
May 2, 2010 • Fifth Sunday of Easter

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
michaelr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x100

Homily at the Easter Vigil by Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland

This is the fourth in a series of perspectives on the clergy sexual abuse crisis now gripping the Church. You will find previous perspectives in my April 11, April 18, and April 25 Pastor's Columns. You are encouraged to read those if you haven't yet.

The Church of Ireland is greatly suffering at this time.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed human history. It enters history...as an explosion of light, light which illuminates the darkness, light which allows us to see reality as it is, light which enables us to discern the good from what is evil. Darkness already begins to be dispelled even when only one single flicker of light appears. Even one single flicker of light can be the beginning of hope within any darkness.

We remember in our prayers this evening all those for whom darkness seems impossible to overcome, for whom darkness seems unbearable and without hope. We remember those for whom the darkness of their past still haunts them. We remember those whose torment and anxiety tears away at their will to live...

As a Christian community we are called to be light in the world. We are called to be with those for whom darkness is excruciating and who see no future, no hope. Woe to a Church which hides and destroys light in people's hearts. Woe to a Church which prevents the light of Christ from appearing as it should.

Resurrection means that death has been definitively conquered. Jesus Christ entered into his passion and death *freely* out of love for us. His death was the ultimate expression of his giving of himself. Christ's death lovingly opens the door which leads to resurrection and new life. It is love that transforms death definitively. That explosion of light which is the Resurrection tells us and reminds us even in the darkest days that there is always a future beyond darkness...

In our days there is so much scrutiny and examination of the Church. There are exposés of the failings of the Church; there is questioning of the role of the Church in society in the past and in whatever our future may be. The role of the Church is being examined under a microscope and from every possible direction. The spotlight of the media and public opinion is focused on the failures and the betrayals of Church leaders and a damaging culture which has grown up in the Church.

I am not criticizing the media for that. That is their job. In doing their job some will feel the media have been unfriendly to the Church, even unfair; others will welcome and recognize valid criticism, from whatever angle it comes, even if it comes from people patently unfavorable to the Church. We have to remember that the truth will set the Church free, even if the truth is hard to digest.

Identifying the failures of the Church may, however, be the easier task. There will be some who will hope that such exposure will mortally wound an organization which they consider has gone irreparably astray. But what of those who love the Church? How do we overcome our disgust and shame for the sins of Christians?

The sins of the Church can well be exposed by the spotlight of the media; but the Church will be converted, renewed, and reformed only when it allows the light of Christ to inspire it and guide it. It is the light of Christ which will show the real significance of the darkness that has slipped into our lives.

The light of Christ will expose the sins of Christians but the light of Christ does not abandon us naked and alone in the exposure of our shame and sin. The light of Christ heals, it leads; there is no way we can switch off or dim the light that can open the path to a new future. No generation is too sophisticated not to need the light of Christ; no generation is too sophisticated not to be able to comprehend that light and what it can bring to society...

The tomb signifies a place of death. The Resurrection brings new light. The spirit gathers us as children of the light, prepared with all our weaknesses to ensure that the message of Jesus Christ is not just transmitted abstractly to the next generation, but that the next generation will be a generation inspired by the light of Christ.

The message of the Resurrection comes to us *at* a moment of darkness. The message of the Resurrection comes to us *as* a message of hope that the darkness will not prevail.

Christ is truly risen. Let us go out into life filled with joyful hope.

Archbishop Martin's homily was posted by Rocco Palmo, on his website, http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com/2010/04/quote-of-day_11.html.

Fr. Mike