplaced loyalty to a mistaken and obstinate bishop, thus encouraging the latter in his unchristian stupidity. He is now gone, and there has been a deathly silence for over six months. Meanwhile, there is now a Diocesan Administrator in place, fully equipped to do what is necessary to heal the rift within the diocese.

What a wonderful thing it would be if the Administrator were to see the light of those words of Jesus, and invite Fr Speekman back to take up those responsibilities which are his by right of office. What a great gesture of healing that would be for the whole diocese and beyond. The Administrator has that power, but it is up to him to use it.

Of course, there is another route to justice and healing. Rome might well decide that, if nothing along those lines is forthcoming from within the administration of the diocese, it is well overdue for it to intervene directly to show that it is not itself just some form of toothless tiger.

Fr Speekman could be appointed the new bishop of the diocese. In that case the priests of the diocese would have to, again, honour their pledge of loyalty and oath of obedience to the new bishop. What an opportunity for renewal!

S.C., Melbourne

Tell the Truth

For those with internet connection, click on the link below to see Tim Rebecchi's Tell the Truth Coalition advert against the legalisation of abortion in Victoria, on Youtube. The TV ad ran in Bendigo and Ballarat for a week before the Advertising Standards Bureau deemed it unacceptable - after three complaints which were nonsensical. There are no graphic images, but it is very powerful.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLKVEV9SCLU>

*Maryse Usher, Melbourne,
Member of Tell the Truth Coalition steering committee*

Friends of the Lamb

Allow me to pen a few thoughts that may seem appropriate when we see how a number of our priests and bishops are failing to giving us the good example for which we crave.

I personally find it very easy to criticize these weak shepherds when I observe their obvious weaknesses but, sadly, I can be very slow in praying for these chosen souls, that they may become good and holy priests. I find it necessary to remind myself that Almighty God did not choose them for what they are, but for what they could become. May I suggest through the pages of "Into the Deep" that we immediately begin to pray for all our priests and actively persuade our children to do the same by encouraging them to become "Friends of the Lamb".

Let me explain. This is a God-given opportunity to encourage our little ones to become actively involved in praying for our priests and vocations. They could become members of a junior version of the "31 Club" (where adults select one day of the month on which they will attend Holy Mass for their priest(s) in addition to the normal Sunday Mass).

Did not Jesus say, "Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to Me" (Mt 19: xiv)? Should we not encourage our Lord's "little friends" to pray for their priests and for an increase in vocations? After all without our priests we would no longer have "The Lamb". An appropriate name for these participants is "Friends of The Lamb" and all junior parishioners, be they tiny babes or youngsters preparing for confirmation, could be invited to join. Since there are no rules, parishes can do whatever they consider best. Of course the little babies would not know the words of the "Hail Mary" but their mothers or guardians would and the latter could recite an Ave for the wellbeing of their priest as they held their child in their arms.

Just imagine the joy in a mother's heart as she announces to her pastor immediately after he has baptised her little babe that henceforth both she and her child would say an Ave for his intention each month on the date of her child's baptism.

Initially the children would only be encouraged to say their Hail Mary once a month on an easy to remember date such as their baptism or birth date. Of course they could pray as many days of the month as they wished, but the idea is to encourage the youngsters to commence praying for their clergy. It is not meant to be a penance but something beautiful. It is the child's special gift to his pastor and parish.

Just imagine how wonderful it would be for these little "Friends of the Lamb", if on the day of their First Holy Communion, they heard their pastor speak directly to them and say that he needed their prayers and would be very grateful if they would say three

Aves for his intentions on just one day each month so that Almighty God would make him a good and holy priest. After Confirmation, they would be regarded as adults and might then like to join the "31 Club".

Jesus is called "The Lamb" 32 times in the New Testament (28 in the book of Revelation). We Catholics believe that this is the Lamb who came down from heaven to suffer and to die for us so that we may be redeemed. Jesus was prefigured by the Lambs of the Exodus. When our Lady appeared in Knock in 1879 she was escorted by St Joseph and St John and uniquely in the history of Marian apparitions she was accompanied by The Lamb (about 8 weeks old) who stood on the altar upon which a cross was plainly visible.

The Lamb is our saviour. We need the Lamb. In some parts of the world vocations are not being nurtured, the number of priests is in decline and parishes are closing. Clustering seems to be the ready solution. But that is not the real answer. What we need are more priests for whom we must all pray. Priests have the miraculous power through the words of consecration to bring the Lamb down to the altar in our parish. Without the blood of the Lamb to redeem us we would be lost.

