

Into the Deep

Issue 232

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

December 2022

Seeking God at Christmas

Pope Francis, General Audience, 22-12-2021

Every person, in the depths of his or her heart, is called to seek God: we all have that restlessness. Our work is not to snuff out that restlessness, but to allow it to grow because it is that restlessness that seeks God; and, with his own grace, we can find him.

We can make this prayer of Saint Anselm (1033-1109) our own:

“Lord, teach me to seek you, and reveal yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek you if you do not teach me how, nor find you unless you reveal yourself. Let me seek you in desiring you; let me desire you in seeking you; let me find you in loving you; let me love you in finding you.”

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to invite every man and woman to the stable of Bethlehem to adore the Son of God made man. May each one of us draw near to the Nativity scene in our own homes or in the church or in another place, and try to make an act of adoration, within: “I believe you are God, that this baby is God. Please, grant me the grace of humility to be able to understand”. ...

Let’s return home with the angel’s song: “Peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!” Let us always remember: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us [...] he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:10, 19), he has sought us. Let’s not forget this.

This is the reason for our joy: we are loved, we are sought for, the Lord seeks us to find us, to love us more. This is the reason for joy: knowing that we are loved without any merit, we are always loved first by God, with a love so concrete that he took on flesh and came to live in our midst, in that Baby that we see in the crib. This love has a name and a face: Jesus is the name and the face of love – this is the foundation of our joy.

Brothers and sisters, I wish you a Merry Christmas, a happy and holy Christmas. And I would like that – yes, there are well wishes, family reunions, this is always very beautiful – but may there also be the awareness that God comes “for me”.

Vatican.va

He Comes Like a Whisper

Pope Francis, 25-12-2021 Urbi et Orbi message

The Word of God, who created the world and who gives meaning to history and to humanity’s journey, became flesh and came to dwell among us. He came like a whisper, like the murmur of a gentle breeze, to fill with wonder the heart of every man and woman who is open to this mystery. ...

Today, “the Love that moves the sun and the other stars”, as Dante says, became flesh. He came in human form, he shared in our plight and he broke down the wall of our indifference. In the cold of the night, he stretches out his tiny arms towards us: he is in need of everything, yet he comes to give us everything. ...

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

Be Vigilant, and Pray

Pope Francis, Angelus address 28-11-2021

The Gospel of today's liturgy, the First Sunday of Advent, speaks to us about the Lord's coming at the end of time. ... We await Him with joy, even in the midst of tribulations, during life's crises and the dramatic events of history. We await Him.

But how do we raise our heads and not become absorbed with difficulties, suffering and defeat? Jesus points the way with a strong reminder: "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy... Be vigilant at all times and pray" (Lk 21:34, 36).

"Be vigilant": *vigilance*. Let us focus on this important aspect of the Christian life. From the words of Christ, we see that vigilance is tied to alertness: be alert, do not get distracted, that is, stay awake! Vigilance means this: not to allow our hearts to become lazy or our spiritual life to soften into mediocrity. Be careful because we can become "sleepy Christians" ... Christians without spiritual fervour, without intensity in prayer, without enthusiasm for mission, without passion for the Gospel; Christians who always look inwards, incapable of looking to the horizon. ...

We need to be vigilant so that our daily life does not become routine, and, as Jesus says, so we are not burdened by life's anxieties (cf. v. 34). So today is a good moment to ask ourselves: what weighs on my heart? What weighs on my spirit? What makes me go to sit in the lazy chair? It is sad to see Christians "in the armchair"! What are the mediocrities that paralyze me, the vices that crush me to the ground and prevent me from raising my head? And regarding the burdens that weigh on the shoulders of our brothers and sisters, am I aware of them or indifferent to them? ... The Book of Proverbs says: "With all vigilance guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life" (Prov 4:23). Guard your heart: that means to be vigilant! Stay awake and guard your heart.

And let us add an essential ingredient: the secret to being vigilant is *prayer*. In fact, Jesus says: "Be vigilant at all times and pray" (Lk 21:36). Prayer is what keeps the lamp of the heart lit. This is especially true when we feel that our enthusiasm has cooled down. Prayer re-lights it, because it brings us back to God, to the centre of things. Prayer reawakens the soul from sleep and focuses it on what matters, on the purpose of existence.

