

Into the Deep

Issue 222

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The Scandal

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 22-08-2021

God made himself flesh. And when we say this, in the Creed, on Christmas Day, on the day of the Annunciation, we kneel to worship this mystery of the incarnation. God made himself flesh and blood; he lowered himself to the point of becoming a man like us. ...

Even today, God's revelation in Jesus' humanity can cause scandal and is not easy to accept. This is what Saint Paul calls the "folly" of the Gospel in the face of those who seek miracles or worldly wisdom (cf. 1Cor 1:18-25). And this "scandalousness" is well represented by the sacrament of the Eucharist: what sense can there be, in the eyes of the world, in kneeling before a piece of bread? Why on earth should someone be nourished assiduously with this bread? The world is scandalized.

Faced with this prodigious deed of Jesus, who with five loaves and two fish fed thousands of people, everyone acclaimed him and wanted to lift him up in triumph, to make him king. But when he himself explains that the gesture is a sign of his sacrifice, that is, of the gift of his life, his flesh and blood, and that those who want to follow him must resemble him, His humanity given for God and for others, then no, this is not pleasing, this Jesus throws us into crisis. Rather, we should be worried if he does not throw us into crisis, because we might have watered down his message!

And we ask for the grace to let ourselves be provoked and converted by his "words of eternal life". And may Mary Most Holy, who bore her Son Jesus in the flesh and joined herself to his sacrifice, help us to always bear witness to our faith in our real lives.

Vatican.va

The Face of Her Son

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 28-12-2011

Mary was a peerless model of contemplation of Christ. The face of the Son belonged to her in a special way because he had been knit together in her womb and had taken a human likeness from her. No one has contemplated Jesus as diligently as Mary. The gaze of her heart was already focused on him at the moment of the Annunciation, when she conceived him through the action of the Holy Spirit; in the following months she gradually became aware of his presence, until, on the day of his birth, her eyes could look with motherly tenderness upon the face of her son as she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger.

Vatican.va

A Christmas Prayer

Pope John XXIII

O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas.

Put into the hearts of men and women this peace for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give to them.

Help them to know one another better, and to live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father.

Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity. Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness. Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace.

Amen

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

Pray as a Family

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 28-12-2011

The Holy Family is the icon of the domestic Church, called to pray together.

The family is the domestic Church and must be the first school of prayer.

It is in the family that children, from the tenderest age, can learn to perceive the meaning of God, also thanks to the teaching and example of their parents: to live in an atmosphere marked by God's presence.

An authentically Christian education cannot dispense with the experience of prayer. If one does not learn how to pray in the family it will later be difficult to bridge this gap.

And so I would like to address to you the invitation to pray together as a family at the school of the Holy Family of Nazareth and thereby really to become of one heart and soul, a true family.

Vatican.va

Tasmanian News

From the newsletter of the Monks of the Notre Dame Priory, Colebrook, Tasmania

Between now and the anniversary a significant event will take place, namely the Solemn Profession of Br Bede Mary, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 2021. This is the first solemn profession of one of our monks, and so is a very important occasion, for which Archbishop Porteous will be present. Given the fact that our own Church of the Immaculate Conception will not suffice, the ceremony will be held at St Patrick's Church, Colebrook.

All are welcome, however, due to limitations of space it is necessary to reserve a place beforehand. If you wish to come, please contact us at professions@notredamemonastery.org. Hopefully we will be able to confirm your reservation for the 3.00pm Mass to be followed by a reception at the Priory.

On Tuesday 22 February 2022, to mark the 5th anniversary of the foundation, we intend to hold a special Mass of thanksgiving at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, followed by a lunch with open house for anyone to visit the monastery.

Notredamemonastery.org

The Birthday of Life!

St Leo the Great, Pope

Dearly beloved, today our Saviour is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. ...

And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: *Glory to God in the highest*, and they proclaim *peace to his people on earth* as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world.

When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvellous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?

Next Issue of ITD

Remember there will be no January issue of Into the Deep, but a combined January/February issue released around mid-January.

