

Into the Deep

Issue 247

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Life is Always Worth Living

Pope Francis, Montorio Prison, Verona, 18-05-2024

Life is always worth living, and there is always hope for the future, even when everything seems to be draining away. Our existence, the existence of each of us, is important, it is a unique gift for us and for others, for everyone, and especially for God, who never abandons us, and who indeed knows how to listen, rejoice, and weep with us. With Him by our side, we can overcome despair and live each moment as the right time to start again. Therefore, in the worst moments, let's not close in on ourselves: let's talk to God about our pain and help each other to bear it, among companions on the journey and with the good people we find by our side. It is not weakness to ask for help: let's do it with humility and trust. We all need each other, and we all have the right to hope, beyond any history and any mistake or failure. ... Let us continue to walk together because love unites us beyond any kind of distance.

Vatican.va

The Immeasurable Depths of God

St Columbanus

Who can examine the depths of God? Who will take pride in knowing the infinite God who fills all things and surrounds all things, who pervades all things and transcends all things, who takes possession of all things but is not himself possessed by any thing? The infinite God *whom no-one has seen as he is?* Therefore let no-one try to penetrate the secrets of God, what he was, how he was, who he was. These things cannot be described, examined, explored. Simply – simply but strongly – believe that God is as God was, that God will be as God has always been, for God cannot be changed.

So who is God? God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. Do not demand to know more of God. Those who want to see into the depths must first consider the natural world, for knowledge of the Trinity is rightly compared to knowledge of the depths of the sea: as Ecclesiastes says, *And the great depths, who shall fathom them?* Just as the depths of the sea are invisible to human sight, so the godhead of the Trinity is beyond human sense and understanding. Thus, I say, if anyone wants to know what he should believe, let him not think that he will understand better through speech than through belief: if he does that, the wisdom of God will be further from him than before.

Therefore, seek the highest knowledge not by words and arguments but by perfect and right action. Not with the tongue, gathering arguments from God-free theories, but by faith, which proceeds from purity and simplicity of heart. If you seek the ineffable by means of argument, it will be further from you than it was before; if you seek it by faith, wisdom will be in her proper place at the gateway to knowledge, and you will see her there, at least in part. Wisdom is in a certain sense attained when you believe in the invisible without first demanding to understand it. God must be believed in as he is, that is, as being invisible; even though he can be partly seen by a pure heart.

Office of Readings, Thursday of Week 7 in Ordinary Time

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

Sense of Our Own Smallness

Pope Francis, General Audience 22-05-2024

We will conclude this series of catecheses by looking at a virtue which is not part of the seven cardinal and theological virtues, but which is at the base of Christian life. This virtue is *humility*, the great antagonist of the most mortal of sins, namely pride. Whereas pride and arrogance swell the human heart, making us appear to be more than we are, humility restores everything to its correct dimension: we are wonderful creatures, but we are limited, with qualities and flaws. From the beginning, the Bible reminds us that we are dust, and to dust we shall return; indeed, "humble" derives from *humus*, that is, earth. And yet delusions of omnipotence, which are so dangerous, often arise in the human heart, and this does us a great deal of harm. It takes very little to free ourselves from the demon of pride. Contemplating a starry sky is enough to restore the correct measure, as the Psalm says: "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?" ...

Blessed are the people who guard this perception of their smallness in their heart! ... In his Beatitudes, Jesus leads precisely with them: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven". It is the first Beatitude because it is at the base of the ones that follow: indeed, meekness, mercy and purity of heart stem from that inner sense of smallness. Humility is the gateway to all the virtues. ...

Let us think of Mary: she was always small, always without self-importance, always free of ambition. This smallness of hers was her invincible strength ...

Brothers and sisters, humility is everything. It is what saves us from the Evil One, and from the danger of becoming his accomplices. And humility is the source of peace in the world and in the Church. Where there is no humility, there is war, there is discord, there is division. God has given us an example of [humility] in Jesus and Mary, so that it may be our salvation and happiness. And humility is precisely the way, the path to salvation.

Vatican.va

Thank You Too!

