

Into the Deep

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If He Was Only a Man, Then He Was Not Even a "Good" Man.

Venerable Fulton Sheen, Life of Christ (p.7,8)

...Christ does not fit, as the other world teachers do, into the established category of a good man.

Good men do not lie. But if Christ was not all that He said He was, namely, the Son of the living God, the Word of God in the flesh, then He was not "just a good man"; then He was a knave, a liar, a charlatan and the greatest deceiver who ever lived. If He was not what He said He was, the Christ, the Son of God, He was the anti-Christ! If He was only a man, then He was not even a "good" man.

But He was not only a man. He would have us either worship Him or despise Him – despise Him as a mere man, or worship Him as true God and true man. That is the alternative He presents.

It may very well be that the Communists, who are so anti-Christ, are closer to Him than those who see Him as a sentimentalist and a vague moral reformer. The Communists have at least decided that if He wins, they lose; the others are afraid to consider Him either as winning or losing, because they are not prepared to meet the moral demands which this victory would make on their souls.

If He is what He claimed to be, a Saviour, a Redeemer, then we have a virile Christ and a leader worth following in these terrible times; One Who will step into the breach of death, crushing sin, gloom and despair; a leader to Whom we can make totalitarian sacrifice without losing, but gaining freedom, and Whom we can love even unto death. We need a Christ today Who will make cords and drive the buyers and sellers from our new temples; Who will blast the unfruitful fig-trees; Who will talk of crosses and sacrifices and Whose voice will be like the voice of the raging sea.

But He will not allow us to pick and choose among His Words discarding the hard ones and accepting the ones that please our fancy. We need a Christ Who will restore moral indignation, Who will make us hate evil with a passionate intensity, and love goodness to a point where we can drink death like water.

Fit to Face Death

The Imitation of Christ (1,23,1)

Every action of yours, every thought, should be those of one who expects to die before the day is out. Death would have no great terrors for you if you had a quiet conscience Then why not keep clear of sin instead of running away from death? If you aren't fit to face death today, it's very unlikely you will be tomorrow

Quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church n.1014

Second Death

St Francis of Assisi, Canticle of the Creatures

Praised are you, my Lord,
for our sister bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.
Woe on those who will die in mortal sin!
Blessed are they
who will be found in your most holy will,
for the second death will not harm them.

Quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church n.1014

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

Jesus Christ Loves You

Pope Francis, 21-09-2019

How many people close to us live always in a hurry, as slaves to what should help them to feel better, and forget the taste of life: the beauty of a large and generous family, which fills the day and night but expands the heart, the brightness that is in the eyes of children, that no smartphone can give, the joy of simple things, the serenity that prayer gives. What our brothers and sisters often ask of us, perhaps without being able to ask the question, corresponds to their deepest needs: to love and be loved, to be accepted for what one is, to find peace of heart and a joy that is more lasting than entertainment.

We have experienced all this in one word, indeed in one person, Jesus. We who, though fragile and sinful, have been inundated by the river in full flow that is God's goodness, have this mission: to encounter our contemporaries so as to make His love known to them. Not so much by teaching, never by judging, but by being travelling companions. ... Transmitting God, then, is not talking about God, it is not justifying His existence: even the devil knows that God exists! To proclaim the Lord is to witness to the joy of knowing Him, it is to help live the beauty of encountering Him. God is not the answer to an intellectual curiosity or to a commitment of the will, but an experience of love, called to become a story of love. Because – it is true first of all for us – once we have met the living God, we must look for Him again. The mystery of God is never exhausted, it is as immense as His love.

"God is love", says the Scripture. ... He is unconditional love, He does not change, despite all the things we do. As the Psalm says: "His love is for ever". ... How beautiful it is to announce this faithful God, a fire that is not consumed, to our brothers and sisters who live in tepidness because the first enthusiasm has cooled. How beautiful it is to say to them: "Jesus Christ loves you, He gave His life to save you, and now He is living at your side every day".

w2.vatican.va

Unplanned

The powerful pro-life movie "Unplanned" continues to be screened in Australia. Please support any local screenings so that the movie continues to be shown and hopefully changes hearts and minds of those who see it.

"Unplanned" is the true story of Abby Johnson – her journey from being a staunch abortion advocate and Planned Parenthood clinic director to being a staunch pro-lifer.

