

Writing in a document entitled 'The Church in Europe' (2003) St John Paul II observed, 'European culture gives the impression of "silent apostasy" on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist.' That is even truer today when, for example, so many Christians in Ireland and Britain have drifted away from the church, its beliefs and practices. They have been turned off for many reasons including scandals of different kinds, especially the clerical abuse of children.

There are two accounts of apostasy in the Gospels. Firstly, there were the two disillusioned disciples symbolically going away from Jerusalem to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35). Secondly, there is the account in John 21:1-19 of Peter who returned to his former way of life. Commenting on the latter, scripture scholar John Marsh has observed that it is about apostasy. Fearing that the life and ministry of Jesus had been a glorious, but ultimately a miserable failure, Peter and some of his companions decided to go back to their former profession. They did this in order to earn a living, just as they had done before they met Jesus. It is spiritually significant that when they relied on their own unaided expertise, they achieved nothing and caught no



fish. As it says in Psalm 127:1, 'unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.'

It is noteworthy that when Jesus met with Peter and his companions, following their abortive night's work, there was no finger wagging, no admonition, recrimination, judgement or condemnation. It is equally noteworthy that when they did what he asked, by casting their nets, the apostles caught lots of fish. Having dined with the apostles, Jesus went on to commission Peter, in spite of the fact that he had betrayed and deserted him, to take up the burden of leadership in the Christian community

by feeding it's members, as a good pastor, on his behalf.

The new evangelisation, which lies at the heart of current Church thinking, is about bringing the good news of Christ's love to the apostates of today who no longer go to church, adhere to its beliefs, or observe its ethical teachings. What we learn from this Gospel is that evangelisation by the clergy and laity alike has to be conducted in a non-judgemental, loving and humble way.

— Tom Cox

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, O Lord, we pray, these offerings of your exultant Church, and, as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right and just.

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. ...

After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command ...
Our Father, who art in heaven...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy ...

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Jn 21:12-13)

Jesus said to his disciples: Come and eat. And he took bread and gave it to them, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion

Look with kindness upon your people, O Lord, and grant, we pray, that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries may attain in their flesh the incorruptible glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Reflection

Remember people who encouraged you to try again when you felt discouraged. Perhaps on some occasions you were pleasantly surprised by the results.



Lesson

Followers of Jesus do not live only for themselves but for others, trusting in God to help them along the way.



Prayer

O Lord, come to my help; change my mourning into dancing.
O Lord, my God, I will thank you for ever.