

St. Nicholas News

Francis Street Parish, Dublin 8. --- 01-5157512 --- 01-5611390



16th Sunday Ordinary Time 17 July 2022

THIS WAS THE DAY I THOUGHT I'D NEVER WITNESS — Fr. Brendan Hoban



The gathering in the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone on June 18 of bishops, priests, religious as well as delegates and representatives of varied Catholic associations - 162 in all - was, as we say, something else altogether. It's even difficult to find words that exaggerate its importance. The word 'historic' is not out of place in that it never happened before in the long history of the Catholic Church in Ireland, not since the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, not since St Patrick came to Ireland, not ever. We had expected that, after the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), the focus on

becoming a People's Church would have led to a multiplicity of such gatherings when, to implement the vision of the council, such gatherings seemed both necessary and inevitable. But it was not to be. It was a devastating failure to trust the voice of the highest teaching authority in the church - the bishops of the world gathered in general council, mapping out the future of the Church. It needed nerve to overturn centuries of tradition, to learn from 'the signs of the times', to hold in appropriate esteem and focus the vision of a People's Church. It was too a supreme failure in leadership, looking back instead of looking forward, listening to those in love with the past rather than trusting those able and ready to live in the present and to shape the future. So, 60 years after the Second Vatican Council, the reforms intended by that council were truly launched when, as part of Pope Francis' challenge to become a People's Church, a representative gathering of the Irish Catholic Church met in Athlone recently. As expected on the day - a day longed for and yearned for by so many for so long - there was a huge sense of expectancy, even nervousness, that the occasion would not deliver or that, after being used to being told what to do, the spirit of openness that Francis was encouraging would not be translated into this first, crucial test. If for so long we had become used to thin gruel, would we be able for more satisfying food? We shouldn't have worried. I met Fr Tony Flannery on the way in. There was a delicious irony in the fact that Tony had been 'silenced' and his ministry as a priest taken from him because he had written about most if not all of the issues now on the Athlone agenda. When Tony entered the room, Archbishop Eamon Martin rushed over to welcome him. The gesture set the tone for the day. Everyone was welcome and everyone seemed happy that everyone was welcome. We were, I felt, like children arriving at a party to which for years we had longed to attend but had never been invited. And we stood there looking around us, not quite believing that (i) it was happening and (ii) that we had the pleasure of being there. There was a sense that, after all the work and the talk the synodal pathway was opening out in front of us. The challenge - represented to the Catholic Church by the vision of the Second Vatican Council - was at last on the table as we listened, discussed, prayed to discern God's will and, effectively, decided on a process that would involve a journeying together of lay Catholics, bishops, priests and religious. The goal of that journey, we could all see, was nothing less than embracing a different way of being church, a People's Church. As I looked around the gathering, groups of eight, usually comprising a bishop, a priest, laywomen and lay men, discussing issues that pre-Francis priests like Tony Flannery and others were called to account for by the congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, I had to almost pinch myself that it was actually happening. Even more extraordinary was the energy in the room, the sense of united, respectful purpose, a gathering enthusiasm, even at times a feeling of pure joy and a hope that our withering Church, battered and bruised for within and without, might yet become an effective conduit of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Every one of the 26 Irish dioceses had sent a report of a listening process to the Irish bishops and a national committee analysed them and summarised them under 15 headings: predictable ones like youth, family, faith but also sexual abuse, the equality of women, co-responsible decision-making, sexuality teaching, LGBTQI+, and questions related to priests - liturgy, mandatory celibacy, etc. The Athlone meeting was to check with the 162 delegates whether the committee in reviewing the 26 reports had missed out on some important issue and such amendments will be included in the final document to be sent to the bishops. The document to Rome,

which will become part of the Roman Synod in October 2023, will be published in August. After the experience of the Athlone meeting, the clear effect is that the Catholic Church in Ireland has been firmly pointed on a synodal pathway and Archbishop Eamon Martin made it clear in his closing words that there's no turning back from synodality now. In effect, the Second Vatican Council is back on track. June 18, 2022 will, I believe, stand its ground as a red-letter day for Irish Catholicism. Of course, it creates huge expectation of change that may not be easily realised as becoming a People's Church is more than the work of a day or indeed a year..... A good start would be to bring Tony Flannery in from the cold.

