

# *Into the Deep*

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## Time for a Change of Heart

**Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 22-02-2012**

I would like to reflect briefly upon the season of Lent, which begins today with the Liturgy of Ash Wednesday. It is a journey of 40 days that will lead us to the Easter Triduum – the memorial of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection, the heart of the mystery of our salvation.

In the first centuries of the Church's life, this was the time when those who had heard and received the announcement of Christ began, step by step, their journey of faith and conversion on the way to receiving the sacrament of Baptism. It was a time of drawing near to the living God and an initiation into the faith...

Later on, also penitents and then all the faithful were invited to live out this journey of spiritual renewal and to increasingly conform their own lives to Christ's. The participation of the entire community in the various stages of the Lenten journey underlines an important dimension of Christian spirituality: It is the redemption not of some, but of all, made possible thanks to the death and resurrection of Christ.

For this reason, both those who were making the journey of faith as catechumens in order to receive Baptism, as well as those who had distanced themselves from God and from the community of faith and who were seeking reconciliation, and also those who were living the faith in full communion with the Church – everyone together knew that the time preceding Easter was a time of *metanoia*, that is, of a change of heart, of penance.

It is the season that identifies our human life and all of history as a process of conversion set in motion now so as to meet the Lord at the end of time.

Zenit.org 22-02-2012

## Observe

**Pope Benedict XIV, 1741**

The observance of Lent is the very badge of the Christian warfare.

By it we prove ourselves not to be enemies of the cross of Christ. By it we avert the scourges of divine justice. By it we gain strength against the princes of darkness, for it shields us with heavenly help.

Should mankind grow remiss in their observance of Lent, it would be a detriment to God's glory, a disgrace to the Catholic religion, and a danger to Christian souls.

Neither can it be doubted that such negligence would become the source of misery to the world, of public calamity, and of private woe.

Ewtn.com

## Loved Forever

**Pope Francis, Homily 14-03-2021**

"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son". This is the heart of the Gospel; this is the source of our joy. The Gospel message is not an idea or a doctrine. It is Jesus himself: the Son whom the Father has given us so that we might have life. ...

[God] has always looked at us with love, and for the sake of love, he came among us in the flesh of his Son. In Jesus, he went in search of us when we were lost. In Jesus, he came to raise us up when we fell. In Jesus, he wept with us and healed our wounds. In Jesus, he blessed our life forever. The Gospel tells us that whoever believes in him will not perish. In Jesus, God spoke the definitive word about our life: you are not lost, you are loved. Loved forever.

**All issues of *Into the Deep* are at [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)**

# A Challenge

**Pope Francis, to Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 21-01-2022**

Without faith, the presence of believers in the world would be reduced to that of a humanitarian agency. Faith must be the heart of the life and action of every baptized person. And not a generic or vague faith, as if it were diluted wine that loses its value, but a genuine, pure faith, as the Lord demands when he says to the disciples: "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed..."

For this reason, we must never forget that a faith that does not trouble us is a troubled faith. A faith that does not raise questions is a faith that has to be questioned. A faith that does not rouse us is a faith that needs to be roused. A faith that does not shake us is a faith that needs to be shaken.

Let us not be satisfied with a lukewarm, habitual, textbook faith. Let us cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and let us cooperate with each other, so that the fire that Jesus came to bring into the world may continue to burn and inflame the hearts of all.

Vatican.va

# St Irenaeus, Doctor of the Church

**By Vatican News staff reporter, 20-01-2022**

Pope Francis on Thursday received in audience Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and authorized him, in accordance with the opinion of the Plenary Session of the Cardinals and Bishops who are members of the same Dicastery, to confer the title of Doctor of the Universal Church on Saint Irenaeus.

The Pope had already announced this intention during an audience with members of the St. Irenaeus Orthodox-Catholic Joint Working Group in the Vatican last October.

On that occasion, he described Saint Irenaeus, (who, though born in Smyrna, in what is now Turkey, between 130 - 140 AD, later moved to France where he served as Bishop of Lyons) as "a great spiritual and theological bridge between Eastern and Western Christians."

Vaticannews.va

# Persecution against Christians

**By Lisa Zengarini, Vatican News, 20 January 2022**

2021 recorded a new significant increase of persecutions against Christians across the world, according to a new report released by Open Doors International, which for over 60 years has been supporting persecuted Christians worldwide.

