

Into the Deep

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Sentimental

Caritas in Veritate, n.4

A Christianity of charity without truth would be more or less interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments, helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance. In other words, there would no longer be any real place for God in the world. Without truth, charity is confined to a narrow field devoid of relations.

Don't Forget!

By Bishop Robert Vasa, Diocese of Baker, Oregon

In cross-state travel there is little danger, at least for the time being, of getting so distracted by the country through which I travel that I forget both where I am going and how I plan to get there.

Unfortunately, in terms of the spiritual life, it is quite easy to get so distracted by the "foreign land" we presently inhabit that we can quite literally forget who we are, where we are going and how we plan to get there.

In the midst of the busyness of a typical day, we can forget that we are Catholic Christians, followers of Christ, pilgrims, lovers of the Gospel, sons and daughters of God, a resurrection believing people. We can forget that our true citizenship is in heaven, that we are "strangers and aliens" here, that our true home still awaits us, that this world is passing, that our relationship with God surpasses all others. We can forget, usually because of being distracted by what we find along the way, that we are to leave ourselves behind, that he who seeks to save his life will lose it, that strict obedience to a moral code is essential, that Jesus is the way, that he gave us the Church to show us the way.

We can never forget that our living is really a spiritual journey with a very important and baptismally predetermined destination.

It is certainly good and proper to enjoy the journey but never at the expense of the destination.

Surrender to Him

Fr Fulton J. Sheen, 1944

If you want to know about God, there is only one way to do it: get down on your knees. You can make His acquaintance by investigation, but you can win His love only by loving. Arguments will tell you God exists, for God's existence can be confirmed by reason; but only by surrender will you come to know Him intimately.

That is one of the reasons why so many professors in secular institutions have no religion. They know about God, but they do not know God. And because they do not *love* what they already know, because they do not act on their belief, even the little they have is taken away. They rattle the milk cans of theology but they never drink the milk. Atheism is born from the womb of a bad conscience. Disbelief comes from sin, not from reason.

This is not a broadcast about God, it is a plea to love God. Worship Him because He is your perfection, more than knowledge is the perfection of the mind. Love Him because you cannot be happy without love. Love Him quite apart from all you are, for you have the right to love Him in your heart, even though you do not always succeed in loving Him in your acts. Think a little less about whether you deserve to be loved by Him; He loves you even though you are not deserving – it is His love alone that will make you deserving. It is love that confers value. "Nobody loves me" is the equivalent of being valueless. Hence the more important the person who loves you, the more precious is your value. You are infinitely precious because you are loved by God.

[From the book "You", a collection of Sheen's addresses, p.14]

"A good pastor, a pastor according to God's heart, is the greatest treasure that the good Lord could grant a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of his divine mercy."

St John Vianney, Curé of Ars

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Congratulations!

- To Father John Speekman on the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, which he celebrated on 17th August 2009! His Morwell parishioners look forward to a belated celebration when he eventually gets back to his parish one day. What a pity he has to celebrate such a wonderful milestone in a 'foreign land' away from his family and friends. But, God is good, and we are blessed to have a priest such as Fr Speekman in the Church.

Thankfully we all have access to his homilies via his blog: homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com, to give us guidance and inspiration and sound Church teaching on a weekly basis – food for the journey!

God bless you, Fr John! And thank you for the gift of your priesthood. May you continue to be strengthened in your faith and ministry for many years to come.

- Ed.

Becoming More Human

*From an address by Pope Benedict XVI
in Amman, 08-05-2009*

At times it is difficult to find a reason for what appears only as an obstacle to be overcome or even as pain – physical or emotional – to be endured.

Yet faith and understanding help us to see a horizon beyond our own selves in order to imagine life as God does. God's unconditional love, which gives life to every human individual, points to a meaning and purpose for all human life. His is a saving love. As Christians profess, it is through the Cross that Jesus in fact draws us into eternal life, and in so doing indicates to us the way ahead – the way of hope which guides every step we take along the way, so that we too become bearers of that hope and charity for others. [...]

In our own trials, and standing alongside others in their struggles, we glimpse the essence of our humanity, we become, as it were, more human. And we come to learn that, on another plane, even hearts hardened by cynicism or injustice or unwillingness to forgive are never beyond the reach of God, can always be opened to a new way of being, a vision of peace.

www.zenit.org 08-05-2009

Pleasures of Sin

“Pride inflates man; envy consumes him; avarice makes him restless; anger rekindles his passions; gluttony makes him ill; comfort destroys him; lies imprison him; murder defiles him... the very pleasures of sin become instruments of punishment in the hands of God.”

Pope Innocent III, c. 1204

Theological Nonsense

Here's a challenge for Bathurst's new Bishop Michael McKenna – sort this out:

The Shalom House of Prayer – prominently featured on the diocesan website – recently sent out an email advertising a course on the Enneagram: “Enneagram, the nine faces of Jesus with Sr Colleen O’Sullivan. How do you reflect Jesus? Understand the gift of your individual personality and learn to know yourself and appreciate the gift that God has made you to be. ... *When you find your real self you find God.*” They also have “Springtime Meditations” coming up, offering “Peace, prayer, meditation on rebirth into the newness of life.” According to the website, they recently had a course on “The message in your dreams.”

