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Adventures in Reconciliation

I was born in 1956 in Wellington, New Zealand, the third eldest in a family of nine children. From an early age, I felt occasional stirrings towards God, but as I grew older, my life became filled by many competing interests - girls, alcohol, sport - and Mass ceased to mean very much to me.

My older sisters got involved in the Young Christian Workers movement (YCW). They would always be going off to meetings, invariably bringing home members of their group for coffee and barbecues. I couldn't help but be impressed by the quality of the friendships I saw amongst them.

One day, one of my sisters asked me to zip her into town on the back of my motor scooter. She was going to a 'house Mass': people would sit around on a lounge floor, and in a relaxed and personal way, celebrate Mass. A battle raged within me: should I ask my sister if I could go with her to the Mass? I had to swallow my pride, as I had been very rude to her about her Christian friends. She could hardly contain her elation when I asked, and she welcomed me to join her. I remember it vividly to this day, as I sensed the presence of God at that Mass and it made a real impact on me.

I became increasingly involved with the YCW group. I started to discover prayer: I would sit in a church and just talk to the Lord. He was becoming very real to me. Eventually, our YCW group came into contact with the Charismatic Movement. We ended up going to a prayer meeting, and were then invited to do a 'Life in the Spirit' seminar. My relationship with the Lord grew immensely at this time. There was a tremendous awakening.

Like many New Zealanders living at the end of the world, I had a desire to travel. I sensed that God had some kind of full-time ministry for me but I didn't feel called to the priesthood. In 1982, I headed off for what New Zealanders call OE - overseas experience. I visited charismatic communities across Europe, before finally stopping at the Castle Croy community in the south of Holland.

Also staying at the Castle Croy community at the time was a Youth With A Mission team (YWAM). What immediately impressed me was how open and down to earth the people were and, at the same time, how real and solid was their love for God. I started to hear about something called a Discipleship Training School, the basic training unit of YWAM. Some of the folks from the Castle Croy community were going to Spain to help staff a school geared towards Catholics who were interested in lay mission. I spent a while considering and then, sensing God's leading, decided to go and do this training school. It was wonderful, and again, a time of deepening my walk with the Lord.

It was a natural step to join the staff and work with YWAM, which from the outset, had been an interdenominational grouping, but had drawn its staff and students from the Pentecostal-Evangelical-Anglican world. I worked with Bruce Clewitt in Austria, who had pioneered an approach of serving and collaborating with Catholic charismatic groups.

In 1987, I moved to Ireland, where I took on the leadership of YWAM, working from their base in Drumcondra, Dublin. The Lord was very good to me: in the months after I arrived, I got to know the most wonderful Irish girl and we married in 1989. We now have six children. Our work here in Ireland is primarily directed towards young people. We run school retreats, and are involved in helping to launch and support a number of youth groups in parishes around Ireland.

Liturgy and Readings

Monday of 13th week of Ordinary Time

Liturgical notes: First Martyrs of the Church in Rome, optional memorial

Mass Readings:

Today's Sunday's Sunday Homily Resources
Liturgical Calendar 2008(pdf)

Thought For The Day

Thought For The Day:

"Filling the vacuum"

CRE D

Reflection for each Day

Pictorial Thought Today:

Thought for Today

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As I look over my life, I can see God's hand very clearly. My personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ has become the rock on which my life is built. I seek to grow in that relationship each day as I pray and read Scripture. I am grateful for the rich heritage I have in the Catholic Church. My life has also been enriched by my many Protestant and Pentecostal friends with whom I work.

by Rob Clarke | Edited version of Rob Clarke's Personal Testimony, taken with kind permission from the book "Adventures in Reconciliation"