

# *Into the Deep*

Issue 253

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

March 2025

## Return to Me

Pope Francis, Ash Wednesday homily, 10-02-2016

The Gospel which opens Lent calls us to be protagonists, embracing three remedies, three medicines which heal us from sin (cf. Mt 6:1-6, 16-18).

In the first place is *prayer*, an expression of openness and trust in the Lord: it is the personal encounter with him, which shortens the distances created by sin. Praying means saying: "I am not self-sufficient, I need You, *You* are my life and my salvation".

In the second place is *charity*, in order to overcome our lack of involvement with regard to others. True love, in fact, is not an outward act, it is not giving something in a paternalistic way in order to assuage the conscience, but to accept those who are in need of our time, our friendship, our help. It means living to serve, overcoming the temptation to satisfy ourselves.

In the third place is *fasting*, penance, in order to free ourselves from dependencies regarding what is passing, and to train ourselves to be more sensitive and merciful. It is an invitation to simplicity and to sharing: to take something from our table and from our assets in order to once again find the true benefit of freedom.

"Return to me" – says the Lord – "return with all your heart": not only with a few outward deeds, but from the depths of our selves. Indeed, Jesus calls us to live prayer, charity and penance with consistency and authenticity, overcoming hypocrisy.

May Lent be a beneficial time to "prune" falseness, worldliness, indifference: so as not to think that everything is fine if I am fine; so as to understand that what counts is not approval, the search for success or consensus, but the cleansing of the heart and of life; so as to find again our Christian identity, namely, *the love that serves, not the selfishness that serves us*.

Let us embark on the journey together, as Church, by receiving Ashes – we too will become ashes – and keeping our gaze fixed on the Crucifix. He, loving us, invites us to be reconciled with God and to return to him, in order to find ourselves again.

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"Lent is certainly a demanding journey, as it rightly should be, because love is demanding, but it is a journey filled with hope."

Pope Francis

## Darkness So Dark

St Teresa of Calcutta

There was a moment when I nearly refused to accept. Deliberately I took the Rosary and very slowly without even meditating or thinking - I said it slowly and calmly. The moment passed - but the darkness is so dark, and the pain is so painful. - But I accept whatever He gives and I give whatever He takes.

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

# Prayers for Pope Francis

Staff and patients at Rome's Gemelli Hospital are expressing their solidarity with Pope Francis by offering an hour of Eucharistic Adoration and Mass each day.

**By Vatican News, 24-02-2025**

The Vicar General of the Diocese of Rome, Cardinal Baldassare Reina, released a statement expressing the Italian Bishops' solidarity with Pope Francis and encouraging everyone to pray for him.

"Aware of how precious communal prayer is, we ask all parish and religious communities to spend an hour in silent adoration," he said. "As one large family, we ask the Lord to grant our Bishop the strength needed to face this delicate moment."

Following this invitation to communal prayer, the community of the Gemelli University Hospital and the Roman branch of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart expressed "even stronger support and solidarity with His Holiness Pope Francis during this time of trial and suffering" through various moments of prayer.

Starting Monday, February 24, and for the entirety of Pope Francis' recovery in the Gemelli Hospital, there will be an hour of Eucharistic Adoration every day from noon until 1 p.m. at the St. John Paul II Chapel in the hospital, followed by Mass. During the Mass and Adoration, special prayers will be offered for Pope Francis. Later, at 4:30 p.m. Rome time, the Rosary will be recited in front of the statue of St. John Paul II in the square outside the hospital, and Mass will follow at 5 p.m. in the Hospital Hall.

Everyone all around the world is invited to participate in these moments of prayer – both physically and spiritually. For those who wish to join from outside of Rome, they can recite the following prayer:

"Lord Jesus, Redeemer of the world, who took upon yourself our pain and carried our suffering in your passion, hear the prayer we offer for our sick brother: grant him trust and revive his hope, that he may be lifted up in body and spirit."

VaticanNews.va

## All or Nothing!

I recently viewed a YouTube video called "All or Nothing". It's about Clare Crockett, a young girl from Ireland who has a conversion experience on Good Friday at the exaltation of the cross. She goes on to become a nun serves in the missions and is killed in an earthquake in Ecuador.

