

Parish Church Quotes

A parish church faces three basic demands of the spiritual life -- "the need not to run away, the need to be open to change, the need to listen. They are based on a commitment which is both total and continuing. And yet the paradox is that they bring freedom, true freedom." Esther de Waal

When people come into a church like All Saints they may be impressed by architecture and iconography. These things may give them pause for thought: "What does all this mean?" Just as important can be the impression they receive from the living icons; people using the building for its true purpose, as a place of prayer. People who through its life of worship are being built into a living temple. If we consider ourselves useless at evangelism, we should think again and recognize that the power of that witness to Christ given by a community and individuals who pray.[1] - Father Alan Moses

The story of every parish should be a love story. C. Kilmer Myers

And all this built to provide a canopy over the acts of a worshipping community of believers, an organization of space in which movement and music, word and sacrament, can be presented with dignity befitting an action which is nothing less than a celebration of the Christian understanding of the meaning and mystery of being alive and being human. A cathedral is a theatre for a kind of liturgical dance to the music of time and the hidden harmonies of God.

A cathedral is both a protest and a proclamation. ...a protest against all ideologies and political systems which deny or diminish the spirituality, dignity and true liberty of human persons, and a proclamation of the Christian Way as an invitation to pilgrimage, an offered route by which human beings can find help in their search for the answer to their fundamental questions: 'Who am I?' 'What may I hope?' 'What should I do?' - Sydney Evans, one time Dean of Salisbury Cathedral, offered an understanding of the cathedral, and all churches

A revitalized parish is one in which the individual and corporate implications of the baptismal covenant of the people of God are being worked out. ...A revitalized parish is one in which the whole Faith is taught with diligence and acted on with courage. ...The revitalization of the parish means making the church a place of prayer and the people a praying people. ...It is the people of God engaged actively in their relationship with God, through Scripture, sacraments and prayer, and engaged in their work in family, neighborhood and workplace, in service to the poor and oppressed which is the sign of the coming of the kingdom. -- Emmett Jarrett

*The disciplined, prayerful, listening Christian community, located in a specific place ... tries to understand and respond to the challenges of its immediate context ... it is rooted in the worshipping and corporate life of actual communities; it begins with concrete and specific issues and moves outwards; and it overcomes the syndrome of a facile optimism in which we seek to deal with problems over too wide an area, at the level of general principles and moral rhetoric, and then gradually move to a cosmic pessimism, which abandons any hope of change of any kind. Kenneth Leech *Subversive Orthodoxy: Traditional Faith and Radical Commitment**

The parish includes ... the horses and cattle, the dogs and cats, the fields and woods, the schools, and businesses—the whole kit and caboodle. Of course, I'm talking mostly about the people, but give me a bit of leeway here. It's sort of biblical, like Jonah talking about Nineveh: "And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals? Loren Mead

The story of every parish should be a love story. ...One possible definition for a parish is that it is God's way of meeting the problems of the unloved. This meeting between God and the unloved, the unwanted, takes place in the preaching of the Word, in the Sacraments, in the social life of the parish made possible by the climate of acceptance which is

engendered by those who have been baptized and confirmed in the Catholic faith. One of the main tasks of the parish priest is to train the militant core of his parishioners in such a way that they understand as fully as possible the true nature of a Christian parish. -- Kilmer Myers

Parishes of loneliness – Parishes of Solitude

To live a spiritual life we must first find the courage to enter into the desert of our loneliness and to change it by gentle and persistent efforts into a garden of solitude. – Nouwen

Parishes exist in the space between loneliness and solitude. Some are fragile communities of loneliness. Others are stable communities grounded in solitude. Many drift between the poles with limited awareness of their condition, no vision about what's possible, and lacking in the skills and knowledge needed to shape a new and better future.

Parishes of loneliness have an investment in their dependence and sentimental orientation. They seek immediate and short-term gratification at the expense of long term and wise stewardship. For them the parish exists to save us from our loneliness; "togetherness" is the solution to our confusion and our emptiness.

Parishes of solitude have an ability to listen to one another even when what is said brings uncomfortable feelings; to be still and silent both in worship and in meetings; and to allow space and time for people of differing temperaments.

- Robert A. Gallagher, OA in "The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life: Part One - From Loneliness to Solitude" on Means of Grace, Hope of Glory

Influence on society, conversion of individuals, occur when the divine office, the Holy Eucharist and positive guidance of the faithful take place as the church's central activity. –Martin Thornton

The issue for the Episcopal Church in the city is not survival but faith. At the heart of every congregation must be a converted and prayer-full pastoral community, in which the biblical and theological experience of Jesus as Lord is nurtured in prayer, sustained by study of the scriptures, and expressed in a serious effort to discern and bear witness to the gifts of the Spirit which God has bestowed uniquely on that community and those individuals who make it up.

Arthur Walmsley

Richard Baxter, the seventeenth-century Puritan, saw the "building up of the converted" to be of the greatest importance, and he particularly emphasized the care of the strong Christian, which is so often neglected. - Kenneth Leech, *True Prayer: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality*,

It is interesting that whereas Sunday services are thought of in terms of numbers, an element of the vicarious is often imputed to the weekday Office of the priest. Yet Anglican theology insists that the creative channel of Grace in the world is not the priesthood but the Church; thus there is a most vital distinction between the priest alone and priest plus Remnant of one. There is no such particular distinction between priest plus one, and priest plus two, sixty, or six thousand. Those who are worried over lack of support might substitute ascetic for arithmetic. There is nothing so contagious as holiness, nothing more pervasive than Prayer. This is precisely what the traditional Church means by evangelism and what distinguishes it from recruitment. – Martin Thornton in *Pastoral Theology*

The renewal and development of a parish is a process of entering more deeply into the life of Christ and the nature and mission of the Church. A parish is being renewed as it enters into and reflects the mind, heart and work of Christ. A parish is being renewed as it enters into and reflects the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church. A parish is being renewed as it pursues the mission of holy unity. Parish development is our striving, as a community of Christian people, toward God. It is not primarily something we do, or create, or make happen. It is the way in which a

parish, a local manifestation of the Holy Catholic Church, shares in the Divine Life. It is living the Christian life, not simply as individuals, but as a people. - Robert A. Gallagher, OA

Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives. ...And when that person moves away, someone else arrives immediately to take his or her place. - Parker J. Palmer

Parish development is establishing the structures, processes and climate:

- 1. That renew people in their baptismal identity and purpose and sends them, in Christ, for an apostolate in family, with friends, in work, civic life and church.*
- 2. That nurture the Christian life of people at all phases of maturity; gives special attention to training and coaching those of Apostolic Faith; encourages all toward a more prayerful, disciplined, and compassionate Christian life.*
- 3. That foster a strong life and ministry of worship, doctrine, action and oversight that is rooted in our tradition.*
- 4. That enable people to seek the presence of Jesus Christ in the people, things and circumstances of life, through stability, conversion of life and obedience. – The Rule of the Order of the Ascension*