

Reflection from Fr. Colm on Wednesday of the 2nd week of Eastertide

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Wednesday 22nd April 2020

Good morning everybody I hope you're okay. Two women, one a human rights lawyer, the other a novelist. The human rights lawyer gave a TED Talk recently and it was on solitary confinement. It was a fantastic talk and it just lasts about 12 minutes and it's given in one of the high security prisons in the United States. It was a huge assault on the lack of transparency that the prison system in the States had with regard to solitary confinement and the devastating effects it has on the person. She quoted Nelson Mandela as saying that of all his experiences in prison the worst of all was solitary confinement how it deprives us, diminishes us mentally and physically and how we need to be constantly vigilant to those in society and the world at large who are confined.

That was on a human rights level, the more immediate level with regard to the virus a recent article by V she talked about the effects it had on her by way of lack of sensory connection with friends and family. She said *"I am sure so much of what women do - so much of our so-called beauty routines - have as much to do with touch as they do with appearances. I cannot wait to have my hair washed by my hairdresser when this is over. There is one particular woman; I will call her Nina. Her hands are delicious and confident and kind, equally firm and gentle. When she digs her long, waltzing fingers into my scalp, mixed with the warm soapy water, I know salvation. The same with the woman who does my nails, the little hand massages, her fingers pressing deep into the stress of my palm, the flesh-to-flesh contact and energetic exchange. I need that. We need that. Particularly those of us who live alone, who don't live with partners or spouses. Particularly those of us most likely to perish from the virus - the older ones. Touch is how we go on."*

I think that's beautiful in the context of where we are, it's optimistic but however it's realistic and realistic to the point where we have to face the ongoing trauma of how we are impacted by this.

Each day this week in our readings from Mass, from our liturgy there's a breakout. A breakout from confinement, from imprisonment. We see the disciples suddenly discovering a renewed sense of hope and confidence. What was their confinement like? We don't know. How long was it? We

don't know. Were they together? We don't know. Probably were but it was a confinement and the freedom that they gave, St Luke constantly fires home this message. They were standing in the middle of where the action was with a renewed sense of confidence. Luke says this over and over again. They are standing. They are standing. Good morning.