

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 245

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

April 2024

## Happy Easter!

Pope Francis, Easter 09-04-2023

Christ is risen!

On this day we proclaim that he, the Lord of our life, is "the resurrection and the life" of the world.

Today is Easter, the Pasch, a word that means "passage", for in Jesus the decisive passage of humanity has been made: the passage from death to life, from sin to grace, from fear to confidence, from desolation to communion. In him, the Lord of time and history, I would like to say to everyone, with heartfelt joy, Happy Easter!

May this Easter be for each of you, dear brothers and sisters, and in particular for the sick and the poor, the elderly and those experiencing moments of trial and weariness, a passage from affliction to consolation. We are not alone: Jesus, the Living One, is with us, forever. Let the Church and the world rejoice, for today our hopes no longer come up against the wall of death, for the Lord has built us a bridge to life. Yes, brothers and sisters, at Easter the destiny of the world was changed, and on this day...we can rejoice to celebrate, by pure grace, the most important and beautiful day of history.

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Jesus Christ is ris'n today,

Alleluia!

Our triumphant holy day,

Alleluia!

Who did once upon the cross,

Alleluia!

Suffer to redeem our loss.

Alleluia!

## Christ is Risen!

St John Chrysostom

Let all pious men and all lovers of God rejoice in the splendour of this feast; let the wise servants blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord; let those who have borne the burden of Lent now receive their pay, and those who have toiled since the first hour, let them now receive their due reward. Let any who came after the third hour be grateful to join in the feast, and those who may have come after the sixth, let them not be afraid of being too late.

For the Lord is gracious and He receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes on the eleventh hour as well as to him who has toiled since the first. Yes, He has pity on the last and He serves the first. He rewards the one and is generous to the other. He repays the deed and praises the effort. ...

Let no one fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it. ...

O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and life is freed! Christ is risen and the tomb is emptied of the dead! For Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. ...

To Him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

## The Lighter Side

Cartoon seen online

Pontius Pilate to Joseph of Arimathea: "Joseph, I really don't understand. You're one of the richest men in the region, and you've spent a small fortune on a new tomb for yourself and your family – and you want to give it to this man Jesus?"

Joseph: "It's just for the weekend."

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

# What is There After Death?

**Pope Benedict XVI, Urbi et Orbi message, Easter 12-04-2009**

From the depths of my heart, I wish all of you a blessed Easter. To quote Saint Augustine, "The resurrection of the Lord is our hope". ...

Indeed, one of the questions that most preoccupies men and women is this: what is there after death? To this mystery today's solemnity allows us to respond that death does not have the last word, because Life will be victorious at the end.

This certainty of ours is based not on simple human reasoning, but on a historical fact of faith: Jesus Christ, crucified and buried, is risen with His glorified body. Jesus is risen so that we too, believing in Him, may have eternal life. This proclamation is at the heart of the Gospel message. As Saint Paul vigorously declares: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." He goes on to say: "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:14,19).

Ever since the dawn of Easter a new Spring of hope has filled the world; from that day forward our resurrection has begun, because Easter does not simply signal a moment in history, but the beginning of a new condition: Jesus is risen not because his memory remains alive in the hearts of his disciples, but because he himself lives in us, and in him we can already savour the joy of eternal life.

The resurrection, then, is not a theory, but a historical reality revealed by the man Jesus Christ by means of his "Passover", his "passage", that has opened a "new way" between heaven and earth. It is neither a myth nor a dream, it is not a vision or a utopia, it is not a fairy tale, but it is a singular and unrepeatable event: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, who at dusk on Friday was taken down from the Cross and buried, has victoriously left the tomb. ...

The proclamation of the Lord's Resurrection lightens up the dark regions of the world in which we live. I am referring particularly to materialism and nihilism, to a vision of the world that is unable to move beyond what is scientifically verifiable, and retreats cheerlessly into a sense of emptiness which is thought to be the definitive destiny of human life. It is a fact that if Christ had not risen, the "emptiness" would be set to prevail. If we take away Christ and his resurrection, there is no escape for man, and every one of his hopes remains an illusion.

Yet today is the day when the proclamation of the Lord's resurrection vigorously bursts forth, and it is the answer to the recurring question of the sceptics, that we also find in the book of Ecclesiastes: "Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new?'" (Ec 1:10). We answer, yes: on Easter morning, everything was renewed. "Death and life have come face to face in a tremendous duel: the Lord of life was dead, but now he lives triumphant" (*Easter Sequence*). This is what is new!

