

Into the Deep

Issue 99

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Then You Will Always Be Happy

Fr Fulton J. Sheen, 1945

You then who are Christians, who know that the Divine Life is in your soul, be conscious that your every word, thought, and deed is enacted before a Divine Audience.

Let the Christ be the Unseen Guest at your every meal; your Divine Host in every visit; your Captain in every war; your Fellow-Worker in every task; your Father in every home; your Giver of every gift; the Listener in your conversation; your Companion in every walk; your Visitor at every knock; your Neighbour in every street; your Owner of every treasure; and your Lover in every love.

Do not fear God with a servile fear, for perfect love casts out such fear. Be bold enough then to believe that God is on your side, even when you forget to be on His. Live your life not by law, but by love. As St Augustine put it: "Love God and then do whatever you please." For if you love God, you will never do anything to hurt Him or break off relationship with Him – and then you will always be happy.

From the book You, p.58

Profound Memory

Pope Benedict XVI

"Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope."

Seek That Which Is Above, Ignatius Press, 2007

Come to the Manger

Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Vigil homily 2009

Today too there are simple and lowly souls who live very close to the Lord. ... But most of us in the world today live far from Jesus Christ, the incarnate God who came to dwell amongst us. We live our lives by philosophies, amid worldly affairs and occupations that totally absorb us and are a great distance from the manger. In all kinds of ways, God has to prod us and reach out to us again and again, so that we can manage to escape from the muddle of our thoughts and activities and discover the way that leads to Him.

But a path exists for all of us. The Lord provides everyone with tailor-made signals. ... Left to ourselves we could not reach Him. The path is too much for our strength. But God has come down. He comes towards us. He has travelled the longer part of the journey. Now He invites us: come and see how much I love you. ...

Vatican Information Service

*"And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us."*

Such powerful words!

They express
the deepest reality
of the greatest event
ever to take place
in human history.

Pope John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, 1996

"The surest way of knowing the will of God, is to pray to our good Mother."

Curé of Ars

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

Heart Speaks Unto Heart

Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily for the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman, 19-09-2010

Cardinal Newman's motto, *Cor ad cor loquitur*, or "Heart speaks unto heart", gives us an insight into his understanding of the Christian life as a call to holiness, experienced as the profound desire of the human heart to enter into intimate communion with the Heart of God.

He reminds us that faithfulness to prayer gradually transforms us into the divine likeness. As he wrote in one of his many fine sermons, "a habit of prayer, the practice of turning to God and the unseen world in every season, in every place, in every emergency – prayer, I say, has what may be called a natural effect in spiritualizing and elevating the soul. A man is no longer what he was before; gradually...he has imbibed a new set of ideas, and become imbued with fresh principles".

www.zenit.org 19-09-2010

Holiness and Perfection

Blessed John Henry Newman

"Who can estimate the holiness and perfection of her, who was chosen to be the Mother of Christ? What must have been her gifts, who was chosen to be the only near earthly relative of the Son of God, the only one whom He was bound by nature to revere and look up to; the one appointed to train and educate Him, to instruct Him day by day, as He grew in wisdom and in stature?"

'100' Apologies

In recent issues I suggested that we have a get-together to celebrate ITD's 100th issue in January. Thank you to those who have responded that you would like to join us. However, my apologies to you all – after being away for a month, I've run out of time to organise anything more 'useful' than simply a lunch together, so have decided to delay any celebrations until we can offer something to make your trip worthwhile (a guest speaker for example). It would be lovely to have Mass too of course, and Exposition even, but I doubt there's a parish in our diocese that would be willing to host us. So we'll put our 100th celebrations on hold. If you want to celebrate "for" us instead of "with" us, then you have a few options:

- pray for us
- introduce someone else to ITD
- send a donation (if you haven't recently)
- write us a letter.

Thanks for all your support and encouragement!

- Ed.

Handing on The Faith Not on Their Agenda

What a surprise to read the poem "Nun so blind" in Issue 98 of ITD (p.9). I found the poem quite accurate in its content.

I deliberately chose a school for my daughter in the 1980s because it was run by the Josephite order of nuns. This was the same order who taught my mother over in Western Australia. They handed on the Catholic faith expertly, and my mother often spoke of them with respect. I decided at an early age that should I ever have a daughter, I would send her to the Josephites for primary and secondary education. And that is exactly what I did. My son went to the same primary school, but for secondary education was sent to Nudgee College.

Unfortunately, I had no idea how the spiritual fabric of the faith of this order had deteriorated. I was shocked to find out, in the first year my girl was at the school, that the handing on of the Catholic faith was not on their agenda. The only religious lesson they received was called "The Study of Religion"- which was the study of every main-line religion on the planet. The Catholic religion received the same amount of space as all the other religions, which was usually no more than one page.

Thanks be to God, I had brought my two children up at home in the practice of their faith. I do remember, the week before my daughter made her First Holy Communion, that I was amazed to discover she didn't even know her 10 Commandments. I made sure, by the weekend of her big day, she knew them off by heart.