Her story is a heart-warming one for parents and grandparents to see how she brings the young and old to Christ. With truth and love she brings them to the Eucharist, adoration and rosary, and the Lord does the rest.

There have been many miracles since her death and her cause has been referred to Rome for sainthood.

So go to YouTube, type in "All or nothing: Sr Clare Crockett" [or click [here](#)] and you can watch the full movie. If you enjoy it, please pass it onto all your contacts.

**Pat Crozier, Traralgon, Victoria**

I watched this and loved it! Truly inspiring! You can't help but love Sr Clare. Thanks, Pat. **Ed.**

## The Future of ITD

As mentioned previously, please remember no more donations for ITD, as it will be finishing up in September or October this year when we use up our current funds. Thanks for all the messages of support – I'll save them for my final issue!

**Ed.**

## Healthy Option

**Servant of God Sr Clare Crockett**

We often wonder if this or that food is healthy for us. But, do we ask ourselves, "Is my current life helping or hindering to advance the Gospel?" (cf. Phil 1:12) To ask this question is spiritually healthy for the soul, because it helps us to reflect, to pray to change, and therefore to grow.

Our Blessed Mother Mary reveals herself to us as an instrument of God's redeeming love. Let us look at her, and ask her to teach us how to be docile instruments in the hands of her Son.

Sisterclare.com

# A Challenging Time

Lent is always a challenging time. And preparation for Lent is sometimes just as hard! You want to choose something that is meaningful, but also something do-able. Sometimes I choose too many things and then lose track of what I'm doing. Sometimes I don't choose enough and feel like I'm cruising through Lent without much effort. Other times I pick up a new habit (or lose a bad one) that lasts for years afterwards and I feel like I finally hit the nail on the head! And then another Lent comes along.

Reading through our parish bulletin I picked up the following gems from our parish priest Fr Ken Clark:

- Remember that the aim of Lent is not suffering but discipline in our interior and exterior life so that we draw closer to Christ.
- Lent allows us to let go of self-love, taking control of our passions, and our useless search for worldly happiness, and to try to deepen our 'love of the other'. In Lent we draw closer to Christ who is 'Love' Himself. It is a time of looking at our interior life, and to search out those interior dispositions which keep us from moving deeper into our understanding of Christ and inviting others to do the same.
- Remember, any Lenten program is to draw us closer to God so that we may draw others closer to God.

Each year I try to pick something out of each of the three 'categories' of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Here are some of my suggestions this year:

Prayer: Start listening to Bible in a Year or Catechism in a Year with Fr Mike Schmitz (available free on Apple podcasts, Google podcast players, Ascension Press app/website, YouTube etc.); watch The Chosen series (free The Chosen app or on The Chosen website, or through some streaming services); make a weekly Stations of the Cross; go to an extra Mass each week.

Fasting: Turn off reels on social media, or set a time reminder to limit your usage (go to Privacy Settings then Time Management); turn off the TV after your show has ended instead of getting caught up in whatever comes next; and of course the inevitable giving up of chocolates and treats – always a major challenge for me!

Almsgiving: Donate to Mary's Meals ([marysmeals.org.au](http://marysmeals.org.au)) which provides children in poverty a meal a day at their place of education - \$35 feeds a child for a whole school year; donate to Aid to the Church in Need ([aidtochurch.org](http://aidtochurch.org)); increase your weekly giving in your parish.

As Pope Francis has said, "Lent is certainly a demanding journey, as it rightly should be, because love is demanding, but it is a journey filled with hope." Wishing everyone a demanding Lent filled with hope!

Ed.

## St Teresa of Calcutta's Feast Day

Vatican News 11-02-2025, by Devin Watkins

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was "a beacon of hope, small in stature but great in love, a witness to the dignity and privilege of humble service in the defence of all human life and of all those who have been abandoned, discarded and despised even in the hiddenness of the womb." Cardinal Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, offered that praise of St Teresa on Tuesday. The Cardinal Prefect released a comment to accompany the decree inscribing St Teresa of Calcutta into the General Roman Calendar. ... Her feast day will be celebrated as an optional liturgical memorial annually on September 5, the date of her death in 1997.

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje on August 26, 1910 as Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu. She professed solemn vows as a Sister of Loreto in Calcutta, India, in 1937. In 1950, she left the Sisters of Loreto to found the Missionaries of Charity, which now numbers over 6,000 sisters active in 130 countries who serve those most in need.

Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and Pope St John Paul II beatified her on 19 October 2003. Pope Francis canonized her on September 4, 2016 during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

VaticanNews.va

# Follow in the Footsteps of the Magi

Pope Francis, General Audience, 19-02-2025

When the Magi set off again, the star reappears and leads them to Jesus... The sight of the star inspires an irrepressible joy in those men, because the Holy Spirit, who stirs the heart of whoever sincerely seeks God, also fills it with joy.

Having entered the house, the Magi prostrate themselves, adore Jesus and offer Him precious gifts, worthy of a king, worthy of God. Why? What do they see? An ancient author writes: they see "a humble little body that the Word has assumed; but the glory of divinity is not hidden from them. They see an infant child; but they worship God" (Cromazio Di Aquileia, Comment on the Gospel of Matthew, 5:1). The Magi thus become the first believers among the pagans, the image of the Church drawn together from every language and nation.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us, too, follow in the footsteps of the Magi, these "pilgrims of hope" who, with great courage, turned their steps, hearts and goods towards the One who is the hope not only of Israel but of all peoples. Let us learn to adore God in His smallness, in His kingship that does not crush but rather sets us free and enables us to serve with dignity.

Vatican.va

## The Power of Poverty

I have been reading the book, "The Air we Breathe, The Mariology of Catherine de Hueck Doherty" by Fr Denis Raymond Lemieux. Catherine's cause for beatification was introduced in 2000, granting her the title Servant of God. To Catherine (1896 - 1985), Mary is "the air we breathe". Through her experiences of losing everything through the Russian Revolution and extreme poverty when she moved to America, Catherine realised that the Cross is always "the marriage bed of Christ, which possesses "the secret of joy - ineffable, incomprehensible. ... The greatest gift God could have given me." (p.90)

"Those of us especially who are from North America tend to think that the Church and the world need programs, organisations, marketing, advertising, competence, and above all, money to make things happen, to take back the reins of culture from the forces of secularism, relativism, and hedonism. Catherine's mystical sense is that what God really needs is people who will abandon themselves to Him and fashion from the warp and woof of their daily self-surrender a mantle to warm the cold hearts of loveless modern humanity. Our Lady shows us the way. Another way of putting it is that our hearts have to become empty enough to take the world into them. ... We tend to think of emptiness of heart as a barren, arid experience, something to be fled from. Catherine in this experience [an "encounter" she had with Our Lady, as mentioned elsewhere in the book] sees that Mary's self-emptying and poverty was the necessary condition for the Holy Spirit to expand her heart to encompass the world, and that it is this interior emptiness that gives God an opening into the world. Poverty [both physical and interior, as mentioned elsewhere in the book] is the condition for God's love and fire to descend from heaven and rekindle the earth." (pp 108,110).

In this book Catherine teaches us how to live this "poverty" and it reminded me of what Pope Francis is trying to teach us.

Maureen Wright, Lurnea, New South Wales

## Go Further

There are a couple of booklets now giving stories of how Our Lord has worked through his currently-serving faithful priests, and Fr Speekman's book, Things Serious, Silly and Sublime, is one of them. I hope they have inspired any men thinking they might have a vocation, to go further.

Merle Ross, Rockhampton, Queensland

## A Bundle

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. ... It is very easy to break a single stick, but if you join it to others to make a bundle, it cannot be broken. "In union, there is strength."

# Rules of Fasting and Abstinence

## Code of Canon Law

**Can. 1249** The divine law binds all the Christian faithful to do penance each in his or her own way. In order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance of penance, however, penitential days are prescribed on which the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence, according to the norm of the following canons.

**Can. 1250** The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.

**Can. 1251** Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

**Can. 1252** The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their sixtieth year. Pastors of souls and parents are to ensure that even those who by reason of their age are not bound by the law of fasting and abstinence, are taught the true meaning of penance.

**Can. 1253** The conference of bishops can determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast.

## Lenten Penance in Australia

**Archbishop Anthony Fisher, Archbishop of Sydney**  
**Lenten Penance Message, 14-02-2024**

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has not restricted our penance to fast and abstinence; in all cases, it has left room for our own responsible choice. We should carefully select the form of penance that we consider most appropriate for our own circumstances and growth in the Christian life.

