

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Audio posted to the Parish Website on Monday 31st August 2020*

Hello everybody, hope you're okay if I can just give a reflection, particularly in retrospect on the readings over the weekend. We have this confrontation between Jesus and Peter in the Gospel, we have Jeremiah in the first reading struggling with his role, the prophetic role that he is very and understandably uncomfortable in, and Paul of course is beautifully describing the idea of having to choose. So that sense of choice is very much a part of the readings and not just choice but a kind of radical choice too.

The term "*You cannot have your cake and eat it*" one that confused me for some time but I kind of get it you know? It's just a matter of linguistics, isn't it? It's a matter of language. What it's basically saying is that you cannot simultaneously retain your cake and eat it. Something has to give. And if you do eat the cake well then, you've got to accept the consequences.

This term goes back to the 16th Century actually as early as that when the Duke of Norfolk wrote to Thomas Cromwell on the 14th March 1538 explaining to Thomas Cromwell these dark choices that he had to make. Cromwell would have done by listening to that advice when you consider the consequences of his action and the execution that happened. Those of you familiar with Wolf Hall will be all too familiar with both the book and the series of Thomas Cromwell. Anyhow enough of that.

What we're talking about is the tension between choosing and not choosing. That tension is called suffering and it's where most of us actually languish in our lives. It's not a bad place to be but it is a place of reality and it's that tension where we as Christians in particular in which Jeremiah's struggling in that reading, Paul was to struggle with, Peter most certainly was to struggle with it even not just in this confrontation with Jesus where he's pulling Jesus aside to whisper in His ear. We're told by St Matthew that he pulled Jesus aside. A little covert activity here, you know. A bit of politicking going on, little nudge-nudge going on. Jesus, of course, doesn't buy into it.

W.H. Auden said in one of his great poems he said: "*We would rather be ruined than changed, we would rather die in our dread than climb the cross of the moment and let our illusions die.*" Yeah. Peter had those

illusions of the Kingdom and Jesus being triumphant in a militaristic style. Oh, no said Jesus to Peter that's not to be the way and you'd better learn, and it probably will take you some time to learn which it did. Peter did learn and of course, martyrdom awaited him.

I'm not saying martyrdom awaits us in a that dramatic form but every choice in many ways in our own lives does involve a slight if not a great piece of, a great degree of martyrdom. So good readings, really challenging readings and I hope you get something out of them. Take care.