

Into the Deep

Issue 200

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

December 2019

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the Body and the Blood
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph;
Cherubim with sleepless eye
Veil their faces to the Presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

An ancient chant of Eucharistic devotion based on words from Habakkuk 2:20, "Let all the earth keep silence before him". The original was composed in Greek ...goes back at least to AD 275. In modern times, the Ralph Vaughan Williams arrangement of a translation from the Greek by Gerard Moultrie to the tune of "Picardy", a French medieval folk melody, popularized the hymn... [Wikipedia]

Anticipation

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 02-12-2018

Today Advent begins, the liturgical time which prepares us for Christmas, inviting us to lift our gaze and open our hearts to welcome Jesus. During Advent we do not just live in anticipation of Christmas; we are also called to rekindle the anticipation of the glorious return of Christ – when he will return at the end of time – preparing ourselves, with consistent and courageous choices, for the final encounter with him. We remember Christmas, we await the glorious return of Christ, and also our personal encounter: the day in which the Lord will call.

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Poor and Little

St Macarius the Great, 4th-century Desert Father

God makes himself little! The inaccessible and uncreated One, in his infinite and ineffable goodness, has taken a body and made himself little. In his goodness, he descends from his glory. No one in the heavens or on earth can grasp the greatness of God, and no one in the heavens or on earth can grasp how God makes himself poor and little for the poor and little. As incomprehensible is his grandeur, so too is his littleness.

"The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.27

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

10th December – Feast of Our Lady of Loreto

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 7 October 2019

Since the Middle Ages, veneration for the Holy House of Loreto has been the origin of that particular shrine which still today is visited by many faithful pilgrims in order to nourish their faith in the Word of God made flesh for us.

This shrine recalls the mystery of the Incarnation, leading all those who visit it to consider “the fullness of time”, when God sent his Son, born of a woman, as well as to meditate both on the words of the Angel announcing the Good News and on the words of the Virgin in response to the divine call. Overshadowed by the Spirit, the humble handmaid of the Lord so became the dwelling-place of divinity, the purist image of the holy Church. ...

In the Holy House, before the image of the Mother of the Redeemer and of the Church, Saints and Blesseds have responded to their vocation, the sick have invoked consolation in suffering, the people of God have begun to praise and plead with Mary using the Litany of Loreto, which is known throughout the world. In a particular way, all those who travel via aircraft have found in her their heavenly patron.

In light of this, Pope Francis has decreed, by his own authority, that the optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto should be inscribed in the Roman Calendar on 10 December, the day on which the feast falls in Loreto, and celebrated every year. This celebration will help all people, especially families, youth and religious to imitate the virtues of that perfect disciple of the Gospel, the Virgin Mother, who, in conceiving the Head of the Church also accepted us as her own.

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.

The “Unplanned” DVD is now available from Divine Mercy Publications for \$25. Order at divinemercury.com.au/category/C24 or phone (03) 9830 4386

Ed.

Knock, Knock, I’m Here

In regard to your October issue (p.1, Knock Knock, Who’s There?), I pass ITD onto three people. They and my husband and I do read it all. I too appreciate your paper. God bless you and all helpers. Please find donation enclosed.

Helen Casanova, Westmere, Victoria

The Joy of Waiting

Pope Francis, 01-12-2018

We Christians are called upon to preserve and spread the joy of waiting: we await God Who loves us infinitely and at the same time we are awaited by Him. In this way, life becomes a great period of betrothal. We are not left to ourselves, we are not alone. We are visited, now already. ... God visits us and waits to stay with us forever. Today, tomorrow, always. If you banish Him, the Lord remains at the door, waiting, waiting for you to let Him enter another time. Let us never banish the Lord from our life! He is always waiting to stay with us. ...

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Next Issue of ITD

The next issue of ITD will be a combined January/February issue, coming out late January. I wish all readers and their families a holy Christmas Season and happy New Year!

Ed.

