

Into the Deep

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Make Peter's Answer Our Own

Pope Benedict XVI, 29-06-2007

In fact, there are two ways of "seeing" and "knowing" Jesus: one - that of the crowd - is more superficial; the other - that of the disciples - more penetrating and genuine. With his twofold question: "What do the people say?" and "who do you say that I am?", Jesus invited the disciples to become aware of this different perspective. The people thought that Jesus was a prophet. This was not wrong, but it does not suffice; it is inadequate. In fact, it was a matter of delving deep, of recognizing the uniqueness of the person of Jesus of Nazareth and his newness.

This is how it still is today: many people draw near to Jesus, as it were, from the outside. Great scholars recognize his spiritual and moral stature and his influence on human history, comparing him to Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and other wise and important historical figures. Yet they do not manage to recognize him in his uniqueness. What Jesus said to Philip at the Last Supper springs to mind: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip?" (Jn 14: 9).

Jesus is often also considered as one of the great founders of a religion from which everyone may take something in order to form his or her own conviction. Today too, "people" have different opinions about Jesus, just as they did then. And as he did then, Jesus also repeats his question to us, his disciples today: "And who do you say that I am?".

Let us make Peter's answer our own. According to the Gospel of Mark he said: "You are the Christ"; in Luke, the affirmation is: "The Christ of God"; in Matthew resounds, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"; finally, in John: "You are the Holy One of God".

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This is Our Joy

Pope Francis, Canada, 28-07-2022

This, brothers and sisters, is our joy. Nor is it a cheap joy, like the one that the world sometimes proposes, dazzling us with fireworks. This joy is not about wealth, comfort and security. It does not even try to persuade us that life will always be good, without crosses and problems. Christian joy is about the experience of a peace that remains in our hearts, even when we are pelted by trials and afflictions, for then we know that we are not alone, but accompanied by a God who is not indifferent to our lot. When seas are rough: the storm is always on the surface but the depths remain calm and peaceful. That is also true of Christian joy: it is a free gift, the certainty of knowing that we are loved, sustained and embraced by Christ in every situation in life. Because he is the one who frees us from selfishness and sin, from the sadness of solitude, from inner emptiness and fear, and gives us a new look at life and history: "With Christ joy is constantly born anew" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 1).

So let us ask ourselves a question: How are we doing when it comes to joy? Does our Church express the joy of the Gospel? Is there a faith in our communities that can attract by the joy it communicates?

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

Bringing Fire to the Earth

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 14-08-2022

In the Gospel of today's liturgy there is an expression of Jesus which always strikes us and challenges us. While he is walking with his disciples, he says: "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49). What fire is he talking about? And what is the meaning of these words for us today, this fire that Jesus brings?

As we know, Jesus came to bring to the world the Gospel, that is, the good news of God's love for each one of us. Therefore, he is telling us that the Gospel is like a fire, because it is a message that, when it erupts into history, burns the old balances of living, challenges us to come out of our individualism, challenges us to overcome selfishness, challenges us to shift from the slavery of sin and death to the new life of the Risen One, of the Risen Jesus. In other words, the Gospel does not leave things as they are; when the Gospel passes, and is listened to and received, things do not stay as they are. The Gospel provokes change and invites conversion. ...

So, what does that word of Jesus, about fire, mean for us? It invites us to rekindle the flame of faith, so that it does not become a secondary matter, or a means to individual wellbeing, enabling us to evade the challenges of life or commitment in the Church and society. ... In short, faith is not a "lullaby" that lulls us to sleep. True faith is a fire, a living flame to keep us wakeful and active even at night! And then, we might wonder: am I passionate about the Gospel? Do I read the Gospel often? Do I carry it with me? Does the faith I profess and celebrate lead me to complacent tranquillity or does it ignite the flame of witness in me? We can also ask ourselves this question as Church: in our communities, does the fire of the Spirit burn, with the passion for prayer and charity, and the joy of faith? Or do we drag ourselves along in weariness and habit, with a downcast face, and a lament on our lips, and gossip every day?

