

Into the Deep

Issue 250

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

October 2024

Everything Changes!

Pope Francis, Angelus Address 15-09-2024

In reality, to know the Lord, it is not enough to know something about Him, but rather to follow Him, to let oneself be touched and changed by His Gospel. It is a matter of having a relationship with Him, an encounter. I can know many things about Jesus, but if I have not encountered Him, I still do not know who Jesus is. It takes this encounter that changes life: it changes the way of being, it changes the way of thinking, it changes the relationships you have with your brothers and sisters, the willingness to accept and forgive, it changes the choices you make in life. Everything changes if you have truly come to know Jesus! Everything changes.

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Happy Birthday to ITD!

This month marks ITD's 22nd birthday! Little issue number 1 came out in October 2002. When you have a moment, go to the website and browse through some of the earlier issues. It's fascinating how it's grown and changed over time.

Thank you to everyone who has supported ITD over the years, written in, donated, shared it with others, and enjoyed it. It makes my heart happy.

See page 2 of this ITD for some (perhaps) surprising news though.

Ed.

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The True Compass

Pope Francis, Homily, Indonesia 05-09-2024

The Evangelist relates that many people flocked to Jesus and "the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God" (Lk 5:1).

They were looking for him, hungry and thirsting for the word of the Lord and they heard it resound in the words of Jesus.

This scene, then, repeated many times in the Gospel, tells us that the human heart is always searching for a truth that can feed and satisfy its desire for happiness. We cannot be satisfied by human words alone, the thinking of this world and earthly judgments. We always need a light from on high to illuminate our steps, living water that can quench the thirst of the deserts of the soul, consolation that does not disappoint because it comes from heaven and not from the fleeting things of this world.

In the midst of the confusion and vanity of human words, brothers and sisters, there is need for the word of God, the only true compass for our journey, which alone is capable of leading us back to the true meaning of life amid so much woundedness and confusion.

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October

Pope Francis, Angelus address 01-10-2023

Today begins the month of October, the month of the *Rosary* and of the *missions*.

I encourage everyone to experience the beauty of praying the Rosary, contemplating the mysteries of Christ with Mary and invoking her intercession for the needs of the Church and of the world.

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

No More Donations Please

Well, who would've thought that an October (ITD birthday month) would go by without me asking for donations! But this time I'm being cautious. Thinking. Mulling over future options. Toying with the idea of giving up ITD. I've toyed with that idea many times before, of course, but something always comes up to convince me (inspire me!) to continue. We currently have enough donations to last about a year, so this time I'm thinking I'll put a halt on future donations and use up what we have, and then in a year or so, write my final farewell...

Or, if I find that I can't "let go" after all, then I can call for a flood of donations again. It gives me the freedom to stop, and the freedom to continue if I change my mind. Or maybe change to every second month. Or maybe skip a couple of months (e.g. when my sister comes to visit from overseas next year). Or maybe hand over the reins to someone else – any takers? Who knows?

But for now, no more donations please. And as always, a huge "thank you" for always being so generous in supporting ITD. Over all these years! 22 years. 250 issues. Wow... You're amazing. Thank you. The thing I miss most is the number of letters to the editor we used to have in the beginning. And I worry about no increase in subscribers. But I suppose I need to leave that in God's hands. Again.

Ed.

Common Language

Last month (Sept ITD, p.2) I wrote about how many Biblical words and phrases have made it into the media and secular conversation, in spite of the generally non-religious society/media. I could only think of a few examples at the time. Thanks to those who have helped add to the collection – let's keep adding.

Last month we had: A Good Samaritan, the Golden Rule/Do unto others, Thou shalt not, David and Goliath, a prodigal son, Ten Commandments of..., Noah's Ark, Amen, Alleluia, and to 'crucify' someone.

Here are some new ones:

Seek and ye shall find
Calling someone a Judas
Moving Heaven and earth
Thou shalt not kill
Love thy neighbour
Suffer the children
God-given talent
God's own country

And I recently heard the phrase in (Aussie Rules) football – "a Hail Mary kick"! I looked it up and apparently it's been a term in the USA since the 1930's. "A Hail Mary pass is a very long forward pass in American football, typically made in desperation, with an exceptionally small chance of achieving a completion. Due to the difficulty of a completion with this pass, it makes reference to the Catholic "Hail Mary" prayer for strength and help." (Wikipedia). I don't know whether to be horrified or impressed...!

