

Into the Deep

Issue 225

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

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Christians

St John Chrysostom

The Israelites witnessed marvels; you also will witness marvels, greater and more splendid than those which accompanied them on their departure from Egypt. You did not see Pharaoh drowned with his armies, but you have seen the devil with his weapons overcome by the waters of baptism. The Israelites passed through the sea; you have passed from death to life. They were delivered from the Egyptians; you have been delivered from the powers of darkness. The Israelites were freed from slavery to a pagan people; you have been freed from the much greater slavery to sin.

The Risen One

Pope Francis, General Audience, 31-03-2021

In the darkness of Holy Saturday, joy and light will break through with the rites of the Easter Vigil ... He who was crucified is risen! All questions and uncertainties, hesitations and fears are dispelled by this revelation. The Risen One gives us the certainty that good always triumphs over evil, that life always conquers death, and that it is not our end to descend lower and lower, from sorrow to sorrow, but rather to rise up high. The Risen One is the confirmation that Jesus is right in everything: in promising us life beyond death and forgiveness beyond sins.

Vatican.va

Monday of the Angel

Pope Francis, Regina Caeli Address, 13-04-2020

Today, Monday of the Angel, the joyful proclamation resounds of Christ's Resurrection. The evangelical page (cf. Mt 28:8-15) recounts that the women, scared, left Jesus' sepulchre in haste, which they had found empty. However, Jesus Himself appeared to them on the way, saying: "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (v.10). With these words, the Risen One entrusts to the women a missionary mandate to the Apostles. In fact, they gave an admirable example of fidelity, of dedication and of love of Christ in the time of His public life as well as during His Passion. Now He rewards them with this gesture of attention and predilection. The women are always at the beginning: Mary, at the beginning; the women, at the beginning.

First the women, then the disciples and, in particular, Peter ascertain the reality of the Resurrection. Many times, Jesus had preannounced to them that, after the Passion and Cross, He would resurrect, but the disciples hadn't understood, because they weren't yet ready. Their faith had to make a quality leap, which only the Holy Spirit, gift of the Risen One, could elicit.

At the beginning of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we hear Peter state frankly, with courage, with frankness: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32). As if to say: "I show my face for Him. I give my life for Him." And then he would give his life for Him. From that moment, the proclamation that Christ has risen has spread everywhere and reached every corner of the earth, becoming the message of hope for all. Jesus' Resurrection says to us that life, not death, has the last word. By resurrecting His Only-Begotten Son, God the Father manifested fully His love and His mercy for humanity of all times.

Zenit.org 13-04-2020

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

Turning the Other Cheek

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 20-02-2022

Jesus says: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Lk 6:27). And even more concretely: "To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also" (v.29). When we hear this, it seems that the Lord is asking for the impossible. ...

Let us consider first and foremost that sense of *injustice* that we feel in "turning the other cheek". And let us think of Jesus. During the passion, in his unjust trial before the high priest, at one point he receives a slap from one of the guards. And how does He react? He does not insult him, no: he says to the guard, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" (Jn 18:23). He asks for an account of the wrong done to him. Turning the other cheek does not mean suffering in silence, giving in to injustice. With his question, Jesus denounces what is unjust. But he does so without anger, without violence, indeed *with kindness*. He does not wish to spark off an argument, but rather *to defuse resentment*, this is important: to extinguish hatred and injustice together, seeking to restore the guilty brother. This is not easy, but Jesus did it and he tells us to do likewise. This is turning the other cheek: Jesus' meekness is a stronger response than the slap he received.

Turning the other cheek is not the withdrawal of the loser, but the action of one who has a greater inner strength. Turning the other cheek means defeating evil with goodness which opens up a breach in the heart of the enemy, unmasking the absurdity of his hatred. And this attitude, this turning the other cheek, is dictated not by calculation or by hatred, but by love.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is the freely given, undeserved love we receive from Jesus that generates in the heart a way of doing things that is similar to his, that rejects all vengeance. ...

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Loving Your Enemies

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 20-02-2022

Let's get to another objection: is it *possible* for a person to come to love his or her enemies?

If it depended only on us, it would be impossible. But let us recall that, when the Lord asks for something, he wishes to give it.

The Lord never asks for something he has not already given us first. When he tells me to love my enemies, he wants to give me the capacity to do so. Without that ability, we would not be able, but he tells you to "love your enemy" and gives you the capacity to love.

