

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the feast of The English Martyrs

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Monday 4th May 2020

Good morning everybody. I'm glad to report that the family of finches are doing very well on the windowsill, doing less well of course have been a number of wood pigeons around whose carcasses I have seen in the front and back lawn probably an indication of the vulnerability that perhaps some wildlife feel at the moment or security they feel at the moment but laying themselves out very vulnerable of course too as in the situation now with the wood pigeons to the hawks.

So, anyhow, this morning, I don't know if you've noticed around also the air seems fresher some people have observed and it's a very fresh morning this morning and just walking down by the river here in Durham yesterday the swans seem very much at ease, very comfortable, seem to be increasing in number along the river as well.

In the paper this morning I'm reading that dog purchase, adopting a dog, adopting a puppy, buying a puppy, google searches have gone up by 120%, for adopting a puppy up by 130%. Again, just a, I think a sign to everybody the invaluable gift that nature and indeed animals offer to us in all their aspects.

So today, we're celebrating the feast of Martyrs of England and Wales. I came across, this whole martyrdom, it's a tricky thing isn't it? One of the longest running and most successful musicals in history of both west and New York has been the musical Hamilton which is based on the life of Alexander Hamilton one of the founding fathers of America who was not white and perhaps the less we knew about him because of that the better in the past however it's taken on a whole new dimension now with this musical.

And in the dialogue between him and George Washington, Washington says to him *"It's alright, you want to fight, you've got a hunger I was just like you when I was younger
Head full of fantasies of dyin' like a martyr?"* "Yes" says Hamilton. *"Dying is easy"* says Washington *"Young man, living is harder."
"living is harder."*

I think that's a wonderful line, it's a real challenge to live indeed we're seeing it in the tremendous courage of health workers in hospital and the frontline workers. We're seeing it also I'm sure, though we don't see so much of it, in the intense lives, which I'm sure many are living in the small crowded accommodation, wherever they might be this point in time.

This is what living is all about, this to me is what martyrdom is about. Those moments, daily moments, of just putting your own ego and self aside for the betterment of others. Good morning everybody.