Fr Mitch Pacwa, S.J., author and EWTN presenter, who wrote the book “Catholics and the New Age”, says the following (taken from an article in *Our Sunday Visitor*, 05-07-1992, quoted at www.ewtn.com):

“The Enneagram ... is a system of classifying personality types based on the figure of a circle with nine points on it, [each] connected by lines. ... The Enneagram is supposed to be ancient Sufi wisdom, thousands of years old. But the Sufis, who are Muslim mystics, aren't that old a movement. The diagram itself can't be older than the 14th or 15th century. It was discovered in the 1890s in Central Asia by a Greek-Armenian occultist named George Gurdjieff. He got it from a secret brotherhood of Sufis called the Naqshbandi, who were using it for numerological fortune-telling. Gurdjieff, a charlatan and a swindler who was into gnosticism, taught it to his disciples as a symbol of the cosmos. Gurdjieff died in 1949 but left followers. Oscar Ichazo, a Chilean who claimed to have had out-of-body experiences since childhood and studied all sorts of psychic practices, learned the Enneagram from such a group.

“In the 1960s, Ichazo devised a personality system of nine types – each with its animal totem – matched to the Enneagram. Esalen Institute psychologist Claudio Naranjo, another admirer of Gurdjieff, collaborated with him. Naranjo spread the Enneagram through Esalen classes.

“I have two criticisms [of Enneagram]. First, it's theological nonsense, suffused with Gnostic ideas. For instance, the nine points of the Enneagram are called the “nine faces of God,” which become nine demons turned upside down. No one should speak that way... And the way the Enneagram is taught is Pelagian – self-salvation through a man-made technique, not by God's grace.

“Secondly, this is a psychological system that hasn't been tested by professional psychologists. We have no independent evidence that it's true. As a result, Enneagram experts – who aren't necessarily aware of the occult aspects – are making up descriptions as they go along. It's irresponsible to pass this off as true.”

True Progress

Pope Benedict XVI, homily 28-06-2009

Those who serve the truth in love together with Christ contribute to the true progress of the world. ... Christ, his life, his suffering and his rising, was the great leap ahead in the progress of humanity, of the world. Now, however, the universe must grow in accordance with him. Where the presence of Christ increases, therein lies the true progress of the world. There, mankind becomes new and thus the world is made new.

The Book of Nature

Caritas in Veritate, n.51

If there is lack of respect for the right to life and a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational system and laws do not help them to respect themselves.

The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other.

Devotion to Mary

From a talk by Bishop Peter J. Elliott

at the Marian Conference in Traralgon, 16-05-2009

...[Y]ou probably take for granted the two basic principles that explain our Catholic devotion to the Mother of God:

1. You cannot separate the Mother from her Son – and this is clear in Scripture. If you love Jesus, if you wish to be his disciple, you must stand with Mary the greatest disciple of the Lord. She is inseparable from him as his true Mother, but, in faith, she is inseparable as his closest and most faithful follower.

2. You cannot separate Mary from us, the Church. As the most faithful disciple, she is the first member of the Church. But in a richer mystical sense, in herself she epitomises the Church, Mother and Virgin, the Bride of Christ, the one from whom Christians are reborn. [...]

As with all the Marian dogmas, the real focus is not Mary but her Son Jesus. He is his Mother's Redeemer. She is only Immaculate so as to be able to be his real human Mother. The Mother is inseparable from her Son. She exists for him and he cherishes her totally.

Why Do Priests Do This?

Here in Brisbane there is a prominent priest who, at the Offertory ablutions, prays "Lord, wash away *our faults*; cleanse *us* from *our sin*", where the Missal has "Lord, wash away *my iniquities*; cleanse *me* from *my sin*".

In other words, he changes the Missal's singular pronouns to plurals, like the Boston priests criticized in a query to Fr Edward McNamara (Aug 09 ITD, p.9), and waters down the strong word "iniquities" to the tamer "faults", presumably to reassure the people that, while graciously incorporating them into his own private prayer, he does not for a moment imagine that their (and his?) wrongdoing could possibly merit such a lurid term.

Fr McNamara charitably puts such illicit changes down to ignorance. Let us go a little further and ask what kind of ignorance this might be. Could these priests possibly be unaware that the Church strictly prohibits such unauthorized changes (see "Right to Protect Liturgy", Aug 09 ITD, p.2)? This hardly seems likely. And do they realize that this short prayer is actually a citation from the moving first-person penitential Psalm 50? On balance, it might be more charitable to assume that they know the psalms than that they do not. In any case, objectively, these priests are not only violating the liturgy that the Church has entrusted to their care but are abusing their position to mangle the words of Sacred Scripture itself; and all this within a prayer begging God for forgiveness! The irony could hardly be more glaring.

Since priests who introduce such changes with such cavalier insouciance tend to wax lyrical about "the spirit of Vatican II", we need to stress that this penitential psalm entered the Offertory prayers only with the arrival of the postconciliar Novus Ordo liturgy. The old Tridentine Mass did not have a penitential psalm at this point but rather Psalm 25:6-12, "I will wash my hands among the innocent ...", where the psalmist expresses his love for God by telling him how he visits his temple, avoids the company of the wicked and leads a blameless life.

This story has a brief coda. About six years ago, in another Brisbane church, when a retired priest turned up to say Mass, the congregation was shocked when he abandoned the official Offertory words and rubrics and performed his own simultaneous offering of bread and wine together, accompanied by his home-made prayer (the fourth Brisbane priest I have observed sporting this apparently fashionable but certainly illicit innovation). But then, unexpectedly, there was a sudden return to the words of the Missal (if not to the rubric requiring them to be spoken "quietly") as we heard him bellow "Lord, wash away my iniquities; cleanse me from my sin". A titter could be heard among the cognoscenti.