As a result of the poor reinforcing of the faith at the school, my daughter, and all of her friends, after they graduated, never crossed a Catholic church doorstep again. What a contrast to the faith I received as a child at the hands of the Mercy nuns in the 1950's. What a faith they handed on to us then. Deo gratias.

May Saint Mary of the Cross help the poor, misguided, progressive-thinking Josephite nuns and may they turn back to the one, true, holy, apostolic Catholic Church (and bring back the habit). Amen.

Di Smyth, Nanango, QLD

Two Responses

Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 15-11-2010

"For too many, politics is the ultimate horizon of their thinking and acting. As we know, fidelity to Christ in his body the Church calls for two responses on the part of those who would call themselves his disciples: orthodoxy in belief and obedience in practice."

Consequences of Faith

*From a reflection by Msgr Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula
Interim President, Human Life International*

Faith is an interior response to the call of Christ that is made through the Church, but it also has external and social consequences.

We can ask ourselves, *is faith without works a living faith?* As St James in his magnificent epistle makes it abundantly clear a faith without works is dead.

A person who refuses to apply the truth of the faith in his exercise of politics, medicine, business and the other human endeavours cannot honestly call himself a Catholic.

Archbishop Raymond Burke, in his speech to the World Prayer Congress on October 9th, reminded us that, "Our Lord was unequivocal in his condemnation of those who would confuse or lead others into sin by their actions and their failures to act." Then he reminded us of the hard saying from the Gospel, "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin."

Ready for God's Will

*From The treatise of St Cyprian on mortality
(Office of Readings, Friday of week 34)*

The world hates Christians, so why give your love to it instead of following Christ, who loves you and has redeemed you?

John is most urgent in his epistle when he tells us not to love the world by yielding to sensual desires. *Never give your love to the world, he warns, or to anything in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. All that the world offers is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and earthly ambition. The world and its allurements will pass away, but the man who has done the will of God shall live for ever.*

Our part, my dear brothers, is to be single-minded, firm in faith, and steadfast in courage, ready for God's will, whatever it may be. Banish the fear of death and think of the eternal life that follows it. That will show people that we really live our faith.

Retreat Availability

Perhaps you would be kind enough to mention in December ITD that we still have vacancies for our 3rd - 6th December retreat with Fr Chris O'Dowd O.P. and our January 28th - 31st retreat with Fr Manuel Adami. For further information and/or invitations those interested can phone me on 5154 8419. Thanks.

Richard Earle, Marlo

A Highlight of My Life

Arriving at the Vatican at 6am on Sunday October 17 for the Canonisation Mass for St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, our group settled in the short queue to wait for the gates to open at 8am.

Wondering how we were going to fill in two hours outside and then two hours inside before the Mass began, we soon discovered that we were all friends and chatted to those around us. There were many priests and nuns, many of them young and fresh, proudly wearing their religious habit.

In no time the gates opened and younger members of our group sprinted to the front and found seats for the 43 of us in rows 7 and 8, immediately facing the lovely photo of Mary MacKillop on the wall of St Peter's. By this time the weather was perfect, overcast but warm. As it was outside, we met many other pilgrims and were amazed at the vast crowd gathering behind us.

Slowly the special guests began to gather and take their seats around the main altar. We then noticed a line of elderly women processing from the crowd up to the altar and wondered who they could be. Not wearing a habit, it was hard to tell but we then noticed that they were all wearing aqua scarves and someone in the crowd announced that they were members of the Sisters of St Joseph Order from Australia. While normally refusing to wear an identifiable habit, they had apparently decided that they wanted to be recognised on this historic day and hence the aqua scarves. My thought was that a more sensible solution would be to wear a habit and be proudly recognised at all times.

It wasn't until well after the event that we learnt that the Sister of St Joseph representing the Order when being presented to the Holy Father, had refused to kiss his ring as protocol demanded. It would seem that obedience is not taken too seriously in the remnants of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's dwindling congregation. Sadly, if this cavalier, or worse, attitude continues, the proud Order founded by Mary MacKillop will not survive long after her canonisation.

Despite this hiccup, the canonisation of six saints from around the world reminded us that we belong to a timeless universal Church founded by Jesus Christ.

Coupled with the Australian Thanksgiving Mass at the magnificent St Paul's Outside the Walls on the Monday morning, it was a special privilege to walk the same ground as St Peter and St Paul in Rome and to participate in this historic event first hand. It was one of the highlights of my life.

Pat O'Brien, Sale

*"I've noticed that everyone who is for
abortion is already born."*

Ronald Reagan

The History of Christmas

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 23-12-2009

To better understand the meaning of the birth of the Lord, I would like to briefly refer to the historical origin of this solemnity.

In fact, the liturgical year of the Church did not initially develop beginning with the birth of Christ, but rather from faith in the Resurrection.

Because of this the most ancient feast of Christianity is not Christmas, but Easter: The resurrection of Christ is at the base of Christian faith; it is at the base of the proclamation of the Gospel and gives birth to the Church. ...

