



ZOOM MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY 2020 AT 7:30PM

CHAPTER 5 Part I

By Kitty Hooley

PP. 87-109

**LAYING THE FOUNDATION
and
How To Transform the Culture of the Parish Community.**

Outline

CULTURE

What are the Buildings and Why?

VALUES

What does the parish spend its time and money on?

COMMON VALUES

What makes a parish church strong and healthy?

NEW WINES FOR NEW WINESHKP

What Changes should we make?

COMMON VALUES:

Giving priority to the weekend celebration of Mass and

Communicating

HOSPITALITY AND WELCOMING THE STRANGER

How do we reach out to others?

Content

JESUS and St Joseph were not 'just carpenters' working with wood alone. They were building and laying foundations for cities in the area of Nazareth. So when in Matthew Chap 5 verses 24-29 Jesus talked about 'The Wise Builders' building



foundations on ROCK he talked from experience. But the foundation JESUS speaks of is not just trusting and believing, but includes ACTION.

So how do we transform the Culture of the Parish Community? CULTURE being the operative word.

CULTURE

We need to ask ourselves WHAT are we building and WHY? We need to lay a foundation.

The Church is the spotless Body of Christ and therefore the Divine Essence - but the Church is also human. St Thomas Aquinas tells us : Grace builds on nature. Grace being the Divine Essence. Nature being human. And thus if the human foundation is not healthy then the spiritual commitment will be fragile.

VALUES

Now the human foundation of the Church depends on the VALUES embraced by that human community.

JESUS said that building on rock only took place when His Words were listened to and more importantly, acted upon.

How we act communicates our true VALUES. And the True VALUE of a parish depends on how it spends its time and money.

Time? Look at the parish calendar.

How many Pastoral Staff is there?

What are the church buildings being used for?

What kind of activities does the parish hold?

Money? Study the parish budget.

Does the church have more maintenance staff than pastoral staff?

Or are we a Maintenance Church?

The sum of what a Parish values, will constitute its CULTURE.



COMMON VALUES

In this chapter Fr James gave a personal experience of becoming pastor of a new Parish in Nova Scotia in 2010. I do not quite understand what he was getting at in this chapter, but he did say: The Church of GOD that will last into eternity is the Church of The Living Stones, built upon the cornerstone of CHRIST that must be constantly built up. Personally - I repeat - personally I am not sure if he was criticising the diocese of selling off three church buildings and the building of a new state-of-the-art Church which would house the newly constituted parish.

NEW WINE FOR A NEW WINESKIN

However, in this next chapter I understand his meaning.

The decline in three parishes over the years had necessitated the selling off of three church buildings - cum - parishes, and the building of one large church. However, would this physical action stop the decline in numbers in the future? Not unless the culture of the parish changed. Their task was now to 'make new wine for a new wineskin'.

This necessary change is one of CULTURE and Fr James refers to the 2007 *Aparecida Document* which has come to be seen as a road map for the entire Church to use in searching for ways to proclaim the Gospel to all. He emphasises the fact that closing churches is merely cosmetic! However he does suggest that with the dwindling numbers of Priest, amalgamating parishes is a far better solution than clustering parishes where one Priest serves more than one parish. To 'make the new wine' we need to reconstruct the pastoral team, perhaps taking on new members in different roles, and to speak about the vision for the parish - which ultimately means a conversion of our Values and changing the Culture of our Parish.

He is very supportive of the Alpha Course as a form of evangelising to not only Catholics, but non-church goers as well. However running any courses in the parish will be only as good as the Culture of the Parish.



Fr James relates his personal experience of building up this new amalgamated parish in the state-of-the-art church which he inherited in 2010, and emphasises the fact that it is hard work and will take time.

Quoting Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*: The parish is not an outdated institution; it possesses great flexibility & it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.”

Values become transferable. Whatever the circumstances of your church is, these values become the foundation of all you do and say, and will bring about the health and growth of the Parish.

In the remainder of Chapter 5 of “Laying The Foundation” Fr James outlines ten common values that are shared by healthy growing churches, and he will give examples from his personal experiences.

CHAPTER 5 Part II
Charles Pinsent

PP. pp. 110-122

UPLIFTING MUSIC

Outline

Music is an integral part of the liturgy

Second Vatican Council called for the renewal of all aspects of the liturgy.

The standard of music was lowered.

Our music should embrace both old and new Hymns of Praise.

Contemporary Music must be played well by competent and skilful musicians

Screen technology can increase participation.



Content

UPLIFTING MUSIC

Music is an integral part of the liturgy and one of the main ways to renew the church. Music reaches deeply into our souls and touches us. “He who sings, prays twice” said St Augustine.

The Second Vatican Council called for the renewal of all aspects of the liturgy so that the faithful could enter into full and active participation.

During the middle ages, collective worship by clergy and laity had evolved into three distinct modes of participation:-

- The priest prayed silently in Latin.

- The choir sang elaborate versions of the prayers.

- The laity observed passively; they neither sang with the choir nor prayed with the priest.

Until the 20th Century most Catholics could not read so could not even follow the liturgy in the missal. The laity were truly passive spectators.

The Second Vatican Council attempted to call the laity into active participation using music to effect this change. Sadly, the standard of music was lowered and made functional. Laity participation was loosely defined as “joining in”. People views became polarised with many thinking that the “old was bad and the new was good” and the rest that “new is bad and the old is good”

The Old cannot be excluded. The word “Catholic” means “Whole Church” Kath - Holon The church is always the communion of Saints stretched out across history. It has no cultural or time boundaries. The new is necessary because, while treasuring what is old, the church is also missionary and so must express its ancient and eternal realities in a way that people can understand. It must be relevant.



