

Into the Deep

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Revive The Thirst

Pope Francis, Homily 06-06-2021

To celebrate the Eucharist, we need first to recognize our thirst for God, to sense our need for him, to long for his presence and love, to realize that we cannot go it alone, but need the Food and Drink of eternal life to sustain us on our journey.

The tragedy of the present time – we can say – is that this thirst is felt less and less. Questions about God are no longer asked, desire for God has faded, seekers of God have become increasingly rare. God no longer attracts us because we no longer acknowledge our deep thirst for him. ...

Our thirst for God brings us to the altar. Where that thirst is lacking, our celebrations *become dry and lifeless*. As Church, it is not enough that the usual little group meets to celebrate the Eucharist; we need to go out into the city, to encounter people and to learn how to recognize and revive their thirst for God and their desire for the Gospel.

Vatican.va

Know Him Better and Better

Pope Benedict XVI, 09-11-2006

[W]hat matters above all is to tend one's personal relationship with God, with that God who revealed himself to us in Christ. ... We know that God is not a philosophical hypothesis, he is not something that *perhaps* exists, but we know him and he knows us. And we can know him better and better if we keep up a dialogue with him.

This is why it is a fundamental task of pastoral care to teach people how to pray and how to learn to do so personally, better and better. ... Many seek meditation elsewhere because they think that they will not be able to find a spiritual dimension in Christianity. We must show them once again not only that this spiritual dimension exists but that it is the source of all things.

To this end, we must increase the number of these schools of prayer, for praying together, where it is possible to learn personal prayer in all its dimensions: as silent listening to God, as a listening that penetrates his Word, penetrates his silence, sounds the depths of his action in history and in one's own person; and to understand his language in one's life and then to learn to respond in prayer with the great prayers of the Psalms of the Old Testament and prayers of the New. ...

And from this viewpoint one perceives, in my opinion, the significance of the Liturgy also as precisely a school of prayer, where the Lord himself teaches us to pray and where we pray together with the Church, both in humble, simple celebrations with only a few of the faithful and also in the feast of faith.

Vatican.va

"There is nothing so great as the Eucharist!"

St John Vianney

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

Mystery of Prayer

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2616

St Augustine wonderfully summarises the three dimensions of Jesus' prayer:

"He prays for us
As our priest,
Prays in us
As our Head,
And is prayed to by us
As our God.
Therefore let us acknowledge
Our voice in Him
And His in us."

Thanks

I did appreciate so much Our Queen and Our Mother (May ITD, p.1), also of course the page letter by Mother Teresa (May ITD, p.11), and other beautiful articles. Thank you for all your work with Into the Deep. Please find donation enclosed.

Helen Casanova, Westmere, Victoria

A quick note to say congrats on ITD and regrets for my delayed contribution to help you over the months and years to come. Cheque enclosed. Also enclosed are a few of the recent faxes I send to clergy and lay of recent reports which tend to support out traditional standards regarding our faith and morals – or dilute and/or attack them! I've found my own letters are not published in the secular media (as many others I know) because of the rejection of much of our traditions in the public square.

Fr Bernard McGrath, Bendigo, Victoria

Just for Fun

One of the jokes Fr McGrath (above) included:

A farmer wants to know how many sheep he has in his field, so he asks his Border Collie to count them.

The dog runs into the field, counts them and runs back to the farmer. "40", the dog says.

The farmer is surprised and says, "How can there be 40? I only bought 38."

The dog says, "I rounded them up."

Vaccine Nitty Gritty

There is much angst about the use of Covid vaccines among Catholics. We have serious ethical concerns about the use of human embryonic cell lines in the testing and development of some vaccines. On the other hand, we are aware that Church teaching allows us to accept morally-compromised vaccines if there are no alternatives. But when it comes to the crunch, which ones are which?

In Australia we have Pfizer or AstraZeneca. If we have a choice, the 'lesser evil' is the Pfizer vaccine.

Abortion-derived cell lines were used in the lab testing of the Pfizer vaccine, but not in the development or production of the vaccine. The same applies to the Moderna vaccine which may be available in some places. Try to avoid the AstraZeneca if you can (abortion-derived cell lines used in the development/ production and testing of the vaccine).