Saint Augustine prayed in this way – listen to this beautiful prayer: Lord, "give what You command, and command what You will", because you have already given it to me.

What should we ask of him? What is God happy to give us? The strength to love, which is not a thing, but rather the Holy Spirit. The strength to love is the Holy Spirit, and with the Spirit of Jesus, we can respond to evil with good, we can love those who do us harm. This is what Christians do.

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It's a Simple Thing

After writing last month's, "Say the Black and Do the Red" (March ITD, p.4-5), I came across the following quote that marries in well with what I was talking about.

It's from an article by Fr Michael Rennie of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, U.S.A., and appeared in the Adoremus Bulletin of May 2021:

"Parishioners often approach me and remark how edifying it is to see the care with which I follow the rubrics of the Mass. It's a simple thing, really. I'm no hero for having the capacity to read the instructions and obey, and I'm sure any number of priests are doing the same. But these simple actions done with quiet dignity reveal the heart of the Mass. Throughout the Mass, the priest disciplines himself in subservience to those rubrics. He puts on the identity of Christ and serves as his icon."

My point exactly. It's not hard, the obedience that the faithful request. But it is immensely important, and much appreciated.

Ed.

Adoremus Bulletin Free Offer

Adoremus Bulletin is coming to Australia and New Zealand, and prospective subscribers can receive it free of charge until March 2023.

Adoremus has been blessed since its inception in 1995 to have readers across the English-speaking world, including Australia and New Zealand. Beginning in May 2022, the Bulletin will be printed and distributed directly from Australia thanks to local donors, current readers, and the Sydney-based Catholic media enterprise, Parousia.

For almost 30 years, Adoremus has fostered the sound formation of Catholic laity in matters relating to the Church's worship, consistent with the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, and has aided Catholics (including priests and seminarians) with reliable information and encouragement about the Church's mind and heart on all things liturgical.

In Adoremus's mission, its editorial team and host of talented, thoughtful writers strive to bring the Catholic liturgy to its readers. We share Pope Benedict XVI's excitement in raising up our readers to share ever more fully in the beauty and truth of Christ found at the heart of the liturgy. "What is exciting about Christian Liturgy is that it lifts us up out of our narrow sphere and lets us share in the Truth," says Pope Benedict. "The aim of all liturgical renewal must be to bring to light this liberating greatness" (*Feast of Faith, 75*).

The mission of Adoremus is to rediscover and restore the beauty, the holiness, and the power of the Church's rich liturgical tradition while remaining faithful to an organic, living process of renewal. Faithful to the magisterium, concerned with tradition, eager to open the liturgy's mystery to the modern world, Adoremus is joyful, orthodox, and intelligent. Our hope is to respond to the interventions of Australia's Plenary Council, through a lay endeavour, by being faithful to our mission and providing this resource to the people of Oceania.

When you sign up to receive Adoremus, you not only receive its full-colour, 12-page print bulletin, published six times each year, but you also receive a monthly electronic newsletter, AB Insight. In addition, Adoremus offers podcasts and videos on its website, www.adoremus.org.

If you would like to receive the Adoremus Bulletin for free from May 2022 until March 2023, simply contact us at orders@parousiamedia.com to request your free subscription (Australia & New Zealand Residents only). Please join us in the work of ongoing liturgical renewal!

Chris Carstens, Editor
La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA

"Without the priest,

the passion and death of our Lord would be of no avail. It is the priest who continues the work of redemption on earth... What use would be a house filled with gold, were there no one to open its door? The priest holds the key to the treasures of heaven: it is he who opens the door: he is the steward of the good Lord; the administrator of his goods."

St John Vianney

Can You Recall...?

...The Stations of the Cross?

See p.11 if you need help.

Final Blessing

In the March issue of ITD, on page 5, you speak of the blessing of the priest at the end of the Mass. You refer to priests who change the words, and:

at the final blessing say, "May the Lord bless *us*, in the name of the Father..." instead of *you*.

I would add that the priest is not supposed to say "in the name of the Father..." but he should say "May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Fr John Speekman, Howlong, New South Wales

"We are in God's hands, and we are in good hands." - **St Leonard Murialdo**

The Perfection of Brotherly Love

St Aelred

The perfection of brotherly love lies in the love of one's enemies. We can find no greater inspiration for this than grateful remembrance of the wonderful patience of Christ.