Our music should embrace both old and new. We should give our ancient musical treasures a place in our worship and also sing new songs and play new instruments. We should worship with music that speaks to people and that they can enjoy.

Fr Mallon's Parish seeks to combine the old and new in its four Sunday masses. Saturday afternoon Mass – Mid-sized choir singing parish hymnbook offerings with piano or organ accompaniment.

Sunday morning 9.00 Mass. Contemporary band, electric, acoustic and bass guitars, electric keyboard and drums play a mixture of old and new hymns in a contemporary style. This draws the greatest number of young families and the church rocks.

Sunday 11.15 Mass. A 30-voice choir singing classic congregational hymns and choral pieces with organ accompaniment, Gregorian chant and Latin Mass parts. Sunday evening Mass. A 15- voice choir singing contemporary hymnbook music. The advantage of this broad offering is that no one style is imposed upon the whole parish. Parishioners can choose a style of worship that speaks to them. Fr Mallon believes that we can experience the power of singing God's praises best when we open our mouths and sing God's praises ourselves.

Hymns can be classified as:-

- Speaking to god – hymns of praise.
- Speaking about God – confessional hymns.
- Speaking with God – singing the words of God from Scripture.
- Speaking to one another – exhortation.

Fr Mallon believes that hymns of praise ought to have pride of place because they:-

- are the essence of prayer itself i.e. talking to God.
- allow us to pray twice.
- unite us to the father, son and holy spirit.



- bring about the personal encounter with Jesus that the New Evangelisation calls for.

If you examine any hymn book, the Hymns of praise are not as common as they should be. It is Fr Mallon's experience that people are much more likely to join in when singing hymns of praise. He recalls he experienced his most sublime moments of the Liturgy when hundreds of voices were united in singing praise to God.

The Book of Psalms is the oldest hymnbook we have. It demonstrates all the genres above of hymns in the worship of God.

The oldest hymn we have is the Gloria used in the oldest manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament, the bible used by the infant church. The Gloria is pure praise – "We bless you, we praise you, we adore you, we glorify you and onto praise of Jesus – You alone are the holy one, you alone are the Lord. This is the language of love.

It is hymns of praise that move the heart most and lead people who gather into a personal encounter with Jesus. Fr Mallon warns he is not advocating that we only sing hymns of praise but that we return to giving the hymns of praise a preferential place in our collections of Catholic Hymns.

Evangelical Protestant churches are healthy and growing. They have a huge body of music with a strong preference for contemporary hymns of praise known as "praise and worship". They usually use the first person and tend towards sentimentality. It is worth noting that love songs are supposed to have sentiment and that the Psalms themselves use the first person even in communal worship. This type of praise and worship contemporary style speaks powerfully to our culture today.

Many Catholic Composers such as Matt Maher are writing "praise and worship" hymns that are gaining wide acceptance in Catholic and Non-Catholic circles. A large number of traditional catholic hymns can be successfully set to a contemporary style. For example "O come, O come Emmanuel" is both ever



ancient and ever new; Fr Mallon says it sounds great when played by a contemporary band at his church.

To be successful, contemporary music must be played well by competent and skilful musicians. The human mind and heart is drawn to quality and recognises this as beautiful.

Church's need to install a quality sound system to allow a full range of music. Most churches have sub-standard systems.

Using screen technology can increase participation. Teenagers who would never pick up a hymn book are drawn to the screens; even if they are not yet singing. Screen technology is cheaper than buying hymnbooks and allows for visual components in the homily.

The guidelines when using screens are that they must not detract from the Liturgy. The altar must be the focus. Don't mount screens on or above the sanctuary but to the side of the altar and mount projectors from the ceiling. Avoid blank screens. Show a default theme-slide reflecting the Sunday Theme whenever the screen is not being used and let the theme slide give way to a Eucharistic symbol to minimise any possible distraction as is done in St Peter's square.

Use a background screen colour to reflect the liturgical season. Do not show animated backgrounds, flowing waters or moving clouds; this avoids distractions. It is a lot of work to create content every week and to train a team of operators. However, people are very willing to volunteer for this work.

Getting to work

When Fr Mallon was a seminarian, he visited a priest friend who said an afternoon Mass. He was the only one singing besides the Cantor. People were looking at him. He felt uncomfortable. At the end of Mass, the priest announced the birthday of one of the altar servers; the entire Church then erupted into a loud rendition of Happy Birthday.



This was a big lesson for Fr Mallon. He realised that people do not sing not because they cannot sing or are unwilling to sing but because they have not yet realised the “joy of salvation”; there is no song in their hearts. People need to be encouraged to do this.

Fr Mallon preaches once a year on “the role of praising God in song. In addition, every week he talks about or invites people to enter into a particular hymn. We too should invite people to know the joy of praising God in song and not just being passive spectators. If we are to grow in this area, we must teach and invite.

The word liturgy comes from the Greek *Leitourgia* meaning the work of the people.

Fr Mallon invites us to associate “coming to the liturgy” with “showing up for work”. We need to teach people that when they stand mute and not even mouthing the words they are not only not doing their share but discouraging other people around them from singing a praise to God. Fr Mallon leads by example; he invites the congregation to join him in preparing our hearts to enter in the worship of the Eucharist.

NEXT MEETING

22nd July
7:30 p.m.
Divine Renovation
Chapter 5

Laying the Foundation
Part III - pp. 123-156: Siobhan Burn
Part IV - pp. 157-195: Peter Wills
Secretary: Anthony Hooley
Chair Person: Anne Colquhoun