

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 7th February 2021.

Well, well, well the book of Job's our first reading this weekend, and what an appropriate reading for a time of uncertainty in lockdown which, please God, we're beginning to come out or certainly seeing light at the end of the tunnel I think aren't we?

Job is expressing all his uncertainty about himself and his predicament *'Like the slave, sighing for the shade, or the workman with no thought but his wages, months of delusion I have assigned to me, nothing for my own but nights of grief.'*

Well, I don't think we're all going through anything like that but the reason of course we're taken to these extremes by the book of Job is to remind us that you know that someone has been there, someone has experienced all that hardship especially the interior hardship that can be thrown up against us in life.

Christopher Plummer died this week and one of the great character actors I think that I've ever known or seen in, particularly his main role which made him, of course, a great star was the sound of music which he never looked back with any great fondness to but he continued to have a wonderful rapport and friendship with his CoStar Julie Andrews of whom he said *"Working with Julie Andrews is like being hit over the head with a Valentine's"* that's typical of Christopher Plummer's humour but he knew the gravitas that was required for that film in fact Julie Andrews did say that if it wasn't for him that film would not have been a success because she said he brought depth to it. He brought that seriousness which the film desperately needed otherwise she said it would have been quite trite. I thought that was a lovely compliment to him because if you read anything about him that sense of humanity prevails all the time and I'm not going to focus anymore now on Christopher Plummer other than to say what we're being asked of in the context of the readings and especially the uncertainties even today we're hearing whether it's dramatic news mongering or sensationalism in the relation to one of the vaccines it makes us a little bit on edge and uncertain.

And so I think Job is speaking to all of us when he says *"Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?' Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes! 'Restlessly I fret till twilight falls."* Wonderful statements of

uncertainty and rawness that is a part of this great book and almost as if to compliment that Paul is telling us you know that okay despite what we are going through try to be available to each other. *"I am not a slave of any man,"* he says, *"I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessing."* Wonderful reassuring words from Paul. We don't have to look too far to see where this sense of struggling with humanity is even today just watching the news at one the appalling conditions in which refugees are living in camps.

Sub-zero levels, heavy flooding, children, elderly, young and old all present in the most makeshift of conditions. Desperate, absolutely desperate and thank God there are people working intensely to try to alleviate that suffering and I'm reminded of a 19th-century preacher C H Spurgeon who wrote *"Very interesting is the little peep into the house of the fisherman,"* he's talking about of course today's Gospel where Jesus heals Peter's mother in law. He goes on, *"We see at once the Lord's gracious work upon one's own flesh and blood. Peter's house was probably a poor fisherman's hut, but the Lord of glory entered, lodged in it and wrought a miracle in it. God is oftener in little huts than in rich palaces. Jesus is now looking around your room and is waiting to be gracious to you."*

In his book "In an uncertain world" Robert Rubin wrote, *"Some people are more certain of everything than I am of anything."* And so when we begin next time to feel a little bit down and uncertain, unsure of what the future might hold let's be grateful for what we have and try to think of those who are uncertain about having anything and I certainly saw them today in Syria, God bless.