

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 241

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

November 2023

## Free Time

**Pope Francis, Angelus address 15-10-2023**

Let us return, then, to the parable: the king "sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they *would not come*". Here is the drama of the story: the "no" to God.

But why do people refuse his invitation? Was it perhaps an unpleasant invitation? No, and yet – the Gospel says – "they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business". They did not care, because they were thinking of their own affairs. ...

Brothers and sisters, how many times do we fail to heed God's invitation, because we are intent on our own affairs! Often, we struggle to have *free* time, but today Jesus invites us to find the time that *frees*: the time to dedicate to God, that lightens and heals our hearts, that increases peace, confidence and joy in us, that saves us from evil, loneliness and loss of meaning.

It is worth it, because it is good to be with the Lord, to make room for him. Where? At Mass, in listening to the Word, in prayer and also in charity, because by helping those who are weak or poor, by spending time with those who are lonely, by listening to those who ask for attention, by consoling those who suffer, one is with the Lord, who is present in those in need.

However, many think that these things are a "waste of time", and so they lock themselves away in their private world; and it is sad. And this creates sadness. How many sad hearts there are! ...

Let us ask ourselves, then: how do I respond to God's invitations? What space do I give him in my days? Does the quality of my life depend on my affairs and my free time, or on love for the Lord and for my brethren, especially those most in need?

Vatican.va

## November

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

As we pray for the souls in purgatory this month especially, please remember to pray for those readers and supporters of Into the Deep who have died and who may have no practising Catholic family members to pray for them or offer Masses for the repose of their souls. Thank you.

Ed.

## Inside This Issue

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- Local author and historian gets his facts wrong in a new book. See p.8 for more.
- Mercy and healing after abortion? Yes, it's possible! See p.9 for the wisdom of the Church.
- Got a favourite saint? Let me know! See p.6.
- Interested in worldwide Catholic statistics? See p.10 for the latest.
- What does the Church teach about Purgatory? Find out on p.3.

**All issues of *Into the Deep* are at [www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)**

## Fr Speakman's Book

Thank you to all who have purchased Fr Speakman's book so far. I trust you have enjoyed it! Please let me know your thoughts after having read it – I would love to share your impressions with others.

*Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime* costs only \$15, and postage starts at only \$3. Contact me for further details and to place your order.

For more information about *Things Serious, Silly and Sublime* and for excerpts from the book, see Jan/Feb ITD p.10, and page 2 or 3 of all issues of ITD since March 2023.

Proceeds from the sale of the book at this stage go to ITD, thanks to Fr Speakman, so you have twice the reason to buy the book! Thanks for your support.

Ed.

## The Blurb

### From the back of the book

*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.

## Christmas Presents Sorted!

During November and December, if you **buy 3 or more copies** of Fr Speakman's book, *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, you **get free postage** anywhere in Australia! Take advantage of this special offer to stock up on your Christmas presents! *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime* would make a perfect Christmas gift for friends, family, fellow parishioners, or parish priest. You may also want to donate one to your local hospital library trolley, street library, parish library, piety stall or local Catholic bookshop.

Ed.

## Pier Runners

*Things Silly, Serious and Sublime*, by Fr John Speakman, p.79

Have you ever watched that series of YouTube clips called Pier Runners? They are fascinating, sometimes amusing, occasionally tragic. They are about holidaymakers who are late boarding their cruise liner, hence the name Pier Runners. Sometimes they miss out altogether.

Can you imagine how they feel as they see their ship pulling away from the dock? All the doors are securely locked and the poor stranded passengers are left standing on the pier with the beach sand still between their toes and the shopping bags full of souvenirs. To make matters worse, they are often wearing no more than a soggy towel around their bathers.

To make things even worse they sometimes attract many hundreds of fellow passengers hurling abuse from the decks. 'Come on, you mugs, RUN' and if they don't run the crowd sets up a chant, 'Run, run, run, run.' It amazes me how many refuse to run. They amble along, quite confident that the ship will not leave without them and sometimes even wave at the hecklers above.

It is only when they see the gangway being withdrawn into the ship's hull that they realise things are serious but by then, of course, it is too late and their fellow travellers on the decks above change their chant to 'Bye bye...bye bye...bye bye'.

It must be a terrible feeling as the awareness dawns that you have 'missed the boat'.

*They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said "open the door for us." But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you".* (Matthew 25:10-12)

# Thank You

Happy 21<sup>st</sup> ITD birthday! Thank you for your continued great gift to us of spiritual edification.

