

Into the Deep

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Lord, Make Us Easter People

Pope Benedict XVI, Easter Vigil Mass 2008

In the early Church there was a custom whereby the Bishop or the priest, after the homily, would cry out to the faithful: "*Conversi ad Dominum*" – turn now towards the Lord. This meant in the first place that they would turn towards the East, towards the rising sun, the sign of Christ returning, whom we go to meet when we celebrate the Eucharist. Where this was not possible for some reason, they would at least turn towards the image of Christ in the apse, or towards the Cross, so as to orient themselves inwardly towards the Lord.

Fundamentally, this involved an interior event; *conversion*, the turning of our soul towards Jesus Christ and thus towards the living God, towards the true light. Linked with this, then, was the other exclamation that still today, before the Eucharistic Prayer, is addressed to the community of the faithful: "*Sursum corda*" – "Lift up your hearts", high above all our misguided concerns, desires, anxieties and thoughtlessness – "Lift up your hearts, your inner selves!"

In both exclamations we are summoned, as it were, to a renewal of our Baptism: *Conversi ad Dominum* – we must always turn away from false paths, onto which we stray so often in our thoughts and actions. We must turn ever anew towards him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We must be converted ever anew, turning with our whole life towards the Lord. And ever anew we must withdraw our hearts from the force of gravity, which pulls them down, and inwardly we must raise them high: in truth and love.

At this hour, let us thank the Lord, because through the power of his word and of the holy Sacraments, he points us in the right direction and draws our heart upwards. Let us pray to him in these words: Yes, Lord, make us Easter people, men and women of light, filled with the fire of your love. Amen.

Zenit.org 23-03-2008

Rest in Peace

John Henderson

Our dear friend and stalwart ITD supporter has finally gone to meet the Lord face to face. John died peacefully in hospital on 13 March. Words fail me in trying to pay a fitting tribute to him. I refer you instead to his son Peter's eulogy printed on page 4 & 5 of this issue of ITD, and my tribute to John in the July 2019 issue of ITD (p.8).

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Ed.

Christian Faith

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Papal Household, in his 3rd Lenten sermon 2021

Saint Augustine said: 'It is no great feat to believe that Jesus died; this is believed even by pagans and reprobates; everyone believes in that. But it is a really great feat to believe that he has risen.' And he concluded: 'Christian faith is the resurrection of Christ.'

The same thing must be said of the humanity and the divinity of Christ, which are respectively manifested in his death and resurrection. Everyone believes that Jesus is a man; what makes a difference between believers and non-believers is believing that he is also God. Christian faith is the divinity of Christ.

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

That the World Might Believe

Pope Francis, General Audience, 20-01-2021

After the Last Supper, He prayed for His own, "that they may all be one". ... He prayed to the Father for us, so that we might be one. This means that we are not able to achieve unity with our own strength. Above all, unity is a gift, it is a grace to be requested through prayer. ... Unity can be achieved only as a fruit of prayer. Diplomatic efforts and academic dialogue are not enough. These things are done, but they are not enough. Jesus knew this and opened the way for us by praying. Our prayer for unity is thus a humble but trusting participation in the Lord's prayer, who promised that any prayer said in His name would be heard by the Father.

At this point, we can ask ourselves: "Do I pray for unity?" It is Jesus's will but, if we inspect the intentions for which we pray, we would probably realize that we have prayed little, perhaps never, for Christian unity. And yet, the world's faith depends on it; in fact, the Lord asked that we be one "so that the world might believe" (Jn 17:21).

Vatican.va

Alleluia, Amen

St Isidore of Seville

Alleluia is an expression of two words, that is, 'God's praise,' and is Hebrew, for *Ia* is one of the ten names by which God is addressed among the Hebrews.

Amen means "truly" or "faithfully," and it too is Hebrew. It is not permitted for Greek, Latin, or barbarian speakers to translate these two words, *alleluia* and *amen*, wholly into their own language, or to pronounce them in any other language, for although they can be translated, the antiquity of their own language has been preserved in them from apostolic times because of their especially sacred authority.

For so holy are these words that even John in the Apocalypse tells that when the Spirit revealed it to him he saw and heard the voice of the heavenly host like the voice of many waters and mighty thunder, saying *amen* and *alleluia* (Apoc. 19:4, 6). And because of this it is fitting for both words to be spoken on earth just as they resound in heaven.

The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville, Book VI, xix. 19-23

Reader Responses

Thank you for publishing 'Into the Deep' especially through this past year and this March issue.

