

Into the Deep

Issue 87

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December 2009

Watch and Pray

Pope Benedict XVI, Advent 2007

The Lord is coming! With this knowledge we set out on the journey of Advent, preparing ourselves to celebrate with faith the extraordinary event of the Lord's birth. In the coming weeks, day after day the liturgy will offer for our reflection Old Testament texts that recall the lively, constant desire that kept alive in the Jewish people the expectation of the Messiah's coming. Watchful in prayer, let us too seek to prepare our hearts to receive the Lord, who will come to show us his mercy and give us his salvation.

www.zenit.org 16-12-2007

Make Love Real

From a homily by Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster, on St Thérèse of Lisieux

We live in a time in which affectivity and love itself seem to be commercialised and relationships subject to calculations of benefit and loss, and used accordingly. St Thérèse reminds us that no cost is too high for God's love to meet, and that in love for us God has abandoned every calculation of worth and reward. ...

The practice of love in every relationship is the heart of our mission, a mission carried out in every action, at every moment. And our mission is here. 'Make love real where you live.' That is her invitation.

Hidden in this invitation, and making it come to life, is a single question, addressed to every one of us who wish to share in her mission. The question is this: Do you really want to be close to God? Do you really want to live close to the Lord?

Only when we answer with an unequivocal 'Yes!' will our mission be fruitful. As messengers of Christ, it is not effectiveness we seek; it is fruitfulness. And to bear that fruit we must abide in him, remain part of him, be with him one vine.

www.zenit.org 16-10-2009

Expectant

From an address by Pope Benedict XVI, 17-12-2008

Precisely today we begin the days of Advent that immediately prepare us for the nativity of the Lord: We are in the Christmas novena ... The entire Church, in effect, turns its gaze of faith toward this approaching feast, readying itself, like each year, to unite to the joyful song of the angels, who in the heart of the night will announce to the shepherds the extraordinary event of the birth of the Redeemer, inviting them to draw close to the cave of Bethlehem. There lies Emanuel, the Creator made creature, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a poor manger. [...]

Christmas is a privileged opportunity to meditate on the meaning and value of our existence. Approaching this solemnity helps us to reflect, on one hand, about the drama of history in which men, wounded by sin, are permanently seeking happiness and a satisfactory meaning to life and death; on the other hand, it exhorts us to meditate on the merciful goodness of God, who has gone out to meet man to communicate to him directly the Truth that saves, and make him participate in his friendship and his life.

Let us prepare for Christmas, therefore, with humility and simplicity, readying ourselves to receive the gift of light, joy and peace that irradiates from this mystery. Let us welcome the nativity of Christ as an event capable of today renewing our existence. May the encounter with the Child Jesus make us people who do not think only of ourselves, but rather open to the expectations and necessities of our brothers. In this way we too become testimonies of the light that Christmas radiates over the humanity of the third millennium. Let us ask most holy Mary, the tabernacle of the incarnate Word, and St Joseph, silent witness of the events of salvation, to communicate to us the sentiments they had while they awaited the birth of Jesus, so that we can prepare ourselves to celebrate in a holy way the coming Christmas, in the joy of faith and enlivened by the determination of a sincere conversion.

www.zenit.org 17-12-2008 [Translation by Zenit]

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

Places of Hope

A big thank you to all those wonderful people who responded to our ad “Wanted – an Orthodox Parish” (Oct 09 ITD). Your responses indicate that there are still places of hope. They are like shining stars above the dark ocean of relativism, indifferentism and distorted, New Age style teaching. It is very encouraging to say the least.

God-willing we’ll be in one of the areas suggested in the very near future – hopefully very soon. Thank you also ITD for publishing the ad. God bless you all.

Name and address supplied

Resting Catholics

The bishops’ conference of England and Wales is sponsoring a campaign uniting mothers everywhere who pray for their children to come back to the Church for Christmas.

This initiative is part of the larger annual “Come Home For Christmas” campaign started in 2007 as an outreach to lapsed Catholics who no longer attend Mass. It is being resourced by the conference’s Catholic Agency to Support Evangelization.

The campaign has seen great success since it began, and this year a special role is being given to Catholic mothers.

Bishop Kieran Conry of the Arundel and Brighton Diocese in England, head of the conference’s Department for Evangelization and Catechesis, explained how the campaign finds an inspiration in St Monica.

“St Monica is the patron saint of resting Catholics,” he affirmed. “She was a faithful wife and mother who prayed for years for her son to embrace the Christian faith.”

“God answered her pleas,” the prelate said, “and St Augustine became a great role model for generations of Christians throughout the ages.”

He continued: “Monica reminds each one of us of the importance and power of Christian prayer, but also of the necessity to be patient. She teaches us that no matter how long it takes we are to be positively engaged – through prayer, love and invitation – in supporting those who are ‘resting’ Catholics to reconnect with their local Christian community.”

The bishop encouraged all people, but mothers in particular, to participate in a novena of prayer from Dec. 12 to Dec. 20.

He added, “By the grace of God let’s pray that thousands experience a deep encounter with the living God and that the invitations we issue to ‘come home’ are warmly received.”

www.zenit.org 19-11-2009

The Hands and Lips of God

From a message by Pope Benedict XVI to priests on an international retreat in Ars, France, 28-09-2009

St John Mary Vianney emphasized the indispensable role of the priest when he said: “A good pastor, a pastor according to the heart of God, this is the greatest treasure that the good God can give a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of divine mercy.”

