

# ***Into the Deep***

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## **The Favourable Time**

**Pope Francis, Ash Wednesday homily 2023**

"Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" 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". Return to what is essential: it is the Lord.

Vatican.va

## **The Mercy of God**

**Pope Francis, Homily at celebration of Reconciliation, 17-03-2023**

Brothers and sisters, today let each of us make an examination of conscience, because the Pharisee and the tax collector both dwell deep within us. Let us not hide behind the hypocrisy of appearances, but entrust to the Lord's mercy our darkness, our mistakes. Let us think about our wretchedness, our mistakes, even those that we feel unable to share because of shame, which is alright, but with God they must show themselves. When we go to confession, we stand "far off", at the back, like the tax collector, in order to acknowledge the distance between God's dream for our lives and the reality of who we are each day: poor sinners. At that moment, the Lord draws near to us; he bridges the distance and sets us back on our feet. At that moment, when we realize that we are naked, he clothes us with the festal garment. That is, and that must be, the meaning of the sacrament of Reconciliation: a festal encounter that heals the heart and leaves us with inner peace. Not a human tribunal to approach with dread, but a divine embrace in which to find consolation. ...

In this season of Lent, with contrite hearts let us quietly say, like the tax collector, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!". God, when I forget you or I neglect you, when I prefer my words and those of the world to your own word, when I presume to be righteous and look down on others, when I gossip about others, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner!* When I care nothing for those all around me, when I'm indifferent to the poor and the suffering, the weak and the outcast, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner!* For my sins against life, for my bad example that mars the lovely face of Mother Church, for my sins against creation, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner!* For my falsehoods, my duplicity, my lack of honesty and integrity, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner!* For my hidden sins, which no one knows, for the ways in which I have unconsciously wronged others, and for the good I could have done and yet failed to do, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner!* ...

And in this act of repentance and trust, let us open our hearts to the joy of an even greater gift: the mercy of God.

Vatican.va

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

# Anyone for Pancakes?

From an article by Fr. William Saunders, published on [CatholicCulture.org](http://CatholicCulture.org)

Shrove Tuesday is the last day of what traditionally was called "Shrovetide," the week preceding the beginning of Lent. The word itself, *Shrovetide*, is the English equivalent for "Carnival," which is derived from the Latin words *carne[m] levare*, meaning "to take away the flesh." (Note that in Germany, this period is called "Fasching," and in parts of the United States, particularly Louisiana, "Mardi Gras.") While this was seen as the last chance for merriment, and, unfortunately in some places, has resulted in excessive pleasure, Shrovetide was the time to cast off things of the flesh and to prepare spiritually for Lent.

Actually, the English term provides the best meaning for this period. "To shrive" meant to hear confessions. In the Anglo-Saxon "Ecclesiastical Institutes," recorded by Theodulphus and translated by Abbot Aelfric about AD 1000, Shrovetide was described as follows: "In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him as he then may hear by his deeds what he is to do in the way of penance." ...

While this week of Shrovetide condoned the partaking of pleasures from which a person would abstain during Lent, Shrove Tuesday had a special significance in England. Pancakes were prepared and enjoyed, because in so doing a family depleted their eggs, milk, butter, and fat which were part of the Lenten fast. At this time, some areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish. For example, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604), writing to St. Augustine of Canterbury, issued the following rule: "We abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs." These were the fasting rules governing the Church in England; hence, the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. ...

One last point: When the "carnival" or "mardi gras" became for some people a debauched party, the Church tried to restore the penitential nature of this time. In 1748, Pope Benedict XIV instituted the "Forty Hours of Carnival," whereby prayers were offered and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in churches during the three days preceding Ash Wednesday.

[CatholicCulture.org](http://CatholicCulture.org)

**Fat Tuesday:** Mardi Gras, (French: Fat Tuesday) festive day celebrated in France on Shrove Tuesday (the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday), which marks the close of the pre-Lenten season. The French name Mardi Gras means Fat Tuesday, from the custom of using all the fats in the home before Lent in preparation for fasting and abstinence.

