

Into the Deep

Issue 108

Newsletter of orthodox Catholics of Gippsland

September 2011

The Great Truth

Pope Benedict XVI, Madrid, World Youth Day 2011

God loves us. This is the great truth of our life; it is what makes everything else meaningful. We are not the product of blind chance or absurdity; instead our life originates as part of a loving plan of God. To abide in his love, then, means living a life rooted in faith, since faith is more than the mere acceptance of certain abstract truths: it is an intimate relationship with Christ, who enables us to open our hearts to this mystery of love and to live as men and women conscious of being loved by God.

If you abide in the love of Christ, rooted in the faith, you will encounter, even amid setbacks and suffering, the source of true happiness and joy. Faith does not run counter to your highest ideals; on the contrary, it elevates and perfects those ideals. Dear young people, do not be satisfied with anything less than Truth and Love, do not be content with anything less than Christ. ...

Dear friends, may no adversity paralyze you. Be afraid neither of the world, nor of the future, nor of your weakness. The Lord has allowed you to live in this moment of history so that, by your faith, his name will continue to resound throughout the world.

www.zenit.org 20-08-2011

Church is Not Ours

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 19-01-2011

The path to visible unity among all Christians resides in prayer, because fundamentally we do not "build" unity, but it is "built" by God, it comes from Him, from the Trinitarian Mystery, from the unity of the Father with the Son in the dialogue of love which is the Holy Spirit and our ecumenical effort should be open to divine action, it must be a daily invocation of God's help. The Church is His and not ours.

www.zenit.org 21-08-2011

Persevering in Love

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2742, 2745

"Pray constantly ... always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." St Paul adds, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints."

For "we have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast constantly, but it has been laid down that we are to pray without ceasing." This tireless fervour can come only from love.

Against our dullness and laziness, the battle of prayer is that of humble, trusting, and persevering love. This love opens our hearts to three enlightening and life-giving facts of faith about prayer.

"He "prays without ceasing" who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer. Only in this way can we consider as realizable the principle of praying without ceasing." (*Origen*)

Say to Jesus

Pope Benedict XVI at the closing of World Youth Day, Madrid, 21-08-2011

Dear young people, today Christ is asking you the same question which he asked the Apostles: "Who do you say that I am?"

Respond to him with generosity and courage, as befits young hearts like your own. Say to him:

"Jesus, I know that you are the Son of God, who have given your life for me. I want to follow you faithfully and to be led by your word. You know me and you love me. I place my trust in you and I put my whole life into your hands. I want you to be the power that strengthens me and the joy which never leaves me".

www.zenit.org 21-08-2011

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A Heavy Heart

It was with a heavy heart that I read the August issue of ITD. If this is the final decision made by the Apostolic Signatura, so be it. What can we continue to say or do? Satan loathes and is incredibly terrified of people of deep humility. It seems to me that Fr Speekman has accepted this decision and I doubt he'll do any more than he has done thus far. This is a very good sign. Humility once again, humility. The finger of God is in all of this and He only knows what good will come out of it in the near future.

One Polish priest said to me recently: "With all that is happening around the world, the natural disasters, apostasy etc., they are certainly signs that we are coming closer to Christ's second coming." He referred to St Faustyna's (Polish way of spelling her name) diary and some things he quoted from that.

We can only prepare ourselves to the best of our ability – always ready, standing firm, although our hearts feel faint because of these terrible things happening around us. It almost seems like evil is winning and in some cases it is.

One priest from Opus Dei told me some years ago, that some people can do more in silence. That doesn't mean that we need to be silenced and not to act on evil but, we come to a certain stage that silence and prayer is the only answer. Perhaps in Fr Speekman's case – this is the time.

I really feel for you all and you are all in my prayers. These prayers I will take before the Blessed Mother.

Evie, Tasmania

A Catholic School Principal's Response

The following email was received, unsigned, from the address of Jason Slattery, Principal of St Thomas' Primary School, Sale:

Finally Bishop Coffey is justified in his decision. A fantastic man who will always be considered a leader and an inspiration to many. It's a pity people who follow the crap you write in this publication can't see this from the idiots you support. Hopefully this is the end of your laughable rubbish.

A Little Penance

Blessed Angela of Foligno, 13th century

"Through temporal poverty the soul will find eternal riches; through contempt and shame it will obtain supreme honour and very great glory; through a little penance, made with pain and sorrow, it will possess with infinite sweetness and consolation of the Supreme God, God eternal."

Reactions

As a "sideline" reader of your journal I quite often will nod enthusiastically or even at times shake my head in some disagreement. The last issue had me doing both.

I have followed the Fr Speekman issue from the beginning and have felt saddened for him, knowing him to be a really good pastor and I felt sure that the Apostolic Signatura (whose head is Cardinal Burke) would respond in his favour. However, I suppose I am shaking my head and thinking, they looked after the Bishop rather than Fr Speekman and the people he ministered to.

The second point of your journal which concerned me came under the title, "Squandering your assets" (Cardinal Pell, p.5) – the line: "Priesthood is also a full-time job, when taken seriously."

I am sure it must have been a slip of the tongue for His Eminence to make priesthood but a "job"? If it's only a "job" then its no wonder women harangue and insist that they can do "the job". It's no wonder that homosexuals can "do the job". It's no wonder anyone "can do the job" because after all it's "only a job", even if a full-time job.

Yes, parenting is a full time job but before that, being a spouse itself is not a full time job but a divine call from God to continue His work. Before parenting must come "spousing" and for this to be honoured before parenting.

In our day neither priesthood, spousing nor parenting are honoured and so because of this we have the society we have. Or even the society we asked for.

