

Into the Deep

Issue 101

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

February 2011

Never Be Ashamed of the Cross

*Pope Benedict XVI to youth from Madrid, 06-04-2009
receiving the World Youth Day cross for 2011*

Life is a journey, certainly. But it is not an uncertain journey without a fixed destiny; it leads to Christ, the end of human life and history. On this journey you will meet with Him who gave his life for love, and opens to you the doors of eternal life.

I invite you, therefore, to be formed in the faith that gives meaning to your life and strengthens your convictions, so as to be able to remain firm in the difficulties of each day.

Moreover, I exhort you, on your journey to Christ, to be able to attract your young friends, your study and work companions, so that they too will know him and confess him as Lord of their lives. [...]

I encourage you to contemplate Christ in the mysteries of his Passion, Death and Resurrection. In them you will find what surpasses all wisdom and knowledge, namely, the love of God manifested in Christ.

Learn from him, who did not come “to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). This is the style of Christ’s love, marked with the sign of the glorious cross, in which Christ is exalted, in the sight of all, with his open heart, so that the world can look and see, through his perfect humanity, the love that saves us.

Thus the cross becomes the very sign of life, as on it Christ overcomes sin and death through the total giving of himself.

That is why we must embrace and adore the cross of the Lord, make it our own, accept its weight as the Cyrenean to participate in the only thing that can redeem the whole of humanity (cf. Col 1:24).

In baptism you were marked with the cross of Christ and you belong to him totally. Make yourselves ever more worthy of it and never be ashamed of this supreme sign of love.

Yes, It Is Possible

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Pontifical Household Preacher

“In your book ‘Introduction to Christianity’ of many years ago, you, Holy Father, wrote: ‘It is only in the second section of the Creed that we come up against the real difficulty...about Christianity: the profession of faith that the man Jesus, an individual executed in Palestine round about the year 30, the Christus (anointed, chosen) of God, indeed God’s own son, is the central and decisive point of all human history.

“It seems both presumptuous and foolish to assert that one single figure who is bound to disappear farther and farther into the mists of the past is the authoritative centre of all history.

“To this question, Holy Father, we respond without hesitation as you do in the book and as you do not tire of repeating today, in the dress of Supreme Pontiff: Yes, it is possible, it is liberating and it is joyful, not by our efforts, but by the inestimable gift of faith that we received and for which we render infinite thanks to God.”

www.zenit.org 03-12-2010

The Reign of the Eucharist

St Peter Julian Eymard, 1864

“The great evil of our time is that people do not go to Jesus Christ as to their very Saviour and God. They abandon the only foundation, the only law, the only grace of salvation... What is to be done then? We must return to the fountain of life, and not just to the historical Jesus nor to the Jesus glorified in heaven, but rather to Jesus in the Eucharist. It is necessary to bring him out from the shadows so that he can once again take his place at the head of Christian society... May the reign of the Eucharist increase.”

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

Pope John Paul II to be Beatified!

On 1 May, the second Sunday of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, Benedict XVI will preside at the rite of beatification for John Paul II in the Vatican.

According to a note released by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, “Benedict XVI ... authorised the dicastery to promulgate the decree of the miracle attributed to the intercession of Venerable Servant of God John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła). This concludes the process which precedes the rite of beatification.

“It is well known that, by pontifical dispensation, his cause began before the end of the five-year period which the current norms stipulate must pass following the death of a Servant of God. This provision was solicited by the great fame of sanctity which Pope John Paul II enjoyed during his life, in his death and after his death. In all other ways, the normal canonical dispositions concerning causes of beatification and canonisation were observed in full.

“With a view to the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God, the postulator of the cause invited the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to examine the recovery from Parkinson’s disease of Sr Marie Simon Pierre Normand, a religious of the ‘Institut des Petites Soeurs des Maternites Catholiques’. ... The experts of the congregation, having studied the depositions and the entire documentation with their customary scrupulousness, expressed their agreement concerning the scientifically inexplicable nature of the healing.

“Finally, on 11 January 2011 the ordinary session of the cardinals and bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints took place. They expressed their unanimous approval, believing the recovery of Sr. Marie Simon Pierre to be miraculous, having been achieved by God in a scientifically inexplicable manner following the intercession of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, trustingly invoked both by Sr. Simon herself and by many other faithful”.

Vatican Information Service 14-01-2011

“We Are Happy!”

Pope Benedict XVI, 16-01-2011

“On May 1, I’ll have the joy of beatifying Venerable Pope John Paul II, my beloved predecessor. The date that has been chosen is very significant: It will be the second Sunday of Easter, which he himself entitled “Divine Mercy,” and on the eve of which his earthly life ended. Those who knew him, those who esteemed and loved him, cannot but rejoice with the Church for this event. We are happy!”

www.zenit.org 16-01-2011

The Argument is with Jesus

From a column by Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago

A gift is not a gift if the recipient has a right to it. A refund on your taxes is not a gift from the IRS. Our civic order is arranged to help individuals receive their rights; this is the goal of legal justice. A gift, however, is not due in justice; it comes from love, is freely offered and can’t be manipulated by the recipient.

In the order of grace, no one has rights and everything is gift from a God who loves us. Sanctifying grace, God’s life in us, is pure gift; we can’t demand it from God; nor can we tell God to change it to suit us. All that Christ has given us through the church – the Gospel, the sacraments, the church herself – comes to us from his love. It’s all gift, and it is either received as such or lost.