The first one to clearly affirm that Jesus was born on December 25 was Hippolytus of Rome in his commentary on the Book of the prophet Daniel, written around 204. One exegete observes, moreover, that on this day was celebrated the Dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, instituted by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC. The concurrence of dates would come to mean that with Jesus, appearing as light of God in the night, advent of God to this earth, the consecration of the temple is truly fulfilled.

Within Christianity, the feast of Christmas took on a definite form in the fourth century, when it took the place of the Roman feast of “sol invictus,” the invincible sun. Thus was shown that the birth of Christ is the victory of true light over the darkness of evil and sin.

Yet, the unique and intense spiritual atmosphere that surrounds Christmas developed in the Middle Ages, thanks to St Francis of Assisi, who was profoundly in love with Jesus as man, with God-with-us.

His first biographer, Thomas of Celano, in the “Vita Seconda,” narrates that St Francis, “above the other solemnities, celebrated with ineffable attention the birth of Baby Jesus, and he called the feast of feasts the day on which God, become a small child, nursed at a human breast”.

From this particular devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation came the famous celebration of Christmas in Greccio. ... What moved the Poor Man of Assisi was the desire to experience in an actual, concrete and living way the humble greatness of the event of Baby Jesus’ birth, and to communicate his joy to everyone. ...

This particular approach to Christmas has brought a new dimension to Christian faith. Easter had focused attention on the power of God who overcomes death, inaugurates new life and teaches us to hope in the world to come. With St Francis and his nativity, the defenseless love of God was shown, his humility and goodness, which in the incarnation of the Word is manifested to man so as to teach a new way to live and to love.

www.zenit.org 23-12-2009

The Mystery of His Silence

Pope Benedict XVI, Verbum Domini, 2010

As the cross of Christ demonstrates, God also speaks by his silence.

The silence of God, the experience of the distance of the almighty Father, is a decisive stage in the earthly journey of the Son of God, the incarnate Word. Hanging from the wood of the cross, he lamented the suffering caused by that silence: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Advancing in obedience to his very last breath, in the obscurity of death, Jesus called upon the Father. He commended himself to him at the moment of passage, through death, to eternal life: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”.

This experience of Jesus reflects the situation of all those who, having heard and acknowledged God’s word, must also confront his silence. This has been the experience of countless saints and mystics, and even today is part of the journey of many believers.

God’s silence prolongs his earlier words. In these moments of darkness, he speaks through the mystery of his silence. Hence, in the dynamic of Christian revelation, silence appears as an important expression of the word of God.

Exciting to Understand

Father Mauro Gagliardi, consultant of the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff and professor of theology at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum of Rome

The liturgy is truly understood only by being inserted in the living Tradition of the Church, from which we receive it as a gift to keep and live out in a spirit of faith and prayer.

This is, in fact, the only correct spirit with which to celebrate and participate in the liturgy. It is not about producing superficial and passing emotions, through particular inventions to be inserted in the rite, because the true “spirit of the liturgy” is the spirit of adoring prayer, of the one who is to “stand in [his] presence and serve [him]” (cf. Eucharistic Prayer II).

It is exciting – says the Holy Father based on his personal experience – to learn to understand the liturgy with this ecclesial and dynamic sense of the true Tradition.

For this reason, liturgical formation is necessary, which illuminates the darkness of ignorance and pulls down the bastions of ideology, helping to understand the sacred meaning of divine worship and its link with the whole history of the faith, which the Church guards and professes in her children: head and members, shepherds and flock.

www.zenit.org 12-11-2010

Wasted Resource in Schools

The 'penny' Catechism was the main religious text book used with great success in the Catholic school system throughout Australia before the event of Vatican II. Generations of young Catholics learnt the religion of the Catholic Church from the little 'penny book', and it flourished. A priest (or sometimes a Bishop) appointed by the Archbishop would visit the classroom to test our knowledge of the faith. Their visits were treated seriously and the students were well-versed in preparation for their coming. As a result the students knew, understood and practised the Catholic religion. It was an inclusive subject of their general education.

As a result of the 'penny' Catechism, nuns and brothers ensured that their students were well-versed in the articles of faith, believed in the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and were zealots for Jesus Christ.

The faithful practised the faith handed down to them. Churches were full to capacity for the Sunday Masses and the priest's sermon enforced, encouraged and uplifted that faith. They were continually informed of their religious obligations.

What has happened – what has gone wrong?

In 1982, Pope John Paul II, whom we remember fondly, commissioned a revised version of the 'penny' Catechism. As a result of a thorough research, 10 years later the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (CCC) was published for use worldwide on 11 October 1992. The CCC contains all aspects of the teaching of the Catholic Church and fully covers the Creed, the Commandments, the Sacraments, the Precepts, the Liturgy, and all occasions of Sin: abortion, euthanasia, IVF treatment, cohabitation, active homosexuality, etc. It is a reference book that should be referred to often for sound answers where necessary; it is perfectly indexed and is an ideal reference book for use in our Catholic schools.

The question then is: "Why is the CCC left to gather dust on the storeroom shelves in our schools when it should be used extensively and exclusively for teaching the Catholic faith to Catholic children?"