On January 19 the non-denominational organization based in the Netherlands presented its 2022 World Watch List which ranks the top 50 countries where Christians experience the worst persecution for their faith. The survey, covering a period from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021, shows that persecution continues to rise especially in Asian and African countries and that the COVID 19 pandemic has further exacerbated discrimination.

According to its findings, which have been thoroughly analyzed by the independent International Institute for Religious Freedom, over 360 million people (that is 1 out of 7 globally) endured persecution and discrimination in their country last year. Overall, 5,898 Christians were killed (up 23.8% versus 2020), 5,110 churches were attacked or closed (up 13.8%), 6,175 were Christians arrested without trial (up 44.3%) and 3,829 kidnapped (up 123.9%).

In the new report, Afghanistan ranks first as the most dangerous country for Christians, since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, overtaking North Korea. However, the situation of religious freedom under the Pyongyang regime of Kim Jong-Un has continued to worsen in the period examined and the Far East country is second in the list after ranking first for 20 years. Four out of the first five countries recording the highest rate of anti-Christian violence are Islamic States where both political unrest and religious extremism have grown. Apart from Afghanistan, they include Somalia (3), Libya (4) and Yemen (5). They are followed by Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Sudan, Iraq and Syria. ...

Vaticannews.va

# Bible in a Year

Happy New Year! Thank you for continuing to gather together such important reading for us through "Into the Deep". I particularly look forward to reading the quotes from our beloved popes and saints.

I am glad that you have encouraged your readers to watch "The Chosen" which I also find compelling viewing. Not only does it bring the gospels to life so that when we read them or hear them read at Mass we can more readily place ourselves in the story, but it also makes Jesus so real and loveable and his followers so believable. It is beautifully written and a Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi and an Anglican scholar check each episode for authenticity.

Another "must see" series on You tube is Fr Mike Schmitz' "Bible in a Year". Fr Mike reads a bit from the Bible each day, starting from Genesis on Day 1 and prays a psalm, prayer and gives a commentary on the text/s. Fr Mike says that the Bible is "where we encounter God's voice" so that we can "live life through the lens of Sacred Scripture" and allow God to speak "to our hearts and minds" and "reveal" His Heart to us.

I am only up to Day 80 and coming to the end of the Pentateuch, but have learned so much of how we fit into that story today and how important the Old Testament is to our understanding of the holiness of God, the primacy of worship and Sacred Liturgy. Just as God's people, after the Fall, were broken, God continued to walk with them, our lives can also be broken and we have to remember that Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us and He is both merciful and just.

Some of the first 5 books are repetitious (genealogies, laws and statutes, setting up of the Tent of Meetings, the types of sacrifices and offerings, blessings and warnings...), some make us feel uncomfortable and some are vengeful but Fr Mike reads every word. His reflections help us to understand the why, how different life was in those days and how faithful and just God is.

In particular I found that the detail of the instructions that God commanded Moses on how to construct the Tent of Meetings, perform the sacrifices and write down the laws and statutes were a wake-up call to us today! God organised how He wanted them to worship Him, even down to the colour of the material used as drapes around the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies – the place where God would come down in the Tent of Meetings. The Bible tells us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. In pre-Vatican II days, altar rails separated the congregation from the sanctuary – it was set apart because God resides in our tabernacles and He is most Holy – most set apart. Maybe with the loss of faith it is time to return the altar rails to help the congregation to believe that God is all-holy *and* truly present in the tabernacle.

Another interesting insight is the way God expects the garments of the Levitical priests to be made, including the 12 different precious stones to be sewn into the Breastpiece of Judgement, which the priest wore over his heart when he approached God in the Holy of Holies. Each stone had the name of one of the tribes of Israel engraved into it. The Catholic priest is called to be our spiritual father that has our names engraved over his heart so that every time he approaches the Lord in worship he brings us with him into God's presence. In one of "The Chosen" episodes when Jesus is invited to choose a scroll to read in a synagogue by a priest, the priest is wearing the Breastpiece with 12 stones sewn onto it.

There is so much more hidden in plain sight within the pages of the Old Testament that Fr Mike reveals to us to help us understand the New Testament, the Sacred Liturgy and our place in the Heart of God.

**Maureen Wright, Lurnea, New South Wales**

## REST IN PEACE

Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Monica Hackett** (died 28 December 2021, aged 94) and **Ada Pigott** (died 31 January 2022, aged 97), both late of Morwell. They were long-time supporters of Into the Deep, faithful Catholics, and strong, fearless women.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

# May I Make a Suggestion?

Once again, many thanks for the latest edition of Into the Deep. I always find articles of interest and, importantly, spiritually nourishing items. For example, the article on why the readers at Mass do not give the chapter and verses from where they are reading was, I thought, informative and helpful. I can't remember ever hearing an explanation for this practice – with which, incidentally, I have no difficulty.