He who is *more fair than all the sons of men* offered his fair face to be spat upon by sinful men; he allowed those eyes that rule the universe to be blindfolded by wicked men; he bared his back to the scourges; he submitted that head which strikes terror in principalities and powers to the sharpness of the thorns; he gave himself up to be mocked and reviled, and at the end endured the cross, the nails, the lance, the gall, the vinegar, remaining always gentle, meek and full of peace.

In short, *he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before the shearers he kept silent, and did not open his mouth.*

Who could listen to that wonderful prayer, so full of warmth, of love, of unshakeable serenity – *Father, forgive them* – and hesitate to embrace his enemies with overflowing love? *Father, he says, forgive them.* Is any gentleness, any love, lacking in this prayer?

Yet he put into it something more. It was not enough to pray for them: he wanted also to make excuses for them. *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.* They are great sinners, yes, but they have little judgement; therefore, *Father, forgive them.* They are nailing me to the cross, but they do not know who it is that they are nailing to the cross: *if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory; therefore, Father, forgive them.* They think it is a lawbreaker, an impostor claiming to be God, a seducer of the people. I have hidden my face from them, and they do not recognise my glory; therefore, *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*

If someone wishes to love himself he must not allow himself to be corrupted by indulging his sinful nature. If he wishes to resist the promptings of his sinful nature he must enlarge the whole horizon of his love to contemplate the loving gentleness of the humanity of the Lord. Further, if he wishes to savour the joy of brotherly love with greater perfection and delight, he must extend even to his enemies the embrace of true love. But if he wishes to prevent this fire of divine love from growing cold because of injuries received, let him keep the eyes of his soul always fixed on the serene patience of his beloved Lord and Saviour.

Office of Readings, Friday of 1st Week of Lent

Why Go to Confession

Pope Francis, Homily, 25-03-2022

... "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28). The reason to rejoice, the reason for joy, is revealed in those few words: *the Lord is with you.* Dear brother, dear sister, today you can hear those words addressed to you. You can make them your own each time you approach God's forgiveness, for there the Lord tells you, "I am with you". All too often, we think that Confession is about going to God with dejected looks. Yet it is not so much that we go to the Lord, but that he comes to us, to fill us with his grace, to fill us with his joy. Our confession gives the Father the joy of raising us up once more. It is not so much about our sins as about his forgiveness. Our sins are present but the forgiveness of God is always at the heart of our confession. Think about it: if our sins were at the heart of the sacrament, almost everything would depend on us, on our repentance, our efforts, our resolves. Far from it. The sacrament is about God, who liberates us and puts us back on our feet.

Let us recognize once more *the primacy of grace* and ask for the gift to realize that Reconciliation is not primarily our drawing near to God, but his embrace that enfolds, astonishes and overwhelms us. The Lord enters our home, as he did that of Mary in Nazareth, and brings us unexpected amazement and joy – the joy of forgiveness. Let us first look at things from God's perspective: then we will rediscover our love for Confession. We need this, for every interior rebirth, every spiritual renewal, starts there, from God's forgiveness. May we not neglect Reconciliation, but rediscover it as *the sacrament of joy.*

Keep Close to the Lord

Pope Francis, at the International Theological Symposium on the Priesthood, 17-02-2022

Many crises in the priesthood originate precisely in a poor life of prayer, a lack of intimacy with the Lord, the reduction of the spiritual life to mere religious practice. I want to point this out even in formation: the spiritual life is one thing, religious practice is another. "How is your spiritual life going?" "Good, good. I make my meditation in the morning, I pray the rosary, I pray the breviary and all the rest. I'm doing everything." "No, this is religious practice. But how is your spiritual life going?"

I can think of important moments of my own life, where closeness to the Lord proved decisive in sustaining me, sustaining me in dark moments. The intimacy born of prayer, the spiritual life, concrete closeness to God through listening to his word, the celebration of the Eucharist, the silence of adoration, entrustment to Mary, the wise accompaniment of a guide and the sacrament of Reconciliation... Without these concrete "forms of closeness", a priest is merely a weary hireling who has none of the benefits of the Lord's friends.

In my former diocese, I liked to ask priests: "Tell me," – they told me about all their work – "Tell me, how do you go to bed?" They did not understand. "Yes, yes, at night, how do you go to bed?" "I come home tired, I have a bite to eat and I go to bed, but before bed, a little television." "Ah, good! But you don't stop before the Lord, at least to tell him good night?" This is the problem. A lack of closeness. Being tired from work is normal, going to rest and watching television are legitimate, but without the Lord, without this closeness? Praying the rosary, praying the breviary, but without intimacy with the Lord. Feeling no need to say to the Lord, "Goodbye, until tomorrow, many thanks!" These are little acts that reveal the attitude of a priestly soul.

