

Into the Deep

Issue 234

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

March 2023

Return to What is Essential

Pope Francis, Ash Wednesday 2023

"Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor 6:2). With these words, the Apostle Paul helps us enter into the spirit of the Lenten season. Lent is indeed the "favourable time" to return to what is essential, to divest ourselves of all that weighs us down, to be reconciled with God, and to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit hidden beneath the ashes of our frail humanity. Return to what is essential. It is the season of grace when we put into practice what the Lord asks of us at the beginning of today's first reading: "Return to me with all your heart" (Jl 2:12). Return to what is essential: it is the Lord.

Vatican.va

"Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross."

Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2023

Light in the Heart of Lent

Pope Francis, Homily, 28-02-2021

The Gospel says: He "led them up a high mountain" (Mk 9:2). ... Here, he is transfigured before them. ...

As the Apostle Peter exclaimed, it is good to pause with the Lord on the mountain, to live this "preview" of light in the heart of Lent. It is a call to remember, especially when we go through a difficult trial – and many of you know what it means to go through a difficult trial – that the Lord is Risen and does not allow darkness to have the last word.

At times we go through moments of darkness in our personal, family or social life, and we fear there is no way out. We feel frightened before great enigmas such as illness, innocent pain or the mystery of death. In the same journey of faith, we often stumble encountering the scandal of the cross and the demands of the Gospel, which calls us to spend our life in service and to lose it in love, rather than preserve it for ourselves and protect it. Thus, we need a different outlook, a light that illuminates the mystery of life in depth and helps us to move beyond our paradigms and beyond the criteria of this world. We too are called to climb up the mountain, to contemplate the beauty of the Risen One that enkindles glimmers of light in every fragment of our life and helps us to interpret history beginning with the paschal victory.

... Going up the mountain does not mean forgetting reality; praying never means avoiding the difficulties of life; the light of faith is not meant to provide beautiful spiritual feelings. No, this is not Jesus' message. We are called to experience the encounter with Christ so that, enlightened by his light, we might take it and make it shine everywhere. Igniting little lights in people's hearts; being little lamps of the Gospel that bear a bit of love and hope: this is the mission of a Christian.

Vatican.va

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

Fr Speakman's Book Available for Sale!

Fr John Speakman's book, *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, has been printed and is available for sale (see p.10 of Jan/Feb ITD for more from the book). At this stage, it is only available through ITD.

To order your copy:

- Contact ITD by mail or email (details on p.12 of each ITD). Remember to include your name and address!
- Include payment or proof of payment. Payment accepted via cash, cheque or Direct Deposit to ITD (details on p.12 of each ITD) – remember to include your name as reference!

The soft-cover, 89-page book costs only \$15.

Postage within Australia will be as follows:

- Standard envelope, no padding or tracking: \$3.
- Standard envelope, no padding, with tracking: \$5.
- Parcel Post bag, with padding and tracking: \$10. This Parcel postage will be the same whether you buy 1 book or up to 10 books. Consider buying extra for your friends and family. It would make a lovely gift!

For international postage, please email me to advise the number of books and the postal address *first*, and I will calculate postage *before* you pay.

Ed.

Intensive Care Unit

**From the book, *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*,
by Fr John Speakman**

Beside every bed in ICU stands a mind-boggling array of technical equipment and machinery with flashing lights, monitors and beeping warnings. There are so many illnesses, so many doctors, so many specialised treatments – and then there's me, the priest.

I carry a little bag on my shoulder with Holy Oils, Holy Water, Holy Cards and, of course, the Blessed Sacrament. Nothing beeps or flashes. I go to each patient, one after the other, and only ever find one illness and only ever offer one cure.

Please support Into the Deep by buying a copy (or two or three!) of this lovely book by Fr Speakman. It is so good! I highly recommend it. – Ed.

What It's About

From the back cover of the book, *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speakman:

Things Serious, Silly and Sublime is a collection of Fr Speakman's thoughts and reflections from his time as a hospital chaplain and parish priest.

It gives readers an over-the-shoulder look at encounters in the life of a priest, where each interaction becomes a source of deeper reflection, even those moments that seem, at first glance, ordinary or routine.

Fr Speakman's pithy recollections and personal insights not only reveal a quirky sense of humour and obvious love of people, but give readers a sense of his deep Catholic faith.