[Britannica.com](http://Britannica.com)

## To Be Loved Back

Our friends have two little boys, now 5 and 3 years old. We have loved them since before they were born, and have been a regular part of their lives as they've been growing up. They are an absolute delight, and they enrich our lives no end. We love spending time together, and their affection for us is clear. But it struck home when their mother said after a recent visit, "It's obvious how much they love you both when you arrive." It warmed my heart, and I was reminded of how precious it is to be loved by the children you love. To be loved back. And I thought of how God our Father must feel the same – all he wants is for us to love him back. All we have to do is love him back.

Ed.

## Let Nothing Paralyze You

**Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, 20-08-2011**

Dear friends, may no adversity paralyze you. Be afraid neither of the world, nor of the future, nor of your weakness. The Lord has allowed you to live in this moment of history so that, by your faith, his name will continue to resound throughout the world.

# Lent is a Time of Truth

**Pope Francis, Ash Wednesday homily 2023**

The rite of the imposition of ashes...exhorts us to do two things: *to return to the truth about ourselves* and *to return to God and to our brothers and sisters*.

First, *to return to the truth about ourselves*. The ashes remind us who we are and whence we come. They bring us back to the essential truth of our lives: the Lord alone is God and we are the work of his hands. That is the truth of who we are. We *have* life, whereas God *is* life. He is the Creator, while we are the fragile clay fashioned by his hands. We come from the earth and we need heaven; we need him. With God, we will rise from our ashes, but without him, we are dust. As we humbly bow our heads to receive the ashes, we are reminded of this truth: we are the Lord's; we belong to him. ...

Lent is *a time of truth*, a time to drop the masks we put on each day to appear perfect in the eyes of the world. It is a time, as Jesus said in the Gospel, to reject lies and hypocrisy: not those of others, but of ourselves: We look them in the eye and resist them.

Yet there is a second step: the ashes invite us also to *return to God and to our brothers and sisters*. Once we return to the truth about ourselves and remind ourselves that we are not self-sufficient, we realize that we exist only through relationships: our primordial relationship with the Lord and our vital relationships with others. ...

Lent, then, is a season of grace when we can rebuild our relationship with God and with others, opening our hearts in the silence of prayer and emerging from the fortress of our self-sufficiency. Lent is the favourable time when we can break the chains of our individualism and isolation, and rediscover, through encounter and listening, our companions along the journey of each day. And to learn once more to love them as brothers and sisters.

How can we do this? To make this journey, to return to the truth about ourselves and to return to God and to others, we are urged to take three great paths: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. These are the traditional ways, and there is no need for novelty. Jesus said it clearly: almsgiving, prayer and fasting.

It is not about mere external rites, these must be actions expressing the renewal of our hearts. Almsgiving is not a hasty gesture performed to ease our conscience, to compensate for our interior imbalance; rather, it is a way of touching the sufferings of the poor with our own hands and heart. Prayer is not a ritual, but a truthful and loving dialogue with the Father. Fasting is not a quaint devotion, but a powerful gesture to remind ourselves what truly matters and what is merely ephemeral. ... Let us remember this: in our personal life, as in the life of the Church, outward displays, human judgments and the world's approval count for nothing; the only thing that truly matters is the truth and love that God himself sees. ...

Brothers and sisters, let us not neglect the grace of this holy season, but fix our gaze on the cross and set out, responding generously to the powerful promptings of Lent. At the end of the journey, we will encounter with greater joy the Lord of life, we will meet him, who alone can raise us up from our ashes.

Vatican.va

## Keep the Name of Jesus Alive

**Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent sermon 2023**

I have followed many high-level debates on the Internet about the existence of God: almost never in them was the name of Jesus Christ mentioned. As if he didn't belong in a discussion about God! This must be our main commitment in the effort for evangelization. The world and its media do everything they can (and unfortunately they succeed!) to keep the name of Christ separate, or silenced, in all their discussions on the Church. We must do everything we can to keep him obstinately present. Not to hide behind it and remain silent about our failures, but because it is "the light of the nations", the "name that is above every other name", "the cornerstone" of the world and of the history.

Cantalamessa.org

# May It Touch Many Lives

A friend and consecrated member of *The Sons and Daughters of God* gifted me Fr John Speekman's delightful book, "*Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime in the Life of a Catholic Priest*" which I have just read in one sitting today. I loved his "moving house" collection of valuables! There is so much truth in all he recounted, and much to apply to my living the faith more fruitfully. Fr Speekman's meditation on St John the Baptist is a portrait of himself in his ministry. My husband, Bill, and I met Fr Speekman at a presentation in Glenrowan some years ago at which Eamonn Keane spoke. We had been following his story in those turbulent years when the Diocese of Sale was making him a Saint! I also met him witnessing at the abortion clinic in Albury before its closure, thanks be to God! May his book touch many lives.