Even during our busiest days, we must not neglect prayer. The prayer of the heart can be helpful for us, repeating often brief invocations. For example, during Advent, we could make a habit of saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." Only these words, but repeating them: "Come, Lord Jesus". This time of preparation leading to Christmas is beautiful: we think of the nativity scene and Christmas, so let us say from the heart: "Come, Lord Jesus". Let us repeat this prayer all throughout the day: the soul will remain vigilant! "Come, Lord Jesus".

Vatican.va

IN MEMORIAM

Please pray for the repose of the souls of

Michael Apthorp

late of Brisbane, who died in October 2022, and

Leo Dignan

late of Bundalaguah, Victoria, who died in
November 2022.

Both men were long-time supporters of Into the Deep, possibly both since the inception of ITD in 2002. May God rest their souls.

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

Ed.

Act of Faith

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Oh my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

In this faith I intend to live and die. Amen.

A Few Observations

Just a note to say thanks for the latest issue of ITD (November 2022). A few brief observations:

- Appreciated the quotes from the writings of various popes – very apt.
- The reference to the Purpose of the ITD made me go and read it! To this date, had overlooked it! Hope you are having some success fulfilling those purposes.
- The little story about the outcome of Fr Rizzo's tip to the waitress was, I think, quite touching. Made me think miracles are still happening even through our seemingly small efforts.
- As always, liked the little quiz!

Because it is All Saints day, today, just thought I would share news with you about a potentially official 'new' Australian saint, in case you are not already aware. I am referring to the cause for beatification/canonization of John Hawes in the Diocese of Geraldton. I believe he is being promoted as the first potential saint for Western Australia. The promoter of his cause is Fr Robert Cross from that diocese. More information is available on their website. If ever you are able to visit WA and have not yet done so I recommend travelling in part or whole the John Hawes Heritage Trail and visiting the cathedral at Geraldton – which Fr John Hawes designed – and the associated John Hawes Museum nearby. Fr Hawes is I believe one of a small number of other Australians whose causes for beatification/canonization are proceeding. Please God their names will be added to that of St Mary MacKillop. Might even be worth a little article in a future edition of ITD! [see p.4 – Ed.]

Name and address supplied, New South Wales

We Kneel

Pope Francis, *Desiderio Desideravi* n.53

We kneel to ask pardon, to bend our pride, to hand over to God our tears, to beg his intervention, to thank Him for a gift received.

It is always the same gesture which in essence declares our own being small in the presence of God.

Nevertheless, done in different moments of our lives, it moulds our inner depths and then thereafter shows itself externally in our relation with God and with our brothers and sisters.

[K]neeling should be done with art, that is to say, with a full awareness of its symbolic sense and the need that we have of this gesture to express our way of being in the presence of the Lord.

Unparalleled Event

***Admirabile Signum*, n.8**

"Life was made manifest" (1Jn 1:2). In these words, the Apostle John sums up the mystery of the Incarnation. The nativity scene allows us to see and touch this unique and unparalleled event that changed the course of history, so that time would thereafter be reckoned either before or after the birth of Christ.

Overflowing Happiness

Pope Benedict XVI, Midnight Mass 24-12-2012

There is another verse from the Christmas story on which I should like to reflect with you – the angels' hymn of praise, which they sing out following the announcement of the new-born Saviour: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

God is glorious. God is pure light, the radiance of truth and love. He is good. He is true goodness, goodness *par excellence*. The angels surrounding him begin by simply proclaiming the joy of seeing God's glory. Their song radiates the joy that fills them. In their words, it is as if we were hearing the sounds of heaven. There is no question of attempting to understand the meaning of it all, but simply the overflowing happiness of seeing the pure splendour of God's truth and love.

We want to let this joy reach out and touch us: truth exists, pure goodness exists, pure light exists. God is good, and he is the supreme power above all powers. All this should simply make us joyful tonight, together with the angels and the shepherds.

Vatican.va

The Life of Fr John Hawes

John Cyril Hawes was born September 7th, 1876 in Richmond, England. ... He was accepted into the Architectural profession in 1897. ... One of his first Architectural commissions was an Anglican Church in Northumberland for Bishop Hornby. It was through this project and working with Bishop Hornby that Hawes was encouraged to study for the priesthood and in 1903 he was ordained an Anglican Deacon in St Paul's Cathedral, London. ...

