



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

An appeal to Roman Catholics



"Man of the shadows" — perverted priest, Sean Fortune

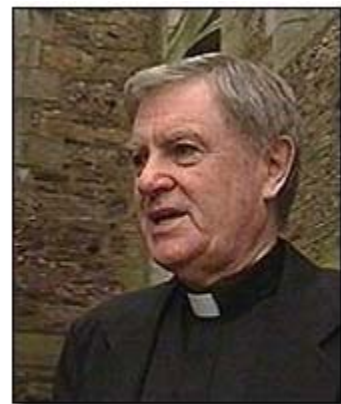
A few years ago, I was interviewed by a newspaper reporter. During the interview, my views on Rome and the then recent disclosures about the scandalous lifestyle of the Irish Roman Catholic bishop, Eamonn Casey, were discussed. After the interview was over the reporter returned to that topic and spoke of his mother, a lifelong devout Roman Catholic who started each day with a visit to her local Roman Catholic chapel. He said that her reaction to the news of Casey's sinful life was one of disbelief at first, but then it became one of despair and disillusionment. He said that she had ceased going to the chapel and remained at home, a sad and disheartened woman.

I have never forgotten that image. I am sure that there were many like that mother, and increasingly so as the relentless torrent of court cases has brought before the public the evil world of the celibate priests of Rome.

To the image of that disheartened figure has been added the misery I saw etched upon the faces of middle-aged men, interviewed for a television news bulletin outside a court in the west of Ireland, just after an aged priest was found guilty of numerous crimes against children in Roman Catholic orphanages. The middle-aged men were amongst the victims of this priest. Now, some forty years later, the misery and wretchedness through which they passed as boys was still to be seen upon their faces and heard in their voices, as they gave their responses to the priest's conviction.

SHAME

No Christian could be anything but moved to sorrow for the shame and abject misery which these young lads experienced at the hands of the church they trusted. I watched a video tape of a BBC programme in mid-March, in which the evil career of a priest, Sean Fortune, was exposed. Those who were his victims bravely spoke of the abuse and shame they endured at his hands. They also spoke bitterly of the chicanery and deceit of the hierarchy, which for years deliberately covered up the evil activities of this priest. Bishop Comiskey, (see addenda) succeeded Bishop Herlihey as bishop in charge of the parish where most of the crimes were committed, when the latter died. Complaints of Sean Fortune's conduct were made to Bishop Comiskey but nothing was done for years. Complaints against four priests have been made in Comiskey's diocese. In 1999, 66 charges were brought against Sean Fortune, years after the first incidents



"Forced to resign" - Bishop Comiskey



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were reported to the hierarchy, but Fortune died (or was murdered) from a drugs and drink overdose before he could be brought to trial. Had he been brought to court, then his threat not to “go down” on his own but to bring others with him would have doubtless resulted in unprecedented revelations. His death forestalled that! The secrets that he brought to the grave are known, however, by the Judge of all the earth and one day justice will be administered. The news stories of the wicked behaviour of priests could be multiplied many times over and that relates only to the cases in the British Isles. When we consider what has been happening in Africa, Canada, USA and many other countries, the number of cases is almost beyond calculation. The cost to the Vatican is calculated in the £billions!

GRIEF

As a Protestant, I do feel real sorrow for the ordinary Roman Catholics for whom the revelations have been shocking in the extreme. Some like the lady mentioned at the beginning of the article have ceased to attend the chapel. Others have chosen to see the whole thing as a mere “blip” from which the Roman Catholic church will recover under the “wise and holy guidance” of the Pope. Still others have simply turned to atheism and abandoned all religious aspirations. I have no doubt that the latter course is the reason for the increasing materialism within so-called Roman Catholic countries. Hopefully, there are some who will turn to the Word of God to seek out the truth about the teaching of Christ, since the institution they had trusted to present such teaching to them has so monstrously failed.