Please find enclosed a cheque for a copy of Fr Speekman's book and a small donation. I always find Fr Speekman's sermons that you include very good and I am aware of the very many crosses he has had to carry. "The Way We Think" in the October issue of ITD (p.11) was another fine example.

So good to read another of Fr Mike Schmitz's Catechism in a Year too (October ITD, p.9). He wowed us again this morning on Day 224 "The Grace of the Sacrament of Marriage", where he explained those words in Ephesians 5 which many women find so offensive – "wives, submit to your husbands...". Not only does he explain the Christian meaning of submission but he also explores the Christian meaning of the husband's role to be "head" and "leader" of his home – to be Christ-like and willing to sacrifice himself. Maybe you could reprint this Day 224 in ITD one day.

Thank you again. May God continue to bless you and this work.

**Maureen Wright, Lurnea, New South Wales**

# Pray for Them

With the month of November approaching, regarding praying and offering Masses for the deceased, I feel not enough is said about the souls who have no one to pray for them.

Another practice that little is said of is to visit a cemetery between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of November [plenary indulgence] – a good opportunity to pray for those buried there who have no one to pray for them.

Keep up the good work. Please find enclosed a cheque to help with production costs.

**Bernie Slater, Bendigo, Victoria**

# Do You Know?

According to Wikipedia, the Oceania region includes Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, Micronesia, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Palau, Nauru and Tuvalu (in order of population).

Considering the number of Catholics in all of Oceania: *What percentage of the world's Catholic population do you think we constitute?* See page 10 of this ITD ("Catholic Stats") for the answer. **Ed.**

# The Final Purification

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

**1030** All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

**1031** The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come. (St. Gregory the Great)

**1032** This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them. (St. John Chrysostom)

# Prayer for Peace in the World

**Pope Francis, 27-10-2023, at the conclusion of the Pacem in Terris Holy Hour at St Peter's**

Mary, look at us! We stand here before you. You are our Mother, and you know our struggles and our hurts. Queen of Peace, you suffer with us and for us, as you see so many of your children suffering from the conflicts and wars that are tearing our world apart. ... Intercede for our world, in such turmoil and great danger. Teach us to cherish and care for life – each and every human life! – and to repudiate the folly of war, which sows death and eliminates the future.

Mary, how many times have you come, urging prayer and repentance. Yet, caught up in our own needs and distracted by the things of this world, we have turned a deaf ear to your appeal. In your love for us, you never abandon us, Mother. Lead us by the hand. Lead us by the hand and bring us to conversion; help us once again to put God first. Help us to preserve unity in the Church and to be artisans of communion in our world. Make us realize once more the importance of the role we play; strengthen our sense of responsibility for the cause of peace as men and women called to pray, worship, intercede and make reparation for the whole human race.

By ourselves, Mother, we cannot succeed; without your Son, we can do nothing. But you bring us back to Jesus, who is our Peace. Therefore, Mother of God and our Mother, we come before you and we seek refuge in your Immaculate Heart. Mother of mercy, we appeal for mercy! Queen of Peace, we appeal for peace! ... To you we entrust and consecrate our lives and every fibre of our being, all that we possess and all that we are, forever. To you we consecrate the Church, so that in her witness to the love of Jesus before the world, she may be a sign of harmony and an instrument of peace. To you we consecrate our world, to you we consecrate especially those countries and regions at war. ... Amen.

## 40 Days for Life From a Distance

It's not always possible to travel to your local 40 Days for Life campaign to stand vigil and pray for an end to abortion. You can, of course, join in from home with prayer and fasting, but it just doesn't feel the same.

This year, our parish priest put on an hour of adoration with Exposition once a week during 40 Days for Life, and set aside some weekday Masses for the same intention. It was a great opportunity to be able to get more involved in the 40 days of prayer, even though 'from a distance'.

I encourage anyone wishing they could be more involved but unable to attend, to approach your parish priest in future and see if he will do the same in your local parish during the 40 Days for Life campaigns.

**Ed.**

**"The more people learn about abortion,  
the more pro-life they become."**

40 Days for Life, Day 19 email

## At the Moment of Our Death

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:  
The Particular Judgment**

**1021** Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ. The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul – a destiny which can be different for some and for others.

**1022** Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through a purification or immediately, – or immediate and everlasting damnation.