May I make a suggestion, without wishing to be too demanding or challenging. In your item on page 3, in the January/February edition, under the heading **Fret Not**, you make reference, among other things, to the way you strive to find a parish/priest where the Mass is celebrated 'reverently and obediently'. You also refer to the spiritual benefits of finding a parish where you 'feel at home and at peace'. Would you consider in a future edition an article that indicates how or simply give some examples of what you or others deem is a Mass that is celebrated 'reverently and obediently': and perhaps the converse.

I guess a simple answer is, as a minimum, a Mass according to the GIRM but sometimes examples help flesh these issues out and hopefully are helpful and cause for thought. As well it would be interesting to know what makes you feel 'at home and at peace'. Is it things such as the welcoming congregation, the way people participate, and their reverence, the quality of the singing – when, nowadays it is possible! – the quality of the homily, the architecture of the Church and the general atmosphere (for example, existence of beautiful stained-glass windows/mosaics/murals), the quality of the Sunday bulletin, use of screens, how well the PA system works etc etc.

Enough from me! But if you feel ok including such an article I for one would find it helpful and hopefully so would others. I was partly prompted to write to you because only this morning I was having a discussion about the pluses and minuses of so-called gun barrel churches versus fan-shaped or semicircular churches and also the location of the tabernacle and the location of the altar and the ambo.

Once again, many thanks for the great work you do.

**Name and address supplied**

Good idea. I've made a start below, and I look forward to the contributions of others. I've also written about this before in the December 2015 issue of ITD (p.11) and October 2007 issue (p.2). **Ed.**

## Say the Black and Do the Red

This is indeed an interesting topic, raised by our reader above. What do I consider a Mass celebrated 'reverently and obediently' and what makes me feel 'at home and at peace' in a parish?

Certainly the starting point, and end point too really, is as our correspondent says: a Mass according to the GIRM (General Instruction of the Roman Missal). In simple terms, it is "Say the black, do the red". That is primarily what I ask of a priest. Read what you're supposed to read, and do what you're supposed to do. It's not hard. It's all in the book in front of you. And it's all I want.

I remember reading *Redemptionis Sacramentum* in 2004 and being struck by the following (n.12):

"[I]t is the right of all of Christ's faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes, according to her stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms. Likewise, the Catholic people have the right that the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass should be celebrated for them in an integral manner, according to the entire doctrine of the Church's Magisterium. Finally, it is the Catholic community's right that the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist should be carried out for it in such a manner that it truly stands out as a sacrament of unity, to the exclusion of all blemishes and actions that might engender divisions and factions in the Church."

It was the first time I realised that I did actually have a *right* to having the Mass said correctly. That it wasn't just my preference, or my desire, but my right. The Church itself afforded me that right, and *Redemptionis Sacramentum* was reminding priests of that right that all the faithful have.

*Continued on p. 5*

Yet it's hard to find a parish where you can just hear the Mass as the Church intends. So many priests insert their own words or actions, or omit words and actions required, or change things around as if to 'personalise' the Mass so that it's "their" Mass instead of "the" Mass. Even some priests who otherwise follow the rubrics, tend to feel free to change words at the "Behold the Lamb of God..." or at the final blessing say, "May the Lord bless *us*, in the name of the Father..." instead of *you*. It's jarring to hear their own words instead of the words we expect, not to mention the change in meaning they create. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (n.59) has this to say about it: "The reprobated practice by which Priests, Deacons or the faithful here and there alter or vary at will the texts of the Sacred Liturgy that they are charged to pronounce, must cease."

Ultimately, it all comes down to the priest. A faithful priest can say a reverent and obedient Mass in the worst church (or hall, for that matter). He can remind noisy parishioners that we are in a house of prayer, the House of the Lord, that the Lord Almighty is indeed present. He can politely but firmly refuse the 'assistance' of various women who might barge up onto the sanctuary at any time, and he can reclaim his rightful authority. As to what makes me feel at home and at peace in a parish, here are some thoughts:

Silence. When I walk into the church, there is a hush, a quiet reverence and awareness that we are in the presence of the living Christ; people don't talk unless it's urgent, and then it's in whispers. There's a strong sense of being in communion with our Catholic family (even if we've never met them e.g. visiting a parish while on holiday), knowing we're all there for the same reason, and we all believe the same thing, in the same One. Hence the silence.