In the wake of the exposures, Rome has launched her “rescue mission.” Everywhere a priest, a bishop, a cardinal has been indicted of criminal activities, a respected and revered stalwart has been sent in to engage in “damage limitation.” He comes over as a genial, fatherly figure who shares the concerns of the outraged parents and parishioners generally. What he never does is truly condemn the criminal in plain terms, but rather pleads for understanding and reconciliation and love and mercy etc., etc., etc!!! An example of this was seen in the statement released after the resignation of Bishop O’Connell of Palm Beach, Florida, for “sexual misconduct” some 25 years ago. It was reported in the US press that a diocese spokesman, Sam Barbaro, said, “It’s a sad day for the diocese. Bishop O’Connell was much loved by the people and admired. But we must obey the Vatican’s determination on this. We pray for Bishop O’Connell and we pray for the victims in this terrible tragedy.” Prayers for the criminal first and the victim second!

PLEASE . . . NEVER FORGET!

The Roman Catholic people must not forget that these replacements all come from the same corrupt system from which the criminal perverts emerged. Consider again the case of the Bishop Anthony O’Connell. O’Connell replaced Bishop J. Keith Symons, who was the first U.S. bishop to resign after he admitted molesting altar boys in the 1950s and 60s! Three years later, the replacement is forced to resign for the same crime. In truth, the system that produced a Symons cannot but produce an O’Connell to replace him. It is time for the Roman Catholic people to examine this whole sordid matter in the light of Holy Scripture.

HOLINESS

The true Church of Jesus Christ is not marked by persistent evil, rather it must be consistently holy. That is the teaching of Christ. His command to His people is: “Be ye holy; for I



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am holy," 1 Peter 1:16. Faith in the gospel of Christ produces holiness of life. The imparting of the life of Christ to the sinner, at the moment of his regeneration, cannot produce anything other than holiness. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:8-10. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus 2:14. That is not to say that the true Christian may not backslide or give way to sin! Sadly, it is all too clear in the lives of the most holy of God's servants that this is so. Peter's failures are recorded for us in the gospels and in Galatians 2:11. The Word of God teaches us that sinless perfection is not possible while the Christian is yet in this world. John the Apostle put the two sides of this matter before us in 1 John 1:6, 8-9. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. . . . If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

NO PERFECTION IN THIS WORLD

No church is perfect and I have often owned the fact that my own church, my own life is not without its faults. But what even the most bitter critics of Bible Christianity must acknowledge is that immorality does not predominantly feature in the life of the true child of God. On the other hand, Rome has persistently been a system of corruption; political, financial, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, moral and spiritual corruption has marked her history. The documentation is legion. The united voice of the centuries of recorded history is raised against her evils, her persecutions, her murders, her purveying of sin. Popes, cardinals, priests and nations have been the victims of her ambitions, carried on with murderous zeal. In recent times, the "death" of Pope John Paul 1 has been commonly believed to be the result of murder. The book, "In God's name," by David Yallop gives clear proof of that fact. The former Jesuit priest, Peter De Rosa, wrote a book entitled, "Vicars of Christ — The Dark Side of the Papacy." It is an indictment of the whole system of Rome. He shows that it has been consistently evil. Indeed, is it not the boast of Romanism that she is "Semper Idem" — "Always the Same." Such a consistency cannot be reconciled to Christ's command: "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

CONDEMNATION

"But," you say, "have not these evils been condemned by the Church? " Yes, they have, at least in word. But have they truly been condemned? Let it be remembered that the Church of Rome teaches that the "ex-cathedra" pronouncements of those Popes whose lives were one long unrestrained indulgence of fleshly lusts, are still considered infallible declarations of the will of God and must be obeyed if the faithful Roman Catholic ever hopes to enter heaven. Far from repudiating the evils of past generations, Rome continues to build upon that iniquitous foundation.

