

Into the Deep

Issue 82

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

July 2009

Always The Priest

From Pope Benedict XVI's letter to the priests of the world on the occasion of the Year for Priests:

The Cure of Ars was quite humble, yet as a priest he was conscious of being an immense gift to his people: "A good shepherd, a pastor after God's heart, is the greatest treasure which the good Lord can grant to a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of divine mercy". He spoke of the priesthood as if incapable of fathoming the grandeur of the gift and task entrusted to a human creature: "O, how great is the priest! ... If he realised what he is, he would die. ... God obeys him: he utters a few words and the Lord descends from heaven at his voice, to be contained within a small host".

Explaining to his parishioners the importance of the Sacraments, he would say: "Without the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we would not have the Lord. Who put Him there in that tabernacle? The priest. Who welcomed your soul at the beginning of your life? The priest. Who feeds your soul and gives it strength for its journey? The priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, bathing it one last time in the blood of Jesus Christ? The priest, always the priest. And if this soul should happen to die [as a result of sin], who will raise it up, who will restore its calm and peace? Again, the priest. ... After God, the priest is everything! ... Only in heaven will he fully realise what he is".

These words, welling up from the priestly heart of the holy pastor, might sound excessive. Yet they reveal the high esteem in which he held the Sacrament of the Priesthood. He seemed overwhelmed by a boundless sense of responsibility: "Were we to fully realise what a priest is on earth, we would die: not of fright, but of love. ... Without the priest, the passion and death of our Lord would be of no avail. It is the priest who continues the work of redemption on earth. ... What use would be a house filled with gold, were there no one to open its door? The priest holds the key to the treasures of heaven: it is he who opens the door: he is the steward of the good Lord; the administrator of His goods. ... Leave a parish for twenty years without a priest, and they will end by worshipping the beasts there. ... The priest is not a priest for himself, he is a priest for you".

www.zenit.org 18-06-2009

Bishop Appointed

On 18 June our Holy Father appointed Bishop Christopher Prowse, auxiliary of Melbourne, as our new bishop of Sale. He will be installed on 15 July 2009 at St Mary's Cathedral in Sale, at 2pm.

The faithful of the Diocese of Sale have long been yearning and praying for a good strong bishop to lead us; a holy man, with courage and wisdom, to shepherd us and nourish our faith, to teach us, guide us and challenge us to deepen our relationship with Christ and his Church; a bishop who is not afraid to stand for the truth, regardless of the radical responses it may elicit or even the division it may cause; a man who is fearless in his own faithfulness to the Magisterium and who is not influenced by politics or diplomacy or image or mateship when it comes to making hard decisions in line with Church teaching. We have longed for a true leader, a man we can pledge our support to, serve, and be inspired by, because he faithfully images Christ whom we strive to serve and love.

Being a bishop is a difficult task, an enormous challenge, and taking over a diocese lost in liberalism is an added burden. Yet there is no shortage of inspiration for a bishop to draw on, from popes and saints throughout the ages to our current pope and the growing number of orthodox bishops around the world. What a wonderful calling! What a profound responsibility! What an awe-inspiring mission!

Let us always keep Bishop Prowse in our prayers as he leads the diocese in a new chapter of life.

- Ed.

"Truly, Jesus knows us,

even more deeply than we know ourselves, and he has a plan for each one of us. We know, too, that wherever he calls us, we will find happiness and fulfilment; indeed, we will find our very selves."

Pope Benedict XVI

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

The Church ...

St Germanus, quoted by Pope Benedict XVI

“The Church is the temple of God, sacred space, house of prayer, convocation of the people, body of Christ ... It is heaven on earth, where the transcendent God dwells as in his house and walks [about] in her, but it is also the fulfilled image of the Crucifixion, of the tomb and of the Resurrection. The Church is the house of God in which the life-giving mystical sacrifice is celebrated, at the same time the most intimate part of the sanctuary and the holy grotto. Within her is found those true and authentic precious pearls that are the divine dogmas of the teaching offered directly by the Lord to his disciples.”

... Divine Beauty

*Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 29-04-2009,
on St Germanus*

What does this saint [St Germanus] have to tell us today...? I think substantially three things.

The first: There is a certain visibility of God in the world, in the Church, which we should learn to perceive.

God has created man in his image, but this image has been covered in so much filth from sin that consequently God is almost not seen anymore in it. Thus the Son of God became true man, perfect image of God: In Christ we can thus contemplate the face of God and learn to be true men ourselves, true images of God. Christ invites us to imitate him, to come to be similar to him, so that in each man the face of God, the image of God, again shines through. ...

The second is the beauty and dignity of the liturgy.

To celebrate the liturgy in the awareness of the presence of God, with this dignity and beauty that allows one to see a bit of his splendour, is the task of every Christian formed in his faith.

The third is to love the Church.

Precisely concerning the Church, we men are inclined to see above all, its sins, the negative; but with the help of faith, which makes us capable of seeing authentically, we can also, today and always, rediscover in her the divine beauty. It is in Church where God makes himself present, offers himself in the holy Eucharist and remains present for adoration. In the Church, God speaks with us, in the Church, “God walks with us”, as St Germanus says. In the Church, we receive the forgiveness of God and we learn to forgive.

Let us pray to God so that he teaches us to see in the Church his presence, his beauty, to see his presence in the world, and that he helps us also to be transparent for his light.

www.zenit.org 29-04-2009

Beyond Schooldays

Many ITD readers will recall the following prayer we recited at noon each day during our school years:

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary; And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; Be it done unto me according to your word. Hail Mary...