Enclosed is a small donation towards helping you to keep your wonderful ITD in circulation. Without people like yourself I wonder where we would be. Thank you and may God bless you abundantly.

– M.R., Elsternwick, Victoria

Thank you. You are doing a wonderful job for the Lord and for us readers. Donation enclosed.

– K.B., Balwyn, Victoria

More inspirational reading. I would just like to add a few words to the end of your "Gaze of Love" article (May ITD, p.5) where you wrote: "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" – I'd add: and two hearts beat as one!

Thank you and God bless.

– M.W., Lurnea, New South Wales

June/July Issue

You'll notice that we have another combined June/July issue this year. For the last two years it was because we were off road-tripping across Australia. This year it's because I wish we were! So instead, I'll call it a mid-winter break and stay home, keep warm and rest. See you again for the August issue! God bless, and thanks again for all your support.

Ed.

Never Too Late

Pope Francis at Vigil Mass of Pentecost, Verona

[Recalling] an exchange with an elderly person:

"Father I'm 90 years old, I can't change."

"But how many days of life do you have left?"

"I don't know."

"With just one day the Spirit can change your life, can change your heart."

VaticanNews.va, 18-05-2024

Desire to Make Amends

Pope Francis, 04-05-2024,

in the context of the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary

Reparation, to be Christian, ...presupposes two demanding attitudes: *recognizing oneself as guilty* and *asking for forgiveness*.

Recognizing oneself as guilty. Any reparation, human or spiritual, begins with acknowledgment of one's own sin. Self-accusation is part of Christian wisdom; this pleases the Lord, because the Lord welcomes the contrite heart. It is from this honest acknowledgment of the wrong done to one's brother or sisters, and from the profound and sincere sentiment that love has been harmed, that the desire to make amends arises.

Asking for forgiveness. It is the confession of evil committed, following the example of the prodigal son who says to the Father: "I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son". Asking for forgiveness reopens dialogue and manifests the will to re-establish the bond of fraternal charity. And reparation – even a beginning of reparation or simply the will to make amends – guarantees the authenticity of the request for forgiveness, it expresses its depth, its sincerity, it touches the heart of the brother, consoling him and inspiring in him acceptance of the forgiveness requested. Therefore, if the irreparable cannot be completely repaired, love can always be reborn, making the wound bearable.

Jesus asked Saint Margaret Mary [for] acts of reparation for the offences caused by the sins of humanity. If these acts consoled His heart, this means that reparation can also console the heart of every wounded person. May the work of your conference renew and deepen the meaning of this beautiful practice of the reparation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a practice that today may be somewhat forgotten or wrongly judged obsolete. And may it also help to enhance its rightful place in the penitential journey of each baptized person in the Church.

Vatican.va

Holy Like Him

St Louis de Montfort

Chosen soul, living image of God and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God wants you to become holy like him in this life, and glorious like him in the next.

It is certain that growth in the holiness of God is your vocation. All your thoughts, words, actions, everything you suffer or undertake must lead you towards that end. Otherwise, you are resisting God in not doing the work for which he created you and for which he is even now keeping you in being.

What a marvellous transformation is possible! Dust into light, uncleanness into purity, sinfulness into holiness, creature into Creator, man into God!

A marvellous work, I repeat, so difficult in itself, and even impossible for a mere creature to bring about, for only God can accomplish it by giving his grace abundantly and in an extraordinary manner. The very creation of the universe is not as great an achievement as this.

Holy Communion

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1415 Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.

1416 Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins.

Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

1419 ... Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.

Men

I hate to admit it, but I do waste a lot of time scrolling through 'reels' on social media. Occasionally I come across a gem that makes me feel less guilty about it. The other day there were two.

One was a video of a father talking to his young son (about 10 or 12 years old) in the car after a long day's work fencing on their farm, before heading into the house. He explained to his son that in spite of their long day, their physical work, their tiredness, their desire to rest, that when they went into the house they would need to remember that Mum had been looking after the other children all day as well as doing the housework and that she would also need some help, and that the other children would also want attention as they walk in the door. Dad advised the son that they had to put their own needs second, and do what was needed to help and support Mum when they headed into the house. He phrased it in terms of that's what it is to be a man.

