

Into the Deep

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Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 25-08-2024

"Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6:68). It is a very beautiful expression that gives witness to the friendship and manifests the trust that bind him to Christ, along with the other disciples. ... Peter speaks these words at a critical moment. Jesus has just finished a discourse in which he said he was the "bread come down from heaven". It is a difficult language for people to understand and many, even disciples who were following Him, abandon Him because they did not understand.

The Twelve, however, remained with Him. They stayed because in Him they found "words of eternal life." They heard Him preach, they saw the miracles He performed, and they continue to share with Him public moments and the intimacy of daily life.

The disciples do not always understand what the Master says and does. At times they struggle to accept the paradoxes of His love (cf. Mt 5:38-48), the extreme demands of His mercy (cf. Mt 18:21-22), the radical nature of His way of giving Himself to all. It is not easy for them to understand, but they are faithful. Jesus' choices often go beyond common thinking, beyond the very canons of institutional religion and traditions to the point of creating provocative and embarrassing situations (cf. Mt 15:12). It is not easy to follow Him.

Yet, among the many teachers of that time, Peter and the other apostles found only in Him the answer to the thirst for life, for joy, for love that animates them. Only thanks to Him did they experience the fullness of life they seek, beyond the limits of sin and even death. Therefore, they do not leave. Indeed, all but one, even amidst many falls and times of repentance will remain with Him to the end.

And, brothers and sisters, this also concerns us. Even for us it is not easy to follow the Lord, to understand His way of acting, to make His criteria and His example our own. It is not easy for us. However, the closer we are to Him – the more we adhere to His Gospel, receive His grace in the Sacraments, stay in His company in prayer, imitate Him in humility and charity – the more we experience the beauty of having Him as our Friend and realise that He alone has the "words of eternal life."

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Listen, Lord

Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Incidentally, our prayer should not always be talking. Suppose we went into a doctor's office and said, "Doctor, I've got a pain here and a pain here and a pain here", and then walked out. That's what some people do when they pray. Scripture says, speak Lord, Thy Servant heareth. It doesn't say, listen, lord, thy servant speaketh.

Lest We Forget

St Teresa of Calcutta

If Jesus had not established the Eucharist we would have forgotten the crucifixion. It would have faded into the past and we would have forgotten that Jesus loved us. There is a saying that to be far away from the eyes is to be far away from the heart. To make sure that we do not forget, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as a memorial of his love.

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

Being Mocked by The World

Venerable Fulton Sheen

As the scourging was the reparation for the sins of the flesh, so the crowning with thorns was the atonement for the sins of the mind – for the atheists who wish there were no God, for the doubters whose evil lives becloud their thinking, for the egotists, centred on themselves. The soldiers cursed as the thorns pricked their fingers. Then they cursed the Lord, as they drove the crown of thorns into His head, as a mockery of a royal diadem. Into His hands they placed a reed, the symbol of His kingdom, presumed to be false and unstable like the reed. His flesh, already hanging from Him like purple rags, is now covered with a purple robe to ridicule His claim to kingship of hearts and nations. Blindfolding Him, they struck Him, asking Him to prophesy, or tell whom it was that delivered the blow. They then bowed down before Him in mock reverence, spitting in His face, that all the subsequent...martyrs of the world might have courage in their hour of martyrdom.

In this Mystery is verified the truth of our Saviour's warning: 'If the world hates you, be sure that it hated Me before it learned to hate you. If you belonged to the world, the world would know you for its own and love you; it is because you do not belong to the world, because I have singled you out from the midst of the world, that the world hates you.'

He who expects to preserve His faith without being mocked by the world is either weak in it, or else not so bold in goodness as to draw upon himself the mocking insults of another purple robe and a torturing circle of thorns.

Sunday

Pope Francis, *Desiderio desideravi*, n. 65

Sunday, before being a precept, is a gift that God makes for his people; and for this reason the Church safeguards it with a precept. The Sunday celebration offers to the Christian community the possibility of being formed by the Eucharist.