Courtesy, Fr. Brendan Hoban & The Western People

Notices

Remembered in Prayer

Saturday 6pm

Raymond (Ray) Taylor (1st A)
Mary Rice (nee Devey) (5th A)
Paul Dempsey (3rd A)
Mick Kiersey (15th A)

Sunday 11.30am

Aideen O'Sullivan (6th A)
Her Dad Pat O'Sullivan (12th A), Margaret Taylor (9th A)
Bernie D'Arcy (Birthday)
Bernard D'Arcy
Malachy Hogan (15th A)
Barry Coughlan (32nd A)



Domestic Violence

Women's Aid: 1800341900
Male Domestic Abuse:
1800816588
Rape Crisis Centre:
1800778888

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Penitential Rite

As we begin our celebration, let us be mindful of God's immense love and compassion.

You lead us to your light and life. Lord have mercy

You show us your truth and love. Christ have mercy

You ask us to follow your way. Lord have mercy

May our loving and merciful Lord, have mercy on us,
forgive us our sin and bring us to life everlasting.
Amen

Genesis: 18:1-10

The Lord appeared to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre while he was sitting by the entrance of the tent during the hottest part of the day. He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed to the ground. 'My lord,' he said 'I beg you, if I find favour with you kindly do not pass your servant by. A little water shall be brought; you shall wash your feet and lie down under the tree. Let me fetch a little bread and you shall refresh yourselves before going further. That is why you have come in your servant's direction.' They replied 'Do as you say.' Abraham hastened to the tent to find Sarah. 'Hurry' he said 'knead three bushels of flour and make loaves. Then running to the cattle Abraham took a fine and tender calf and gave it to the servant, who hurried to prepare it. Then taking cream, milk and the calf he had prepared, he laid all before them, and they ate while he remained standing near them under the tree. 'Where is your wife Sarah?' they asked him. 'She is in the tent' he replied. Then his guest said, 'I shall visit you again next year without fail, and your wife will then have a son.'

Colossians 1:24-28

Christ It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church. I became the servant of the Church when God made me responsible for delivering God's message to you, the message which was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and has now been revealed to his saints. It was God's purpose to reveal it to them and to show all the rich glory of this mystery to pagans. The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory: this is the Christ we proclaim, this is the wisdom in which we thoroughly train everyone and instruct everyone, to make them all perfect in Christ.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Open our heart, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son. Alleluia

Luke 10: 38-42

There Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'

Prayer of the Faithful

Father Son and Spirit, you are the God who constantly listens to us. We thank you. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to be committed to your Word and allow it to shape our lives, our attitudes and actions. Lord hear us.

We are conscious of the families who have to struggle to make ends meet. May our response to them always be one of practical generosity. Lord hear us.

For all who have died and especially those who have died through war and violence. We look to the day when we will be united again in God's Kingdom. Lord hear us.

We pray for an end to all violence and war, that humankind may live in peace and freedom. Lord hear us.

In silence we put aside our own needs and remember those who need our prayer and support.....Lord hear us

Reflection

When you take the time to draw on your listening-imagination, you will begin to hear this gentle voice at the heart of your life. It is deeper and surer than all the other voices of disappointment, unease, self-criticism and bleakness. All holiness is about learning to hear the voice of your own soul. It is always there and the more deeply you learn to listen, the greater surprises and discoveries that will unfold. To enter into the gentleness of your own soul changes the tone and quality of your life. Your life is no longer consumed by hunger for the next event, experience or achievement. You learn to come down from the treadmill and walk on the earth. You gain a new respect for yourself and others and you learn to see how wonderfully precious this one life is. You begin to see through the enchanting veils of illusion that you had taken for reality. You no longer squander yourself on things and situations that deplete your essence. You know now that your true source is not outside you. Your soul is your true source and a new energy and passion awakens in you.

John O'Donohue