Why not inspire your children to become "Friends of the Lamb"? Talk it over with a few from your parish and if you receive a positive response you could approach your pastor and gently seek his assistance (if he thinks that it is appropriate) to encourage as many "Little ones" as possible to become members of this special group. He might feel reassured to know that these important little parishioners will be praying on a certain date each month for their parish clergy and for an increase in vocations.

The children could "sign up" as they leave the church i.e. nominate a date on which they will pray each month for Father. If they are too young to do so then perhaps their parents or guardians could act on their behalf. Hopefully someone could collate all the responses on a large board divided into 31 segments for each day of the month, possibly displaying the image of a lamb, so that the names of the participants recorded under their chosen dates could be displayed in a suitable place in the vestibule of the church. Other children may subsequently feel encouraged to join this special band of youngsters when they see that their friends have already agreed to pray for their priests. Who knows, perhaps the example of our children may even stimulate some adults to join the "31 Club". Even if it is not possible to display the names of the participants, that is not of great importance – what is essential is that as many children as possible become "Friends of the Lamb."

Is it not time we prayed for good and holy priests?

Pat Ryan, London UK

What Babies Need Most

From a homily of Pope Benedict XVI on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, when he baptised 13 babies

Christian parents...bring their children to the baptismal font as soon as possible, knowing that life which they have communicated calls for a fullness, a salvation that God alone can give. And parents thus become collaborators of God, transmitting to their children not only physical but also spiritual life.

Dear parents, I thank the Lord with you for the gift of these children and I invoke his assistance so that he may help you to raise them and incorporate them into the spiritual Body of the Church.

As you offer them what they need for their growth and salvation may you always be committed, helped by their godparents, to developing in them faith, hope and charity, the theological virtues proper to the new life given to them in the sacrament of baptism.

You will guarantee this by your presence and your affection; you will guarantee it first of all and above all by prayer, presenting them daily to God and entrusting them to him in every season of their life.

If they are to grow healthy and strong, these babies will of course need both material care and many other kinds of attention; yet, what will be most necessary to them, indeed indispensable, will be to know, love and serve God faithfully in order to have eternal life.

Dear parents, may you be for them the first witnesses of an authentic faith in God!

In the Rite of Baptism there is an eloquent sign that expresses precisely the transmission of faith. It is the presentation to each of those being baptized of a candle lit from the flame of the Easter candle: It is the light of the risen Christ, which you will endeavour to pass on to your children.

Thus, from one generation to the next, we Christians transmit Christ's light to one another in such a way that when he returns he may find us with this flame burning in our hands.

During the Rite I shall say to you: "Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly." Dear brothers and sisters, always feed the flame of the faith by listening to and meditating on the Word of God and assiduous communion with Jesus in the Eucharist.

May you be assisted in this marvellous, if far from easy, role by the holy protectors after whom these children will be named.

Above all, may these saints help those being baptized to reciprocate your loving care as Christian parents.

May the Virgin Mary in particular accompany both them and you, dear parents, now and forever. Amen!

www.zenit.org 21-01-2008

Fr Speekman in Good Company

Many older Catholics will remember the story of the appointment of St Ambrose as Bishop of Milan.

This is a good precedent for the faithful of the diocese to put forward Fr Speekman's name as someone appropriate to replace Bishop Coffey. There is little likelihood that his was among the three names submitted to the Vatican.

At the same time, such an appointment would take considerable courage on the part of Fr Speekman, in that a good number of his fellow-priests signed a petition to punish him.

A similar petition was circulated during the time of the Cure of Ars, St John Vianney, much the same as the one against Fr Speekman. It was sent by mistake to his own parish. He signed it himself and sent it on. Fr Speekman is in good company.

Richard Stokes, Brisbane

Distractions

St Alphonsus Liguori

"The Devil is never busier trying to distract us than when he sees us praying and asking God for grace. And why? Because the enemy sees that at no other time do we gain so many treasures of heavenly goods as when we pray."

Don't Underestimate Youth

Pope Benedict XVI

They also have an aptitude for self-mastery: Indeed, in sports, the creative arts, and in academic studies, they readily welcome it as a challenge. Is it not true that when presented with high ideals, many young people are attracted to asceticism and the practice of moral virtue through self-respect and a concern for others? They delight in contemplating the gift of creation and are intrigued by the mystery of the transcendent.