I feel, as I think many are, very depressed with the way things are. When I go to Mass, instead of being joyous I find myself being focussed on rules: social distancing, masks, booking to go to Mass etc. Weekday Mass is easier and less stressful but still not as it should be. I seem to feel closer to Our Lord at home. A sign of the times I suppose.

It is uplifting to read your articles. Some give me the answer I am looking for. I pass on to others whom I know will benefit and will help them. Please keep it up. I will deposit more funding.

Christine Williamson, Drouin South, Victoria

Thank you for the notice of Pat Ryan's death. I hope that knowing someone here in distant Australia kept him mentioned in daily prayers was of some comfort to him.

John McMahon, Kolonga, Queensland

Please find enclosed a donation towards ITD. Many thanks for what you do. I have been receiving copies of ITD by email for some years now and greatly appreciate each edition. In particular, I value the quotations from Pope Francis, prayers/quotes from the saints, Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and the occasional quiz! Reference to why we do things in our liturgies is also a good idea.

Kevin Kiem, Carrington, New South Wales

Closeness of Bishops

Pope Francis, Iraq, 05-03-2021

Here, I would like to say a special word to my brother bishops. I like to think of our episcopal ministry in terms of closeness: our need to remain close to God in prayer, close to the faithful entrusted to our care, and close to our priests.

Be particularly close to your priests. Let them not see you as only an administrator or manager, but as true fathers, concerned for their welfare, ready to offer them support and encouragement with an open heart. Accompany them with your prayer, your time, your appreciation for their work and your efforts to guide their growth. In this way, you will be for your priests a visible sign and model of Jesus, the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and gives his life for them.

Vatican.va

Praying With Christ Beside You

Pope Francis, General Audience, 03-02-2021

The Catechism writes: "In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays" (n. 2655).

The liturgy, in itself, is not just spontaneous prayer, but something more, and more original: it is an act that founds the whole Christian experience and, therefore, prayer, too, is an event, it is a happening, it is presence, it is encounter. It is an encounter with Christ. Christ makes himself present in the Holy Spirit through the sacramental signs: hence the need for us Christians to participate in the divine mysteries. A Christianity without a liturgy, I dare say, is perhaps a Christianity without Christ. Without the Total Christ. Even in the barest of rites, such as the one some Christians have celebrated and continue to celebrate in places of incarceration, or in the hiddenness of a house in times of persecution, Christ is truly present and gives himself to his faithful.

Precisely because of its objective dimension, the liturgy asks to be celebrated with fervour, so that the grace poured out in the rite is not dispersed, but rather reaches the experience of each one. The Catechism explains it very well and says this: "Prayer internalizes and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration" (ibid.). Many Christian prayers do not originate from the liturgy, but all of them, if they are Christian, presuppose the liturgy, that is, the sacramental mediation of Jesus Christ. Every time we celebrate a Baptism, or consecrate the bread and wine in the Eucharist, or anoint the body of a sick person with Holy Oil, Christ is here! It is he who acts and is present just as he was when he healed the weak limbs of a sick person, or when he delivered his testament for the salvation of the world at the Last Supper. ...

Life is called to become worship to God, but this cannot happen without prayer, especially liturgical prayer. May this thought help us all when we go to Mass: I go to pray in the community, I go to pray with Christ who is present. When we go to the celebration of a Baptism, for example, it is Christ present there, who baptizes. "But Father, this is an idea, a figure of speech": no, it is not a figure of speech. Christ is present, and in the liturgy you pray with Christ who is beside you.

Vatican.va

Hosanna

Osanna (i.e. *hosanna*) cannot entirely be translated into another language: *osi* means "save!"; *anna* is an interjection expressing the emotion of someone in a state of passionate beseeching. ...

In Hebrew it is spoken *osanna*, which means "save!" with its object understood as either 'thy people' or 'the whole world.'

The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville, Book VI, xix. 19-23

Do You Know?

What percentage of "people across the globe profess faith in God and are affiliated with a religion"?

- A. 17%
- B. 62%
- C. 85%

See page 7 for the answer.

Marian Day

Saturday 8th May 2021

St Brigid's, Church Street, Cowwarr, VIC

Starting with 9.30am Mass, concluding with the 3pm Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Theme – Fatima: The Blessed Virgin Mary and the four Last Things.