My immediate thought was how brilliant it was to hear a father actually teaching his son how to be a man; that sacrifice was part of the deal, and that manhood was something to be proud of.

The other was a gripping short video of how a young boy was rescued from the balcony of an apartment that was on fire. A group of men on the balcony below worked together to find a way to reach the boy above them. Men from the street level hoisted up a ladder to them, which they then poised precariously on the edge of their balcony, got another man to lean out of a window to try to hold the ladder, and rested it against the wall near the boy's balcony. There was some sort of safety netting they had to cut through on both balconies before they could get over the side. It was painstaking work, and they worked as quickly as they could, all while the boy's apartment was full of flames and he was helpless in the corner of the balcony. As with all good stories, there was a happy ending, of a man reaching over to the boy and carrying him down, while the other men all tried to steady the balancing ladder. Once the boy was handed over, the man on the ladder still had a challenge to get himself down safely, but made it, falling into the balcony. There were cheers from everywhere.

My overwhelming feeling was of admiration for the men. For manhood. For their strength, and ability to make a plan and carry it out, for their desire to protect, and their willingness to risk their own safety in order to save a child.

Men are so often 'put down' in our society, mocked or 'cautioned', blamed, criticised, even despised. You only hear the word 'masculinity' paired with 'toxic'. How beautiful to see examples of men comfortable in their manhood, living their masculinity naturally through love and sacrifice and courage. God bless them!

Ed.

Basic Certainties in Life

Pope Francis, International Congress on Youth Ministry, 25-05-2024

I would like to mention several things that should never be lacking in the day-to-day work of youth ministry. First, young people need to be helped to arrive at *certain basic certainties* in life, truths of the heart: "God is love," "Christ saves you", "He lives", and "the Spirit gives life." These are the certainties but there is also another: Our Lady loves you because she is a mother. We must never tire of proclaiming these four or five simple truths.

Young people may be concerned about the bad news that bombards us daily, yet that should not obscure their certainty that the risen Christ is with them and is more powerful than any evil. ...

Christ is alive! Everything that lives is in his hands. He alone knows the future of our world and of our individual lives. It is important to offer young people opportunities to experience the living Christ through prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, community gatherings, service to the poor and the testimony of the lives of the saints. Young people who have had this experience become convincing witnesses of the message of the Gospel.

Vatican.va

Everyone Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes

Currently in Bible in a Year with Fr Mike, I'm listening to the books of conquests, of Joshua and Judges, of God's People claiming the promised land. In explaining this period of salvation history, Fr Mike mentioned that after wandering in the desert for 40 years, God made a new covenant with them even though he knew as a people they would be disloyal, fickle and unfaithful; because after 400 years of captivity in Egypt, they had grown accustomed to an idolatrous and paganistic way of life. In spite of all the miracles God performed to free his chosen people, this is what they yearned for time and time again, when their hearts were tested by God as they wandered in freedom in the desert under the leadership of Moses and Joshua. But what really made me reflect on how human nature has not changed, is the period of Judges, where 'every person did what he saw as being right and just in his own eyes'. In other words, God's people followed the dictates of their own hearts, minds and wills, and took matters into their own hands.

And even though this happened thousands of years ago, strangely enough, I get a strong sense that this is what seems to be happening currently in the Church in Australia.

I feel it most acutely when my wife and I are on holidays and go to different places for Sunday Mass. It pains me to see Catholics, be they bishops, priests, religious or lay people, worshipping according what they consider right in their own eyes; and unashamedly doing it as if God doesn't know or see what they're doing! These are Catholics who entered into a new and everlasting covenant with God, that was sealed by the blood of his only begotten Son. But rather than read the Catechism and find out what the Church actually teaches about worshipping God, some of them follow not only what they believe, feel and see as right, but latch on to the latest social media commentary and opinions about it all. They forget, and some probably aren't aware, that we are living in what is known in salvation history as the period of the Church, of which Jesus is the living head, the holy Father his chosen vicar, and the Holy Spirit the Church's divine guide and inspiration in all things. God's Church is the bulwark of truth and the goal of his plan for salvation. He has divinely revealed to her through his Son, the how, the where, the when and the what of sacrifice and worship definitively, and no one can change it.

