

St. Nicholas News

Francis Street Parish, Dublin 8. ---- 01-4530387 ---- 01-5611390



30 April 2017

CHURCH MUST MOVE AWAY FROM 'SERVICE STATION' MODEL



Fifteen years on from the publication of his influential book, *The End of Irish Catholicism?*, theologian Dr Vincent Twomey has warned that one of the factors contributing to the demoralisation of the clergy in Ireland is the still prevalent pre-Vatican II attitude to the Mass. In a new paper published in the Jesuit journal, *Studies*, the professor emeritus of moral theology at St Patrick's College

Maynooth warns that the Sunday obligation has produced "what could be called the 'service station' model of church, which, with the declining number of clerics, is putting a huge strain on their time and their limited energy". He highlights the assumption "by all concerned" that the Church will provide certain services to the faithful, so that the laity can fulfil their obligations. "The (remaining, mostly elderly) faithful are satisfied, once they have 'been to Mass'" and often the attitude is, the shorter the Mass, the better. As a result, Fr Twomey comments, clergy, conscious of this, are anxious to reduce the ritual to a minimum. As to the proposals put forward by the Association of Catholic Priests to alleviate the shortage and ageing profile of priests, Dr Twomey warns that these proposals are "predicated on the same traditional model namely providing the requisite pastoral services to the people, as in a service station. The net result is a desiccated liturgy."

The Divine Word missionary observes that the main object of Eucharistic ministers is, it seems, to reduce the time needed for distributing Communion. "Readers read scriptural texts that evidently make no sense to them. Very often, they are indistinct or inaudible. As with the Eucharistic ministers, their presence seems to be a token recognition of lay involvement, in particular by women, with little or no awareness that readers, Eucharistic ministers, choir members (if they exist), and sacristans all need theological training as much as the clergy need ongoing formation and education." The net result of all of this, according to Fr Twomey, is that the "source and summit of the Christian life has been reduced to an obligation to be satisfied with the least pain for either priest or people." He adds that generally speaking, the state of the liturgy in Ireland is "uninspiring" and says it is no surprise that youth feel bored, if they attend.

Elsewhere in his paper he explains that his book, *The End of Irish Catholicism?*, sparked considerable discussion, particularly of its radical proposal for a restructuring of the dioceses by reducing them from twenty-six to twelve, or even six. Though it was debated in the Bishops' Conference and in Rome, it was rejected by the Irish bishops, who he claims "dissuaded Rome, arguing that, if the diocesan boundaries were now changed, they would in future always be associated with the stigma of the clerical scandals." In his paper, as in his book, the former Maynooth professor argues that traditional Irish Catholicism was, for all its extraordinary achievements in education and healthcare, neither fully Catholic nor fully Irish. His basic thesis is that the fundamental weakness of the Irish Catholic Church has been its anti-intellectual bias and consequent lack of self-criticism. "It contained within itself the seeds of its present demise. Living among the debris of a distorted cultural expression of Catholicism, the worst expression being the scandals and cover-ups, we are, as the Church, experiencing the end of a cultural phenomenon." On the other hand, the greatest achievement of the Irish Church was its missionary tradition, which saw Irish Catholic missionaries leave everything to go to the ends of the earth, first in the seventh to twelfth centuries, and then in the nineteenth and twentieth, "to bring good news to the poor, heal the broken-hearted - and, incidentally, build up societies in every continent through their involvement in education and healthcare." But today, missionary vocations have dried up completely, he acknowledges. The lack of spiritual leaders and the dearth of missionary vocations, according to Dr Twomey, point to the source of the real crisis facing the Church: a crisis of faith. "It has been posited that what we are facing is really a crisis of identity caused by our postmodern, post-truth world. Perhaps, one could more accurately say that the present crisis is probably a combination of a crisis of faith and a crisis of identity." He adds that though prayer is the way out of a personal crisis of faith, he is not convinced that prayer, however needed, is alone sufficient to overcome the present crisis of faith that has enervated the Church.

NOTICES

Money Matters

Sunday 23 April 2017

Thank you for your contributions.

1st Collection: p285
2nd Collection: p315
Share: p35
Family Offering: p503
Conquer Cancer: p505



Remembered at Mass

Sat 6pm: Joe & Lena Walsh Pat Lynam 6th Anniv & Son Wade Lynam 2nd Anniv, James Brennan, Eilish Mc Donnell

Sun 11.30: Fr. Des O'Beirne, John Gibson.



World Meeting of Families

invite you to a Day Meeting dedicated to the theme of Family and hear experiences from a variety of situations on Saturday 29th April, from 10.30am-4.00pm, in the Aula Maxima, Maynooth. The meeting is organised by the Focolare Movement - Keynote speakers are Fr. Tim Bartlett, secretary for the World Meeting of Families and Lorna Gold, Trocaire. There will be programmes also for children and teenagers. Donation of €10 for individuals and €20 per family. Families may bring packed lunch and have outdoor picnic or go to one of the many places to eat in Maynooth. Parking is free. Contact: focolaireireland.event@gmail.com or 01-4922709.



Venerable Matt Talbot

First Friday Novena Mass and prayers for healing in St. Agatha's Church, North William Street, Dublin 1 on 5th May at 7.30pm. We pray especially for those suffering from any form of addiction. All are welcome. www.matttalbot.ie / 01 855 4078.

Support Meeting

Anam Cara, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding its next monthly Parent Evening on Monday 8th of May from 19:30-21:00pm in the Maldron Hotel, Tallaght, Dublin 24.



Book Launch

10-11 South Earl Street, Dublin 8., 18th May, 5.30pm. "Effective Group Leadership", Insights of a Practitioner, written by Gerard Fitzpatrick, Managing Director of Fusion. Special guest Jerry Murphy. Refreshments and finger food will be served. RSVP: ger@fusiontraining.ie.



SUNDAY LITURGY - 3RD SUNDAY EASTER

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 22-33

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice: 'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say. Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him: "I saw the Lord before me always, for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me. So my heart was glad and my tongue cried out with joy; my body, too, will rest in the hope that you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow your holy one to experience corruption. You have made known the way of life to me, you will fill me with gladness through your presence." 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, 'what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.'

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Psalm 15: Show us, Lord, the path of life.

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.' R/
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. R/
3. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay. R/

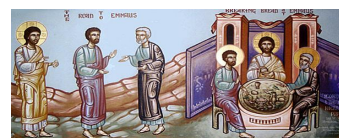
Gospel Acclamation: Lk 24:32

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us
Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 24:13-35

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days'. 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.' Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

When a man whose marriage was in trouble sought his advice, the Master said, "You must learn to listen to your wife". The man took this advice to heart and returned after a month to say that he had learned to listen to every word his wife was saying. Said the Master with a smile, "Now go home and listen to every word she isn't saying."

From 'One Minute Wisdom' by Anthony de Mello