Ed.

Unwantedness

Denise M Cameron, President of Pro-Life Victoria, Editorial in Pro-Life News, Winter 2024, p.2

I was so saddened to read the revelations in a recent podcast produced by the two daughters of the Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone. To their question: "You had said that your mum didn't want you, right?" their father replied: "Not at all... my mother would say, 'The only reason you're here is because the hanger didn't work' or 'bouncing down those steps didn't cause you to get lost'." ... The doctor [at his birth] used forceps to deliver him, paralysing muscles in his face and his mother told him, "You know, truthfully, Sylvester... you know, if there was really something wrong with your brain, I would have definitely opened up the window and put you on the windowsill and let you freeze because I'd be doing you a favour." Understandably, Stallone's daughters were appalled. But even so, their father responded with only compassion towards his mother. "My mother, she was a troubled person. She was put into a very cruel orphanage because her father had remarried and the new stepmother hated her." Despite his traumatic childhood, Sylvester Stallone has gone on to live a life filled with breakthroughs and blessings, becoming a loving, compassionate father and husband, a powerful testament that even an "unwanted" child can grow up to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life.

I am With the Lord. Be Gone.

Pope Francis, General Audience 25-09-2024

Nowadays we are witnessing a strange phenomenon regarding the devil. At a certain cultural level, it is held that he simply does not exist. ... But "the cleverest ruse of the devil is to persuade you he does not exist!", as someone wrote (Charles Baudelaire). He is astute: he makes us believe that he does not exist, and in this way he dominates everything. He is cunning. And yet our technological and secularized world is teeming with magicians, occultism, spiritualism, astrologers, sellers of spells and amulets, and unfortunately with real satanic sects. Driven out the door, the devil has re-entered, one might say, through the window. Driven out of faith, he re-enters with superstition. And if you are superstitious, you are unconsciously conversing with the devil. One does not converse with the devil.

The strongest proof of the existence of Satan is found not in sinners or the possessed, but in the saints! "And how can this be, Father?". Yes, it is true that the devil is present and working in certain extreme and "inhuman" forms of evil and wickedness that we see around us. But by this route, though, it is practically impossible to reach, in individual cases, the certainty that it is truly him, given that we cannot know with precision where his action ends and our own evil begins. This is why the Church is so prudent and so rigorous in performing exorcism, unlike what happens, unfortunately, in certain films!

It is in the life of the saints, precisely there, that the devil is forced to come out into the open, to place himself "against the light". All the saints, all the great believers, some more, some less, testify to their struggle with this obscure reality, and one cannot honestly assume that they were all deluded or mere victims of the prejudices of their time.

The battle against the spirit of evil is won as Jesus won it in the wilderness: by striking with the word of God. You see that Jesus does not converse with the devil, He never conversed with the devil. Either he casts him out, or condemns him, but He never converses. And in the wilderness, he replies not with His word, but with the Word of God. Brothers, sisters, never converse with the devil; when temptations present themselves: "But, this would be nice, that would be nice" – stop. Raise your heart to the Lord, pray to Our Lady and banish him, just as Jesus taught us how to banish him. Saint Peter also suggests another means, that Jesus did not need, but we do – vigilance. "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1Pt 5:8). And Saint Paul says to us: "Give no opportunity to the devil" (Eph 4:27).

After Christ, on the cross, defeated forever the power of the "ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31), a Father of the Church said, "the devil is bound, like a dog on a chain; he cannot bite anyone except those who, defying the danger, go near him... He can bark, he can urge, but he can bite only those who want" [Saint Caesarius of Arles]. If you are a fool and you go to the devil and say, "Ah, how are you?", and everything, it ruins you. The devil – distance. One does not converse with the devil. One banishes him. Distance. And all of us, everyone, we have experience of how the devil approaches with some temptation. The temptation of the ten commandments: when we feel this, stop, keep your distance: do not approach the chained dog.