**Ida Day, Devenish, Victoria**

*[See p.8 of this issue of ITD for the Meditation on the Feast of St John the Baptist from the book. Ed.]*

## Proclaim Him

**Pope Francis, General Audience 13-12-2023**

Today we will conclude the series dedicated to apostolic zeal, in which we have allowed the Word of God to inspire us, to help nurture a passion for the proclamation of the Gospel. And this involves every Christian. Let us consider the fact that in Baptism, the celebrant, touching the ears and the lips of the baptized, says: "May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf hear and the mute speak, grant that you may soon receive his word and profess the faith". ...

Brothers, sisters, let us all feel called, as baptized people, to witness and proclaim Jesus. And let us ask for the grace, as Church, to bring about a pastoral and missionary conversion. On the banks of the Sea of Galilee, the Lord asked Peter if he loved him and then asked him to tend his sheep. Let us too ask ourselves. Let each one of us ask ourselves this question, let us ask ourselves: Do I truly love the Lord to the point of wanting to proclaim him? Do I want to become his witness or am I content to be his disciple? Do I take to heart the people I meet, bringing them to Jesus in prayer? Do I want to do something so that the joy of the Gospel, which has transformed my life, may make their lives more beautiful? Let us think about this, let us think about these questions and go forward with our witness.

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## Pray as a Family

**Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 28-12-2011**

Dear friends, ... the Holy Family is the icon of the domestic Church, called to pray together. The family is the domestic Church and must be the first school of prayer. It is in the family that children, from the tenderest age, can learn to perceive the meaning of God, also thanks to the teaching and example of their parents: to live in an atmosphere marked by God's presence. An authentically Christian education cannot dispense with the experience of prayer. If one does not learn how to pray in the family it will later be difficult to bridge this gap. And so I would like to address to you the invitation to pray together as a family at the school of the Holy Family of Nazareth and thereby really to become of one heart and soul, a true family.

Vatican.va

## Silence

**Pope Paul VI, Nazareth, 05-01-1964**

At the school of the Holy Family we understand why we must maintain a spiritual discipline, if we wish to follow the teaching of the Gospel and become disciples of Christ.

In the first place it teaches us silence. Oh! If only esteem for silence, a wonderful and indispensable spiritual atmosphere, could be reborn within us! Whereas we are deafened by the din, the noise and discordant voices in the frenetic, turbulent life of our time.

O silence of Nazareth! Teach us to be steadfast in good thoughts, attentive to our inner life, ready to hear God's hidden inspiration clearly and the exhortations of true teachers.

Quoted by Pope Benedict XVI, 28-12-2011

# Stop Being Deaf to the Word of God

Pope Francis, Homily on Sunday of the Word of God, 21-01-2024

We have just heard that Jesus said to them: "Come, follow me"... Immediately they left their nets and followed him" (Mk 1:17-18). The word of God has immense power, as we heard in the first reading: "The word of God came to Jonah, saying: 'Get up, go to Nineveh... and preach to them'... So Jonah set out and went... according to the word of the Lord" (Jon 3:1-3). The word of God unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit, a power that draws people to God, like those young fishermen who were struck by Jesus' words, and sends others, like Jonah, towards those distant from the Lord. The word *draws us to God and sends us to others*. ... It does not leave us self-absorbed, but expands hearts, changes courses, overturns habits, opens up new scenarios and discloses unthought-of horizons.

Brothers and sisters, that is what the word of God wants to do in each of us. As with the first disciples who, upon hearing the words of Jesus, left their nets and set out on a stupendous adventure, so too, on the shores of our life, beside the boats of our families and the nets of our daily occupations, that word *makes us hear the call* of Jesus. It calls us to set out with him for the sake of others. The word *makes us missionaries*, God's messengers and witnesses to a world drowning in words, yet thirsting for the very word it so often ignores. The Church lives from this dynamic: called by Christ and drawn to him, she is sent into the world to bear witness to him. This is the dynamic within the Church.