Brothers and sisters, let us examine ourselves on this, so that we too can say, like Jesus: we are inflamed with the fire of God's love, and we want to spread it around the world, to take it to everyone, so that each person may discover the tenderness of the Father and experience the joy of Jesus, who enlarges the heart...and makes life beautiful. Let us pray to the Holy Virgin for this: may she, who welcomed the fire of the Holy Spirit, intercede for us.

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A Thousand Times Happy

St Peter Julian Eymard

The Eucharist is the life of the people. The Eucharist gives them a centre of life. All can come together without the barriers of race or language in order to celebrate the feast days of the Church. It gives them a law of life, that of charity, of which it is the source; thus it forges between them a common bond, a Christian kinship. All eat the same bread, all are table companions of Jesus Christ who supernaturally creates among them a feeling of togetherness. Read the Acts of the Apostles. It states that the whole community of the first Christians, converted Jews and baptized pagans, belonging to different regions, "had but one heart and one soul". Why? Because they were attentive to the teaching of the Apostles and faithful in sharing in the breaking of the bread. ... Oh how happy, a thousand times happy, is the faithful soul who has found this hidden treasure, who goes to drink at this fountain of living water, who eats often this Bread of eternal life!

Precious Right

Pope Paul VI, 22-05-1974

Above all the precious right to life – that most fundamental of all human rights – must be affirmed anew, together with the condemnation of that massive aberration which is the destruction of innocent human life, at whatever stage it may be, through the heinous crimes of abortion or euthanasia.

Catechism in a Year Coming in 2023

For those who are listening to Fr Mike Schmitz's "Bible in a Year" podcast, you'd be delighted to have heard that he's starting a "Catechism in a Year" podcast in 2023! For those who haven't started the Bible in a Year yet, you can start anytime – do it, and enjoy. I'll be tuning in to the Catechism on New Year's Day, and am looking forward to it already. I'm currently on Day 170 of the Bible year, and loving it.

For those who aren't sure what a podcast is, it's just a recorded talk. The Bible in a Year talks are each about 20 minutes long. You can listen on any podcast app, or at ascensionpress.com website. It's free to listen to. More details below.

Ed.

Bible in a Year

In *The Bible in a Year* podcast, Fr. Mike Schmitz walks you through the entire Bible in 365 episodes, providing commentary, reflection, and prayer along the way.

Unlike any other Bible podcast, Ascension's *Bible in a Year* podcast follows a reading plan inspired by The Great Adventure Bible Timeline, a groundbreaking approach to understanding salvation history developed by renowned Catholic Bible scholar Jeff Cavins. For each period in the timeline, Jeff will join Fr. Mike for a special episode that will help you understand the context of each reading.

With this podcast, you won't just read the Bible in a year, you'll finally understand how all the pieces of the Bible fit together to tell an amazing story that continues in your life today! Listen and:

- Read the ENTIRE Bible
- Feel more confident about your understanding of Scripture
- Experience the transformative power of God's Word in your daily life
- Start seeing the world through the lens of Scripture.

[Podcasts.apple.com](https://podcasts.apple.com)

Some Stats

The Bible in a Year podcast is the most successful Catholic podcast of all time. After its January 1, 2021 launch, *The Bible in a Year* became the #1 podcast on the Apple Podcast charts in all categories for 17 days, achieved the same feat for 7 days in January 2022, and remains the #1 podcast on Apple's Religion & Spirituality chart today.

The Bible in a Year has seen 63% growth in average daily episode downloads since 2021. It has reached 350 million all-time downloads.

newsroom.ascensionpress.com

Catechism in a Year

In response to countless requests, Ascension is launching *The Catechism in a Year* (with Fr. Mike Schmitz) on January 1, 2023!

With this podcast, Catholics will:

- Read the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church in 365 days
- Understand the essentials of the Catholic Faith and why they matter
- See how Church teaching is rooted in Sacred Scripture
- Absorb over 2,000 years of Sacred Tradition
- Encounter God's plan of sheer goodness
- Transform their relationship with the Church that Christ founded.

If you have ever wanted to understand what it means to be Catholic and allow those truths to shape your life – this podcast is for you! We can't wait to start this incredible journey with you!

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At the Heart

Catechism of the Catholic Church

426 "At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever." To catechize is "to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him." Catechesis aims at putting "people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."

