

Into the Deep

Issue 223

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

Jan/Feb 2022

Source of Every Blessing

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 01-01-2019

Today, the eighth day after Christmas, we celebrate the Holy Mother of God. Like the shepherds of Bethlehem, we remain with our gaze focused on her and on the Child she holds in her arms. And in this way, by showing us Jesus, the Saviour of the world, she, the mother, *blesses* us. Today Our Lady blesses all of us, everyone. She blesses the journey of every man and of every woman in this year that is beginning, and that will be *good* precisely in the measure in which each one will have welcomed God's *goodness* which Jesus came to bring into the world.

In essence, it is the blessing of God who gives substance to all the good wishes that are exchanged in these days. And today the liturgy brings back the ancient benediction with which the Israelite priests blessed the people. Let us listen carefully; it states: "*The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace*" (Num 6:24-26). This is the age-old blessing. The priests would repeat the *name* of God, 'Lord', three times, extending his hands toward the people gathered. In the Bible, in fact, the name represents the very reality that is invoked, and thus, 'to place the name' of the Lord on a person, a family, a community, means offering them the beneficial force that flows from him. In this same formulation, the '*face*', the face of the Lord, is named twice. The priest prays that God 'make it shine' and '*lift it up*' toward his people, and thus grant them mercy and peace.

We know that according to Scripture the face of God is inaccessible to man: no one can see God and remain alive. This expresses the transcendence of God, the infinite greatness of his glory. But the glory of God is all Love, and therefore, while remaining inaccessible, like a Sun that one cannot look at, his grace shines on every creature and, in a special way on men and women, in whom he is most greatly reflected.

"When the time had fully come" (Gal 4:4), God revealed himself in the face of a man, Jesus, "born of woman". And here we return to the icon of today's celebration, which we have shared: the icon of the Holy Mother of God, who shows us her Son, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world. He is the Blessing for each person and for the entire human family. He, Jesus, is the wellspring of grace, mercy and peace.

Vatican.va

"Lord, teach me to seek you,

and reveal yourself to me as I seek, because
I can neither seek you if you do not teach me how,
nor find you unless you reveal yourself.

Let me seek you in desiring you;
let me desire you in seeking you;
let me find you in loving you;
let me love you in finding you."

St Anselm (1033-1109)

The Mass

St John Vianney

All the good works taken together do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass, because they are the works of men and the holy Mass is the work of God. The martyr is nothing in comparison, because martyrdom is the sacrifice that man makes to God of his life; the Mass is the sacrifice that God makes for man of his body and blood.

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

"Are we not happier than Simeon?

We can hold Him always if we want. He doesn't come only into our arms but into our heart."

St John Vianney

An Invitation to All

Pope Francis, in his Message for 30th World Day of the Sick, 11-02-2022

I would like to remind everyone that closeness to the sick and their pastoral care is not only the task of certain specifically designated ministers; visiting the sick is an invitation that Christ addresses to all his disciples. How many sick and elderly people are living at home and waiting for a visit! The ministry of consolation is a task for every baptized person, mindful of the word of Jesus: "I was sick and you visited me". (Mt 25:36)

Dear brothers and sisters, to the intercession of Mary, Health of the Infirm, I entrust all the sick and their families. United with Christ, who bears the pain of the world, may they find meaning, consolation and trust. I pray for healthcare workers everywhere, that, rich in mercy, they may offer patients, together with suitable care, their fraternal closeness.

"You Are My Son"

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 3rd Advent meditation 2021

"When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman." ...

In the Bible, the expression "born of a woman" underscores that the individual belongs to the human condition which comprises both weakness and mortality. To appreciate the significance of those words, we have only to remove them from the text. Without them, what would Christ be – a heavenly, disembodied illusion. The angel Gabriel "was sent" by God but returned to heaven in the same form that he had when he came down from heaven. It is the woman, Mary, who "anchored" the Son of God forever to humanity and history. ...

Ignatius of Antioch uses a startling expression when he says that Jesus "was [born] of Mary and of God," almost as we might say that someone is the child of so-and-so and so-and-so. The fact is that, in the entire universe, Mary is the only person who can address Jesus in the same way that the heavenly Father does: "You are my son, I have begotten you."