I write this because the nature of the sacrament of holy orders has recently been publicly discussed as if it fell into the order of rights rather than the reality of gift, as if it were a matter of rules rather than a mystery of faith. Like all the sacraments of the apostolic churches, holy orders comes from Christ and is what he intends it to be. The church is not free to change it, anymore than the church can change the nature of baptism or the Eucharist or matrimony. Nor does anyone have a right to be ordained. It’s all gift. ...

Whether women can be ordained priests has been discussed regularly since the second century. Each time over the centuries, the church has said she is not free to change the gift that comes to us from Christ himself. The argument is with Jesus, not the church.

The fact that some theologians in every age have put forth arguments contrary to church teaching proves nothing except that they are mistaken, their understanding of the sacrament is not adequate to the faith of the church. The fact that there is huge social pressure to force the church to change her understanding of Christ’s gift and thereby lose the sacrament proves nothing except that cultures are not adequate to the faith of the church. ...

The claim is raised that Jesus is “inclusive,” and it is certainly true that he invites the whole world to follow him. The price of discipleship, however, is conversion, turning from our ways to his. ...

Catholics who want to live their faith in peace should not be subjected to organized protests by others whose personal faith is not adequate to the faith of the church. Personal questioning of the mysteries of the faith is often part of anyone’s faith journey, and Catholics should make their concerns known to their pastors. But using political tactics to change church teaching to what one would like it to be is inconsistent with one’s continuing to claim to be Catholic. This is, finally, a matter of personal integrity.

The Catholic New World 21-10-2010

Impressions of Christmas

The Christian world has just celebrated the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ and our King and those who do not believe also joined in the celebration. Any excuse will do for a holiday.

The commercial world also celebrated with increased profits from the previous year.

“Eat, drink and be merry”, we were told, and we did. The founder of one large Emporium, whose background is not Christian, was proud to advertise in the daily newspapers that “We love Christmas”. They had every right to do so. Their profits exceeded those of the previous year on the purchases we made on unnecessary expensive Christmas gifts.

We have every good reason to rejoice at the miraculous birth, but did we over-indulge for the wrong reason? The shepherds and kings brought gold, frankincense and myrrh as appropriate gifts for a far different reason – to honour their King – The King of Kings. Did we honour Him with the gift of our presence with Him on Christmas Day?

A Melbourne department store decorated its display windows with animated fantasy scenes and thousands of parents and grandparents with children in tow queued up for hours to see the display as a Christmas treat for them. A separate detached window at the end of the queue, which depicted the Nativity, was virtually ignored.

Let us trust that parents and grandparents along with children visited their churches and stopped at the Crib to honour the Christ born King on Christmas Day.

May the reason to celebrate Christ’s birth stay with us throughout the year and may we grow in Holiness because of it.

Leo Morrissey, Sandringham, Vic

Unavoidable Contradictions

An abortionist in the U.S. is being accused of the murder of a woman he over-dosed on anaesthesia after an abortion, as well as seven babies he killed after birth instead of before.

The media, in their attempt to remain impartial about abortion, can’t help tripping themselves up. They can’t hide their horror at a doctor killing a newborn infant, but what they accept comfortably is that he should’ve killed that same baby “properly” before birth.

In a CBS news report there was this statement: “Gosnell is suspected of killing hundreds of living babies.” Is the irony lost on this reporter, that you can only kill living babies, not dead babies? Every abortion kills a living baby – if the baby were not living, there would be no need for an abortion in the first place.

- Ed.

Misunderstanding Motives

Only those who have suffered under Pontius Pilates or Judas Iscariots can appreciate the depth of feeling and sense of betrayal experienced by those who have suffered similar if lesser things with Our Lord.

Those who have not been battle-hardened fighting for Catholic orthodoxy cannot fully comprehend or understand the poem “Nun So Blind” by Anne Onumos in the November issue of ITD (p.9). Only those who have borne the wounds of battle can empathize with the desolation of the author’s experiences and her spiritual anguish.

We can understand. Many cannot; hence their misunderstanding of motives.

Is ITD inciting hatred? We do not think so.

We have had presentations given by nuns in our parish pushing their own agenda and not adhering to Church teaching. They have such a way of ‘sweet-talking’ around Catholic teaching.

The poem should also include some bishops and priests. We know for a fact that correspondence to a Bishop and dialogue with some priests (always done respectfully and courteously) regarding the abuses that were occurring in the liturgy has been totally ignored.

We have heard sermons on ‘love, love, love’, wishy-washy sermons, with hardly, if ever, a mention on the evil of abortion, euthanasia, co-habitation when not married, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, contraception, the existence of hell, reverential silence, modesty, the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

At funerals, the deceased instantly becomes a canonized saint. At some funerals, the coffin leaves the Church to the tunes of “I did it my way” or “Come fly with me”.

Thank God for the faithful nuns, bishops and priests, many who also bear the scars yet remain faithful to the teachings of the Church, are loyal to the Holy Father and the Magisterium, and proudly wear their clerical garb and habits. What a joy and consolation they are to us.

By all means let us be charitable. But also be informed and realistic. Learn from those who stand for orthodox teaching.