Check fan-force.com/films/unplanned for the latest dates and venues and to buy your tickets. Arrange a screening yourself if there's nothing near you. It's easy, just follow the prompts online.

Ed.

Saying "I Love You"

Msgr. Lucio Ruiz, Secretary of the Dicastery for Communication, to Zenit, 15-10-2019

When someone is in love, saying 'I love you,' can never become monotonous, or mechanical, for it is special every time. Praying the rosary, and saying the Hail Mary is the same. It never gets old, each time, each prayer is new...

Are You Listening?

Pope Francis, Morning Mass 03-10-2019

Sunday is the day of the people's encounter with the Lord... it's a day of encounter. However, the celebration of Sunday isn't understood without the Word of God.

When we hear the Word of God, what is happening in our hearts? Do I follow the Word of God attentively? Do I let it touch my heart, or do I stay there looking at the ceiling and thinking about other things, and the Word enters one ear and goes out the other, without reaching my heart? ... How do I listen to the Word of God? Or don't I listen to it? How do I recognize the Lord in his Word, which is the Bible?

Do I prepare myself so that the Word will reach my heart? And when the Word reaches my heart, are there tears of joy and celebration? ...

The Word of God makes us joyful; the encounter with the Word of God fills us with joy and this joy is my strength – it's our strength. ...

... Am I convinced that the joy of the Lord is my strength?

Zenit.org 03-10-2019

The Great Longing

Pope Benedict XVI, All Saints Day 2006

Our Eucharistic celebration began with the exhortation: "Let us all rejoice in the Lord". The liturgy invites us to share in the heavenly jubilation of the Saints, to taste their joy. The Saints are not a small caste of chosen souls but an innumerable crowd to which the liturgy urges us to raise our eyes. This multitude not only includes the officially recognized Saints, but the baptized of every epoch and nation who sought to carry out the divine will faithfully and lovingly. We are unacquainted with the faces and even the names of many of them, but with the eyes of faith we see them shine in God's firmament like glorious stars. ...

This, then, is the meaning of today's Solemnity: looking at the shining example of the Saints to reawaken within us the great longing to be like them; happy to live near God, in his light, in the great family of God's friends. Being a Saint means living close to God, to live in his family. And this is the vocation of us all, vigorously reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council and solemnly proposed today for our attention.

But how can we become holy, friends of God? We can first give a negative answer to this question: to be a Saint requires neither extraordinary actions or works nor the possession of exceptional charisms. Then comes the positive reply: it is necessary first of all to listen to Jesus and then to follow him without losing heart when faced by difficulties. ...

The Church's experience shows that every form of holiness, even if it follows different paths, always passes through the Way of the Cross, the way of self-denial. The Saints' biographies describe men and women who, docile to the divine plan, sometimes faced unspeakable trials and suffering, persecution and martyrdom. They persevered in their commitment: "they... have come out of the great tribulation", one reads in Revelation, "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rv 7: 14). Their names are written in the book of life (cf. Rv 20: 12) and Heaven is their eternal dwelling-place.

The example of the Saints encourages us to follow in their same footsteps and to experience the joy of those who trust in God, for the one true cause of sorrow and unhappiness for men and women is to live far from him.

Pleas and Thank You

Thank you to all who have donated to Into the Deep recently – your encouragement and support keeps me going.

There were not many letters this month though, which is a bit sad. And next month is the last issue until February, so get those pens out quickly if you have something to share! I'd love to hear from you.

With November being the month we traditionally remember the dead, please include in your prayers the readers of ITD who have gone before us and perhaps have no family to pray for them.

Ed.

Mass Offerings

Code of Canon Law

Can. 945 §1. In accord with the approved practice of the Church, any priest celebrating or concelebrating is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention.

§2. It is recommended earnestly to priests that they celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy, even if they have not received an offering.

Can. 946 The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works.

Moral Law Cannot Be Set Aside

John Paul II, Homily in Ireland 29-09-1979

Every human being has inalienable rights that must be respected ... The moral law, guardian of human rights, protector of the dignity of man, cannot be set aside by any person or group, or by the State itself, for any cause, ...The law of God stands in judgment over all reasons of State.

Welcome Those Who are Homesick

Pope Francis, Mass at Albano, 23-09-2019

How good it would be if our neighbours and acquaintances felt the Church as their home!

