

Into the Deep

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Sending Instant Messages

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 16-10-2022

The Gospel from today's Liturgy concludes with a troubling question posed by Jesus: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8)

It's almost like he was saying, "When I come again at the end of time" – or we could also think, even now, at this time of life – "will I find a bit of faith in you, in your world?" This is a serious question.

Let us imagine that the Lord came today on earth. Unfortunately, he would see many wars, much poverty and many inequalities. At the same time, he would see tremendous technical conquests, modern means, and people who are always running, who never stop.

But would he find someone who dedicates time and affection to him, someone who would put him in first place? Above all, let us ask ourselves, "What would he find in me, if the Lord were to come today, what would he find in me, in my life, in my heart? What priorities would he see in my life?"

We often focus on so many urgent but unnecessary things. We occupy and preoccupy ourselves with so many secondary realities. And perhaps without even recognizing it, we neglect what counts the most and we allow our love for God to grow cold, to grow cold bit by bit.

Today, Jesus offers us the remedy to rekindle a tepid faith. And what is the remedy? Prayer. Yes, prayer is the medicine for faith, it is the restorative of the soul. ...

This is why Jesus tells his disciples – to everyone, not only to some! – "that they ought always to pray and not lose heart" (v. 1). Now someone might object: "But, how can I do that? I don't live in a convent. I don't have much time to pray!"

Perhaps a wise spiritual practice for this real difficulty that the elderly, especially our grandparents, know well can come to our aid, which is a bit forgotten today. These are so-called aspirations. The name is a bit outdated, but the substance is good. What are they? They are very short, easy to memorize prayers that can be repeated often throughout the day, in the course of various activities, to remain "in tune" with the Lord.

For example, as soon as we awaken, we can say: "Lord, I thank you and I offer this day to you". This is a short prayer. Then, before an activity, we can repeat, "Come, Holy Spirit". Between one thing and another, we can pray thus, "Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I love you". Really short prayers that help us stay in contact with the Lord.

How often we send instant messages to the people we love! Let's do this with the Lord as well so that our hearts remain connected to him. And let's not forget to read his responses. The Lord always responds. Where do we find them? In the Gospel which should always be kept at hand and should be opened several times every day, to receive a Word of life directed to us.

And let's go back to the advice I have given many times – carry a pocket-size Gospel in your pocket, in your purse. And when you have a minute, open it and read something, and the Lord will respond.

May the Virgin Mary, faithful listener, teach us the art of praying always, without losing heart.

Vatican.va

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

Going Against the Current

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 01-11-2020

Dear brothers and sisters, choosing purity, meekness and mercy; choosing to entrust oneself to the Lord in poverty of spirit and in affliction; dedicating oneself to justice and peace – all this means going against the current in respect to this world's mindset, in respect to the culture of possession, of meaningless fun, of arrogance against the weakest. This evangelical path was trodden by the Saints and Blessed.

Today's solemnity that honours All Saints reminds us of the personal and universal vocation to holiness, and proposes sure models for this journey that each person walks in a unique way, an unrepeatable way. It is enough to think of the inexhaustible variety of gifts and real life stories there are among the saints: they are not all the same, each one has their own personality, and developed their own life of holiness according to their own personality. Each one of us can do it, take this path: meekness, meekness, please, and we will head toward holiness.

This immense family of faithful disciples of Christ has a Mother, the Virgin Mary. We venerate her under the title Queen of All Saints; but she is first of all the Mother who teaches each one of us to welcome and follow her Son.

Vatican.va

No More Catholic Life

A friend of mine recently alerted me to the fact that there is no longer the Sale diocesan newspaper, Catholic Life. I hadn't realised. Turns out it stopped production in April 2019. Into the Deep's initial reason for being was that Catholic Life stopped allowing letters to the editor because it didn't want to hear any questioning of Catholic education in the diocese. So on the back page of each ITD since then, has been that the one of the purposes of ITD was "to provide a forum for those who no longer have a voice in Catholic Life, and other diocesan newspapers". I have changed that now to simply "no longer have a voice in diocesan newspapers". But maybe that's not relevant anymore. Does your diocese still have a newspaper? And if so, do you get your letters published if you're orthodox?