However, if you have no choice of which vaccine to accept, the Church allows us to still accept whatever is available, as an act of charity towards the other members of our community and as part of our moral responsibility for the common good. If we refuse on the grounds of our conscience, we still have the responsibility to take whatever other precautions we can to avoid becoming vehicles for transmission to those most vulnerable.

Ed.

[More detail from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Jan/Feb 2021 issue of ITD, p.11; and at ewtn.com Answers]

Coptic Binding

Many years ago, a friend of a friend offered to bind my copies of Into the Deep into annual books, using Coptic binding technique (basically sewn together with the stitching visible across the spine). This continued from 2002 until 2008, for which I was (and am) very grateful. I now have another 12 years (and counting) of ITD that I would love to have bound in some way to keep them organised and easily accessible. Does anyone know of anyone who would consider binding some years of ITD for me? Please let me know.

Ed.

Prayer is Combat

Pope Francis, General Audience, 12-05-2021

Prayer certainly gives great peace, but through inner struggle, sometimes difficult, which can accompany even long periods of life. Praying is not something easy, and this is why we flee from it. Every time we want to pray, we are immediately reminded of many other activities, which at that moment seem more important and more urgent. This happens to me too: I go to pray a little... and no, I must do this and that... We flee from prayer; I don't know why, but that is how it is. Almost always, after putting off prayer, we realize that those things were not essential at all, and that we may have wasted time. This is how the Enemy deceives us.

All Godly men and women report not only the joy of prayer, but also the tediousness and fatigue it can bring: at times it is a difficult struggle to keep to the time and ways of praying. Some saints continued it for years without finding any satisfaction in it, without perceiving its usefulness. Silence, prayer and concentration are difficult exercises, and sometimes human nature rebels. We would rather be anywhere else in the world, but not there, in that church pew, praying. Those who want to pray must remember that faith is not easy, and sometimes it moves forward in almost total darkness, without points of reference. There are moments in the life of faith that are dark, and therefore some saints call this "the dark night", because we hear nothing. But I continue to pray. ...

In times of trial, it is good to remember that we are not alone, that someone is at our side, watching over and protecting us. ...

Prayer works miracles, because prayer goes directly to the heart of the tenderness of God, who loves us like a father. And when he does not grant us a grace, he will grant us another that in time we will see. But always, it is necessary to battle in prayer to ask for grace. Yes, at times we ask for a grace we do not need, but we ask for it without truly wanting it, without fighting. But serious things are not asked for this way. Prayer is combat, and the Lord is always with us.

Vatican.va

Behold Your Mother

Dr Scott Hahn, in his book, "Hail, Holy Queen", Introduction

As He hung dying on the cross, in His last will and testament, Jesus left us a mother. "When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27).

We are His beloved disciples, His younger siblings (see Heb 2:12). His heavenly home is ours, His Father is ours, and His mother is ours. Yet how many Christians are taking her to their homes? Moreover, how many Christian churches are fulfilling the New Testament prophecy that "all generations" will call Mary "blessed" (Lk 1:48)

Most Protestant ministers – and here I speak from my own past experience – avoid even mentioning the mother of Jesus, for fear they'll be accused of crypto-Catholicism. Sometimes the most zealous members of their congregations have been influenced by shrill anti-Catholic polemics. To them, Marian devotion is idolatry that puts Mary between God and man or exalts Mary at Jesus' expense. Thus, you'll sometimes find Protestant churches named after Saint Paul, Saint Peter, Saint James, or Saint John – but rarely one named for Saint Mary. You'll frequently find pastors preaching on Abraham or David, Jesus' distant ancestors, but almost never hear a sermon on Mary, His mother. Far from calling her blessed, most generations of Protestants live their lives without calling her at all.

This is not just a Protestant problem. Too many Catholics and Orthodox Christians have abandoned their rich heritage of Marian devotions. They've been cowed by the polemics of fundamentalists, shamed by the snickering of dissenting theologians, or made sheepish by well-meaning but misguided ecumenical sensitivities. They're happy to have a mom who prays for them, prepares their meals, and keeps their home; they just wish she'd stay safely out of sight when others are around who just wouldn't understand.