### DAYS OF PENANCE

1. Abstinence from meat, and fasting, **must** be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All who have completed their eighteenth year and have not yet begun their sixtieth year are bound to fast. All who have completed their fourteenth year are bound to abstain.
2. On all other Fridays of the year including the Fridays of Lent, the law of the common practice of penance is fulfilled by performing **any one** of the following:
  - (a) prayer – for example, Mass attendance; family prayer; a visit to a church or chapel; reading the Bible; making the Stations of the Cross; praying the rosary.
  - (b) self-denial – for example, not eating meat; not eating sweets or dessert; giving up entertainment to spend time with the family; limiting food and drink so as to give to the poor of one's own country; limiting use of social media, smart phones or television.
  - (c) helping others – for example, special attention to someone who is poor, sick, elderly, lonely or overburdened.

### PASCHAL PRECEPT

Each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. This is to be done between Ash Wednesday and Trinity Sunday unless for a good reason it is done at another time during the year. All the faithful are obliged to confess their grave sins at least once a year.

stmaryscathedral.org.au

# The 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope: Q&A

by the Conventual Sisters of St Dominic, Ganmain, New South Wales

**1. What is a Jubilee Year?** "In the Church, a Holy Year, or Jubilee is a great religious event. It's a year of forgiveness of sins and also the punishment due to sin, it is a year of reconciliation between adversaries, of conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and consequently of solidarity, hope, justice, commitment to serve God with joy and in peace with our brothers and sisters. A Jubilee year is above all the year of Christ, who brings life and grace to humanity." (Excerpts taken from Vatican document *History of Jubilees, 2000*)

**To ponder...** *What are we doing in our lives to reconcile with enemies or better understand those we don't get on with? How can we make Confession more fruitful in our lives, rather than the predictable recitation of sins? Do our lives clearly show the signs of Christ's life and grace?*

**2. Why is the Jubilee Year also called a "Holy Year"?** "The Jubilee is called a Holy Year, not only because it begins, is marked, and ends with solemn holy acts, but also because its purpose is to encourage holiness of life. It was actually convoked to strengthen faith, encourage works of charity and brotherly communion within the Church and in society and to call Christians to be more sincere and coherent in their faith in Christ, the only Saviour".

**To ponder...** *Are we committed to growing in holiness this year? What 'solemn holy acts' have we planned for the coming months? What new works of charity are we going to work into our lives? How are we helping to foster union with the Church? What can we do to live better what we believe as Christians?*

**3. What is the origin of the Jubilee Year?** The origin of the Christian Jubilee goes back to Biblical times. The Law of Moses prescribed a special year for the Jewish people: "You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim the liberty throughout the land, to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his family.

**To ponder...** *How do we 'make holy' our home and family relations this year? Who among us needs to be liberated and from what? Who among us needs to be welcomed home?*

**4. How often is a Jubilee Year?** The Church celebrates a Jubilee Year every 25 years. This has been the case since 1470, when Pope Paul II changed it from every 50 years. (A Pope can also proclaim an Extraordinary Jubilee, like the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which Pope Francis inaugurated in 2015). The 'Ordinary' Jubilee years are celebrated every 25 years so that every person can have a chance in his lifetime to experience one.

**To ponder...** *Many of us would have experienced more than one Jubilee Year by now. If this one were our last, how would we live it? If this one were our last, would we mind?*

**5. What is the meaning of the Holy Door?** The door is a passageway that ushers pilgrims into the interior of the church. In crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, pilgrims are reminded of the passage from chapter 10 of St John's gospel: "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." Passing through the Holy Door expresses the decision to follow and be guided by Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd. (Taken from Vatican official website *Jubilaem 2025*)

**To ponder...** *Most of us will probably not make it to Rome for the Jubilee Year. Have we discovered the Holy Sites in our dioceses? Have we already booked in when we will visit at least one of them? We who are in the Catholic Church – how careful are we in making sure we don't leave?*

**6. What is the theme of this Jubilee Year in 2025?** The theme is "Pilgrims of Hope". Pope Francis has invited Catholics to "recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our inter-personal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation". He asks "the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises." (See the Bull of Indiction *Spes Non Confundit*; 25).