Wishing all ITD readers a blessed Advent, merry Christmas, and a happy New Year! May God bless you and keep you.

Thank you once again to all who have donated to ITD over the past year to keep us going. Your support is always very much appreciated.

Ed.

Greek Alphabet

With the latest Covid strain being named 'Omicron' (a word I'd never heard of before), and with my husband patiently explaining that it's a (another) letter of the Greek alphabet, I finally realised that all the strains have been named according to letters of the Greek alphabet e.g. the 'Delta strain' we always hear about.

A Facebook post I saw the next day made the perfect point about it:

"In light of the widespread usage of the Greek alphabet recently, let us never forget that Our Lord is the Alpha and the Omega."

Ed.

Now is the Acceptable Time

St Charles Borromeo

Beloved, now is the acceptable time spoken of by the Spirit, the day of salvation, peace and reconciliation: the great season of Advent. This is the time eagerly awaited by the patriarchs and prophets, the time that holy Simeon rejoiced at last to see. This is the season that the Church has always celebrated with special solemnity.

We too should always observe it with faith and love, offering praise and thanksgiving to the Father for the mercy and love he has shown us in this mystery. In his infinite love for us, though we were sinners, he sent his only Son to free us from the tyranny of Satan, to summon us to heaven, to welcome us into its innermost recesses, to show us truth itself, to train us in right conduct, to plant within us the seeds of virtue, to enrich us with the treasures of his grace, and to make us children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Each year, as the Church recalls this mystery, she urges us to renew the memory of the great love God has shown us. This holy season teaches us that Christ's coming was not only for the benefit of his contemporaries; his power has still to be communicated to us all. We shall share his power, if, through holy faith and the sacraments, we willingly accept the grace Christ earned for us, and live by that grace and in obedience to Christ.

The Church asks us to understand that Christ, who came once in the flesh, is prepared to come again. When we remove all obstacles to his presence he will come, at any hour and moment, to dwell spiritually in our hearts, bringing with him the riches of his grace.

In her concern for our salvation, our loving mother the Church uses this holy season to teach us through hymns, canticles and other forms of expression, of voice or ritual, used by the Holy Spirit. She shows us how grateful we should be for so great a blessing, and how to gain its benefit: our hearts should be as much prepared for the coming of Christ as if he were still to come into this world. The same lesson is given us for our imitation by the words and example of the holy men of the Old Testament.

Office of Readings, Monday of 1st week in Advent

Asleep in the Boat

Saint Augustine, Sermon 63

... I want to urge you not to let the faith sleep in your hearts against the storms and waves of this world. After all, it can scarcely be true that Christ the Lord had power over death, and did not have power over sleep, and that sleep possibly overtook the Almighty against His will, as He was sailing out. If you do believe this, He is asleep in you, but if Christ is awake in you, your faith is awake too. ...

You have heard an insult – it's a high wind; you've gotten angry – it's a wave. So as the wind blows and the waves break, the boat is in peril, your heart is in peril, your heart is tossed about. When you hear the insult, you are eager to avenge it; you do avenge it, and by giving way to someone else's evil, you suffer shipwreck. And why is that? Because Christ is asleep in you. What does it mean that Christ is asleep in you? That you have forgotten Christ. So wake Christ up, remember Christ; let Christ stay awake in you, think about Him. ...

What have I said about anger, you should hold onto as a rule to be followed in all your temptations. A temptation arises, it's a wind; you are troubled by a wave. Wake Christ up, let Him talk to you. *Who is this, when even the winds and the sea obey Him?* (Mt 8:27). Who is this, whom the sea obeys? *He is the sea, and He made it* (Ps 95:5). *All things were made through Him* (Jn 1:13). Imitate the winds and the sea instead: submit to the creator. At Christ's command the sea hears, and will you be deaf? The sea hears, and the wind drops, and are you still blowing? ...