Michael Apthorp, Brisbane

Verbal Harassment

It was reported on the front page of *The Age* on August 11th that Archbishop Denis Hart told a woman who had been harassing him for some time to “go to hell, bitch”. All the Archbishop could say in his defence was that it happened so long ago that he could not recall what he actually said.

No doubt some Catholics were horrified to read about this. But by and large the majority of Catholics would have been forgiving of this impulsive outburst and would have seen it as nothing but a human slip-up back in 2004.

Far more significant however, is the fact that since this disgrace has been publicised, none of the Archbishop’s brother bishops have been calling for his removal or have collectively maligned him for his disgraceful remarks. Neither are any of them wearing themselves out petitioning priests and bishops to have him suspended or impeded.

Compare the reaction when Bishop Coffey used a similar accusation as a basis for his case to remove Fr Speekman – similar only in that it was an accusation of so-called verbal harassment.

In Fr Speekman’s case it was the fact that he raised his voice in exasperation when, at a parish meeting, a school principal tried to argue her point that it was okay to leave out some of the more uncomfortable sins when going to Confession. He didn’t call her any names, didn’t tell her to go anywhere.

This was all it took to have Fr Speekman removed, his rights as a parish priest and a human being denied and violated, his good reputation damaged and his vocation nearly destroyed. This baseless accusation of verbal harassment caused mayhem in Fr Speekman’s parish, deprived his parishioners of their lawful pastor for 6 years and placed them at the mercy of 3 administrators and numerous supply priests.

The accusation was treated with such solemnity by Bishop Coffey that it ended up in the highest court of justice in the Church, the Apostolic Signatura where it has been for a year and a half. Bishop Coffey has been desperate to prove that defence of Church teaching is unforgivable if a raised voice was once used in 2001.

The ongoing delay in resolving this case makes Fr Speekman a victim of due process as well. After 6 years in exile and 2 decrees in his favour Fr Speekman still does not know what it was he said or did that warranted his removal.

But one thing is absolutely certain; it was not nearly as bad as what Archbishop Hart is alleged to have said. And even that wouldn’t warrant the treatment Fr Speekman has received.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

Pope’s Advice to Children

From the question-and-answer session Pope Benedict XVI gave during an audience on May 30 with children of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood

Q: Dear Pope Benedict, ... how can we children help you to proclaim the Gospel?

A: ...First of all, pray. Prayer is a reality: God listens to us and, when we pray, God enters into our lives, he becomes present among us, works among us. Praying is a very important thing that can change the world, because it makes the power of God present.

And it is important to help each other by praying: to pray together in the liturgy, to pray together in the family. And here I would say that it is important to begin the day with a small prayer and also to end the day with a small prayer: to remember our parents in prayer. Pray before lunch, before dinner and during Sunday’s shared Celebration. A Sunday without Mass, the great communal prayer of the Church, is not truly a Sunday: it lacks the very heart of Sunday and so also the light for the week. And you can also help others especially those who do not pray at home or do not know about prayer by teaching others to pray: praying with them and in this way introducing others to communion with God.

Next, listen that is, learn what Jesus really says. In addition, get to know the Sacred Scriptures, the Bible. In the story of Jesus we learn...the Face of God, we learn what God is like. It is important to know Jesus deeply, personally. That way he enters into our life and, through our life, enters into the world.

Also, share, do not want things only for yourselves, but rather for everyone; divide things with others. And if we see that another is perhaps in need, that he or she is less gifted, we must help that person and so make God’s love present without too many words, in our own personal world, which is part of the bigger world. And in this way we become a family together, in which each one has respect for the other: tolerating the other’s differences, accepting also those who are disagreeable, not allowing anyone to be marginalized, but instead helping others to integrate into the community.

All of this simply means living in this big family of the Church, in this big missionary family. To live out essential points such as sharing, knowledge of Jesus, prayer, reciprocal listening and solidarity is missionary work, because it helps to make the Gospel a reality in our world.

www.zenit.org 05-06-2009

“The reason why a priest is lax is that he does not pay attention to the Mass! My God, how we ought to pity a priest who celebrates as if he were engaged in something routine!”
Curé of Ars

Affirming, Re-energising, Celebrating Ourselves!

Catholic Women for Catholic Women!

The following is from a media release by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Can you believe it's real?

Media Release – August 25, 2009: Catholic women from across Australia will gather for a landmark conference in Canberra this week to mark 10 years since the launch of ...the Report into the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

A highlight of the conference, hosted by the ACBC's Council for Australian Catholic Women, will be a Photographic Exhibition of influential and inspirational Australian Catholic Women. ...

Director of the Office for the Participation of Women, Kimberly Davis said it was hoped the exhibition would encourage the celebration of all women who contribute to the life and mission of the Church in Australia.

"The Church in Australia is richly blessed by talented, gifted women who seek out a voice and place in the life of the Church," she said. "This exhibition highlights a small sample of the expertise, knowledge and wisdom available to the Church in Australia."

Kimberly said the conference, under the theme of "Women: Gathering, Affirming, Celebrating" aimed to celebrate the gifts and ongoing participation of the women in the Church.