A Man Who Holds the Place of God

Saint John Vianney

What is a priest! A man who holds the place of God – a man who is invested with all the powers of God. "Go," said Our Lord to the priest; "as My Father sent Me, I send you. All power has been given Me in Heaven and on earth. Go then, teach all nations. ... He who listens to you, listens to Me; he who despises you despises Me." When the priest remits sins, he does not say, "God pardons you"; he says, "I absolve you." At the Consecration, he does not say, "This is the Body of Our Lord;" he says, "This is My Body." St. Bernard tells us that everything has come to us through Mary; and we may also say that everything has come to us through the priest; yes, all happiness, all graces, all heavenly gifts. If we had not the Sacrament of Orders, we should not have Our Lord. Who placed Him there, in that tabernacle? It was the priest. Who was it that received your soul, on its entrance into life? The priest. Who nourishes it, to give it strength to make its pilgrimage? The priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, by washing that soul, for the last time, in the blood of Jesus Christ? The priest – always the priest. And if that soul comes to the point of death, who will raise it up, who will restore it to calmness and peace? Again the priest. You cannot recall one single blessing from God without finding, side by side with this recollection, the image of the priest.

Go to confession to the Blessed Virgin, or to an angel; will they absolve you? No. Will they give you the Body and Blood of Our Lord? No. The Holy Virgin cannot make her Divine Son descend into the Host. You might have two hundred angels there, but they could not absolve you. A priest, however simple he may be, can do it; he can say to you, "Go in peace; I pardon you." Oh, how great is a priest! The priest will not understand the greatness of his office till he is in Heaven. If he understood it on earth, he would die, not of fear, but of love. The other benefits of God would be of no avail to us without the priest. What would be the use of a house full of gold, if you had nobody to open you the door! The priest has the key of the heavenly treasures; it is he who opens the door; he is the steward of the good God, the distributor of His wealth. Without the priest, the Death and Passion of Our Lord would be of no avail. Look at the heathens: what has it availed them that Our Lord has died? Alas! they can have no share in the blessings of Redemption, while they have no priests to apply His Blood to their souls!

Humility

Pope Francis, 28-08-2022

In fact, there exists no other way to accomplish God's will than to assume the strength of the humble, there is no other way. Precisely because they are such, the humble appear weak and as losers in the eyes of men and women, whereas in reality, they are the true conquerors because they are the ones who confide completely in the Lord and know his will. It is, in fact, "to the humble that God reveals his secrets, and by the humble he is glorified" (cf. Sir 3:19-20). In the spirit of the world that is dominated by pride, the Word of God for today invites us to become humble and meek. Humility does not consist in belittling ourselves, but rather in that healthy realism that makes us recognize our potentials as well as our misery. Beginning with our misery, humility makes us take our gaze off ourselves in order to turn it toward God, to the One who can do everything and who even obtains for us what we would not succeed in obtaining on our own. "All things can be done for the one who believes" (Mk 9:23). The strength of the humble is the Lord, not strategies, human means, the logic of this world, calculations. No, it is the Lord.

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"There are no bad priests, only priests for whom there has not been enough prayer."

St John Vianney

A Tree Ever Young

Pope Benedict XVI, 12-10-2012, to Bishops who participated in Vatican II

Christianity must not be considered as "something of the past", nor must it be lived with our gaze ever turned back, because Jesus Christ is yesterday, today and forever (cf. Heb 13:8). Christianity is marked by the presence of the eternal God, who entered into time and is present in all times, because every time is brought forth from his creative power, from his eternal "today".

This is why Christianity is always new. We must never look at it as though it were a tree, fully developed from the mustard seed of the Gospel, that grew, gave its fruit, and one fine day grows old as the sun sets on its life force. Christianity is a tree that is, so to speak, ever "timely", ever young. And this trend, this *aggiornamento* [updating] does not mean a break with tradition, but expresses its ongoing vitality; it does not mean reducing the faith, debasing it to the fashion of the times, measured by what pleases us, by what pleases public opinion, but it is the contrary: exactly as the Council Fathers did, we must bring the "today" that we live to the standard of the Christian event, we must bring the "today" of our time to the "today" of God.