To Grandparents and the Elderly

Pope Francis, in his message for the 1st World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly: 25 July 2021

"I am with you always": this is the promise the Lord made to his disciples before he ascended into heaven. They are the words that he repeats to you today, dear grandfathers and grandmothers, dear elderly friends. "I am with you always" are also the words that I, as Bishop of Rome and an elderly person like yourselves, would like to address to you on this first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly. The whole Church is close to you – to us – and cares about you, loves you and does not want to leave you alone! ...

Let us try to read a page of the Gospel every day, to pray with the psalms, to read the prophets! We will be comforted by the Lord's faithfulness. The Scriptures will also help us to understand what the Lord is asking of our lives today. For at every hour of the day and in every season of life, he continues to send labourers into his vineyard. I was called to become the Bishop of Rome when I had reached, so to speak, retirement age and thought I would not be doing anything new. The Lord is always – *always* – close to us. He is close to us with new possibilities, new ideas, new consolations, but always close to us. You know that the Lord is eternal; he never, ever goes into retirement.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells the Apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". These words are also addressed to us today. They help us better understand that our vocation is to preserve our roots, to pass on the faith to the young, and to care for the little ones. ...

It makes no difference how old you are, whether you still work or not, whether you are alone or have a family, whether you became a grandmother or grandfather at a young age or later, whether you are still independent or need assistance. Because there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel and handing down traditions to your grandchildren. You just need to set out and undertake something new.

At this crucial moment in history, you have a renewed vocation. You may wonder: How this can be possible? My energy is running out and I don't think I can do much. How can I begin to act differently when habit is so much a part of my life? How can I devote myself to those who are poor when I am already so concerned about my family? How can I broaden my vision when I can't even leave the residence where I live? Isn't my solitude already a sufficiently heavy burden? ... Jesus himself heard a similar question from Nicodemus, who asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?". It can happen, the Lord replies, if we open our hearts to the working of the Holy Spirit, who blows where he wills. ...

I want to tell you that you are needed in order to help build, in fraternity and social friendship, the world of tomorrow: the world in which we, together with our children and grandchildren, will live once the storm has subsided. All of us must "take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies". Among the pillars that support this new edifice, there are three that you, better than anyone else, can help to set up. Those three pillars are *dreams*, *memory* and *prayer*. ...

The prophet Joel once promised: "Your old men shall dream *dreams*, and your young men will have visions." The future of the world depends on this covenant between young and old. Who, if not the young, can take the dreams of the elderly and make them come true? Yet for this to happen, it is necessary that we continue to dream. Our dreams of justice, of peace, of solidarity can make it possible for our young people to have new visions; in this way, together, we can build the future. You need to show that it is possible to emerge renewed from an experience of hardship. I am sure that you have had more than one such experience: in your life you have faced any number of troubles and yet were able to pull through. ...

Dreams are thus intertwined with *memory*. I think of the painful memory of war, and its importance for helping the young to learn the value of peace. Those among you who experienced the suffering of war must pass on this message. Keeping memory alive is a true mission for every elderly person: keeping memory alive and sharing it with others. ...

Finally, *prayer*. As my predecessor, Pope Benedict, himself a saintly elderly person who continues to pray and work for the Church, once said: "the prayer of the elderly can protect the world, helping it perhaps more effectively than the frenetic activity of many others." ... There is something beautiful here. Your prayer is a very precious resource: a deep breath that the Church and the world urgently need.

Later First Holy Communion

Cardinal George Pell, in Prison Journal, Volume 1: 20 May 2019 entry

[Pope Pius X] had introduced the practice of First Communion at the age of eight or nine. It is a beautiful practice for children in church-going families of faith, introducing them earlier to traditions of piety and giving them access to Eucharistic grace.

Here in Australia, we should be asking whether early First Communion is still the best practice, when the families of most of these children are not practising their faith at regular Mass. This makes it difficult to convince them that what is being received is the Body of the Lord, not a symbol of Christ, and difficult also to explain to them that they should be practising their faith and living good lives (in a state of grace) and should have the personal dispositions required by St Paul for a fruitful reception of Communion.