Name and address supplied, Vic

Fr John Appointed to Sale

Fr John Speekman has been temporarily appointed to Sale as assistant priest to Dean of the Cathedral Fr Andrew Wise. Many Sale parishioners are hopeful he'll stay there permanently. It's ironic that at every parish Fr John serves in, there are parishioners who greet him after Mass and ask excitedly if he's staying for good. They are grateful to have the Mass said simply and obediently, and to hear homilies that teach and challenge. The same happened in Morwell of course, but those who rejected his "manner of acting and speaking" won out in the end. Bishop Prowse has called for expressions of interest from other priests to take up the position of Parish Priest of Morwell now that the position is officially vacant. If Fr John was at some stage told what he'd actually said or done (or how) to warrant his removal in the first place, he might have the opportunity to 'reform his ways' and apply to be appointed back to Morwell. Imagine that.

- Ed.

No, It's Not Over

I was dismayed to learn from the August edition of *Into the Deep* that you consider the Father Speekman case "is over". Daily, the media remind me (Ireland, Ballarat, etc.) that during the past 30/40 years the highest authorities in our Church have failed us in the exercise of wisdom and justice, have betrayed the Church (for whatever reason) – the Church founded, as we believe, by Jesus Christ, and left by Him to their human administration.

The Public Statement by Bishop Christopher Prowse does nothing to restore my confidence in the hierarchy, but does a great deal to remind me that both their Holinesses, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, have appealed to the laity for help, for the help that the Papacy can no longer rely on from all the hierarchy. Such help has been given generously by *Into the Deep*, and must not be withdrawn now, leaving the Holy Father apparently complicit in yet another scandalous situation, and leaving Fr Speekman apparently found guilty, by the "highest judicial authority in the Catholic Church", of some as yet unrevealed crime.

It seems to me that Bishop Prowse's use of the neutral word "dispute" does not truthfully name the situation that has existed between Father Speekman and his Bishops for the last eight years. I would argue that Father Speekman did not engage in "the long standing dispute" of Bishop Prowse's Public Statement but, in priestly obedience to his Bishop, vacated his parish and took the next step under Canon Law – referred the matter to Rome for adjudication.

Bishop Prowse's Public Statement informs us that the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome found in favour of Father Speekman, "because it did not consider all the reasons presented to it." In other words, the Congregation for the Clergy swept Father Speekman's wrongdoing – whatever it was – under the carpet. By implication, Bishop Prowse tells us that the Apostolic Signatura did consider all the reasons including Father Speekman's wrongdoing and, therefore, "upheld" his removal.

This leaves us asking what Fr Speekman's wrongdoing was – wrongdoing that made him unfit to be the parish priest of Morwell but fit "for a fresh appointment in the Diocese of Sale."

Molly Brennan, Bendigo

Dampened

About the Coffey/Speekman decision – though God can draw good out of bad, from the laity's level it puts a dampener on any further appeal to Rome on any other serious issue that might arise.

Thank you for your always-great bulletins.

M.V., Queensland

Radical Fidelity Required

Pope Benedict XVI to seminarians, Spain 20-08-2011

The holiness of the Church is above all the objective holiness of the very person of Christ, of his Gospel and his sacraments, the holiness of that power from on high which enlivens and impels it. We have to be saints so as not to create a contradiction between the sign that we are and the reality that we wish to signify. Meditate well upon this mystery of the Church, living the years of your formation in deep joy, humbly, clear-mindedly and with radical fidelity to the Gospel, in an affectionate relation to the time spent and the people among whom you live.

No one chooses the place or the people to whom he is sent, and every time has its own challenges; but in every age God gives the right grace to face and overcome those challenges with love and realism.

That is why, no matter the circumstances in which he finds and however difficult they may be, the priest must grow in all kinds of good works, keeping alive within him the words spoken on his Ordination day, by which he was exhorted to model his life on the mystery of the Lord's cross.

To be modeled on Christ, dear seminarians, is to be identified ever more closely with him who, for our sake, became servant, priest and victim. To be modeled on him is in fact the task upon which the priest spends his entire life. We already know that it is beyond us and we will not fully succeed but, as St Paul says, we run towards the goal, hoping to reach it (cf. Phil 3:12-14). ...

Under the guidance of your formators, open your hearts to the light of the Lord, to see if this path which demands courage and authenticity is for you. Approach the priesthood only if you are firmly convinced that God is calling you to be his ministers, and if you are completely determined to exercise it in obedience to the Church's precepts.

www.zenit.org 20-08-2011

Pope's Wish for Families

Pope Benedict XVI, Homily 21-12-2010

I address a special thought to families; I accompany them with the wish that they may fully realize their vocation of love with generosity and perseverance. Even when difficulties in conjugal life and in the relationships with their children present themselves, the spouses must never cease to remain faithful to that fundamental "yes" that they pronounced before God and each other on their wedding day, recalling that faithfulness to their vocation demands courage, generosity and sacrifice.

www.zenit.org 21-12-2010

Authentic Catholicism vs Cafeteria Catholicism

Excerpts of a delightful talk by our beloved Cardinal Pell, at the Catholic Voice Annual Dinner in Cork, Ireland, 29-07-2011. His talk was titled 'Authentic Catholicism vs Cafeteria Catholicism'. More in the next issue of ITD.

I am not going to talk about the Church in Ireland but I am going to talk about what I am trying to do in Australia, as an archbishop, and you can draw your own conclusions on what might, or what might not, be adaptable to here in Ireland. ...