APPEAL

I appeal again to Roman Catholics to give due consideration to this matter. Do Protestants gloat over the consternation brought upon the Roman Catholic people by these ongoing



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revelations? No, I do not believe the genuine Christian gloats over the shame brought upon their Roman Catholic neighbours by these deviant priests and clerics. We certainly rejoice that these things have been brought out into the open but we do in the hope that the Roman Catholic people will see the utter falsehoods of Rome and her claims and the hope of heaven she proffers to her people. What does grieve the true Protestant is the readiness of the Roman Catholic to believe the assurances and the "blarney" which follows each exposure and the willingness to yield afresh to the deceptions of this system. The deceitful words which calm the fears and doubts of this generation of troubled Roman Catholics are exactly the same which have lulled past generations to sleep.

MERCY

May God in mercy give to the troubled people of Ireland and those other nations, in which Rome's crimes have come to light, the grace to see that they have been the victims of the greatest deception ever wrought upon mankind. Far from being the Church of Christ she is a system of antichristianity. She is today's manifestation of that latter-day wickedness, depicted in the last book of the Bible. "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," Revelation 17:1-6. The errors of Rome are greater than a article of this length could ever do justice to, but I sincerely hope that these few words will prompt some of my Roman Catholic neighbours to turn to God's Word for the answer which many of them are seeking in this traumatic time.

The following article appeared in "The Irish Independent," a Dublin-based newspaper on Thursday 4th April in the wake of Bishop Comiskey's resignation.

Bishop 'shouldn't be allowed resign'

THREE victims of paedophile priest Sean Fortune yesterday called personally on the Pope, Cardinal Connell and Archbishop Brady to guarantee "full and frank cooperation" with an inquiry.

And they urged the Pope not to accept Bishop Brendan Comiskey's resignation, insisting he still had questions to answer and was the senior clergyman best placed to supply essential information.

The three men said files held by the Church on actual and alleged abuse of children by diocesan priests should be handed over to an independent public inquiry.

Colm O'Gorman, Pat Jackman and Donnacha MacGloin, all taking civil cases against the diocese of Ferns, said they feared the bishop had been turned into a scapegoat.



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The men, due to meet Health Minister Micheal Martin tonight, insisted it wasn't a case of when a public inquiry went ahead - but when and how.

Their intention was not to "destabilise the Church" but to force it to address the issues openly and accept responsibility, they added. Its current stance left priests in danger of becoming "pariahs," they warned.

Wexford-born Mr O'Gorman, now a London-based counsellor, said he was "deeply troubled" by Cardinal Connell's refusal to comment last week and suggested the hierarchy was distancing itself from Bishop Comiskey.

"It would be refreshing if they told Bishop Comiskey to stay in position and to cooperate fully with an inquiry," he said. He noted another victim of Fortune's had written to the Pope asking him not to accept the bishop's resignation and "personally I would concur with that".

Mr Jackman described the bishop as "the ideal person to give us the answers - his resignation doesn't serve our interest". He would prefer him to help an inquiry.

"After full and frank disclosure maybe he could resign in six months to a year," said Mr Jackman. But he added: "He did an awful lot of good within our diocese. It's unfortunate that a man who contributed so much to our diocese will be forever remembered as the bishop who didn't report sexual abuse."

"We're not looking for resignations we're looking for courage," said Edinburgh-based Mr MacGloin, who was abused by Fortune in Dublin. Also attending a news conference in Dublin yesterday were Jim and Josie Gahan, parents of one of the victims of Fr Jim Grennan of Monageer, Co Wexford. They want to know why the garda inquiry in their case was ended abruptly. Mr Jackman, the only one of the three victims living in Wexford, defended clergymen on the ground for their solid work. He told of receiving a "communication of concern" from local clergymen, including one senior member. But Mr MacGloin criticised an attitude of "zero concern" from the senior hierarchy. "Clearly they are running against the mood of the country," he said.

Some 1,000 phonecalls were received by a helpline run by Mr O'Gorman's charity One In Four after the Suing the Pope BBC2 documentary. And Wexford Rape Crisis Centre took 110 calls after RTE repeated the programme on Tuesday night, with 70 calls to Dublin.

Five further victims have also made themselves known following the programme. Colm O'Gorman announced the launch of a website for victims yesterday.