Thank you for a great read and for your dedication. A small donation enclosed and a very blessed and happy Christmas to you.

Margaret Regan, Melbourne, Victoria

REST IN PEACE

VALERIE GLEESON

Please pray for the soul of Val Gleeson, late of Yinnar, Victoria, who died 03-11-2019.

Val was found to have inoperable cancer over two years ago, and was only given a few months to live. She lived those years graciously, always more worried about faith and family than her own health. Val and her late husband John were Catholic stalwarts, well-known and loved in the local area. May they rest in peace.

JUDY COONEY

Please pray for the soul of Judy Cooney, late of Cowwarr, Victoria, and beloved wife of John. Judy died on 15-11-2019 after a long time of ill health.

Judy was beautifully remembered by Cowwarr priest Fr Ken Clark in his parish bulletin as "a woman close to Christ, and who 'visited' often with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. I remember her 'just going for a visit' with great joy and fondness". What a beautiful way to be remembered. May God rest her soul, and comfort John in his grief.

**ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD,
AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON
THEM. MAY THEY REST IN PEACE. AMEN.**

Bambinelli Sunday

I invite everyone to celebrate Bambinelli Sunday! This wonderful tradition originates in the papacy of Pope St John Paul II and is celebrated when the children of Rome and their families fill St Peter's Square on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, for the blessing of the Gesu Bambino, the 'little baby Jesus.'

On this day the children bring from home their Christ-child figures, their bambinelli, in hands, in pockets, in backpacks, from their own family nativity scenes. Some will even bring the bambinelli of friends and neighbours unable to attend. Then, during the noontime Angelus address, the Holy Father invites all to hold up their bambinelli for a special blessing of the Christ-child figures, the children and their families.

Upon returning home the figure is set safely out of sight for the remainder of Advent until happily placed in the creche with the arrival of Christmas.

What a beautiful, tangible way to keep the anticipated coming of the Lord Jesus into our homes and hearts central to our holiday preparations. Why not bring your own Christ-child figures to Mass this Gaudete Sunday (15th December) and ask your priest for this beautifully memorable blessing!

A suggestion is that following the blessing, your 'bambinello' is taken home, put in a gift box and wrapped or placed in an unseen place of honour to await Christmas. Let this be the first gift your family opens on Christmas as together you place the blessed Christ-child figure in the manger and welcome Christmas into your home.

Pat Ryan, London, UK

Daily Mass and Paying a Visit

Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, n.66

It is desirable to have the faithful in large numbers take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass each and every day and receive the nourishment of Holy Communion with a pure and holy mind and offer fitting thanks to Christ the Lord for such a great gift. They should remember these words: "The desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church to see all the faithful approach the sacred banquet each and every day is based on a wish to have them all united to God through the Sacrament and to have them draw from it the strength to master their passions, to wash away the lesser sins that are committed every day and to prevent the serious sins to which human frailty is subject" (Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, December 20, 1905, approved by St. Pius X).

And they should not forget about paying a visit during the day to the Most Blessed Sacrament in the very special place of honour where it is reserved in churches in keeping with the liturgical laws, since this is a proof of gratitude and a pledge of love and a display of the adoration that is owed to Christ the Lord who is present there.

Three New Beginnings

Homily by Fr John Speakman, for 1st Sunday of Advent, Year A

It's always a pleasure on this day, the first Sunday of Advent, to turn both the Missal and the Lectionary from the very last page back to the very first page, to begin the celebration of the paschal mystery all over again. Today is a Mass of beginnings.

Firstly we begin a new liturgical year. There are three of them: Year A when we read the Gospel of Matthew; Year B when we read the Gospel of Mark; and Year C when we read the Gospel of Luke.

Today we begin the three year cycle again from the very beginning – Year A – and, in another sense, we are also beginning the journey of the rest of our life.

And so, from all the different areas of the parish, from many different walks of life, and from a great variety of human situations you and I have joined the long procession of Catholics who, throughout the world, have gathered in their own local church to celebrate these three new beginnings as disciples of Christ.

