

CLERICALISM (Homily by Fr Aidan Murray at ADoRE 22nd September 2018)

Pope Francis has several times spoken about "Clericalism" as at least partly responsible for the widespread Sexual Abuse Scandal among Catholic Clergy. But most people don't understand what he means.

I first came to understand it when reading DIVINE RENOVATION by Fr James Mallon, a Canadian Parish Priest. This book needs to be studied both by clergy and by committed lay people.

Clericalism could be described as "a disordered attitude toward clergy, an excessive deference and an assumption of moral superiority."

Popes, Bishops and Priests felt they had to establish how important Priesthood was and how wonderful it was that they could be God's instruments in changing bread and wine into the Body & Blood of Christ. But they over-did the plea for respect and submission of lay people. So in a sense they became a religious upper-class...and enjoyed this exalted status.

Unfortunately lay people fell into the trap....partly because it was an easy option. They began to think that their contributions to the life of the Church were only second-rate, or that in all things, surely "Father knows best." Priests are better at this so let them get on with it.

True, the Clergy have the Gift of Holy Orders.....which gave them the ability to do specific Sacred Tasks. But this fact of the power of Holy Orders does not mean that clergy are automatically wiser or possessed of better judgment than lay people or that they are morally superior to anyone else. They too are sinners.

Popes from the time of St. Gregory the Great have taken the title *servus servorum Dei*, "servant of the servants of God." The clergy are not here as our masters, but as our helpers. As Pope Francis wrote, "Lay people are part of the faithful Holy People of God and thus are the protagonists of the Church and of the world; we [priests] are called to serve them, not to be served by them."

The Sacrament of Baptism confers on each one the task, the responsibility for being PRIESTS, PROPHETS AND KINGS.

"All Catholic lay men and women share in this threefold ministry of Christ. Catholic lay men and women, by their baptismal and confirmational character, are empowered, in Christ through the Holy Spirit, to be priests, prophets and kings and so come to share in the Church's ministry of sanctification, teaching and governing. " The King (Pope) is meant to be the Servant of all.

Dismissal at end of Mass: Go the Mass is ended.....or Go in the peace and joy of Christ....This is too cosy.

GO & ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD!.....that's why you came to Mass...to be empowered.to be a Sower of the Seed.