

# ***Into the Deep***

Issue 246

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

May 2024

## **The Love of His Life**

**Pope Francis, Regina Caeli address, 21-04-2024**

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that, "The good shepherd *lays down his life* for the sheep". ...

This is what the Lord wants to tell us with the image of the Good Shepherd: not only that He is the guide, the Head of the flock, but above all that He thinks about every one of us, and that He thinks of each of us *as the love of His life*.

Consider this: for Christ, I am important, He thinks of me, I am irreplaceable, worth the infinite price of His life. And this is not just a way of speaking: He truly gave His life for me, He died and rose again for me. Why? Because He loves me and He finds in me a beauty that I often do not see myself.

Brothers and sisters, how many people today think of themselves as inadequate or even wrong! How many times do we think that our value depends on the goals we achieve, on whether we succeed in the eyes of the world, on the judgments of others! And how many times do we end up throwing ourselves away for trivial things! Today Jesus tells us that we are always infinitely worthy in His eyes. So, in order to find ourselves, the first thing to do is to place ourselves in His presence, allowing ourselves to be welcomed and lifted up by the loving arms of our Good Shepherd.

Brothers, sisters, let us ask ourselves: am I able to find the time, every day, to embrace this assurance that gives value to my life? Am I able to find the time for a moment of prayer, of adoration, of praise, to be in the presence of Christ and to let myself be caressed by Him? Brother, sister, the Good Shepherd tells us that if you do this, you will rediscover the secret of life: you will remember that He gave His life for you, for me, for all of us. And that for Him, we are all important, each and every one of us.

May Our Lady help us to find in Jesus what is essential for life.

Vatican.va

## **No Matter Where You Go**

**Archbishop Anthony Fisher, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, 14-04-2024**

No matter where you go in the Catholic world, you can join 1.4 billion lay faithful, 5,600 bishops, 400,000 priests and 50,000 deacons called to gather on Sunday. No matter the language, ethnicity or particular church: wherever you are, there's something familiar about the structure and rhythm of the Mass. It's familiar because it's what we've always done, ever since the Last Supper.

Every Sunday we gather to "break open the Word" and for "the Breaking of the Bread," recognising Christ really present in word and sacrament, receiving Him into our bodies and souls. No phantom, no stranger, no fantasy, but the very Jesus who is the Word made flesh, the flesh made Eucharist, the Eucharist made Church. No longer in fear and trembling, disbelief and confusion, we now recognise Him with awe and worship, joy and peace.

CatholicWeekly.com.au 19-04-2024

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

# Christ is Alive!

**Pope Francis, Message to Youth, 25-03-2024**

Dear young people, Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive! This certainty always makes my heart overflow with joy, and now it inspires me to write you this Message...

Above all, I would like my words to be a source of renewed hope for you. In today's world, marked by so many conflicts and so much suffering, I suspect that many of you feel disheartened. So together with you, I would like to set out from the proclamation that is the basis of our hope and that of all humanity: "Christ is alive!"

I repeat this to each of you individually: Christ is alive and he loves you with an infinite love. His love for you is unaffected by your failings or your mistakes. He gave his life for you, so in his love for you he does not wait for you to be perfect. Look at his arms outstretched on the cross, and let yourself be saved over and over again. Walk with him as with a friend, welcome him into your life and let him share all the joys and hopes, the problems and struggles of this time in your lives. You will see that the path ahead will become clearer and that your difficulties will be much less burdensome, because he will be carrying them with you. So pray daily to the Holy Spirit who draws you ever more deeply into the heart of Christ, so that you can grow in his love, his life and his power.

How greatly I want this proclamation to reach every one of you, for you to accept it as living and true in your own lives, and feel the desire to share it with your friends! For you have received a great mission: to bear witness before everyone to the joy born of friendship with Christ.

Vatican.va

## Regina Caeli

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia! For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia! Has risen as he said, alleluia! Pray for us to God, alleluia! Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia! For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did vouchsafe to give joy to the world; grant, we beseech you, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Thank You

Last month I mentioned that postage had increased by 30c a letter, and asked anyone receiving ITD by regular mail to consider a small donation to help, if they could. However, I know how nice it is to read something on real paper rather than on a screen, so I didn't want anyone to feel pressured to cancel their paper subscription just because of the cost.