Reason for Hope Perhaps

Retired Bishop of Sale, Jeremiah Coffey, has donated a monstrance to the diocese to mark his golden jubilee and retirement. "Contemporary" in design though it may be, it is a monstrance nonetheless, and gives us reason to hope that our prayers for him may be bearing fruit. After all, Bishop Coffey has not exactly been known for his encouragement or support of Eucharistic adoration, occasionally even scoffing at the thought.

- Ed.

How Refreshing

I recently attended Mass at St Gerard's Church North Dandenong where my wife and family and also my parents were founding parishioners. What a pleasure it was to call in and attend Sunday Mass and walk out like a new battery fully charged! It was Mass like we were brought up with (and exactly like Father John Speekman's). No brainwashing but words of truth and wisdom according to our faith. The Mass was said as laid down to the letter and no changing words but as per the book. There were 5 altar boys perfectly trained in their duties and beautifully turned out. A lady organist with a beautiful voice playing and singing proper hymns during Mass and not the razzamattaz we so often hear in churches to please the trendies. The parish priest Rev. Father Roger Ryan gave a wonderful homily on the Readings. The congregation is very multicultural and I hate using this word but I write this to explain that Fr Ryan spoke that all could take notice of what the scriptures were telling us and how it sounded to me like Fr John. Also another thing that stood out was the prominent position of the tabernacle and the beautiful presentation of Our Lord and Blessed Lady's statues.

When we first started this parish some 50 years ago the Mass was held in the Scout Hall. It was a real parish of strugglers, many from battling disadvantaged homes. Our first church was on the current block of land in Gladstone Road bought some years before by Fr Kevin Donnelly (well known for the wrong reasons but God bless his soul) and was the old weather board hospice of the Sisters of Charity from Abbotsford. Being a builder and with many more tradesmen in the new parish we set it up and it became our church, temporary school and parish hall.

We were later to be blessed with a parish priest by the name of Fr John Daly and assisted by Fr Peter Carrucan, two great men and holy priests. Around Vatican II they both at different times were very sick and eventually the parish started to see the liberalist trendy priests appointed to replace them and everything fell in a big hole.

Fr Ryan no doubt will ensure that our Catholic faith is taught and is as strong as it was in times past. God bless him. All we need now in Sale is a new strong Bishop with no previous ties to any of the current priests and deacons of the diocese to come in and take a firm grip on the status quo and give it a real good shake and clean-out and teach and instruct the clergy and us all in being faithful and loyal to the Pope and Rome and all the Church's teachings.

Mal Bugg, Morwell

The Way It Is

Quotes from a talk by Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, Colorado, in Sydney during World Youth Day

“Jesus wants all of us. And not just on Sundays.”

“We need to take Christ at his word. We need to love him like our lives depend on it. Right now. And without excuses.”

“It's not about choosing what you want to do with your life. It's about discovering how God wants to use your life to spread the good news of his love and his kingdom.”

“Being a follower of Christ is not just one among many aspects of your daily life. Being a Christian is who you are. Period. And being a Christian means your life has a mission. It means striving every day to be a better follower, to become more like Jesus in your thoughts and actions.”

“St John of the Cross said: "Where there is no love, put love and you will draw out love." Those are good words to live by. Put real love into everything you do. Not a vague, sentimental warm feeling. That kind of love doesn't mean anything because it doesn't cost you anything. No. Jesus wants a love that comes from the heart, a love that sacrifices for others as he sacrificed for us.”

Sound Advice

“Love the Church; love her as your mother and teacher. Help to build her up, to purify her life and work. We all get angry when we see human weakness and sin in the Church. But we have to remember always that the Church is much, much more than the sum of her human parts.

The Church is the Bride of Christ. The Spirit that worked in Jesus Christ and in his apostles is still at work in the Church. Jesus promised his apostles that when they teach, it will be he who is teaching. That when they forgive sins, it will be he who forgives. That when they say his words, "This is my body," the bread and wine will become his body and blood. Jesus doesn't forget his promises. Where the Church is, Jesus Christ is. Until the end of the age. And we always want to be where Christ is, because there is no way home to God except through him.

So love the Church. And this is crucial: Know what the Church teaches. What the Church teaches is what Christ wants you and everyone else to know – for our own good and for our salvation. Know what the Church teaches so you can live those teachings and share those teachings with others.”

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“To fulfill the mission that Jesus has given us, we mustn't be either lazy or cowardly.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Baptism: A Call to Holiness

[This is the fifth in a series of articles on Baptism catechesis appearing in ITD on this page. Ed.]