**To ponder...** *Do we have 'confident trust' in the Church? Do we trust that God is still working for good in society? Are we mindful that other people are important, and, in its own measure, so is God's Creation? Are we in danger of being 'spreaders of cynicism and doom' in our friendship/family circles, or are we committed, especially in this year, to be "a leaven of authentic hope"?*

# Presumed Authority

In listening to the Bible in a Year with Fr Mike Schmitz for the second time now, and having done the Catechism in a Year, there are a number of things I will share that I have learned.

One, is that the Bible is Catholic. It was the Church that gave us the 73 books of the Bible (46 Old Testament and 27 New Testament), and she alone is the authoritative and authentic interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures; and that traditionally she has always taught that the entire Bible is but one book and can be summed up in one unique and incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, through whom God the Father in unity with the Holy Spirit expresses himself completely and definitively. Every word speaks of Christ and all of divine Scripture is fulfilled by him and in him. Scripturally, when we read and speak about justice, life, love, peace, redemption, salvation, truth, virtue and wisdom, we are speaking and reading about Christ. And, even though, it was the Church that gave us the Bible, she is not primarily a religion 'of the book', so to speak, but of the living Word and Sacrament.

The second thing that I have learned is that the Bible is a story of salvation, an historical account of God's deep and enduring covenantal love for mankind and the cosmos he created. It's a true story of faith and truth, and one in which every individual human being's own story has meaning, and that that story is not finished. God in his goodness and love, continues to create, redeem, heal, forgive and sanctify mankind through the paschal mystery of his only begotten Son in his Catholic Church, and will continue until the whole of humanity will come to rest in holy communion with him.

And lastly, and may I add most importantly, as a Christian created in the image and likeness of God, I should never presume to have the authority to do things in his Church. Why? Because he alone is the author and creator of the Church, and the cosmos for that matter; and as such, he alone authorises, appoints, calls, chooses, commands, initiates, instructs, ordains, sends and wills all Christians to 'play' their part in the story of salvation.

Take as an example David, and the process God's prophet Samuel went through to select him as the anointed one to succeed Saul, the first king to rule over his people. As a good and faithful king he ruled over a united kingdom, and presumed that he was the one to build God a house, a temple, only to be told by the prophet Nathan that he had too much 'blood on his hands' and that God had chosen and appointed his son Solomon to be the one to build him a temple.

In the New Testament God, through his only begotten Son, Jesus, called and chose twelve Apostles, and singled out Peter alone to be the rock of faith on which he will build his Church. To him alone he gave the keys to bind and loose, and the Twelve, and St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, he sent out to preach the Good News of salvation, and to baptise all nations. It was Jesus Christ himself who called, chose and appointed them to the apostolate and not their own presumption, and neither were any of them made apostles through men or the community.

The reason I emphasise this last point, is that it is as a result of men presuming their own authority that we have more than 45,000 Christian denominations in the world today, and this is in spite of them claiming to 'know' the Bible and Christ. And even within the Catholic Church, we have lay people presuming authority to take on various 'ministries' as they see fit, rather than obeying the will of the Church.

**Gregory Kingman, Morwell, Victoria**

## Christ, The Unique Word of Sacred Scripture

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.102**

Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely: "You recall that one and the same Word of God extends throughout Scripture, that it is one and the same Utterance that resounds in the mouths of all the sacred writers, since he who was in the beginning God with God has no need of separate syllables; for he is not subject to time." (St Augustine)

# Courage, Let Us Enter the Desert!

Pope Francis, 26-02-2020

Today, Ash Wednesday, we begin our Lenten journey, a 40-day journey towards Easter, towards the heart of the liturgical year and of faith. It is a journey that follows the one of Jesus, who at the start of his ministry, withdrew to the desert for 40 days to pray and fast, and was tempted by the devil. Today, I would like to speak precisely about the *spiritual significance of the desert*. What does the desert mean spiritually for all of us, also for those of us who live in cities? What does the desert mean?

Let us imagine that we are in a desert. The first feeling would be that of being enveloped by a great silence: no sound besides the wind and our own breathing. The desert is a place of detachment from the din that surrounds us. It is the absence of words to make room for another Word, the Word of God, that caresses our hearts like a light breeze. The desert is the *place of the Word* with a capital W. Indeed in the Bible, the Lord loves to speak to us in the desert. ... In the desert one finds a renewed intimacy with God, the Lord's love. Jesus loved to withdraw daily to deserted places and pray. He taught us how to seek the Father who speaks to us in silence. ...

