



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Pentecost Sunday-Year C-June 9th 2019

Readings: Acts 2: 1-11, Psalm 103, Romans 8: 8-17, John 14 :15-16 23-26

As many of you know, I have just returned from the Emerald Isle where I was privileged to be a part of a performance, in Killarney Cathedral, of Johnny Marseglia's beautiful musical setting of Bernard Lavery's moving meditations on the Stations of the Cross. Not a dry eye in the house.

Relaxing the following afternoon in a nearby café and reading the Irish Examiner, as you do, I was struck by a photo story on the inside page. A young woman was being presented with an award. It was at the 'Travellers' Pride' Festival – nothing to do with floats full of moustachioed men mincing about in frocks.

I seldom come across a word I do not know but here was one for sure. The young lady was getting the youth prize for 'INTERSECTIONALITY'. I assumed this was a young person's word so I mooched over to the bar and asked the two teenage waitresses to translate. They were as baffled as me. We were then joined by an equally puzzled but intrigued forty something in a tight dress and heels. Great bars in Killarney. She got the internet up on her phone – and there it was. Let me put you out of your misery – or rather into more of it.

Intersectionality is 'a non empirical qualitative framework that applies deconstructionist critical theory to identify interlocking systems of

power that impact the marginalised in e.g. gender, race, class, age, economic status, physical or mental ability etc. etc.'

Non empirical means simply the avoidance of factual proof.

Deconstructionist theory is the philosophical process of taking your oven to pieces and wondering why you can't cook the Sunday lunch anymore.

To nobody's very great surprise 'Intersectionality' turned out to be a 1989 invention of the Feminist movement and is now enjoying a belated reprise.

When I ran this past my historian academic son (who has connections in this world) he told me it was causing divisions on the Marxist left by potentially dividing the elements of the revolution and the usually middle class 'class warriors' who long for the return of Joseph Stalin. So it's not all bad.

What on earth is this massive detour about on the glorious birthday feast of the Universal Church of Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour?

Well it occurred to me, listening to all this tendentious and unhappy nonsense, that we had something to say in this matter. Let me say it for you.

Christianity is the original and genuine intersectionality.

If we are looking for a society where you are valued regardless of race, class, gender, origin, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, this, brothers and sister, is it. Everyone equally valued.

The gathering in the upper room contains all backgrounds from the working man to the scholar. It includes the womenfolk. The crowd to whom Peter preaches are from around the known world. Look at the map and see the geographical spread of these first hearers.

The first council of the Church, at Jerusalem, will decide definitively that there are to be no boundaries between the races, Gentile or Jew.

St. Paul will memorably write, in that spanking letter to the Galatians, that 'there is no discrimination between Jew and Greek, Male and Female, Slave and Free. We are all one in Christ and heirs of Abraham'. Truly revolutionary stuff.

He will also remind the uppity Corinthians that 'not many' of them were educated, clever or powerful. They didn't get salvation by being smart or rich.

The Church almost alone now stands for the equal value or sanctity of human life, regardless of physical or mental ability. No-one is dismissed as unworthy of life or inconvenient.

When you walk into Church you do not have to pass an exam. You are accepted and welcomed home.

True intersectionality takes place at the true and eternal intersection – where the upright meets the crossbeam on the hill of Calvary. Here everyone can meet the overwhelming love of God, regardless of race, class, gender, ability etc. Here is the intersection between God and Man between Time and Eternity. That is what happens on the altar. That is what happens every time we receive Jesus and take Him out into the World.

Happy Birthday Mother Church – you old original intersectional revolutionary.