The Word was made flesh; And dwelt among us. Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God; That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Yes, The Angelus! What has happened to it? Why is it no longer recited?

Although the Angelus dates back to the 12th century, today we hardly ever hear the sounds of the bells that call us to pray the ancient prayer. The practice of reciting three Hail Marys at sunset became general throughout Europe and Pope John XXII granted indulgences in the year 1318 and again in 1327 to the faithful who prayed the Angelus.

It is not well founded, but it is ascribed to Pope Gregory in the year 1239, in an ordinance that enjoined it, that a bell should be rung for the salutation and praise to Our Lady at 6am, at noon, and in the evening. Three single bell-rings followed by nine straight rings called the faithful to honour Mary and her Immaculate Conception. The bells were a call to the faithful to prayer, and for peace.

We may not hear the bells any more, but it would be good practice if we were to at least return to saying three Hail Marys at noon each day in honour of Our Lady.

Leo Morrissey, Sandringham VIC

No Limits

St John Vianney, Curé d'Ar

“There are those who say: “I have committed too many sins, the Good Lord cannot forgive me”. This is a gross blasphemy. It is the same as putting a limit on God’s mercy, which has none: it is infinite.”

Not a Civil Disagreement

One cannot relegate the soul, the energy of the pro-life movement just to a “position” on which one can have a civil “disagreement.” The position of pro-life advocates is in a different category, because abortion itself is in a different category. We don’t settle for civil disagreements about racism, segregation, genocide, terrorism or other human rights violations. It’s only the human rights of that forgotten brother and sister in the womb that seem not to matter enough.

Fr Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life

Raymond de Souza

Speaking Tour of Australia & East Timor, July 1-20

Raymond de Souza, international lay Catholic apologist – Brazilian by birth, Catholic by grace, Australian by choice, now resident in the United States.

From America with Love...For the Catholic Truth!

Sydney

Wednesday 1st: St Charbel parish, 148 Highclere Ave, Punchbowl. Topic: When they come knocking – address on how to respond to Jehovah's Witnesses.

Thursday 2nd: Sacred Heart parish, 9 Ropes Rd, Mt Druitt. Topic: The 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Friday 3rd: Melkite Catholic Centre, 80 Waterloo Rd, Greenacre. Topic: The hope of Catholic and Orthodox Unity in a world growing de-Christianised.

Saturday 11th: De LaSalle and Bethlehem College, 18-24 Bland St, Ashfield. A major Apologetics Conference, 10.00am - 7.30pm. Co-speaker with American apologist Tim Staples and fellow Australians Fr Peter Joseph and Mr Robert Haddad. Topic: Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist: Real... or symbolic?

Monday 20th: Topic: The Reasonableness of Faith – Is Faith merely personal opinion or can it be presented and defended by the use of reason? 7:30pm. Venue to be advised, Sydney CBD. Check website closer to date.

Perth

Monday 13th: St Joseph's parish, 22 Hamilton St, Bassendean. 7:30pm. Topic: De-Christianisation, the Culture War and the Gospel of Life.

Tuesday 14th: Bio Ethics Centre, Jugan St, Glendalough. 12:30pm (after Rosary/Mass 10.30am) Cnr Leeder & Jugan Streets, Mt Hawthorn.

Tuesday 14th: St Bernadette's parish, Glendalough. 7.30pm. Topic: The third secret of Fatima: what was it all about?

Melbourne

Wednesday 15th: St Charbel Monastery, 43 The Grove, Coburg. 8:00pm. Topic: Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist: Real... or just symbolic?

Thursday 16th: St Leonard's Community Centre, 349 Springvale Rd, Glen Waverley. 7.30pm. Topic: The Pro-Life struggle in a world growing de-Christianised.

Brisbane

Friday 17th: Holy Spirit Church, Banyo Parish, 352 St Vincents Rd, Cnr Red Hill Road Banyo. 7:30 pm. Topic: De-Christianisation: Social Evolution? or Cultural Extinction?

Saturday 18th: The Emmaus Centre for Renewal and Evangelisation, Cnr Herbert St and Central Ave, Paddington. Topics: 1. The Pro-Life struggle in a world growing de-christianised. 2. 'What is 'Good' and 'Evil' and who decides? 3. The Eucharist: real presence or symbolic? 4. Q & A session with youth.

Toowoomba

Sunday 19th: Holy Name Parish Hall, 190 Bridge St, Toowoomba. 10am to 12.30pm. Topic: The Rights and Duties of the Laity under Canon Law.

Dili and Beaucau (East Timor)

Sunday 5th to Friday 10th: East Timor (email for details).

www.SaintGabriel-International.com, Raymond@SaintGabriel.com.au

Holy Families

Pope Benedict XVI in a homily at Nazareth, 14-05-2009

All of us need ... to return to Nazareth, to contemplate ever anew the silence and love of the Holy Family, the model of all Christian family life. Here, in the example of Mary, Joseph and Jesus, we come to appreciate even more fully the sacredness of the family, which in God's plan is based on the lifelong fidelity of a man and a woman consecrated by the marriage covenant and accepting of God's gift of new life. How much the men and women of our time need to reappropriate this fundamental truth, which stands at the foundation of society, and how important is the witness of married couples for the formation of sound consciences and the building of a civilization of love!