Don't let the waves overwhelm you when your heart is upset by a temptation. And yet because we are human, if the wind has driven us on and shaken our souls with passion, don't let us despair; let us wake up Christ, and so sail on in a calm sea, and reach our home country.

The Real Thing

Cardinal George Pell, in *Prison Journal*, Volume 2: 12 November 2019 entry

Today was a special day, as Sr Mary had organized for Fr Jerome Santamaria to come with her and celebrate Mass for me, in the usual place in the common area. We had no interruption until Mass was over, thanks to Mr Harris. ...

It was a relief to have the Mass, to have the drought broken, if only for this occasion. For some weeks, when I obtained a text, I read it through as a "dry" Mass, but I found this unsatisfactory; not counterfeit, but not the genuine article which must be revered. Neither do I make "spiritual communions", whatever that means, because God is already in my heart spiritually, and I don't have the means to confect the Real Presence.

Neither do I choose to dwell on the fact that I cannot attend or celebrate Mass, but resolutely, each day, I do what I can and should do, which is follow my regular schedule of prayer.

At some times, special times such as Easter, I feel very keenly the inability to celebrate, to worship in the Mass, in the way Jesus prescribed. But Jesus will continue to listen to my small prayers; "poor" prayers would be more accurate than "small".

Catholicism is ritualised and sacramental, the making present of Jesus' redemptive suffering and death. Much more than even the most holy icon, the Mass takes us to the heart of creation and all human history, perhaps especially in this jail setting where a dozen criminals, including myself, are confined twenty-three hours a day – some of them murderers, probably many damaged by drugs, many of them wretched and unhappy, and some very angry. I heard of one murderer, touched by grace, who told the family of the person he murdered not to allow themselves to be consumed by hatred as he had been.

Christ was born in a stable and died on a rubbish dump between two thieves, even if the Last Supper was celebrated with dignity in decent surroundings. I am sure the good God has a special regard for the Eucharist celebrated in jail, just as he blesses all those who work with prisoners, such as Sr Mary.

It seems ungracious to be critical of the TV evangelists, whom I watch every Sunday and from whom I do receive nourishment. But it is a great relief, a return to the richer habits of a lifetime, to immerse myself in the simple Mass ritual and receive Holy Communion. While we had no major eruptions of noise from the prisoners, we were not in St Peter's or accompanied by the choir from St Mary's, Sydney. It was still simple and reverent, the real thing.

George Cardinal Pell, *Prison Journal*, Volume 2 (Ignatius Press, 2021), p.275-277. www.ignatius.com

Signs of Christmas

Pope Francis, after the Angelus, 06-12-2020

As you see, the Christmas tree has been raised in the Square and the Nativity scene is being set up. In these days, these two signs of Christmas are being prepared also in many homes, to the delight of children – and adults too! They are signs of hope, especially in this difficult time. Let us be sure we do not stop with the sign, but get to the meaning, that is, to Jesus, to the love of God that he revealed to us; get to the infinite goodness that he made shine on the world. There is no pandemic, there is no crisis that can extinguish this light. Let us allow it to enter our heart, and let us lend a hand to those who need it most. In this way God will be born anew in us and in our midst.

Vatican.va

Not For Sale

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church, USCCB, November 2021

53. Saint José Sánchez del Río, a Mexican teenager who was martyred at the age of 14 and canonized in 2016, was so filled with love of Christ and his Church that he was willing to give up his life rather than renounce Christ and his Kingship. While imprisoned, Saint José Sánchez del Río was able to receive the Blessed Sacrament when it was smuggled into his cell along with a basket of food. Strengthened by this viaticum, he was able to endure torture and to remain faithful to Christ when his captors told him he must renounce his faith or be executed. He replied to his persecutors: "My faith is not for sale."

Usccb.org

Disillusioned?

Think your next step through

By Philippa Martyr, The Catholic Weekly, 18-11-2021

Every now and then, someone – usually on The Catholic Weekly Facebook page – will tell me that they no longer go to Mass because the Church is full of terrible people.

