

I have to confess that when I was reading last night all the meticulous instructions of what I was supposed to do at the beginning of this Mass, it did remind me a bit of Jesus in today's gospel "*There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes.*" Of course, as a faithful Jew, Jesus didn't have a problem with traditions unless they got in the way of the very message they are trying to protect. So, thinking along that vein I was considering these fine traditions attached to the chapter and it led me to ponder on what is the purpose of Metropolitan Cathedral.

I turned to reading a section of canon law that I must confess I don't remember ever reading before, and the purpose seems twofold: a consultative body for the Archbishop and also to foster the worship of God here in this place- the Cathedral of St Chad. Then I discovered the wonderful stroke of providence in that the first reading for Tuesday week 5, that is today, is the Solemn Blessing of Solomon in the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem from the book of Kings. The authors of Kings were very keen not to suggest that a temple built by human hands could contain God, who of course is totally beyond creation, but rather as the text says: *Day and night let your eyes watch over this house, over this place of which you have said, "My name shall be there."*

So, despite being totally other, beyond the heavens, through the presence of his name, God desires to dwell among his people. We get here already in the Old Testament a sense of the closeness of God which found fulfilment in Jesus the Word made flesh. But after reading this passage last week that phrase '*my name shall be there*' kept ringing in my head. I realised it was a line from a motet I had sung when I was in the schola at the Venerable English College over 40 years ago. I think we sang it at the consecration of the chapel in 1981. I could not remember the title of the piece and had to google it but eventually found that it was "Here the voice and prayer" by Thomas Tallis. The base line keeps repeating the phrase "my name shall be there, my name shall be there, my name shall be there." Musically it really shows the solemn beauty of God's presence among us.

When Bishop Thomas Walsh was inspired to build this Cathedral between 1839 and 1841, he built it in the midst of this bulging new industrial town among the factories and slums. This was a definite choice to ensure that it was built right among the people, not the gentry but the factory workers, so that God's name should be there. Once again, we see the desire of God to be close to his people, this time being made manifest in this extraordinary building.

As child I was taken around this Cathedral by my father who was very proud of it. He showed me inscription in roof where in World War II an incendiary bomb fell through without going off, thus saving church. Then another memory is of him bringing me to Easter Monday Men's Mass sometime in the early sixties. I will never forget the shock, as a child, of the sound of cathedral full of men singing '*Faith of our Fathers*' at the top of their voices. It was my first experience of belonging to the wider universal church, other than my family and parish. "*My name shall be there*", in that moment, that presence was sown into my heart.

We now live in very different times. That post war Anglo- Irish cultural Catholicism is now history in our country. Our buildings which were once right where they should be are sometimes far removed because of population shifts in cities. We need to pray to be creative like Bishop Walsh and seek to plant the name of God among his people, wherever they are. Not where we want them to be, but where they actually are. Whether that be in our schools, our social outreach projects, or in groups on the fringes of the church and society or in social media and AI like Blessed Carlo Acutis pioneered. The mission or direction of the Holy Spirit is always towards God's people "*my name shall be there.*"

And what is this name – it is Jesus, of course, – the God who saves. In today's feast day we remember St Paul Miki and his companions. Jesuits, Franciscans and lay catechists who suffered horrendous torture and death in the early missions in Japan. As they hung upon their crosses, the contemporary account says that they kept repeating the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Those names were so dear to them that when all else was taken away, in that darkest of places '*my name shall be there.*'

So, as we gaze out upon the landscape of the world around us today in our increasingly chaotic and confusing world with so much uncertainty and the tragedy of wars, lets listen to those words "*my name shall be there*" Let those words keep ringing in our hearts. Let those words direct our prayers our thoughts, our words and our actions so that the name of Jesus – God who saves- may indeed be there!