



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Roman Catholic Archbishop preaches in Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral First time since the Reformation

On St Patrick's Day, March 17th, Archbishop Sean Brady, the leader of Ireland's Roman Catholics, preached in the Church of Ireland cathedral in Armagh. It is the first time since the reformation that this has happened. Two Free Presbyterian Church ministers, Rev Ron Johnstone of Armagh and Rev. Thomas Murray of nearby Markethill, submitted a letter of protest to the local press.

It read as follows:

It was with great sadness that we read in the Gazette that the Roman Catholic Archbishop spoke in the Church of Ireland Cathedral on St Patrick's day. The fact that it was the first time this has happened since the Reformation begs the question, 'What has changed to bring this about?'

Ecumenical Protestants may argue that the Roman Catholic Church is vastly different from the days of the Protestant Reformation and the drawing up of the 39 articles. It is true that the Roman Catholic Church has changed a lot from the 1600's.

It has brought in many more unscriptural doctrines such as Papal Infallibility, The Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption of Mary. The present Pope has canonised more 'Saints ' than any of his predecessors and has also promoted the worship of Mary more than any recent Pope. In 1998 the Vatican declared that Roman Catholic doctrine is irreformable. Even such a leading ecumenist as the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches expressed consternation at this statement.

The recent Roman Catholic Catechism has declared that Justification is conferred in baptism and that baptism is necessary for salvation. Since the Roman Catholic Church is even further away from the New Testament truth than at the Reformation it must therefore follow that the men in leadership of the Church of Ireland are the ones who have changed!

We are sad that the position of former godly Church of Ireland preachers has been so repudiated.

No doubt some will seek to justify the compromise by raising the red herring of community relations. Of course the Bible instructs us to love our neighbour. However it never calls believers to betray the faith revealed in the New Testament. It is dishonest to people and disloyal to the Saviour to promote the impression that Protestantism and Roman Catholicism agree on the vital matter of salvation. Those responsible for the invitation to Archbishop Brady to preach in the Cathedral have in fact denied the distinctive doctrines of Protestantism.

The issue is simple: Is a person justified by faith alone in Christ alone as Protestantism teaches or are the rituals of the church necessary for salvation?

Both views cannot be right.

Rev. R Johnstone. Rev. T Murray.