Cantalamessa.org

Cleanse Our Tearful Eyes

Archbishop Anthony Fisher's mother, Maria Fisher, passed away on 11 January 2022. Archbishop Fisher posted a notice on his Facebook page and included this beautiful prayer of Fr Bede Jarrett, OP (1881-1934):

We seem to be giving her back to you, O God,
who gave her to us.

Yet, as You did not lose her in giving her to us,
so we do not lose her by her return.

For You do not give as the world gives, O Lover of souls:
what You give You never take away,
for what is Yours is ours also, if we are Yours.

For life is eternal, and love is immortal,
and death is only an horizon,
and the horizon is no more than the limit of our sight.

Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see further;
cleanse our tearful eyes, that we may see more clearly;
draw us closer to Yourself, that we may know ourselves
to be nearer to our loved one who is with You.

And while You prepare a place for us,
prepare us also for that happy place,
that where You and she are, we may be also, for evermore.

With Love

Bequest: An enormous posthumous "Thank You!" to John Henderson who left a bequest to Into the Deep that will keep us going for more than a year! Please remember John in your prayers and Masses. And consider ITD in your Will.

Twenty Minutes: Have you downloaded "The Chosen" app yet? Have you watched the series yet? (see November 2021 ITD, p.11). If not, why not? It is wonderful! They have added two new short episodes for Christmas. The 20-minute episodes are Christmas specials – one titled "The Shepherd" and the other "The Messengers". Watch The Shepherd first. It's beautiful. The arrival of the long-awaited Messiah as seen from the perspective of a poor, outcast shepherd.

Mary's intercession: The second, new, 20-minute episode of The Chosen is about the nativity from Mary and Joseph's perspective. However, it also includes a powerful scene from well after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. The young Church is struggling against persecution as it spreads the Gospel. A mature Mary sends for Mary Magdalen so she can pass a message on to Luke. The two women are delighted to see one another again, and Our Lady's first questions are about how the Church is faring and who is in trouble and who she needs to pray for. It struck me that this is still what Our Lady is seeking – who and what to pray for on our behalf. She is, and was from the beginning, a mother full of love and concern for her children, and ready to ask her Divine Child for every good thing on our behalf. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Fret Not: Pope Francis has recently tightened restrictions around the celebration of the earlier form of the Mass even further (Responsa ad dubia, 04-12-2021). There are many 'Latin Mass Catholics' that are quite distraught about this. I know what it's like to be unable to find a home in your local parish; we have spent many years travelling an hour or more to the closest parish or priest who celebrates the (current) Mass reverently and obediently. I know the great spiritual benefit there is to finding a parish where you feel at home and at peace (and I thank God for our Ordinariate parish that is now our forever home!). But fret not, my 'Latin Mass' brothers and sisters. You will find a parish where the priest celebrates the current form of the Mass reverently – they are out there, and you can find them, and the travel distance is likely to be the same as you've had to travel for the old form of the Mass. Becoming angry or distressed will not change the current norms; and if you're tempted to become disobedient, then you're falling into the same pit as the liberal priests that led you away from the current form in the first place. Hang in there, take courage, and seek till you find. God is good. The Church is your home. Pope Francis is your Holy Father. If he has made a mistake, let God fix it in His own time. If he has not made a mistake, then your only option is to grow to love and accept the decision if you wish to remain Catholic.

Ed.

Expressions of Prayer

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

568. Christian tradition has preserved three forms for expressing and living prayer: vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer. The feature common to all of them is the recollection of the heart.

569. Vocal prayer associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart. Even the most interior prayer, however, cannot dispense with vocal prayer. In any case it must always spring from a personal faith. With the *Our Father* Jesus taught us a perfect form of vocal prayer.

570. Meditation is a prayerful reflection that begins above all in the Word of God in the Bible. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire in order to deepen our faith, convert our heart and fortify our will to follow Christ. It is a first step toward the union of love with our Lord.