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## Postage Increase

Australia Post has announced another increase in postage, by 30c a letter. I hesitate to mention it, because I know there are many people like me who prefer to read from paper instead of a screen, and I don't want you to feel pressured to change from getting ITD mailed to you to having it emailed. I would rather you enjoy reading the pages over a cup of tea, than delete an email because it's too laborious to read on a screen. But just be aware costs have increased and consider a small donation if you can. Thank you!

Ed.

## Divine Mercy

**Our Lord to St Faustina**

"At three o'clock, implore My mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of my agony. This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. I will allow you to enter into My mortal sorrow. In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion." (Diary, 1320) "It is my desire that [the feast of Divine Mercy] solemnly be celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the fount of My Mercy." (Diary, 699)

# The Answer to the Problem of Suffering

Fr Mike Schmitz, Bible in a Year podcast, Day 26: [transcribed]

I don't know if you noticed this, but one of the struggles of the book of Job is that it addresses the problem of evil, but doesn't *answer* the problem of evil. God never gives a 'why', like 'here is why I allow suffering to happen'. Now again, our theology would reveal to us that maybe some 'whys' would be to preserve our freedom, and because God can bring a greater good out of it. That's great. But God never *says* why. He just responds to Job with a bunch of questions.

But he responds to Job not just with questions – he responds to Job with himself. And this is the key of the entire book of Job. At the end of the book of Job, Job says, "I had heard of you beforehand, but now I have seen you with my eyes. And therefore I repent, and I will speak no more."

Basically, the answer to the problem of pain is God himself. The answer to the problem of suffering is God himself.

You know, if we had a question for God, like, 'God, why this?' you know, and he can maybe give us an answer. And then we come up the next day with, 'Okay but God, why this?', and he'd have to give us an answer again. But God has spoken definitively, especially when it comes to suffering, by offering himself. I mean, this is the mystery of the cross, this is the mystery of the crucifixion. God could give us a reason why; he could tell us, 'Here's the story behind everything'. Or he could say, 'I'm no stranger to suffering. All that you have experienced, all that has collapsed against you, all that has come down on your head, I have also allowed to come down on my head.'

Just like God responded to Job by showing Job his face, God has responded to all of us by showing us the face of Jesus; particularly the broken, and rejected, the beaten and the crucified face of Jesus. This is God's answer to the problem of pain. And the answer is himself.

That's the secret of the book of Job. That's the secret of our friend Job, that God does give an answer. But the answer isn't logic, the answer isn't reason, the answer isn't 'just have faith'. The answer is himself. And he gives himself to us today as well.

Ascensionpress.com

## A Singular, Unique Divine Act

Venerable Fulton Sheen: *Calvary and the Mass*

When we assist at the Mass we are not just individuals of the earth or solitary units, but living parts of a great spiritual order in which the Infinite penetrates and enfolds the finite, the Eternal breaks into the temporal, and the Spiritual clothes itself in the garments of materiality.

Nothing more solemn exists on the face of God's earth than the awe-inspiring moment of Consecration; for the Mass is not a prayer, nor a hymn, nor something said – it is a Divine Act with which we come in contact at a given moment of time.

An imperfect illustration may be drawn from the radio. The air is filled with symphonies and speech. We do not put the words or music there; but, if we choose, we may establish contact with them by tuning in our radio. And so with the Mass. It is a singular, unique Divine Act with which we come in contact each time it is represented and re-enacted in the Mass.

## Be Like Moses

St Oscar Romero

When we leave Mass, we ought to go out the way Moses descended Mount Sinai: with his face shining, with his heart brave and strong to face the world's difficulties.

# Calvary and the Mass

During the 6 weeks of lent Fr Ken Clark of the Ordinariate parish in Cowwarr has been sharing with us a section each week of "Calvary and the Mass: A Missal Companion" written by Venerable Fulton Sheen. It has been so insightful in understanding the Mass.

"...we were there at the crucifixion in our representatives. If we are envious of the good, we were there in the Scribes and Pharisees. If we are fearful of losing some temporal advantage by embracing Divine Truth and Love, we were there in Pilate. If we trust in material forces and seek to conquer through the world instead of through the Spirit we were there in Herod....men who were free to sin were also free to crucify."