Leo Morrissey, Sandringham, Vic

All The Rest is Opinion

Cardinal Francis George

President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

"The bishops in apostolic communion and in union with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, speak for the Church in matters of faith and in moral issues and the laws surrounding them. All the rest is opinion, often well-considered and important opinion that deserves a careful and respectful hearing, but still opinion."

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Pray We Will Soon Be Back on Track

Please put me on your post mailing list. I have been enjoying your newsletter thanks to a friend. We used to live in Sale and Warragul many years ago so it is interesting to read what is going on.

I think England, in some places, has not gone quite so far down the track of experimentation as has been the case in Australia.

Now we have Mary MacKillop as first saint for Australia, let's hope and pray that we will soon be back on track with the truth in the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

I would like to promote Archibald and Caroline Chisholm as first lay saints recognised for Australia and the Universal Church. Without her husband's help, Caroline would never have achieved what she did. God bless them, and you all at ITD too.

Wendy Harrap, Queensland (and UK)

Are You Comfortable With That?

*From Fr John Speekman's homily for 27th Sunday, Year C
homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com*

An over-emphasis on feelings leads inevitably to an over-emphasis on self. The subversive little phrase 'Are you comfortable with that?' is symptomatic of the trend. Good becomes that which makes you feel good.

No wonder the young say, 'I don't go to Mass because I get nothing out of it; it does nothing for me.' Having long ago lost any intellectual grasp of the meaning of the Eucharistic liturgy they are reduced to judging it by how it makes them feel.

We priests, instead of undertaking the task of re-catechising our people have all too often fallen into the trap of entertaining them - making them feel good. And so we have had rock Masses, and puppet Gospels and clown homilies, and all sorts of innovations and novelties bordering on abuse and even sacrilege.

When young people tell me the Mass does nothing for them I tell them it's actually meant to do something for God. The Mass is meant to please God. We come to give him (not ourselves) glory and praise and honour and worship. This is our obligation as God's servants.

And when they complain that they don't like the music or such and such a hymn I tell them we're not singing these hymns for their enjoyment; we are singing them for God. We are here at Mass to do something for God.

It Does Make Sense to Become a Priest

Excerpts from Pope Benedict XVI's Letter to Seminarians, 18-10-2010, www.zenit.org

Where people no longer perceive God, life grows empty; nothing is ever enough.

People then seek escape in euphoria and violence; these are the very things that increasingly threaten young people. God is alive. He has created every one of us and he knows us all. He is so great that he has time for the little things in our lives: "Every hair of your head is numbered". God is alive, and he needs people to serve him and bring him to others. It does make sense to become a priest: the world needs priests, pastors, today, tomorrow and always, until the end of time. ...

In this letter I would like to point out – thinking back to my own time in the seminary – several elements which I consider important for these years of your journeying.

1. Anyone who wishes to become a priest must be first and foremost a "man of God", to use the expression of Saint Paul. For us God is not some abstract hypothesis; he is not some stranger who left the scene after the "big bang". God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. In the face of Jesus Christ we see the face of God. In his words we hear God himself speaking to us. It follows that the most important thing in our path towards priesthood and during the whole of our priestly lives is our personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. The priest is not the leader of a sort of association whose membership he tries to maintain and expand. He is God's messenger to his people. ...

That is why it is so important, dear friends, that you learn to live in constant intimacy with God. When the Lord tells us to "pray constantly", he is obviously not asking us to recite endless prayers, but urging us never to lose our inner closeness to God. Praying means growing in this intimacy. So it is important that our day should begin and end with prayer; that we listen to God as the Scriptures are read; that we share with him our desires and our hopes, our joys and our troubles, our failures and our thanks for all his blessings, and thus keep him ever before us as the point of reference for our lives. ...

2. For us God is not simply Word. In the sacraments he gives himself to us in person, through physical realities. At the heart of our relationship with God and our way of life is the Eucharist. Celebrating it devoutly, and thus encountering Christ personally, should be the centre of all our days. In St Cyprian's interpretation of the Gospel prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread", he says among other things that "our" bread – the bread which we receive as Christians in the Church – is the Eucharistic Lord himself. ... The proper celebration of the Eucharist involves knowing, understanding and loving the Church's liturgy in its concrete form. ...

3. The sacrament of Penance is also important. It teaches me to see myself as God sees me, and it forces

me to be honest with myself. It leads me to humility. ... Even when we have to struggle continually with the same failings, it is important to resist the coarsening of our souls and the indifference which would simply accept that this is the way we are. It is important to keep pressing forward, without scrupulosity, in the grateful awareness that God forgives us ever anew – yet also without the indifference that might lead us to abandon altogether the struggle for holiness and self-improvement. Moreover, by letting myself be forgiven, I learn to forgive others. ...