As for Catholic education, I can't imagine anything's improved in this diocese. Just that people have given up complaining about it. Parents are pretty much on their own if they want to raise their children Catholic. Even priests don't get invested much in young Catholic families. Partly because they're dead scared of being seen near a child, and partly because they get moved on so often from parish to parish that they see no point in trying to foster a long-term relationship with any family. Gone are the days a priest would be a father to the parish; now they're just a fly-in-fly-out Mass-giver.

Ed.

Random Thoughts

Surveys

What is your gender? Male, Female, Non-binary, or Other? It annoys me no end to see this nonsensical multiple choice selection on legitimate surveys – whether health, educational, or government. How ridiculous can we get, thinking that "non-binary" or "other" are actual classifications of gender. What's the point of even collecting gender data on surveys if the answers can simply be made up?

At Peace

At our moment of death, we face judgement. A moment of profound peace for saints and martyrs no doubt, but for the rest of us? I would certainly hesitate to claim, as 'everyone' seems to claim, that the person's 'suffering is over' and they're now 'at peace'. Instead of making assumptions, let us pray for God's mercy on their soul so that they may well attain peace.

Hard to Believe

I have a colleague, in her late 20's, who has never set foot in a church. Ever. Not even for a wedding or a funeral. I was gobsmacked to hear that. She is not specifically anti-religion or anti-God, she's just never been into a church. I can't imagine living without that. The smell of wood, the sound of silence, the magnificent architecture and art, the familiar feeling, the awareness of the actual presence of God. How much I take for granted!

Ed.

Let the Poor Help You

Pope Francis, Message for the Sixth World Day of the Poor, 13-11-2022 (n.7-8)

Where the poor are concerned, it is not talk that matters; what matters is rolling up our sleeves and putting our faith into practice through a direct involvement, one that cannot be delegated. At times, however, a kind of laxity can creep in and lead to inconsistent behaviour, including indifference about the poor. It also happens that some Christians, out of excessive attachment to money, remain mired in a poor use of their goods and wealth. These situations reveal a weak faith and feeble, myopic hope.

We know that the issue is not money itself, for money is part of our daily life as individuals and our relationships in society. Rather, what we need to consider is the value that we put on money: it cannot become our absolute and chief purpose in life. Attachment to money prevents us from seeing everyday life with realism; it clouds our gaze and blinds us to the needs of others. Nothing worse could happen to a Christian and to a community than to be dazzled by the idol of wealth, which ends up chaining us to an ephemeral and bankrupt vision of life.

It is not a question, then, of approaching the poor with a "welfare mentality", as often happens, but of ensuring that no one lacks what is necessary. It is not activism that saves, but sincere and generous concern that makes us approach a poor person as a brother or sister who lends a hand to help me shake off the lethargy into which I have fallen. ...

The poverty that sets us free, on the other hand, is one that results from a responsible decision to cast off all dead weight and concentrate on what is essential. We can easily discern the lack of satisfaction that many people feel because they sense that something important is missing from their lives, with the result that they wander off aimlessly in search of it. In their desire to find something that can bring them satisfaction, they need someone to guide them towards the insignificant, the vulnerable and the poor, so that they can finally see what they themselves lack. Encountering the poor enables us to put an end to many of our anxieties and empty fears, and to arrive at what truly matters in life, the treasure that no one can steal from us: true and gratuitous love. The poor, before being the object of our almsgiving, are people, who can help set us free from the snares of anxiety and superficiality.

Pray for Them

As we pray for the Holy Souls in November, please remember the souls of past readers of Into the Deep who have died and who may not have family members who remember to pray for them.

"Eternal rest, grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen"

Pray also for their family members that they may return to the practice of their faith.

Ed.

"The first task of a Christian, of a consecrated person, of a priest and of a bishop is to pray, and that personal prayer must not be neglected for any reason."

Pope Francis, 22-10-2022

The Poor

St Charles de Foucauld

Let us not despise the poor, the little ones, the workers; not only are they our brothers and sisters in God, they are also those who most perfectly imitate Jesus in his outward life. They perfectly represent Jesus, the Worker of Nazareth. They are the firstborn among the elect, the first to be called to the Saviour's crib. They were the regular company of Jesus, from his birth until his death... Let us honour them; let us honour in them the images of Jesus and his holy parents... Let us take for ourselves [the condition] that he took for himself... Let us never cease to be poor in everything, brothers and sisters to the poor, companions to the poor; may we be the poorest of the poor like Jesus, and like him love the poor and surround ourselves with them.

