

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on the Saturday of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of Eastertide

*Audio posted to the Parish Website on Saturday 16th May 2020*

Morning. Today's Gospel Jesus used the word "hate" at least three times. It's a word that has confused definitions I find certainly in my own understanding of the word but in its extreme form it's not a very nice, pleasant word to confront and to try to eradicate.

Some definitions that I've come across which perhaps may be helpful. One is from Joumanah El Matrah she's an Australian academic. She talks about the extreme edges in which hate finds itself. She said *"The use of hate in society is a complex phenomenon, but psychologically, who and why we hate is much clearer. The motive of hate is to eliminate the other, whether that be real or symbolic. Hate evolves out of both real and imagined threats. When we hate another, we don't just hate what they do, we hate who they are: we see them as inherently bad, morally inferior and we believe their intention towards us is malicious. What we hate about the other is their imagined innate nature. Once we come to hate, the hatred persists."*

She goes on and she talks about the targets of our hate and she does say *"I believe with certainty that the group we hate more than any other group in society is the poor. We are both righteous about and entitled to an opinion about those who are poor, and while we speak about the system and class, we will not name the very special and resilient hate we have for the poor."*

Pope Francis speaks about hate also in the context of all the phobias and -isms that are a part of that word hatred. He said, *" I confess that when I hear some speeches by someone responsible for public order or a government, I am reminded of Hitler's speeches in 1934 and '36, They are typical actions of Nazism which, with its persecutions of Jews, Gypsies and people of homosexual orientation, represent a negative model par excellence of a throwaway culture and a culture of hatred. That's what they did then and today these things are resurfacing "* And so he urged us to be vigilant both in civil and religious society and avoid any possible compromise with such degeneration. Strong words.

And as I say with all the -isms and phobias etc that we have towards and are outlined by both the pope and the writer. A report that you probably recall not too long ago highlighted the perhaps one of the

greatest targets for hatred today, if not the greatest hatred and that is Christians. And a report that was indeed commissioned just last year found the number of Christians who are being hated and persecuted throughout the world is on the increase particularly in the Middle East. The bombings in Sri Lanka highlighted them just last Easter and in according to a report by the UN in some regions the level of and nature of persecution is arguably coming close to the international definition of genocide and so that is the level of hatred against Christians today. Interesting and challenging for all of us, in our understanding of this word. Good morning.