This quote is from part 1, and it is just a glimpse of the wisdom hidden in these chapters. The reflections are written simply and in such a way to make the reader understand the Mass and the Cross are the same and how we are partakers in the Mass. So full of spiritual food and helps us delve deeper into the mystery of the Holy Sacrifice. Absolutely brilliant!

I will be reflecting on these chapters again. It is so amazing, no matter how much you read or listen, there is always something new about Jesus that triggers the heart and mind. Thank you, Fr Ken, for sharing "Calvary and the Mass" during this Lent.

**Josie Vitale, Morwell, Victoria**

## Believing in the Resurrection

**Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, 4<sup>th</sup> Lenten sermon 2024**

In a previous meditation, I spoke about the prejudice present in non-believers towards faith, which is no less evident than what they reproach believers for. In fact, they reproach believers for not being able to be objective, since faith imposes on them, from the start, the conclusion they must arrive at, without realizing that the same thing happens among them. If you start from the assumption that God does not exist, that the supernatural does not exist, and that miracles are not possible, the conclusion you will reach is also given from the start, and is therefore, literally, a pre-judgment.

The resurrection of Christ constitutes the most exemplary case of this. No event in antiquity is supported by as many first-hand testimonies as this one. Some of them date back to personalities of the intellectual calibre of Saul of Tarsus who had previously fiercely fought against this belief. He provides a detailed list of witnesses, some of whom were still alive and could easily have disproved him (1Cor 15:6-9).

Discrepancies regarding the places and times of the apparitions are put forward, without realizing that the unplanned coincidence on the central fact is a proof of the historical truth of it, rather than its denial. No "pre-established harmony" in this case! Before being written down, the events of Jesus' life were transmitted orally for two decades, and marginal variations and adaptations in the founding narrative are typical of every oral transmission inside a living and expanding community.

Apparitions, of course, are not the only proof of the resurrection of Christ. St John Chrysostom has a famous page that no modern critical investigation has been able to contradict. In a homily to the people he said:

"How could it occur to twelve poor men, and ignorant ones at that, who had spent their lives on lakes and rivers, to undertake such a work? They, who had perhaps never set foot in a city or a square, how could they think of facing the whole earth? [...] Rather, shouldn't they have said to themselves: "In his life he failed to conquer a single nation and we, with his name alone, should conquer the whole world?" Wouldn't it be crazy to undertake such a mission, or even to simply think about it? It is therefore evident that if they had not seen him resurrected and had not had irrefutable proof of his power, they would never have exposed themselves to such a risk. ..."

St Augustine wrote – "The faith of Christians is the resurrection of Christ". And he added: "Everyone believes that Jesus died, even the reprobates believe it, but not everyone believes that he was resurrected and you are not a Christian if you don't believe this." This is the true article by which "the Church stands or falls." In Acts, the Apostles are defined simply as "witnesses of the resurrection" (Acts 1:22; 2:32).

# Sacrament of Reconciliation: Foundation of Christian Existence

**Pope Francis, Homily at "24 Hours for the Lord" celebration of Reconciliation, 08-03-2024**

"The Lord does not tire of forgiving".

The Lord wants this, because He wants us renewed, free, light within, happy and on the move, not parked on the roads of life. He knows how easy it is for us to stumble, fall and stay on the ground, and He wants to lift us up. I saw a beautiful painting, in which there is the Lord who stoops to lift us up. And the Lord does this every time that we approach Confession. Let us not sadden Him, let us not postpone the encounter with His forgiveness, because only if we are lifted up by Him can we get back on our feet and see the defeat of our sin, erased forever. For sin is always a defeat, but He conquers sin, He is the victory. ...

And this is the restart of the new life: begun in Baptism, it starts again from forgiveness.

Let us not renounce God's forgiveness, the Sacrament of Reconciliation: it is not a practise of devotion, but rather the foundation of Christian existence; it is not a question of knowing how to say our sins well, but of recognizing ourselves as sinners and throwing ourselves into the arms of the crucified Jesus to be set free; it is not a moralistic gesture, but the resurrection of the heart. The risen Lord resurrects us, all of us.