Quoted by Pope Francis in Message for World Day of the Poor 2022

Indeed a Great Tale of Love

How great the tale, that there should be,
In God's Son's heart, a place for me!
That on a sinner's lips like mine
The cross of Jesus Christ should shine!

Christ Jesus, bend me to thy will,
My feet to urge, my griefs to still;
That e'en my flesh and blood may be
A temple sanctified to Thee.

No rest, no calm my soul may win,
Because my body craves to sin;
Till thou, dear Lord, thyself impart
Peace on my head, light in my heart.

May consecration come from far,
Soft shining like the evening star.
My toilsome path make plain to me,
Until I come to rest in thee.

The above hymn from Saturday's Office of Readings is one of my favourites in the entire Divine Office! Why? Because phrase by phrase and stanza by stanza it tells me who I am, and reminds about my mission, and meaning of my life as a Catholic.

It teaches me about my place in salvation history, and that despite my fallen human nature, and my body's daily craving for sin, God continues to love me; and in his merciful kindness has reserved a place for a 'little old' sinner like me in his only begotten Son's heart.

This realisation and truth is immensely overwhelming and touching! And it is just not for me and my fellow brothers and sisters, but for the whole of humanity! Can you imagine that! Right from the very beginning, God created us and the world out of the loving goodness of his heart; from its very depths he made mankind in his image and likeness, a chosen portion of himself.

This divine and infinite heart is not some sentimental, spiritualised pie in the sky stuff that cannot be encountered, and is therefore unattainable. Through the redemption of his Son's paschal mystery, all of humanity is once again invited to take up their 'reserved seats' so to speak, in his merciful and loving heart.

What an incomprehensible and wondrous gift! And even though this is 'only' a hymn, written melodically and poetically, it embodies a very deep mystery, a profound reality and truth. A reality and truth which almighty God in his goodness has made possible through the Church which his Son established.

St Therese of Lisieux writes: "I have found my place in the Church, and you gave me that very place, my God. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love..."

St Therese shows us practically, that we take up our place in God's Son's heart when we assist at Mass, the beating heart of the life of the Church and all her endeavours. When we eat his flesh and drink his precious blood in holy Communion, we avail ourselves of the immeasurable gift which God offers all of humanity every minute, hour, day, week, month and year.

Sadly however, it must be about 90% of Catholics in this country who, for whatever reason, no longer have the need or desire to take up their place on the Lord's Day in the loving, tender, merciful heart of God who has visited us like the dawn from on high in his Eucharistic Son, Jesus Christ.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

After Death

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

205. *What happens to our body and our soul after death?*

After death, which is the separation of the body and the soul, the body becomes corrupt while the soul, which is immortal, goes to meet the judgment of God and awaits its reunion with the body when it will rise transformed at the time of the return of the Lord. *How* the resurrection of the body will come about exceeds the possibilities of our imagination and understanding.

In the Heart of the Church, I will be Love

St Thérèse of Lisieux

Since my longing for martyrdom was powerful and unsettling, I turned to the epistles of St Paul in the hope of finally finding an answer. By chance the 12th and 13th chapters of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians caught my attention, and in the first section I read that not everyone can be an apostle, prophet or teacher, that the Church is composed of a variety of members, and that the eye cannot be the hand. Even with such an answer revealed before me, I was not satisfied and did not find peace.

I persevered in the reading and did not let my mind wander until I found this encouraging theme: *Set your desires on the greater gifts. And I will show you the way which surpasses all others.* For the Apostle insists that the greater gifts are nothing at all without love and that this same love is surely the best path leading directly to God. At length I had found peace of mind.

When I had looked upon the mystical body of the Church, I recognised myself in none of the members which St Paul described, and what is more, I desired to distinguish myself more favourably within the whole body. Love appeared to me to be the hinge for my vocation. Indeed I knew that the Church had a body composed of various members, but in this body the necessary and more noble member was not lacking; I knew that the Church had a heart and that such a heart appeared to be aflame with love. I knew that one love drove the members of the Church to action, that if this love were extinguished, the apostles would have proclaimed the Gospel no longer, the martyrs would have shed their blood no more. I saw and realised that love sets off the bounds of all vocations, that love is everything, that this same love embraces every time and every place. In one word, that love is everlasting.

