

Reflection from Fr. Colm on Tuesday of Holy Week

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Good morning everybody. On this sunny morning we gather again, perhaps in the confinement of our own homes unable to access the glories of that sunshine. Nonetheless let us focus on the faith in which we are invited to share in this particular week and today especially Judas is taking centre stage in the Gospel of St John.

That great, great chapter 13. In that Gospel in which we focus on the institution of the Eucharist, the washing of the feet, the betrayals not just of Judas but the prophecy of Peter's betrayal by Jesus however today it's Judas that takes centre stage.

When I was a priest in Dublin many years ago in order to get some exercise at night after a heavy day of confessions or counselling whatever it might be I used to stroll around Trinity College in Dublin and very often I'd meet a lonely figure. That figure turned out to be the Head of English in Trinity College and was the poet Brendan Kennelly.

I mention Brendan Kennelly because Brendan Kennelly wrote a book of poetry, well it was just one poem, it was *400 pages* long and the book was simply called "The Book of Judas." Kennelly asks in the poem how we today perhaps might be scapegoating Judas and perhaps we don't see the relevance of Judas in our own lives and our contribution to the betrayal of humanity and to each other.

One of Kennelly's great fans was the U2 frontman Bono and Bono particularly commented on a line that caused huge controversy on the publication of this bestselling book and that line was "*If you want to serve the age, betray it.*"

For Bono this was exposing the conceits, the foibles, the secrets of our age and facing harsher truths. And that's the hard challenge for each one of us isn't it? Facing those harsher truths. But unfortunately, as Christians, as Catholics, we're invited and asked to do that, particularly over the season of Lent and we will see so much of that in the readings this week. Whether we agree or not with either Kennelly or Bono the reality is that Judas is not just someone who is that eternal scapegoat and outcast but as I say he is that uncomfortable presence in all of us.

This is a time of real uncertainty when even our Prime Minister is in Intensive Care Unit with COVID-19 and we pray for him. Perhaps we might too ask ourselves some searching questions as to how humanity might well have betrayed its responsibilities to this wonderful earth of ours. Eucharistic prayer tells us and invites us *"You formed us in your own image and entrusted the whole world to our care."* So, let us pray again for each other on this day and pray for this world of ours that indeed we will be more responsible and caring for it in all its aspects.