

## **102 - FALLING CATHOLIC NUMBERS**

I keep reading in UK newspapers that the number of practicing Christians is dropping. Some of the reasons quoted say people:

Don't like being told how to behave.  
Don't like giving up their leisure time to attend services.  
No longer believe in the Bible.  
Just don't have the time to be religious.  
Don't know enough about Christianity to care.

There are others, but to me, a practising Catholic, I find this sad because it's true. I've been thinking about this situation for the last couple of years, and the only realistic answer I could find, and I could be wrong, was that:

**Many Christians no longer know why they were created by God.**

This is not their fault. In today's world, we're all bombarded via electronic media using iPhones, iPads TV, films and computers to buy, take part in, support or don't miss out on things made to look extremely attractive to have or be part of. Then there's the many things that parents want their children to take part in, such as:

**Music Lessons**  
**Team sports.**  
**Individual Sports**  
**Hobbies of all kinds**

All these are reasons for not having time to attend Catholic services. I had to ask myself, how can we blame Catholics for not practising their religion when many of them know little about it or, over the years, have forgotten what it teaches and practices?

Once they have left school, they are never taught about their religion apart from a priest's sermon at Sunday mass.

The diocese does provide educational lessons on Catholicism for adults, but people are generally put off by the distances to venues, the costs of attending, and/or having to give up some of their leisure time.

I don't know how all this can be overcome, but businesses are great at advertising their products effectively. Maybe the Catholic Church can do the same.

Could all the dioceses in the UK contribute to the associated cost of such an educational campaign using online captivating video lessons? I

don't believe for one moment that it would be easy, but I do believe that if it was done in an easy-to-understand manner, it could be successful.

Doing it this way would mean people being educated in their religion without them having to travel distances to do so, pay for it or giving up their leisure time, and hopefully getting them to start thinking and talking about their religion and taking part in religious services.

People should be reminded about what they were told about their religion at school. Many non-practicing Catholics have forgotten the covenant God made with us and the role that Jesus played in it. When they realise the mega difference between 100 years of human life compared with a never-ending eternity of our spiritual soul, then maybe they'll start to realise the importance of God's covenant and the strategies that the church provides for all to achieve it, such as:

**Praying, The Mass, The Sacraments Corporal Works of Mercy  
Misionary Work, and many others**

People need to know why these strategies are special privileges, not things that take up our leisure time. Then, they would realise they are missing out on important things and should be taking part in them.

The financial problems families face these days, and the competition from social media mean that whatever is done will not be easy will have to be free from theological terms, cost very little, and will not take up leisure time. With prayer and God's help, it would not be a hopeless task but a very effective one.