In 1908, Bishop Hornby, who was now the Bishop of Nassau in The Bahamas, once again invited Hawes to work with him. A devastating hurricane had destroyed all the churches on Long Island and he believed that Hawes was the perfect person to help with their restoration and minister to the people. Hawes worked diligently during his time in The Bahamas and restored 4 churches on Long Island. He was however struggling with personal conflict over his religious direction. He left The Bahamas after two very productive years and began his journey with Catholicism. He converted in New York in 1911 and four years later he was ordained a Catholic Priest in Rome.

The most productive architectural period of his life was spent in the Mid-West of Western Australia in the first half of the 20th century. Hawes arrived in Western Australia at the beginning of November 1915. He spent his first summer in the Murchison travelling first to Cue in the very hottest part of the year. In a letter home to England he described the climate as far too hot to do anything except "flop around struggling to exist". He soon adapted to the harsh environment and always carried a full waterbag and wore light clothing while riding his horse for long distances to visit families on remote sheep stations. His friendly manner and dedication to his parishioners endeared him to the locals.

In 1916 he was recalled to Geraldton to begin work on St Francis Xavier Cathedral. The first stage of the cathedral was completed in 1918. Due to financial constraints and the death of Bishop Kelly in 1921, work did not recommence until 1926 with the 2nd stage being completed in 1928. It was not until ten years later in 1938 that the magnificent cathedral was finally completed and officially opened to much fanfare that extended over 4 days.

During his time in the Mid-West, Hawes was responsible for an astounding body of work throughout the region. His creations ranged from basic corrugated iron structures like St Patrick's Church in Wonthella, Geraldton, to the unique design of Our Lady of Mt Carmel in Mullewa, or the grand structure of Nazareth House perched on the edge of Champion Bay in Geraldton.

... However, in 1939, Monsignor Hawes left Western Australia for England and eventually Cat Island in The Bahamas, never to return. ... While his aim in returning to The Bahamas had been to live out his life as a hermit under the name of Fra Jerome, his architectural skills as well as his priestly talents, were once more very much in demand. This was also a very productive stage of his architectural life and as well as building 4 Churches on Cat Island and 1 on Long Island, he undertook his biggest commission of all in Nassau – St Augustine's Monastery, School and Church, as well as the convent of Blessed Martin de Porres.

He did however also succeed in building a most impressive but simple dwelling on Como Hill, the highest point in The Bahamas. He named it Mt Alvernia and built his Hermitage and Chapel and also created his own burial chamber beneath the hill. He died on June 26th, 1956 in Miami, Florida aged 79.

The Nativity Scene

Pope Francis, General Audience, 18-12-2019

The nativity scene is "like a living Gospel". It brings the Gospel to the places where people live: in homes, schools, work and meeting places, hospitals, retirement homes, prisons and in the squares. And in those places where we live, it reminds us of an essential thing: that God did not remain invisible in Heaven, but rather came to earth, became man, a child. To make a nativity scene is *to celebrate God's closeness*. ...

I hope that setting up the nativity scene will be for you all an opportunity to invite Jesus into your lives.

Being Fruitful

Two blessed means of coping with our need to worship God are the Mass and the Rosary. The Rosary involves repeating the Hail Mary which includes the declaration, 'blessed is the fruit of Thy womb'. Jesus, the fruit of his mother's womb, spent nine months in the womb before he was born at Bethlehem. We celebrate this birth at Christmas. Jesus was born into a family where he lived a normal life for some thirty years. He then made an entry to a wider community and spent some three years with a group of men who were formed by sharing the life of Jesus. Yet this group of close friends abandoned Jesus when he was arrested and executed. We commemorate this travesty at Easter. Before his death Jesus shared a last meal with his close friends and he made this meal, the Mass, the means of giving ongoing worship to God.

Jesus spent nine months in his mother's womb, but only three days in the tomb. He then founded his Church which was given the task of carrying out his Father's will that was given as a task to both our First Parents and Noah. 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth' (Gen 1:28; 9:1). This task is carried out within the Church, mainly by means of the seven sacraments. Two of these sacraments are vocational, marriage and orders. Marriage is the means of achieving the fruit of the mother's womb. Orders is the means by which the fruit of Mary's womb is still with us. At a time of great confusion about gender and sexuality, we have ready access to the lifestyle that God clearly has in mind.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Advent Calendars

**Monsignor Carl Reid, Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross,
in the Ordinariate's December 2021 Newsletter**

I'm easy prey when it comes to dark chocolate. In years gone by, my wife often has managed to find an Advent calendar with dark chocolates, sometimes *fortified*, behind each of the 24 doors.