Having said that, I'd like to thank those who have advised they're just as happy to receive ITD by email instead of paper, to reduce our regular mailing list. And I'd like to thank all those who made very generous donations to help cover costs! No "small donations" arrived – only big ones! Thank you so much for your support. Two of the donations via direct deposit had no name with them as reference, so I don't know who to thank personally. May God bless you!

Ed.

## Confusing Our Lady and Our Lord

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

There is no question here of confusing our Lady and our Lord; we venerate our Mother, we worship our Lord. We ask of Jesus those things which only God can give: mercy, grace, forgiveness. We ask that Mary should intercede for us with Him, and especially at the hour of our death. Because of her nearness to Jesus which her vocation involves, we know our Lord listens especially to her appeal.

To no other saint can we speak as a child to its mother: no other virgin, or martyr, or mother, or confessor has ever suffered as much for us as she has; no one has ever established better claim to our love and patronage than she. As the Mediatrix of all graces, all favours come to us from Jesus through her, as Jesus himself came to us through her.

# Be Strong in Faith

St Cyril of Jerusalem

*On the night he was betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat: this is my body." He took the cup, gave thanks and said: "Take, drink: this is my blood." Since Christ himself has declared the bread to be his body, who can have any further doubt? Since he himself has said quite categorically, *This is my blood*, who would dare to question it and say that it is not his blood?*

Therefore, it is with complete assurance that we receive the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ. His body is given to us under the symbol of bread, and his blood is given to us under the symbol of wine, in order to make us by receiving them, one body and blood with him. Having his body and blood in our members, we become bearers of Christ and sharers, as Saint Peter says, in the divine nature.

Once, when speaking to the Jews, Christ said: *Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you shall have no life in you.* This horrified them and they left him. Not understanding his words in a spiritual way, they thought the Saviour wished them to practise cannibalism.

Under the old covenant there was showbread, but it came to an end with the old dispensation to which it belonged. Under the new covenant there is bread from heaven and the cup of salvation. These sanctify both soul and body, the bread being adapted to the sanctification of the body, the Word, to the sanctification of the soul.

Do not, then, regard the eucharistic elements as ordinary bread and wine: they are in fact the body and blood of the Lord, as he himself has declared. Whatever your senses may tell you, be strong in faith.

You have been taught and you are firmly convinced that what looks and tastes like bread and wine is not bread and wine but the body and the blood of Christ. You know also how David referred to this long ago when he sang: *Bread gives strength to man's heart and makes his face shine with the oil of gladness.* Strengthen your heart, then, by receiving this bread as spiritual bread, and bring joy to the face of your soul.

May purity of conscience remove the veil from the face of your soul so that by contemplating the glory of the Lord, as in a mirror, you may be transformed from glory to glory in Christ Jesus our Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Office of Readings, Easter Saturday

## Always Worth It

**Cardinal Lazarus You Heung-sik, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy, in an interview with Vatican News**

*Are priests "equipped" to face today's culture?*

... One is always a disciple, even if one has been a deacon, a priest or a bishop for many years. And a disciple always has something to learn from the one Master, who is Jesus.

*But, in your opinion, is becoming a priest still worth it today?*

Despite everything, following the Lord down this path is always worth it, letting oneself be seduced by Him, spending one's life for His project. We can look to Mary, this young girl of Nazareth who, despite being disturbed by the Angel's announcement, chooses to take the risk of the fascinating adventure of the call, becoming Mother of God and Mother of humanity. With the Lord, one never loses anything!

And I would like to address a word to all priests, especially those who at this moment are discouraged or wounded: the Lord never goes back on His promise. If he has called you, he will not let you lack the tenderness of His love, the light of the Spirit, the joy of the heart. In many ways, He will manifest himself in your life as a priest. I would like this hope to reach priests, deacons and seminarians throughout the world, to console and encourage them. We are not alone, the Lord is always with us! And he wants us to be happy!

VaticanNews.va 19-04-2024

# Thanks for ITD

Another great issue of ITD, thank you. I always find your articles from the popes (past and present) and saints very appropriate to the season and very spiritually edifying.

There are quite a few YouTube videos which are openly hostile to Pope Francis which could be the cause of Roman's concern (April ITD, p.7). One of my granddaughters also raised some issues about his pontificate that she had heard. I asked her where she was getting her information from – the source or hearsay – and if she was praying for him. Maybe that is what is missing these days – are we praying for our pope? He is human, can make mistakes and would be attacked by the devil so much more strongly than us, so he needs our prayerful support, not our condemnation. All the articles that you quote are from his homilies and talks and are beautiful and challenging.