Modern technology, for example, besides the many positive resources that are to be appreciated, offers also countless means to "give an opportunity to the devil", and many fall in the trap. Think of online pornography, behind which there is a flourishing market: we all know this. It is the devil at work, there. And this is a very widespread phenomenon, which Christians should beware of and strongly reject. Because any smartphone has access to this brutality, to this language of the devil: online pornography.

Awareness of the action of the devil in history should not discourage us. The final thought must be, also in this case, of trust and security: "I am with the Lord, be gone". Christ overcame the devil and gave us the Holy Spirit to make His victory our own. The very action of the enemy can turn to our advantage, if with God's help we make it serve our purification. Let us therefore ask the Holy Spirit, in the words of the hymn *Veni Creator*:

"Drive far away our wily Foe, and Thine abiding peace bestow;
If Thou be our protecting Guide, no evil can our steps betide".

Beware, the devil is astute – but we Christians, with God's grace, are more astute than him.

Pope's Visit to Asia and Oceania

Here are some interesting stats from various Vatican News articles during the apostolic journey of Pope Francis to these countries in September 2024:

- In **Indonesia** we are at 3%, so a small percentage of the population, but which still amounts to 8 million Catholics.
- **Papua New Guinea**: Nearly all Papuans are Christian, but only around 30% are Catholic. 2.5 million Catholics inhabit the country.
- On Tuesday (10-09-24), Pope Francis celebrated an open-air Mass in Taci Tolu, a coastal plain in **Timor-Leste**. According to the local authorities, about 600,000 people – or nearly half of the country's population – were in attendance.
The population of Timor-Leste is overwhelmingly – around 98% – Catholic.
- In **Singapore**, Christians make up about 18 percent of the population, and Catholics only 3.5 percent (about 176,000 people). Buddhists are the largest group, accounting for about 33 percent of the more than 5 million inhabitants, while Muslims make up about 15 percent; Taoists 11 percent; Hindus 5 percent; and non-religious about 17 percent.

The population is about 74 percent Chinese, 13.5 percent Malay, and 9 percent Indian.

"I thank the Lord who allowed me to do as an elderly Pope what I would have liked to do as a young Jesuit, because I wanted to go there as a missionary!" – Pope Francis, Audience 18-09-24

The Great Divider

Pope Francis to clergy, Indonesia 04-09-2024

[P]roclaiming the Gospel does not mean imposing our faith, placing it in opposition to that of others, or proselytizing, it means giving and sharing the joy of encountering Christ (cf. 1 Pet 3:15-17), always with great respect and fraternal affection for everyone. I invite you always to keep yourselves open and friendly to all – I like the expression "hand-in-hand" as Father Maxi said – prophets of communion, in a world where the tendency to divide, impose and provoke each other seems to be constantly increasing. On this point, I want to tell you something: do you know who is the most divisive person in the world? The great divider, who always divides, but it is Jesus who unites. It is the devil who divides, so be careful!

Vatican.va

Raising a New Pro-Life Generation

Dr Joanna Howe, drjoannahowe.com/lif summit

Get ready for a ground-breaking one-day conference unlike anything Australia has seen before. This transformative event is dedicated to promoting the human rights of every child. Our aim is to bring together young leaders, health professionals, and influential speakers, all driven to inspire the next generation of advocates and professionals. Join us in shaping an Australia where the equality of every human person is the foundation of our future.

The **first-ever inaugural National Life Summit** will take place at a glamorous 5-star hotel in **Sydney's** CBD on **Saturday, 30 November**, from 9am-5pm. The Summit will be divided into two streams: Stream 1: Young adults aged between 18 and 45. Stream 2: Health professionals and health students (any age).

Tickets are \$30. However, the first 100 people under the age of 25 to register for either stream will receive a discounted price of \$10. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters around the country and our Platinum Sponsor, Prolife Victoria, we're able to keep costs low for this event. Your ticket includes a delicious morning tea, lunch and beverages. Spaces are limited so we advise booking early to secure your spot.

More information and registration at drjoannahowe.com/lif summit

The Fruit of Your Womb

1. 2017 was a very significant year for it was the centenary of the appearance of Our Lady to three young children at Fatima in Portugal. She appeared at monthly intervals from May to September and she identified herself as Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Satan was well aware of the significance that this course of events had, and a tyrannical atheistic government ruled Portugal. Indeed, the young children were imprisoned for a short time by the government. The Church was careful about giving the government any excuse to attack the faithful, so viewed the appearance of Our Lady with great caution. Families were guided by the Church and so were also very cautious. Consequently, the three young children were initially very isolated as a result of their contact with Our Lady.