But, of course, that's not why German Lutherans first began to use these calendars sometime in the 19th century. In many manifestations of an Advent calendar, the days of December are not necessarily laid out in a regular sequence, but rather scattered about the card. Traditionally, behind each door might have been a different image than on the front of the door, or a poem, or a portion of Bible story pointing ahead to the Nativity of Jesus.

Sadly, as is true with most things that may originally have found their centre or climax in Christmas but that have been commercialised or secularised, many modern Advent calendars have absolutely nothing to do with *the* Centre, Who is Christmas. As corny as it may sound to many, the verse, "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" truly does hit the nail on the head.

God willing, I shall never tire of reminding people that Christmas begins – on Christmas Day, followed, at a minimum, by 12 days through to the Epiphany on 6 January. There is also a long-standing and commendable tradition that Christmas lasts for 40 days, until 2 February – variously known as Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Against that, moving from North America to Australia has been somewhat alarming in terms of just how far back into the calendar year the commercialised influence has extended. Even in Canada, there was a more-or-less unwritten rule that decorations, carols and all of the associated, didn't "go up" until after American Thanksgiving – being the 4th Thursday of November. Here in Australia, we've been alarmed to see Christmas decorations up at the October/November boundary. Even some Catholic church buildings have put up their Christmas decorations in early November.

I confess that I must wonder how such churches, if they do, manage to keep a meaningful Advent as a time of preparation and penitence in anticipation of, "*When as all the world was in profoundest quietness, and night was in the midst of her swift course: thine almighty Word, O Lord, leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne.*" (Introit for the Second Sunday after Christmas & The Vigil of the Epiphany)

www.ordinariate.org.au

Ongoing Catechesis

On 1st January 2023, Fr Mike Schmitz, who does the popular Bible in a Year podcast, will be launching his Catechism in a Year podcast. I dearly hope that the Catechism in a Year will be as popular worldwide as his Bible in a Year! Because just as the Bible in a Year podcast is a ministry of the Word and a fundamental element of the Church's evangelisation mission; so too, the Catechism in a Year, the ministry of catechesis, is a fundamental service for the realisation of the missionary mandate of Jesus.

The Catechism proclaims the story of Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, and recounts the story of God with us, as the Bible relates it. It completely trusts the Biblical word; because as the Holy Bible is the book of the Church for the Church, so too is the Catechism; and it is only through the living Church that it speaks to the whole world.

For too long now our spiritual leaders, particularly those in the West, have been losing sight of the very reason for the Church's existence, and her essential purpose in the world. She exists to evangelise. Her head and founder, Jesus Christ, created her for this purpose and has entrusted her with the apostolic and pastoral responsibility of catechising all those who believe.

Yet for many years this has not happened and is still not happening; as a result, the Church is no longer seen as the bulwark of truth and the sacrament of salvation in the world. She has stopped being the light, life and salt to a world spiralling deeper into a wasteland of darkness and death. She has stopped preaching, speaking and teaching about sin, evil, grace and virtue, heaven, hell and the pursuit of holiness as the goal of the Christian life.

One only has to look around so many first-world countries to realise that the Catholic faith is moribund and that holy Mother Church has become sterile, because her all-important evangelising mission has come to a grinding halt. To put it bluntly, she has simply stopped producing converts, true disciples of Christ. Mainly due to a cataclysmic crisis in catechesis, she has effectively failed to form Catholics, disciples who can effectively hand on faith, and express and show to others the mystery of Christ in the places where they live, work or travel.

Ongoing catechesis is the foundation and impetus for continual individual conversion, for building up the Church and effectively driving her 'new' evangelising mission in the world. As a fundamental element of evangelisation, catechesis helps all the faithful to establish an ever more profound communion with Christ by participating regularly in the sacraments of his Church.

For a long time now, I have considered ongoing catechesis as one of the most urgent concerns of the Church's evangelising missionary mandate. It is one of the most important aspects of evangelisation that has greatly been neglected, and in some dioceses in the West, completely abandoned by the hierarchy.