Unfortunately, it happens that our communities become foreign to so many and not very attractive. Sometimes we also suffer the temptation of creating closed circles, intimate places among the elect. We feel chosen, we feel elite. However, there are so many brothers and sisters that are homesick, who don't have the courage to approach, perhaps because they haven't felt welcome; perhaps because they have met a priest that treated them badly, or chased them out, who wanted to make them pay for the Sacraments – an awful thing – and they moved away. ...

Brothers and sisters, may the Church be the place where one never looks down on others but, as Jesus with Zacchaeus, looks up from below. Remember that the only moment in which it's allowed to look at a person from the top down is to help him rise again; ... only in that moment look at him that way, because he has fallen. Let us never look at people as judges, always as brothers. We are not inspectors of others' life but promoters of the good of all. And to be promoter of the good of all, something that helps a lot is to keep the tongue still: not to speak badly of others.

w2.vatican.va

For the Dead

St John Henry Newman

Help, Lord, the souls which Thou hast made,
The souls to Thee so dear,
In prison for the debt unpaid
Of sins committed here.

Those holy souls, they suffer on,
Resigned in heart and will,
Until Thy high behest is done,
And justice has its fill.
For daily falls, for pardoned crime,
They joy to undergo
The shadow of Thy cross sublime,
The remnant of Thy woe.

Help, Lord, the souls which Thou hast made,
The souls to Thee so dear,
In prison for the debt unpaid
Of sins committed here.

Oh, by their patience of delay,
Their hope amid their pain,
Their sacred zeal to burn away
Disfigurement and stain;
Oh, by their fire of love, not less
In keenness than the flame,
Oh, by their very helplessness,
Oh, by Thy own great Name,

Good Jesus, help! sweet Jesus, aid
The souls to Thee most dear,
In prison for the debt unpaid
Of sins committed here.

The Things That Enslave Us

Pope Francis, Homily 13-10-2019

Like those lepers, we too need healing, each one of us. We need to be healed of our lack of confidence in ourselves, in life, in the future; we need to be healed of our fears and the vices that enslave us, of our introversion, our addictions and our attachment to games, money, television, mobile phones, to what other people think.

The Lord sets our hearts free and heals them if only we ask him, only if we say to him: "Lord, I believe you can heal me. Dear Jesus, heal me from being caught up in myself. Free me from evil and fear". The lepers are the first people, in this Gospel [of Luke], who called on the name of Jesus. Later, a blind man and a crucified thief would do so: all of them needy people calling on the name of Jesus, which means: "God saves". They call God by name, directly and spontaneously. To call someone by name is a sign of confidence, and it pleases the Lord. That is how faith grows, through confident, trusting prayer. Prayer in which we bring to Jesus who we really are, with open hearts, without attempting to mask our sufferings.

Each day, let us invoke with confidence the name of Jesus: "God saves". Let us repeat it: that is prayer. And prayer is essential! Indeed, prayer is the door of faith; prayer is medicine for the heart.

w2.vatican.va

Dissent and Obedience

From an article by Fr Ken Clark, Ordinariate Parish of the Most Holy Family, Cowwarr, Victoria

Sometimes I almost despair. I have been praised and vilified, scorned, ignored, laughed at, hated, and all because I am a faithful Magisterial priest, an obedient son of the Church. I am just one man and I feel the pangs, yet I am called to be faithful, as are all baptised. Someone asked me, "Today, what is the greatest danger to the Church?" My answer is easy: it is disobedience. ...

I am relatively new in terms of being a Catholic priest. However, in the six years I have been a priest some of the following have happened: I've been vilified on the phone by a Latin Mass-goer because I am "not a priest" because I am married. Been vilified because I do not (yet) celebrate a Latin Mass. Been praised for wearing a cassock, and been vilified for wearing the same. Been praised for being obedient to the Pope, and been vilified for it. Been told I am too orthodox, been told I am not orthodox enough. Been praised for praying for Pope Francis, and been vilified for it. Been vilified for not saying that Pope Benedict is still Pope, and been praised for it. Been praised for teaching what the Magisterium teaches, been vilified for it. Been praised for giving Communion in the hand (an Ordinariate praxis), and been vilified for it. Been called a good priest, a bad priest, an evil priest, and the list could go on.