We cannot do without God's word and its quiet and unassuming power that, as if in a personal dialogue, touches the heart, impresses itself on the soul and renews it with the peace of Jesus, which makes us, in turn, concerned for others. If we look at the friends of God, the witnesses to the Gospel throughout history and the saints, we see that the word was decisive for each of them. We think of the first monk, Saint Anthony, who, struck by a passage of the Gospel while at Mass, left everything for the Lord. We think of Saint Augustine, whose life took a decisive turn when God's word brought healing to his heart. We think of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, who discovered her vocation by reading the letters of Saint Paul. And we think too of the saint whose name I bear, Francis of Assisi, who, after praying, read in the Gospel that Jesus sent his disciples to preach and exclaimed: "That is what I want; that is what I ask, that is what I desire to do with all my heart!". Their lives were changed by the word of life, by the word of the Lord.

But I wonder: how is it that, for many of us, the same thing does not happen? We hear the word of God many times, yet it enters into one ear and goes out the other: why? Perhaps because, as those witnesses make clear, we need to stop being "deaf" to God's word. This is a risk for all of us: overwhelmed by a barrage of words, we let the word of God glide by us: we hear it, yet we fail to listen to it; we listen to it, yet we don't keep it; we keep it, yet we don't let it provoke us to change. More than anything, we read it but we don't pray with it, whereas "prayer ought to accompany the reading of sacred Scripture, so that it can become a dialogue between God and the reader" (Dei Verbum, 25). Let us not forget the two fundamental aspects of Christian prayer: listening to the word and worshiping the Lord. Let us make room for the prayerful reading of Jesus' words. Then we will have the same experience as those first disciples. ...

Brothers and sisters, may the Sunday of the Word of God help us to return with joy to the sources of our faith, which is born of listening to Jesus, the living Word of God. May it help us, barraged by words *about* the Church, to rediscover the word of life that resounds *in* the Church! If not, we end up talking more about ourselves than about him, and so often we concentrate on our own thoughts and problems rather than on Christ and his word. Let us return to the sources, in order to offer to the world the living water for which it yearns and does not find, and while society and social media reflect the violence of words, let us draw closer to, and cultivate, the quiet word of God that brings salvation, that is gentle, that does not make a loud noise and that enters into our hearts.

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*"Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner."*

# Advice for Priests: Let Jesus Be Enough

Message sent on behalf of the Holy Father Francis by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin for the meeting of Seminarians of France in Paris, 01-12-2023

In order to live this demanding, and sometimes harsh, priestly perfection, and face the challenges and temptations you will encounter along the way, there is only one solution, dear seminarians: nurture a strong, living and authentic personal relationship with Jesus. Love Jesus more than anything else, let his love be enough for you, and you will emerge victorious from every crisis and every difficulty.

For if Jesus is enough for me, I have no need of great consolations in ministry, or of great pastoral success, or of feeling at the centre of extensive relational networks; if Jesus is enough for me, I have no need of disordered affections, or of notoriety, or of having great responsibilities, or of pursuing a career, or of shining in the eyes of the world, or of being better than others; if Jesus is enough for me, I have no need of great material possessions, or of enjoying the seductions of the world, or of security for my future.

If, on the other hand, I succumb to any of these temptations or weaknesses, it is because Jesus is not enough for me and that I lack love.

So, dear seminarians, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1Cor 1:3-9). Your first concern should always be to respond to this call, and to strengthen your union with the One who deigns to make you his friend (cf. Jn 15:15). He is faithful and will be your greatest joy.

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## 2024 Year of Prayer

Pope Francis, after the Angelus 21-01-2024

The coming months will lead us to the opening of the Holy Door, with which we will begin the Jubilee. I ask you to intensify your prayer to prepare us to live well this event of grace, and to experience the strength of God's hope. Therefore, today we begin the *Year of Prayer*, that is, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and in the world.

## Family Ties

Did you know?

- St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa were brothers?
- St Clare of Assisi had a sister, St Agnes of Assisi?
- St Catherine of Sienna was the youngest of 25 children?

From *Saintly Solutions to Life's Common Problems*, by Fr Joseph Esper (p.121-124)

## Blessed is the Fruit of Your Womb

Mary, the Mother of God, appeared to three young children at Fatima in 1917. When the children asked the Lady about her name she replied, *I am Our Lady of the Rosary*. The Rosary is intended for regular repetitive use and has a long history of support from Our Lady, particularly at troubled times. The Rosary contains two main prayers; the Lord's prayer and the Hail Mary. The first verse of the Hail Mary ends with the declaration 'Blessed is fruit of your womb, Jesus'.