There is no groundswell of opinion even for exploring the possible option of reintroducing the ancient Western practice of First Communion after confirmation (while leaving confirmation at about the age of twelve). It would mean fewer taking Communion. The danger is that receiving Communion once in a while comes to be seen as a formal rite of passage, a routine gesture, something like a low-key wedding reception or Sunday luncheon rather than a profoundly significant religious occasion. The transcendent, vertical dimension of worship is being obscured and lost.

The necessity of preserving the vertical dimension of community worship is one reason why I also favour the practice of the priest praying to God with his back to the people during the Eucharistic Prayer. This would make it brutally clear that the priest is not the centre of attention, not the centre of the action, which must be found elsewhere.

Anyone coming to Mass should be made aware that the celebration is mysterious, a reaching out to the silent, hidden God, and a commemoration of the suffering, death, and Resurrection of our leader, Jesus Christ, nearly two thousand years ago, which changed the course of human history and still calls us today to conversion, to prayer and repentance.

The Bland Leading the Bland

Cardinal George Pell, in Prison Journal, Volume 1: 25 April 2019 entry

The evidence demonstrates clearly that orthodox bishops, teachers of the Catholic tradition, who have a good seminary will attract priestly vocations. When the bland are leading the bland, we produce a contraceptive Catholicism, which looks healthy on the surface but cannot produce new life.

The Christian Package Works

Cardinal George Pell, in an interview with Vatican News, 08-06-2021

How much has prayer helped you to cope with the humiliation and discomfort of imprisonment?

I have to say that faith and prayer were fundamental; they helped me to completely change the perspective during those days of detention. Today I tell everyone, using an English expression, that in prison I have had confirmation that "the Christian package works." My experience shows how much the Church's teachings help us, how much praying and seeking God's grace helps. Especially when we understand that we can live our personal suffering for the greater good, that we can associate our suffering with that of Jesus. As Christians, we know that we have been redeemed by the passion and death of the Son of God. Living this teaching on the value of suffering really changes everything when you find yourself in a situation like mine.

Did you continue to believe in providence while in prison?

Yes, even if sometimes I did not understand what God's providence was doing. But I always believed that God was behind everything that was happening to me.

What Does it Mean to be a Child of God?

Let me start off by saying that learning what it means to be a child of God, and understanding it, is a very difficult and never-ending process. Why? Because it is supernatural process – that means you cannot make yourself God's child, and you need his Church and the grace of her Sacraments to live a fruitful life worthy of your second supernatural and virginal birth.

Just for a moment, think about it! The God who created heaven and earth, and everything in it, who knows all and has no need of anyone or thing, enabled us to become his adopted children through the sacrament of Baptism so that we could be with him forever.

When I think about this reality and truth, I'm always astounded and somewhat fascinated by the many Christians who seems to think they can make themselves a child of God in whichever way they like, according to what they believe or think feels right for them. They seem to have this 'come as you are' approach to Christianity. The same can be said about worship! Many Christians seem to think that they or the community can determine how and when they should worship. They forget that Christianity is a divinely revealed religion. Worship, like Baptism, are absolute divine realities, which God has once and for all revealed in his only begotten Son, through, with and in the Holy Spirit.

Listen to what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:5 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom God"; and again in chapter 6:53 when the Jews were disputing his divinity as the living bread come down from heaven, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Just as worship should be done according to what is most acceptable, fitting and pleasing to the recipient (God the Father) and not the giver or worshipper, so too one can only be an adopted child of God in the manner and way of his only begotten Son. According to God's definitive plan of salvation for the world, the whole of mankind can only be adopted as his children in the image and likeness of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, in his great family the Catholic Church.

I say the Catholic Church deliberately and seriously, because once we have been baptized, we must become through the grace of the sacraments what Christ is by nature; and this side of heaven, God has commissioned, empowered and entrusted the Catholic Church alone, to faithfully and fruitfully realize this divine vocation.

Just listen to what Jesus said to his eleven apostles in Matthew 28:18-20 after the Resurrection, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

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.