In this context the opening words of our celebration are especially significant. Hundreds of millions of Catholics will begin the Mass with these words: *To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.* (Entrance Antiphon)

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. What beautiful words! We gather for this new season of Advent and the first thing the Church asks us to do is to say together: *To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.* This is the essence and definition of prayer – raising my soul to God.

There seems to me a special significance in the fact that we were not asked to say this in a plural form today, that is: *To you, we lift up our souls, O our God.* I wonder if it was intentional? In any event, the use of the singular is very appropriate here. As the millions of believers gather to pray it is fitting that together, each one should address God in a personal way. Only *I* can lift my soul to God. It's a very personal thing. You cannot lift my soul to God. You cannot trust God for me. Your wife or husband can pray for you at Mass but they cannot take your place before God.

Interestingly, the revised Mass translation makes the same point. We no longer say: *We* believe in one God. We have returned to the original Latin: *I* believe in one God. You cannot believe for me; I cannot believe for you. I have to believe for myself – as an individual. And we might add here, that even though we make the journey of Advent together, no one can make it for us. You have to make it for yourself; I have to make it for myself.

So let us continue with the Entrance Antiphon. Having lifted my soul to God I now tell him: *In you, I have trusted...* Of all the prayers we can say to God this surely must be one of the most pleasing; telling him that we trust him. Saint Faustina confirms this for us in her Diary when she writes that *trust* in God will unlock the door of his mercy. It was the signature Jesus wanted placed under the image of Divine Mercy – *Jesus, I trust in you.*

Recognising our own weakness, however, we acknowledge that it can cause us to come to grief and so we plead: *let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me.* And our enemies do exult, they do gloat over us. That's what enemies do, that's their job, they can't help it. And to the degree that they cause us to turn to God we should be grateful to them.

The best kind of enemy to have is one who opposes you for the sake of the name of Christ; as we heard in our readings two weeks ago; *You will be hated by all men on account of my name.* Jesus then told us: *Not a hair of your head will be lost,* and that's why we can pray with confidence, as in the conclusion of our Entrance Antiphon: *let none who hope in you be put to shame.*

So our themes are clear. Advent will be for us, or should I just say, for me?

- A time for gathering with the Church for the Sunday Mass. - A time of looking forward to and waiting for the coming of Christ. - A time of prayer, of lifting my soul to God every day, as often as possible. - A time of renewed trust. - A time of faith, of knowing that *no one who waits for God is ever put to shame.*

The Four Pillars

I last wrote (October ITD, p.6) on the Trinitarian-Christological and Ecclesiological doctrinal core of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In the same way as these three central mysteries of the Church's Faith in one way or another inform and inspire every page of the Catechism, so too should it our lives. We should express and show to others these mysteries in the places where we live, work or travel.

Upon this doctrinal core rest the four fundamental elements of the Catechism: 1) The Creed, 2) The Sacraments, 3) The Commandments and 4) The Our Father.

All that is said about the Catholic Faith is organized around these four fundamental elements which are known as 'pillars'. They cover and embrace the four fundamental dimensions of Catholic life: 1) the profession of the faith, 2) the celebration of the liturgy, 3) the morality of the Gospel, and 4) prayer.

These four pillars spring from a single source, the Mystery of Christ, which is really the axis of the entire Catechism. In structuring the contents in this way, the Catechism refers to the faith as 1) believed, 2) celebrated, 3) lived and 4) prayed.

It develops the essential aspects of the Church's Faith, which is 1) the belief in the Triune God and in His plan of salvation, 2) the sanctification by him in the sacramental life, 3) loving him with all one's heart and one's neighbour as one's self, and 4) prayer, while waiting for the coming of Christ's Kingdom and our meeting with him face to face.

It really is a synthesis, a bringing together if you like, of all the teachings of the Church based on Scripture and Tradition. This doctrinal organization is rather telling, insofar as it reflects a particular logic and order of presentation for proper doctrinal education and formation.