In this Year for Priests, we are all called to explore and rediscover the grandeur of the sacrament that has configured us forever to Christ the High Priest and has “consecrated” all of us “in truth” (John 17:19). ...

Our priestly vocation is a treasure that we bear in earthen vessels. St Paul expressed happily the infinite distance that exists between our vocation and the poverty of the answer we can give to God. Let us keep present in our ears and in the depth of our heart the Apostle’s exclamation full of confidence, who said: “for when I am weak, then I am strong”. Awareness of this weakness opens us to intimacy with God, who gives us strength and joy. The more the priest perseveres in friendship with God, the more he will continue the work of the Redeemer on earth. The priest is no longer for himself, but for all.

Precisely therein lies one of the greatest challenges of our time. The priest, man of the divine Word and of sacred things, must be today, more than ever, a man of joy and hope. To men who can no longer conceive that God is pure Love, he will always affirm that life is worth living, and that Christ gives it all its meaning because he loves men, all men. The religion of the Cure d’Ars is a religion of joy, not a morbid seeking of mortification, as sometimes has been believed: “Our happiness is too great, no, no, we will never be able to understand it,” he said, and also “when we are along the way and we catch sight of a bell tower, this should make our heart beat as the sight of the roof of the dwelling of the beloved makes the bride’s heart beat.” ...

Think of the great number of Masses you have celebrated or will celebrate, each time making Christ present on the altar. Think of the innumerable absolutions you have given and will give, allowing a sinner to be forgiven. ... Your hands, your lips, become, in the space of an instant, the hands and lips of God. You bear Christ in yourselves; you have, by grace, entered in the Holy Trinity. ...

“The happiness there is in saying the Mass will be understood only in heaven,” [the Cure] wrote. Therefore, I encourage you to reinforce your faith and that of the faithful in the sacrament you celebrate which is the source of true joy. The Saint of Ars wrote: “The priest should feel the same joy (of the Apostles) on seeing Our Lord, whom he has between his hands.”

www.zenit.org 29-09-2009

Surprise Me

My thanks go to Fr Conway for his letter on the Antics of Bishops (ITD Oct 09, p.5). Could anyone have believed that in 1968 our bishops were one vote away from dissenting from the Holy Father's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*? Has anything changed since? One can safely assume that matters have become much worse.

Had it not been for the courage of Richard Stokes, Archbishop Bathersby would surely not have acted against Fr Peter Kennedy. For the bishops to table the Collins/Purcell petition at their Conference was a scandal. Then we have the Council for Australian Catholic Women formed and no doubt funded by the Bishops – your money at work (ITD Sept 09, p.5). Recently we had the case of Fr Bob Maguire where Archbishop Hart bowed to public pressure. Would the Archbishop support his orthodox priests against complaints from the Catholic Education Office (CEO), the schools or some disgruntled parishioners? My observation would be in the negative but then again he may surprise me.

Our bishops profess loyalty to the Pope. But what do their actions tell us? I have the greatest respect for the office of Bishop. But the only one I would follow into battle is Cardinal Pell. He has more courage in his little finger than most of the bishops combined.

Most of our bishops have been seduced by the millions of dollars handed out by the government. That is exactly why they have abdicated their authority to the CEOs. These CEOs run the dioceses and the schools the parishes. God help us.

We have recently had another Bishops' Conference. Maybe I will be surprised but then again the only decision of any import they make may be about something like the plight of the yellow-bellied parrot.

How is the situation to be rectified? I have no degree or doctorate but respectfully offer the following advice from those more qualified than I am: In December 2007 Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, wrote to each bishop requesting they instigate and promote Perpetual Adoration in their dioceses. This would be a good beginning. Pope Benedict XVI has said our bishops and priests should partake in a spiritual renewal of their priesthood; celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass prayerfully and reverently daily; make a Holy Hour each day in front of the Blessed Sacrament; go to Confession regularly; pray the Rosary; be faithful to the daily Divine Office. Then they will be able to encourage us to do the same. Incidentally, it would do no harm to preach on sin, a long-forgotten subject.

The two fundamental qualities of a good spiritual leader are holiness and courage. Show us those qualities. In the meantime I and many others will continue to pray for our priests and bishops.

John Henderson, Morwell

Dealing with Death

“The departure of loved ones is painful. The event of death is a disquieting enigma. But, for believers, however it comes, it is always illumined by the hope of immortality.”

This was a reflection made by Pope Benedict XVI when he celebrated a Mass for the prelates who have died over the past year.

Although death “might occur in humiliating and painful circumstances that seem to be a tragedy; in truth for those who have faith it isn't so,” he explained. “Faith sustains us in these moments humanly speaking full of sadness and uneasiness,” and in all difficult moments.

The Holy Father acknowledged that in this life, “there is no lack of difficulties and problems.”

“There are situations of suffering and pain, difficult moments to understand and accept,” he said. “All this, however, acquires value and meaning if considered in the perspective of eternity.

“Every trial, in fact, accepted with steadfast patience and offered for the Kingdom of God, comes to our spiritual aid already down here, and above all in the future life, in heaven.”