This is sadly true. But this seems like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

When you stop going to Mass, you don't harm the clerical sexual abusers, or their enablers. You don't harm the hypocrites, the liars, and the people who don't sort their recyclables. Will anyone notice your absence? Possibly. If you were a very regular Mass-goer, someone might.

But this misses the entire point. When you go to Mass, you get to be physically close to Jesus Christ Himself. You might even consume Him as food. That's the same Jesus who hates sin and is heartbroken by abuse. He notices when you're not there, and misses you terribly.

So really, the only people you hurt by not attending Mass are Jesus and yourself.

I suspect that most people who no longer go to Mass really stopped going a long time ago, and for other reasons. That's a pretty big call, but I'll explain.

Most Mass-going Catholics don't simply wake up one day and decide, 'That's it.' Usually, it's a gradual process. They miss Mass one weekend, and then another – often when they're on holiday. Or they've only been going to Mass because Jack's coming up for Confirmation and we need to get that done. (Once Jack is confirmed, we don't see that family again.) There are lots of other reasons as well, mostly to do with what one witty theological writer called 'pelvic theology'. These are people who have various issues with the Church's teaching on sexuality.

Most people who abandon Mass-going don't understand what they're giving up. People who really know what Mass is don't give it up lightly, or at all.

Most of us don't understand what the Church is, and how it works. We also don't really understand what the sacraments are, and why they're important.

The Church is made up of sinners – people who do awful things all the time. This includes priests and bishops. When they do awful things, it makes all of us question what we're doing in the same Church as them. So the early Church worked out that we could still receive valid sacraments from a sinful person. Otherwise, the Church would have come to a grinding halt very shortly after the Ascension.

When the Church's ministers commit sin, those sins are not transmitted to us via the sacraments we receive from them. Yes, it's still awful. I agree with you. But God's grace and holiness are enough for us, and they reach willing and open hearts even through failing people and structures and bad examples. That's a guarantee.

Do you really believe the Church is corrupt beyond repair? Then stop giving it money. Most of the corruption is actually around money, so de-finance it.

But don't cut yourself off from the Source of Life Himself.

Catholicweekly.com.au

Christmas Consumerism

Pope Francis, General Audience 23-12-2020

Christmas must not be reduced to a merely sentimental or consumerist feast, full of gifts and good wishes but poor in Christian faith, and also poor in humanity. Therefore, it is necessary to curb a certain worldly mentality, incapable of grasping the incandescent core of our faith, which is this: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (Jn 1:14). And this is the heart of Christmas; rather, it is the truth of Christmas, there is no other.

Interceding for the World

Sometimes I struggle to be patient with people I don't warm to. Some people are too 'different' for me to feel drawn to them and for me to be understanding of them. It's easy to avoid these people, or not engage them; to get tired of them or impatient with them. There are also people who seem to feel this way about me – people who prefer not to engage me, or get impatient with me for being too 'different' ('too Catholic' sometimes), and others who seem to look down on me ('not Catholic enough' sometimes). It's much too easy to remain with people who think like we do, who like us, and whom we like, and forget about the rest. But I was reading about Moses interceding for his people. Moses becomes so close to God that he can speak to him as a friend, face to face. Yet when he comes down the mountain and finds that the people have turned away from God and are worshipping idols, he doesn't turn to God and take comfort in his wonderful, intimate relationship with him and no longer worry about his people who have chosen their own way. No, he begs God to have mercy on them. How easy it would've been for him to think, well, they chose their way, they knew that God was guiding them, calling them, caring for them, but they turned away, they made their choice, they were silly, and they lost out. Instead, he begs God to forgive them, and even lays *his own life* on the line, saying to God that if he doesn't forgive them, then God must blot Moses' *own name* out of his book too! Imagine that!

Talking about this prayer of Moses, Pope Francis, in his General Audience of 17-06-2020, reminds us that this is how we need to be with one another too, even with people who turn away from God. We must intercede for them. We must stand before God on their behalf. We must be a 'bridge' between God and his people.