4. I urge you to retain an appreciation for popular piety, which is different in every culture yet always remains very similar, for the human heart is ultimately one and the same. Certainly, popular piety tends towards the irrational, and can at times be somewhat superficial. Yet it would be quite wrong to dismiss it. Through that piety, the faith has entered human hearts and become part of the common patrimony of sentiments and customs, shaping the life and emotions of the community. Popular piety is thus one of the Church's great treasures. ... Certainly popular piety always needs to be purified and refocused, yet it is worthy of our love and it truly makes us into the "People of God".

5. Above all, your time in the seminary is also a time of study. The Christian faith has an essentially rational and intellectual dimension. Were it to lack that dimension, it would not be itself. ... The point is not simply to learn evidently useful things, but to understand and appreciate the internal structure of the faith as a whole, so that it can become a response to people's questions, which on the surface change from one generation to another yet ultimately remain the same. ... But you should also learn to understand and – dare I say it – to love canon law, appreciating how necessary it is and valuing its practical applications: a society without law would be a society without rights. Law is the condition of love. ...

6. Your years in the seminary should also be a time of growth towards human maturity. It is important for the priest, who is called to accompany others through the journey of life up to the threshold of death, to have the right balance of heart and mind, reason and feeling, body and soul, and to be humanly integrated. ... This also involves the integration of sexuality into the whole personality. Sexuality is a gift of the Creator yet it is also a task which relates to a person's growth towards human maturity. When it is not integrated within the person, sexuality becomes banal and destructive. ...

Dear seminarians, with these few lines I have wanted to let you know how often I think of you, especially in these difficult times, and how close I am to you in prayer. Please pray for me, that I may exercise my ministry well, as long as the Lord may wish.

Living With The Saints

By Anne Onumos

Through prayers of our Saints, we all can obtain
Graces and favours, one should not disdain.

Firstly, St Anthony, who finds our lost things
Our memories, our car keys, our gold wedding rings!

Suffering from headaches, turn to Saint Denis
At home or at work, or during some tennis!

Pray to St Dymphna, if feeling depressed
Don't you ever doubt! Prayers will be addressed.

Charles Borromeo a Saint for young men
Discerning your call? He'll help there and then.

Musicians beware of Gregory the Great
Musica Sacra! He will put things straight.

Francis will look at your sick cats and dogs
Perhaps at your cows, your goats and your hogs.

Go to Jacinta those people in jail
A Fatima seer; her prayers will not fail.

Our youth and young girls - Goretti will aid
Maria - so pure, she was never afraid.

Those mothers-to-be who else but St Anne
Formed in her womb was our Lord's Divine plan.

To people born blind, Odelia knows well
She'll show you the way, your fears she will quell.

St Francis de Sales for those who are deaf
Don't think for a bit that you will be bereft.

Problem with locusts, no doubt what a pain!
Pray to St Roch it will not be in vain.

Workers in dairies there's one for you too
Brigid of Ireland you'll get back your due.

Those on the mainland, on drought-stricken plains
Saint Godeberta she'll bring down the rains.

Got trying in-laws and no-where to turn?
Elizabeth Seton - through her you will learn.

Alas! Our Lawyers are covered as well
St Mark will keep you from going to hell!

So, last but not least as death does draw near
None has been greater than Joseph most dear.

Now you who *do* pray and things stay the same
Take it as God's will, the Saints aren't to blame.

Amen.

Reference: <http://www.scborromeo.org/>

Takes Our Breath Away

From a reflection by Father Thomas Rosica, CSB

In the name "Emmanuel," we find the answer to
humanity's deepest longings for God throughout the
ages.

Emmanuel is both a prayer and plea (on our behalf)
and a promise and declaration on God's part. When
we pronounce the word, we are really praying and
pleading: "God, be with us!" And when God speaks
it, the Almighty, Eternal, Omnipresent Creator of the
world is telling us: "I am with you" in this Child.

In the baby Jesus, God is "with us" not merely to bless
us in some sort of cameo appearance at one difficult
moment in history. Nor is God with us in that he is
going to use Jesus to help us, protect us, and guide us.
No – the little Lord Jesus asleep in the manger of
Bethlehem is "God with us" because he is God.

The true message of Christmas takes our breath away
and continues to stagger the imagination: The Second
Person of the Blessed Trinity, the only begotten Son
of the Father, the eternal Word, our Creator wills to
clothe himself in our nature, and to become man, our
brother, one of us. God Himself lies in the manger,
completely human, completely Divine.

The shepherds went back to the fields rejoicing in
Luke's marvelous Christmas story and the wise men
bow down in wonder, awe and worship in Matthew's
account because they realized what was unfolding
before their very eyes: They were in the presence of
their Creator made man, of the Word made flesh, of
God becoming one of us.

The name Emmanuel is also alluded to at the end of
Matthew's Gospel where the risen Jesus assures his
disciples of his continued presence: "I am with you
always, until the end of the age" (28:20). God did
indeed keep his promise in Jesus. Jesus truly fulfills
the plan of God in word and deed, in desire and
presence, in flesh and blood.

www.zenit.org 21-12-2009

Opportunities for Martyrdom

St Thomas More

"There are, in fact many opportunities for imitating
the martyrs without the martyrdom of blood and
death. There is a martyrdom which consists in the
anguish which each of us experiences in himself in
following the ways of God and in the fulfilment of his
proper duty. There is a martyrdom which consists in
the difficulty of a duty exactly, faithfully, and fully
accomplished. There is a martyrdom which occurs in
the continual persevering fidelity in little things, in
those demands for diligence in the divine service, in
the daily duty which becomes a daily cross."

