

Tuesday Reflection 220920

Every Saturday noon a small group from the Parish gets together to pray the Angelus, that beautiful prayer which celebrates Mary's acceptance of God's will and the subsequent Incarnation of Our Lord as Jesus the Christ.

Following the prayer, we usually exchange ideas and reflections, and last Saturday we were thinking about the way that we are cut off from much of parish life and our Parish church building. Fr Naz distinguished two functions of the church building; firstly, it is *Domus Dei* - the House of God - and secondly *Domus Ecclesiae* - the House of Meeting or Assembly. In our Catholic tradition, the church building has a supreme function, which links it with the Temple in Jerusalem, and that is as a place of sacrifice.

As *Domus Dei* the church is not, of course God's sole abode; we know that God is everywhere, in the carpark as much as in the church, but by dedicating a special space to God's presence, we are reminding ourselves of God's presence everywhere. What has now become more difficult is meeting God in the church - but God's real home is in our hearts, so it is there that we need to seek him.

It is as the *Domus Ecclesiae* that we perhaps have the deepest sense of loss; we cannot meet so easily with our fellow-parishioners, and thus it becomes more difficult to maintain the solidarity of our parish Community, which is why it is so important for each one of us to seek out ways of serving the community.

In our reflection on Saturday, we drew parallels between the church being closed to many of us and the fate of the people of Israel in Babylonian exile, cut off from the Temple in Jerusalem. Although the comparisons are difficult, it is the case that many of us see ourselves as exiled from the full life of our Parish community.

It is perhaps instructive in this respect to look at how the people of Israel responded to their Babylonian exile; they did 'hang up their harps and weep', but at the same time they did everything possible to keep their faith alive through prayer, study and evangelisation, so perhaps in this time of our 'exile' we are called to develop innovative ways of prayer, study and evangelisation.

PS If anybody would like to join in the Angelus on Saturdays, please contact Francesca on <<f.townson@btinternet.com>>.

PPS If anybody would be interested in joining/forming a reading/discussion group, please contact me on <<m.townson1@btinternet.com>>

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