The Trinity Met

Pope Francis, General Audience, 21-08-2024

In the Gospel of Mark, the scene of Jesus' baptism is described thus: "In those days Jesus came up from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased'" (Mk 1:9 -11).

The entire Trinity met at that moment, on the banks of the Jordan! There is the Father, who is present with His voice; there is the Holy Spirit, who descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and there is He Whom the Father proclaims to be His beloved Son, Jesus.

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Common Language

Have you ever noticed how many Biblical words and phrases have made it into secular conversation? I find it fascinating. I notice it in news reports, interviews and articles, online, in print, on TV or radio, and occasionally in regular conversation. Most of the time the people using the language are non-religious or anti-religious and probably have no idea where it came from. It's amazing how much of Christianity makes it into normal language without people being aware of it anymore.

But now that I finally come to write this, I can only think of a few examples! I will keep 'collecting' them as I come across them, and invite you to do the same and let me know!

Here are some you'll see/hear people refer to in everyday language:

A Good Samaritan
The Golden Rule/Do unto others...
Thou shalt not...
David and Goliath
The prodigal son
The Ten Commandments of...
Noah's Ark
Amen
Alleluia!
To 'crucify' someone.

Ed.

The Holy Spirit Will Come Upon You

Pope Francis, General Audience, 07-08-2024

"How shall this be, since I have no husband?", Mary asks, and the angel answers, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Lk 1:34-35).

When she is faced with tasks beyond her strength, the Church spontaneously asks the same question: "How is this possible?". How is it possible to proclaim Jesus Christ and his salvation to a world that seems to seek only well-being, in this world? The answer is also the same as then: "*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*"... "and you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). This is what Jesus told the Apostles after he had risen, using almost the same identical words. Without the Holy Spirit, the Church cannot move forward, the Church does not grow, the Church cannot preach.

What is said about the Church in general also applies to us, to every baptized person. All of us sometimes find ourselves, in life, in situations beyond our strength and ask ourselves: "How can I cope with this situation?". It helps, in such cases, to remember and repeat to ourselves what the angel said to the Virgin: "*With God nothing will be impossible.*" (Lk 1:37).

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Stay Close

Pope Francis, to Oblates of St Joseph, 26-08-2024

At times, we neglect adoration, but the prayer of adoration, silence before the Lord, ... we should all do this... This is how, first of all, Saint Joseph responded to the immense gift of having the very Son of God made man in his home: staying with Him, listening to Him, talking with Him and sharing everyday life with Him. Let us remember this: without Jesus, we cannot remain standing! And every one of us, in this moment I ask you to think of your own sins: we are all sinners. But think of your sins, now, and see that when you fell into sin, it was because you were not close to the Lord: it is always like this. Those who are close to the Lord cling on immediately, and do not fall. Closeness to the Lord.

And all this will reflect positively on your apostolate too, especially on that mission that characterizes you as "apostles of youth". The young do not need us: they need God! And the more we live in His presence, the more we are capable of helping them to encounter Him, without pointless protagonism and having at heart only their salvation and their full happiness.

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Being Accepted

Pope Benedict XVI, 22-12-2011

Josef Pieper, in his book on love, has shown that man can only accept himself if he is accepted by another. He needs the other's presence, saying to him, with more than words: it is good that you exist.

Only from the You can the I come into itself. Only if it is accepted, can it accept itself. Those who are unloved cannot even love themselves.

This sense of being accepted comes in the first instance from other human beings.

But all human acceptance is fragile. Ultimately we need a sense of being accepted unconditionally.

Only if God accepts me, and I become convinced of this, do I know definitively: it is good that I exist. It is good to be a human being. ...

Where doubt over God becomes prevalent, then doubt over humanity follows inevitably. We see today how widely this doubt is spreading. We see it in the joylessness, in the inner sadness, that can be read on so many human faces today.

Only faith gives me the conviction: it is good that I exist. It is good to be a human being, even in hard times. Faith makes one happy from deep within.

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Cardinal George Pell's tomb inscription at the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney:

CHRISTUM ET ECCLESIAM VEHEMENTER DILEXIT.