Priesthood

St Peter Chrysologus

How unique is the duty of Christian priesthood!
For there a man is himself sacrifice as well as priest;
there a man does not look for something outside
himself to offer to God;
there a man brings with himself and in himself and
for himself a sacrifice to God;
there the victim is not consumed and the priest
never completes his task;
there the victim is slain but lives.

Just Getting Older (15) – Caring

My next door neighbour who is also, like me, an old man, has dropped his hand into the shredder a bit too far and nearly lost his hand. But there was his neighbour, a lady, giving him all the support he needed to not lose all his blood before reaching the hospital.

The result is that my neighbour has now a different opinion about hospital care given than the media gives us about hospital care. The spirit of care was overwhelming. He thought too that this is the land of the Holy Spirit – the care given about the bushfires, and now realising how caring they are in the hospital.

After this episode we have come to the conclusion that time does not only consist of hours, minutes, money and status, but also of love, care and affection. That made me think.

God has given me free will, and regardless of the circumstances, to choose the good and to also do it! How beautiful it is, when our love moves us, not to distraction by dangers and temptation, but aims to stick with God and employ all efforts to do his will. "Love one another as I have loved you." I ask the Lord to guard me therefore from making mistakes, and from temptations; there is so much that could change my tune, like carelessness and neglect; there is so much that can distract me.

I ask the Lord for much love, in order that without dallying I may bind myself to him. May he give me perseverance so as not to become tired of serving him; courage and strength to aim always for doing what he has asked us to do: live by the commandments and love one another. That's why I am asking the Lord to give me a tender attitude and a pure outlook, then I shall in all that I seek, find him.

Bert Van Galen, Mowbray, Tasmania

The Closeness of God

Pope Francis, General Audience 03-03-2021

But perhaps the most moving acknowledgment of the poverty of our prayer came from the lips of the Roman centurion who one day begged Jesus to heal his sick servant. He felt totally inadequate: he was not a Jew, he was an officer in the detested occupying army. But his concern for his servant emboldens him, and he says: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed." It is the phrase we also repeat in every Eucharistic liturgy. To dialogue with God is a grace: we are not worthy of it, we have no rights to claim, we "limp" with every word and every thought... But Jesus is the door that opens us to this dialogue with God.

Why should humanity be loved by God? There are no obvious reasons, there is no proportion.... So much so that most mythologies do not contemplate the possibility of a god who cares about human affairs; on the contrary, they are considered bothersome and boring, entirely negligible. Let us remember God's phrase to his people, repeated in Deuteronomy: "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us?". This closeness of God is the revelation!

Some philosophers say that God can only think of himself. If anything, it is we humans who try to persuade the deity and be pleasing to his eyes. Hence the duty of "religion", with the procession of sacrifices and devotions to be offered continuously to ingratiate ourselves with a mute God, an indifferent God. There is no dialogue. It was only Jesus, it was only the revelation of God to Moses before Jesus, when God introduced himself; it was only the Bible that opened us up to the path of dialogue with God. Let us remember: "What great nation is there that has a god so near to it as ours?"; this closeness of God that opens us up to dialogue with him.

A God who loves humanity: we would never have had the courage to believe in him, had we not known Jesus. The knowledge of Jesus made us understand this, it revealed this to us. ... What God is prepared to die for people? What God loves always and patiently, without demanding to be loved in return? ... It is Jesus who reveals God's heart.

Vatican.va

Funerals at the River

Funerals have become all about celebrating the deceased's earthly life, with no concerns about what happens after death. I recently heard an advert for a funeral parlour saying they can arrange your funeral anywhere, even on the banks of your favourite fishing river. Why on earth...?

Most people don't believe in hell anymore. But everyone seems to believe in heaven. Today, anyone who dies is at peace, or in heaven with their loved ones (who are also all there, of course), or even magically transformed into angels in heaven.

No one seems to believe in Purgatory, yet it's our only hope.