Also, there are many wonderful Catholic blogs on YouTube, especially Fr Mike Schmitz's Bible and Catechism in a Year series which help us grow in our understanding and love of our Faith. Thank you for including some snippets from these too. May God continue to bless you and your work for His glory and our salvation.

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

## The Work of the Holy Spirit

**St Basil the Great**

The titles given to the Holy Spirit must surely stir the soul of anyone who hears them, and make him realise that they speak of nothing less than the supreme Being. Is he not called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, the steadfast Spirit, the guiding Spirit? But his principal and most personal title is the Holy Spirit.

To the Spirit all creatures turn in their need for sanctification; all living things seek him according to their ability. His breath empowers each to achieve its own natural end.

The Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light, and he offers his own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we can know him by his goodness. The power of the Spirit fills the whole universe, but he gives himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of his faith.

Simple in himself, the Spirit is manifold in his mighty works. The whole of his being is present to each individual; the whole of his being is present everywhere.

Though shared in by many, he remains unchanged; his self giving is no loss to himself. Like the sunshine, which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Spirit pours forth his grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive him. To all creatures that share in him he gives a delight limited only by their own nature, not by his ability to give.

The Spirit raises our hearts to heaven, guides the steps of the weak, and brings to perfection those who are making progress. He enlightens those who have been cleansed from every stain of sin and makes them spiritual by communion with himself.

As clear, transparent substances become very bright when sunlight falls on them and shine with a new radiance, so also souls in whom the Spirit shines become spiritual themselves and a source of grace for others.

From the Spirit comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of the mysteries of faith, insight into the hidden meaning of Scripture, and other special gifts.

Through the Spirit we become citizens of heaven, we enter into eternal happiness, and abide in God. Through the Spirit we acquire a likeness to God; indeed, we attain what is beyond our most sublime aspirations – we become God.

# Journey Into Truth

***Journey into Truth*** is starting on the **14<sup>th</sup> of May** at 7pm at **Our Lady of Dolours, Chatswood**.

*Journey into Truth* is a 24-week course that presents a deep teaching of the Catholic faith. *Journey Into Truth* is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and presented by popular educator and columnist Fr John Flader. The *Journey into Truth* DVD series, which features 24 half-hour talks by Fr Flader, is enhanced by beautiful high-definition film clips, images, and quotations.

The following is from the flyer:

Do you want to deepen your relationship with God?

Join us for the *Journey into Truth* – a 24-session weekly course that explains the principles and teachings of the Catechism in a way anyone can understand, and shows how these teachings can be lived out in ordinary life.

Begins Tuesday 14 May, 7pm – 9pm. All are welcome to join these weekly sessions. The first session is an introductory session with guest speaker Fr John Flader. The course officially begins on 21 May. At the Magnificat Room of Our Lady of Dolours Chatswood – 96 Archer Street, Chatswood. Entry from Kirk Street.

To register your attendance and/or for further queries, email me at [Journey\\_truth@yahoo.com](mailto:Journey_truth@yahoo.com).

For any questions about Our Lady of Dolours parish, contact [chatswoodoffice@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:chatswoodoffice@bbcatholic.org.au).

**Catharine Chu, Chatswood, New South Wales**

## A Gaze of Love

Recently, our parish priest gave a homily where he started by talking about how we gaze at a newborn when we hold him in our hands. He rested his elbows on the lectern and cupped his hands together, one hand behind the other, as if holding the head of a newborn in his hands. I'm not sure if he realised it, but for the rest of the homily, his arms and hands remained in this position as he talked. I kept envisaging a little baby there, lying on the lectern, his head nestled in Father's hands, gazing up at Father as he spoke.

I imagined a mother holding her baby like that, her elbows on her knees perhaps, baby's head in her hands, gazing at her baby with her heart exploding with quiet, powerful, uncontainable love. How beautiful that an infant can bask in his mother's love like that, be showered with her love. Un-earned, just pure gift. And how that love will allow that baby to thrive.