The Lord. The tabernacle is visible, front and centre, and the red light is on. There are kneelers.

Holy Communion. Presenting for Holy Communion is slow and reverent, not a rush to the front, and not a show. There is provision for receiving Holy Communion both standing and kneeling (e.g. at an altar rail), and in the hand or on the tongue, and you don't feel odd for receiving the way you feel comfortable or the way you're used to. All are allowed by the Church.

Dress. I like it when women can feel free to dress in a skirt or in pants, wear a veil or not, without being frowned-upon by others for their choices. All are allowed by the Church.

Regarding the examples our correspondent raised, here are my personal preferences:

- Screens – I'm ok with a screen if it's used for responses or hymn words only and then is turned off. No pictures, no words that the priest says. Otherwise it draws my eyes away from the miracle happening on the altar.
- Singing – I like singing to be in a friendly key, not reserved for those who 'can sing', but easy enough for anyone and everyone to join in. Beautiful, old, traditional hymns (in English, because my Latin is not great) are my personal favourite, ones that even small congregations can sing with confidence and without accompaniment. I don't mind if there's organ or guitar or other instrument, as long as there is no 'band on show', as if playing at a concert for an audience.
- Architecture – I like the traditional gun-barrel churches because it focusses all attention on the front. Fan-shaped churches often allow my eyes to wander over to other parishioners instead of the altar.
- Windows – I love beautiful, traditional stained-glass windows. Regular see-through windows out onto a glorious view (sea or mountains) simply draw my attention away from the altar and tabernacle.
- A welcoming congregation – give me a quiet, polite nod when I enter the pew, or a genuine 'hello and welcome' outside after Mass, rather than an 'official welcomer' who virtually blocks my way into the church, or the one who wants to make small-talk to me inside the church when I'm trying to pray.
- Homilies – yes, I love a good homily. But a good homily to me might be different to a good homily to someone else. So as long as it's about the readings or about Church teaching, I'm fine with that. If it 'speaks to me' or moves me, or leads to me ponder or change, all the better. But not every priest can be a fine preacher (for me) and that's ok, as long as he says the Mass properly.

All in all, "Say the black and do the red" is enough for me from priests, and respectful silence in the presence of the Lord is enough for me from fellow worshippers. The rest is bonus. What a joy and privilege it is to be Catholic!

Ed.

# 1. Prayer

**Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2022**

*Let us not grow tired of praying.* Jesus taught us to “pray always without becoming weary”.

We need to pray because we need God. Thinking that we need nothing other than ourselves is a dangerous illusion. If the pandemic has heightened the awareness of our own personal and social fragility, may this Lent allow us to experience the consolation provided by faith in God, without whom we cannot stand firm.

No one attains salvation alone, since we are all in the same boat, amid the storms of history; and certainly no one reaches salvation without God, for only the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ triumphs over the dark waters of death.

Faith does not spare us life’s burdens and tribulations, but it does allow us to face them in union with God in Christ, with the great hope that does not disappoint, whose pledge is the love that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Vatican.va

# 3. Almsgiving

**Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2022**

*Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbours.* During this Lent, may we practise almsgiving by giving joyfully.

God who “supplies seed to the sower and bread for food” enables each of us not only to have food to eat, but also to be generous in doing good to others.

While it is true that we have our entire life to sow goodness, let us take special advantage of this Lenten season to care for those close to us and to reach out to our brothers and sisters who lie wounded along the path of life.

Lent is a favourable time to seek out – and not to avoid – those in need; to reach out – and not to ignore – those who need a sympathetic ear and a good word; to visit – and not to abandon – those who are lonely. Let us put into practice our call to do good to all, and take time to love the poor and needy, those abandoned and rejected, those discriminated against and marginalized.

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# 2. Fasting

**Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2022**

*Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives.* May the corporal fasting to which Lent calls us fortify our spirit for the battle against sin.

*Let us not grow tired of asking for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation,* knowing that God never tires of forgiving.

*Let us not grow tired of fighting against concupiscence,* that weakness which induces to selfishness and all evil, and finds in the course of history a variety of ways to lure men and women into sin. One of these is addiction to the digital media, which impoverishes human relationships.

Lent is a propitious time to resist these temptations and to cultivate instead a more integral form of human communication made up of “authentic encounters”, face-to-face and in person.

Vatican.va

# Thank You!

Thanks for this month’s episode. Good old John Henderson. May he rest in peace.