2. The Rosary has been prayed to God by many people for many years, but the emphasis given by Our Lady at Fatima is very significant. Each mystery of the Rosary contains five decades, and each decade includes the *Hail Mary* ten times. Each Hail Mary consists of two verses and the first verse ends with the prayer, 'blessed be the fruit of thy womb'. So, the emphasis given to the womb indicates that it is a matter of some importance. For the continuation of God's creation takes place in the womb; together with other essential birthing organs. The normal fruit of the womb is a person made in the image and likeness of God. This happens when the father and mother perform a sacred act to seal their marriage vows, and to ensure that the womb becomes fruitful. Satan takes full opportunity to abuse the pleasure associated with this sacred action, in his ongoing determination to frustrate God's will for his creation. Yet it is still God's people who have been given the responsibility for unraveling the wonders and splendors of God's creation that are yet to be discovered, and are still needed to satisfy God's will.

3. Mary, a teenage Jewess, was well aware of what was involved to enable a woman to become a parent. 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin.' (Luke 1:34). Mary clearly understood that her womb contained the source and the means needed to provide the fruit that God wanted. In Mary's case there was no sacred act with a husband for 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you... and the power of the Most High will come upon you' (Luke 1:15).

4. So, Jesus began his journey to provide the gift of salvation as the member of a family. Mary brought him to birth, and she was subsequently with him at the crucifixion; where Satan appeared to win his opposition to God. However, after the resurrection Mary joined the disciples in starting Jesus' church. 'All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus.' (Acts 1:14). Jesus' gift of salvation is achieved by means of the seven sacraments celebrated by the Church. Two of these sacraments are vocational; the sacrament of Orders provides the priesthood dedicated to celebrating the Eucharist and to proclaiming the clarification of God's will that is provided by the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of Marriage provides the families that are God's chosen means of continuing the process of creation. Challenges such as same sex relationships show that Satan's victory over Eve are still causing confusion. However, the vocational sacraments make it perfectly clear, as Mary recognised, that while a man can become a priest, he cannot become a mother.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

Rest in peace

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mrs **Martha Hall**, who died 01-10-2024, aged 95. Martha was late of Morwell, Victoria, and a firm supporter of Into the Deep over all the years of its existence. Martha was a warrior, fiercely independent, and deeply committed to the Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. She suffered in her final months with her lack of independence, and was ready to meet her Lord. May she rest in peace!

Eternal rest, grant unto
them, O Lord, and let
perpetual light shine upon
them. May they rest in
peace. Amen

Silent Victims

I wrote this letter to the editor of my local newspaper and was pleasantly surprised that it was published: I read an article in the Latrobe Valley Express titled 'Animal shelter investigation' where a Facebook post resulted in an investigation into animal cruelty. And rightly so, it should be investigated. I read that council takes allegations of animal cruelty very seriously.

We are also bombarded with newspaper headlines, TV advertising, billboards and posters in relation to family violence against women and children, child abuse and human trafficking, and rightly so, we need to be made aware of these things, take these actions very seriously, and report them to the proper authorities. But, why isn't domestic violence against men by their partners or spouses investigated and taken seriously? The authorities in most cases take the woman's side without investigation. I'm sure there are many silent male victims suffering. Where are their support systems?

Family violence comes under many forms such as physical, coercive control, narcissistic behaviour, mental abuse, withholding children from their fathers and fathers who wish to care for their child are not given the chance because the woman has an abortion, just to name a few.

Which brings me to the elephant in the room. I believe that abortion should also come under family violence. After all, the baby is being killed. Oh wait, it is legal in this country!

Where is the outrage for the babies born alive after a failed abortion, left to die alone with no medical attention, no palliative care, no human affection? A viable baby born alive after an abortion can last from one minute to five hours or more gasping for breath. In Australia there is no national law protecting babies born alive from a failed abortion.