Pray much for those who have gone astray that the good Lord will give them the grace to mend their ways.

Pray much also for those who bear the wounds of battle, who stand for truth and orthodoxy, that they will continue to ‘fight the good fight’ and on the day of Judgment hear these glorious words from our Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of my Kingdom”.

Les & Marie Gapps, Forster Keys, NSW

National Council of Priests “Spitting Vitriol”

The following email correspondence submitted by John McMahon, Kolonga, Qld

John McMahon writes to the National Council of Priests (NCP):

regarding the article in The Swag by Fr Eric Hodgens [refer ITD January 2011, p.3]

Subject: *Reflections on an Ordination Golden Anniversary*

Oh dear! His bleating and self pity almost brought me to tears.

Here is one observation on the story by one in Melbourne who knows him well: “Eric the Cleric” as he is known around Melbourne is one of the many “spirit of Vatican II” lost souls among our post-1960s clergy.... He is a yesterday’s man like Paul Collins and co. The Church has passed them all by. Notwithstanding their inflated sense of self-importance, their opinions are valueless and meaningless – other than to the usual suspects in the ABC and Fairfax newspapers.”

As St John Chrysostom observed: “The road to hell is paved with the skulls of Bishops” (and priests).

Apostle Paul had this to say in Galatians: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!”

Undoubtedly the Apostle and St John Chrysostom had many of these “Gaudium et Spes priests” in mind when they made their statements.

The Church has been so blessed with Holy Fathers such as Pope Paul VI, John Paul II and our present Pope.

John FG McMahon

Fr Brian Mathews, Treasurer of the NCP, responds:

Subject: *Re: Reflections on an Ordination Golden Anniversary*

Dear John,

Normally I do not reply to emails such as yours because over the years I have learnt that it is a waste of my time! I thought we priests were all supposed to be working towards the same goal, to allow people to discover the Love of God, Jesus, in their lives! Maybe you should consider that next time you spit vitriol on a brother priest! One of the good things about the Church is the many differences it has, even if they may not be to your (my) particular liking. One of my greatest sadnesses is to see priests putting the boot into other priests, in sport it is called playing the man NOT the ball and I can’t stand it. So please don’t bother to send me another email of this type again unless you are prepared to play the ball and discuss the issues and not to put a brother priest down.

Happy New Year John and may your ministry to the People of God bring the Peace, Joy and Consolation of Jesus the Christ.

Fr. Brian Mathews, Saint Mary of the Angels Catholic Church, Port Lincoln, South Australia

John McMahon replies:

Subject: *Re: Reflections on an Ordination Golden Anniversary*

Dear Father Mathews,

I am but a humble Layman who has been unjustly wounded by the actions and inaction of so many of today’s cowardly clergy who have brought shame and disgrace upon the Church. I quote your words “I thought we priests were all supposed to be working towards the same goal, to allow people to discover the Love of God, Jesus, in their lives.”

You may care to redirect this comment to your “brother” priest, Eric Hodgens, who spat upon and viciously attacked a fellow priest, the late Holy Father John Paul II, with vitriol such as “his self-assessment as God’s chosen man of destiny” and “John Paul’s lust for power showed very early and was taken to monumental proportions” etc, etc.

The holier-than-thou hypocrisy evident in so many of the clergy today is exemplified by Eric Hodgens and your own “put down” rebuking lecture to me.

I throw his own words back to you to reflect upon: “A newly critical laity questions but receives no answers”. What we do receive, other than silence, are lectures from recalcitrant clergy.

John FG McMahon

Fr Mathews replies:

Subject: *Good-bye*

Like I said a waste of time!

Daily Appointment

Pope Benedict XVI to clergy, 03-10-2010

Always be men of prayer in order, also, to be teachers of prayer.

It is not easy to remain faithful to these daily appointments with the Lord, especially today when the rhythm of life has become so frenetic and our occupations absorb ever more time. Yet we must convince ourselves that the moment of prayer is fundamental, because it is there that divine grace acts most effectively, making our ministry fruitful. There are many pressing matters, but if we are not in inner communion with God we can give nothing, not even to others.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life ... What care do we take in preparing ourselves for Mass? In celebrating it? In remaining in adoration? Are our churches truly 'houses of the Lord' where His presence attracts people who, unfortunately, today often feel the absence of God?

A priest always and immutably finds the source of his identity in Christ the Priest. It is not the world that defines his status, according to its requirements and its conception of social roles. ... A priest exists for the faithful; he encourages them and supports them in the exercise of their common priesthood as baptised individuals, in their journey of faith, in cultivating hope and living in charity, the love of Christ. ...

Priests cannot distance themselves from the daily concerns of the People of God. Quite the contrary, they must remain very close to those concerns, but as priests.

Vatican Information Service 03-10-2010

Lord, To Whom Can We Go?

Pope Benedict XVI, 15-05-2010

We ourselves cannot achieve the greatest things (friendship, love, joy and happiness), they come to us only as a gift. ... Today almost no-one speaks of eternal life which, in the past, was the true object of hope. Since people no longer dare believe in it, they must hope to obtain everything in this life. Setting aside hope in eternal life leads to greed for life here and now, which almost inevitably becomes selfish and, in the end, unattainable. Precisely when we want to take possession of life as a kind of treasure it escapes us.