To me, Fr Mike's Catechism in a Year podcast is truly a God-sent opportunity to atone for what I believe is one of the biggest and most catastrophic episcopal pastoral failures in the history of the Church in the West, and hopefully these podcasts will be a major step in resuscitating her all-important mission, and the Christian faith in the daily lives of people all over the world.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Immaculate Conception

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 08-12-2020

Today's liturgical feast celebrates one of the wonders of the history of salvation: the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Even she was saved by Christ, but in an extraordinary way, because God wanted that the mother of his Son not be touched by the misery of sin from the moment of conception. And thus, for the entire course of her earthly life, Mary was free from any stain of sin, she was "full of grace", as the angel called her. She was favoured by a unique action of the Holy Spirit so as to always remain in perfect relationship with her Son, Jesus. Indeed, she was Jesus' disciple: his Mother and disciple. But there was no sin in her.

Don't Delay

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 08-12-2020

In the magnificent hymn that opens the Letter to the Ephesians (cf. 1:3-6, 11-12), Saint Paul makes us understand that every human being is created by God for that fullness of holiness, for that beauty in which Our Lady was clothed from the beginning. The goal to which we are called is also a gift of God for us, for which, the Apostle says he "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him"; he predestined us, in Christ to be totally free from sin one day. ...

And do you know who is the first person we are sure entered paradise? Do you know who? A "ruffian": one of the two who was crucified with Jesus. And he turned to Jesus saying: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom". And He responded: "Today you will be with me in paradise". Brothers and sisters, God's grace is offered to everyone; and many who are the least on this earth will be the first in heaven.

But be careful. It does not pay to be clever – to continually postpone a serious evaluation of one's own life, taking advantage of the Lord's patience. He is patient. He waits for us. He is always ready to give us grace. We may be able to deceive people, but not God; he knows our hearts better than we do ourselves. Let us take advantage of the present moment! This, yes, is the Christian sense of seizing the day. Not to enjoy life in each passing moment – no, this is the worldly sense. But to seize today, to say "no" to evil and "yes" to God, to open oneself to his grace, to once and for all stop falling back on ourselves, dragging ourselves into hypocrisy and to face our own reality as we are – to recognize that we have not loved God and neighbour as we should have. And to confess it. This is the beginning of a journey of conversion, asking God's pardon first of all in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and then to repair the harm done to others. But always open to grace: the Lord knocks on our door, he knocks on our heart to enter into friendship with us, in communion, to give us salvation.

And this, for us, is the path for becoming "holy and immaculate". The uncontaminated beauty of our Mother is incomparable, but at the same time it attracts us. Let us entrust ourselves to her and say "no" to sin and "yes" to Grace once and for all.

Vatican.va

A Spare Chair at the Table

Pope Francis, Homily 13-11-2022 World Day of the Poor

Are you convinced that the Lord walks with you? We should always repeat this to ourselves, especially at times of greatest trouble: God is a Father, and he is at my side. He knows and loves me; he does not sleep, but watches over me and cares for me. If I stay close to him, not a hair of my head will perish.

And how do I respond to this? By looking at our brothers and sisters in need; by looking at the throw away culture that discards the poor and people with few possibilities; a culture that discards the old and unborn... by looking at all of them; as a Christian, what should I do in this moment?

Since he loves us, let us resolve to love him in the most abandoned of his children. The Lord is there. There is an old tradition, even in some Italian regions, and I am sure some people still follow it: leaving an empty chair for the Lord at the Christmas dinner, and believing that he will surely come knocking at the door in the person of a poor person in need. Does your heart have a space for such persons? Is there a place in my heart for such people? Or are we too busy attending to our friends, attending social events and other engagements which will never let us have a space for such people. Let us care for the poor, in whom we find Jesus, who became poor for our sake. He identifies with the poor. Let us feel challenged to care for them, lest even a hair of their head perish. Let us not be content, like the people in the Gospel, to admire the beautiful stones of the temple, while failing to recognize *God's true temple*, our fellow men and women, especially the poor, in whose face, in whose history, in whose wounds, we encounter Jesus. He told us so. Let us never forget it.

