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3rd Sunday of Easter, 1st May 2022.

Dear Parishioner,

On this day, five years ago, the sad news of the death of Fr. Pat Moore reached the ears of many people. One cannot say that it was unexpected, as he had suffered from oesophageal cancer for a lengthy period before that. Fr. Pat was known far and wide, throughout the diocese and further afield. **A factor in his being seen and known all over the diocese was that he was what was known as the Diocesan Examiner – the priest who visited the primary schools of the diocese.** When Fr. Pat was ordained in 1982, I had spent the most part of a year in Kenya and after my return to Ireland in the summer of 1987, I spent the months until a short time before Christmas, doing a renewal course in Dublin.

After returning to the diocese, I probably met him at one of our diocesan meetings, or on some other occasion between the start of 1988 and August of that year, when I took up an appointment as a curate in Killarney Parish. Fr. Bill Murphy (now our retired bishop) had been living with Fr. Pat in a diocesan house in Ballycasheen. When he moved to the Presbytery in New Street as Administrator of the Cathedral, I took up residence in his place. We were to be together in Ballycasheen until the summer of 1993, when I was transferred to Rathmore Parish. **I did not expect that we would be working in the one parish, but not living in the same house, when, in the summer of 1994, Fr. Pat was also appointed to Rathmore Parish.** I had spent a year living in Knocknagree and he took up residence in the Presbytery in Gneeveguilla. I left him in the parish, when I headed back to Kenya, after a ten year stay in the diocese, in September 1997.

While many people were aware of the sickness that led to Fr. Pat's death, his earlier sickness, while in Rathmore Parish, might not be as well known. Everybody who knew him was saddened, when they saw that, for some time after returning from his stay in a big London Hospital, it took some time before he got back to walking in a fairly normal way. What I recall about that time is how upbeat he was about the future and how he took up walking again but not as vigorously as he had been doing, before he became unwell. On his fifth anniversary, I thank God for the privilege of knowing a man of charisma, courage and strong faith. (Fr. Denis O'Mahony

Struggles of Faith

Essays by Fr. Michael Paul Gallagher (Columba Press 1991)

Coming back to Ireland, from the poor world, highlighted for me the sheer materialism of our environment and the fact that, since the boom of the sixties, affluence has created a completely different context of values and lifestyles, different even from the fifties. **Economics has quietly but inevitably replaced religion as the dominant value in Irish society.** This social change has created a new context, not openly at war with Christianity, but in fact, hostile to the survival of real faith. Our social context for the future is one where, increasingly, greed and envy will be valued and cultivated in glossy forms. **In this world, the danger is that religion will be reduced to a minor leisure-time activity, a convention retained but, only on the margins of life, something devoid of challenge or depth.....**

Of course, the key question for the future of faith is not minimum external convention but some level of conviction and maturity. The older patterns of quasi-universal religious practice, still found in rural areas, can involve a certain degree of social conformism. When that conformism loses its power, as it has done for younger and urbanised families, a quite different pastoral approach is called for. **Irish Catholics seem to be over-sacramentalised and under-evangelised. Sacramental attendance is experienced by many as a matter of obedience or duty, rather than as a spiritual nourishment or meeting with the Lord.....**

Putting it very simply, there seem to be three main thrusts of renewal in the worldwide Church today, and these three could have a special application in the unique situation of Ireland: **spiritual renewal, small support groups and social commitment.** As against these new potentials, one can discern three new dangers, three forms of lapsing from religion: **apathy, alienation and anger. Apathy is a form of socio-cultural loss of faith.** It is largely passive; it stems from a new environment dominated by money-values and this, in turn, results in a dull indifference to the spiritual dimension of life.

