



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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“Smoking (incense) may injure your health!!”



Mr. Jim McDade

An Irish government minister, Dr. Jim McDaid, has issued a health warning about incense in Irish Roman Catholic funeral masses. Dr. McDaid is a junior government minister and also a medical doctor. He recently said the health of altar boys and girls was being put at risk from the use of burning incense, particularly at funeral services.

During a radio interview in support of the Irish government's plan to ban smoking in the workplace from the beginning of 2004, he said: “It makes me cringe when I see that huge cloud of smoke rising right up into the child's face, particularly given the delicate nature of a child's lungs and the level of irritation it must cause.”

Dr. McDaid said he often asked priests to remind Mass servers to shake the thurible (censer) over and back so the smoke did not billow into their faces.

Not anti-church

Dr. McDaid hastened to say that he was not anti-church, anti-smoking or against the use of incense. He explained: “I am not against the use of incense at religious ceremonies, but I think we should be more aware of the potential danger of these things.”

A spokeswoman for the Dublin archdiocese said incense had been widely used in the past during Benediction and High Mass, but was most often used now during funeral ceremonies, when the priest was performing a blessing over the coffin.

Comment.

The use of incense in the worship of God has absolutely no basis in the New Testament whatever. Its use can only be traced back to the 4th century AD and was never employed by the apostolic church. It is a mere invention of Romanism.