In today's first reading, drawn from the book of Sirach (3:3-7, 14-17), the word of God presents the family as the first school of wisdom, a school which trains its members in the practice of those virtues which make for authentic happiness and lasting fulfilment. In God's plan for the family, the love of husband and wife bears fruit in new life, and finds daily expression in the loving efforts of parents to ensure an integral human and spiritual formation for their children. In the family each person, whether the smallest child or the oldest relative, is valued for himself or herself, and not seen simply as a means to some other end. Here we begin to glimpse something of the essential role of the family as the first building-block of a well-ordered and welcoming society. We also come to appreciate, within the wider community, the duty of the State to support families in their mission of education, to protect the institution of the family and its inherent rights, and to ensure that all families can live and flourish in conditions of dignity.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Colossians, speaks instinctively of the family when he wishes to illustrate the virtues which build up the "one body" which is the Church. As "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved", we are called to live in harmony and peace with one another, showing above all forbearance and forgiveness, with love as the highest bond of perfection. Just as in the marriage covenant, the love of man and woman is raised by grace to become a sharing in, and an expression of, the love of Christ and the Church, so too the family, grounded in that love, is called to be a "domestic church", a place of faith, of prayer and of loving concern for the true and enduring good of each of its members.

www.zenit.org 14-05-2009

"I prefer to be in disagreement with men than, agreeing with them, to be in disagreement with God."

St Anslem

Sunday Socials

Recently at Mass at St Michael's Gin Gin a very serious incident occurred. I observed a boy aged about ten attending Mass with his parents and siblings. What caused him to distract me and bring him to my notice? His dancing and jiving! I then noticed he was singing along to himself. Then I saw something that made my jaw drop – he was wearing a pair of earphones connected to an iPod in his hands. He was listening to “music” whilst Mass was being celebrated. Obviously he had the blessing of his parents as he was seated next to them and walked out of the church in front of them at the conclusion of Mass still jiving and singing along to his “music”. As he walked out I drew the attention of another parishioner, who was seated next to me, to the boy. She laughed in response. When I rang my parish priest to express my concern, he launched into an abusive tirade and hung up in my ear.

The church is being treated as an entertainment hall where Sunday socials (the Mass) are held. Prior to Mass people wander around chatting with each other as well as others chatting together in the pews whilst awaiting commencement of Mass.

Respect for the Presence of our Lord in the Tabernacle is virtually non-existent. That respect for the Mass is seriously declining as well is evidenced by this incident. Those who wish to pray and contemplate in respectful silence are being denied that right by those who deign to treat others in a less than Catholic manner with their social talk and other distracting activities.

In order to restore respect for the Mass and the Presence of our Lord some “cures” are necessary now:

- 1) No clapping;
- 2) Chit-chatting with the congregation to cease;
- 3) The congregation chit-chatting with each other inside the church, prior to Mass and after Mass, to cease with all chit-chatting and gum-bashing to be conducted outside;
- 4) Notices to be read out after the Final Blessing and any other matter(s) to be raised at this time also;
- 5) All non-Liturgical readings, announcements, performances etc. to be held after the conclusion of Mass;
- 6) All clothes particularly T-shirts, to have no writing, artwork or advertising (elsewhere, not St Michael's, I've seen t-shirts with obscenities on the back as a teenager queues up for Holy Communion);
- 7) Periodic reminders by the priest to ensure that due respect is maintained.

None of the suggestions above are extra-ordinary. In fact most, if not all, are official guidelines/instructions of the Catholic Church.

John FG McMahon, Kolonga QLD

Call Our Culture to Reform

Excerpts from an address by Archbishop Raymond Burke, head of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signature, at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, Washington D.C. 08-05-2009:

“In the battle for the protection of the right to life and for the safeguarding of the integrity of marriage and the family in our nation, we are easily tempted to give way to discouragement. And it would be right to do so, if the outcome of the battle depended upon us alone. But it does not. Christ is with us always in the Church and, in a particular way, in the struggle to restore the respect for the right to life of all of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are helpless and who have the first title to our care, and to safeguard the integrity of marriage and the family.”

“If we are serious about our patriotic duty, then we must pray every day for our leaders, especially our president, and our nation.”

“At every Mass, we should offer special prayers for our nation and her leaders, in order that the culture of death may be overcome and a civilization of love may be steadfastly advanced.”

“All Catholics throughout the nation should take part in Eucharistic adoration and in the praying of the rosary for the restoration of the respect for human life and for the safeguarding of the integrity of the family.”

“In a culture marked by widespread and grave confusion and error about the most fundamental teachings of the moral law, our Catholic schools and universities must be beacons of truth and right conduct.”

“If we as individuals or our Catholic institutions are not willing to accept the burdens and the suffering necessarily involved in calling our culture to reform, then we are not worthy of the name Catholic.”

www.zenit.org 08-05-2009

A Grave Error

Pope John Paul II to United States Bishops, 1987

It is sometimes reported that a large number of Catholics today do not adhere to the teaching of the Church on a number of questions, notably sexual and conjugal morality, divorce and remarriage. Some are reported as not accepting the Church's clear position on abortion. It has also been noted that there is a tendency on the part of some Catholics to be selective in their adherence to the Church's moral teachings. It is sometimes claimed that dissent from the Magisterium is totally compatible with being a “good Catholic” and poses no obstacle to the reception of the sacraments.

This is a grave error that challenges the teaching office of the bishops of the United States and elsewhere.

Dribbling On

Where did the Church get all these “wets?” How did large sections of the Church get taken over by such shallow practitioners? I am referring to Fr Wrex Woolnough’s limp defence of the St Mary’s South Brisbane schism in his Caboolture parish newsletter, which was reproduced in the June issue of *Into the Deep* (p.9). For a man who has completed seminary training, his inability to see Church issues clearly is appalling.

