



ZOOM MEETING HELD ON 22nd JULY 2020 AT 7:30PM

CHAPTER 5 Part III

By Siobhan Burn

PP. 123-156

**LAYING THE FOUNDATION
and
HOMILIES.**

Outline

**HOMILIES
MEANINGFUL COMMUNITIES
CLEAR EXPECTATIONS**

Content

Continuing with an examination of the 10 values proposed by Fr Mallon for laying the foundation for a healthy church. Values are manifested by what we do and not by what we say.

This section covers the following values:

- #4: Homilies
- #5: Meaningful communities
- #6: Clear Expectations



Homilies

“Faith comes from what is heard and
what is heard comes through the word of Christ”

Romans 10:17

- The homily is the 3rd (others were hospitality and hymns) in Church renewal and “it is the first task of the ordained Priest.” *Vat. II*
It is not a simple task and it is difficult to get right.
- It is also a responsibility of the Congregation to give honest and constructive feedback.
- Potential reasons for failure:
 - Length expectations: Congregation < 10 mins; Pope Francis < 1 hour;
 - Poor formation in seminaries on preaching, often experience is too academic.
- Pointers to improvement:
 - It should be a Christocentric proclamation, topical to the secular world and joyful;
 - A good hook helps, the opening and close are important;
 - Preaching to the whole person, heart, mind, conscience and will;
 - Include at least one item to elicit laughter, particularly with difficult messages;
 - Message needs to be so clear it could be summarised succinctly. (< 140 characters) Containing the two key points: core message; what should we do;
 - Minister needs to be ready to preach, emotionally balanced, fully present and having full personal experience of the message. The ‘how’ it should be said. Always preach “the truth in love” *Ephesians 4:15* “...yielding to the blade of God’s word”;



- Try to connect between the weeks or through the season. Avoid stand-alones;
- Text free, “TED Talk” style. A few slides if you have a projection system;
- Humility helps and don’t believe your fans.

Meaningful Community

“The Church cannot be a collection of individual believers practicing their faith in private, satisfied with their self-sufficiency” *Archbishop Anthony Mancini*.

- Don’t let your full Church have lonely people or people in distress who are not offered support. It isn’t none of our business when someone is distressed (?);
- As an illustration of community, he quotes the refrain from TV show Cheers:
 - “You want to be where everybody knows your name”;
- In our modern world the one constant is change. People need to feel they belong with others of like-minded beliefs particularly in our ever-changing culture with constant movement of people;
- Implement the **belong-believe-behave** model to bring in new members, as opposed to behave-believe-belong. This can be difficult to navigate as we stand by our moral code but also stand by the person who is gradually moving and transforming: “... we love that person into the Kingdom, ...Church, ...journey of discipleship”. The young are independent thinkers;
- Alpha programme: 10 sessions to introduce Christian faith run by parishioners. Each session starts with shared meal or refreshments, a talk on the Kerygma followed by group discussions. Fr Mallon has a variety of Alpha courses e.g. Sushi, Pub, Youth, even one that takes place in Prison. Pope Francis likely supporter, *EG#165*, but it does have its’ critics:



- Course content limited leaves out essentials of Church teaching;
- Non-Catholic origination of the course and used by many Christian denominations;
- Fr Mallon suggests in answer to critics, it is important to separate Kerygma from *Didache* (catechesis) EG #35 and there is a possible strength in Ecumenism. EG#246 It also embraces the **belong-believe-behave** approach to evangelization, to a personal encounter with Jesus;
- Fr Mallon’s Parish has also developed a series of post-Alpha catechesis courses.
- Implementing elements of Alpha in the Sunday Eucharist:
 - Name tag Sunday;
 - Prayer Partners at Mass. Introduced before the Penitential Rite. Prayer in silence at the end of Prayer of the Faithful;
 - Prayer Ministry after Mass: On a personal level, make that promised prayer for someone happen immediately if possible. On a wider level: trained prayer teams.
- Gallop: “You cannot manage what you cannot measure” Fr Bill Hanson:
 - Increasing the 20% pool who are engaged to support the Church community;
 - “Start with the soil not the branches” Engagement (belonging) ➔ spiritual commitment (believing) ➔ outcomes (behaving) of growing, serving, giving;
 - ME 25 (Membership Engagement) Survey measured percentage of engaged members, non-engaged, actively disengaged. Results in Fr Mallon’s church:

	Engaged	Non-Engaged	Active disengaged	Comment
2011	24%	47%	29%	Problem: size, 1 Priest/2.5K parishioners
2012	33%	48%	19%	It takes time
2013	41%	44%	15%	Promising, but not there yet



Clear Expectations

“...from everyone to whom much has been given, even more will be demanded”

Luke 12:48

- Catholics who leave and join another denomination often contribute more to the new church, so it wasn't demands that drove them away. Do not be frightened of having expectations of parishioners, but don't just use them;
- From the ME 25 survey it is finding the right *ratio* of welcoming to expectation of the individual. What is the respectful ideal is high welcome with high expectations “We believe that God will work in you and work through you; we expect it and you should, too”;
- A sick parish is one where both are low: Jesus provides the model to improve the ratio, e.g. in the parable of the Talents. *Matthew 25:14-30*;
- “God does not expect a moderate return ...but a kind of spiritual venture capitalism, even if it means taking a risk”.