Dr Elisha Broom from a Queensland hospital admitted that inducing babies alive and leaving them to die is intentional. This process was outlawed in Australia in 2022 for calves, so why is it legal to do it to babies? Australia has the most diabolical abortion laws. A total of 4929 gestationally viable babies over an 11-year period were killed right up until birth in Victoria and Queensland, one of those babies at 37 weeks.

Louise Adsett, a midwife from Queensland, gave a chilling and heart-breaking testimony in the Queensland Parliament of what she and other midwives experienced.

Dr Joanna Howe is a Law Professor and over the last two years she has been advocating for babies born alive after a failed abortion to be given equal medical treatment as other babies.

An emergency bill was put forward by Senator Ralph Babet and was rejected by Labor, Greens, Teals and four members of the Liberal Party. It seems to me that animals are more important than babies in our society.

If you are outraged and take this cruelty to human life seriously and want to know more and learn what evil is coming to light, check out Dr Joanna Howe's research (you can find her on social media platforms), and join me and thousands of others in the **March For The Babies on October 12 in Melbourne** at Treasury Gardens (corner of Spring Street and Wellington Parade). This year marks 16 years since the legalisation of the abortion till birth bill came into practice by Daniel Andrews, who was Health Minister' at the time.

You don't have to be a Christian to fight for human life. Then maybe, just maybe, if we stop this atrocity, family violence might also reduce dramatically.

Josie Vitale, Morwell, Victoria

Not an Inch Nor a Moment

Pope Francis to clergy, Indonesia 04-09-2024

There is not an inch of the marvelous Indonesian territory, nor a moment in the lives of its millions of inhabitants that is not a gift from God, a sign of his gratuitous and everlasting love as Father. Looking at all we have been given with the humble eyes of children helps us to believe, to recognize ourselves as small and beloved (cf. Ps 8), and to cultivate feelings of gratitude and responsibility.

Vatican.va

Celibacy for the Sake of the Kingdom

Fr Gregory Bellamy, Chairman, Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy

As important source of priestly fruitfulness is the gift of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom. By living this commitment faithfully, the priest certainly becomes more pastorally available to others. But the Church's normative discipline of celibacy for priests is not simply pragmatic. Chaste celibacy is an expression of Christ's nuptial love for the Church and a counter-cultural sign to worldly living.

In our society today the purposeful sacrifice of celibacy is especially counter-cultural and so is, perhaps more than ever, a particularly important prophetic sign. Certainly, it is a challenging calling in all cultures, but this is even more the case in over-sexualised Western culture, which celebrates immediate indulgence and is pessimistic about the liveability and fruitfulness of long-term commitment and sacrifice.

The joy of the celibate who accepts the sacrificial nature of his commitment is a living testimony that challenges the perennial human temptation to focus on this world over the next. The faithful celibate is a living reminder that this life is a time of preparation, not an end, and whatever sacrifices we are called to make here and now they are nothing compared to eternal life in God's presence. Herein lies celibacy's great prophetic value as the normative way in which the priesthood is lived.

Christ continues to call men today to celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom not because it is easy but precisely because it is difficult.

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The Most Profitable Investment

Pope Francis, Homily, Singapore, 12-09-2024

Dear brothers and sisters, if there is anything good that exists and endures in this world, it is only because, in innumerable situations, love has prevailed over hate, solidarity over indifference, generosity over selfishness. ... nothing lasting is born or grows without love.

Sometimes it happens that the greatness and grandeur of our projects can make us forget this, and fool us into thinking that we can be the sole authors of our lives, of our wealth, our wellbeing, our happiness. Yet, ultimately, life always brings us back to one reality: *without love we are nothing*.

Faith, then, confirms and enlightens us even more deeply regarding this conviction, because it tells us that at the root of our capacity to love and be loved is God himself, who with a Father's heart has willed and desired to bring us into existence in an utterly gratuitous way and who in an equally gratuitous way has redeemed us and freed us from sin and death, through the death and resurrection of his only Son. It is in Jesus that all that we are and can become have their origin and fulfilment.

The most beautiful building, the most precious treasure, the most profitable investment in God's eyes, what is it? It is ourselves, all of us, for we are beloved children of the same Father (cf. Lk 6:35), called in turn to spread love. ...

