

## **Views from the Pews - Work and Worship**

Prior to Christmas, when visiting the Cathedral, I found myself with half an hour to spare.

Not being in the habit of frittering time, I pondered what to do!

Soon this question was interrupted by the sound of one of the Cathedral organists having a practice session. I felt moved to discreetly enter, find a pew behind a pillar and take the opportunity for quiet reflection ahead of the Christmas frenzy. The organist alternated between the familiar and a piece unknown to me that made me think earthquake proofing was probably a good idea for the now aged edifice.

This frivolous thought was interrupted by the quiet entry of someone with a mop and bucket who proceeded to clean between the pews. The simple, steady, yet rhythmic movement seemed a contradiction to the skill required for the strident music coming from the organ pipes.

Both activities were “work”, willingly and diligently performed while presenting a stark contrast in their complexity. To me, the silent observer, both seemed to be an act of worship, in what is a sacred place.

So often human frailty can lead to our passing judgement as to which of these two activities might be considered the “greater work” or gift. We all have our own understanding of the value given to paid versus unpaid work.

We perhaps may even ponder which might be the greater act of worship, and lastly are these components necessary for a place to be deemed sacred? Our answers may surprise us, and not necessarily be congruent with those of our maker, the giver of all gifts and to whom all glory is due. Paul, in many of his letters to the early church, referred to such matters and warned the believers of his day against the folly of placing human values on them. In his second letter to the Corinthians chapter eight, verse twelve, he says, ‘For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man has, not according to what he hath not.’

As we reflect on these questions we could then ask, ‘How well do I use my gifts within the sacred place of the Cathedral?’ and ‘Do I see these as acts of worship to God?’ But perhaps the greater question is, ‘Do I earnestly seek his presence in the quiet, sacred place of being alone with him?’

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