This engaging little book will entertain, challenge, invite, and console; and ultimately draw readers closer to the heart of Christ.

Proceeds to ITD

With this letter I'd like to clarify and formalise some details surrounding my book "Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime".

My intention was always, and still is, to gather together some of my thoughts into a small book which I can leave to the (many) members of my family. I have no intention of making profit on this book as it will be a gift to my family. However, it can be sold to assist the monthly printing of *Into the Deep*. I support its printing and distribution and have contributed to this end over the years. So, I am happy to donate the proceeds of any sales from the book to cover the costs you incur printing and distributing ITD and, in return, you have agreed to manage the sales and wider distribution of my book. The proceeds are to be used solely to provide funds to cover the costs of producing ITD and no other purpose.

Should you decide to discontinue the production of ITD in the future then I would want the proceeds to go to Aid to the Church in Need or any other Catholic organisation you choose.

Many thanks and God bless.

Fr John Speakman, Old Junee, New South Wales

The Annunciation

Pope Benedict XVI, Shrine of the Annunciation in Nazareth, 14-05-2009

What happened here in Nazareth, far from the gaze of the world, was a singular act of God, a powerful intervention in history, through which a child was conceived who was to bring salvation to the whole world. The wonder of the Incarnation continues to challenge us to open up our understanding to the limitless possibilities of God's transforming power, of his love for us, his desire to be united with us. Here the eternally begotten Son of God became man, and so made it possible for us, his brothers and sisters, to share in his divine sonship. That downward movement of self-emptying love made possible the upward movement of exaltation in which we too are raised to share in the life of God himself.

The Spirit who "came upon Mary" is the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of Creation. ... When we reflect on this joyful mystery, it gives us hope, the sure hope that God will continue to reach into our history, to act with creative power so as to achieve goals which by human reckoning seem impossible. It challenges us to open ourselves to the transforming action of the Creator Spirit who makes us new, makes us one with him, and fills us with his life. It invites us, with exquisite courtesy, to consent to his dwelling within us, to welcome the Word of God into our hearts, enabling us to respond to him in love and to reach out in love towards one another.

Vatican.va

If You Don't Want to Be Sheep

Pope Francis, General Audience 15-02-2023

If you don't want to be sheep, the Lord will not defend you from the wolves. Deal with it as best you can. But if you are sheep, rest assured that the Lord will defend you from the wolves. Be humble. He asks us to be like this, to be meek and with the will to be innocent, to be disposed to sacrifice; this is what the lamb represents: meekness, innocence, dedication, tenderness. And he, the Shepherd, will recognise his lambs and protect them from the wolves. On the other hand, lambs disguised as wolves are unmasked and torn to pieces. A Church Father wrote: "As long as we are lambs, we will conquer, and even if we are surrounded by many wolves, we will overcome them. But if we become wolves - 'Ah, how clever, look, I feel good about myself' - we will be defeated, because we will be deprived of the shepherd's help. He does not shepherd wolves, but lambs" (St John Chrysostom, Homily 33 on the Gospel of Matthew). If I want to be the Lord's, I have to allow him to be my shepherd; and he is not the shepherd of wolves, He is the shepherd of lambs, meek, humble, kind as the Lord is.

Vatican.va

From the Editor

Readership survey: Thank you to those (few!) who completed the ITD Readership survey in last month's ITD. Results are on p.11 of this issue.

Winner! The winner of the free copy of Fr John Speakman's book *Things Serious, Silly and Sublime* is Marg Goss from Sale, Victoria. Congratulations!

Thank You once again to those who have donated recently to ITD. Your generosity keeps ITD going, and is very much appreciated, especially as postage went up yet again at the beginning of this year.

Did you spot it? Last issue had Jan/Feb 2022 instead of 2023 on the odd-numbered pages. Oops.

Ed.

Medical Theology

**From the book, *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*,
by Fr John Speakman**

The discussions one has with patients as a hospital chaplain are usually interesting and, occasionally, very interesting. One meets people from all walks of life. Some are highly educated professional people and some are salt-of-the-earth blue collar workers. Sometimes, however, under the influence of medication and the particular treatment being undergone, a patient's learning can desert him as I discovered recently when I was told by a man after his prostate operation that the Pope rarely speaks 'ex catheter'.