Pope Francis reminds us that this is precisely what Jesus does for us. He intercedes for us. We are not good enough, not holy enough, not worthy. But Jesus doesn't turn away from us in disgust – he "shows the Father the wounds that are the price of our salvation, and he intercedes". What a beautiful image. I can imagine Jesus standing before his Father, begging for mercy for me, saying, "Don't give up on Janet, even though she falls so often – give her another chance, even though she is far from perfect. She lets us down time after time, but look! Look at my wounds in my hands, feet, side – I suffered and died for her! Don't give up on her – please! I laid down my life for her. She's worth it."

Pope Francis calls us to pray for others the same way, not to give up on people but to intercede for them:

"Everyone belongs to God. The worst sinners, the most wicked people, the most corrupt leaders, are children of God, and Jesus feels this and intercedes for everyone. ... Let us think of Moses, the intercessor. And when we want to condemn someone and we become angry inside – getting angry can do good, but condemning does no good – let us intercede for him or her; this will help us a lot."

(Pope Francis, General Audience, 17-06-2020)

Ed.

Love Doesn't Come Cheap

Pope Francis, to youth in Slovakia, 14-09-2021

Love is our greatest dream in life, but it does not come cheap. Like all great things in life, love is magnificent, but not easy. It is our greatest dream, but not easy to explain. ... Dear friends, let us not trivialize love, because love is not simply an emotion or feeling, even though it may start that way. Love is not about having *everything now*, it is not part of today's *throwaway culture*. Love is fidelity, gift and responsibility. Today, being really original and revolutionary means rebelling against the culture of the ephemeral, going beyond shallow instincts and momentary pleasures, and choosing to love with every fibre of your being, for the rest of your life. We were not put here just to make do, but to make something of our lives. If you think about some of the great stories you read in novels, or see in unforgettable movies or hear in some moving tale, there are always two things that go together. One is love, and the other is adventure, heroism. They always go together. For our life to be great, we need love and heroism alike. If we look to the crucified Jesus, we find both boundless love and the courage to give one's life to the utmost, without half-measures.

Vatican.va

Teach Us About the Church

Last time I wrote that the early Church, especially her Fathers, knew and understood her to be divinely authored, created and willed (November ITD, p.8). But, in the process of writing, it struck me that it was the Church who taught and instructed these people about her origin, foundation, nature and mission; the Church who doctrinally educated, fostered and shaped their strong ecclesial spirituality. It was she who taught them to think with her, to love her tenderly and sincerely, and to adhere to her truth no matter what the circumstances of their lives.

Since the Church's birth at the foot of the Cross, she has been teaching people about herself, and through grace configuring them into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ her head. And even today, she continues to do so through the Catechism (see paragraphs 748-945) and complimentary Directory. Given the dire state of the Church in this country, and in the West in general, this is what I believe her leaders, priests, religious and every person charged with pastoral and catechetical responsibilities, urgently need to do today – teach us about the Church.

Ask yourself, seriously, when last did you hear or read a sermon, article or pastoral letter on the Church as the fundamental and universal Sacrament of the presence of Christ in the world, the work of the Trinity, born right from the very beginning in the heart of communion between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? (CCC 758, 776, 813) When last have you heard about the Church as a sacred Mystery, without whom salvation wouldn't exist and holy communion in this world would be impossible? (CCC 760) When last have you heard and read any teaching on the Church as mother and teacher, the holy, spotless Bride of Christ; or as his Body for which he as her head and high priest, shed his precious blood and laid down his life? (CCC 789-796) When have you heard a sermon from the hierarchy about their own ecclesial (Church) spirituality, about their spousal relationship with their Bride, and the tender love and concern they should have for her and the many children she has given them? (Pastores Dabo Vobis, n.29)

No, instead, over the last 20 years or so, we have heard and read endless pastoral letters, plans and programs from her bishops and their consulting 'experts', about her being a malleable, visible human hierarchical institution that should be changed and shaped, made culturally acceptable and relative according to the 'spirit' of the age; according to the image and likeness of whoever is in charge really. In the diocese of Sale, Journeying Together, as a pastoral plan immediately springs to mind, where the Church was promoted as a community of equal discipleship, where everyone can exercise leadership and ministry; where the Church was reduced to a social justice and charitable non-government organization, and sometimes even a business or industry. No mention of her as a divine unchangeable mystery and reality.