Lent is a favourable time to make room for the Word of God. It is the time to switch off the television and open the Bible. It is the time to separate from mobile phones and connect to the Gospel. When I was a child there was no television but there was the habit of not listening to the radio. Lent is a desert. It is a time to give up something, to distance ourselves from mobiles and connect to the Gospel. It is the time to give up useless words, gossip and slander and to talk to and be informal with the Lord. It is the time to dedicate ourselves to a healthy *ecology of the heart*, to cleanse it. We live in an environment that is polluted by too much verbal violence, by many offensive and noxious words that the internet amplifies. Nowadays, we insult each other as if we were saying "Good Morning". We are submerged by the empty words of advertising, of underhanded messages. We have become accustomed to hearing everything about everyone and we run the risk of slipping into a worldliness that sullies the heart and there is no bypass to heal this. Only silence. We struggle to distinguish the voice of the Lord speaking to us, the voice of conscience, the voice of goodness. By calling us to the desert, Jesus invites us to listen to what matters, to what is important, to the essential. Replying to the devil who tempted him [Jesus] said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". We need the Word of God like bread, [even] more than bread. We need it to speak with God: we need *to pray*. Because only before God do the inclinations of the heart come to light and the duplicity of the spirit cease. The desert is a place of life not of death because speaking to the Lord in silence, gives us life again.

Let us try to think of a desert again. The desert is *the place of the essential*. Let us look at our lives: how many useless things surround us! We chase after thousands of things that seem necessary and that in reality are not. How good it would be for us to free ourselves from many superfluous realities, to rediscover what matters, to rediscover the faces of those who are beside us! Jesus also sets us an example of this: fasting. Fasting is knowing how to give up things that are vain and superfluous in order to reach the essential. *Fasting* is not only for losing weight. Fasting is actually going to the essential. It is seeking the beauty of a simpler life.

Lastly, the desert is a *place of solitude*. Today too, there are many deserts near us. They are the lonely and neglected people. How many poor and elderly people are near us and live in silence, without making any noise, marginalized and discarded! Speaking about them does not increase the *ratings*. But the desert leads us to them, to those who were stifled and who silently ask for our help: many silent gazes that ask for our help. The journey in the Lenten desert is a journey of *charity* towards the weakest. ...

Dear brothers and sisters, God made his promise through the voice of the Prophet Isaiah: "Behold I am doing a new thing; ... I will make a way in the wilderness". A new path opens up in the desert, which takes us from death to life. We enter the desert with Jesus and we will leave it experiencing Easter, the power of God's love which renews life. It will happen to us just as it does to deserts that blossom in spring, suddenly sprouting buds and plants "out of nothing". Take courage, let us enter this Lenten desert. Let us follow Jesus in the desert: with him, our deserts will blossom.

Vatican.va



# The Basis of Our Hope

**Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the year 2025 (n.20)**

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the heart of our faith and the basis of our hope.

Saint Paul states this succinctly by the use of four verbs: "I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve" (1 Cor 15:3-5). Christ *died, was buried, was raised and appeared*.

For our sake, Jesus experienced the drama of death. The Father's love raised him in the power of the Spirit, and made of his humanity the first fruits of our eternal salvation. Christian hope consists precisely in this: that in facing death, which appears to be the end of everything, we have the certainty that, thanks to the grace of Christ imparted to us in Baptism, "life is changed, not ended", forever. Buried with Christ in Baptism, we receive in his resurrection the gift of a new life that breaks down the walls of death, making it a passage to eternity.

The reality of *death*, as a painful separation from those dearest to us, cannot be mitigated by empty rhetoric. The Jubilee, however, offers us the opportunity to appreciate anew, and with immense gratitude, the gift of the new life that we have received in Baptism, a life capable of transfiguring death's drama.

It is worth reflecting, in the context of the Jubilee, on how that mystery has been understood from the earliest centuries of the Church's life. An example would be the tradition of building baptismal fonts in the shape of an octagon, as seen in many ancient baptisteries, like that of Saint John Lateran in Rome. This was intended to symbolize that Baptism is the dawn of the "eighth day", the day of the resurrection, a day that transcends the normal, weekly passage of time, opening it to the dimension of eternity and to life everlasting: the goal to which we tend on our earthly pilgrimage.

