

SPREADING THE WORD

Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven

I have now been writing my reflections for nearly fifteen years. I first began experimenting when I retired and my wife bought me a laptop for my birthday, even though I had little idea of how to use it. I attended a few lessons at the community centre to learn the basics and started to write about little unimportant things like days out we had enjoyed and memories of past experiences. I also started to write letters to family members abroad and I wrote a few short stories about incidents that I remembered happening to me when I was working. My first real Reflection was my memories of growing up in the parish of Saint Anne in Rock Ferry. I showed it to Fr. Courell and he seemed impressed and encouraged me to continue writing. I was shown by a parishioner and very dear friend how to self-publish my reflections in booklet form and had a number of them duplicated in the parish office. They were left in the porch people helped themselves. When Fr. Ravi came to us, he started the parish web site he included my reflections.

By this time, my son Michael had been studying at Oscot College for a few years to be a Deacon and was ordained at Shrewsbury Cathedral. This made me think again about my reflections. What right have I to expect people to read them? What qualifications do I have? My knowledge of God comes from what my parents taught me when I was a child, from the eleven years I spent at primary and grammar school and from listening to thousands of homilies over many years from priests I highly respected. I felt that that was insufficient qualification to be writing about such deep subjects. It amazed me when people began to tell me how much they enjoyed my reflections. These even included a number of the clergy. This made me think deeply of where my thoughts and reflections were coming from.

Recent readings have been about calling; Jesus invited Peter, Andrew and the other disciples to follow him. One Easter I was given a picture which had a profound effect on me. The figure in the picture was Jesus, The Risen Christ. He was standing at daybreak, just as the sun was beginning to rise above the horizon and while it was still quite dark, holding a lantern and knocking on a door that had no handle. The door could only be opened from inside. He still had on his head the crown of thorns and the wounds in his hands and feet were visible. His eyes were sad and he was looking straight at me, lovingly and pleadingly. I knew then that it was my door he wanted to have opened, the door to my heart. I realised that although I had retired from my career, I was still in service to him. I could not, must not, would not retire from that vocation.

I know that I do not have the eloquence of my patron Saint Anthony, but in his letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul says "Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of power." So, I will continue to write my humble offerings for as long as I can. My eyes and ears may be failing but I no longer see that as an obstacle, but a blessing. With the help of my hearing aids and modern technology, I can hear every word the priest says during mass and, although I can no longer read fluently, with help of magnifiers, I can read and study the scripture readings slowly and more carefully.

O Lord, almighty and merciful God, Loving father in heaven, thank you for all the graces and blessings you have bestowed upon me.