

Reflection from Fr. Colm on Good Friday

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Friday 10th April 2020

Good morning everybody. Good Friday, a Good Friday like no other I think you'll agree. Usually very quiet but this Good Friday will be much quieter than most. Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk wrote one of his earliest books on his sense of inadequacy at watching a world go by where so much was needed to be addressed by way of care and healing but he himself found no avenue. He did ultimately discover that through prayer and his hopes and the very isolation of his own monastery in Kentucky. His time alone was a time where he felt more connected to the world than ever before, a world which he had up to then ignored. He wrote with clarity on ecumenism, the environment, justice and peace and his own catholic tradition with a clarity and resonance that is still very popular to this today.

And so, where we are and lest we feel inadequate in the isolation that we are experiencing. Listen to his words. *"A woodpecker with a cry as sharp as a dagger terrifies the lesser birds, while he himself is benevolent and harmless. The beautiful kingfisher in dazzling flight rattles like a bird of ill omen. So, we fear beauty."* And this is precisely what Good Friday is about. The fear of beauty. It seems the authorities were terrified of the beauty that stood before them, their own egos, self-ambition all played out in this drama. Or how perhaps do we participate in this drama in our own lives? Are we guilty of being bystander's inclusion of what goes on in society? perhaps this time of isolation and lockdown is a real opportunity to be more than just bystanders. As parish we are connecting with each other certainly in a way that has been very different and very, very wonderful to see.

One of the great American hymns associated with this day is the African American spiritual "Where you there when they crucified my Lord?" written by a slave in 1889 it was accepted into main stream church singing not until 1940 by the American Episcopal hymnal. It took time. With its haunting refrain it asks the same question of each one of us as bystanders. *"Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble, where you there when they crucified my Lord?"* Composed in poverty, composed in slavery, it's a reminder to us that that sense of poverty at all times is a real connection between us and Christ. Let us do that on this day when we can't be with each other as community physically but let us connect with each other in prayer. God bless.