571. Contemplative prayer is a simple gaze upon God in silence and love. It is a gift of God, a moment of pure faith during which the one praying seeks Christ, surrenders himself to the loving will of the Father, and places his being under the action of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond All This

Cardinal George Pell, in Prison Journal, Volume 2: 16 November 2019 entry

My recollection is that recently I heard on the television that the Milky Way has between one and four hundred billion stars. My memory might be faulty, and especially when I was working with money I had to be careful that I was not adding or subtracting two or three zeros. Whatever about the exact number, the Milky Way is immense beyond our imaginings, and only one part of the story of the universe. This thought was sparked by the report this week that the Anglo-Australian telescope at the Siding Spring Observatory [in New South Wales] had discovered a star, slingshot from the supermassive black hole at the heart of our galaxy five million years ago, which is travelling at six million km [3.7 million miles] an hour, ten times the speed of most stars. At this rate, it will exit the Milky Way in about 100 million years and never return. The black hole responsible for this expulsion, named Sagittarius A, has a mass equivalent to four million suns.

These distances are beyond our imagination, and even when we say the numbers quickly, as we do with the Vatican financial losses, we cannot completely evade their immensity.

It is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom Jesus called "Father", who created and sustains this unimaginable universe. Equally mysterious is the journey from the macroscopic to the microscopic, to the subatomic world of convertible mass and energy, without venturing into the mysteries of the soul and the brain or without touching the creations of human genius or the beauty of the saints and mystics, poets and artists.

The one true God is behind all this; no, he is beyond all this, and yet he is interested in each of us and loves each one of us, sending his only Son "to do it rough" with us and suffer and die for us.

As we pray toward the end of each baptism ceremony:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus. Amen.

George Cardinal Pell, *Prison Journal, Volume 2* (Ignatius Press, 2021), p.284-285. www.ignatius.com

The Great Mosaic

Pope Benedict XVI to youth, Turin, 02-05-2010

Today it is not easy to talk about eternal life and things everlasting because the mentality of our time tells us that nothing definitive exists; everything changes, and changes quickly. In many cases, 'change' has become a watchword, ... and in this way you, young people, are also led to think that it is impossible to make definitive choices that commit you for life. ... Is it true that in order to be happy we have to make do with small and fleeting moments of joy, which, once over, leave bitterness in our hearts? Dear young people, this is not true freedom, happiness cannot be attained in this way. Each of us was created to make, not provisional and reversible choices, but definitive and irrevocable choices which give full meaning to existence. We see this in our own lives: we would like every beautiful experience which fills us with joy never to end. God created us with a view to the 'forever'. In each of our hearts He placed the seed for a life that creates something great and beautiful. ...

In his dialogue with the rich young man, Jesus indicated life's greatest wealth: love. To love God and others with all of ourselves. ... Today we live in a cultural context that does not favour profound and disinterested human relationships, on the contrary, it often leads us to close in on ourselves, inducing individualism. ... But the hearts of the young are by nature sensitive to true love. Thus, with great trust, I address myself to each of you and say: it is not easy to make something great and beautiful of your lives, it is demanding, but with Christ everything is possible. ... Experience this meeting with Christ's love in a strong personal relationship with Him; experience this in the Church and primarily in the Sacraments. ... May each of you feel yourselves to be a 'living part' of the Church, unafraid, involved in the work of evangelisation...with your brothers and sisters in the faith, and in communion with pastors, avoiding individualist tendencies even in the life of faith, in order deeply to absorb the beauty of being part of the great mosaic that is the Church of Christ.

Vatican Information Service, 02-05-2010

Liturgy - Primary Concern and Focus

Philippa Martyr's article in the December issue ITD (p.5) was excellent. What sober reading! I've read many of her articles, particularly the ones in Catholic Weekly, and most of them, if not all, seem to come back to our participation, or the lack thereof, in the Church's Liturgy. And rightly so. The Eucharist is the crowning jewel of the sacraments, the summit towards which all activity of the Church is directed and the fount from which all her power flows. Not only is it the beating heart and wellspring of the Church's life and mission, but the very basis and foundation of our leaders' fatherly episcopal office, and should always be their primary concern and focus as well.

All the universal Church's endeavours – catechetical, pastoral or otherwise, even her lofty mission – aim to lead the baptized into becoming liturgical people, and moving them towards full and active participation in the Sunday worshipping parish community. The entire Catechism was promulgated to aid us in living a liturgical life, a life anchored in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and to prepare newcomers to participate in it and help them to deepen their understanding of it.