The Pope said that, “mysteriously associated” to Christ's passion, life can be “a pleasing offering to the Lord, a voluntary sacrifice of love.”

www.zenit.org 05-11-2009

No Guarantee of Success

“Opting for Christ does not guarantee success according to the criteria of the world, but it does ensure the peace and joy that only He can give. This is apparent, in every age, from the experience of so many men and women who, in Christ's name, in the name of truth and justice, have shown themselves capable of resisting the lure of earthly power in its various disguises, even to the point of crowning their faithfulness with martyrdom.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Afraid to Let Them In

Father Thomas Rosica, CSB

God is Love and Truth, and neither Love nor Truth is ever imposed. They stand gently knocking at the doors of our minds and hearts, waiting for us to open the door and welcome them. Yet so often we are afraid to usher in such guests into our lives and earthly kingdoms because of the serious implications associated with such gifts. Many of us resist the truth with power, while others will resort to very refined forms of pressure and manipulation to keep the Truth at bay.

www.zenit.org 18-11-2009

Contemptuous Omission

The phrase “Lamb of God” occurs on three occasions during Mass.

The first is in the Gloria: “Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.”

The second is the similar threefold “Lamb of God” invocation during the Breaking of the Host.

The third is the climax, coming just before the distribution of Communion: “*This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*” (literally, “*Behold the Lamb of God*”). These are the words of John the Baptist when identifying Jesus as the Messiah, the Redeemer and the Son of God (John 1:29, cf. 34, 36, 41).

Yet this climactic reference to the Lamb is often completely omitted.

Instead, we hear “This is Jesus”, followed by an interpolated reference to the Gospel of the day, e.g. “who chatted with the Samaritan woman at the well”. No “Lamb of God”, no “who takes away the sins of the world”. So much for the Missal, the Scriptures and the climactic structure of the Mass! I have myself witnessed this abuse hundreds of times.

Don’t these priests know that St Cuthbert Mayne was martyred in 1577 for wearing an Agnus Dei, an image of the Lamb blessed by the Pope?

Or if perchance they have little respect for such traditional Catholic pieties, don’t they recall the beautiful chorus “Behold the Lamb of God” in the Protestant Handel’s *Messiah*, a Scriptural citation rightly regarded as central to the story of our Saviour?

More recently the American convert Stephen K. Ray has written an encyclopaedic Commentary on St John’s Gospel (Ignatius Press, 2002) in which (pp.63-4) he calls this verse “one of the most profound statements in the Bible”, reminding us that we hear it every Sunday at Mass.

But not in large parts of Australia and New Zealand, where the profundity of the Mystery of the Atonement is apparently mistaken for mundane incomprehensibility, and the words of Scripture prescribed by the Missal are contemptuously jettisoned.

Michael Apthorp, Brisbane

Extraordinary Numbers

On Wednesday at Christ the King in Deception Bay we had 45 people at morning Mass. That’s the good news. But the large crowd made it necessary to have three extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Well, I suppose 45 people at Mass is extraordinary these days.

Richard Stokes, Caboolture QLD

Corrupting the Liturgy

Redemptionis Sacramentum, n.31

In keeping with the solemn promises that they have made in the rite of Sacred Ordination and renewed each year in the Mass of the Chrism, let Priests celebrate “devoutly and faithfully the mysteries of Christ for the praise of God and the sanctification of the Christian people, according to the tradition of the Church, especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation”.

They ought not to detract from the profound meaning of their own ministry by corrupting the liturgical celebration either through alteration or omission, or through arbitrary additions.

For as St. Ambrose said, “It is not in herself ... but in us that the Church is injured. Let us take care so that our own failure may not cause injury to the Church”.

Let the Church of God not be injured, then, by Priests who have so solemnly dedicated themselves to the ministry. Indeed, under the Bishop’s authority let them faithfully seek to prevent others as well from committing this type of distortion.

No Other Person

Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 22

Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.

In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.

Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

Don’t Cause Division

Redemptionis Sacramentum, n.12

It is the right of all of Christ’s faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes, according to her stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms.

Likewise, the Catholic people have the right that the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass should be celebrated for them in an integral manner, according to the entire doctrine of the Church’s Magisterium.

Finally, it is the Catholic community’s right that the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist should be carried out for it in such a manner that it truly stands out as a sacrament of unity, to the exclusion of all blemishes and actions that might engender divisions and factions in the Church.

Preparing for Christmas

By Fr Thomas Euteneuer, President of Human Life International, www.hli.org

One of the less appealing characteristics of American culture is that it doesn't seriously prepare for many things. We are an instantaneous culture. We don't like to wait for things: we have fast food, fast delivery, fast cash and on-demand banking. We have instant just-about-everything. Patience is not a virtue in this culture because we can have it all and have it now – or at least we think so.

But God isn't that way. He has a time for everything under the sun, and no one rushes Him to meet deadlines. His Plan has been stored up for an eternity and presses on to completion with divine serenity. All things operate in their proper order and arrive at their completion in His time. Most importantly, God prepared this Plan of salvation with divine foresight. ... But the question is always the type of reception God's Plan will find in our world. As the Virgin Mary and Joseph prepared a manger with swaddling clothes to receive the Son of God into the world, so every man must prepare his heart to receive the Son spiritually.

The Church gives us the great event of Advent to help us get over the cultural sloth and make our hearts ready for Christ. Here are three simple but effective ways to prepare the throne of your heart to better welcome the King on the great Feast of Christmas:

1. Walk with Mary: the best preparation for the feast of the Son is to live well the feasts of the Mother [Immaculate Conception, Virgin of Guadalupe]. We need to see the sublime Mystery of Christ through Her eyes. ... Let us walk with Her this Advent, and She will help us in the preparation of our hearts. Show your desire for preparation by praying the Rosary regularly or making a consecration to the Virgin this Advent.