Then I thought of how we sit in Adoration. A saint once said that during Adoration it's as if we are sitting in the sunshine, allowing the rays of the Lord's love to warm us and envelop us. Even if we do nothing or say nothing, simply being in the presence of the Lord is enough to be showered with his love. I imagined the Lord gazing at me as a mother gazes at her newborn, holding my head in his hands and just loving me. Un-earned, undeserved, just pure gift.

Then I realised that the way we cup our hands to cradle the head of a newborn in them, is very similar to how we cup our hands to receive the Lord at Holy Communion. And I thought how beautiful that we have that brief moment before Holy Communion, where we can gaze at the Lord in our hands, and he can gaze back up at us. An exchange of loving gazes, pure gift, before we become one flesh.

Ed.

## Receive, Not Take

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

Hence, we use the word "receive" when speaking of communion with our Lord in the Eucharist, for literally we do "receive" Divine Life, just as really and truly as a babe receives the life of its mother.

# The World Created for the Sake of the Church

Lately I have come across so many practising Catholics who are fearful for the future of the Church and what is currently happening in her, I suspect all because they have a poor grasp of her nature, origin, foundation and mission. Many seem to think that if the Church is ill and 'dying' in their part of the Western world, then she is 'dying' universally, even though the Catholic population in our country only makes up half of one percent of the total Church population in the world. This couldn't be further from the truth. Just recently I read about how the Church is thriving in South Korea, and growing in Asia. In central Africa, especially in Nigeria, where the Church is being persecuted, vocations to the priesthood are flourishing. Even in the Middle East, in places such as Iran and Iraq, Christianity is growing. It is mainly in the developing first world countries of the West where the Church seems to be struggling.

But what saddens and disturbs me the most when listening to Catholics speak about the current situation in the Church, is that they speak as if Jesus Christ, who is the centre of the universe and history, the Redeemer of mankind, the alpha and omega, the Head of his own Body, the Church, is totally absent and hasn't got a clue about what is happening to her, around her, and in her.

As a result, they easily subscribe to all the latest conspiracy theories and man-made remedies and suggestions to allay or validate their fears and rectify her; without realizing that together with the rest of fallen humanity, it is our sin and lack of holiness that continues to crucify her, that dims her light in this dark world, and that thwarts her all-important evangelising mission as a sacrament of communion, love and salvation in the world.

In listening to the Catechism in a Year, I learnt from the early Church Fathers that the Church, born in the heart of the Father, is the goal of everything (see Catechism para 760). They believed and understood that world was created for the sake of the Church and not the other way around as most people think today, that the Church was created as an afterthought, for the sake of the world, to save it from sin and death.

And while the main mission of the Church is the salvation of souls, many of us miss the fundamental point, which the early Christians seem to have grasped clearly, that all of creation was authored and created for communion with God, for the sake of communion with his divine life and love; a communion that through the Holy Spirit, is a calling together of mankind in Christ; and here on earth, that communion is the Catholic Church. In and through her alone God has made it possible for the whole of humanity and all of his creation to participate and share in his divine life and love. She is the sacrament of salvation for the whole world, and this salvation is only possible because she exists.

As the Body of Christ, she extends his mystery throughout time. This is why so many men and women throughout her sacred history imitated her Head in offering their lives for the propagation of her faith and mission of saving souls.

**Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria**

## The Goal of All Things

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

**760** Christians of the first centuries said, "The world was created for the sake of the Church."

God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the "convocation" of men in Christ, and this "convocation" is the Church.

The Church is the goal of all things, and God permitted such painful upheavals as the angels' fall and man's sin only as occasions and means for displaying all the power of his arm and the whole measure of the love he wanted to give the world:

Just as God's will is creation and is called "the world," so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called "the Church." St Clement of Alexandria

# Faith, Hope and Love

Pope Francis, General Audience 24-04-2024

The Christian is never alone. He does good not because of a titanic effort of personal commitment, but because, as a humble disciple, he walks in the footsteps of Jesus, the Master. He goes forward on the way. The Christian has the theological virtues [faith, hope, charity], which are the great antidote to self-sufficiency. How often do certain morally irreproachable men and women run the risk of becoming conceited and arrogant in the eyes of those who know them! It is a danger that the Gospel rightly warns us against, when Jesus advises the disciples: "You too, when you have done all that you have been commanded, say, 'We are useless servants. We have done what we ought to have done'" (Lk 17:10).