Vatican.va

This Holy Season

St Charles Borromeo

Beloved, now is the acceptable time spoken of by the Spirit, the day of salvation, peace and reconciliation: the great season of Advent. This is the time eagerly awaited by the patriarchs and prophets, the time that holy Simeon rejoiced at last to see. This is the season that the Church has always celebrated with special solemnity. We too should always observe it with faith and love, offering praise and thanksgiving to the Father for the mercy and love he has shown us in this mystery. In his infinite love for us, though we were sinners, he sent his only Son to free us from the tyranny of Satan, to summon us to heaven, to welcome us into its innermost recesses, to show us truth itself, to train us in right conduct, to plant within us the seeds of virtue, to enrich us with the treasures of his grace, and to make us children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Each year, as the Church recalls this mystery, she urges us to renew the memory of the great love God has shown us. This holy season teaches us that Christ's coming was not only for the benefit of his contemporaries; his power has still to be communicated to us all. We shall share his power, if, through holy faith and the sacraments, we willingly accept the grace Christ earned for us, and live by that grace and in obedience to Christ.

The Church asks us to understand that Christ, who came once in the flesh, is prepared to come again. When we remove all obstacles to his presence he will come, at any hour and moment, to dwell spiritually in our hearts, bringing with him the riches of his grace.

In her concern for our salvation, our loving mother the Church uses this holy season to teach us through hymns, canticles and other forms of expression, of voice or ritual, used by the Holy Spirit. She shows us how grateful we should be for so great a blessing, and how to gain its benefit: our hearts should be as much prepared for the coming of Christ as if he were still to come into this world. The same lesson is given us for our imitation by the words and example of the holy men of the Old Testament.

From the Office of Readings, Monday of the 1st week of Advent

Bad Piece of Advice

Fr Mike Schmitz, from Day 230 of his Bible in a Year podcast

"They did not obey me or incline their ear, they walked in their own counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil hearts, they went backward and not forward." (cf. Jer 7:24)

You know, one of the worst pieces of advice anyone's ever uttered on this planet, is "follow your heart". That is just the dumbest thing I have ever heard anyone say.

I mean, I know that in some contexts it might be accurate, some contexts it might be appropriate, in some ways we might say that yeah, that's a good path of just kind of recognising what's going on in my heart.

But here is the word of the Lord that declares, no – oftentimes our hearts are distorted, oftentimes our hearts are set on things that are not good for us, oftentimes our hearts are not aligned with the word of the Lord or the law of the Lord. And so what these people have done, just like ourselves, it says, "They did not obey or incline their ear to my voice, but they walked in their own counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil hearts." ...

I remember hearing...that the first two movements of conversion are: distrust of self, and trust in the Lord. And I think yes, that's exactly it.

I recognise that I can't be trusted to belong to Christ, I can't be trusted to always choose the right thing, I can't be trusted with the gifts that he's given me in Christ Jesus, and yet I can trust in the Lord. Even in my brokenness, even in my weakness, even in my faithlessness, I can still trust in the Lord.

Trivia: 67 of the Bible's 73 books are referenced in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

"I Decided to Live"

Fr John Rizzo

It was August 1985. I had been ordained a priest only a few months before, and my first assignment was London, England. One Tuesday morning, an elderly gentleman was preparing everything for the Mass I was about to offer. Unbeknown to me, he had thrown a match into the rubbish bin in the sacristy. Because he was partially blind, he did not realise that he had not fully extinguished the match. I started to say Mass, when suddenly the smoke detectors went off because of a fire in the sacristy. We had to quickly evacuate the chapel oratory and the presbytery, but I first needed to remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. There was much smoke, and I inhaled a lot of it.

Later that evening, I was scheduled to offer another Mass, in North London. The train ride there was about 45 minutes long – from Wimbledon Park to North London. Because of the smoke inhalation, I was not feeling very well. I thought to myself "Maybe I could cancel that evening Mass and have an early night."

But I had second thoughts and decided to go. I got on the train with a piercing headache, arrived at the Church not feeling well, and began to say Mass. I felt so unwell that I was wondering if I was going to be able to finish the Mass. Halfway through the Mass, at the time of the Offertory, I heard the large wooden doors at the back of the Church squeak open, announcing the arrival of a latecomer. I finished the Mass and went into the sacristy. How I longed for a Panadol!

As I was divesting, a man who appeared to be in his late sixties entered the sacristy. As he approached me, I saw that he had a gun in his hand. I suddenly felt very uneasy, to say the least! He placed the gun on the bench where the vestments were. He said to me "Father, I was going to end my life tonight. I was on my way to the park, to sit on the bench and shoot myself in the head. But Father – I noticed the lights on in the Church, and I came in to seek shelter. There you were saying Mass, and I knelt at the back. The Mass was so beautiful that I decided to live."