The Council was a time of grace in which the Holy Spirit taught us that the Church, in her journey through history, must always speak to the people of today. But this can only happen through the strength of those who are deeply rooted in God, who allow themselves to be guided by him and live out their faith with purity. It does not come from those who adapt themselves to the passing moment, from those who choose the easiest path. The Council was clear when in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, n. 49, it stated that everyone in the Church is called to holiness according to the words of the Apostle Paul "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3): holiness reveals the true face of the Church, it ushers the eternal "today" of God into the "today" of our life, into the "today" of the people of our time.

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Prayer for Priests

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal High Priest, You offered yourself to the Father on the altar of the Cross and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gave Your priestly people a share in Your redeeming sacrifice.

Hear our prayer for the sanctification of our priests.

Grant that all who are ordained to the ministerial priesthood may be ever more conformed to You, the Divine Master.

May they preach the Gospel with pure heart and clear conscience.

Let them be shepherds according to Your own Heart, single-minded in service to You and to the Church and shining examples of a holy, simple and joyful life.

Through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Your Mother and ours, draw all priests and the flocks entrusted to their care to the fullness of eternal life where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Pope Benedict XVI

Synods

Pope Francis, to Jesuits in Canada, 29-07-2022

It seems fundamental to me to repeat, as I often do, that the synod is not a political meeting nor a committee for parliamentary decisions. It is the expression of the Church where the protagonist is the Holy Spirit. If there is no Holy Spirit there is no synod. There may be democracy, parliament, debate, but there is no "synod." If you want to read the best book of theology on the synod, then re-read the Acts of the Apostles. There you can clearly see that the protagonist is the Holy Spirit. The action of the Spirit is experienced in the synod. The dynamic of discernment happens. One experiences, for example, that at times an idea moves quickly, people quarrel and then something happens that brings things together again, that harmonizes them in a creative way. That is why I like to make it clear that the synod is not focused on a vote, nor is it a dialectical confrontation between a majority and a minority. The risk is also that of losing the overall picture, the sense of things.

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Embarrassed by the Church and Priesthood

Last month in Catholic Weekly I read a great article by Monica Doumit titled: The Joy of Priesthood (12-08-2022). [See p.7 of this ITD – Ed.]

This is what she had to say in the opening paragraph about her experience of the hierarchy, the priesthood in particular, during the Plenary Council: "If I am being honest, the saddest thing for me about the Plenary Council was the way it appeared in parts to be apologetic for, if not embarrassed by, the Priesthood."

And even though this statement did not shock or surprise me, I couldn't help thinking how utterly dismaying and sad this must have been for many Catholics who made the same observation and had to endure the same experience!

However, when it comes to Monica Doumit's observations, the Church in this country has form, not only about the priesthood but about her actual patriarchal and hierarchical divine nature. We have to remember that the Church in this country is predominantly first world and liberal, and what Monica witnessed at the Plenary Council was the 'new church' agenda of the many pastoral plans of dioceses 15 to 20 years ago still at work in the Church today. This was the period in the Church when the 'elite Catholics' at the Plenary Council (who called for women priests and greater roles for women in ministry) were coached, educated and trained by their respective diocesan hierarchy to do what they did.

Back then, many dioceses saw their shortage of priests as a 'blessing' and a sign of the 'holy spirit' calling the hierarchy to subvert the faith and reconstruct their new church along democratic lines, so that priestly vocations would no longer be a problem; so that the laity, women in particular, could take their 'rightful place' by exercising leadership in the Church. Interestingly enough, the same consultative, democratic processes the Plenary Council adopted to conduct itself, was used back then by dioceses to draft their respective pastoral plans.

Journeying Together, the pastoral plan of the Diocese of Sale at the time, asserted in a letter in 2002 that it was "grounded in local consultation and shared wisdom from across the diocese – combining views of young and old, clergy and laity, diocesan personnel etc. It seems more appropriate to continue in this vein rather than with a model which could be perceived as being hierarchical." Yes! Back then many bishops abused their episcopal authority and treated the Holy Spotless Bride of Christ as an outdated human institution that needed to be fashioned into their own progressive image and likeness.