HE HAS LOVED CHRIST AND THE CHURCH VEHEMENTLY.

Priestly Fatherhood and Fatherly Priesthood

Recently our friend Fr John Speekman celebrated his 40th anniversary of ordination. My wife, who was creating a card for his anniversary, asked me what it is about his priesthood over the years that I have been most grateful for. I immediately said, "his priestly fatherhood and his fatherly priesthood". And while this may have rolled off my tongue and sounded like one and the same thing, it really got me thinking more deeply about it.

First of all, the sacrament of Holy Orders separates a priest from common ordinary life and in a unique and powerful way conforms him to Christ. So much so, that he will never be ordinary again, and will always be a spiritual father until the day he dies.

The Catechism tells us the priest who acts in the person of Christ is a living image of God the Father (ccc, 1548-9). As such he is a living sign of God the Father's presence and power; a visible sign that reveals and relives on earth the very fatherhood of God in the parish family.

Theologically, this is how the Church has always seen and understood priestly fatherhood and why she calls them fathers; because it's a supernatural one. As such it is everything that natural fatherhood is, but far, far more. By administering the sacrament of Baptism, they communicate Christ's divine life to souls just as natural fathers communicate biological human life. Like natural fathers they have to take responsibility for the souls to whom they have given life in the hundreds of households in their parish.

For me, as someone who worked for and with Fr Speekman, this is where I witnessed and experienced firsthand what fatherly priesthood not only entailed but meant.

As a father of souls who took his spiritual responsibilities very seriously, with evangelisation and catechesis always in the forefront of his mind, he always set out to thoroughly, coherently and effectively prepare the souls whom the Church, his Bride, had given him. Apart from teaching and disciplining them, guiding and correcting them, forgiving them, praying for them, and loving them even when they were difficult and caused him heartache, he believed that evangelization and proper Baptismal preparation was essential as a basis for ensuring the fruits of all the other sacraments could be realised in his spiritual children, especially going regularly to Confession and participation in Sunday Mass.

It wasn't until my wife and I got to Morwell that priestly fatherhood and fatherly priesthood became spiritual realities that described our experiences and relationships in a parish family. It is one thing as a priest to communicate divine life to the newly baptised, but to be a spiritual 'dad' who cares, guides, nourishes, nurtures and sustains them as his children is another thing altogether. Sometimes the latter is much harder. This is why his canonical removal from the parish of Morwell not only did my head in, but was like a dagger to my heart and remains so to this very day, because this was the part he was particularly good at.

Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria

In the Person of Christ the Head

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1548 In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*:

It is the same priest, Christ Jesus, whose sacred person his minister truly represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*). - Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*

Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ. - St Thomas Aquinas

1549 Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers. In the beautiful expression of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop is *typos tou Patros*: he is like the living image of God the Father.

40 Days for Life, Melbourne

Our 2024 campaign for 40 Days for Life will **commence on Wednesday 25th September and close on Sunday 3rd November**. This year there is a **location change** and we will be stationed at River Gum Creek Reserve Playground, Hallam Road, **Hampton Park**.

This new location is directly across from Hampton Park Shopping Centre and around 200 metres from Hampton Park Women's Health Clinic, our target abortion clinic for this campaign. The shopping centre has plenty of parking, as well as toilets, cafes etc. The toilets at the park are not currently in operation. The playground is large, covered and fenced, so it is very safe for children.

The address of the clinic is 4 Warana Rd, Hampton Park – please do not pray near the abortion clinic. *Please note that in Victoria, it is a criminal offense to witness for life, to offer help to women or to pray within 150m of an abortion facility.*

The calendar is open at www.40daysforlife.com/en/melbourne for anyone wishing to populate volunteer hours so please don't hesitate to start planning and volunteering!

To prepare for our campaign/prayer vigil we are hosting a **World Day against Abortion on Saturday 7th September** at St. Philip's Catholic Church Hall, 60 Junction Road, Blackburn North, Victoria. The day promises to be interesting with some great speakers including a guest author from Sydney, Mark Sutherland who has published a book about his grandfather's legal battle with Marie Stopes in the UK. Mark will speak about his book "Exterminating Poverty" which details Stopes' involvement in the eugenics movement in the UK, amongst other things.

