

LEPANTO

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At a time when new questions are being put and when grave errors aiming at undermining religion, the moral order and human society itself, are rampant, the Council earnestly exhorts the laity to take a more active part, each according to his talents and knowledge and in fidelity to the mind of the Church, in the explanation and defence of Christian principles and in the correct application of them to the problems of our times.

Decree of the Apostolic of Lay People, 18.11.65

Desperation breeds Dissent !

The newly appointed Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, when questioned by Italian journalist Gianni Cardinale early in Advent (on the subject of certain atheists who support the Pope on some issues to do with Islam), spoke out on the

remain committed to actively promoting vocations to the current celibate male priesthood and open to inviting priests from overseas.

What is certain however is that Easter 2014 is irrevocably approaching!

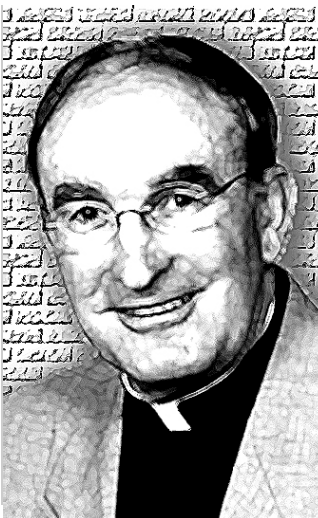
Please take some time to give these matters serious thought and reflection."

That an Australian Bishop of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church should present such options (*none of which, of course, are "options" at all!*) as some sort of solution to his "priest shortage" in an official Diocesan Document is almost unbelievable. But no - there they are! That he should exhort his flock to give them "**serious thought and reflection**" indicates just how far NewChurch thinking has permeated and compromised the Faith in the State of Queensland.

matter of DISSENT. He had this to say: *"If I can put it in a sound-bite, the Church doesn't really worry about atheists, because they're out of her spiritual jurisdiction, so to speak. Much more worrisome are those inside the Church who work to distort the faith and moral principles, or who oppose the Pope and his design for renewal of the Church."*

At about the same time, the Bishop of Toowoomba, Most Rev. William Morris, published his Advent pastoral letter. It is a tale of desperation, proposing a litany of dissent. It is a picture of the stretching of pastoral resources - of available priests - like an elastic band to breaking point. The Bishop calls it the "in-between" time. But it is not all "gloom and doom" he says. Why? Because, he said: "we have witnessed a flowering of lay-led ministry at a local level." However the "long term task" he admits "remains as yet unaddressed". One can understand why. On his own figures the whole diocese in 2014 will have only **18 priests - all but 3 of them - 65 years of age or older**, with 10 having the option to retire. That some of these may have died of exhaustion or frustration in the meantime does not appear to be in the equation. So what does Bishop Morris propose as a solution now?

Over the years Qld Catholics have been so conditioned to the idea of "priestless parishes" that, as they become a reality in more and more areas, it is accepted with a shrug as having been inevitable. The depth of knowledge of the Faith among the vast majority of Catholics educated in the "Catholic" school system over the last couple of generations has been so shallow that to many of them the proposals presented by Bishop Morris would not appear so outrageous at all.



The ideas of "women priests" and "married clergy" have been bandied about for so long in the NewChurch thinking of so many, it is just a matter of time before they too become a reality. A number of Australian bishops, Bishop Morris among them, have pandered to these notions. This is apparent in the Bishop's Advent letter when he refers to the "current celibate male priesthood" - *as if it could change at any time*. Never mind the fact that the Holy See has spoken with regard to "women priests". As the late Holy Father John Paul II definitively stated in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, "the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women." It will never happen. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith confirmed this teaching as an infallible part of the ordinary magisterium: "to be held always and everywhere and by all, as belonging to the Deposit of the Faith."

"Given our deeply held belief in the primacy of Eucharist for the identity, continuity and life of each parish community, we may well need to be much more open towards other options of ensuring that Eucharist may be celebrated. Several responses have been discussed internationally, nationally and locally

- *ordaining married, single or widowed men who are chosen and endorsed by their local parish community*
 - *welcoming former priests, married or single back to active ministry*
 - *ordaining women, married or single*
 - *recognising Anglican, Lutheran and Uniting Church Orders*
- While we continue to reflect carefully on these options we*

As for "married priests", this is a matter of discipline and tradition. However at the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 2005 it was discussed and rejected. Even bishops of the Eastern Rite churches in communion with Rome - who allow

(Continued on page 8)

Archbishop Bathersby would appear to have a special talent for pulling the roof down on his head. Such was the case with his recent special hosting and attention given to Father Richard Rohr OFM. (*Catholic Leader*, Nov. 12 '06)

For your editor the story of Fr Richard Rohr OFM began about 3 or 4 years ago. It was announced in the parish that men would be invited to attend a series of gatherings at the parish centre to listen to and then discuss taped talks by Fr Rohr. I had then never heard of him. With a friend, we went along. Only about 8 or 9 turned up. I can't remember much about the first taped talk, except that it seemed to contain a lot of 'psychobabble'; that men should try to discover and express their 'inner maleness' and that there were a number of snide references to the Vatican's attempt to 'reign in' the wonderful new freedoms expressed since Vatican II. In the following discussion I expressed some concerns about Fr Rohr's views - they were not well received.

However, in the belief the talks might improve we went along again the next week. Fr Rohr developed his theme with enthusiasm. It was again all about finding and giving expression to the 'true, male self', discovering your personal, uniquely male spirituality, getting rid of guilt and past inherited, straight-jacketed thinking. He could be very persuasive. Nevertheless to me it all came down to the negation of personal sin or responsibility for actions. The doctrine of Original Sin appeared to be reinterpreted by Fr Rohr. The only sins he seems to recognise were the "social" sins of intolerance and of being 'judgemental'. The following discussion was, shall we say, even more spirited and we were the odd ones out! We decided that was enough of Fr Richard Rohr.

Then, more recently, his name came up again - this time on the Internet. There it was in a list of well documented and celebrity US Catholic 'dissenters'. Apparently, in his early lecture touring days, he had been a leading proponent of the enneagram, a system of character assessment, deemed to be dangerous to the Faith particularly so when susceptible souls become involved. It still remains the plaything of New Age nuns. He was also listed as a supporter of the Call to Action mob.

Fr Rohr has now moved on and in 1986 established his **Centre for Action and Contemplation** in Albuquerque, New Mexico. There he conducts "male spirituality" courses and retreats in between extensive speaking tours back and forth across the US and overseas. He has become somewhat of a charismatic figure, gathered around him a substantial following particularly among the homosexuality community.

In May 22, 1997, the Catholic newspaper *The Wanderer* published an article by Stephanie Block on Fr Rohr's activities. In a long article she mentions two events. One was a retreat in 1997 titled "Coming Out, Coming Home: A place in the Church for Lesbians and Gays" hosted by the **Centre for Action and Contemplation**. Then, again in

1997, Fr Richard Rohr spoke at the New Ways Ministry Symposium conducted by the notorious Fr Robert Nugent and Sr Jeannine Gramick, whose so-called 'ministry to gays and lesbians', has been formally condemned by the Vatican. Both have been removed from their positions.

Fr Richard Rohr was also a speaker at least once (in 2000) at the Cardinal Mahoney (Archbishop of Los Angeles) sponsored annual "Religion Education Congress" that has the reputation of attracting the greatest collection of dissenters - bishops, priests and nuns at any one time, in any one place.

On the Catholic Culture website there is available an article from the "New Oxford Review" LXXIII No 3 March 2006 by Fr Bryce Sibley STL with the title "The Richard Rohr Phenomenon" that has been borrowed for this editorial. Fr Sibley provides a thorough analysis of Rohr's published works and his views as expressed in interviews and hundreds of talks. It is far too long to review in any great depth here. However, a couple of things in it are significant. First, Fr Sibley refers to the website of Soulforce, a homosexual advocacy group that carries a letter from Fr Rohr, dated Oct. 8 2000, endorsing Soulforce and its non-violent resistance to the "spiritual violence perpetrated against GLBT persons by religious and social groups" and protests the condemnation of homosexual activities and homosexual 'marriage' by the Church. Second, and here we quote directly from Father Sibley, he writes: "I will be the first to admit that there is something lacking in the Church's sacramental celebrations, but Rohr's proposals for solving the problem are strange. Instead of advocating an authentic renewal of the Sacraments and the rituals surrounding them, he takes upon himself to create new rituals. In fact, the appendix of (his book) "Adam's Return" gives an outline of a sample rite for men. The sponsoring of such male rituals is one of the main activities of Rohr's **Centre for Action and Contemplation** in New Mexico. Men from all around America pay hundreds of dollars to 'find themselves' in the New Mexico desert. What makes these rituals problematic for discerning Catholics is that they draw from or retain elements of various pagan rituals of initiation. Rohr argued at his conference that the rites that inspired him are Native American. Most disturbing was Rohr's description of crawling around naked on all fours with a group of men in a Native American sweat lodge. He gushed about what a powerful experience it was for him. But Christ came to save us from such pagan rituals. Rohr's almost uncritical adoption of religious rituals alien to the Gospel brings us to the main problem with his theory of male initiation - Rohr's rites can in no way bring about Christian redemption.