All too often, for example, in the life of priests, prayer is practiced only as a duty; we forget that friendship and love do not come from following rules, but are a fundamental choice of the heart. The priest who prays remains, ultimately, a Christian who has come to appreciate fully the gift received at baptism. A priest who prays is a son who constantly remembers that he is such, and that he has a Father who loves him deeply. A priest who prays is a son who keeps close to the Lord.

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We Are Children of Light

Pope Benedict XVI, Easter Vigil Homily 22-03-2008

Through his radical love for us, in which the heart of God and the heart of man touched, Jesus Christ truly took light from heaven and brought it to the earth – the light of truth and the fire of love that transform man's being. He brought the light, and now we know who God is and what God is like. Thus we also know what our human situation is: what we are, and for what purpose we exist. When we are baptized, the fire of this light is brought down deep within ourselves. Thus, in the early Church, Baptism was also called the Sacrament of Illumination: God's light enters into us; thus we ourselves become children of light.

We must not allow this light of truth, that shows us the path, to be extinguished. We must protect it from all the forces that seek to eliminate it so as to cast us back into darkness regarding God and ourselves. Darkness, at times, can seem comfortable. I can hide, and spend my life asleep. Yet we are not called to darkness, but to light. In our baptismal promises, we rekindle this light, so to speak, year by year. Yes, I believe that the world and my life are not the product of chance, but of eternal Reason and eternal Love, they are created by Almighty God. Yes, I believe that in Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, in his Cross and resurrection, the face of God has been revealed; that in him, God is present in our midst, he unites us and leads us towards our goal, towards eternal Love. Yes, I believe that the Holy Spirit gives us the word of truth and enlightens our hearts; I believe that in the communion of the Church we all become one Body with the Lord, and thus we encounter his resurrection and eternal life.

The Lord has granted us the light of truth. This light is also fire, a powerful force coming from God, a force that does not destroy, but seeks to transform our hearts, so that we truly become men of God, and so that his peace can become active in this world.

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Turning to Our Mother

Pope Francis, Homily prior to the Act of Consecration, 25-03-2022

In union with the Bishops and faithful of the world, I desire in a solemn way to bring all that we are presently experiencing to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I wish to renew to her the consecration of the Church and the whole of humanity, and to consecrate to her in a particular way the Ukrainian people and the Russian people who, with filial affection, venerate her as a Mother.

This is no magic formula but a spiritual act. It is an act of complete trust on the part of children who, amid the tribulation of this cruel and senseless war that threatens our world, turn to their Mother. It is like what young children do when they are scared; they turn to their mother for protection.

We turn to our Mother, reposing all our fears and pain in her heart and abandoning ourselves to her. It means placing in that pure and undefiled heart, where God is mirrored, the inestimable goods of fraternity and peace, all that we have and are, so that she, the Mother whom the Lord has given us, may protect us and watch over us.

Vatican.va

Prayer Request

My younger sister has recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She is a lapsed Catholic of some 40 years. Would you please pray that she returns to her Faith.

Name and address supplied

The Grace of Conversion

Our Lord to St Faustina (Diary, 186, 187)

I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in My Heart for souls, and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer:

"O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You."

My Journey Home

Father John Rizzo's "Memoirs from the Heart of a Priest" once again confirms the old saying that "God works in mysterious and unexpected ways." The start of my own continuing journey "home" came unexpectedly.

I began to drift away from the practice of the Faith a few years after entering the work force in June 1964 as a sixteen-year-old and the drift was all but complete by the time I returned to Australia in 1973 after working for some years overseas. This continued until December 1989 when several frustrating set-backs to the travel plans of this then-never-married lapsed Catholic, necessitated taking short term accommodation at a tourist park in North Queensland. Later in my cabin I began browsing through a bunch of those "places to visit" brochures that I had casually picked up from the stand near the park's reception desk. It was a real shock to find among them, a two-leaf flyer (four pages) concerning Our Lady's apparitions at Garabandal about which I had never heard.

It was the message of 18/06/65 that intrigued me most. Although I had been "away" for a long time, I was aware that "changes" had occurred in the Church. Whether these "changes" were somehow connected to the overall message, I knew not then. That possibility would arise later as I became aware of the confusion and conflicting opinions circulating among fellow Catholics. The immediate impact of the message however, was the sentence, "If you ask His forgiveness with a sincere heart, He will pardon you". As I still remembered a fair bit of what I'd been taught in my youth, I found myself in the confessional of the nearby Catholic Church two weeks later. It was the Saturday afternoon before Christmas, 1989.