I agree with you that we have to look for a parish ‘home’ – so important, and so fruitful when found.

**J.S., Howlong, NSW**

I have transferred a donation into the appropriate account. Thank you for all you are doing to uphold the faith we are blessed to have and uphold.

**M.G., Forster NSW**

Thank you for Into the Deep. Enclosing a small donation towards your expenses. As an email recipient I don’t realise your costs.

**M.W., Lurnea, NSW**

I have been receiving Into the Deep for some years. My daughter emails it to me. I wish to enclose a donation. Wishing you all the best with the magazine and I hope it continues.

**B.O’C., Longwarry, VIC**

Better late than never, my annual contribution for your superb, magnificent work in Into the Deep.

**M.H., Morwell, VIC**

Thank you to everyone who continues to support and inspire ITD, whether with letters, comments, prayers or donations. May God bless you all. **Ed.**

*“Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all.” (Gal 6:9-10)*

# Unleashing our Baptism

**Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1<sup>st</sup> Advent meditation 2021**

Catholic theology acknowledges the idea of a sacrament that is both valid and licit, but “tethered” or “frozen”. Baptism is often a “tethered” sacrament.

A sacrament is said to be “tethered” if its effects remain inhibited and hindered due to the lack of certain conditions that impede its effectiveness. An extreme example would be the sacrament of Matrimony or Holy Orders received in a state of mortal sin. In those circumstances, such sacraments cannot confer any grace on the individuals. However, once the obstacle of sin is removed through a good confession, it is said that the sacrament revives (*reviviscit*) without needing to repeat the sacramental rite, thanks to the fidelity and irrevocability of God’s gift.

As I mentioned, Matrimony and Holy Orders are extreme examples, but there could be other cases in which a sacrament, although not completely tethered, is also not completely unleashed, that is, free to work its effects. In the case of Baptism, what is it that could cause the effects of the sacrament to remain frozen? Sacraments are not magical rites that work mechanically without our knowing it or without some cooperation on our part. Their effectiveness is the result of synergy or collaboration between divine omnipotence (specifically, the grace of Christ of the Holy Spirit) and human freedom.

In the sacrament, everything that depends on the grace or will of Christ is referred to as “the work accomplished” (*opus operatum*); that is, the finished work, the objective and inevitable effects of the sacrament when validly administered. On the other hand, everything that depends on the recipient’s freedom and disposition is called “the work yet to be accomplished” (*opus operantis*), that is, what remains to be carried out, the human contribution.

What we receive from God – the so-called “grace of Baptism” – is multifaceted and very rich. It includes our becoming children of God, the remission of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the planting of the seeds of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity into our souls. The human contribution consists essentially of faith! “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mk 16:16). When grace and freedom touch in perfect synchronism, like two poles, one positive and one negative, light and power are unleashed.

In the case of infant Baptism (and also in adult Baptism when deep conviction and participation are lacking), that synchronism is missing. I’m not suggesting that we abandon the practice of infant Baptism. The Church has always rightly practiced it and defended it on the basis that Baptism is a gift of God even prior to being the result of a human choice. Rather, we need to acknowledge what this practice involves, given the new historical situation in which we live.

In times past, when the entire environment was Christian and impregnated with faith, this faith could blossom, albeit gradually. The free and personal act of faith was “supplied by the Church” and expressed, as it were, through a third party, namely the parents and godparents. This is no longer the case. The environment in which a child grows up today is less conducive to helping faith blossom in the child. Often neither is the family, and even less so the school system, and least of all our society and culture.

This is why I spoke about Baptism as a “tethered” sacrament. It is like a very precious gift package that remains unopened, like a Christmas gift, misplaced somewhere and forgotten about, even before it was opened. Whoever has it has everything they need to carry out all the acts required in the life of a Christian, and also experiences some of its effects at least partially, but does not enjoy the fullness of the reality. In the language of St. Augustine, they experience the sacrament (*sacramentum*), but not – at least not fully – the reality of the sacrament (*the res sacramenti*).

The fact that we are here meditating on this already means that we have believed, that faith has been joined to the sacrament in us. What, then, are we still lacking? We lack faith-as-amazement, the wide-eyed Wow! of wonder and excitement as that you get when you open a gift and which is, to the gift-giver, the best reward of all.

