

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 24th January 2021.

Hi everybody hope you're okay. Sunday, the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. An extraordinary week in so many ways we've had the most importantly the inauguration of the new American President Joe Biden. I thought his speech was good. His inauguration speech it contained lots to hope for, he even quoted some of the saints, and in particular St Augustine, he quoted Martin Luther, he quoted other names of course but he was unapologetic about the faith background from which he came that's a sign of hope I think without being too biased. And also, we had Lady Gaga singing fantastically rigged out in extraordinary dress but of course, we all know who stole the show don't we? It was the young African American poet or poetess Amanda Gorman. It was a lengthy enough poem but the two lines I should say that I found very striking when she wrote *"So let us leave behind a country, better than the one we were left."* *"Let us leave behind a country, better than the one we were left."*

She didn't say leave aside a country that we have left but that we were left. That's what we have. That's what we've got to move on now so do it. There's a sense of immediacy about what Joe Biden said but more particularly about what this marvellous young poetess has written and if ever you want to go and find out anything about immediacy you just go to St Mark's Gospel because the words 'straight away' and 'immediately' occur 30 times. There's a swiftness of movement in St Mark's Gospel that is quite extraordinary.

In the early 1960's an American writer, psychologist, sociologist named Alvin Toffler wrote a book called 'Future Shock' and in it, his main theme is that acceleration or change generate acceleration and change. How does that happen? Well, the next time you turn on your computer and it isn't coming on at the time, the precise moment that you want it on just think of the impatience with which you build up within your own system. That's what he's talking about. That immediacy, we want it now.

However, it seems to me that well obviously Alvin Toffler never anticipated what we've been going through for the last year. Covid has

changed the world forever. It's out of our control at the moment, thank God the vaccine is being rolled out but it has made us very much aware, certainly, me, very much aware of my own limitations and I don't have as much control over my own future as I'd like to think I did. It has taught us to be reflective, I've heard the numerous people say that to me. It has taught each of us to go back into ourselves with a greater degree of depth and introspection in a very positive way. Sure, it has the mental issues, the mental challenges that many people find very difficult when coping with real loneliness but that immediacy which is not only in St Mark, we get it in the first reading. Jonah is told, "Up, go to Nineveh only 40 days more, out you go Jonah." St Paul's really eases us into this I think beautifully in the second reading when he says, "*Those whose life is buying things shall live as though they had nothing to own.*" It's a great statement that.

So with all of this as a backdrop, the presidential inauguration speech and most particularly the poetry of this young girl and of course the bedrock of our readings today we have a great reason for hope, prioritising and you know just being more comfortable about ourselves that yes we're moving forward, things will change. We have to go with change whether we like it or not it has and will happen and continue to happen perhaps at a faster rate but maybe with a greater degree of reflection and anticipation that we had before all of this pandemic hit us. Good morning and I hope you're okay.