In last month's article on Baptism and the forgiveness of sins we concluded that as children of God we love him and obey his will in the measure that we reject Satan and his works and are prepared to resist sin, to deny the self and say no to the ways of the world.

This month we will be looking at Baptism as the call to a life of holiness and what this actually means for God's children on a daily basis.

The first thing we need to understand about holiness is that it is the action of God. Baptism is the action by which God clothes us with holiness. We cannot make ourselves holy. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are made new in mind, heart and soul and we put on the new holy nature of God's creating.

The Holy Spirit is God's mark of ownership, he made us, we belong to him. He who is the source and fountain of all holiness has chosen us in Christ to be his children according to the Spirit of holiness.

It is the same Spirit that dispels the darkness of sin from our hearts and minds and who brings us into the true light of Christ. Through the waters of Baptism our minds, hearts and souls are turned toward God's will, love and truth.

What this means is that the baptized have made a decision to stop being their own creators, of living according to the self, of following their own plans, wills and desires. Baptism is the very act of choosing to make a response to God's love by redirecting our hearts, minds and souls towards God's love and truth no matter what the circumstances of our lives.

Baptism is the consecration of a person, adult or baby, in the truth. To be consecrated means to be made holy, to be set apart for a holy purpose. This is shown in Baptism by the person being anointed with the oil of Chrism, as a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit.

By our Baptism we have been entrusted with the responsibility of revealing the truth of God by the way we live our lives daily. We have said yes to proclaiming and witnessing to what we believe about God, about Jesus Christ, about his Church and her teachings and all that has been revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

To be consecrated in truth means that our new life of faith and morals is centred on the truth that is God. For Christians this truth is not a concept, a theory, or an idea but a person, Jesus Christ. In St John's Gospel, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life".

Christ lived his life in total dependence on God the Father and in absolute obedience and love for his will. Being baptized into the life of Christ means that we need to live our new resurrected life totally dependent on Christ, in order to reject Satan and all his works and to avoid sin daily.

We are not baptized into the life of Christ, the faith of the Church and the divine life of God to be like everyone else. Neither do we become a member of God's family, the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church to follow our own wishes or the wisdom of the world.

No, we become God's children in order to know, love and serve Him. It makes no sense to ask for Baptism of the Church, for faith, if you intend to live this new life of faith according to your own wants, wishes, and plans. You do not need Baptism to do this. Asking for Baptism with this intention would be a complete misunderstanding and contradiction of what Baptism is and what it means to be a child of God.

Our new life in Christ only makes sense and becomes a true value and worthy gift if it is lived according to God's plan, his commandments and the Gospel of Christ. As the first letter of St John (2:3-6) explains, "We can be sure that we are in God only when the one who claims to be living in him is living the same kind of life Christ lived."

The Father has made known his divine plan and will to his beloved Son, Jesus Christ once and for all. The way we live this divine life has been marked out for us by the Father: Jesus Christ is the complete revelation of this divine life which we received in Baptism. He reveals to us who we are, what we must become and where we are going.

Baptism is the beginning of the unconditional belief and trust in God's plan for our soul as his son and daughter. As children of God we have to spend our life on this earth learning about his plan and truth, and how to live this life in a way that is pleasing to him. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism God has made us capable of following his plan, of knowing his truth and of obeying his will. Jesus Christ has entrusted the Catholic Church with the mission of preaching, teaching and proclaiming this truth and plan to the whole world.

The goal of Baptism is communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Not only is this sacrament the source and summit of our faith, but it is also the fullest expression and development our baptismal call to holiness.

It was Pope John Paul II that said in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* that, "since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: "Do you wish to receive Baptism?" means at the same time to ask them: "Do you wish to become holy?" (n.31)

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland

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	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 (every second month, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday (10am Mass) 10.30am – 12 noon
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 (every second month, January onwards)

Mass for Vocations

Sale	Saturday 9am
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If We Really Understood

Blessed Dina Belanger

“If souls but understood what treasure they possess in the divine Eucharist, it would be necessary to protect the tabernacles by impregnable ramparts because, in the delirium of a holy and devouring hunger, they would themselves go to be nourished by the Bread of Angels. The churches would be brimming with adorers consumed by love for the divine prisoner, both during the day and the night.”

Adoration for Youth Groups

Pope Benedict XVI

I am happy to testify that many young people are discovering the beauty of adoration, whether personal or in community. I invite priests to encourage youth groups in this, but also to accompany them to ensure that the forms of adoration are appropriate and dignified, with sufficient times for silence and listening to the word of God.

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.
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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.