

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 8th November 2020

Good morning everybody, hope you're okay. Well, what a week we've had. We begin a lockdown for a month at least, a new American president, dramatic changes everywhere. However, my real sadness this week has been the passing yesterday of the former chief rabbi Jonathan Sacks. He was a real light whenever he gave Thought for the day. Well-modulated in that deep sonorous voice he delivered a message that cut across all religions and creeds. Always to the point. Such wisdom, such insights such as *"One who is not in my image is nonetheless in God's image."* Insights like these could keep one going for some time, did for me. And of course, we now get a sense of this in the most recent speech of the new American president-elect Joe Biden as he now tries to reconcile very opposing views in his country, dare I say this need for reconciliation is politically necessary right across the spectrum today. However, the wait was worth it. The last few days of voting counted have kept us on a knife-edge. Waiting isn't easy, is it?

The Gospel indeed of today of the bridesmaids is a Gospel of valued waiting. Waiting however for us now is not something we really have an option on, is it? Lockdown has forced us really into a profound sense of waiting.

I came across on this Remembrance Sunday a story I think both applicable to Lockdown and to the day that we recall those who have given their lives for freedom. This was a prayer it was found in the pocket of a Russian soldier who died during the second world war. It's a story of realisation of God's presence even in the most perilous of circumstances.

"Are you listening to me God? I have never ever spoken to you before. However tonight I want to greet you. You know how from my earliest days as a child I was told that you did not exist, and I believed it foolish as I was then. From the exquisite beauty of your creation, I learned nothing but tonight from the bottom of this crater, carved out by a bomb I have been attentive to the beauty of the sky filled with the light of the stars to my utter amazement I have become acutely aware that the glittering light is your presence shining through. Lord, I don't know whether your hand is outstretched towards me or not but I want to say to you that the beautiful insight which has been given to me in this

crater has brought to my heart a relief that words cannot describe. It's late in the day but at last, I've come to recognise you. After saying that I don't know what more there is for me to add except to say that I am so very very happy. It is so good to know that I am in your presence."

And so here we see in this wonderful prayer of a Russian soldier the night before he died, a waiting which increased his desire for God to come into his life. Yes, God is gracious, He does not impose. He waits until hands and heart are ready to receive from the treasure of His gifts. Good morning everybody.