God did away with whole nations and principalities to free his people's hearts from an idolatrous way of life. He punished people, be they judges, kings, mediators, priests or prophets who did not carry out his commands to the very letter with regard to sacrifice and worship. And what divine revelation continues to show us is that those in the Church who consider themselves clever enough to take matters into their own hands, and do what they consider to be right in their own eyes when it comes sacrifice and worship, especially bishops and priests, do so at their own peril.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

"Mary is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way
of approaching Jesus."

St Louis de Montfort

Pray for These Children

Pope Francis, First World Children's Day, 25-05-2024

There are so many girls and boys who cannot go to school. These are realities that I carry in my heart, and I pray for them. We need to pray for children who cannot go to school, for children who suffer because of wars, for children who have no food, and for children who are sick but have no one to take care of them.

Friend

Pope Francis, Regina Caeli address, 05-05-2024

Today the Gospel tells us about Jesus who says to the Apostles: "No longer do I call you servants, but friends". What does this mean? In the Bible, the "servants" of God are special people to whom He entrusts important missions, as for example Moses, King David, the prophet Elijah, up to the Virgin Mary. They are people in whose hands God places his treasures (cf. Mt 25:21). But according to Jesus, all this is not enough to say who we are for him. It is not enough: more is required, something greater, that goes beyond goods and plans themselves: it takes friendship.

As children, we learn about the beauty of this experience: we offer our friends our toys and the most beautiful gifts; then as we grow up, as teenagers, we confide our first secrets to them; as young people we offer our loyalty; as adults we share satisfactions and worries; as seniors we share the memories, the respect and the silences of long days. The Word of God, in the Book of Proverbs, tells us that "Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel". Let us think about our friends for a moment and thank the Lord for them!

Friendship is not the fruit of calculation, nor of compulsion: it arises spontaneously when we recognize something of ourselves in the other. And if it is true friendship, it is so strong that it does not fail even in the face of betrayal. "A friend loves at all times" – states the Book of Proverbs again – as Jesus shows us when he says to Judas, who betrays him with a kiss: "Do what you came for, friend!". A true friend does not abandon you, even when you make mistakes: he corrects you, perhaps he reproaches you, but he forgives you and does not abandon you.

And today in the Bible, Jesus tells us that for him we are precisely this, friends: people who are dear beyond all merit and expectation, to whom he extends his hand and offers his love, his Grace, his Word; with whom – with us, friends – he shares what is dearest to him, all that he has heard from the Father. Even to the point of making himself fragile for us, of placing himself in our hands without defence or pretence, because he loves us. The Lord loves us. As a friend he wants our good and he wants us to share in his.

And so let us ask ourselves: what face does the Lord have for me? The face of a friend or of a stranger? Do I feel loved by him as a loved one? And what is the face of Jesus that I show to others, especially to those who err and need forgiveness? May Mary help us to grow in friendship with her Son and to spread it around us.

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Signs of Life

It was uplifting to read of the huge Corpus Christi procession held in Sydney this year – they had 15,000 people process through the city streets with the Blessed Sacrament! Archbishop Anthony Fisher noted (email newsletter), "In doing so, you proclaimed to our city the gift of redemption in Christ Jesus, not through your words but simply by walking with Christ whom you love. You proclaimed that Christ lives in our city, our communities, our hearts." In relation to the many challenges to religious freedom we are now facing in Australia, Archbishop Fisher continued, "I am convinced that the answer to such challenges is less about robust argument and clever rhetoric, but by the bold and prayerful witness of Catholics who want to walk with Christ not just on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, but every day of our lives."

In Hobart, they had the same annual Eucharistic procession through the city streets. Archbishop Julian Porteous stated (Facebook), "On the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Church not only celebrates the Eucharist, but solemnly bears it in procession, publicly proclaiming that the Sacrifice of Christ is for the salvation of the whole world. Let us never be afraid of being witnesses to our Catholic faith, and always embrace the precious gift that we have in the Blessed Sacrament with renewed devotion."

