

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the feast of St Benedict

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Tuesday 12th January 2021.

Hi everybody, hope you're ok. Beautiful morning, sun blazing through here. I hear the ruffling under the windowsill, as usual, I don't know whether the nests are being rebuilt or whatever but like all of us, I think they've been locked in and staying safe at home. Please continue to do that.

Today the Gospel is about Jesus in the synagogue. Creates a bit of controversy because He's dealing with an individual who seems to have some kind of mental issue and as you probably know within the Jewish tradition and indeed the Catholic tradition for many years that any with seen with mental issues were seen as evil and so they basically, he should not have been there in the first place but Jesus recognises him but what's more important is he recognises Jesus and out of Jesus flows this extraordinary sense of compassion.

And "*What do you want with me Jesus of Nazareth?*" this man shouts. He seems really physically upset, uneasy with himself, agitated with himself and I'm sure we all have those experiences to some degree or another throughout our lives and *especially* over these past months. But we're told two very important words in the Gospel that Jesus spoke with authority and He made a big impression on those who heard Him.

Now they are difficult things to do as you will know from the latest and most disturbing political episodes we've had to witness over these last few weeks. Authority doesn't come easy. Some are in leadership roles of course but do they have that gravitas? And that faith, that sense of confidence that they install in us is something that Jesus is very uniquely containing within Himself.

The American comedian Bill Hicks sadly died at the age of 32 from pancreatic cancer. He came from a Southern Baptist background in which they believed in the literal Word of the Bible. He challenged his father he recalls in some of his routines in relation to that literal belief and tenet. However, he did say something, as lots of comedians do, so many of them have wonderful commentaries on the social issues of the day and Bill Hicks brought a lot of his Baptist background into his routine and he did say "*The whole image (that is the image of God) is that eternal suffering awaits anyone who questions God's infinite*

love. That's the message we're brought up with, isn't it? Believe or die!" Then he concludes by saying "Thank you forgiving Lord, for all those options."

Yes, there are a lot more options out there and the God that is represented by Jesus represents an extraordinary confidence and authority that is something that we cherish and really hang onto especially in these difficult times, I hope you're okay. Do take care okay? God bless you.