Then, nearly ecstatic with the supreme joy in my soul, I proclaimed: O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my calling: my call is love. Certainly I have found my place in the Church, and you gave me that very place, my God. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love, and thus I will be all things, as my desire finds its direction.

Makes You Seem Ridiculous

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 23-10-2022

Indeed, the publican of the parable humbly stops at a distance – he does not come close, he is ashamed – he asks for forgiveness, and the Lord raises him up. Instead, the pharisee exalts himself, self-assured, convinced that he is fine: standing up, he begins to speak with the Lord only of himself, praising himself, listing all the good religious works he does, and disdainful of others: “I am not like that person there...”. Because this is what spiritual arrogance does. “But father, why are you talking to us about spiritual arrogance?” Because we all risk falling into this trap. It leads you to believe yourself righteous and to judge others. This is spiritual arrogance: “I am fine, I am better than the others: this person does this, that one does that...”. And in this way, without realizing, you adore your own ego and obliterate your God. It revolves around oneself. This is prayer without humility.

Brothers, sisters, the pharisee and the publican concern us closely. Thinking of them, let us look at ourselves: let us confirm whether, in us, as in the pharisee, there is the conviction of one’s own righteousness that leads us to despise others. It happens, for instance, when we seek compliments and always make a list of our own merits and good works, when we concern ourselves with how we appear rather than how we are, when we let ourselves be trapped by narcissism and exhibitionism. Let us beware of narcissism and exhibitionism, based on vainglory, that lead even us Christians, priests and bishops, always to have one word on our lips. Which word? “I”: “I did this, I wrote that, I said it, I understood it before you”, and so on. Where there is too much “I”, there is too little God. In my country, these people are called “Me, with me, for me, only me”, this is the name of those people. And once upon a time they used to talk about a priest who was like that, self-centred, and the people, jokingly, used to say, “When he incenses, he does it backwards, he incenses himself”. It is like that; it even makes you seem ridiculous.

They Listened and Wept

Thank you again for another fine copy of ITD and congratulations on another milestone. May God continue to bless you and the work you do for him.

My husband and I are up to Day 276 of Fr Mike Schmitz's Bible in a Year podcase and I would just like to share with you and your ITD readers a beautiful insight that he brings out on this day. He was reading from Nehemiah Chapter 8 where Ezra is re-introducing the returned exiles to the Law, as they were all assembled at the Water Gate from early morning until midday. As the people listened and were helped by some of the Levites to understand it, they all said "Amen, Amen" and wept bitterly. Ezra tells them that this day is holy to the Lord and for them not to be grieved because "the joy of the Lord is your strength" ("stronghold" in some translations).

Fr Mike then goes on to explain how the people would have wept because they had never heard the Law read out before, even though they were Jews. They had never realised that the Law was not just a book of rules, but it was given by God to reflect His love, justice and mercy; the rules come out of the relationship that God wanted to have with them – He is a God who knows them and loves them. Fr Mike then extended this to us as Christians. How many Christians go through all the motions of being a Christian but do not really know what it means to have a loving, personal relationship with God? How many Christians leave their Faith because they have never experienced His love?

There are so many stories of being 'born again' and people coming back to a faith when they have had a personal encounter with Jesus and who have wept bitterly over their sinful unworthiness, but with great joy at the overwhelming love that they experienced in this personal encounter. Their lives were changed from anger, depression and sadness and they felt the peace that only Jesus can bring. I personally know of three men that this has happened to – one was a very angry anti-Catholic, one a young alcoholic and one an angry husband.

In Vinny Flynn's "7 Secrets of Divine Mercy" he explains how the image of Divine Mercy shows us that God, through Jesus is always blessing (raised right hand), always seeking (Jesus is stepping forward), and always inviting (left hand on Heart). The rays of Blood and Water which stream from His heart are to draw us into His heart to the Heart of the Father. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven he commissioned his disciples (and us) to go out to all the world to tell the Good News of God's great love for all. We are not all called to be priests, religious, teachers or catechists, but Vinny finishes his book by reminding us that we are all called to become 'transfigured' into Christ, so that when people meet us they experience His love, His Mercy and want to get to know Him.

