

Christ is a role model for real men

Mags Gargan

The third annual Meant4more Men's Conference took place last Saturday at the Clarion Hotel in Liffey Valley, Dublin with Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers as its main speaker.

Deacon Harold is married with four children and is ordained to the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, USA. He spoke on the theme 'Behold the Man' offering a challenging message on male spirituality for today.

Deacon Harold looked at men in the Old and New Testament as examples for how modern men can live their lives. "I am trying to make a deeper spiritual connection between our Biblical faith, the teaching of the Church and what it means to be a man," he said.

"I have a passion for being a man - for living out the true message of manhood which is lived from the cross of Jesus Christ," Deacon Harold told *The Irish Catholic*. "It's not the emasculated man of our culture, it's not the man depicted by television and the media, it's the man who, if you look at the cross of Jesus



Sean Ascough, Peter Mahony, Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown, Tony Foy, Joe Walsh, Msgr Pat Lynch, Leanne Nichols and Tim Nichols at the Meant4More Men's Conference in Dublin last weekend.

Christ you see someone who gave himself totally and completely for the Church. It's to emulate Him and to serve the way Christ served - to give your life every day for your bride if you are married or the Church if you are a priest or for the culture if you are a lay person and single.

The participants at the Men's Conference were also offered a choice of seminars, focusing on subjects such as 'Dealing with Pornography', 'Marriage' and a third seminar given by Deacon Harold on the vocation of the Permanent Diaconate. The conference concluded with



Deacon Harold Burke Sivers speaking at the conference.

Mass celebrated by the Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown.

Meant4more is a one day conference which seeks to bring men together from across Ireland to look afresh at their Christian faith, and in particular to challenge them to respond to the call to follow Christ.

According to the organisers the event does not have an anti-female agenda, rather the promotion of the active role of the laity, both male and female in the mission of

the Church.

"Visit a typical Catholic parish in Ireland, and one will find that on average over two thirds of the congregation are women. Why are there so few men actively participating in the life of the Church?"

"In a major recession, with rising unemployment, the growth of debt, and suicide four times more common among Irish men, does the Gospel offer men hope, in the midst of challenging times?" their website asks.

In different parts of Ireland, Catholic men have started to come together to support and encourage each other in men's groups and the Meant4more Men's Conference seeks to support and encourage such initiatives, and assist these groups to grow and multiply.

Meant4more is an initiative of the Tine Leaders Network, a Catholic network of different communities, ministries and groups working in collaboration for the New Evangelisation.

To find out more about the Meant4more Men's Network, check www.m4m.ie

Deacons not answer to vocations crisis

Mags Gargan

An American permanent deacon has warned that the diaconate should not be seen as a solution to the vocations crisis in Ireland, and the only way to get more priests is to encourage vocations in young men.

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, from the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, was guest speaker at the Meant4more Men's Conference in Dublin last weekend. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* in advance of the conference he said the role of a permanent deacon is "not to take the place of a priest".

Encourage

"The only way to get more priests is to encourage more young men into the priesthood. We should not be ordaining deacons because 'there are not enough priests'. There are definitely enough vocations out there, but we have to encourage them," he said.

"When a young man wants to become a priest, back in the day they used to be encouraged, fostered and nurtured, now it's like, 'why would you want to do that when there are plenty of other things you could be doing?'.

"It's a whole different dynamic and that needs to change, and the diaconate is not going to fix that," Deacon Harold said.



Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers.

"The diaconate is a service ministry in the Church and it does not take the place of the priest. Our job is to assist and support the laity, and to work with the bishops and priests, particularly in the role of evangelisation and mission."

Administrative

Deacon Harold said that the main way that deacons can assist priests would be to take a more administrative role and free the priest up to do ministry.

"I travel hundreds of thousands of miles a year and I meet priests all over the world and a lot of them are not able to minister as much as they would like to because they are so bogged down in administration. A practical role for the diaconate would be to alleviate some of that responsibility." See Page 10.