Renewal of the Church, with Danny Curtin

Transcript

I'm Danny Curtin. I'm very privileged to work alongside lots of church organisations on their own journey towards renewal and the process of the renewal of the church. It often makes me think about what's my own role in church renewal, how do I contribute in my day-to-day life to the renewal of the church? And I think the story in Luke's gospel of the woman coming in to Jesus eating with the Pharisee with the alabaster jar ointment and anointing our Lord, I think that story really helps me think about this.

In that story when the woman is rebuked by others, the Lord stops and he says to Simon the host, the Pharisee, he says, Simon do you see this woman? Now of course he could see the woman standing there in front of him but really the Lord is saying do you really see this woman? Do you see her for who she is? Do you see her for the individual person that she is and for the act of love that she's just shown me in anointing?

I think that gives me a clue to what my role in renewal is. Maybe it's something you can reflect on this week. Do I really see people for who they are and am I prepared to walk alongside them for who they really are? Unlike Simon and those dinner guests, could I leave aside my preconceptions and my judgements and just be ready to walk with them? We call this accompaniment and I think it's a key.

It's almost like the golden nugget to church renewal and what we as individuals can do. Are we ready to show the church to others? Are we ready to walk alongside others and so a church of love and mercy of tenderness and a church of joy in the world rather than a church of judgment? This week can you use that scripture and hear that question, Simon do you see this woman? And in your encounters this week ask yourselves do I really see the person in front of me? Am I ready to put judgments to one side, to put even my own agenda, my own wishes for this person in front of me to one side and be ready to walk with them?

That means that we expect to meet the spirit of God in this person. We expect to see them as a child of God.

We stand aside from our own agendas and really we're just listening to them and we're trying to perceive within them what the spirit is doing in their lives. Not what I think the spirit is telling me to tell them to do but what is the spirit doing in their lives? Practice that this week. Practice being present to yourself, being present to the Lord but also in your encounters being present to the other person and being present to the spirit of God in the other person.

Listen to that and try and tune into where the movement is. Where is the goodness? Where is the Lord inviting that person to? And see if you can just be useful in nudging that person forward without judgment, without preconceptions, without agendas, just accompanying them on their journey towards God's intent for them. It might be a family member, it might just be just a chance encounter on a bus or at a bus stop.

How are you going to be present to them? How are you going to show the church as a loving church, as a joyful church, as a tender church? What opportunities can you take to help renew the role of the church in the world this week? Take this privileged moment of encounter and see people for who they really are, children of God by our side.

Let's pray. O God, we know that you are with us and that you accompany us in all that we do.

Grant that by the light of your Holy Spirit we may have the wisdom to accompany others well and the courage to take up this work.

We pray through Christ our Lord.

Amen.