In a pastoral letter on religious freedom (Salt of the Earth), Archbishop Porteous stated: "As the Church we cannot stand by as we experience our freedoms being taken from us. The time has come to take a clear stand and say, "enough is enough".

Ed.

George Cardinal Pell and The Family

On the 15 September 2019, George Cardinal Pell included the following comments in Volume 2 of his Prison Journal:

One of my most frequent correspondents, and among the best theologians in that group, is involved in teaching the theology of the body. She expressed her admiration for the writings of Cardinals Arinze and Sarah, saying that theirs is exactly what she needs as she is "living in a deceptively comfortable culture that can put the faith to sleep if I'm not diligent".

She then went to the heart of the struggle for the family, which I fear could be a harder struggle than the battle for the faith. Faith and family are intimately connected for most of us, and it is hard to know which is the chicken and which the egg for both belief and unbelief. "We will never really reform the family in the world until we reclaim the genuine spirituality of the family, grounded in the Genesis story. It's like St John Paul gave the key to the treasure, but we threw it away and are trying to open the chest with a backhoe."

The Genesis story begins with the declaration, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. God's process of creation lasted some six days; and before his day of rest God said, 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness'. God did this 'and settled the man in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it'. God allowed the man freedom but placed a restriction on the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. God also recognized that, 'it is not good that man should be alone'. He sought a suitable partner from the existing creation 'but no helpmate suitable was found'. So, God created a woman from the man's rib. 'Now both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame in front of each other'. This is hardly surprising for the first commandment given by God to man was 'be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth'. Indeed, the importance God gave to this 'be fruitful' is indicated by the same commandment being given to Noah and his family after the flood.

And so, the first family began with the creation of the woman. However, the process of filling the earth was frustrated by Satan. After the fall, Adam tried to justify his hiding from God by his nakedness. God's response was, 'Who told you that you were naked?' So, nakedness is not contrary to God's plan for creation. Indeed, after the fall 'the man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain'. Sadly, the birth of Cain demonstrated that Satan was still very active. Yet it is birth within a family that is God's chosen way of continuing his process of creation.

Cardinal Pell notes that 'Faith and family are intimately connected'. The book of Genesis certainly illustrates the point. It is also noteworthy that two of the sacraments included in the church founded by Jesus are the Sacrament of Orders to nurture our faith, and the Sacrament of Marriage to continue God's process of creation.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Sacred Heart Prayer

St John Henry Newman

O Mother of Jesus, and my Mother, let me dwell with you, cling to you and love you with ever-increasing love. I promise the honour, love and trust of a child. Give me a mother's protection, for I need your watchful care. You know better than any other the thoughts and desires of the Sacred Heart. Keep constantly before my mind the same thoughts, the same desires, that my heart may be filled with zeal for the interests of the Sacred Heart of your Divine Son. Instil in me a love of all that is noble, that I may no longer be easily turned to selfishness. Help me, dearest Mother, to acquire the virtues that God wants of me: to forget myself always, to work solely for him, without fear of sacrifice. I shall always rely on your help to be what Jesus wants me to be. I am his; I am yours, my good Mother! Give me each day your holy and maternal blessing until my last evening on earth, when your Immaculate Heart will present me to the heart of Jesus in heaven, there to love and bless you and your divine Son for all eternity. Amen.

Marriage Support

Pope Francis to couples responsible for the [Teams of Our Lady] Movement, 04-05-2024

It is a true mission to accompany married couples today! Protecting marriage indeed means protecting an entire family, it means saving all the relationships generated by marriage: the love between couples, between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren; it means saving that witness of a love that is possible and forever, which young people struggle to believe in. Indeed, children need to receive from their parents the certainty that God created them out of love, and that one day they too will be able to love and be loved as their mother and father did. Be sure that the seed of love, sown in their hearts by their parents, will germinate sooner or later.