God is alive. God loves us. In Jesus Christ He became one of us. I can address Him and He listens to me. For this reason, like Peter, in the confusion of our own times which encourage us to believe in many other paths, we say to Him: 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Vatican Information Service 15-05-2010

Criticising Priests

There are well-intentioned people who question the criticism of bishops and priests by me and others.

I am not interested in the personal sins of the bishops or priests or of anyone else. My criticism concerns their public antagonism and disobedience to Church teaching.

What they do is deceive the laity and especially the young. No one sins anymore; unless of course they are sceptical about global warming – that is serious sin!

When bishops seem to do nothing to convert those unfaithful priests, the message they send is confusing to the faithful laity.

The silence of the bishops on the comments of Fr Eric Hodgens is a case in point. To say they are not going to make a martyr of him is a cop-out – nothing but an excuse for doing nothing. Christ Himself was unambiguous when he warned us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

It is not easy to be a good leader, especially when tough decisions have to be made. But good strong leaders make those decisions.

Fr Hodgens and Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, who has also been critical of Church teaching, should be requested to recant, and failure to do so should incur the withdrawal of faculties.

We have to realise that we are involved in a very serious spiritual war – a war that involves our eternal death or eternal life.

The enemy is alive and well and now operates inside the Church in an overt way.

How we respond to this attack is vital. We must be prepared to stand and fight for Christ and His Church and to pray continuously for the Holy Father. It is important to also pray for our bishops and priests.

The irony here is that priests like Fr Hodgens and bishops such as Bishop Robinson can operate with immunity, whilst faithful priests such as Fr John Speakman are unjustly treated. That is why it is a major scandal that despite two Decrees from Rome in his favour, both Bishop Coffey and Bishop Prowse have failed to reinstate him.

John Henderson, Morwell

Well-Trained Priests

Pope Benedict XVI, 17-01-2010

"The Church needs well-trained priests, rich in the wisdom acquired through friendship with the Lord Jesus, priests who constantly draw from the Eucharistic table and from the endless font of His Gospel. From these two irreplaceable sources, draw continual support and the inspiration necessary for your life and ministry, for a sincere love of Truth."

Learn the Faith, Live the Faith, Defend the Faith!

Fr John Speekman's homily for the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. (1Cor 1:10-11)

In my opinion there is nothing more demoralising and destructive going on in our Catholic Church today than division, and it's everywhere. Division causes peace and joy to evaporate and replaces them with tension and squabbling. The great temptation, of course, is to try to paper over the serious differences tearing our Church apart, but clearly that's not working.

Recently an article appeared in the quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia (which represents no small percentage of Australia's clergy). This article was written by a priest. It condemned Pope John Paul as 'out of touch in scripture and limited in theology, a bad listener.' Pope Benedict and Pope Paul VI were similarly rubbished. This priest slated the 'theologically limited' Roman Curia as well as our present bishops whom he sees as 'low on creativity, leadership, education and even intelligence.' He dissents from various key teachings of the Church, calling them 'policies' and consistently refers to the vocation of priesthood as a 'job'. All in all, and without exaggeration, this article was enough to make one cry. What was totally lacking was love for and trust in the Church.

The next article, by another priest, aimed to demonstrate that missing Mass was not a big deal and should not worry us much. 'In none of Jesus' teachings do we find exhortations or commands to participate in weekly services of worship,' he confidently asserts, as though Holy Mother Church had never existed.

Indeed, Chloe's people were right: *My dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you.*

The 'serious differences' are really a profound crisis of faith. Catholics are unbelievably confused about the Faith. It seems all has boiled down to 'opinions' rather than obedience.

There is continual and deliberate spreading of errors in every segment of the Catholic Church by large numbers of priests and laity. The interior disunity of the Church is a bleeding sore which no one seems willing to stem. What a disaster! And what suffering for those Catholics who know the Faith and who know how things should actually be in their parishes!

Almost entirely gone is any notion of sin and so there is a general acceptance of those who habitually live in

sin and there are many who do so. Confession has all but disappeared as a result of the confusion caused by disobedient priests who illicitly used the third rite of Reconciliation for many years. All this has resulted in parishes with great attendance at the parish barbeque and negligible numbers seriously living the Christian life, which has been reduced to 'doing jobs at Mass' and engaging in social activity around the parish.

As a priest committed to orthodoxy in faith and morals, in liturgical worship, obedience to Rome and especially, love for the Church, I meet with extraordinary opposition from priests and laity who are strangely angered and even scandalised at me. I believe it is because these priests have somehow come to believe that they *have been commissioned to change the Church* while I, and many like me, have clung to the apparently outdated notion that *we should be letting the Church try to change us.*

Pope Paul VI, one year before his death, said: *There is a great uneasiness, at this time, in the world and in the Church, and that which is in question is the faith ... What strikes me, when I think of the Catholic world, is that within Catholicism, there seems sometimes to predominate a non-Catholic way of thinking, and it can happen that this non-Catholic thought within Catholicism, will tomorrow become the stronger. But it will never represent the thought of the Church.* (The Secret Paul VI by Jean Guilton, pages 152 and 153)

From prison Paul wrote to implore the Ephesians to preserve 'the unity of the Spirit' so that they would not be 'carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practising deceit.' (Eph 4:1.14)

To Timothy he wrote: *The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths. Be careful always to choose the right course...* (2Tim 4:3-5)

Be careful always to choose the right course! This is not advice; it is a warning – a warning on which depends our relationship with Christ and his Church and, therefore, our eternal future.