It teaches us that, in communicating the Catholic Faith at whatever level, priority must always be given to 1) the divine invitation to Trinitarian communion (the Creed), then 2) to the grace-filled sacramental enablement (the Sacraments) which makes such communion possible, then 3) to the pattern or way of life (the Commandments) which leads to this communion, and finally 4) to the fulfilment and realization of this communion in prayer and adoration through the Our Father.

All too often in past and present-day catechesis, this logical structure which stems from a profound unity of the Catholic life, has been neglected, and in many instances omitted, with dire consequences to the education and formation in the faith for whole generations of Catholics.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Almost Ordinary

St John Henry Newman

The Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not... The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming; has no pretence... with so little that is unusual or striking in his bearing, that he may easily be taken at first sight for an ordinary man.

Did You Notice?

This is the 200th issue of Into the Deep. Hard to believe it's been going so long, and completely funded by your donations. Thank you so much for all your support over the years to get 200 issues printed and distributed (and read!). Here's to 200 more!

Ed.

Angels

"Go where we will, our angels are always with us."

- **St Augustine**

"So sublime is the dignity of the human soul that from its birth there is appointed to each one a Guardian Angel." - **St Jerome**

"Make the holy angels your friends. No matter how weak we may be, or lowly our condition, or how great the dangers which surround us, we have nothing to fear under the protection of these guardians." - **St Bernard**

"Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life." - **St Basil**

Grave Mistake

I know that ITD has good intentions and that your readership looks to your articles for hope and inspiration and I admire and respect your intentions.

However your one-sided promotion of Pope Francis as a saintly man is leading people away from the truth and reality. If you, yourself personally believe and support 100% that the Pope is and has done, pre, during and post Synod as being above reproach, then that's your belief. But if you squirm at what he's doing and planning for Catholics in the future and you turn a blind eye and worse still stay silent in your publication, then you are leading people astray, something which would plague my conscience greatly.

Please don't misinterpret my letter as a personal attack on you and ITD. I have absolutely no malice towards you. I am in my humble opinion calling out a grave mistake that I believe you are making. I just hope and pray that you firmly believe that the Pope's recent behaviour is in accord with your conscience.

I will pray for you in my prayers.

Roman Kulkewycz, Garfield, Victoria

Thank you for assuming my best intentions, and for your prayers. I have not attempted to portray Pope Francis as a saintly man, but have simply acknowledged him as our Pope. As with previous Popes, I have published excerpts of various addresses and writings of his that have made an impact on me, or that I think will have an impact on others, or that is new or official. I do not consider myself unteachable, and as a Catholic, I do consider the Pope a teacher. I am willing to listen to what our shepherd on earth has to say to his flock, and to try to learn from it.

If I were to consider that listening to the Pope would lead to moral danger, then I would be, well, Protestant, I guess. It's pretty much a Catholic thing, recognising the Pope's authority. I would be more likely to lead people astray by leading them to ignore or despise or ridicule the Pope. That would certainly plague my conscience.

There are many opinions out there about Pope Francis, none of which I find helpful. I certainly don't think that ITD readers would find more value in my opinion about our Holy Father than in hearing what he actually tries to teach us. I am not the moral authority in the Church. Into the Deep is a Catholic publication that owes allegiance to the Pope, as we (Catholics) all do. The Lord is at the helm, and he has entrusted us to Pope Francis. Let us not make the (grave) mistake of trusting our own judgement more.

Ed.

God Has Spoken

St John of the Cross

The principal reason why the Old Law permitted us to ask questions of God, and why prophets and priests had to seek visions and revelations of God, was because at that time faith had no firm foundation and the law of the Gospel was not yet established; ... But now that the faith is founded in Christ, now that in this era of grace the law of the Gospel has been made manifest, there is no reason to enquire of God in that manner nor for him to speak to us or answer us as he did then. For, in giving us, as he did, his Son, who is his one and only Word, he spoke to us once and for all, in this single Word, and he has no occasion to speak further.