Many of them, under the guise of renewal, were hell-bent on drafting pastoral plans which deconstructed the sacred priesthood of Christ's Church. They took upon themselves the ministry of empowerment of the laity. They envisaged a new church, where a local parish would be a community of equal discipleship, and where the priest would be just one among many carrying out ministry. In the name liberty, fraternity and equality they abdicated their own fatherly authority by insisting on being called by their first name. Many ditched their collars, and even today still parade around totally indistinguishable from the laity and the secular world.

I could go on about the untold damage done by the bishops then, and how it continues today, but suffice it to reiterate that nothing will change in the Church in this country until the College of Bishops are self-effacing enough to accurately and courageously diagnose themselves as the problem. In other words, until they change as a College, nothing in the Church in Australia will change.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

To Be Forgiven

Pope Francis, 28-08-2022

Mercy is the experience of feeling welcomed, put back on our feet, strengthened, healed, encouraged. To be forgiven is to experience here and now that which comes closest to being resurrected. Forgiveness is the passage from death to life, from the experience of anguish and guilt to that of freedom and joy.

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Two Ideas of the Priesthood

By Monica Doumit, Catholic Weekly, 12-08-2022

If I am being honest, the saddest thing for me about the Plenary Council was the way it appeared in parts to be apologetic for, if not embarrassed by, the Priesthood.

There was a daily Mass, of course, but outside of the Holy Sacrifice, the Priests seemed to be sidelined. The daily, livestreamed morning prayer was led exclusively by laity. Grace before meals similarly so. This is notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the Plenary Council members were clergy. When we were invited to bless the members of our table with Holy Water, many clergy stood aside and encouraged the lay members to offer the blessing. Even at the daily Masses, there were only five bishops on the sanctuary of St Mary's Cathedral, despite it easily being able to hold several dozen. The remainder of the bishops, along with the priest Plenary Council members, concelebrated from the main body of the Cathedral. Some did not concelebrate at all, choosing instead to attend Mass 'with the people.' At every point possible, it seemed as though there was a conscious or unconscious decision to hide the Priesthood or at least minimise it. Perhaps it was intended to make the laity feel more 'included,' but for this lay person at least, it just felt uncomfortable.

Fast forward one month to last Saturday 6 August when, in the very same St Mary's Cathedral, Archbishop Anthony Fisher ordained five new priests for Sydney. They are wonderful men, with hearts full of love for God and a desire to serve His people. I didn't count the number of concelebrating priests, but I overheard the people sitting in the pews behind me say: "There were 125 priests, plus the bishops and the seminarians." Their count was probably accurate given the length of the procession. Far from hiding or apologising for the Priesthood, the three-hour Ordination Mass celebrated it with great joy.

The 1500-plus people at St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday morning witnessed the awesome gift of the Priesthood on full display. Priests aged in their 20s and priests aged in their 80s and perhaps even in their 90s. Those who have been ordained more than 50 years and one who had been ordained just six weeks' prior, Eastern Rite and Latin Rite, from different dioceses and so many cultural backgrounds that they would give the United Nations a run for its money. ...

Ordination weekend in Sydney showed that there really is no need to apologise for or minimise the Priesthood because, for the most part, the lay faithful view see a long procession of priests and a packed sanctuary as a sign of God's love for His Church, a promise that He will always provide for the needs of His people, and a sign of hope that the future is in good hands. Cathedrals fill to capacity at ordinations because we want to celebrate the Priesthood and we love when the Church gives us the opportunity to do so.

125 priests processed into the Cathedral on Saturday morning and 130 Priests walked out, and the people of God rejoiced.

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All the Suffering of the World

Samaritanus Bonus, II [on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life]

In the Cross of Christ are concentrated and recapitulated all the sickness and suffering of the world: all the *physical suffering*, of which the Cross, that instrument of an infamous and shameful death, is the symbol; all the *psychological suffering*, expressed in the death of Jesus in the darkest of solitude, abandonment and betrayal; all the *moral suffering*, manifested in the condemnation to death of one who is innocent; all the *spiritual suffering*, displayed in a desolation that seems like the very silence of God. ...

To contemplate the living experience of Christ's suffering is to proclaim to men and women of today a hope that imparts meaning to the time of sickness and death. From this hope springs the love that overcomes the temptation to despair.

I Believe in Jesus Christ

Catechism of the Catholic Church

422 'But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.' This is 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God': God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation – he has sent his own 'beloved Son'.