John Royal, Bundaberg West, Queensland

John Royal enclosed Fr Rizzo's booklet, an excerpt of which appears on the following page. Ed.

Wrong Floor – or so I thought!

I was ordained on May 19, 1985. Before I could accept my first assignment, I had to complete some Studies at the seminary. One night – about a week after I was ordained – the rector of the seminary knocked on my door and said to me "Father, I want you to go to St Vincent's Medical Centre in Bridgeport (in Connecticut). Annie, a benefactress of ours is there, and she is seriously ill. I would like you to give her Holy Communion and the Last Rites." I immediately left my desk, borrowed a seminary vehicle, and drove for an hour and a half to the medical centre.

When I got to reception, I asked what room Annie was in. "Room 312", I was told. I got into the lift as quickly as I could, and pushed the button for the third floor. When the doors of the lift opened, I ran out and went quickly into what I thought was room 312. As I ran in, my stomping feet woke up the man who was lying in the bed. I turned around to look at the room number – *Oh no, wrong room!*

I nervously said to him "Oh, I am so sorry – I am looking for room 312 – and I see that this is room 212. I have to go up another floor." He said to me "No worries, Father." When I heard him call me 'Father', I said to him "Are you a Catholic?" He said "Yes Father, but I haven't been to Church for many years." I jokingly replied to him "You know, RC means Roman Catholic, not Retired Catholic!"

He chuckled a bit and we got talking. He said "You know, Father, I have not been to Church, but I have said many Rosaries to Our Lady." I was in no doubt about who had led me to this man's room – *thank you, Mother Mary*. I said to him "Why don't you make your peace with God – would you like me to hear your confession?" He said "Oh Father, how can I do that? It has been so long." I said "I can help you with your confession, if you like."

Whenever anyone has not been to confession for a long time, and is unsure what or how to confess, I go through the Ten Commandments with them. He agreed to that. He made a beautiful and necessary confession, after which I gave him half of the Communion Host I had with me for Annie. I then gave him the Anointing of the Sick, and what is called the *Apostolic Pardon*, an indulgence for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin.

I asked him "What are the doctors saying about you?" He said "The doctors say that I am doing fine, and that I will be home by the end of the week." It was a Wednesday evening that I was speaking to him. He was anticipating going home on the Friday. I said goodbye to him and hurriedly went upstairs to see Annie. After giving Annie the Sacraments, I left the hospital and drove back to the seminary.

The following day – Thursday – I was busy taking exams. In the evening, I decided to call the hospital and find out how Annie was. The nurse told me that she was doing fine. I then asked her "There is a gentleman in room 212 — I don't know his name — how is he doing?" The nurse said "Hold on, Father, I will just find out." About 30 seconds later, she got back on the phone and said "I am sorry to say, Father, but he died this morning." I was shocked – he certainly didn't look like he was going to die.

But you know what? That man was right. He said that he would be home by the end of the week – and he was, holding onto the hand of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us.

From *Memoirs from the Heart of a Priest* (p.8-10), by Fr John Rizzo, Chaplain of Tyburn Priory, Diocese of Paramatta
For a copy of the booklet, email priestmemoirs@gmail.com

Bible in a Year

Following Maureen Wright's letter in the March issue of ITD (p.3), I started listening to Fr Mike Schmitz's Bible in Year podcast this Lent, and am currently up to Day 28 and really enjoying it. Has anyone else done the same?

Ed.

"We must go to this Child, this Man, the Son of God, at whatever inconvenience, or whatever risk to ourselves, because to know and love him will truly change our lives."

St John Paul II

Blessed Benedict Daswa

I first came to know and learn about Blessed Benedict Daswa through praying the Divine Office of Readings on 1st February 2016, when the Church for the first time celebrated the feast of the newly-beatified Benedict Daswa. Not having known or heard of him as a South African, I did some research about this convert who was brutally martyred for his Catholic faith. The more I read about the life of this humble, ordinary, married father-of-eight and lay catechist, the more inspired and moved I became. What I found quite extraordinary about his beatification is that Pope Francis named him an "Apostle of Life", because he privately and publicly took a radical stand against his ancestral religion which is steeped in muti, sorcery, witchcraft and ritual murders of innocent people, a traditional culture of death. As a Catholic, Blessed Benedict Daswa knew who he was and what he was called to be, and that his faith was incompatible with this traditional culture of death. Significantly, his beatification date (1 February) coincided with the day that the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act, signed by Nelson Mandela, the then-President of South Africa, came into effect in 1997. Back then, not many South Africans would have realised that this Act was one of the most draconian and liberal abortion laws in the world!

