



# Rumblings from the Bunker

## THE DEEP WINTER OF DISBELIEF

Recently on a long flight I watched Dr Zhivago. It's a long film but my goodness how rewarding. Julie Christie, Omar Sharif and all that snow....and what about the music? Not just Lara's Theme, though this blows me away, but the entire score. I was grateful that my fellow passengers seemed engrossed in their own little world and hopefully remained unaware of the impact my trip into 1917 Russia was having on me. My heart soared and crashed as the music and evolving story sped me through the surrounding blizzard, and more importantly the changing seasons of the hearts of Lara and Yuri. I failed to stifle a few gasps of wonder but I think my tears were unnoticed.

Over the past few days I have been thinking again of the impact of both the snow and the music in this, Pasternak's classic. Inevitably, I guess my thoughts drifted towards the Church and indeed perhaps more precisely to consider faith. I wonder is it too much to say that there is a great crisis of faith? I would like to pose it as a question. Whilst my primary interest is the Irish context, and indeed to be even more precise, the context of the twenty six counties as I believe faith, or the faith in the North, given the ravages of sectarianism and imperialism, and indeed the present political indolence, is in a different place to faith south of the border. My basic contention is that in Western Europe and indeed all over the English speaking world, perhaps the term the first world is useful, there is a great abandonment of faith. Certainly there is a mass exodus from organized or institutional religion. The reasons for this are indeed complicated.

It can be argued that the present dying within the Church is self inflicted. This has some merit. However to suggest it as the only reason, is simplistic and, in truth, a tad lazy. In any decent treatment of this decline one would have to at least acknowledge sociological factors, the relationship between religious practice and economic prosperity, and indeed take cognizance of the well mapped undulations of Church history. Fascinating a topic though it is, I do not wish to pursue it here other than to proclaim in my view the undeniable truth that faith, as it is in the developed world, is in crisis. Certainly in Ireland today the person of deep and vibrant faith is in there with the curlew and the Kerry slug, as in, they are now recognized as an endangered species.

I believe we have entered a deep winter of disbelief. Whilst I feel we are in it, I believe we have a long way to go before the thaw, the thaw of rebirth, renewal and the new shoots of faith that will come in the spring. I believe it will get darker and colder. I believe, as in any severe winter, there will be much loss. This severe and deep winter of disbelief will see a further decline of religious practice. Some of the casualties of this 'big faith freeze' will include closure of churches, less Catholic schools and hospitals, less frequent celebration of the Eucharist. This winter of disbelief will shut seminaries and mean the native Irish priest could wear a 'save the sagart' badge!

In the face of all this we can pretend it's not going to happen. We can say we have survived worse winters. It'll not be as bad as they say. If we do this, as sure as night follows day, this winter will come. We will be taken by surprise. We will be wrong footed. Panic. Shortages. Sickness. Death.

There is another way though. It involves reading the signs of the times. In this scenario we prepare. We baton down the hatches. We put on the right gear. We stockpile. We plan. What might this prudent approach to the ensuing deep winter of disbelief mean for us as a Faith Community?

For a start, Unity. Seek to heal the divisions in the Church. Stop the fragmentation and labeling of each other, liberal, conservative and so on. Consolidation and solidarity with all the groups that we have allowed to hemorrhage from the Church, the gay community, the abused, the former religious, the ex priest, those in second unions. In the depths of this winter we might see the beauty of true ecumenism. In the dark harsh cold that is deepening we might at last return to Jesus of Nazareth. Might we emerge into the springtime sun as more steeped in prayer? Perhaps the real grace of this deep winter will be genuine reform and renewal.

'The summer days are ending in the valley,  
And soon the time will come when we must be apart  
But like the rose that comes back with the spring time,  
You will return to me when spring time comes around'.

(The White Rose of Athens, Nana Mouskouri)

**MASS INTENTIONS**

Bob Fullam	Brigid McCluskey	Lilian Maguire
Noel McDermot	Jack McPhillips	Anthony O'Connell
Phyllis Sweeney	Mary Walsh	

**Recent Funerals**

Bridget Jones	Jeanne Plunkett	Padraig Whyte
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**MASS TIMES**

<b>Weekends</b>	<b>Weekdays:</b>
<b>Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30</b>	<b>Mon, Thur, Fri: 10.00</b>
<b>Sunday: 09.00,10.30,12.00</b>	<b>Wed: 7.00pm</b>
<b>Tuesday: Prayer Service 10.00</b>	

**FAITH MOMENT**

We participate in the Paschal Mystery through the sacraments, especially Baptism and the Eucharist. In Baptism, we die and rise with Christ to a new life in the Holy Spirit. In the Eucharist, we are united with Christ's unique offering on the Cross, sacramentally present in every Eucharistic sacrifice.

**Next Sunday  
World Day of Prayer for Vocations**

**Special Collection**

A Collection for the support of Dublin diocesan students preparing for Ordination to the Priesthood. Will be taken up next Sunday at all the Masses. It will replace the Share Collection.

**RONCALLI REFORM**

The Roncalli Reform, founded last October by Fr Joe, is a group dedicated to the ongoing reform of the Church. The key elements are: Contemplative Prayer, Discussion, Fellowship and Prophetic Action.

**It's next meeting takes place**

**Next Thursday May 30 7 - 9 pm in St. Matthews.  
All Welcome.**

**BOOK OF THE WEEK**

**THIS IS GOD'S MERCY by ALIX BINYON  
(A simplification of the Encyclical,  
Dives in Misericordia,  
of Pope John Paul II)**

**Catholic Truth Society/ The Grail London 1984 Pp 64**  
During this Eastertide and especially having celebrated Divine Mercy last Sunday I was drawn again to this beautiful letter of John Paul II's. Alix Binyon is a Canoness of St. Augustine and she has presented the original text in a new fresh and very accessible way. The layout lends itself suitable for prayer and meditation as well as for study.

**Church Collections**

**21 Apr**

1st Collection	€N/A
2nd Collection	€N/A
Family Offering	€N/A

**SPECIAL DATES IN MAY**

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION FOR BOYS  
SUNDAY MAY 12TH @ 12 noon

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION FOR GIRLS  
SUNDAY MAY 26TH @ 12 noon

CONFIRMATION FOR BOYS  
TUESDAY MAY 14TH @ 11 am

CONFIRMATION FOR GIRLS  
THURSDAY MAY 16TH @ 11am

**Pilgrimage to Lourdes**

**Tuesday 20 - 27 August**

4-Star Hotel Solitude

**7 Nights Full Board €800**

Single room supplement €252  
(subject to availability)



Accompanied by Spiritual Director  
Fr. Joe McDonald, St. Matthew's

**PLEASE NOTE IT IS POSSIBLE  
TO PAY THE COST BY INSTALLMENTS**

Contact Eddie Teeling @ 0868063625

**GOSPEL READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

Mon 06/05	<b>Jn 6: 22-29</b>	'Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life'.
Tue 07/05	<b>Jn 6: 30-35</b>	'I am the bread of life'.
Wed 08/05	<b>Jn 6: 35-40</b>	<b>BLESSED JOHN SULLIVAN S.J</b> 'This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life'.
Thu 09/05	<b>Jn 6: 44-51</b>	'Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God'
Fri 10/05	<b>Jn 6: 52-59</b>	'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you'.
Sat 11/05	<b>Jn 6: 60-69</b>	'Do you also wish to go away? Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life'.