2. Pray more: there is no better antidote to cultural lethargy than to admit to ourselves that we are not spiritual enough. Yes, we have to live *in* this world but often we are too much *of* this world! Prayer pulls us out of the work-a-day world of instant everything and places us before the serene Plan of God to see that all reality is not material. Faith grows, hope strengthens and charity inflames when we are prayerful. We just need to pray more in Advent, and we will be more spiritually prepared to receive Him. Why not make special visits to the Blessed Sacrament or, lacking that, dedicate a time each day for silent prayer.

3. Devotion to duty: finally, and not least, is the need to do what God has asked us to do with deepest fidelity and zeal. Are there natural responsibilities that you have been neglecting? Now is the time to renew your fervour for them. Have you been apathetic or cowardly towards the difficult dimensions of your Christian duty? Has your family suffered because you have been involved in too many trivial matters that put family in second place? Return with all your heart and increase your enthusiasm toward those things He asks you to do for His Kingdom. A season of grace and favour awaits those who dedicate themselves with blessed ardour to their God-given callings.

Thank God for Advent! We are purified and challenged by the message of salvation preached to us by the Church in this great season. If we live it well and prepare our hearts to receive Him, we will know the Truth in a new way at Christmas and beyond, and the Truth will set us free.

It's Up to You!

It is heartening to read about people actively seeking a Mass conducted in an 'orthodox' manner around the state. I have wept in my heart for the abuses routinely allowed in some churches which I have attended.

I ask those seeking or having found these 'good' churches to not abandon where you have come from. Those poor souls who attend Mass there may not be aware that they attend a Mass which contains illegitimate practices. It is therefore up to those that see these wrongs to help your brother along the right path. They need someone to explain to them what abuses are occurring and what can be done to correct them. Talk to your parish priest (if he will listen); if he does not heed your words, seek your local bishop.

Christ came into this world as the Good Shepherd to find his lost sheep. We too are called to attend the sick, those in need, the lost, our neighbour, our brother. At the end of each Mass, we are invited to "go in peace to love and service the Lord." How are we to serve Him? By doing what he asks!

Our Lord is calling us, He needs workers in the fields, not sit around in the servants' quarters.

If the priest, the bishop, the people will not listen to you, pray for them, suffer for them (as Jesus did), but do not abandon them. If Jesus abandoned those poor sinners 2000 years ago, where would we be now?

Do not leave it up to someone else, it is up to you!

Sean Kennedy, Strathfieldsaye, VIC

I Will Be Love

From a homily by Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster, on St Thérèse of Lisieux

There is a profound sense of purpose running through the whole of the life of St Thérèse. She said that her single desire was ‘to love Jesus and to make him loved.’ This was her mission statement.

[She said:] ‘Finally I understood that love comprises all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and all places ... in a word that it is Eternal.’ Then she cried out, ‘My vocation is love ... Yes, I have found my place in the Church ... in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love.’

As often as we listen to these words, well-known and inspiring as they are, we need to remember that they were written in October 1896, nine months before she died. They were written, then, at a time of anguished pain and suffering. They are not the words of a young romantic, day-dreaming of an ideal future. They are born of abandonment to God, in darkness and desolation. They are, therefore, powerful testimony to the grace of God at work in our weakness, and not to the power of a self-centred romantic imagination. They are words to shape our mission today.

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Family Value

Pope Benedict XVI, 02-10-2009

“Nothing can equal or replace the formative value of growing up in a secure family environment, learning to respect and foster the personal dignity of others, acquiring the capacity for acceptance, encounter and dialogue, disinterested availability, generous service and deep solidarity, in short, learning to love. A society, on the other hand, which encourages alternative models of domestic life for the sake of a supposed diversity, is likely to store up social consequences that are not conducive to integral human development.”

Faith

Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 1816

The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: “All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.”

Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: “So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Lighting the Path

From an address by Pope Benedict XVI, Feast of Immaculate Conception 2007

The star of Mary Immaculate shines down on the path of Advent. She is the “sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God during its sojourn on earth” (*Lumen Gentium*, 68). To reach Jesus, the true light, the sun that has dissipated all the darkness of history, we need human persons near to us who reflect Christ’s light and thus illuminate the road to be taken. What person is more luminous than Mary? Who can be for us better than her the star of hope, the sunrise that proclaims the day of salvation?

... Gazing upon her, we recognize the height and beauty of God’s project for every man: becoming holy and immaculate in love, in the image of our Creator.

What a great gift to have Mary Immaculate as mother! A mother shining with beauty, transparent to God’s love. I think of the young people of today, growing up in an environment saturated by messages that propose false models of happiness. These young men and women run the risk of losing hope because they often seem orphans of true love, the love that fills life with meaning and joy. This was a theme dear to my venerable predecessor, Pope John Paul II, who many times proposed Mary as “Mother of Love” to the young people of our time.

Not a few experiences tell us that young people, adolescents and even children are easy victims of the corruption of love, deceived by unscrupulous adults, who, lying to them and to themselves, draw them into the dead ends of consumerism. Even the most sacred realities, such as the human body, temple of the God of love and life, become objects of consumption; and this happens earlier and earlier, already in pre-adolescence. How sad it is when the young lose wonder, the enchantment of the best sentiments, the value of respect for the body, manifestation of the person and his inscrutable mystery!

