

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on Trinity Sunday

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Good morning everybody this Trinity Sunday. You may be delighted I'm sure to hear the news this morning that places of worship will be opened again a week on Monday and of course we have been planning this eventuality within the parish and just by way of beginning this morning's reflection just to remind you that it will be a slow process. One church in the various vicariates, there are five vicariates, and one in each will be open initially as a pilot church and in our vicariate St Mary's in Sunderland will pilot that and of course much preparation has to be done there. Your safety, your protection is of the upmost and the type of building that is to be used perhaps into the future or beginning with the return to worship in our own partnership and indeed parish will depend very much on the accessibility and size of each building. So that's just by way of filling you in initially on the good news that we hear this morning. The gathering for worship of course is going to be a different matter altogether so I'd say that might be just a little bit down the line but there are announcements to be made this week on that so let's wait and see.

Today is Trinity Sunday as I've said but yesterday also was a very important day in the context of the turbulence that so much of the United States and indeed here has been experiencing over these past few days. Yesterday was the 52nd anniversary of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy he was assassinated on the 6th June 1968 by one Sirhan Sirhan a disillusioned Palestinian Christian, and one of the great losses I think to American politics, however his shadow is certainly cast high and broad around what's happening in not just America but I think Britain today.

Bobby Kennedy made an extraordinary speech, one of many, some extraordinary speeches and as you can probably tell I am a great fan of his and this speech was made in the Cleveland City Club on the 5th April 1968 and so that's just a few months before he himself was assassinated and it was to a mainly white audience which wasn't easy and not only a white audience but a fundraising white audience which was hugely important if one intended to go on. But just let me give you some one or two quotes from that.

First of all, he quoted Abraham Lincoln and said *"Among free men, there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet; and those who take such appeal are sure to lose their cause and pay the costs."*

However, he did go on with some very striking language

*"Too often we honour swagger and bluster and the wielders of force; too often we excuse those who are willing to build their own lives on the shattered dreams of others. Some Americans who preach nonviolence abroad fail to practice it here at home. Some who accuse others of inciting riots have by their own conduct invited them. Some look for scapegoats, others for conspiracies, but this much is clear; violence breeds violence, repression brings retaliation, and only a cleaning of our whole society can remove this sickness from our soul."*

But and this is the important bit

*"there is another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly, destructive as the shot or the bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions, indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colours. This is a slow destruction of a child by hunger, and schools without books and homes without heat in the winter. This is the breaking of a man's spirit by denying him the chance to stand as a father and as a man among others. And this too afflicts us all. I have not come here to propose a set of specific remedies nor is there a single set. For a broad and adequate outline, we know what must be done. When you teach someone to hate and fear his brother and sister, when you teach that he is a lesser man because of his colour or his beliefs or the policies he pursues, when you teach that those who differ from you threaten your freedom or your job or your family, then you also learn to confront others not as fellow citizens but as enemies - to be met not by cooperation but with conquest, to be subjugated and mastered."*

I don't think I can say any more on this feast of the Trinity which is all about community and sharing there's no need to go into theological background of that. There's much to read on the wonderful theology that is the Trinity but essentially it is about our gathering to share, essentially it is about caring for each other, essentially it is about having respect for each other. Good morning.