Pride is a poison, a powerful poison: a drop of it is enough to spoil a whole life marked by goodness. A person may have performed a mountain of good deeds, may have reaped accolades and praise, but if he has done all this only for himself, to exalt himself, can he still call himself a virtuous person? No! ...

When our "I" is at the centre of everything, everything is ruined. ...

To correct all these situations, which sometimes become painful, the theological virtues are of great help. They are especially so in times of falling, because even those with good moral intentions sometimes fall. We all fall in life, because we are all sinners. Just as even those who practice virtue daily sometimes make mistakes; we all make mistakes in life: intelligence is not always clear, will is not always firm, passions are not always governed, courage does not always overcome fear.

But if we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit – the Master of the interior life – He revives the theological virtues in us: then, if we have lost confidence, God reopens us to *faith*; if we are discouraged, God awakens *hope* in us; and if our heart is hardened, God softens it with His *love*.

Vatican.va

## Keeping Abreast of Things

As a prelude to the Sacrament of Baptism being celebrated in the Sistine chapel, Pope Francis assured mothers nursing their babies that they were free to breastfeed these babies during the ceremony. Pope Francis had no difficulty equating the splendor of the Sistine chapel with the wonder of new life. Our Pope clearly recognizes that men can be priests; they cannot be mothers. The priest proclaims the existence of God and appropriate means of subsequent worship. The Sistine chapel is historically very involved in this process with the Councils and Papal elections underpinning this worship. The Sacrament of Baptism provides entry to the other six sacraments that Jesus left us for our spiritual growth and to redeem us from our sins. The priest has received the gift of confecting bread and wine to form the body and blood of Jesus. He also has the power to forgive sins, such as those caused by the distorting saturation media coverage of the physical beauty of women's breasts.

Parents are charged with the sacred consummation of their marriage in order to continue God's ongoing process of creation. Indeed, the Sacrament of Marriage necessarily precedes the Sacrament of Orders in meeting God's ongoing plan for creation. The mother, in particular, has exposure to the physical demands of conception, the growing pains associated with pregnancy, the anguish of childbirth and the demands of having primary association with the growing person. Breastfeeding is very much a part of these demands.

Pope Francis has been subjected to violent criticism for challenging popular misconceptions. His clarification of the nature of worship given in the Sistine chapel restores an appropriate appreciation for the wonders of the Sacrament of Marriage.

John H. Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

"For the valiant man, fortune and misfortune are like his right and left hands; he uses both." - St Catherine of Siena

# Stations of the Cross Reflection

Fr Lewi Barakat gave a wonderful sermon after the Stations of the Cross livestreamed from St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on Good Friday this year. I followed his talk and typed it out for my own benefit to reflect and I thought I would share it with ITD readers. I hope you find it spiritually rewarding as I did. Fr Lewi is an assistant priest at St Mary's Cathedral and the Master of Ceremonies to the Archbishop Fisher.

Fr Lewi begins: "There isn't a person who doesn't have need for God, or for what makes this Friday truly Good. Even if some were to eat all the seafood they desired today, without accepting the saving sacrifice of Christ, and accepting the offer of His body and blood celebrated at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we would remain ultimately unfulfilled in this world. We are made for more."

As we prayed the Stations we were asked to bring to mind:

- Those who at times become disillusioned with religion and might succumb to indifference with regards to truth.
- Anyone who is tempted to forsake what they previously knew to be good, to indulge what might be the more comfortable or the more popular.
- People facing the sad reality of war and violence, raging around or in them.
- Individuals misusing or abusing rightful authority entrusted to them and all who are facing death, their family members, or friends.
- And he said to remember to pray for ourselves, for at different stages of life's journey we could be any of these people described above. All these people Jesus will find along the way of the Cross. Jesus will find you too, He found me.

"In our contemplation of each of the Stations, we will walk with Jesus, who walked the way to Calvary to save us all, from our darkest and our most difficult battles, those experienced already and those to come. During our walk through the Stations of the Cross we can all follow the Way, the Truth and the Life. We can meditate on the Sacred Scriptures, the word of God which has something to say to each of us no matter where we are on the journey."

After our journey through the Stations of the Cross, the homily based on the reflections earlier continues:

"The Way of the Cross invites all of us to recognize where we are in life's journey and to see how we do not walk alone, there are many people who walk around us, some in different directions comfortable enough doing so, others unhappy with the way we walk, wanting to take us off our path. Every one of us at different times in life is tempted to choose another way but today we recognize the way that leads to life is the way of the Cross.