Taking The Church to Court

Talk by ambitious lawyers of suing the Pope, class actions against companies and today's general readiness to take anyone to court raises the thought – could we take the Church to court? Why would we want to?

Well, if a weight-loss programme promises you'll lose a kilo a week, and instead, you put on more than that, should you sue them for breach of contract? If you send your daughter to a driving school and at the end of the course she crashes the family car, do you sue the school? What do you do if you order steak and your restaurant serves up mush?

Now most of the complaints aired by Catholics about what they are getting on Sundays are because they are not getting what the Church wants them to have, and which is theirs by right.

Yes, by right. In *Catechesi Tradendae*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "The person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive 'the word of faith' not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form, but whole and entire, in all its rigour and vigour" (n.30).

And from whom are we to receive "the word of faith", if not our bishops and priests? And where? Obviously, primarily at Sunday Mass, in the liturgy, the homily and maybe the parish bulletin. Yes, the liturgy is intended not only to worship God, but to teach us. How we pray is how we believe. (That's one reason why we're getting a new and better translation of the Mass.) So if the liturgy is played around with, trivialised or turned into a performance, we are being denied our right. If the homily is a chatty session about the day's news rather than the Good News, the already hungry sheep will soon be starving.

It shows up in surveys, like a recent one in America which showed only 45% of Catholics knew the meaning of the Real Presence. There's no reason to believe the result would be any different in Australia – just watch people talking and laughing before and after Mass, and try counting the genuflections.

It might be argued that nobody's complaining. Well, you would complain about your failed weight-loss programme, the driving school or the restaurant, wouldn't you? Or you would refuse to pay the bill.

Maybe it is that people don't want to get on the outer with their priest, or think that what Father is doing or saying must be OK because, well, he's the priest, after all. But hey, he was ordained for a specific purpose, to provide Mass and the Sacraments, and to teach. He's an ambassador, St Paul would tell us, a representative, so he should be representing, not doing his own thing because he wants to stay popular and dodging the "hard" teachings. He should be obedient to the Church and its directives. No wonder people

aren't sure what to believe, or just pick and choose anyway. Where is the supernatural in all this?

Dare one wonder just what some priests believe? Or our school teachers, too? Is anyone willing to confront the issue of the rate at which our Catholic students abandon their Faith by the time they leave school? Were they ever given it in the first place? Our Lord asked rhetorically whether He would find any faith when He returned. A rhetorical question does not require an answer.

Then of course there are supposed Catholics who go on TV, write books and give lectures, who deliberately or otherwise undermine the Faith.

So what do we do? Take the Church to court for fraud or false pretences? Of course not. It's not the Church we are talking about – she is the spotless Bride of the Lamb. It's the ambassadors – not all by any means, but too many – who are failing to represent Her. If an earthly government found its ambassadors weren't doing their job, they'd be replaced. The weight-loss people, the driving school or the restaurant would sack the staff who were damaging their reputation.

But the Church isn't an earthly government or an employer. Our priests are anointed ministers of the High Priest, Jesus Christ, so we respect them and pray for them. If they are failing to be His ambassadors, we should talk to them, and if this fails, send our weekly contributions elsewhere, perhaps to Rome. As "S.C." wrote in the October issue of ITD (p.5), they are taking our money under false pretences.

We don't need a class action with expensive lawyers. We just need an informed and dedicated laity, loyal to Christ and His Vicar, to let it be known gently and respectfully that we have a right to the fullness of the Catholic Faith. A "Right to Faith" movement, you could call it. But – and there is a large but – are there enough informed and dedicated members of the laity left?

Ruadhri, address supplied, Vic

Success Rates

On your layout of ITD, it seems to be a pretty good balance. We are obliged to describe truthfully the human side of the Church today. You have avoided making the issues overfull of complaint, and the reflections from Popes and Saints are quite helpful.

Incidentally, on the subject of handing on the Truth – if you don't believe it yourself, then your students won't. Some of our dioceses have a lower rate of success than under Hitler in 1944 or Communism in 1974.

God bless you and keep going.

Don Gaffney, Tarragindi, QLD

The Ambition of Others

All the hoo-ha of Mary MacKillop's canonization – the overseas trips, the sightseeing, the new outfits, the TV programs, the payment of travel and hotel expenses etc. – is all over now, so there is some opportunity to consider the good of her life, and what we can learn from it for our benefit now.

She certainly got a bad trot from 'the powers that be' of those times, from whom she was entitled to expect something better. The bishop, Bishop Shiel, now famous or infamous, proved himself to be a naïve fool. Was he a bad man? No, but he had around him ambitious and narrow-minded advisers who were jealous of Mary and her successes.