I was amazed! This was the latecomer I had heard come in. We spoke at length about all his hardships, and then he made a beautiful, humble confession. After he left, I took the gun and handed it over to the police.

I thought to myself, as I was sitting on the train to return home, "What if I had the early night I wanted, and did not go to say that evening Mass? That man would have walked past a closed Church, a Church in the dark, which couldn't have provided the shelter he was seeking. Oh my God, thank you for this opportunity of being an instrument of grace. This man needed grace – he saw the lights on in the Church, and entered. He saw the light emanating from Your Sacred Heart, and he decided to live. Amen."

I kept in contact with this man, and he lived a very godly life until his death. May he rest in peace.

From *Memoirs from the Heart of a Priest* (p.15-17), by Fr John Rizzo, Chaplain of Tyburn Priory, Diocese of Paramatta
For a copy of the booklet, email priestmemoirs@gmail.com

New Testament Quiz

1. Which prophet is considered to be the bridge between the Old and New Testament?
2. How many books are there in the New Testament?
3. What was the name of Jesus' grandma?
4. Name the 12 Apostles.
5. Which is the longest Gospel?
6. What's the last book of the New Testament?
7. Who is traditionally considered to be the writer of the last book of the New Testament?
8. Who is the apostle who replaced Judas?
9. Which book of the New Testament recounts the history of the Church?
10. What island was Paul shipwrecked on, when he was heading to Rome?

Answers on page 11 – if you need them!

Perfectionism and the Road to Perfection

My German grandmother used to call her son (my father) "Millimetre Herman" because he was so precise – a perfectionist. I am so picky when it comes to proof-reading that my colleagues created a verb out of my name – "to Janet" – as in, "Has this document been Janetted yet?" A hint that perhaps a bit of my father's perfectionism rubbed off on me?

So I was naturally intrigued by the title of a book by Christopher West called, "Love is Patient, but I'm not - Confessions of a Recovering Perfectionist". I'm a long-time admirer and 'student' of Christopher West and his explanations of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, so I enjoyed listening to him answer some questions on the title of his book (a video at corproject.com). The following really struck me:

"Well a recovering perfectionist is someone who is trying to get over this idea – it's often deeply ingrained in us – that I have to be perfect, I have to get my act together, in order to be 'lovable'. And here we need to distinguish between perfectionism and the road to perfection. Sure enough, it's right in the Gospel, Jesus says, 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect'. Well, for the perfectionist that strikes fear in the heart, because the perfectionist believes, I'm not going to be lovable until I'm perfect. The road to perfection is very, very different. The road to perfection recognises I am loved right where I am, right as I am – and it's that love that draws me on a journey to becoming more and more who I am meant to be. The perfectionist is scared to death that he's never going to be loved. The person who's on the road to perfection knows this: a saint is not someone who's perfect; a saint is someone who knows he or she is perfectly loved in all their imperfections. What a relief! Now, here's kind of a litmus test for whether we are on the road to perfection or struggling with perfectionism: When you hear someone like Mother Teresa say, I am one of the most awful sinners, do you just roll your eyes like, yeah sure you are, Mother Teresa! Well, if that's your reaction, well, we don't know what holiness is! The saints know they're imperfect, they know they're full of all kinds of brokenness, but they know they are perfectly loved, right there."

Ed.

Christmas Reflections from Prison

Cardinal George Pell, in *Prison Journal*, Volume 3: Entry for Christmas Day 2019

I remember hearing of a young Chinese woman with no religion who was told how God sent his only Son to live among us as one of us, poor and vulnerable. "What a beautiful story", she exclaimed; and so it is.

At St Peter's, the feast was solemnly announced with the traditional proclamation.

The twenty-fifth day of December, when ages beyond number had run their course... ; when century upon century had passed since... the Great Flood... ; in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt... ; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the foundation of the City of Rome... Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the Eternal Father, ...was conceived by the Holy Spirit... and was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it everywhere, in palaces and in slums, in great international cities and in deserts and jungles, in St Peter's, the most famous church in Christendom, and in jail, home of the disgraced and condemned.

St John Henry Newman prayed this prayer at the end of one of his parish sermons.

May each Christmas, as it comes,
find us more and more like Him,
who at this time became a little child for our sake -
more simple-minded,
more humble, more holy,
more affectionate, more resigned,
more happy, more full of God.