The Irish that I grew up with were fighters: they were people who had convictions and went and battled for them. ... People are saying to me the same things they were saying to me back in 1998; we need this, we need that, nobody is doing anything – well, if nobody else is doing anything then you have to get it started yourself and if help comes, as it might or might not, at least you're doing things. I realise that your presence here tonight is evidence of your desire and determination to do something BUT things are slipping and, from what I hear, you know you are slipping; so if others won't act then do something yourselves.

Christians need to speak out

The secularists are steadily pushing a political agenda, trying to undermine the traditional Christian foundations, and they are also trying to drive Christian spokesmen out of public life. This also goes for priests and you just have to keep speaking publicly. I am determined to continue speaking out: why should I become the only man in Australia not able to exercise his democratic right to free speech? People are quite free to accept or reject what I have to say. We have as much right as anybody else to speak out. Of course we also need lay political figures who can speak out because it is not always productive for the clergy to be speaking, but I am absolutely sure that regular silence from the hierarchy and from the priests is not good at all.

[Catholics] as a minority in Australia we have two options: we are either submerged by the majority or we try to resist that and try to spread. In other words, we have to try to Catholicise the country.

Increasing vocations

The religious in Australia are disappearing but against that I invited the Nashville Dominicans to come to Sydney and they have been there since 2007. They are all young, attractive and wear the full habit and since arriving, about ten young women have joined them. In Sydney we can now get out the news to encourage young women who might be contemplating a religious vocation. Priestly vocations are up in quite a number of dioceses and I think it is interesting to work out what those dioceses are, to take a look at their churchmanship, their ecclesiology, their style and I think that, almost universally, the vocations are in the dioceses which are thoroughly Catholic. ...

There also has to be a focus on youth. One of the

things I did in Sydney was to set up lay chaplaincy teams in the universities – lay teams because I didn't have enough priests to do it. That has changed now because vocations are coming from it and, in the ten years this has been running in Sydney, we have had nine vocations to the priesthood and four to the nuns from Sydney University alone.

Battle against insipient anti-Roman sentiment

In Australia, as elsewhere, we have to struggle with the conviction that we are part of the Universal Church, led by the Pope, and that means something in everyday life. For example, we had one bishop in Toowoomba who had to be removed after over ten years of dialogue with the Holy See. It was a tragedy and didn't need to happen but he wouldn't back down or give any ground and so they were forced to say, 'Enough is enough.' So we have to battle against this insipient anti-Roman sentiment. Cardinal George of Chicago has a thesis that in many places the Catholic Church in the USA, in its style, is becoming Protestant – a church of individual judgement, with less concern for the Pope, the hierarchy and Catholic teaching – and there is no doubt that very senior elements in the Democratic Party are working to separate the hierarchy from many of the people in the United States. I am sure that this is happening in other parts of the world also, with some politicians preferring the establishment of what they call 'national churches'. Of course this has to be resisted.

Reforming Religious Education

[Another] thing I did was to reform religious education, which is of course fundamental to the future, and I was absolutely determined that I would change it no matter what. I called a friend of mine home from Rome, made him the Vicar for Education, and we commenced the immense task of writing a comprehensive Christ-centred Catholic text on faith and morals for the whole thirteen years of school education. This programme is now mandated in the schools. By and large it is working and it is welcomed by the teachers because many of them were not taught the faith themselves and so they welcomed a text-book which is full of content and can give them the answers. The education programme in schools has to be Christ-centred and it has to be totally Catholic. It is remarkable the number of people in Australia who think of the sacraments in a Protestant way; they think only of two, of Baptism and the Eucharist. In fact we are a Church of seven sacraments and one of the most wonderful sacraments is the sacrament of Penance, where there has been a massive drop-off. There is no reason for this, and if a decent preparation programme is in place then the young people will attend and welcome it.

Help End Abortion

We in Melbourne have once again joined the great international 40 Days for Life campaign (our 4th) under our adopted patroness of the unborn: Mary our Lady of Guadalupe. Our aim, object, goal, desire, greatest wish, passion is:

- a) The conversion of all the workers in the abortion clinics especially the ones in the so-called fertility control clinic at 118 Wellington Parade;
- b) The conversion of all members of parliament who are pro-abortion and have voted as such, particularly the Emily's List members;
- c) To be there for mothers who have had or are contemplating an abortion;
- d) To pray for fathers who have abdicated their responsibility of fatherhood or are devastated because their right of being a dad has been taken away and their baby has been or is going to be aborted!

It is very important for all of the above to know that God never stopped loving them and is waiting for them to say I am sorry. Now we know that we all need God's help to say "I am sorry" and that is where prayer comes in! If God never stopped loving them, then we ought to realise that "There, but for the grace of God, go I". We can only copy the Master and also keep loving them and not judging them.

We will offer our prayers up to our Lady of Guadalupe asking her to intercede on their behalf so they too can experience the inner peace which only God can give.

We invite everyone to commit time to be a peaceful, prayerful witness for life and help start changing this dreadful culture of death into a culture of life. Fill in timeslots on our website: click on Vigil Schedule at www.40daysforlife.com/melbourne. If you cannot access the website and would like to nominate timeslots, please ring me or send me an e-mail with your selected timeslots.

The campaign runs from 28 September - 6 November, 7.30am - 7.30pm, at 118 Wellington Pde, East Melb (catch tram 75 from Flinders St Station to tram stop 12).

May God bless each and every one of you.

*Fons Janssen, Campaign Director, Willung South, Vic
fonsforlife@skymesh.com.au, (03) 5194 2340*

So Far in 40 Days for Life:

- 4 313 lives have been reported as spared from abortion
- 14 abortion facilities completely shut down
- 53 abortion workers have left the abortion industry.

