

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Thursday 21st May 2020

Hi everybody hope you're okay. Today we're celebrating the feast of the Ascension, it's also World communications day and I think both of them slot in beautifully to each other. The Ascension is the celebration of Jesus going back to the Father and it's of the disciples letting go of one particular form and concept they have of Him. Being shifted down the mountain by the two angels, come on down yous go, and trying to earth them again from keeping their heads in the clouds which many of us at times tend to do.

This account in the Gospel today it's beautifully brought out I think anyhow in a very short story and I'm just going to read it to you. Teachers will probably be familiar with it.

"Upon Jesus' arrival in Heaven a big number of angels greeted Him. After the formalities they asked Him whom He had left behind on Earth to finish the work that He had begun. Jesus replied "Just a small group of women and men who love Me." "Is that all?" they asked astonished, "What if this group should fail?" Jesus replied, "I have no other plans."

I think that's the big question facing us at the moment *"What if this group should fail?"* We don't know how we're going to pan out after the return to normality, please God, which won't be too long now. I think our means of communication are going to be dramatically changed and that's why today is so important, the virtual world has simply taken over, everywhere, socially, business world I don't know how many Zoom/TEAM meetings I've been on of late. Parish Council meeting takes place via Zoom and they're all good meetings. Good means of communication but they're not really I mean the human contact is very evident, there's no way that they could continue indefinitely without some kind of human contact and I think to that degree it's hugely important perhaps that we never lose sight of the fact that we do need that human contact.

I came across Dacher Keltner, a professor of psychology University of Berkeley, California who said *"Touch is the fundamental language of connection," "Touch is the fundamental language of connection."*

You know nobody knew that better than Jesus, did they? Everywhere in the New Testament He's embracing, He's the kiss, even the washing of the feet, the healing of the blind man with His own spittle, an extraordinary intimacy that He seems to display, reveals it seems in just human contact and connection.

So, on this great day as we anticipate Pentecost with a very frightened community who are up in that upper room self-isolating out of fear in lockdown and they are waiting to meet their Lord and be inspired by that same Spirit. So, take heart and keep an eye particularly on those on the margins who really need our support and our comfort and our uplifting contact and communication at this time. Good morning.