All welcome. Everyone to bring their own food for lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Being Productive

Listening to the news lately what's going on in the world, I believe that those who pray, do more for the world than those who fight. And if the world is going from bad to worse, it is because there are more battles than prayers.

Bert Van Galen, Mowbray, Tasmania

A Tribute to John Henderson, R.I.P.

Eulogy by his son Peter Henderson, before John's Funeral Mass on 19 March 2021, Sacred Heart Morwell

Thank you all for your attendance today. Dad would want me to remind everyone that today's Mass is to pray for his soul and to ask you to please do that by participating in the Mass by simply following the book. Dad had a habit of making what you might call pronouncements. When we were younger for many years he would say "you children don't know how lucky you are to have the mother you have". Prior to mum's illness that had changed to "if anything happens to your mother I don't want to be mollycoddled". It turned out that he was very correct about the former and very wrong about the latter. There were a number of mollycoddlers that we must thank.

Dad's doctors, Charles Luiz & Anthony Boers miraculously kept him going for many years more than any of them thought possible. They were not just excellent doctors but just as importantly very caring and Dad considered them to be friends.

The staff at Maryvale Private Hospital, especially the North ward, looked after Dad on many occasions in recent years including at his passing. They also were very kind and caring and very patient with him and his, at times, very blunt sense of humor.

Various priests in the parish and beyond including those here today provided pastoral care to Dad that was essential for him. In particular, over the last 4 years Father Edwin who will celebrate the Mass for us, has proved to be an outstandingly caring priest and Dad was grateful beyond explanation for his care. I'd also like to personally thank Father James who has been incredibly helpful and cooperative this week in organizing the funeral.

Gabrielle Mattioli started out many years ago as Mum's hairdresser. As her illness progressed, he started making house calls for her. After Mum died, he continued with the house calls for Dad and at some point a few years ago became a personal carer for Dad, showering him and things like that. That's a major transition! After the job was done Gabrielle would sit with Dad having a chat and a smoke, despite having given up smoking many years ago. They became good friends. I hope your wife's not here today, Gab, to hear about your smoking!

Two years ago, Greg Kingman became another personal carer taking the night shift for at least 6 nights a week. Greg would be at home doing all sorts of things for Dad and set a standard that no one could possibly match when he was away on a short break. Greg proved himself to be more than a friend and someone who demonstrated his beliefs with action.

Dad called my wife Helen his guardian angel. After Mum died Helen did everything and anything for Dad and as his health deteriorated in the last 4 years, she had the day shift 7 days a week (with some double shifts thrown in) and performed tasks that no daughter-in-law should have to perform on their father-in-law. Her only breaks were when we went on holidays and then I wasn't sure where she'd rather be. Dad and Helen were very close and Helen will miss him greatly.

My sister Sue has been looking after Dad since Mum died nearly 8 years ago. She has undertaken all manner of work and tasks including cooking Dad's meals, taking him for medical appointments (and occasionally dealing with him afterwards when declaring that no one was telling him what to do) and many other tasks big and small. She worked very hard on top of her 2 jobs to look after Dad as well as any daughter could.

Dad was effectively running a do-it-yourself aged care home which he thought was better than any aged care home could be. On behalf of the family and Dad, we'd like to sincerely thank all those people, and the many other people who helped Dad make that possible that we can't mention today.

I read a biography some years ago where the subject person was quoted as saying that he didn't think he could be raised with a better pair of parents. He said, "I didn't get money from my parents" but "I won the Ovarian Lottery" (meaning he had all the luck he needed with the parents he was given). We were in the same boat. It's difficult to talk about Dad without also mentioning Mum. Mum's brother Ron has said to me a number of times, that their marriage was a match made in heaven in more ways than one. They weren't

perfect (nobody is) and they had their disagreements (everybody does) but they were a single unit in their devotion and care for us. When we were young, especially back in the McMillan Street days, we really had nothing much. Dad got his first car 4 years after he was married, there was 7 of us in a 2-bedroom home and we had our first family holiday after Mum and Dad had been married for 13 years. But we were always loved and we were happy and we wanted for nothing. And they loved us all dearly for their entire lives.

At Mum's funeral, Dad said that ultimately love is not about emotions but is all about sacrifice, for each other. Mum and Dad made innumerable sacrifices for us. When Dad was 23, he retired from football as a valued senior player at Morwell, because he had to get a second job after I was born and Mum had ceased working. He couldn't go and watch Morwell play because watching the footy was too painful. Of course, the season after he retired, Morwell won the premiership and he never got to play in one. That may be why he enjoyed his involvement in the Club's successful era of the 1980's when he was president. There were plenty of other sacrifices from both of them over the course of their lives.