So many people that we know and love don't want to know when we tell them that God loves them and wants to have a personal relationship with them. This breaks our heart. So how do we become 'transfigured' into Christ so that when they meet us they experience His love? Maybe we can make this reading from Nehemiah our own: the more we read the Word of God and make this our stronghold, the more we will weep with joy as we journey deeper into the Heart of God. And journeying with Fr Mike, as he breaks open the scriptures each day, is a wonderful way to do this.

Hopefully this makes some sense to you. It is very hard to put all this into words.

Maureen Wright, Lurnea, New South Wales

"Amen"

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

217. *What is the meaning of the word "Amen" with which we conclude our profession of faith?*

The Hebrew word "Amen", which also concludes the last book of Sacred Scripture, some of the prayers of the New Testament, and the liturgical prayers of the Church, expresses our confident and total "yes" to what we professed in the Creed, entrusting ourselves completely to him who is the definitive "Amen" (Revelation 3:14), Christ the Lord.

The Best \$20 I Ever Spent!

Fr John Rizzo

It was 1995. I was travelling from Atlanta in Georgia to the state of Alabama. I was going to visit Mother Angelica who has the same surname that I have – Rizzo. She wanted us to meet for that reason! It was quite a long distance to travel, and on the way there I stopped at a little roadside diner for a meal. The waitress was hustling about the café clearing the tables and, after a little while, she came over and took my order. I noticed that she was pregnant. After I had finished my meal, I went up to pay for it, and then I went over to the waitress and gave her a tip. As I gave it to her, I said "Here – this is for you." I then pulled out a twenty dollar note from my wallet, and as I gave it her I said "And this is for the beautiful child that you have inside of you." She looked at me, took the twenty dollars, and got tears in her eyes. She then ran away into a room at the back of the café. I wondered why she was so upset.

I left the café, and went to my car which was parked out the back. As I was about to get in, I was surprised to see the waitress approaching me, crying. She said to me "Father, I just want you to know that when I finished work today, I was going to go and have an abortion. I thought that I wouldn't be able to take care of this child. But after what you said to me, and giving me this tip, I have decided to keep my child."

I was gobsmacked. I must say that tears came to my eyes as well. Owing to the grace of God and Divine providence, the waitress and I crossed paths, and a life was saved. It was without doubt the best \$20 I have ever spent! People have asked me what inspired me to give the waitress the \$20? I can give no explanation for it – all I can say is that I felt inspired to do it.

Whose prayers were responsible for such an outpouring of God's grace at that particular moment? We will not know for certain in this life, but perhaps it was thanks to the prayers of the nuns I was on my way to visit, or thanks to the prayers of one of the many people who say the 'Spiritual Adoption' prayer every day. It is a prayer I would like to encourage you to pray:

Jesus my Lord, through the intercession of Mary Your Mother, who bore You so lovingly, and of St Joseph, strong man of faith who protected You both, I pray to You for the life of the unborn child who is in danger of abortion, the one I have spiritually adopted. Please give to the parents of this particular child the grace and courage to bring it to the life You have destined for him or her. Amen.

From Memoirs from the Heart of a Priest (p.20-21), by Fr John Rizzo, Chaplain of Tyburn Priory, Diocese of Paramatta
For a copy of the booklet, email priestmemoirs@gmail.com

Prayer for Priests

Aid to the Church in Need

O Holy Mother of God, pray for the priests your Son has chosen to serve the Church.

Help them by your intercession, to be holy, zealous and chaste.

Make them models of virtue in the service of God's people.

Help them to be prayerful in meditations, effective in preaching, and enthusiastic in the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Help them to administer the sacraments with joy. Amen.

www.aidtochurch.org/priests

Souls in Purgatory

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

210. *What is purgatory?*

Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.

211. *How can we help the souls being purified in purgatory?*

Because of the communion of saints, the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice. They also help them by almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance.

Christianity Must Recover its Voice

Archbishop Anthony Fisher, 24-10-2022

Archbishop Fisher delivered the 35th Erasmus Lecture, hosted by First Things journal, in New York. His lecture was titled "The West: Post-Christian or Pre-Christian?" and the following are his concluding points:

The aggression of some ex-Christians, neo-pagans and faux Christians towards real Christianity pays tribute to its continuing spiritual power.