Over the past 4 years

- 400 000 people have united in peaceful fasting and prayer for an end to abortion,
- including 13 000 church congregations.

This campaign

- 291 cities are participating,
- across 7 countries,
- including 46 first-time campaigns.

Organise Adoration

On the 8th of December 2007, Cardinal Hummes, the then Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy wrote to every bishop in the world urging them to promote perpetual Eucharistic adoration in their dioceses. I stand corrected but to my knowledge I know of no diocese in this country that has done so. Maybe someone can pleasantly surprise me.

I have taken the extracts below from past copies of ITD that emphasise the importance of Eucharistic adoration. How can we argue with such emphatic statements?

Any program must have as its starting point a strong emphasis on Eucharistic adoration – failure to do so renders any program pointless or subject to failure, as we have witnessed with past programs.

Every parish should be able to have at least one day per week of 8 hours continuous adoration. The larger parishes should have as a starting point 24 hours of continuous adoration.

To achieve this needs organisation. To relieve the parish priest I would suggest that a member of the laity take responsibility to co-ordinate and be responsible for maintaining a roster. It is not difficult and you will be surprised how the faithful respond.

John Henderson, Morwell

"Jesus wants all of us to come to Him in the Blessed Sacrament. He is really there in person waiting just for you." *Mother Teresa*

"The (Bishop) should diligently foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or prolonged or almost continuous, with the participation of the people." *Redemptionis Sacramentum n.136*

"Spending time in intimate conversation with, and adoration of the Good Shepherd present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is a pastoral priority far superior to any other." *The Common Priesthood of the Faithful and The Ordained Priesthood*

"The solemn cult of Exposition is also necessary to arouse the slumbering faith of many good people who have forgotten Jesus Christ because they have lost sight of the fact that He is their Neighbour, their Friend and their God." *St Peter Julian Eymard*

"I cannot doubt at all your Real Presence in the Eucharist. You have given me such a lively faith that when I hear others say they wish they had been living when You were on earth, I laugh to myself, for I know that I possess you as truly in the Blessed Sacrament as people did then, and I wonder what more anyone could possibly want." *St Teresa of Avila*

"Without adoration there is no transformation of the world." *Cardinal Ratzinger in 'God is Near Us'*

"Every great reform has in some way been linked to the rediscovery of belief in the Lord's eucharistic presence among his people." *Sacramentum Caritatis n.6.*

What An Exciting World We Live In!

A homily by Fr John Speekman, on his blog: homiliesfromaustralia.blogspot.com, 19th Sunday in Ordinary time, Year A

A while ago I happened to notice this statement from Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI: *We're finding it more difficult to dwell in a universe inhabited by unseen presences: the presence of God, saints, one another. Today's world is reduced to what is physical, what can be measured, seen, touched, tasted, smelled. We're mystically tone-deaf, all the goods are in the shop window.*

These words struck a chord with me as I had been wrestling with the responses I imagined people would have to the Gospel of today – the Gospel of Jesus walking on water in the middle of a storm. I could hear the cynical chuckles, 'Yeah, sure, walking on water'.

Fr Ron was basing his thoughts on a book called *Sacred Heart, Gateway to God* by Wendy Wright. She was a struggling Hollywood actress, more of an agnostic than a believer, when, while killing time one afternoon in a Los Angeles library, she picked a book about St Hubert to read about her husband's middle name.

At first she was fascinated by the descriptions of Hubert, a scholar, a bishop, and a diplomat. But then: *I was chugging along just fine until I came to a description of Hubert's ability to bilocate.*

For those of you who don't know what bilocate means it is the well-documented mystical gift of being able to be in two places at the same time.

The book Wendy was reading told very matter-of-factly how St Hubert had been able to be in North Africa and in Continental Europe at the same time. She goes on: *Profoundly disoriented, I closed the book. I felt queasy. It was as though two subterranean tectonic plates had collided inside the structured universe in which I lived.*

Wendy goes on to explain how this experience was repeated many times during the course of her journey into the Catholic Church as she discovered that reality is not merely physical and that the believer lives in a multi-layered world of hidden realities which science cannot reveal for us.

Let me give another example. On the eve of the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul, July 19, 1830 St Catherine Labouré was awakened by a brilliant light and the voice of a child: *Sister Labouré, come to the Chapel; the Blessed Virgin awaits you.*

The child, it turned out was Catherine's Guardian Angel. He led her to the convent chapel to speak with the Blessed Virgin who gave her the Miraculous Medal.

I wonder how many of us stop to reflect on all this – apparitions, guardian angels, the blessed Virgin, miraculous medals? What an exciting world we live in! A world in which our mortal earthly lives are

already in intimate connection with heaven, and of profound concern to those who live there.

Each one of us has a Guardian Angel. They are somehow here with us in this church right now, surrounding us. The Catechism has this to say: [336] *From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession ... Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life. And just so we don't miss the point, it highlights for us that: Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God.*

And if Guardian Angels can appear to us so can the Blessed Virgin, so can Padre Pio, and Mother Teresa and any other saint, or even a soul in purgatory, or even the demons from hell.

St John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, used to receive frequent visits from demons. At first he was terrified but later in life he treated them with contempt.

Saint Faustina, the first saint of the Third Millennium, often spoke with the souls in Purgatory who asked for her intercessory prayers, and what's more, she was shown hell and its terrible reality.

Yes, it's true that we believers live in a rich world. A world far richer and more interesting than Harry Potter's world of magic and goblins. His world is make believe – ours is real.

