

Cardinal Burke warns Oxford audience of dictatorship of relativism



Cardinal Raymond Burke preached yesterday against a “dictatorship of relativism” which brands Christians “fundamentalists and extremists”.

At a Mass in Oxford to celebrate the quincentenary of the birth of St. Philip Neri, founder and patron of the Oratorians, the cardinal who has just left the Vatican to become patron of the Knights of Malta, compared today's world to the Renaissance world of “corruption” which St. Philip chose to stand apart from, despite his youth and the expectations of his culture. The cardinal encouraged the assembled faithful to take inspiration from the saint in encounters with our own culture, which Burke described as “secularised and therefore corrupt”. He spoke of how “fundamental truths”, like the importance of human life and its “cradle in the family”, based on marriage, have been “ignored, defied, and violated”.

Quoting the Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Burke warned of the dangers of “various ideological currents” and of “human deception and trickery which strives to lead us into error”. He continued with a condemnation of what Benedict termed a “dictatorship of relativism which does not recognise anything as definitive and does not recognise any goal except the ego and its desires”. Such a culture wrongly views Christians as fundamentalists and extremists, he said.

Burke encouraged the faithful to respond to the world by practising humility, remembering that only God purifies us of our sins. He closed by revisiting the Gospel reading, in which Christ declares that he is the vine and we the branches, and urged the congregation to remain in Christ's Eucharistic heart, which would give us “the healing and strength to transform our lives and to transform a culture which would draw us away from his sacred heart”.

The Cardinal also spoke of St. Philip's particular example to priests, saying that the saint exemplified St John Paul II's statement that “the force which animates the heart of the priest is pastoral charity”.

Cardinal Burke is on a short visit to Oxford. Today he will celebrate Vespers and Benediction for the intentions of the Order of Malta, of which he is patron. He will also address the

Newman Society (the Catholic Society of the University of Oxford) on the intellectual legacy of Pope Benedict XVI.

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