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The Public Rosary

St Louis de Montfort

When people say the Rosary together it is far more formidable to the devil than one said privately, because in this public prayer it is an army that is attacking him.

Somebody who says his Rosary alone only gains the merit of one Rosary, but if he says it together with 30 other people he gains the merit of 30 rosaries. This is the law of public prayer.

The Battle of Acedia

Pope Francis, General Audience 14-02-2024

Among all the capital sins, there is one that is often overlooked, perhaps because of its name, which is often incomprehensible to many: I am talking about *acedia*. This is why the term *acedia* is often substituted by another in the list of vices, one which is much more commonly used: sloth, or laziness. In reality, laziness is more an effect than a cause. When people are idle, indolent, apathetic, we say they are lazy. But as the wisdom of the ancient Desert Fathers teaches us, the root of this laziness is often acedia, which literally means "lack of care", in Greek.

It is a very dangerous temptation, which one must not joke about. It is as though those who fall victim to it are crushed by a desire for death: they feel disgust at everything. Their relationship with God becomes boring to them, and even the holiest acts, those that used to warm their hearts in the past, now appear entirely useless to them. A person begins to regret the passing of time, and the youth that is irretrievably behind them. ...

Indeed, for those who are gripped by acedia, life loses its significance, prayer becomes boring, and every battle seems meaningless. If in youth we nurtured passions, now they seem illogical, dreams that did not make us happy. So, we let ourselves go, and distraction, thoughtlessness, seem to be the only ways out: one would like to be numb, to have a completely empty mind. ...

Although in the clutches of acedia, man's desire is to be "elsewhere", to escape from reality, one must instead have the courage to remain and to welcome God's presence in the "here and now", in my situation as it is. ... The demon of acedia wants to destroy precisely this simple joy of the here and now, this grateful wonder of reality. It wants to make you believe that it is all in vain, that nothing has meaning, that it is not worth taking care of anything or anyone. ...

The battle of acedia is a decisive one, that must be won at all costs. And it is a battle that did not spare even the saints, because in many of their diaries there are some pages that confide terrible moments, of genuine nights of the faith, when everything appears dark. These saints teach us to get through the night in patience, accepting *the poverty of faith*. They recommended, under the oppression of acedia, to maintain a smaller measure of commitment, to set goals more within reach, but at the same time to endure and persevere by leaning on Jesus, who never abandons us in temptation.

Faith, tormented by the test of acedia, does not lose its value. On the contrary, it is the true faith, the very human faith, which despite everything, despite the darkness that blinds it, still humbly believes. It is that faith that remains in the heart, like embers beneath the ashes. It always remains. And if one of us falls prey to this vice, or to the temptation of acedia, try to look within and fan the embers of faith; that is how we keep going.

Vatican.va

To All the Altar Servers of the World

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 04-08-2010

Serve Jesus present in the Eucharist generously. It is an important task that enables you to be particularly close to the Lord and to grow in true and profound friendship with him. ... Every time that you approach the altar, you have the good fortune to assist in God's great loving gesture as he continues to want to give himself to each one of us, to be close to us, to help us, to give us strength to live in the right way. With consecration, as you know, that little piece of bread becomes Christ's Body, that wine becomes Christ's Blood. You are lucky to be able to live this indescribable Mystery from close at hand! Do your task as altar servers with love, devotion and faithfulness; ... Assisting your priests in service at the altar helps to make Jesus closer, so that people can understand, can realize better: he is here. ... Dear friends! You lend Jesus your hands, your thoughts, your time. He will not fail to reward you, giving you true joy and enabling you to feel where the fullest happiness is.

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Approval for Medjugorje Devotion

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the assent of Pope Francis, grants approval for devotion linked to Medjugorje, recognizing the abundant spiritual fruits received at the Sanctuary of the Queen of Peace without making a declaration on the supernatural character of the Marian apparitions.

By Vatican News, 19-09-2024

"The time has come to conclude a long and complex history that has surrounded the spiritual phenomena of Medjugorje. It is a history in which bishops, theologians, commissions, and analysts have expressed a series of divergent opinions."