- Those who at times become disillusioned with religion and might succumb to indifference with regards to truth: You may have noticed them, they are the passersby, perhaps you didn't recognize them because they don't say much at all, they become lukewarm or indifferent, they don't care for where you go or what you do even if you are about to walk off a cliff. The passersby are those who have lost touch with themselves, the walking dead perhaps.

*The antidote to such a person is Simon of Cyrene. Reluctant at first, he didn't choose to carry the cross; when it was given to him, he didn't throw it away either; he held on to that cross, he accepted what was given to him and kept going, knowing there was something important happening.*

- When we prayed for anyone who is tempted to forsake what they previously knew to be good, to indulge what might be the more comfortable or more popular: You might have noticed those people along the way, they are the mob. The mob who perhaps not long ago sang songs of Hosanna and now when they see that the King does not meet their expectations, when suddenly the Way He is proposing as the greatest Way for a human to thrive is a challenge to their own comforts and life choices, they become hungry for blood – crucify Him, crucify Him, away with Him; the sight of what Christ presents is unbearable.

*Continued on p.9*



*The antidote to the mob, are the women of Jerusalem, you would have seen them on the way of the Cross, they were lamenting, they recognized the great injustice that was taking place, they cried for love of what is good, they cried for the Source of goodness.*

- When we prayed for the people facing the sad reality of war and violence raging around or in them: You might have noticed along the way the mocking soldiers or perhaps the angry thief screaming at Jesus, slapping, spitting mocking the Saviour of the world, what kind of king is this? It leads them to hatred for self, hatred for others, a hatred that leads to death.

*The antidote to this, you might have seen the centurion; there faithful at the scene of the Cross, though he too holding a weapon ready for war, his desire was not to do damage but to discover and protect what is good, and so he does not go with the way of his colleagues the way that yells and screams, he remains quiet and believing.*

- We prayed for Individuals misusing or abusing rightful authority entrusted to them: You would have noticed along the way Pilot and Chief Priests who had authority to release Jesus from this great injustice, but afraid of the mob and the screaming of the people, they chose instead, death.

*The antidote to this, is one named Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy Israelite and a good and just man, who the Scripture says was himself looking for the Kingdom of heaven. And though he was a member of the Sanhedrin and supreme council of the Jews, he refused to participate in the scapegoating or the mock trials of Jesus.*

- And finally, we pray for all who are facing death for their family members or friends: In the distance to Jesus' crucifixion a death takes place. It is of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. Judas who got to witness the great power of Christ, His miracles, and marvels, heard His words, received His teaching, was in the close company of the Christ, was willing to sell everything that Christ was offering for some pieces of silver. Judas who, having betrayed Christ, would have discovered the awesome power of God's mercy and forgiveness if only he was willing to return. The pain of his bad decision is something he fears he cannot recover from, a pain and darkness that he decides for himself, not because of someone else, that it can only end in death.

*The antidote to this darkness that leads to a culture of death are the two great people you would have noticed along the way – Jesus the son of God and the Son of Man, one who became like us except for sin, embracing the sins of the world to set us free; and his Mum the blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary the one who wholeheartedly believed and accepted what God had promised her even when she had to go through the unbearable torment of watching her innocent Son suffer, humble, obedient, accepting death in order to overcome it.*

We don't have to travel to another time 2000 years past or to a distant place, the Holy Land, in order to discover Calvary. The culture of death is on our doorstep, and for some time now it's been trying to force its way into our society, into our lives. But we have an antidote:

*The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass represents Calvary to us as a place from which the light overcomes the darkness, the truth forever proclaimed and celebrated. We know that the suffering of today leads to the glory of tomorrow. For this reason today is truly Good."*

The Easter season does not end till Pentecost Sunday, so may you all continue to receive many blessings this Easter season.

**Josie Vitale, Morwell, Victoria**

"Your life must be woven around the Eucharist. Direct your eyes to Him, who is the Light; bring your hearts very close to His Divine Heart; ask Him for the grace to know Him, for the charity to love Him, for the courage to serve Him. Seek him longingly." - St Theresa of Calcutta

# Church Stats

VaticanNews 04-04-2024, by L'Osservatore Romano

The 2024 Pontifical Yearbook and the 2022 Statistical Yearbook of the Church, edited by the Central Statistical Office of the Church, are currently being distributed in bookstores, published by the Vatican Printing Press. The Pontifical Yearbook offers information regarding the life of the Catholic Church worldwide for the period ranging from December 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. ...