Fr Ron Rolheiser goes on to say in his article: *What she (Wendy Wright) describes ... so brilliantly points towards something that is all but lost in our world today, namely, the fact that reality is more than just physical, that it has layers that we do not perceive empirically (with our senses), that these layers are just as real as the physical, and there is more mystery within ordinary life than meets the eye.*

- How is it that Padre Pio, and St Francis of Assisi, and Esperanza of Betania carried on their bodies the bleeding wounds of the Passion of Christ – the stigmata?
- How is it that Therese Neumann could live for 50 years sustained only by her daily Communion?
- How is it that the Curé of Ars could tell penitents the sins of their youth which even they had long forgotten?
- How could St Teresa of Avila and St Joseph of Cupertino defy the laws of gravity and levitate during their prayer, in front of many witnesses?
- And how could Jesus walk on water?

Continued on page 7

The purpose of the Gospels is to bring us to faith. As John says at the end of Chapter 20 of his Gospel: *These (the things Jesus did and said) are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.*

When Jesus came to the Apostles, walking on the stormy waters of the lake, it was so that they might believe. Jesus wanted his followers to believe that the loving care of God for his children can penetrate our physical world of little boats and stormy lives – and that there is ultimately no barrier between heaven and earth when faith is active.

Faith is our response to God and the Apostles responded in faith: *The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God'.*

Yes, what an exciting world is the world of faith! Nothing is impossible in that world, because nothing is impossible to God our Father, and we are his children. We have only to look forward to the next miracle.

And what is the next miracle?

Well, that bread and wine over there at the back of the church will be brought up and placed on the altar. The priest will speak over them the words the Lord used at the Last Supper – and the bread and wine will become the Body and Blood of Jesus – offered to the Father so that our sins 'may be forgiven' – and offered to us in Holy Communion so that we may become one with God.

Signing Petitions in Trust

That petition to the Holy Father and Bishops of Australia (August ITD, p.8) is in the back of my parish church and a couple have signed it in complete ignorance of the contents. It is a case of if Father says you may sign if you wish, then away they go and sign without reading.

At the top of the letter it says Archbishop Coleridge has said it is not to come to his diocese (Canberra-Goulburn). Is he the only Bishop who has spoken out about this?

Today is Thursday and the day I always pray for all priests. This is so important. We can complain and moan but unless we pray very hard for the sanctification of priests things will not improve.

Mother of Priests intercede before the throne of God for all your priests. God bless Australia.

Kathleen Collins, Melbourne

Disturbing Petition

While I'm not a subscriber I do download your monthly newsletter and follow the issues raised.

I wish to remain anonymous in this, but the petition you mentioned in the August issue of ITD (p.8) was offered to parishioners to sign at the church I often attend in Brisbane, St Thomas, Camp Hill. I don't wish to get involved in controversy but I felt I needed to bring it to your attention. I'm curious to know if it is being done in other churches throughout Australia.

It was partially read out by the local priest and offered to parishioners to sign if they wanted to, or they could take it home to read. I did the latter and in doing so feel very uneasy.

What was curious is that it was at 5:30pm Mass and I was surprised by the larger than usual attendance. The thought did go through my mind that perhaps there was a linkage in the larger than usual attendance and the petition but I left early after Communion and I'm not sure how many signed it. I find it disturbing.

Name and address supplied

Signs of Hope

I would like to let Catholics who live in a "modern" parish or diocese know that they must not give up hope.

Since Cardinal Pell has come to Sydney he has made many changes (reforms) that have slowly brought the Church here back to being Catholic. The wonderful work that Fr Flader did with the Catholic Adult Education Centre, the appointment of a new director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) with the resultant new "Catholic" syllabus for teaching scripture in public schools, and particularly with the seminary (to name a few).

The new priests coming out of the seminary are priests who see themselves as caretakers of our souls (for a change) and are very reverent. The two newly ordained priests at Liverpool's All Saints parish are a good example. They automatically genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament, bow their heads at the name of Jesus, say the Mass prayerfully and give a short (weekday Mass) homily that is both beautiful and challenging.

There is much hope in the Church in Australia, but it won't happen overnight. Just pray and trust. Seeing these priests bow their head when saying Jesus' most holy name reminds me that all Catholics used to do this. Why has the gesture gone out of use? Surely with the much abuse of His name at this time, all Catholics need to get back to doing this.

Maureen Wright, Lurnea, NSW

"The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works."

St Augustine

Persistent in Dissent

Sr Joan Chittister continues with her public dissent against Church teaching, ably supported by CathNews as usual – funded by our Bishops. This is an excerpt from CathNews Perspectives of 26/08/2011 (originally in National Catholic Reporter):

“The decision to take the church out of the 16th century – out of the character and quality of Trent – into the vision and character of Vatican II was good. At the council of Trent in the 16th century, the church’s response to calls for reform was to lay new laws and new regimentation on the backs of the people rather than bring reform to the policies at the centre of the system itself.

“The brave decision of the bishops of the world in our time to bring the church into the 20th century in Vatican II – 400 years after the fact and more necessary than ever – was good. But the response this time, too, is being delayed by a few.

“It is being denied by those in the system who fear loss of privilege and power for themselves more than they value spiritual gain for the many. In the name of reforming the reforms there is a move abroad now to define who are the ins – the clerical, the hierarchical, the male – and who are the outs again – the laity, the women, the gays.”

It seems Sr Chittister thinks that Vatican II really meant that women could become priests, that laity could run the Church like a democracy, and that homosexual acts were good and sacred just like marital sexual acts. Where in the Vatican II documents did she find any of that? Hasn’t she heard of Church teaching in these areas? Surely an elderly Benedictine Sister with some degree of education would know that Catholic teaching in these areas is clear, settled, official, and available for all to read and learn; and, if you’re Catholic, you live by it. Or does she know all that but still consider her contrary opinion to contain more wisdom and insight than the teaching of Christ through His Church.