Cantalamessa.org

# The Palms and the Passion

Reflection by Fr John Speekman, in his parish bulletin of 21 March 2021

I was once called to attend an elderly patient, let's call her Rosa, who was critically ill; she was in her agony but conscious. She smiled weakly as I entered the room. I absolved her, gave her the plenary indulgence given at the time of death, anointed her and gave a tiny particle of the Sacred Host. After a few moments she whispered to me: *Father, he takes our health, he takes our dignity, but he never takes himself.* It was one of those occasional moments in a priest's life when heaven itself seems to speak and how I wished the whole world could have heard: *...he never takes himself!* On reflection, the whole dying process could be seen as a process of giving back to God all that he has given us during our life, ending with life itself. It is the painful fulfilment of those words spoken in another context to the disciples of the Pharisees: *Give back...to God what belongs to God.* Rosa had given back everything only to discover she was left with one last thing which would never be taken from her, God himself.

It's a curious thing that today's feast has two names – Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday – two names which, probably unintentionally, underline these two aspects of every human life, the giving and the giving back, the palms and the passion.

Jesus' welcome into the city of Jerusalem is a wonderful 'palms' moment filled with blessings, a moment of popularity and welcome. He gets the colt of the donkey to ride on and they even cover it with their cloaks. They spread cloaks on the ground and wave palms, welcoming him as king with loud acclamations. Somehow the hosannas of the people are a recognition of all that God had given his Son Jesus during his life.

The Passion, which we have just read is, on the other hand, the painful litany of Jesus' returning all to the Father. He divests himself willingly of everything; he allows himself to be stripped of all that is not God, so that he might show us, in a moment of supreme surrender, where our true treasure lies. Betrayed by one of his inner circle of friends, arrested as a lawbreaker, deserted by his disciples, denied by the leader of his Apostles, condemned by the religious authorities, punished unjustly by the civil authorities, mocked and tortured by soldiers, stripped of his clothes, crucified between thieves – the innocent Jesus is left to die as a contemptible criminal, exposed on a Cross, jeered at by the crowds.

And yet one further torment lay in store for him, the greatest agony a person can suffer, the experience of the withdrawal of the merciful presence the Father: *My God, my God, why have you deserted me?*

Let us hasten to affirm that in reality God never leaves us, that he is always present to us and that he didn't actually abandon Jesus; Rosa was right '*...he never takes himself.*' What we are speaking of here an experience of what it would be like if God really did withdraw from us. Many of the saints have undergone this ultimate purification of their love and the mystical doctors call it the 'dark night of the soul'. Jesus took the full punishment of sin upon himself and, undoubtedly, the punishment of sin is the eternal deprivation of the presence of God. St Faustina, the Apostle of the Divine Mercy, experienced this dark night and tells us that: *the dreadful thought of being rejected by God is the actual torture suffered by the damned.* Later she describes her experience a little more fully.

She tells us: *One day, just as I had awakened, when I was putting myself in the presence of God, I was suddenly over-whelmed by despair. Complete darkness in the soul. I fought as best I could till noon. In the afternoon, truly deadly fears began to seize me; my physical strength began to leave me. I went quickly to my cell, fell on my knees before the Crucifix and began to cry out for mercy. But Jesus did not hear my cries. I felt my physical strength leave me completely. I fell to the ground, despair flooding my whole soul. I suffered terrible tortures in no way different from the torments of hell.*

Do you see now why Jesus' suffering was so necessary? In taking upon himself that which by rights we should have suffered, total alienation from God, that is, the torment of hell, he satisfied divine justice and won, for those who would claim it, restoration to communion with the Father.

In every human life, in yours and in mine, the palms and the passion are intermingled. We accept the first with gratitude and the second with faith and look forward to that moment when, having given back all that we were given, we enter into the unutterable joy of eternal life.



# Open it and Read it

**Pope Francis, Slovakia, 14-09-2021**

How do we learn to see glory in the cross? Some of the saints teach us that the cross is like a book: in order to know it, we have to open it and read it. It is not enough to buy a book, take a look at it and put it on a shelf in our home. The same is true for the cross: it is painted or carved everywhere in our churches. Crucifixes are found all around us: on necks, in homes, in cars, in pockets. What good is this, unless we stop to look at the crucified Jesus and open our hearts to him, unless we let ourselves be struck by the wounds he bears for our sake, unless our hearts swell with emotion and we weep before the God wounded for love of us. Unless we do that, the cross remains an unread book whose title and author we know, without it having any impact on our lives. Let us not reduce the cross to an object of devotion, much less to a political symbol, to a sign of religious and social status. ... Standing with John at Calvary was the Holy Mother of God. No one saw the book of the cross so wide open as she did, and she testified to it with humble love. Through her intercession, let us ask for the grace to turn the eyes of our heart to the crucified Jesus. Then our faith will be able to flower in its fullness; then our witness will bear its full fruit.