During the Diocletian Persecution of 303AD, all legal rights of Christians were rescinded, their churches razed, their worship banned, their clerics imprisoned, their members purged from the establishment, and many enslaved or executed. Christianity was doomed. Yet nearby the eremitical, monastic, and patristic movements were flowering, and only ten years later a new Emperor with a sainted Mom decreed the Constantinian "peace of the Church". ...

Since the first Pentecost the Church's ordinary rhythm has been growth and decay, purification and renewal. ... But finally, for Christianity to do great things for humanity again, it must recover its voice. We must "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15), boldly and in words and deeds. We must eschew privatization and bracketing that would make Christianity irrelevant. We must see the current chastisement of the Church as an opportunity for purification and a promise of resurrection.

To survive times like these will require: a robust desecularization and depaganization of some institutions and hearts; a clear-sighted, intelligent and fervent faith; more effective telling of the Christian story through preaching, teaching, arts, education, and media; renewed confidence in the Christian anthropological, soteriological and ethical vision; cultivation of a deeply affective liturgical-devotional life; the witness of lives of justice, compassion and holiness; the renewal of supportive communities of family, parish, school, association and society; a willingness to dialogue and collaborate with people who are more post- or pre-Christian than Christian; patience, fidelity, and hope to persevere through dark times; above all, the grace of the Holy Spirit to whom we pray *Come*.

As St Peter told the persecuted Church: "Dear friends, I urge you... live such good lives among the pagans that, though they suspect you of wrongdoing, they may see your good deeds and glorify God for them." (1Pet 2:11-12)

Political conflicts, culture wars, discrimination, and institutional diminishment are not what we'd wish for, but nor should we flee them for they are opportunities to witness to the Gospel. Only this kind of Christianity can honestly say it loves God and humanity and will go wherever God and humanity are, without fear of being sullied or bruised. Only such a Christianity can reunite a divided Church and culture, provide a foundation for a genuinely tolerant, pluralist society, and bring God and humanity closer together.

When we do these things, we are not post-Christian, or pre-Christian, or insipidly pseudo-Christian. Amidst all the complexity, we are authentically Christian.

sydneycatholic.org

In Need of Hope

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, 29-11-2009

The contemporary world above all needs hope; the developing peoples need it, but so do those that are economically advanced. We are becoming increasingly aware that we are all on one boat and together must save each other. Seeing so much false security collapse, we realize that what we need most is a trustworthy hope. This is found in Christ alone. As the Letter to the Hebrews says, he "is the same yesterday and today and for ever". The Lord Jesus came in the past, comes in the present and will come in the future. He embraces all the dimensions of time, because he died and rose; he is "the Living One". While he shares our human precariousness, he remains forever and offers us the stability of God himself. He is "flesh" like us and "rock" like God. Whoever yearns for freedom, justice, and peace may rise again and raise his head, for in Christ liberation is drawing near, as we read in today's Gospel (cf. Lk 21:28). We can therefore say that Jesus Christ is not only relevant to Christians, or only to believers, but to all men and women, for Christ, who is the centre of faith, is also the foundation of hope. And every human being is constantly in need of hope.

God Doesn't Have Grandchildren

Fr Mike Schmitz, Bible in a Year, Ascension Press

Day 218: Each will be judged

Then [Ezekiel] Chapter 18 ... where it talks about the justice of God: which is, every person is judged on their own conduct. They are not judged on the holiness of their parents, or on the holiness of their children. They're not judged on the sinfulness of their parents or on the sinfulness of their children. And that's really important for us to be reminded of, in so many ways. Not only because there are some people who are like "Oh yeah, you know, I have a whole line of family members who have been followers of the Lord" – okay, but are *you* a follower of the Lord?

In fact, I remember someone once saying: God doesn't have any grandchildren. He's not a grandfather, he's only a father. And as a father he only has children, he doesn't have grandchildren.

So my mom or dad was really, really faithful – that is great for them; it doesn't kind of mean anything when it comes to me. I have to choose also to be faithful. Or maybe my parents were awful. And again that doesn't mean anything for me. I get to choose to be faithful.

And that's so good. And yet here it says: You say the way of the Lord is not just. And God is saying, no, no, this is actual justice – whoever it is turns away from their sin and to me, I receive them. And whoever turns away from their righteousness, to evil, I allow them to go. But God doesn't want that to happen. Last words of chapter 18, says, I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God, so turn, and live. And that's ...his desire, that none of us should be lost, none of us turn away from him, but all of us turn to him and live. And so, the stakes are high. This is eternity we're talking about.