Unfortunately the bishop listened to *and acted on* the advice (gossip?) that was fed to him. So, while his advisers may have been more at fault than he was, in the end *he was the one that did the damage* which has carried his unfortunate reputation down to our own time. The names of his malicious clergy and others are now of no account, but whatever good he did is now forgotten because of his stupidity. The one good thing is that on his death bed he realized his mistake, recanted his excommunication of her, and asked her forgiveness.

I can't help drawing a comparison between her situation then, and that of Fr Speekman in the diocese of Sale today. Neither had done anything wrong, but the ambition of others made them subject to jealousy and scheming. Add to this the stubbornness of bishops, old and new, who will just not back down. The new bishop of Sale had every opportunity and power to start afresh and heal the weeping sore within his pastoral responsibility, but has chosen to follow in his predecessor's footsteps.

'The quality of mercy is not strain'd', Shakespeare tells us, meaning that it is full and generous, like all God's graces to us; but not in Sale, apparently. Whereas 'true mercy droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, and is thrice blessed', the whole point of the plot elaborated by Shakespeare in "The Merchant of Venice" is that mercy is different from law.

When the history of Sale diocese is recounted, as it often will be, good works will be forgotten because of the unfortunate and unjust folly of another, and perpetuated without reason.

S.C., Melbourne

Work and Rest

Pope Benedict XVI, in his letter for the 7th World Meeting of Families (to be held June 2012)

Work and rest are intimately associated with the life of families. They influence the choices the family makes, the relationship between the spouses and among parents and children, and they affect the dealings the family has with society and with the Church.

In our own time, unfortunately, the organisation of work, which is planned and implemented as a function of market competition and maximising profit, and the concept of rest as a time for evasion and consumption, contribute to the break-up of families and communities, and to the spread of an individualistic lifestyle.

It is therefore necessary to reflect and commit ourselves to reconciling the demands and requirements of work with those of the family, and to recover the true significance of rest, especially on Sundays, the weekly Easter, the day of the Lord and the day of man, the day of the family, of the community and of solidarity.

Vatican Information Service 24-09-2010

Only Those United to Peter

Having read in ITD about the audacity of some priests and bishops in confronting the authority of the Pope, it is very interesting to read what was said by a great Catholic Archbishop 40 years ago.

I recently listened to a recording of a talk given by Servant of God Bishop Fulton Sheen to a group of priests in Dublin, in which he said that when our Lord spoke to His apostle saying, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Lk 22:31), Our Lord seemed to imply that He permits the devil to sift all His bishops as wheat. But when speaking to Peter, He said "I have prayed for *thee* (v.32) that *thy faith fail not*".

Sheen went on to say: "Notice that Christ in relation to the demon spoke only to Peter. Only to him, in the conflict with evil, in the conflict with error, we are protected from evil, we are protected from error, *only* when we are united with Peter. And the bishops who are not united with Peter, if there be any, they do not share in the prayer of Christ".

Pat Ryan, London, UK

The Church Exists in Order to Evangelise

Pope Paul VI, Evangelii nuntiandi, n.14

"Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection."

“Gifts Given Space to Flourish”

The “Council for Australian Catholic Women” exists “to ensure that the dignity of women is honoured and their gifts are given space to flourish for the sake of the Church’s life and mission. (ACBC Social Justice Statement 2000)”

The “Office for the Participation of Women” undertakes “projects as determined by the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry in implementing the recommendations of the Bishops’ Social Justice Statement on the participation of women in the Church” and acts “as a focal point for ongoing dialogue and the integration of ideas pertaining to women and their participation in the Catholic Church in Australia.” [Quotes taken from the corresponding websites]

Both are thanks to our Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference.

I wonder when the Men’s Council and Men’s Office will be established, to help men assume responsibility without feeling guilty or beaten into submission by ‘powerful’ women? When I look around Australian parishes, women run around officiously, showing off their wonderful ‘participation’ and ‘gifts’ that have been given space to flourish. Where are our men?

- Ed.

The Desert and the Garden

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, 06-12-2009

The Word of God is the force that moves history, inspires prophets, prepares the way for the Messiah, convenes the Church.

Jesus Himself is the divine Word Who became flesh in the virginal womb of Mary. God revealed Himself fully in Him. He told us and gave us everything, opening us to the treasures of His truth and mercy.

... “So, the Word descended that the earth, which before had been a desert, would produce its fruits for us” [St Ambrose].

The most beautiful flower to grow from the Word of God is the Virgin Mary. She is the first fruit of the Church, the garden of God upon the earth.

But while Mary is Immaculate...the Church has continual need of purification, because sin threatens all her members.

Within the Church there is a constant struggle between the desert and the garden, between sin which dries out the land and grace which irrigates it to produce abundant fruits of sanctity.

Let us, then, pray to the Lord’s Mother that she may help us in this period of Advent, to ‘straighten’ our path and allow ourselves to be guided by the Word of God.

Vatican Information Service 06-12-2009

True Joy!