I should add that the Morwell Football Club had a special place in Dad's heart especially because of those people involved back in the 1980's. He and Mum had some of their happiest memories from their time at the Club due to the quality people involved back then such as Stan Morgan, Gert Mahoney and many others including players who Dad in many ways saw as additional sons.

Dad was a man of great faith and this shaped not only his values and principles but his entire life. He tried to treat everyone the same. Back in the 1990's at one point, a supported house for people with intellectual disabilities opened a few doors up the street from home. As was his way, Dad introduced himself to one of the residents out the front one day, a bloke named Peter. Peter had a very bad speech impediment as well as his intellectual disability, and was very difficult to communicate with, unless it was Dad. Peter would talk to Dad out the front when they saw each other and one day Dad invited Peter into the garage for a stubby, of course. Peter seemed to not have had a stubby before and he quickly developed a liking for Melbourne Bitter. He'd arrive regularly for a stubby which Dad happily provided as Dad thought this was great, that is, making Peter happy. This occurred one Christmas Day, after lunch. Peter wandered up the driveway looking for his fix of Melbourne Bitter, and Dad asked him to join us for a stubby while Dad had a conversation with him. Keith Barlow was with us and watching all this, and sort of thinking out loud said in part admiration and part amazement, "he treats everyone the same". It was what made Dad a special person and such a great leader of the footy club, something borne out by the admiration the footy club people had for him back then and to this day.

Of course, he didn't get along with everyone and he didn't try to. He used to say you should be tolerant and forgiving but that doesn't mean you have to be someone's punching bag. If he saw what he considered to be an injustice, which usually involved some sort of authority, whether it be political, football or Church authorities, then he didn't hold back. For him it was never personal, but it definitely was about him standing up for what he thought was right and often for someone or some important principle he believed was being wronged. There will be people here today who were the beneficiaries of that support and for whom Dad had their eternal admiration. Others would have preferred Dad to just shut up (especially the various authorities) but for Dad shutting up was the weak and disingenuous option. Thomas Jefferson once said "in matters of taste swim with the tide. In matters of principle stand like a rock". That was Dad and we admired him for that.

It's the end of an era now that Dad has gone to join Mum and Katherine. It's a sad time in some ways, but Dad had been unwell for some years and was well past being ready to go. He'd sometimes say through a thick fog of cigarette smoke, "I wish the good Lord would take me" to which my coughed-out response was, "I don't think he's ready for you". So, his passing would be a relief for him, and he had a very holy and peaceful death. It really doesn't get any better as far as deaths go.

As kids we've always been grateful to have had the parents we had. We have always been very proud of who they were. When you're young you have heroes, usually sports or entertainment stars. As you get older you understand that these people are often quite flawed and yet still have fame and fortune as their rewards. You perhaps also understand that the real heroes are the so called "ordinary people" doing outstanding jobs in important roles such as parenting, for no fame and no fortune. Our parents fit that description perfectly. Today we remember especially our Dad as such a man who we will always be proud of and thankful for.

Putting Us Back on Our Feet

Pope Francis, Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday 2020

It has already been a week since the disciples had seen the Risen Lord, but in spite of this, they remained fearful, cringing behind "closed doors" (Jn 20:26), unable even to convince Thomas, the only one absent, of the resurrection.

What does Jesus do in the face of this timorous lack of belief? He returns and, standing in the same place, "in the midst" of the disciples, he repeats his greeting: "Peace be with you!" (Jn 20:19, 26). He starts all over. The resurrection of his disciple begins here, from this *faithful and patient mercy*, from the discovery that God never tires of reaching out to lift us up when we fall. He wants us to see him, not as a taskmaster with whom we have to settle accounts, but as our Father who always raises us up. In life we go forward tentatively, uncertainly, like a toddler who takes a few steps and falls; a few steps more and falls again, yet each time his father puts him back on his feet. The hand that always puts us back on our feet is mercy: God knows that without mercy we will remain on the ground, that in order to keep walking, we need to be put back on our feet.

You may object: "But I keep falling!". The Lord knows this and he is always ready to raise you up. He does not want us to keep thinking about our failings; rather, he wants us to look to him. For when we fall, he sees children needing to be put back on their feet; in our failings he sees children in need of his merciful love. Today...we confidently welcome this message. Jesus said to Saint Faustina: "I am love and mercy itself; there is no human misery that could measure up to my mercy" (Diary, 14 September 1937).