9am Mass (TLM) followed by morning tea. 10:30am - talk by Sr. Maureen from Nigeria. 12 noon - talk by Fr. Francis Denton. 1pm - lunch. 1:45 pm - talk by Mark Sutherland. 3pm finish. \$10. Tea & coffee available all day, lunch provided. Book at www.trybooking.com/CUGWI.

Thank you for your continuing support – we can't make this happen without you.

Evelyn Ogilby, Communications Officer – 40 Days For Life (Melbourne)

Let the Heavens Exult

St Francis of Assisi

Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest!
O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity!
O sublime humility! O humble sublimity!
The Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under an ordinary piece of bread!
Brothers, look at the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before Him!
Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by Him!
Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!

Real Holiness

St Pio of Pietrelcina

Let us keep before our minds that which makes up real holiness.

Holiness means getting above ourselves; it means perfect mastery of all our passions. It means having real and continual contempt for ourselves and for the things of the world to the point of preferring poverty rather than wealth, humiliation rather than glory, suffering rather than pleasure.

Holiness means loving our neighbor as ourself for love of God. In this connection holiness means loving those who curse us, who hate and persecute us and even doing good to them.

Holiness means living humbly, being disinterested, prudent, just, patient, kind, chaste, meek, diligent, carrying out one's duties for no other reason than that of pleasing God and receiving from Him alone the reward one deserves.

The Gift of Temperance

Pope Francis, General Audience, 17-04-2024

Today I will talk about the fourth and final cardinal virtue: *temperance*. ... The Greek term literally means "power over oneself". Temperance is a power over oneself. This virtue is thus the capacity for self-mastery, the art of not letting oneself be overcome by rebellious passions, of establishing order in what Manzoni calls "the jumble of the human heart".

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that "temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods". The *Catechism* continues, "It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honourable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion, and does not follow the base desires, but restrains the appetites" (cf. 1809).

Therefore, temperance, as the Italian word says, is the virtue of the right measure. In every situation, one behaves wisely, because people who act always moved by impulse or exuberance are ultimately unreliable. ... In a world where many people boast about saying what they think, the temperate person instead prefers to think about what he says. ... He does not make empty promises but makes commitments to the extent that he can fulfil them.

The temperate person acts judiciously also with regards to pleasures. The free course of impulses and total license accorded to pleasures end up backfiring on us, plunging us into a state of boredom. How many people who have wanted to try everything voraciously have found themselves losing the taste for everything! It is better, then, to seek the right measure. For example, in order to appreciate a good wine, tasting it in small sips is better than swallowing it all in one go. We all know this.

The temperate person knows how to weigh words and dose them well. He thinks about what he says. He does not allow a moment's anger to ruin relationships and friendships that can then only be rebuilt with difficulty. Especially in family life, where inhibitions are lower, we all run the risk of not keeping tensions, irritations and anger in check. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent, but both require the right measure. And this applies to many things, for instance being with others and being alone.

If the temperate person knows how to control his own irascibility, this does not mean we always find him with a peaceful and smiling face. Indeed, at times it is necessary to be indignant, but always in the right way. These are the words: the *just measure*, the *right way*. A word of rebuke is at times healthier than a sour, rancorous silence. The temperate person knows that nothing is more uncomfortable than correcting another person, but he also knows that it is necessary; otherwise, one offers free reign to evil. In some cases, the temperate person succeeds in holding extremes together: he affirms absolute principles, asserts non-negotiable values, but also knows how to understand people, and he shows empathy for them. ...

The gift of the temperate person is therefore balance, a quality as precious as it is rare. Indeed, everything in our world pushes to excess. Instead, temperance combines well with Gospel values such as littleness, discretion, modesty, meekness. The temperate person appreciates the respect of others but does not make it the sole criterion for every action and every word. He is sensitive, he is able to cry and is not ashamed about it, but he does not weep over himself. In defeat, he rises up again; in victory, he is capable of returning to his former reserved life. He does not seek applause but knows that he needs others.