So Mary was a normal woman leading a normal life. However, her womb contained an ovum that would provide the human nature to be assumed by Jesus. Indeed, as soon as Mary gave her consent the Holy Spirit fertilized this cell that had been provided for Jesus: and the Virgin Mary became the Mother of God.

In the beginning, the only people created directly by God were Adam and Eve. God subsequently used the fruit of the womb to continue his process of creating people. In short, the family has been very much a part of God's plan for creation from the very beginning. The Rosary is a firm reminder that despite Satan's subsequent malicious and ongoing efforts to replace God, God also used the fruit of the womb to enable our redemption.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

# The Fourth Pillar - Christian Prayer

Over the year with Fr Mike Schmitz in Catechism in a Year, we looked at how the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to the faith as *believed* (Creed), *celebrated* (Liturgy) and *lived* (Ten Commandments). The last pillar is the Our Father or Lord's Prayer, which the Catechism deals with as the faith *prayed*, under the heading of Christian Prayer.

In this section, I learned that Jesus Christ is the model and master of the whole Church's prayer and worship. And the prayer which he commanded and taught his disciples to say, and which he entrusted to his Church, is, like the other three pillars, essentially rooted in liturgical prayer, especially Sunday Mass (CCC 2768).

The only begotten Son, who through Baptism made it possible for us to become God's adopted children and so be incorporated into his Mystical Body the Church, prays for us, in us and is prayed to by us (CCC 2740). He prays for us as our High Priest; he prays in us as our Head; and is prayed to by us as our God, the second person of the Trinity.

Most importantly, the one who is our prayer and worship, brings about, fulfills and realizes all the petitions in the very prayer he taught us, during the Mass (CCC 2804-2806). Through it we are bound to the Father, configured to the Son and made holy by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why Sunday Mass is truly a meeting of God's children with the Father in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, by virtue of our Baptism, we are expected and obliged to pray the Lord's Prayer unceasingly. More importantly however, by this very Baptism, we have also pledged ourselves to a lifelong, ongoing process of conversion. Participating in Fr Mike's Catechism in a Year podcasts has made this real for me, and has been a great take-away message for me!

His constant refrain, that going through the Catechism is "not just about information transfer, but transformation" has made me conscious that listening to every one of his podcasts has been an 'essential moment' for me in the Church's evangelising mission and process. I became aware that I was engaging in a process of conversion, self-evangelization; that it's not just a process of acquiring knowledge and learning, but an encounter through which we are converted to Jesus Christ, and grow deeper in communion and intimacy with him.

Finally, and should I say sadly, my wife and I completed Fr Mike's the Catechism in a Year. Already I miss it! Doing first Bible in a Year and then Catechism in a Year was like doing a daily examination of conscience and consciousness. It was a graceful time to consider and reflect on how and when the mystery of Christ was and is functional and operative in my day.

So, to continue this and the ongoing process of self-evangelisation, I have decided to join my wife this Lent to start Fr Mike's Bible in a Year again. So that God's eternal Word, who became flesh and dwells among us, can continue to work in, on and through me, and transform me as an adopted son.

**Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria**

## Gospel Summary

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

**2761** The Lord's Prayer "is truly the summary of the whole gospel." (Tertullian)

"Since the Lord ... after handing over the practice of prayer, said elsewhere, 'Ask and you will receive,' and since everyone has petitions which are peculiar to his circumstances, the regular and appropriate prayer [the Lord's Prayer] is said first, as the foundation of further desires." (Tertullian)

## Perfect Prayer

"Run through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], and I do not think that you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer." – **St Augustine**

"The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers ... In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired." – **St Thomas Aquinas**

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2762, 2763)

# A Meditation on the Feast of St John the Baptist

A prophet is in the first place one who is close to God – he lives on the mountain-top of the inner life.

He is one who can see in the dark – whose eyes pierce the obscurity created by facts and public opinion.

A prophet is that rare man who can say of himself: *I am not confused*.

Nor can a prophet be misled or disturbed or awed by loud voices or appearances because he has the gift which allows him to identify and keep his eyes on the truth of every matter.