All of this brings us back to the Brisbane "Catholic Leader" of November 12 2006 and the article on page 5 headlined "Hundreds flock to hear contemplative advice". It reports on 800 people or more from Brisbane and elsewhere flocking to hear Fr Richard Rohr. Included in the

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Letters to the Editor:

audience are Archbishop Bathersby, Auxiliary Bishops Finnigan and Ouderman and Bishop Morris of Toowoomba. The article carried a photo of a smiling Archbishop Bathersby with Fr Richard Rohr.

Catholic Education spokesman Damien Brennan said "The response to Fr Rohr's presence had been overwhelming. He quoted Fr Rohr as saying: "God loves a vacuum and fills emptiness ...". We might add – so does the devil!

The report also noted that Fr Rohr would be back on Nov 13-15 for a public lecture at the Mercy Nuns Bardon Conference Centre – the noted venue for dissenters over the years.

That should have been the end of the story – the Brisbane Archdiocesan elite falling hook, line and sinker for "The Rohr Phenomenon". But it was not!

The surprising and welcome sequel came on December 12 when the *Catholic Leader* published in the "Centrepoint" section an article from Archbishop Phillip Wilson of Adelaide titled "Rohr reaction". One can only suggest that this article could not be ignored because Archbishop Wilson is also President of the Australian Bishops Conference.

In no way did Phillip Wilson fall for the blandishments of Richard Rohr. The Archbishop said: "He largely dismissed the Church's celebration of the liturgy today and condemned what he saw as the contemporary understanding and expression of the priesthood." Archbishop Wilson added: "Not only are these condemnations inaccurate and unfair they show little understanding of the real challenges facing the Church".

Later in the article he said Fr Rohr's sweeping condemnation of priests also bears little relationship to their real lives. He added that for Fr Rohr to say that "just to join the clergy is to join an establishment world view of status and security" is not only wide of the mark but demeaning. It belittles the lives and work of priests.

Archbishop Wilson concluded: "In effect, Fr Rohr presents caricatures of both the liturgy and the priesthood as well as other aspects of Catholic faith in order to move to some 'pure' state. His arguments not only misrepresent contemporary expressions of the liturgy and the priesthood but they do not come to terms with the real challenges facing the Church."

Dabbling with dissent can be dangerous. Archbishop Wilson brings some reality to an otherwise blind acceptance by the Archbishop and Archdiocese of Brisbane of the celebrity status of Richard Rohr without, it would appear, any discernment or investigation by them into his writings and works. Unless, of course, they are of the one mind.

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Lepanto 10:1

DIVINE TRINITY

I have invested in EWTN and have just seen an item by Father John Corapi. It was most uplifting. Amongst other things, in a little aside, he said words to the effect: "I am 56 years old and I don't cop much from anyone, so when people try and tell me that Hell is not on our agenda I make no bones about telling them that the devil and his cohorts are part of doctrine." I was most motivated by his pronouncement that wherever there is Jesus present, the Father and the Holy Spirit must be present.

It is a pity that this doesn't get across to the exponents of the idea of emphasis on the humanity of Christ to the exclusion (almost) of His Divinity.

B.S., Bowen Qld

LOST?

Without your "Lepanto" and NCC we would be lost.

(Mrs) A.M.S. Toowoomba

Michael Gilchrist believes we all have been – lost, that is! -Ed

STRANGE REPLY INDEED

Sadly Queensland is the state in Australia (well documented) that appears to be leading the way with non-Catholic forces taking over correct Church teachings. (ie New Age, We are church, Womenspace etc)

It's all right for Archbishop Bathersby to run for cover to defend the abysmal record there and dismiss Michael Gilchrist's book "Lost" as not being both factual and unashamedly honest!

The fact of the matter is that if so many bishops and archbishops had not submitted to 'niceties and comforts' of our secular society over the past 30-40 years, we would not have the problems that we have today.

I don't wish to go into the matter of what went wrong in "Faith formation" in the then full and vibrant seminaries of the past 30-40 years. And whose fault was that?

If we could just rotate the likes of Cardinal Pell, Archbishop Hickey and some others (on contracts) to all Australian dioceses for a period of time, the Catholic Church – as founded by Jesus Christ (with love, obedience, prayer, self-sacrificing, no egos, etc) – would once again flourish and grow.

This contribution is from a humble, self-confessed sinner, trying to likewise find his way – as we all are!

Most sincerely

Errol Duke. Elizabeth East SA

'NEWCHURCH' TO BLAME

Thanks for the back copies of "Lepanto". I have been trying to assess the situation of Queensland's appalling lack of vocations to the priesthood. It must be all due to, as you call it, the "NewChurch". An anti-Rome attitude set in after the "*Humanae Vitae*" letter and there was much cynicism in the seminaries of the time - "that Rome was completely out of touch and we'll go our own way". This is still the thinking of Bishops like William Morris who, the other day, gives the impression of being prepared to go into schism on the question of "ordination" of women. Over zealous ecumenism has also helped to create this independent attitude. Many priests from the southern dioceses already seem to think that the Queensland Church is 'out on a limb'.

Thank you

Fr M - Queensland priest

“Catholic Schools To Cross The Religious Divide”

That was a headline in the Courier Mail during 1998 announcing the Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic Education Commission Strategic Plan entitled “*With Vision and Spirit*” for the period up until 2002. It was complete with photograph of Archbishop Bathersby and Catholic Education Commission executive chairman Alan Druery.

For a strategic plan it was extraordinary – full of phrases like ‘we might do this’, ‘we may do that’. Take this gem as an example: “We **might** have to put an ecumenical dimension into the education programme.” Alan Druery said: “Teaching **might** become more broadly Christian in its base and less specifically Catholic.” And this one: “... classrooms **could** devote more time to studying other faiths including Islam and Buddhism.” And again: “... the church **may** establish ecumenical schools with a broad Christianity focus.”

To cover himself (and the Archdiocese) from expected adverse reaction from parents, Alan Druery explained: “We **don’t know yet** to what extent it is necessary or how far it will go. We will have significant elements of the Catholic community concerned there will be a watering down of Catholic education.”

Why are we recalling what happened in 1998?

Because what was said then might happen did happen. In line with the ecumenical emphasis of the Brisbane Archdiocese this same emphasis was followed within Catholic Schools. There was no pretence now that the Catholic Faith, complete and based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, would be taught in the Catholic School system in Brisbane. Ecumenical schools were opened: the most ambitious being Unity College at Caloundra, a joint project of the Catholic and Uniting Churches.

Alan Druery need not have worried about ‘significant elements of the Catholic community’ staging some sort of revolution against the Catholic Education Office. Many Catholic parents knew from experience, when ‘sex-ed’ had been foisted upon them some years earlier, that protest was pointless. Others, who were in a position to do so, began or continued home-schooling. Many more have simply taken their children out of the ‘Catholic’ system and sent them to private Christian colleges – who don’t pretend to be other than what they claim to be. Even more parents, particularly at the senior level, have sent their children to state schools. In these circumstances the religious fate of the children depended greatly on the depth of the Faith of the parents. Where it was strong and passed on the children were indeed blessed. Where it was shallow then the children left school hardly less ignorant of their Faith than those who had spent 12 years in the ‘Catholic’ system.

Now we come to 2006.

Two things happened. **ONE.** Staged with expensive pageantry and fanfare at South Bank, Brisbane, with giant outdoor screen to capture the occasion, Archbishop Bathersby announced a new Strategic Renewal Framework for Brisbane ‘Catholic’ schools for the next five years. Details were reported

in the *Catholic Leader* of November 5.

TWO. Cardinal Pell made an address at the National Catholic Education Conference on 28 September.

Here are a few thoughts on these two events, firstly on the new Strategic Renewal Framework on ‘Catholic’ Education as reported in the “*Catholic Leader*”. Tony Harkness of the Catholic Education Office, Brisbane, is nominated as a key architect of this new plan replacing the revised version of the 1998-2002 plan. He states that it is “underpinned by the archdiocese’s vision of Jesus Communion Mission.” This phrase was first expressed by Archbishop Bathersby to sum up in three words the ‘spirit’ of the 2003 Archdiocesan Synod. The trouble is that, when asked, most people do not seem to know what exactly it means and express different and conflicting versions. It is repeated often enough by the Archbishop and in archdiocesan documents but with little or no clarification. It has never been mentioned, let alone explained, by this writer’s parish priest.

The whole *Catholic Leader* report is couched in convoluted jargon that appears to cloak the real meaning of what is being said. For instance, it introduces a spiritual formation framework for education staff called “*Catching Fire*” - then has this to say about it: “**While underlining the impact the individual spirit of each staff member has on students, parents and other staff, *Catching Fire* is respectful of the individual’s journey as well as the shared mission of Catholic education.**” The writer’s interpretation of this is: “With regard to *Catching Fire* staff can take it or leave it and no matter if you are heretic or homosexual, atheist or Adventist you can still work for Catholic Education.”

