

THE ROSEAU CATHEDRAL and the COMMON GOOD: PART I

Photo and text by Bernard Lauwyck



Window in the Cathedral : St. Charles Borromeo assisting the sick

Recently I heard a comment that we, Catholics, do everything to fix our church buildings and beautify our sanctuaries but forget the needs of the people. My response to this would be that, as we are a religious people, the effort to improve our liturgical spaces is an answer to a deeply felt need of the people. I have worked in and with almost every Catholic community in Dominica and this need is very evident, despite personal economic hardships and poverty. Indeed if there is anything central to our Catholic Faith, it is the 7 sacraments with the Eucharist as summit. The sacraments take place in suitable adapted spaces, which we call liturgical spaces. I have been instrumental in upgrading several of our Catholic liturgical space and I am convinced that these upgrades benefit the level and intensity of catholic worship in our communities. Out of these ceremonies one comes nourished and alive. Man does not live from bread alone !

During the ceremony of the first vows of Brother Elton Letang, I was deeply touched by the emphasis by the Redemptorists on serving the poor as their mission.

This inspired me to write this article on the Social Mission of the Catholic Church to record the impact the Catholic church had on society in Dominica, which I think was profound and far reaching.

It is my opinion that the Catholic Church has been, for centuries, the main engine to promote the common good in Dominica. This was driven by the Catholic Social teaching . This is a history that deserves to be written and I need your help.

I want to mention a few names which might jolt your memories. I am asking you to send me your stories and memories. Do you remember FMI Fathers Chauvet, Guéry, Jean Martin ? Did they help you in a personal way ? DJ Sisters Pauline, Yvette, Janet, Catherine, Irene ? What did they mean to you ? Redemptorists Fathers Vandenberg, Vanacker, Francis, Werner, Huysmans, John Bergmans ? Did they touch your personal life ? ICM Sisters Sr. Alicia and Maria, Sr. Gisela, Sr. Borgia, Sr. Elsa, Georgina, Elodie, Clara, Madeleine, Joyce and Maria in the infirmary and many more ? I mention some of the ones who have left our shores for good.

We had great priests and religious sisters working in our Diocese who were profoundly inspired by the Social Teaching of the Church and had an extraordinary impact on the lives of the ordinary man and woman in Dominica.

They are not remembered for the Good News they preached from the pulpit but because they lived, in their daily life, the Gospel. I would like you to share their stories with me. Pass this on to your neighbours and friends so that their efforts might be recorded for the future generations.

St. James tells us in chapter 2 14 – 18 on Faith and Actions:

“My friends, what good is it for one of you to say that you have faith if your actions do not prove it? Can that faith save you? Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, “God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!”—if you don't give them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead. But someone will say, “One person has faith, another has actions.” My answer is, “Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions.””

Please let us record recent history before it is lost for the future.

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