The Lives of the Saints

Whenever I pray the Divine Office of the Church through the Universalis app, I scroll to the 'About Today' section which gives a summary about whichever saint or martyr's feast day it is – it explains where they were from, when they were born and died, and how they lived their new life of faith in Christ, in the service of his body, the Church. More often than not, that summary mentions that, "The Church at that time was in a weak and corrupt state", or "in a terrible state".

What always amazes me about this is that these men and women seemed unconcerned and unperturbed by the state of the Church universally or wherever they lived, worked or travelled. Their humble belief and trust that the Church was a divinely-willed Trinitarian mystery and reality, allowed them to focus resolutely on their own new life of grace in Christ, on ordering their own souls, and working out their salvation in God's ultimate plan.

They were single-minded in their devotion to Christ, so much so that they didn't have time to undermine Church unity or fracture communion by relentlessly scrutinising and attacking the vicar of Christ of the day. They knew that Christ entrusted his Church militant and Gospel to weak, fickle, frail and fragile human beings, who would be guided, led and protected by the Holy Spirit; and that she will always be under attack from within and without by the evil forces of this world, that there will always be corruption, decay and ruin in her, and as a result, she would always be in need of conversion, reform and renewal.

They reformed the Church in depth not by tearing down structures and working up plans for new ones or by fomenting discord and disunity, but by reforming, renewing and evangelising themselves daily. As consecrated people, called to holiness, they focussed solely on their Master, Jesus Christ, and worked tirelessly on manifesting a unity in their own lives, between being and acting, between self-evangelisation and witness, and between interior renewal and fervent discipleship; because what the Church and the world needs more than anything else today is holiness.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

Patron of a Good Death

Pope Francis, General Audience, 09-02-2022

I would like to explore the special devotion Christian people have always had for Saint Joseph as the patron of a happy death; a devotion that arose from the thought that Joseph had died, comforted by the presence of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus, before he left the house of Nazareth. ... A century ago, Pope Benedict XV wrote: "through Joseph we go directly to Mary, and through Mary to the origin of all holiness, who is Jesus". Both Joseph and Mary help us to go to Jesus. ... May Saint Joseph help us to live the mystery of death in the best possible way. For a Christian, a good death is an experience of the mercy of God, that comes close to us even in that last moment of our life. Even in the Hail Mary, we pray asking Our Lady to be close to us "at the hour of our death".

Temptations

Do not grieve over the temptations you suffer.

When the Lord intends to bestow a particular virtue on us, He often permits us first to be tempted by the opposite vice.

Therefore, look upon every temptation as an invitation to grow in a particular virtue and a promise by God that you will be successful, if only you stand fast.

St Philip Neri

Out of Nothing

Catechism of the Catholic Church

298 Since God could create everything out of nothing, he can also, through the Holy Spirit, give spiritual life to sinners by creating a pure heart in them, and bodily life to the dead through the Resurrection. God "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

And since God was able to make light shine in darkness by his Word, he can also give the light of faith to those who do not yet know him.

What More Are You Doing?

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 19-02-2023

The words Jesus addresses to us in this Sunday's Gospel are demanding, and seem paradoxical: he invites us to turn the other cheek and to love even our enemies (cf. Mt 5:38-48).

It is normal for us to love those who love us, and to be friends of those who are friends to us; yet Jesus provokes us by saying: if you act in this way, "what more are you doing than others?". *What more are you doing?* Here is the point to which I would like to draw your attention today, to what you do that is extraordinary.

"More", "extraordinary", is what goes beyond the limits of the usual, what exceeds the habitual practices and normal calculations dictated by prudence. Instead, in general we try to have everything more or less in order and under control, so as to correspond to our expectations, to our measure: fearing not to be reciprocated or to expose ourselves too much and then be disappointed, we prefer to love only those who love us in order to avoid disappointments, to do good only to those who are good to us, to be generous only to those who can return a favour; and to those who treat us badly, we respond in kind, so that we are even.

But the Lord warns us: this is not enough! We would say: this is not Christian! If we remain in the ordinary, in the balance between giving and receiving, things do not change. If God were to follow this logic, we would have no hope of salvation! But, fortunately for us, God's love is always "extraordinary", it goes beyond the usual criteria by which we humans live out our relationships. ...

