NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Learning from the Dutch church

Tom Roberts | Jun. 23, 2009

In my last posting, **Carving out a spiritual home** [1], from the national gathering of intentional eucharistic communities, I wrote about Robert McClory's talk. To refresh your memory:

> McClory ... began his talk by relating his experience on an assignment in 2007 for *NCR* to cover what was occurring in the church in Holland following the publication of a booklet by the Dutch province of the Dominican order. The booklet proposed that because of the priest shortage and the theology of ministry coming out of Vatican II, parishes should consider selecting lay members to preside at the Eucharist.

I thought that readers might be interested in seeing McClory's reporting from Holland, so I dug around in the NCR archives and came up with these links (The pages are from two web site iterations ago, so be careful with navigation).

- The Dutch plan: Will innovation save this church? [2]
- Interveiw with Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx [3]
- Smart, suave, he may be next Dutch cardinal [4] (Bishop Gerard de Korte)
- Like an Old Testament prophet [5] (Interview with Eric Borgman, professor of systematic theology at the Catholic university in Tilburg)

Here's a stats box we ran with McClory's article:

Holland: Free-falling numbers 12/14/2007

According to the Catholic Institute for Social-Religious Research, there were 4.3 million Catholics among the Netherlands? 16 million people in 2006. That figure represents a decrease of 700,000 Catholics since 2000 and 1.3 million since 1980.

The reality is even starker than the figures, since only about 60 percent of that 4.3 million really consider themselves Catholic in anything other than name. Sunday Mass attendance is about 7 percent of the Catholic population, down from 14 percent in 1990 and 24 percent in 1980. The total of active diocesan priests in 2006 was 950, compared to 2,150 in 1990 and 3,400 in 1980. Few young men attend theology schools.

Ordinations have averaged 10 to 15 per year for the whole country. The Breda diocese had no ordinations for a recent stretch of almost 15 years.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/05/2015 - 05:33*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/learning-dutch-church

Links:

[1] http://ncronline.org/node/13453
[2] http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2007d/121407/121407a.htm
[3] http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2007d/121407/121407h.htm
[4] http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2007d/121407/121407i.htm
[5] http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2007d/121407/121407j.htm