How many 'other' people do we expect to be judged after they die? The father who abused his children and 'got away with it'; the murderer who never confessed; the upstanding Catholic who misjudged and wrongly condemned someone but no one knew – all those people whose victims are the only ones who know their sins. Do we really expect them to die and go to heaven, and for God to simply dismiss their sins and the lifelong hurt and devastation they caused others to suffer? Isn't it their victims' only hope that 'one day' they will be called to account, one day they will be made to see what they have done. The same applies to drug dealers and mafia, dictators and oppressors, violent and blood-thirsty criminals who are either not caught or not repentant. Do they all live forever in light and peace with our loved ones in heaven?

It all becomes very subjective. Those we love, go to heaven. Those we don't love, go somewhere else. We ourselves, of course, will go straight to heaven to be with our loved ones there, happily ever after. No justice? All mercy? If we want unconditional mercy for ourselves, we must expect unconditional mercy for those criminals and perverts and other sinners. If we expect them to be held to account for their sins, surely we must expect the same for ourselves and our loved ones, all sinners too. Who of us is perfect?

For those who haven't rejected God, our hope is that after death we will come to see ourselves as we truly are, and begin the process of purification in Purgatory. This is why we pray for the souls of the dead. The importance of a Catholic funeral Mass is beyond words, beyond this world. And certainly beyond your favourite fishing spot!

Ed.

A Priest's Love for the Cross

2013 Directory for the Ministry and the Life of Priests, Congregation for the Clergy

67. The priest is called to celebrate the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice, to meditate constantly on what it means and transform his life into a Eucharist, which becomes manifest in love for daily sacrifice, especially in fulfilling the duties and offices proper to his state.

Love for the cross leads the priest to become himself an offering pleasing to the Father through Christ (cf. Rm 12:1). Loving the Cross in a hedonistic society is a scandal, but from a perspective of faith it is the fount of interior life. The priest must preach the redemptive value of the cross with his style of life. It is necessary to evoke the irreplaceable value for the priest of the daily celebration of the Holy Mass – the "source and summit" of the priestly life – even if it should not be possible to have the faithful present. ...

If celebrated in a faith-filled and attentive way, the Holy Mass is formative in the deepest sense of the word, since it fosters the priest's configuration to Christ and strengthens him in his vocation. He is to live the celebration of the Eucharist as the core moment of his day and his daily ministry, the fruit of sincere desire and occasion for a deep and effective encounter with Christ.

In the Eucharist the priest learns to give himself each day, not only in moments of great difficulty, but also in minor daily setbacks. This learning experience is reflected in love in preparing himself for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice and living it in piety without haste, ever attentive to the liturgical norms and the rubrics so the faithful may in this manner perceive an authentic catechesis.

A Sincere Person Knows he is Guilty

Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with clergy of Rome, 07-02-2008

In the Encyclical [Spe Salvi] I tried to show that it is God's Last Judgement that guarantees justice. We all want a just world. Yet we cannot atone for all the destruction of the past, all the people unjustly tortured and killed. God alone can create justice, which must be justice for all, even for the dead... We believe in this resurrection of the body in which not all will be equal.

Today people have become used to thinking: what is sin? God is great, he knows us, so sin does not count; in the end God will be kind to us all. It is a beautiful hope. But both justice and true guilt exist. Those who have destroyed man and the earth cannot suddenly sit down at God's table together with their victims.

God creates justice. We must keep this in mind. Therefore, I felt it was important to write this text also about Purgatory, which for me is an obvious truth, so evident and also so necessary and comforting that it could not be absent.

I tried to say: perhaps those who have destroyed themselves in this way, who are for ever unredeemable, who no longer possess any elements on which God's love can rest, who no longer have a minimal capacity for loving, may not be so numerous. This would be Hell. On the other hand, those who are so pure that they can enter immediately into God's communion are undoubtedly few – or at any rate not many. A great many of us hope that there is something in us that can be saved, that there may be in us a final desire to serve God and serve human beings, to live in accordance with God.

Yet there are so very many wounds, there is so much filth. We need to be prepared, to be purified. This is our hope: even with so much dirt in our souls, in the end the Lord will give us the possibility, he will wash us at last with his goodness that comes from his Cross. In this way he makes us capable of being for him in eternity. And thus Heaven is hope, it is justice brought about at last.