The liturgy presents the mystery of Christ concretely and is the primary means of entering and participating in it immediately. All the Sacraments are the actions of Christ who administer them through his bishops and priests, and their conferral is supposed to form and shape us into a liturgical people because liturgy is the primary work of the 'People of God'.

However, our bishops who are the primary administrators and moderators of the Sacred Liturgy, have abjectly failed in their duty, responsibility and evangelizing mission in this country. Their failed administration, governance and leadership over many years has done exactly the opposite, and emptied our parishes. The 2016 Church survey results confirms this. Of the 5,291,817 Catholics currently in this country only 9.4% attend Sunday Mass every Sunday. In some dioceses it is even lower than this and still trending south.

The Church in Australia is gripped in a process of becoming extinct, and her faith is moribund. For a long time now she has been entrenched in what I believe is a sacramental or liturgical crisis. Call it what you will, but critical and major it is! A crisis which consists in the radical drop in the number of Catholics who still bother to attend the sacraments, and even fewer participating in post-baptismal sacraments. Baptisms are down, the sacrament of Confession is almost non-existent, and Sunday Mass attendance numbers are abysmal. Church marriages are a rarity, and more and more Catholics are being buried from funeral parlours. Vocations to priesthood and religious life are as scarce as hen's teeth, and our bishops' answer to this scarcity and major crisis, is to pretend it doesn't exist, and import seminarians and priests from Africa, India and Vietnam in order to perpetuate the status quo and administer palliative care to dying parishes.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Guard This Identity

Pope Francis, before baptising children on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, 09-02-2022

Your children will receive Christian identity today. And you, parents and godparents, must guard this identity.

This is your task during your life: to guard the Christian identity of your children.

It is an everyday commitment: to make them grow with the light they will receive today.

The Only Authentic Revolution

Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the Major Penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary, in a letter to all Confessors

"[T]he confessor knows well that he is participating in the only authentic revolution: that of mercy and goodness, of truth and justice, in the "revolution of Love" inaugurated by Jesus Christ who revealed to us that God himself is Love."

Vatican News 10-12-2021

Chapter and Verse

Answered by Fr Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy and sacramental theology and director of the Sacerdos Institute at the Regina Apostolorum university

Q: Recently I have been asked to explain why the reader at Mass doesn't say the chapter and verses from where the reading is taken from, for a given reading during Mass. - C.M., Lusaka, Zambia

A: I would say that there are several reasons why announcing the chapter and verse does not generally form part of liturgical tradition, whether Catholic or Orthodox. As far as I can ascertain, Anglican services do include the announcement of chapter and verse before the readings.

The first reason, I would say, is that the liturgical rituals for proclaiming the readings were established long before the introduction of chapter and verse into the Bible. When preaching, the Church Fathers say, "As John says somewhere..." or "As Ezekiel prophesies regarding the temple..." as numerical references did not exist.

The introduction of chapters to the Bible was made by Cardinal Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury (1150-1228). It was probably done while he was a professor at the University of Paris in the years 1204-1205, so as to bring some uniformity in teaching Scriptures to students who hailed from all over Europe. These chapters were later substantially adopted in the first printed versions of the Latin Vulgate.

Verses were introduced later, after the invention of the printing press. For the Old Testament, the division was based on a 1440 concordance of the Hebrew Bible prepared by Rabbi Isaac Nathan ben Kalonymus, which in turn was based on a much older system of division used for study and cantillation of the sacred text in the Jewish community. This concordance was first printed in 1523, and its system became standard.

Although he was not the first person to divide the New Testament into verses, the modern system was introduced by scholar and printer Robert Estienne (1503-1559) in his 1551 edition of the Greek New Testament, a French version in 1553 and the Latin Vulgate in 1555.

Since the cycle of readings and the introductory rituals already existed, and until relatively recent times the readings were proclaimed in Latin, the division into chapter and verse was never incorporated into the liturgy.

A second reason is that the Roman Catholic Church often selects and abridges texts for liturgical proclamation in order to transmit a particular message adapted to the day while leaving out some verses. ... This practice would make for rather awkward proclamations.

A third reason is that the liturgical introductions are geared more toward fostering an attitude of attentive listening in the faithful than in imparting information. ... It is a living word that is experienced and not just a "reading" or text to be used as a starting point for preaching.