Old Testament Quiz

1. What does the word *Bible*, derived from the Greek *biblia*, mean?
2. The Holy Scriptures comprises 73 books. How many are in the Old Testament?
3. What are the first five books of the Old Testament collectively referred to as?
4. Traditionally who is considered the author of the first five books of the Old Testament?
5. Name the first 5 books, in order.
6. What is the sixth book of the Old Testament?
7. Name the four major prophets.
8. Name any 3 of the minor prophets.
9. The Book of Psalms is a collection of how many sacred hymns?
10. Who is known as 'Israel' in the Old Testament?
11. What was the name of Abraham's concubine?
12. What was the name of Abraham's concubine's son?
13. How many sons did Isaac have?
14. Which of Isaac's sons is said to have sold his birthright for a bowl of lentils?
15. How many sons did Jacob have? (Bonus points! Can you name them?)
16. What are the names of the 3 Archangels mentioned in the Bible?
17. Which Archangel's name means 'God heals'?
18. Who was the first King of God's chosen people?
19. Who was considered the greatest king?
20. Who was considered the wisest king?

Answers on page 11 – if you need them!

Preparing for Advent

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 12-12-2021

The Gospel in today's Liturgy, the Third Sunday of Advent, presents us with various groups of people – the crowd, the publicans and soldiers – who, touched by John the Baptist's preaching, ask him: "What then should we do?" (Lk 3:10). *What then shall we do?* This is the question they asked. Let us reflect a little on this question.

It does not stem from a sense of duty. Rather, the heart is touched by the Lord. It is the enthusiasm for his coming that leads them to ask: *what shall we do?* ... Let us give an example: let us think of a dear one who is coming to visit us. We joyfully and impatiently await them. To properly welcome them, we will clean the house, we will prepare the best dinner possible, perhaps a gift... In short, there are things we will do. It is the same with the Lord. The joy of his coming makes us ask: *what shall we do?* ...

Let us ask ourselves as well: what would be good for me to do for myself and for my brothers and sisters? How can I contribute to the good of the Church, to the good of society? The Season of Advent is meant for this: to stop and ask ourselves how to prepare for Christmas. We are so busy with all the preparations, with gifts and things that pass. But let us ask ourselves what we should do for Jesus and for others! What shall we do? ...

Faith is not an abstract theory, a generalized theory – no! Faith touches our very flesh and transforms each of our lives. Let us think about the concreteness of our faith. I, my faith: is it something abstract or concrete? Does it lead me to serving others, helping out?

And so, in conclusion, let us ask ourselves: what can I do concretely during these days as we draw near to Christmas? How can I do my part? Let us make a concrete commitment, even if small, that is adapted to our situation in life, and let us continue to do it to prepare ourselves for this Christmas. For example: I can call a person who is alone, visit that elderly person or that person who is ill, do something to serve a poor person, someone in need. Even still: maybe I need to ask forgiveness, grant forgiveness, clarify a situation, pay a debt. Perhaps I have neglected prayer and after a long time, it is time to draw near to the Lord's forgiveness.

Brothers and sisters, let us find something concrete and do it! May Our Lady, in whose womb God became flesh, help us.

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Ongoing Challenge

Pope Francis, Homily, 25-09-2022

Here then is the ongoing challenge that the Eucharist offers to our life: to worship God and not ourselves. To put him at the centre, and not the vanity of self. To remind ourselves that only the Lord is God and everything else is a gift of his love.

Because if we worship ourselves, we die suffocated by our small selves; if we worship the riches of this world, they take possession of us and make us slaves; if we worship the god of appearance and inebriate ourselves in wastefulness, sooner or later life itself will ask us for the bill.

When, on the other hand, we adore the Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist, we also receive a new outlook on our lives: I am not the things I possess or the successes I manage to achieve; the value of my life does not depend on how much I can show off, nor does it diminish when I falter and fail. I am a beloved child, each one of us is a beloved child; I am blessed by God; He wanted to clothe me with beauty and he wants me free, he wants me free from all slavery.

Let us remember this: he who worships God does not become a slave to anyone: he is free. Let us rediscover the prayer of adoration, a prayer that is often forgotten. Worship, the prayer of adoration, let us rediscover it: it frees us and restores us to our dignity as sons and daughters, not slaves.