As the Apostle Paul writes, "One will hardly die for a righteous man – though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rm 5:7-8). So, God loves us while we are sinners, not because we are good or able to give something back to him. Brothers and sisters, God's love is a love always in excess, always beyond calculation, always disproportionate. And today he also asks us to live in this way, because only in this way will we truly bear witness to him. ...

The extraordinary love of Christ is not easy, but it is possible; it is possible because He Himself helps us by giving us His Spirit, His love without measure.

Vatican.va

Random Hail Marys for Strangers

The other day a friend of mine told me a story that he'd seen online, about a woman whose life was saved by a random stranger who prayed a Hail Mary for her as he jogged past her house. The story goes that he was out jogging, saw an ambulance in someone's driveway, and said a Hail Mary for that person as he continued jogging (he had no idea who lived there or what the emergency was). A week later he was jogging in the same street and a lady called out to him. She called him over and said he'd saved her life. He didn't understand what she was talking about as they didn't know one another. She explained she was taken to hospital a week earlier by ambulance, and while in hospital, dying, Jesus appeared to her. Jesus held his hand up to her, and in the palm of his hand was the face of this jogger. Jesus told her that his prayer had saved her life. (I subsequently searched for the story online, and it's told by a Fr Joe Freedy, of his friend John Petrovich who was the jogger.)

It's a lovely story about the power of prayer, and it immediately reminded me of my mother. My mother used to say Hail Marys and 'leave them' for anyone in need. If she was walking in to town, she'd say a Hail Mary here and there and 'drop them' on the ground. If she and Dad were in the car driving quietly, she'd say Hail Marys and 'throw them out the window' for anyone who may need them. I remember an old Dominican nun from my primary school days who used to do the same. I think she may have been the one who told my mother about it. She'd walk along quietly saying Hail Marys to herself and 'dropping them' as she went. It's a habit I've picked up, although I admit it's one I could use a lot more than I do. Random Hail Marys, 'left' in random places, for random people. Our Lady will know best who needs them most.

Ed.

Dying to Live

Book Review: *Dying to Live – Reflections on Life After Death*

Author: John Flader, BA, DCL

Published: Connor Court, 2022

From a review by: Eamonn Keane

Dying to Live is based on a good deal of research into the Catholic Church's teaching on what happens beyond the point of death. The book reads like a mystery thriller, whereby one cannot wait to turn the next page in order to see how the main theme unfolds. With 162 pages, the book is relatively short and intended primarily for people without faith or belief in life after death. As such it presents a riveting account of Catholic teaching on a question of vital concern to believers and unbelievers alike. ...

The average length of each chapter is 4-5 pages. The title of Chapter 2, "Placing a bet", might leave one wondering what it is about. It is an account of how Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), the famous French Catholic mathematician, scientist (invented the adding machine) and writer, challenged sceptics of his day to bet or *wager* their lives on belief that God exists. He told them that if they are wrong they had nothing to lose as death will be the end of everything as far as they are concerned, but if they are right about God's existence, they will have everything to gain.

The longest section in the book is Chapter 5 titled "Is there a God?". This chapter is very significant, for if God does not exist, then we are all doomed to eternal extinction. Fr. Flader draws on the findings of modern science and his own knowledge (he studied chemistry at Harvard), to show that science supports belief in an infinitely intelligent Creator God. ... A proper understanding of the relationship between faith and science is critical to helping young people recognise that there can never be a conflict between faith and reason. Recent research in the U.S. indicates that a major factor conducive to young Catholics giving up the practice of the faith is that they think Catholic doctrine is incompatible with the findings of modern science. ...

Dying to Live is a book about the virtue of hope and trust in the providence and merciful love of God who will not abandon his children, if only we say sorry for our sins and desire to mend our ways by following Jesus Christ more closely. Fr Flader has done a great job by demonstrating how Catholic doctrines on Death, Judgement, Heaven, Hell and Purgatory are positive affirmations of the wisdom and mercy of God the Creator and Redeemer. ...