Then the report outlines the “Eight Priorities of the Plan” - No 1 being:

“Religious and evangelising mission of school: Teaching, challenging and transforming in the context of Jesus, Communion and Mission in partnership with the archdiocesan Church will be central to the Catholic identity and the religious and evangelising mission of schools.”

If a parent – or anyone else – can deduce from the above that a student at a Brisbane archdiocesan school will receive a complete Catholic education, based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Magisterium then their powers of deduction are remarkable. It is the same airy-fairy, gobbledegook that, over the years, has resulted in 97% of students, after 12 years of Catholic schooling, ceasing to attend Mass and practice their Faith. The other 7 Points of the Plan are as non-specific and vague as No 1.

The “*Catholic Leader*” article also contains this paragraph that must be the prize understatement of 2006: “**There have been significant cultural, social, economic, environmental and political changes in education in recent years. Not all of these are supportive of the Catholic Christian ethos.**”

Why can’t these people come out and call a spade a spade? Why can’t they say that Catholic Education – and the whole Church – exists in an anti-Catholic, anti-religion, anti-



God, pagan, sex-saturated secular society in which the tyranny of relativism – as Pope Benedict has stressed – reigns supreme.

Why are students, particularly in the higher grades, not continually made aware of this reality and provided with the full armoury of the Faith: the vital necessity of Sunday Mass, the reception of Holy Communion and frequent Confessions (Reconciliation)? Is it not realised that in today's environment the teaching of the Faith must have depth and substance? To love and be able to defend their Faith, students must first **know** it. That is the whole purpose, the *raison d'être* for the existence of Catholic schools. If this does not happen – or, at least, be strived for as a primary objective - then the whole bureaucratic edifice of the Brisbane Catholic Education Commission is a sham, an expensive but empty shell taking money from parents – and the government – under false pretences.

At this point it would be appropriate to hear what Pope Benedict XVI has to say on the subject of 'Religion in the schools'. This is a segment from his address to German bishops on the occasion of their "ad limina" visit on November 17, 2006:

"Above all, we must be concerned about the study programs for the teaching of religion, which should be inspired by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, so that in the courses of study the fullness of the faith and of Church practices may be transmitted. In the past, it was not rare for the content of catechesis to be put in second place with respect to the teaching methods. The complete and comprehensible presentation of the contents of the faith is a decisive aspect for the approval of textbooks for religious instruction. No less important is the teachers' fidelity to the Church's faith, and their participation in the liturgical and pastoral life of the parishes or the ecclesial communities in which they work.

In the Catholic schools, moreover, it is important that the introduction to the Catholic vision of the world and of the practice of the faith, as also the overall Catholic formation of the personality, be transmitted in a convincing way not only during the hour of religious instruction, but also throughout the entire school day – and not in the last place through the personal testimony of the teachers."

What the Holy Father had to say here is in sharp contrast to details of the Brisbane Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Education announced with such fanfare and published in the "Catholic Leader" article of November 9 2006. Do the directors of Diocesan Catholic Education Commissions, not only in Brisbane, but in many other Australian dioceses, ever take time out to learn and apply what the Universal Church has to say on the vital subject of Catholic education? There is no apparent evidence that, with a few notable exceptions, any do so.

In his address to the National Catholic Education in Sydney on 28 September 2006, Cardinal George Pell spoke at length on a research project, completed by a team headed by Redemptorist Father Michael Mason, called "***The Spirit of***

Generation Y"

This was a survey of beliefs and practices of Australians aged from 13 to 29 years. As the Cardinal reported "there was a mixed bag of good, bad and indifferent news."

The address is full of interesting and enlightening details that we haven't space to detail here. The full text may be accessed at www.sydney.catholic.org.au. A good coverage of the address was also published in *AD2000*, November 2006.

The Cardinal said a couple of the survey findings surprised him: only 10% of young Catholics believe "only one religion is true". He said the question is capable of being understood in several ways, but the pressures on young Catholics ***beyond tolerance and ecumenism and towards muddle are evident here, sometimes through the ill-effects of courses in comparative religion.***

Cardinal Pell added: "worse is to come 75% of young Catholics believe it is 'OK to pick and choose beliefs' against a national average of 36%". This disturbing finding is paralleled by the fact that 56% of young Catholics believe 'morals are relative', much higher than Anglicans (49%) and other Christians (40%).

The Cardinal then makes this observation: ***"Too many young Catholics have been led by the pressures of contemporary propaganda, whatever might be said about the inadequacies of family life and Catholic religious education, so that their religious confusion is worse than that of all other young Australian Christians. Why is this so?"***

Cardinal Pell rounded off his address by posing a number of questions to focus thinking and discussion. A number of these have been selected:

- Do Catholic schools retain today a capacity to strengthen the faith and improve the morals of students as they did in the past?
- Are Catholic truths presented to students sequentially and comprehensively over the 13 years of schooling? Do students know what are the four or five fundamental truths of our faith? What is the place of student text books in religious education?
- What strategies would overturn that assumption that all morality is relative? How can the truths about life, marriage, family and social justice be defended?
- What strategies might be adopted to strengthen the Christian faith and perhaps make converts among the 23% of non-Catholic students in our schools?
- Should more be done for the religious education of Catholics in state schools?

The Cardinal concluded with this thought: ***"The decisions to believe in Christ are mysterious and individual. But schools can impart religious knowledge, encourage patterns of clear thinking, constructive enquiry and a thirst for answers. We need to inculcate a respect for reason and tradition as well as call to faith, hope and love."***

This *Lepanto* feature on Catholic Education would not be complete without mention of a new book by Steve Kellmeyer "***Designed to Fail – Catholic Education in America.***" It was

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reviewed by Rev Father James Tierney in the recent Catholic Newman Faith Resources Inc. newsletter. Fr Tierney says: "I've just finished it and am about to start again. It's worth it. **It's one of the most powerful demolitions I've ever read.**"

Kellmeyer makes the point that making Catholic schools a priority was a strategic error. Quite apart from post Vatican II dissent in schools, they cannot be expected to work (and they don't work) because the most basic priority was ignored, namely, **adult education in the faith.**

The heroic effort in the USA parish schools (as in Australia) has so often bypassed the parents and their inalienable personal rights and duties. Kellmeyer quotes 2000 years of continuous Church teaching about catechesis. Incidentally these texts strongly favour family catechetics and, implicitly, homeschooling as preferable to government schools. He quotes figures of early 19th century USA children having the highest level of literacy in the world – before compulsory government schools – **before schooling took them over.** He accuses the 19th and 20th century bishops of "contracepting the parents", by thwarting them from the completion of their act of procreation in that they imposed dictatorial diocesan and parish structures on sacramental programmes, and did not insist on home catechesis, or give proper support to those diffident of their abilities; in a word they violated subsidiarity by usurpation."

Fr James Tierney speaks from experience. He was, at one stage head of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the Archdiocese of Sydney. He recounts: "In the late 70's, after one meeting, I had state school parents working from texts at home, to prepare their children for Confession, Communion and Confirmation, with a help-line and a Sunday check-up to collect new materials. The only other meeting was a final drill for the event. It worked! In the 80s I turned half the Sunday (parish) bulletin into a worksheet for parents to use with their children at home, because the particular parish excluded the parish priest from the Confirmation preparation. This was the beginning of the Family Catechetics monthly gatherings, to support parents giving at least a weekly instruction at home. It really worked!"

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OBSERVATIONS

Rome November 16 2006 (with acknowledgement Chiesa Newsletter 16.11.06, author Sandra Magister).

In the second of his addresses to the Swiss bishops on their 'ad limina' visit Benedict XVI replied to what is, perhaps, the objection most commonly directly against the pope and the Church hierarchy by 'progressive' Catholic circles.

The objection is that, in the areas of life and family, the Church's hierarchy preaches truths defined as non-negotiable, pure and solid, binding even in political decisions, while in the areas of peace, justice and the protection of the environment, it waters down "Christian distinctiveness" and makes feeble statements, acquiescing to the temporal powers.

According to the 'progressive' Catholic circles, the priority should be reversed. The Church should put in first place the struggle for peace, justice and the defence of nature and should be more understanding towards modern "subjectivity" in the areas of life and the family.

Benedict XVI told the Swiss bishops that he had reflected a great deal on this. And his conviction is that, in effect, there exists in today's world a division between "two parts of morality."

This is what Benedict XVI had to say:

I often hear said that people today have a nostalgia for God, for spirituality, for religion, and that the Church, too, is again beginning to be seen as ... a great repository of spiritual experience: it is like a tree in which birds can build their nests, even if they want to fly away again ...

But what turns out to be very difficult for people is the morality that the Church proclaims.

I have reflected upon this – I had already been reflecting upon it for some time – and I see with increasing clarity that, in our time, it is as if morality had been divided into two parts.

Modern society is not simply without morality, but it has, so to speak, "discovered" and professes a part of morality that, in the Church's proclamation over the past few decades and even further back than that, perhaps hasn't been presented sufficiently.

These are the great themes of peace, non-violence, justice for all, concern for the poor, and respect for creation.

This has become an ethical complex that, precisely as a political force, has a great power and constitutes for many a substitute for religion, or its successor.

In place of religion, which is seen as something metaphysical and otherworldly – and perhaps also as an individualistic thing – the great moral themes enter in as the essential reality that then confers dignity and commitment upon man ...