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The Beauty and Truth of the Liturgy

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

48. One way of caring for and growing in a vital understanding of the symbols of the Liturgy is certainly the *ars celebrandi*, the art of celebrating. ... The *ars celebrandi* cannot be reduced to only a rubrical mechanism, much less should it be thought of as imaginative – sometimes wild – creativity without rules. The rite is in itself a norm, and the norm is never an end in itself, but it is always at the service of a higher reality that it means to protect. ...

51. Speaking of this theme we are inclined to think of it only in regards to ordained ministers carrying out the service of presiding. But in fact this is an attitude that all the baptized are called to live.

I think of all the gestures and words that belong to the assembly: gathering, careful walking in procession, being seated, standing, kneeling, singing, being in silence, acclamations, looking, listening. There are many ways in which the assembly, *as one body*, (Ne 8:1) participates in the celebration.

Everybody doing together the same gesture, everyone speaking together in one voice – this transmits to each individual the energy of the entire assembly. It is a uniformity that not only does not deaden but, on the contrary, educates individual believers to discover the authentic uniqueness of their personalities not in individualistic attitudes but in the awareness of being one body.

It is not a question of following a book of liturgical etiquette. It is, rather, a “discipline,” – in the way that Guardini referred to – which, if observed authentically forms us. These are gestures and words that place order within our interior world making us live certain feelings, attitudes, behaviours. They are not the explanation of an ideal that we seek to let inspire us, but they are instead an action that engages the body in its entirety, that is to say, in its being a unity of body and soul.

52. Among the ritual acts that belong to the whole assembly, silence occupies a place of absolute importance. Many times it is expressly prescribed in the rubrics.

The entire Eucharistic celebration is immersed in the silence which precedes its beginning and which marks every moment of its ritual unfolding. In fact, it is present in the penitential act, after the invitation “Let us pray,” in the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings, between the readings and after the homily), in the Eucharistic prayer, after communion.

Such silence is not an inner haven in which to hide oneself in some sort of intimate isolation, as if leaving the ritual form behind as a distraction. That kind of silence would contradict the essence itself of the celebration.

Liturgical silence is something much more grand: it is a symbol of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit who animates the entire action of the celebration. For this reason it constitutes a point of arrival within a liturgical sequence. Precisely because it is a symbol of the Spirit, it has the power to express the Spirit’s multifaceted action.

In this way, going over again the moments I just mentioned, silence moves to sorrow for sin and the desire for conversion. It awakens a readiness to hear the Word and awakens prayer. It disposes us to adore the Body and Blood of Christ. It suggests to each one, in the intimacy of communion, what the Spirit would effect in our lives to conform us to the Bread broken. For all these reasons we are called to enact with extreme care the symbolic gesture of silence. Through it the Spirit gives us shape, gives us form.

Quiz Answers (from page 9)

1. Books; 2. 46; 3. Pentateuch; 4. Moses; 5. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; 6. Joshua; 7. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; 8. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; 9. 150; 10. Jacob; 11. Hagar; 12. Ishmael; 13. Two (Esau and Jacob); 14. Esau; 15. Twelve (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin); 16. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael; 17. Raphael; 18. Saul; 19. David; 20. Solomon.

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
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

Frequent Visits

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

286. *What kind of worship is due to the sacrament of the Eucharist?*

The worship due to the sacrament of the Eucharist, whether during the celebration of the Mass or outside it, is the worship of *latria*, that is, the adoration given to God alone. The Church guards with the greatest care Hosts that have been consecrated. She brings them to the sick and to other persons who find it impossible to participate at Mass. She also presents them for the solemn adoration of the faithful and she bears them in processions. The Church encourages the faithful to make frequent visits to adore the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.

No Better End

Pope John XXIII, towards the end of his life:

“This life of mine, now nearing its sunset, could find no better end than in the concentration of all my thoughts in Jesus, the Son of Mary... a great and constant friendship with Jesus, contemplated as a Child and upon the Cross, and adored in the Blessed Sacrament.”

(Journal of a Soul) Quoted by Pope Francis, homily 11-10-2022

Contact *Into the Deep*

www.stoneswillshout.com

stoneswillshout@bigpond.com

12 Vincent Road, Morwell, Vic, 3840, Australia

 find us on  facebook

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- no longer have a voice in 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