

Churches need to walk the moral talk

Having a moral voice is at the centre of our ministry. If we as the church have no moral voice our ministry is redundant. Morality should be the compass in our ministry. It is important that we walk the walk and talk the talk. We should practice what we preach. We are called to lead by example so that those who are following us can emulate our actions.

In as much I am suggesting that churches should gain their moral voice, I am not ignorant of the fact that churches have lost some areas of influence in society.

In the past churches had many mission schools. The mission schools were instrumental in empowering our society and gave the oppressed the ability to stand up for their rights.

Some of our political leaders are a product of these mission schools.

Other churches had hospitals. Institutions like schools and hospitals were clear evidence of the fulfilment of John 10:10; "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full".

The churches were the face of charity work. That picture is changing. Now we have NGOs and NPOs slowly taking over the work that was once championed by churches.

Currently we are experiencing a new reality, where the church has been forced by Covid-19 to close its doors. Believers have to find new ways of getting spiritual motivation, leaving the church itself at a crossroad. Almost every avenue that we used to connect with our congregations is challenged. The church is confronted with a challenge of finding a way that will be effective in reaching out to its people.

- The church is called to embrace the life of service (Diaconia). Cardinal Kasper stated that; "It has been shown that the public image of the church depends primarily on diaconia, and the diaconal work of the church enjoys the highest measure of respect in society." People are more attracted by action, and the church that is seen to be serving humanity. If we think we can only stand in the pulpit and preach and command the people, then we are missing the point.
- This is the time for the church to cleanse itself from all that had prevented it from being the moral voice of society. This is the time for the church to reflect, and humble itself. This is a time for churches to unite and move forward as one in Christ.
- The church leaders should use their prophetic voice in uplifting our communities, we must resist the temptation of being political commentators. When we get too involved in Party Politics, we are giving away our prophetic voice.
- Christ should be the centre in the life of the Church, we shouldn't be directed by our own ambitions. When Christ is at the centre, he can direct the church in all its difficulties. In the Gospel of Mark 4:35-41, we are told how Jesus calms the storm. In verse 40, "Jesus said to his disciples, why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" When Jesus is in the boat, we don't have to be afraid.

The history of the church is characterised by many challenges and misfortunes, but it always manages to pull through. What is the difference between now and then? I want to believe that churches have survived in the past because of the quality of leadership and its ability to renew itself.

Churches have always been guided by the presence of Christ. In our time there is lack of collaboration among the church leaders. Money has taken the centre stage instead of Christ. Covid-19 has presented the Church with time for its renewal. The church leaders are called to join hands and invite Christ to come and take his place and calm the storms and lead the Church in its renewal.

The Church is called to grow in prudence. Prudence enables us to do the little things in the holiest manner. It is prudence that makes us distinct. In serving humanity we must always be directed by prudence. Infused prudence is the moral virtue that transcends the limits of the natural gift of right reason. It is in a sense the consequence of taking an acquired moral virtue and infusing it with grace.

According to well-known Christian author John Pasquini; "Grace elevates that which was natural into the realm of that which is supernatural." The infused moral virtue of prudence is given in response to grace. It is marked by a profound love and zeal for God and for the burning desire for the salvation and good of all.

I want to believe that growing in prudence as the Church will help us to gain the moral ground we have lost. It will assist the Church to be the voice of the people.

Covid19 has presented the Church with an opportunity for self-renewal.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said; "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well".

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