Each and every one of the above has, at its heart, some form of disobedience and dissent. Disobedience takes many forms. One can dissent from the teaching of the Magisterium as codified in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: I am a Catholic except for... (insert some form of dissent – homosexual, abortion, infidelity...). One can dissent from obedience to those given charge over us, usually based on something they have done or said that does not fit our agenda. One can dissent from canonical obedience to the Rites of the Church: I only go to a Latin Mass, people have said, yet there are 24 other Rites in the Church that do not use Latin or English, and the Ordinariate has been given the Mass in English. I wear a veil, people have said, which is right and a good practice (one veils what is holy), and yet the Church has decreed that women can choose not to wear a veil. Each and every instance has at its heart disobedience to what has been given by the Church through the Pontiff and the bishops. One can dissent by not acknowledging the Pope as the Supreme Pontiff. And the list could go on.

One might not like any of the above, one might question whether it is right or not. However, the Church is a Divine Institution, a continuing revelation of Christ in the world, and as such, it is He and He alone that has control. Usually, if one dissents, or is disobedient, there is a form of spiritual pride at work, one that says that "I know what is best." How does any of the above further the Kingdom of God? How does it attract people to know the beauty and Grace of God? How does it attract people into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ? How does it teach people that to follow God is a holy and righteous occupation? How does it point to the love of God? How does it show the sacrifice of Christ for all mankind? How does it demonstrate that we love? How does it tell people that God loves them, cares for them, and nurtures them? How does it demonstrate God's forgiveness? When I came into the Church, I had one aim: to further the Kingdom of God. Furthering the Kingdom is the essential nature of the call to be Catholic. ...

Personally, I think that the Devil is having a field day. Misdirection, dissention, sniping at each other, disobedience to the Pope and the bishops, despair at this synod or that synod, looking to the next scandal, despair at the previous scandal. All of this works in Satan's favour.

There is much more to be gained by loving Christ, having a relationship with Him, working out our own salvation in fear and trembling (Phil 2: 13). We must become holy – not only the priest up the road, not only the Pope, not only the Bishop, not only the man or woman one castigates because they do not do Church as you do; but ourselves. If we want to further the church we must become holy, that means you and I. ...

The first sin was that of disobedience, and the world has never quite recovered. We must not continue to be disobedient. Christ came in obedience to the will of the Father, to offer Himself as an oblation of Love for all. We are called to further that oblation in the world by becoming Christlike, in love, reparation and sacrifice. It is His Church, His Body and we do a grave disservice if we do not continue in obedience to Him, in faithful love, and Christlike surrender.

The Core of the Catechism

I have previously written about the mysteries of the Holy Trinity (July ITD, p.5), Christ (Sept ITD, p.7) and the Church (Oct ITD, p.9) as a way of introducing the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) and to draw attention to the central mysteries of the Catholic faith.

In sequence, these three mysteries (Trinitarian-Christological-Ecclesiological) form the core doctrinal structure of the entire Catechism. At least one, if not all three of these mysteries, informs and inspires every page of the Catechism.

It is of utmost importance to note that the Catechism is a magisterial document; and yet, as the Church's fundamental source of Catholic doctrine, it is the most misunderstood and under-used document in the education and formation of Catholics in the Church.

In my own ongoing spiritual development, it has deepened my grasp of the sacred mysteries that are central to the faith of the Church and ultimately to our salvation. It has taught me that the definitive aim of all catechesis is not only to put people in touch, but in communion, in intimacy, with Christ since he alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Holy Spirit and makes us share in the life of the Holy Trinity. It has taught me that the work of catechesis is really a participation in the Church's work of handing on Jesus Christ, his life and message. And as such, it cannot be done haphazardly according to the visions and whims of individual Catholics, but has to be done coherently and systematically, according to the doctrinal structure of the Catechism.

In studying the Catechism I have learned that there is a critical connection or relationship if you like, between doctrine and spirituality, and that the logic of doctrine provides the manner in which catechesis should proceed. It has heightened my awareness and deepened my understanding of the Trinitarian-Christological and Ecclesiological experiences I have had by living my life anchored in the Sacraments of the Church. As a Catholic catechist, and witness striving for holiness, and who has a duty to evangelize, it has increased my commitment to a process of ongoing conversion. It has taught me that the Church catechizes to evangelize and she exists to evangelize so that she can catechize.