A man who can see where the road of history is taking humanity – a man who can see the ultimate consequences of the things we begin to do.

A prophet is a man inspired – that is, he sees as God sees – from within – from above – clearly.

A prophet is always confronting because he speaks truths that are hidden – which take us by surprise – which catch us off guard – which go against the popular and the common. Therefore we are tempted to dismiss him.

His words are confronting because they are always about the God we forget or about us, whom we think we know.

His words claim to come from God – so in dismissing a true prophet we are rejecting God and his truth – his truthful word.

A prophet says precisely what we do not wish to hear.

He spoils our fun – he warns us of consequences we deny – he tells us we are wrong.

A prophet speaks of disaster because he speaks of sin – a disaster we bring on ourselves from within – it is our disaster – contained within ourselves – approaching from afar – made history in our actions.

A prophet doesn't fit in to our world view – just like the truth – or the disaster he warns of. Therefore a prophet is never welcome, never invited to the party.

He is the future come to meet us – *our* future – the one we are creating. He tells us the meaning of what we do today – and the future it will give birth to.

A prophet will not go away – ever – just like the truth.

He will not desist – he cannot be bought off – he must be killed – but only to make way for the next prophet.

Scorn, ridicule, contempt, rejection are the daily food of the prophet.

A man driven – who refuses to subscribe to the consensus, the popular, the 'chummy' atmosphere.

A prophet is the arch-enemy of the liar – even should the liar be an entire nation – a whole planet – he still overturns us.

The prophet is a sentry who never sleeps. He warns us about the enemy who approaches from afar – the one who emerges from within us – who is acting in our actions – fuelled by the power of our disordered hearts.

The prophet is therefore always warning us about ourselves who are so ready to displease God – to find our own way.

A prophet cares for us and about us – he loves us.

He has responsibility for us because he is one of us. He takes us more seriously than we take ourselves.

He is our shepherd – the shepherd of God's flock.

A prophet is powerful because he is 'under orders' – 'sent' – he has to answer to God for his actions and words – which he takes from God.

A prophet is a man trapped. If he does not speak the word which turns us against him – the word itself will turn on him.

He is trapped by truth as we are trapped by – error.

A prophet does what he calls us to do. He is close to God and calls us to be close to God – to listen and obey.

A prophet calls us to be reconciled to God – and to one another.

**From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speakman (p.58-61)**



# Don't Dialogue with the Devil

Pope Francis, General Audience 27-12-2023

As we know, Adam and Eve do not manage to resist the temptation of the serpent. The idea of a God who is not so good, who wanted to keep them in subjection, who wanted to keep them in his submission, insinuated itself into their minds: hence the collapse of everything.

With these accounts, the Bible explains to us that evil does not begin in man in a clamorous way, when an act is already manifest, but the evil begins much earlier, *when one begins to fantasize about it*, to nurse it in the imagination, thoughts, and ends up being ensnared by its enticements. The murder of Abel did not begin with a thrown stone, but with the grudge that Cain wickedly held, turning it into a monster within him. In this case too, God's recommendations are worthless.

*One must never dialogue, brothers and sisters, with the devil.* Never! You should never argue. Jesus never dialogued with the devil; He cast him out. And when in the wilderness, [with] the temptations, He did not respond with dialogue; He simply responded with the words of Holy Scripture, with the Word of God.

Be careful: the devil is a seducer. Never dialogue with him, because he is smarter than all of us and he will make us pay for it. When temptation comes, never dialogue. Close the door, close the window, close your heart. And so, we defend ourselves against this seduction, because the devil is astute, intelligent. He tried to tempt Jesus with quotes from the Bible! He was a great theologian there. With the devil you do not dialogue. Do you understand this? Be careful. We must not converse with the devil, and we must not entertain ourselves with temptation. There is no dialogue. Temptation comes, we close the door. We guard our heart. ...

This is the recommendation – guard the heart – that we find in various fathers, saints: guard the heart. ... And we must ask for this grace of learning to guard the heart. It is a form of wisdom, how to guard the heart. May the Lord help us [in] this work.

Vatican.va

## Australia Day Award to Abortion Activists

Prominent pro-life activist Dr Joanna Howe has alerted us to the conferring of an Order of Australia Medal to two radical abortion activists.