Mary, the Immaculate one, whom we contemplate in her beauty and holiness, calls us back to all this. On the cross, Jesus entrusts her to John and to all the disciples, and from that moment she became Mother for all humanity, Mother of Hope.

www.zenit.org 09-12-2007 [Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic]

Lentils

“Lentils will always be lentils while my life in the monastery lasts but despite everything, I eat them with great pleasure, because I season them with two things: with hunger and with the love of God, so there is no food that I won’t take.”

St María Rafael Arnáiz Barón (1911-1938), known as Brother Rafael, canonised October 2009

Apparitions and Messages

While I agree for the most part with the article in your October issue of ITD titled "Apparitions True and False" by Fr Peter Joseph, perhaps the alleged apparitions of Garabandal are deserving of a little more clarity.

On October 14th 1966, Pope Paul VI approved the abolition of Canons 1399 and 2318. Since then, publications about new appearances, revelations etc, have been allowed to be distributed and read by the faithful without the express permission of the Church, providing they contain nothing which contravenes faith and morals. This means that no Imprimatur is necessary when distributing information on new apparitions not yet judged by the Church.

In his Official Note of July 8th 1965 regarding the apparitions, Bishop Beitia of Santander wrote, "We point out, however, that we have not found anything deserving of ecclesiastical censorship or condemnation, either in the doctrine or in the spiritual recommendations that have been published as having been addressed to the faithful, for these contain an exhortation to prayer and sacrifice, to Eucharistic devotion, to veneration of Our Lady in traditional praiseworthy ways, and to holy fear of God offended by our sins. They simply repeat the common doctrine of the Church in these matters."

Incidentally, on June 18th 1965, the alleged message at Garabandal was a controversial one which said in part, "Many Cardinals, many Bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition, and are taking many souls with them..." On 25th July 1968 Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* which, according to an article in ITD (October 09) was voted against by 22 Australian Bishops (and how many others worldwide dissented from its teaching?).

Regardless of whether the Blessed Virgin did appear at Garabandal or not, how sad it is that those who would want to pass on its message of prayer and sacrifice, Eucharistic devotion, veneration of Our Lady, and fear of God – all sadly lacking today – could be deemed, according to the article, 'sinful and disobedient'.

Rosanna Sherman, Taranaki, New Zealand

No one is suggesting that to promote prayer, sacrifice, Eucharistic devotion, veneration of Our Lady and fear of God, is sinful or disobedient. As Bishop Beitia wrote, "They simply repeat the common doctrine of the Church in these matters." There is enough Magisterial teaching to keep all orthodox Catholics occupied and challenged – and united – for the rest of our lives, without having to resort to arguments over our opinions on various apparitions which are not (yet, perhaps) approved. As Fr Joseph wrote, "Everyone is free to have an opinion, but all have to submit to the judgement of the Church with practical obedience."

[Further clarifications opposite].

-Ed.

Clarifications

Relating to Apparitions and Messages

With regard to Pope Paul VI's abolition of certain canons, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released a Notification in December 1996 (in L'Osservatore Romano), which said in part:

II. Regarding the circulation of texts of alleged private revelations, the Congregation states:

1) The interpretation given by some individuals to a Decision approved by Paul VI on 14 October 1966 and promulgated on 15 November of that year, in virtue of which writings and messages resulting from alleged revelations could be freely circulated in the Church, is absolutely groundless. This decision actually referred to the "Abolition of the Index of Forbidden Books", and determined that – after the relevant censures were lifted – the moral obligation still remained of not circulating or reading those writings which endanger faith and morals.

2) It should be recalled however that with regard to the circulation of texts of alleged private revelations, canon 823 §1 of the current Code remains in force: "the Pastors of the Church have the ... right to demand that writings to be published by the Christian faithful which touch upon faith or morals be submitted to their judgement".

3) Alleged supernatural revelations and writings concerning them are submitted in first instance to the judgement of the diocesan Bishop, and, in particular cases, to the judgement of the Episcopal Conference and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

With regard to Garabandal, Fr Joseph relied on the letter of Bishop Jose Vilaplana (Bishop of Santander 1991-2006), which said in part:

1. All the bishops of the diocese from 1961 through 1970 asserted that the supernatural character of the said apparitions, that took place around that time, could not be confirmed.

2. In the month of December of 1977 Msgr. del Val, Bishop of Santander, in union with his predecessors, affirmed that in the six years of being Bishop of Santander there were no new phenomena.

3. Notwithstanding, the same Msgr. del Val ... initiated an interdisciplinary study in order to examine with greater profundity these phenomena. The conclusion of this study coincided with the previous findings by the bishops, which is to say, that it does not prove the supernaturality of said apparitions. [...]

6. ... I find it opportune to redact this information as a direct response to the persons who ask for direction concerning this question, which I give finally, accepting the decisions of my predecessors and the direction of the Holy See.

Tired of Petitions

The Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 (to alter the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions) is before federal parliament and very likely to be voted on well before the end of the year. I asked my parish priest if he had seen the bulk petition against the bill. He said he had not seen it and then stunned me with his comment that people are tired of signing petitions.