I could go on and on about the devastating effects the hierarchy's erroneous and reductive outlook and vision of the Church's unchangeable divine origin, nature and mission has had on the practice of the faith. But suffice it to say, this has been one of the major reasons why 85% of the Catholic population no longer have a relationship with the Church, or believe her to be holy, the universal sacrament that is necessary for salvation in this world. In fact, many do not even consider her a force for good at all.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

The Birth of the Church

Catechism of the Catholic Church

766 The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus. For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.' As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.

Participation in the Mass is an Act of Love

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2021

4. As Christians we know that we need Christ to be present in our lives. He is our very sustenance as he reminded us: *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you* (Jn 6:53).

5. The Lord accompanies us in many ways, but none as profound as when we encounter him in the Eucharist. On our journey toward eternal life, Christ nourishes us with his very self. ...

9. The mission of the Lord's entire life on earth was to glorify the Father by bringing us salvation. In the Nicene Creed recited at Mass, we profess "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." The salvation offered in the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ is nothing less than sharing in the very life of God, in the communion of love among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is no greater gift that God could possibly give us. In Christ, we are *sharers in the divine nature* (2Pt 1:4). The Church Fathers referred to this participation in the divine life as "divinization." The eternal Son of God made this possible by becoming man and uniting humanity to his divine Person. St. Augustine explained, "the maker of man was made man, so that man might be a receiver of God." In fact, Pope Francis reminds us that "in the bread of the Eucharist, 'creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself.'" ...

18. From the very beginning, the Church has believed and celebrated according to the teaching of Jesus himself: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him* (Jn 6:54-56). It is not "ordinary bread and ordinary drink" that we receive in the Eucharist, but the flesh and blood of Christ, who came to nourish and transform us, to restore our relationship to God and to one another. ...

21. The reality that, in the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ without ceasing to appear as bread and wine to our five senses is one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith. This faith is a doorway through which we, like the saints and mystics before us, may enter into a deeper perception of the mercy and love manifested in and through Christ's sacramental presence in our midst. While one thing is seen with our bodily eyes, another reality is perceived through the eyes of faith. The real, true, and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the most profound reality of the sacrament. ...

23. The Church's firm belief in the Real Presence of Christ is reflected in the worship that we offer to the Blessed Sacrament in various ways, including Eucharistic Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction; Eucharistic Processions; and Forty Hours Devotions. In addition, the practices of reverently genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, bowing one's head prior to the reception of Holy Communion, and refrain from food and drink for at least one hour before receiving Communion are clear manifestations of the Church's Eucharistic faith. ...

24. When we receive Holy Communion, Christ is giving himself to us. He comes to us in all humility, as he came to us in the Incarnation, so that we may receive him and become one with him. ... Through this sacrament, the pilgrim Church is nourished, deepening her communion with the Triune God and consequently with one another. ...

28. ... St. John Paul II, writing of Sunday as "a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life", further asserts "Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human." [Dies Domini, no. 7.] We have been reborn in Baptism and nourished by the Eucharist so that we may live in communion with God and one another, not only today but also in the fullness of the heavenly Kingdom. To worship God on Sundays, then, is not the mere observance of a rule but the fulfillment of our identity, of who we are as members of the Body of Christ. Participation in the Mass is an act of love. ...

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Receiving Holy Communion

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2021

46. There are some sins, however, that do rupture the communion we share with God and the Church, and that cause grave offense to human dignity. These are referred to as grave, or mortal, sins (see 1 Jn 5:16-17). One commits a mortal sin by freely, knowingly, and willingly choosing to do something that involves grave matter and that is opposed to charity, opposed to love of God and neighbour.