Grasping this doctrinal structure of the contents of the Catechism will not only open up to us important keys to understanding, reading and teaching from the Catechism effectively and fruitfully, but it will enable us, catechetically, to drink from the wells of beauty, truth and goodness offered to us by our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Priests Putting God Aside

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in an interview with Edward Pentin of the National Catholic Register, 23-09-2019

This movement which consists of "putting God aside," making God a secondary reality, has touched the hearts of priests and bishops. God does not occupy the centre of their lives, thoughts and actions. The life of prayer is no longer central. I am convinced that priests must proclaim the centrality of God through their own lives. A Church where the priest no longer carries this message is a Church that is sick. The life of a priest must proclaim to the world that "God alone is enough," that prayer, that is, this intimate and personal relationship, is the heart of his life. This is the profound reason for priestly celibacy.

The forgetting of God finds its first and most serious manifestation in the secularized way of life of priests. They are the first to have to carry the Good News. If their personal lives do not reflect this, then practical atheism will spread throughout the Church and society.

I believe that we are at a turning point in the history of the Church. Yes, the Church needs a profound and radical reform that must begin with a reform of the way of being and the way of life of priests. The Church is holy in herself. But we prevent this holiness from shining through our sins and worldly concerns.

nregister.com 23-09-2019

Let's Not Be Impressed

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in an interview with Edward Pentin of the National Catholic Register, 23-09-2019

Edward Pentin: In recent years, the Church has suffered many controversies related to the questioning, according to some, of the Church's moral teaching by Church leaders, for example on *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), ignorance of the magisterium of John Paul II (which the Pontifical John Paul II Institute has recently modified in a clear manner), efforts to undermine *Humanae Vitae* (Human Life) and the revision of the death penalty, to name just a few. Why is this happening, and should the faithful be concerned?

Cardinal Sarah: We are facing a real cacophony from bishops and priests. Everyone wants to impose their personal opinion as a truth. But there is only one truth: Christ and his teaching. How could the doctrine of the Church change? The Gospel does not change. It is still the same. Our unity cannot be built around fashionable opinions.

The Letter to the Hebrews says: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teaching. It is good to have our hearts strengthened by grace and not by foods, which do not benefit those who live by them" (13:8-9) – because [of] "my doctrine," says Jesus. "My teaching is not my own but is from the One who sent me" (Jn 7:16). God himself often repeats it to us: "I will not violate my covenant; the promise of my lips I will not alter. By my holiness I swore once for all" (Ps 89:35-36).

Some people use *Amoris Laetitia* to oppose the great teachings of John Paul II. They are mistaken. What was true yesterday remains true today. We must hold firmly to what Benedict XVI called the hermeneutic of continuity. The unity of faith implies the unity of the magisterium in space and time. When a new teaching is given to us, it must always be interpreted in coherence with the preceding teaching.

If we introduce ruptures, we break the unity of the Church. Those who loudly announce revolutions and radical changes are false prophets. They are not looking for the good of the flock. They seek media popularity at the price of divine truth. Let's not be impressed. Only the truth will set us free. We must have confidence. The magisterium of the Church will never contradict itself.

When the storm rages, you have to anchor yourself to what is stable. Let us not chase after fashionable novelties that may fade before we have even been able to grasp them.

ncregister.com 23-09-2019

Deacons Are For Service

Pope Francis, General Audience 25-09-2019

The Apostles are ever more aware that their main vocation is to pray and preach the Word of God: to pray and proclaim the Gospel: and they resolve the issue by establishing a nucleus of "seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (Acts 6:3), who, after receiving the laying on of hands, will serve tables". It refers to the deacons who were created for this, for service. In the Church a deacon is not a deputy priest, but something else. He is not for the altar but for service. He is the custodian of service in the Church. When a deacon is too fond of going to the altar, he is making a mistake. This is not his path. This harmony between service to the Word and service to charity represents the leaven that makes the ecclesial body grow.

w2.vatican.va

Bear Witness

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

We are not allowed to *not* think about the role and the mission that we all have to bear witness to the faith. We must bring faith to others.

Pope Francis tells us this very clearly: we need to witness what we believe and what we love, which is part of our life, and at the same time, to announce it. This is what Saint Peter said: "to explain the hope you have in you."

And therefore, this is the announcement. Having this awareness takes us out of that idea of delegating mission to others, to take it instead as our mission, as an integral, essential part of our moral, spiritual life, our life of faith. ...

If there is no love for one's faith, everything stops!