At one time, the Saint, with satisfaction, told Jesus that she had offered him all of her life and all that she had. But Jesus' answer stunned her: "You have not offered me the thing that is truly yours". What had that holy nun kept for herself? Jesus said to her with kindness: "My daughter, give me your failings" (10 October 1937). We too can ask ourselves: "Have I given my failings to the Lord? Have I let him see me fall so that he can raise me up?" Or is there something I still keep inside me? A sin, a regret from the past, a wound that I have inside, a grudge against someone, an idea about a particular person... The Lord waits for us to offer him our failings so that he can help us experience his mercy.

Zenit.org 19-04-2020

Have the Courage to Return to Jesus

Vatican News 22-02-2021, by Christopher Wells

Pope Francis has written a letter to the Bishop and Church of Płock, Poland, on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the first apparition of the Merciful Jesus to St Maria Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun. The apparitions to St Faustina formed the basis of the Divine Mercy devotion. In his letter, Pope Francis recalls the words heard by St Faustina on 22 February 1931: "Paint a picture according to the pattern you see, with the caption: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated first in your chapel and then throughout the world." The image of the Divine Mercy has subsequently spread around the globe.

"I share the joy of the Church of Płock that this special event is already known throughout the world and remains alive in the hearts of the faithful," Pope Francis writes.

The Holy Father encourages the faithful to "ask Christ for the gift of mercy," to allow Christ's mercy "to embrace us and penetrate us," to have "the courage to return to Jesus, to encounter His love and mercy in the Sacraments," and to "feel His closeness and tenderness," so that we "might be more capable of mercy, patience, forgiveness, and love."

He notes that his predecessor, St John Paul II, whom he calls "the Apostle of Mercy," "wanted the message of God's merciful love to reach everyone in the world." In 2002, during a visit to the Divine Mercy Shrine in Krakow, the Polish Pope said, "This fire of mercy needs to be passed on to the world. In the mercy of God the world will find peace and mankind will find happiness!" ...

"Pass on the fire of Jesus' merciful love," Pope Francis writes in conclusion. "Be for everyone a sign of His presence among you."

Spiritual Childhood

I last wrote (March ITD, p. 5) about how the boy Blessed Carlo Acutis naturally knew what it meant to be a child of God in his great family the Catholic Church. He understood what it meant to be a son of the Father and holy Mother Church. We are not all blessed with this gift, and it is harder to know and learn about our identity as God's adopted sons and daughters when it is hardly preached and taught from the pulpit on Sundays. Even poorer or scarcer if you like, is the catechesis on the sacrament of Baptism and its relationship to spiritual childhood. Ask yourself, when in the last five to ten years, have you heard Bishops and priests, preach, teach or write about spiritual childhood in the Church?

No, these spiritual fathers have been far too busy exercising the ministry of empowerment by promoting lay leadership and ministry, equal discipleship and justice. Yet, if you read your Scriptures, you will find that this is not what Jesus said will get you into the kingdom of heaven.

This is why for many Catholics, childhood and family have not been spiritual realities that would describe their experiences and relationships in God's household. And it is also why I appreciated the inspirational and refreshing article on Carlos Acutis a couple of months ago (Jan/Feb ITD, p.7) even though it didn't directly address spiritual childhood.

For most Catholics, and dare I say Christians in general, spiritual childhood is not an easy thing to grasp, and even harder to exercise if one considers oneself a 'mature' adult in the practice of the faith. We find it far more important and fulfilling to exercise some form of leadership and ministry, than to concentrate on truly being a humble, obedient and trusting son or daughter in the Church. As Catholics we should really look into ourselves and carefully examine our hearts and minds to see if we have been, and currently are, living our endless life in Christ as a son or daughter of the Father; because this is what being a Catholic really, seriously and truly means.

We tend to forget that just as God had to accustom himself to our base human nature when he sent his only begotten Son, born of a woman, to redeem to the world, so too we have to accustom ourselves to the higher divine life we received when we were baptized as Catholics.

And God established his Church, with his Son as its head, to form and shape us through grace into his sons and daughters, so that we could be in communion with Him here on earth and ultimately in heaven. He established his hierarchical and patriarchal Church as our Mother to enable us to do this, and to discipline, forgive, heal, teach, nourish and nurture us to realize this profound vocation.