So let us go to receive God's forgiveness and let us, who administer it, feel that we are dispensers of the joy of the Father who finds his lost son; let us feel that our hands, placed on the heads of the faithful, are those pierced with the mercy of Jesus, who transforms the wounds of sin into channels of mercy. And we, who act as confessors, may we feel that the "forgiveness and peace" we proclaim are the Holy Spirit's caress on the hearts of the faithful.

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## If Only We Cared

The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne has an annual Good Friday Appeal as their major public fundraising effort. We are told stories of heart-breaking circumstances of ill babies and children who, thanks to the work of the staff at the Royal Children's, have beaten the odds and are still alive today. The sentiment is how precious our children are, and how grateful we are to have them. Time and time again we hear phrases like, "If it wasn't for the medical care he received, he wouldn't be here", or, "We can't imagine life without her; we nearly lost her." Our hearts melt for the children with lifelong disabilities, and how they take it in their stride and bring joy to so many around them. Everyone pitches in, everyone sheds a tear. And yet my thought was: How we pretend to care about babies! If those babies had illness or disease or deformity in the womb, the mothers would be pressured to abort. They'd be told the child would be better off dead, that it would be the responsible thing to do, that they can 'try again' for a 'better' child. And yet once born, these same babies would get all the care and respect they deserve.

If we really cared about babies, and about saving lives, and about children living their full potential, and about medical treatment for every child who needs it, we wouldn't also be legalising and normalising and promoting abortion as 'basic medical care' and a 'woman's right'. Either all babies are worthy of our care, or they aren't. It can't depend on circumstances, otherwise it's just discrimination.

Every precious baby we see was once in the womb. But the womb is now the most dangerous place to be, where lives can be ended at will, at any stage and for any reason. How can we consider ourselves civilised and continue to think abortion is ever justified, let alone normal or 'just a medical procedure'?

Ed.

"Jesus, I trust in you!"

# Looking for Glory

**Pope Francis, Angelus address 17-03-2024**

Brothers and sisters, from the Cross, the "cathedra of God", the Lord teaches us that true glory, which never fades, and makes us happy, is made up of *giving and forgiveness*.

Giving and forgiveness are the essence of God's glory. And for us, they are the way of life.

Giving and forgiveness: very different criteria to what we see around us, and also within us, when we think of glory as something to receive rather than to give; something to possess instead of something to offer. No, worldly glory fades, and does not leave joy in the heart; it does not even lead to the good of all, but rather to division, discord and envy.

And so, we can ask ourselves: what is the glory I desire for myself, for my life, that I dream of for my future? That of impressing others with my prowess, my abilities, or the things I possess? Or the path of giving and forgiveness, that of the Crucified Jesus, the way of those who never tire of loving, confident that this bears witness to God in the world and makes the beauty of life shine? What kind of glory do I want for myself? Indeed, let us remember that when we give and forgive, God's glory shines in us.

Vatican.va

# John Paul II and the Homeless Man

**Recounted by Pope Francis:**

There is a famous story in the Vatican about a homeless person, of Polish origin, who usually stayed in Piazza Risorgimento in Rome. He didn't speak to anyone, not even the Caritas volunteers who brought him a hot meal in the evening. Only after a long time did they manage to have him tell his story: "I am a priest. I know your pope well; we studied together in seminary," he said.

Word arrived to St John Paul II, who heard the name, confirmed he was in seminary with him, and wanted to meet him. They embraced after 40 years, and at the end of the audience the Pope asked the priest, who had been his companion in seminary, to hear his confession. "Now it is your turn," Pope John Paul II said. And his companion from seminary went to confession with the Pope.

Thanks to the gesture of one volunteer, a hot meal, a few words of comfort, and a look of kindness, this person recovered and resumed a normal life that led him to become a hospital chaplain. The pope helped him. Certainly this is a miracle, but it is also an example to say that homeless people have a great dignity.

Aleteia.org 28-02-2017

# Religious Discrimination Coming Our Way

Prime Minister Albanese is set to do a deal on the Religious Freedom Bill with the anti-life Greens. This risks the Greens' radical left ideology that abortion to birth is healthcare and a human right will be embedded in all medical, educational and other institutions across Australia. The Greens policy is to make federal funding to hospitals – including those operated by religious organisations – contingent on the provision of abortion.