47. One is not to celebrate Mass or receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin without having sought the Sacrament of Reconciliation and received absolution. As the Church has consistently taught, a person who receives Holy Communion while in a state of mortal sin not only does not receive the grace that the sacrament conveys; he or she commits the sin of sacrilege by failing to show the reverence due to the sacred Body and Blood of Christ. St. Paul warns us that *whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself* (1 Cor 11:27-29). To receive the Body and Blood of Christ while in a state of mortal sin represents a contradiction. The person who, by his or her own action, has broken communion with Christ and his Church but receives the Blessed Sacrament, acts incoherently, both claiming and rejecting communion at the same time. It is thus a counter-sign, a lie – it expresses a communion that in fact has been broken. ...

50. Before we receive Holy Communion, we should make a good examination of conscience to ensure that we are properly disposed to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. If we find that we have broken communion with Christ and his Church, we are not properly disposed to receive the Eucharist. However, we should not despair since the Lord in his mercy has given us a remedy. He loves us and deeply desires to forgive us and to restore our communion with him. On the first Easter night, the Risen Jesus gave to the apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins and to reconcile sinners with the Church. He gave the Church the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation when he breathed on the apostles and said to them: *Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained* (Jn 20:22-23). Whenever we sin, we have this beautiful opportunity to be renewed and strengthened by God's grace. If we have sinned gravely, the Sacrament provides us with the opportunity to recover the gift of sanctifying grace and to be restored to full communion with God and the Church. All the Sacrament requires of us as penitents is that we have contrition for our sins, resolve not to sin again, confess our sins, receive sacramental absolution, and do the assigned penance. We encourage all Catholics to a renewed appreciation for this wonderful sacrament in which we receive the Lord's pardon and peace. ...

55. ... We repeat words attributed to Saint Teresa of Calcutta: "Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the Church. Not because the Church won't let you but because your heart won't let you." ...

58. ... Let us all ask the Lord to call us into a time of Eucharistic renewal, a time of prayer and reflection, of acts of charity and sincere repentance. The Lord is with us in the Eucharistic Mystery celebrated in our parishes and missions, in our beautiful cathedrals and in our poorest chapels. He is present and he draws near to us, so that we can draw nearer to him. The Lord is generous to us with his grace; and so we, by his grace, should always humbly ask him to give us what we need.

59. ... Let us adore Jesus who ever remains with us, on all the altars of the world, and lead others to share in our joy!

www.usccb.org

"The good God wanted to give himself to us in the sacrament of his love, and gave us a great and vast desire that only he can fill."

St John Vianney

Pray for Families

Pope Francis, in his Message to the participants in the 14th National Pilgrimage of Families for the Family

Dear friends, the family is alive if it is united in prayer. The family is strong, if it rediscovers the Word of God and the providential value of all its promises. The family is generous and builds history if it remains open to life, if it does not discriminate and serves the weakest and most in need, if it does not stop offering the world the bread of charity and the wine of fraternity.

I encourage you to walk together along this path, and thus to cooperate in preparing, first and foremost with prayer, for the Tenth World Meeting of Families, to be held in Rome from 22 to 26 June 2022, but at the same time also in diocesan communities throughout the world. I therefore invite you to pray from now on with the official prayer for that meeting:

Holy Father, we are here before You to praise and thank You for the great gift of the family.

We pray to you for the families consecrated in the sacrament of matrimony, that they may rediscover every day the grace they have received and, as little domestic Churches, know how to bear witness to your Presence and the love with which Christ loves the Church.

We pray to you for families beset by difficulties and sufferings, by sickness, or travails that You alone know: support them and make them aware of the path of sanctification to which You are calling them, that they may experience Your infinite mercy and find new ways to grow in love.

We pray to you for children and young people that they may encounter you and respond joyfully to the vocation you have planned for them; for parents and grandparents, that they may be aware of their being a sign of the fatherhood and motherhood of God in the care of the children whom, in flesh and in spirit, You entrust to them; for the experience of fraternity that the family can give to the world.