The Eastern liturgies tend to emphasize this reality much more strongly. For example, the widely used Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom ... :

People: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Priest (in a low voice): Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of your Gospel. Instil in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the light of our souls and bodies, and to You, we give glory together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The introductory rites for the Gospel proclamation follow:

Priest: Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the holy Gospel. Peace be with all.

People: And with your spirit.

Deacon: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to (Name). Let us be attentive.

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Zenit.org 03-05-2020

The Father of Each One of Us

Fr Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1st Advent meditation 2021

In this initial meditation, I would like to reflect on: "God sent his Son so that we might receive adoption as God's children."

The fatherhood of God is at the heart of Jesus' preaching. Even in the Hebrew Scriptures, God is seen as a father. The novelty here is that now God is seen not so much as the "father of his people Israel" in a collective sense, so to speak, but as the father of each human being in an individual and personal sense, of both the righteous and the sinner. God cares about each one as if that person were the only one; God knows the needs, the thoughts and counts the number of hairs on the head of each one.

The mistake of Liberal Theology, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (especially in its most renowned representative, Adolf von Harnack), was to view the fatherhood of God as the essence of the Gospel, leaving aside Christ's divinity and the Paschal Mystery. Another error (which began with the heresy of Marcion in the 2nd century and was never completely eradicated) was to view the God of the Hebrew Scriptures as a just, holy, powerful, and thundering God, and the God of Jesus Christ as a tender, affable and merciful "daddy-figure" God.

The novelty brought by Christ does not consist in this. Rather, it consists in the fact that God, who remains as he was described in the Hebrew Testament, namely, thrice holy, just, and all-powerful, is now given to us as our papa!

This is the image set in place by Jesus in the opening words of the Our Father and which expresses, in a nutshell, all that follows: "Our Father who art in heaven." You are in heaven, that is, you are the Most High, the transcendent One, as high above us as the heavens are above the earth, but still, "our father" – or as the original puts it: "Abba!" – somewhat akin to saying our papa, my dad.

This is also the image of God that the Church places at the head of its Creed. "I believe in one God, the Father almighty": father, but still almighty; almighty, but still father. This is, after all, what every child needs – a parent who bends down to them, who is tender, with whom they can play, but who, at the same time, is strong and can be relied on for protection, who instils in them courage and freedom.

In Jesus' preaching, we get a glimpse of the real novelty that changes everything. God is not just a father in a metaphorical and moral sense in so far as he created and cares for his people. God is – first of all – a real father of a real son begotten "before the dawn," meaning before time began, and it will be thanks to this only Son that people will also be able to become God's children in a real sense and not just metaphorically. This novelty shines in the way Jesus addresses himself to the Father calling him Abbà, and also through his words: "No one knows the Father but the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). ...

Thanks to the redemption brought about by Christ and imparted to us in Baptism, we are no longer God's children in a moral sense alone, but also in a real, ontological sense. We have become "sons in the Son," and Christ has become the "firstborn of many brothers and sisters" (Rom 8:29).

To express all this the Apostle [Paul] uses the notion of adoption: "...that we might receive adoption as children" "God destined us for adoption as his children" (Eph 1:5). It is only an analogy, and as with any analogy, it cannot express the fullness of the mystery. In itself, human adoption is a legal fact. Adopted children may assume the surname, citizenship, and residence of the adoptive parent, but they do not share their blood or DNA. Conception, birthing pangs, and delivery were not involved. This is not the case with us. God not only imparts to us being called his children, but he also imparts to us his intimate life, his Spirit which is, so to speak, his DNA. By Baptism, the very life of God flows within us.

On this point, John is more daring than Paul. He does not speak in terms of adoption, but of real birthing, God giving us birth. Those who believed in Christ "were begotten by God" (Jn 1:13); in Baptism, we are "born of the Spirit;" one is "born again from above" (see Jn 3:5-6). ...

Cantalamessa.org

Tired and Heavy-Laden

Pope Francis, Homily, 03-12-2021

"Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Is there any one of us who is not, in some way, tired or heavy laden? All of us are. Yet, we resist coming to Jesus. Often we would rather remain closed in on ourselves, alone in the darkness, feeling sorry for ourselves and content to have sadness as our companion.

