

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 24th May 2020*

Good morning all. Seventh Sunday of Easter heading towards Pentecost. The Gospel today is the priestly prayer of Jesus. It's a lovely prayer, beautiful prayer and it's basically preparing the disciples for Pentecost. However, a huge challenge awaits. It's also about denial. Denial is not a river in Egypt as the poster says. It's a word however that we hear often today. We can say that friend is in a state of denial, that person, that foe, indeed a country can be in a state of denial but going beyond the denial can be rather difficult and challenging depending on what state we're in. However, if not confronted, confusion, havoc can prevail.

Let me give you an example. Recently speaking about liberation from Nazi tyranny, the German federal president marking the end of the 75th anniversary of the end of the second world war he addressed the German problem with coming to terms with culpability. *"Liberation didn't take place on the 8th May 1945,"* he says, *"but rather it is a long and painful process which involved facing up to the past investigating what people knew and what they had colluded in. Rather, painful questions within families and indeed between the generations. Fighting to stop silence and denial prevailing."* He reminded us that this was a continuing journey that never ends when he said, *"There can be no deliverance from our past for without past we lose our future."* Quoting Rabbi Menachem he said *"No heart is as whole as a broken heart."*

Jesus is praying the great prayer today, the priestly prayer as I said, we're eavesdropping in on Him. He's moving the disciples from that constant state of denial that they often fell into. Denial according to the Greek word skótos actually means darkness. It means an unwillingness to learn and to see. And we all suffer from it I think. Skótos happens when we speak of the kingdom of God while forgetting that God is in the poor and the sick. Skótos happens when we have plenty to say about problems elsewhere but refuse to see the very ones that are at our doorstep.

Jesus saw skótos indeed in His disciples. When? Well, when Peter demanded that Jesus would not suffer. When James and John wanted those positions of control and power within the kingdom. When even at the end Thomas refused to believe. *"I don't believe until I touch the wounds of Jesus."* The pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, they

refused to believe, they were also in that state. Indeed, not even His own family believed. It's as if nobody saw.

That's why He will say in the Gospel today *"Father, now at last they know. I have given them the teaching that you gave me, and they have truly accepted it."* They went back to Jerusalem; they shared the Word and they prayed in the upper room. Let's do that this week, especially in this time of lockdown when we have perhaps more time than we want and let us ask too are we willing or prepared to know the full truth, to understand the real situations, to be truly informed. And are we ready to really encounter ourselves? These are the questions that the Spirit will gently unravel for us and is doing so. Good morning everyone.