George Cardinal Pell, *Prison Journal*, Volume 3 (Ignatius Press, 2021), p.70-71. www.ignatius.com

The Beauty and Truth of the Liturgy

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

54. ... In visiting Christian communities, I have noticed that their way of living the liturgical celebration is conditioned – for better or, unfortunately, for worse – by the way in which their pastor presides in the assembly. We could say that there are different “models” of presiding. Here is a possible list of approaches, which even though opposed to each other, characterize a way of presiding that is certainly inadequate: rigid austerity or an exasperating creativity, a spiritualizing mysticism or a practical functionalism, a rushed briskness or an overemphasized slowness, a sloppy carelessness or an excessive finickiness, a superabundant friendliness or priestly impassibility. Granted the wide range of these examples, I think that the inadequacy of these models of presiding have a common root: a heightened personalism of the celebrating style which at times expresses a poorly concealed mania to be the centre of attention. ... Be sure you understand me: these are not the most widespread behaviours, but still, not infrequently assemblies suffer from being thus abused. ...

56. The priest lives his characteristic participation in the celebration in virtue of the gift received in the sacrament of Holy Orders, and this is expressed precisely in presiding. Like all the roles he is called to carry out, this is not primarily a duty assigned to him by the community but is rather a consequence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit received in ordination which equips him for such a task. The priest also is formed by his presiding in the celebrating assembly.

57. For this service to be well done – indeed, with art! – it is of fundamental importance that the priest have a keen awareness of being, through God’s mercy, a particular presence of the risen Lord. The ordained minister is himself one of the types of presence of the Lord which render the Christian assembly unique, different from any other assembly. This fact gives “sacramental” weight (in the broad sense) to all the gestures and words of the one presiding. The assembly has the right to be able to feel in those gestures and words the desire that the Lord has, today as at the Last Supper, to eat the Passover with us. So, the risen Lord is in the leading role, and not our own immaturities, assuming roles and behaviours which are simply not appropriate. The priest himself should be overpowered by this desire for communion that the Lord has toward each person. It is as if he were placed in the middle between Jesus’ burning heart of love and the heart of each of the faithful, which is the object of the Lord’s love. To preside at Eucharist is to be plunged into the furnace of God’s love.

Hymns of St Thomas Aquinas

Lauda Sion
Pange Lingua
Sacris Solemniis
Verbum Supernum
Adoro te Devote

“The Word as Flesh
makes true bread
into flesh by a word
and the wine becomes
the blood of Christ.”

St Thomas Aquinas, from Pange Lingua (v.4)

Quiz Answers (from page 9)

1. John the Baptist; 2. 27; 3. Anne. 4. Simon/Peter & his brother Andrew, James & John (sons of Zebedee), Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus/Judas, Simon (the Zealot), Judas Iscariot; 5. Matthew; 6. Revelation; 7. John; 8. Matthias; 9. Acts of the Apostles; 10. Malta.

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

Testimony of St Thomas

Pope Francis, 30-09-2022

Another testimony that St Thomas [Aquinas] has left us was his deep relationship with God, which is manifested, for example, in the adoration of Jesus in his real presence in the Eucharist. We know that he was the author of beautiful Eucharistic hymns used to this day in the Liturgy of the Church. His spirituality helped him to discover the mystery of God, while his talents made it possible for him to put it in writing.

This is an important fact: to unravel the presence of the Lord in the world, in events, it is necessary to pray, to have the heart united to that of Jesus in the tabernacle.

Thus our spirit is nourished, strengthened, human powers, such as intelligence, are perfected, and we are able to see in a transcendent way every situation, even those that before human logic can only present a discouraging panorama.

Precisely, faith and reason, when they walk hand in hand, are capable of enhancing the culture of the human being, impregnating the world with meaning, and building societies that are more human, more fraternal, and consequently more full of God.

Vatican.va [Translated in Microsoft Word]

Contact *Into the Deep*

www.stoneswillshout.com

stoneswillshout@bigpond.com

12 Vincent Road, Morwell, Vic, 3840, Australia

 find us on  facebook

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

Editor: Janet Kingman

Subscription is free. We rely on donations.

Cheques to be made out to Janet Kingman.

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

Account name: Janet Kingman

BSB: 013-745 (ANZ)

Account number: 2901-63632

Donate via Ritchies Supermarkets Community Benefit program by nominating Into the Deep, CB number 81799.

The purpose of ITD is to provide a forum for those who:

- 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