

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November

*Audio posted to the Parish Website Wednesday 18th November 2020*

Hello everybody, Danny Boyle, I'm sure you've all heard, many have heard of Danny Boyle. He's a great film director, he's from Manchester and he orchestrated or co-ordinated, choreographed the entire Olympic opening ceremony and closing ceremony in the 2010 Olympics here in London and Danny was also educated by one of my previous priests here in the parish Fr Michael McGovern who was from Glasgow, he was a Salesian priest and I've seen Danny being interviewed on television and referring to Fr McGovern very affectionately calling him 'Jock' McGovern who was a wonderful music teacher but Danny was really not a great learner and he said this with great aplomb and kindness.

I'm mentioning Danny Boyle because I've just been reading a review of a book on what it means to be I suppose nice in life and still winning and Danny is singled out and some of the aspects to his life I found very interesting. There were ten thousand involved in the opening ceremony specialty of the Olympics and the big logistical challenge for him was to basically get them all coordinated and working on the night and it was a year in planning but his biggest challenge was keeping it a secret and on such occasions people are asked not to bring their mobiles, shut down mobiles completely, some have to sign a non-disclosure statement that they will not, and they have to be paid as well to do this, not to disclose to others what in fact they are preparing for. Danny said *'No I don't want to go down that road at all. I just want volunteers.'* And he got ten thousand volunteers. And he was asked well how are we going to keep them to secrecy? Well, he said, *"you simply ask nicely. You've got to ask nicely."*

Three aspects to Danny Boyle's character were very clear on that night and are brought out in this review. First one is that you try and listen without ego, B you give in a way that builds trust and C you defend yourself but without vilifying the other. Danny for his great efforts was offered a knighthood for which he said: *"No it's not my cup of tea"*. That was his simple answer. It's not my cup of tea. And he said *"this was a team effort. Every one of us contributed to this."* And so that's a measure of the character,

Yesterday we celebrated the feast of St Hilda of Whitby an extraordinary woman, 7th century, persuaded by St Aidan not to go over to France to join her sister then in a covenant but to stay here, put her roots down here, and thank God she did, perhaps maybe not for the Celtic monks but she was such a formidable, kind person. Bede, St Bede, writes very affectionately about her too, and like Danny Boyle she seemed to have those same qualities which made her such a giant of a figure, such an important figure that in fact Whitby was chosen as a location for the great synod and Bede actually refers to her as someone "*she was a great example of peace and charity, all who knew her called her mother such was her wonderful goodness and grace.*" She was a skilled administrator and a skilled teacher. Great qualities in people, good people that seem to be able to lead while being decent and good, and kind.