

In darkness there is light

In these times we are all experiencing the pain of huge economic depression when everyone in Ireland is bearing the cost of world recession. There are many groups who have come together to address specific issues relating to the economic crisis. The most visible are the tent groups camped outside financial institutions in cities across Europe and including our own city of Dublin. These are pressure groups addressing specific issues like the contribution banks have made to the financial mess the world economy finds itself in.

The Christian Church cannot act or be hijacked as a similar pressure group but needs to meet and identify with the pain of the people. It is in response to this that I am proposing the celebration of a service entitled: *'In darkness there is light.'* People from all walks of Irish life, North and South, are invited to gather together to share through music, prayer and word, our shared heritage and solidarity in facing the darkness with the light of hope.

The celebration of Candlemas (Feastday of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) on 2nd February is ideally suited to locate an ecumenical service incorporating all the churches of the land to come together in solidarity with the people of the country as we journey through the darkness of economic gloom to affirm that in all darkness there is light and hope. This service seeks to affirm and stir the spirit of the Irish people not to lose hope but to rekindle the flame of optimism and national belief that has sustained us throughout our long and often troubled history.

Using the Candlemas theme we embrace the light in the midst of darkness and spread that light all around us. This service is linked to the ancient rituals of Candlemas because its message speaks loudly to our present situation. In the liturgy of Candlemas it states: *'The true meaning of Candlemas is found in its bitter-sweet nature. It is a feast and the revelation of the child Jesus in the Temple, greeted by Simeon and Anna, calls for rejoicing. Nevertheless, the prophetic words of Simeon, which speak of the falling and rising of many and the sword that will pierce Mary's heart, lead on to the passion and the Easter coming at the very end of the Christmas celebration with lent nearly always nearby.'*

I wish to personally invite you to come and be part of this service of solidarity which will be held on the 2nd February 2012 at 20.00 in Christ Church Cathedral. Your presence would demonstrate your solidarity with all who are feeling lost and in the dark during a time of financial wilderness and weakened hope.

May I take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your reply and to share in all our belief that, united together in solidarity, the spirit of this beautiful country of ours will shine out as it has always done.

Le gach Dé

Dermot Dunne