At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love. (St. John of the Cross)

# The Fourth Commandment

Currently the Catechism in a Year with Fr Mike Schmitz is dealing with the Ten Commandments, the third pillar of Catechism. In explaining the fourth commandment, Fr Mike emphasized the sanctity of marriage and the family as the domestic church, and the fundamental importance of its evangelizing duty and task in society and the world.

Although I had a fairly good understanding of, "honouring your mother and father" I never realized that what the Church teaches about the fourth commandment is much broader and deeper than simply honouring and respecting one's parents. She teaches that monogamous marriage and family was authored by God and is intimately related to his designs and plans. As the basic cell and building block of civilization, the family is sacred, and as such should be honoured and respected by mankind.

The Church upholds Sacred Scripture's definition of marriage and the family, and asserts that since they are holy institutions founded by God there can be no other positions on these matters, and that anything else is a basically a deviation, a lie, a distortion and perversion of divine revelation and truth.

As Catholics, and the whole of humanity, it is absolutely necessary for us to understand this; because if the family collapses, things that are essential, that form the core, the heart and soul of our culture, society and civilization collapses. As St John Paul II so famously proclaimed, "As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live." This is so true! The current state of world bears this out.

Nations have done everything but honour, respect and treat marriage and family as holy and sacred. Both have been treated with contempt and disdain, particularly in the West by feminists, Marxists, progressive left groups and socialists governments with their failed, false anti-family, anti-life, anti-marriage laws, policies and ideologies. Not only have they rejected God, but they have ravaged his divine plan of life and love, and his Church's truths.

As a result, every sphere of life has degenerated into chaos, and plunged into a grave crisis; and the arrogant and insolent manner in which mankind has gone about in redefining marriage and the family, has brought to fulfillment the prophetic words of the psalmist (Ps. 9:15-17), "They have fallen in the pit which they made, their feet caught in the snare they laid. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands."

**Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria**

## An Appeal to Parents

**Pope John Paul II, Homily 30-11-1986, Perth, Australia**

A society that loves its children is a healthy and dynamic society. On their behalf I appeal to you, parents. Children need parents who will provide them with a stable family environment. To know what real love is they need you to be united in your love for each other and for them. From you they seek companionship and guidance. From you, first and foremost, they must learn to distinguish right from wrong and to choose good over evil. I appeal to you: do not deprive your children of their rightful human and spiritual heritage. Teach them about God, and tell them about Jesus, about his love and his Gospel. Teach them to love God and respect his commandments in the sure knowledge that they are his children above all. Teach them to pray. Teach them to be mature and responsible human beings, and honest citizens of their country. This is a stupendous privilege, a grave duty, and a wonderful task that you have received from God. By the witness of your own Christian lives, you lead your children to take their rightful place in the Church of Christ.

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"Australia, a nation of so much hope and opportunity, needs to know how to safeguard the family and the stability of married love if there is to be true peace and justice in the land." **Pope John Paul II, 30-11-1986**

# A Family Celebration

**Pope Francis, Angelus address, Solemnity of All Saints, 01-11-2018**

Today's first reading, from the Book of Revelation, speaks to us about heaven and sets before us "a great multitude", innumerable, "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Rev 7:9).

They are the saints. What do they do up there in heaven? They sing together, they joyfully praise God.

It would be beautiful to hear their song.... But we can imagine it: do you know when? During Mass, when we sing "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...". It is a hymn, the Bible says, which comes from heaven, which is sung there (cf. Is 6:3; Rev 4:8), a hymn of praise. Thus, by singing the *Sanctus*, not only do we think of the saints, but we do as they do: at that moment, in the Mass, we are united with them more than ever.

And we are united with *all* the saints: not only the most well known, from the calendar, but also those "next door", our family members and acquaintances who are now part of that great multitude. Therefore, today is a *family celebration*. The saints are close to us, indeed they are our truest brothers and sisters. They understand us, love us, know what is truly good for us, help us and await us. They are happy and want us to be happy with them in paradise.

Thus they invite us on the path of happiness, indicated by today's beautiful and well-known Gospel passage: "Blessed are the poor in spirit.... Blessed are the meek.... Blessed are the pure in heart...". But how?

The Gospel says blessed are the poor, while the world says blessed are the rich. The Gospel says blessed are the meek, while the world says blessed are the overbearing. The Gospel says blessed are the pure, while the world says blessed are the cunning and the pleasure-seekers. This way of the Beatitudes, of holiness, seems to always lead to defeat. Yet – the first reading also reminds us – the Saints hold "palm branches in their hands", which is a symbol of victory. They have prevailed, not the world. And they exhort us to choose their side, that of God who is Holy.