If a Catholic priest, bishop or nun is going through a crisis of faith, it would be best for them to deal with it privately. Catholic faithful should not have to see or hear dissent from them, let alone have to pay for it to be publicised more broadly.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference needs to withdraw all funding and ties with CathNews. They have been promoting dissent and division for far too long.

- Ed.

Persecution Kept Quiet

In Pakistan, churches have been destroyed, Christians lynched and children forcibly converted to Islam. Anglicans and Catholics are being denied jobs, government support, housing and, obviously, freedom of religion. The reputable US-based Pew Research Center found that 76% of Pakistan’s Muslims favour the death penalty for those who convert to Christianity or some other religion.

In Egypt, a country of 70 million Muslims, many of the around 8 million Christians face daily harassment with recurring, at times deadly, violence. Sometimes, police merely stand by, or may even provide support to facilitate vicious attacks by mindless mobs.

Contributing to a sense of permanence of the mass persecution of Christians in Egypt is a perverse ruling which prevents Christians from having access to life-saving exit visas. The measure echoes the steps taken 75 years ago by Nazi Germany and Communist Russia against German and Soviet Jews.

Intriguing is that letters reminding readers of Australia’s secular papers of relentless anti-Christian persecution appear to be routinely sidelined. Is it a case of keeping Muslim customers on side? Is it a puzzling manifestation of an anti-Christian newspaper culture engendered by some newspaper magnates? Or is there a fear of ‘Islamist reprisals’ for disseminating truth?

Henk Verhoeven, Beacon Hill NSW

Blessings by Deacons

Answered by Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university

Q: Can a permanent deacon impart blessing on people or articles as the priest or bishop does by making the sign of the cross over them? Can he also bless water apart from baptismal water? - Reader from Alabama, USA

A: A deacon, whether permanent or transitory, may carry out all those blessings not specifically reserved to a bishop or priest in the Book of Blessings. The rites open to the deacon include most blessings of people, devotional objects and also holy water.

Although the deacon may impart these blessings, he should usually defer to a priest if one is present and available. Likewise, blessings during Mass are always done by the priest.

www.zenit.org 26-11-2010

Catholic Social Work

“Everything in Catholic social ministry begins and ends with Jesus Christ. If it doesn’t, it isn’t Catholic. And if our social work isn’t deeply, confidently and explicitly Catholic in its identity, then we should stop using the word ‘Catholic.’ It’s that simple.”

Archbishop Charles Chaput, Denver, addressing Caritas International, 21-06-2011

Assistance with Kneeling for Holy Communion

An article by Tess Livingstone in *The Australian*, 04-08-2011, quotes Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, as saying: "I think the entire church needs to receive communion while kneeling. It is to simply know that we are before God himself and that he came to us and that we are undeserving. If we trivialise communion, we trivialise everything, and we cannot lose a moment as important as that of receiving communion, of recognising the real presence of Christ." The cardinal said Catholics who received communion while standing should make "a genuflection or profound bow".

The article noted that since the Second Vatican Council in 1975, Catholics in Australia have had the option of receiving communion either kneeling or standing, on the tongue or in the hand.

After reading the article, I wrote to my parish priest:

"I write to you again on another matter and that is the opportunity to receive holy communion kneeling, as I have learned that such a practice is not banned but optional as is receiving the host on the tongue. As I for one would appreciate the chance of receiving the host kneeling, I ask what facility you are prepared to provide for myself and any other parishioner wishing to kneel whilst receiving the host. For instance the provision of a kneeler would be much appreciated as I with my osteoarthritis would find it very painful getting up off the floor from a kneeling position. I am prepared to put up with whatever pain is necessary to give my full adoration and worship of Christ in his Holy Catholic and Apostolic church led by his holiness Pope Benedict 16th."

Bruce Freeman, Stanthorpe, Qld

Returning to Altar Rails

Around the same time as receiving Bruce Freeman's letter, I was forwarded an article by Rose Walsh of Lincoln, Nebraska, (04-08-2011) describing how one parish in the USA reintroduced altar rails in their relatively new church (they requested it of their parish priest to celebrate the parish's 20th anniversary). Altar rails were installed and have since been used at all Masses for those who choose to kneel for Holy Communion. Those who wish to stand approach the sanctuary in a single, centre line as previously.

It makes sense to return to altar rails. And I imagine it would be very easy to achieve in most churches. What about suggesting it to your parish priest?

- Ed.

The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

First, I applaud and respect the response of ITD, Bishop Prowse and especially Fr John himself to the unexpected decision of the Apostolic Signatura as published in August ITD. Our Blessed Mother herself always sets us an example of obedience and humility.

Nowadays the spirit of the world has entered the Church rather than the reverse. Hence we live in an age of confusion, reversals and apostasy. As in the world where many innocent are condemned and many guilty go free, so it is in the Church.

Nevertheless, God is the author of Truth and the Church is the Bride of Christ, the Word made Flesh. Pope Benedict warns us constantly not to fall into the trap of moral relativism. We must love the sinner, hate the sin and never tolerate evil.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that the Apostolic Signatura has contradicted the findings of the Congregation of the Clergy. We don't know all the facts in Fr John's case and therefore cannot judge. We don't even know of the role and influence of other significant players like the Catholic Education Office and other priests and laity who wrote letters and signed petitions against Fr John.