Zenit.org 21-10-2019

DYING IN CHRIST JESUS

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1005 To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must "be away from the body and at home with the Lord". In that "departure" which is death the soul is separated from the body. It will be reunited with the body on the day of resurrection of the dead.

1006 "It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt." In a sense bodily death is natural, but for faith it is in fact "the wages of sin." For those who die in Christ's grace it is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share his Resurrection.

1007 *Death is the end of earthly life.* Our lives are measured by time, in the course of which we change, grow old and, as with all living beings on earth, death seems like the normal end of life. That aspect of death lends urgency to our lives: remembering our mortality helps us realize that we have only a limited time in which to bring our lives to fulfilment...

1008 *Death is a consequence of sin.* The Church's Magisterium, as authentic interpreter of the affirmations of Scripture and Tradition, teaches that death entered the world on account of man's sin. Even though man's nature is mortal, God had destined him not to die. Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God the Creator and entered the world as a consequence of sin. "Bodily death, from which man would have been immune had he not sinned" is thus "the last enemy" of man left to be conquered.

1009 *Death is transformed by Christ.* Jesus, the Son of God, also himself suffered the death that is part of the human condition. Yet, despite his anguish as he faced death, he accepted it in an act of complete and free submission to his Father's will. The obedience of Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing.

1010 Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) "The saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him. What is essentially new about Christian death is this: through Baptism, the Christian has already "died with Christ" sacramentally, in order to live a new life; and if we die in Christ's grace, physical death completes this "dying with Christ" and so completes our incorporation into him in his redeeming act:

It is better for me to die in (*eis*) Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. Him it is I seek – who died for us. Him it is I desire – who rose for us. I am on the point of giving birth Let me receive pure light; when I shall have arrived there, then shall I be a man. (St. Ignatius of Antioch)

1011 In death, God calls man to himself. Therefore the Christian can experience a desire for death like St. Paul's: "My desire is to depart and be with Christ." He can transform his own death into an act of obedience and love towards the Father, after the example of Christ:

My earthly desire has been crucified; . . . there is living water in me, water that murmurs and says within me: Come to the Father. (St. Ignatius of Antioch)

I want to see God and, in order to see him, I must die. (St. Teresa of Avila)

I am not dying; I am entering life. (St. Therese of Lisieux)

1012 The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church:

Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven. (Roman Missal, Preface of Christian Death I)

1013 Death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him so as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny. When "the single course of our earthly life" is completed, we shall not return to other earthly lives: "It is appointed for men to die once." There is no "reincarnation" after death.

1014 The Church encourages us to prepare ourselves for the hour of our death. In the litany of the saints, for instance, she has us pray: "From a sudden and unforeseen death, deliver us, O Lord"; to ask the Mother of God to intercede for us "at the hour of our death" in the *Hail Mary*, and to entrust ourselves to St. Joseph, the patron of a happy death.

Sign and Cause of Unity

Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, n.70

Because, Venerable Brothers, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is a sign and cause of the unity of Christ's Mystical Body, and because it stirs up an active "ecclesial" spirit in those who are more fervent in their Eucharistic devotion, never stop urging your faithful, as they approach the Mystery of the Eucharist, to learn to embrace the Church's cause as their own, to pray to God without slackening, to offer themselves to God as an acceptable sacrifice for the peace and unity of the Church; so that all the sons of the Church may be united and feel united and there may be no divisions among them but rather unity of mind and intention, as the Apostle commands.

May all those who are not yet in perfect communion with the Catholic Church and who glory in the name of Christian despite their separation from her, come as soon as possible to share with us, through the help of God's grace, in that unity of faith and communion that Christ wanted to be the distinctive mark of His disciples.

Death Shall Strip Us

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

What folly it would be for travellers to think only of acquiring dignities and possessions in the countries through which they had to pass, and then to reduce themselves to the necessity of living miserably in their native lands, where they must remain during their whole lives!

And are not they fools who seek after happiness in this world, where they will remain only a few days, and expose themselves to the risk of being unhappy in the next, where they must live for eternity?

We do not fix our affections on borrowed goods, because we know that they must soon be returned to the owner. All earthly goods are lent to us: it is folly to set our heart on what we must soon quit.

Death shall strip us of all. The acquisitions and fortunes of this world all terminate in a dying grasp, in a funeral, in a descent into the grave. The house which you have built for yourself you must soon give up to others.