"It also aims to critically reflect on what has been achieved and what is yet to be realized following the publication of the report 'Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus', and to affirm, re-energise and offer well-springs to participants – from scripture, contemporary life and their own inner spirit," she said.

Speakers will include ... the Rev Dr Sarah Bachelard on 'Accepting the Gift of our Creation: Practising Christian Meditation'; and Dr Nereda White on 'Indigenous Women in Leadership'...

The ... conference will also feature sessions highlighting what's been happening in dioceses in relation to the participation of women and consideration of the question, 'Where to from here?'

Delegates will also be welcomed to Government House for morning tea with the Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce.

Where to from here, indeed! Oh, how grateful the Church must be to have Us! The expertise, knowledge, wisdom, influence, inspiration, talents and gifts We so generously offer! Oh, how wonderful to be Us! And what an interesting concept to have a non-Catholic woman minister teaching Catholic women (who are seeking to "go somewhere" in the Catholic Church...) about Christian meditation. And morning tea with a pro-abortion woman-in-power. Surely these choices are not accidental.

As I wrote in the March '09 issue of ITD (p.7), can someone please explain where and when and how the Church has excluded women? If this is not a cover for dissenting women in the Church, then what exactly is it? I'd like to send all participants a survey on whether or not they accept Church teaching on the priesthood, marriage and divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion. Somehow I don't think we'd be all that surprised by the responses. I would've thought our Bishops could think of more urgent and useful (and spiritual!) reasons to have conferences.

- Ed.

Purity

From a talk by Bishop Peter J. Elliott at the Marian Conference in Traralgon, 16-05-2009

Mary holds in herself the two great glories of womanhood, virginity and maternity. In a world which scorns virginity, where pressure is exerted on young women and young men to lose their virginity as soon as possible, we need to proclaim Mary ever-Virgin from the housetops. In a world that mocks maternity and presses for contraception, sterilization and abortion, this greatest of all Mothers shines forth in her resplendent purity and integrity. When our devotion is inspired by her perpetual virginity, it is a means for us to respect our own bodies, to pray for and strive for holy purity in thought, word and deed, to seek the grace of chastity in its different forms, in marriage or single life.

Thank You for Support

"Please find enclosed a cheque for your publication ITD. I hope and pray for you each day that your work will always be charitable and pleasing to God. It was Bishop Fulton Sheen who once said, "Attack the problem, not the person." I used to listen to him when he was on the radio many years ago. May God bless you and all your work." [C.K., Vic]

"I have been meaning to send you a donation for your wonderful paper Into the Deep. I hand it out to everyone, trying to get people more aware, and to get moving doing God's work. May Jesus and Mary bless your work. It's so needed especially here in Queensland." [E.H., Qld]

May God in His goodness bless you and enable you to continue with your aim to defend the faith. [L.M., Vic]

True Rights

Many today seem very concerned about their own rights but tend to neglect or restrict the rights of others. Rights pre-suppose duties if they are not to become mere licence.

Every society has a system of justice to guarantee its citizens what is their *due* for their full natural development in mind and body. This “due” becomes the *duty* and *right* of all to each other.

Basic rights can be deduced from the nature of man in society, as many great thinkers have shown. They are self-evident and inalienable from conception to natural death (cf. Cicero; Aristotle; UN Charter; U.S Constitution; Nuremburg war trials). Some of these basic rights are: to life; to nurture and education in a normal family; to reputation; to practice religion; to associate with others; to choose a state in life; to work; to private property; to be told the truth; to share in public affairs etc.

In positive law many basic rights become civil rights and even secondary rights are enacted to detail the application of basic rights (eg. basic wage/safety). All rights must be exercised with due regard to the common good – balancing private and public affairs, and the ordering of priorities (eg. right to life precedes right to convenience).

But there is no right or duty (or freedom of choice) to do a bad thing – contrary to the natural good of man in society (logic law of non-contradiction – doctors’ former Hippocratic oath). For example, there is no such right or duty to die – by suicide or euthanasia; nor a right to kill by abortion, birth-control or embryo experiments; nor a right to use sex only as a pleasure in homosexuality, in sodomy, in same-sex “marriage” or in other perversions; nor a right to claim freedom from offence or discrimination because others exercise their rights to free speech (to preach and teach their beliefs, within reason).

In the paradox of freedom, true rights and freedom are to do what we *should/ought* to do according to the nature of man in society, *not* to do what we *feel like* for convenience, fashion, greed, lust or power. This is feral and leads to the culture of death as we see today.

The foundations of human rights are not in the deliberations of men in majority rule or consensus, no matter how well-intentioned they may be. These can change and easily become a matter of “might is right” in a rule of tyranny or totalitarianism (recent history). Many secularists are threatening this today, wittingly or not, in the spirit of anti-authoritarian behaviour, and in the claim for the “contrived rights” described above, for acceptance and respectability, and as valid choices to be promoted.

Aristotle describes the transcendent natural law well, as “reason unaffected by desire.”

Fr Bernard McGrath, Bendigo

Faithful Undercurrent

The world is facing financial problems on a vast scale, which prompts us to ask “How did we get to this?” and “What can we do about it?” Those are huge questions for any administrator. In the small world which each of us inhabits they might seem irrelevant questions, but the principles of the problem apply everywhere.