Brothers and sisters, it is not true that temperance makes one grey and joyless. On the contrary, it lets one enjoy the goods of life better: staying together at the table, the tenderness of certain friendships, confidence with wise people, wonder at the beauty of creation. Happiness with temperance is the joyfulness that flourishes in the heart of those who recognize and value what counts most in life.

Let us pray to the Lord that He might give us this gift: the gift of maturity, of age, of emotional maturity, of social maturity. The gift of temperance.

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Brotherhood Among Priests

Fr Gregory Bellamy, Chairman, Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy

Priestly identity and ministry is the private property of no one man. It is a sharing in the priesthood of the God-man, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in union with the bishops and our brother priests.

Presbyterium ordinis, which will be 50 years old in December next year, does not envisage the Diocesan priest as a 'lone wolf' who occasionally tolerates spending time with his bishop and other clergy. Rather, the decree teaches that the priests of a Diocese form a brotherhood, together with their Bishop who has a "heavy responsibility" for the sanctity of his priests and who therefore "should exercise the greatest care in [their] continual formation" (no. 7). Priests in their turn should respect in their bishops "the authority of Christ" and "stand by their bishops in sincere charity and obedience" (no. 7).

Under the bishop, and engaging in a diversity of assignments, priests together work to build up the Body of Christ. Naturally enough, they differ in temperament, culture, and background. Unfortunately, sometimes the differences in theology and practice are serious. Nonetheless, *Presbyterium ordinis* insists: "It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, help one another always to be fellow workers in the truth. Each one, therefore, is united in special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry and brotherhood with the other members of this priesthood" (no. 8).

Older priests should receive younger priests as true brothers and assist them in their growth, and they should "endeavor to understand the mentality of younger priests, even though it be different from their own" (no. 8). But likewise younger priests "should respect the age and experience of their seniors", seek their advice, and work in a spirit of cooperation (no. 8). "In a fraternal spirit, priests should extend hospitality, cultivate kindness ... share their goods in common ... [and] should gladly and joyfully gather together for recreation" (no. 8).

Priestly fraternity affords us encouragement and keeps us on the right track. When it is absent we can find our passion for ministry depleted and the mental weight of our challenges exaggerated. Brother priests often understand the challenges we face better than anyone else and, when our fraternity is genuine, can offer personal insight, authentic sympathy, and even robustly honest but needed feedback. Sometimes the only person who will tell you the truth you need to hear is a trusted brother priest!

Being personally enriched by priestly fraternity is important. But priestly fraternity is also a responsibility and an important form of service. Perhaps nothing is more poisonous to priestly life than isolation, whether self-imposed or imposed by circumstances outside our control. Priests can be isolated in rural areas because of the tyranny of distance, but they can also be isolated in the middle of the city. Priests can be isolated because they feel there are no like-minded men in their presbyterate, or there are no men of a similar age, or no men of a similar cultural background. Priests can suffer self-imposed isolation because they are demoralised or the weight of their many responsibilities seems crushing. And sometimes no one even notices that a priest is isolated: everyone assumes that he must be part of someone else's social group but in fact he belongs to none.

To all priests: How often do you ring a brother priest just to check how he is going? How quickly do you return a missed call? How often do you arrange social functions for other priests to come together? Do you contact your brother priests on their ordination anniversaries and remember to pray for them? And what about the priest that may not easily fit-in with his fellows; from a different culture, or different age-group, or with different sensibilities? Priestly fraternity is a joyful responsibility laid on the shoulders of every priest.

It is a particular joy for priests to meet with seminarians. Their enthusiasm is an encouragement to priests who, as fathers, pray that God will raise up many young men to succeed them in the ministerial priesthood. Fatherhood should be fruitful, so we pray for and offer special encouragement to the young men who are in formation or discerning where Christ is calling them.