Alienation by comparison with apathy is more agitated or troubled in mind and conscience. It is less a form of drifting than a definite disappointment with institutional life within the Church. **It often arises from precise sources of dissatisfaction with conventional religion and with the priests and religious who are viewed as embodiments of this convention.** The third

umbrella term to describe loss of faith is 'anger'. This is at the opposite end of the spectrum from apathy in that it is much more active, conscious, chosen and ideological in its stance. **Apathy is a danger for large number of people, whereas alienation affects, mainly, the more searching and the more educated, an increasing proportion in Irish society.....**

If the Irish Church can read the strengths and dangers of the present faith situation, and can give courageous priority to the new pastoral needs, then a certain guarded optimism about the future is well justified. Innovation has always been a hallmark of Irish missionaries abroad: it is a question of the same missionary zeal and adventure being brought to bear on the local situation. **The causes of lessening of practice and belief lie in two directions - both the inevitabilities of the age and in the human failures of ourselves as witnesses of the Gospel.** Just as EEC (*In 1991 we were familiar with European Economic Community, now known more simply as the EU – European Union.*) regulations slowly eroded our freedom on fisheries, so also many large forces in our western world erode our freedom as fishers of faith. However, within our own hands is the question of the trawlers and nets we use within our waters. **As fishers of faith, we may be less free than we were but more free than we know. (M.P.G.)**

What you have been reading are some random passages from Fr. Michael Paul Gallagher's book. You might have noted at the top of the other page that the book of essays was published in 1991. Most of us will find it hard to remember 1991, unless something memorable happened in our individual or family life or, if we are the kind of people who can remember a great variety of things from times past. (As I write this, I cannot recall whether or not Kerry were in the All-Ireland. Some 'Dear Parishioner' reader might want to say to me, 'Surely you can remember who played in the final that year and who got the Sam Maguire Cup!')

I will pick one sentence from the paragraph beginning 'If the Irish Church can read the strengths and dangers of the present faith situation and can give courageous priority to the new pastoral needs, then a certain guarded optimism about the future is well justified!' Did that reading of the present 'strengths and dangers' happen? If it did happen, it didn't happen in a very significant way! If it had happened as expressed in Michael Paul Gallaghers 'hoped-for-happening', would the face of the Irish Church be different today? **I think that is a question that does not have a clear answer. (D.O'M)**

Seeing Your Life Through The Lens Of The Gospel John Byrne

1.The disciples spend a fruitless night fishing and catching nothing. Things change dramatically when Jesus appears and invites them to try again. Remember those who came to you and encouraged you to try again when you felt discouraged. Perhaps, on some of these occasions the results were beyond your expectations.

2.Some people view the synodal process proposed by Pope Francis as a futile exercise, and others see it as an opportunity of renewal and growth. **What have you seen or heard that encourages you to engage in the process?**

3.The story can serve as a reminder that, sometimes, we are wasting our time if we try to work on our own without the Lord's help. When have you found that your work or life was more fruitful when you acknowledged that you needed God's help and you spoke to God about your needs?

4.Peter is given the chance to be reconciled with the Master after his denial during the Passion. Remember those who gave you an opportunity for reconciliation after you hurt or let them down. What was it like to be given this chance? To whom have you offered the possibility of reconciliation?

Points to Ponder (Pope Francis in Bulgaria, 5th May 2019)

It is the very moment of Peter's failure that Jesus appears, starts over, patiently comes to him and calls him 'Simon' (v15) – the name Peter received when he was first called. The Lord does not wait for perfect situations of frames of mind: he creates them. He does not expect to encounter people without problems, disappointments, without sin or limitations. He himself confronted sins and disappointment in order to encourage all men and women to persevere. **Brothers and sisters, the Lord never tires of calling us. He is the power of love that overturns every expectation and is always ready to start anew. In Jesus, God always offers us another chance.** He calls us day by day to deepen our love for him and to be revived by his eternal newness. Every morning, he comes to find us where we are. He summons us 'to rise at his word, to look up and realise we were made for heaven, not for earth, for the heights of life and not for the depths of death', and to stop seeking 'the living among the dead'. When we welcome him, we rise higher and are able to embrace a brighter future, not as a possibility but as a reality. **When Jesus' call directs our lives, our hearts grow young. (Intercom)**