The Final Exam

Book Review: *The Final Exam – Preparing for the Judgment*

Author: Fr John Flader

Published: Connor Court 2023

From a review by: Prof. Tony Shannon, PhD, AM

Fr John Flader describes his new book, *The Final Exam – Preparing for the Judgment*, as a sequel to his previous book, *Dying to Live*. In fact, it is more than a sequel, because the two books are complementary in content and character. Everything, but everything, for healthy daily living (and spiritually healthy dying) is covered within and between the two.

In a very readable style, the author deals with topics which too many of us would prefer to avoid. As its title suggests, the purpose of this book is to help the reader prepare well for the 'final exam', the judgment. Even if one is nearing the end of life right now, as I am, the book shows how the reader can still turn a possible failure into a brilliant success.

The author assists in this by covering all aspects of morality in simple language, which is not always easy to do. He challenges our world of moral relativism, which we have inherited from the Enlightenment – the "my values are not your values, to each his own" way of thinking – showing how morality is objective, based on human nature, on the natural law.

It is on this objective standard, common to all human beings, no matter what their religious belief, that God will judge us. As the author points out, this is fair, since we will all be judged by the same standard. And if we fail this exam, we cannot appeal to a higher authority, because there isn't one. Nor can we ask to take the exam again. This is the end, the final exam. That is why this book is so important. It shows the reader how to live in such a way as to be well prepared for the judgment at the moment of death. ...

The Tempter Keeps Coming Back

Pope Francis, to Roman Curia, 22-12-2022

The true problem, however, and it is one that we often overlook, is that conversion does not only make us aware of evil so that we can choose the good; it also forces evil to change its tactics, to become more insidious, to find new disguises that will be hard for us to see through. The battle is real. The tempter keeps coming back, disguised, but he comes back.

In the Gospel, Jesus uses a parable to illustrate how this battle takes place at different times and in different ways: "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which he trusted and divides his plunder" (Lk 11:21-22). The first major problem is when we put too much trust in ourselves, our strategies and our programmes. This is the "pelagianism" of which I have often spoken. Some of our failures are in fact a grace, for they remind us that we should not put our trust in ourselves, but in the Lord alone. Some of our failings, also as a Church, are a forceful summons to put Christ back at the centre, for, as he says, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Lk 11:23). It is that easy.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not enough to condemn evil, including the evil that quietly lurks among us. We need to respond by choosing to be converted. Mere condemnation can give the illusion that we have solved the problem, whereas what really counts is making the changes that will ensure that we no longer allow ourselves to be imprisoned by evil ways of thinking, which are often those of this world.

One of the most helpful virtues to practice in this regard is the virtue of *vigilance*. Jesus uses a striking example to illustrate the need for vigilance, attentiveness to ourselves and to the Church. He tells us: "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'. When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first" (Lk 11:24-26). Our initial conversion follows a certain pattern: the evil that we acknowledge and try to uproot from our lives does indeed leave us, but we would be naïve to think that it will long be gone. In short order, it comes back under a new guise. Before, it appeared rough and violent, now it shows up as elegant and refined. We need to realize that and once again to unmask it. Let me put it this way: they are "elegant demons": they enter smoothly, without our even being conscious of them. Only *the daily practice of the examination of conscience* can enable us to be aware of them. Hence the importance of the examination of conscience, to keep watch over our house.

Vatican.va

Prayers for the Church in Nicaragua

The pontifical foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) calls for prayers for the Church in Nicaragua and for the Nicaraguan bishop who was convicted of treason on 10 February. United to Pope Francis, who expressed his sadness and concern on 12 February, following the Angelus prayer, the ACN foundation asks all its friends and benefactors to bear in mind the terrible situation of Rolando Álvarez, bishop of Matagalpa and apostolic administrator of the diocese of Estelí, and requests prayers for him and for all those who are suffering in Nicaragua.

According to information from local news sources, the Government has now taken to arresting and reprimanding priests who mention bishop Rolando Álvarez in their sermons, which they describe as "forbidden activity". At least two priests were arrested in Madriz and in Nueva Segovia for mentioning or praying for the bishop during Sunday masses. For this reason, and considering the regime's intention of silencing the prayers of the people of Nicaragua, ACN is calling on benefactors the world over to pray even more fervently for the Nicaraguan Church, that it may not feel abandoned in these challenging times and may continue to proclaim the Gospel and accompany its faithful, especially the poorest and the most frail.