He also gives us criteria by which to live, so that this time may be in some way paradise, a first gleam of paradise. Where people live according to these criteria a hint of paradise appears in the world and is visible. It also seems to me to be a demonstration of the truth of faith, of the need to follow the road of the Commandments, of which we must speak further. These really are road signs on our way and show us how to live well, how to choose life. Therefore, we must also speak of sin and of the sacrament of forgiveness and reconciliation. A sincere person knows that he is guilty, that he must start again, that he must be purified. And this is the marvellous reality which the Lord offers us: there is a chance of renewal, of being new. The Lord starts with us again and in this way we can also start again with the others in our life.

This aspect of renewal, of the restitution of our being after so many errors, so many sins, is the great promise, the great gift the Church offers but which psychotherapy, for example, cannot offer. Today, in the face of so many destroyed or seriously injured psyches, psychotherapy is so widespread and also necessary. Yet the possibilities of psychotherapy are very limited: it can only make some sort of effort to restore balance to an unbalanced soul but cannot provide true renewal, the overcoming of these serious diseases of the soul. It is therefore always temporary and never definitive. The Sacrament of Penance gives us the opportunity to be renewed through and through with God's power - *ego te absolvo* -, which is possible because Christ took these sins, this guilt, upon himself. I think there is a great need of this especially today. We can be healed. Souls that are wounded and ill, as everyone knows by experience, not only need advice but true renewal, which can only come from God's power, from the power of Crucified Love.

Vatican.va

The Beauty of a Cathedral

Archbishop of Paris, Michel Aupetit, in an interview after the Notre Dame fire:

"Why was this beauty built? What jewel was this case meant to contain? Not the crown of thorns. It was built for a piece of bread, the bread that we believe is the Body of Christ."

EWTN is Everywhere

Reader Terry Brusamarello (see June ITD, p.2) recently sent ITD a "Catholic Survival Guide" on EWTN. I was surprised to learn how EWTN has spread from needing a satellite dish to get EWTN on your TV, to being accessible virtually anywhere and anyhow.

The Eternal Word Network Television (EWTN) was established in 1981 by Mother Angelica. Its mission: to teach the truth of the Gospel as defined by the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church.

EWTN offers daily Mass and devotionals, global Catholic news, Catholic movies, documentaries and dramas, conversion stories, discussion of topical issues, exploring the faith, programs for children and teens, Church and Papal events, and Catholic music.

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Ed.

Information Overload

Time was when a Christian scholar could dip into the full range of available knowledge; provided the scholar had access to manuscripts laboriously produced in Greek, Latin, etc. These manuscripts covered available knowledge in theology, philosophy, rhetoric and mathematics. The prime purpose of study was to grow in understanding of God and his creation. The ancient Greeks had made some progress in uncovering the wonders embedded in God's creation. For example, Archimedes' fascination with the phenomenon of his bath water led to the discovery of an important principle: the principle that allows us to sail ships over oceans and fly aircraft around the globe. Of course, this principle had been a part of God's creation from the very beginning, but God left it to human beings to discover how useful the principle could be.

Attempts to unleash the principles embedded in God's creation have not always been successful. Even so, these attempts to find God and his works has resulted in a vast amount of literature. Happily, contemporary insights have allowed us to unleash the principles embedded in the phenomenon of numbers. Binary numbers that have made possible computers, and the digital age allows some access to this vast amount of information made available by the ongoing attempts to understand God's creation.

At the personal level, however, the resultant information overload can be daunting. Certainly, the broad overview achieved by earlier scholars is beyond the reach of many people. Yet all is not lost. In their eulogy for John Henderson (June ITD, p.3) the Conventual Sisters of St Dominic make reference to *sensus fidelium*. In short, we have a personal capacity to evaluate the material we encounter when simply trying to live our lives. Some of this material contains insights into God's creation; other material does not. The *sensus fidelium* provides a sensitivity for the truth and the credibility of matters of importance to us. The sensitivity arises from the successes and failures that make up our personal life experiences. For example, in the case of marriage, two disparate persons join together to form a unique relationship. This disparate relationship that God has chosen in order to maintain his ongoing process of creation, is at the heart of the family setting.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Choices

Pope Francis, Homily 22-11-2020, to youth

[H]ow do we begin to make great dreams come true? With *great choices*. Today's Gospel [Mt25:31-46] speaks to us about this as well. Indeed, at the last judgment, the Lord will judge us on the choices we have made. He seems almost not to judge, but merely to separate the sheep from the goats, whereas being good or evil depends on us. He only draws out the consequences of our choices, brings them to light, and respects them.