I’m sure that income for churches has gone down everywhere over the last forty years. As part of this steady decline many people have gone elsewhere. A lot have stayed with the Church to some degree, but have given up contributing. The loyal few, not the loud liberals, have continued to support the Church, yet they are often those denigrated by those in power who don’t really appreciate where their true support comes from.

The yuppies, the liberals, the progressives, the mere passengers, the fellow-travellers and their ilk, the paid bureaucrats, the social engineers, those clamouring for control, those who want their voices heard and their ideas followed, etc., all know how to spend (other people’s) money, but don’t know how – or are unwilling – to make it or contribute themselves.

This ought to be a worry for a new bishop in a difficult situation – to know where his real support comes from, not just financially but spiritually also. Oddly enough, the financial yardstick is a pretty good litmus test of the other dimensions of reality.

When it comes to whom the bishop is going to support, those often seen in the corridors of power are not necessarily the most reliable, since most of them would find a place somewhere in a previous paragraph.

There must be many people in Sale who have remained committed to the truth as known who have suffered for their constancy, but perhaps now have hopes of being heard in the right place, particularly when it comes to matters of the Faith.

The leader of the Faith would be wise not to forget this undercurrent, so unappreciated in a former regime. It is a base on which he can build strength and unity, both so badly needed.

S.C., Melbourne

Event for Your Diary

Catholic Life’s ‘What’s On’ column in the August edition reminds us that a coming event on September 16 is the “International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer.” Well, now! And we silly people had thought the hole in the Ozone Layer had mysteriously disappeared and Global Warming was now the big issue. Perhaps one day Catholic Life will sponsor an “International Day for the Salvation of Souls,” or is that too much to ask?

Pat O’Brien, Sale

Satan Exists

By Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap, Pontifical Household preacher

Demons, Satanism and other related phenomena are quite topical today, and they disturb a great part of our society.

Our technological and industrialized world is filled with magicians, wizards, occultism, spiritualism, fortune tellers, spell trafficking, amulets, as well as very real Satanic sects. Chased away from the door, the devil has come in through the window. Chased away by the faith, he has returned by way of superstition.

.. First of all, do demons exist? That is, does the word “demon” truly indicate some personal being with intelligence and will, or is it simply a symbol, a manner of speaking that refers to the sum of the world’s moral evil, the collective unconscious, collective alienation, etc.?

Many intellectuals do not believe in demons in the first sense. But it must be noted that many great writers, such as Goethe and Dostoyevsky, took Satan’s existence very seriously. Baudelaire, who was certainly no angel, said that “the demon’s greatest trick is to make people believe that he does not exist.”

The principal proof of the existence of demons in the Gospels is not the numerous healings of possessed people, since ancient beliefs about the origins of certain maladies may have had some influence on the interpretation of these happenings. The proof is Jesus’ temptation by the demon in the desert. The many saints who in their lives battled against the prince of darkness are also proof. They are not like “Don Quixote,” tilting at windmills. On the contrary, they were very down-to-earth, psychologically healthy people.

If many people find belief in demons absurd, it is because they take their beliefs from books, they pass their lives in libraries and at desks; but demons are not interested in books, they are interested in persons, especially, and precisely, saints.

How could a person know anything about Satan if he has never encountered the reality of Satan, but only the idea of Satan in cultural, religious and ethnological traditions? They treat this question with great certainty and a feeling of superiority, doing away with it all as so much “medieval obscurantism.”

But it is a false certainty. It is like someone who brags about not being afraid of lions and proves this by pointing out that he has seen many paintings and pictures of lions and was never frightened by them. On the other hand, it is entirely normal and consistent for those who do not believe in God to not believe in the devil. It would be quite tragic for someone who did not believe in God to believe in the devil!

Yet the most important thing that the Christian faith has to tell us is not that demons exist, but that Christ has defeated them. For Christians, Christ and demons are not two equal, but rather contrary principles, as certain dualistic religions believe to be the case with good and evil. Jesus is the only Lord; Satan is only a creature “gone bad.” If power over men is given to Satan, it is because men have the possibility of freely choosing sides and also to keep them from being too proud (cf. 2 Cor 12:7), believing themselves to be self-sufficient and without need of any redeemer. ...

With Christ we have nothing to fear. Nothing and no one can do us ill, unless we ourselves allow it. Satan, said an ancient Father of the Church, after Christ’s coming, is like a dog chained up in the barnyard: He can bark and lunge as much as he wants, but if we don’t go near him, he cannot harm us.

In the desert Jesus freed himself from Satan to free us! This is the joyous news.

www.zenit.org 08-02-2008 [Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic]

Forceful Witnesses

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

In today’s world, as in the troubled times of the Cure of Ars, the lives and activity of priests need to be distinguished by a forceful witness to the Gospel. As Pope Paul VI rightly noted, “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”. Lest we experience existential emptiness and the effectiveness of our ministry be compromised, we need to ask ourselves ever anew: “Are we truly pervaded by the Word of God? Is that Word truly the nourishment we live by, even more than bread and the things of this world? Do we really know that Word? Do we love it? Are we deeply engaged with this Word to the point that it really leaves a mark on our lives and shapes our thinking?”

Message from the Editor

Please remember that while all letters to ITD are welcome, we cannot publish letters that have no name and address or other means of contacting the writer (preferably email). In some cases this is a real shame [“Anne”, please contact us with these details!]. ITD is willing to publish letters as anonymous if need be, but will not do so without knowing the identity of the writer.