423 We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He 'came from God', 'descended from heaven', and 'came in the flesh'. For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...and from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.'

424 Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church.

425 The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in him. From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ: "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." It and they invite people of every era to enter into the joy of their communion with Christ:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.

426 "At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever." ...

Saved by the Blower

Fr John Rizzo

Really, I cannot talk enough about the role of our Guardian Angels in our daily lives. Have you ever thought of the possibility, for example, of invoking the Guardian Angel of an individual before you speak to that person, to ensure that your conversation is one of charity?

Recently, when I was visiting Hawkesbury Hospital to see a patient, I was walking towards the footpath and saw an elderly lady sitting in a wheelchair, smoking. I thought to myself "I will say a few words to her", and I invoked the help of her Guardian Angel as I approached her. I said jokingly "Well, here you are, smoking away in front of the hospital – how does that look?!" She smiled, and we got talking. I told her that I would pray for her good health.

She called me 'Father' and told me that she was a Catholic, but that she hadn't been to Church for many years. I said to her "Well, I'm here. Would you like the chance of making a good confession?" I was also thinking to myself "Here we are on a public footpath – what can I do to make sure no one will overhear our conversation?" As soon as that thought came to mind, a nearby gardener turned on the blower and started blowing away all the loose grass from the footpath. Perfect timing!

A nice chat with that lady ended up with a wonderful confession, and a smile on both our faces as we parted. Thank you, Guardian Angels!

From Memoirs from the Heart of a Priest (p.30), by Fr John Rizzo, Chaplain of Tyburn Priory, Diocese of Paramatta
For a copy of the booklet, email priestmemoirs@gmail.com

Depressing News

- News of ring of paedophiles has been stopped and 28 men arrested across the country over the last two years as part Operation Arkstone, an online child abuse investigation. Vile details of the crimes have been released. It turns out that most, if not all, of them are homosexual – men preying on young boys. Yet you don't hear the media calling for homosexuality to be condemned or outlawed.
- News of a \$6.8 million project to have a 2-month-long gay-pride summer festival in Victoria. What a waste of money. Is there no end to the ways they'll try to make us celebrate deviant sexual practices? First they told us it was no one's business what someone's sexual 'orientation' was. Now they keep making it everyone's business, everywhere you turn.
- News of abortion clinics opening in Morwell, Shepparton and Warrnambool in Victoria. \$10.5 million spent on expanding a network of abortion clinics across the state. To make abortion more easily accessible in regional Victoria. Because abortion is just a "normal part of life", claims the 'sexual health nurse' involved. When debates raged about making abortion legal, the argument was that abortion is a difficult medical decision that is made with a heavy heart out of personal necessity and should not be challenged but should be made safe and private. Now that it's legal, the push is to make it quick and easy and a normal everyday health decision to pop a pill and be on your way.

The forces that want to break down marriage, family, the joy of life, and good Christian living seem to be having a field day. It made me think we should lobby for having Christian festivals and life-affirming events. Then I realised of course we have Christmas, Easter, St Patrick's Day, St Valentine's Day, Halloween – it's just that we've been bullied into taking religion out of them, silenced into making them secular holidays with secular meanings. Let's reclaim our Christian feasts and not play down their religious meaning. A friend introduced me to the phrase, "Reclaim the rainbow", in terms of remembering the joy and beauty of the rainbow, and the significance of God's covenant with Noah, instead of accepting that the rainbow is now and forever more a gay-pride political symbol. Let's encourage others to reclaim our Christian legacy in society too. The 2021 Australian census had 44% of us claiming to be Christian, and 39% claiming to have no religion. Let's work on widening that gap!

Ed.

Asking of Bishops

Pope Francis to Bishops, Budapest, 12-09-2021

First, *be heralds of the Gospel*. Let us not forget that the heart of the Church's life is our encounter with Christ. Sometimes, especially when society around us is less than enthusiastic about the Christian message, we can be tempted to retreat into a defence of our institutions and structures. ... Structures, institutions and the Church's presence in society are meant to awaken in men and women the thirst for God and to offer them the living water of the Gospel. As Bishops, you are not called to be primarily bureaucrats and managers; other people can fulfil these tasks. Nor are you called to seek privileges and benefits. Please be servants. Servants, not princes. What is it I am asking of you? To demonstrate a burning passion for the Gospel. Fidelity and passion for the Gospel.

