

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul

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Hi everyone, looking out the window it is indeed a windy day or as the more positive folk would say a 'fresh' day. Intermittent rain falling is a welcome to all thirsty gardens at this time I think, and for those who wonder how thirsty our wildlife is, well, just fill your garden watering bowl and observe the water as the, or the water-starved birdlife especially and the keen shower that the young fledglings indulge in. It's fantastic to see real assertion of boss and authority that goes on in these watering fonts is lovely also.

Very symptomatic indeed of the day that we're celebrating today which is the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Turbulent breeze is also a good analogy of these times as holiday bookings surge but as one astute commentator said, "*we all want to get away but one thing is certain, coronavirus hasn't gone away.*"

Now, I'd like to go onto some headlines and comments which I've read this week and they are particularly on the address given by Pope Francis last Monday on Radio 4, *Today* programme. One of the headlines I saw said "*Pope sparks fury with ridiculous BBC broadcast calling for a downfall of global system*" Well, one can accept all forms of political or comment on these things but I'm just wondering well where did this come from? Where did this criticism come from?

However, it followed the Pope's message on the *Today* programme as I say not that anyone should criticise or is not entitled to criticise the Pope, no it was what was in, and these are tweets, it seems everything goes on tweeting. I won't go into their content you can check those yourself but all seemed irrelevant to the very content of the papal message of Pope Francis' message because he used language that is very familiar to you and to me over these years that we've known him and what he does say. He talked of the crisis afflicting the world today as the spotlight is on COVID, he criticised world leaders in the plural, for what he termed functional hypocrisy, perhaps somebody is getting tetchy about that criticism. He spoke of every crisis having dangers and opportunities and here he asked us to reflect on the terms of production and consumption and to reconnect using an important word - convert. That our economies be more human, and he pleaded that we not just go back to the way we were. The lost, contemplative dimension was

highlighted as he challenged us to regain it and to learn from what we have gained of that contemplative dimension in lockdown. This obviously, some of this, upsets listeners.

However, today as I mentioned, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul both very diverse personalities. Peter, the rock, but who did say *"You are the Christ, you are the son of the living God."* He wasn't without his blemishes, his weaknesses, he wasn't as expansive in his thinking in spreading the Good News as perhaps St Paul was. Paul was a deep thinker and a religious zealot at one stage who found openness via a profound personal experience of Christ. However, a comment which I found very lovely and amusing by a figure who will perhaps be familiar to some of us in Durham, Bishop Tom Wright who is a world authority on St Paul but he did write *"Wherever St Paul went there was a riot, wherever I go they serve tea."* Perhaps this is the challenge to you and to me, we perhaps need both, the challenge and the solidity of what Peter and Paul represent. Both buried, both martyred in Rome. And I think this is why the Church in its wisdom celebrates the feast of both these great Saints on the one day, it's that complementarity.

What little information we do have of them would seem to indicate that their meetings were not the easiest, Paul and Peter. Paul challenging to be a little bit more open and be expansive in his thinking, Peter trying to retain that sense of solidity. However, what they did have in common and what enabled them to pursue with great courage and determination the spreading of the Good News was that they were both profoundly loved by their Lord Jesus Christ. Good morning.