Beginning with the words "The Queen of Peace," the Note about the Spiritual Experience connected with Medjugorje was signed by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández and Monsignor Armando Matteo, respectively Prefect and Secretary for the Doctrinal Section of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Francis approved the Note on August 28. It recognizes the goodness of the spiritual fruits linked to Medjugorje, authorizing the faithful to adhere to it – according to the new Norms for discerning these phenomena – since "many positive fruits have been noted in the midst of a spiritual experience, while negative and dangerous effects have not spread among the People of God."

The overall judgment of the messages is generally positive, though several clarifications are offered regarding certain expressions. "It is important to clarify from the outset that the conclusions of this Note do not imply a judgment about the moral life of the alleged visionaries," and, in any case, the spiritual gifts "do not necessarily require those involved to have moral perfection."

Positive fruits

The places linked to the Medjugorje phenomenon have become pilgrimage destinations for people from around the world. "The positive fruits are most evident in the promotion of a healthy practice of a life of faith, in accordance with the tradition of the Church," reads the Note.

It recognizes "abundant conversions" of people who have discovered or rediscovered their faith, many people have returned to confession and sacramental communion, and numerous vocations have been confirmed, as well as "many reconciliations between spouses, and the renewal of marriage and family life." ...

The message of peace

The Dicastery's Note continues by examining the central aspects of the messages, starting with that of peace understood not only as the absence of war but also in a spiritual, familial, and social sense. The most original title that Mary attributes to herself is indeed "Queen of Peace." ...

God at the centre

There is a frequent invitation to confident abandonment to God who is love: "We can see a nucleus of messages in which Our Lady does not place herself at the centre but shows herself to be fully directed toward our union with God." ...

Call to conversion

... Conversion seems to be the focal point of the Medjugorje message. There is also "an insistent exhortation not to underestimate the gravity of evil and sin, and to take very seriously God's call to fight against evil and the influence of Satan," indicated as the origin of hatred, violence, and division.

Prayer and fasting are also essential to the message of Medjugorje, as well as the centrality of the Mass, the importance of fraternal communion, and the search for the ultimate meaning of existence in eternal life. ...

Necessary clarifications

The second part of the Note emphasizes how "a few" messages deviate from the content listed so far. ...

If some messages are read partially, they may appear connected to "confused human experiences, theologically inaccurate expressions, or interests that are not entirely legitimate," even if some errors may not be "not due to bad intentions, but to the subjective perception of the phenomenon." ...

VaticanNews.va

Patron Saints Quiz

Match the saint on the right to the cause on the left. (Answers p.11)

Hopeless cases	1.	A.	St Anthony
Finding lost items	2.	B.	St Bernard of Clairvaux
Beekeepers	3.	C.	St Joseph of Cupertino
Musicians	4.	D.	St Fiacre
Dairy workers	5.	E.	St John Vianney
Children	6.	F.	St Jude
Gardeners	7.	G.	St Nicholas
Pregnant women	8.	H.	St Vincent de Paul
Engaged couples	9.	I.	St Alphonsus Liguori
Volunteers	10.	J.	St Tarcisus
Funeral directors	11.	K.	St Phillip Neri
Photographers	12.	L.	St John of God
Joy	13.	M.	St Thomas More
Priests	14.	N.	St Brigid of Ireland
Air travellers	15.	O.	St Veronica
Altar servers	16.	P.	St Gerard Majella
Arthritis	17.	Q.	St Valentine
Cancer	18.	R.	St Peregrine
Heart patients	19.	S.	St Joseph of Arimathea
Civil servants	20.	T.	St Cecilia

Who was St Tarcisus?