Energetic South Australian pro-life activist Dr. Joanna Howe has contacted us with her concerns and the strong plea that "None of us can do this alone but together we can stop this full-frontal attack on the ability of ordinary Australians to challenge the radical left, pro-abortion agenda of The Greens who want this to be institutionalised across our nation". She appeals for the following actions to be taken:

Action 1: Spread the word.

Action 2: Contact the Prime Minister and demand that he does not do a deal with The Greens on Religious Freedom. ...the Greens policies and fundamental ideologies are anti-Christian and anti-human life - they are profoundly pro-abortion.

Action 3: Sign this Petition by Family First click [HERE](#) making it clear that you will only vote for parties that support meaningful protections for religious freedom.

Action 4: Sign this Petition by the Australian Christian Lobby click [HERE](#) demanding religious freedom in in schools.

**Denise M. Cameron, President, Pro-Life Victoria (Inc)**

# On the Road to Hell

You stated in your last issue that readership and the general well-being of ITD was waning. The reason I would suggest is your blatant support of Pope Francis when it is obvious that he is involved with the WEF and is leading the destruction of the church.

Many readers are aware that you have sided with Francis and therefore are complicit in his evil deeds against the Catholic church. The problem is that you have possibly led many souls onto the road to Hell.

You need to turn your focus back to the truth and beg your betrayed readers for forgiveness. You have much work of reparation ahead of you. Do you honestly in your heart of hearts believe that by canonising Francis in your articles that you were providing spiritual leadership for your readers. Are you too proud to face the truth? Please communicate to your readership your deep sorrow for leading them astray. The losing of readers surely is your wake-up call. If you just shut down ITD and walk away you will have left a trail of injured souls. You need to admit your guilt and at least make an effort of reparation, otherwise your conscience will be troubled for rest of your life. Please before it's too late, do something.

**Roman Kulkewycz, Garfield, Victoria**

This is truly an interesting thought. Fancy a Catholic being accused of supporting the Pope! What has the world come to? Orthodox Catholics joining the 'democratic church' Catholics who want to decide how the Church should be run.

If ITD loses readers because Catholics can't bring themselves to respect our Holy Father, then so be it. Pope John Paul II was my 'favourite' pope, Pope Benedict XVI was my husband's 'favourite' pope, and no doubt Pope Francis is the 'favourite' of many others. Regardless, I remain open to his teachings and insights, and trust that the Holy Spirit is finding new ways to reach my heart through him. I have neither canonised him nor condemned him, but accept him as our current Holy Father who deserves my respect and obedience. I expect the same of all my Catholic brothers and sisters. **Ed.**

## Double Homicide and Double Standards

**I came across a fascinating video clip of street-talk interviews by Live Action** (Liveactionnews on Instagram, 26-03-2024). **Following is the written introduction provided by Live Action, and then I've transcribed the questions the interviewer asked, and the answers she received from various passers-by.** **Ed.**

A Florida man received two life sentences for murdering his pregnant girlfriend and their preborn child. We asked the people of Las Vegas if they agree that men should be charged for intentionally killing preborn children. While most people believe the answer is a resounding "yes", the answers get a little shaky when asked about women committing abortions.

Q: If a pregnant woman is murdered, do you think it's just for a judge to charge the criminal with two murders, one for the woman and the other for the baby in her womb? A: I absolutely do. A: Yes. A: Definitely. A: Yes.

Q: If the boyfriend of a woman and father of a child doesn't want to raise a baby, does he have the right to kill that baby if the baby isn't wanted? A: Absolutely not. A: No, he does not. A: He does not have a right to kill a baby in the womb. A: No. A: No.

Q: If someone slips a pregnant woman an abortion pill to cause her to miscarry and she doesn't know it's an abortion pill, do you think that person should be charged? A: Yes. Q: What do you think they should be charged with? A: Murder. A: First degree murder. A: Murder.

Q: So, it's homicide in these cases if it's the man that's causing it, but not if it's the woman that's causing it? A: In her case, she knows that she wanted and she took the pill to do it, so...

Q: If that person's being killed, do you think it matters to him or her who's doing the killing? Or are they being murdered regardless? A: They're being murdered regardless.

# A Communion Reflection

Around the beginning of Lent, my wife and I were speaking to Fr Speekman, and he said something to the effect of, "I imagine the Heavenly Father talking to Jesus about his will for Jesus in the passion, and explaining the very serious sufferings it would entail, up to his painful death. And Jesus answering, 'But Father, I was thinking of giving up chocolate.'"