The Redeeming Love of Christ

Family First

It's very common to hear people say that family is everything to them, or family always comes first, or their children are the most important thing to them in the world. You hear it and read it in interviews both with 'celebrities' and with 'ordinary' people. Especially around Christmas and Easter, you hear it's "all about family". Words that warm the heart and meet with everyone's approval. But in reality, it's not always the case. Couples live together without getting married, there's infidelity, there are serial partners, mothers or fathers walk out on their children and find 'happiness' with another partner yet still claim that their children come first in their lives, aborting children is a 'right', gay couples are given the status of marriage and have the right to deny children their mother or father, domestic violence and sexual abuse is rife. But "my family always comes first" we hear everyone say.

And family is indeed a great good. But what happens when you put your family before your faith? I can't help wondering how many Catholics have compromised their faith for the sake of their children, instead of standing firm and drawing their children to the truth of the Faith. When children decide not to go to Mass anymore, parents start believing the Sunday Mass obligation is not that big a deal anymore. When children choose to live together before marriage, Catholic parents start believing it's not so bad anymore because everyone does it. When their grandson says he's gay, or their daughter's in a loving lesbian relationship, suddenly Catholics start believing that the Church must have it wrong on homosexual acts being sinful. When their children divorce and move onto another relationship, Catholic parents start saying their child is so happy now that divorce can't be wrong and annulments are cruel and unnecessary.

Family comfort and approval has become more important than doctrine. Children are accepted and affirmed in their sin, and lead their previously-faithful Catholic parents into sin as well, instead of the other way around. How often is family put ahead of faith? Is this part of the reason the voice of Catholics is now as weak as others out there? It hurts to take a stand.

Ed.

Allow Christ to Be Your King

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 25-11-2018

The Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe, which we celebrate today, is set at the conclusion of the liturgical year and recalls that the life of creation does not advance at random, but proceeds toward a final destination: the definitive manifestation of Christ, Lord of history and of all creation. The conclusion of history will be his eternal kingdom.

Today's Gospel passage (cf. Jn 18:33-37) speaks to us about this kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Jesus, recounting the humiliating situation that Jesus is in after being arrested in Gethsemane: bound, insulted, accused and led before the authorities of Jerusalem. And then, he is presented to the Roman prosecutor, as one who seeks to undermine political power, to become the king of the Jews. So Pilate conducts his inquest and, in a dramatic interrogation, twice asks Jesus *if He is a king*.

And Jesus initially responds that his kingship "is not of this world". Then he states: "You say that *I am a king*". It is evident from his entire life that Jesus does not have political ambitions. ...He makes Pilate take note that His disciples did not fight to defend Him. He says: "if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews".

Jesus wants to make it understood that above and beyond political power there is another even greater one, which is not obtained by human means. He has come to earth to exercise this power, which is love, by *bearing witness to the truth*, the divine truth which ultimately is the essential message of the Gospel: "God is love"; and he wishes to establish in the world his kingdom of love, justice and peace. And this is the kingdom of which Jesus is king, and which extends until the end of times. History teaches us that kingdoms founded on the force of arms and on the abuse of power are fragile and sooner or later collapse. But the Kingdom of God is founded on his love and is rooted in hearts – the Kingdom of God is rooted in hearts – conferring peace, freedom and fullness of life upon those who embrace it. We all want peace; we all want freedom and we want fulfilment. And how do you do this? Allow the love of God, the Kingdom of God, the love of Jesus, to take root in your heart and you will have peace, you will have freedom and you will have fulfilment.

Today Jesus asks us to *allow him to become our king*.

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O Lord, support us all the day long,
until the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done;
then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging,
and a holy rest, and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St John Henry Newman

Angels only envy us for one thing:
they cannot suffer for God.
Only suffering can enable us to say:
My God, how much I love You.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Handing on the Faith

Catechism of the Catholic Church

4 Quite early on, the name *catechesis* was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ.

5 "Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life."

7 "Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan, depend essentially on catechesis."

Just Repent

Homily by Fr John Speekman, for 2nd Sunday of Advent

The Gospel wastes no time. Before we know it a prophet stands before us – John the Baptist. He stands in the desert of Judaea, wearing a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food is locusts and wild honey. Have you ever wondered why Matthew would go to the trouble of describing the clothing and the diet of John the Baptist? It's because they are both signs of repentance, and the penance that goes with it. John lived the message he preached. In 1974 Pope Paul VI gave an address in which he said: Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. Apparently this was true also of the people of 2000 years ago because, as the Gospel tells us: *Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him*. They came from everywhere, attracted by the man John and the message he proclaimed. In fact, his whole lifestyle was already a message clearly spoken to all who came to know him.

