

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 26th July 2020

Hello everybody, hope you're okay. Today now we gathered in Church for our first Mass in the parish and most those who booked in for that Mass attended. It was an unusual and that's putting it mildly, very unusual experience, surreal perhaps is a word, a better word to use, and yet that doesn't adequately describe it because there was on one level there was a return to reality, but on another level, there was also our realisation of the heightened sense of fear that's a part of our society at the moment in the light of the COVID and the fact that it simply hasn't gone away as has been proven today with the news of the returning Spanish holidaymakers having to be quarantined.

Again, looking at the final fixtures in the football league today some of them if you see the crowds, well the non-crowds, you just see the absenteeism that's a part of the stands. Another realisation that we're really not out of the woods yet.

But back to Mass this morning and it was lovely, even to see the faces, not familiar because of the masks, young and old from many parts not just our own parish but the surrounding areas. Lovely to see them and to know that they had come to receive the reality, *the reality*, which is the Eucharist, the bread of life. The bread of life, changed, transformed, consecrated into the body and blood of Jesus. Pure and simple.

It was a pure and simple Mass because of again health restrictions we had to be in and out as quickly as possible. There's also realisation that the experiences for our stewards will be of benefit to them into the future as they look after and guide us into the days ahead when please God now we'll get up and running on a more regular basis. But this trying and testing of making things safe is just a reminder of to us that fear still abounds. Fear is still very much with us as to what way we go in the future.

I'm reminded of words, which I think are very nice words, that are written by a Sister Mary David and she said, *"The experience of fear in our hearts doesn't mean we cannot be courageous. Being really brave means embracing the Cross in the midst of fear, even while we are*

fighting against it, like Jesus in the Garden of Olives. That's the kind of courage the martyrs showed. The Lord is never closer to his own than in those moments. That kind of courage-in- the-midst-of-fear is the greatest witness to belief in God and the power of his love for our healing and our good."

Now I like that because it reminds me that we may feel that things were far from being normal this morning but that fear made the Eucharist and those expressions that constant reassurance of be not afraid come to me all that more real and even perhaps in a very abnormal surreal unusual situation that Mass was this morning there was a closeness to Christ which is perhaps something that many of us may not have had an experience of in what was known as normality. Nice to be back however, God bless.