Lord, grant that every family may live their vocation to holiness in the Church as a call to be a protagonist of evangelisation, in the service of life and peace, in communion with priests and every state of life.

Bless the World Meeting of Families. Amen.

The Shepherds

Admirabile Signum, on the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene, Pope Francis 2019 (n.5)

"Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Lk 2:15). So the shepherds tell one another after the proclamation of the angels.

A beautiful lesson emerges from these simple words. Unlike so many other people, busy about many things, the shepherds become the first to see the most essential thing of all: the gift of salvation. It is the humble and the poor who greet the event of the Incarnation.

The shepherds respond to God who comes to meet us in the Infant Jesus by setting out to meet him with love, gratitude and awe.

Thanks to Jesus, this encounter between God and his children gives birth to our religion and accounts for its unique beauty, so wonderfully evident in the nativity scene.

The Most Important Event in History

Pope Francis to Vatican employees, 21-12-2020

It is important to rediscover the birth of the Son of God as the most important event of history. It is the event foretold by the prophets centuries before it happened. It is the event that is still spoken of today: which historical figure do we speak of like we speak of Jesus?

Twenty centuries have passed and Jesus lives more than ever – and He is also more persecuted, very often – and more soiled by the lack of witness of many Christians. Twenty centuries have passed. And those who turn away from Him, by their behaviour, bear further witness to Jesus: without Him, man falls prey to evil: to sin, vice, selfishness, violence, and hatred.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us: this is the event that we must rediscover.

Vatican.va

Christmas Quiz 2021

1. What does the word "Advent" mean?

- a. Coming/arrival
- b. A short adventure
- c. Air vent/fresh air

2. When does Advent begin?

- a. 4 Sundays before Christmas
- b. 1 December
- c. 15 September

3. When does Advent begin in 2021?

- a. 1 December
- b. 24 December
- c. 28 November

4. What does Advent prepare for?

- a. The coming of Christ
- b. Christmas lunch
- c. Christmas presents

5. When does the Christmas season begin?

- a. 1 December
- b. 25 December
- c. 15 September

6. When does the Christmas season end?

- a. The 3rd Sunday after Christmas (Feast of the Baptism of the Lord)
- b. Midnight of 25 December
- c. New Year's Eve

7. What does Christmas celebrate?

- a. Santa Claus
- b. The end of the year
- c. The birth of Christ, the Son of God

8. What are 'The 12 Days of Christmas'?

- a. The last 12 days before Christmas
- b. The first 12 days after Christmas
- c. The 12 months of the year

9. How long is the feast of Christmas?

- a. 1 day
- b. 3-day long weekend
- c. 8 days, the Octave of Christmas

10. What does the Feast of the Epiphany celebrate, and when is it?

- a. The arrival of the Three Wise Men to honour the newborn King, 2nd Sunday after Christmas
- b. The arrival of the Three Wise Men to honour the newborn King, Christmas Day
- c. The feast of anticipation, Christmas Eve



Answers: 1a. 2a. 3c. 4a. 5b. 6a. 7c. 8b. 9c. 10a.

Ed.

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

With Mary Let us Adore Him!

St Peter Julian Eymard

Eucharistic adorers share Mary's life and mission of prayer at the foot of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

It is the most beautiful of all missions, and it holds no perils. It is the most holy, for in it all the virtues are practiced.

It is, moreover, the most necessary to the Church, which has even more need of prayerful souls than of powerful preachers; of men of penance rather than men of eloquence. Today more than ever have we need of men who, by their self-immolation, disarm the anger of God inflamed by the ever increasing crimes of nations. We must have souls who by their importunity re-open the treasures of grace which the indifference of the multitude has closed. We must have true adorers; that is to say, men of fervour and of sacrifice. When there are many such souls around their Divine Chief, God will be glorified, Jesus will be loved, and society will once more become Christian, conquered for Jesus Christ by the apostolate of Eucharistic prayer.

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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