Jesus is the divine physician: he alone is the true light that illuminates every man and woman (cf. Jn 1:9), the one who gives us an abundance of light, warmth and love. Jesus alone frees the heart from evil. So let us ask ourselves: do I remain wrapped in the darkness of despondency and joylessness, or do I go to Jesus and give my life to him? Do I follow Jesus, shout out my needs, and hand my bitterness over to him? Let us do it! Let us give Jesus the chance to heal our hearts. ...

Brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus...wants to touch our eyes, to touch our hearts, and to lead us to the light, to give us spiritual rebirth and new strength. That is what Jesus wants to do. He asks us the same question that he asked the two blind men: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (Mt 9:28). Do we believe that Jesus can do this? Let us renew our faith in him. Let us say to him: Jesus, we believe that your light is greater than our darkness; we believe that you can heal us, that you can renew our fellowship, that you can increase our joy.

Vatican.va

Better Than It Was

A sermon by St Faustus of Riez: The marriage of Christ and the Church

On the third day there was a wedding. What wedding can this be but the joyful marriage of man's salvation, a marriage celebrated by confessing the Trinity or by faith in the resurrection. That is why the marriage took place "on the third day," a reference to the sacred mysteries which this number symbolises.

Hence, too, we read elsewhere in the Gospel that the return of the younger son, that is, the conversion of the pagans, is marked by song, and music and wedding garments.

Like a bridegroom coming from his marriage chamber our God descended to earth in his incarnation, in order to be united to his Church which was to be formed of the pagan nations. To her he gave a pledge and a dowry: a pledge when God was united to man; a dowry when he was sacrificed for man's salvation. The pledge is our present redemption; the dowry, eternal life.

To those who see only with the outward eye, all these events at Cana are strange and wonderful; to those who understand, they are also signs. For, if we look closely, the very water tells us of our rebirth in baptism. One thing is turned into another from within, and in a hidden way a lesser creature is changed into a greater. All this points to the hidden reality of our second birth. There water was suddenly changed; later it will cause a change in man.

By Christ's action in Galilee, then, wine is made, that is, the law withdraws and grace takes its place; the shadows fade and truth becomes present; fleshly realities are coupled with spiritual, and the old covenant with its outward discipline is transformed into the new. For, as the Apostle says: *The old order has passed away; now all is new!* The water in the jars is not less than it was before, but now begins to be what it had not been; so too the law is not destroyed by Christ's coming, but is made better than it was.

When the wine fails, new wine is served: the wine of the old covenant was good, but the wine of the new is better. The old covenant, which Jews follow, is exhausted by its letter; the new covenant, which belongs to us, has the savour of life and is filled with grace.

The good wine, that is, good precepts, refers to the law; thus we read: *You shall love your neighbour but hate your enemy.* But the Gospel is a better and a stronger wine: *My command to you is: love your enemies, pray for your persecutors.*

Office of Readings (Saturday after Epiphany Sunday)

A Key Role in the Conflict

If we go back to the beginning, God created man and woman, and then left the process of creating people with them. Thus it was that another unique person resulted from God's instruction to 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth'.

In addition to this ongoing process of creation, the man and the woman had to continue adapting their unique personalities to build the family relationship needed to support their ongoing contribution to God's creation. Sadly, the personal freedoms that God also gave to the man and the woman were exploited by the serpent to achieve rejection of God. This rejection resulted in the disruption of many things including sexual relations.

God himself decided to become human in order to save humanity from its sins. But, once again God was rejected. This rejection led to the death of Christ: but also his resurrection and foundation of his Church.

Our redemption is achieved within this Church by means of the sacraments, of which two are vocational: Orders and Marriage. The priest celebrates the sacrament of Orders by confecting bread and wine to form the body and blood of Christ. Parents celebrate their sacrament by consummating their sexual relationship to pass on life to others made in the image and likeness of God.

In that the vocational sacraments are clearly part of maintaining God's creation, Satan will be fiercely exercising his disruptive powers. Sexuality has played a key role in this conflict. In their book, *From the Depths of our Hearts*, Benedict XVI and Robert Cardinal Sarah proclaim the vital importance of celibacy for the priesthood.

Clearly marriage has different demands such as rejection of contraception and abortion; the proper use of sex.

At Fatima, the Mother of God instructed three children about the conflict taking place in God's creation. One of these children later became Sister Lucia who, before she died in 2005, told Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, Archbishop of Bologna, Italy, the final battle between Christ and Satan would be over marriage and the family.