Aidtochurch.org

Perseverance

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 13-11-2022

Christ says: "By your perseverance you will secure your lives" (Lk21:19). *Perseverance*. What is perseverance? ...

To persevere is to remain constant in goodness, especially when the reality around us urges us to do otherwise. Let us reflect on a few examples: I know that prayer is important, but, like everyone, I too always have a lot to do, and so I put it off: "No, I am busy now, I can't, I'll do it later". Or, I see many crafty people who take advantage of situations, who dodge the rules, and so I too stop observing them and persevering in justice and legality: "But if these scoundrels do it, so will I!". Beware of this! And again: I carry out service in the Church, for the community, for the poor, but I see that many people in their free time think only of enjoying themselves, and so I feel like giving up and do what they do. Because I do not see results, or I get bored, or it does not make me happy.

Persevering, instead, is *remaining* in goodness. Let us ask ourselves: what is my perseverance like? Am I constant, or do I live faith, justice and charity according to the moment: I pray if I feel like it; I am fair, willing and helpful if it suits me; whereas if I am dissatisfied, if no-one thanks me, do I stop? In short, do my prayer and service depend on circumstances or on a heart that is steadfast in the Lord? If we persevere – Jesus reminds us – we have nothing to fear, even in the sad and ugly events of life, not even in the evil we see around us, because we remain grounded in the good. ...

Perseverance is the reflection in the world of God's love, because God's love is faithful, it is persevering, it never changes.

Vatican.va

What is Truth?

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Papal Household, Good Friday homily 2022

Jesus treats Pilate as a soul who needs light and truth, and not as a judge. He is interested in the destiny of the man Pilate more than in his own destiny. With his appeal to receive the truth, he wants to prompt him to come to his senses, to look at things with different eyes, to place himself above the momentary dispute with the Jews.

The Roman Procurator understands Jesus' invitation to him, but he is skeptical and indifferent about this kind of higher speculation. The mystery he glimpses in Jesus' words frightens him and he prefers to end the conversation. Muttering to himself "What is truth?", he leaves the Praetorium.

What a relevant page from the Gospel for today! Even today, as in the past, man asks himself: "What is truth?" But, as Pilate did, he casually turns his back on the one who said, "I came into the world to bear witness to the truth." "I am the Truth!" (Jn 14: 6).

Through the internet, I have followed countless debates on religion and science and on faith and atheism. One thing struck me: hours and hours of dialogue, without ever mentioning the name of Jesus. And if the believing party sometimes dared to mention his name and his resurrection from the dead, they immediately tried to close the discussion as an irrelevant digression. Everything happens "*etsi Christus non daretur*": as if in the world there had never been a man called Jesus Christ.

What is the result? The word "God" becomes an empty vessel for everyone to fill at will. But it is precisely for this reason that God took care to give content to his name. "The Word became flesh." Truth became flesh! Hence the staunch effort to leave Jesus out of the discourse on God; he removes from human pride any pretext for deciding himself what God should be like! ...

If I had the courage of St. Paul, at this point I too would have to shout: "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2Cor 5:20). Do not "waste" your life! Do not leave this world as Pilate left the Praetorium, with the unanswered question: "What is truth?" It is too important: It is a question of knowing whether we live for something, or in vain!

Catholicnewsagency.com 15-04-2022

The Oil of Gladness

Pope Benedict XVI, Chrism Mass homily 2010

In the early Church, the consecrated oil was considered a special sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, who communicates himself to us as a gift from Christ. He is the oil of gladness. This gladness is different from entertainment and from the outward happiness that modern society seeks for itself. Entertainment, in its proper place, is certainly good and enjoyable. It is good to be able to laugh. But entertainment is not everything. It is only a small part of our lives, and when it tries to be the whole, it becomes a mask behind which despair lurks, or at least doubt over whether life is really good, or whether non-existence might perhaps be better than existence. The gladness that comes to us from Christ is different. It does indeed make us happy, but it can also perfectly well coexist with suffering. It gives us the capacity to suffer and, in suffering, to remain nevertheless profoundly glad. It gives us the capacity to share the suffering of others and thus by placing ourselves at one another's disposal, to express tangibly the light and the goodness of God. I am always struck by the passage in the Acts of the Apostles which recounts that after the Apostles had been whipped by order of the Sanhedrin, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:41). Anyone who loves is ready to suffer for the beloved and for the sake of his love, and in this way he experiences a deeper joy.