I wasn't really certain if Father meant he himself was tired of asking people to sign petitions or if parishioners were wearied of them. Of course, there are always those who take action in other ways by writing personal letters to or visiting their members of parliament. In my experience, these are usually the most spontaneous in signing public petitions.

Many are aware that the devil has been hard at work to alter the moral fabric of our society by his subtle influence on the media, politicians, secular groups etc., to undermine the salutary ethical principles defended and promoted by the Catholic Church for the benefit of all.

I would have thought all Catholics seriously concerned about these issues and the insidious onslaught against our values from all sides would have responded readily to sign any petition aimed at recognising and preserving our spiritual/religious/social rights and the free practice of them.

On Judgment Day, I certainly would not like to hear words from Our Lord like: 'I was attacked in my Church and throughout society by those who wished to undermine and change the moral/ethical values I established for the salvation of my people, and you grew tired of defending me.'

Is slackening off in the unending struggle to try to maintain the daily, free practice of a true, saving moral lifestyle worth such a humiliating sentence from my Saviour?

Peter Phillips, Springvale North, VIC

The Priest

St Gregory of Nazianzus

(quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.1589)

"We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify, lead by the hand and counsel prudently. ...

"[Who then is the priest? He is] the defender of truth, who stands with angels, gives glory with archangels, causes sacrifices to rise to the altar on high, shares Christ's priesthood, refashions creation, restores it in God's image, recreates it for the world on high and, even greater, is divinized and divinizes."

Confessional for an Office

From an article by Carmen Villa, www.zenit.org 02-10-2009

They have a fixed schedule, a day of rest, and a couple of hours for lunch. Their office is not a desk with a computer, but a confessional. They are the basilica confessors, those priests assigned a special ministry to impart the sacrament of reconciliation on a fulltime basis at the four major basilicas of Rome. The ministry...is entrusted to four different religious orders. ... The colleges of confessors of each basilica are assigned by their congregation, but must be approved by the Apostolic Penitentiary. ZENIT talked to Dominican Father Pedro Fernández, confessor in St Mary Major.

He said that his mission often goes beyond absolving. "I see much loneliness. There are penitents who come wanting to be relieved, to be listened to. The confessor must take advantage of this occasion to help them, in the first place, to be conscious of their sins to be able to repent, because no one repents of something of which one is unaware." Talking to a penitent can also be an opportunity to evangelize: "There is much religious ignorance. It is appropriate that at that moment the confessor give an appropriate catechesis."

Fr Fernández acknowledged that to administer this sacrament as it should be administered, the Church needs many hands. "If there were more confessors, there would be more confessions. It's always difficult to ask a priest to hear one's confession, but if one sees him seated, it's easier."

The priest emphasized the importance that the faithful see this sacrament as a gift and not as a punishment: "We must approach confession to receive this forgiveness. Herein lies the beauty of confession. It is the sacrament of peace with oneself. ... It is a wonderful experience to see a person repent."

But, why should I tell my sins to a priest? Why can I not confess to God directly? These are questions that thousands of Catholics ask themselves. Fr Fernandez explained: "No one has seen God. The relationship with him is mediated. In our faith, this mediation is through the sacraments, faith and mystical experience. In order to confess, one must have faith, believe in God, know one's sins and repent. It is not a way imposed by the Church. It is a way indicated to us by faith."

Fr Fernández pointed out the real meaning of confession: "It isn't a psychological consultancy, giving one a human reason for one's problems. Above all, it is forgiveness." He also noted that it is a sacrament that Benedict XVI has greatly emphasized ... "The fact that the Pope recommends to priests that we sit to hear confessions, means that we must be conscious of our identity and sanctification," the confessor said.

Fr Fernández added that one can't give what he does not have. "One learns to confess by confessing," he said. "It would be hard to be a confessor if one doesn't confess oneself well."

Laypeople's Use of Oil

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

Q: There are chaplains who minister at a local Catholic hospital and one of them likes to use “oil” when she prays with the patients (Catholics and non-Catholics). I feel that this causes confusion. One of the chaplains attended a recent convention of chaplains and was told by a presenter that this practice is allowed as long as they tell the patients that they are not receiving the sacrament of the sick. I seem to recall that years ago the Vatican came out with a document on the use of oil by laypersons. Could you please comment? - A.S., Bridgeport, New York

A: The document you refer to is probably the 1997 instruction “On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest.” This is an unusual document insofar as it was formally issued by the Congregation for Clergy but was co-signed by no fewer than eight Vatican congregations and councils, including that of the Doctrine of the Faith. This gives the document a certain weight with respect to its authority. ...

The first article, on the “Need for an Appropriate Terminology,” attempts to clarify the multiple uses of the expression “ministry.” ... The document accepts that the term “ministry” is applicable to the laity in some cases:

“§3. The non-ordained faithful may be generically designated ‘extraordinary ministers’ when deputed by competent authority to discharge, solely by way of supply, those offices mentioned in Canon 230, §3 and in Canons 943 and 1112. Naturally, the concrete term may be applied to those to whom functions are canonically entrusted e.g. catechists, acolytes, lectors etc. Temporary deputation for liturgical purposes – mentioned in Canon 230, §2 – does not confer any special or permanent title on the non-ordained faithful.”

However: “It is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume titles such as ‘pastor,’ ‘chaplain,’ ‘coordinator,’ ‘moderator’ or other such similar titles which can confuse their role and that of the Pastor, who is always a Bishop or Priest.”