Clearly Christ will win. And he gave us the means of being on his side for marriage is a sacrament as a result of his resurrection.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Appeal to Those with Disabilities

Pope Francis, Message for International Day of Persons with Disabilities, held on 3 December 2021

The Second Vatican Council, in speaking of the universal call to holiness, teaches that "all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity... In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ... They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor" (*Lumen Gentium*, 40).

The Gospels show that whenever persons with disabilities met Jesus, their lives changed profoundly, and they became his witnesses. Such was the case, for example, of the man blind from birth who, after being healed by Jesus, boldly declared to everyone that Jesus was a prophet (cf. Jn 9:17). Many others joyfully proclaimed what the Lord had done for them.

I know that some of you live in situations that are not easy. I would like to speak personally to each of you, and I ask that, if necessary, your family members or those closest to you read my words to you, or convey my appeal. I ask you to pray. The Lord listens attentively to the prayers of those who trust in him. No one should say: "I don't know how to pray", because, as the Apostle says, "the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings" (Rom 8:26). In the Gospels, Jesus always listens to those who turn to him, however haltingly, even with a small sign (cf. Lk 8:44) or a cry for help (cf. Mk 10:47). Prayer is a mission, a mission accessible to everyone, and I would like to entrust that mission in a particular way to you. There is no one so frail that he or she cannot pray, worship the Lord, give glory to his holy Name and intercede for the salvation of the world. In the sight of the Almighty, we come to realize that we are all equal.

Pray for Families

Prayer for the 10th World Meeting of Families, 22-26 June 2022

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.

Flint

Fr Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1st Advent meditation 2021

St Gregory the Great compared the Word of God to flint, that is, to the stone once used to produce a spark that ignited a fire. He said it is necessary to do with the Word of God what is done with the flint: to strike it repeatedly until it produces a spark. Ponder it, repeat it, even out loud.

During your prayer time or adoration, with your whole heart, and without becoming bored, repeat within yourself: "A child of God! I am a son of God; I am a daughter of God. God is my father!"

Or simply repeat for some time: "Our Father who art in heaven" without continuing the rest of the prayer.

As you do so, it is more necessary than ever to remember the words of Jesus: "Knock and it will be opened to you".

Sooner or later, and perhaps when you least expect it, it will happen – the reality of those words, if only for a moment, will explode within you and will be enough for the rest of your life.

And even if nothing sensational should happen, be assured that you have achieved what is essential. The rest will be given to you in heaven: "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2)

Cantalamessa.org

Liturgical Formation

Archbishop Arthur Roche, Prefect Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Responsa ad dubia re Traditionis Custodes*

It is sad to see how the deepest bond of unity, the sharing in the one Bread broken which is His Body offered so that all may be one (cf. Jn 17:21), becomes a cause for division. It is the duty of the Bishops, *cum Petro et sub Petro*, to safeguard communion, which, as the Apostle Paul reminds us (cf. 1Cor 11:17-34), is a necessary condition for being able to participate at the Eucharistic table.

One fact is undeniable: The Council Fathers perceived the urgent need for a reform so that the truth of the faith as celebrated might appear ever more in all its beauty, and the People of God might grow in full, active, conscious participation in the liturgical celebration (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 14), which is the present moment in the history of salvation, the memorial of the Lord's Passover, our one and only hope.

As pastors we must not lend ourselves to sterile polemics, capable only of creating division, in which the ritual itself is often exploited by ideological viewpoints. Rather, we are all called to rediscover the value of the liturgical reform by preserving the truth and beauty of the Rite that it has given us. For this to happen, we are aware that a renewed and continuous liturgical formation is necessary both for Priests and for the lay faithful.

Vatican.va

Let Us Not Forget Adoration

Pope Francis, Epiphany homily, 06-01-2022

At the end of the Magi's journey came the climactic moment: once they arrived at their destination, "they fell down and worshiped the Child" (cf. Mt 2:11). *They worshiped*. Let us never forget this: the journey of faith finds renewed strength and fulfilment only when it is made in the presence of God. Only if we recover our "taste" for adoration will our desire be rekindled. Desire leads us to adoration and adoration renews our desire. For our desire for God can only grow when we place ourselves in his presence. For Jesus alone heals our desires. From what? From the tyranny of needs. Indeed, our hearts grow sickly whenever our desires coincide merely with our needs. God, on the other hand, elevates our desires; he purifies them and heals them of selfishness, opening them to love for him and for our brothers and sisters. This is why we should not neglect adoration, that prayer of silent adoration which is not so common among us. Please let us not forget adoration.