This morality exists, and also fascinates young people, who engage themselves on behalf of peace, non-violence, justice, the poor, and creation. And these are truly great moral themes, which moreover belong to the tradition of the Church as well. Now, the methods that are advanced to solve these are often very one-sided and are not always credible, but we shouldn't dwell upon this for now ...

The other part of morality, which is not rarely viewed in a fairly controversial light by politics, concerns life.

Part of this is the commitment on behalf of life, from conception to death; that is, its defence against abortion, against euthanasia, against manipulation, and against man's



- Pope Benedict XVI

self-conferred authorization to dispose of life.

The attempt is often made to justify these interventions with the apparently lofty aims of using them for the benefit of future generation, and thus is made to appear moral even if the taking of the very life of man into one's hands in order to manipulate it.

But, on the other hand, there also exists the awareness that human life is a gift that demands our respect and our love from the first moment to the last, even for the suffering, the handicapped and the weak.

The morality of marriage and the family is also situated in this context.

Marriage is being increasingly marginalized. We are familiar with the example of some countries where the law had been modified to define marriage no longer as a bond between a man and a woman, but as a bond between persons. This obviously destroys the essential concept (of marriage) and society, from its very roots, becomes something totally different.

The awareness that sexuality, eros, and marriage as a union between man and women go together – “The two shall be one flesh,” says Genesis – this awareness is continually weakening. Any sort of bond seems absolutely normal, and this is all presented as a sort of morality of non-discrimination and a form of freedom that is due to man. With this, naturally, the indissolubility of marriage has become an almost utopian idea that appears to be disowned, even by many people in public life. In this way, the family itself is gradually falling apart.

Of course there are various explanations for the startling decline in birth rates, but a decisive role is certainly played in this by the desire to possess life for oneself, by the lack of confidence in the future, and by the conviction that it is almost impossible to establish the family as a lasting community in which the future generations can grow up.

In these areas, therefore, our proclamation clashes with a contrary awareness within society, with a sort of anti-morality that bases itself upon a conception of freedom as the ability to choose autonomously and without predefined guidelines, as non-discrimination, and therefore as the approval of any sort of possibility, situating itself as ethically correct by its own authority.

But the other awareness has not disappeared. It exists, and I think that we should exert ourselves in reconnecting these two parts of morality and making it clear that these must be inseparable united.

It is only if human life is respected from conception to death that the ethics of peace is also possible and credible; it is only then that non-violence can express itself in every direction; only then that we truly welcome creation, and only then that we can arrive at true justice.

I think we are facing a great task here: on the one hand, we must not make Christianity appear as mere moralism, but as a gift in which is given to us the love that sustains us and provides us with the strength necessary to be able to “lose one's life”; on the other hand, in this context of the gift of love, we must also progress toward concretization, the foundations of which are still provided for us by the Decalogue, which, with

Christ and with the Church, we should interpret in a new and progressive way at this time.

In his address to German bishops on the occasion of their “ad limina” visit in November 2006 Benedict XVI spoke briefly on three subjects that have particular relevance to the situation in Australia – particularly in Queensland. They are: Theological Facilities, The Seminaries, Priests and Laity. This is what he said:

THEOLOGICAL FACILITIES: “It cannot be stressed enough that fidelity to the “Depositum fidei”, as this is presented by the Church's magisterium, is the prerequisite par excellence for serious research and teaching. This fidelity is also a requirement for the intellectual honesty of anyone who is charged by the Church to carry out some task of academic instruction. Here the bishops have the duty to give their ‘nihil obstat’ as highly placed authorities only after a conscientious examination. Only a theological faculty that feels itself obliged to respect this principle can be capable of making an authentic contribution to spiritual exchange within the universities.”

THE SEMINARIES: “In this regard, Vatican Council II, in its decree ‘Optatum Totius’, established important norms that, unfortunately, have not yet been completely implemented. This is particularly true of the institution of what is called the introductory course before the beginning of real and proper study. This should not only transmit a solid understanding of the classical languages, which is expressly required for the study of philosophy and theology, but also familiarity with the catechism, together with the religious, liturgical and sacramental practice of the Church. In the face of a growing number of interested persons and candidates who no longer come from a traditional Catholic formation, such an introductory year is urgently needed. Furthermore, during the year the student can attain greater clarity on the vocation to the priesthood. Besides this, the persons responsible for priestly formation have the possibility of getting an idea of the candidate, of his human maturity and his faith life. But the so-called role playing games with a group dynamic, the groups of self-exploration, and other psychological experiments are less adapted for this purpose, and can create uncertainty and confusion instead.”

PRIESTS AND LAITY: “It is important that the specific profiles of the various missions not be confused. The homily during Holy Mass is a task assigned to the ordained minister; when a sufficient number of priests and deacons is present, the distribution of Holy Communion belongs to them. Moreover, the request continues to be advanced for the laity to be permitted to carry out functions of pastoral guidance. In this regard we cannot discuss the related questions solely in the light of pastoral convenience, because this is a matter of the truths of the faith, which is the same thing as saying the sacramental-hierarchical structure willed by Jesus Christ for His Church. Because this is founded upon His will, as the apostolic ministry rests upon His mandate, both are exempt from human intervention. Only the sacrament of ordination authorises those who receive it to speak and act ‘in persona Christi’.”

(Continued from page 1)

married clergy – were strongly against any change in the tradition of a celibate priesthood.

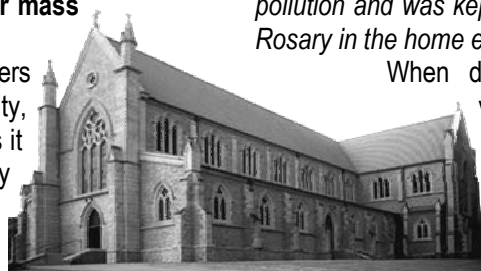
Should priests who have left the active ministry wish to return to active pastoral life then they would have to accept the rule of celibacy and their return would have to be authorised by Rome. It would be foolish indeed to think that the number of men to whom these conditions were acceptable would have an impact at all on numbers needed for the Toowoomba Diocese. Bishop Morris may as well delete this ‘option’.

Bishop Morris states that his “proposals” have been discussed **“internationally, nationally and locally.”** Locally we can understand, considering the paucity of faith education among Queensland Catholics over the past 30 or so years. We can even visualise an enthusiastic NewChurch Parish Council proposing the ordination of one of their own: a scenario that could go something like this: *“Now that we haven’t got a parish priest why not ordain Bill Brown – he’s a decent enough bloke – everyone knows him - been taking up the plate for years – does his bit for Vinnies – has been doing the ‘lay-led liturgy’ course – so now that his wife has died it will give him something to do – I’m sure he’d be more than happy to take the job on.”*

Bishop Morris gives no references as to where this idea of a parish “choosing and endorsing” a man for ordination has been discussed internationally or nationally. Nationally? Surely not at the Australian Bishops Conference! ... Perhaps at the National Council of Priests?

The Bishop’s other option, that Anglican, Lutheran and United Church Orders be recognised, is plainly absurd. Either Bishop Morris proposed it tongue in cheek or his ideas on ecumenicalism are wildly astray. Has he cleared the suggestion with his Metropolitan Bishop – Archbishop John Bathersby – or with the Vatican? Or, indeed, even with the heads of those Churches in the Toowoomba area? One would think they would be bemused and bewildered by the notion that while attending to their own ministries they should also take on the job of Catholic priests! Or does Bishop Morris have in mind their mass conversion to Catholicism?

In his Advent letter Bishop Morris refers to “the primacy of Eucharist for the identity, continuity and life of each parish.” Why is it that NewChurch people – clerical and lay alike – can always be identified when they drop the pronoun ‘the’ when



referring to ‘the Eucharist’ or ‘the Church’ –as in the phrase ‘we are Church’. Why is the word ‘Mass’ disappearing from their vocabulary? How often these days do you hear a priest refer to ‘the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass’?

Of course the Consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ – the Eucharistic sacrifice - within the celebration of Holy Mass is the primary act of the sacrificial priesthood. It is the Mass that matters. The Protestant Reformation got rid of the notions of priesthood and sacrifice that are central to the Catholic ordination rite. Thus, since the Reformation there is no Mass, no priesthood within the Protestant/Anglican denominations. Ministers of other Christian religions who wish to be priests have to be ordained in the Catholic ordination Rite.

In fact the whole desperate tone of Bishop Morris’s Advent Letter – turning to active dissent as a solution to a problem that has obviously been looming for years – describes a reality that does not auger well for the future of the Faith in the Toowoomba Diocese. But then Bishop Morris is no stranger to dissent. Years after the Third Rite of Reconciliation (when offered in the normal parish context) was banned by the Vatican, it was still the norm within some Toowoomba parishes.

The tragedy is, of course, that what is happening in Toowoomba is symptomatic of the crisis of Faith throughout the whole state of Queensland. The situation in the Rockhampton Diocese is just as serious as in Toowoomba. There it is exacerbated by the policy of priests having the option to retire at age 60 should they so desire. The elastic band approach to the shortage of priests is under increasing strain in Rockhampton as in all other Queensland Dioceses.