The most convincing testimony to this hope is provided by the *martyrs*. Steadfast in their faith in the risen Christ, they renounced life itself here below, rather than betray their Lord. Martyrs, as confessors of the life that knows no end, are present and numerous in every age, and perhaps even more so in our own day. We need to treasure their testimony, in order to confirm our hope and allow it to bear good fruit.

The martyrs, coming as they do from different Christian traditions, are also seeds of unity, expressions of the ecumenism of blood. I greatly hope that the Jubilee will also include ecumenical celebrations as a way of highlighting the richness of the testimony of these martyrs.

## The Church in God's Plan

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**777** The word "Church" means "convocation." It designates the assembly of those whom God's Word "convokes," i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ.

**778** The Church is both the means and the goal of God's plan: prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf. Rev 14:4).

**779** The Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed of two components, human and divine. That is her mystery, which only faith can accept.

**780** The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men.

# Poor, Imprisoned, Blind, Oppressed

Pope Francis, Angelus address, 26-01-2025

This Sunday, the Evangelist Luke presents Jesus to us in the synagogue in Nazareth, the town where He grew up. He reads the passage from the prophet Isaiah announcing the Messiah's evangelizing and liberating mission. He then says, in the general silence: 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled'.

Let us imagine the surprise and dismay of Jesus' fellow citizens, who knew Him as the carpenter Joseph's son and would never have imagined that He could present himself as the Messiah.

It was bewildering. Yet this is precisely how it was: Jesus proclaims that, by His presence, 'a year acceptable to the Lord' has come. It is the glad tidings for all and in a special way for the poor, for the captives, for the blind, for the oppressed.

That day, in Nazareth, Jesus confronted His interlocutors with a choice about His identity and mission. No one in the synagogue could help but wonder: is He only the carpenter's son who arrogates to Himself a role that does not belong to Him, or is He truly the Messiah, sent by God to save the people from sin and all evil? The Evangelist tells us that the Nazarenes failed to recognize the Lord's anointed one in Jesus. They thought they knew Him too well, and this, instead of facilitating the opening of their minds and hearts, prevented them from doing so, like a veil obscuring the light.

Sisters and brothers, this event, with the due analogies, also happens for us today. We too are challenged by the presence and words of Jesus; we too are called to recognize in Him the Son of God, our Saviour. But it may happen to us, as it did to His countrymen, to think that we already know Him, that we already know everything about Him, that we have grown up with Him, in school, in the parish, in catechism, in a country with a Catholic culture... And so, for us too, He is a Person who is close, indeed perhaps even 'too' close.

But let us try to ask ourselves: do we sense the unique authority with which Jesus of Nazareth speaks? Do we recognize that He is the bearer of a proclamation of salvation that no one else can give us? And I, do I feel in need of this salvation? Do I feel that I too am in some way poor, imprisoned, blind, oppressed? Then, only then, 'the year of grace' will be for me!

Vatican.va

## Freedom

One of the many thought-provoking contents of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the treatment of the Sacrament of Marriage (Catechism Article 7). Matrimony is followed by the Part Three treatment of *Life in Christ* which begins with an article on Man's Freedom. This begins with the declaration that "God created man a rational being conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions" (Catechism 1730). As Genesis has it, "God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them". Clearly, there would have been a close relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who were together involved in the process of creation.

God placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave him great freedom. However, another of God's creatures who had also been given freedom, was the serpent. The serpent used its freedom to try and take God's place; and to encourage others to do the same thing. So, our freedom is challenged by the force of evil which is intent on using its freedom to reject God.

The *Catechism* (1732) declares "As long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of *choosing between good and evil*, and thus of growing in perfection or of failing and sinning." However, God left the ongoing process of creation with the male and female who had been created, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it." He chose the support of a family to continue that process of creation. Like the Trinity, there would be need for mutual support and encouragement provided for the mother and father freely living out their sacrament as a part continuing God's process of creation.