CHAPTER 5 Part IV

Peter Wills

PP. pp. 156-195

**LAYING THE FOUNDATION
and
COMMUNITY**

Outline

**Worship
Growth
Service/Giving
Connect**

Creating a welcoming Church

Cf. Acts 2, The new Christians devoted to “Apostolic teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread & prayers”.

Mallon focuses on the ‘fellowship’.

Strength based ministry, not just a ‘warm body’ to do the job.

Recognising and rejoicing in the gifts given to ourselves and to others.

**The Church will do greater works even than Jesus, after His bodily departure!
Jn 14:12.**

Pope Francis longs for a new chapter of Evangelisation, p. 187 (*Evangelii Gaudium* 261)

But how will all this be different post COVID in a more digital world?



Content

The Foundation includes a Church strong in Worship, Growth, Service and giving, and connection.

This relates to the situation recorded in Acts 2, where the first community of Christians devoted themselves to:-

- The teaching of the apostles
- The fellowship
- The breaking of bread
- The prayers.

The whole thrust of Mallon's book in my view seems to emphasise the need to boost the 'fellowship' aspect, with the need for us to be welcoming evangelizers. He praises the Alpha Course as a means to this (something I have not experienced and cannot comment on).

We Catholics are wonderfully blessed with the ongoing authentic teaching of successors of the Apostles, through the Church, a living reality now just as it was in Apostolic times.

Also, whatever the Church has failed in, a commitment to the Eucharistic Celebration has never been lacking.

We also have the treasury of the prayers of the liturgy, an unsurpassed resource.

It's the 'fellowship' aspect, in all its facets, that is often lacking.

Fr Mallon criticises the culture that only recognises the value of ministry delivered by the priest. We laity are not 'passive consumers of religious services delivered by the clergy,' we are living and unique members of a Body, each of us with a contribution to make that cannot be made by somebody else. Or 'living stones,' each of us contributing to the spiritual house.



This means that the unique gifts given to each of us need to be recognised and used. A few years ago we had the 'Appeal for time and talent;' being North America, Mallon hired a professional (!) to do this in his Parish.

He dismisses as misplaced the idea applied to ministry that 'strength is made perfect in weakness', and firmly rejects what he calls the 'warm body' approach to fill a need - i.e. just being alive is the qualification to fill a role.

Rather the need, he says, is for a 'strength-based ministry' which starts with someone being asked something like 'What makes your heart thrill and sing?' Can you actually do it? And, of course, Is it for the common good? Putting it another way, if the burning thought arises that 'Something needs to be done' it should be followed up by 'Why not by me?' Perhaps you are noticing something others haven't. But the 'spirits need to be tested' and it is usually unsafe to go with it alone. When Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him, He sent them in pairs.

Mallon quotes and celebrates the Scripture (Jn 14:12) that states that we would perform greater works even than Jesus, after His bodily departure. Almost sounds heretical, except that the words are the Lord's himself. I should rejoice in the gifts and the power delegated to me, no less than I should in the gifts of others.

The commitment to mission that we have should not neglect the need we all have to be constantly evangelized ourselves - a lifelong task. Cf. St John Henry Newman who stated, 'Growth is the only evidence of life'.

The chapter I read culminates in the quote from Pope Francis:- 'How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new Chapter of Evangelization full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realise that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts.' *Evangelii Gaudium*.



The Divine Renovation Ministry has developed an extensive network online with resources, webinars and community links worldwide, however, to add some ‘pepper,’ a drawback is that there is nothing in Mallon’s book of the opportunities and challenges present now in the digital culture; in this respect the book is dated already. Just look at the high attendance at these zoom meetings! And how enriched we have all been by the Sacred Heart Website. We have only just begun to explore these opportunities.

NEXT MEETING

5th August

7:30 p.m.

Divine Renovation

Chapter 6-7

Chapter 6 “The Front Door”

pp. 197-232

Harvey Martin

Chapter 7

pp. 233-282 “Leader of the House”

Brid Greatorex

Secretary: Kitty Hooley

Chair Person: Valerie Pike