Lyrical Twists

Now I've heard it all. Recently at Sunday morning Mass, one of the modern, popular "worship me" hymns had a rather disconcerting lyrical twist. During the Communion "reflection hymn" I heard: "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of His blood ... *you shall live forever.*"

What was that? While I was trying to focus on Jesus' precious visit into my heart, a voice was telling the congregation in supposedly uplifting, inspiring word and song that if they *did not* eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, they would have eternal life! Perhaps the musician/vocalist experienced a momentary, human lapse of concentration.

Another confusing message I always hear in the above "worship me" hymn comes from the seemingly contradictory flow of the lyrics. One moment I hear: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world." In the very next breath, the lyrics direct me to tell my Saviour: "And I will raise you up ... on the last day." Who is supposed to be talking to whom here? Am I not meant to be expressing my praise, love and adoration towards Jesus? The sense and meaning of "I am the bread of life" leave me somewhat confused, tossed between on the one hand a fervent desire to adore and love my Creator and Saviour while on the other using words that arrogantly (unintended of course by the many who follow them) draw the focus of adoration towards myself.

At certain moments in the presented "hymns" the guitar droned with regular, monotonous, bass-sounding effects like someone trying to walk or run in shoes with lead weights. At other moments, the swinging waltz tempo made me feel like going up to the nearest woman and surging into a circular waltz up the aisle of the church.

It intrigues me how so many at our "folk" Masses have become so conditioned to this sort of so-called liturgical music and lyrics that they seem to take it all on board as normal. But it will never be normal, at least not liturgically. I find it an invasion against my true spiritual senses.

This scenario exists in many other parishes in and beyond Melbourne. It may take years for any improvement to occur since the practices have been entrenched for so long. At the root of change must be a clear, genuine re-education in Church Teaching on the Liturgy to help us understand and appreciate the deeper meaning and purpose of liturgical music and song. The process may be initiated only when we pray more fervently for our liturgical educators to align themselves more intimately with the liturgical heart and mind of the Catholic Church.

Peter Phillips, Springvale, Vic

Restore Authority, Repair the Damage

By any fair judgment the Father Speekman case can be described as a massive conspiracy. Those involved – including the Director of the Catholic Education Office at the time Therese D'Orsa, Vincent Carr a C.E.O. employee, Maree Swenson the St Vincent's school principal at the time, the teachers' union, teachers, and some disgruntled parishioners – convinced Bishop Coffey to remove Fr Speekman on a trumped up charge.

After the Congregation for the Clergy upheld Fr Speekman's appeal on two occasions, the conspiracy continued when a number of his brother priests signed a petition against him. I have no doubt I could go into any of their parishes and find parishioners who were unhappy with them. In fact, this would be true of any parish.

These priests should have a frank examination of their ministry. For instance, are the Mass attendances declining? Have they abrogated their authority to some nun or a select number of parishioners? Have they faithfully exercised their authority over their parish school or do they meekly submit to the wishes of the teachers? My observation suggests the latter.

Bishop Coffey's brother bishops showed they were not interested in the facts. Their comments such as, "There was more to it", indicated such. To put it simply and bluntly, they were not interested in ascertaining the truth. If they were, they would have advised Bishop Coffey to comply with the Congregation's decrees.

Almost three years after the last decree (20th Nov 2006), Fr Speekman still has not been returned to his parish. This is a major scandal that has weakened the respect and trust in our bishops and priests. This cannot be allowed to occur again.

I fully support the power and authority of bishops. What I cannot tolerate is the abuse of this power and authority as has happened in the Fr Speekman case. How can our young people be expected to take any notice of bishops and priests who blatantly show a disregard for the authority of the Church?

It is to be hoped that Fr Speekman will be returned in the near future. My final question is how is the damage to Fr Speekman's reputation going to be repaired? All those involved at least need to offer a humble and profound apology. They must admit the gross wrong they have inflicted on Fr Speekman.

John Henderson, Morwell

"It is not with sentimental love but rather with loving actions that souls are purified."

St Cajetan da Thiene

Leaving Straight After Communion

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

Q: Unfortunately some in the parish have developed the poor habit of leaving Mass immediately after Communion. I estimate around 30% leave early. Could you provide a theological discourse on why this is not appropriate behavior? - D.S., Port Charlotte, Florida

A: This is a perennial problem, but one which must be faced with patience, insisting, as St Paul would say, “Opportune et inopportune” (in season and out of season), until the message reaches home.

This question reminded me of the story of a saintly priest who had the same problem with one of his devout parishioners who attended daily Mass but left immediately after Communion. He solved the problem by ordering two altar boys with lighted tapers to walk on either side of him as soon as he started to leave the church and accompany him all the way to his carriage. When, after three days repeating this action, the somewhat flustered and embarrassed gentleman asked the priest for an explanation, he was told that since Christ was still present in him as he left the church, his presence had to be honoured by lighted candles. Needless to say, he never left early again.

This anecdote could serve as a starting point for the priest to reflect with the people on the importance of giving thanks for the gift of Mass, of being spiritually nurtured by God’s word, of participating in his unique sacrifice, and by receiving Communion. This also requires that there is effectively a period of silence after the Communion song and that the priest, deacon and other ministers lead by example, dedicating two or three minutes to silent reflection at the chair. On occasion the priest may assist the people by directing a brief meditative prayer of thanksgiving. This is especially effective at so-called children’s Masses for, while the prayer is ostensibly directed toward the children, it often serves adults just as much.