"I am horrified to report that an Order of Australia Medal has just been awarded to two radical abortion activists for their work in furthering abortion" Dr Howe reports. "Barbara Baird and Brigid Coombe have campaigned for decades to introduce abortion up to birth and without restriction in Australia. As co-founders of the extremist group, the South Australian Abortion Action Coalition, they are even against laws which would give medical care to newborns who survive an abortion. We should not give Australia's highest honours to abortion extremists ... Please sign my petition to revoke Barbara Baird and Brigid Coombe of their award: [www.drjoannahowe.com/revokeaward](http://www.drjoannahowe.com/revokeaward).

"It is shocking to see Baird and Coombe honoured with an Order of Australia Day medal for their work in advocating for the deaths of Australian children. Now is the time to speak up and demand that the Order of Australia Council revoke the awards given to Baird and Coombe. We must hold the Order of Australia Council and Baird and Coombe to account for this national disgrace.

"Every abortion kills an innocent human being and Baird and Coombe's radical activism has been instrumental in the deaths of over an estimated 1 million Australian children over two decades. This should not be celebrated or honoured. It should be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

We are grateful for Dr Howe's vigilance and efforts to rectify this injustice. We can also express our opposition to these awards by emailing [honours@gg.gov.au](mailto:honours@gg.gov.au) or writing to: The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat, Government House, Canberra ACT 2600

Denise M Cameron, for Pro-Life Victoria Inc.

# Say One Thing and Do Another

**A sermon of the second century**

*My name is constantly blasphemed by unbelievers, says the Lord. Woe to the man who causes my name to be blasphemed.*

Why is the Lord's name blasphemed? Because we say one thing and do another. When they hear the words of God on our lips, unbelievers are amazed at their beauty and power, but when they see that those words have no effect in our lives, their admiration turns to scorn, and they dismiss such words as myths and fairy tales.

They listen, for example, when we tell them that God has said: *It is no credit to you if you love those who love you, but only if you love your enemies, and those who hate you.* They are full of admiration at such extraordinary virtue, but when they observe that we not only fail to love people who hate us, but even those who love us, they laugh us to scorn, and the Name is blasphemed.

[Office of Readings]

# Still Knocking

**Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Pontifical Household, 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent sermon 2023**

Mary and her husband Joseph continue to mystically knock at the doors, as they did that night in Bethlehem. In Revelation it is the Risen One himself who says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock". Let's open the door of our heart. Let us make it a cradle for the Baby Jesus, making him feel, in the chill of the world, the warmth of our love and our infinite gratitude!

Cantalamessa.org

# Invoke Jesus

**Pope Francis, Angelus address 28-01-2024**

Facing the devil who challenges him by shouting, "What have you to do with us? Have you come to destroy us?", Jesus answers, "Quiet! Come out of him!". Jesus has the power to drive out the devil. ... So, what should we do when we feel tempted and oppressed? Negotiate with the devil? No: there must be no negotiating with him.

We must invoke Jesus.

# Jesus Prays

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**2601** "He was praying in a certain place and when he had ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" In seeing the Master at prayer the disciple of Christ also wants to pray. By *contemplating* and hearing the Son, the master of prayer, the children learn to pray to the Father.

**2602** Jesus often draws apart to pray *in solitude*, on a mountain, preferably at night. He *includes all men* in his prayer, for he has taken on humanity in his incarnation, and he offers them to the Father when he offers himself. Jesus, the Word who has become flesh, shares by his human prayer in all that "his brethren" experience; he sympathizes with their weaknesses in order to free them. It was for this that the Father sent him. His words and works are the visible manifestation of his prayer in secret.

**2603** The evangelists have preserved two more explicit prayers offered by Christ during his public ministry. Each begins with thanksgiving. In the first, Jesus confesses the Father, acknowledges, and blesses him because he has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from those who think themselves learned and has revealed them to infants, the poor of the Beatitudes. His exclamation, "Yes, Father!" expresses the depth of his heart, his adherence to the Father's "good pleasure," echoing his mother's *Fiat* at the time of his conception and prefiguring what he will say to the Father in his agony. The whole prayer of Jesus is contained in this loving adherence of his human heart to the mystery of the will of the Father.