In this way, like the Magi, we will have the daily certainty that even in the darkest nights a star continues to shine. It is the star of the Lord, who comes to care for our frail humanity. Let us set out on the path towards him. Let us not give apathy and resignation the power to drive us into a cheerless and banal existence. Let our restless hearts embrace the restlessness of the Spirit. The world expects from believers a new burst of enthusiasm for the things of heaven. Like the Magi, let us lift up our eyes, listen to the desire lodged in our hearts, and follow the star that God makes shine above us. As restless seekers, let us remain open to God's surprises. Brothers and sisters, let us dream, let us seek and let us adore.

Vatican.va

The Joyful Mysteries

Rosarium Virginis Mariae, on The Most Holy Rosary, Pope John Paul II, 2002 (n.20)

The first five decades, the "joyful mysteries", are marked by *the joy radiating from the event of the Incarnation*. This is clear from the very first mystery, the Annunciation, where Gabriel's greeting to the Virgin of Nazareth is linked to an invitation to messianic joy: "Rejoice, Mary". The whole of salvation history, in some sense the entire history of the world, has led up to this greeting. If it is the Father's plan to unite all things in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10), then the whole of the universe is in some way touched by the divine favour with which the Father looks upon Mary and makes her the Mother of his Son. The whole of humanity, in turn, is embraced by the *fiat* with which she readily agrees to the will of God.

Exultation is the keynote of the encounter with Elizabeth, where the sound of Mary's voice and the presence of Christ in her womb cause John to "leap for joy" (cf. Lk 1:44). Gladness also fills the scene in Bethlehem, when the birth of the divine Child, the Saviour of the world, is announced by the song of the angels and proclaimed to the shepherds as "news of great joy" (Lk 2:10).

The final two mysteries, while preserving this climate of joy, already point to the drama yet to come. The Presentation in the Temple not only expresses the joy of the Child's consecration and the ecstasy of the aged Simeon; it also records the prophecy that Christ will be a "sign of contradiction" for Israel and that a sword will pierce his mother's heart (cf. Lk 2:34-35). Joy mixed with drama marks the fifth mystery, the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple. Here he appears in his divine wisdom as he listens and raises questions, already in effect one who "teaches". The revelation of his mystery as the Son wholly dedicated to his Father's affairs proclaims the radical nature of the Gospel, in which even the closest of human relationships are challenged by the absolute demands of the Kingdom. Mary and Joseph, fearful and anxious, "did not understand" his words (Lk 2:50).

To meditate upon the "joyful" mysteries, then, is to enter into the ultimate causes and the deepest meaning of Christian joy. It is to focus on the realism of the mystery of the Incarnation and on the obscure foreshadowing of the mystery of the saving Passion. Mary leads us to discover the secret of Christian joy, reminding us that Christianity is, first and foremost, *euangelion*, "good news", which has as its heart and its whole content the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the one Saviour of the world.

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

A Simple Answer

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

People ask me: 'What will convert America and save the world?' My answer is prayer. What we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Hours of prayer.

Farewell, Alleluia

From the Mozarabic liturgy of Spain (9th or 10th century) – the farewell to the Alleluia before Lent

Stay with us today, Alleluia,
And tomorrow thou shalt part.
When the morning rises,
Thou shalt go thy way,
Alleluia, alleluia.

The mountains and hills shall rejoice, Alleluia,
While they await thy glory.
Thou goest, Alleluia; may thy way be blessed,
Until thou shalt return with joy.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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ITD is released on or around the first day of each month by email and on the blog; printed copies about a week later. Deadline for contributions is one week before the end of the month (but preferably by the 15th of the month).

Editor: Janet Kingman

Subscription is free. We rely on donations.

Cheques to be made out to Janet Kingman.

ITD's bank details for **Direct Deposits:**

Account name: Janet Kingman

BSB: 013-745 (ANZ)

Account number: 2901-63632

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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