

Divine Renovation – Summary of Chapter 5: Part 2 of 4

According to Fr. Mallon, healthy, growing churches have in common particular values that provide strong foundations:

1. Giving Priority to the Weekend
 2. Hospitality
 3. Uplifting Music
 4. Homilies
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1. Giving Priority to the Weekend: “The priority of any parish, and any priest, ought to be about preparing for and celebrating the Sunday Eucharist to make it the best possible experience for the maximum number of people.” (p. 96) Fr. Mallon explains that every aspect of the Sunday celebration should be intentional, our best efforts. “The days of the 50-minute get-it-over-and-done-with Mass must end.” The expectation of the amount of time we spent at mass, he says, is formed simply through habit. We are schooled by experience. In the Western world, serving the unspoken value of convenience, we are habituated to the hour Mass. We have developed a culture of minimalism; what is the least we have to do to make it count. “Minimalism and convenience cannot be the primary values of a healthy church. Minimalism and convenience have no place in the life of the disciple who is called to save his or her life by losing it.” (p.100)
 2. “Someone once said that the church is the only organization that exists mainly for the sake of those who do not belong. This is the difference between a church and club. Club exists for the sake of their members.” . . . “Hospitality, therefore, does not mean being friendly with our friends and all the people who look, think, and talk like us, but reaching out to the stranger.” (p. 100)

Describing hospitality from the point of view of the outsider, in contrast to the member, we are challenged to realistically look at how we welcome the stranger in our parishes.