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Address, 13-12-2009

Behold, dear friends, what true joy consists in: It is feeling that our personal and communal existence is visited and filled by a great mystery, the mystery of God’s love.

To be joyful we do not just have need of things, but love and truth: We need a God who is near, who warms our heart, and responds to our profound desires.

This God is manifested in Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. This is why that Baby, whom we place in the stable or the cave, is the centre of everything, the heart of the world.

Let us pray that every person, like the Virgin Mary, may welcome into the centre of their lives the God who became a Child, font of true joy.

www.zenit.org 13-12-2009

Happy Christmas!

from Into the Deep!

*May you all have a happy and holy
Christmas Season!*

The January issue of ITD will be released on the website and by email around the first of the month as usual, but the printed copies will be delayed due to our printing service’s holiday closure until the second week of January.

No Religious Freedom

The Victorian Abortion Law Reform Bill was passed through a conscience vote of Members of Parliament giving the appearance of religious and ethical freedom in operation yet in more than one area this legislation seeks to undermine and coerce the religious beliefs of doctors, nurses and others opposed to abortion. So much for freedom! Such tactics are not entirely different to those used by Julian the Apostate (361-363) who tried to use obstructive laws to subdue Christianity.

In one sense each person is religious, by having a belief or disbelief in Some One or something, and possesses an innate sense of right and wrong, so any attempt to bring about a complete separation of Church and State will also result in a denial of religious freedom. The solution to society’s abortion issue is being further hindered by those who believe that all religion is largely inscrutable.

John M. Royal, Bundaberg West, QLD

The “Te Deum” at the end of the year

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

The Te Deum, an ancient Latin hymn in rhythmical prose, is probably a compilation of three sources. In fact, there are triple rhythms and three distinct melodies within the one piece. In many ways it resembles another ancient liturgical prose hymn, the Gloria in Excelsis Deo. ...

We present...the translation published in the 1975 Liturgy of the Hours. For the sake of clarity we have divided it into the three parts mentioned above.

“You are God: we praise you; You are the Lord: we acclaim you;

You are the eternal Father: All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,

Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praises you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:

Father, of majesty unbounded,

your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,

and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

“You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.

When you became man to set us free
you did not spurn the Virgin’s womb.

You overcame the sting of death, and opened the
kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God’s right hand in glory.

We believe that you will come, and be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people, bought
with the price of your own blood,

and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.

“Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.

Govern and uphold them now and always.

Day by day we bless you.

We praise your name for ever.

Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your love and mercy;

for we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope:

And we shall never hope in vain.”

As we mentioned, we are probably dealing with three distinct hymns in one.

The first is directed toward the Father and ends with a Trinitarian doxology. It could be a rare survivor of the hymns that were popular before the Council of Nicaea in 325. There are probable references to this hymn in the writings of St Cyprian of Carthage and in the Passion of St Perpetua, which would make its composition earlier than the year 250.

The second part, entirely Christological, is evidently later and reflects the controversies surrounding the fourth-century Arian heresy. It is also the more-perfect composition faithfully respecting the rules of Latin rhetoric.

The third section is formed from a series of verses from the Psalms. It is possible that these were originally versicles added as a litany at the end of the hymn. ...

The earliest evidence for the use of this hymn in the Divine Office is found in St Caesarius of Arles in 502. St Benedict (died 526) also prescribed it for his monks. The general rubrics of today’s Divine Office direct the recitation of the Te Deum before the concluding prayer of the Office of Readings on all Sundays outside of Lent, during the octaves of Easter and Christmas, and on solemnities and feasts.

It is also common to sing the Te Deum as a hymn of thanksgiving to God on special religious and civil occasions. ...

Finally, the Te Deum is traditionally sung on December 31 in thanksgiving for the year about to end. The Church grants a plenary indulgence to those who participate in public recitation of the Te Deum on this day.

www.zenit.org 13-07-2010

No Fairytale

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address 20-12-2009

Today, as in the time of Jesus, Christmas is not a fairytale for children, but rather God’s answer to the drama of humanity in search of peace. “He himself will be peace!” the prophet Micah says, referring to the Messiah. We are expected to throw open the doors to welcome him. Let us learn from Mary and Joseph: Let us put ourselves at the service of God’s plan with faith. Even if we do not fully understand it, let us entrust ourselves to his wisdom and goodness. Let us first seek the Kingdom of God and Providence will help us.

www.zenit.org 20-12-2009

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	6pm Thursday – 6pm Friday (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	Wednesday and First Saturday: (9.30am Mass) 10am – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, January onwards)
Wonthaggi	First Friday 7pm – 8pm

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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Australia**

- 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).
- Donate to ITD via Ritchies Supermarkets Community Benefit program by nominating Into the Deep as your group, with CB number 81799, and shopping at your local Ritchies Supermarket (56 supermarkets throughout Eastern Australian) with your Community Benefit Card.

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.

Everything Spoken At Once

Saint John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 22

“Since he has given us his Son, his only word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything at once in this sole word – and he has no more to say... because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has spoken all at once by giving us this All who is his Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behaviour but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely on Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty.”