Since then this profound little reflection has been a constant refrain in my mind during my own Lenten journey. We think our sacrifices are great, but Jesus gave up his whole life for us.

As part of our Lenten 'sacrifice', we have been going to Saturday morning Mass and doing a holy hour directly after, thanks to our parish priest Fr Ken Clark. Basically, it amounts to dedicating a morning in communion with God, and abiding in his merciful presence. The fruits and graces of these mornings have been phenomenal! Just the realization alone that the Holy Spirit actualizes what God has desired for me, and the whole of his creation right from the beginning, and that Jesus Christ, the high priest of our faith and head of the Body, the Church, during this time, leads me and everyone who is present into communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Through, with and in Jesus we get to relate to the other persons of the blessed Trinity as they relate to one another.

It made me understand that this is what Jesus meant in the Gospel according to John, when he said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one can come to the Father but by me", "abide in me and I in you".

The other insight I gained during these Masses and holy hours, is that the altar of sacrifice reveals the loving heart of God; and that God exposed in the monstrance on the altar, who hears, knows and sees everything, looks not only at me, and the holes in my soul, but knows and sees what's happening in the heart of his Church, and every nook and cranny of the world he created.

I could go on and recount the many fruits and reflections, but suffice it to say, that the Holy Mass is the Sacrament of sacraments which binds us to God, and Exposition by extension, prolongs this holy communion. Through it we are bound to the Father, configured to the Son and made holy by the power of the Holy Spirit. What an awesome and extraordinary mystery! Thank you, Jesus!

**Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria**

## Confession Fundamental for Renewal

**Vatican News, 04-03-2024, by Joseph Tulloch**

A week-long forum on penitence and forgiveness [organised by the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary] is now underway in Rome. The forum was opened...by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

He began his address by reflecting on the upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year, stressing that, although it often goes unnoticed, the aspect of reconciliation is central to the event. While the media, he said, focus above all on the millions of pilgrims expected to descend on Rome for the Jubilee, the penitential dimension is equally essential to the celebration.

Before the "light" of forgiveness can shine in the world, however, Cardinal Piacenza cautioned, it must first shine in each one of us. "Indeed," he suggested, "it would be unthinkable to hope for a renewal of the Church and the world, without our own personal renewal."

The Cardinal also pointed out the importance of penitence to the reform of the Church. "Reform, necessary at all times," he said, "does not consist in reshaping 'our' Church according to our preferences ... but rather in allowing our human constructions to be swept away by the mercy that comes from above."

Finally, the Cardinal reflected on the eschatological dimension of penitence, which, he said, brings us back into communion not only with the Church on earth but also with the Church in Heaven. Confession, Cardinal Piacenza stressed, thus reconciles us with "the entire ecclesial body."

VaticanNews.va 04-03-2024



# I Knew it

**From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speekman (p.81,82)**

I found Cheryl in the cubicle next to the window in the six-bed medical ward. She was on the list of Catholic patients and very talkative. In an embarrassingly loud voice she told me about her three husbands and how she had tried for an annulment once but hadn't pursued it. How she had grown tired of attending Sunday Mass when she realised you could worship God at home and how she sometimes wished things could be different but her prayers never seemed to get answered.

'Anyway, Father, I would like Holy Communion' she said.

I replied in a whisper, 'Cheryl, you've just given me three or four reasons why you should go to Confession before you can receive Holy Communion again, so how about we do that first?'

She said she had already told God she was sorry and then, with a voice full of annoyance, insisted again on Holy Communion. I did my best to explain to her the necessity for Confession. She did her best to listen but I had the impression I wasn't getting through at all.

I concluded my explanation with '... so I'll give you a blessing for now and if you decide on Confession just tell the nurses you want to see the priest and I'll come back immediately.' With that I gave her a short blessing and made to go. 'Father, don't go' she said quietly. 'I know you are right. I knew all along that you were right. You only said what I learned from my parents and what I learned at school. Thank you for sticking to your guns.'

Cheryl was not yet ready to go to Confession but she promised me she would pray about it. What struck me about this incident was how suddenly and completely Cheryl's demeanour changed. She had been nervous, irritated, and frustrated but, in the twinkling of an eye she became calm and friendly. I sensed God was already at work in her heart.