What we do know however is: Evil exists and the Devil, through his agents, especially Communism and Freemasonry, has infiltrated the Church. Lenin himself declared in the 1920's that he would infiltrate the Catholic Church. Both Douglas Hyde and Bella Dodd, ex-Communist converts, have confirmed this. When she was a high-ranking official of the American Communist Party Mrs Dodd said, "In the 1930's we put 1,100 men into the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within"; and in 1950 she said, "Right now they are in the highest places in the Church."

The '*Permanent Instruction*' produced by the Alta Vendita (the governing centre of European Freemasonry) called for the dissemination of liberal ideas throughout society and within the institutions of the Catholic Church so that laity, seminarians, clerics and prelates would, over the years, gradually be imbued with progressive principles.

Today we are witnesses of the triumph of secular humanism (Freemasonry) and atheistic materialism (Communism). Like Our Lord, the Church is beginning her Calvary. Many, if not most, bishops, priests and laity are marching under the modernist banner introduced so gradually by Freemasonry, thinking they are the tolerant Church of today. On the other hand, those priests, like Fr John who wear a collar, teach the Dogmas of our Faith, obey the Pope, adore Our Lord and honour Our Lady are considered stuck in the authoritative pre-1950's Church. With good reason Our Lady of Fatima has asked us to pray for our priests, bishops and especially our Holy Father.

Richard Earle, Marlo

New Bishop

On 23 June 2011 a highly significant historical event took place: Franciscan Friar Vincent Long Van Nguyen of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual (OFM Conv) was consecrated the new Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne. What is memorable about this appointment is Bishop Vincent is not only the first Vietnamese-born elected to such a high honour in the Catholic Church in Australia, but attained this goal after arriving here as one of the early 'boat people' fleeing oppression in their native Vietnam that had been taken over by the Communists. Naturally there was great rejoicing by the Vietnamese community and the Conventual Franciscan Friars.

My link with Bishop Vincent stems from a long association with the warm-hearted Vietnamese community that began in 1978 – my first introduction to a 'boat person'. The stories I've heard of human tragedy, endurance, courage, survival and success would fill an encyclopaedia. Perhaps high among Bishop Vincent's appealing traits is his ability to mix with ordinary Australians in a way that makes him feel 'one of them', notably with his acquired Aussie accent and even familiarity with our more 'colourful' colloquialisms. This 'integrated' adjustment to his country of adoption shows how His Lordship has risen above the traumatic events undergone in escaping oppression long ago. There is no doubt in my mind a poignant quality gained on the journey would be his unreserved forgiveness of his enemies.

A few weeks before his consecration, Bishop Vincent offered weekend Masses in his former parish of St Joseph's, Springvale, personally greeting people outside afterwards. As I approached, I spontaneously said: "Congratulations, My Lord Elect." His short, prompt reply: "Shock! Horror!" left me utterly surprised and speechless. Besides, it was not the time or place to query him. When I pondered His Lordship's response later, the only interpretation I could gain was that he had vivid memories of an incident from his parish priest days when I asked him to correct a liturgical abuse regarding the distribution of Holy Communion (see ITD Feb 2009). In summary, he had returned to the altar leaving at least one Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to replace him. My request for him to read the relevant Vatican Instruction *Inaestimabile Donum* was met with: "I threw it in the rubbish bin."

My heartfelt prayer is that, in his new episcopal role with its responsibilities, Bishop Vincent has found a refreshed vision of defending and proclaiming Church teaching, especially regarding the liturgy. Hopefully he will use this unique opportunity to liaise with his fellow bishops, in particular Archbishop Hart, to instruct clergy and laity in all parishes where liturgical abuses continue to exist (including St Joseph's, Springvale) in a deeper appreciation and understanding of their true roles in administering the Eucharist, as clearly defined in directions given us by the Magisterium.

Peter Phillips, Springvale

Prayer Without Words

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience 17-08-2011

What is meditation? It means to "remember" all that God has done and not to forget all his benefits (cf. Ps103:2b). Often, we see only the negative things. We also need to hold in our memory the good things, the gifts that God has given us; we need to be attentive to the positive signs that come from God, and remember these. Therefore, we are speaking about a kind of prayer that the Christian tradition calls "mental prayer." We are more familiar with vocal prayer, and naturally the mind and heart must also be present in this prayer, but today we are speaking about a meditation that does not involve words, but that is rather a making contact of our mind with the heart of God.

And here Mary is a true model. The Evangelist Luke repeats numerous times that Mary, for her part, "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart". She keeps them; she does not forget. She is attentive to all that the Lord has said and done to her, and she...dwells deeply upon them in her heart. ...

In our own time, we are absorbed with so many activities and commitments, concerns and problems. Often, we tend to fill up all the spaces of the day, without having a moment to stop and reflect and to nourish our spiritual life – our contact with God. ...

We can [meditate] in many ways; for instance, by taking a short passage of sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostle's Letters, or a page from a spiritual author we are drawn to and which makes the reality of God in our today more present, perhaps taking advice from a confessor or spiritual director; by reading and reflecting on what we've just read, pausing to consider it, seeking to understand it, to understand what it says to me, what it says today – to open our soul to all that the Lord wants to say to us and teach us.

The holy rosary is also a prayer of meditation: In repeating the Hail Mary we are invited to think back and to reflect upon the mystery we have announced. But we can also dwell upon some intense spiritual experience, on the words that have remained with us from our participation in the Sunday Eucharist. You see, therefore, there are many ways of meditating and of thereby making contact with God – of drawing near to God, and in this way, of being on the road to heaven.