Vatican.va

Athens and Jerusalem

Tertullian (155-220 AD), the early Christian author from Carthage, gave people plenty to think about with his question, 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' Jerusalem, of course, is the focal point for Judaism, starting with Abram. Yahweh said to Abram, "Leave your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you." (Gen 12:1). The promised land was very near fierce and cruel neighbours. These neighbours were the Assyrians who had been a world power (from mid-2000 to 609BC). The Assyrians were very cruel in imposing their particular culture on their subject nations. So followers of Abraham had to face many challenges when they set about observing the Covenant they had with God. The scriptures give graphic accounts of the persecution that moved the Hebrews to cry out to God. In due course, the Assyrians were replaced as world powers. Eventually the Greeks had their turn. The Greeks also intended to impose their culture on their subject nations, but they were more accommodating than the Assyrians. Indeed, St Paul was dismayed by the evidence of this tolerance – "his whole soul was revolted by a city given over to idolatry" (Acts 17:16). The idols showed that there had been a long search by communities to understand the wonders of God's creation. The search was ongoing and forward looking and: indeed, one of the idols was for the Unknown God. Even so, the Greeks made significant progress with philosophy in their quest to achieve a richer understanding of God's creation. So the universities have made use of Grecian thought processes. On the other hand, Saint Thomas Aquinas made full use of the Greek philosopher Aristotle when developing his contribution to the Christian quest for God. At Jerusalem the followers of Abraham crucified Jesus, an event that led to the formation of Jesus' church. So the answer to Tertullian is that the quest for God has involved both the intellectual pursuits of Athens, and the deep faith in Jesus of Jerusalem.

John H. Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Babies Left to Die

Prof Joanna Howe (Professor of Law at the University of Adelaide), on Instagram Feb 2023

On average, every week a baby is born alive and left to die after a failed abortion in Queensland and Victoria. That's 724 babies between 2010-2020. Even if it was one baby whom we abandoned after birth to die in a kidney dish in an empty hospital room it would be a tragedy. But 724 babies in just two states (the other states don't publicly release data on this) is horrific. This is the greatest human rights abuse in Australia and yet most Australians have no idea.

A Life Without Sacrifice

Pope Benedict XVI, Palm Sunday homily 2009

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (Jn 12:25). In other words, the one who wants to have his life for himself, living only for himself, keeping everything to himself and exploiting all its possibilities – is actually the one who loses his life. Life becomes boring and empty. ...

Love, in fact, means letting go of oneself, giving oneself, not wanting to possess oneself, but becoming free from oneself: not retiring into oneself – (what will become of me?) – but looking ahead, towards the other – towards God and towards the men that he sends to me. And once again, this principle of love, which defines man's path, is identical to the mystery of the cross, to the mystery of death and resurrection that we encounter in Christ.

Dear friends, perhaps it is relatively easy to accept this as the fundamental great vision of life. In practice, however, it is not a question of simply recognizing a principle, but of living according to the truth that it contains, the truth of the cross and resurrection. Hence, once again, a single great decision is not enough. ...the great "yes" of the decisive moment in our life – the "yes" to the truth that the Lord puts before us – must then be won afresh every day in the situations of daily life when we have to abandon our "I" over and over again, placing ourselves at the Lord's disposal when deep down we would prefer to cling to our "I".

An upright life always involves sacrifice, renunciation. To hold out the promise of a life without this constant re-giving of self, is to mislead. There is no such thing as a successful life without sacrifice.

Vatican.va

The Precepts of the Church

Catechism of the Catholic Church

2041 The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the indispensable minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbour:

2042 The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.") requires the faithful to participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.

The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year.") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

The third precept ("You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and centre of the Christian liturgy.

2043 The fourth precept ("You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation.") completes the Sunday observance by participation in the principal liturgical feasts which honour the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints.

The fifth precept ("You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.") ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts; they help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.

The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities.

2047 The moral life is a spiritual worship. Christian activity finds its nourishment in the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments.