**Fr Speekman's book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, can be purchased through ITD for \$15, with postage starting at only \$3. For more information about the book and for excerpts from the book, see previous issues of ITD from Jan/Feb 2023. Contact ITD to place your order. - Ed.**

## Life After Death

**Gaudium et Spes (n.18,22) as quoted in the Office of Readings, 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Ordinary Time, Saturday**

In the face of death the enigma of human existence reaches its climax. Man is not only the victim of pain and the progressive deterioration of his body; he is also, and more deeply, tormented by the fear of final extinction. ... He carries within him the seed of eternity, which cannot be reduced to matter alone, and so he rebels against death. ... Imagination is completely helpless when confronted with death. Yet the Church, instructed by divine revelation, affirms that man has been created by God for a destiny of happiness beyond the reach of earthly trials.

Moreover, the Christian faith teaches that bodily death, to which man would not have been subject if he had not sinned, will be conquered; the almighty and merciful Saviour will restore man to the wholeness that he had lost through his own fault. God has called man, and still calls him, to be united in his whole being in perpetual communion with himself in the immortality of the divine life. This victory has been gained for us by the risen Christ, who by his own death has freed man from death.

Faith, presented with solid arguments, offers every thinking person the answer to his questionings concerning his future destiny. At the same time, it enables him to be one in Christ with his loved ones who have been taken from him by death and gives him hope that they have entered into true life with God.

Certainly, the Christian is faced with the necessity, and the duty, of fighting against evil through many trials, and of undergoing death. But by entering into the paschal mystery and being made like Christ in death, he will look forward, strong in hope, to the resurrection.

# May We All Be One

O thou, who at thy Eucharist didst pray  
that all thy Church might be for ever one,  
grant us at every Eucharist to say  
with longing heart and soul, "thy will be done."  
O may we all one Bread, one Body be,  
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

For all thy Church, O Lord, we intercede;  
make thou our sad divisions soon to cease;  
draw us the nearer each to each, we plead,  
by drawing all to thee, O Prince of Peace;  
thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,  
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

We pray thee too for wanderers from thy fold;  
O bring them back, good Shepherd of the sheep,  
back to the faith which saints believed of old,  
back to the Church which still that faith doth keep;  
soon may we all one Bread, one Body be,  
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

So, Lord, at length when sacraments shall cease,  
may we be one with all thy Church above,  
one with thy saints in one unbroken peace,  
one with thy saints in one unbounded love;  
more blessed still, in peace and love to be  
one with the Trinity in Unity.

Author: W. H. Turton (1881)

# The Great Unloved

**Venerable Fulton Sheen**

**Calvary and the Mass: A Missal Companion**

Do we fully realize how much Communion is bound up with Sacrifice, both on the part of our Lord and on the part of us, His poor weak creatures? The Mass makes the two inseparable: there is no Communion without a Consecration. There is no receiving the bread and wine we offer, until they have been transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. Communion is the consequence of the Calvary; namely, we live by what we slay. All nature witnesses this truth; our bodies live by the slaying of the beasts of the fields and the plants of the gardens. We draw life from their crucifixion. We slay them not to destroy, but to fulfill; we immolate them for the sake of communion.

And now by a beautiful paradox of Divine Love, God makes His Cross the very means of our salvation. We have slain Him; we nailed Him there; we crucified Him; but Love in His eternal Heart willed not to be defeated. He willed to give us the very life we slew; to give us the very Food we destroyed; to nourish us with the very Bread we buried, and the very Blood we poured forth. He made our very crime a happy fault; He turned a Crucifixion into a Redemption; a Consecration into a Communion; a death into life everlasting.

And it is just that which makes man all the more mysterious! Why man should be loved is no mystery, but why he does not love in return is the great mystery. Why should our Lord be the Great Unloved; why should Love not be loved?