Take, for instance, his statement: “Peter [Fr Kennedy] has been willing to...give the community a significant say in decision-making.” When did giving the community a significant say in decision-making become a virtue? When it comes to deciding between two equally virtuous paths, giving the community a vote might well be a good thing, but to imply that whatever the community decides in each and every matter is good and right is just plain wrong. If the community is divided over what is right and what is wrong, it is the priest’s role to state the Church’s position, and to state it unequivocally. Consciences are not truly formed by a democratic process, but by faithful and accurate instruction in the Church’s teaching. Fr Kennedy appears not to have provided that faithful lead at South Brisbane. Do the parishioners at Caboolture fare any better?

The passage dribbles on into: “...(we are burdened with an overabundance of masculine words in such formulae), and see the need in a more sensitive world to search for more inclusive alternatives.” What an abject capitulation to the ridiculous demands of the grey shadows of the world of militant feminism! How does one determine when an “overabundance of masculine words” has arisen, and who determined that “inclusive alternatives” constitute a sensitising of the situation? The most truly sensitive approach is to ensure that the word of God is presented in an authentic manner to the people, and neither Fr Woolnough’s shame at finding himself male, nor the feminists’ shame at finding themselves female should be allowed to detract from that.

As for Fr Woolnough’s echoing of Fr Peter Kennedy’s charge that “spies” attend the churches seeking abuses to report, has it occurred to him that such “spying” is a very recent phenomenon in the Church, and has he wondered why? It is only since priests like Peter Kennedy, and presumably Wrex himself began taking liberties with the doctrines and practices of the Church that concerned Catholics, in their justifiable desire to participate in the authentic liturgy of the Catholic Church, have found it necessary to present evidence in order to spark some action from the bishops, many of whom do not appear themselves to adequately monitor their parishes.

John Daly, Greensborough, VIC

Where the Priest Should Begin Mass

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

Q: Which is the right place or position to begin the celebration of Mass, bearing in mind the two tables: table of the word and table of the Eucharist? I have the experience of priests who start either from the celebrant’s chair, or from the altar, or still from the pulpit. - A.M., Harare, Zimbabwe

A: The entrance procession and the beginning of Mass are described in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), No. 50:

“When the Entrance chant is concluded, the priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, makes the Sign of the Cross. Then he signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered there by means of the Greeting. By this Greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest. After the greeting of the people, the priest, the deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.”

It is clear, therefore, that the priest should ordinarily begin a Mass with the faithful from the celebrant’s chair. This chair, as specified in GIRM, No. 310, “must signify his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer.”

It is not liturgically appropriate to begin the Mass either at the ambo or at the altar because each liturgical place should be reserved for its proper purpose, the ambo for the table of the Word, the altar for the table of the Eucharist.

This is why liturgical norms specify that commentaries, monitions and other announcements should not be delivered from the ambo but from some other place.

Once the initial veneration of the altar is completed, it should not be used until the presentation of the gifts. It is also better to wait until this moment before placing the missal, visible microphone, extra ciboria and other necessary liturgical elements upon the altar.

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Catholics in the Holy Land

The Vatican published the following interesting statistics on the Holy Land prior to the Holy Father’s recent pilgrimage there:

Jordan has a population of 5,720,000 of whom 109,000 (1.91%) are Catholic.

Israel and the Palestinian Territories have a population of 7,180,000 of whom 130,000 (1.81%) are Catholic.

Immense Gift

From the letter Pope Benedict XVI sent to the priests of the world on the occasion of the Year for Priests:

“The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus”, the saintly Cure of Ars would often say. This touching expression makes us reflect, first of all, with heartfelt gratitude on the immense gift which priests represent, not only for the Church, but also for humanity itself. I think of all those priests who quietly present Christ’s words and actions each day to the faithful and to the whole world, striving to be one with the Lord in their thoughts and their will, their sentiments and their style of life. How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labours, their tireless and hidden service, their universal charity? And how can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as “friends of Christ”, whom He has called by name, chosen and sent?

www.zenit.org 18-06-2009

Suspended, Liberated

Archbishop John Bathersby of Brisbane has finally taken action against Fr Peter Kennedy of St Mary’s South Brisbane and suspended him from all priestly activities.

This is a relief for all faithful Catholics who have been horrified at what has been allowed to continue for so long in that parish. Fr Kennedy’s open admissions (of essentially not being Catholic) on national television and radio surely contributed to his fate. Undaunted, Fr Kennedy has continued to lead ‘his’ congregation in what they consider to be Mass at the local Trades and Labor Council building.

Archbishop Bathersby’s revocation of Fr Kennedy’s faculties applies to any priestly duty anywhere in the world. He also revoked Fr Terry Fitzpatrick’s priestly faculties, but this is effective only within the Brisbane Archdiocese (Fr Fitzpatrick is a priest of the Toowoomba diocese). Fr Fitzpatrick works alongside Fr Kennedy and is equally dismissive of what the Catholic Church teaches and believes. He and his teenage son who lives with him, were featured on a national television program about Fr Kennedy and St Mary’s South Brisbane. He has since indicated that he intends to remain with Fr Kennedy in South Brisbane and also defy his suspension.

According to the Sunshine Coast’s thedaily.com.au (07-06-2009), Fr Kennedy considers his suspension “a liberation from a corrupt, ruthless and irrelevant hierarchy” but claimed “we’ve done nothing to deserve this.”

A liberation indeed.

- Ed.