The Queensland Bishops show determination to rely on “lay-led liturgists” and ‘Pastoral Assistants’ to keep parish life functioning with priests more and more frequently arriving only to celebrate Holy Mass and hear Confessions. It is all too sadly reminiscent of what happened in the early colonial days. *(Except, of course, that then there were no ‘lay-led liturgists’ about, the Faith was strong and unadulterated by NewChurch pollution and was kept alive by the recitation of the family Holy Rosary in the home every evening).*

When discussing the problem of the lack of vocations to the priesthood in Queensland, a deeply concerned Toowoomba parishioner has sadly observed that: **“God removes His Grace in the face of disobedience and dissent.”**

STOP PRESS

The “Catholic Leader” in its issue of January 14 has tacitly endorsed the Advent Pastoral Letter of Bishop Morris!

By printing the Letter verbatim, without one critical word and adding a few extra statements by Bishop Morris, the “Catholic Leader”, mouthpiece of the Brisbane Archdiocese, has provided credence and support for the Bishop’s dissention “options”.

This is not in any way surprising. Why? Because the Brisbane Archdiocese is heading for the same sad fate as Toowoomba and it knows it! Not perhaps as quickly but, humanly speaking, inevitably.

In his added comments Bishop Morris said he

asked Catholics in all his 35 parishes scattered over his “vast diocese to keep talking about alternative models for ministry.” Would it not be better for Bishop to recommend a series of continuing Novenas to Our Lady for priestly vocations and to institute Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on a regular basis in every parish?

We must correct an error in our article above. We must have misread the Bishop’s figures. We said that the number of active priests in the Toowoomba Diocese in 2014 would be 18. In his comments in the “Catholic Leader” he said the figure was six! Only a third of our figure. The death of a diocese looms.

SURVEY REVEALS

France no longer Catholic

According to a recent survey, only 51 per cent of French people now identify themselves as Catholic, down from 80 per cent a decade ago, with the number of professed atheists rising to 31 per cent.

The shift has led some commentators to lament that the nation once known as the eldest daughter of the Church can no longer be considered Catholic.

"In its institutions, but also in its mentalities, France is no longer a Catholic country," writes Frederic Lenoir, editor in chief of *Le Monde des Religions*, according to a report cited by the *Christian Post*.

Among the respondents who did identify themselves as Catholics, only 10 per cent attend church services regularly, the poll showed. More remarkable, only half of the self-identified Catholics say that they believe in God. Some respondents indicated that for them, Catholicism involves a social or cultural identity rather than a religious commitment.

"Catholicism will remain the most important religion," adds Frederic Lenoir, but "in its institutions and in its mentality, France is no longer a Catholic country".

In an interview with *Le Figaro*, French Jesuit Fr Henri Madelin agreed.

"All the values that France has stood for, which went beyond religious ownership and which had been appropriated by the whole of society, are under attack today," he said.

"If we continue along this path, the practice of the Catholic faith is going to become a counter-culture... One Belgian bishop recently said that his Church would soon become as small a minority as the Church in Turkey..."

However, the poll also showed that many people have a high opinion of Pope Benedict XVI.

According to Fr Madelin, this is characteristic of "cultural Catholics".

"The Pope stands for values that they believe in: humanitarian, humanist, etc. He also gets the benefit of the previous papacy (of Pope John Paul II). However, in a world threatened by a clash of civilisations, Benedict XVI is also seen as a bulwark against forces such as Islam," Fr Madelin explained.

Nevertheless, Fr Madelin finds the situation "troubling for Europe and for Catholicism".

"If Christians no longer see the extraordinary gift that was given to them historically by the Orient, then other continents, other Churches will pick up this richness which is considered here as a poverty. Here I am thinking of Africa, or Vietnam and India in Asia and undoubtedly also China in the future... The Church doesn't belong to Europeans or to the French.

"They received it but if they reject it, it will go elsewhere," he said. "The image of God will then evolve with the different cultures and will liberate itself from its European tutelage," he concluded.

SOURCE

"France is no longer Catholic, survey shows"

Catholic World News, 11/1/07 <http://www.cathnews.com/news/701/71.php>

EXTRACT FROM INEFFABILIS DEUS

"Hence, if anyone shall dare—which God forbid—to think otherwise than as has been defined by Us, let him know and understand that he is condemned by his own judgment, and that he has suffered shipwreck in the faith, and has defected from the unity of the Church ...

"Our speech overflows with joy, and Our tongue with exultation. We give, and We shall continue to give, the humblest and deepest thanks to Jesus Christ Our Lord, because through His singular favor He has granted Us, unworthy though We be, to decree, and offer this honor and glory and praise to His Most Holy Mother. All fair and immaculate, she has crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world. She is the praise of the Prophets and Apostles, the honor of the Martyrs, the crown and joy of all the Saints. She is the

safest refuge and the most trustworthy helper of all who are in danger. With her Only-begotten Son She is the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix in the whole world. She is the most excellent glory, ornament and impregnable stronghold of the Holy Church. For She has destroyed all heresies and snatched the faithful peoples and nations from all sorts of very great calamities. She has delivered Us, too, from so many threatening dangers. We have, therefore, a very certain hope and complete confidence that this Most

Blessed Virgin will effect by her most powerful patronage that all difficulties be removed and all errors dissipated, so that Our Holy Mother the Catholic Church may flourish daily more and more throughout all nations and countries, and may reign 'from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth' (Ps. 71:8), and may enjoy genuine peace, tranquillity and liberty. She will also obtain pardon for the sinner, health for the sick, strength of heart for the weak, consolation for the afflicted, help for those in danger. She will remove spiritual blindness from all who are in error, so that they may return to the path of truth and justice, and that there may be one flock and one shepherd."

Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus, 08/12/1854



**MASSABIELE GROTTA
LOURDES, FRANCE**

EWTN Ban Bombs!

We have been advised by the EWTN installers, Total Television Solutions, that, not only has the ban on advertising in the Brisbane Archdiocesan "Catholic Leader" failed to curb sales and interest in EWTN, it has had the opposite effect.

They report that 75% of ALL new installations throughout Australia have been in the Brisbane Archdiocese and adjacent areas!

The full, authentic orthodoxy of the Catholic Faith as presented by Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network



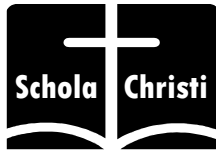
will continue to be sought by deprived Qld Catholics despite the churlish advertising ban by Brisbane Archdiocesan authorities.

If the role of the priest is weakened or is not appreciated, a local Catholic community may be dangerously lapsing into the idea of a priestless community. This is not in line with the genuine concept of the Church instituted by Christ.

If a diocese does not have enough priests, initiatives should be taken to seek them from elsewhere now, to encourage local vocations and to keep fresh in the people a genuine "hunger" for a priest. Non-ordained members of the faithful who are assigned some roles in the absence of a priest have to make a special effort to keep up this "hunger." And they should resist the temptation of trying to get the people accustomed to them as substitutes for priests. There is no place in the Catholic Church for the creation of a sort of parallel "lay clergy".

Priests on their part should show themselves transparently happy in their vocation with a clear identity of their liturgical role. If they celebrate the sacred mysteries with faith and devotion and according to the approved books, they will unconsciously be preaching priestly vocations. On the other hand, young people will not desire to join a band of clerics who seem uncertain of their mission, who criticize and disobey their Church and who celebrate their own "liturgies" according to their personal choices and theories.

FROM CARDINAL ARINZE'S ADDRESS
TO INSTITUT SUPÉRIEUR DE LITURGIE 20/01/07(ZENIT.ORG)



Evangelical History

Are the Gospels Historical Records?

Before beginning the account of the life of Jesus, the Evangelist Luke explains the criteria that guided him. He says that he is referring to facts attested to by eye witnesses, which he verified by "accurate research," so that those who read what he writes may realize the solidity of the teachings contained in the Gospel. This provides us with an occasion to consider the problem of the historicity of the Gospels.

Until some centuries ago, the critical sense did not exist in people. What was referred to in the past was taken as having been an historical event. In the last two or three centuries the historical sense was born which brought people to submit things to a critical test to ascertain their validity before they would believe them to be facts of the past. This procedure has been applied to the Gospels.

Let us sum up the various stages that the life and teaching of Jesus have passed through before they have reached us.

First stage: Jesus' earthly life. Jesus did not write anything, but in his preaching he used some common expediences of ancient culture which facilitated keeping a text in one's memory: brief phrases, parallels and antitheses, rhythmic repetitions, images, parables ... Think of lines from the Gospels like: "The last will be first and the first will be last"; "Wide is the door and broad is the way that leads to perdition ... ; "Narrow is the gate and hard is the way that leads to life" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Phrases like these, once heard, would even be difficult for people today to forget. The fact that Jesus himself did not write the Gospels does not mean that the words that they contain are not his. Unable to write words on paper, the men of ancient times wrote them on the mind.

Second stage: the oral preaching of the apostles. After the resurrection, the apostles immediately began to proclaim to all the life and words of Christ, taking account of the needs and the circumstances of the different listeners. Their purpose was not to do history but to bring people to faith. With the clearer understanding that they now had, they were able to transmit to others that which Jesus said and did, adapting it to the needs of those to whom they turned.