John, like all prophets, is a divisive man. He stands between God and humanity and speaks the truth about both – not an easy or enviable commission. John has spent years in the silence of the wilderness. From his earliest days in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, ever since the visit of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of the Messiah, he has been filled with the Holy Spirit. He has understood the Scriptures and the ways of God. From the lofty pinnacle of his wisdom he has surveyed the landscape of poor humanity and understood deeply their, and our, most profound need. And what was it? Food? Security? Political freedom? Health?

He wastes no time telling us – Repent, for the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and do it now!

The word repent inserts itself like a door between two opposed realities – our sins, and the kingdom of heaven. It keeps them both apart and yet stands between them not as an unpassable obstacle but as the promise of reconciliation.

As he cries 'Repent!' John the Baptist points with one hand to our sins and with the other to the approaching Kingdom. No niceties, no softening of the blow, no gentle preamble, no sensitivity to 'where I'm at' – just – Repent! John had no time for excuses or precious sensibilities. He had not come to suggest or invite, he had come to warn. 'Get off the tracks – the train is coming! Spare me the details of your life's story, we all have them, just get off the track!'

But my husband is so difficult, he makes me so angry – Of course he does, just you make sure you repent! But I don't like Confession, it's so embarrassing – Yeah, not as embarrassing as hell, repent! But if you only knew the sufferings in my life – Yes, we all have them, repent! But I've tried so often and failed every time – Try again, repent! You just don't understand – I'm not here to understand, I'm here to tell you the kingdom is coming, I don't want you to miss out so, repent!

We are not accustomed to such uncompromising directness. We live in a world in which feeling has taken precedence over thought and if something makes us feel bad it can't be good or true. By canonising our feelings in this way we have subtly made them into gods, and when someone comes along with a truth we don't want to hear we complain: I feel excluded, I feel bullied, I feel uncomfortable.

No wonder John made so many enemies and no wonder he was soon silenced. Look at the way he spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders among the people: Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit ...

Protestations of sorrow and repentance did not impress John. He knew all too well the rocky path that lies between repentance and its fruits, as he knew also our ability to kid ourselves. Unmasking our hypocrisy was John's calling – his service to us.

Let me conclude by pointing out another opposition in this Gospel, the one between heaven and hell. John, again, stands in the breach. His call to repentance is a warning to 'make straight' the path into the first, and to avoid the axe wielded by the one who is coming and the fire awaiting in the second.

Of course we are free to ignore John's warning or to 'explain' it away. The Advent choices, however, remain clear – repentance and the Kingdom, or the axe and the fire.

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Heyfield	1 st Fridays 10am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Mass 10am) – 11am Thursday 6-7pm; 1 st Friday (Mass 6pm) – 9pm 1 st Saturday (Mass 10am) – 11am
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Cranbourne	Fri & Sat in church: (9.30 Mass) – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by PIN available at parish office.
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am 1 st Friday 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Dec on)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Maffra	Wednesday (5pm Mass) – 6pm
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday 2pm – 6pm (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Sale	Friday 11.30am–12pm; 1 st Friday till 4pm
Trafalgar	Wed & 1st Sat: (9.30am Mass) – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am 1 st Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Jan on)
Wonthaggi	1 st Friday 7pm – 8pm

“Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends.”

St Alphonsus Liguori

The Spiritual Centre

Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, n.68

The Eucharist is reserved in churches or oratories to serve as the spiritual centre of a religious community or a parish community, indeed of the whole Church and the whole of mankind, since it contains, beneath the veil of the species, Christ the invisible Head of the Church, the Redeemer of the world, the centre of all hearts, "by whom all things are and by whom we exist."

In a World of Noise

Pope Benedict XVI to clergy, Warsaw, 25-05-2006

In a world where there is so much noise, so much bewilderment, there is a need for silent adoration of Jesus concealed in the Host. Be assiduous in the prayer of adoration and teach it to the faithful. It is a source of comfort and light particularly to those who are suffering.

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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. There is no guarantee that every letter will be published, and we reserve the right to edit letters. 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.

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