**2604** The second prayer, before the raising of Lazarus, is recorded by St. John. Thanksgiving precedes the event: "Father, I thank you for having heard me," which implies that the Father always hears his petitions. Jesus immediately adds: "I know that you always hear me," which implies that Jesus, on his part, *constantly made such petitions*. Jesus' prayer, characterized by thanksgiving, reveals to us how to ask: *before* the gift is given, Jesus commits himself to the One who in giving gives himself. The Giver is more precious than the gift; he is the "treasure"; in him abides his Son's heart; the gift is given "as well."

# Fr Speekman's Book

Thank you to all who have purchased Fr Speekman'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 ITD for further details and to place your order.

For more information about *Things Serious, Silly and Sublime* and for excerpts from the book, see previous issues of ITD throughout 2023.

From the back of the book: "*Things Serious, Silly and Sublime* is a collection of Fr Speekman's thoughts and reflections from his time as a hospital chaplain and parish priest. ... Fr Speekman'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."

Ed.

Vatican.va

# Rejoice in Hope

**Pope Francis, Message for the 38<sup>th</sup> diocesan World Youth Day 2023, celebrated 26-11-2023**

"Rejoice in hope" was Saint Paul's encouragement to the community of Rome at a time when it was undergoing harsh persecution. The "joy in hope" proclaimed by the Apostle is the fruit of Christ's paschal mystery and the power of his resurrection. It is not a product of our human efforts, plans or skills, but of the energy born of an encounter with Christ. Christian joy comes from God himself, from our knowledge of his love for us.

Pope Benedict XVI, reflecting on his experience of the 2011 World Youth Day in Madrid, asked: "Where does joy come from? How is it to be explained? Certainly, there are many factors at work here. But the crucial one is this certainty based on faith: I am wanted. I have a task in history. I am accepted, I am loved". He went on to say: "Ultimately we need a sense of being accepted unconditionally. Only if God accepts me and I become convinced of this, do I know definitively: it is good that I exist... It is good to be a human being, even in hard times. Faith makes one happy from deep within."

## Thank You for Donations:

Thank you to those who donated to ITD over December and January. Your support is always appreciated and keeps ITD in print. For those looking for somewhere to donate to during Lent, look no further! Donations always welcome. Thank you! - Ed.

# The Poor Family of Jesus

**Pope Francis, Angelus address 31-12-2023**

The Holy Family arrives in the temple bearing the humblest and simplest among the prescribed offerings as a gift, a testimony to their poverty. In the end, Mary receives a prophecy: "And a sword will pierce through your own soul". They arrive in poverty, and set out again loaded with suffering. This is surprising – but how is it that the Family of Jesus, the only family in history who could boast of having God present in flesh and blood among them, instead of being rich, was poor! Instead of having things easy, it seems this family meets obstacles! Instead of being free from hardship, this family is immersed in tremendous sorrows!

What does this tell our families, the way the Holy Family lived their life, poor, facing obstacles, with such sorrow? It tells us something very beautiful: God, whom we often imagine to be beyond problems, came to live our life with its problems. He saved us in this way. He did not come already an adult, but really little. As the son of a mother and father, he lived in a family where he spent most of his time growing, learning, an everyday life, in hiddenness and silence. And he did not avoid difficulties. Rather, in choosing a family, a family that was "expert in suffering", he says this to our families: "If you are facing difficulties, I know what you are experiencing. I experienced it. I, my mother and my father, we experienced it so we can say to your family too: You are not alone!"

Vatican.va

## 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

## “Lord, teach me

to be generous.

Teach me to serve as you deserve;

to give and not to count the cost;

to fight and not to heed the wounds;

to toil and not to seek for rest;

to labour and not to ask for reward,

save that of knowing that I do your will.”

**St Ignatius of Loyola**

## Suffering

**St Pio of Pietrelcina**

“Whenever you are seized by melancholy, let your thoughts dwell on that fateful night on which the Son of God began the work of redemption in the solitude of Gethsemane, and offer your own sufferings to the Divine Father, along with the sufferings of Jesus.”

“You ought to ask our Lord for just one thing, to love Him. All the rest should be thanksgiving.” - **St Pio**

## Contact *Into the Deep*

[www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)

[stoneswillshout@bigpond.com](mailto:stoneswillshout@bigpond.com)

12 Vincent Road, Morwell, Vic, 3840, Australia

 **find us on**  **facebook**

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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**