

Tuesday Reflection 5th April 2022

“Straws in the wind”

With *Praedicate Evangelium*, the ‘Constitution for the Reform of the Roman Curia’ Pope Francis has taken the first faltering steps towards redressing the patriarchal - and at times frankly misogynistic - culture of the Church.

As a man, I see my illusions of male superiority confirmed in a church where the patriarchal tail wags the - predominantly female - dog (to say ‘bitch’ would be discriminatory, and thereby hangs another tale). I feed off male-dominated sacred texts (written by men) with which I am encouraged to worship a male deity who created man (and, as an afterthought, woman, who fell into her role as a temptress, which led to God issuing an eviction notice). The male God became incarnate as a man (admittedly a woman was needed for this). God Incarnate then gathered a group of men about him and set off on a mission, preaching the Kingdom of God (has it occurred to you how often women feature in the parables?) and setting up a male-dominated Church which has persisted as such until this day. This is the official version, from which women have been written out. In the Bible there are only two books featuring women - Ruth and Esther; female texts, such as the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, never made it into the canon.

This - admittedly biased - account nevertheless makes it clear how high the mountain is which we have to climb. But, as two Chinese sayings have it, “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step”, and “the first step is half the journey”. Let us pray that many will follow in Francis’ footsteps towards a new culture.

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