And this is the meaning of that passage with which the Letter to the Hebrews begins...: "At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, in the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son." That is, God has said so much about so many things through his Word that nothing more is needed, since that which he revealed partially in the past through the prophets, he has now revealed completely by giving us the All, which is his Son.

Therefore if someone were now to ask questions of God or seek any vision or revelation, he would not only be acting foolishly but would be committing an offence against God – for he should set his eyes altogether upon Christ and seek nothing beyond Christ.

Ordinary and Extraordinary

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

... Like Benedict XVI, I hope that the two forms of the Roman Rite will be mutually enriching. This implies getting out of a hermeneutic of rupture. Both forms have the same faith and the same theology. To oppose them is a profound ecclesiological error. It means destroying the Church by tearing it out of its Tradition and making it believe that what the Church considered holy in the past is now wrong and unacceptable. What a deception and insult to all the saints who have gone before us! ...

We must move away from dialectical oppositions. The Council did not wish to break with the liturgical forms inherited from Tradition, but, on the contrary, to better enter and participate more fully in them. The Conciliar Constitution stipulates that "new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing."

It would therefore be wrong to oppose the Council to the Tradition of the Church. In this sense, it is necessary that those who celebrate the extraordinary form do so without a spirit of opposition and therefore in the spirit of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

We need the extraordinary form to know in which spirit to celebrate the ordinary form. Conversely, celebrating the extraordinary form without taking into account the indications of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* risks reducing this form to a lifeless and futureless archaeological vestige. ...

If we live in this spirit, then the liturgy will cease to be the place of rivalries and criticism and will finally lead us into the great heavenly liturgy.

nregister.com 23-09-2019

Welcoming Martyrdom

Pope Francis, General Audience 25-09-2019

Stephen's prayer is very beautiful at that moment: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59) – and he dies as a son of God, forgiving: "Lord do not hold this sin against them". These words of Stephen teach us that it is not beautiful speeches that reveal our identity as children of God, but that only by surrendering one's life into the hands of the Father and forgiving those who offend us can the quality of our faith be shown.

There are more martyrs today than there were at the beginning of the life of the Church, and martyrs are everywhere. Today the Church is rich in martyrs, it is steeped in their blood: "The blood of Christians is seed" (Tertullian) and ensures the growth and fruitfulness of the People of God. Martyrs are not just "saintly", but rather men and women in flesh and blood who – as Revelation says – "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14). They are the true victors.

Let us also ask the Lord today that by looking to the martyrs of yesterday and today, we can learn to live a full life, welcoming the martyrdom of everyday faithfulness to the Gospel and conforming to Christ.

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The Most Effective Testimony

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 17-11-2019

Faith makes us walk with Jesus on the torturous ways of this world, in the certainty that the force of his Spirit will subdue the forces of evil, subjecting them to the power of God's love. Love is superior, love is more powerful because it is God: God is love.

Examples of this are the Christian martyrs...who, despite the persecutions, are men and women of peace. They give us an inheritance to protect and imitate: the Gospel of love and of mercy.

This is the most precious treasure that has been given to us, and the most effective testimony that we can give to our contemporaries: responding to hatred with love, to an offense with forgiveness. As in daily life: when we receive an offense, we feel pain, but it's necessary to forgive from the heart. When we feel hated, we must pray for the person that hates us.

May the Virgin Mary sustain, with her maternal intercession, our daily journey of faith, following the Lord who guides history.

[ZENIT's translation by Virginia M. Forrester] Zenit.org 17-11-2019

Without Jesus There is No Christmas

Pope Francis, General Audience, 27-12-2017

Without Jesus there is no Christmas; there is another holiday, but not Christmas. And if he is at the centre, then all the trimmings, that is, the lights, sounds, various local traditions, including the characteristic foods, all contribute to creating an atmosphere of celebration, but with Jesus at the centre. If we remove him, the light goes out and everything becomes feigned, illusory.