Another article, No. 9, is on “The Apostolate to the Sick.” Regarding our reader’s question on the use of oil in a non-sacramental way, the article is very clear:

“§1. [...] The non-ordained faithful particularly assist the sick by being with them in difficult moments, encouraging them to receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, by helping them to have the disposition to make a good individual confession as well as to prepare them to receive the Anointing of the Sick. In using sacramentals, the non-ordained faithful should ensure that these are in no way regarded as sacraments whose administration is proper and exclusive to the Bishop and to the priest. Since they are not priests, in no instance may the non-ordained perform anointings either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil.”

www.zenit.org

What Were They Thinking?

Bishop Joseph Grech of Sandhurst, after consultation with Papal Nuncio Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, agreed to let the Anglican community use a Catholic church in Bendigo for an Anglican ordination service (3 men and 4 women).

The Catholic Church does not recognise Anglican orders as valid (men *or* women) – yet Bishop Grech was willing to offer a Catholic church as a ‘venue’ for this Anglican ceremony.

Fortunately, a few days after the news broke, it was announced that the decision had been reversed. The Anglican Bishop Andrew Curnow said he understood that “the issue was with the Catholic hierarchy and not in Bendigo.” He and Bishop Grech apparently considered the church-sharing idea as a grand ecumenical gesture, arranged because the Anglican cathedral in Bendigo is closed due to structural issues.

- Ed.

Be True to Principles

Pope Benedict XVI in Amman, 09-05-2009

We cannot fail to be concerned that today, with increasing insistency, some maintain that religion fails in its claim to be, by nature, a builder of unity and harmony, an expression of communion between persons and with God. Indeed some assert that religion is necessarily a cause of division in our world; and so they argue that the less attention given to religion in the public sphere the better. Certainly, the contradiction of tensions and divisions between the followers of different religious traditions, sadly, cannot be denied. However, is it not also the case that often it is the ideological manipulation of religion, sometimes for political ends, that is the real catalyst for tension and division, and at times even violence in society? In the face of this situation, where the opponents of religion seek not simply to silence its voice but to replace it with their own, the need for believers to be true to their principles and beliefs is felt all the more keenly.

Mother of God

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

The greatest title of Mary is “Mother of God”. This has the supreme approval of the Church.

The Council of Ephesus (431 AD) gave Mary the title “*Theotokos*”, the God-bearer, which is rendered in English and other languages as “Mother of God”.

This title upsets some people who imagine that we are making an absurd or blasphemous claim that the omnipotent uncaused God could have an eternal mother. ...

But the title “Mother of God” refers to what happened *in this world*, the Incarnation. This title affirms that, at a point of time, God created and chose a human Mother so that, through her, he could take flesh on this planet and literally be her divine and human Son.

The title is really about Jesus Christ. It refers to him as God and Man in one Person. Mary is the Mother of the whole Christ, not just the Mother of his human nature. At the Council of Ephesus, the title was set out to take precedence over another legitimate title “Mother of Christ”, because at that time this title was being misused to argue that Mary is simply the mother of the human Christ. ...

The integrity of the Person of Jesus Christ, God and Man, is maintained when we refer to Mary as the Mother of God.

In devotion, in the second part of the Hail Mary added in the Fifteenth Century, she is invoked as “Holy Mary, Mother of God” millions of times every day. In ecumenical terms, devotion to the Mother of God also spans the divisions across the East and West, because we join with millions of the Orthodox Christians in praying to Mary under this title.

The full text of Bishop Elliot’s Marian Conference talks are at stoneswillshout.com under Documents

A Child’s Understanding

A delightful memory regularly comes to me at this time of the year. Several years back when my eldest child was 4, sitting in the charged atmosphere of a Christmas Eve Mass, he asked, ‘What is Christmas?’ In simple terms I explained that ‘Christmas was celebrating the time that Jesus was born, when he was given as a gift for everyone’. To which he quickly replied, ‘Just like at Mass’.

I was dumbfounded! From his simple understanding, he had hit one of the deepest mysteries of the church right on the head.

How wonderful is the mind of a child!

Name and address supplied

Catholic Universities

Pope Benedict XVI to the International Federation of Catholic Universities, 19-11-2009

In today’s society, where knowledge is increasingly specialized and sectorial, but which is increasingly marked by relativism, it is even more necessary to be open to the wisdom that comes from the Gospel.

Man, in fact, is incapable of understanding himself fully and the world without Jesus Christ: Only he illumines his true dignity, his vocation, his ultimate destiny and opens the heart to a solid and lasting hope.

Dear friends, your commitment to serve the truth that God has revealed shares in the evangelizing mission of the Church: It is an ecclesial service. ... “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

It is important for everyone, professors and students, never to lose sight of the end pursued – to be an instrument of the evangelical proclamation. The years of the higher ecclesiastical studies can be compared with the experience that the apostles lived with Jesus: Being with him, they learned the truth, to become later heralds everywhere.

At the same time it is important to remember that the study of the sacred sciences must never be separated from prayer, from union with God, from contemplation...

www.zenit.org 19-11-2009

Just for Laughs

The following version of the song “Gather Us In” was created by a group on Facebook called SLAP – Survivors of Liturgical Abuse in Parishes. It was posted on Fr Z’s blog (wdtprs.com/blog) on 10-11-2009:

Here in this place, our comfortable parish,
All of the statues carried away,
See in each face a vacuous visage,
Brought here by guilt or by R.C.I.A.