Right now, in many parts of the Western world, it looks like the Church has failed in its mission to evangelize and transform humanity into God's sons and daughters, so that they can be incorporated as members of his Son's sacred Body, the Church.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Answer

See page 3 for the question

"Our world is profoundly religious. Eighty-five percent of people across the globe profess faith in God and are affiliated with a religion. Of all of the factors that can unite the nations of the world, faith is among the strongest, as it brings people into communion at the core of their being beyond distinctions of citizenship, language, race, and sex."

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, addressing a virtual side event entitled, "A Faith-Based Vision For The UN At 75 And Beyond" New York, October 21, 2020

Zenit.org 26-10-2020

Year of St Joseph Prayer to St Joseph

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Divine Mercy Image Not Just for the Wall

I have tried to summarise the message of Divine Mercy as found in the beautiful book, "7 Secrets of Divine Mercy", by Vinny Flynn (Ignatius Press, 2015) that I mentioned in my previous letter (March ITD, p.5). The trouble is no summary can do it justice.

"God has a plan" that we would all get to heaven. To get there, Sacred Scripture says that we have to be perfect, holy and merciful, as He is perfect, holy and merciful. However, when sin entered the world our "good enough was not good enough" so God sent His Son to save us.

His saving action is revealed in the image of Divine Mercy which is "not just a picture", not an idol but an icon "to help us enter into the reality of the way God looks at us, to see with our inner eyes the way God loves us." Through Jesus, the Father is always blessing us (right hand), inviting us into His Heart (left hand) from which streams of mercy flow through the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Eucharist, seeking us (mercy in motion) with a gaze of love, and all we have to do is trust in Him.

God's mercy for us is so great that He "loves backwards" and the greater the sinner, the more mercy He shows. This is because He is a prodigal Father, one who squanders His mercy on us and loves us unconditionally. We cannot lose His love, as the first son thought, or work to gain His love, as the older brother thought. What the Father wants with us is a relationship, so that He can be our Father who forgives us when we stray and prunes us when we need it.

The way we can receive this "endless fountain of Mercy" is through the elements of the devotion, which are the "vessels of mercy", and our actions (sins) now, affect His then (add to His sufferings); and His Passion then, can be applied to save us now (especially through the devotional practises of Divine Mercy - veneration of the Image, the Chaplet etc.)

And the "goal is Transfiguration" as we are not supposed to just hang the Image on our walls, but "become it". The Eucharist is the Divine Image and we should strive to become living images of Divine Mercy in the world, as was Mary, who was fully transparent to God. The more we trust, the more God's mercy can flow into us and through us to others.

Maureen Wright, Lurnea, New South Wales

For the Fanatics

By Vatican News

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's resignation from the papacy, which became effective eight years ago, [28 February 2013] was a "difficult choice," but made "in full conscience" – one which he has not regretted at all. ... This was reiterated by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

"It was a difficult decision," explains the Pope Emeritus, "but I made it in full conscience, and I believe I did well. Some of my friends who are a bit 'fanatical' are still angry; they did not want to accept my choice. I am thinking about the conspiracy theories which followed it: those who said it was because of the Vatileaks scandal, those who said it was because of the case of the conservative Lefebvrian theologian, Richard Williamson. They did not want to believe it was a conscious decision, but my conscience is clear."

Vaticannews.va 01-03-2021

If God is a God of Life

Pope Francis, Iraq 07-03-2021

Before we pray in this city of Mosul for all the victims of war, in Iraq and in the entire Middle East, I would like to share with you these thoughts:

If God is the God of life – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to kill our brothers and sisters in his Name.

If God is the God of peace – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to wage war in his Name.

If God is the God of love – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to hate our brothers and sisters.

Let us now join in praying for all the victims of war. May Almighty God grant them eternal life and unending peace, and welcome them into his fatherly embrace. Let us pray too for ourselves. May all of us – whatever our religious tradition – live in harmony and peace, conscious that in the eyes of God, we are all brothers and sisters.

Vatican.va

Simply Follow the Missal

I don't know how other Catholics feel, but I find it cringeworthy when the priest starts off the Mass with 'Good morning, everyone.' It seems to me that the priest is annexing to himself the ownership of the Mass. It is his Mass, and he is going to put his stamp on it. And if Christ disappears into the background, so be it.

