

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on Remembrance Day

*Audio posted to the Parish Website on Wednesday 11th November 2020*

Good morning everybody, rather overcast day today but all good news really in the context of the great discovery of a vaccine we hope that's a you know a real sense of 90% certainty isn't a bad thing is it? And indeed, I'm sure wariness will be expressed by some and that's understandable. However, the two individuals who've made this extraordinary discovery come from fascinating backgrounds in the context of both are from Turkish immigrant families in Germany. The Turkish community in Germany have always been seen as a little bit below par you know no shortage of distancing on the part of the German population against them in the past but however that's changing. Their names of course are Özlem Türeci and Ugur Sahin - I hope I've got those names right.

But interesting to see that they are both very proud of what they call the collaborative effort in discovering this vaccine. Also see that Özlem Türeci, that is the wife, they're a married couple, she was the daughter of a father who worked as a surgeon at a small Catholic hospital. She describes herself as a Prussian Turk and has spoken of her admiration for the Nuns at her father's hospital while Sahin her husband found inspiration in science books he took out from the library of his local church so and I think that might give us inspiration in these challenging times.

However today is another day of remembrance. Sunday was Remembrance Sunday but today the eleventh of the eleventh is that day when we pause and we reflect on those who've given their lives for the freedom of all and I'm just reflecting particularly two of the most celebrated books that have come out of the first world war in particular one was Robert Graves "Goodbye to all that" and the other was by Remarque the German writer and Robert Graves wrote "*We no longer saw war as one between trade-rivals: its continuance seemed merely a sacrifice of idealistic younger generation to the stupidity and self-protective alarm of the elder.*"

Remarque wrote from the German perspective "*But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me.*" He's describing his enemy here. "*I thought of your hand-grenades, of your face of our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that*

*you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fears of death, and the same dying and the same agony--Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy?"*

So, that sense of solidarity, that sense of comradeship is expressed really I think in the idealism of both writers and on a day like today it doesn't do us any harm to remember these truly remarkable people who have given us a different perspective on the jingoism that we often hear in the context of war and this great discovery shows the commonality that all humanity have. That we do seek togetherness and we do seek to break down barriers. Good morning.