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 04-08-2010

It is said that he was a boy who came regularly to the Catacombs of St Calixtus here in Rome and took his special Christian duties very seriously. He had great love for the Eucharist and various hints lead us to conclude that he was presumably an acolyte, that is, an altar server. Those were years in which the Emperor Valerian was harshly persecuting Christians who were forced to meet secretly in private houses or, at times, also in the Catacombs, to hear the word of God, to pray and to celebrate Holy Mass. Even the custom of taking the Eucharist to prisoners and the sick became increasingly dangerous. One day, when, as was his habit, the priest asked who was prepared to take the Eucharist to the other brothers and sisters who were waiting for it, young Tarcisus stood up and said: "send me!". This boy seemed too young for such a demanding service! "My youth", Tarcisus said, "will be the best shield for the Eucharist". Convinced, the priest entrusted to him the precious Bread, saying: "Tarcisus, remember that a heavenly treasure has been entrusted to your weak hands. Avoid crowded streets and do not forget that holy things must never be thrown to dogs nor pearls to pigs. Will you guard the Sacred Mysteries faithfully and safely?". "I would die", Tarcisus answered with determination, "rather than let go of them". As he went on his way he met some friends who approached him and asked him to join them. As pagans they became suspicious and insistent at his refusal and realized he was clasping something to his breast that he appeared to be protecting. They tried to prize it away from him, but in vain; the struggle became ever fiercer, especially when they realized that Tarcisus was a Christian; They kicked him, they threw stones at him, but he did not surrender. While Tarcisus was dying a Pretoria guard called Quadratus, who had also, secretly, become a Christian, carried him to the priest. Tarcisus was already dead when they arrived but was still clutching to his breast a small linen bag containing the Eucharist. He was buried straight away in the Catacombs of St Calixtus. Pope Damasus had an inscription carved on St Tarcisus' grave; it says that the boy died in 257.

Parish: playschool ... or school of communion?

From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speakman (p.52,53)

Yes, I know, I can be very negative at times, but remember, this is my little book and I can say what I want. Almost everything in so many parishes is now 'lay led' in a way that goes far beyond legitimate collaboration. An implicit message is beginning to be heard more and more loudly, especially in priest-less parishes: *No Priest Required!*

Good people have been misled, and all too often conflicts, divisions and power struggles have been the result at parish level, while many dioceses have become *vocations-free zones*. Either the priest simply walks away from his responsibilities and gives the laity a free hand, thereby immediately becoming 'popular', or he condemns himself to interminable confrontations and discord and the labels *bullying* and *divisive*.

There are now in most parishes 'leadership' groups which are very fond of, and very attached to, their own understanding of the Church. Anyone who has attended a Bible Study with Sister Maude, or who has done the session on being a 'Eucharistic minister' with Betty Smiles, is now an expert 'ready to shape the Church of the future!'

To put such a parish under scrutiny is usually to find a noisy, people-centred forum in which every individual can in some way be a 'leader' – while the things of God are sidelined or emptied of content.

All too many parishioners see their parish as a kind of playground offering all sorts of 'games' in which they can express their 'giftedness' and 'creativity'.

They move between the seesaw and the swings and the sandpit in a frenzy of busyness – and when they do finally enter the school building they just want to go on playing, forgetting that the parish is really a *school of holiness*.

Such churches are usually full of chatter because they are all about 'me'. There is no reverent greeting of the Lord on entering or leaving, but great care not to overlook friends. In these churches the sense of the sacred has all but been demolished, and the high point of the Mass is the Sign of Peace.

Well, I don't believe in such parishes, no matter how well attended. I believe such parishes are failures because they fail at their primary task which is to draw people to Christ.

Priest and people face the task of building a parish which has Christ as its centre, drawing closer to him and then, as an unavoidable consequence, closer to each other.

Fr Speakman'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.

Prayer

From the book *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speakman (p.16)

During my prayer time a question popped into my head: *What does prayer do for you?* The answer was immediate and unexpected: *Prayer pushes back the darkness.*

So what does prayer do for **you**?

1F, 2A, 3B, 4T, 5N, 6G, 7D, 8P, 9Q, 10H, 11S, 12O, 13K, 14E, 15C, 16J, 17I, 18R, 19L, 20M.

Patron Saints Quiz Answers

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

Lessons from the Eucharist

Pope Francis, video message to International Eucharistic Congress, September 2024

The lessons we can draw from the Blessed Eucharist always surprise us. We might say, with the Psalm, "If I would count them, they are more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with thee", silently present in the Tabernacle (cf. Ps 139:18).

The Rosary

Pope John Paul II

From my youthful years the Rosary has held an important place in my spiritual life.

The Rosary has accompanied me in moments of joy and in moments of difficulty. To it I have entrusted any number of concerns; in it I have always found comfort.

The Rosary is my favourite prayer. A marvellous prayer! Marvellous in its simplicity and its depth.

Pope Pius IX

If you desire peace to reign in your hearts and families, gather together each evening to recite the Rosary.

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