ABC’s Lack of Respect

On 23 June 2009, while waiting for the telecast of Wimbledon tennis to begin, I chanced upon a program on ABC1 free-to-air television. It began at 10pm, and was called “Artscape: Circus Oz - The Big Birthday Bash,” and was Part 2 of 3. It showed prospective circus performers honing their skills under the supervision of certain directors. In itself, it was quite entertaining. However, at one stage, the apparently most senior supervisor expressed his frustration with one of the acts by using the expletive phrase “f*****g Jesus!” (I can’t even bring myself to write it).

I’m quite certain of what was said because I had the Closed Captions turned on. As a Christian, to say I was appalled is an understatement. This would have been a recorded program and this blasphemous and offensive phrase could have easily been “bleeped” out.

I well remember the first time I heard “Jesus Christ” used as an expletive on a television movie about 30 years ago. I was then also appalled! I find it just as repulsive now, when it has become commonplace, but it’s disturbing to observe how frequent exposure tends to de-sensitise you.

I’ve worked among men engaged in manual, unskilled type of work and have heard these expressions used, but this is a government-sponsored television station which used to set the standards.

I refuse to watch shows such as Chasers and Underbelly, but as I have stated, some shows can be entertaining if a bit of restraint is used. One such show that I enjoy is “The Gruen Transfer” on ABC, (now in recess), though it tends not to use the aforementioned restraint. It is a satirical show which looks at and comments on various TV commercials. They also invite viewers to participate by using an “on-line kit” to make and submit their own commercials. One such viewer used the expression “I Thirst” by Jesus Christ on the cross to create a pseudo beer ad. I was motivated to write to the ABC expressing my concern. Of course I was fobbed off with the expected platitudes about meeting ABC guidelines for satirical programs etc. Still, it’s said that one written complaint carries the weight of several verbal complaints so I may have made a miniscule difference.

I remember when growing up, how the Sydney Royal Easter Show and football matches were never held on Good Friday and radio stations played dirge-type music all day (the latter a bit “over the top,” maybe). This was in deference to our Christian heritage, now ridiculed. In those days, the united front of the Catholic church carried some weight, but these days, with about 50% or less of professed Catholics actually practising, it’s a different story. Imagine what the reaction would be if similar references to those stated above were made to Mohammed!

Austin Cummins, Crookwell, NSW

Mother Angelica: Spiritual Mother to Millions

Excerpts from an interview by Zenit with Raymond Arroyo. Arroyo is the director of EWTN News, host of "The World Over," and author/editor of "Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles" and "Mother Angelica's Little Book of Life Lessons and Everyday Spirituality." www.zenit.org 15-06-2007

Has the popularity of your books on Mother Angelica surprised you?

No, I can't say that it has. Mother is one of those beloved figures in the Church who resonates with people around the world. Much like Pope John Paul II or Mother Teresa, Mother Angelica has touched people by her witness. But unlike those iconic figures, Mother comes into people's homes each day. For decades she has brought them hope in those moments of despair or confusion – and that leaves an incredible impact. She is truly a spiritual mother to millions. ...

Mother Angelica is not a stereotypical nun and your biography makes this clear. In what ways do you think her particular feminine genius can inspire others?

Mother is definitely not a stereotypical nun. She appears stereotypical, but beneath the habit is this gutsy, determined woman who wields an incredible faith. Her feminine genius resides just there I think: in her radical faith, in her abandonment to God's will in the present moment. Additionally, she had an intuition that allowed her to see events as they were and to follow her heart and God, always.

We need that feminine aspect in the Church today. Mother used to say that the faith had become too "heady," too theoretical. And I think she is right. In the new book she says, "Most people today are seeking master's degrees, then they forget the Master." She never forgot her Master.

Isn't it curious that some of the same people who were the most outspoken advocates of "women's power" in the Church, were the first ones trying to shove Mother Angelica back into the cloister once she appeared on the scene? The idea of an orthodox, faithful woman leading people to Christ was a threat somehow. ...

How would you describe Mother's spirituality?

Mother described her approach as "nitty-gritty," "sock-it-to-'em" spirituality. Her style was always very practical, and easily applicable to the lives of her listeners. ... But buried in her funny, earthy approach was always the profound wisdom of the Church. She used to say, "If you have two legs and you're breathing – you're called to holiness, sweetheart."

And people believed her. She didn't teach theology, she taught people to be more like her Spouse. She held that living example of Jesus up for the world to see and dared all comers to try to match it.

The reason she remains relevant is that people can't turn away from her directness, her passion and her

lovable humour. I mean, how many nuns do people know who describe the eternal judgment to intimates this way: "Everyone drags his own carcass to market, so be careful."

What do you think was Mother Angelica's most significant contribution to Catholic television and to Catholic media, in general?

Global Catholic media is Mother's great contribution to the Church. ... Mother Angelica is the first woman, never mind nun, in the history of broadcasting to found a non-profit cable network, and the only religious to ever do so. The Eternal Word Television Network is now seen in more than 140 million households around the world, heard on over 100 AM/FM stations in the U.S., on its own shortwave radio network, and on a stand-alone Sirius channel. Pretty good work for a crippled, cloistered nun with only a high school degree and innumerable physical ailments. Her whole life is a witness to the power of faith and to what she tagged the "theology of risk."

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

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

What do you anticipate happening in the future of Catholic media?

All of Mother's efforts were rooted in her prayer life. She didn't play a nun on television; she was a nun. If Catholic media efforts are to thrive in the future, they must find their sustenance in prayer. They must also be attentive to the needs of their audience in this "present moment." Mother reached people where they were and translated the timeless teachings of the Church into an idiom and a format that could reach a contemporary audience. If others can follow her example, they will flourish.