I see a great urgency today: to help young people to discover that Christian marriage is a vocation, a specific calling that God addresses to a man and a woman so that they can fully realize themselves as generative, becoming a father and a mother, and bringing the Grace of their Sacrament into the world. This Grace is the love of Christ united with that of the married couple, His presence between them, it is God's fidelity to their love: it is He who gives them the strength to grow together every day and to remain united.

Today, it is thought that the success of a marriage depends only on the willpower of the people. It does not. If it were so, it would be a burden, a yoke placed on the shoulders of two poor creatures. Marriage, on the other hand, is a "three-way step", in which Christ's presence between the bride and groom makes the journey possible ...

In the first years of marriage, it is necessary above all to discover faith within the couple, to taste it, to savour it by learning to pray together. Many people marry today without understanding how faith enters into their married life, perhaps because no-one bore witness to it before them prior to their marriage. I invite you to help them with a "catechumenal" journey – let's call it that – of rediscovery of the faith, both personal and as a couple – so that they learn straight away to make room for Jesus and, with Him, succeed in taking care of their marriage. ...

You can be like flames that kindle other flames to faith, especially among the youngest couples: do not let them accumulate sufferings and wounds in the solitude of their homes. Help them to discover the oxygen of faith gently, patiently, and trusting in the action of the Holy Spirit. ...

Without Christian communities, families feel alone, and loneliness does a great deal of harm! With your charism, you can become rescuers attentive towards those who are in need, those who are alone, those who have family problems and do not know how to talk about them because they are ashamed or have lost hope. In your dioceses, you can make families understand the importance of helping each other and forming a network; building communities where Christ can "dwell" in the homes and in family relations. ...

I entrust your mission and all your families to the Virgin Mary, so that She may protect you, keep you steadfast in Christ, and always make you witnesses of His love. In this year dedicated to prayer, may you discover and rediscover the joy of praying, praying together at home, with simplicity and in daily life.

Vatican.va

Good Sheep

St Augustine

If only good shepherds be not lacking! Far be it from us that they should be lacking, and far be it from divine mercy not to call them forth and establish them.

It is certain that if there are good sheep, there are also good shepherds: in fact it is from good sheep that good shepherds are derived.

Looking for You

St Augustine

Will he, who sought you first when you despised him instead of seeking him, despise you, O sheep, if you seek him?

Begin, therefore, to seek him, the one who sought you first and carried you on his shoulders. Make his words come true: the sheep that belong to me listen to my voice and follow me.

“Do Not Cast Me Off in my Old Age”

Pope Francis, Message for the 4th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, to be held 28 July 2024

God never abandons his children, never. Even when our age advances and our powers decline, when our hair grows white and our role in society lessens, when our lives become less productive and can risk appearing useless. God does not regard appearances; he does not disdain to choose those who, to many people, may seem irrelevant. God discards no stone; indeed, the “oldest” are the firm foundation on which “new” stones can rest, in order to join in erecting a spiritual edifice. ...

At the same time, in the Psalms we also find this heartfelt plea to the Lord: “In my old age do not abandon me”. Words that are strong, even crude. They make us think of the extreme suffering of Jesus, who cried out on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”.

In the Bible, then, we find both the certainty of God’s closeness at every stage of life and the fear of abandonment, particularly in old age and in times of pain. There is no contradiction here. If we look around, we have no difficulty seeing that its words reflect an utterly evident reality. All too often, loneliness is the bleak companion of our lives as elderly persons and grandparents. ...

The Psalm cited above – with its plea not to be abandoned in old age – speaks to a conspiracy surrounding the life of the elderly. This may seem an exaggeration, but not if we consider that the loneliness and abandonment of the elderly is not by chance or inevitable, but the fruit of decisions – political, economic, social and personal decisions – that fail to acknowledge the *infinite dignity* of each person, “beyond every circumstance, state or situation the person may ever encounter” (Declaration *Dignitas Infinita*, 1).

This happens once we lose sight of the value of each individual and people are then judged in terms of their cost, which is in some cases considered too high to pay. Even worse, often the elderly themselves fall victim to this mindset; they are made to consider themselves a burden and to feel that they should be the first to step aside.