Let us ask ourselves which side we are on: that of heaven or that of earth? Do we live for the Lord or for ourselves, for eternal happiness or for some immediate gratification? Let us ask ourselves: do we truly want holiness? ...

It is good for us to let ourselves be spurred by the saints, who did not use half-measures here, and are 'cheering us on' from there, so that we may choose God, humility, meekness, mercy, purity, so that we may be impassioned by heaven rather than earth. ...

It is not a matter of doing extraordinary things, but of following, each day, this way that leads us to heaven, leads us to family, leads us home.

Thus today we glimpse our future and we celebrate what we were born for: we were born so as to die no more; we were born to enjoy God's happiness! The Lord encourages us and says to those setting out on the path of the Beatitudes: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven".

May the Holy Mother of God, Queen of Saints, help us to decisively follow the road to holiness; may she, who is the Gate of Heaven, introduce our departed loved ones into the heavenly family.

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## Patron Saints Quiz

By request of a reader, I will attempt putting together a little quiz on patron saints. Please send me your favourite saint and what you pray to them for. Any stories of how your devotion to that saint came about will also be welcome. Apparently there are more than 10,000 saints recognised in the Catholic Church, so your input would help to narrow things down a bit! Thanks.

Ed.

## Starting Your Day

The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Saviour's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2157

# St Charles de Foucauld

Pope Francis, General Audience 18-10-2023

And what was the "secret" of Charles de Foucauld, of his life? After living his youth being distant from God, without believing in anything other than the disordered pursuit of pleasure, he confides this to a non-believing friend, to whom, after having converted by accepting the grace of God's forgiveness in Confession, he reveals the reason of his life. He writes: "I have lost my heart to Jesus of Nazareth".

Brother Charles thus reminds us that the first step in evangelizing is to have Jesus inside one's heart; it is to "fall head over heels" for him. If this does not happen, we can hardly show it with our lives. Instead, we risk talking about ourselves, the group to which we belong, a morality or, even worse, a set of rules, but not about Jesus, his love, his mercy. ...

Advised by his confessor, he goes to the Holy Land to visit the places where the Lord lived and to walk where the Master walked. In particular, it is in Nazareth that he realises he must be formed in Christ's teachings. He experiences an intense relationship with the Lord, spends long hours reading the Gospels, and feels like His little brother. And as he gets to know Jesus, the desire to make Jesus known arises in him. It always happens like this. When one of us gets to know Jesus better, the desire to make him known, to share this treasure, arises. ...

He then decides to settle in distant regions to cry out the Gospel in silence, living in the spirit of Nazareth, in poverty and concealment. He goes to the Sahara Desert, among non-Christians, and he goes there as a friend and a brother, bearing the meekness of Jesus the Eucharist. Charles lets Jesus act silently, convinced that "Eucharistic life" evangelizes. Indeed, he believes that Christ is the first evangelizer.

And so he remains in prayer at Jesus' feet, before the Tabernacle, for a dozen hours a day, certain that the evangelizing power resides there and feeling that it is Jesus who brings him close to so many distant brothers.

And do we, I ask myself, believe in the power of the Eucharist? Does our going out to others, our service, find its beginning and its fulfilment there, in adoration?

I am convinced that we have lost the sense of adoration: we must regain it, starting with us, consecrated people, bishops, priests, religious sisters and all consecrated persons: "wasting" time before the tabernacle, regaining the sense of adoration.

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## Atheism Can Be Partly Our Fault

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**2125** Since it rejects or denies the existence of God, atheism is a sin against the virtue of religion.

The imputability of this offense can be significantly diminished in virtue of the intentions and the circumstances.

"Believers can have more than a little to do with the rise of atheism. To the extent that they are careless about their instruction in the faith, or present its teaching falsely, or even fail in their religious, moral, or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than to reveal the true nature of God and of religion." (Gaudium et Spes, n.19)

## From the Rooftops

**Saint Charles de Foucauld**

Our entire existence, our whole being must shout the Gospel from the rooftops. Our entire person must breathe Jesus... Our whole life must cry out that we belong to Jesus, reflect a Gospel way of living.