## What should I do with my blessed palms?

**Aleteia.org Philip Kosloski - published on 10-04-17 - updated on 27-03-23**

Whatever you do, don't throw them away! According to the Code of Canon Law, blessed items are not to be discarded in a trash can, but treated with respect (cf. #1171). At Mass these palm branches were set apart by a blessing from the priest and made into a "sacramental," an object that is meant to draw us closer to the celebration of the seven sacraments. Throwing them in the trash ignores their sacred purpose and treats them like any other object we no longer need. ... Over the years many people have used palm branches to decorate their homes. It could be as simple as tucking them behind a religious painting or crucifix ... The benefit of using them as decorative pieces in your home is that the palm branches will be a constant reminder of Palm Sunday and bring to mind the Passion narrative that was read at Mass. ... Most sacramentals, like palm branches for example, can be burned or buried in order to properly dispose of them. This type of disposal honours their sacred purpose and returns them to the earth in a dignified way. ... Often priests will encourage the faithful to return palm branches to the church so that he can burn the branches and make ashes for Ash Wednesday. This way the liturgical year remains connected and nothing goes to waste.

# The Challenge to Transmit the Faith

Pope Francis, to the Dicastery for Evangelization, 15-03-2024

My first thought goes to the condition in which several *local Churches* find themselves, where the *secularism* of past decades has created enormous difficulties: from the *loss of a sense of belonging* to the Christian community, to *indifference* regarding faith and its content. They are serious problems, which many brothers and sisters must confront every day, but one must not lose heart. Secularism has been studied and scores of pages have been written about it. We know the negative effects it has produced, but this is the right time to understand *what effective answer we are required to give to the young generations*, so that they can recover the meaning of life. ...

Therefore, the major issue before us is to understand how to *overcome the rupture that has occurred in the transmission of faith*. To this end, it is urgent to recover an effective relationship with families and with formation centres. In order to be transmitted, faith in the risen Lord, which is the heart of evangelization, requires significant experience lived within the family and the Christian community as an encounter with Jesus Christ who changes life. Without this encounter, real and existential, we will always be subject to the temptation to make faith a theory and not a testimony of life.

Again, with regard to the priority question of the transmission of faith, I thank you for the service you give in the field of *catechesis*. ... In this mission, a specific role is entrusted to those who have received and will receive the *ministry of Catechist*, in order to be strengthened in their commitment to the service of evangelization. I hope that the Bishops will be able to nurture and accompany vocations to this ministry, especially among the young, so that the gap between generations may be narrowed and the transmission of the faith may not appear as a task entrusted only to older people. In this regard, I encourage you to find ways for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to continue to be known, studied, and valued, so that it may respond to the new needs that manifest themselves with the passing decades.

A second theme I wish to share with you is the *spirituality of mercy*, as a fundamental component of the work of evangelization. God's mercy is never lacking, and we are called to bear witness to it and, so to speak, to make it circulate in the veins of the body of the Church. ... When evangelization is carried out with the anointment and the style of mercy it receives a better hearing, and the heart opens more willingly to conversion. Indeed, we are touched in what we feel to need the most, namely pure, freely-given love, which is the wellspring of new life.

The third theme I wish to propose to you is *preparation for the next year's Ordinary Jubilee*. It will be a Jubilee in which the power of *hope* should emerge. ... The holy people of God needs it so much! ...

And let us not forget that *this year* that precedes the Jubilee is *dedicated to prayer*. We need to rediscover prayer as the experience of being in the Lord's presence, of feeling we are understood, welcomed and loved by Him. As Jesus taught us, it is not a question of multiplying words, but rather of giving space to silence so as to listen to His World and to welcome Him in our life. Let us start, brothers and sisters, to pray more, to pray better, in the school of Mary and of the saints.

Vatican.va

## The Good Thief

**Venerable Fulton Sheen: Calvary and the Mass**

The more penitent we are, the less anxious we are to escape our cross. The more we see ourselves as we are, the more we say with the good thief: "I deserved this cross." He did not want to be excused; he did not want to have his sin explained away; he did not want to be let off; he did not ask to be taken down. He wanted only to be forgiven.

## A Bullet

*Contemplating Jesus on the Cross, I say: "I did this to you." Contemplating me from the Cross, Jesus says: "I did this for you."*

This short reflection from the editor that was on the last page of the March ITD is really worth contemplating. It is like a bullet which has entered our heart before we have time to resist. Thank you.

**Fr John Speakman, Old Junee, New South Wales**

## 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

"If you do not worship God,  
you worship something,  
and nine times out of ten  
it will be yourself.

You have a duty to worship God,  
not because He will be  
imperfect and unhappy if you do not,  
but because you will be  
imperfect and unhappy."

**Venerable Fulton Sheen**

## Divine Mercy 3 o'clock Prayer

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us,  
I trust in You! Amen.

## 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**