Many orthodox priests are anguished by the present state of our Church. Pope Paul VI rightly foresaw that it would become worse in succeeding years. I call upon you, my friends, to be equally concerned and to make every effort you can to learn the Faith and live the Faith of the Catholic Church and to resist anyone, anywhere, who attempts to pervert or misrepresent it.

Strong, Effective, Piercing Words

St Louis De Montfort, The Love of Eternal Wisdom

Wisdom not only gives man a light to know the truth, but also a wonderful capacity for making truth known to others. "Wisdom has knowledge of the voice." (Wis 1:7) ...

As Divine Wisdom is the Word of God in eternity as well as in time, He has always spoken, and by His word all things were made and restored. He spoke by the Prophets and Apostles, and He will speak until the consummation of the world, by the mouth of those to whom He will communicate Himself.

But the words which the Divine Wisdom communicates are not common, natural and human words, they are the words of God (1 Th 2:13). They are strong, effective, piercing words; "more piercing than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12); shooting forth from the heart of him by whom He speaks and penetrating the heart of him who hears them. ...

These are the words which Our Lord promised the Apostles when He said: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which your adversaries will not be able to resist." (Lk 21:15)

O how few are the preachers today who possess this ineffable gift of eloquence and who can say with St Paul: "We speak the wisdom of God." (1 Cor 2:7)

Most of them speak from the natural knowledge of their intellect, or from what they have borrowed from books; not from the love which Divine Wisdom has communicated to them. Hence it is that now we hear of so few conversions brought about by preaching.

If a preacher had truly received from Wisdom this gift of eloquence, his listeners could have scarcely resisted his words any more than could have those who listened to Eternal Wisdom speaking through the mouth of St Stephen. "Those who listened were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke." (Mt 12:34).

Stones Cry Out

May God, the Father in Heaven, bless your work! Oh, how much I asked our Lord to help us orthodox Catholics to become united in the true teaching of the Church! Our beloved Catholic Church that our Lord Jesus established is going through Calvary. The Catholic schools have lost their way; it seems education is first and Christ our Lord is second to them – how wrong they are.

Please allow me to subscribe, for I have longed to see the stones cry out, through your website into the deep. Thank you.

Pat & John Bayliss, Melbourne

It Can Happen in Australia

I followed with interest the articles on euthanasia in the media and I would like to bring to your attention what happened in the Netherlands.

By adopting the narrow definition of euthanasia as "active termination of life upon the patient's request", there were 2300 instances of euthanasia in the year of the survey, or 1.8% of all deaths. When, however, to these are added instances of killing patients without request and intentionally shortening the lives of both conscious and unconscious patients, the figures are dramatically altered. They are:

- 400 assisted suicide,
- 1000 of life ending actions without specific request,
- 8750 patients in whom life-sustaining treatment was withheld without request, either 'partly with the purpose' (4750) or 'with the explicit purpose' (4000) of shortening life,
- 8100 cases of morphine overdose 'partly with the purpose' (6750) or 'with explicit purpose' (1350) of shortening life,
- 5800 cases of withdrawing or withholding treatment on explicit request, 'partly with the purpose' (4292) or with the 'explicit purpose' (1508) of shortening life.

This brings the total to 23 350 instances of doctors intending, by act or omission, to shorten life, lifting the incidence from 1.8% to over 20% of all deaths in the year!

The report also noted that, to these totals should be added unspecified numbers of handicapped babies, sick children, psychiatric patients and patients with AIDS, whose lives were also terminated by doctors, but for all of whom there were no reliable data. It is estimated that some 25% of deaths in AIDS patients in the Netherlands are now due to euthanasia.

It was further revealed that the guidelines for careful practice were frequently disregarded. 27% of respondents admitted they had killed patients without any request, and 72% reported that after they had carried out euthanasia, they falsified the death certificate to make it appear that death was due to natural causes.

All this did not happen all that long ago. On 17 January 1990, the government of the Netherlands appointed the Committee to investigate the Medical Practice Concerning Euthanasia. The committee released its report on 10 September 1991. The report is called the Rimmelink report after Prof. J. Rimmelink, the Attorney General of the Supreme Court, who chaired the committee.

It is naïve to believe that this cannot happen in our beautiful Australia. Remember that the Prime Minister of Australia believes in a "sustainable population".

Leon Voeselek, North Tamborine, QLD

Men of Honour

We used to say that there was honour among thieves, meaning even at the lower levels of society, but these days there doesn't seem to be much honour anywhere, not even at the top.

What is honour? Well, a sense of integrity is part of it. Loyalty is too, and specially honesty. It demands adherence to what is due or correct according to an accepted code of conduct based on attitudes like respect, esteem, deference, credit where due, good name and reputation, etc.

Without these there will be no honour, or even practical wisdom, because the driving force will be self-protection and the security of power. There is good power and bad power, but the gospel warns us: "How ingeniously you get around the commandment of God in order to preserve your own security" (Mark 7:9).