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www.clergy.asn.au

With you

Pope Francis, to participants in the XIII International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers to Rome, 30-07-2024

The theme of your pilgrimage, *With you*, particularly strikes me. Do you know why? Because it says everything in two words. This is beautiful, and it leaves room for searching and for finding possible meanings.

With you. This is an expression that encapsulates the mystery of our lives, the mystery of love. When a human being has been conceived in the womb, the mother says to him or her, "Do not be afraid, I am with you". Yet mysteriously, the mother also feels that this little baby is saying to her, "I am with you". In a different way, this also applies to the father. ...

Your experience of serving the liturgy reminds me that the first subject, the agent of this "with you", is God. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, *I am there among them*" (Mt 18:20). This occurs above all during Mass, in the Eucharist, where the God who is "with you" becomes a real and concrete presence in the Body and Blood of Christ. The priest sees this mystery take place every day in his hands; and you see it too, when you serve at the altar. When we receive Holy Communion, we experience that Jesus is "with us" both spiritually and physically. He says to you, "I am with you", but not in words, instead he does so with that gesture, that act of love, which is the Eucharist. You too, in Communion, can say to the Lord Jesus, "I am with you", not in words, but with your heart and your body, with your love. Precisely because Jesus is with us, we can truly be with him.

That is the key point, dear young friends! I hope I can make myself understood about the "with you" that we can share with others. In this way, we can carry out Christ's commandment to "love one another *as I have loved you*". If you minister with an attentive mind, heart and body, like Mary, then the mystery of God who is *with you* gives you the ability to be *with others* in a new way. Thanks to Jesus, always and only thanks to him – you also can say to your neighbour, "I am with you", not in words, but in deeds, with gestures, with your heart, with concrete closeness – please do not forget this tangible closeness. You can do so by weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice, without judgement, without prejudice, without selfishness and excluding no one. Even with those we might not like; with those different from me; with foreigners; with those whom we feel do not understand us; with those who never come to church; with those who say they do not believe in God.

Dear young people, such a great mystery is contained in these two little words, *with you!* Let us thank those who chose them, and special thanks to you for coming here as pilgrims in order to share the joy of belonging to Jesus, of being servants of his love, servants of his wounded heart that heals our wounds, that saves us from death, and that gives us eternal life.

Vatican.va

Open Ourselves Up

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 11-08-2024

[I]t can happen to us...that instead of truly listening to what the Lord has to say to us, we look to Him and others only for a confirmation of what we think, a confirmation of our convictions, our judgements, which are prejudices. But this way of addressing God does not help us to encounter God, to truly encounter Him, nor to open ourselves up to the gift of His light and His grace, in order to grow in goodness, to do His will and to overcome failings and difficulties. Brothers and sisters, faith and prayer, when they are true, open the mind and the heart; they do not close them.

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Horoscopes

Catechism of the Catholic Church (First Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me"), n.2116

All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future.

Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honour, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

Learn and Know the Heart of God

Pope Francis, General Audience 12-06-2024

One way of conducting spiritual reading of the word of God is that which is called the *lectio divina*, a word whose meaning we perhaps do not understand. It consists of dedicating a time of the day to the personal and meditative reading of a passage of the Scripture. And this is very important: every day, take the time to listen to, to contemplate, reading a passage from the Scripture.

And therefore, I recommend you always to have a pocket edition of the Gospel and keep it in your bag, in your pocket... So, when you are travelling, or have a little free time, take it and read it. This is very important for life. Get a pocket Gospel and during the day read once, twice, when you have the chance.

But the quintessential spiritual reading of the Scripture is the community reading in the Liturgy in the Mass. There, we see how an event or a teaching, given by the Old Testament, finds its full expression in the Gospel of Christ. And the homily, that comment by the celebrant, must help to transfer the Word of God from the book to life. ... A brief homily: a thought, a sentiment and a cue for action, for what to do. No more than eight minutes. Because the homily must help transfer the Word of God from the book to life. And among the many words of God that we listen to every day in Mass or in the Liturgy of the Hours, there is always one that is meant specially for us. Something that touches the heart. Welcomed into the heart, it can illuminate our day and inspire our prayer. It is a question of not letting it fall on deaf ears!