## Catholic Things

There are two simple 'Catholic things' that I've always loved: The 'feel' inside a Confessional – the dim light, the woody smell, and the old creaks. And the sound of church doors opening and closing behind me, quietly and regularly, as people come in to a church for Adoration.

Tell me yours.

**Ed.**

# A Fictional Account of History

*The following is an excerpt from the book "A MASS-KIT IN THE SADDLE BAG: The Gippsland Catholic Church and Community", by Patrick Morgan, Connor Court Publishing (p.180,181):*

The last decade of Bishop Coffey's rule was blighted by the long running Fr Speekman affair. The traditionalist parish priest of Morwell, Fr John Speekman, physically divided his congregation in church and publicly queried those approaching Communion on their religious disposition. This caused such divisions in the local parish community that Bishop Coffey eventually decided to withdraw Fr Speekman's licence to be parish priest there. Almost all the diocesan priests supported their bishop in this matter. Fr Speekman twice successfully petitioned Rome against his removal, but Bishop Coffey appealed the decision and was eventually successful. But these appeals took up almost a decade, with an irretrievable breakdown of the relationship, whatever the outcome. As a result the Australian hierarchy intervened and transferred Fr Speekman to the conservative Wagga diocese to end the impasse. Bishop Coffey was upset by this outcome as the matter had been taken out of his hands.

He was similarly disappointed in another matter. He had a statement read out from the pulpit in all churches at Sunday Mass that he had terminated the licence of a priest who was in a relationship with a 'mature woman'. Bishop Coffey employed this terminology to make it clear this was not a case of paedophilia. To Coffey's shock and annoyance this priest returned to his European country of origin where he was permitted by the local archbishop to continue his ministry as a priest. The long tussle with Fr Speekman and church authorities may have played a part in gradually undermining Bishop Coffey's health. He retired in 2008 after nearly two decades in office to live in a house at Paynesville on the Gippsland lakes. The title of Bishop Emeritus was conferred on him, a public sign of the church's support for him after the disappointments of his last years. He later moved into a retirement home near Bairnsdale, suffering a stroke in November 2014, and dying a few days later aged eighty one. He is buried in the grounds of his cathedral at Sale. Bishop Coffey's abilities, career and personal qualities were outstanding.

## Don't be Fooled!

The blurb on the back of Patrick Morgan's latest book sounds like he's an accomplished author who writes historical accounts ("Patrick Morgan has published more than a dozen books, including a two-volume history of the Melbourne Catholic archdiocese, and book length assessments of Gippsland history and literature."). But don't be fooled. I have only read a page of his book (see above) and it's enough to make me ill. I am very, very familiar with the whole process of Fr John Speekman's removal as Parish Priest of Morwell Catholic Parish. I lived through it first-hand alongside Fr Speekman with my husband who was his Pastoral Associate at the time. I can assure you that there were no accusations that Fr Speekman "physically divided his congregation in church and publicly queried those approaching Communion on their religious disposition". That is just a ridiculous assertion to make. All he sought to do was teach what the Church teaches. Some school staff objected to this and worked against him. Details are in past issues of Into the Deep over the years involved (2003-2011) – they are not secret.

There is so much more in those two paragraphs that contradicts the facts, it's hard to know which to deal with here. The diocesan priests were not involved in the first removal – their support was only sought by the bishop years later. The "Australian hierarchy" did not "intervene and transfer Fr Speekman" to Wagga diocese – he simply requested a move there well after the case was closed (he moved to Wagga diocese in 2014, long after Bishop Coffey's retirement in 2008). The matter was never "taken out of Bishop Coffey's hands" – at every stage he had the power to end the process instantly by treating Fr Speekman fairly. The title Bishop Emeritus is given to all retired diocesan bishops – to suggest that the title was given to Bishop Coffey as "a public sign of the church's support for him after the disappointments of his last years" is deceiving. Talk of a bishop's "career" is inappropriate from a Catholic perspective. I could go on. If there is so much wrong in these two paragraphs of the book, how can we trust anything else? So disappointing that this is passed off as history. Yet another cross for Fr Speekman to bear.

**Ed.**



# Don't Let the Wound Get in the Way of Healing

Fr Mike Schmitz, in *Catechism in a Year*, Day 295 – The Wound of Abortion

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2272:** Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*," (can. 1398) "by the very commission of the offense," (can. 1314) and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

Why does the Church attach this canonical penalty to abortion, that's not attached to necessarily every sin? The reason why, it says here: "The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society." We recognise that this ... scourge of abortion, the reality of the evil of abortion, has destroyed millions of lives, and ... I would maintain ... it's transformed our culture. We have become a culture of death ... I mean, even those who survive, it's wounded. ...