Third stage: the written gospels. About 30 years after Jesus' death, some authors began to write down this preaching that had come to them orally. The four Gospels that we know were born in this way. Of the many things that had come down to them, the evangelists selected some, they summarized others, and others they explained to adapt them to the needs that the communities for whom they were writing had at the moment. The need to adapt Jesus' words to new and diverse demands influenced the order in which the facts are recounted in the four Gospels, as well as their coloration and importance, but they did not otherwise alter their fundamental truth.

That the evangelists had, insofar as it was possible at the time, a historical concern and not only a concern with edification, is demonstrated by the precision with which they situate the event of Christ in time and place. A little further on, Luke furnishes us with all the political and geographical coordinates of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (cf. Luke 3:1-2).

In conclusion, the Gospels are not historical books in the modern sense of detached and neutral accounts of facts. They are historical, rather, in the sense that what they transmit reflects the substance of what happened. But the argument most in favor of the fundamental historical truth of the Gospels is that which we experience inside ourselves every time we are profoundly touched by the word of Christ. What other word, ancient or new, ever had the same power?

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa

ROME, JAN. 19, 2007 (ZENIT.ORG). - A TRANSLATION OF A COMMENTARY BY THE PONTIFICAL HOUSEHOLD PREACHER ON THE READINGS FROM THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: NEHEMIAH 8:2-4A,5-6,8-10; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31A; LUKE 1:1-4;4:14-21 ZE01071928

Eucharistic Adoration

We gain much spiritual insight and wisdom from our prayers in Eucharistic adoration, which are all the more increased if we combine it with the practice of *Lectio Divina*.

Pope Benedict XVI said (Sept. '05) "*I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime.*"

"Using Sacred Scripture as a starting point, *Lectio Divina* becomes like a ladder of escalation or intensification of prayer with four steps: ...

"Lectio: Read the selected Scripture text slowly, several times over, trying to savor each word. Remember that God speaks to us through this inspired word of Sacred Scripture. Focus on any thought, word, or line that captures your attention. Be open and attentive to whatever new perceptions, insights, inspirations, thoughts, and feelings that arise. At any distraction simply return to the Biblical text and dwell on it as long as necessary.

"Meditatio: Having read and received God's word, we need to meditate and ponder it. Reflect on how this Scripture applies to our life. Two traditional ways to meditate on Scripture are: Imagine these words and events happening directly to us now (Augustinian method). Or try to place our self back into the biblical situation, and image that we are present as the words or events first occurred, and then draw something from this experience (Ignation method). Through reflection and meditation we try to personally relate the message and meaning of the text to our life.

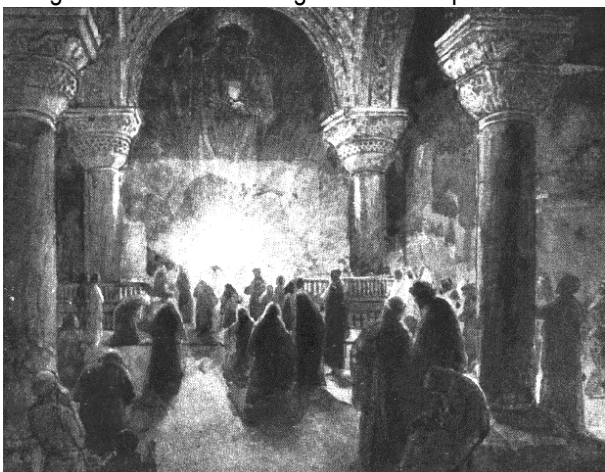
"Oratio: Having read the Scripture and reflected on its message and meaning in our life, we need to respond in some way. Our response is often expressed through words, thoughts, desires, feelings, resolutions, decisions, etc., or in the four types of traditional prayer: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication or petition (ACTS). All of them may be part of our personal response to God in prayer. This is a time for a heart to heart (affective) conversation with the Lord.

"Contemplatio: Having read, reflected, and responded to God's Word in the Sacred Scripture, we now await and hope for whatever graces God may wish to offer us. This is a time simply to be quiet, to listen, and to be open to whatever God may wish to do. Try to be aware of anything that happens within us. Often we will not be aware of anything happening, but we should trust that the grace of God is working within the depths of our soul. All we seek is union with our Lord.

"These four steps of *Lectio Divina* may be followed in any order we may be led, so that one may go from one to the other and then back again. For example, quiet periods of contemplation can be interspersed throughout the reading, meditation

and oration. They can be used interchangeably with each other."

(DOMINICAN VOCATIONS <http://www.australia.op.org/voc/lectio.php>)



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS:

Please offer Masses and pray the Rosary for our Bishops, Priests and religious; for our organisations; and for more vocations to the Priesthood and religious life.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS

✠ Most Holy Virgin Mary, Help of Christian, how sweet it is to come to your feet imploring your perpetual help.

If earthly mothers cease not to remember their children, how can you, the most loving of all mothers forget me?

Grant then to me, I implore you, your perpetual help in all my necessities, in every sorrow, and especially in all my temptations.

I ask for your unceasing help for all who are now suffering. Help the weak, cure the sick, convert sinners.

Grant through your intercessions many vocations to the religious life.

Obtain for us, O Mary, Help of Christians, that having invoked you on earth we may love and eternally thank you in heaven.

By St. John Bosco

Almighty God, deepen in our hearts our love of Mary, Help of Christians. Through her prayers and under her protection, may the light of Christ shine over our land. May Australia be granted harmony, justice and peace. Grant wisdom to our leaders and integrity to our citizens.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

<p>... December 5 2006 ...</p> <p>Your Grace,</p> <p>I adjure you by Christ Himself either to answer my specific queries as a member of your flock, or tell me directly that I have no such right to ask such questions.</p> <p>I refer to your Advent Pastoral letter 2006, which is reminiscent of your teaching on Good Friday, 1996, in St. Stephen's Cathedral.</p> <p>I ask you to explain to me the seeming discrepancies between what you teach and what the Church states officially. You write: "This conviction of Jesus <u>must have developed</u> during his...33 years... He must also have realised that.... He himself was the Messiah."</p> <p>Doesn't this deny the official Catholic doctrine that Christ, as man, enjoyed the Beatific Vision from the instance of His conception? Aquinas writes that God did not become less divine by becoming human. Doesn't denial of this constitute heresy? Isn't your attempt to explain the Incarnation by downgrading Christ's divinity merely tired old Arianism? The fact that we can't fully understand a Mystery of Religion doesn't give us license to explain it out of existence. The view that Jesus' human knowledge was limited was fathered by the first Modernists of a century ago and has been condemned (Dz 2032-2034), but flourishes again in our time.</p> <p>You further wrote: "He must also have realised....that in relating to Himself, people were relating to God....". What rubbish. Christ didn't <u>gradually realise these truths</u>, He TAUGHT these things with authority. At 12 years old He could say, "I must be about My Father's business."</p> <p>Quote: "It was a reckless, extravagant claim." More rubbish! It was a completely exact, because divinely guaranteed claim – a statement of reality vindicated by the Resurrection.</p> <p>"The risen Christ lives on in ourselves...." This is true under certain conditions. The unqualified statement smacks of immanentism which is the main doctrine and tool of the modernists.</p> <p>Finally, Your Grace, might I suggest that any praise for Karl Rahner be chronologically qualified. He could write in <u>Theological Investigations</u> (about polygenism) : "it is not a free opinion in the Church, it cannot be held." Yet later in <u>Evolution and Original Sin, 1967</u>, he could abandon this principle of the authority of encyclicals. He is also famous for coining the absurdity "loyal dissent" which has been of great service to many clerical prevaricators.</p> <p>But all of them over the years have demonstrated what might be termed the dynamism of heresy; namely that is no such thing as a little disobedience. What seems a comparatively minor doctrinal difference at the beginning becomes a great divergence, e.g. Charles Curran initially tried only to prove that <i>Humanae Vitae</i> was not binding, but moved eventually to attack the whole concept of Catholic authority. Martin Luther declared initially that he was loyal to the Pope and only wished to attack Indulgences – look where he finished up.</p> <p>The great split known as the Reformation only succeeded because of weak, indifferent or opposed bishops, and the even greater catastrophe of the last 40 years has succeeded for the same reason. I pray that Your Grace will be given the resolve and the strength to play a proper part in this struggle</p> <p>May God Bless you (sgd) Don Gaffney.</p>	<p>... December 5 2006 ...</p> <p>Dear Don</p> <p>Thanks for your prayers. I will reciprocate. I'm sure that Christ looks down from the cross at both of us and prays:</p> <p>"Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing"</p> <p>Sincerely in Christ (sgd) John Bathersby Archbishop of Brisbane</p>	<p>... December 15 2006 ...</p> <p>Your Grace</p> <p>I refer to your reply December 5, 2006 to my letter of the same date.this letter consists of what seems to be premeditated dishonesty.</p> <p>It deliberately avoids what surely is your direct commission from Christ – to proclaim and to explain Catholic doctrine. Instead, you demonstrate your abandonment, or perhaps your genuine incomprehension of Catholic teaching, sic "Father, forgive them they don't know what they are doing."</p> <p>Doesn't Christ expect you to know exactly what your duty is? Isn't that duty to explain the Faith to your flock? Isn't my duty to follow the teaching of the Pope and <u>of those bishops teaching in union with him?</u> Don't you habitually avoid or deflect questions from your flock?</p> <p>The following lists just a few of the many concerns which I know have been the subject of questions addressed directly to you by members of your flock, and to no avail:-</p> <p>Sacrilegious and/or blasphemous rituals carried out by nuns in archdiocesan facilities, after a supposed investigation five years ago, yet they continue.</p> <p>A group of priests presenting the case for, at least, the toleration of homosexual activity – and when a Catholic reports this to you, you furnish no reply. Instead he receives a threat of legal proceedings against himself.</p> <p>Your farcical ban on advertising for Eternal Word Television Network in the Catholic Leader, while accepting the same from an ordinary commercial station, has made the Church (<i>in Queensland –Ed</i>) a laughing stock across Australia.</p> <p>Occasions of liturgical abuse and disobedience must number hundreds, and the complaints are met with evasion or more usually silence.</p> <p>Your ecological Pan-theism as a substitute for proper Catholic concerns is so factually and scientifically astray that the secular press can refer to it as "sheer fatuity and presumption".</p> <p>The almost unbelievable failure rate of 97%, repeat 97%, in our Catholic education system <u>over many years</u> didn't stop you from accepting public recognition for the achievements (sic) of that system. Something similar would be the bestowal of the Nobel Peace Prize on Adolf Hitler.</p> <p>After your gratuitous insults to the hundreds of good priests over the past forty years, and to the staff and the seminarians of seminaries across Australia to bolster your defence of Queensland's endangered specimen, you press on with your creation of 'Pastoral Associates'.</p> <p>Now, when it has been impossible to ignore the catastrophic drop in Mass attendance, the 'Catholic Leader' writes as if it was solely the fault of priests <u>and bishops are not mentioned</u>.</p> <p>To repeat, I can't judge your conscience, and Christ has specifically warned all of us not to attempt to do so. I hope that you and I and all of us can make it successfully to Heaven, but I must tell you that you seem to be a hinderance and not a help towards the knowledge and practice of our Catholic Faith to gain our salvation.</p> <p>(Sgd) Don Gaffney</p>
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A Voice in the Wilderness by the late Tim Pickford