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# The Inner Splendour

**Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1<sup>st</sup> Advent meditation 2021**

Last Lent I tried to shed some light on the danger of living...“as if Christ had never existed.”

Continuing this line of thought, in this year’s Advent meditations I would like to call attention to another analogous danger: that of living “as if the Church were nothing more than” scandals, controversies, personality clashes, gossip, or at best, at least socially useful. In short, just human, like everything else in the course of history.

I would like to shed light on the inner splendour of the Church and the Christian life. We must not close our eyes to factual reality nor evade our responsibilities; at the same time, we need to face them from a correct perspective and not allow ourselves to be crushed by them. ... Speaking about the proclamation of the Gospel, the Apostle wrote: “We carry this treasure in fragile clay jars” (2Cor 4:7). It would be foolish to spend all of our time and energy focusing on the “fragile clay jars” while forgetting about “the treasure”. The Apostle gives us a reason to assert the positive that exists even in a situation like ours. He says that this is “so that it may be clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us” (2Cor 4:7).

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# Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away

**Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 14-11-2021**

The Gospel passage of today’s liturgy begins with a phrase from Jesus that leaves us astonished: “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven” (Mk13:24-25). ... In the end, however, Jesus says what does not fall: “Heaven and earth will pass away”, he says, “*but my words will not pass away*” (v.31). The Lord’s words will not pass away. ...

And we, brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: on what are we investing our lives? On things that pass, such as money, success, appearance, physical well-being? We will take away none of these things. Are we attached to earthly things, as if we were to live here forever? When we are young and healthy, everything is fine, but when the time comes to depart, we have to leave everything behind. The Word of God warns us today: this world will pass away. And only love will remain. To base one’s life on the Word of God, therefore, is not an escape from history, but an immersion into earthly realities in order to make them solid, to transform them with love, imprinting on them the sign of eternity, the sign of God. Here then is some advice for making important choices. When I do not know what to do, how to make a definitive choice, an important decision, a decision that involves Jesus’ love, what must I do? Before deciding, let us imagine that we are standing in front of Jesus, as at the end of life, before he who is love. And imagining ourselves there, in his presence, at the threshold of eternity, we make the decision for today. We must decide in this way: always looking to eternity, looking at Jesus. It may not be the easiest, it may not be the most immediate, but it will be the right one (cf. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 187), that is certain.

# Servant of the Liturgy

**Redemptionis Sacramentum, n.186**

Let Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the exercise of the sacred ministry, examine their consciences as regards the authenticity and fidelity of the actions they have performed in the name of Christ and the Church in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

Let each one of the sacred ministers ask himself, even with severity, whether he has respected the rights of the lay members of Christ's faithful, who confidently entrust themselves and their children to him, relying on him to fulfill for the faithful those sacred functions that the Church intends to carry out in celebrating the sacred Liturgy at Christ's command. For each one should always remember that he is a servant of the Sacred Liturgy.

# Obedience to the Rite

**Sacramentum Caritatis, n. 23**

As a result, priests should be conscious of the fact that in their ministry they must never put themselves or their personal opinions in first place, but Jesus Christ. Any attempt to make themselves the centre of the liturgical action contradicts their very identity as priests.

The priest is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord's hands. This is seen particularly in his humility in leading the liturgical assembly, in obedience to the rite, uniting himself to it in mind and heart, and avoiding anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality.

## St George Preca

**Saint George Preca (1880 - 1962), Feast Day 9 May**

George was born in Valetta, Malta, growing up not far from the Carmelite Shrine church there. At the age of four, he nearly drowned in the Grand Harbour, but was rescued by a passing boatman. When his family later told the story they would joke that he had been rescued from the waters, like Moses. George, recalling that the rescue had happened on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, attributed his rescue to the protection of the same Lady. As a young man, George was enrolled in the Carmelite scapular and later joined the Third Order. Attracted to the service of the priesthood, George joined the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1906, inspired by a personal mission to convert the world.

Early on, Father George ('Dun Gorg' in Maltese) noticed the lack of genuine faith education amongst the young people of Malta. Their religion was built around festivals and formalities, with little connection to their interior lives and a truer following of Jesus. His vision for something more and his lived integrity attracted a circle of young men around him who gathered for prayer, discussion and ultimately to work as lay missionaries in parishes and villages around Malta. His society was known as MUSEUM, which stood for Magister, Utinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundos, or "Master, would that the whole world would follow the Gospel." A society of laymen who would teach the catechism to the people while receiving instruction themselves was unheard of at the time, and it took twenty-five years and much tension with the Church authorities (including at one point the closure of the Society's houses) before the Society's existence was officially approved. It continued its work throughout World War II even in the places where members fled from the violence as refugees.