We always say abortion has two victims: there's the one who's dead and the one who's wounded – the child itself and the mom – but also abortion has other victims, including society at large has been wounded because of the reality of abortion. Because of that ... that's one of the reasons why the Church has attached this canonical penalty. Again, not to limit the scope of God's mercy, but simply highlight the reality of the injurious nature of this sin.

Now, keep this in mind ... please, if this is part of your story, please go to Confession. There have been so many people who've been part of the Bible-in-a-Year story, that community, [and] there are so many people here in this Catechism-in-a-Year, who have written to me and they've said, this sin, the sin of abortion, is something I've withheld from Confession for years, [or] this sin is the thing that kept me from Confession for years. But they've said – I've gone, and my life is so transformed.

So if this is you right now, and you're hearing this, ... please know, you are not alone. This community – Bible-in-a-Year, Catechism-in-a-Year – has people who have known this, have been convicted by the need to go to Confession, have done it, and have experienced the most incredible freedom, the most incredible peace, the most incredible welcome back, the most incredible reconciliation, the most incredible love.

Because again, we know what mercy is, right? **Mercy is the love that we need the most, but we deserve the least.** And so, if this is part of your story, please **do not let the wound get in the way of the healing. Don't let the sin get in the way of God's love for you.** God loves you so much. We need to declare this. We need to declare the truth of the sin, but we also need to declare the truth of God's love for you. So please keep that in mind. Never forget it. And actually not just 'don't forget it' – please act on it. If you or someone you love, someone you know, is in this place of woundedness ... know that you're invited this day today to go to Confession, ... knowing that you can have confidence in the Lord's love for you, the Lord's mercy for you, that he wants to ... bring you home. He wants to heal that wound.

**You've been wounded by this. You don't have to stay wounded.** And I just invite all of us – if this is part of your story, please take that step. And if this is not part of your story, please pray for each other, pray for every person in this community who hears these words right now and is just hesitant and is fearful ... and just says but is it true? Is it true that I could come back home, is it true that I could go to Confession within the next couple days, within this week, and that I would be met with mercy, I'd be met with love? Is it true that I could actually be healed? Please pray for each other, please, because we know that without God's grace none of us will move.

AscensionPress.com [Transcribed from the podcast - Ed.]

# Entrance into Everlasting Life

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

**1020** The Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus views it as a step towards him and an entrance into everlasting life. When the Church for the last time speaks Christ's words of pardon and absolution over the dying Christian, seals him for the last time with a strengthening anointing, and gives him Christ in viaticum as nourishment for the journey, she speaks with gentle assurance:

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world  
in the name of God the almighty Father, who created you,  
in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for you,  
in the name of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out upon you.

Go forth, faithful Christian!

May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion,  
with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with Joseph, and all the angels and saints....

May you return to [your Creator] who formed you from the dust of the earth.

May holy Mary, the angels, and all the saints come to meet you as you go forth from this life....

May you see your Redeemer face to face. (Prayer of Commendation)

“Not every day of our lives is serene and unclouded,  
but let us never forget the words of the Lord Jesus to his friends before  
his Passion: “In the world you will have tribulations, but be courageous:  
I have conquered the world!””

**Pope Francis, in his Message for World Mission Day 2023**

## Catholic Stats

From the latest edition of the “Church’s Book of Statistics”, as at 31 December 2021 (compared to the previous year ending 31 December 2020)

**World Population:** 7,785,769,000 (increase of 118,633,000)

**Catholic Population:** 1,375,852,000 (increase of 16,240,000)

**World percentage of Catholics:** 17.67% (decrease of 0.06%)

**Catholics per priest in the world:** 3,373 (increase of 59)

**Bishops in the world:** 5,340 (decrease of 23)

**Priests in the world:** 407,872 (decrease of 2,347)

**Men religious in the world:** 49, 774 (decrease of 795)

**Women religious in the world:** 608,958 (decrease of 10,588)

**Permanent Deacons in the world:** 49,176 (increase of 541)

**Seminarians in the world:** 109,895 (decreased 1,960)

**Oceania population:** 42,347,000 (increase of 184,000)

**Oceania Catholics:** 10,985,000 (increase of 55,000)

*Catholics constitute 25.94% of the population of Oceania (increase of 0.02%).*

*Oceania constitutes 0.8% of the world’s Catholic population.*

Fides News Agency, 22-10-2023

# Begin Again

Pope Francis, Angelus address 04-12-2022

Today, the Second Sunday of Advent, the Gospel for the Liturgy presents the figure of John the Baptist. ... And he was saying this: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" ...