Gather us in, by Beemer or Hummer,
Gather us in, so we can feel good,
Come to us now in this barren Zen temple,
With only a shrub and an altar of wood.

We are the young, our morals a mystery,
We are the old, who couldn’t care less,
We have been warned throughout all of history,
But we enjoy this liturgical mess.

Gather us in, our radical pastor,
Gather us in, our unveiled nun,
Call to us now, with guitars and bongos,
Hang up your cellphones and join in the fun!

Radical and Courageous

*From an address by Pope Benedict XVI
on St John Leonardi*

Moved by apostolic zeal, in May 1605 St John Leonardi sent newly elected Pope Paul V a report in which he suggested the criteria for a genuine renewal of the Church. ...

[He] observed that “whoever wishes to carry out a serious moral and religious reform must make first of all, like a good doctor, a careful diagnosis of the evils that beset the Church so as to be able to prescribe for each of them the most appropriate remedy.” And he noted that “the renewal of the Church must be confirmed as much in leaders as in followers, high and low. It must begin from those who command and be extended to the subjects.”

It was because of this that, while soliciting the Pope to promote a “universal reform of the Church,” he was concerned with the Christian formation of the people, especially of the young, educating them “from their early years ... in the purity of the Christian faith and in holy practices.”

Dear brothers and sisters, the luminous figure of this saint invites priests, in the first place, and all Christians, to tend constantly to the “high measure of the Christian life,” which is sanctity – each, of course, according to his own state. In fact, only from fidelity to Christ can genuine ecclesial renewal spring. [...]

There is another aspect of the spirituality of St John Leonardi that I would like to highlight. In many circumstances he had to confirm that a living encounter with Christ is realized in his Church: holy but fragile, rooted in history and in a sometimes dark future, where wheat and weeds grow together, but, nevertheless, always the sacrament of salvation. Having a clear awareness that the Church is the field of God, he was not scandalized by her human weaknesses. To oppose the weeds he chose to be good wheat: He decided, that is, to love Christ in the Church and to contribute to render her an ever more transparent sign of him. [...]

Every reform certainly involves structures, but in the first place it must be engraved in the hearts of believers. Only the saints, men and women who allow themselves to be guided by the divine Spirit, ready to carry out radical and courageous choices in the light of the Gospel, renew the Church and contribute, in a decisive way, to building a better world.

www.zenit.org 07-10-2009 [Translation by ZENIT]

“O wonderful dignity of the priests;

in their hands, as in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate.”

St Augustine

Feast of Goodness

*From a reflection by Father Raniero Cantalamessa,
Pontifical Household preacher, 24-12-2007*

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”

In the past this expression was translated differently, that is, as “Peace on earth to men of good will.” ... After Vatican II this expression was used to indicate all the honest, who seek the true and the common good, whether or not they be believers.

But it is an inexact translation and for this reason it has been abandoned today. In the original biblical text it is a matter of men who are loved by God, who are the object of the divine good will, not that they themselves are gifted with good will. In this way the proclamation becomes more consoling. If peace were accorded to men on account of their good will, then it would be limited to a few, to those who merit it; but since it is accorded through God’s good will, through grace, it is offered to all. Christmas is not an appeal to the good will of men but a radiant proclamation of the good will of God toward men. ...

Only after having contemplated the “good will” of God toward us can we concern ourselves also with the “good will” of men, that is, with our response to the mystery of Christmas. This good will must be expressed through imitation of God’s action. Imitating the mystery that we celebrate means abandoning every thought of justifying ourselves on our own, every remembrance of wrongs done to us, erasing from our hearts all resentment toward others, even justified resentment. It means not willingly allowing any hostile thought against anyone, whether against neighbours or those far away, the weak, the strong, the little, the great of the earth, or against any creature that exists in the world. This is what it means to honour the birth of the Lord, because God did not hold onto any rancour, he did not look at the wrong done to him, he did not wait for others to take the first step to him. If this is not always possible during the rest of the year, let us at least do it at Christmas. Thus Christmas will be truly the feast of goodness.

www.zenit.org 24-12-2007 [Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic]

Christmas Greetings

ITD wishes everyone a blessed Advent, joyful Christmas and happy New Year!

The January issue of ITD will be posted on the website at the usual time (on or around the first day of the month), but the printed copies will be delayed at least a week due to our printers closing for the Christmas break.

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

Do Him Homage

“When you have received Him, stir up your heart to do Him homage; speak to Him about your spiritual life, gazing upon Him in your soul where He is present for your happiness; welcome Him as warmly as possible, and behave outwardly in such a way that your actions may give proof to all of His Presence.”

St Francis de Sales

God Became a Child

Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Eve homily 2008

The medieval theologian William of Saint Thierry once said that God – from the time of Adam – saw that his grandeur provoked resistance in man, that we felt limited in our own being and threatened in our freedom. Therefore God chose a new way. He became a child. He made himself dependent and weak, in need of our love. Now, this God who has become a child says to us: you can no longer fear me, you can only love me.

Mary, our mother

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

Pope John Paul II

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- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
- There is no subscription fee.
- We rely on donations (cheques made out to John Henderson please)

ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email and on the website; printed copies about a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15th of the month).

Editor - Janet Kingman

The purpose of ITD is to provide a forum for those who:

- no longer have a voice in Catholic Life, 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.