The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Conscience

It seems to me that as we leave the Christmas season behind and we start to think of Lent which will soon be upon us, it might be timely to take a close look at what the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** teaches with regard to **Conscience**.

Lent, after all, is a special time for clearing our conscience and standing 'nakedly' in the presence of our God, not trying to hide our sins from ourselves and Him. We ought to be striving to see ourselves as others see us.

It is clear from what many priests have said and published that there is a reluctance to teach clearly the responsibility of all Catholics to inform their consciences. Instead, conscience has become the final escape clause for all those who wish to contracept at will.

A respondent (call him MBF) has written to make a plea for unity among Catholics. He notes that there are three broad groups of Catholics: the ultra conservative who believes everything from Vatican II, including the Council itself has been a dreadful mistake; the modernist who believes the Council marks a true beginning for the Church and that every thing before 1965 has to be reinterpreted in the light of Vatican II; and the traditional/orthodox Catholic who believes (with the Council) that the documents of Vatican II must be interpreted in the light of Vatican I, Trent and all the other Councils dating back to the very first held in Apostolic times in Jerusalem.

MBF sees the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** as a lynchpin for the bringing together of the three factions. While I think this may prove unrealistic since there appears to be so little good will in either of the two extreme camps, a sound knowledge of what the **Catechism** does and does not teach can never go astray.

It can be observed that almost no bishop and very few priests in Australia are actively promoting the reading of the **Catechism**, and that this in itself is a sign of its virtue. Why do they not promote it? Precisely because it contradicts their position, their beliefs concerning contraception, conscience and a multitude of other Catholic dogmas and doctrines which they deem to be out of touch with the needs of the modern person. They are relativists who think truth must be tailored to meet the current fashion. Green is currently in fashion, so Christ's cursing of the fig tree (to take a random example) must, one suspects, be denigrated as anti-social.

Conscience and the Catechism.

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** examines the question of conscience under four main headings. But before it does so, it introduces the subject by drawing on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning the fact that each

person has within him an inner voice which is his divinely appointed guide enabling him to know what is the good and right thing to do and what is evil and should be avoided.

After this brief introductory article, we arrive at the first heading, which looks at the judgement of conscience. The Catechism goes on to pose and answer such questions as: What is conscience? Where does it come from? What is its purpose? What rights does it bestow? And so on.

The second heading leads to an examination of the obligation of every person to form his conscience, that is, to educate it – an obligation which implies the need to seek answers to questions concerning what is morally permissible.

The third heading leads into a deeper study of our obligation to heed our conscience and to make decisions in accordance with this inner voice which speaks to us in God's name.

Fourthly, the Catechism stresses the limitations of conscience by examining the functions of conscience under the heading of "erroneous judgement". It is the obligation of every person to recognise the fundamental truth that God cannot contradict Himself. He cannot say to one person, this is a morally good action, while also teaching through His divinely appointed Church that this action is intrinsically evil.

While some have argued that following one's conscience is subjectively always a good act, the Catechism does not teach this doctrine. On the contrary, while it

recognises that an ignorant or ill-educated conscience can make a wrong judgement and in following an erroneous conscience such a person may not necessarily be imputed with the sin, that sin is nevertheless an objective reality and is by definition an evil act. An evil act is never a good act, but a person committing the evil act may, because of circumstances, be found not guilty of personal sin provided his ignorance is not wilful and was unavoidable.

Finally, the Catechism concludes by drawing the main points together in what it terms a 'compendium' or summary. It is suggested (cf CCC #22) that these brief sentences should be memorised. It is recommended to study closely what the Catechism teaches, read the commentary and make the prayer serve as a meditational conversational with God

May God assist us with His Grace to grow in goodness, love and truth. And may His Blessed Mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, intercede for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: TIM PICKFORD DEVELOPED HIS STUDY OF CONSCIENCE IN FOLLOWING "A VOICE FROM THE WILDERNESS" ARTICLES. WE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO INCLUDE THIS IN SUBSEQUENT ISSUES.)



Dear Friends of Life,

I hope the new year finds you all refreshed and ready to walk the pro-life path with kindness but firmness in spreading the pro-life truth.

It is only through your generosity that Queensland Right To Life has remained a steadfast voice for the most innocent of all - the unborn child. When Queensland Right To Life association was formed, abortion was the only issue. However thirty-five years on, we are fighting not just the destruction of abortion, but euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, cloning, the abortifacient effects of the pill, RU-486 and the "morning after" pill.

So your contributions are now spread over many areas where previously, it was only one.

This year we are holding 3 fundraising events - please mark your calendars! As we are now fighting so many issues - and they seem to raise their heads so frequently - we hope you will join us for a fun play being held in March.

DETAILS:-

PLAY - "Tiptoe Through The Tombstones"

"Tiptoe Through The Tombstones" is a light-hearted comedy about a group of relatives who meet in an old mansion to discuss their upcoming inheritance.

PLACE: St Luke's Anglican Church Hall

TIME & DATE: 8pm Saturday 24th March 2007

Tickets: \$25

NOTE - all tickets must be prepaid by March 16th.

This play is suitable for all ages so bring your children and your grandmothers! (Due to Workplace, Health and Safety Regulations, prams are not permitted inside the hall.)

Free Parking, easy access - **100 seats only!**

For payments of tickets please call Queensland Right To Life on 3871 2445 and ask for Teresa or Anita.

Thank you and God bless,

Teresa Martin

State President

Queensland Right to Life.

 **Queensland
Right to Life**
fundraiser



Lepanto 10:1

Fundraising Event Qld Right to Life



"Tiptoe Through the Tombstones"

By Norman Robbins

Directed by Brian Edmunds

Acted by St Luke's Acting Group

An Agatha Christie-style play in the form of a light-hearted comedy that finds a group of relatives gathering at an old mansion to discuss their upcoming inheritance.

One by one they are found dead...