Vatican.va

A Supreme Dishonour

Samaritanus Bonus, III

Just as we cannot make another person our slave, even if they ask to be, so we cannot directly choose to take the life of another, even if they request it. Therefore, to end the life of a sick person who requests euthanasia is by no means to acknowledge and respect their autonomy, but on the contrary to disavow the value of both their freedom, now under the sway of suffering and illness, *and* of their life by excluding any further possibility of human relationship, of sensing the meaning of their existence, or of growth in the theological life. Moreover, it is to take the place of God in deciding the moment of death. For this reason, "abortion, euthanasia and wilful self-destruction (...) poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator".

Children of History, and Authors of History

Pope Francis, 26-07-2022, Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne

So, dear brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: are we children and grandchildren capable of safeguarding this treasure that we have inherited? Do we remember the good teachings we have received? Do we talk to our elders, and take time to listen to them? And, in our increasingly well-equipped, modern and functional homes, do we know how to set aside a worthy space for preserving their memory, a special place, a small family memorial which, through precious pictures and objects, allows us to remember in prayer those who went before us? Have we kept their Bible, their rosary beads? In the fog of forgetfulness that overshadows our turbulent times, it is essential, brothers and sisters, to take care of our roots, to pray for and with our forebears, to dedicate time to remember and guard their legacy. This is how a family tree grows; this is how the future is built.

Let us now think of the second important thing. In addition to being *children of a history that needs to be preserved*, we are *authors of a history yet to be written*. Each of us can recognize ourselves for who and what we are, marked by both light and shadows, and by the love that we did or did not receive. This is the mystery of human life: we are all someone's children, begotten and shaped by another, but as we become adults, we too are called to give life, to be a father, mother or grandparent to someone else. Thinking about the people we are today, what do we want to do with ourselves? The grandparents who went before, the elderly who had dreams and hopes for us, and made great sacrifices for us, ask us an essential question: what kind of a society do we want to build? We received so much from the hands of those who preceded us. What do we, in turn, want to bequeath to those who come after us? ...

Often we measure our lives on the basis of our income, our type of career, our degree of success and how others perceive us. Yet these are not life-giving criteria. The real question is: am I giving life? Am I ushering into history a new and renewed love that was not there before? Am I proclaiming the Gospel in my neighbourhood? Am I freely serving others, the way those who preceded me did for me? What am I doing for our Church, our city, our society? Brothers and sisters, it is easy to criticize, but the Lord does not want us to be mere critics of the system, or to be closed and "backwards-looking", as says the author of the Letter to the Hebrews (cf. 10:39). Rather, he wants us to be artisans of a new history, weavers of hope, builders of the future, peacemakers.

Vatican.va

To Pray Like a Child

"A young girl received her first Holy Communion, and, when she returned to her pew, she was noticed by her parents to be in rather deep prayer. After Mass they asked her, 'What were you praying about after your first Communion?' 'Well,' she said, 'I prayed for Mommy and Daddy and my brother, too. And then I sang Jesus a song and told him a story.'"

"I must have been about 5 or 6, and there was a Sacred Heart statue on the dresser. I would see that statue and start talking to God in the freest way, and God would speak to me, simply and in a way a child could understand. But it was very real." Msgr Charles Pope

"Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying." Elliott

"Dear God, If you watch in Church on Sunday I will show you my new shoes." Mickey D

Quoted in an article by Alyssa Murphy, nregister.com, 14-08-2022

A Lesson From Japan

Pope Francis, General Audience 15-01-2014

On the subject of the importance of Baptism for the People of God, the history of the Christian community in Japan is exemplary. It suffered severe persecution at the start of the 17th century. There were many martyrs, members of the clergy were expelled and thousands of faithful killed. No priest was left in Japan, they were all expelled. Then the community retreated into hiding, keeping the faith and prayer in seclusion. And when a child was born, the father or mother baptized him or her, because the faithful can baptize in certain circumstances. When, after roughly two and a half centuries, 250 years later, missionaries returned to Japan, thousands of Christians stepped out into the open and the Church was able to flourish again. They survived by the grace of Baptism!