As Catholics, we are all called to be saints and have a duty to become true witnesses of life in our families, society and whatever station in life we find ourselves, following the courageous and humble example of little-known Blessed Benedict Daswa.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Blessed Benedict Daswa (1946-1990)

by Bishop-Emeritus Hugh Slattery MSC [Bishop-Emeritus of Tzaneen, South Africa, who initiated Blessed Benedict Daswa's cause]

Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa was born on 16th June 1946 in the village of Mbahe...in the province of Limpopo, South Africa. ... Tshimangadzo was the eldest in a family of four sons and one daughter. They grew up in the traditional animism (ancestor veneration) religion of their parents, and at the age of seventeen Benedict was baptized and received into the Catholic Church. He was strongly influenced by Benedict Risimati, a local teacher who instructed him in preparation for baptism. This voluntary catechist was a very committed member of the Church and spoke to his catechumens about St. Benedict and other Saints as role models. This led Tshimangadzo to choose Benedict as his baptismal name. He also took the Saint's motto, *ora et labora* ("pray and work") as his own, in living out his baptismal promises. Inspired by this great Saint, Blessed Benedict led an exemplary Christian life with an intense love for the Lord and His Blessed Mother. He grew steadily in the faith nourished by daily prayer, the reading of the bible, the Eucharist, frequent confession and helping the poor by charitable deeds.

As a devoted husband and loving father, Bl. Benedict Daswa is a real role model for Christian families. He built up his family as a little domestic church where the bible was read and where they all prayed together with a special devotion to the Bl. Virgin Mary our spiritual mother. There in the heart of a loving family Benedict made sure that the basic truths of the faith, as well as the commandments of God and the sacraments of the Church, were taught and explained to the children. Blessed Benedict knew that this was the way for Christian families to initiate the next generation into the Christian way of life and give them a strong Catholic identity. Blessed Benedict was an active member of the local Catholic community, as a voluntary catechist and an effective youth leader. When no priest was available for Sunday mass, he frequently conducted the Sunday service for his own community and also for other Catholic communities in the district. Blessed Benedict was a dedicated school principal and was also active in promoting the welfare of his local village community. On becoming a Catholic he realized he had to make a complete break with the prevailing practices of witchcraft and sorcery in his traditional African culture. He was well aware of all the fear and violence leading at times to the death of innocent people, which were associated with these practices. He took a public stand against them and this was resented by some members of the community. He was fully aware that this public witness involved risks for himself and for his family. On the 2nd of February 1990 as he was driving home in the evening, he was ambushed and attacked by a mob of young people who stoned and clubbed him to death. He was survived by his wife and seven young children – his eighth child was born a few months after his death. He was beatified as a martyr for the faith on 13 September 2015. Blessed Benedict Daswa, a humble son of Africa, is a good role model for all believers as a courageous witness to the faith and a true apostle of life and family.

The Liturgy of the Word

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 1st Lenten Sermon 2022

When we listen to biblical readings in the liturgy, they take on a meaning that's new and stronger than they would have for us in some other context. When we read Scripture at home or study it in a course, it serves to help us know the Bible better. But when we read it in the Liturgy, it serves to help us know better the One who makes himself present in the breaking of bread, and each time it brings to light an aspect of the mystery we are about to receive.

This is what stands out in the very first Liturgy of the Word that took place with the risen Christ and the two disciples of Emmaus. As they listened to his explanation of the Scripture, their hearts began to soften in such a way that they were able to recognize him when he later broke the bread.

Not only are the words of the Bible spoken and its stories retold at Mass, they're also relived in such a way that what's remembered becomes real and present. Whatever it was that happened "at that time" is happening "at this time" – "today" (*hodie*), as the liturgy loves to say. We're not only hearers of the word, passive recipients as it were, but we ourselves are the ones who are spoken to and who act. We're called to put ourselves in the place of the people in the story.

