

Dear Parishioner,

While you have not seen the heading above for the past few weeks, you were not left without '*Dear Parishioner*' because of the good work done by Parish Secretary, Bernie White. Before going on a trip to Kenya, I did not want to make a song and dance about it and, so, I did not broadcast very widely that I was jetting off to the African continent. Over the coming weeks, I will give a short report on my travels. I will not touch on this subject this weekend.

When I took the wrapping off the October issue of Reality Magazine, I found a letter which caused a slight shock and made me a little sad. **The letter contained the news that the magazine would not be published from January 2023 onwards.** It has been no secret for some time now that the '*world of the printed word*' is going through a difficult phase. This has been the case because of the influence of social media and other technological advances and has affected newspaper sales as well as having a big impact on magazines of various kinds. I think '*Dear Parishioner*' readers will recall good articles from Reality that you have been reading over the past number of years. I think, especially, of the articles by two regular contributors - **Carmel Wynne (Family and Relationships) and Fr. Peter McVerry (Reality Check).**

I feel both writers have an ability to reflect on topics that touch the lives of all people. We may find ourselves reading in one of the articles about something we have thought about, now and then, or something that surprises us – maybe something that we never thought about. In her article this month, Carmel Wynne concludes by quoting a famous psychiatrist, philosopher and holocaust survivor, Victor Frankel, "*When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.*" Peter McVerry never tires of challenging his readers to open our eyes to the injustice in society, to see the inequality and to do what we can to bring about change. I am of the view that, if legislators and people in high places, could take note of the various suggestions he makes, many of the instances of injustice and inequality would no longer be so evident in our society. There would be in that much used phrase, '**a more level playing field.**' (Fr. Denis O'Mahony)

We Must Take Sides

We Only Realise How Privileged We Are When We See

How Others Have To Live

When I went to live and work in the inner city of Dublin in 1974, two things shocked me:

First, the conditions in which some people there had to live. Some of the houses were old tenement buildings from the 1800s, divided into flats for families. There was no soundproofing between flats – I could listen to the news on the television in the flat below me. Some of the houses had one outside toilet for eight families. The place was crawling with rats, the size of little kittens. **The unemployment rate was about 80 per cent, as most people traditionally had worked on the nearby docks, loading and unloading ships but containerisation took their jobs away.** So, most young people growing up there never expected to ever have a job. Hence, they saw no point in staying in school and many left school early, often by the age of 12. They hung around the streets all day, with no money in their pockets, so they started stealing and they soon realised that the only way out of the life of poverty in which they were trapped was crime. Some turned to drugs to dull the pain of their meaningless lives. **Our prisons then, as still today, were full of people from deprived areas, who left school early, had low levels of literacy, and no history of employment, but a long history of addiction.**

Secondly, what shocked me even more was that I had been living in Dublin but had no idea of the conditions in which some people had to live. I had lived a privileged life, growing up in a family that was financially secure, went to a fee-paying school, on to college and could have had a well-paid job if I hadn't joined the Jesuits (the Jesuits don't pay very well!). **Being privileged in Ireland doesn't mean being wealthy - just having secure and affordable housing, not having to worry about paying the bills, or being on waiting lists for hospital treatment.** I only realised how privileged I was when I saw how others had to live and, if I wanted to retain my privileged lifestyle, I needed not to know how they lived. **Knowing changed me from a young conservative into an old radical.**

We live in a society where accumulating resources to provide security for our families is considered common sense, the responsible thing to do. In such a model there are winners and losers. **Our culture tries to persuade us**

that Irish society provides a level playing field, that those who succeed are the ones who made good choices, studied hard in school and so got good jobs. They are the winners, they succeeded through their own efforts and deserve their privileged lifestyle. Similarly, it tries to persuade us that those who are poor and marginalised are the losers, they made bad choices, failed to take the opportunities offered to them. By and large, they live in deprived areas, with few resources, and struggle financially. Some of them, of course, deserve our charity but the playing field is far from level. In fact, the game is rigged. Through fee-paying schools or grinds (62 per cent of children from higher socio-economic groups pay for grinds), those of us who are privileged can give our children a substantial advantage in this competitive struggle, thus improving their access to good employment opportunities.

To take sides with the poor is not to be against those who are privileged. It is to take sides with the cause of the poor and against the cause of those who seek to preserve their privileges at the expense of the poor. It means opposing those who oppose social housing or Traveller accommodation. It means opposing those who oppose paying higher taxes so that poverty can be reduced. It means opposing policies, resource allocations and structures which favour those who are privileged and consequently, and often unintentionally, keep those who are poor marginalised. Jesus took sides: “*How happy are you who are poor, yours is the Kingdom of God*” (Luke 6:20). In the Kingdom of God in Heaven, the poor have a privileged place. So, it should be in the Kingdom of God which we are building here on earth.

Fr. Peter McVerry, Reality October 2022.

Miss no opportunity of making some small sacrifice,
Here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word
Always doing the smallest and doing it all for love.
(St. Therese of Lisieux)

‘It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the source so much in life that makes life worth living.’

‘The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.’
The first quotation is from David Attenborough, the second from Dorothy Parker, both taken from Reality Magazine, October 2022.

Seeing Your Life Through The Lens of The Gospel John Byrne OSA
1.Faith can move mountains... well it can certainly get us moving. Recall a time when you were full of self-doubt, scepticism about a project, or lacking trust in God. What was that like? **Contrast this with times when your faith and trust in God was strong. What kind of faith has enriched your life?**

2.Faith is like a mustard seed, small, and sometimes we may be tempted to wait till our faith grows. **Part of the message in the gospel is to use the faith we have, even though it may be small.** That is how we grow in belief in ourselves and in God’s presence in our lives. Does your experience back up this?

3.It is nice when what we do is recognised and acknowledged, but the desire for recognition leaves us vulnerable. It is not always forthcoming. **It can be helpful if our main motivation in doing something is the value of the action itself. Have you experienced this?**

4.This is particularly true when it comes to love. Love is a free gift. What is given lovingly is not given because of a claim. **What is your experience of the freedom of love given and received?**

Points to Ponder Intercom October 2022

Liturgical Silence: Among the ritual acts that belong to the whole assembly, silence occupies a place of absolute importance. Many times, it is expressly prescribed in the rubrics. The entire Eucharistic celebration is immersed in the silence which precedes its beginning, and which marks every moment of its ritual unfolding. It is present in the penitential act, after the invitation ‘*Let us pray*’, in the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings, between the readings and after the homily), in the eucharistic prayer and after communion. **Such silence is not an inner haven to hide oneself in intimate isolation, as if leaving the ritual form behind as a distraction.** That kind of silence would contradict the essence itself of the celebration. Liturgical silence is something much grander; **it is the symbol of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit who animates the entire action of the celebration.**

Silence moves us to sorrow for sin and the desire for conversion. It awakens a readiness to hear the Word and awakens prayer. It disposes us to adore the Body and Blood of Christ. It suggests to us, in the intimacy of communion, what the spirit would effect in our lives to conform us to the Bread broken. For all these reasons we are called to enact with extreme care the symbolic gesture of silence. Through it the Spirit gives us shape, gives us form. (Pope Francis,
Desiderio Desideravi,
Apostolic Letter on the Liturgical Formation of the People of God.)