Let us conclude with a thought that can help us to fall in love with the Word of God. Like certain pieces of music, the Sacred Scripture too has a base note that accompanies it from the beginning to the end, and this note is the love of God. "The whole Bible", observes Saint Augustine, "does nothing but tell of God's love". And Saint Gregory the Great defines the Scripture as "a letter from God Almighty to His creature", like a letter from a bridegroom to his bride, and exhorts us to "learn and know the heart of God in the words of God". "Through this revelation", says Vatican Council II again, "the invisible God, out of the abundance of His love, speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself" (*Dei Verbum*, 2).

Dear brothers and sisters, keep reading the Bible! But do not forget the pocket Gospel: carry it in your bag, in your pocket, and at some moment during the day, read a passage. And this will make you very close to the Holy Spirit, who is in the Word of God. May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures and now breathes from them, help us to grasp this love of God in the concrete situations of life.

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Aid to the Church in Need

Annual Stats

- Offices in 23 countries
- 359,920 benefactors worldwide
- \$234.1 million received in donations and legacies in 2023 worldwide
- Projects in 138 countries
- 5,573 projects supported worldwide
- 81.3% of donations used for mission-related expenditure
- 1.74 million Mass offerings to support poor priests; on average, Mass was celebrated every 18 seconds for the intentions of our benefactors somewhere in the world
- 10,991 seminarians supported
- 930 projects supporting religious Sisters
- 969 construction projects; almost a third were churches or chapels
- 1,041 vehicles for pastoral work (cars, motorcycles, bicycles, buses and boats)

ACN Annual Report 2023, [Aidtochurch.org](https://www.aidtochurch.org)

On the Church

From an article by Vatican News, 02-08-2024, on the encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*

Sixty years have passed since August 5, 1964, when Pope Paul VI, a little more than a year after his election as Bishop of Rome, announced the publication of *Ecclesiam suam* during the General Audience at Castel Gandolfo. ... The text was entirely handwritten by the Pope. ... The encyclical sets out to make clear "to all men the Church's importance for the salvation of mankind, and her heartfelt desire that Church and mankind should meet each other and should come to know and love each other."

The Church has something to say

Ecclesiam suam then addresses the issue of dialogue with the world. ... "An attitude of preservation of the faith is insufficient... The Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labours. The Church has something to say, the Church has a message to deliver; the Church has a communication to offer;" because "even before converting the world, nay, in order to convert it, we must meet the world and talk to it."

Dialogue

Dialogue, the Pope writes, presupposes "a state of mind...of one who realizes that he can no longer separate his own salvation from the endeavour to save others." Dialogue "is not proud, it is not bitter, it is not offensive. Its authority is intrinsic to the truth it explains, to the charity it communicates, to the example it proposes; it is not a command, it is not an imposition. It is peaceful; it avoids violent methods; it is patient; it is generous." It is "the union of truth and charity, of understanding and love is achieved." ...

"And before speaking, it is necessary to listen, not only to a man's voice, but to his heart. A man must first be understood; and, where he merits it, agreed with." But the Pope warns once more of the dangers that make "the apostle's art a risky one," recalling that "the desire to come together as brothers must not lead to a watering down or subtracting from the truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our faith. In our apostolate we cannot make vague compromises about the principles of faith and action on which our profession of Christianity is based. An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs is, fundamentally, a kind of scepticism about the power and content of the Word of God which we desire to preach. Only those who are completely faithful to the teaching of Christ can be an apostle." ...

A message for everyone

"there is no one who is a stranger to [the Church's] heart, no one in whom its ministry has no interest. It has no enemies, except those who wish to be such." ...

The Primacy of Peter

A concluding passage is devoted to the primacy of Peter, with Paul noting with sorrow that some Christians say "if it were not for the primacy of the Pope, the reunion of the separated churches with the Catholic Church would be easy." "We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position," the Pope says, "not only in that, without the Pope the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because, without the supreme, efficacious and decisive pastoral office of Peter the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse."