Then too nowadays many women and men seek personal fulfilment in a life as independent as possible and detached from other people. Group memberships are in crisis and individualism is celebrated: the passage from “us” to “me” is one of the most evident signs of our times. The family, which is the first and most radical argument against the notion that we can save ourselves by ourselves, has been one of the victims of this individualistic culture.

Yet once we grow old and our powers begin to decline, the illusion of individualism, that we need no one and can live without social bonds, is revealed for what it is. Indeed, we find ourselves needing everything, but at a point in life when we are alone, no longer with others to help, with no one whom we can count on. It is a grim discovery that many people make only when it is too late.

Solitude and abandonment have become recurrent elements in today’s social landscape. They have multiple roots. In some cases, they are the result of calculated exclusion, a sort of deplorable “social conspiracy”; in others, tragically, a matter of an individual’s personal decision. In still other cases, the elderly submit to this reality, pretending that it is their free choice. Increasingly, we have lost “the taste of fraternity”; we find it difficult even to think of an alternative. ...

[B]y remaining close to the elderly and acknowledging their unique role in the family, in society and in the Church, we will ourselves receive many gifts, many graces, many blessings!

On this Fourth World Day devoted to them, let us show our tender love for the grandparents and the elderly members of our families. Let us spend time with those who are disheartened and no longer hope in the possibility of a different future. In place of the self-centred attitude that leads to loneliness and abandonment, let us instead show the open heart and the joyful face of men and women who have the courage to say “I will not abandon you”, and to set out on a different path.

To all of you, dear grandparents and elderly persons, and to all those who are close to you I send my blessing, accompanied by my prayers. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Vatican.va

Hope Does Not Disappoint

Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025

1. *Spes non confundit.* "Hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee that, in accordance with an ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims every twenty-five years.

My thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope who will travel to Rome in order to experience the Holy Year and to all those others who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches. For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "door" (cf. Jn 10:7,9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope" (1 Tim 1:1).

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope. Taking it as our guide, let us return to the message that the Apostle Paul wished to communicate to the Christians of Rome.

2. "Since we are justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God... Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1-2,5).

Miracle Attributed to Blessed Carlo Acutis

By Devin Watkins, Vatican News, 23-05-2024

Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, met Thursday with Pope Francis, who approved the promulgation of several decrees related to the causes of canonization of several men and women. For young Catholics, the most interesting is surely the recognition of a miracle attributed to Blessed Carlo Acutis.

The young layman was born on May 3, 1991, in London, England, and died on October 12, 2006, in Monza, Italy, succumbing to leukemia at the age of 15. Pope Francis beatified the millennial in 2020 in Assisi, where Blessed Carlo had made multiple pilgrimages and where his mortal remains rest.

The miracle recognized on Thursday is related to a woman from Costa Rica. On July 8, 2022, Liliana prayed at Blessed Carlo's tomb in Assisi, leaving a letter describing her plea. Six days earlier, on July 2, her daughter Valeria had fallen from her bicycle in Florence, where she was attending university. She had suffered severe head trauma, and required craniotomy surgery and the removal of the right occipital bone to reduce pressure on her brain, with what her doctors said was a very low chance of survival.

Liliana's secretary began praying immediately to Blessed Carlo Acutis, and on July 8, Liliana made her pilgrimage to his tomb in Assisi. That same day, the hospital informed her that Valeria had begun to breathe spontaneously. The next day, she began to move and partially regain her speech. On July 18, a CAT scan proved that her haemorrhage had disappeared, and on August 11, Valeria was moved to rehabilitation therapy. She made quick progress, and on September 2, Valeria and Liliana made another pilgrimage to Assisi to thank Blessed Carlo for his intercession.

In the decree released on Thursday, Pope Francis announced he will convene a Consistory of Cardinals to deliberate the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis...

VaticanNews.va

Praying for Priests

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

A young lady, a member of a new group of consecrated women, asked me what I thought was a priest's greatest need. Her group sensed they needed to pray for priests but were not sure what they should be praying for.