Some examples will help us grasp this. When at Mass the first reading tells us how God spoke to Moses in the burning bush (see Ex 3), we realize that we are in fact the ones who are actually standing in the presence of the true burning bush. When we read about Isaiah whose lips were touched by a burning ember to purify him for his mission (see Is 6), a sudden awareness comes upon us: we are the ones who are about to receive on our lips the true burning ember, the One who came to set the earth on fire (see Lk 12:49). When we read how Ezekiel was told to eat the scroll and feed his stomach with it (Ez 2:8-3:3), a light strikes us: we are the ones who are about to eat the "scroll", the Word-made-flesh and now made bread.

Moving from the Old Testament to the New, from the first reading to the Gospel passage, the point becomes even clearer. If the woman who suffered a haemorrhage was sure that she would be healed if only she would touch the hem of Jesus' cloak, how much more is it the case for us who are about to touch much more than just the hem of his cloak? I remember once hearing the Gospel story about Zacchaeus and suddenly it became so "real" for me. I was Zacchaeus. It was to me that Jesus was saying, "Today I must stay at your house". And when I received communion I could say in utter truth, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner", and Jesus, in turn, said to me, "Today salvation has come to this house" (see Lk 19:5-9). The same is true every time the Gospel is proclaimed at Mass. How could we not help but identify with the paralytic to whom Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven", "Rise ... and go home" (Mk 2: 5.11)? Or with Simeon who embraced the infant Jesus in his arms (Lk 2:27-28)? Or with Thomas who, trembling, reached out to touch his wounds (Jn 20:27-28)?

On the second Sunday of Ordinary Time of the current liturgical cycle there is the Gospel passage in which Jesus says to the man with the paralyzed hand: "Hold out your hand! He stretched it out and his hand was healed." (Mk 3,5). We do not have a paralyzed hand; however, we all have, some more or less, paralyzed souls, withered hearts. It is to the listener that Jesus says at that moment: "Stretch out your hand! Spread out your heart in front of me, with the faith and readiness of that man!

When proclaimed during the liturgy, Scripture acts in a way that is above and beyond any human explanation. It reflects how sacraments act. These divinely inspired texts have a healing power. Once the Gospel passage has been read, the Church invites the minister to kiss the book and say, "Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away."

Cantalamessa.org

"What is the place the Eucharist has in the history of salvation?

The answer is that it has no particular place – it is the whole thing."

Fr Cantalamessa

Loving With More Than Words

Pope Francis, Homily 14-03-2021

If hearing the Gospel and practicing our faith don't enlarge our hearts and make us grasp the immensity of God's love – maybe because we prefer a glum, sorrowful and self-absorbed religiosity – then this is a sign that we need to stop and listen once more to the preaching of the Good News. God loves you so much that he gave you his entire life. He is not a god who looks down upon us from on high, indifferent, but a loving Father who becomes part of our history. He is not a god who takes pleasure in the death of sinners, but a Father concerned that no one be lost. He is not a god who condemns, but a Father who saves us with the comforting embrace of his love. ...

Precisely because he loves us so much, God gives himself; he offers us his life. Those who love always go out of themselves. ... Love always offers itself, gives itself, expends itself. That is the power of love: it shatters the shell of our selfishness, breaks out of our carefully constructed security zones, tears down walls and overcomes fears, so as to give freely of itself. That is what love does: it gives itself. And that is how lovers are: they prefer to risk self-giving over self-preservation. That is why God comes to us: because he "so loved" us. His love is so great that he cannot fail to give himself to us. When the people were attacked by poisonous serpents in the desert, God told Moses to make the bronze serpent. In Jesus, however, exalted on the cross, he himself came to heal us of the venom of death; he became sin to save us from sin. God does not love us in words: he gives us his Son, so that whoever looks at him and believes in him will be saved (cf. Jn 3:14-15).

The more we love, the more we become capable of giving. That is also the key to understanding our life. It is wonderful to meet people who love one another and share their lives in love. We can say about them what we say about God: they so love each other that they give their lives. It is not only what we can make or earn that matters; in the end, it is the love we are able to give.

Vatican.va

In the Beginning

One of the more intriguing pieces of Scripture is John 1:1-18 – *In the beginning*. John was particularly close to Jesus and so would have been close to the mind of Christ; who was at the beginning. Increased human knowledge has given us sound understanding of our planet, and an increasing appreciation for the wonders of our universe. Yet, John's gospel begins simply with 'in the beginning was the Word'. A word is essentially the expression of someone's thoughts, ideas and expectations. Indeed, Scripture affirms that 'the Word was God' - God alone, for 'through him all things came to be, not one thing came to be, not one thing had its beginning but through him'. So the wonders of our planet and universe were in the mind of God like everything else. Strangely enough this also included the serpent who subsequently countermanded the word of God that had forbidden Adam and Eve from eating the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. The serpent told Adam and Eve, 'God knows in fact that on the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods' (Gen 3:5). So the temptation to be like gods has been with us from the very beginning. In short, the need to deal with temptations is an integral part of becoming a person.