It is a question of being so rigid that legitimate power feels threatened and cannot recognize or trust goodness. Leadership in the Church is supposed to be of the servant variety (as in the washing of the feet in the liturgy of Holy Thursday), but too often it comes across as the power of domination, backed up by the force of law wielded by the institution. When this is the case there is no concern for the welfare of the individual; it is just 'circling the wagons', as you can see in western movies, for self-protection.

Psychologically and spiritually there is no triumph when force is invoked. It is very hard for people with power not to become preoccupied with control – that is, managing facts and failures to maintain their position. It is effective, but not what Jesus teaches in the gospel (Mark 10:42-45). This kind of power leaves us untransformed, as our old selves, because it is just another form of domination, not evangelical service.

All of this is about one question: How do we deal with people? We know how secular society does, but those with power within the Church are not supposed to act like that. Ultimately this issue has to be faced with the question: Have I the courage to follow the pattern set for us by Jesus himself?

If we are truly concerned about the fate of Fr Spekman, there is a Psalm (84, v.10-11) which reveals that for complete restoration, the social virtues require that "Kindness and truth are to meet, and justice and peace are to embrace".

These are nice words, but the ideal asked of us won't happen without a true sense of honour. When (apparent) difficulties arise, the first reaction for many of those in power is to run for cover and 'circle the wagons'. To do this there is immediate recourse to the force of some law and its interpretation as applicable to the situation, when practical common sense would achieve much more.

S.C., Melbourne

Follow the Right Path

*Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 29-12-2010,
on St Catherine of Bologna*

She identifies seven weapons in the fight against evil, against the devil:

1. always to be careful and diligently strive to do good;
2. to believe that alone we will never be able to do something truly good;
3. to trust in God and, for love of him, never to fear in the battle against evil, either in the world or within ourselves;
4. to meditate often on the events and words of the life of Jesus, and especially on his Passion and his death;
5. to remember that we must die;
6. to focus our minds firmly on memory of the goods of Heaven;
7. to be familiar with Sacred Scripture, always cherishing it in our hearts so that it may give direction to all our thoughts and all our actions.

A splendid programme of spiritual life, today too, for each one of us! ...

Dear friends, with her words and with her life, St Catherine of Bologna is a pressing invitation to let ourselves always be guided by God, to do his will daily, even if it often does not correspond with our plans, to trust in his Providence which never leaves us on our own. In this perspective, St Catherine speaks to us; from the distance of so many centuries she is still very modern and speaks to our lives.

She, like us, suffered temptations, she suffered the temptations of disbelief, of sensuality, of a difficult spiritual struggle. She felt forsaken by God, she found herself in the darkness of faith. Yet in all these situations she was always holding the Lord's hand, she did not leave him, she did not abandon him. And walking hand in hand with the Lord, she walked on the right path and found the way of light.

So it is that she also tells us: take heart, even in the night of faith, even amidst our many doubts, do not let go of the Lord's hand, walk hand in hand with him, believe in God's goodness. This is how to follow the right path!

www.zenit.org 15-01-2011

Core of Renewal

Pope Benedict XVI, 25-09-2010

We all need God as the Divine Sculptor Who removes the accumulation of dust and debris covering the image of God inscribed within us. We need forgiveness, which is the nucleus of all true reform. It rebuilds individuals from the depths of their hearts and is the core of the renewal of the community.

Vatican Information Service 25-09-2010

What About Silence?

An ITD reader recently wrote asking: “Can you please write something on silence in the Church. I am having trouble finding much on it, except in the GIRM. With some Priests thinking it OK, where do I go for clarification on the subject?”

Here are excerpts from two columns by Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum, relating to silence (www.zenit.org 20-01-2004 and 02-03-2004):

Silence has a very important role to play in the celebration as indicated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 45.

“Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times,” the GIRM says. “Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts. Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.” ...

The specific periods of silence recommended in the GIRM encourage a general atmosphere of interior and exterior silence for all the participants at Mass. ... This helps quiet our imagination, our worries and our toils so as to join our hearts to the prayers and be fully attentive to whatever the Holy Spirit should inspire in us. Thus silence at Mass is an active, not a passive disposition. ...

Before Mass there should be a general atmosphere of silence. This does not exclude a quiet word of greeting, a nod of recognition or a friendly handshake among the parishioners. What should be avoided is the steadily rising hum of multiple conversations in the pews, often on frivolous themes, interrupted only by the announcement that the celebration is about to begin. When this happens the result is that while the body and the voice are ostensibly raised in prayer, the mind carries on the theme of conversation. In contrast, an overall spirit of silence allows for an easy transition from the world to the celebration of the mystery.

This transition is also very necessary for the priest, even when he has the custom of greeting the faithful before Mass. He should strive to reserve some moments of silent preparation for the celebration. He may use the traditional vesting prayers, the prayers before Mass provided in the missal, or any prayer that helps him to recollect his thoughts before the celebration begins.

Sometimes, people desire to speak with the priest before Mass. Although there will always be special cases which need immediate attention, in general it is best for the priest to take the opportunity of a teaching moment and tactfully point out that Mass is about to begin. He should always seek to meet them halfway and propose a concrete and convenient time in which he will attend them. If done charitably, this will edify the people and help them to value the importance of the Mass. ...

Some readers also asked about the respect for the silence after Communion and what, if any, activities should be carried out during this time. ... It is inappropriate to use this period of silence for other activities such as second collections or announcements. The proper time for these is after the concluding prayer and before the final blessing. If necessary, the congregation may be invited to sit down until the announcements are over.