**The number of baptized Catholics has increased** globally, rising from 1.376 billion in 2021 to 1.390 billion in 2022, with a relative increase of 1.0%. The rate of change varied from continent to continent. Africa recorded an increase of 3%, with the number of Catholics rising from 265 to 273 million in the same period. Europe shows a situation of stability (in 2021 and 2022 Catholics amount to 286 million). The Americas and Asia recorded a significant growth in the number of Catholics (+0.9% and +0.6%, respectively), a trend entirely in line with the demographic development of these two continents. Oceania reported stability, with lower absolute values. ...

The year 2022 marked a further **decrease in the number of priests** compared to the previous year, continuing the downward trend that has characterized the years since 2012. The global number of priests in the world in 2022, compared to that of 2021, decreased by 142 priests, going from 407,872 to 407,730. Africa and Asia showed a sustained dynamic (+3.2% and 1.6%, respectively) and the Americas remained almost stationary. Europe, with the greatest weight on the total, and Oceania registered negative variation rates of 1.7 and 1.5 percent, respectively.

The number of permanent deacons continued to show significant evolutionary dynamics. In 2022, the **number of deacons increased** by 2% compared to a year earlier, going from 49,176 to 50,150 deacons. The number improved in all continents at significant rates. In Africa, Asia, and Oceania, where they still failed to reach 3% of the total, the number of deacons increased by 1.1%, standing at 1,380 in 2022. The data also improved in areas where the presence of permanent deacons was quantitatively significant. In the Americas and Europe, where 97.3% of the total population resided, deacons increased in the biennium considered by 2.1 and 1.7 percent, respectively.

**Decrease in professed religious.** The number of non-priest professed religious men contracted at the global level. There were 49,774 religious men in 2021, falling to 49,414 in 2022. The decline was attributable, in order of importance, to the European, African, and Oceanian continents. In Asia, on the other hand, religious men increased considerably, and to a lesser extent in the Americas.

**Professed religious women** ... are currently **in sharp decline**. Globally, they went from 608,958 professed women in 2021 to 599,228 in 2022, with a relative decline of 1.6%. Africa was the continent with the largest increase in religious women, who went from 81,832 in 2021 to 83,190 in 2022, with a relative increase of 1.7%. They were followed by Southeast Asia, where professed religious women went from 171,756 in 2021 to 171,930 in 2022, with an increase of just 0.1%. South and Central America showed a decline, going from 98,081 religious women in 2021 to 95,590 in 2022, with a global decrease of 2.5%. Finally, three continental areas are marked by a significant contraction: Oceania (-3.6%), Europe (-3.5%), and North America (-3.0%).

**Reduced numbers of seminarians.** The decline that has characterized the trend of priestly vocations since 2012 continued over the period. In 2022, men preparing for the priesthood numbered 108,481, with a variation of -1.3% compared to the situation a year earlier. ... In Africa, the number of major seminarians (post-secondary education), increased by 2.1% over the two year period. In all parts of the Americas, there was a decrease in vocations resulting in a variation of -3.2%. In Asia, a decrease was recorded that brought the number of major seminarians in 2022 to a level 1.2% lower than that of 2021. Europe's vocational crisis since 2008 continued unabated. In the biennium 2021-2022, the number of seminarians decreased by 6%. In Oceania, priestly vocations in 2022 exceeded those of 2021 by 1.3%. Of the 108,481 seminarians worldwide, in 2022, Africa was the continent that showed the highest number of seminarians, with 34,541 men. It was followed by Asia with 31,767, the Americas with 27,738, Europe with 14,461, and Oceania with 974 major seminarians.

# Sue and Brian, are you out there?

From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speekman (p.34)

I was driving my nephew somewhere. I hadn't really spent any time with him for many years except seeing him when I went to visit his father and mother. It was nice being alone in the car with him. He was about 23 years old.

At one point he asked me about Sue and Brian. Puzzled, I asked, *Sue and Brian, who are they?* He said *You asked us to pray for them years ago.*

Sue and Brian? Sue and Brian? I asked them to pray for Sue and Brian?