2048 The precepts of the Church concern the moral and Christian life united with the liturgy and nourished by it.

ITD Readership Survey

Unfortunately, only 21 readers have completed the ITD readership survey at this stage so results are limited. However, there have been some interesting trends, comments and suggestions. The survey is still open for those who would still like to share their views, although the book prize has already been allocated. You can complete the survey on p.11 of the Jan/Feb issue of ITD and mail it in, or [click here](#) for the survey online. **Ed.**

1. **Where are you from?** 71% of respondents were from Victoria, 14% from New South Wales, 10% from the USA and 5% from Queensland.
2. **How long have you been reading ITD?** 24% since the beginning, 38% in the last few years, and 38% for at least 10 years.
3. **How much of ITD do you read?** 48% read all of it, 33% most of it, and 19% a few things that grab their attention.
4. **How many others do you pass ITD on to?** 43% have never shared ITD with anyone, 43% have shared with one or two people, and 14% share with up to ten people.
5. **What do you like best in ITD?** Quotes, Letters to the Editor, and Excerpts from the Catechism rated highest; with Homilies, Stories about saints, Excerpts from books, and Quizzes and trivia also mentioned. Other comments included: Prayers, Editor's reflections and observations, and Current Church news not provided in mainstream media.
6. **What do you like least in ITD?** Homilies and Quizzes and trivia rated highest; with Letters to the editor and Excerpts from the Catechism also mentioned. Other comments included: Nothing I don't like; It's all good; Don't dislike anything; There is nothing I do not like; By marking these "least" does not mean that I don't like them, they are not as important as the others; The negative opinions that there is nothing right with the Church at the moment.
7. **What would you like to see in ITD that isn't already there?** Love the prayers of the saints. Local snippets from all parishes. It is very interesting as it is; I can't think of anything else that should be included. Book reviews maybe. Jokes? Regular Biblical story with colouring and task to do for children; perhaps an occasional family outing/picnic? Maybe some photos. Nothing in particular. Happy with current content. Positive stories that show the Gospel is still alive and promoted by the Church at the moment.
8. **Have you ever written a letter to the Editor of ITD?** 42% yes, 58% no.
9. **Have you ever donated to ITD?** 63% yes, 37% no.
10. **Do you pray the prayer to Mary on p.12 each month?** These results were skewed because I didn't realise in the online version that once comments were entered, it took away the yes/no answer. As it stands, for those who didn't comment, 11% said yes and 32% said no.

Other comments and suggestions:

J.V., VIC: I never tire of reading the topics in ITD. You cover current and all that we need to hear/read.

Anon, VIC: I like to read what other Catholics are thinking and doing. Perhaps solicit responses from mothers, fathers, teachers, business people, priests, on the issues they face that are a challenge to their faith and how they've handled these issues. E.g. to teachers: what are the most difficult and challenging aspects of your job? Has anything happened recently that gave you hope about young people or the future? Similar questions to other groups. Thank you for your work.

M.W., NSW: I think what you include in each issue is very good and often relevant to what is happening at the time. Maybe some Church history could help your readers understand how the Holy Spirit has led the Church through good times and bad. Many things, like the Crusades and the Inquisition are shown to be evil in the modern secular press. Robert Haddad's book "Defend the Faith" is an excellent source for this. Also a history of the development of the Mass would be interesting. The more we learn the reason why the Church did and does do, the better we can defend our faith.

M.M., VIC: I read from cover to cover. Love the prayers of the saints. I am a fan of Fr Speakman.

W.H., TAS: Thank you for your newsletters through the year and the quizzes, great fun. I also liked the Fr John Rizzo stories. Encouraging to hear how a priest sees God working in his life.

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 | 2 nd Friday (9.30am Mass) – 10.30am |

True Adorers

Virgin Immaculate,
perfect lover of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,
we ask you to obtain for us the graces we need
to become true adorers
of our Eucharistic God.

Grant us, we beg of you,
to know Him better,
to love Him more,
and to centre our lives around the Eucharist,
that is, to make our whole life
a constant prayer of adoration, thanksgiving,
reparation, and petition
to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Amen.

St Peter Julian Eymard

*My Lord and my God, take from me
everything that distances me from you.*

*My Lord and my God, give me
everything that brings me closer to you.*

*My Lord and my God, detach me from
myself to give my all to you.*

St Nicholas of Flüe

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