My answer came from the heart: *Pray for good bishops. A priest's greatest need is a good bishop.*

Damascus

From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*,
by Fr John Speekman (p.41)

Saul,
struck blind.
Blind!?
Yes -
but struck.
What joy!

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 each previous issue of ITD from Jan/Feb 2023. Contact ITD to place your order. - Ed.

The Next Step – Please Help

Thank you to all those who have bought a copy (or two!) of Fr Speekman's book over the past year. Your purchase through ITD supports ITD as we receive the full profit as a donation from Fr Speekman. *Things Serious, Silly and Sublime* is now also available through Divine Mercy Publications, which will hopefully reach a wider audience. But the time has come to spread the word even further! We want to reach bookshops and piety stalls, websites and libraries, but we need your help. Please let me know of your favourite bookshops or local piety stalls. Send me their address and I will send them a copy of the book to see if they're interested in having them for sale. Any hints or tips as to how to get a published book up for sale on various websites will also be welcome! And if you're a regular at your local library, ask if they'll accept a copy to put on their shelves and we'll send one. *Anyone who helps us distribute the book in this way, will receive a free, autographed copy of the book themselves!* Thank you in advance for your help and support.

Ed.

Advice for a New Priest

**Archbishop Julian Porteous, at the ordination Mass
of Fr Bede Mary, 03-04-2024, Tasmania**

Every time you stand at the altar and offer the liturgy of worship as designated by the Church you are standing before God for the people. Through you their prayers are presented to the Most High God. As a priest of the New Testament you mediate the grace of the salvation won for us by Christ on Calvary. This is the power and efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the Sacrament of the Sacrifice. The Old Testament carried a sense of the awe and majesty of God. This same awe and majesty should inspire the way in which you celebrate every Mass. Reverence, a sense of the sacred, a mode of silence, draw those attending to a spiritual place that enables them to be conscious of the holiness of God, and assists them in offering themselves to God as a spiritual sacrifice.

Fr Prior, at the First Mass of Fr Bede Mary

In your priestly ministry you must always lead souls to Jesus Christ crucified. Do not ever be afraid of pointing to the crucifix, of holding up the crucifix, the symbol of ignominy that the world rejects, but which is the only path to glory. Any preaching of Christ that does not lead souls to the foot of the cross and goad them on to aspire to share in the sufferings of Christ is deficient. We can say many things – and we must – to be an encouragement to souls, especially in times of trial. But never forget that you can never make the Gospel better by trying to make it more palatable. No, the priest must challenge souls to take up their cross, manfully, generously, for it is only by losing one's life with and for Christ that one finds it. Of that, a priest, and especially a monk priest, must always be the model.

www.notredamemonastery.org

Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland, Victoria

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Heyfield	1 st Fridays 10am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Mass 10am) – 11am 1 st Saturday (Mass 10am) – 11am
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Cranbourne	Fri & Sat in church: (9.30 Mass) – 11am
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am 1 st Friday 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Dec. on)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Maffra	Wednesday (5pm Mass) – 6pm
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday 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 st Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 nd month, Jan. on)
Wonthaggi	2 nd Friday (9.30am Mass) – 10.30am

Prolong the Feast

From a reflection by St Peter Julian Eymard on the Feast of Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi is our feast, we who are adorers of the Blessed Sacrament. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament...exists for the sole purpose of honouring Jesus Christ with a continual feast of Corpus Christi.

To prolong this feast throughout the entire year is the object of our life and happiness. ...

It is also your feast, my dear brethren. ... [W]hen you receive Communion, do you not really celebrate Corpus Christi in your hearts? Oh! You know the joy and happiness Jesus brings with Him!

I will go further and say that for souls who know how to receive Communion, there is only one feast day, that is Communion day. They find therein the object of all the mysteries, the Being Who makes these mysteries and in Whose honour they are celebrated, whereas most Christians recall them only in a vague manner.

More than that! I say that if our Lord were not living in His Sacrament, all our Christian feast days would be nothing but a series of funeral services. The Eucharist is the sun that gives light, life and joy to the feasts of the Church.

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