While there was a single word associated with the beginning, there is now a deluge of words telling us how to be gods. And this deluge is unleashed to us by a multitude – of means. The influences demanding our attention and service exert great attraction through such means as fashionable ideologies, innovative education, intoxicating entertainment and various other means of promoting strange ideas. Sadly, the serpent still makes full use of these methods for countermanding the word of God. At the universal personal level, the attitude to sexuality illustrates the point. When explaining creation, the Scriptures record that the man and his wife were naked, but they felt no shame in front of each other. Clearly, they accepted that they were simply part of God's ongoing plan for creation. It was only after the fall that Adam attempted to hide his nakedness. God's concern was, 'Who told you that you were naked?' So, abuse of sexuality is still a fundamental element of the serpent's efforts to countermand God's plan for his creation. There is a pressing need to ensure that the Word of God is clearer, and more popular, than the serpent's alternative.

John H. Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

The Sorrowful Mysteries

Rosarium Virginis Mariae, on The Most Holy Rosary, Pope John Paul II, 2002 (n.22)

The Gospels give great prominence to the sorrowful mysteries of Christ. From the beginning Christian piety, especially during the Lenten devotion of the *Way of the Cross*, has focused on the individual moments of the Passion, realizing that here is found *the culmination of the revelation of God's love* and the source of our salvation. The Rosary selects certain moments from the Passion, inviting the faithful to contemplate them in their hearts and to relive them.

The sequence of meditations begins with Gethsemane, where Christ experiences a moment of great anguish before the will of the Father, against which the weakness of the flesh would be tempted to rebel. There Jesus encounters all the temptations and confronts all the sins of humanity, in order to say to the Father: "Not my will but yours be done". This "Yes" of Christ reverses the "No" of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. And the cost of this faithfulness to the Father's will is made clear in the following mysteries; by his scourging, his crowning with thorns, his carrying the Cross and his death on the Cross, the Lord is cast into the most abject suffering: *Ecce homo!*

This abject suffering reveals not only the love of God but also the meaning of man himself.

Ecce homo: the meaning, origin and fulfilment of man is to be found in Christ, the God who humbles himself out of love "even unto death, death on a cross". The sorrowful mysteries help the believer to relive the death of Jesus, to stand at the foot of the Cross beside Mary, to enter with her into the depths of God's love for man and to experience all its life-giving power.

"The biggest winners in abortion

are bad men, selfish men, irresponsible men who use women for their own enjoyment and then abandon them to the abortion industry."

Shawn Carney

President/CEO, 40 Days for Life

Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus takes up his Cross.
3. Jesus falls for the first time.
4. Jesus meets his Mother.
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls for the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls for the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.
12. Jesus dies on the Cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

A Good Reminder

From an article by Fr Ken Clark in his parish bulletin, Third Sunday of Lent 2022 (Ordinate Parish of the Most Holy Family, Gippsland)

In traditional sacristies are these words:

"Priest of Jesus Christ, celebrate this Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, and your only Mass."

It is a good reminder to all priests celebrating Mass there that we never celebrate Mass for ourselves. As a matter of fact, no man, no priest, no Bishop, not even the Pope can celebrate Mass as his own Mass. It is always Christ's Mass. It is His Sacrifice. The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross because in the Mass the victim is the same, and the principal priest is the same, Jesus Christ.

It is good to remember to "celebrate this Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, your only Mass". So too for those who come to Communion. Every time we partake of Communion should be as if it were the first time, the only time, your last time. Perhaps we too need a reminder as we process up for Communion.

"Beloved of Christ, receive Christ in the Sacrament as if it was your first Communion, your last Communion, your only Communion."

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

Daily Renewal

Pope St Leo the Great

Initially, men are made new by the rebirth of baptism. Yet there still is required a daily renewal to repair the shortcomings of our mortal nature, and whatever degree of progress has been made there is no one who should not be more advanced. All must therefore strive to ensure that on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.

Divine Mercy

Our Lord to St Faustina (Diary, 699)

My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet ... Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.

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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