Dun Gorg continued preaching and writing, drawing on the rich spiritual writings of Carmelites Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, as well as his models as a Third Order Carmelite, Elijah and Mary. He had a flair for making Carmelite thoughts, teachings and traditions clear and simple for working people. In 1951 Malta celebrated the Seventh Centenary of the Brown Scapular, with Father George at the forefront. In the same year the Carmelite Prior General, Killian Lynch, formally affiliated him to the Carmelite family.

He composed the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary in 1957. He died in 1962, and was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on 3 June 2007, being described as "Malta's second father in faith" after St Paul. Today the Society has over a thousand members and is responsible for the teaching of some 20,000 young people in the Maltese islands, the UK, Australia, Peru, Albania, Kenya and the Sudan.

From the Universalis app

# The Luminous Mysteries

*Rosarium Virginis Mariae, on The Most Holy Rosary, Pope John Paul II, 2002 (n.21)*

Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way “mysteries of light”.

Certainly the whole mystery of Christ is a mystery of light. He is the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12). Yet this truth emerges in a special way during the years of his public life, when he proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom. In proposing to the Christian community five significant moments – “luminous” mysteries – during this phase of Christ's life, I think that the following can be fittingly singled out: (1) his Baptism in the Jordan, (2) his self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana, (3) his proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with his call to conversion, (4) his Transfiguration, and finally, (5) his institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery.

Each of these mysteries is *a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus*. The Baptism in the Jordan is first of all a mystery of light. Here, as Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became “sin” for our sake (cf. 2Cor 5:21), the heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son (cf. Mt 3:17 and parallels), while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission which he is to carry out.

Another mystery of light is the first of the signs, given at Cana (cf. Jn 2:1-12), when Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intervention of Mary, the first among believers.

Another mystery of light is the preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. Mk 1:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. Mk 2:3-13; Lk 7:47-48); the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. Jn 20:22-23).

The mystery of light *par excellence* is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to “listen to him” (cf. Lk 9:35 and parallels) and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit.

A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies “to the end” his love for humanity (Jn 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

In these mysteries, apart from the miracle at Cana, *the presence of Mary remains in the background*. The Gospels make only the briefest reference to her occasional presence at one moment or other during the preaching of Jesus (cf. Mk 3:31-5; Jn 2:12), and they give no indication that she was present at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Yet the role she assumed at Cana in some way accompanies Christ throughout his ministry. The revelation made directly by the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan and echoed by John the Baptist is placed upon Mary's lips at Cana, and it becomes the great maternal counsel which Mary addresses to the Church of every age: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). This counsel is a fitting introduction to the words and signs of Christ's public ministry and it forms the Marian foundation of all the “mysteries of light”.

## Laws of Fasting and Abstinence

**Code of Canon Law**

**Can. 1250** The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.

**Can. 1251** Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

**Can. 1252** The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their sixtieth year.

## Hours of Eucharistic Adoration

### in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday after 9.10am Mass
Heyfield	1 <sup>st</sup> Fridays 10am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Mass 10am) – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> Friday 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> Friday till 4pm
Trafalgar	Wed & 1st Sat: (9.30am Mass) – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> month, Jan. on)
Wonthaggi	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday 7pm – 8pm

## Dignity

### Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1<sup>st</sup> Advent meditation 2021

What dignity could be greater than being a child of God?

The story is told of an arrogant, mean daughter of the king of France who constantly scolded one of her maids. One day she shouted in her face, "Don't you know that I'm the daughter of your king?"

To which the maid replied, "And don't you know that I am the daughter of your God?"

Cantalamessa.org

## Secret of Happiness

### Pope John Paul II, Address to families, 24-05-1987

Loving is essentially a giving of oneself to others. Far from being an instinctive inclination, love is a conscious decision of the will to go out to others. To be able to love properly, one must detach oneself from many things and above all from self; one must give freely, one must love to the end. This stripping away of self – a long job – is laborious and exciting. It is the source of equilibrium. It is the secret of happiness.

Agenda for the Third Millennium, Fount Paperbacks, 1997 (p.93)

## Contact *Into the Deep*

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- 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**