



Rumblings from the Bunker

SEXUALITY, GIFT OR CURSE?

A few weeks ago, on July 6th to be precise, it was the Feast of St. Maria Goretti. I associate it with summer and I often revisit Maria's story around this time of year. As I am sure you know she was only twelve when she was brutally raped by a farmhand who was six years older than her. Alessandro had been sexually harassing the young Maria for quite a while and she had successfully managed to evade him. She was very clear and very consistent in her belief that what he wanted to do was wrong. In any case the day arrived when Alessandro, seeing his opportunity to get Maria on her own, trapped her and forced himself on her. He did this with great violence and savagely stabbed her many times. Maria was to survive a few days and though terribly mutilated lived long enough to express her forgiveness for her attacker and promised to pray for him in Heaven. Many remember her story because her attacker, after many years in prison, and indeed many years of remaining unrepentant, was eventually released and went immediately to Maria's old mother to beg her forgiveness. This she graciously gave. Both he and her mother were to be present at Maria's canonization. The challenge for us as a faith community is to ask what is the gift of this modern young saint for today? What is the value of the Church putting someone like Maria in front of us? What is the spiritual legacy of Maria Goretti?

The first attitude to dispose of is the notion that Maria's story is archaic, that it belongs to another world when things were simpler or at least different. The reality, though it may not be initially that obvious, is that Maria's story has a very pertinent relevance. The spiritual legacy of her story is about sexuality. Sexuality is something we don't do well. Certainly it would appear that as a topic it is not often the subject of the Sunday sermon. The seldom time it is addressed it is rarely done well. Unfortunately we as a Church have at times contributed to the idea that sex is dirty. Of course sex is dirty if it is about abuse, rape or trafficking. However in these instances it's not sex itself that is dirty but rather what we do to it. It's a bit like saying alcohol is evil. Of course in itself it is not evil, in fact alcohol is a beautiful gift from God. However when we abuse alcohol and end up as a result injuring ourselves or others then we must acknowledge the destructive nature not of alcohol, but our abuse of it.

For many sex is funny. This also is true. Some of the funniest jokes, and comedy sketches involve sex and have given many's a laugh. This is true from Dave Allen to Benny Hill to more lately Mrs Brown's Boys. Some will be offended and that's why the remote control and the off button are handy to have. An interesting question though might be why we find ourselves offended. This may well be because something we hold dear, something that in our view is sacred, appears to be being mocked and ridiculed. However if we are honest sometimes we retreat into the fog of being offended rather than face the fact that good comedy often exposes our own insecurities and fears. We talk about humor sometimes being a bit too close to the bone. That skit or joke was a bit raw. We regularly encounter sex as funny, sadly sometimes sex as dirty, but how about sex as sacred?

Here's a question for you! When we speak of sexuality and the Catholic Church in the same breath, does it have negative connotations, thou shall not, rules and what is not allowed? Do we see the Church and sexuality as about what is forbidden? Let's put it another way. How often, in a Church context, have you heard sexuality spoken of as something lovely. Have you heard the priest at Mass speak about the beautiful gift that is our sexuality? Do we realize that beside the gift of life itself, sexuality is one of the great God-given gifts we have. In this gift we share in the divine, we share in creation. We share in making the world more beautiful. We bless the world. Its sad indeed when sexuality is made routine, when sexuality is cheapened.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Noel Buckley	Christine Cullen	John Dillon
Helen Donoghue	Sinead Harte	John Higgins
Leo Hoolahan	Anne Jordan	Finola Murray
Nicholas Murray		

Recent Funerals

George Long	Kathleen Moloney	William O'Flaherty
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Mass Times

St. Matthew's **Weekdays:**
Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30 **Mon, Thur, Fri: 10.00**
Sunday: 09.00,10.30,12.00
No Convent Mass @ 9.45 in August
Tuesday:10.00 Prayer Service
NO WEDNESDAY EVENING MASS IN AUGUST

FAITH MOMENT

Sexuality is a gift of God by which we are to participate in God's plan for men and women made in the image and likeness of God. Chastity as self-mastery and the healthy integration of sexual identity are part of God's plan for every person.

**Feast of the Assumption — Wed Aug 15
Is a Holyday of Obligation**

Mass Times

Vigil Mass: Tuesday 14 Aug @ 6.30
 Wednesday 15 Aug @ 10.30

BOOK OF THE WEEK

**THE HISTORICAL JESUS
A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED
T & T CLARK, BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING.
LONDON 2012. Pp 200**

This is a well researched book. Based on plenty of good scholarship. It is geared up for concise discussion. One of the best general readers on the topic.

Weekly Collections

	July 29
First Collection	€ N/A
Second Collection	€ N/A
Family Offering	€ N/A

Concert in Aid of

St. Matthew's & Peter McVerry Trust

**Friday 30th November in St. Matthews Tickets €15
Show Starts @ 7.45pm Doors open at 6pm.**

Performing will be the Flukey Ukeys, The Dublin Gospel Choir, Ms. Mary Byrne, Matt Dodd, the Girls from St. Louise's School and the Boys from St. Lorcan's BNS.
 Contact Ken Byrne for more information on 086 236 52 88

Barnardos National Collection Day

Barnardos is seeking parishioners to support them with 1-2 hours of their time to help collect funds on **Barnardos National Collection Day on Friday 14th September 2018**. We need volunteers to help with organised bag-packs or on-street collections in their local community. All money raised on the day will help change the lives of vulnerable children and their families in communities around Ireland. Every hour of volunteered will give hope and create brighter futures. To hear what's planned in your community for the day and how you can get involved please contact Robyn Macken on 01-7080418 or email buckets@barnardos.ie

**ARE YOU CARING FOR A LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA?
Our research team needs your help!**

We are holding a series of workshops throughout Ireland to spread awareness of the 'Enhancing Carers Resilience' (EnCaRe) resource.

We are seeking feedback from a broad range of family carers, to promote the EnCaRe resource.

The workshop will take place on September 4th and will be completed in a single day which will run from 10:00 – 13:00. There will be refreshments at the meeting, followed by lunch after the workshop

Location: **Dublin – The Ashling Hotel (September 4th)**

Participants will be invited to engage with other family carers to tell of their experiences in caregiving.

If you are interested in participating in this workshop or would like more information on the project please contact Kevin Deegan on +353 85 852 9352 or email kevin@carealliance.ie

Don't forget to visit our website
www.stmatthewsballyfermot.com

And our Facebook page,
www.facebook.com/st.matthews.ballyfermot/

**Parish Centre or Sacristy:
Phone: 626 56 95
Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm**

**Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland
Church Gate Collection
This weekend after all the Masses**

**St. Vincent DePaul
Monthly Church Gate Collection
Amount Collected: €495
Our thanks to all who contributed**

GOSPEL READINGS FOR THE WEEK

MON 13/08 Mt 17: 22 – 27	And a great sadness came over them.
TUE 14/08 Mt. 18: 1-5,10,12-14	ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST AND MARTYR 'Will he not leave the ninety - nine on the hillside and go in search of the stray?'
WED 15/08 Lk. 1: 39-56	THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 'The child in my womb leapt for joy.'
THU 16/08 Mt 18: 21 - 19: 1	'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me?'
FRI 17/08 Mt 19: 3-12	OUR LADY OF KNOCK 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted'.
SAT 18/08 Mt 19: 13-15	'Then he laid his hands on them and went his way.'

**Papal Visit
August 25 - 26**

**Saturday 25
No Mass at 6.30**
**Sunday 26
No Mass at 9.00,
10.30, 12.00**

**Mass at 9.30am
ONLY**