Given the culture we find ourselves in today, and the anaemic Catholic efforts out there, there is little time to waste. Mother would say: "Get cracking."

Focus of Faith and Unity

The Diocese of Sale has a new bishop at last. Bishop Prowse is to be congratulated on his appointment and we should all wish him well.

It would be an understatement to say that people will expect great things of him, but a bishop is meant to be a source and focus of faith and unity within his diocese. That can happen only through clear statements and the example of what orthodoxy is.

Unfortunately, many people are so individualistic and personalised these days that the proper objectivity of our Catholic faith is very easily lost. When that happens, interest centres on the unique and the unusual. That is why so much of religious literature, talks, retreats and conferences nowadays, and what claims to be spirituality, is at best superficial and at worst misleading.

People are really looking for openness and justice in our time, and a new bishop can do much by example and leadership to promote these aspects of Church life.

Any claims in justice that anyone – priest included – has, must be dealt with objectively. I couldn't imagine anything more objective than just simply putting into effect the known and published directives of a Congregation of the Holy See. The personal opinions of others, for whatever reason, just don't rate. In this context a right-thinking person would expect that Fr Speekman would immediately be given the opportunity to resume his ministry in his own parish. Such a move would settle this affair for good by showing that the demands of justice take precedence in the Diocese of Sale over other irrelevant and unbecoming pressures and politics. It would be a significant start to unity within the diocese. In one fell swoop the bishop could stamp his authority on the diocese and draw all with him.

Let us rejoice!

S.C., Melbourne

Act of Faith

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

In this faith I intend to live and die.

Amen.

Discernment

From a sermon by Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household

Sometimes ... the choice is not between good and evil, but between a good and another good and it is about seeing which one is what God wants, in a given situation. It was primarily to respond to this demand that St Ignatius of Loyola developed his doctrine on discernment. He invites us to look at one thing above all: our own interior dispositions, the intentions (the "spirits") that are behind a decision.

St Ignatius suggested practical means to apply these criteria. One is this: when we are faced with two possible choices, it is useful to first consider one of them, as if we must follow it, and to stay in that state for a day or more; then we should evaluate how our heart reacts to that choice: is there peace, harmony with the rest of our own decisions; is there something inside of you that encourages you in that direction, or on the contrary has it left a haze of restlessness... Then repeat the process with the second hypothesis. All this should be done in an atmosphere of prayer, abandonment to God's will, and openness to the Holy Spirit.

The most favourable condition for making a good discernment is the habitual interior disposition to do God's will in every situation. Jesus said "My judgment is just, because I do not see my will, but the will of he who sent me" (John 5:30).

The danger, among some modern people who intend to practice discernment, is to emphasize the psychological aspects to such an extent that we forget the primary agent of all discernment which is the Holy Spirit. There is a deep theological reason for this. The Holy Spirit is himself the substantial will of God and when he enters a soul "he manifests himself as the very will of God for those in whom he is found".

The concrete fruit of this meditation could be a renewed decision to trust ourselves in everything and for everything to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as a sort of "spiritual direction". It is written that "whenever the cloud rose from the Dwelling, the Israelites would resume their march. If the cloud did not rise, they would not resume their march" (Exodus 40:36-37). Even we should not undertake anything if it is not the Holy Spirit, that according to tradition is prefigured by the cloud, who moves us and without having consulted him first in every action.

We have the most luminous example in the very life of Jesus. He never undertook anything without the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit he walked in the desert; with the power of the Holy Spirit he returned and began his preaching; "In the Holy Spirit" he chose his apostles; in the Spirit he prayed and offered himself to the Father.

www.zenit.org 27-03-2009

Like Moses

From an address by Pope Benedict XVI at the Basilica of the Moses Memorial at Mount Nebo. Tradition holds that at this spot, God showed Moses the Promised Land.

Like Moses, we too have been called by name, invited to undertake a daily exodus from sin and slavery towards life and freedom, and given an unshakeable promise to guide our journey. In the waters of Baptism, we have passed from the slavery of sin to new life and hope. In the communion of the Church, Christ's Body, we look forward to the vision of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, where God will be all in all. [...]

Moses gazed upon the Promised Land from afar, at the end of his earthly pilgrimage. His example reminds us that we too are part of the ageless pilgrimage of God's people through history. In the footsteps of the prophets, the apostles and the saints, we are called to walk with the Lord, to carry on his mission, to bear witness to the Gospel of God's universal love and mercy. We are called to welcome the coming of Christ's Kingdom by our charity, our service to the poor, and our efforts to be a leaven of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace in the world around us.

We know that, like Moses, we may not see the complete fulfilment of God's plan in our lifetime. Yet we trust that, by doing our small part, in fidelity to the vocation each of us has received, we will help to make straight the paths of the Lord and welcome the dawn of his Kingdom.

And we know that the God who revealed his name to Moses as a pledge that he would always be at our side will give us the strength to persevere in joyful hope even amid suffering, trial and tribulation.

www.zenit.org 09-05-2009

Replaced

The parish bulletin at St Mary's Sale has a comment on the Gospel each Sunday. Mostly these comments are relevant and in accord with Church teaching. However, on Trinity Sunday the final comment was thus: "Finally, Jesus replaces the old Law, the commandments given to Moses, with a new Law, the commandments given by Jesus." Well! Well! The Ten Commandments abolished by the stroke of a pen!