Vatican.va

The Beauty and Truth of the Liturgy

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter, *Desiderio Desideravi*, On the Liturgical Formation of the People of God

The Liturgy: place of encounter with Christ

10. ... Christian faith is either an encounter with Him alive, or it does not exist.

11. The Liturgy guarantees for us the possibility of such an encounter. For us a vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good. We need to be present at that Supper, to be able to hear his voice, to eat his Body and to drink his Blood. We need Him.

In the Eucharist and in all the sacraments we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and of having the power of his Paschal Mystery reach us. The salvific power of the sacrifice of Jesus, his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling reaches us through the celebration of the sacraments. I am Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the man possessed by demons at Capernaum, the paralytic in the house of Peter, the sinful woman pardoned, the woman afflicted by haemorrhages, the daughter of Jairus, the blind man of Jericho, Zacchaeus, Lazarus, the thief and Peter both pardoned. The Lord Jesus who dies no more, who lives forever with the signs of his Passion continues to pardon us, to heal us, to save us with the power of the sacraments. It is the concrete way, by means of his incarnation, that he loves us. It is the way in which he satisfies his own thirst for us that he had declared from the cross. (Jn 19:28)

12. Our first encounter with his paschal deed is the event that marks the life of all believers: our Baptism. This is not a mental adhesion to his thought or the agreeing to a code of conduct imposed by Him. Rather, it is a being plunged into his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, a being plunged into his paschal deed. It is not magic. Magic is the opposite of the logic of the sacraments because magic pretends to have a power over God, and for this reason it comes from the Tempter. In perfect continuity with the Incarnation, there is given to us, in virtue of the presence and action of the Spirit, the possibility of dying and rising in Christ.

13. How moving, the way in which this comes about. The prayer for the blessing of baptismal water reveals to us that God created water precisely with Baptism in mind. This means that when God created water, he was thinking of the Baptism of each one of us, and this same thought accompanied him all throughout his acting in the history of salvation every time that, with precise intention, he used water for his saving work. It is as if after having created water in the first place, he had wanted to perfect it by making it eventually to be the water of Baptism. It was thus that he wanted to fill it with the movement of his Spirit hovering over the face of the waters (Ge 1:2) so that it could contain hidden within the power to sanctify. He used water to regenerate humanity through the flood (Ge 6:1-9,29). He controlled it, separating it to open the way of freedom through the Red Sea (cf. Ex 14). He consecrated it in the Jordan, plunging into it the flesh of the Word soaked in the Spirit. (cf. Ma 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22) At the end he blended it with the blood of his Son, the gift of the Spirit inseparably united with the gift of the life and death of the Lamb slain for us, and from his pierced side he poured it out over us. (Jn 19:34) And it is into this water that we have been immersed so that through its power we can be inserted into the Body of Christ and with him rise to immortal life. (cf. Ro 6:1-11)

The Church: Sacrament of the Body of Christ

14. As Vatican Council II reminded us (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 5), citing the scriptures, the Fathers, and the Liturgy – the pillars of authentic Tradition – *it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth “the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.”* The parallel between the first Adam and the new Adam is striking: as from the side of the first Adam, after having cast him into a deep sleep, God draws forth Eve, so also from the side of the new Adam, sleeping the sleep of death on the cross, there is born the new Eve, the Church. The astonishment for us lies in the words that we can imagine the new Adam made his own in gazing at the Church: “Here at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Ge 2:23) For our having believed in His Word and descended into the waters of Baptism, we have become bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

15. Without this incorporation there is no possibility of living the fullness of the worship of God.

Eucharistic Adoration, 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
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

Ignorance of the Eucharist

St Peter Julian Eymard

The world is ignorant concerning the Eucharist. It is not preached about often enough. The faithful complain of this and wait for someone who will feed them with the word of true life. If we do not preach the Blessed Sacrament, the reason is that our hearts do not understand It. If preachers adored the Blessed Sacrament more often, they would preach about It more often. And yet the salvation of the world lies in Jesus Christ abiding in our midst.

“Prayer
is an exercise of
love.”

St Teresa of Avila

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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