

Good Friday and the alcohol sale ban

Dear Editor

In recent days it has been claimed that the ban on the sale of alcohol on Good Friday is “archaic” and “discriminatory” and causes a loss of income to the pub trade especially during this year when the 2016 celebrations will be particularly intense around Easter.

In reply to this we should ask why we have the ban on the sale of alcohol on that day in the first instance. Good Friday is one of the most sacred days of the year.



Bishop of Waterford & Lismore, Alphonsus Cullinan.

It is called ‘good’ because it is the day on which the Saviour was put to death for us and opened for us the way to eternal life. The ban is a mark of respect for the Lord and what He did for us, and helps us to make this sacrifice for Him who sacrificed everything for us.

Some will object and say that this day is therefore only for Catholics and other Christians and only for practicing ones at that. Therefore they claim that the ban discriminates against those of other religions or none.

If that is the case, then in order to be consistent our society would have to get rid of the public celebration of all Christian feast days which affect the public calendar: Christmas, Easter, Saint Patrick’s Day, Saint Valentine’s Day, etc, since all of these days were established, and are still celebrated, as religious feast days.

They have no significance otherwise, even though they have been commandeered by commercialism to a great extent.

Therefore supporters of a ban on the sale of alcohol in pubs and shops on Good Friday cannot have it both ways. They cannot object to the ban on alcohol sales on Good Friday adversely affecting their trade because at different occasions they greatly benefit from other religious feasts in terms of increased business.

I would further ask: what kind of example are we setting to our young people if we as a society cannot do without alcohol on sale for this one day? The problems associated with the abuse of alcohol are there for all to see, especially in terms of the health impact on the individual, the damage to family stability, and public order offences.

If Ireland can at least do without the sale of alcohol on Good Friday, we can show our young people that alcohol does not have to be an integral part of our national character and, as importantly, that we can restrain ourselves for a higher goal at least to some degree. What an example that would continue to be.

Yours sincerely,

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