Another point to be emphasized is the importance of assisting at the entire Mass. There are many plastic images to illustrate this, but most can grasp that if their boss, or the local mayor, summons them to a meeting, they would not dare leave before their host has formally brought it to a close. Even more is this true when a beloved parent, sibling or lifelong friend invites us to spend time with them.

If we behave thus before mere human authority and relationships, then how much more should it be true when our host is the Father who created us, the Son who died and rose for us, and the Spirit who gives us life.

Let us leave courtesy aside for a moment and return to thanksgiving. The Mass is something we celebrate together as Church and as a worshipping assembly united to Christ through the priest. It is not just something we do as individual Christians. In the same manner, our thanksgiving for Mass cannot be reduced to the individual sphere and must be carried out as Church. This collective thanksgiving is done through the priest at the closing prayer to which all respond “Amen.”

Finally, the Mass is intimately united to Christian life and mission. The final blessing and dismissal send us forth to transmit what we have received to our brothers and sisters. If we leave directly after Communion, then we lose this important component of our spiritual life.

From a very material standpoint one could also see if there is some tangible motivation that leads so many of the faithful to leave early. Is there a bottleneck in the parking lot? Are Mass schedules too close together? If there are real practical inconveniences involved, then theology alone will be ineffective in changing people’s habits until these are resolved.

www.zenit.org

Shepherds Who Do Harm

Pope Benedict XVI at the inauguration of the Year for Priests, 19-06-2009

“Even our shortcomings, our limitations and weaknesses must lead us back to the heart of Jesus. If it is true that sinners, by contemplating His Heart, must learn the necessary ‘suffering of sins’ that leads them back to the Father, this holds even truer for ministers in holy orders. In this context, how can we forget that nothing makes the Church, the Body of Christ, suffer so much as the sins of her pastors, above all of those who become ‘stealers of sheep’, either by misleading them into a private doctrine or binding them with bonds of sin and death? Dear priests, the call to conversion and the recourse to Divine Mercy apply to us too. We too, with heartfelt humility, must ask the Heart of Jesus to preserve us from the terrible risk of harming the very people whom we are required to save. The Church needs holy priests, ministers who help the faithful experience the merciful love of the Lord and who are themselves convinced witnesses of that love”.

Vatican Information Service

Fresh and Restored!

From an article by Melbourne's Archbishop Denis Hart, in Kairos Catholic Journal, 26-07-2009 www.kairos.com.au

English-speaking Catholics today are awaiting the restoration of an even greater treasure than the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel: a fresh and faithful translation of the Liturgy of the Church into the English language.

In 1963, in its very first Decree, the Second Vatican Council granted that it "may frequently be of great advantage to the people" if some parts of the Liturgy were translated into the common language of the people. In this way, the Council Fathers hoped that some of the hidden treasures of the Liturgy would be brought to light for all to appreciate. We have been using the translation that resulted for the past 40 years.

While very successful in many ways, this translation has, in many cases, hidden rather than revealed the true treasures of the Liturgy. Just as the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel were dulled by smoke and grime, so the vivid colours of the Sacred Liturgy were dulled by a limited use of vocabulary and a pedestrian style of sentence structure. Most tragically, in some places our current translations have actually hidden the Church's true faith. An ancient saying, 'Lex orandi, lex credendi' ('the way we pray is the way we believe') teaches that if our prayers are robbed of their full meaning, so also our faith is impoverished.

The Latin text of the Liturgy is the result of many centuries of faith and tradition. Parts of the text go back to the very earliest times of the Church. Like Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, the Roman Liturgy carries in it many allusions to the Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers. ... It centres on the Sacrifice of the Mass, the greatest treasure of the Church, in which saints and martyrs and bishops and priests and people join together with the angels 'as one voice' to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To enable this great symphony, the Liturgy employs a language that is 'noble' and 'poetic'. The language of public worship has never been the language of the street or the marketplace [...] following the instinct of the Church that in matters of worship we should offer God the very best of which we are capable.

The desire to use English in our liturgies and the desire to offer our prayers to God in a language of the highest nobility ought not to be mutually opposed. English, like Latin, can also be poetic and beautiful. English, like Latin, is also capable of bearing many layers of meaning. English, like Latin, can accurately express and convey the truth of our Faith.

I am sure that when this great work of restoration is completed and we are all able to experience the result for ourselves, we will rejoice to see the revelation of the hidden treasures of the Liturgy – a treasure fresh and restored for the Church today and future generations.

Hopes For Better Days

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of copies of your August 2009 issue, some of which were distributed to interested friends for feedback. The appointment of the Most Rev. Christopher Prowse as the Diocesan Bishop of Sale was welcomed even by Catholics outside its boundaries. However, it is not without a reaction that the Catholics of Sale had to hibernate through no fault of their own. The relief that is felt after years of uncertainty is beginning to percolate through to the faithful.

As much as your newsletter has expressed the thought for a prayer for the Bishop, a prayer that the authority of Bishop Prowse would be respected and take precedence is my presumption.

A reference in your newsletter from the pastoral letter issued by Pope Benedict XVI to priests ("Pastoral Plan", ITD August 09, p.1), discloses a parallel but not an identical situation as what prevailed within the village of Ars - a salutary reminder of the power of prayer.

The necessity to embody Christ's presence in the life of the Catholics of Sale should be a priority for the Bishop. I have no doubt that the laity together with the parish priests will leave no stone unturned to dedicate themselves to Christ and His Blessed Mother.