These Pharisees and Sadducees believed they had it all together and, faced with the Baptist's blunt appeal, justified themselves, saying: "We have Abraham as our father". Thus, due to duplicity and presumption, they did not welcome the moment of grace, the opportunity to begin a new life. They were closed in the presumption of being right.

So, John tells them, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance!". This is a cry of love, like the cry of a father who sees his son ruining himself and says to him, "Don't throw your life away!".

In essence, dear brothers and sisters, hypocrisy is the greatest danger because it can even ruin the most sacred realities. Hypocrisy is a serious danger. This is why the Baptist – as Jesus would be later – is harsh with hypocrites. ... And why do the Baptist as well as Jesus do this? To shake them up. Instead, those who sensed they were sinners went "out to him [John], and they were baptized by him, confessing their sins".

... Each of us needs to confess our own sins, our own failings, our own hypocrisy. It requires getting off the pedestal and being immersed in the water of repentance. ...

Are we not at times a bit like those Pharisees? Perhaps we look at others from top to bottom, thinking that we are better than them, that we have our lives under control, that we don't need God, or the Church, or our brothers or sisters on a daily basis. We forget that only in one case is it legitimate to look down on someone else: when it is necessary to help them get up. ...

Advent is a moment of grace to take off our masks – every one of us has them – and line up with those who are humble, to be liberated from the presumption of the belief of being self-sufficient, to go to confess our sins, the hidden ones, and to welcome God's pardon, to ask forgiveness from those whom we have offended. This is how to begin a new life. There is only one way, the way of humility – to be purified from the sense of superiority, from formalism and hypocrisy, to see ourselves, along with our brothers and sisters, as sinners, and to see Jesus as the Saviour who comes for us, not for the others, for us, just as we are, with our poverty, misery and failings, above all with our need to be raised up, forgiven and saved.

And let us remember one thing: with Jesus, there is always the possibility of beginning again. It's never too late. There is always the possibility to begin again. Be courageous. He is near to us and this is the time of conversion. Everyone might think: "I have this situation inside, this problem that I am ashamed of". But Jesus is next to you. Begin again. There is always the possibility of taking a step forward. He is waiting for us and never gets tired of us. He never gets tired! And we are annoying, but he never gets tired!

Let us listen to John the Baptist's appeal to return to God. And let us not let this Advent go by like days on the calendar because this is a moment of grace, a grace for us too, here and now!

Vatican.va

## Mass Offerings

### Code of Canon Law

**Can. 945 §1.** In accord with the approved practice of the Church, any priest celebrating or concelebrating is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention.

§2. It is recommended earnestly to priests that they celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy, even if they have not received an offering.

**Can. 946** The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works.

**Can. 952 §1.** It is for the provincial council or a meeting of the bishops of the province to define by decree for the entire province the offering to be given ... §2. Where there is no such decree, the custom in force in the diocese is to be observed.

## Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland, Victoria

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday after 9.10am Mass
Heyfield	1 <sup>st</sup> Fridays 10am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Mass 10am) – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (Mass 10am) – 11am
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Cranbourne	Fri & Sat in church: (9.30 Mass) – 11am
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> month, Dec. on)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Maffra	Wednesday (5pm Mass) – 6pm
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday 10am-11am (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Sale	Friday 10am - 11am Mass
Trafalgar	Wed & 1st Sat: (9.30am Mass) – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> month, Jan. on)
Wonthaggi	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (9.30am Mass) – 10.30am

## United to Jesus

### Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Day 2023

In order to bear fruit, we must remain united to Jesus.

This union is achieved through daily prayer, particularly in Eucharistic adoration, as we remain in silence in the presence of the Lord, who remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament.

By lovingly cultivating this communion with Christ, the missionary disciple can become a mystic in action.

May our hearts always yearn for the company of Jesus, echoing the ardent plea of the two disciples of Emmaus, especially in the evening hours: "Stay with us, Lord!" ...

So let us set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit.

Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion.

Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity.

Vatican.va

## Contact *Into the Deep*

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**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**