John Cooney, Cowwarr, Victoria

# More for less?

From *Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime*, by Fr John Speekman (p.62)

Escalators are wonderful things. I like the flat ones you can walk up better than the moving stairways, and I like the horizontal 'conveyer belts' at the airport.

Part of the pleasure is, of course, that you just stand on them and they do all the work, while, if you do choose to walk you get twice the speed for the same amount of energy.

The crucial thing to remember, of course, is that there is a unity of purpose when it comes to 'walking' and using escalators. The one makes the other easier.

I was on one this afternoon and feeling energetic I started briskly walking along, and as that special 'why-can't-life-be-like-this-all-the-time' feeling came over me, I suddenly found myself wondering about, of all things, my daily Rosary.

I think it must have been that thought about *saving energy* on the escalator which somehow led me to the make a connection with *saving time* on the Rosary.

The Rosary is meant to be, and can be, a deeply contemplative prayer which invites our complete attention, all our 'prayerfulness'.

We may say the Rosary while out walking but it is not a good idea to go for a walk to say the Rosary, at least that's what I've found.

A walk, with its many distractions, often impoverishes the meditative praying of the Rosary because it diminishes the unity of purpose between the two activities.

## Doggerel or duckerel?

Sometimes on worms  
my duck will snack  
and juicy escargots  
toss back  
and even little frogs  
go in  
till it canardly  
quack.

*Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime p.57*

## Correction

*Things Serious, Silly, and Sublime p.65*

In my experience one of the clearest indicators of a person's overall maturity is the manner in which he or she accepts and deals with correction.

Today there is a notion, as false as it is popular, that correction, however gently given, is really bullying and mistreatment.

Thank God for the man and woman who receives the word of correction with a humble and docile heart; may I be like them.

## Special Offers on Fr Speekman's Book!

Fr Speekman's book (see above) costs only \$15. It makes a perfect gift for family, friends, priests, parishioners, colleagues, neighbours, patients in hospitals, the housebound elderly, those in prison, the sick and the suffering, those who need hope and inspiration, those who need to see and hear and feel the presence of God in their lives.

See if you can offer one to your local library or school library or to your hospital if they have a library, and we'll cover the costs. Ask your parish piety stall if they'll stock a few, and we'll give them a discount. They can contact me at [stoneswillshout@bigpond.com](mailto:stoneswillshout@bigpond.com) for details.

Throughout 2025, all orders through ITD will be sent with **free postage!** No matter how many you order. Or where you are in the world. Let's just get the word out there!

Ed.

## Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland, Victoria

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday after 9.10am Mass
Heyfield	1 <sup>st</sup> Fridays 10am – 4.30pm
Cowwarr Ord.	Wednesday (Mass 10am) – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (Mass 10am) – 11am
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Cranbourne	Fri & Sat in church: (9.30 Mass) – 11am
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> month, Dec. on)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Maffra	Wednesday (5pm Mass) – 6pm
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) – 10.30am
Morwell	Friday 10am-11am (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) – 11am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Sale	Friday 10am - 11am Mass
Trafalgar	Wed & 1st Sat: (9.30am Mass) – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 4pm–8pm (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> month, Jan. on)
Wonthaggi	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (9.30am Mass) – 10.30am

## Loving Jesus with the Heart of Mary

### St Teresa of Calcutta

When we pray the Rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament, we love Jesus with the Heart of Mary. When we pray the Rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament, we offer to Jesus the perfect adoration of Mary. We unite our love for Jesus to the perfect love and praise of Mary.

Jesus receives our holy hour as if Mary herself were making it, because no matter how weak our faith or poor our love, Mary encloses us in Her Heart and Jesus accepts our hour with Him as coming directly from the heart of His very own Mother. The Immaculate Heart of Mary repairs and makes up for what is lacking in our own hearts.

“O Sacrament most Holy,  
O Sacrament Divine,  
All praise and all thanksgiving  
Be every moment thine.”

## Contact *Into the Deep*

[www.stoneswillshout.com](http://www.stoneswillshout.com)

[stoneswillshout@bigpond.com](mailto:stoneswillshout@bigpond.com)

12 Vincent Road, Morwell, Vic, 3840, Australia

 find us on  facebook

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

**Editor:** Janet Kingman

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

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

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

Account name: Janet Kingman

BSB: 013-745 (ANZ)

Account number: 2901-63632

**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**