Dear friends, consistency in giving time to God is a fundamental element for spiritual growth; it will be the Lord Himself who gives us a taste for His mysteries, His words, His presence and action, to feel how beautiful it is when God speaks with us. He will make us understand in a more profound way what He wants of us. In the end, this is the goal of our meditation: to entrust ourselves ever more to the hands of God, with trust and love, certain that, in the end, it is only in doing His will that we are truly happy.

Love the Church

Pope Benedict XVI, at the closing of World Youth Day, Madrid, 21-08-2011

Dear young friends, as the Successor of Peter, let me urge you to strengthen this faith which has been handed down to us from the time of the Apostles. Make Christ, the Son of God, the centre of your life. But let me also remind you that following Jesus in faith means walking at his side in the communion of the Church. We cannot follow Jesus on our own. Anyone who would be tempted to do so “on his own”, or to approach the life of faith with that kind of individualism so prevalent today, will risk never truly encountering Jesus, or will end up following a counterfeit Jesus.

Having faith means drawing support from the faith of your brothers and sisters, even as your own faith serves as a support for the faith of others. I ask you, dear friends, to love the Church which brought you to birth in the faith, which helped you to grow in the knowledge of Christ and which led you to discover the beauty of his love. Growing in friendship with Christ necessarily means recognizing the importance of joyful participation in the life of your parishes, communities and movements, as well as the celebration of Sunday Mass, frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation, and the cultivation of personal prayer and meditation on God’s word.

Friendship with Jesus will also lead you to bear witness to the faith wherever you are, even when it meets with rejection or indifference. We cannot encounter Christ and not want to make him known to others. So do not keep Christ to yourselves! Share with others the joy of your faith. The world needs the witness of your faith, it surely needs God.

www.zenit.org 21-08-2011

Did You Know?

The centrepiece of St Peter’s square, the obelisk, brought by Emperor Caligula in 37 AD from Egypt, remains the only one in Rome to have never been broken. It is also the only obelisk without hieroglyphics making it very difficult to gauge the date (the range is 1900 BC to 500 BC). It does, however, hold a special place in the history of Christianity. Erected in the private imperial horse racing circus by the Vatican hill, the obelisk witnessed the martyrdom of St Peter and the other 900 Christians wrongfully accused by Nero of having set the Great Fire of Rome of 64 AD. Moved in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V to be a beacon to pilgrims, now it will be tested, assisting in reminding people of St Peter’s witness for years to come.

Elizabeth Lev www.zenit.org 25-08-2011

Defend the Faith

The arduous duty of a parish priest is not only that of a pastor of his flock, he must lead them to eternal life by his word and example. He must encourage them by the Gospels and by what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches. It seems that Father Speekman’s only failure was that he carried out that task only too well.

It appears that the retired Bishop of Sale, the dissident principal of the Catholic primary school in Morwell who reported Fr Speekman to the Bishop, and the Catholic Education Office, have had a precise victory.

In no matter what priestly capacity Father Speekman is placed in the Diocese of Sale, he is certain to defend the Holy Catholic faith without fear.

Leo Morrissey, Sandringham, Vic

The Canaanite Woman

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, 16-08-2011:

And it is here that he meets a Canaanite woman, who turns to him and asks him to heal her daughter, tormented by a demon (cf. Mt 15:22).

Now in this request we can perceive the beginning of the journey of faith that grows and is reinforced in the dialogue with the divine Teacher.

The woman is not afraid to cry out to Jesus “Have mercy on me”, an expression that recurs in the Psalms. She calls him “Lord” and “Son of David”, thus manifesting firm hope of being heard. What is the Lord’s attitude in response to the pain of a pagan woman?

Jesus’ silence might seem disconcerting, so much so that it arouses the intervention of the disciples, but it is not a question of insensitivity to that woman’s pain. St Augustine rightly comments: “Christ showed himself indifferent to her, not to refuse mercy to her, but to inflame her desire”.

Jesus’ seeming detachment, who says “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel”, does not discourage the Canaanite woman, who insists: “Lord, help me!”.

And even when she receives an answer that seems to close all hope – “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” – she does not desist.

She does not want to take anything from anyone: in her simplicity and humility she is content with little, she is satisfied with crumbs, she is content with just a look, a good word from the Son of God. And Jesus is in admiration of such a great response of faith and says to her: “Be it done for you as you desire”.

Dear friends, we are also called to grow in faith, to open ourselves and to receive freely the gift of God, and to trust and to also cry out to Jesus: give us faith, help us to find the way!

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	Wednesday (9.30am Mass) 10am – 11am
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

Our Plethora of Anxieties

Pope Benedict XVI, 07-08-2011 Angelus address

Let us call on the Virgin Mary, model of total entrustment to God, so that amidst the plethora of anxieties, problems and difficulties which churn up the sea of our life, may our hearts resonate with the reassuring words of Jesus who also says to us "Take heart, it is I; have no fear!"; and may our faith in him grow.

Contact *Into the Deep*

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Australia**

- Please notify by email if you would like to be added to the regular emailing list.
- There is no subscription fee.
- We rely on donations (cheques made out to John Henderson please).
- Donate to ITD via Ritchies Supermarkets Community Benefit program by nominating Into the Deep as your group, with CB number 81799, and shopping at your local Ritchies Supermarket (56 supermarkets throughout Eastern Australian) with your Community Benefit Card.

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

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.

Thank you to those who have been shopping at Ritchies supermarkets and liquor stores for us!

ITD has qualified for its first donation, of \$11.62 for the month of July! It may not seem much, but it all helps, and hopefully we can keep up a steady donation in future if readers keep shopping at Ritchies after nominating ITD on their Community Benefits Card (CB number 81799).