There are other problems too. First, it is unnecessary. There is a formal greeting already at the start of the Mass. 'The Lord be with you.' So the priest is indicating that somehow this is not enough, and must be supplemented by a more human greeting of his own personal choosing. And given Catholic practice that all conversation in the church should be limited to what is really necessary, it introduces an irreverence into the Mass.

Second, the Church forbids any unauthorised addition to the Mass: "Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, n.22). Now a priest might argue that he says Good Morning before starting Mass, entirely separate from the Mass itself. Even so, how is it not an addition to the Mass, given that he has proceeded to the altar for the very purpose of saying Mass?

Third, given that it is a public abuse, it adds the further sin of scandal (the murder of souls), since it tells the congregation that what seems to be a bit of disobedience is nothing to really worry about. In fact, sins committed during Mass are sacrilegious in nature, and hardly a trivial matter.

Fourth, once such an abuse is accepted without question, it opens the door to other unauthorised changes in the Mass.

Given that the unnecessary greeting would appear to offend God, why not simply follow the Missal? Isn't that what priests are supposed to do?

Richard Stokes, Burpengary, Queensland

In having Masses said for the suffering souls in Purgatory:

"the holy Mass not only shortens their pains, but also extends great immediate relief to those poor souls ... the charity you exercise toward poor souls under purification will all redound to your own good."

St Leonard of Port Maurice

The Most Intimate of all Unions

Pope Leo XIII began his encyclical on devotion to St Joseph by reviewing the state of the world as he knew it: "Now, Venerable Brethren, you know the times in which we live; they are scarcely less deplorable for the Christian religion than the worst days, which in time past were most full of misery to the Church. We see faith, the root of all the Christian virtues, lessening in many souls; we see charity growing cold; the young generation daily growing in depravity of morals and views; the Church of Jesus Christ attacked on every side by open force or by craft; a relentless war waged against the Sovereign Pontiff; and the very foundations of religion undermined with a boldness which waxes daily in intensity." (n.1)

It would appear that the world in which we now live has problems similar to those experienced by the world of 1889. Pope Leo recalled the past practice of appealing to the saints, particularly Jesus' mother Mary, for help in confronting this deplorable state of affairs. Yet in his encyclical on St Joseph, the Pope does not refer to a single saint; but his reference is to the family. "For marriage is the most intimate of all unions which from its essence imparts a community of gifts between those that by it are joined together." (n.3)

In fact, this central role of the family has also been affirmed in quite recent times. In 2005 Sister Lucia, one of the children schooled by Our Lady at Fatima, predicted that the final battle between Christ and Satan would be over marriage and the family. Satan used the jaundiced relationship between Adam and Eve to disrupt God's plan for creation. Happily, the Holy Family illustrates that healthy family relationships will foster God's plan for creation.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

No Blessings for Same-Sex Relationships

*Responsum of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to a **dubium***

TO THE QUESTION PROPOSED:

Does the Church have the power to give the blessing to unions of persons of the same sex?

RESPONSE:

Negative.

Explanatory Note

In some ecclesial contexts, plans and proposals for blessings of unions of persons of the same sex are being advanced. ...

Among the liturgical actions of the Church, the *sacramentals* have a singular importance: "These are sacred signs that resemble the sacraments: they signify effects, particularly of a spiritual kind, which are obtained through the Church's intercession. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions of life are sanctified" [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 60]. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* specifies, then, that "sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it" (#1670).

Blessings belong to the category of the *sacramentals*, whereby the Church "calls us to praise God, encourages us to implore his protection, and exhorts us to seek his mercy by our holiness of life". In addition, they "have been established as a kind of imitation of the sacraments, blessings are signs above all of spiritual effects that are achieved through the Church's intercession".

Consequently, in order to conform with the nature of sacramentals, when a blessing is invoked on particular human relationships, in addition to the right intention of those who participate, it is necessary that what is blessed be objectively and positively ordered to receive and express grace, according to the designs of God inscribed in creation, and fully revealed by Christ the Lord. Therefore, only those realities which are in themselves ordered to serve those ends are congruent with the essence of the blessing imparted by the Church.

For this reason, it is not licit to impart a blessing on relationships, or partnerships, even stable, that involve sexual activity outside of marriage (i.e., outside the indissoluble union of a man and a woman open in itself to the transmission of life), as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex. The presence in such relationships of positive elements, which are in themselves to be valued and appreciated, cannot justify these relationships and render them legitimate objects of an ecclesial blessing, since the positive elements exist within the context of a union not ordered to the Creator's plan.