In my view the Most Rev. Christopher Prowse is a disciplined Evangelist. I believe that with prayer and patience, bureaucratic improprieties that may have occurred earlier will be addressed with decorum.

Jeremias Wijeyeratne, Clayton, Vic

Confession

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

Priests ought never to be resigned to empty confessionals or the apparent indifference of the faithful to this Sacrament. In France, at the time of the Cure of Ars, confession was no more easy or frequent than in our own day, since the upheaval caused by the revolution had long inhibited the practice of religion. Yet he sought in every way, by his preaching and his powers of persuasion, to help his parishioners to rediscover the meaning and beauty of the Sacrament of Penance, presenting it as an inherent demand of the Eucharistic presence.

Extraordinary

Only four people at Mass today at St Eugene's. But we still had an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. This was to make sure the Mass was not unduly delayed by an undue number of communicants.

Richard Stokes, Caboolture, QLD

The Effects of Confirmation

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

One of the main effects of the gift of the Holy Spirit is holiness. This means that the Spirit of God, who is the fountain and source of all holiness, enters and dwells in the soul of each person who is confirmed.

Holiness does not result from our own power and efforts but from our conversion to Jesus Christ through the working of his Holy Spirit in us. All holiness consists in receiving the divine life from Christ and in retaining it and growing in it by being and living in union with him. The soul's entire holiness and perfection lies in our love for Christ who is our redeemer, our highest good and our God.

The only thing that can diminish holiness and destroy the life of Christ in us is sin, especially grave sin. However, whenever this happens we can regain Christ's life, love and holiness through sincere repentance in the sacrament of Penance.

This is why it is essential that all Catholics practise their faith by living their lives firmly anchored in the Holy Mass and the sacraments of the Church. In all the sacraments of the Church, Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit is the supreme High Priest who ministers to us, shepherds our souls, sustains us and makes us holy as we grow in love of him.

In this way we are strengthened in living this wonderful, holy and divine life that was given to us in Baptism and sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

We will never understand this divine life fully because it is from above, from God our Father. The Holy Spirit himself is the giver of life and the one who fully reveals how we should live this divine gift. This is why prayerful devotion to the Holy Spirit is such an important part of our Catholic spiritual life. After all, he is the one who directs our thoughts, our words and our actions daily so that we may know and do the Father's will.

Some other important effects of Confirmation, ones that are often misunderstood by many Catholics, are that the sacrament binds the baptised more perfectly to the Church, strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed, and to spread and defend the faith. This is what the law of the Church (Canon 879) states as the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation. As Catholics we need to reflect more seriously and responsibly on what this means for us on a daily basis.

God, out of love for us makes us worthy members of Christ's living Body, children of his royal priestly and prophetic family and servants of his Church. Again,

we can do nothing to merit this; it is purely a gift from God. It may serve us well to be reminded of this fact from time to time, especially those who consider themselves qualified and 'mature' enough to lecture the Church about faith and morals, about her liturgy, the priesthood and her mission.

We are not given the Holy Spirit to boldly and publicly express our personal tastes and wishes or for personal fulfilment, interests and realization. Neither are we initiated into Christ's life and called to share in his kingly, priestly and prophetic mission as completely isolated individuals.

We are reminded of this very clearly at Mass on Sundays in the fourth Eucharistic prayer when the priest says: "... by rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as his first gift to those who believe, to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace".

In the Church we are confirmed in God's truth and in the faith of the Apostles, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit we are blessed with every spiritual blessing to proclaim it and to spread it no matter what the circumstances and the cost to ourselves.

In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit of love is poured into our hearts as a source of light, strength and courage so that we may hear Christ's call more clearly and follow it more generously as living members of his Church.

The gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to build up the Body of Christ by spreading the Good News and defending the faith. In obedience to Christ and in his Spirit, we are bound to be witnesses of his redeeming love in the places where we live, work or travel.

Whose life and spirit are we expressing and witnessing to when we contradict the Vicar of Christ and the Magisterium and disobey the laws of the Church and the Gospel?

God in his mercy has restored us to his life and love, made us holy and has set us apart as members of the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Out of love for Christ, who is the way, the truth and the light, Confirmation is our "yes" to suffer affliction, distress, hunger, nakedness, peril, persecution and the sword. Confirmation is our total commitment in faith and love to combat the sin and evil that endangers not only our own souls but the Body of Christ from within and without while we are in this world.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell

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 (continuing until 6pm on First Fridays) [Sacred Heart Church]
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 Sunday 2pm – 3pm

Adoring with the Angels

St Basil

“Eternal Son of the living God, Whom I here acknowledge really present! I adore Thee with all the powers of my soul. Prostrate with the Angels in the most profound reverence, I love Thee, O my Saviour, Whom I now behold on the throne of Thy love! O dread Majesty, O infinite Mercy! Save me, forgive me! Grant that I may never more be separated from Thee.”

Everything Under His Gaze

St John Vianney, Curé of Ars

“Let us go my soul, go and speak with the good Lord, to work with Him, to walk with Him, to fight and to suffer with him. You will work, but He will bless your work; you will walk, but He will bless your steps; you will suffer, but He will bless your tears. How great, how noble, how consoling it is to do everything in the company and under the gaze of the good Lord, and to think that he sees everything, counts everything!...”

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, 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.