Life, we come to see, is a time for making robust, decisive, eternal choices. Trivial choices lead to a trivial life; great choices to a life of greatness. Indeed, we become what we choose, for better or for worse. If we choose to steal, we become thieves. If we choose to think of ourselves, we become self-centred. If we choose to hate, we become angry. If we choose to spend hours on a cell phone, we become addicted.

Yet if we choose God, daily we grow in his love, and if we choose to love others, we find true happiness. Because the beauty of our choices depends on love. Remember this because it is true: *the beauty of our choices depends on love*. Jesus knows that if we are self-absorbed and indifferent, we remain paralysed, but if we give ourselves to others, we become free. The Lord of life wants us to be full of life, and he tells us the secret of life: we come to possess it only by giving it away. This is a rule of life: we come to possess life, now and in eternity, only by giving it away.

It is true that there are obstacles that can make our choices difficult: fear, insecurity, so many unanswered questions... Love, however, demands that we move beyond these, and not keep wondering why life is the way it is, and expecting answers to fall down from heaven. The answer has come: it is the gaze of the Father who loves us and who has sent us his Son.

No, love pushes us to go beyond the *why*, and instead to ask *for whom*, to pass from asking, "Why am I alive?" to "For whom am I living?" From "Why is this happening to me?" to "Whom can I help?" For whom? Not just for myself! Life is already full of choices we make for ourselves: what to study, which friends to have, what home to buy, what interests or hobbies to pursue. We can waste years thinking about ourselves, without ever actually starting to love. ...

Not only doubts and questions can undermine great and generous choices, but many other obstacles as well every day. Feverish consumerism can overwhelm our hearts with superfluous things. An obsession with pleasure may seem the only way to escape problems, yet it simply postpones them. A fixation with our rights can lead us to neglect our responsibilities to others. Then, there is the great misunderstanding about love, which is more than powerful emotions, but primarily a gift, a choice, and a sacrifice.

The art of choosing well, especially today, means not seeking approval, not plunging into a consumerist mentality that discourages originality, and not giving into the cult of appearances. Choosing life means resisting the "throwaway culture" and the desire to have "everything now", in order to direct our lives towards the goal of heaven, towards God's dreams. ...

Each day, in our heart, we face many choices. I would like to give you one last piece of advice to help train you to choose well.

If we look within ourselves, we can see two very different questions arising. One asks, "*What do I feel like doing?*" This question often proves misleading, since it suggests that what really counts is thinking about ourselves and indulging in our wishes and impulses.

The question that the Holy Spirit plants in our hearts is a very different one: not "*What do you feel like doing?*" but "*What is best for you?*" That is the choice we have to make daily: what do I feel like doing or what is best for me?

This interior discernment can result either in frivolous choices or in decisions that shape our lives – it depends on us. Let us look to Jesus and ask him for the courage to choose what is best for us, to enable us to follow him in the way of love. And in this way to discover joy.

Vatican.va

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 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

Make Reparation

**Jesus Waits for us Here With Divine Longing,
by St Peter Julian Eymard**

3. Adore Jesus and make reparation for sin; my ingratitude, profanations and sacrileges, of which the world is full.

Offer up for this intention all that you have suffered during the day or week.

Inflict on yourself some atoning penance for your own offenses, and for those of your relatives or of people whom you may have scandalized by your lack of respect and piety in church.

4. But since all your satisfactions and penances are too petty and deficient to atone for so many crimes, unite them to those of your Saviour Jesus, lifted up on the Cross.

Receive His Divine Blood as it flows from His wounds, and offer it up to appease Divine justice.

Take His sufferings and His prayer on the Cross and, through them, beg the Heavenly Father for pardon and mercy for yourself and all sinners.

Unite your reparation to that of the most Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross or of the altar, and from the love of Jesus for His Divine Mother you will obtain everything.

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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