Through the message of the Church, we, as the shepherds of the Gospel, are led to seek out and find the true light, that of Jesus who, becoming human like us, reveals himself in a surprising way: he is born to a poor, unknown maiden, who gives birth to him in a stable, with only the help of her husband. The world does not notice anything, but in heaven the angels who know of the event exult! And it is in this way that the Son of God presents himself to us today: as God's gift to humanity, which is immersed in darkness and in the listlessness of slumber. And again today we witness the fact that humanity often prefers darkness, because it knows that the light would reveal all those actions and thoughts that would make us blush or stir our conscience. Thus, we prefer to remain in the dark and not subvert our own bad habits.

We can thus ask ourselves what it means to welcome God's gift, which is Jesus. As he himself has taught us with his life, it means becoming daily a gift freely given to those we meet on our own path. This is why Christmas gifts are exchanged. The true gift to us is Jesus, and like him we seek to be gifts to others. And, since we want to be gifts to others, we exchange gifts, as a sign, as a symbol of this attitude that Jesus teaches us: he, sent by the Father, was a gift to us, and we are gifts to others.

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Source of Wonder

Prayer from a Hymn by St Ephraim (306-373)

Lord Jesus Christ,
Your mother is a source of wonder:
the Lord entered in her and became a servant;
the One who is the Word entered in Her and became silence;
the thunder that shakes the forest entered in Her and was born in the silence of the night;
the Shepherd of everyone entered in Her and became the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.
Your Mother has disrupted the order of things:
the Creator of all has entered in her property but came out poor;
the Most High has entered in Her but came out humble;
the Splendour entered in Her but came out as a weak light;
the Almighty has entered in Her but took upon himself uncertainty and fear;
the One who feeds every thing has entered in Her but has experienced hunger;
He, who quenches the thirsty, has entered in Her and has suffered thirst;
Here, from Her, naked is born the One who clothes every thing.

The Roman Pontiff

Code of Canon Law

Can. 331 The bishop of the Roman Church, in whom continues the office given by the Lord uniquely to Peter, the first of the Apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, is the head of the college of bishops, the Vicar of Christ, and the pastor of the universal Church on earth. By virtue of his office he possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely.

Can. 333 §1. By virtue of his office, the Roman Pontiff not only possesses power over the universal Church but also obtains the primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches and groups of them. Moreover, this primacy strengthens and protects the proper, ordinary, and immediate power which bishops possess in the particular churches entrusted to their care.

§2. In fulfilling the office of supreme pastor of the Church, the Roman Pontiff is always joined in communion with the other bishops and with the universal Church. He nevertheless has the right, according to the needs of the Church, to determine the manner, whether personal or collegial, of exercising this office.

§3. No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.

Remembering Eternity

From a reflection by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, 10-12-2010

When did we hear the last homily on eternal life? Who dares any more to mention eternal life in front of the suffering of an innocent child? We continue to recite the Creed: "I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come," but without giving too much weight to these words. Kierkegaard was right when he wrote: "The beyond has become a joke, such an uncertain need that not only does no one respect it anymore, but no one even expects it, to the point that we are amused even at the thought that there was a time in which this idea transformed the whole of existence."

What is the practical consequence of this eclipse of the idea of eternity? St Paul refers to those who do not believe in the resurrection from the dead: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1Cor 15:32). The natural desire to live always, distorted, becomes a desire or frenzy to live well, namely, pleasantly, even at the expense of others, if necessary. ... The horizon of eternity having fallen, human suffering seems doubly and irremediably absurd. ... There are questions that men have not ceased to pose themselves since the world began and the men of today are no exception: "Who are we? From whence do we come? Where are we going?" ...

