

# Complaint about Rose of Tralee Mass joke rejected

THE Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has rejected complaints that Mass and Holy Communion were ridiculed at last year's Rose of Tralee.

One Rose compared the act of receiving Communion to eating a biscuit, and another made a plea to legalise abortion here.

The BAI received five complaints over RTÉ's broadcasting of the show last August.

One, from Philomena Travers, referred to comments in which North Carolina Rose Maigan Kennedy was allowed to 'ridicule, make fun of and generally rubbish the Irish Roman Catholic Mass'.

The Rose had said that Mass was really holy and that the act of sitting down and standing up was like going to the gym and being

By Sarah Burns

given a biscuit at the end. Presenter Dáithí Ó Sé quipped: 'Was it gluten-free?'

RTÉ said it did not agree with the complainant's characterisation of the exchange between the North Carolina Rose and the presenter and said she instead gave a 'light-hearted, humorous and respectful account of her attendance at Mass'.

Another complainant, Mike Mannion, maintained it was wrong to describe the Eucharistic Host as a biscuit.

A separate complaint from Christine Doran took issue with how the Sydney Rose, Brianna Parkins, was allowed to air her views on the Eighth Amendment

to the Constitution and claimed that she had asked the Irish people to support repealing the amendment.

She said: 'I think it's time to give women a say on their own reproductive rights and I would love to see a referendum on the Eighth [Amendment] coming up soon, that'd be my dream.' The women's rights supporter added that funding for domestic violence shelters had been cut in Australia and women were being turned away on a nightly basis.

RTÉ said the personal view from the Sydney Rose was unscripted and unplanned. It added that the presenter 'properly moved on to the next section of the interview' and did not engage with the view expressed.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# We all have an ocean of calm below surface

**L**ATELY, my middle son is obsessed about the fate of the ozone layer. One day, he arrived home from school in a panic. 'What are we going to do about the ozone?' he frantically inquired, before listing off all the associated risks.

When I was in school, we worried about Soviet bombs hailing down over Dublin. We worried about what would happen if the IRA succeeded in taking over the country. We also despaired at the massively high rates of unemployment, concerned that we would leave school without any prospects.

The environment was completely off our radar. So, too, was immigration, the EU and the Middle East. Naturally, we were shocked by the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, but such events seemed like they were happening a world away.

When I contrast my boyhood worries with those of my sons, I realise not only that each generation has its own problems, but that we can't afford to live solely on the surface. As I told my eight-year-old: 'All we can do to protect the ozone is to care for our little patch of Earth in the best way we can. Then, we must get on with our lives.'

Worrying about the ozone will not repair the damage. It won't stop the world's greatest polluters from pumping more gases into the stratosphere. The only thing we can do is respond ethically by keeping our own house in order.

Most of us get up in the morning, turn on the news and are hit with an avalanche of misery, murder and mayhem. We descend into anxiety as the bad news takes a heavy toll on our nervous system. That is why I no longer permit the radio to be played during the school run.

Children are particularly sensitive to bad news, undermining as it does their sense of security and safety. When they hear of something awful, they carry it with them for the day. The grim truth about our inhumanity is hard to explain to little beings so full of radiant goodness.

Of course, we can't change reality or deny the events of each day. However, by refusing to live solely on the surface, we can protect ourselves from much of the poison. That is what it means to live inside out.

I once read the story of a wise man who said that when his mood was good, everything in his world fell into place.

However, when he was in a bad or anxious mood, he became a hostage to fortune. His inner mood shaped his outer life.

The problems of the age are ripples on the surface of life. Below the surface, there is an ocean of calm from which we can see things in their true light.

We can see them for what they are:

passing phases in the inexorable tide of human existence.

There is an old saying which sums this up: 'Everything will look different after a good night's sleep.'

It is not as though the problem will magically disappear overnight. Neither will you have ready-made answers to your worries.

However, what you will have is a completely different perspective on the problem.

This is not because things on the outside have changed, but because you have changed. Your inner self, your mood or your attitude, has been purified of all its toxins.

No longer are you skirting along the surface of life, being shoved here and there by every random event. You have taken a step back and you now see everything differently.

Anxiety gives way to calm as you set about dealing with the problems.

We are not meant to be tossed about in a sea of despair and doubt. We each have the capacity to look at the world differently, the capacity to change our mood.

In sleeping on a problem, we very often wake to an opportunity.

Sleep, silence, meditation and contemplation are all ways to nourish the inner self, to transform our relationship to the world and to others. When we can't see the wood for the trees, it is time to withdraw from the surface to root ourselves in reality. It is time to escape the stormy seas for the peaceful pond within.

**I**F we choose to live our lives perpetually on the surface, we will find there is no hiding place from the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'. We shall endure every calamity or threat as if it were somehow aimed at us. And then, having no way to remedy the situation, we stress and burn out.

Living inside out keeps us at a remove from the surface. We no longer seek solutions on the outside because we know that is just more of the same. Instead, by seeking to get our moods right, we deal with surface problems from a place they cannot touch.

Now, try explaining all of this to a child in the grip of environmental hysteria. Try explaining it to a little man who not only worries about the ozone, but about volcanoes, hurricanes, avalanches, icebergs, tsunamis and quicksand. It seems like, each day, he carries a new global calamity back home in his bag.

One morning, as we drove to school, I did endeavour to explain how to live inside out. I glanced in the mirror and saw that he was smiling with obvious relief. And then, after school, I waited to see how heavy that bag looked.

For two days, I heard nothing about the ozone layer. But then, the other night, the topic resurfaced.

'You're right, Dad, it really doesn't matter about the ozone layer. Actually, it will help to sell loads of sun cream!'

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