Furthermore, since blessings on persons are in relationship with the sacraments, the blessing of homosexual unions cannot be considered licit. This is because they would constitute a certain imitation or analogue of the nuptial blessing invoked on the man and woman united in the sacrament of Matrimony, while in fact "there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family".

The declaration of the unlawfulness of blessings of unions between persons of the same sex is not therefore, and is not intended to be, a form of unjust discrimination, but rather a reminder of the truth of the liturgical rite and of the very nature of the sacramentals, as the Church understands them. ...

The answer to the proposed *dubium* does not preclude the blessings given to individual persons with homosexual inclinations, who manifest the will to live in fidelity to the revealed plans of God as proposed by Church teaching. ...

At the same time, the Church recalls that God Himself never ceases to bless each of His pilgrim children in this world, because for Him "we are more important to God than all of the sins that we can commit". But he does not and cannot bless sin: he blesses sinful man, so that he may recognize that he is part of his plan of love and allow himself to be changed by him. He in fact "takes us as we are, but never leaves us as we are".

For the above mentioned reasons, the Church does not have, and cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex in the sense intended above.

Press.vatican.va 15-03-2021

A Catholic School

I was searching the internet for a reference to St Isidore of Seville and stumbled upon a prayer to him for internet-users. The website this appeared on was of a Catholic school in Austin, Texas – St Dominic Savio Catholic High School. As happens with internet browsing, I ended up having a look at the rest of the school's website and became more and more impressed. What an inspiring Catholic school it seems to be! I can't recall reading anything like this about a diocesan Catholic school in Australia. Can you?

OUR MISSION - St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School is a co-educational college preparatory school founded by the Diocese of Austin to prepare young men and women to become faith filled, visionary and inspirational leaders in service to the Church and the world.

OUR PHILOSOPHY - St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School expresses the Church's educational mission through faith formation, social development and awareness, and a strong academic program. We seek:

- to develop within the school a strong Theology program based on Catholic teachings, Scripture, liturgical experiences, and service so that each student will grow and develop in the Catholic Christian way of life
- to facilitate the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of each student
- to challenge students to become Christian leaders, living as young men and women of conscience, compassion, and action

OUR CORE VALUES - We hold firm to our core values, which define our identity and serve as the fundamental beliefs that guide the daily life of the school: Faith, Scholarship, and Witness.

www.saviochs.org

In addition, they have a few Sisters on staff (and they wear habits!):

The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist is a Roman Catholic community of women religious based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The community was founded in the Dominican tradition to spread the witness of religious life in accord with Pope John Paul II's vision for a new evangelization.

Through profession of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, along with a contemplative emphasis on Eucharistic adoration and Marian devotion, their community exists for the salvation of souls and the building of the Church throughout the world. As Dominicans, their primary apostolate is the education and formation of young people. They remain open to engaging the modern culture with new forms of evangelization in order to preach the Gospel and teach the Truth. (adapted from www.sistersofmary.org)

www.saviochs.org

For those interested in the prayer to St Isidore, by the way, here it is:

Almighty and eternal God, who hast created us in Thy image and hast bidden us to seek after all that is good, true, and beautiful, especially in the divine person of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee that, through the intercession of Saint Isidor, bishop and doctor, during our journeys through the internet we will direct our hands and eyes only to that which is pleasing to Thee and treat with charity and patience all souls whom we encounter. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. St. Isidore of Seville, pray for us.

Ed.

"No human tongue can enumerate the favours that trace back to the Sacrifice of the Mass. The sinner is reconciled with God; the just man becomes more upright; sins are wiped away; vices are uprooted; virtue and merit increases; and the devil's schemes are frustrated."

St Lawrence Justinian

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

In His Presence

St John Henry Newman

I place myself in the presence of Him, in whose Incarnate Presence I am before, I place myself there.

I adore Thee, O my Saviour, present here as God and man, in soul and body, in true flesh and blood.

I acknowledge and confess that I kneel before that Sacred Humanity, which was conceived in Mary's womb, and lay in Mary's bosom; which grew up to man's estate, and by the Sea of Galilee called the Twelve, wrought miracles, and spoke words of wisdom and peace; which in due season hung on the cross, lay in the tomb, rose from the dead, and now reigns in heaven.

I praise, bless, and give myself wholly to Him, who is the true Bread of my soul, and my everlasting joy.

“What's there? The body of Our Lord.
Why is he there? Because the priest has
passed there and said Holy Mass.”

St John Vianney

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 find us on  facebook

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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