Pat O'Brien, Sale

Universal Human Rights

Pope Benedict XVI, WYD 2008

Do we recognize that the innate dignity of every individual rests on his or her deepest identity – as image of the Creator – and therefore that human rights are universal, based on the natural law, and not something dependent upon negotiation or patronage, let alone compromise?

And so we are led to reflect on what place the poor and the elderly, immigrants and the voiceless, have in our societies. How can it be that domestic violence torments so many mothers and children? How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space – the womb – has become a place of unutterable violence?

My dear friends, God's creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity. They cannot, however, be understood apart from a profound reflection upon the innate dignity of every human life from conception to natural death: a dignity conferred by God himself and thus inviolable.

At The Empty Tomb

From Pope Benedict XVI's address during his visit to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, 15- 05-2009

Saint John's Gospel has left us an evocative account of the visit of Peter and the Beloved Disciple to the empty tomb on Easter morning. Today, at a distance of some twenty centuries, Peter's Successor, the Bishop of Rome, stands before that same empty tomb and contemplates the mystery of the Resurrection.

Following in the footsteps of the Apostle, I wish to proclaim anew, to the men and women of our time, the Church's firm faith that Jesus Christ "was crucified, died and was buried", and that "on the third day he rose from the dead". Exalted at the right hand of the Father, he has sent us his Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. Apart from him, whom God has made Lord and Christ, "there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Standing in this holy place, and pondering that wondrous event, how can we not be "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), like those who first heard Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost? Here Christ died and rose, never to die again. Here the history of humanity was decisively changed. The long reign of sin and death was shattered by the triumph of obedience and life; the wood of the Cross lay bare the truth about good and evil; God's judgment was passed on this world and the grace of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon humanity. Here Christ, the new Adam, taught us that evil never has the last word, that love is stronger than death, that our future, and the future of all humanity, lies in the hands of a faithful and provident God.

The empty tomb speaks to us of hope, the hope that does not disappoint because it is the gift of the Spirit of life.

www.zenit.org 15-05-2009

Radical Responses

Fr John Corapi

“From the very beginning, in general, I’ve had a great, great reception and response from the good Catholic people. I know there are some who, of course, are on the other side of things, and they hate me as much as the good folks love me. I’ve never been so conscious of being loved or hated as since I’ve been a priest. You know, I think that’s what the truth does. If you present the truth clearly, unambiguously, it will elicit radical responses one way or the other.

“A great passage from the Gospels is where Jesus said, “You think I’ve come to bring peace? I have not come to bring peace, but division that will separate a house of five, three against two and two against three.” People will probably scratch their heads reading that, but it’s the truth. What does it mean? What brings division? Truth.

“Those who are ill disposed, those who are confirmed in sin, they react negatively. They’ll behave violently. Those who are well-disposed will react positively. And so that’s why it elicits such strong emotions.”

National Catholic Register, May 3-9, 2009

The Swiss Guard

The Swiss Guard was founded by Pope Julius II in 1506 when he called on the States of the “Confederatis Superioris Allemanniae” to allow him to recruit young men to form a Pontifical Corps of Guard. The Guard came into being on 22 January 1506 with the arrival in Rome of a contingent of 150 men who had marched on foot from Lucerne along the pilgrim route known as the Via Francigena. The main duty of the Swiss Guard – which has as its motto “Acriter et Fideliter” (Courage and Loyalty) – was and still remains that of guarding the person of the Roman Pontiff and the Apostolic Palaces.

The swearing-in ceremony [for new recruits] is celebrated every year on 6 May to commemorate the death of the 147 Swiss Guards who died during the Sack of Rome.

Vatican Information Service 05-05-2009

Approaching the Eucharist

St Pius X, Sacra Tridentina Synodus, 1905

“He who approaches the Holy Table should do so, not out of routine, or vain-glory, or human respect, but that he wishes to please God, to be more closely united with Him by charity, and to have recourse to this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.”

Body of Christ Confusion

Not so long ago a bishop in the U.S. conducted a survey among his priests. One of the questions was whether they believed in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. 49.5% did not.

ITD and other orthodox Catholic publications are bringing to the attention of those who read them, the truths of our Faith which so many of our priests and laity don’t know or don’t want to know.

Xavier O’Kane’s sad article (ITD June 09, p.2) is just one example of a confused Salesian priest leading the young astray with his false understanding of the Eucharist. Our own priest in Lakes/Orbost is a very kind, considerate and likeable man. Although from an excellent Catholic family, he is also a product of “Catholic” education in the 70’s and 80’s and the Clayton Seminary before it was reformed by Archbishop Pell. Sadly he won’t read ITD, but has forbidden its distribution on church property.

Christ hated the sin but loved the sinner. Many of our priests can’t seem to understand that we love and pray for them but don’t approve when they ignore or distort the treasures of our Faith.

On the feast of Corpus Christi this year, Fr Hogan asked us to greet each other with “Happy Body and Blood of Christ” (most said: “Good morning!”). He then told us, as he often does, that we are the body of Christ, we are the real presence – here for each other. That was the whole focus of his homily on this great but neglected day. We were there for each other in a sacred place focused on the altar and the Eucharist, he said. But what is the Eucharist? The body of Christ. Us?! The underlying message always seems to be that because we share in the same bread, we are all one body, the body of Christ. Is this not, by implication, the great secular and humanist heresy of our day: We have no need of the God-man because we have become our own god. Man has created God in his own image! Satan is the master of confusion and reversals.

I have never heard a modernist priest explain or teach the difference between the Real Presence, as Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in the consecrated Host and Precious Blood; and St Paul’s teaching on the Mystical Body of Christ in which Christ is the Head and we are the members.