After Mass, the most charitable approach is to quietly leave the main body of the Church so as to facilitate the recollection of those who wish to extend their personal thanksgiving for Communion. This quiet is similar to the situation before Mass as it does not exclude a friendly greeting. But actual conversation should not begin until outside.

Even in those cases when the tabernacle is not present in the sanctuary the church remains a sacred space and its character should be respected.

“Sweetest God, in honour of your holy Passion, I ask you, if you love me, to reveal to me how I must answer these men of the Church.”

St Joan of Arc (1412 – 1431)

Know Him, Love Him

Pope Benedict XVI, 03-12-2010

“Whoever has discovered in Christ the love of God, infused by the Holy Spirit in our hearts, wishes to know better the one who loves him and whom he loves. Knowledge and love sustain one another in turn.”

The Priest as an Example

By Father Nicola Bux,

Professor of Eastern Liturgy, Consultor of the Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, Saints' Causes, Divine Worship and the Sacraments, and Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff

Faith in the presence of the Lord, and in particular in his Eucharistic presence, is expressed in an exemplary manner by the priest when he genuflects with profound reverence during the Holy Mass or before the Eucharist. ... More than words, a genuflection manifests the humility of the priest, who knows he is only a minister, and his dignity, as he is able to render the Lord present in the sacrament. However, there are other signs of devotion. ...

In proceeding to the altar, the priest must be humble, not ostentatious, without indulging in looking to the right and to the left, as if he were seeking applause. Instead, he must look at Jesus; Christ crucified is present in the tabernacle, before whom he must bow. ...

The reverent kiss of the altar follows and the incense, the sign of the cross and the sober greeting of the faithful. Following the greeting is the penitential act, to be carried out profoundly with the eyes lowered. ...

He will touch the holy gifts with wonder, and will purify the sacred vessels with calm and attention, in keeping with the appeal of so many saints and priests before him. He will bow his head over the bread and the chalice in pronouncing the consecrating words of Christ and in the invocation of the Holy Spirit. He will raise them separately, fixing his gaze on them in adoration and then lowering them in meditation. He will kneel twice in solemn adoration. ...

The priest will not leave the Sacrament on the altar to give the sign of peace outside the presbytery, instead he will break the Host in a solemn and visible way, then he will genuflect before the Eucharist and pray in silence. He will ask again to be delivered from every indignity not to eat and drink to his own condemnation and to be protected for eternal life by the holy Body and precious Blood of Christ. ...

After communion, silence for thanksgiving can be done standing, better than sitting, as a sign of respect, or kneeling, if it is possible, as John Paul II did to the end when he celebrated in his private chapel, with his head bowed and his hands joined.

... The priest, after the final greeting and blessing, going up to the altar to kiss it, will again raise his eyes to the crucifix and will bow and genuflect before the tabernacle. Then he will return to the sacristy, recollected, without dissipating with looks and words the grace of the mystery celebrated.

In this way the faithful will be helped to understand the holy signs of the liturgy, which is something serious, in which everything has a meaning for the encounter with the present mystery of God.

[Translation by ZENIT] 21-01-2011

Another Dissenter Getting Desperate

Sr Joan Chittister O.S.B. is hailed among the liberals as one of the leading lights, an intelligent, inspiring speaker held in high regard. Her latest opinion column promoted in Cathnews (24-01-2011) would make Fr Eric Hodgens proud!

In her article, Sr Chittister tries to talk up the revolution of the liberal laity, in the face of the failing liberal clergy whose time is up. She refers to the priests of the last 50 years as having "held the church together" by "enabling its growth and revering its traditions in new and creative ways", but is afraid of the new generation of orthodox priests who are likely to put an end to her dreams of revolution. She's desperately hoping that the laity will call the priests to order and set them straight about the "real" church of the laity.

She puts forward a list of "suggestions" for new priests written by a lay couple ("longtime faithful parishioners", she calls them). She refers to the list as "impressive" and "realistic", and adds her own affirming comments to each one. Here are a few examples:

Reread annually a summary of the second Vatican Council reforms. (I wonder which ones they're thinking of specifically, and which documents they're in? - Ed.)

Be open to a changing position of the church on gays and women. (i.e. teach that sodomy is normal, and ordain women priests. - Ed)

Learn more in the first four years of your priesthood than you did in the recent [seminary trainings]. "The message is clear," Sister notes: "the parish has as much to teach a new priest as the seminary ever did."

Respect the role of the laity in an evolving Church.

Store your seminary notes in an inaccessible place. Sister's wisdom: "Remember that parish life is about more than theory, theology, and "the rules." Like Jesus, be among us, listen to us, enable us all to go on together." (Yes, Jesus didn't teach or lead, he just listened and walked with the people, didn't he? But if the seminary notes are from a dissenting nun lecturer, then keep them and consider them The Gospel of the Evolved Church - Ed.)

Remember that an unquestioning "company man" in all professions, even the priesthood, sacrifices creative energy. "There are times when the needs of people transcend any particular rule," Sr Chittister adds.

She concludes by saying that the laity "are no longer passive observers of church rules, church liturgy, or church administration. They see themselves as carriers of the faith as well as consumers of the faith. They know that baptism is every bit as important as ordination."