Where: Anglican Church Hall of St Luke's,
Ekibin Road East, Annerley

When: Saturday 24th March, 8:00pm

Cost: \$25 (Tickets **MUST** be paid for by 16th March
by sending your payment to the QRTL Office)

Call Teresa or Anita on 3871 2445
for payments and bookings

Refreshments available at intermission





Date Claimers:

LATIN MASS

QUEENSLAND

Buranda: St Luke's, Taylor St - Sunday, 9.30am

Fortitude Valley: Legion House, St Paul's Tce - Wednesday 7.30pm

Rockhampton North: St Mary's, Nobbs St - 2nd Sundays, 7.30am

West Mackay: St Francis of Assisi Chapel, 1st Saturdays, 9am

Cairns: Our Lady Help of Christians, 18 Balaclava Rd.
- First Saturday of the month, 10.30am

VICTORIA

Geelong: info at http://www.geocities.com/geelong_latín_mass

ACT

Canberra: John XXIII Chapel at Australian National Uni
- Sunday 11.30am: Missa Cantata

PRAY FOR AN END TO ABORTION

Spring Hill: 383 Wickham Terrace, outside clinic - Saturday am
Enquiries: ph. 3324 2575

Bowen Hills: 8 Campbell St, outside clinic - Fridays 7-9am

Salisbury: Hayling St, outside clinic - Every Friday 7-8 am

Morayfield: 40 Cresthaven Dve, outside clinic - Tuesday mornings
Enquiries: Bob 5496 7884

Rockhampton: 123 Bolsover St, outside clinic
- from 7.30am, alternate Fridays

Cairns: Day Surgery, Cnr Florence & Grafton St.s
- Friday 12.30 - 1.30pm

Red Hill: St Brigid's - Vigil Mass for Life -
- 2nd Saturday of every month, 7.30am
followed by prayer vigil opposite abortuary in Wickham Terrace.

RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES

EWTN - **Brisbane:** BRIZ31, Sundays, 10-11am and now
Monday to Friday 12.30 - 1.30 pm
- **Perth:** TV Channel Access 31, Sundays 1-2pm

"The Gate of Heaven"

on Radio Fremantle, 107.91FM, Sundays, 7.30pm.
Hosted by the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate
- now featuring EWTN Radio Programmes.

GROUPS

Apologetics Study Group

Banyo: Parish Centre, 352 St Vincents Rd
- every Friday night
(except school holidays)
Enquiries: Vince McHugh - 3267 0265.

Toowoomba:

four Apologetics Study Groups.
Details: Mavis Power - 4632 5523

SEND DETAILS OF YOUR EVENT TO THE EDITOR.
EVENTS MUST BE IN ACCORD
WITH OUR OBJECTIVES

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Brisbane: St Stephen's Cathedral - Mon-Fri 10.30am-12.15pm
Dorrington: St Michael's, 250 Bank St - Mon, Wed 7pm-12mn
-First Fridays 7pm-1am Sat.

Fortitude Valley: Villa Maria Chapel, 123 Warren St
Mon-Fri 6.30am-4pm, Sat-Sun: 10.30am-4.30pm

Geebung: St Kevin's, 251 Newman Rd -
Monday after 8.40am Mass - 10am (except school holidays)

Toowong: St Ignatius' - Saturday 7-10pm

Toowoomba:

Sacred Heart Church, 302 North St, Wilsonton,
- every First Friday 11am-12.10pm

'The Shrine', Ruthven St - Mon-Fri 9am-4.30pm

Woodford: St Mary's - Fridays after 8am Mass

Nambour: St Joseph's, Currie St - 2nd & 4th Sundays, 11am-4pm

Mass and Adoration

New Farm: Holy Spirit Church, Villiers St - Every Friday, 8pm

Bray Park: Holy Spirit, Sparkes Rd - Wed after 8am Mass 'til 9pm
1st Friday after 7 pm Mass until 8 am Saturday

Rockhampton North: St Mary's, Nobbs St
- Thursday 10.00 am - 10.00 pm weekly

Clermont: St Mary's, Capricorn St
- Thursday 9am - Friday 9am before First Friday each month

Mass, Rosary, Benediction & all night Adoration

Bowen Hills: Our Lady of Victories, Roche Ave
- Every 13th of the month, from 7.15pm

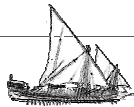
New Farm: Holy Spirit Church Villiers St - Fridays - Mass 8pm,
followed by Adoration till 6am Mass Saturday

Jindalee: Twelve Apostles Church, Valambee Rd
- 1st Saturday after 5pm Mass through to 8am Mass Sunday
Contact: Sue Martin 0418 792 021

Coorparoo: St James', 165 Old Cleveland Rd

Gordon Park: St Carthage, 115 Beaconsfield Tce
First Friday/Saturday from 7pm
in honour of the Sacred & Immaculate Hearts. Also confessions.

Toowoomba: Sacred Heart, 302 North St, Wilsonton
- Tuesday 6.30am Mass followed by Adoration until Wednesday
Benediction 6.20am, Mass 6.30am (includes Mass Tues 12.10pm)
- Friday Adoration until Sat. Benediction 8.20am, Mass 8.30am



LEPANTO LEAGUE OBJECTIVES :

- 1 Uphold & promote the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- 2 Be Loyal to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and to the teachings of the Holy Father.
- 3 Oppose the teaching of the so-called Personal Development/Sex Education in the class room environment.
- 4 Foster vocations to the Priesthood and to the religious life by personal and formal group devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and by the support of seminaries, whose formation and training is in accord with the guide-lines and directions of the Holy See.
- 5 Foster devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and daily praying of the Holy Rosary.
- 6 Provide active support for other groups and organisations who are loyal to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
- 7 Support parents as the prime educators of their children.
- 8 Insist that Catholic schools teach the full content of the Catholic Faith without compromise.
- 9 Foster love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to actively work for the fulfillment of the legitimate aspiration of having the traditional Latin Rite (Tridentine) Mass available regularly.
- 10 Advance these objectives & to defend them with vigour from all attacks no matter from what source they may arise, & to provide mutual support & assistance amongst members.



I reckon ...

SEND THEM TO ILLYRIA

- Kathleen Ashworth

I don't agree with much that George Santayana said, but "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" has become an aphorism.

The Arian heresy was the first crisis in the Church after Constantine recognised it in AD313. Named for Arius, a priest and theologian who promoted the idea, simply put, Arius denied or 'diminished' the divinity of Christ. It was " ... an aberration which, had it finally triumphed, would have anticipated Islam, reducing the Eternal Son to the rank of a prophet, and thus undoing the Christian revelation."

(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01707c.htm>)

Initially, Constantine ordered the factions to compromise, not realising the significance and implications of the issue. When he did, he instigated the First Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church in 325 which produced the Nicene Creed in response to the Arian heresy. We still say the first part, but are probably less familiar with the next bit of the original:

"Those who say: There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten; and that He was made out of nothing (ex ouk onton); or who maintain that He is of another hypostasis or another substance [than the Father], or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change, [them] the Catholic Church anathematizes."

(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01707c.htm>)

Strong words.

I was sitting in Mass, listening to the Gospel about Jesus being lost and found in the temple (Luke 2). An alarm bell rang when the visiting priest said that Jesus' response to his concerned parents was "... did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

This was a translation I hadn't heard from the ambo. The reason for the different text became quickly clear as Father proceeded with his homily which expounded on his theory that Christ was not aware of his divinity at the time.

A bible with the same translation that Father used has this footnote:

"I must be in my Father's house: this phrase can also be translated, "I must be about my Father's work." In either translation, Jesus refers to God as his Father. His divine sonship, and his obedience to his heavenly Father's will, take precedence over his ties to his family."

(<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible/index.htm>)

But no, they've got it wrong. Evidently, according to Father, Jesus ran away from his parents, like any naughty boy may do, and hid from them in the temple. There he felt a vague sense of belonging, which prompted his reply to his parents when they found him.

Lepanto 10:1

I started to compile a list of all the texts that evidence Christ's divinity, but gave up - really, the Gospels are all about Jesus being God: in the temple, forgiving sins, working miracles - the transfiguration, the forty days in the desert ... And God is omniscient - knowing all. So if Jesus is God, He would know. For heaven's sake - His disciples knew He was God!

And conversely, if Jesus was not aware of His divinity, he is not omniscient, so He is less than God. That's Arianism.

"If anyone does not say that the Son of God is true God just as [His] Father is true God [and] He is all-powerful and omniscient and equal to the Father, he is a heretic."

(Council of Rome, Tome of Pope Damasus, Canon 12, AD382.)

Sadly, this was not a lone incident. Many of us poor deprived faithful have heard various versions of this one lately. Once again I have to wonder whether the recent rash of priests claiming that God, Jesus Christ, was not aware of his divinity (until He was baptized by John/dying on the cross/whatever), are victims of the widespread and criminal lack of education and knowledge of our faith, or protagonists in the spread of this disinformation.

There are many of us poor deprived faithful sitting in churches all over Queensland (and one or two other places) that, like the Emperor Constantine, would not be aware

of the implications of such a theory. It is blasphemy; it is a huge insult.

Constantine got wise. It's ironic that these modernists, committing the sin of pride in their belief that they have superior understanding to the Magisterium, have not considered the implications and consequences of their claims - or do they think they have asbestos hides?

Arius, his followers and his writings were 'branded with anathema', his books were cast into the fire, and he was exiled to Illyria. Illyria was part of, what is now called, the Balkan Peninsula. I wonder if they still take exiles?

TO CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

✠ O Christ Jesus, I acknowledge You King of the Universe. All that has been created has been made for You. Exercise upon me all Your rights.

I renew my baptismal promises renouncing Satan and all his works and pomps. I promise to lead a good Christian life and to do all in my power to procure the triumph of the rights of God and Your Church.

Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You my poor actions in order to obtain that all hearts may acknowledge Your sacred royalty and that thus the reign of Your peace may be established throughout the universe. Amen.

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January 2007