"It would be vain to look for other principles of unity in place of the one established by Christ Himself," the Pope says, adding, "We should also like to observe that this fundamental principle of Holy Church has not as its objective a supremacy of spiritual pride and human domination. It is a primacy of service, of ministration, of love. It is not empty rhetoric which confers upon the Vicar of Christ the title of 'Servant of the Servants of God'."

The Secret of the Church's Renewal

Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*, n.51

The Church will rediscover its youthful vitality not so much by changing its external legislation, as by submitting to the obedience of Christ and observing the laws which the Church lays upon itself with the intention of following in Christ's footsteps. Herein lies the secret of the Church's renewal.

Forever is Such a Long Time

From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speekman (p.36,37)

A priest confided to me that he didn't believe in hell. It was clear from the look on his face that he knew he was being naughty, out of line. He smilingly asked, *How could it be imagined that God would allow such a thing? Forever is such a long time, isn't it?*

Like often happens, I didn't know exactly what to reply and therefore said nothing. I knew, of course, he was wrong. The existence of hell is *de fide* and therefore non-negotiable; we are obliged as Catholics to believe in its reality. I guess what confused me was his statement that forever 'is such a long time.'

It's a mistake we can easily make, transferring our earthly way of thinking to heavenly matters, or in this case, to hell. I remembered something I had been taught as a child, *God has no birthdays*. And when we go to heaven, please God, we will not have anniversaries. We will not be able to say: *Today we have been in heaven six years and two months* because in heaven there is no time.

Similarly there is no time in hell. *Forever* is indeed a long time – a very, very, very long time – but forever is not the same as *eternity*, which is an eternally present *now!* And so there is no passing of time in either heaven or hell – both are an eternal *now* – on either side of which there is no past and no future.

And following on from this reflection I am reminded that here on planet Earth we live in a *now* wedged between the past and future. When the Master returns to us it will be precisely and only in this present moment. He will not find us anywhere else.

And this means that to ask 'Will I be ready when he comes?' is actually a silly question. The only meaningful question is 'Am I ready *now?*'

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.

Born of God

St Leo the Great

Born of a virgin mother by the action of the Holy Spirit, Christ keeps his Church spotless and makes her fruitful by the inspiration of the same Spirit. In baptismal regeneration she brings forth children for God beyond all numbering. These are the sons of whom it is written: *They are born not of blood, nor of the desire of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ...*

From every nation on earth, without exception, Christ forms a single flock of those he has sanctified, daily fulfilling the promise he once made: *I have other sheep, not of this fold, whom it is also ordained that I shall lead; and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*

Although it was primarily to Peter that he said: *Feed my sheep*, yet the one Lord guides all the pastors in the discharge of their office and leads to rich and fertile pastures all those who come to the rock. There is no counting the sheep who are nourished with his abundant love, and who are prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of the good shepherd who died for them.

But it is not only the martyrs who share in his passion by their glorious courage; the same is true, by faith, of all who are reborn through baptism. That is why we are to celebrate the Lord's paschal sacrifice with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The leaven of our former malice is thrown out, and a new creature is filled and inebriated with the Lord himself. For the effect of our sharing in the body and blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive. As we have died with him, and have been buried and raised to life with him, so we bear him within us, both in body and in spirit, in everything we do.

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

Encountering Christ in Adoration

Pope Francis, in a message for the National Eucharistic Congress in Madagascar, 23-08-2024

Rediscover the meaning of Eucharistic adoration and the desire to spend time with Christ. It is a process that helps each of you to grow into the Christian you are called increasingly to become. ...

Once you have encountered Christ in adoration, once you have touched and received Him in the Eucharistic celebration, you can no longer keep Him for yourself, but become a missionary of His love for others. ...

At a time when faith in the Lord's real presence is a great challenge, I invite you...to help your brothers and sisters to experience Jesus in the Eucharist. Help them also to make their own lives an offering to God, united to that of Jesus on the altar, so that he may be better known, loved and served.

Vatican.va

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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