Tiny bells started ringing in my head. *How long ago did I ask you to pray for them?*

*When I was a little kid. You came to visit one day and asked us to remember a couple called Sue and Brian who were having some sort of difficulty. You were in such-and-such a parish.*

*But that was over ten years ago! And you've been praying all this time?*

*We all have, every night, at Rosary time. We pray for vocations and then for Sue and Brian.*

I couldn't believe it. And though I kept asking myself, *Who the hell are Sue and Brian?* the bells in my head were not getting any louder.

Anyway, somewhere in Australia there is a very lucky couple who have had 7 people praying for them for over ten years.

And I still can't remember them, or what the problem was.

**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.**

## Sharing the Joy

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 01-04-2024

Today, Monday of the Octave of Easter, the Gospel shows us the *joy* of the women at Jesus' Resurrection: the text says they abandoned the tomb with "great joy", and "ran to tell his disciples". This joy, which is born precisely from the living encounter with the Risen One, is a powerful emotion, which impels them to spread and to tell what they had seen.

*Sharing joy* is a wondrous experience, which we learn from a very young age: think of a child who gets a good mark at school and cannot wait to show his or her parents, or a young person's early achievements in sports, or a family in which a child is born. Let us try to remember, each of us, a moment so happy that it was even difficult to put into words, but which we wished to tell everyone about immediately!

The women on Easter morning live this experience, but in a much greater way. Why? Because Jesus' Resurrection is not just wonderful news or the happy ending to a story, but something that changes our lives completely, and changes them forever! It is the victory of life over death. This is the Resurrection of Jesus. It is the victory of hope over despondency. Jesus broke through the darkness of the tomb and lives forever. His presence can fill anything with light. With him, every day becomes a step in an eternal journey, and every "today" can hope for a "tomorrow", every end a new beginning. Every instant is projected beyond the limits of time, towards eternity.

Brothers, sisters, the joy of the Resurrection is not something far away. It is very close, it is ours, because it was given to us on the day of our Baptism. Since then, we too, like the women, can meet the Risen One, and he says to us, as he did to them: "Do not be afraid!". Brothers and sisters, let us not give up the joy of Easter! ... Let us hasten to seek him in the Eucharist, in his forgiveness, in prayer and in lived charity! When joy is shared, it grows. Let us share the joy of the Risen One.

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

## Go to Joseph

Go, then to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you;  
Go to Joseph, and obey him as Jesus and Mary obeyed him;  
Go to Joseph, and speak to him as they spoke to him;  
Go to Joseph, and consult him as they consulted him;  
Go to Joseph, and honour him as they honoured him;  
Go to Joseph, and be grateful to him as they were grateful to him;  
Go to Joseph, and love him, as they love him still.

**St Alphonsus Liguori**

"He who labours as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands."

**St Benedict of Nursia**

"If I can give you any advice, I beg you to get closer to the Eucharist and to Jesus...  
We must pray to Jesus to give us that tenderness of the Eucharist."

**St Teresa of Calcutta**

## 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

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

**Editor:** Janet Kingman

**Subscription is free. We rely on donations.**

**Cheques** to be made out to Janet Kingman.

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

Account name: Janet Kingman

BSB: 013-745 (ANZ)

Account number: 2901-63632

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

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

- no longer have a voice in diocesan newspapers,
- wish to understand and defend the teachings of the Catholic Church,
- wish to support and defend those who are unjustly treated by Church bureaucrats and organisations,
- wish to campaign for the renewal of our Catholic schools,
- wish to promote Eucharistic adoration in all parishes,
- wish to have a means of support and contact for one another in remaining true to our Catholic faith.

**Letters to the Editor:**

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters. There is no guarantee that every letter will be published, and we reserve the right to edit letters. Name and contact details must accompany letters, however, if there is sufficient reason, anonymity will be preserved when publishing. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of ITD.

**Mary,** our Mother,

And Mother of the Redeemer,  
Gate of heaven and Star of the sea,  
Come to the aid of your people,  
Who have sinned, yet also yearn to rise again!  
Come to the Church's aid,  
Enlighten your devoted children,  
Strengthen the faithful throughout the world,  
Let those who have drifted, hear your call,  
And may they who live as prisoners of evil,  
Be converted!

**Pope John Paul II**