

## Reflection for Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020

At last, the news that most of us have been waiting for since the lockdown began all those weeks ago. Having been literally locked out of our churches and forbidden to enter them they are now able to open for private prayer. This is wonderful news because Our Lord has been waiting patiently for us in the tabernacle. This is something the politicians and many others have failed to understand about Catholic churches. We have the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in the church. He is there so that we might receive Him in Holy Communion, especially the sick and the housebound, and for veneration, adoration and private prayer. The tabernacle should be the focal point of any Catholic church, along with the altar and should not be hidden away in a corner. The sanctuary lamp is clearly visible to remind us of His presence.

Some people have commented that you don't need to be in a church to pray, that God is everywhere. While this is true it's not the whole story, otherwise Jesus wouldn't have given us his body and blood at the Last Supper. He did this so that He would stay with us in a special way, in a very close and intimate way. If people say the church is only a building and nothing special then they have misunderstood the teaching of the real presence of Our Lord in the tabernacle, or maybe they didn't know about it. Perhaps this is the fault of poor catechesis in the past.

Jesus abides in the tabernacle in a Catholic church. That is His house. We don't have this presence in our homes or anywhere else. The Jews would have been very offended if anyone had said that the Temple was just another building, as far as they were concerned it was where God dwelt among them, in the Holy of Holies. Imagine how they would have felt if they had been locked out of the Temple for weeks or months.

Do you sometimes feel that Catholics fail to appreciate the wonderful gifts that God has given us? Or do you feel that we have forgotten why Jesus instituted the Church? The Church does a tremendous amount of good work for those who are poor and disadvantaged and is the biggest provider of health care in the world. But all this work is of no avail if we forget about the reason why Jesus started the Church in the first place. This open letter to the hierarchy puts it like this:

*I don't need the church to save my body, I need the church to save my soul.*

*I don't need the church to try and help me live on this earth forever, I need the church to help me live eternally with Jesus in heaven.*

*I don't go to church so that I have life abundantly on this earth, I go to church so I will have life abundantly and eternally in heaven.*

Now that we are beginning to get back to a more normal way of life let us not miss the opportunity to renew our faith especially the basic beliefs and discover anew the beauty of the faith and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the main reason we have our churches and parishes.

May the Lord bless us and Our Lady protect us.

Deacon Kevin