It is interesting to note the prophesy of Our Lady of Akita in 1973. Pope Benedict XVI, who is under so much attack even from some of his fellow bishops, approved the messages of Akita when he was Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Our Lady said: “The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops. The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres...”

Richard Earle, Marlo

Confirmation: Sacrament of the Holy Spirit

This is the third in a series of articles on Confirmation catechesis appearing in ITD on this page. - Ed.

The celebrant lays his hands on those to be anointed and says a prayer over them. Then he dips his right thumb in the holy oil of Chrism and makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of each of those to be confirmed, with the words: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The newly confirmed responds: "Amen." The celebrating priest adds: "Peace be with you." The newly confirmed responds: "And also with you."

On the surface, these actions and words may seem plain and simple enough. However the full force, meaning and value of this act of anointing is well and truly beyond any human imagination and understanding.

In this anointing we receive far more than the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which we automatically associate with the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit himself as gift, the third person of the Blessed Trinity – he who we profess in our Creed at Mass every Sunday as "the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified..."

We receive the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life who moved on the face of the waters right in the beginning of creation as we read in the book of Genesis, even before God said, "Let there be light".

We receive as gift the one through whom Mary conceived Jesus in her blessed womb, the Holy Spirit who descended on the Apostles at the birth of the Church. We receive as gift the very fountain of all holiness who makes our gifts on the altar holy and changes them into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We receive as gift through this anointing the one who unites us to the Father and the Son in a communion of love. We receive the gift of God himself, the gift of his own Spirit.

This is the gift which God breathed into Adam (mankind) when he created him, and which died in him when Adam sinned by disobeying God. But out of love for us while we were still sinners, God the Father sent his only begotten Son to redeem us and win back for us the gift of God's Holy Spirit which died in Adam through sin. Through Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection and ascension, the gift of God's life and love has been merited for us once again.

All people, in any place, at any time who confess that Jesus is the Christ, believe in his resurrection, and sincerely repent by asking the Church for Baptism, have access to this inexpressible gift of God's Spirit, who is his life, love and truth.

This divine anointing with the oil of Chrism is the Father's unrepeatable seal with the gift of his Holy

Spirit. This seal leaves an indelible mark on our souls, a mark that we belong to the Father, that we are his. Confirmation restores what Adam had lost, and truly makes us become what the Father intended us to be from all eternity, through his own anointed Son.

Through our anointing, the risen Christ comes and touches us and gives us what he has by nature – his Spirit. The Holy Spirit whom Christ had from all eternity as his life, he gives to us. This is an extraordinary encounter. Our entire Catholic life consists in becoming accustomed to this gift.

It is a life-long process and it is also a battle because our human nature is opposed to this gift of God's nature. God sent his Son not only to give us his divine life, but to show us how to live this life. Jesus told us that he would send us the Advocate, who would teach us everything that he made known to us.

The Holy Spirit is the gift of God the Father to those who obey what he has said through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ who is the head of the body, the Church.

It is the Holy Spirit alone who can teach us to understand the gift of our divine life with which we have been sealed in Confirmation.

This means our entire life must be grounded and governed by the Holy Spirit who has been poured out into our hearts, minds and souls. All our actions, words and thoughts must be inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is he who must shape our basic attitudes and motivations, who must inform our decisions and who must order our souls. He must be our rule of life, the standard by which we truly understand our divine nature.

It is the Holy Spirit given in Confirmation who conforms us more fully to Christ as the Father's adopted children and who ensures that we are living the same kind of life as Christ lived.

Such is the measure of the greatness and the power of the gift of the anointing we receive in the sacrament of Confirmation.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

"The conscience is the capacity of mankind to perceive the truth, but particular interests often block this capacity. And it is a big job to liberate from these interests, to open more to the truth, to the true values: It is a duty of the Church to help one to know the true criteria, the true values, and to liberate ourselves from particular interests."

Pope Benedict XVI

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland

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 Friday 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 9.30am – 10.30am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10am – 11am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2pm First Friday 11.30am – 6pm
Trafalgar	Tuesday 10am – 11am First Saturday 10am – 11am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, January onwards)
Wonthaggi	First Friday 7.30pm – 8.30pm

Living Inheritance

Pope Benedict XVI

What would our lives as Christians be without the Eucharist? The Eucharist is the perpetual, living inheritance which the Lord has bequeathed to us in the Sacrament of his Body and his Blood and which we must constantly rethink and deepen so that, as venerable Pope Paul VI said, it may “impress its inexhaustible effectiveness on all the days of our earthly life”.

Rejoice That He Knows You!

Pope Benedict XVI at Amman, Jordan 10-05-2009

“I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me” (Jn 10:14). Rejoice that the Lord has made you members of his flock and knows each of you by name! Follow him with joy and let him guide you in all your ways. Jesus knows what challenges you face, what trials you endure, and the good that you do in his name. Trust in him, in his enduring love for all the members of his flock, and persevere in your witness to the triumph of his love.”

Mary, our mother

And mother of the Redeemer,
Gate of heaven and Star of the sea,
Come to the aid of your people,
Who have sinned,
Yet also yearn to rise again!
Come to the Church's aid,
Enlighten your devoted children,
Strengthen the faithful throughout the world,
Let those who have drifted
Hear your call,
And may they who live as prisoners of evil
Be converted!

Pope John Paul II

Contact Into the Deep

www.stoneswillshout.com

stoneswillshout@yahoo.com.au

**PO Box 446, Traralgon, VIC, 3844
Australia**

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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, and other diocesan newspapers,
- 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.