And she considers laity telling priests how to be accountable to them, rather than to be faithful to the Church, as signs of "deep-down, total and life-long commitment" of the laity!

- Ed.

The Church is Not a Vague Moralising Agency

From a homily by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, 20-11-2010

But the crisis of the Church is still a deeper one. It is not about the role of the Church in society. It is not about numbers. It is about the very nature of faith in Jesus Christ. It is about our understanding of the message of Jesus Christ. It is about faith in the God revealed in Jesus Christ and about the fundamental question: who is Jesus Christ?

We do not create our own identity for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to bring a message of love. But it was not a message just of being nice to each other. We have to ask: what is it that makes a Christian different in his or her interaction with others? What is it that should mark the Church of Jesus Christ as a people driven by the message of salvation revealed through the death and resurrection of Jesus? ...

Renewal and reform of the Church, however, will only come from within the Church, that is from within a community of men and women who listen to the word of God, who come together to pray, who celebrate the Eucharist and are called to share in the very life of Christ himself. The Church is communion. That is not the same as saying the Church is a community, or an association or an institution. The Church is formed by the Word of God and is lived by men and women who allow that word of God to transform them. ...

There are many indications that the Church in Ireland has lost its way. Let me be very clear: sadly many people, of various ages, no longer really know Jesus Christ. That is not to say that they are not good people, caring people. It is not to say that the Church is only for a holy elite: the Church is a Church of

sinner; each of us has to repent day after day; each of us compromises and each of us lets Jesus down and betrays Jesus.

The Church is the Church of Jesus Christ. It is not a vague moralising agency in society. It is not there to provide some sort of spiritual comfort zone for all comers. The Eucharist and the sacraments are celebrations of faith in Jesus Christ within a Christian community. Allowing the sacramental life of the Church to become some just sort of vague social celebration is allowing the true identity of the Church to become distorted. ...

Where do we go on the path of renewal? Can we be happy to celebrate first communion services which put people into debt for thousands of Euro for empty external expenses, while neither the children nor their parents have been led to a true understanding of the Eucharist and the Eucharistic community which is the Church? Can we be satisfied when confirmation is looked on by many as a graduation out of Church life? In not addressing such issues we are not just deceiving ourselves but we are damaging the integrity of the message of Jesus.

The Church is not a holy elite. It is made up today as always by the humble of heart. Many people with little education have a deeper insight into the message of Jesus Christ than learned theologians or bishops. But in today's society where the message of Jesus is less and less accessible, the Church must become a place where formation in the Word of God resounds in a way that it has not done so in the Irish Church for generations.

www.zenit.org 27-11-2010

What Are Our Priests Thinking?

In an editorial of December 2010 on [National Council of Priests' magazine] The Swag's website, Fr Hal Ranger asks: "What are the big issues and challenges for us ordained priests at this time in history in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania?"

He lists some things to get his fellow "ordained priests" thinking, including the following:

"- Are we really at ease with the system of government from the top down that still regularly shows itself in Church matters? How much of that is really "Jesus-like"?"

"- If we really believe that the Celebration of Eucharist is at the centre of our Christian life, then why are we not passionately campaigning for a serious rethink about the practice of only ordaining male celibates? ...

"- Should we not be claiming, with energy and passion, the right and desirability of using liturgical rituals, language and rubrics that are easily understood, inclusive and readily accessible to all ...? All liturgy is surely about enabling those gathered to connect with God and with each other – in, through and with Jesus. How does this imperative relate to the "New Roman Missal"?"

I'd hazard a guess that the "big issues and challenges" facing them are understanding the Catholic Catechism and believing what Catholics believe. As a start at least.

- Ed.

Hours of Eucharistic Adoration in Gippsland

Bass	Wednesday 9.30am – 10.30am
Bairnsdale	1 st Friday after 9.10am Mass
Cowwarr-Heyfld	1 st Friday alternately: Cwr 7.30pm–8.30am Heyfield 10am – 4.30pm
Churchill	Saturday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
Cranbourne	Friday and Saturday in the Church: (9.30 Mass) 10am – 11am Adoration Chapel accessible 24 hours by PIN available at parish office.
Drouin	Thursday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, December onwards)
Lakes Entrance	Friday 9.30am – 11am
Moe	Wednesday (9am Mass) 9.30am – 10.30am
Morwell	6pm Thursday – 6pm Friday (Sacred Heart Church)
Orbost	Friday 9.30am – 10.30am
Rosedale	First Wednesday 10am – 11am
Sale	Friday 11.30am – 2pm First Friday 11.30am – 6pm
Trafalgar	Wednesday and First Saturday: (9.30am Mass) 10am – 10.45am
Traralgon	Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
Warragul	Saturday 10am – 11am First Friday 4pm – 8pm (every second month, January onwards)
Wonthaggi	First Friday 7pm – 8pm

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

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Editor - Janet Kingman

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

- no longer have a voice in Catholic Life, and other 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 or articles. We cannot guarantee that all will be published, and we reserve the right to edit letters. The purpose of sharing letters is to pass on relevant information and suggestions for making positive changes, that is, in line with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We live in joyful hope that the diocese we love can be faithful to the authentic tradition of the Church. As such, Into the Deep aims to be a messenger of hope and not of doom. 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.

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