A renewed faith in eternity does not only serve for evangelization, that is, for the proclamation to be done to others; it serves, even before that, to give a new impetus to our journey towards sanctity. The weakening of the idea of eternity acts also on believers, diminishing in them the capacity to face suffering and the trials of life with courage. We are no longer accustomed in front of a difficult situation to repeat what St Bernard and Ignatius of Loyola used to say: "Quid hoc ad aeternitatem?" (What does this matter compared to eternity?). ...

Saint Paul dared to write: "For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal" (2Cor 4:17-18). The weight of tribulation is light precisely because it is momentary, that of glory is immeasurable precisely because it is eternal. Because of this, the Apostle can say: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us" (Rom 8:18). ...

The passage from time to eternity is not straight and equal for all. There is a judgment to face and a judgment that can have two very different results, hell or paradise. ... Let us direct our thoughts then with renewed impetus towards eternity...

Zenit.org 11-12-2010

Pause Before the Nativity Scene

Pope Francis, General Audience 19-12-2018

To celebrate Christmas is to do as Jesus did, who came for us needy ones and to bend down to those who need us. It is to do as Mary did: to trust God with docility, even without understanding what he will do. To celebrate Christmas is to do as Joseph did: to arise in order to do what God wants, even if it is not according to our plans.

Saint Joseph is surprising. He never speaks in the Gospel; there is never a word from Joseph in the Gospel and the Lord speaks to him in silence. He actually speaks to him in his sleep. Christmas means preferring the silent voice of God to the din of consumerism. If we can pause in silence before the Nativity scene, Christmas will be a surprise for us too, not a thing that we have already seen. To stand in silence before the Nativity scene: this is the invitation for Christmas. Take some time, stand before the Nativity scene and be silent. And you will feel, you will understand the surprise.

Unfortunately however, one can have the *wrong celebration* and prefer the usual things of the earth to the newness of Heaven. If Christmas remains just a beautiful traditional celebration where we are at the centre and not him, it will be a missed opportunity. Please let us not make Christmas *worldly*! Let us not put the Celebrated One aside, as happened then, when he "came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:11).

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Careful Searching Like the Magi

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 06-01-2018

Today, the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Gospel presents three attitudes with which the coming of Jesus and his manifestation to the world were received: careful searching, indifference, fear.

The Magi do not hesitate to set out to search for the Messiah. When they reach Jerusalem they ask: "Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage". They have made a long journey and now they conduct a careful search to discover where the newborn King can be found. In Jerusalem they turn to King Herod, who asks the chief priests and scribes to inquire about the place where the Messiah was to be born.

This careful search of the Magi contrasts with the indifference of the high priests and scribes. They know the Scriptures and are able to give the right answer regarding the place of His birth: "In Bethlehem of Judea, because this is what the prophet wrote", but they do not bother to go and visit the Messiah. Bethlehem is only a few kilometres away, but they do not move.

Even more negative is the attitude of Herod: he is afraid that the Child will take away his power. He calls the Magi and has them tell him when the star appeared to them, then he sends them to Bethlehem saying: "Go and find out all about the child and, when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage". In reality, Herod wants to know where the child is, not to do him homage, but to eliminate him, because he considers him a rival. See how fear provokes hypocrisy. Hypocrites are the way they are because they have fear in their hearts.

These are the three attitudes we find in the Gospel: careful searching, indifference, fear. And we too must choose which of the three to adopt.

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A Cry of Pain

Pope Francis, to hospital staff, Bangkok 21-11-2019

Each of us knows how illness brings with it questions that dig deep. Our first reaction may be to rebel and even experience moments of bewilderment and desolation. We cry out in pain, and rightly so: Jesus himself shared in that suffering and made it his own. With prayer, we too want to join in his own cry of pain.

By uniting ourselves to Jesus in his passion, we discover the power of his closeness to our frailty and our wounds. We are invited to cling to him and to his sacrifice. If at times we feel deeply "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction", let us also pray that we can find, in an outstretched hand, the help needed to discover the comfort that comes from "the Lord who does not hide himself" (cf. Is 30:20), but remains ever close to us and accompanies us at every moment.

Zenit.org 21-11-2019

Aim of the Catechism

Catechism of the Catholic Church

11 This catechism aims at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals, in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the whole of the Church's Tradition. Its principal sources are the Sacred Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, and the Church's Magisterium. It is intended to serve "as a point of reference for the catechisms or compendia that are composed in the various countries".

12 This work is intended primarily for those responsible for catechesis: first of all the bishops, as teachers of the faith and pastors of the Church. It is offered to them as an instrument in fulfilling their responsibility of teaching the People of God. Through the bishops, it is addressed to redactors of catechisms, to priests, and to catechists. It will also be useful reading for all other Christian faithful.

"Let us understand that God is a physician, and that suffering is a medicine for salvation, not a punishment for damnation."

St Augustine of Hippo

Liturgical Colours

From an answer by Fr Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University

The essential norms dealing with the use of liturgical colours are found in the new General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 346:

As to the colour of sacred vestments, the traditional usage is to be retained: namely,

- a. White is used in the Offices and Masses during the Easter and Christmas seasons; also on celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not Martyrs; on the Solemnities of All Saints (1 November) and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 June); and on the Feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (27 December), of the Chair of Saint Peter (22 February), and of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 January).
- b. Red is used on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and on Good Friday, on Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, on the feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of Martyr Saints.
- c. Green is used in the Offices and Masses of Ordinary Time.
- d. Violet or purple is used in Advent and of Lent. It may also be worn in Offices and Masses for the Dead (cf. below).
- e. Besides violet, white or black vestments may be worn at funeral services and at other Offices and Masses for the Dead in the Dioceses of the United States of America.
- f. Rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).
- g. On more solemn days, sacred vestments may be used that are festive, that is, more precious, even if not of the colour of the day.
- h. Gold or silver coloured vestments may be worn on more solemn occasions in the dioceses of the United States of America."

To this we may add the observation of the instruction "Redemptionis Sacramentum":

[121.] "The purpose of a variety of colour of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year." On the other hand, the variety of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments. In fact, these "sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself." ...

The names Gaudete and Laetare comes from the traditional entrance antiphon, or introit, sung at these Masses. Both terms may be broadly translated as "rejoice" or "delight" and refer to the importance of the theme of Christian joy, even in the midst of a penitential season, which is reflected in the formulas and readings of both these Masses. ...

Historically it appears that all sacred vestments were white until about the seventh century. Around the time of Pope Innocent III (died 1216) we had four principal colours (red, white, black and green) and three secondary colours (yellow, rose and purple). But a common criterion for the use of the various colours is not found until around 1550, when the present usage became standard. ...

The use of the diverse colours is both pedagogical and symbolic of the various liturgical feasts and seasons. Thus, white, the symbol of light and purity, and gold and silver are festive colours. Red expresses both the fire of the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Passion and of martyrdom. Green is the symbolic colour of hope and serenity. Violet, recalling sombreness and penance, has also largely replaced black for funerals although this latter colour may still be used. Rose, which has never enjoyed frequent use, serves as a reminder, by using an unusual colour, that we are halfway through a penitential season.

Zenit.org 07-12-2004

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

Like the Shepherds

Pope Francis, 21-12-2018

So my wish is this: to be holy, to be happy. But not picture-postcard saints! Normal saints. Saints in flesh and blood, with our character, our faults, even our sins – let us ask for forgiveness and go ahead – but ready to let ourselves be “infected” by Jesus’ presence in our midst, ready to come to Him, like the shepherds, to see this Event, this incredible sign that God has given us. “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Lk 2:10). Will we go see Him? Or will we be occupied with things?

Dear brothers and sisters, let us not be afraid of holiness. I assure you, it is the path of joy. Merry Christmas to all!

w2.vatican.va

Angels Tremble

St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi

Prayer ought to be humble, fervent, resigned, persevering, and accompanied with great reverence. One should consider that he stands in the presence of God, and speaks with a Lord before whom angels tremble from awe and fear.

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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